

**DEVELOPMENT OF VAIṢṆAVISM IN KERALA
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE GURUVĀYŪR TEMPLE**

Thesis

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by

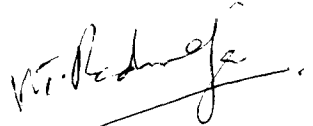
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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this thesis submitted by Smt. Neena Kumari N.B. is a bonafide record of research work carried out by her in the Department of History, University of Calicut during the period 1992 – 2001 under the guidance and supervision of myself.


Dr. V.T.Padmaja

DECLARATION

Certified that this thesis entitled "Development of Vaiṣṇavism in Kerala with special reference to the Guruvāyūr temple" is a bonafide record of the research work carried out by me during the period of 1992 – 2001 in the Department of History, University of Calicut under the supervision of Dr. V.T. Padmaja and that no part of this thesis has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.

Calicut University
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PREFACE

The study of the "Development of Vaisnavism in Kerala with special reference to the Guruvayur temple" provides a valuable document for scholars who are interested in the history of the temple.. Though many scholars and other devotees have dealt with the worshipping methods , no one has paid a great attention to the development of this temple. So I chose this topic .I have tried to correlate all views about this temple and its origin.

For this work, two types of sources were considered. Guruvayur Devaswom Board publications were valuable literary source. But they do not provide sufficient archaeological information. On account of the temple fire in 1970 which damaged the architecture and sculptures the exact period of the construction is not possible. It is with this object in view that I have attempted to review the historical evolution of the temple. Though I made strenuous efforts to locate and consult different sources I am more than aware of the paucity of sources materials .

In order to assess the impact of the temple on the socio-economic and cultural aspect of the people in the region, I have relied mainly on the original records, documents and old books, available at the Calicut university centre. The discussions with the Tanthri (late) Sri. Divakaran Nambuthiri, Uralar Sri. Raman Nambuthiri, the famous architect Sri. Kanippayur Krishnan Nambuthiri and his relative Sri.Krishnan Nambuthiri enabled me to get important source materials and the details of the renovation work.

The pattern of documentation followed in this thesis is mainly in conformity with the Padma samhitha, a Sanskrit work. With the useful

information from different sources I hope this work will be of use to scholars who want to know more about this temple.

I hereby express my sincere thanks to Dr.V.T.Padmaja for her inspiring guidance and constant help during my research.

I received the full support of the Devaswom Board to make the correct measurement of this temple. I am also indebted to the teachers of the Calicut university Dr. Elayath Neelakandan, Dr. Parameswaran Nambuthiri, Dr.GopalanKutty and Dr. Sivadasan C.P for comments and criticism. I am deeply grateful to all of them for their contributions. Needless to say the defects remain.

I owe a lot to my husband Dr. P. Rameshan without whose constant encouragement this thesis would not have been possible. Finally I wish to place on record my thanks to the Head of the department of History . Dr. Muhammadkoya, Librarians – Sushama, Fathima, Krishnankutty and all my co-fellows and students who have been involved in this project.

ABBREVIATIONS

- G.T.R.C.S : Guruvayur Temple Renovation Committee Souvenir
- H.C.L.C : High Court Level Committee
- H.R.C.E.B : Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board
- I.A : Indian Antiquary
- J B B R A S : Journal of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society,
- J E S H O : Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
- M H R E A : Member of Hindu Religious Endowment Act
- RHLC : Rule of Hindu Labour Committee
- S B E : Sacred Books of Education
- T A S : Travancore Archaeological Series

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INTRODUCTION

Vaiṣṇavism the predominant religion of India revolves round the worship of the god Viṣṇu. Most of the well known civilizations of the past were centred round the religions- Brāhmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Ancient devotees dissolved this form of the god in various forms. On the basis of the archaeological sources, we came to know that vaiṣṇavism had deep roots in the northern region in the second century A.D. But in the southern side this religion took firm roots in around seventh and eighth centuries A.D. That the vision of the Supreme Being was possible only to those whose minds have become pure was known to the paramabhaktas but later to the other devotees. Tangible objects of worship were created and installed in temples. Later on, many factors contributed to the growth of the institution of the temple. It provided employment to numerous people and later became socially significant. The temples of the Vaiṣṇava faith thus acquired an aura of the divine.

The present study proposes to analyze the problems of the development of Vaiṣṇavism in Kerala. The analysis of different source materials such as Indigenous literary texts and archaeological remains enables us to understand the different aspects of this cult. The present study consists of the development of Vaiṣṇavism in Kerala, its contribution to the society and its growth which have not been adequately discussed by earlier scholars. Hence there is a need for a fresh attempt to understand the various aspects of this cult. Before

entering into the historiographical dimensions, it is necessary to reassess the contribution of earlier scholars regarding the problem.

Progress in anthropological researches in the nineteenth century aroused much interest in ancient religions. Edward Moor in his book, The Hindu Pantheon¹ exhibits visible objects of various deities and thereby made a general study of these objects in the year 1864. Weber published an article 'An investigation into the origin of the festival of KṛṣṇaJanmāṣṭami' in 1874². Edward Washburn Hopkins³, studied with the intention of knowing the manner in which religious and theistic ideas arose and developed among the people and the light these shed on the origin and development of such ideas elsewhere. Six years later, Max Muller stated in the preface to the Sacred Books of the East Series⁴ that the purpose was to help the philosophers and historians in evaluating correctly the real development of early religious thought. On the occasion of the anniversary of the Prārthana Samaj⁵ in 1883, R.G.Bhandarkar stated that modern methods of comparison and criticism should be applied to religion to discriminate the element of true worth from that which came to it by pure accident. With this view, he published a monograph Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious systems⁶ in 1913.

The first notable article on Bhagavatism 'Narayaneeya and the Bhagavathas' appeared in 1908, written by Grierson who also contributed to the Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics an essay on Bhakti marga, the Vaiṣṇavite doctrine of devotion⁷. Hopkin's essay on The Epic use of Bhagavath and Bhakati⁸ appeared in 1911. Although it does not explain the connection between the vedic use of the term

Bhakti and the Epic, it is a scholarly contribution on the subject. The earliest iconographical study was done by T.A.Gopinatha Rao. He published his Elements of Hindu Iconography⁹ in 1914. He has succeeded to a certain extent in providing some useful pointers; the explanation of a number of technical terms relate first to the objects which the images of Hindu gods are shown to bear in their hands such weapons, musical instruments, animals, birds etc. R.P.Chanda attempted to reconstruct the early history of Vaiṣṇavism on the basis of archaeological records in 1920¹⁰ and one year later H.C.Ray Chaudhari brought out a small treatise, Materials for the Study of the Early History of Vaiṣṇava Sect in which he vehemently refuted the arguments of those who held that the Bhakti cult of Kṛṣṇa owed something to Christinity¹¹. In 1922, L.D.Barnett published in the Wisdom of the East Series, The Hindu Gods and Heroes¹². The purpose was to encourage goodwill between the East and West. Here the treatment of Vaiṣṇavite divinities is sympathetic. G.Jouveau Dubrevil published an Iconographical study of South India¹³. This book was translated from French by A.C.Martin in 1926. He tried to make a methodical classification of legends. It was very favorable to the development of Vaiṣṇavism. An authentic work on Bengal Vaiṣṇavism was done by two scholars- Sushil Kumar De in 1942¹⁴ and Jadunatha Sinha in 1983¹⁵. Sushil kumar De devoted attention to the early history of Chaitanyaism and excludes its later developments in his work Early History of Vaiṣṇava faith and movement in Bengal. His religious system associated with only the name of Chaitanya the great devotee and his adherents. The latter's book, Jivagoswami's Religion of devotion and Love help to make a right appraisal of Hinduism as pure Monotheism and Monism with a

blend of polytheism. Some parallel passages have been quoted to show similarities between Bengal –Vaiṣṇavism and Christianity. In the year 1948, D.D.Kosambi in an article indicated the possible sources of the Bhagavadgīthā and commented upon the syncretism effected through the doctrine of incarnations¹⁶. Kunja Govinda Goswami tried to give a picture as to how this tribal cult had become a powerful all-India religion and how in course of time its geographical boundary had become more and more extensive¹⁷. He tried to make a study of Vaiṣṇavism from the advent of Sungas to the fall of the Guptas. An attempt has also been made to assess the value of Vaiṣṇavism in relation to the religio – cultural history of India. In 1961, Kosambi while discussing the Bhagavadgīthā analysed the social and economic background of the Bhagavadgīthā and analyzed the social functions of bhakti¹⁸.

With regard to the Bhakti cult, great changes had taken place as years passed on. As a result it is regarded as universal, that is open to all, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. Some scholars devoted their time for the study of the Bhakti cult. In the year 1965, Mahamahopadhyaya Dr.Bhagavath kumar Goswami Sastri published his book, The Bhakti cult in Ancient India¹⁹. His account is based on the various aspects of the cult of Bhakti in Ancient India, particularly the Kṛṣṇaite Bhakti groups of North India. From this, we get an illuminating picture of not only the theological concepts and the ascetic practices but also the ritualistic details. R.N.Vyas tried to study the nature of Bhakti and published his work, Melody of Bhakti and Enlightenment²⁰. Through this he tried to establish that it was based on a firm foundation of the highest knowledge. Dr.Shyam Chand Mukerji,

Through Medieval Bengal Vaiṣṇavism²¹, made a critical study of the Vaiṣṇava faith and movement in Bengal from the earliest times down to the age of Chaitanya. Suvira Jaiswal's The Origin and Development of Vaiṣṇavism²² made an attempt to study in a dispassionate manner the development and progress of Vaiṣṇavism in the context of its social basis. In the year 1972, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, wrote a book by the name Gita the mother²³. It is said that the most authentic and inspiring translation of Gita was done by him. Maharaj noted Gita to be the essence of the Vedas. This poem has deeply fascinated the Western as well as the Indian mind and scholars are often tempted to investigate into the origins of the ideas and doctrines propounded in it.

Donald and Jean Johnson's book God and Gods in Hinduism²⁴, published in 1972, gives a brief introduction to various gods in Hinduism in a lucid style and clear simple language. It deals with two salient aspects of this fascinating religion (a) the nature of god (b) the role played by deities. Vaiṣṇavism and society in North India²⁵ of Urmila Bhagowalia analyses vaiṣṇavism from its beginning to 700 A.D. The book also discusses its propagation in the North, the evolution of social patterns under the influence of Vaiṣṇavism. It also contains

A comparative study of Vaisnavism with other religious movements. The Kṛṣṇa cycle in the Puranas²⁶ written by Benjamin Precia Do solis, mentioned themes and motifs found in the Kṛṣṇa legend upto the tenth century A.D. The work was based on literary and archaeological evidences together with their interpretations and discussions by modern scholars.

If we scrutinize the ancient scriptures and archaeological evidences we can find a trace of vaiṣṇava worship here and there in Kerala. These evidences also ushered in the period of growth of the temples. This topic was also discussed by the eminent scholar Manorama Chaudhari who edited South²⁷ India and its Architecture in 1969. Dr. Stella Kramrisch, Dr. J.H. Cousins and R. Vasudeva Poduval published the work Arts and Crafts²⁸ of Kerala in 1970. This is a monumental work inspired by devotion and backed by deep knowledge. In this magnificent work we get a survey of Vaiṣṇavite Sculpture, Architecture, Painting and the Dance of Kerala. Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya paid great attention to the culture and the fascinating arts of Kerala. From his book Kerala²⁹ published in 1971, we get some ideas of Vaiṣṇavite Architecture, Sculpture and Painting in Kerala. During the same period, K.V. Kṛṣṇa Ayyar published an article on 'The Guruvāyūr cult³⁰'. Here he referred to the circumstances that led to the rise of temples in Kerala, the importance of Guruvāyūr and his view on Narayaneeyam and Jnanappana, an amalgamation of the Vaiṣṇava cult into the Guruvāyūr cult. This article gives much importance to social activities. He also gives a little attention towards the religious functionaries in the Guruvāyūr temple in Guruvāyūr Charitram³¹. K.V. Sounda Rajan is another scholar who published Temple Architecture of Kerala³² in 1974. Though it gives a detailed description of the Kerala temples - architecture, he exempted some important temples. Travancore Inscriptions³³, the work of Vasudeva Poduval which was published in 1990 helps us to fix the period of the temple together with the responsibilities of the devotees towards the temple.

We get several references to the Vaiṣṇava cult from the

writings of Shangunny Menon, A. Sreedhara Menon and Padmanabha Menon. History of Travancore³⁴ of Shagunny Menon which was published in 1878, made references to the exploits of Paraśurama and a short account of Kulaśekhara Perumal and his pilgrimage to almost all the Vaiṣṇavite shrines. Sreedhara Menon's Kerala District Gazetter³⁵ (Thrissur) gives a general view of the growth of temples. In 1983 Padmanabha Menon published his History of Kerala³⁶ in four volumes. They give a brief account of Vaiṣṇavite temples and its deities, avataras of Viṣṇu, Vaiṣṇavite symbols in temples as well as in coins, location and nature of Viṣṇu temples. In it they also inset certain references to the devaswom (temple administration) materials used for making the Vaiṣṇavite image and nature of worship. K.R.Vaidyanathan's Sri Kṛṣṇa³⁷ - The Lord of Guruvāyūr is a valuable book for this temple. But one cannot get a correct view on architecture, sculpture and iconography.

The above works enable us to understand the doctrines of the Vaiṣṇava religion and the causes of the rise and growth of the temples. Vaiṣṇavite rites and practices are noted and examined, for they determine the social character of this cult. A thorough utilization of the numismatic and epic evidence together with that derived from literary sources enables us to trace the regional extent and popularity of vaiṣṇavism in much detail.

Numerous temples in this region are truly remarkable. Much attention is paid towards a particular temple - The Guruvāyūr temple - which is well known in Kerala as well as the whole of India. Before recognising this temple's particularity, it is useful to examine the

details of its building, rise and growth. The reconstruction of the destroyed portions of the temple and the prohibitive orders on photography etc do not help us to obtain an actual view of its ancient Architecture, Sculpture and Iconography.

The first chapter discusses the background of Vaiṣṇava worship in Kerala. Religious experiences originally centre round the mystical flashes of divine uncovering of the transcendent. The ways of realising the manifold personality of god can be seen in the earlier works-Vedas, Brāhamanas, Purānās and Ithihāsās. To deal with the Southern region, these were beautifully expressed in the hymns of the Alvars. They were easily affected by their mental power. The experiences of the Alvars put on an obvious view that illuminate grace is god. On this firm belief they founded their whole method of approach. The activities of the mudal Alvars centred round the vaiṣṇavite shrines of Kanchipuram whereas the latter is associated with Srirangam. Both of these centres exhibit a clear view of the vaiṣṇavite theme and rituals. Later in time came the Acharyas. They gave much importance to the medium of the worship which leads one to assert that this kind of worship has sanctity and reality. Their works marked the existence of the Vaiṣṇava devotees and paved the way for the growth of the temples.

The Second chapter deals with the History of Viṣṇu temples in Thrissur region with special reference to archaeological sources. We can find the inflow of various religions. Its present condition indicates the evolution of many religious faiths and forms. Earlier, devotees gave greater importance to the phenomena of nature in order to ensure prosperity to the individuals. Their convictions were changed by the

influence of other religions. The foreign religions tried much to strengthen their stability. Buddhists and Jains worked hard to find a safe place and thereby spread their principles. In the meanwhile, the activities of the Aryans displayed their strength to establish supremacy. The discriminative devotees who came after them set apart Hymns and Devarams towards separate gods. It was in the hymnal period that Brāhmanism came into conflict with Buddhism and Jainism. It was in that period that Śankaracharya arrived and revealed the spirit of unity and wholeness. Recognising his desire, the Vaiṣṇavites tried to make their aims more firm through their travels and hymns. All these led to strengthen the idea of the god in the mind of the people.

The Thrissur region famous as a centre of Śaivism in the earlier period became a centre of Vaiṣṇavism in the later period. This is evident in the large number of vaiṣṇava temples found in this region. Guruvāyūr temple emerged as a centre of Vaiṣṇavism during the sixteenth century under the patronage of the Zamorins. The devastating fire on the night of November 29, 1970, destroyed the western part of the temple. But the sanctum sanctorum was intact. This temple can be dated to an earlier period on the basis of its Pallava model Adhistana, Niche and Gavaksha of Jaganatha Temple. The details of this are given in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter deals with the Administrative and Religious functionaries of the Guruvāyūr temple. This temple at the time of its control under the Trikkanamathilakam was in a peaceful state. It was managed by the Uralars. As years passed on, this was substituted by the

rise of the powerful Zamorin. The quarrel between these two was occasioned by the desire to get the upper hand in the management of the temple. While the debate was going on, the third party, the executive government formulated a plan for its solution. The Hindu Religious Act controlled this matter. In the meanwhile, on receiving an appeal from the Uralar, the High Court of Madras framed a scheme for the administration of this temple. It caused this temple to be governed by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act and a Board that operated under the state Government. In spite of this, the Board made many an attempt to bring the Devaswom under its control. Considering this temple's religious functionaries, the most important power was vested in the Tantri. The other notable persons- MēlŚānti, KīlŚānti, Othikkan, Mārār, Pishārādis and Vāriers work for the upkeep and growth of this temple.

In regard to the Rituals of this temple, described in the fifth chapter, we can see certain peculiarities. The modes of worship differ according to the size and the popularity of the temple. It can be classified as major and minor. The major rituals conducted in the Guruvāyūr temple are of four categories. Unlike in other temples, Panchamahapuja is performed here and following its renovation, Sahasrakalaśam continues yearly. Out of the three types of Festivals, Ankuradhi is celebrated here in commemoration of the god of the Guruvāyūr temple.

The last chapter deals with the patronization of the earliest Bhaktas, their various actions and the way it affected future generations. Reading and hearing of the devotional works created a

great change among the devotees of Kerala. The great devotee, Zamorin Manaveda's powerful action is a noted thing. His desire for hearing the story of this god led him to meet the activities of political powers of the surrounding areas. It was believed that it is in this connection he diverted the attention with a conscious thought. There must have been provisions in Sruthi and Smrithi, but by the passing of time, the same is lost and is not traceable. Both these are futile for they are declared to be founded on ignorance. Thus a form of dance was made by the Zamorin Manaveda which consisted of the move with measured steps.

Deeply religious devotees also existed in this region. Their peculiarity was the Rare Bhakti which was obtained by them through passing much of time in sloth. Its result comes on their own way which came to be known for ever. Without spending a lot of time in the thoughts of God no one could reach the apex of Bhakti. Another significant thing is that it was only in that level they could influence much of the coming devotees. Melppattur Narayana Bhattathiri, Punthanam, Villwamangalam, Kururamma, Vazakkunnam Vasudevan Nambuthiri etc are all linked with this Bhakti tradition.

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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF VAISNAVA WORSHIP IN KERALA

The existence of a number of Theistic religions constituted Indian religion. Brāhmanism is the oldest religion among them. It covered several phases of development in ancient India, identifying itself with a variety of people, religious commitments and local influences. Rituals, sacrifices and prayers were the most important forms of their religion. Through this, the attention of the devotees was concentrated on working out relationship between man and the divine reality. A proper collation of all available source materials enable us to know about the rise and growth of the Brāhmanical religion.

The earliest literary information about the growth of Brāhmanism obtains from the early and later Vedic texts. Vedic Religion, being a polytheistic one had different gods, each with his own priests and special worshippers. Viṣṇu was considered as the supreme god in early times, only by His own devotees and a few other devotees. A clear indication of a cosmological myth of Viṣṇu appears in Rigvedic verses¹. The term Visnu may be derived from the root Vis' (Visnati - be active) or Vis' (Vis'āti-to enter), or from veris (vēveṣṭi) expressing pervasion. He is thus explained as the sun God who is everything and is contained in everything. It is in the Atharva Veda² that Viṣṇu takes a more definite form. In the later Vedic period, the priests, who were more powerful than any earthly king,

controlled everything. Brāhmanas and a few early Upanisads were composed in the later vedic age³.

The activities of the Aryans marked a tremendous change in religion, agriculture and trade. They gave much importance to prayer and balikarmas. Through the use of iron tools, they promoted agriculture. The use of iron tools and mercantile relations helped in the growth of towns and a number of trade routes. It caused the rise of new social groups. Many tribes of the vedic period were affected by the concentration of private property in the hands of a few persons, whereas many aboriginal non - Aryan tribes remained unaffected by the knowledge of Iron technology. This paved the way for the growth of the varna system and untouchability. The newly developed features of the social and economic life of the people did not fit in with vedic ritualism and animal sacrifices⁴. Thus new religions⁵ and philosophical ideas took shape in keeping with the basic changes in the material life of the people.

Of all the sects, only Jainism and Buddhism remained to stay in India as independent religions. Both religions denied the authority of the vedas and opposed animal sacrifice. The concept of Ahimsa was popularized for the first time by these religions. Since Buddhism showed a greater awareness of the contemporary needs of agriculture, it was acceptable to the village folk⁶.

Buddhism stands firm above Jainism on the basis of "Dharma". Moreover Buddha developed the common language Pāli and Prakṛt for the people who were denied the elite Brāhmanical language of sanskrit⁷.

The concept of Buddhism protested heavily against himsa and its popularity weakened the prestige and authority of the priestly class and varna rules. The lower varnas, who were favorably inclined towards Buddhism was a graver threat to the Brāhmanical social order. So the Brāhmanas, to know about the influence of Buddhism recognised the need to adopt new conditions⁸. For that the Brāhmanās made a change in their worship. They seized upon the devotional cults of Vāsudēva Kṛṣṇa and Śankarāna, and recognized these deities as forms of the orthodox divinity Narayana Viṣṇu⁹. Thus, two forms of Vaiṣṇavism emerged in the later times-the Bhagavatha and the Pāñcarātra system. Ekantika Dharma or monotheistic religion was that which was promulgated by the Bhagavadgita. The Bhagavathas were devotees of Vāsudēva and hence Vāsudēva was the real and original Bhagavat. Pāñcarātras worshipped Viṣṇu in his four Vyūha forms -Vāsudēva, Śankarāna, Pradyumna and Aniruddha¹⁰. Bhagavatha devotees accepted the Brāhmanical social order and championed the Varna system. The Pāñcarātras showed no respect to the varna rules and their initiation was open to all with no distinctions of caste and sex¹¹.

A proper collation of all available source materials enable us to know the original truth laid down in the Brāhmanical religion. In the Rigveda, God Viṣṇu is mentioned as a cosmic character, as a sacrificer in the Satapatha Brāhmana (1,2,5,4) and with all the attributes of the supreme soul in the Taittiriya (x,11) Aranyaka. In the Mahabharatha and Puranas¹² Viṣṇu figures as a supreme God. In the Ghosundi¹³ inscription there appears to be a dedication of an enclosure to Narayana. Considering Vāsudēva, the most important is the Bēsagar

inscription¹⁴. Out of the two, one is the Garuda column of Vasudeva and the other is a fragment of the shaft of another octagonal column. The latter bears a Brahmi inscription in one line recording the erection of the Garuda column of the excellent temple of the Bhagavath by Gautamiputra¹⁵, a Bhagavatha. Kṛṣṇa belongs to Āngirasa as described in Chandogya Upaniṣad¹⁶. Satvatās was another name of the Vṛiṣṇi race. It was the Satvatās, an important branch of the Yadava race, who first recognised Kṛṣṇa not merely as their tribal god and leader, but as the supreme God, or the sun God who he taught them to meditate upon. The idea of cosmic character of Narayana developed in the later Brāhmanas and Āranyakas. While considering the Besnagar inscription which is dedicated to Vāsudēva by one who calls himself a Bhagavatha suggests that Vāsudēva was originally associated with Narayana¹⁷ in the second century B.C. In the first century B.C. a Bhagavatha king Sarvatata had a stone enclosure built round the place of worship of Śankarṣana and Vāsudēva in the Narayanavatika. This may also point to the association of Vāsudēva with Narayana. In the Bhagavadgita Kṛṣṇā's change to the Viṣṇu (virat) rupa became an established fact¹⁸. The term param - Vaiṣṇava, the devout worshipper of Viṣṇu, appears for the first time on the coins of the Traikutaka Kings. Vaiṣṇava as a title of the worshipper of Viṣṇu is found only in the Bhagavadgita portion of the Mahabharatha¹⁹.

A large number of the Vaiṣṇavite epigraphs of the Gupta age reappeared in favour of the Brāhmanic religion. An inscription in the fifth century A.D (dated 402 A.D) records the dedication of a Viṣṇu image at Udayagiri by a sanakanika feudatory, the son of Maharaja Viṣṇu - dasa and grandson of Maharaja Chagalaga²⁰. The undated

inscription²¹ of the Bhitāri Stone Pillar, belonging to the reign of Skandagupta, mentions that an image of the god Sargin (Viṣṇu) was set up by him. The same person also built a temple to Chakrabhrit (Visnu).

The Gupta Kings Chandragupta II, Kumaragupta and Skandagupta, were styled Paramabhagavathas on their coins. They were thus worshippers of Bhagavath or Vāsudēva. Chakra Vikrama type of gold coins of Chandra Gupta bear the representation of the king nimble receiving three round objects from a deity who is variously identified as Viṣṇu or Chakra -Puruṣa²². In the Meghaduta²³ (V.15), Kalidasa compares the cloud adorned with a piece of a rain-bow, with Viṣṇu. Here there is an identification of Gopala Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu and if the Vikramaditya who was the patron of Kalidasa was Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty, this must be considered to be a record²⁴ belonging to the early part of the fifth century B.C.

On the basis of the development we can see four divisions in Vaiṣṇavism. In the first division, which existed until third century B.C. Kṛṣṇa Vasudeva, who belonged to Yadava family, established Bhagavatha or Pāñcarātra religion. At the end of this century, the devotees regarded Kṛṣṇa Vāsudēva - an establisher of the Bhagavatha religion and a Maha Yogi, as a Divya Purusa²⁵. In the second division, that existed until first century A.D, people considered the followers of the Bhagavatha religion as Hindus. Here the Divya Puruṣa Kṛṣṇa Vāsudēva was compared to the god - Viṣṇu. They accepted him as an important deity. From first century A.D. to twelfth century A.D, in the last division, this Kṛṣṇa Viṣṇu was compared to Para Brahma. From the

twelfth century A.D, Ramanuja in South and Krsna Chaitanya in North India made a distinction to this religion. It was in the last division that Vaiṣṇava religion gained strength in the South. It was through Alvars and Acharyas that Vaiṣṇavism reached upto Kerala.

Vedas, Upaniṣads and Epics brought about many devotees in the southern region. A new wave of Aryans and other devotees inspired the people through social contact. Their unity and divinity strengthened Brāhmanism. This is manifested in the contemporary literary works. Another sect of devotees turned their attention towards tangible forms of worship. All these indicate the rise of devotional cults. Here on the basis of indigenous cults fertilized by Aryan influence, theistic schools had arisen and characterized by intense ecstatic piety. It was this devotional religion propagated by many preachers and hymn singers in the medieval period which had the greatest effect on Vaiṣṇavism as it exists today.

The earliest iconographic representations of viṣṇu appear on a coin of viṣṇumitra of the so called pañcāla series²⁶, datable perhaps to the first century B.C. The sculpture of Mathura depicts Vasudeva wading through the waters carrying the child Kṛṣṇa to Gokula²⁷. Kṛṣṇa stories had been current in India sometime before the first or second century A.D. The importance of the Mora stone slab inscription reveals another fact. It may refer to the setting up of an image of the blessed or the divine Vṛiṣṇi that is Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudēva who belonged to the Vṛiṣṇi branch of the Yadava race (Vṛiṣṇinam Vāsudēvo- smi). It dates back to the time of Panini²⁸.

