

Chapter 2

IDENTIFYING KERALA *DRAVIDA*

Namaskara Mandapa as the Unique Feature

INTRODUCTION

There are many studies conducted on the architecture of Kerala temples since 1940's. Among them the works of Stella Kramrisch, Soundararajan and H Sarkar stand out as the significant studies. However all these scholars of repute, characterize Kerala architecture as a sub-category or as a style emerged out of the Tamil temple architecture and retain a hazy theory on the origin of Kerala temples. This uncertainty was also due to the lack of accurate records regarding the early history of Kerala. The architecture of Kerala also underwent periodical renovations and kept minimal documentation of their history. It was Stella Kramrisch who initiated the attempts to study the religious architecture of Kerala when the region was divided as Princely states of Tiruvitankur and Kochi along with British Malabar. Stella Kramrisch, though concentrating on Tiruvitankur, as the project was supported by Travancore State Department of Archaeology, envisages the whole Kerala region as a singular cultural entity. Kramrisch considerate of the characteristics of the region introduced the nomenclature of Kerala *Dravida* for Kerala temples.

Stella Kramrisch proposed three types of temples in Kerala with the nomenclatures of *Dravida*, *Kerala* and *Kerala Dravida*. *Dravida* temples according to her are the cave temples seen in the Tiruvitankur region like that of Vizhinjam which are rock cut shrines datable to the 8th century. These monoliths are conceived and carved by the Tamil craftsmen during the Pandyan ascendancy of south Kerala is purely a Tamil *Dravida* structure and had no bearing on the architecture tradition of Kerala during that period. But the temples like Pukayila Pandaka Salai Ganapati Temple at Kollam

and Narasimha Temple at [Pathanapuram] [both Kollam District] or the Sri Narayana temple at Sri Narayana Puram [Thiruvananthapuram District] can be considered purely as *Dravida* style architecture in Kerala. *Vimanakara* superstructures of these temples clearly denote their Tamil-*Dravida* ancestry. In fact the *Dravida* terminology used by Stella Kramrisch should be understood as defining Tamil-*Dravida* genre of architecture. Kramrisch explains Kerala with pyramidal roof thus, “The roofs are the main accents of Kerala building. The Kerala idiom is seen typically in their wooden constructions and wood carvings”⁵⁸. It is true that the distinctness of the pattern of roof is salient feature of Kerala which differentiates the architecture of Kerala to that of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Interestingly the region having similar climatic conditions as the south Kanara region in Karnataka and Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu do not follow the similar roof pattern in religious architecture, though the domestic architecture traditions retain the similar roof pattern as that of Kerala.

Another specificity which Kramrisch observes in Kerala architecture is the temple cloisters which she consider as the symptom of adherence by the Kerala architecture to the early *Dravida* tradition of architecture. “Similarly” writes Stella Kramrisch, “the entire site plan of these temples of the 13th to the 18th centuries faithfully follows the prescriptions and practice of earlier centuries. The main building lies on an East-West axis within a rectangular cloister. Although the *sri koil* is not placed in the exact centre, it can be approached from the four directions and its high roof dominates the assemblage of buildings. The cloistered temples are not confined to Malabar. Pallava Temples in Mamallapuram and Kanchipuram, Jain temples in Rajasthan and other parts of India, the temples of Kashmir and those of Mysore are similarly enclosed.

⁵⁸ Stella Kramrisch, DRAVIDA AND KERALA IN THE ART OF TRAVANCORE, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum*, Vol II, 1953, [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1522577>], pp 14

This plan of the temple precincts is ancient and has its beginnings in the enclosure by which a sacred field was demarcated prior to the building of temple on it. In the early centuries of the present era the Buddhists in Gandhara worshipped in stone built shrines within similarly planned sanctuaries. The corresponding structures in India were built of wood and bricks and have perished”⁵⁹.

Closeness of the Kerala architecture to that of Calukyan monuments like Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal [Bagalkot District, Karnataka] and Kailashanatha temple at Kanchipuram [Kanchipuram District, Tamil Nadu] cannot be farfetched as far as the layout is concerned. Architectural features such as the *malikai* develop in both these structures which are absent in the early Calukyan and the Pallava monuments like the Megutti Jinalaya [Aihole, Bagalkot district, Karnataka] and the Panca Pandava Rathas at Mahabalipuram [Kanchipuram District, Tamil Nadu]. One can observe a clear distinction with the *malikai* of Kailashanatha temple at Kanchipuram and that of Vaikuntha Perumal temple where in the latter it becomes a circumambulatory path way, as in the case of later Cola temples. Similarly in the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal the *malikai* does not function as the pathway. In Kerala temples, the *cuttambalams* which can be considered as the counterpart of the Tamil/Karnata *malikai* do not serve the purpose of circumambulation; on the other hand it defines the periphery of the space provided for circumambulation. Disengaging the *mukha mandapa* at Kanchipuram Kailashanatha and considering it as the *namaskara mandapa* would provide us a layout quite analogous to the Kerala temple plan.