A notable cola copper coin shows the figure of Kṛṣṇa as muralidhara with the sitting figure of a Raja. This shows an affinity to the Vaiṣṇava believes²⁹. In spite of this, several gold coins of the fish type belonging to the Pandya rulers, have also been discovered. In this connection mention may be made of some silver pieces of a king called Vira- Kerala, which bear legends in the early medieval nagari characters³⁰. The most copious exhibits a human figure of Garuda on the back of the fish with the adjuncts of the Śanka and Chakra, all attributes of Viṣṇu³¹.

Tolkāpiyam³², one of the earliest works of Tamil literature provides us with the earliest references to Vaiṣṇava worship. In it the Purattinaiyāl, we have an important theme - Pūvainilai³³, this aims at the identification of a ruling monarch with one of the the principal deities of the Hindu Pantheon. The power of the God is compared with that of the king. Tirumāl or Mayon is the protector of this universe. Through Tazingi³⁴, the author remembers the first day's fight between Rama and Ravana. The Lord of Dwaraka, as one sutra³⁵ calls upon, was brought in ancient times to the south by the renowned sage Agastya, the resident of the Malaya hill.

Tiruvalluvar's Tirukkural³⁶, the famous and earliest Tamil work which gives some description about the religion, doesn't trace God's name or sect. The later Sangam works³⁷ give us some clue of the God Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu as called by the name Mayon is considered to be a sun God, who removes the darkness of the world. The legend of Paraśurama and the stories of the war between Rama and Ravana are also referred to here³⁸.

The popularity of Vaiṣṇavism had penetrated deep into the south. It may be gleaned from such names as Viṣṇugopa, the Pallava king of Kanchi mentioned in the Allahabad pillar Inscription³⁹ of Samudragupta. The devotion of Simhaviṣṇu to the God viṣṇu testified by the Udayendiram plates of Nandi Varman. We get clear references about the Viṣṇu cult in Tamil classical literature – 'Silappadikaram' and 'Manimekhalai'⁴⁰. In their Kuravaikūttu we can see two forms of Viṣṇu, one as a strong man who helps to overcome danger and the other as Kṛṣṇa a companion in Kṛṣṇaleela⁴¹. 'Silappadikaram' mentions that viṣṇupani must be given primary importance in Madhavi's dance of eleven type. The legend of Rama is also included in it. Thus it is clear from the early Sangam works and Tamil classics that Viṣṇu is compared to the sun God and the Tamils gave much importance to his attributes, and there was no feeling of religious antagonism.

Kalittogai⁴² marked the inflow of various religions such as Jainism, Buddhism, Saivism and Vaiṣṇavism since the period of the fifth century A.D. With the growing influence of the Jains and Brahmans, spirituality received more attention, selfmortification and abstinence from pleasure were advocated and recommended as the high road to salvation.

The period from the seventh to the close of the ninth century was an age of Hindu revival. A wave of Bhakti cult swept over Tamilnadu. Devotion to a personal God in the aspect of Viṣṇu or Śiva, service to devotees, feeding and clothing them to their happiness and comfort, were the chief duties of those who practised this cult. The new

revival had a militant aspect also. It tried to suppress the 'heretical' sects of the Jainas and Bauddhas⁴³. The leaders of this revival on the side of vaiṣṇavas were the Alvars. For the separation of the vaiṣṇava cult and its development into a distinctive sect in the Tamil country, the Alvars were mainly instrumental⁴⁴. They were the first, to sing hymns in praise of viṣṇu and to propagate his worship in their language.

The first four Alvars⁴⁵ who belonged to Pallava territory not only composed hymns but also travelled all over the Tamil country. Poygai Alvar in his 'Mūdal Tiruvandādi'⁴⁶ particularly covers the gamut of religious consciousness about the nature of God and the nature of soul. We find Puttattar to be conversant with the avatars of viṣṇu⁴⁷. Peyalvars third 'Tiruvandādi'⁴⁸ recounts the exploits of Trivikrama, destruction of Danta Vakra, Pūtana, Hiranyakaśipu and also Gajendra Moksha. This work reveals that the supreme Being is the treasure house of auspicious perfections, graces and Venkatam is the place of Release. Tirumālisai otherwise known as Bhaktisara became one of the foremost exponents of Srivaiṣṇava Theosophy. We find in him for the first time the mention of the vyuha theory of Pañcarātra agama. His 'Tirucchanda Viruttam'⁴⁹ describes that God has three forms according to his three different functions.

The other temples of the Pallava period shed a flood of light through architecture, sculpture and painting. A notable vaiṣṇavite temple is Vaikunta Perumal at Conjeevaram which represents the most mature form of the Pallava architecture. A beautiful representation of Govardhana kṛṣṇa comes from the kṛṣṇa maṇḍapa of this temple⁵⁰. An early Pallava cave temple of the Mamalla stage can be found at

Adivaraha at Mahabalipuram⁵¹. The Shore temple at Mahabalipuram⁵², is one of the earliest monolithic temples. Its sculpture had its full share in the spread and propagation of vaiṣṇavism.

Temple building activity of the Pallavas spread from there to Cola, Pandya and Cera territories. Tondaradippodi, Andal, Periyalvar all belong to Cola territory⁵³. Tondaradappodi's `Tirumālai'⁵⁴ is the Tamil mantra of the Tamil veda and his `Tiruppaliyēlucci'⁵⁵ is the suprabhatam hymn for Sriviṣṇu. Periyalvar is the only one who has sung about the protection of the icons⁵⁶. Andal (Goda) is the only woman Alvar. Her `Tiruppāvai'⁵⁷ reveals the beauty, truth, glory and kindness of God Kṛṣṇa. Andal's following the path of the Bhagavatha created a tradition in South Indian Vaiṣṇava temples. She chose Ranganatha as her bridegroom. Since her love was so intense, Ranganatha called her into the shrine where she disappeared. It is through such myths and legends, charged with emotion and drama, that the places and personalities in Tamilakam were sanctified⁵⁸. The cosmic forms of Viṣṇu and Śiva became humanised and localised, playing the roles of companion, child, bridegroom. In this way they endeared themselves to hundreds of devotees around the chief centres of worship.

Following the first phase of the movement in the sixth and seventh century under the patronage of the Pallavas find out in other temples like Tillai or Chidambaram, further south and Tirunallur and Srirangam to the South west (Urayūr, Tiruvellarai, Tirupper). All these were located in the cola territory⁵⁹. The rapid and smooth extension of

this movement is brought out by the Colas, who were the feudatories of the Pallavas⁶⁰.

Tirumangai was the man who travelled widely and spread the Alvar literature in all the vaisnava temples. A detailed description of the Lord Visnu is given in 'Tiruvelukkurirukkai'⁶¹ Moreover he laid down certain fundamental modes of approach to Divine experience called as Rāsas. Out of the two evidences⁶² the hymns of this Alvar and the inscription of Dantivarman seem, however to point to the reign of Nandivarman Pallava- -malla as the period of construction. It is believed that Tirumangai had lived during Nandivarman Pallavamalla's time.

Tiruppanalvar used to pray to SriRanganatha and wrote only ten hymns which contain important symbolic and mystical meanings. Nammalvar was the one who sang more about the temples of Malainad for two reasons - firstly he followed pilgrimage to almost all the Southern temples. Secondly Tiruppātisaram was the native place of his mother⁶³. His two Works⁶⁴ mention the avatars of Viṣṇu. His 'Periya Tiruvandādi'⁶⁵ describes God as father, mother and teacher. In 'Tiruvaymōli' he mentions god Narayana and he is held in the highest esteem as the master mystic of Srivaiṣṇavism. This work spread some light for the progress of the ancient temples. His hymns have shaped the conduct and faith of the Southern vaiṣṇavas (later- vaiṣṇavas). The Acharyas of the Viśiṣṭadvaita system called Nammal as Kutastha because the fundamental doctrines⁶⁶ of the Srivaiṣṇava faith, as current today were taught by him.

Madhurakavi was another Alvar, whose hymns were entirely different from the others. He sang about the glory of Nammalvar alone. The only surviving composition (tra) named 'Kanninum Śiruttambu'⁶⁷, enables us to know that Nammalvar taught the inner and essential meaning of the vedas.

Nathamuni was another great man who was influenced by Nammalvar (st.Śathakopa). While he was visiting some of the temples, a deep interest stimulated him to know the hymns of Nammalvar, whom he accepted as his Guru. He tried much to get all the hymns of the Alvars which he could edict and to turn into a Great Prabandham - Nālayira Divya Prabandham⁶⁸.

The Bhakti movement which represented the emotional side of vaiṣṇavism, turned its aspect towards an intellectual side. It was represented by a group known as Acharyas. Ramanuja was the greatest man among them. By regarding the Alvars, as objects of Worship, the Acharyas broadened the curriculam of holy studies. Ramanuja derives his metaphysical doctrines from the text in the Upaniṣads and from the Brahmasutras⁶⁹. While his theory of production of the external world is that adopted by the Puranas and based on the twenty four elements of the Sankya system. His vaiṣṇavism is the Vāsudēvism of the old Pāñcarātra system. The Acharyas differed from the Alvars in the fact that their teaching was based on both Sanskrit and Tamil⁷⁰. They did not solely depend on Bhakti as the Alvars had done, but united jnana and karma with it for realising God. In connection with the establishment of an apostolic head of vaiṣṇavism, a very important fact to be remembered is that the office was combined with the result

of the great work of the Acharyas. Another result also was introduced there, in connection with the idea of prapatti or self surrender. Thus arose two schools known as Vadakalai and Tenkalai⁷¹.

The essential difference between Vadakalai and Tenkalai revolves around the link between god's grace and man's effort in bringing about final deliverance⁷². Vadakalai's view was that "The soul lays hold of the Supreme Being by its own free will, act and effort". Where as the Tenkalai's hold that the human soul remains helpless until acted on by the Supreme Being. Vadakalai's regarded Lakshmi as equal to Viṣṇu in every respect; but the Tenkalai's maintain that Lakshmi is a created and finite being, and that she is to be worshipped only as a mediator. Regarding the forehead marks-the Tilak of the Vadakalais is 'U' shape and that of the Tenkalais 'Y' Shape⁷³. The syllable "OM" should be omitted from the eight syllabled manthra, according to the Vadakalai, when taught to people other than Brahmanas. The Tenkalai does not make this distinction and provides for the teaching of the whole Manthra (Om Namo Narayana) in the same form to all⁷⁴. The tendency of Ramanuja's system seems to be to give an exclusive Brahmanic form to the traditional method of Bhakti. This is distinctly seen in the doctrines of the Vadakalai. The Tenkalais learning is more liberal and so shapes the doctrines of the system as to make them applicable to the sudra's also⁷⁵. It was by these efforts of Ramanuja, that he could put Vaiṣṇavism on a permanent footing. His system is known by the name Sri - Vaiṣṇavism⁷⁶ for it is one of the four divisions of vaiṣṇavism as known as Sri Sampradāya.

Alvars work is also useful to us to know the existence of certain temples of their period in Kerala. Among the twelve Alvars only Kulāśekhara, Tirumangai and Nammalvar praised these Temples in Kerala. Out of the thirteen temples, majority of it belongs to the southern region. Among these, only four temples differed on the basis of Viṣṇu's posture. Viṣṇu in the reclining pose on serpent can be seen at Tiruvananthapuram and at Tiruvattar. Where as at Trippadisaram Viṣṇu is in a sitting posture. All other Viṣṇu idols are in a standing posture.

The Viṣṇu temple at Tirunavay (Malappuram) is the ancient temple found in Kerala. The four armed Viṣṇu figure appears to Tirumangai as the ruler of Nava⁷⁷. Nammalvar also has been sung about this temple in the eighth century A.D. Kulasekhara is the only one to praise the Viṣṇu temple at Tirumittakode⁷⁸ (Palakkad). The bulk of the verses in 'the Perumāl Tirumoli' is the lamentation of the devotees which is the ultimate refuge of SriVaiṣṇava cult⁷⁹. "Trikkakkārappaśurungal" the work of Nammalvar noted a fact, about Vamanamurthy temple at Trikkākkarai (Eranakulam) that at the climax of devotion, the devotee has no separation from God⁸⁰.

Viṣṇu temple at Mulikkalam (Thrissur) was in existence, when Vaiṣṇava saint Nammalvar visited it in his life time (at the end of the eighth century A.D.)⁸¹. He sang a padikam of ten verses glorifying the god⁸²; where as Tirumangai's verses considered Viṣṇu as the lamp of Mulikkalam⁸³. One of the best examples of Kerala medieval temples is the Srivallabha temple at Tiruvalla (Alappuzha). Carvings of Śiva accompanied by ascetics on the north and south is some what peculiar in

a Viṣṇu temple and could be a later introduction in relation to the earlier shrine. Instead of Tiruvalla, Vallaval is used by Tirumangai. He considered god Viṣṇu, as the ruler of Vallai and a manalan (bridegroom)⁸⁴. Here the manalan is a word for SriKṛṣṇa (Nila's bridegroom). It is one of the thirteen places sacred to SriVaiṣṇavas⁸⁵.

The Viṣṇu temple at Tirukkodittānam (Kottayam) is one of the nine holy places of early Tamil Vaiṣṇavism, in Kerala. The mural subjects of the walls show the combination of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava themes, though it is a celebrated Viṣṇu temple sung about by the Alvars⁸⁶. The Viṣṇu temple at Tiruppuliyūr (Kuttanad) and Tiruchengannur (Chengannur) are the other viṣṇu temples sung by the Alvars⁸⁷. The Pārthasarathi temple at Tiru Aranmula (Kottayam) panels show Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite scenes. The Tamil Vaiṣṇavite saints sang about this four armed viṣṇu⁸⁸. The dvāra maṅḍapa shows the stamp of the Tamilnadu influence in its later Vijayanagar style⁸⁹. The famous other two temples sung by Nammalvar only are at Tiruvattār and Tiruvanvandoor⁹⁰ (Alappuzha). The Sangam age work Purananuru⁹¹ mentions the viṣṇu temple at Tiruvattār. Otherwise known as Southern Vaikunta, was the head quarters of an ancient chieftain called Elini - Ādan.

Sri Padmanabhaswami temple (Tiruvananthapuram) is the best and the only major specimen of the Dravidian style of architecture to be found in whole of Kerala. This temple also exhibits traces of indigenous style. It is one of the most famous of Vaiṣṇava shrines of the south⁹². One of the peculiarities of the viṣṇu temple at Tiruppādisaram was that it was the native place of Nammalvar's

mother⁹³. Perhaps this was the reason for him to see, praise and write about many of these temples. It is a village in the Tovalai thaluk of the padmanabhapuram division and is famous for its visnu temple. The name of the village figures and Tiruppātisaram in the inscription and Tiruvanpārtsaram in the vaiṣṇava scriptures⁹⁴.

Besides this, we can find many other Vaiṣṇava temples in Kerala. An important temple consists of two shrines side by side, one dedicated to Sri Rama facing west and the other to brother Lakshmana facing east. The walls of the latter temple are decorated with Dasāvathāra sculptures. The Sri Rama temple has undergone renovation in recent times⁹⁵. This temple is at Tiruvillwamala (Thrissur). The deity in the viṣṇu temple at Pundarikapuram (Kottayam) is viṣṇu on Garuda with Bhudevi on the left and satyabhama on the right. It shows a combination of śaiva and vaiṣṇava themes, although it is a celebrated Viṣṇu temple. On the basis of mural paintings this temple dates from seventh century A.D. Its other parts⁹⁶ are fixed to the eleventh to twelfth century A.D..

Tirucchambaram Viṣṇu temple at Talipparamba (Kannur) is essentially a unitary shrine. The idol in three of His hand holds the usual vaiṣṇavite symbols and in the fourth exhibits the threatening finger pose called tarjani. Its face is turned towards the south⁹⁷. An interesting complex unit can be seen at Pullūr Viṣṇu temple. Its typical form is fully under the influence of the local devolution. Its inscription is dated to the eleventh century (1019-20)⁹⁸. The Alvars, recognised as Srivaiṣṇavas paid great importance to Tirunelly in Wynad⁹⁹. Its

inscription¹⁰⁰ bears out the fact that in earlier stages it was a great centre of this religion which influenced the temples growth.

From the above description it is clear that Vaiṣṇavism had a gradual development in Kerala. In the earlier Stage, the original theme was elaborated through long verses. The activities of the Aryans account for the growth of Varna system and untouchability. Though many religions were prevalent to fit in with the basic changes in material life of the people, only Buddhism and Jainism could arouse and so remained to stay in India. Both insisted on the need for inner purity and personal experience, disseminated spiritual knowledge to all without distinction of caste and creed. This weakened the prestige and authority of the priestly class. As a result, two forms Vaiṣṇavism - the Bhagavatha and the Pañcarātra emerged. The Brāhmanic religious system reappeared when the Guptas rose to power in the first quarter of the fourth century A.D. The period from the seventh to the close of the ninth century A.D. was an age of Hindu revival. A wave of Bhakti cult with its militant aspect, swept over Tamilnadu. This cult tried to suppress the " heretical sects of the Jainas and Baudhas". The leaders of this revival on the side of the Vaiṣṇavas were the Alvars. For the separation of the Vaiṣṇava cult and its development into a distinct sect in the Tamil country, the Alvars were mainly instrumental. They were the first to write hymns in praise of Viṣṇu in their own languages and to propagate his worship. Thus vaiṣṇavism had penetrated deep in the society and exerted a profound effect on the prevalent ideals and attitude to life.

The deep rooted Vaiṣṇava religion of Kerala is different from that of the neighboring countries. In these countries only Visnu idols were consecrated. This was also the case in Śiva temples. Where as in Kerala, in order to assimilate the different belief systems, a number of idols - Viṣṇu, Śiva, Ganapathy, Ayyappa and Devi were consecrated in one temple. The savants of the Bhakti movement instituted arts and festivals to popularise this assimilation. The Dravidian Goddesses Kottavai was accepted in the form of Durga, Kāli and Bhagavathi and absorbed into this religion. The popular non - Aryan deity Sāstha came to be looked upon as Harihara Puthra- the son of Viṣṇu (Hari) and Śiva (Hara). This was intended to make him acceptable not only to the Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivite sections of the Hindu population but also to the converts to Hinduism from within the Buddhist fold. Thus the Vaiṣṇava religion in Kerala was the result of a synthesis of the Aryan ideas from the north and the Dravidian ideas from the south.

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4. Ibid pp 12-31
5. Ibid p.32 - Ajithakeshakamblin propagated a thorough going materialistic doctrine called annihilationism (Uchchedavada). From this the Lokayata or Charvaka school of philosophy is believed to have derived a great deal. Pakudha Katyayana, another religious leader held that just the earth, water, air and light are primary indestructible elements, so are sorrow, happiness and life. It has been suggested that from this ideas the later Vaisheshika school originated. Purana Kassapa, the third contemporary preacher, regarded the soul as distinct from the body and laid the foundations of what later came to be known as the sankya system of philosophy.
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Vrsninam Vasudevosi (Among Vrsnis Iam Vasueva) BG.X – 37

पुरुषः श परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यते नान्यथा

The heighest Purusa is attainable only through exclusive devotion – chap.V111 Verse 22.

अनन्याः चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते

तेषां भिन्नाभिचुक्तानां शीघ्रं वहाम्यहम्

Those who think of me or meditate on me worship me allround to those devout I secure for them gain and safty – chap.1X v.27

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्याति

Understand that my devotees will never perish - chap.1X v.31

मनमना भव भङ्गको मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु

Fix your mind on me, be devoted to me, bow down to me you will reach me Chap.1X v. 34

भक्त्या न्वनष्टया शक्य अदृषवविद्योर्जुन
जानुं द्रष्टुं चतन्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परतप

Only by undistracted devotion can I of this form be known and seen in reality - Chap.1X v.54

मद्यावंदुम मनो ये मां नित्यकृता इवात्मने
श्रद्धया परयोच तास्ते मे भुक्ततमा भक्तः

Same idea is repeated in another way. Those who worship me with devotion and faith they are the best Yogins- Chap.X11 v.2

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति आनानु यस्यात्मि तन्वनः
ततो मां तन्वतो ज्ञात्वा विद्वान् नदमन्तरमृ

By devotion he knows Me in truth what and who Iam then knowing Me in truth he forth with enters into me – Chap.XV111 v. 55

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणां ब्रज
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मांशयिष्यामि मा शुच

Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me in all I will protect you from all sins. Don't be grieve - Chap.XV111 v.66

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contemporary of the Saiva saint TirujanaSambandar who was himself a contemporary of the Pallava king NaraSimhavarman 1st of Kanchi.If this tradition be true, he has to be assigned to the seventh century A.D.Other tradition contained in the Mathrubhumi NewsPaper of 1937 OpCit, Tirumangai's verses in Perumal Tirumozhi mentioned another view that,

മന്നവൻ തൊണ്ടെടയർ കൊൽ വണങ്കം
നീർമുടിമാലൈ വൈരമേ കൻ
തൻവലിതൻ പു കഴ് മുഴ് കവി അടപു
യകരണു ആതിരുന്നൈ

Vairamekhan - the honour possessed by a Pallava Raja Tondaiyarkon was the ruler of that region. In the ninth century AD.(890),the Cola king Aditya 1st defeated Aparajitha Vikrama Varaman. The successor established his right over that Pallava king. On the basis of this meaning the writer fixed Tirumangai's period as in 900 AD.

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78. Ullur S.Parameswara Ayyar-, Op cit, p.6.
79. Ibid, p. 9.
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CHAPTER II
HISTORY OF VIṢṆU TEMPLE IN THRISSUR DISTRICT
With Reference To Archaeological Sources

Kerala was the meeting ground of the foreign religions like Christianity and Islam. Although there was no deep contradiction, Brāhmin missionaries promulgated these religions and spread Brahmanism. The characteristic feature of the Bhakti movement existed in seventh and eighth century A.D. was profoundly marked by its own devotional aspect. A vigorous effort had to be made by religious reformers and Devotees. As an intellectual scholar, Śankaracharya could encourage people who were out to destroy all that was sacred and old. But it was the Alvars and Nayanars who evolved a new type of Bhakti, an intense emotional surrender to God in the form of Viṣṇu or Śiva. Their Bhakti cult generated a wave of religious enthusiasm among the masses. The Devārams of the Śaivites and the Hymns of the Vaiṣṇavites had a great impact on the people. This was more pronounced in Thrissur. Though many scholars tried their best in the worshipping methods of the temple, the decisive care is taken only by a few. In their point of view, Pallava pattern of the temple is rarely found in Kerala. But the Cola type is to be seen in the medieval temples in this District. Whereas Kerala styles are entirely different among these temples.

The present Thrissur district with the exception of Chāvakkad Thaluk formed part of the erstwhile Cochin state till recent times (1860)¹. At present, it consists of five thālukuks. A), Thalappilli, B), Thrissur, C), Mukundapuram, D), Kodungallur, E), Chāvakkad. Altogether there are ninety-six temples in these thālukuks²

Thrissur region has enough evidence of the earlier religious existence. Out of the four important BuddhaViharas there can be seen near Kodungallur a stupa built by Mahendra, son of Ashoka in the exact place of the Kodungallur temple, Indra Vihara in Kodungallur and the Srimūlavāsam which situated between Azhikode and Kottapuram³. The famous Paliyam copper plate of the Ay king, Vikramaditya Varaguna (885 -25A.D) gives evidence of the patronage extended by the ruler to the temple of Sri.Mūlavāsam. The inscription records the grant of an extensive landed property in South Kerala by the king to this temple. Buddhism was held in the highest respect and veneration by this ruler is clear from the invocation to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, which the paliyam copper plate contains. Later this temple lost by the encroachment of the sea. It was discovered by M.Foucher in Gandhara with the the short inscription, "Dakshinapatha Mulavasa Lokanatha". It proves that Sri Mulvasam was a famous Buddhist pilgrim centre in ancient days⁴.

Apart from Buddhism, Jainism also gained much strength in Thrissur. Pōrkalam, Kunnamkulam, Kakkād and Kadanasseri in Thalappilli Thāluku, the remnant parts of the Jain temples and ascetics on the mountain of Palapilli and Varāndharapilli are all connected with the Jaina culture. According to some scholars, the Kudal

Manikkam temple at Irinjalakkuda, dedicated to Bharatha the brother of Sri Rama, was once a Jain shrine. It was converted into a Hindu temple, during the period of the decline of Jainism⁵. Ilanko Adikal, the author of the Tamil epic *Śilappadikaram*, was a Jain prince who lived at Thrikkana Mathilakam. In earlier days it was a famous centre of Jain religion and learning. It continued to exist even today as Hindu shrines after undergoing a process of transformation⁶

Hippalos, a Roman Yavana Navigator (A.D. 30 to 50) and an Apostle, St. Thomas (A.D 52) landed in Kodungallur with an object of trade relations⁷. Following them Jews (A.D.68) also landed here. The Arabs who settled down in Kodungallur established a separate colony of their own in a part of the town. Their religion which had a relatively slow growth, was introduced by Arab traders in the seventh or or eighth century A.D. The earliest religion prevalent here was the Dravidian religion which was not based on any particular religious philosophy. They worshipped innumerable spirits inhabiting rivers, trees and hills. They had local deities guarding the borders of their villagers and demons that caused diseases⁸.

The advent of the Aryan immigrants brought about significant changes. They devoted all their attention to the propaganda against Buddhism and Jainism. Aryans hold on the people was the main stumbling block to the success of their ideology and previous to these religions lost their followers among the people. They resorted to a deliberate policy of destroying Buddhist viharas and images. On the other side, the absorption of the Dravidians within the fold of their religion was effected by the incoming Aryans. It was by a gradual

process of social assimilation and cultural synthesis rather than something achieved by military conquest.

The Alvars and Nayanars yielded themselves fully to the ecstatic raptures that came to their sense through the action of songs and symbols.

The Padigams⁹ of Kazharittarivār tend to assume the strength of the religion in Kodungallur. It was a notable region enclosed with elevated buildings, Vedas chanting mandapas and the famous temple at Tiruvanchikkulam. Śaivites had fervant devotional feeling towards Siva and showed respect towards Vedas. The most highly honoured of all Śaivites is Tirujnānaśambandha. As a Brahmana devotee¹⁰ the poetic faculty was developed in him at the very early in life. His Padigam¹¹ reveals that Ālavay, the birth place of Śankaracharya was the Śiva's abode as well as the Chanting place of Vedas¹². Perhaps this is the reason why the parents (Sivaguru and Aryamba) of Sankaracharya, accepted Śaivism though they belonged to the Brahmana family. The Padigams Kariyanayanar and Murukanar¹³ clearly showed their awareness in vedas, as to the terms used in verse 50¹⁴. Another notable fact¹⁵ is that out of sixtythree saivites, eight belonged to the Brahmana family.

Among the Śaivaites otherwise known as Nayanars, only Virālminda Nayanar and Ceramān Perumal Nayanar belonged to Kerala. Virālminda Nayanar, a native of Chengannur belonged to the sudra family. He gave much importance to the visit to the Śiva temple and held the devotees of śiva as being more worthy of his regard than Śiva

himself¹⁶ Rajaśekhara¹⁷, Kazharittarivar¹⁸ otherwise known as Ceraman Perumal Nayanar was a multi linguist. He assumed sovereignty (when his father renounced the throne and became an ascetic) in order to know the particularities of the Kodungallur. His Ponvannattandadi and Tiruvāruy Tirumumunikovai contained Bhakti sthotras¹⁹.

Both of these Śaivites conveyed deep devotion and their obeisance towards the devotees proved unity and respect among the Bhaktas.

Among the Alvars, Kulaśekhara Alvar had some peculiarities. He developed the habit of hearing Divya granthas through the pandits in his court²⁰. Thus he attracted many devotees and welcomed them from all over India to his court. In the words of Kulaśekhara, god is the Paramathma, the Purushotthama, the inner rules of all embodied being²¹ His Mukundamala²² contains phrases like Satata Sannihatasāra `siruhaksa caranārajovitana vrajakra hrdaya Pundarika and Matimanaramathita Mahabharatha Pārāvāra Parighritanamrtasañcāya found in the preamble bringing out his devotion towards Lord Viṣṇu. Kulasekara Alvar was the only one who alone won the consecrated name of Perumal²³, in recognition of his spiritual preeminence and close kinship with the supreme.

In Kerala, the influence of the religions can be seen as on one side Śaivism was popularised and on the other side great attention was given to the vedic studies. The popularity of Śaivism in Thrissur area is clearly evidenced by the existence of the Vadakkunathan Śiva temple

and by the Bhajana performed by the parents of Śankaracharya to obtain a child.

The minute vision taken towards the people (in the surroundings of the Thrissur Area) exhibited the attitude of the whole people. There are²⁴ literalists, ritualists who were holding on the letter of the scriptures, missing their spirit. There are nihilists and iconoclasts, who were out to destroy all that was sacred and old. Both the learned and laity seemed to have forgotten the basic vedic teaching that the Real is one.

It was in such surroundings that Śankaracharya was born. Śankaracharya turned his attention towards the sacred process. Through the detailed description of the Vaiṣṇava Śaiva gods in his hymns he was successful in creating an accurate vision of the god in the Advaita Siddhantha.

In the hymn to Hari, Śankara²⁵ declares that the substance of religion is the same though its expressions vary. He purified and consolidated Brāhmanism. A notable achievement of Śankara which is of special interest is the foundation of four mutts 1) Vadakke madam, 2) Naduvil madam 3) Thekke madam and 4) Edayil madam²⁶. Thus he made valuable contributions to the cause of Hindu religious revival and made Tiruśivaperur particularly famous as a centre of Vedic and Vedantic studies. Though the earliest name is Tiruśivapērūr²⁷, while looking on a stone to the right of the middle entrance into the first prakara of the Vadakkunāthan temple we can see Tiruchchuppērūr²⁸ which was later changed into Trichur an abbreviated form in English.

According to Keralolpathi²⁹, six eminent Hindu scholars from outside came here for conducting vedantic studies. Meanwhile on seeing the Buddhist debates, they completely defeated them and re established the authority of the vedas. It is believed that Vedic recitals and proficiency tests conducted in the Katavallur temple, are associated with the revival of Brāhmanism under Prabhakara.

Alvars and other devotees set up some groups after a search in order to strengthen the Vaiṣṇava religion. Manigramam, Anchuvannam, Āyiravar and Āyirattanchuttuvar were considered as an important trade groups of that period. Traffic and cultural exchange increased as a result of Ashoka's (Mourya ruler 272- 232B.C) services for the spread of Buddhism³⁰. All of these enabled different peoples to go to Kerala. The Tazakkad inscription issued by Rajasimha, second Cera emperor (11028- 1043) conferring certain benefits and privileges on two christian merchants of Manigramam by name Chathan Vadukkan and Iravichathan³¹. Naduvalis always tried to secure the help and co operation of the merchant guilds. With this objective they conferred on them valuable rights and privileges³². Bhaskara Ravi Varman1st has immortalised himself in the Jewish copper plate grant issued by him in thousand A.D. (175 K.E.) from the capital city of Mahodayapuram conferring on the Jewish chief, Joseph Rabban, the rights of the Anchuvannam and seventy two other proprietary rights³³. The group Āyirattanchuttur played an important part in trade as well as in temples, pools, damaged works and protections³⁴. Members of all countries, Valanchiārs and Manigrāmams were affiliated within this group³⁵. Their all works

resulted to the progress in trade as well as strength in Vaisnava religion. The Ayiravar³⁶ of the name can be seen in Alvars work.

Factually, the judicious method to apprehend with clarity is to be the archaeological facts, which are essential in the temple building. Very careful attention must be given in the stylistic pattern. Though a detailed study is given in the third chapter it could be mentioned here briefly.

Regarding the Pallava pattern of the temples, the vihara type of rathas are square in plan and are surmounted by a pyramidal tower. The shafts being square in section except for the middle third, which is chamfered into an octagon. Lion figures in Adhistana and Pillars, Rectangular Gavaksha are all of the Pallavas type temple. Moreover the composition as a whole is a Ponderous. Wooden beams and brackets were the main Features³⁷. Considering Niche their old form was plain but the Mahendra style showed an advanced form with an artistically Vision³⁸. The Adhistana, Gavaksha, Niche, Pranala, Ridged roof of the Guruvayur temple is considered to be in the Pallava model.

In regard to the Colas Architecture, their earlier Phase consists of the circular grabhagriha and the vimana consists of diminishing tiers. The circular sikhara has projected kudas containing lion faces. Their later form changed into the square garbhagriha and the vimana consists of the vertical base in square shape, the pyramidal portion and domical stupika. The Vimana contains figures of Dakshinamurthi, Bhiksatnamurthi, Varahamurthi, Viṣṇu and Brahma. The Colas

presence of the lion pillars has been taken to show that the sanctity of the site goes back to the Pallava period³⁹.

The circular garbha griha of the Mulikkalam Viṣṇu temple should be equal in dimension to the Griva. The outer row of pillars support the radiating roof timber with the additional help of the annular ambulatory close to the outer wall. Its large though simple namaskara maṅḍapa and Deepa madam and a kuthambalam are on the south east corner of the outer premises⁴⁰. The inner plinth of the dvāra śala which is original carries inscriptions of Bhaskara Ravi. It is datable to the opening decade of the eleventh century A.D. The oldest record noted in the temple is however of 973 A.D the prakara floor⁴¹.

Regarding the Viṣṇu temple of Trikkulaṣekharapuram, it has a unified pyramidal roof. It has also the tala chadya roof rising over the Uttira beam of ground tala wall and exposes the entablatures and hāra scheme. The sopanam is by lateral flight of steps and of a fairly large and taller dimensions. The pranala is set in the kantha of the main shrine is of a simple faceted shaft projection after the pristine mainland models. Datable in its original form to the tenth eleventh century A.D. It has been modified from time to time⁴².

The garbhagriha of the Trikkakkara Viṣṇu temple shows a square chamber capped by a square pyramidal Sikara. It has direct flight of steps with vyala Balustrades. Typical ornate pranala set in the kantha and supported by a gono. This temple has many inscriptions in vatteluthu. It is datable⁴³ from the tenth to the thirteenth century A.D.

Dealing with the Katavallur temple, it has square Vimana. The wooden divinity figures in addition to the cardinal niches show Brahma, Viṣṇu, Dakshinamurthy in the Dyānamudra the former and in Yogāsana with Yogapatta. More over its pranala is set in the kantha level and is of the ornate Kerala fluted type; Borne at the ends of a yaksha carrying a bowl in his right shoulder through which the water is to pass and running down the spinal column of the Yaksha unseen. It is to be discharged out of his loins in a rather unusual pattern. This temple is dated to the eleventh twelfth century A.D. in its essential plan and elevational elements. But its wood work is of the eighteenth century A.D. This is considered as a typical Kerala early medieval typ⁴⁴.

The Śankara Narayana temple at Peruvanam, has a main temple and Madathil Appan temple. The former has circular vimana. It has a unified conical roof and a regular octagonal sikhara unit over the griva the sopanam is direct approach with ornate balustrades. It is a familiar medieval Kerala model of circular lay out. The latter has a square vimana capped by an octagonal śikhara and its sopanam is the original stone flight of stairs. There is no regular pranala and is a unique type comparable with the Madakkoil or Meru Mandara prasada type. It is interesting to note that all these mainland temples are of the Cola or Pandya affiliation. It had a relationship with Kerala in the pre medieval times. Main temple datable to fifteenth century A.D and the Madathil Appan⁴⁵ to about the eleventh century A.D.

The building and form of the Kerala temples are planned proportionate in all its parts. It is entirely different from others. The various kinds of rafters, their length and thickness and those of their

parts were calculated as forming the hypotenuse of the respective rectangular triangle of posts and brackets etc. The proportionate thickness of the hiprafters of the rigid roof over a rectangular building is equal to the diagonal square section of the rafters. These rafters are bolted to the sides of the top beam. A simple and ingenious construction shows the frame work of the roof, planted in the ground without resting on its walls. It means the roof has such a firm support for ever. The interior of the temple is replete with an impeccably spaced Rhythm. The wall however is very low in proportion to the girth of the temple⁴⁶. The total height does not exceed to any extent if at all the height of trees and palms whose verdure is its wider enclosure.

Thus the above mentioned evidences enable us to know the strength of the Vaiṣṇava religion in Thrissur. As years passed on, the Buddhists and Jains encouraged the men to accept their principles. Though their activities attracted many, tremendous action was taken by the distinctive devotees against them. Aryans resorted to a deliberate policy of destroying Buddhists and Jains viharas. Saivites otherwise known as Nayanars gave much importance to visiting śiva temples and conveyed deep devotion among the Bhaktas. Vaiṣṇavites otherwise known as the Alvars, were motivated with the desire to establish or stress that the local god is no other than the universal, transcendental Viṣṇu. Śankaracharya, who rediscovered the spirit of unity and Wholeness, revealed it to an age of tumult and discord, sought to close the rifts and restore the parts to their proper place in the whole. By recognising the main themes of the Śankaracharya and the earlier devotees works, the devotees of this

region formed their own actions in spreading the bhakti cult which created a great change. As a result, temple building arose in most of the proper places. On the basis of the reliable sources, we can easily consider the existence of the earlier temples as in the ninth century.

The notable thing of this region is that the Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites though belonged to separate sections in the religion, in Thrissur both of them showed each other respect and unity. It led to the strengthening of the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava gods and goddesses in the temple. Thus we can see almost all of the temples contain Ayyanar and Ganapati shrines in the southern corner. Though this region has many temples, only few are well known to this period. It was so as to say that prime importance of the temple lies in its proper place and in the perpetual observances of the workers. On becoming famous, these tended to attract increasing number of devotees.

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CHAPTER III

GURUVAYUR TEMPLE: ORIGIN AND GROWTH

(A survey of details regarding Archaeology, Sculpture, Iconography and Painting)

The temples in Kerala are divided into four on the basis of the relationship with Griha, Grama, Deśa and Rajya. The temples which were established by each family for their family god near their house is known as Griha kshetra. These temples can be seen in the house of the Brahmanas or Kshetriyas. The second and third types were built by Gramas or Deśas, for worship by the people. The temples which could be included into any one of the three categories in the same period are known as Rajya Kshetras. Besides, almost all the Rajyas make use of this Kshetra for the godly karmas. While looking at the Guruvāyūr temple¹ we can see that in the earlier stages it was known as GramaKshetra. As years passed on, a number of changes took place. Thus Guruvāyūr temple turned into Rajya Kshetra. It lies in 10 degree 35 north Latitude and 76 degree 00 East Longitude². It has an area of 6.87 square kilometre.

While considering the legends, there are many linked with this temple. The most popular is that the main deity was installed at Guruvāyūr by Guru, the preceptor of the gods and Vayu, the Lord of the winds. There are stories associated with the reading of the Bhagavatha, the image with Sutapas and Priṣṇi, Kasyapa and Aditi, Vasudeva and Devaki, and finally by Kṛṣṇa himself. On the eve of his swargarohana, Kṛṣṇa directed his disciple Uddhava to entrust the idol to

Devaguru -Brhaspathi to be installed at a suitable place. Accordingly Guru, with the help of vayu after a long search chose this particular place and installed the idol in the presence of Paraśurama and with the blessings of Siva. As both Guru and Vāyu were instrumental in installing the idol, the place came to be called as Guruvāyūpuram This legend has been incorporated with the legend of the Bhāgavathapurāna. However, the Guruvāyūpura Māhātmya³ has it that king Janamejaya, a descendant of Parikshit of Mahabharatha fame having performed a sarpayajna was inflicted with eighteen kinds of leprosy and when he was cured after doing Bhajan at Guruvāyūr, the king in gratitude caused the temple to be built. There is also a tradition associating the construction of the temple with a Pandya king.⁴

The legends are to some extent, valuable in fixing the time or period of the temple. But here both the above legends do not help us to fix the period of this temple. The alleged construction of the temple by a Pandya king does not stand as the style of architecture of this temple is purely of the Pallava model. Later Kerala styles were added to the construction.

Historical Evidences : Literary, Inscriptions and Palm Leaf

The most copious and authentic source for the religious history includes inscriptions, palm leaf and temple records. Among the Kerala temple inscriptions, we can see a few connected with the Guruvāyūr temple. It is due to the act that the Zamorins, the patrons of the temple had to their credit only a few stone inscriptions on copper plates. The

temple records are written in koleluthu script. A few are in Devanagari and Malayalam characters. Most of the old records have been destroyed by white ants. It may be noted that in olden times there existed a practice in the temple of rewriting the old and spoiled palm leaves on Navaratri day. The Kavyas are also useful to us for they contain the earliest literary references. The Calicut Granthavari, the official chronicle of the Zamorins and the Miscellaneous works which include some acts also allude to Guruvāyūr temple.

The earliest recorded reference to Guruvāyūr is to be found in a Tamil invocation in which the Lord is addressed as 'Kuruvayur Ampumumpar Perumale' (O, Lord of the celestials) residing at Guruvāyūr⁵. KokasanDesa⁶ is the foremost among other Kavyas dealing with Guruvāyūr. As for its authorship and date of composition, scholars are of opinion that its author, a native of south Malabar was a contemporary of Manaveda and that he composed the work around fourteenth century(1400 A.D)⁷. The Kavyas, while providing descriptive account of almost all the places between Vellottukara(Tripurancod near Tirunavaya) and Edappally describe Guruvāyūr and its temple in slokas 35 and 36⁸. Guruvāyupura Mahatmya is another grantha for getting some information about Guruvāyūr temple. In the seventeenth century (1678A.D),the Lord of Guruvāyūr is referred to in the temple records maintained in the koleluthu script as Kuruveyūr Tēvar.

The temple Mahatmyas⁹ of unknown authorship written in Sanskrit are considered as the most important sources. The Mahatmyas, give legendary accounts of the origin of the Kerala

temples. The Keralachara consists of sixty eight chapters. One chapter deals with the Guruvāyūr temple¹⁰. It provides an account of the temple, its festivals and incidentally the story of Uriamadham.

Madhava Panickar's (a Niranam poet) translation of the Githa¹¹ would seem to be the earliest in Malayalam language. Sankara Panickar's Bharatamala¹² is more a condensed version in Malayalam. It seems to be the major work based on the theme of the Mahabharatha. Rama Panicker's Bhagavatham¹³ was written on the basis of the Mahabharatha. This work ended, by describing Kṛṣṇā's greatness. The Age of the champus was the golden age of Manipravala and it constitutes an immense body of literature. The composers of the champus drew their material from Puranas and Ithihasas¹⁴. Raja Manaveda produced two works – the early Bharatha champu and the later Kṛṣṇageeti. In the first work, the author mentions Guruvāyūr appa in the seventh sloka¹⁵. The greatness of Mahavisnu is referred to in the tenth sthampaka of the early Bharath champu's Nayakamani¹⁶. Girvānesthrasaraswathi's Prapanchasārasam is a book that deals with kṛṣṇa¹⁷. The Greatness of viṣṇu is given in Mānamōdayathilepārichedam and Nayanidar'san. The Author of the First work is Narayanapandit and the latter's author¹⁸ is unknown.

We also find a rich output of literature dealing with devotional themes from the Puranas. The gathas and the later champus come under this category. Cherusseri's Kṛṣṇagatha¹⁹ was the most important gatha. Its theme is the story of Kṛṣṇa from his birth to ascension and it contains many beautiful passages noted for their felicity of expression. An important kavya which presents Kṛṣṇa is Narayaneeyam.

Narayanabhatta's Narayaneeyam shows a clear link between him and lord of Guruvāyūr. It is in the form of an address to god Viṣṇu²⁰. The story of Kṛṣṇa is described in his Dhātukavya²¹ and the story of the fish incarnation of Viṣṇu is described in his Matsyāvatara²². Here the author describes the fish as described in Bhagavatha (VII.25). His 'Sourikatha'²³ depicts in six cantos the life of Kṛṣṇa, based on the tenth skanda of Bhagavatha.

Another great Malayalam poet who belonged to the school of Bhakti was Punthanam Namputiri, a great devotee of lord Kṛṣṇa of Guruvāyūr. He composed Srikrṣṇakarnāmritam²⁴, sthotra which describes Kṛṣṇa in his various moods. His Jnānappāna²⁵ is vedantha explained in such simple language that the average reader can comprehend the intricacies of its philosophy. Ramapurathu Variyer's Bhāshashtapadi²⁶ is a translation of Gitagovindam. Deva Rajabhattan's Guruvāyupurē- -shastuti²⁷ is written in the form of an address to SriKṛṣṇa. Even though the ten avatars of Viṣṇu are described in Deshāvatharadhanddaka²⁸, prime importance is given to Kṛṣṇa avatara, Kṛṣṇa's Greatness and Rāsakeli is referred here in detail. Though some scholars ascribed its authorship to Swatithirunal, Ulloor²⁹ does not agree with this view.

The term Guruvāyūr is taken by many scholars³⁰ for its meanings as suggested here. The place might have received its name from Kuruva, the paddy that was grown there or from Kuruvis or Sparrows that infested the place. The example of the nearby Chāvakkād (Chowghat) which obtained its name from chāval birds meaning thereby the village of birds is cited in support of this

contension³¹. 'Silappadhikaram'³², the post Sangam classic describes 'Kuruvai kūthu' a form of dance. It was suggested that the place derived its name from this dance. The place where the dance originated came to be called as Kuruvayūr. Another version regarding the term is based on its geographical condition. It is situated near the sea. It seems to be more probable that Kuruvayūr came to be called after Kuruvai which in early Drāvida means the sea. The word Kuruvayūr is a combination of three words - kuru, vai and ur. Here kuru means small, little or short. The other two meanings are kurikkal or Guru and a class of Nayars or otherwise known known as Yogi³³. Vai means the junction of a river with the sea Vay is wind or the speedy horse or the god of winds ; other wise a vital air³⁴. Ur means a village. Moreover, there is no logical basis for considering Guruvāyūr as the original place name. In Kerala, all the original place names have a bearing on the Malanāttu Tamil that was spoken in ancient days. The change from Kuruvayūr to Guruvāyūr is the one that is usually made along with Sanskritisation of place names. Its credit goes to the master mind of Melppattur. He transformed the simple Kuruvayūr into the magnificent Guruvāyūr by softening 'K' into 'G' and lengthening³⁵ 'a'.

The Bhakti cult found supreme expression in Tunchat Ezhuthachan. The meanings of Hari and Narayana, a prayer for getting the mercy of god and the stories of Ramayana and Bhagavatha are available in his Harināma Keerthanam³⁶. Sri Mahābhagavatham³⁷ includes the story of Bhagavatham. The records which relate mainly to the land revenue shows that every year some three hundred to five

hundred potis of paddy were taken to Guruvāyūr from Palakkad, at the astoundingly low transportation cost of one Fanam or twenty eight (paise) per poti as head load. In eighteenth century (1757) the Zamorin became the supervising trustee³⁸. The temple records only a few offences against the lord and the offenders were not too strong for the Purakoyma to invoke the aid of the Melkoyma to punish them. These records are helpful for a study of the socio- economic role of the temple.

There are some inscriptions connected with the period of construction of the temple. The door post of the western gopuram has a writing in the eighteenth century (1747 A.D) on a granite piece which records that the gopura was erected by Ittirarissa Menon. Another inscription below the Deepasthamba records that it was erected by a native of Travancore (in 1836). An inscription on the foot on the walls recites that the temple was built by the Lord of the sea and Hills and had been trodden by the feet of many kings. The writing is comparatively in modern Malayalam characters and the man as the Lord of seas and Hills was recognised as Zamorin itself. It commemorates the Zamorin's construction of the gopuram (in 1842) which is mentioned in kalivakya³⁹ 1011. Its sanskrit verses say that the temple within is Heaven and the gateway and the staircases were built by the Zamorin who was the Lord of the Hills and the seas (sailavravnidhisa) and had been trodden by the feet of many a king⁴⁰. Fragments of two other inscriptions are seen one in a broken slab granite now used as a door step in the house of Mallisseri Nambuthiri and the

other on the left side in front of the sanctum sanctorum of the Chovallur temple.

While considering the nineteenth century sources, the Calicut Granthavari, the official chronicle of the Zamorins, is valuable, as it throws light on the relation of Mysorean rulers with the temple. The Mathrubhumi, the Hindu and Journals like the Harijan and the Unninamputhiri are the important sources for a study of important events connected with the temple. Among these, the Mathrubhumi news paper deserves special consideration. The Mathrubhumi weekly also provides much data for us. Besides these, there are some Miscellaneous works.

I- Legislative enactments like the Guruvāyūr town ship Act (1961), Guruvāyūr Devaswom Act(1971), Guruvāyūr Devaswom Amendment Act (1972). To this category may also be included the various ordinances and proclamations of the government of Kerala.

II- Judicial verdicts like the Madras High Court Judgement (1931) and the Kerala High Court Judgement (1977). They deal with the original petitions filed and the counter affidavits presented to the court of law.

III- Reports like those of the High level committee and temple entry committee. These reports, Acts and judgements are helpful for a study of the changes effected in temple administration.

IV- Malayalam works translated from Sanskrit like Tantrasamuccaya, Narayaneeyam and the original Malayalam work Kuzhikkattu Paccha (Mal) are helpful as they throw side lights on the

author and the temple. The puranas provide legendary accounts of the origin of the temple. The semi historical novels like Balikkallu (Mal) are helpful for a study of the socio economic role of the temple. The poetical works of 'Pond Sree' help us to assess their impact on literature and arts.

By formulating the whole body of the literary Compositions and epigraphical studies, a clear view of the Visnu cult will be available. All are moulded in the avatara stories which increase bhakti. But that system of worship does not stand firm for ever. So that the actual scenes from the daily life of human beings are featured in architectural and sculptural terms. But it was fully developed through iconography and painting. All these help us to assume the period and growth of the temple.

3-2 Architecture :

While considering the temples of south India, we know that a majority of them belong to the Dravida style even though some are found as Nagara style in Kerala. It is by the study of the characteristics of a particular Kerala temple that a scientific study of the regional architecture of Kerala and its evolution can be attempted. Regarding the architecture, Kerala has suffered from neglect in the hands of scholars. It has been restricted to a study of south India only. A study of the architecture of the Guruvāyūr temple is interesting for it throws light on some of the distinctive architectural features.

Though some scholars like James Fergusson⁴¹, K.K.Pillai⁴², Percy Brown⁴³, Manorama Chauhari⁴⁴, E.B.Havell⁴⁵, K.V.Soundararajan⁴⁶ and H.Sarkar⁴⁷, give a detailed account of South Indian temples. But they did not mention about Guruvayur temple Architecture. Only Stella Kramstich⁴⁸ gives a brief account of this temple.

The Architect's work is primarily aimed at planning of temples for glorifying the religious sentiments of the people. The site plan of this temple was prepared from a central point and then expanded into the five enclosures - Antarmandala, Antahāra, Madyahāra, Bāhyahāra, Maryāda. On architectural expression, Climatic factors play a very important role. The climatic divisions of macro and micro- -climate, of which the latter denotes the meteorological conditions like radiation, air currents at the ground level, temperature, humidity and precipitation peculiar only to a limited area⁴⁹. Climatically this region is sub continental monsoonic and the rainfall is mostly from South West monsoons. The distribution of rainfall is mainly governed by the physical features of the region. It secures the advantage of healthy and wholesome breezes. The air is highly humid⁵⁰ throughout the year, the relative humidity being generally over seventy percent. The Rivers, Pools, Streams, Sea and the Forests create passages of air currents.

To deal with the Temperature, we must Know that the Thrissur region is nearer to the latitude. So that it would be necessary to intercept most of the solar radiation. It is by determining the sun's

positions and amount of light coming into the temple that the Gavaksha or Louvres fitted in the top of the sanctum.

The architectural structures differ in various countries to suit not only the climatic conditions but also their economic conditions - soil, aspiration of the people, material, moral and spiritual progress. The material for the construction could be found in a nearby region known as Kunnamkulam. The workers who were from the neighboring areas were simple folks as it was a paddy cultivating area. There were no reports about social tensions among them. It was not difficult for them to work punctually.

The people⁵¹ who undertook the construction of the temples noted the topographical features of the region. Altars of stone and wood could be decided only after availability is ascertained. Stone altars could be cut from the heap of stones. The shape of the temple is derived from the shape of the sacrificial stone (Balikallu). After the cutting of this stone in the shape of a square, the plan of the temple could be drawn. A Gnomon of 15 c.m. in width and 72 c.m. in length is erected from the centre of a watered place (salila stala) and a circle is marked with the bottom of the Gnomon. It is only on this basis that its intersecting parts formed and thereby all important parts of the temple formulated. This is important for the architecture from the rules. Here it⁵² is said that the building should preferably face to the east.

The construction of the Building is begun under the favorable conditions. The experts cited above are consulted when the ground is taken possession of and when the rite of Deposition the Germ of the

temple is performed. The regents of the planets have their allocation in the diagram of the temple and its images are carved on its walls. By them are regulated the measurement of the whole building and its parts and the age of the temple⁵³.

The Sanctum Sanctorum is the holiest part of the temple site. The adhistana of the Guruvayur temple has a lion figure at the bottom in the standing pose. The front part of the praṇālā's hole should come after the simhamukha and the nala proper should be after the elephant trunk (gajostha). It rests on bhutha in the act of uplifting the nala. The central portion of the tube is decorated by circular belts of rings and knots in each centre of it⁵⁴. The sanctuary is filled with earth and above, long pieces of granite should be fixed.

Vāstuvidya is mentioned as one of the arts practised by the Brāhmanas during the time of the Buddha⁵⁵. Vāstumandala plan of the Gurvāyūr temple is known as Pīthapada. The central square is occupied by Prthivi and the idol of Viṣṇu is stabilized in the west. There are three rooms inside, the innermost being the Garbhagriha where the deity is installed. The rooms around the cella is rectangular.

Sopanam of the Sanctum is situated in the latitudinal way of three steps on either side. Its varanda is supported by the Bhutha. Each sopana has a chandra-śīla⁵⁶ The visible adhistana consists of a vertical Jagati, octagonal Kumuda and recessed Kantha, with two kampa mouldings, one above the other, and a projecting pattika – moulding on top. The Kantha mouldings have reliefs at places below the pilasters

that adorn the walls above. From this adhistana, at a distance of 102 cm. towards the inner side, an esoteric adhistana is built with a height of 180 cm. having an area of 63600 cm². The granite perpendicular wall of this square portion rises to its ridged single roof. It runs breadth wise and projects beyond the hipped end. In the making of the dvitala, the ascended wall raised, with the exception of three dhand, the remaining part divided into four sections. Each has an equal proportion of ten. In it, the first part includes the Alinganapadi, Valanam and then the steps of the Valanam. The second part mentions the wall which includes Sala, Kudam, Gavaksha. The third touches the Uttiram, Bhuthamala and Galamala. Then the latter includes the front step of the Kapotam. Leaving a free space, its second storey covered with a griha clot (pindam) and the lintel in the three dhand of height fitted in direct way. Among the salas can be seen the nostrils. These two roofs were covered with golden sheet in recent years for the protection of the sanctum sanctorum. The stupika has four parts - Padma, Kumbha, Nala and Kudmala. The presence of this element is emphasized in accordance with the laws of punctuation and inflection. All these contribute to the height and majesty of the structures.

The size of the temple depends upon the size of the image. The size of the main idol is 120 yavam(45 c.m.) which is comparatively smaller than the idols of the other temples.