⁵⁹ Stella Kramrisch, DRAVIDA AND KERALA IN THE ART OF TRAVANCORE, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum*, Vol II, 1953, [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1522577>], pp 13-14

The one of distinct feature of the Kerala architecture is the *panca prakara*⁶⁰ plan which is missing in the Tamil and Karnata temples. Unlike the *prakaras* of Tamil Nadu which are developed based on the political changes serving the social purpose like the dwelling of the Brahmins, Kerala temples the *panca prakaras* are based on the worshipping rituals of each temple. To expound this further one have to understand the worshipping pattern of the Kerala temple which is elaborated below in the section of the present thesis titled “Layout of Kerala temples”.

In her writing on Kerala architecture, especially on the Kerala type, Kramrisch observes two key points which are crucial to the central argument of this thesis. First, Kramrisch refers to the “sacred field which was demarcated prior to the building of temple on it”, secondly she observes about the possible link of Kerala temple architecture to the Buddhist architecture tradition. I feel that these two aspects are the key features which define the basic characteristics of Kerala temple. The Buddhist past and the *Tantric* layout defined in a Kerala brahmanical temple, which is never shared by the Tamil and the Karnata counterparts of *Dravida* tradition. These points have been dealt in detail in the following sections of the current thesis.

The observations made by Stella Kramrisch, did not get much appreciation from KV Soundararajan who wrote exclusively on Kerala architecture, this time for the Department of Archaeology of unified Kerala state⁶¹. In his volume *Temple*

⁶⁰ Kuzhikkatt Maheswaran Bhattatirippad, *KUZHICKATT PACHA [Tantra Grandham]* [Tantrik Text] [Malayalam] Pancankam books, Kunnamkulam, Eighth edition, 1183 Malayalam Era [2008CE], pp.39

⁶¹ Kerala state of the Republic of India was created on 1st November 1956 by joining the Malayalam speaking regions belonging to the princely state of Travancore [Tiruvitankur] Cochin [Kochi] and Malabar province of the erstwhile Madras Presidency of the British Empire.

*architecture of Kerala*⁶² KV Soundararajan, do not subscribe the nomenclature suggested by Kramrisch due to his eagerness to link it to the Tamil genre of temple architecture, however he does acknowledge the regional characteristic of Kerala thus, “Within the framework of these constituent elements of its model, mode and traditions, it would be feasible to get a reasonable summation of the Kerala temple entity and to discern its architectural personality and to derive its grass roots. While we might still be left with only passable perception of the ritual integrity of the Kerala temple, we would have reasonably well understood its structural individuality as answerable on entirely rational grounds, enabling it to take its deserved place among various regional styles that had defined the macrocosm that is the Indian Temple architecture”⁶³

Kerala architecture for sure shares a lot with its Tamil and Karnata counterparts; however it will be erroneous to fully attribute the parentage of Kerala architecture to Tamil style only, as it has been done so far. The influences of the Karnata Dravida under the Calukyan patronage on Kerala architecture have been completely ignored by the scholars. Another reason may be for the fact that the studies on Kerala architecture mainly concentrated on the central and southern regions of Kerala. Architecture decorative motifs like the *kapota*, *kumbha panjara*, *kuta*, *sala*; etc appears in Kerala temples as they do in the other *Dravida* branches of architecture, but basing the argument concerning the lineage on those motifs will be erroneous as the spatial arrangement in Kerala architecture is clearly differ from its *Dravida* counterparts. For example the *cuttambalam* of the Kerala temples may look akin to

⁶² KV Soundara Rajan, TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE IN KERALA, General Editor, NG Unnithan, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum [Thiruvananthapuram], 1974

⁶³ KV Soundara Rajan, TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE IN KERALA, General Editor, NG Unnithan, Government of Kerala, Trivandrum [Thiruvananthapuram], 1974, pp. 2

that of *malikai* of a Tamil *Dravida* structure but the function varies drastically in Kerala.