To overcome the difficult task of keeping the roof intact buttresses were added to the structure. From the central part of the dark Garbha griha, it shows forth in the architectural theme and in the images on the walls of the temple. It leads from the bottom of the temple to its

crown. On the perpendicular walls of the temple, within the buttresses in their niches and the massive doors which made manifest on the outside of the temple. With this exteriorization, the Prasada wall itself, as it were, keeps pace. Guruvāyūr temple has three niches which marked the place of the god's appearance. At these stages of their statue, an offering table of mud - brick was constructed a little in front of the niche. The thin walls were strengthened with buttresses, and although these were purely practical in origin, they were soon used to add some variety to the exterior.

The adhistana of this temple was fenced with an iron railing with two aims - without affecting the beautiful paintings and to look upwards with the divine view.

In the art of building construction, the pillar seems to be older than the dwelling itself. These pillars on the ^{Mukha} ~~Namaskara~~ Mandapa which supported the upper storey generally comprise polygonal shafts with a base and a capital are of four portions as one stepped with bigger square section and the upper small square sections. They are always the most original and frequently the most elegant projections of Indian art. This mandapam is situated at a distance of 137 c.m. from the sanctum. On the northern side of this structure, the temple yardstick of 72 c.m. Which is used for the construction of the temple, is marked. This procedure of marking the measurement at a prominent place is followed in the Kerala temple construction. From this mandapa with a distance of 153 c.m. a platform of 2465 square cm. platform can be seen towards the south

east. This rare area is built to be attached with the Nalambalam whereas in other temples it is built separately in the same direction.

The Vatilmadam covers the entire eastern side. On the southern side there is the temple kitchen (Madappally) where naivedyams for the deity are prepared. It projects 18c.m from its building and from the above rare area. To the western side of the kitchen is a dark cell closed on all sides. Nobody knows what it contains; hence it is called the "Mystery Cell". It is believed that the chamber contains precious jewels and ornaments. The entrance is closed by stone slabs and the treasure inside is supposed to be guarded by serpents- Panchanagas⁵⁷. No one has ever dared to enter the cell, one or two attempts made in the past having proved futile. Next to the "Mystery Cell" is Saraswati ara (room). It is here that Saraswati puja and worship of the books is conducted during the Navaratri festival. The Mystery Cell of the Guruvāyūr Temple is closed for ever in 1892⁵⁸. Moreover it was also in this year that the repair works of the Kuthambalam, Vilakkumatam and Vathilmadams were taken up.

Beyond this, 154 c.m. on the south and 156 c.m. on the west is a small shrine dedicated to Vighneswara or Vinayaka. On the west, at a distance of 206c.m. from the Vatilmadam, an Anandasayanam sculpture is stabilised. The passage on the northern side is used by pilgrims for entrance and exit like the main entrance on the east. To the eastern side of this passage is a room called "Nrittam " - It is so called because it is believed that Villwamangalam Swamiyar, a great devotee of the Lord, used this room for Meditation. It is believed⁵⁹

that the Lord often gave him darshan in person after the last ritual for the day.

The next feature of this temple is the Vilakkumatam. It has 6684 lamps and are fitted in the copper frame in place of the wooden frame after the disastrous fire. At the time of its full burning it is like a square shaped. To the north - eastern side of the sreekovil is the temple well which is situated at a distance of 140 c.m. from the ^{Mukha}Namaskara mandapam. Its water is crystal clear at all seasons and is reputed to possess digestive and curative properties. The gap between the vatilmadam and valiyambalam is on the east and west as of 206 c.m. and on the north and south as of 200 c.m.

Coming out of the inner portion of the Temple, it is from the Dwajasthambha where the paved processional path around the temple has been made. It has a height of 3300 c.m. and is gilded with gold. On either side of the Dwajasthamba are the stately Deepastambhas⁶⁰. It is through the Balikkalpura that one enters into the inner precincts and to the Passage lying in the raised platforms between the two Vātilmatams. There are twelve pillars of which eight are on octagonal shape and the remaining four at the end of each row are of the Kerala style. Octagonal pillars with the exception of the ones attached to the ^{Namaskara}Mukhamandapam are beautifully carved. They exhibit the scenes of the Balakṛṣṇa directed towards the left and have no bend. The left leg is impressed upon the Kaliya while the right is in the raising pose. The head of the Kaliya bends downwards. In spite of this, the four pillars on each end of the part are extremely unique and they display Kerala style in bulbuous type. With a large cubical capital they are raised by well

proportioned forms of three cubical parts and two prismatic parts with facets, whereas the pillars within the Nalambalam contain the pleased view of the BalaKṛṣṇa in which He directed the flute towards the right side. The colonnaded pillars of all are supported by very strong concentric squares and a circular arcade joined by cusped octagonal squares and rectangular squares.

The Sreekovil⁶¹ was repaired in the year 1638 and its and the mandapa's roof were covered with copper sheets in 1855⁶². It was in the same year that Bell metal was installed permanently and was covered with tiles. It was in the year 1892⁶³ that the Kuthambalam, Valiyambalam and the Anakkottil were built in this temple, where as it was only in 1972 that the roof of the Sreekovil, Kuthambalam and the Ayyappa shrine were covered with gold.

The entire area between the eastern gopuram and the western side of Nalambalam is covered with a tiled roof called Aana pandal (pandal for elephants) or Nadappura. This is a magnificent shed sheltering pilgrims waiting for worship. It is here that the annaprasnam and thulabharam are held. To the south of the gopuram there is a big bell to chime the hours. The outer circumambulation is 216 c.m. wide in the granite floors.

Guruvāyūr Kūthambalam is situated on an equipoised place of the Temple's circumference and Pradhakshinas. It has a distance of 120 c.m. from the circumbulation, 242 c.m. from the south of the prakara and 100 c.m. from the eastern prakara. Though it faces the western direction, it has a northern way also with the same sopanam. Its roof

is made in a peculiar way . Upper side covers with long copper pieces ; below, long wood planks are put in a straight line and then three pieces of wood fitted in their proper place. Kudus, an octagonal shape gave an exact support for its stand. Out of its five rafters, the only one long rafter is fitted in the middle of the building. This can be seen only on this building and that is its peculiarity. Altogether there are twenty four pillars which are built of half stone below and above with wood in a plain manner with a rounded shape. Kūthambalam with a sign of certain facts is also noted here. Kūthambalam is divided for making a stage; a square is marked and there is an upapidam on the centre of this building. The stage's basement was 90 c.m. The width of this building is 1360 c.m. and the length is 1056 c.m.

To the north - western side of the Kuthambalam is the little Sasta shrine. It is situated 195 c.m. from the Vatilmatam. The courtyard is encircled on the southern, western and northern sides by buildings used for different purposes. The southern and western sides are used mainly as pattayapura or granary. The upper story of the building in the north - west corner is the quarters of the MelSanti, who is not expected to leave the premises of the temple during his entire service . The section, south of the western gopuram is used as a store house while the temple kitchen is to the north. This is used during big feasts. The northern side of the building - Agrasala is also utilised for daily Namajapam, Bhagavatha discourses. A portion of this is also used as the green room for Kṛṣṇanattam, the stage for which is in the portico in front of the

northern gateway of the Nalambalam . The passage through the northern wall of the temple leads to the tank as also to the Devi shrine on the north eastern corner.

The sanctity of the temple tank is always maintained. It is where the processional deity is bathed on the last day of the annual Utsavam. It is believed that in ancient times the tank extended upto Mammiyūr and was also famous for its lotuses.

The temple at Guruvāyūr is comparatively small in dimensions, though it has two imposing gopurams - one on the east and the other on the west. The temple faces east and the entrance is through eastern gopuram.

All the above mentioned facts about the temple reveal that the architectural and functional treatment of the structure as a whole is reasoned and logical. Selective site has to be taken and under the pressure of time, constructional activities have to be worked out. The highly founded material of this temple is the granite as it can be found abundantly in the vicinity. The successive phases of this temple have been recovered which show development from a primitive to an advanced stage of architectural design. In the course of subsequent re buildings the temple was enlarged and improved in the measurements of Sankaran Nambuthirippad . The logical coherence and vigor of the temple plan are combined with an incredible profusion of sculpture and ornamentation on the pillars, walls and roofs. Its gavaksha is compared to the Linga Raja temple⁶⁴ at Bhubaneswar, Orissa. It was in the design of the uprights that the most

delicate forms were introduced. While considering its roof, it is entirely different from Kerala Style. Then following its niches and adhistana it exhibits the Pallava model. The Unfinished cave temple's adhistana is like⁶⁵ that of the Guruvāyūr temple. The temple is situated in Narasapalaiyam village, Cheyyar Thaluk, North Arcot district. The original plan of the Guruvāyūr temple seems to have been bolder and more ambitious. As could be seen it was safe even in fire.

It is important that some of the stages in the evolution of Kerala architecture demand further consideration in the light of new facts. This circumstance points to the need for an intensive study of the architecture of all prominent Kerala temples.

3-3 Sculpture:

The sculpture is formed with symbolic manifestations and subjective symbolizations. The Sculptor's attitude of making the form of representation of the movement and their view on the scene of all the living creatures led them to make a bold and lovely task. Through it they advanced rapidly towards classical skill, ability and perfection. These attitudes stand for emotional edification and cultural integration. All these activities enabled them to create the figures with a divine view. Thus was created the temple Sculptures. Sculpture in the South Indian⁶⁶ temple dates from the Pallava period.

The place allotted to the erotic motifs on the temples is in accordance with the architectural canons of the region. Erotic motifs often included sexual intercourse - breast drinking lustily, embracing and the like of the daily lives' surroundings. The idea behind it seems

to be that sex, which generates life, canon the principle of imitative magic, rejuvenates natural forces. It is conceived of, as a creative force which has power to revivify things. It is used for fertility purposes⁶⁷. Fertility in a broader sense includes both its primary purposes of multiplication and revitalization of animals, vegetation, earth and human beings. The happenings of the ordinary life of all - birth and death, virtue and evil, fortune and misfortune, happiness and sorrow - which lasts for ever and ever. While we are getting into the temple, the sculptural scenes at the top of the Vilakkumatam remembers us about the importance of the surroundings of the temple -- the abode of the god which never ends. The sculptures, executed in hard stone, are large vigorous and full of warmth of life. The erotic themes are later day encrustations on the mystic symbolism of Hindu religion which in its more popular manifestations had absorbed a good deal of Tāntrism, a cult which attributes mystic significance to sex.

The images of Brahma, Dakshinamūrthi, Narasimha and Viṣṇu made of granite and fitted in the wooden frame overlooking the East, South, West and North in addition to the hara level of the sanctum. Sitting in the padmāsana, the image of Brahma is sculptured with four arms. He carries a Padma in the front right hand and holds an Akshamala in the vitarka pose of the upper right hand. His upper left hand carries a Kamandalu and the lower left hand holds a Grantha. One, of the right hand of Śiva held in the abhaya pose and a corresponding left one in the varada pose. 'Kuthāra' is held in the upper right and a standing deer is posed in the vitarka pose of the

upper left. He is sitting in the virasana pose. It is fixed in the southern centre. In the western centre is fixed the slender waisted Narasimha image which could be seen holding the western top of the sanctum with his hands. This is indeed an admirable piece of sculpture of Narasimha. The image of Viṣṇu can be seen in the Northern side as in a padmasana pose. He has to carry the usual symbols sankha and chakra in the upper right hand and left hand. But as different from the standing pose gada and lotus were sculptured as in lying and carrying pose in the lower left hand and right hand. In all these images facial features are most elegant. The general expression of the idols were one of calm and limitless grace. A notable thing is that the legs of Brahma, Śiva, Viṣṇu are all in the same view - left legs folded and resting on a seat, right legs downwards.

In the Anandasayanam sculpture, Viṣṇu is constructed as a full sized figure. It is made to recline almost horizontally on the serpent Adishesha, with the head directed to the observer. The five hoods of seshha are raised up as a canopy over the head with high intellectual forehead, large meditative eyes indicating the mystic sleep, long nose, all of which give an air of spirituality to the countenance. Issuing from the navel of viṣṇu, is seated Brahma, on His usual Padmasana, the lotus seat. The figure of Viṣṇu has only two hands. The right one is stretched straight towards another figure and the left one rests on the thigh of one of His consorts Lakshmi. Lakshmi is seated near His head. Both the legs rest on the lap of Bhoomidevi - the Goddess of the earth. The general expression of the deity is one of calm and limitless grace. The two consorts of Viṣṇu - the Lakshmi and Bhoomidevi are

constructed with the grace of an elderly matron in harmony with the spiritual significance of the subject. This sculpture shows a lack in expression, that means a dull looking figure

The well built Bhuthas are strongly held below getting down to the step of the sanctum varanda and as a support to the pranala. While considering the exterior roof of the sanctum the pairs - animals and birds are depicted above the Bhuthamala. These figures represented schematically as the "Tree of life". This tree of life and the pillar symbol are the aniconic⁶⁸ representation of God.

Ganes'a made his first entry in the Brahmanical pantheon - a period when Tantrism was exerting its influence over almost all the regions of India, and reversed the trend of progressive thought⁶⁹.

Ganesa and Ayyappa made with granite are in Panca Dasa Tala. They are considered as the minor deities, whereas Garuda is measured as Adhama Dasa Tala. It is in hundred and sixteen dehangulas⁷⁰. Agnes is stabilised within the Nalambalam in the south western direction

The sitting image of the Ganapathi should have its left leg folded and resting on a sect. The right leg has to be crossed so as to rest on the left thigh. The trunk of this god is turned towards the left. Among the four hands, the upper right one holds the ankusa and the left a pasa. The lower left holds Kadga and upper left modaka.

The image of Sastha is seen in the south of the Nalambalam. Sastha is seated on a pedestal with his leg hanging down and the left one holded and resting upon the seat horizontally. On the knee of the left, the elbow of his outstretched left arm rests. Ornaments shine on his chest, hands and legs. His head dress is peculiar; it is shaped fan - wise like the petals of a dhurdhura flower.

The Guruvāyūr school of sculpture was at its zenith during the medieval period. In sculpture, Garuda is conventionally represented as standing and the face has a cheerful expression apparently facing the god inside the temple and looking at him in adoration⁷¹. But Garuda is installed here in the standing pose under the peepul tree situated in the eastern side with spread wings and a beakshaped nose. With a cheerful expression, it was fitted there in the form of welcoming the devotees. The strength of its grasp, with its fingers, was so strong that it could not spoil easily

The Sun and Earth are however, often also represented as universal parents. It is obviously because they accommodated all that is visible. Moreover the former fertilizes the earth by moisture and light and the latter produces vegetation on her wide expanse, both of them nourishing the living beings, the sky with rain and the earth with herbage. It is with this aim that the Elephant and Snake are fitted in the wall and the latter on the corners of the sanctum sikhram and on the Kūthambalam roof. The Elephant symbolize the life giving force of water⁷². The symbol of the snake signifies the personification of agriculture as a symbol of water or in other

words, fertility of soil had occasionally to take an antagonistic role to exert its influence⁷³.

The female counter part of the god Viṣṇu represents the goddess worship associated with the cult of Vaiṣṇavism. All the glory and prosperity is associated with Lakshmi. A beautiful sculpture of this goddess can be seen in the northern side of the temple. This image has a fully blossomed lotus in both the upper right hand and left hand. The lower right hand and left hand have an abhaya pose.

As a fitting memorial to Kesavan, a twelve feet high concrete statue of the elephant has been erected by the Devaswom Board in front of the Pāñchajanyam Rest House. It is a living testimonial to the great affection with which he was held by devotees during his time. The Rupees - one lakh statue was sculptured by noted artist M.R.D.Dathan

In the temple's northern side can be Seen twenty figures - Balarama, Villwamangalam, Pūnthanam, Manaveda Raja, Brahma, MahaViṣṇu, Śiva, Kuchela, Narada, MahaLakshmi, Saraswathi, Kururamma, Subramanya, Vyāsa, SriBhagavathothaman, two Dwārapālakas, Melppattur, AdiŚankara, SriKṛṣṇa. All are erected on the pillars at equal distance and looking face to face.

The image of Balarama, with a gada in a throwing posture in the right hand and a plough in the left hand can be seen first. To the right of him, Villwamagalalam stands holding a musala in the right hand and a dhanda in the left hand. An oval shaped eagle's joined wings are also sculptured in a free style above his head. Next is Pūnthanam carrying an olakkuda in the left hand and a long stick in the right

hand bending with old age. With a pleasant and divine view stands Manaveda in an anjali^hastha. A cloth is placed in his forearm. Nearby is Brahma upholding padma in lower right hand. His left hand is placed in the Kātyāvalambhitha pose. He carries an akshamala in the upper right hand and a kamandalu in the left hand. As different from the usual emblems, Viṣṇu carries knob of the lotus in the lower right hand and the left hand is impressed on the gada. In the upper right hand, he holds a chakra and in the upper left hand holds a sankh (modern period). The image of Kuchela is closely related to a lanky man. Bending with old age, he is portrayed as carrying a long stick in the right hand and an olakkuda over the left shoulder held with the left hand. Different from all these figures, stands Narada with a veena held by a string across the shoulders. He holds a cymbal (Chapplamkatta) in his left hand. With a pleasant state of mind, the beautiful image of MahaLakshmi in the above mentioned sculpture could also be seen there.

The Second section of the row shows a beautiful figure of Saraswathi, with a book in the upper left and a garland in the right hand. While lower right hand is furnished with the string the left hand in the lyre holds it as if she is merged in the music. Kururamma, the adjacent image uphold an olakkuda within left hand in anjali^hastha pose. This lady devotee shows a divine impulse internally. Different from all these, Subramanya carries śūla in right hand and left hand is placed in the Katyāvalambhitha pose. Vyāsamuni is represented in the 'dhyāna' attitude with

Mahabharatha grantha in his hands. Vazakkunnam otherwise known as Bhagavathothaman placed a grantha in front of him in the left side and holds a stylus in the right hand. With a strong body and rounded hands, Dwarapalakas were sculptured in the northern side of the temple in the same row. The first one placed his right leg on the snake surrounded Gada in the left side. The lower left knee rested on the gada whereas the right hand is in the kataka pose. He holds a trisūl in upper right hand and a shield in the upper left hand. The second one placed the left leg on the snake surrounded gada of the right side. He placed his lower left hand in this gada and the lower right hand is in the pose of holding something. Whereas he holds a shield in the upper left hand and a trisūl near to his shoulder in right hand. Melppattur, another devotee holds a grantha in the left hand and a stylus in the right hand. Śankaracharya, the scholar with a kataka pose holds a danda in right hand and a grantha in left hand. The image of Srikrṣṇa is sculptured here in a different way. His right Leg rests on the floor and the left leg is thrown across in front of the right leg so as to touch the ground with the the toes. The form of Kṛṣṇa is in the Kathakali style. This image shows the regional variation of the sculptured Kṛṣṇa image in Kerala.

The sculptures at the top of the Vilakkumatam and the exterior sanctum walls bear the best specimens, which can stand a favourable comparison with the most brilliant products of the other places in South India. But the sculptures of the nineteenth centuries tend to show a decline. The sculptures depict the factual view of the gods, avataras and the devotees. They are characterized by a certain measure of

rigidity and formalism. A large part of the sculpture of this temple is the product of the sculptors skill. They worked on dhyanaslokas which laid down the canon for the images. To this temple these verses were adapted from the **Padmasambhita**. On the whole, little scope was afforded for the artist to exercise his individuality. That accounts in a large measure, for the domination of formalism and the decline of art in later days.

3-4 Wood Carving :

Architectural sculpture is at its best in the specimens of wood - carving in the temple. It is in the peculiar refinement of linear definition and in the soft, nacreous beauty of the body that all the figures of the wood carving became expressive and beautiful. All parts are dainty and smooth in their curves and the lines are in the delicate form.

Lineal carving of a marvellous type are found on the ceilings of the Namaskara Mandapa nada and of the Kuthambalam stage. The roof of the Kuthambalam stage is made of wood square and the interior side shows carvings of Hamsasana Brahma in the center and eight Devas in the equal square shape. The sculptured panels of the ^{Mukha} Namaskaramandapam exhibits the same figures of the Kuthambalam's interior stage roof where as its Nada shows the squares presently small but elegantly carved figures of the Navagrahas (Planets) with Sun marked at the centre. These carvings are clear and impressive. It reminds⁷⁴ us of the powers of nature at the period of its construction.

Kūthambalam's side wall of the stage shows the figures of Elephant, Kṛṣṇa and Garuda in the first second and third rows. The Elephants being represented with marvelous skill, their movements are realistic and forceful. Their legs and muscles show the forceful nature of their movements. This row of Elephants in the same expression is rendered most skillfully. Kṛṣṇa with different views standing on the elephants and Garuda with a cheerful expression in a flying pose without a gap is marked on its second and third rows. Among the four pillars which supported its roof, the carving of Kṛṣṇa with murali is carved on the top of the last two pillars.

On the sides of the joining wood pieces of the Kūthambalam's roof there are sixty four peacocks carved beautifully. The central piece looks forward while the ones on the side's look at the central one.

Venugopala, another variety of the Kṛṣṇa image is fitted in the Kūthambalam stage. There this image is conceived to be delighting with his enchanting music the hearts of the devotees who participate in the kalās. In the case of these images the rapture of music has to be clearly depicted on the face. This image of Kṛṣṇa is made to stand erect with the left leg resting on the floor in front of the left leg so as to touch the ground with the toes. The flute is held in both the hands, and one end of it is placed near the mouth.

The art of wood carving is the main contribution of the indigenous artists of this region to the art of Kerala. Wood carvings of the Guruvāyūr temple are also found as decoration

consisting mainly of Hamsasana Brahma and Krsna as Venugopala that is holding a flute in the hand. Beautiful wood carvings of Elephants, Peacocks and Garuda are note worthy. Floral designs are absent in the wood carvings of this temple. On the whole, wood carvings of this temple can be dated to eighteenth century.

3-5 Iconography :

Iconography is concerned with the study and interpretation of the characteristics of the principal images enshrined in the sanctum of a temple. It also deals with the delineation of the special features and the understanding of the true significance of the figure sculptures. The excellence or decadence of art in particular localities in different periods can be easily demonstrated with the help of the Iconographical images found in those places. The actual worship of Icons may have become established by the time of Patanjali⁷⁵, the author of Mahabhasya and the great exponent of the Yogas, whose date has been assigned to second century A.D.

The principal image in the Guruvāyūr temple is the Yogasthanakamurthi of the Utthama class. It should be measured in the Utthama Dasa Tala. In other words the Yoga form of Viṣṇu is in hundred and twenty four Dehangulas⁷⁶. Here we must remember that Matrangula was the real method adopted by the image makers. The happy countenance of Viṣṇu is characterised by young and polished cheeks without fold and traces of hair. The straight prominent nose is a characteristic that marks the face of a dignified majestic form. The straight feature of the nose is expressive of

determination, magnificence and high mindedness, the qualities that led to victory⁷⁷. The comparisons of the hands is with the strong and beautiful; Rounded and tapering shape of the arms. The strength of the chest, the sliminess of the waist and the grace of the three folds near the abdomen. The idol is the naturally flaked Pātala Anjanakkallu which has a shantha bhava.

Moreover, this main idol is the Chathurbhahu Viṣṇu in a standing posture having four arms. He carries lotus, which comes through the right toes with the lower right palm. He is to carry the chakra which face to the southern direction with the upper right hand. The thumb and the index finger on eastern side of it and the other fingers on its opposite side. He has to impress with the lower left palm on the gada and carries sankha tightly with the upper left fingers in the same pose of the upper right fingers. It face to the northeastern direction. The Chathurbhahu image of this type is the the earliest representation as illustrated in the relief - No -2520, Mathura⁷⁸ and Udayagiri. He is decorated with the customary jewels – Vanamāla, Kausthubamani, Yoganapavitha running from the left shoulder to the right side. Around the waist is the Udarabanda. Peethamabara cloth is tucking in folds on either side. Srīvatsa is on His chest and also the shining jewel Kaustubha. He wears armlets, a garland (vajrayanthimala), a diadem and ear rings shaped as sea monsters (makara kundalas). In sculpture⁷⁹ Srīvatsa is represented by a flower of four petals arranged in the form of a rhombus, or by simple equilateral triangle. It is invariably placed on the right side of the chest. Vajrayanthi is a necklace composed of a successive series of

groups of gems. Here five formed points to five different kinds of gems, namely the pearl, ruby, emerald blue, stone and diamond⁸⁰. This idol has no Prabhamandala; instead of it there is Thirumudi. This Thirumudi is covered with jeweled discs either in front or on all sides and has jeweled bands round the top as well as the bottom.

According to Das Gupta early Icons of Viṣṇu were very simple and later in the medieval period, it tended to be more ornamental. In Guruvāyūr temple the main idol was simple with usual symbols (Sankh, Chakra, Gada and Padma) strong body and with saumya bhava. It belonged to an early age.

The Iconography of Guruvāyūr temple, as in the rest of Kerala is entirely religious and it has been governed not only by the fancy of the artist but also by set rules and canons. In a large measure, that explains why Sculpture and Iconography rank for a stereotyped reputation of conventional forms in later age.

3-6 Painting :

In India the practice of allowing murals on the walls of the viharas was much earlier⁸¹. The mural paintings now reproduced may be taken in the main to be the work of artists belonging to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Though comparatively recent in age, these murals have a special significance in that they belong to an exclusive school of artists. The techniques of this painting differ from place to place, from people to people, from time to time. It mainly depends on the materials found in the vicinity of the worker and on the capacity to make use of them. The techniques may

be classified under four main divisions⁸² - a) Tempera, b) Fresco c) Encaustic d) Oil painting.

The mural paintings of the Guruvāyūr temple are the best traditions of the Hindu temple art. The Kerala region has shared in the double discovery with difference that this era of neglect has been much shorter than that of other regions. Occasional items have been found there going back to ninth century A.D. Though comparatively recent in age, these murals have a special significance. In that they belong to an exclusive school of artists, whose technique and workmanship is considerably different from other regions.

The mural painting of the Sanctum's exterior wall profusely covers the Mahabharatha stories. Parts of its left front face painting is fadeless looking on which mark the name of its own painter. It is to take on the basis of its niches idols as like of the Viṣṇu on the north. Śiva on the south, and the distinguishing features of Viṣṇu on the west. The figure of Viṣṇu is in a fully grown diverse scene of His Avataras. It covers the early life of Kṛṣṇa ; sleeping back of the guards in the palace ; as a baby lying in the cot looking at the mother; Yashoda's action of taking Him ; lying on a banyan leaf sucking the toe of His leg held by the hand ; as a winsome boy ; full of fun ; Kṛṣṇa is surrounded by the friends ; stealing milk and butter from the neighboring cottages ; fighting with the elephant ; (kāliyamardhanam); stealing the garments of the gopis ; represented as comfortably seated on the apex of the tree, and the slaying of Arishtāsura by the infant Kṛṣṇa.

Then on the western side the painting includes Kṛṣṇā's killing of Kamsa, an elite group which includes Vasudeva, Devaki and Brahmanas. The peaceful looking painting of Bhisma's is in an extremely beautiful sight. The journey of Paraśurama with the axe painted in a true way. Among these, the picture of the writer of this story – Vyāsamuni is done in a good manner. The figure of Vaiṣṇavi with four hands in which the lower right hand and left hand hold the lotus and the upper right hand chakra, the left hand sankha are also taken in both west and south walls. The landscape full of trees and ponds, is attractively pictured. The concluding stage of the Yaga is depicted. More Rhiṣis and ceremonies are shown. Garuda, the vehicle of Viṣṇu, is clumsily presented.

While turning towards the south we can see the figures of the goddess. The painting of the Kali is in an extreme divinity. Saraswathi striking the best music instrument Veena in a soft manner, and then the sacrament music instrument of the god Śiva are all a good picture. Śiva is painted here as like the niche's idol. Śiva's standing under the tree showed a safari look. The goddess Vaiṣṇavi of the same manner of the west is also painted here.

In spite of these mural paintings, there is also some Frescoe paintings in the inner wall of the fourth prakāra. In this painting the colours are laid down without any binding material. While the line plaster is still wet it is called 'a Frescoe⁸³' which means painting on the fresh. In this painting colours applied to the surface through chemical action. Here this type of painting impressed on the

Geethopadesam scene of Mahabharatha, the adventures of Arjuna, (the Pandava kulam).

All the pictures are excellent and are suited to the idols niche. The vahana of Śiva is fully satisfactory in its appearance. The dress, eagerness, anxiousness, quiteness, sizes of all are proportional to its colour, body and climate. That is the reason for its interest way of looking. All these works show the inner urge of the artist for stressing the unity in diversity. Though the paintings of the Mattānchēry palace were done in the same period a difference can be seen. First of all, the form of Kṛṣṇa in the sayana pose lying from the left to right, with a murali and surrounded by the gopis. Though the figure of Kṛṣṇa has a good view, the face of the gopis are not in a good pose- unpleasant looking and their legs are not in a proportional way.

All the above mentioned facts of the temple reveal that the architectural and functional treatment of the structure as a whole is reasoned and logical. A noteworthy feature of the structure of the sanctum sanctorum is their inconspicuous tops. It was done so deliberately that the temples may escape from the event of earthquakes. The damage would also be minimal. With the abundance of the materials construction of the sanctum sanctorum was built in such a way that even the devotees who stand at a distance from the temple could see the main idol. The square temple has its beautiful ridged roof being more austere in appearance and less impressive than the cone. In 1970, this temple witnessed a remarkable activity in the renovation and reconstruction which were subjected to spoliation and

desecration etc. The successive phases of the temple have been recovered, which show development from a primitive to an advanced stage of architectural design. The making of the sculptural images was a result in agreed opinion, since it was difficult to make them in hard stone. All are large, vigorous and full of the warmth of life. Animated and natural in terms of everyday life each idol is the presentation of an event from the legend of Kṛṣṇa. Each may be described as a kind of loving idealization of the village life of the Hindus, a transfiguration of day to do experience. The all - wood carvings would be made with great care and they spent time for this with much patience and attention. The idol's fundamental rules of geometrical drawing are correctly accepted in these pictures. Regarding costumes and jewels, their stiffness and conventional poses are greatly suited to the great mahatmyas. Facial expressions, bend of the body proportions and patience are praiseworthy. The binding material, which was insoluble in water and oil is better for us to know that it does not fade. But the burning of the oil lamp used in front of the sanctum has a drawback - that is the reason for the fading of the painting. The name of its author is not seen now. A knowledge of the techniques of the painter creates a better view of the picture that reveals the life through form, the object through the subject, the meaning through suggestion. Thus we can say that Guruvāyūr temple is one of the finest artistically built temples in Kerala as well as in India.

While considering the period of the establishment of this temple certain factors lay behind it. Adi 'Sankaracharya who established the puja routine at this Temple, was born in the month of Vaishaka⁸⁴. His

celestial way is marked in the gap of Vadakke Valiyambalam's roof and the only day on which the sunrays reflect on the idol enables us to fix the date as on equinox day. Moreover the temple which did not have an elephant and did not use crackers must have been established in ancient times.

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CHAPTER IV

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONARIES

Managing of the temple is a crucial task as it decides the future and progress of the temple. If the management of the temple is resting on an individual (Uralar), it will not lead to the progress of the temple and nobody can question his decisions be they good or bad. This led to debates between the formidable Zamorin and the Uralar. The interference of the court resulted in the organization of the board. Temple's influence extended beyond the purely religious and spiritual realms. It was an important factor influencing the economy of the village. The daily routine of the temple ritual gave assured employment to a large number of the people - priests, learned men, musicians, clerks, accountants and functionaries of various kinds.

Temple rulers were divided into Melkoyma, Samudāya Mānusham and Uralma¹. Of these the Raja occupies the position of the Melkoyma. Samudāya Mānusham was the chief executive of the temples and the chief representative of the Uralar and the Yogam. Those who are considered as the owner of the temple in the grāmās are known as Uraḷmas. As years passed on, a number of changes took place. Instead of paying them with food wages and salaries were fixed for the workers. Now, Devaswom board under an Executive officer is operated by the respective state government.

Guruvāyūr temple functionaries had administrative (external and internal), religious and cultural divisions. The external administrative functionaries were the Yogam, Uralar, Mānusham, Nambuthiri, Purakoyma and Melkoyma. Its internal administrative functionaries consisted of the Akakoyma, Pattamaḷi and Pathukar. Internal religious functions are important and complicated than the routine worship. In it, the Tantri has special rights so that he must be well versed in the Tantras.

Religious functionaries are required to promote Bhakti. In the earlier period, Guruvāyūr was the Kīḷetam of Thrikkanamathilakam. Its supreme power, purity and obedience of the devotees made an obvious change in the temple. This led to Guruvāyūr temple having many Kīḷetams² under it.

A clear picture of the temple about fifty eight years ago can be drawn on the basis of the devaswom publication. Regularly the neighboring Nambuthiries came to the temple during day break and at nightfall ; they poured oil in the lamp and lighted the wick in time. On special days sweet like Appam and Puddings were distributed ; cows wandered about and some would lie down and go to sleep. There were no noisy crowds, jostling for a darśan of the lord - A calm and serene atmosphere prevailed³. A brief narrative of the preceding history beginning with how the Zamorin came to acquire the territories in and around Guruvayur is required.

The political and devotional power of the Zamorin Manaveda formulated a new idea for promoting trade, as well as Bhakti. With this great aim he conquered the neighboring Principalities⁴. Regarding

his Melkoyma power of this temple, the prime importance is laid in the conquest of the Thalappili region. In course of these feuds, the Zamorin fought with the Valluvanad Raja over Tirunavaya, the most important temple of the central Kerala. The Zamorin after expelling Vellatiri, carried his arms further south. Thus with all his supporters and arms of Vellatiri, Zamorin subdued the Punnathur chieftain, who held (sway over) chowghat and the adjoining areas. When he submitted to the Zamorin, Guruvāyūr which formed part of chowghat came under the protection of the Zamorin⁵. Moreover, the prolonged struggle for Tirunāvāya had diverted the intending pilgrims to Guruvāyūr. The war lasting over a long period made it difficult for them to carry on the regular worship at Tirunāvāya⁶. Thus his patronage of this temple later tended to increase the attraction and importance of the Guruvāyūr temple. Altogether with his steadfast action, he could assume the supremacy over this temple. It resulted in freeing of the Guruvāyūr temple from the Thrikkanamathilakam Devaswom.

The Zamorin on becoming Mel-Etam of this temple, fought with the surviving Mallisseri Karanavar for getting the upper hand in the management of the temple. This was an interesting feature in the administrative history of this temple. A temporary truce was however, patched up when the Madras High Court declared that the Uraḷma right was jointly vested in the Zamorin and Mallisseri. This was later confirmed by the legislature and incorporated into law⁷. Once again the quarrel between the two (1889) led to the temporary suspension of the pujas and the closure of the temple for a week. This resulted in a stalemate in the temple administration. The court assumed management of the Zamorin's estate including Guruvāyūr in 1916. It

continued to administer these till 1927. It was left to Sir Henry Cotton, the then collector of Malabar, to manage the temple on behalf of the court of wards⁸. He managed to do so efficiently and with such tender care and devotion that the Hindus themselves appreciated his efforts. Henry Cotton and the court of wards should be credited with formulating many of the laudable practices in the administration.

With the rendition of the estate in 1928, the Zamorin once again became responsible for the Guruvayur temple. The Hindu Religious Endowment Board constituted by the H.R.E. Act of 1926⁹ deprived Mallisseri of their right to function as the hereditary trustee of the temple, and entrusted day to day management of the institution solely to the Zamorin. For this, Mallisseri appealed to the court of the South Malabar¹⁰ which recognised his position as joint hereditary trustee of the Devaswom. This decision was later approved by the Madras High Court, in an appeal filed by the Zamorin¹¹. There after till 1933 the management of the temple was being carried out under the provisions of the Madras H R E scheme, as finalized by the Madras High Court and modified by the Malabar Court¹².

The High Court of Madras framed a scheme for the administration of the Guruvayur temple. The scheme vested the rights of administering the temple and its properties and endowments with the hereditary trustees viz the Zamorin Raja and the Mallisseri Karanavar¹³. It contemplated the appointment of a paid manager who was to be in charge of the routine management of the temple and its endowments as well as on the temple office and its establishment¹⁴. The manager was to be appointed under the orders

of the Zamorin for five years¹⁵. A Cashier who was to be in charge of the money and other valuables of the temple was also to be appointed. The scheme also provided for the system of auditing the annual accounts of the temple¹⁶. Investments could be made in the name of the Devaswom by the trustees with the previous sanction of the Board¹⁷. The scheme came into force on December 1st 1930¹⁸. A review of the salient features of the Act shows that the scheme clearly defined the powers of the trustees and strictly restricted to their sphere of action.

When some worshippers filed a suit¹⁹ for the modification of the scheme, the District Court effected in certain slight modifications²⁰. The important changes effected were A) Fixing the remuneration of the manager and to the trustees²¹. B) Abolition of the post of cashier and entrusting his duties to the manager²² and discretionary power to the trustees to sanction pension to the temple servants²³. In all other respects the High Court Scheme stood unchanged²⁴. The very fact that the scheme of 1930 continued for a quarter of a century is a proof of its practical workability. It formed the basis of Guruvayur Devaswom Act of 1971. When the Madras Hindu Religious Council of Endowment Act of 1951 came into force (30th September 1951), the board became the supervising authority of the temple affairs. In spite of the structures of the court, the board attempted several times to bring the Devaswom under its control. The temple however, continued to be administered under the 1930 scheme.

The two committees which have gone into the question in the recent past, (those headed by C.P Ramaswamy Ayyar and K.Kuttikrishna menon)²⁵ recognised the importance of the temple. They recommended special provisions for the Guruvāyūr temple. The Hindu Labor Committee recommended-a) increase in the number of the trustees, b) vesting of the management of the temple in a trust board, c) the appointment of a Hindu as the manager, d) and the constitution of an eight member Local Advisory Committee. In 1965, the commissioner, Department of H R C E filed a suit²⁶. The subcourt of Thrissur wanted to modify the existing scheme when an accidental fire occurred in the temple Nov. 29,1970)²⁷ which” “brought home the need for immediate effective action” on the temple affairs. Hence the Kerala Legislature enacted the Guruvāyūr Devaswom Management Act of 1971²⁸ for the proper and better administration of the temple²⁹.

The Act of 1971 which superceded the Madras High court scheme may be considered as a landmark in the chequered administrative history of the Guruvayur temple³⁰. The Act vests the administrative control and management of the Devaswom in the G D M committee³¹. The present trustees, namely, the Zamorin as the president and the Mallisseri as the vice president, the chairman of the Guruvāyūr township, the Administrator, the temple Tantri, representative of the employees and members of the Government constitute the committee. It consists of about seventeen members³². The duties of the committee cover all aspects of the temple’s administration³³; such as making arrangements for the performance of the temple rites and ceremonies, ensuring safe custody of the

temple funds³⁴ and preservation of the temple properties. The act further provides for the appointment of a full time administrator of the temple³⁵. As the chief executive officer of the Devaswom, the administrator was responsible for the custody of the temple records and properties³⁶. As the secretary of the Guruvāyūr Devaswom Management Committee, he had to implement its decisions. In case of emergency, the administrator had to direct the execution of any work not provided for in the budget³⁷. The powers of appointment of the temple employees is vested in a special board constituted for the purpose³⁸. It constitutes the Commissioner as President and the Administrator, two members of the temple Management Committee and a nominee of the District Collector of Thrissur as member. The budget³⁹ prepared by the administrator and approved by the committee has to be submitted to the government for its approval. The act also provides for the constitution of a special fund⁴⁰ to be utilized in connection with the temple activities. Another provision of the Act relates to the constitution of a Renovation committee to be in complete charge of the renovation work of the temple⁴¹.

The Act of 1971, as modified by the Act of 1972, virtually reduces the Devaswom to a department of the government and gave the latter complete control over the former. In the appointment of Devaswom officers, in financial transactions and in the constitution of the special fund etc the executive government got an upper hand. The government was given control, even in the day to day administration of the temple. As these provisions offended the religious feelings of many devotees, these provisions were challenged in the court of law. The Act was

challenged first by the hereditary trustees⁴². However their contention that the statute deprived them of any effective control over the management and administration of the temple was rejected by the High Court⁴³ (*Kunhetan Thampuram vs The state of Kerala*), 1973). The validity of the Act was also challenged by T. Krishnan on behalf of the denomination (a member of the scheduled caste who was to be nominated by the Hindu Ministers of Kerala Government) on the plea that it enabled the government to get absolute and unfettered control over the Devaswom and its funds. In the historic judgement⁴⁴, the High Court of Kerala declared as unconstitutional almost all the provisions of the Act. It further declared the entire statute as ineffective and void as they violated the constitution⁴⁵. The verdict of the court closes a chapter in the Administrative history of the Guruvāyūr temple.

It will be seen that, by the Guruvāyūr Devaswom Act 1971, the temple administration was vested with the two traditional trustees. Now it extended to fourteen members who constituted the Managing Committee. The Act was however struck down by the High Court of Kerala after which a fresh ordinance was promulgated on November 29, 1977. This was followed by a regular bill passed by the Kerala Assembly on March 2, 1978. According to this bill, the Managing Committee was to consist of nine members⁴⁶.

This Managing Committee acts through an administrator selected by it. But the panel of names is furnished by the Government. They should be officers not below the rank of Deputy Collector. Government also appoints a Commissioner who acts as the

secretary of the Managing Committee and the Chief Executive of the Devaswom. The bill specifies that committee members should be Hindus and believe in temple worship⁴⁷. In striking down the Guruvayur Devaswom Act, the High Court had observed that there should be no government interference⁴⁸ in the administration of the temple.

4-2 Social Welfare Schemes :

A notable feature of the temple administration at Guruvayur is that a part of the funds is spent on public welfare schemes like education and medical aid. Realising the hardship of hundreds of students in and around Guruvayur, the Devaswom authorities set up a first-grade college. (known as Sri Krsna College), a centre for Vedic studies, a high school and a nursery school.

Devaswom also runs a Kshetrakala Nilayam and Vadyakala Vidyalayam. Young aspirants of Krsnanattam are trained in the former. There is also provision to teach the temple art forms, like Kalameluttu - portrayal of godly figures in coloured powders. Whereas the latter trains the students in Panchavadyam, Chenda, Kombu, Kulal etc.

The Devaswom has established an institute for conducting a five - year Diploma course in mural painting, admitting ten students each year. A medical centre run by the devaswom located half a kilometre to the south and provides free medical treatment. A museum housed in Sathram bungalow exhibits rare offerings made by the devotees to the Lord. A well - stocked library with books on religion, philosophy art and culture is also run by the Devaswom. It publishes books on Hindu philosophy and brings out a monthly

journal in Malayalam, called Bhakthapriya. It also runs two book stalls – one in the Vyjayanthi buildings near Eastern gopuram and the other situated in the Uttupura near the booking counters.

The Devaswom has a hundred acre estate called Vrindavanam estate at Vengad in Malappuram district, about fifty five kilometres from Guruvāyūr. Palm trees and other vegetation are grown here for feeding the elephants. Also crops such as coconuts, cashew etc. are cultivated here. The cows offered to the Lord by devotees are maintained here on a twenty five acre plot, called Gokulam.

4-3 Temple Functionaries :

The temple functionaries at Guruvayur are three fold -- administrative (external and internal), religious and cultural. Yogam is a group consist of Uralmars and Akakoymas. It had the top authority always and had the power to select desakoyma⁴⁹. At Guruvayur, there is a yogam or assembly consisting of the original seventy two Brahmin Illams of the Guruvayur. It meets once a year on the southern Vilakkumatam. The conclave elects the Uralars, scrutinizes the accounts, passes the budget and makes arrangements for the conduct of the annual Utsava and Viswabali. The committee of the Uralars consisting of the (Uralumganam of seven). Mallisseri is the only survived family that has survived and his family has survived only by adoption. It may be noted that the yogam represented only these families, and not the whole village.

Samudaya Mānusham (manager) refers as a representative of the samudaya or corporation. He was the chief executive of the temples and the chief representative of the Uralar and the Yogam. In the ancient period, as the uralers were the natives of the Guruvāyūr, the Yogam and the Uralars selected him from the outside. He formally entered his duties after receiving the Idangalī or small measure and the keys of the Bhandāram, or treasury, from the senior most Uralan seated on the Mandapa or platform facing the lord. The lord functioned through him in matters secular (Uralar Ullirunnu annu ninna Samudāyamanusham, temple records).

The Nambuthiri

The word Nambuthiri here is an official designation, being a contraction of the formal Pattōla Karyakkār, corresponding to our chief secretary and keeper of records and correspondence. There were three Nambuthiri families associated with the temple. 1) The Moliyakattu Nambuthiri was the chief secretary and keeper of the records and accounts of the Guruvāyūr temple. 2) The Chāvakkad Nambuthiri was the permanent representative of Thrikkunavayi, stationed at Chāvakkad. 3) The Kantiyūr Nambuthiri who combined both the functions of the representative and the accountant. He had the privilege of granting 'kūra' and 'Pavithra' to the Tantri as a token of having the Mel Etams permission to begin the festival. However, this privilege was later carried out by Mallisseri⁵⁰. The Kantiyūr Nambuthiri alone survives now as the chief secretary of the Guruvāyūr temple for all ceremonial purposes. This has been taking place since 1757 A.D.

The Pura koyma is entrusted with responsibility of protecting the temple and its property against external aggression. His formal assent is necessary for the commencement of the festival. Besides, he has to escort the lord (Akampati) during arattu procession and has to maintain law and order. He has a permanent residence at this temple. He is paid an honorarium of forty fanams for his services. Kakkad karanavar was the earliest Purakoyma. Following him, it was held in succession by Punnathur chieftan and Vanneri Nampiti. The Vanneri Nampiti was the hereditary purakoyma. The aid of the Melkoyma's was sought when the situation became out of control of the Purakoyma. However temple records show this was rarely needed as the offences done were of a moderate nature⁵¹.

Mel koyma rights were held by Perumpadappu ruler, the Vellatiri. Finally in the fourteenth century, the Zamorin became its sovereign protector when he conquered Cochin⁵². As has been already mentioned, after the dissolution of Thrikunavayi in A.D 1757, he became the supervising trustee also. The temple records mention only a few offences against the lord and the offenders were not too strong for the Purakoyma to invoke the aid of he Mel Koyma to punish them.

In the present set up, there is no yogam. We have now the administrator in place of the samudaya manusham and the G.D.M. C instead of the Uralar and the Yogam.

The internal religious functionaries consisted of the Akakoyma, Pattamali and Pathukar Varier. The Akakoyma, the supreme wielder

of the rod, in matters internal, was the pivot on which the daily worship turned. He had to supply the necessary articles for every worship and see that they were performed in time. A special room (koyma) had been provided for him in the temple. The Pattamali had to collect Pattam (rent) and dues to the temple. The Varier was entrusted with the duties of receiving Varam and other minor dues to the temple and reading the Trithola. Besides he had to act as a link between the people and the Lord and to take charge of the children's (nercca) offered in Nadathallal. These rights were given to three ancient Varier families - Tiruvenkidam, Vadakkeppatt, Chovvallur. Each acts for ten days and hence the name Pathukar Varier.

4-4 Internal functionaries :

The more elaborate and complicated rituals than the routine worship are performed by the people well versed in the Tantras or Science and art of temple worship. The religious functionaries of the temple are the Tantrakkur and the Santikalakam. The former consists of the Tantri who possesses the above qualities and the Othikkan. The latter consists of MelSanti and the KilSantis. The various ceremonies of the Utsava at the Guruvayur temple are performed by the Tantra-Kur.

Puliyannur Tantri is the first hereditary Tantri of the Guruvayur temple. Pulakkara Cennamanagalam Nambutiri followed him. The tantrimatam on the eastern bank of the northern tank is his official residence. The author of Tantrasamuccaya, Cennamangalam

Narayanan Nambuthiri who belonged to Guruvayur was the chief priest of this temple. Subsequently, when the Zamorin extended his authority over these regions, he became his domestic chaplain. These duties, along with other, on him as the authoritative exponent of the tantras, compelled him gradually to withdraw from his daily duties at Guruvayur, where he performs only on special occasions. The main duty of the Tantri link with the main Utsava is the purification karma of the Sreebhutabali. It must be done with supreme divinity.

Othikkan is both a teacher and reciter of the Vedas. He also officiates as domestic priest. Palayam, Munnulam, Pottakkuli, Kakkad are the four madams of the Othikkans of the Guruvayur temple. When Cennamangalam was the chief priest, they had assisted him by performing the third worship of the day. Even now the third worship is the responsibility of Cennamangalam. The fourteen extra worships of the Udayasthama puja are also performed by them. They also officiate for the Tantri in rites which has to be performed, including the offer of the Utsavabali to the spirit attendants of the Lord. In the absence of the Tantri and the MelSanti their duties are also performed by the Othikkans⁵³.

Mel Santhi is the chief priest of the temple. Members belonging to the Nambuthiri families of Sukapuram, Perumanam and Irinjalakuda were alone appointed as MelSantis. At present, it is the G D M C which, on the recommendation of the Tantri, selects one by the system of lot before the deity, for a period of six months. Till

1916 MelSanti was given one fourth of the offerings as perquisite besides half of the oil poured on the idol. It was only afterwards⁵⁴ that he received a fixed salary.

Lower in status are the KilSantis appointed for two months at a time. Guruvayur has thirteen KilSantis - Meccheri, Keeledam, Tiruvalur, Muthedam, Nageri, Manchira, Vengeri, Meledam, Cheruthaiyur, Thelampatta, Akkarappalli, Kodaykkad, Mulamangalam. Their exclusive right consists of carrying the Utsava vigraha, the small image on the lord, on the elephant back in the numerous processions on ordinary and festival days. In ancient days they were obliged to pay a small amount to the Lord. They are not permitted to act on behalf of the MelSanti or to touch the Mula vigraha.

4-5 Cultural Functionaries :

The most important men who tried to promote the Bhakti movement are the Patteris, Chakkyars and Marars. The Patteris have to read and expound Bhagavatha and Mahabharata. Kurumattur Nambuthiri is the hereditary Bharata Patteri of Guruvayur. The Chakkyar had to perform Kuthu in the Kuthambalam and the Marars have to use big percussion drums. The Cakkyar belongs to the Kuttancheri Illam. At any rate, Villwamangalam must have been responsible for instituting the singing of Astapadi. Those who sung Astapadi⁵⁵ songs when Atacchu puja is conducted, are also classified among the cultural functionaries.

4-6 Nercca (Offerings) :

Nerccas refer to the offerings something offered in worship or devotion to God, Deity etc; an oblation or sacrifice. It could be a means of exorcising evil thoughts from one's mind or a means by which one could avert accidents or other unforeseen developments. It could also be a thanks giving for a wish which was fulfilled; a means by which one expresses happiness over the realisation of a long cherished wish.

Offering of elephants is an interested sight. It is called as Nadayiruthal which are of three kinds. Nadayiruthal, with kalabham or sandal paste. 2- Nadayiruthal spreading white cloth and Karimpatam (woolen blanket) and Nadathallal. This function is held after the morning siveli in an area near the flag staff. It must be cleaned, lamps lit and a cloth and blanket is spread over which the elephant is made to sit ceremonially. The MelSanti offers tirtha and prasada adorning it with sandal paste and giving it a name. Anayoot (feeding of elephant) has also become a popular offering.

Another common view is Tulābharam. In this the devotee is weighed against bananas, sugar, jaggery, coconuts, sandalwood, coir, grass brooms, granite stones, ice, or any other article of daily use. Regarding weddings, on payment of the prescribed amount the couples are offered the holy water, prasad and the garlands exchanged by the bride and groom. The ceremony is conducted on the specially erected platform outside the eastnada. Annaprasnam is the first feeding ceremony for the child. It is held near the flag staff in

front of the temple. Officials offer tirtha and cooked rice, payasam, pappadam etc are given to the child. For this the ticket has to be purchased in advance. In respect of their promise to the god for the cure of disease the model of the eye, leg, hand or the whole body is offered to the god. These are available near the flag staff. In order to develop intelligence and smartness in children a handful of Manchadikkuru is taken and deposited three times in the vessel. It is kept near Deepasthamba to the south of the flagstaff.

A complete dedication of oneself to god is known as bhajan which is considered as the most fruitful way of offering. Bhajan is considered as complete dedication of oneself to god. Married people must observe strict brahmacharya during this time. At Guruvayur, the devotees are also expected to be present if possible for the twelve darshans from nirmalyam to Tripuka. (If they writes in astute from the self possession it will show a better result. Visualising the terrible condition they showed the performance writing the readiness).

All the offerings that the Devaswom board receives in the form of offerings are auctioned meeting their needs. They made use of this fund for health- care and educational purposes.

It is clear from the above that the administration and religious functions are systematised in Guruvāyūr temple. The deepset piety and purity of the Uralars performance was diversified by the ruler Zamorin. He made use of all the supporting activities for elaborate administrative

functions. In this respect both the Zamorin's and the Uralar's approach was to be suitably altered in each case. The formation of the high power committee has come at a time when the demand for a separate board was strong. It was reflected in the setting up of a Devaswom board which was headed by the administrator. It aids all the workers in the Devaswom. Considering the religious functionaries, the most important power is vested with the Tantri. All other persons co-operate with him in making an effort for the growth of the Guruvāyūr temple.

References

1. Chattavaryōla of the Elamkunnapuzha Devaswom gives a brief account of the Yogam.
2. See the Appendix No.3.
3. Mathrubhumi Supplyment, Op. cit,p.57.
4. Beypore, Parappanad, Vettal, Valluvanad and the Thalappilli region were the neighboring principalities.
5. Thalappilli region included - Guruvāyūr, Kunnamkulam, Wadakkancheri. Major portions of the present chowghat thaluk and the adjoining places like kunnamkulam, Kakkad and Chittilappalli formed part of the Punnathur family. Ainikkur, Punnathur, Manakkulam and Kakkd were the four branches of the Thalappilli family.If so, the eldest male member of all these branches taken together was called Kakkad Karanavappad. Sreedhara Menon, A survey of Kerala History, Opcit, p.168.
6. Nava Mukunda Temple (of historic fame).
7. Nair C.G.,(ed.) The Voice of Guruvayur, Guruvayur Devaswom Library,Guruvāyūr, p.1X, 1982.
8. Krishna Ayyar K.V, Guruvāyūr Charithram (Mal) , Op cit, p.139.
9. Nair C.G. Op. cit.
10. For over half a century (1825-1892),the temple was managed under a scheme framed by the Court by which an agent was appointed jointly by the trustees.He was directly responsible for the management of the Devaswom.From about 1889, disputes

arose between the two trustees for getting an upper hand in this temple. As a result the temple was remained closed for over a week. However, matters came to a head and in 1916, the court of wards assumed the management of the Devaswom along with the trustees. Again in 1927, the Zamorin got back the management from the Court of Wards and the temple came under his direct control. Vaidyanathan K.R. Op cit, pp.24 -5

11. Rule of Hindu Labour Committee
12. Madas H R E Act 1926. It came to force on 8th February 6, 1927.
13. O. S. No 1 of 1929 in the District court of South Malabar, Calicut under section 63 [IV] of the MHRE of 1927.
14. A.S Nos 211 and 212 of 1930 Madras High Court.
15. O. S No 1 of 1933.
16. Krishna Ayyar K.V., Guruvāyūr charithram, Op cit p- 147.
17. Clause 11 of the scheme.
18. clause 3 and 4.
19. Ibid clause 2.
20. Ibid clause 14.
21. Ibid clause 16.
22. O.S. No. 1 of 1929 in the District court of South Malabar, Calicut.
23. O. S. No 1 of 1933. sub court Ottappalam.