H Sarkar in his magnum opus on Kerala temple architecture accepts the term of '*Dravida Kerala*', thus, "Kramrisc's survey of temples in the former Tiruvitankur state brings to the fore some of the basic facts of the 'Kerala style', which she prefers to distinguish from the *Dravida* of the neighboring Tamil country. Strictly speaking, it is better to call the characteristic temples of Kerala as '*Dravida- Kerala*', because these are fundamentally a regional variation of *Dravida* order, and not a distinct class, but for the sake of convenience and uniformity, the term 'Kerala' is also be used to denote this particular regional style of *Dravida* tradition"⁶⁴. The reason for the regional variation to Sarkar was "influenced by various geographical factors like the high precipitation, the availability of laterite formation and dense jungles"⁶⁵. KR Srinivasan too introduces Kerala temples in the lines of Stella Kramrisc when he states that the timber construction of Kerala temples were as part of the tradition prior to the advent of stone *vimanas*.⁶⁶ All the above mentioned scholars do mention about the wooden prototypes existed in the period prior to the crystallization of stone *vimanas* in the *Dravida* architecture during the Pallava and Calukyan period.

⁶⁴ H Sarkar, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF TEMPLES OF KERALA, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 1-2

⁶⁵ H Sarkar, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF TEMPLES OF KERALA, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 2

⁶⁶ KR Srinivasan, TEMPLES OF SOUTH INDIA, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1972, Fourth Edition 1998, pp.175

KERALA *DRAVIDA*, KARNATA *DRAVIDA* and *TAMIL DRAVIDA*- A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

There are many features which separate Kerala temple architecture to that of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu which share the term *Dravida*, the common denomination for South Indian architecture, along with Kerala. The first wave of the *Dravida* architecture sweeping through the peninsular India surely would have made impact in Kerala too as evident from the architectural decorative motifs as *kudu*, *kapota*, *kumuda* on the *adhithanas*. The layout of the temples in Kerala however varies drastically from their *Dravida* counterparts. Looking for a parallel in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu would take one to Kailashnatha and Vaikūtha Perumal Temples at Kanchipuram [Kanchipuram District, Tamil Nadu] and Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna Temples at Pattadakal [Bagalkot District, Karnataka]. The above mentioned temples are located chronologically to 8th century and have no contemporary structure in Kerala except the rock cut shrines of Vizhinjam. The Cola style too did not impact on the structure of architecture but did leave certain features on the decorative elements. Though the Cola rulers were controlling Kerala for a brief period they never seem to have built any structure in Kerala. The style of Vijayanagara architecture did not reach Kerala directly from Karnataka but routed through the Nayakas of Tamil Nadu. The Vijayanagara/Nayaka type *mandapas* replaces the *valiyambalam* in Central and South Kerala, as in Mahadeva Temple at Vaikom [Kottayam District], Janardhana Swami Temple at Varkala and Mahadeva Temple at Valiya Salai [both Thiruvananthapuram District]. These features are seldom seen in Malabar region which point towards the route Vijayanagara architecture took to enter Kerala. The natural route should have been through north where Kerala shares its boundary with Karnataka.

The adherence to the specific mode of elevation in architecture did occur in Kerala primarily because of the climatic condition where half of the year dominated by the monsoon rains, prompting the architects to devise the pyramidal roofs as superstructures. Soundararajan states thus, "The monsoon- ridden region had seemingly furnished its own mascot in the umbrella which is ubiquitous and which had down the ages been consciously adapted as a motif. In much of the same way as the almost sparsely clothed dress habits of Kerala folk had found complimentary fulfillment in the over-attired Kathakali costume, the temple architecture of Kerala also hides beneath its outlandish exterior cloak a true-to-type temple model of simplicity and clarity"⁶⁷. The enveloping of the temple proper is definitely a feature unique to Kerala as observed by Soundararajan but it is extremely difficult check the authenticity as in many instances one do not get an idea of the layout or elevation of the temple from outside. Incidentally, South Karnataka, the region neighboring Kerala on the north, sharing the similar weather conditions, devises similar pyramidal roofs with stone planks.

If the aspect of enveloping the temple in the elevation can be explained through the climatic conditions enveloping the shrine through *panca prakaras* is purely reflecting the social stratification of Kerala society. Even now, almost all Kerala temples have a notice board outside enumerating the rules of entry. The male devotees have to remove their upper garments to enter into the temple. At many places only *dhoti* [*mundu* as it called in Kerala] is allowed as the lower garment. Earlier there were also restrictions based on caste of the devotee, though it is partially relaxed in mid 20th

⁶⁷ Soundara Rajan K V, TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE IN KERALA, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1974, pp.1

century. There are in some instances restriction of entry based on gender as in Narasimhamurti Temple at Chengannur no woman is allowed into the temple or the partial entry right for women at Raja Rajesvara Temple at Talipparambu. The following chapters of the present thesis will elaborate further on the issue of entry into Kerala temples based on caste.