24. Ibid clause 3.
25. Ibid clause 1.
26. Ibid clause 6.
27. Ibid clause 7.
28. Report of the High Court Level Committee for HRIE, 1964.
29. OP No : 3 of 1965 under section 62 [3] C of MHREA 1951.
30. See Appendix No.4.
31. Counter petition submitted to the High court by the government of Kerala.
32. Act, 6, of 1971, A. 1. R. P.
33. The Act came into force on March 9,1971.
34. Ibid section 3 of the Act.
35. Section 4.
36. Section 10.
37. Section 10 clause c.
38. Ibid.
39. Clause 17 sub section 4, clause [b] and [c].
40. Section 18.

41. Section 20.
42. Section 21.
43. Section 24.
44. Section 32.
45. O P No. 812 Of 1971. H C of Kerala. K E R LT 106; A I R 1973.
46. Para 62 Of the H C J.
47. A I R April 1978 and May 78; vol 65 part 772 and 773 K E R 68 - 96.
48. Vaidyanathan K.R., op cit, p.27.
49. Bhaskaranunni. P., Pathombathamuttadile Keralam (Mal), Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1988, p.512.
50. K.R.Vaidyanathan, Op cit, p.28.
51. K.V.Krishna Ayyar, Guruvāyūr Charithram (Mal)Op cit, p.160.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid, p. 161.
54. Ibid, 162.
55. Ibid, p.157.

CHAPTER V

RITUALS

Ritual is an established or prescribed procedure for a religious rite¹. Vaisnava temple rituals mentioned in the Tantrasamuccayam, Tantrapadhati, Isānaśivagurudevapadhati. Worship has two senses - a wider and a stricter. The wider expressing a man's devoutness in all his living, is equivalent to piety; the narrower, denoting specific forms of devotion, personal or social is nearly synonymous with cults. Worship in the widest sense, may be defined as the acknowledgement by man of his dependence on a power or powers beyond himself. Thus worship can be broadly divided into daily and occasional worships.

The morning ritual has eight parts -- bathing the idol, marking it with the auspicious mark, offering it flowers and garlands, waving a lighted incense stick in front of the image waving a lamp before the shrine, offering rice, offering sweet meals and offering nuts. The first part bathing the idol can be performed only once, so only one worshipper can do that. At the Guruvāyūr temple, MēlSānti performs this part. He removes from the deity all the adornments ornaments of the previous day, and performs abhishekam with gingely oil. Then vaka powder is sprinkled, but not rubbed, all over the idol. This is removed by pouring plenty of water over the image. Following this, abhishekam is performed with water sanctified in a golden pot filled with sankā water consecrated with Brahmakalāśa manthra. It is poured over the deity. This Gangābhishekam is usually

done in other temples only on special occasions. The Nirmalya darshan of the Lord which is conducted at 3.00 a.m. is also called Viswarupa darshan. After the gangabhishekam, the idol is wiped with a thin cloth and adorned with garlands ear ornaments, Kastūrithilaka and a red loin cloth. Thus the idol originally visnu rupa is changed into Balagopala playing the flute and holding butter in the hand. Then follows the Malar Naivedyam and Alankaram between 3.30 a.m to 4.15 a.m. Between 4.15 a.m. and 4.30 a.m. the first of the five pujas known as the Ushah puja is performed. It is done with the offerings of cooked rice and naipayasam. Between 4.30 a.m. and 6.15 a.m., the second puja Ethirthapuja is conducted with offering of vella naivedyam. After this, the utsava vigraha is taken out for siveli (6.15 to 7a.m). The first of the three are conducted daily. Siveli is actually sribali which is an offering to Lord's celestial attendants. The procession is taken round the temple three times. In front of it, twelve lighted silver lamps are held by members, who come from families traditionally enjoying the privilege of rendering this service. Beating of drums like the maddalam, playing of pipes kombu and cymbals accompany this. After the morning siveli a series of abhishekams - Palabhishekam, Navakabhishekam, Pantiradi Naivedyam and Puja are followed. All these are conducted between 7.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m.

The most important puja for the day is the Uchcha (mid- day) puja which is conducted around 12 noon. This elaborate puja's naivedyam consists of cooked rice and palpayasam. Feeding of a Brahmin is a must during this ritual. The SreeKovil is closed around 1 p.m. It reopens at 4.30 p.m and around 5.00 p.m. the second procession,

Deeparadhana is held there. The fifth and last Athala puja takes place around 7.30 p.m. Appam is the naivedyam offered during this puja. All the rituals of the day are concluded with Tripuka² and the sreekovil is closed by 10 p.m.

To inculcate bhakti among the people certain occasional rituals and annual festival are also conducted at the Guruvayur temple. Mandalam, Abhishekam with Panchagavya, Ekadasi Festival, Chembai Music Festival, Narayaneeyam Day, Kuchela's Day, Vishu, Vaishaka, Ashtami Rohini, Festivals at the Bhagavati temple and the Utsavam are celebrated as occasional rituals. It is to remember the work done by the devotees.

The Mandala Kalam (begins from the solar month of Vrischikam - mid November) is regarded as a highly auspicious time throughout Kerala. The devotees of Ayyappa going to Sabarimala in order to stimulate their bhakti, visit this temple during these forty one days. We can see a rush of these pilgrims in this temple which increases bhakti along with its treasure.

Abhishekam with Panchagavya (milk, curd, ghee, urine and cowdung) is a speciality during the season. This is done after Pantirati. Many devotees visit the shrine now to partake of it, since it is believed to burn up all inner impurities. The concluding day of the Mandalam is marked by the Kalabhabhishekam of the deity. This special offering is made only once a year and it is the hereditary privilege³ of the Zamorin to make it.

Besides, the three Śivelis during Mandalam will be conducted with three elephants and special musical instruments. Chākyar Kūttu is also conducted for twelve days. The right to conduct this traditionally belongs to Kuttanchakyār. The famous Guruvāyūr Ekādeśi festival, Melppattur's Narayaneeyam day and Kuchela's day also occur during Mandalam which make it the busiest season at Guruvāyūr. Ekādaśi festival.

Ēkadāśi, the eleventh day of every lunar fortnight, is very auspicious to the Hindus in general⁴. Of the twenty four Ekādaśis⁵ in a year Vrischika Ekādeśi- Sukla Paksha-- in Guruvāyūr has special significance⁶. Here a notable point is that even before the temple entry proclamation in 1935, all Hindus, irrespective of caste or creed were allowed to enter the temple on this day.

The Ekādeśi celebrations begin nearly a month in advance. The rows of lights on the Vilakkumātam around the Nalambalam and the majestic Deepastambhams inside and outside the temple are lighted. The expenses of the vilakku on different days are met from contributions from certain families, who have been recipients of the blessings of Lord Guruvayurappan

The Devotees believe that the lord revealed the Gita to Arjuna on Ekādaśi day⁷. Especially, the last three days of the festival namely -- Navami, Desami and Ekādaśi attract large crowds. A distinguishing feature of the Navami vilakku is that all the lamps in the temple are lit with ghee donated by the Kōladi family⁸, which conducts the festival on this day. The entire Guruvāyūr wears a

festive look on these days with the temple and the surrounding areas decked with festoons and electrical illumination.

The Deśami Vilakku which used to be an offering of Zamorin, is now conducted by Guruvayurappan Sankeerthana trust established by the late Namaacharya Anjam Madhavan Nambuthiri. After the temple is opened on Ekādaśi day for nirmalya darshan, it is closed only at 9.00 a.m on Dwādasi day. Thus allowing continuous darshan for devotees throughout these days.

A highlight of the festival on this day is the memorial services for Gajarajan, the late Guruvāyūr Kesavan. Elephants of the Devaswom, place a wreath in front of the statue of Kesavan. Then they line up on both sides of the Eastern gate way of the temple where they are served a sumptuous feast consisting of sugar cane, banana, jaggery, prasadam etc.

The Udayasthamana pūja on this day is conducted by the devaswom itself. Formerly it was the privilege of Chiralayam royal family which also gave a sumptuous feast on Dwādasi day. After the morning Śiveli a grand elephant procession accompanied by Panchavādyam go to the Pārthasarathi temple. Then after the night puja the famous Ekādaśi illumination (Vilakku) with elephant procession takes place inside the temple, provides a grand finale to the month -- long festival.

On Dwadasi day there is a custom of offering a token amount called Dwadasipanam in Kūthambalam. There after around 9 a.m. the

temple doors are closed. They are opened again at 4.30 p.m. after the purification ceremony.

5-2 Narayaneeyam Day :

Bhakta kavi Melppattur Narayana Bhattatiri is believed to have completed the work Narayaneeyam and dedicated it to Guruvayurappan on Vrischikam twentyeighth⁹ (around December forteenth).This day is commemorated as Narayaneeyam Day every year when Narayaneeya Saptaham, debates on the subject, competition in recitation of Narayaneeyam for school and college students etc are held and prizes awarded. The Narayaneeyam day attract many students and thereby increases the devotees.

5-3 Kujela's Day :

To commemorate the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Kuchela, the first wednesday of Dhanu (December 0- January) is observed as Kuchela's day¹⁰. Beaten rice is offered in abundance by the devotees on this occasion.

5-4 Vishu (Summer Equinox) :

The first of Metam (mid - April) is the day of Vishu, which is the New Year's Day for Malayalees (For this, as a belief to see the objects as kani before the idol considers as the fortunes,)thousands prefer to go to the Guruvāyūr temple to see Vishukkani which is considered to be auspicious. Kani is arranged on Mukhamandapam in front of the deity. In a golden circular vessel (uruli) the Lord's thidambu is kept, decorated with alavattom and chamaram.

5-5 Vaisaka :

The Vaisaka vrata during this (April) month is considered as sacred to viṣṇu. The Vaisaka is the Lunar month commencing from the day following the new moon of Metam (April-May) to the following new moon. The main features of the vow are - early morning ablutions when the waters are believed to be sanctified by the presence of the Ganga and other Gods and Goddesses; feeding the poor, (abstinence from stale food;) partaking of food after it has been offered to the Lord; practising Namasankeertana ; listening to religious discourses; in short, participating in everything divine. The third day in the bright half of Vaisaka, known as Akshaya Triteeya is the most auspicious day of the month. Because it is the birth day of Balarama, it is celebrated and charities are performed. While the observances of Vaisaka vrata is efficacious every where, at Guruvāyūr it is particularly so. A prince belonging to the ruling family of the erstwhile Tiruvanathapuram state was a great devotee. Though the prince worshipped salagrama with great devotion, he suffered a series of disasters. Soon the prince asked a saint the reason for this. The saint advised him to worship the sālagrama in the presence of Lord Viṣṇu. On seeing good results, he came to Guruvāyūr and dedicated the sālagrama to Guruvāyūrappan. It is believed that in due course it merged with the idol. It is this belief which is behind celebrating Vaisaka at Guruvāyūr as a special month. The devotees listening to Bhagavatha and other religious discourses remain in constant bliss. Four Bhāgavatha saptahas¹¹ are arranged by the Devaswom to cover the entire Vaisaka month.

The performance of the pujas in Kerala and TamilNadu regions, is entirely different¹². In Kerala only a trained priest can perform it. He utters the manthras inaudibly whereas in Tamilnadu, a set of eligible persons are enjoined to perform rituals in temples. Several priests are present in the temple at the same time and anyone of them is free to perform the puja as required by the devotee. Sometimes even the devotee is permitted to offer puja according to his liking. Further the priest utters the manthras aloud. In other words, the puja is just cursory in Tamilnadu. In Kerala, the priest alone can touch the idol in the sanctum sanctorum. On the other hand if anybody touches the idol it calls for various expiatory ceremonies as if it is polluted. Tamil Nadu temples text based pujas is different from this temple's. Tatrasamuccayam¹³ an important work on manthrasastra is used here.

5-6 Janmāshtami :

Another important festive day at Guruvayur is Janmashtami. Lord Krsna was born under the Rohini Nakshatra on the eighth day of the waning moon of Sravana. This falls in the month of Chingam (July - August). Niramāla and vilakku on a grand scale are conducted as offering by the staff of Devaswom¹⁴. Appam is offered by devotees in abundance.

5-7 Festivals at the Bhagavati temple :

The Navaratri festival, as the very name indicates, is observed for nine days. Trikala puja , recitals of Lalita Sahasranamam (a thousand names of the Goddess), display of lights around the temple are the special features observed during the celebration.

Another occasion for celebration in this temple is the “Talappoli” which comes in the month of Dhanu (December - January). It is a one day celebration with the customary kalameluthu (decorative design of the Devi on the floor), singing of devotional songs and procession. The expenses are met by public subscription.

5-8 Utsavam :

Utsavams are of three types - Padahādhī, Dwajadhī and Ankurādhī. In Padahādhī, importance is given to the vadyams. In the second type, importance is given to both the vadyams and of the ascendance and descendance of the dwaja. The latter includes three items - the vādyam, ascendance of the flag and the sprouts of the seed. The Guruvāyūr temple celebrates this Ankurādhī type of the celebration in the utsavam.

The major attraction of this temple is the ten day festival in the month of Kumbha. It is celebrated with pomp and pageantry. Its accent is on the various Tantric rites which are important for the prosperity of the temple. It commences under the constellation of Pushya and lasts ten days, marked by rituals, grand feasts, procession of elephants and illumination.

As a forerunner of the festival, a seven day ritual called Sahasrakalāśam¹⁵, being an expensive affair is conducted only rarely at other temples. At Guruvayur it is held every year after the 1970 fire disaster. The day after this the Brahma Kalāśaabisheka is performed on the deity by the Tantri, amidst chanting of manthras.

Anayottam is the another feature which follows the Sahasrakalasam. Out of the temple's fifty odd elephants, selected five to eight stand in a line at Manjula to run towards the temple. Only these are allowed to run inside the temple. The one which arrives first normally stays within the temple walls for the duration of the festival. Receiving royal treatment, partaking of the Lords prasada and carrying His thidambu during processions are the privileges for being first. The origin of this custom¹⁶ goes back to the olden days when the Devaswom didnot own any elephant. When the ceremonies were to begin, the authorities at Guruvāyūr were in a fix because there were no elephants available there. At the same time some elephants had been hired out for a festival in the Trikkanamathilakam. One of these turned back, fled towards Guruvāyūr and presented itself in time for the ceremonies there. Since this event, no elephant is taken in procession for the morning Siveli on the inaugural day of the festival.

At the appointed time at night, the Tantri hoists the temple flag amidst various rites marking the beginning of the festival. On the following six days of the Utsavam, there are elephant processions three times a day – in the morning, in the afternoon, and at night. There is also Sribhuta bali conducted in the morning after Pantirati puja and at night, before the procession. On all these days, religious discourses, entertainment programmes like music, dance etc are held outside the temple.

On the eighth day Utsavabali is observed which is a very important part of the festival. Thousands from far and near gather to witness this ritual and to have darshan of the deity, kept within

the mathilakam. There after the devotees are treated to a sumptuous feast. In olden days, not only devotees but also animals and birds were fed. A basketful of cooked rice used to be hung from one of the branches of Manjulal to be eaten by birds.

The ninth day of festival is marked by Pallivetta or the hunting expedition of the Lord. At 6 'o' clock in the evening, the processional deity is brought outside and kept near the flag staff. Then Deeparadhana is performed by one of the assistant priests selected for this purpose. Normally only MeḷṢānti can perform this. But on Pallivēṭṭa and Ārattu days KiḷṢāntis are vouchsafed this privilege. By the time the procession returns to the temple, the deity is taken on another elephant and goes outside the east nada upto Kalyāna mandapam. From there the hunting expedition returns to the temple and goes around nine times. Men disguised as boars and other animals and birds and join the procession. Pallivēṭṭa is symbolic of the Lord hunting the boar and catching it¹⁷. It also denotes the destruction of such evils as Kāma and Krōdha that plague us in the jungle of life. After the hunting expedition it is believed that Bhagavan sleeps in the forest, so the deity is kept on the maṇḍapam inside the temple. It is only on hearing of the calf's cry then the temple opened. It is opened by 7.a.m.

On the final day of the Utsavam's evening after the Śiveli, the divine chaitanya of the deity is invoked in a vigraha made of Panchaloha which is taken outside and kept near the flag - staff. The Ārattu procession goes round the temple and the tank. The deity is brought down to the temple tank in front of the Bhagavati

temple. After special pūjas, it is dipped in the holy water amidst the chanting of manthras. After the Arattu the uchcha pūja of the deity (actually this day it takes place at night) is conducted at the Bhagavati temple. The Lord then returns to the Garbagriha after eleven circumambulations executed at a fast pace¹⁸. The temple flag is now lowered marking the end of the festival.

Polpakara Manakkal Kunjan Nambuthirippad had officiated as the head priest six or seven times. It was he who first started decorating the deity at dawn in the form of Balagopala¹⁹. Following this, thousands of devotees feast their eyes on this delightful child Kṛṣṇa, with anklets, red loin cloth, flute placed in the mouth and butter in hand.

During the rituals the Tantri is considered as the chief priest of the temple. (As an authoritative exponent of the Tantras), At the time of the Zamorin the Tantri was not freed from his regular duties at the temple. Now the Tantri attends only on special occasions. He offers Utsava Bali or offerings to the celestial attendants during the annual utsavam. He also takes part in special worships during Mandalam and other festival days.

The functions of the Othikkans are akin to those of the Tantri. They often officiate for him in rites which he has to conduct normally. They also perform the Pantirati puja daily. The additional priestly tasks of the Udayasthamana pūja are also their responsibility. The Tantri and the Othikkans are collectively called Tantra – Kūr.

Śānti Kaḷakam comprises the MelŚānti (Head priest) and the KilŚānti (assistant priest). The Tantri and the Othikkans are chosen by heredity, while the officiating priest is appointed office during the pleasure by the temple authorities of the Devaswom. The Head priest is initially chosen by the tantri on the basis of his knowledge and capability to undertake the arduous job. His work begins at 2 a.m and ends at 10 p.m except for the break after Uchcha pūja. Of the five daily pūjas, he performs four, the Pantīrati being performed by Othikkans.

The MelŚānti is assisted by KilŚānti in the daily worship. The duties of the latter are to prepare the offerings for the pūjas, bring water for the abhishekam, make sandal paste and under take such other sundry services as required by the MelŚānti. He has also to take the Utsava vigraha on elephant back during processions. He cannot touch the deity, he can enter the sreekovil only with the Tantri, the Othikkan and MelŚānti.

There are also some temple servants (Ambalavāsīs), drawn from certain privileged families of Variers, Nambiśans, Pisharotees etc. Their chores consists of collecting flowers, making garlands and holding the lamps during procession. The duty of the Pattukārans (men for ten days in their duty of this temple activity) is to supply all materials required for the various pūjas, naivedyams etc for a ten day period. This privilege belongs to the Varier family of Tiruvenkidam, Vadakkēppātt and Chovvallūr. The Pisharadees of this temple belongs to the Puthiyēdath illam which the kaḷakams of the Edathēdathukāvu. Where as the Marars belongs to the Kadvallūr Padinjārēmārāth and Padinjārēppāttumārāth illam.

With regard to the rituals and festivals of the Guruvayur temple certain specialities are noted here. All these are conducted on the basis of the text **Tantrasamuccayam**. Only one DhyānaManthra “Om Namo Narayanaya Nama” is accepted to here. First malar is offered in the prayer to Sakala Murthi. This is followed by prayer to Sakala Niskala Murthi. At the end the innate qualities of the malar merges in the Niskala Brahma. This type of the puja at the temples is of the three types of pujas - Kēvalam, Vyuham, Panchaveeram. The Kevala (Absolute) form of the puja is offered in this temple. This age old ritual is still continued giving enormous disunity to the temple. Two important differences of the festivals in this temple are the complete absence of fire works and the presence of the elephant race. The popular belief is that the Lord Kṛṣṇa being a baby, would be frightened by the fire works. A more rational explanation might be that the temple was founded at a time when gun powder was unknown in Malabar. So that it was not used originally. The latter, elephant race, reflects the importance given to elephants in the temple rituals and festivals. Though some devotees aware of the Rituals of this temple many do not know the reason to take an extendible days of the festival. It is because of the belief that unintentionally carry ‘impurities’ come to pass by all inside the temple must be removed. It is only there by restore the chaitanya and power of the idol.

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5. The twentyfour Ekādaśis are, Ulppanna Ekādaśi, (2) Mokshada Ekādaśi (3) Safala Ekādaśi (4) Puthradha Ekādaśi, (5) Shadthila Ekādaśi (6) Jaya Ekādaśi (7) Vijaya Ekādaśi (8), Amalaki Ekādaśi (9) Papamochini Ekādaśi (10) Kamadha Ekādaśi (11) Varudhini Ekādaśi (12) Mohini Ekādaśi (13) Nirjala Ekādaśi (14) Yogini Ekādaśi (15) Padma Ekādaśi (16) Kamika Ekādaśi (17) Puthradha Ekādaśi (18) Aja Ekādaśi (19) Indira Ekādaśi (20) Papankusha Ekādaśi (21) Rama Ekādaśi (22) Haribhodhini Ekādaśi (23) Kamala Ekādaśi (24) Padmini Ekādaśi. Of these twentyfour Ekadasis in a year, some have special significance - Ashada Ekādaśi in Pandharpur (Maharashtra), Vaikuntha Ekādaśi in Srirangam (Tamil Nadu) and Vrischika Ekādaśi Sukla Paksha (Haribhodini Ekadasi) in Guruvāyūr, Balan Poothur, Guruvayur Ekādaśi (Mal) Sevasramam, Karippur, 1997, pp.33 – 40.
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CHAPTER VI

THE PEOPLE WHO PATRONIZED THE RELIGION - THEIR WORKS AND ITS INFLUENCE

In every religion, various types of patronisation can be seen. The propagation of the Vaiṣṇava religion was undertaken by some devotees. The consecration of Viṣṇu idols and the construction of the Viṣṇu temples formed an important means by which vaiṣṇava religion could be propagated. After a temple is constructed, devoted patrons could add on to the importance of the temple. The Guruvāyūr temple also was patronised in the early times by a few devotees.

The bhaktas who patronised the Guruvāyūr temple, included Rulers and Religious leaders. Among the rulers, special mention should be made of the Zamorin. He composed Kṛṣṇanāttam, probably inspired by art forms like Koodiyattam and epics like Geethagovindam and Narayaneeyam. As different from Narayaneeyam, this depicts the story of the life of only Kṛṣṇa. In one way both these works follow the same pattern i.e. addressed to the Lord Guruvāyūrappa and as like of Kṛṣṇa.

The story goes that the Zamorin actually saw Sreeṣṇa an Elanji tree (the present Kūthambalam is there). As he ran up eagerly to the divine child, the boy disappeared instantly¹. The scholars hold the view that it is this experience which led the Zamorin to create a new type of literature. These experiences increased his divine impulse. Mānaveda has named this work as Kṛṣṇageethi but it became popular as Kṛṣṇanāttam.

Of the Cultural programs conducted at the Guruvāyūr temple, Kṛṣṇanattam is considered as the special item. It deals with the story of Kṛṣṇa and was written in the form of a dance drama. It was presented in eight cantos beginning with Avatāra and ending with Swargārōhana. One part is enacted per day. On the ninth day, the Avatāra is reenacted again so as to end the story with an optimistic note. The drama has to be performed only in the places of sanctity².

The number 'eight' is significant in Kṛṣṇanattam. The story lasts for eight days ; eight measures of oil have to be used in eight lamps ; the duration of the play is for eight Naḷika (= 20 hour); eight lads are required to participate in the drama; the remuneration paid to each actor is eight Fanams³ (224 paise). The masks larger than life with the exaggerated features some even deformed are a distinguishing feature of Kṛṣṇanāttam.

Verses are the inspired expression of one man's devotion. It not merely adorns the soul but is the very soul. Verses or hymns have been more expansive and effective than any other branch of expression in the literary field. To account for this region's genius for verses we have to delve deep into the emotional life of the people. Thus we can find out that all verses linked with this temple are essentially the spontaneous expression of powerful emotional experience. Extraordinary skill of the devotees in the Bhagavatha pāṛāyana and the devotees were plunged in bhakti sthotrās created an environment. It was from here that the great devotional poetic cult flourished in Kerala with phenomenal popularity. Notable point is that in the revival of the bhakti cult, the period was known as a period of creative activity.

The great devotional poets were Melppattur and Punthanam who were contemporaries. They were the exponents of the aforesaid devotional poetic cult. They adored and worshipped the Guruvāyūrappan and immortalised Him with their poetical compositions. The personal name of Melppattur was Narayana Bhattatiri; that of Punthanam is unknown.

Narayaneeyam, the famous work of Melppattur Narayana Bhattatiri is an inspiring work in Sanskrit. It is written with the basic tone of bhakti and pregnant with spiritual meaning and rhetorical wealth. He sought the Lord's favor by describing His incarnations in a series of Dasakas. Almost all of them ending with a prayer to the lord to free him from the ailments that afflicted him. Here, the poet gives an inspired and inspiring vision of Srikr̥ṣṇa that was finally revealed to him. This famous work is regarded as a conventional⁴ grantha but a divine nectar of the lord's stories accepted and set right by the lord himself with appropriate directions where ever necessary.

Bhakti and Parama purusharthas would enable men to be strong as is described in his Prabhandham. Karma Yoga and Jnani Marga are not easily accessible to the ordinary mind but it is through Bhakti that it is realised. Dāthukavya, Kriyākarma and Apaniniyapramāna are the other works of Melppattur⁵. In him we could see parabhakti who from the dawn of their earthly existence feel an innate looking experience the divine bliss and service at the divine feet.

Punthanam was an embodiment of devotion, pure and simple. The Jnānappana or song of wisdom in Malayalam is his personal testimony

to the ancient wisdom of our Rishis. Simplicity is the speciality of the Jnānappāna. It mingles with life and vedantha⁶. He expresses the pain in his mind in the Kumāraharana otherwise known as Santhānagopalam on the death of his only child. It gives us a sight of the true Yogi⁷. He spent his time in reading the Bhagavatha, singing the lord's glories. He exhorts the people to repeat His name which is the easiest way to salvation. His other compositions are SriKṛṣṇakarnāmrītam, Kuchēlavrittam and Subhadrāharanam. In writing all these works, his aim was to turn people's mind from worldly pleasures to the pursuit of salvation.

Villwamangalam II (1575 - 1660) and Kurūramma (1570 - 1640) were cousins and were the two blessed souls who had visions of the Lord. Kurūrammā's maiden name was Dhatri ; she became Kurūramma through marriage in the Kurūr family.

“See Him ----- we must” is the only song of hers that has so far been discovered. On the model of Punthanam, every word of it is instinct with devotion and proclaims her irrepressible passion for the divine vision. She even treated the toy Kṛṣṇa as her son and played with Him. Scolded Him when he was naughty and cried when He disappeared⁸. It is to Pūnthanam and Kurūramma that we owe the conception of the Lord of Guruvāyūr as Unnikṛṣṇa or Balakṛṣṇa.

The popularity of the Nama Japa or repetition of the holy name in Kerala, is also due to them. Villwamangalam II did not approve of his cousin's Nāma Japa always, in season and out of season without any regard to external purity⁹. He became a sanyasin and like Villwamangalam I he became the head of Thekkē Madam at Thrissur.

He was associated with every important temple in Kerala. He considered himself Guruvāyūrappan's greatest fan and claimed that he could see Him whenever and in whatever form he wished to see. Bhaktamāla, Sreechinnam, Purushakāram, Abhinavakaustubhamāla, Dakshinamūrthi sthavam, Kalavadhakavyam, Balakṛṣṇasthotram, Balagopalastuti, Bāvanamukuram, Ramachandrashtakam, Ganapathisthotram, Anubhavashtakam, Srikrṣṇavaradhashtakam, Vrindhavanasthotram etc are some of his works.

Another great devotee was Manjula who took over her mother's duty of making garlands to the Lord. While doing this work at the temple and at home she used to listen to the stories of Bhagavatham expounded by Melppattur, hear Ezhuthachan's Harinama Keerthanam and Jnanappana of Punthanam. All these inspired her. One day hoping to be back at Guruvāyūr for the noon puja, both the mother and Manjula went to another place. They were late in coming back. The temple closed after the night puja, by the time they arrived with the garland. Unable to bear this, Manjula fainted. Among the people who surrounded her, was Punthanam who advised her to regard the vigraha under the peepal tree as Guruvāyūrappā and adorn the garland on it. She then sped to the sacred peepul tree of the eastern nada¹⁰. There upon she considered the image there as the representative of SriGuruvāyūrappan and garlanded it. As a memory of this, even now great importance is given to this peepul tree.

Nowhere is the Bhagavatha discourse given so much importance as in Guruvāyūr. It is because of the indication stressed by Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi that in worshipping Guruvāyūrappan

nothing is more pleasing than the recitation of the Bhagavatha. Guruvāyūr has produced several preachers of divine glory, verily transporting the listeners to a blissful firmament of devotion. Among the names of such devotees, the name Kudallur Kunjikkavu come to our mind. At an early age he was inspired through mother's daily parayana of Tunjath Ezhuthachan's Puranas work. He learnt Sanskrit from his father. With this experience he began discourses at the age of twentyeight¹¹. A particular spot was selected in Guruvāyūr temple which came to be known as "kunjikkāvu's – corner". Like Punthanam and Kururamma, he also preached the efficacy of nāmajapa as the easiest way to salvation. He saw God in everything, inanimate and inanimate alike.(This shows his approach to the god is nearby). Perhaps it is with this view in mind, he entered the sanctum sanctorum at times and took away from there whatever he wanted.

Vazhakkunnam Vāsudēvan Nambuthiri in the earlier time was devoted to Śiva and prayed for getting richer. It was not for mukti. As a result, he suffered from an attack of rheumatism¹²All the medicines proved ineffective. After long contemplation he turned to Narayaneeyam. Each day's recitation of this work improved his health slowly and in due course he was completely cured. It was with this great relief that he became a staunch devotee of Guruvāyūrappan and shifted his residence to Guruvāyūr. He lived there for four years reciting Bhagavatha and Narayaneeyam in the temple for his own benefit and that of the people. He then followed the pursuit of religious enlightenment and worked for the awakening of the Hindu society. Thus he took religious discourses out of the temple to public

platforms. In recognition of his devotion and social service, the Maharaja of the Cochin conferred him the title of Bhaktasiromani¹³. Besides a monthly honorarium of Rs. twenty in 1946. The Bhagavatha discourses of enable many devotees to come to this temple and stay there.

Neelakanda guru¹⁴ who came to Guruvāyūr with a stomach ailment, served the lord and the devotees through Bhagavatha and Namasankeerthan. After getting the honourable Pattathanam at Tali temple his namajapa became a mass movement conducive to the welfare of the community. It was Sadguru who introduced Nama Saptaha yajna for the first time. From April 1940 Nama Saptaha was held every month in Kuthambalam. In 1942, at the time of the second world war, government issued directions to the people to pray for peace and welfare at Guruvayur temple. Kongot RamanKutty Nair, the Devaswom Manager of this temple called Conference for this. At this meeting Neelakanta Guru declared a firm conviction that the welfare of the world could be ensured by mass chanting of Narayana Manthra in front of Guruvayurappan. Thus mass Nama japa lasting for forty one days commenced on twentysixth December 1942 under the leadership of Sadguru. It was the universal prayer, "LokaSamasthah Sukino Bhavantu".

It was noteworthy that this movement gave an impetus to the bhakti cult through Namasankeertan and Namajapa. Namajapa is held for half an hour every evening and has become part of the daily ritual at Guruvāyūr.

Anjam Madhavan Nambuthiri's¹⁵ story is an entirely different one. A non-believer in the earlier stages he reluctantly went to Guruvāyūr with his Uncle who was then the head priest of the temple. Suffering from a chronic stomach complaint he was compelled to take the Lord's prasadam. After a few days, his stomach ailment vanished. Convinced of the divine presence at Guruvāyūr he stayed on there to become a great bhakta of the deity. In spite of himself his hands came together in obeisance to the Lord and his lips began to mumble Lord's name. This is how he made Guruvāyūr his permanent home. There has been no evening in Guruvāyūr without the half-hour namajapa at dusk. He was never tired of chanting into the devotees ears that Name is inseparable from form "Each divine name epitomises and enshrines a leela of the Lord. Constant recitation thus enthrones the Lord permanently in your mind". He was a messenger par excellence of Sri Guruvāyūrappan. Thus spreading goodwill among men in a distracted and distressed world. His seven day Bhagavatha discourses were a veritable treat.

While studying about the devotees we can see a notable man known as Rama Varma Appan Thampuran a senior member of the erstwhile Cochin royal family. A highly educated man he was holding a lucrative post at Calcutta. But he felt great dejection and was unhappy. As a result he renounced everything and undertook pilgrimages to the famous temples. On getting inspiration from other temples turned towards Guruvayur temple. Every month he did one Bhagavatha Saptaha. He served free Kanji for the people as there was scarcity of food grains. The expenditure incurred was met partly from his

own money and partly from the donations. This is being continued even today, thirteen years after his death on August sixteenth, 1979¹⁶.

Parameswaran Embranthiri another devotee had gone to a number of holy places. His last destination was the Guruvayur temple. After few days of bhajan in this temple, he decided to spend his remaining years here. He had a regular fixture in the temple from nirmalyam to Tripuka shine. He spent the night under the gopuram or on the steps of the shops Kalati Narayana Ayyer created a more suitable position for this to him (how to make money). As a result of his call for, Parameswaran Embranthiri joined in the Bhagavatha Discourses and in the Narayanajapa conducted by Mekkad Nilakanta Sadguru. He completed the recital of Namajapa three and half crores times and Bhagavatha parayana in one hundred and eight times. By recognising the suffering of the helpless, he built the asbestos shed in front of the eastern gopuram to provide shelter to the poor. He offered to conduct Vazhivadus for the devotees for which he received dakshina¹⁷. The savings from these was spent on Udayasthamana puja to the Lord.

The glory of the Lord of Guruvayur was propagated during this century by two illustrious personalities. One was the saint and scholar, Upanyasa Chakravarthi Sengalipuram Anantharama Dikshitar who created number of inimitable Upanyasams (discourses). Other was, the mighty Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar through his divine music. Dikshitar was suffering from Leprosy. Without losing hope¹⁸ he became a firm believer of Guruväyurappan. As a result of praying a number of days, he was cured. Meanwhile of this, he came to pray before the deity with a curable prayer. Being dissatisfied, he again visited

the temple to pray before the deity to the amazement of everyone. The miracle was wrought by the fervent recitation of Narayaneeyam. His purity brought a profound effect in him. He eventually lead the attention of many to Lord Guruvāyūrappan, through discourses on the Ramayana or Mahabharatha or Bhagavatha. It was through this that he could attract many people towards this temple. During one of his discourses in Madras, he drew the attention of the audience to the scarcity of rice for daily Naivēdyams. As a result the Tamil Nadu government soon sanctioned the rice required for Guruvāyūr. His belief in the god was so deep that he helped the devotees, through another government.

Another great devotee was the beneficiary musician Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavather. His musical recitals started at the age of twelve in 1907¹⁹. Right from the age of twenty, he selected a particular day for his regularity in singing. It was the Vrischika Ekadasi day of this temple²⁰. While singing in an important place, he was in an inconsolable stage ie he lost his voice²¹. Taking one months treatment, he regained it by the Lord's grace. In order to forbid all prohibitions he desired to start the recovered song as on "Vatapi Ganapathi". He had done this on the belief that if the reflection of sound mix in the play, it will increase. With this view he continues his singing till his death begin with Vātapi Ganapati. That is the reason for the yearly celebration of the Chembai Music Festival in this temple. He gave concerts which were attended by a large number of devotees.

(In keeping his eagerness in the fullness of the desire) Chembai performed the Udayāsthamana pūja at the Guruvāyūr temple. Till that

time no one could get this power²². It is with his great influence led others to do the same for their success in this field.

At the time of Malabar mutiny, the Valiya Raja of Nilambur with his family had evacuated to Thrissur, leaving his extensive property to the mercy of the Lord. He prayed that he would offer one of his twelve elephants to the Lord if He saved all the property from the mutineers²³. Since the property was saved he kept his word. For the first time in history, the Golden Jubilee of the services of an elephant to the temple was celebrated at Guruvayur in 1973²⁴. The title of honor “Gajarajan” was awarded to Kesavan, the elephant.

While spending sorrowful days without having a child, Cherukunnathu Nambuthiri was advised by Kunjikkavu to go Guruvāyūr. As a result of his perceptive bhajan, (in the Satisfied view) he offered a dedicated elephant known Padmanabhan. At that time this temple had only one or two elephants. As his illam²⁵ swelled with more and more children the number of elephants there increased with the coming of Padmanabhan. As a result Anakkottil was transferred to Punnathur Kotta, four kilometres from Guruvāyūr in the northwestern direction. Another notable name is of the elephant Lakshmikutty, who had the privilege many times to carry the Thidambu on her head. Now about fifty elephants are there belonging to this temple.

Guruvayur temple has some special greatness. Great devotees throng to the temple. In this generation the foremost were the Chembakasserri Nambuthiri and Desavarman. These utthama

Brahmanas²⁶ without desperation in being childless, considered Unnikrṣṇa as their child and donated their wealth to this temple.

The above mentioned account of the devotees enable us to draw some conclusions. Firstly, the devotees works aroused intense feelings among the people who worship the form of Īswara and make offerings without any desire for results. Personal devotion to Viṣṇu, thinking of Him, repeating his names, wearing his marks, worshipping in his temples, are a full substitute for all other acts of moral or devotional or contemplative merit. Another aspect is they possessed a rare quality of bhakti. In those great souls, who from the very dawn of their earthly existence, feel an innate longing to experience the divine bliss and serve at the divine feet. From their birth, though they had another attention, the God set on one great consummation. The result comes their own way which are to be known for ever. This bhakti is innate being born with them and conferred on them unasked.

Another notable point of view is that though constructed as a Viṣṇu temple, it became known as a Kṛṣṇa temple. Vaisnavism found expressions in the avatars of Kṛṣṇa and Rama. In Kerala, the human representation of the Kṛṣṇā's view influenced more devotees. As a character in the epic, the devotees accepted Kṛṣṇa as a war prince, a hero, very brave. (But above all very crafty like all the figures, however retaining in a marked way of the mythic impress). Moreover, he was affectionate to the boys and girls of the Gopas and tried to please everybody. This is all that is known as a historical fact. His worship is so popular that his devotees regard him not as a mere incarnation of Viṣṇu but as the supreme Lord Himself.

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21. Narayanan Nambutiri, Op cit, At the very moment,Chembi's student Pumully Ramafan Vaidya politely welcomed him to his mana. As a result of his one months treatment Chembai was recovered. p.59.
22. Mathrubhumi Guruvāyūr supplyment, Op cit, p. 13.
23. Vaidyanathan K.R., Op cit. p.172.
24. Ibid, p.174.
25. Krishna Ayyar K.V., Guruvāyūr Charithram, Op cit,p. 110.
26. Ibid, p.153.

CONCLUSION

By the eighth century vaisnavism had developed into a spiritual and intellectual cult in which salvation could be attained only by a complicated and secret ritual administered exclusively by the Brāhmins. It was at this moment that a number of heretical movements arose and challenged the authority of the Brāhmins and offered the opportunity of personal salvation to the individual. The vigour and power of the great change brought about by scholars came in the final phase of this religion. It represents the complete unity of worship and worshippers. Although the division of worship between the devotees of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Kṛṣṇa may appear clearly defined. Then and now, all these gods are but manifestations of one god, the Great Lord in His final and ineffable form.

The Bhakti movement provided the real impetus to temple architecture. This had its effects in Kerala too. It was only with the rise of organized religions that centres of religious worship came to be established in Kerala. The construction of temples edifices began in Kerala in the ninth century A.D. It received an impetus under the Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram. Kerala was fortunate during this period in having a favorable balance of trade. This explains the generous donations made for the construction of temples. The vast majority of the ancient Hindu temples of Kerala had their origin during this period.

Thrissur region was a religious centre in Kerala in the medieval period. It had Buddhist and Jain shrines. Sankaracharya also was

attracted to this region. As a result of the influence of the devotees the Vaisṇava temples were constructed. These show the strength of Vaisṇavism in Thrissur. A major difference between Kerala and other parts of south India, a number of idols without any differentiation of cults were consecrated in one temple in Kerala. This was a method of assimilation. The savants of the Bhakti movement also instituted arts and festivals to popularize this.

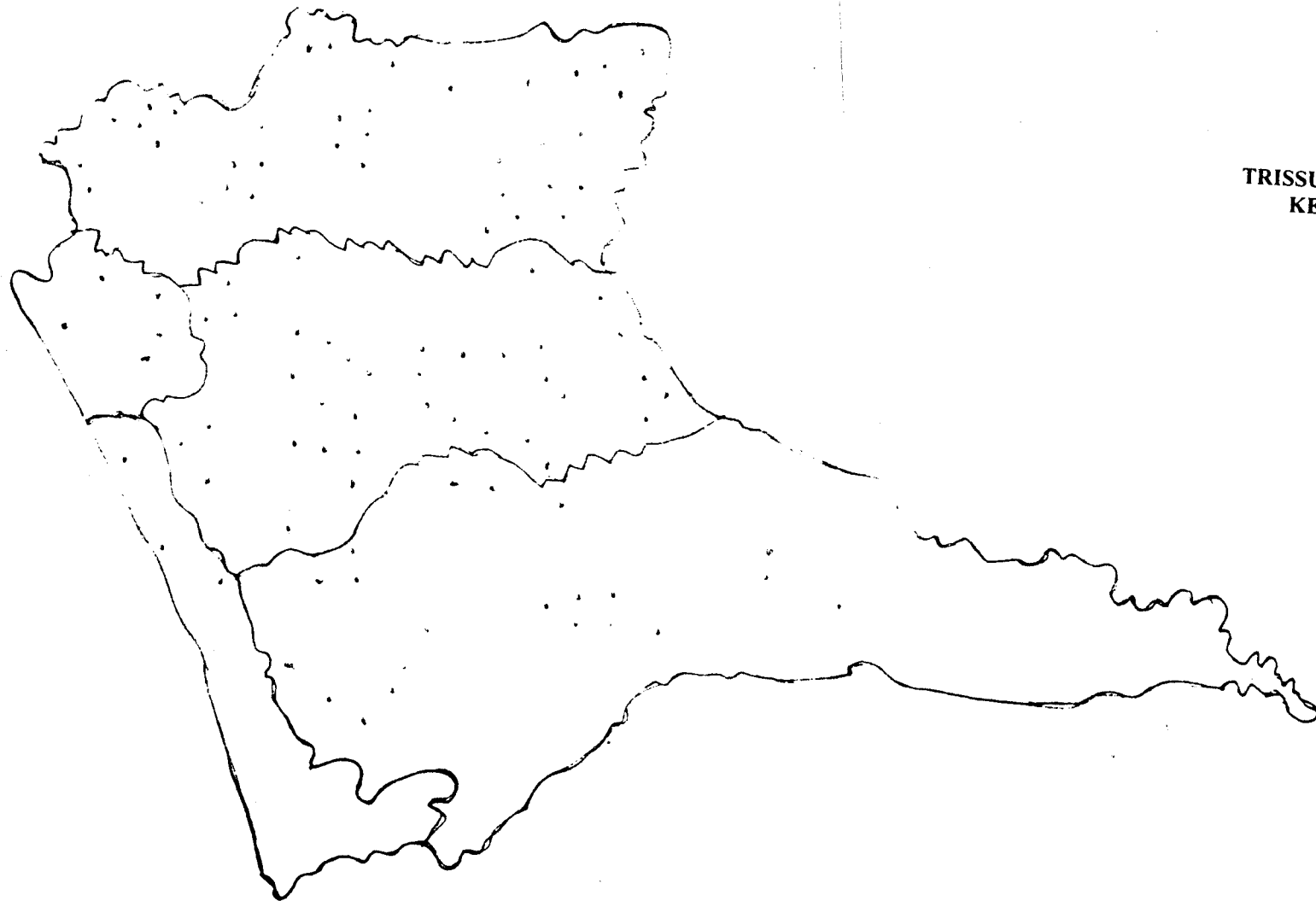
Generally temples in Kerala are divided into four on the basis of the relationship with Griha, Grama, Desa an Rajya. Guruvayur temple was in the beginning a gramakshetra. As years passed on, it became a Rajyakshtra. The temples is in the Pallava style with Kerala styles added to it.

Inscriptions and various Literary works refer to the Guruvāyūr temple. In the modern period, judicial records and reports of various committees provide us with different aspects of this temple.

The notable point is that though the size of the temple is not very big it gained supreme power and because of this it became Rajyakshetra. The composition whole is ponderous. Wooden beams and brackets were the main features. The Adhistana, Gavaksha, Niche, Pranalā and ridged roof of the Guruvāyūr temple are considered to be of the Pallava model. Earlier scholars opined that the Pallavas also marked the making of the sculptural forms. The adhistana was fenced with an iron railing. Sopanam of the sanctum sanctorum is situated in the latitudinal way of three steps on each side. The next interesting and beautiful feature is the Vilakkumatam. The 6684 lamps fitted in the

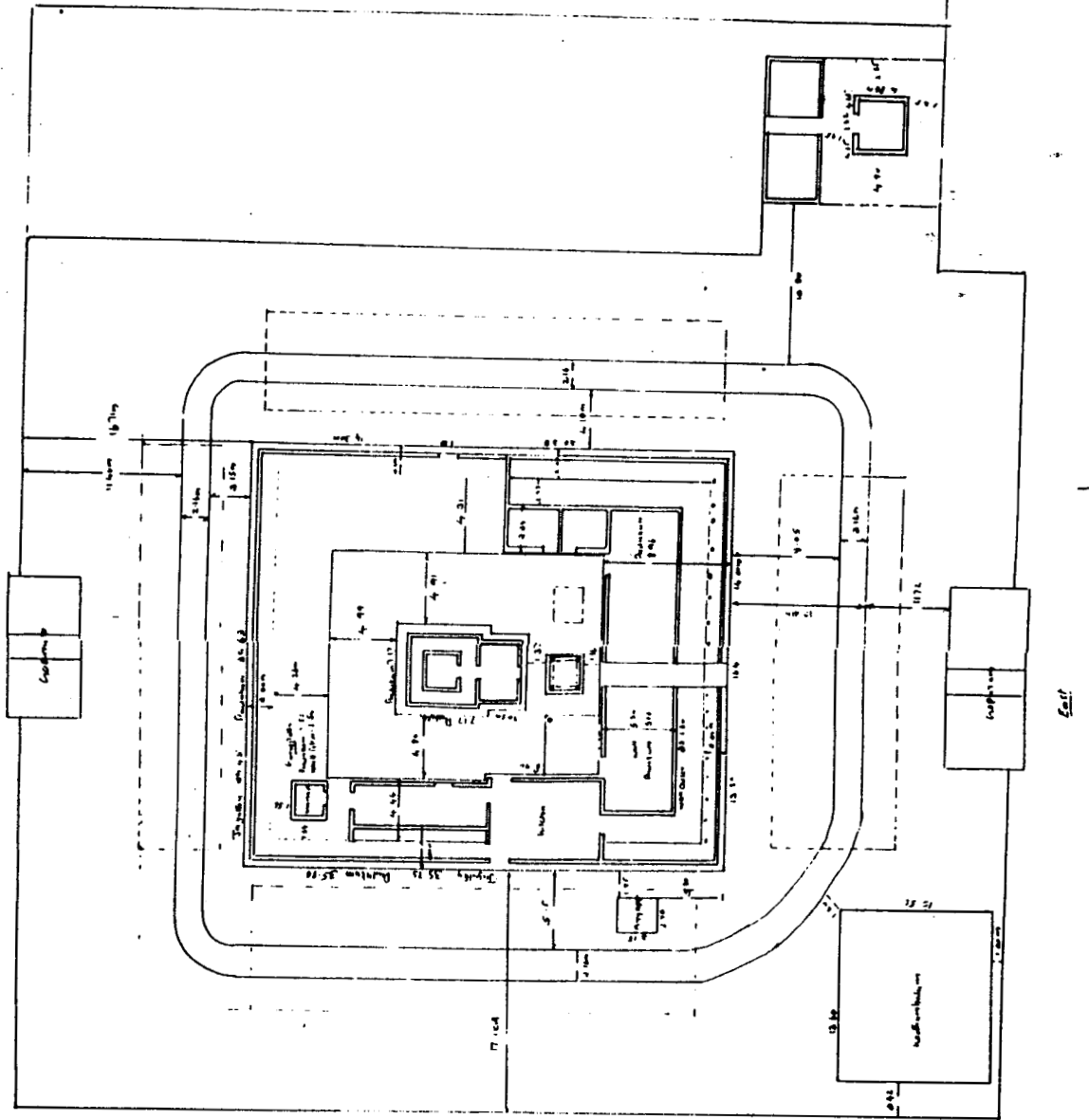
copper frame is like a square shaped of its full burning even in the far sight. The repaired parts of the temple - Sreekovil; Mandapas and Kūthambalam, have coverings on the top with copper sheets. The disastrous fire was the reason to fit the copper frame in place of wooden frame. These and the extent of valiambalam are the good looking features of the temple. The erotic motifs to be seen in the upper parts of the chuttambalam is conceived of as a creative force which has power to revivify things. It is used to indicate the fertility cult. Fertility in the broader sense includes both its primary purposes of multiplication and revitalization of animals, vegetation, earth and human beings. Here, we have to note an important point - the disappearance of all creatures and ever the perennial nature of the abode of the God. The sculptures of the devotees and the figure of the Kesava, the temple elephant- all features of these figures could be found in the modern period. With regard to the Iconographical study, Das Gupta opined in his work that the images of the medieval period tend to be more ornamental than those of the ancient ones. Considering the early iconography of Viṣṇu it is very simple representing only in one form which must have been the only established form of the Viṣṇu image. It belonged to an early age. The techniques of the painting mainly depend on the materials found in the vicinity of the worker and on the capacity to make use of them. The murals of the Guruvāyūr temple are in the best traditions of the Hindu temple art. The main reason to impress the mural paintings on the exterior walls of the Sanctum is that it could not dissolve easily because of the binding material used in it. Different from this, the frescoe painting is applied to the surface through chemical action.

Distribution of Vaisnava Temples in Trichur District



**TRISSUR (District)
KERALA**

Plan of Guruvayur Temple



Courtesy Padmasamhitha

157 H



View of the Guruvayur Temple From South East



View of the Guruvayur Temple From North Side



Procession during the Festival Occasion



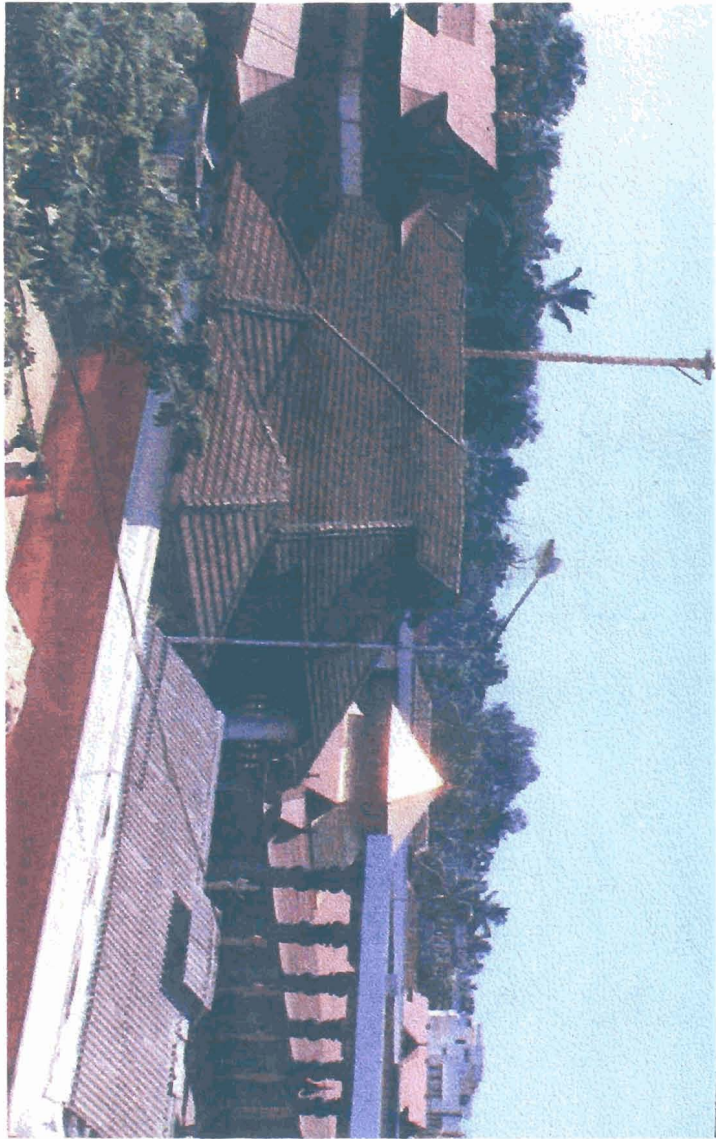
Roof of the Sanctum Sanctorum



**The Sculpture of Garuda under the Manjula
Kizhakke Nada**



**Mural Painting on the Western wall of the
Sanctum Sanctorum**





Krishnanattam

Glossary

Aarati	The concluding rite of a puja in which lamps are lit to the deity called deeparadhana
Aarattu	Bathing festival
Abhishekam	Rite of bathing the deity
Adharma	Sin, opposite of Dharma
Adhistana	Basement
Agrasala	Dining hall
Akakoyma	Inside ruler
Al	Name of the Peepul tree
Alamkaram	Decoration
Ambalavasi	Temple attendant
Ana	Elephant
Annaprasna	Feeding with rice; the term usually refers to the first ceremonial feeding of a child with solid food
Appam	Food
Appan	Father
Archana	Offer of flowers to the deity
Arddhamandapa	Raised platform

Asrama	Hermitage
Athazam	Food offerings at night
Avatara	Incarnation
Bali	Sacrifice
Belikkallu	Altar
Bhajan	Worship
Bhakta	Devotee
Bhakti	Devotion to god
Bhagavan	God
Bulbuous	shaped like a bulb
Caturasra	Square
Cella	Small chamber
Chamaram	Fly - Whisk
Chadya	Flat roof
Cloister	Passages usually surrounding an open square
Colonnade	Series of columns
Column	Vertical support, pillar
Dakshina	South
Darshan	Glimpse of the Lord
Deepasthambha	Pillar of lights

Deeparadhana	Aarati
Desa	District
Devaswom	The authority which administers the temple
Dharma	Moral law
Dry masonry	Stones laid without mortar or any adhesive
Dvitala	Second storey
Dwarapala	Door Keeper
Dwajasthambha	Lofty Pillar
Edayil	Between
Ekadasi	The eleventh day of the moon
Entablature	Upper portion of a structure supported by a colonnade
Erotic	Love or Amatory
Fanam	28 Paise
Fenestration	With windows or openings
Gajan	Elephant
Garbhagriha	The most sacred part of a temple(SanctumSanctorum)
Gavaksha	Structural Opening
Gramma	Village
Griha	House

Goporam	Monumental gateway
Guru	A Preceptor
Gurudakshina	Offering
Hara	A String literally, and connotes the string of the shrine - miniatures that run over the parapet of each Tala
Icon	Image
Iconography	Illustration of figures
Illam	Household of the Nambuthiri
Leela	Play
Kaliyuga	The age of Kali
Kalabhabhishekam	An ointment with sandal paste
Kalyana	Marriage
Kanikka	Offering
Kapotika	Dove designs
KilSanti	Assistant priest
Kshethra	Temple
Kudiyanmar	The People who occupy the land owned by the people
Kura	New dress worn in special day

Kumbha	Sacred water pot
Kudu	Arched Window
Kuthambalam	Temple of dance auditorium attached to a temple
Kuthu	Literally dance
Janma	Birth
Jnana	Spiritual Knowledge
Jnani	A knower of reality
Leela	Play
Malar	Puffed rice
Madappalli	Temple Kitchen
Manasara	Ancient Indian Architectural treatise
Mandapam	Raised platform or Pavilion
Mathilakam	Temple courtyard
Melkoyma	Head priest (over all ruler)
MelSanti	Head priest
Moksha	Libaration from the cycle
Muhurtham	Auspicious moment
Mural	Wall decoration
Nada	Gateway
Naduvil	Middle

Nai	Ghee
Nalambalam	The structure around the sanctum also called
Nalika	1.6 Kilometre
Namasankeerthana	Singing the praises of the Lord
Nakshatra	Star
Nampiti	Nambuthiri
Nasika	Representing small dormer windows on Kapotas, Prastaras and Sikhra roofs; shaped essentially in the form of the original Budhists chaitya dormer
Navarathri	Nine night
Navagraha	Nine planets
Niche	Recess in wall for the reception of a statue
Nirmalyam	The previous day's decorations still on the Lord also immaculate
Nirapara	Offer of a measure of rice for the deity
Niskala	The non manifest
Nrittam	Dance
Nyvedyam	Food offering to the Lord
Octagonal	Eight sided

made for discharge of abhiseka water from within the garbhagriha to the prakara both for drainage as well as for ritual utilisation by the devotees.