WALL DÉCOR

The wall decoration of almost all temples of Kerala, even if the *adhithana* belong to an earlier age, follows the Tamil style under the Vijayanagara period. The *devakosthas* and *ghanadvaras* on the wall are flanked by split pilasters and crowned by *kuta*, *sala* or *panjara* motifs. The *arpita hara* always appear on the top of the overhanging tiled roof. Many temples of early phase were redecorated with mural paintings, which can be dated to 15- 16th centuries. The uniqueness of Kerala temple architecture, which makes it distinct from the Tamil counterparts apart from the building material, is the absence of sculpted icons in the *devakosthas* on the walls. Even the granite structures of the later phase as Ganapati temple at Kollam shy away from the depiction of iconic forms on the *devakosthas*. However, Siva temple at Kantiyur [Pattanamtitta District], Siva temple at Cattanur [Kollam District] and Krishna Temple Trikkulasekhrapuram [Trissur District] can be considered as exceptions in this case. Here it may be noted that the wooden outer walls at Trikkaviyur Siva Temple at Kaviyur [Pattanamtitta District] and Vazhapalli [Kottayam District] in the early phase and Narasimha Murti Temple at Chengannur [Alappuzha District], Narasimha Murti Temple at Turavur [Alappuzha District] and Siva Temple at Ettumanur [Kottayam District] belonging to the later phase have

iconic representations on the outer walls. However, the wooden sculpture tradition fills in the gap left by the lacuna of granite sculptures. The reason for the absence of the figures can be purely based on the climatic conditions as the architecture decorations as *hara*, *vyalamala* and *ganamala* made in stucco all tucked under the protected space created by the overhanging eaves.

SUPER STRUCTURES AND THE KERALA-DRAVIDA TRADITION

Another feature which, differentiate the Kerala-*Dravida* from that of Tamil-*Dravida* is the superstructure of the temples. All the temples in Kerala, leaving apart from few exceptions, have sloping tiled roof supported with wooden rafters quite close to the description of temples in *Cankam* literature as *suduman ongia nedu nilai kottam*⁶⁸ meaning the terracotta roofed multi storied structure. The climatic condition of Kerala with two seasons of heavy rain demands such an architecture pattern. The roofs can be tiled with terracotta tiles, or copper sheets depending on the patronage. Often the roofs are built in two *talas* with a *nasika* like projected opening on the cardinal direction called the *kilivasal* or *kilivatil*.

Although maintaining distinctness in the total layout of the temple complex, Kerala architecture adheres to the *Dravida* style of architecture through the *Sri Koils*. Many times the roof differentiates the first and second *talas*. Some of the temples have stucco *vimanas* underneath this timber capping, however a verification of this is nearly impossible due to restriction of entry into the living temples. KR Srinivasan

⁶⁸ KR Srinivasan, *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture, Lower Dravida Desa*, AIIS, Delhi.

observes thus, "Usually what goes unnoticed is the internal makeup and structural contents of the *Sri Koil*, since by ritual, tradition and convention; the interior of the Kerala temples is totally inaccessible to any except the ordinate priesthood. What one perceives of the *Sri Koil* is in fact an external cell, as it were, of a core *vimana* or *garbhakudya* inside"⁶⁹. Thus, the Kerala style of temple building adheres strongly to the *Dravida* tradition, though, the climatic and material compulsions on the builders made the tradition deviate away from the mainstream *Dravida* style and find its own way. The result was a unique style of architecture with plenteous use of available local material as wood, laterite stone and stucco.

DYNASTIC AFFILIATIONS AND LAYOUT OF ARCHITECTURE

The dynastic affiliations do not really affect the architecture lay out, elevation and the decor of these temples. Perumbaladur Siva temple [Thiruvananthapuram District] in the south of the region under the Ays and the Narayan Kannur temple [Kannur District] on the north under the Musakas follow a similar pattern of architecture lay out. Historically, Kerala was under the hegemony of the Colas for almost a century but no Cola type temple was built in this period. This clearly demonstrate that the architecture style of Kerala having roots in the local tradition only borrowed acceptable stylistic features from the neighboring region and retained an indigenous tradition which can be defined as the Kerala - *Dravida* style of architecture. Elevation and wall décor of most of the temples, as observed above, have gone under renovation around 16th century and thus has consanguinity in style. The Calukyan connection, which Sarkar observes, does not seem to have been potent enough to distinguish the