Prasadam	Literally divine grace
Prasnam	Astrological investigation
Prema	Love, devotion
Puja	Worship
Purakoyma	Outside ruler
Purana	Sacred legend
Rajya	Country
Rasa	Purely spiritual expression
Sahasram	Thousand
Sakala	The fully manifest
Salagrama	Sacred stone found in the river bed of the Gandak in Nepal and worshipped by Vaisnavas
Sama	Equal
Sastra	Sacred Lore, Science
Sattvic	One of the three gunas, this being the most virtuous
Sikhara	Tower over the shrine

Siveli	Procession of the Deity
Sloka	Couplet
Sopanam	Steps leading to the Sanctum
Sraddha	Death Anniversary
Sreekovil	Sanctum Sanctorum
Sthamaba	Pillar
Sthotras	Hymns of praises
Tala	Storey
Thaluk	Sub region of the town
Tangible	Defenite, clearly intelligible
Thekke	Southern
Tripuka	Fumigation of the central shrine and the temple with nine odoriferous gums in a silver tray
Uchcha	Noon
Udayasthamana	From sunrise to sunset
Uralumgamam	Of seven consisting of Chomana, Sneithyur or Jneliyur, Trithala, Tattamangalam, Pullaneli, Arimbur and Mallisseri
Uriamadam	Suspending pots in the Uttupura
Ushah	Early Morning

Utsavam	Temple Festival
Utsava vigraha	Processional deity
Utsava bali	Oblations made to altars during festivals
Uttupura	Dining hall
Valiya	Eldest
Vaikunta	Celestial abode of MahaVisnu
Varna	Caste
Vatilmata	Raised platforms for feeding devotees
Vayana	Reading
Vazhivadu	Offerings to the deity
Vella	White
Vis'warupa	Cosmic form
Vrata	Observation of austerities
Yogi	Sannyasin

APPENDIX I

Nalayira Divya Prabhandam

Nalayira Divya Prabandham composed between seventh and ninth centuries constitute the chief source for the study of early bhakti movement in the Tamil region. Alvars were Ekantikas, who worshipped Visnu alone. Their verses consisted chiefly in the acquisition of true knowledge of the god. Legendarily the first three Alvars, born as amsharupa of Visnu was known as Adi Alvars. They wandered where ever they can, by singing Visnu Stuti. Perhaps Rama or Krsna bhakti does not take root in southern Region. Their minds often covered with Parabrahma. Their verses known as Tiruvanthati for the end of the first verses became the first word of the next verses. With the first Alvars, the practise of Visnu piety consisted chiefly in the acquisition of true knowledge of the god and the propagation of that knowledge among the masses.

We can see austerities in Andal's work. The cosmic form of Visnu became humanized and localized following the disappearance of Andal in the Ranganatha temple. In this way Alvars endeared themselves to hundreds of devotees around the chief centres of worship. The aim of Thirimalisai is the acknowledge of the importance of Visnu to the world. The deviation was intended to introduce and propagate the idea of divine condescension. This is evident from the hymns of Nammalvar. His Tiruviruttam verses also stress the necessity of a simple common ritual conducive to the practice of

Visnu piety. The whole poem of Kulasekhara stresses religious intoxication towards the god Visnu.

Their view pointed out that it was His grace to humanity that makes Him an avatara without losing His infinite nature. He stands, in His love of every Human Being, like the father, mother, self and so on. This easy accessibility enables man to cross the ocean of transmigratory existence without any difficulty, and is noticeable in every avatara. The path of self surrender (prapatti) which the Alvars advocate is characterised by no restriction in regard to knowledge social status and observance. These deities were endowed with local habitation and a name in temples. Each important temple was associated with the lives of the saints. Alvars established a direct parallel between his descent into the temple image and into the heart of the bhakta.

References

1. The Cultural Heritage of India vol. IV, Op cit, "Historical Evolution" of Sri - vaisnavism in South India, V. Rangacharya, p. 164.

APPENDIX II

Name of the Vaisnava Temples in Thrissur District

A). **Thalappilli Thaluk:**

Nambuzha, Mulikkalam, Manathala, Acchur, Arthat, Eranellur, Kadavallur, Edayur, kondur, Painkulangara, Thichur Ayiraniora, Rshimanna, Nelluvai, Azhayannur, Karumarakkad, Tiruvillwamala, Cheruthrikkovu, Mannur kunnam, Thencheri, Odittakuttala, Pandaram, Pattadi, Ravipuramangalam, Thamara thuruthi, Kuruvathur, Vettekkorumakan, Edathrikkov, Vadasseri, Srikandapuram, Thrikkanavu, Kadukkasseri, Thalakkottukara (31).

B) **Thrissur Thaluk:**

Thiruvanath, Manathitta, Ramanchira, Achuthapuram, Kattippilli, Srinarayana swami temple, Bhatapriyam, kulasseri, Mudappilav, Thenkulangara, Keeramkulam, Sreedhara Mangalam, Vadakkekka, Edathiri, Karumukku, Koottala, Pazhuvam, Vendarasseri, Perumanam, Kurumbilav, Cherusseri, Srikrishnapuram (Vallachira), Nherusseri, Chittankara, Thottipal, Thevar, Mambilli, Varanakulam, Kottamkulam, Kadayikulm, Puranattukara, Muthuvara, Kuttumukku, Cheruthrikkovu, Navathrikkovil, Sreekrishna puram (Vilvattam), Pisharikkal, Chengazhithrikkovu, Thiruvekatam, Karoru, Uthram Kulangara, Nettisseri, Mukkattukara (42).

C). Mukundapuram Thaluk:

Thanur, Elambilakkadu, Mukundapuram, Vattapparambu, Murkkanadu, Anuruli, Edathutt, Sridharamangalam, Kanchirappilli, Parijathapuram, Chirangara, Annamanada, Putiyedam, Thirunarayanapuram, Chovvara Krishnaswami (15).

D). Kodungallur Taluk:

Naduvathusseri, Sivakrishnapuram, Thrikkulasekharapuram, Mettala, Krishnapuram (5).

E). Chavakkad Thaluk:

Guruvayur, Manigramam, Triprayar (3).

References

The Temples List Under the Devaswom of Cochin, May 1990, CDB Press, JCR.

APPENDIX III

Survey of Kiletams of the Guruvayur Temple

Guruvayur, as already noted was a temple with a number of Kiletams under it mainly based on festivals. These Kiletams have a history of their own closely associated with that of Guruvayur. In the past, they were owned by the local chieftain, when the British acquired Chowghat, they enacted the Regulation of 1817 which controlled the working of these shrines.

The government control, however never continued for long. The administration was vested in a committee chosen as per Act XX of 1863. It gave way to the Act of 1951 (Act X1X) Madras government as amended in 1954. The Guruvayur Devaswom Act, 1971 effected in Kerala which brought out great changes in the working of the Kiletam. At present, Guruvayur temple functions as the sun around which these subordinate shrines revolve and a part of the income of Guruvayur is being spent on the Kiletam.

Of the Kiletams, seven are Siva temples, nine are Durga Shrines, three are dedicated to Ayyappan, five to Visnu, two to His incarnations, one to Ganapathy and the rest three are already extinct¹. Of the subshrines; the most important in point of time and antiquity is Mammiyur. The place is about half a Kilometre north west of Guruvayur. The temple Mahatmyas has it that it was Mammiyur Siva who had spotted the place to install the idol at Guruvayur. It pointed out the origin of Siva shrine at Mammiyur even more ancient than the Guruvayur temple. Tradition says that Mammiyur which was in a flourishing

condition later declined due to the curse of a Brahmin, thus paving the way for the rise of Guruvayur. So that it is believed that one should pray here also after worshipping Guruvayurappan, in order to derive in full measure the blessings of Bhagawan. A sanskrit couplet describes Mammiyur Siva as one who gives boons to the worshippers². The transformation of the word Mammiyur to Ambapuram is cited to show the prevalence of the cult of mother goddess in the locality³. In the locality there exists the Mammiyur kalari which is closely associated with the Guruvayur temple⁴. It was Panikkars of the kalari who spotted by Devaprasnam the exact location of the Utsava vigraha kept at Ambalapuzha during the Mysorean interregnum (twelfth vrischika 968 K E) and the sacred conch which was found to be missing. In recognition of the services rendered, the Devaswom granted to the Panikkars certain privileges which they continued to enjoy to the present day.

Of the other Siva shrines affiliated to Guruvayur, the Chovallur shrine is important for an inscription related to Guruvayur Brahmakulam for its tank. Peruntatta for a few stone inscriptions, big ay outs and huge walls supposed to be destroyed by Tippu. During his invasion camped here for a while, and the temporary mental disturbances occurred to him had been cured when he offered tender coconut water to the deity. Thereafter he abandoned the plan of plundering the temple and granted a free gift of rent, free land to the temple⁵. The Parampan Tali temple is almost in ruins and seems to be of the several Talis administered by Taliyatiris. At present it is patronised by the Alvanchery Thamprakkal. The Perumanur temple(Kunniseeri,Valappanad) was acquired by the Zamorin and transferred to Guruvayur in 1365. The Thalakkattukara

temple, Kunnamkulam is notable for its double sree kovils with the same chuttambalam.

Of the Durga shrines, the pride of place may be given to the Edathedathu Kavu. Its location in the vicinity of the main shrine led to the belief that it is an upadevata shrine. The existence of an hereditary oracle in Tiyyati Nampiyar however suggests that it was an ancient Bhadrakali temple and certainly more ancient than the Guruvayur shrine. Azhal, the most important offering to the Goddess here, may be the replica of an early fire dance⁶. Of the remaining Durga temples, Tiruvenkitam was originally a Visnu shrine, (the head less statue of Visnu is there even now). But Decent image of Durga placed on the south east corner of the Cuttambalam is worshipped. This temple was previously under the management of the Perumpally family. Later it was transferred to Mallisseri. The management of the Marutayur temple is vested at present in four Nair families. In Narayanankulangara, the deity is that of Visnu maya. The Shrine was formally associated with the extinct Snethiyur Illam. It is half a kilometer to the north of Mammiyur. The Ayyankulangara and Kuruvayur kulangara is also the kiletam of the Guruvayur temple. The Kuruvayurkulangara, so far unidentified might have come into existence after Etathedathu Kavu and it also used to participate in the Minapuram. In the Paluvayi shrine managed by the Punnathur chief, puram was replaced by Vela. The Chettialukkal temple was associated with Guruvayur from antiquity as is shown by the copper plate records preserved in the latter and also by an old Dravida inscription found in the former.

Among the Visnu shrines Srikantapuram of Tamarayur is believed to have fell a pray to the Mysorean onslaughts. The local tradition says that the image, a beautiful four armed deity was deliberately reduced to fragments and the remnants were collected and kept in a pot to be worshipped. The Manigramam shrine is at present one of the seven temples under Ariyannur of the Tiruvillwamala group of devaswom. An Ayyappa image placed in the south east corner of the temple resembles that of the Buddha in penance, but wears a sacred thread. The Thattamangalam shrine is one of the few temples of South India which has an imposing image of Garuda. Two sub shrines are dedicated to the Avatars of Visnu. The Balabhadra temple, Nenmeni belonging to the Illam of the same name has its deity, the lord of the agriculturists. As bhagavata refers to his visit to Kerala (Keralam Stutigarthathal) and as he is the elder brother of Krsna, Balabhadra's presences in Guruvayur may be justified. The very word Nelmani (rice) calls to the mind rice, a natural product of Kerala and it is a fitting place to the lord of the former. The Parthasarathy temple, Tiruthiyil is the most popular subshrine. It situates a few meters to the north of the Manjulal on the east nada. The usual reference to the deity as Tiruthiyil has a Tamil cannatation. Hence the view that it is an abbreviation of the word Tirutheril Tevar. The legend claims great antiquity to this temple. Tradition says that Sankaracharya consecrated the image which he brought from the Ganges and that his disciples had developed it into Mahakshetra. The Ekadasi festival which was formally associated with this temple came to be celebrated with the Guruvayur temple. The temple is at present recovering its old glory. Among the remaining shrines, Anjiyur Ayyappan used to come to Guruvayur on Kumba Tiruvatira. The Chingankavu has its deity seated

upon a lion; and the Kulikkatu Trukkovil is the only Kiletam dedicated to the Ganapathy. The extinct or defunct Kiletams are those of One Iliyur, Chempakasseri and Desavarma all failed to stand the ravages of time and have disappeared leaving no trace behind.

From the foregoing survey of the Kiletams, we may draw certain inferences. [1] Guruvayur temple had sway over a wide area in the past. Its authority was not confined to Chowghat Amsom alone. But it extended to Iringur, Kunnisseri and to such far off places like Tattamangalam, Perumanur and Tiruvillwamala. In short, the whole of South Malabar the concept of a greater Guruvayur was thus in the womb of time. [11] Some of the Kiletams, particularly those where Siva and Durga are worshipped older than Guruvayur itself (for eg. Mammiyur and Etathedathukavu) where Krsna is worshipped. If the tradition of Siva withdrawing to Mammiyur is co related to this factor, we may say that the Krsna cult has a precedence over the other two in these areas. The Visnu shrines in and around the Parthasarathy and Balabhadra shrines nearly show the temple. IV] These Kiletams had a historical development. Most of them were originally family shrines of the seventy two Brahmin Illams. They were in a flourishing condition as it is testified to by the remnants of buildings and the celebration of festivals. A few of them were already defunct consequent on the decline of the original Illams. Tippu's invasion might have given a coup de grace to some of them. [V] The Kiletams deserve a more detailed and deeper study as they may throw new light on the history of the Guruvayur temple. Temples like Chovallur, Parampan Tali, Mammiyur and Cettialukkal may yield inscriptional and archaeological dates for such a study. They may throw

side light on such aspects of Kerala History as the rule of Taliyatiris (Parampantali), the decline of Buddhism (Manigramam) and the Mysorean raid (Perumthatta), provided the sources are tapped carefully. [VI] They may also provide material for a care study of the socio economic role of the Kerala temple.

In the Kiletams, majority of them are saivite temples. On the basis of the epigraphical study some are considered as the ancient temples. But on architectural basis Guruvayur temple is entirely different from these temples. At that time the devotees gave prime importance in fertility agriculture and safeness. Through their experience the devotees became of bravery, wisdom, and widen their mental power. Thus vested their faith in this supreme god. All the temple workers deeds and all others deep faith causes to increase the coming of the devotees in the Guruvayur temple.

References

1. K. V. Krishna Ayyar, Guruvayur Charithram Op cit,p.
2. K. V. Krishna Ayyar fixes the number of Kiletams as 20. But an “on the spot study” reveals that there are altogether 30 such temples in the area which are connected with the Guruvayur temple in one way or the other.
3. It is pointed out that the word Ambapuram later corrupted itself into Ammayur and then to Mammiyur. But it is the other way

round - Ammayur transformed into Ambapuram consequent on the sanskritisation of place names.

4. It is pointed out that the word Ambapuram.
5. Ramakrishnan, Mammiyur Guruvayurile Vighrahavum Mammiyur Kalariyum in G T R U S pp. 310 – 13.
6. Ponani Taluk - 46. 02 acre, Guruvayur Amsham - 458. 32 acre Kozhokode Collectorate Inam Records Five Folio. In spite of this he donated 3000 pagoda for this temples festival.

APPENDIX IV

Renovation work in 1970 Fire

The devastating fire on the night of November 29,1970, which destroyed parts of the temple in the rear and on the sides necessitated the reconstruction and renovation of this immortal temple. Soon a Temple Renovation Committee was constituted with the Minister in charge of Religious Endowments as the President and the late Sri Kelappan as the working president. K. K. Menon, who had worked for many years as executive officer of the famous temples -- Madurai, Tiruchendur, Srirangam, Palani etc was appointed as the Special Officer and Secretary of the Committee.

Sri E. Madhavan Nair, Superintending Engineer, buildings, Tiruvananthapuram, Sri K. Rajagopalan, Chief Engineer, FACT Engineering and Design Organisation, Udyogamandal. Sri Chennas Parameswaran Nambutirippad, Tantri of Guruvayur temple. Sri Kannippayyur Sankaran Nambutirippad and Sri Easwara Varrier of Trippunnithura,experts in Thachusastras – a science of architecture. By considering the necessity, some changes were taken in renovating time.

- 1) To provide for the maximum convenience of the devotees whose number has been increasing day by day.
- 2) To preserve the traditional style of Kerala temple architecture, and to avoid as far as possible Inflammable material.

Accordingly, the main proposals of renovatio formulated by the expert committee were :

- 1) Widening of the entrance doors at the east and the west sides of the temple.
- 2) To have a granite wall all along the Chuttambalam behind the Vilakkumatam.
- 3) To bring down the raised platform of the Chuttambalam to the ground level to create more moving space around the Sreekovil.
- 4) To have beautifully carved granite pillars in place of the wooden ones all along with Chuttambalam.
- 5) To have a beautiful sculpture of Anantasayanam on the west side of the Nalambalam in place of the old painting which was destroyed by fire.
- 6) To reconstruct the Ganapati shrine in granite with space all around for circumambulation.
- 7) To renovate the temple kitchen and reduce the size of the platform in front of it for keeping naivedyam so as to make more moving space around the namaskara mandapam.
- 8) To reconstruct the entire Vilakkumatam Which was the source of the disastrous fire as of its earlier wooden stand fit for the lambs.

All these proposals were subjected to prasnam. As a result, with the exception of the first proposal all were found acceptable to the Lord and were accordingly carried out.

As prescribed by the astrologers, the work was started on 1st May 1971 between 4 and 5 a. m. The foundation stone was laid by his Holiness Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Pithadhipati Sri Sankaracharya Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal.

In the eighth century Adi Sankaracharya was stopped in his celestial journey and made to get down at Guruvayur established the puja routine. Twelve centuries later, this Sankaracharya too had to change his set tour programme to participate in a function that gave shape to the new plan for the reconstruction of the temple. Link with this it is said that the best stones available are at Ambasamudram in Tamil Nadu, those found near Guruvayur have been acknowledged by experts to excel them. The cost of the first stage renovation amounted to about Rupees twenty six lakhs.

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APPENDIX V

GURUVAYUR SATYAGRAHA

Guruvayur temple became the scene of the famous Satyagraha which took place in 1931 - 32. This satyagraha brought the temple to all India notice and made it a part of the progressive social and political movement of the present century.

Untouchability and Unapproachability were looked upon as great social evils by people of the progressive outlook in Kerala. To some extent, the popular attention was diverted from the political struggle against the British to the social sphere in Malabar.¹ The Indian National Congress which had as its goal the uplift of the down trodden took the initiative and led the campaign for the eradication of untouchability in the state. K. Kelappan, the president of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee, declared "Untouchability as such has not been completely removed. It has only been driven to and concerned in temples."²

As the A.I.C.C. was not in favor of starting the campaign in the native states ; it entrusted Kelappan to choose a suitable place for the same in Malabar. By recognizing the facts that the depressed classes were numerous and the majority of the Hindus favor their admission to this temple he chose Thrissur. Thus Guruvayur became the storm - center of the anti untouchability campaign in South India.

The great temple entry campaign was inaugurated by Kelappan on fifth September 1931.³ Propagandists like Madhavanar, Moyarath

Sankaran Nambiyar and A.K.Gopalan toured the whole of Ponnani Thaluk. They addressed several public meetings at such places as Trithala, Kottapadi, Andathode, Edapal, Kumaranallur, Pattambi and Pallipuram. A committee headed by Mannan was entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the 0campaign. Meanwhile a Jatha of sixteen volunteers from Cannore^{an} led by Hariswaran Thirumumpu reached Guruvayur (31st October).⁴ As scheduled, the satyagraha began at 9 A.M. on first November 1931. Accompanied by a long procession led by Mannam, Kelappan and others, the satyagrahi's approached the eastern Gopura singing slogans like "go away untouchability, go away satan had no place in the sacred door step of the Lord". This day is celebrated all over Kerala and outside as "All Kerala Temple Entry Day" accompanied by the processions, meeting and Bhajan. Thus November 1st became a memorable day in the history of Social reform movements in Kerala and in the annals of the Guruvayur temple as well.

However, on November seventh, Subramanya Thirumumpu was arrested for writing an article which was considered as treasonable. Later, Rajaji and Nariman visited Guruvayur and justified the continuance of the satyagraha simultaneously with the freedom struggle. In an editorial, the Mathrubhumi cautioned that the struggle would not reach fruition by merely submitting memorials to the government and filing cases in the courts. as the satyagraha progressed, sporadic instances of violence were reported. The satyagrahi's were attacked, beaten up mercilessly and their leader A.K.Gopalan was assaulted. The angry mob then removed the thorny fences by force. This led to the closure of the temple(in 1932). A new committee of twelve headed by Mannom, was constituted in order to

continue the struggle. Meanwhile, kelappan made a touching appeal to the Zamorin to reopen the temple⁵. Thus when the temple was reopened on 28th January, the satyagraha was resumed. As a result, the satyagrahis were arrested on the very next day. Meanwhile, the new collector T.B.Russel accompanied by the sub collector Carleston and police officials visited Guruvayur to witness the satyagraha and effect a compromise. After prolonged enquiries, he declared that all roads except the one near the northern tank were public roads and hence the avarnas could use them. The temple entry movement received a fillip in the same month when P.S.Warrier of Arya Vaidya Sala declared the Vis'wambara temple, Kottakkal open to all Hindus including the avarnas.

The temple entry satyagraha entered a new phase when on twenty first September, 1932 Kelappan began a fast unto death in front of the temple⁶. The fast of kelappan electrified the whole atmosphere. Delegations were sent to the Zamorin urgin him to open the temple. But the Zamorin held that he was not in a position to grant their request. However, he told another deputation that personally he had no objection to throw open the temple to the Avarnas provided others too agree to it. Kelappan was also urged to end his fast. A "Savarna Memorial" submitted by K.P.Ramanunni Menon urged him to open the temple. A savarna meeting (29th September) held under the president ship of Madhusudhana resolved to fast inside the temple from October 1st 1932. Gandhiji who was kept aware of these developments in Malabar held the view that " If the temple is the private property of the Zamorinthe whole of the agitation for opening Guruvayur to the Harijans was wrong from the commencement and we have to retrace our steps⁸.

The Zamorin, in a telegram appealed to Gandhi to direct Keleppan to end his fast as it amounted to the use of coercion. Then, Gandhiji ordered Kelappan to end his fast, as according to him he had committed the mistakes of a) not consulting him before the commencement of the fast and b) not giving sufficient notice to the Zamorin. Kelappan ended his fast at 8 a.m. on 2nd October 1932. The temple entry satyagraha too was called off.⁹

As Guruvayur had already become an all India concern, Gandhiji had expressed the wish - the cast Hindus declare their opinion by a referendum. This Referendum is the most notable event connect with this satyagraha. Arrangements were made to begin the referendum on December 3rd and end by December 22nd. To canvas popular support, leaders like Rajaji, Kasturba and Mannam toured the whole area of the Ponnani thaluk in an area of 650 square kilometre of the 20, 000 who recorded their opinion, 15, 000 (77%) favored temple entry, 25, 000(1356) opposed and 2000 (10%) remained neutral. A striking feature of the Referendum was that about 8, 000(40%) women voted in favor of temple entry.¹⁰ Even if we consider those who refused to vote as against temple entry, it can be seen that at least 64% were in favor of the proposal for the temple entry to the Avarnas.

In the religious sphere, the satyagraha brought man near to the God. Many saw satyagraha as a journey to God. The worship (Darsan), of God was given precedence over securing fundamental rights to the citizen. Guruvayur satyagraha was a struggle to secure the privilege of worshipping the Lord and hence primarily spiritualistic in nature. Thus by

the satyagraha Guruvayur had already made history and it remains for her to add another to its cap by opening its temple to all Hindus.

A prominent support offered to it by Nakayaleen^{Ya} and others living abroad. It is signified that Kelappan announced his decision to launch the satyagraha in a meeting of the Bombay Malayalees. Offers came from the Bombay Kerala Samajam (12th January 1931). Nambuthiri youths of Pattambi (12th September 1931) and Taliparamba (December 1931), The yogashema Sabha, the Madras Malayalees as represented by eight organisations, the Ceylonees and the Rangoon Malayalees. Some of these organisations convened public meetings, gave monetary help and appealed to the Zamorin. The anthers of this satyagraha was at Calicut Corporation Council of the European Councillor, Furli by name, supporting the resolution. Public meetings were held at several places eg. Dhru hall, Bombay (25th September 1932), Sindhu Pittia Hall, Ceylon and Rangoon 21st September 1932. Women folk of Bombay cabled to the Zamorin to save Kelappan's life (Lady Chimanlal Sethavad, Lady Mehta, Mrs. Birla). There was the instance of Mrs. Nilanagini Devi, an American Hindu writing to Gandhiji offering her readiness to begin the fast on the Guruvayur issue. Petitions and Delegations were also sent in support of the move. The students of Madras, Meerut and Madhurai appealed to the Zamorin. Monatary help was given by the Hindus living at Durban, South Africa. Inspite of this when the All India Congress Committee was declared illegal, it was Gandhi who advised the continuance of the satyagraha. Above all, Gandhi himself visited Guruvayur. Thus, in almost all developments connected with the Guruvauur satyagraha, all of their activities resulted to enter of the Hindus into this temple.

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