⁶⁹ KR Srinivasan, *Temples of South India*, New Delhi, 1972 & Reprint 1998 pp. 178

temples of northern region to that of south. The Tamil style, predominantly a granite tradition, makes inroads to south Kerala only after the Vijayanagara occupation of southern Tamil Nadu. Looking at the temples of Kerala KR Srinivasan concludes thus, “Most of the Kerala temples now existing are not very old, the oldest dating from medieval or post medieval times. The oldest ones, because of the perishable fabric of construction, have been lost, but for their adhisthanas and sculptures of gods, dvarapalas, etc. These give us the idea of the continuity from at least tenth century AD if not earlier”⁷⁰. One cannot differ with the above statement of Srinivasan, even thirty years after, despite the extensive work by H Sarkar on the subject.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS AND LAYOUT OF KERALA ARCHITECTURE

Kodungallur Kunhikuttan Tampuran, a local Historian, suggests that the architecture of Kerala temples originated from the Buddhist tradition⁷¹. Kunhikuttan Tampuran argues that the craftsmen, the *tacchan* and *kamala* community who built the Kerala temples were originally Buddhist and they continued to build the Brahmanical structures in the Buddhist architecture tradition. He further uses this point to explain the distinction between the Kerala architecture and that of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It is an accepted fact that the Buddhist and Jain religions arrived in Kerala prior to the brahmanical tradition. These religions definitely would have had their monasteries, *stupas* and temples influences of which surely affected the overall layout of temple architecture in Kerala. These traditions must have had many monuments

⁷⁰ KR Srinivasan, *Temples of South India*, New Delhi, 1972 & Reprint 1998 pp. 177

⁷¹ Kodungallur Kunhikuttan Tampuran, *KERALAM*, Sarga 2, verse 9,10. As quoted by Gopalakrishnan PK, *KERALATHINTE SAMSKARIKA CHARITHRAM* [Malayalam] [A Cultural History of Kerala] 1974, 2000 [6th edition] State Institute of Languages, Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 2000, pp.318

but many of these have lost in time. Padmanabha Menon⁷² cites *SILAPATIKARAM* and *MANIMEKALAI* which refers to a Buddhist *caitya* and a *nirgrandha matha* [Jain Vihara] along with a Vishnu temple in the city of Vanci, capital of Ceras. Some of the Jain temples of South western Karnataka like the *basatis* of Moodubidri, Karkala and Bhatkal [all in Dakshina Kanara District] have certain resemblance to Kerala temples, more striking probably because the pyramidal roof shared by these *basatis* and Kerala temples. Or the case can be, as agreed by many scholars of Kerala history, some of the Buddhist and Jain shrines might have fully converted into brahmanical shrines during the brahmanical ascendancy coinciding with the waning of Buddhist and Jain religions in Kerala. Most of the historians agree upon the Jain ancestry of the Bharata Temple at Irinjalakkuda [Trissur District] where the deity remained as Bharata but now worshipped as the Bharata, brother of Rama, not as Bharata of Jainism who is the son of Adinatha.

The cultural and historic trends which initiated the Tamil and Karnata style of architecture would have been at work in Kerala too, though the region cannot boast about powerful dynasties like Calukyan and Pallavas. May be that can be a reason where Kerala architecture never used the lithic tradition associated with imperial ambitions of Pallavas and Calukyans. Similar to the other regions of South India, Kerala too had a Buddhist and Jain tradition active prior to the dominance of brahmanical faith. The difference is when these religions failed enthuse the rulers and the public in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, they successfully sustained in Kerala probably till the eradication attempts by the Colas of Thanjavur.

⁷²KP Padmanabha Menon, *KOCHI RAJYA CHARITHRAM* [1914], Mathrubhumi Edition [1989], [1996] Calicut, 1996 Pp 51

The contribution of the Buddhist and Jain religions to the greater Tamil culture including ancient Kerala cannot be ignored while tracing the origin of religious architecture in the region. The argument put forward by Stella Kramrisch about the consanguinity between the Kerala Temples and the Viharas of Gandhara needs to be taken into consideration. The reference of Elamkulam Kunjan Pilla to a Gandhara inscription brought to notice by Foucher mentioning “*Dakshinapathe Mulavasa Lokanatha*”⁷³ only strengthen the cultural link between Kerala and Gandhara region through the Buddhist trail. In fact the Sri Lankan Buddhist temples known as *Vatadage* are closer to Kerala temples than the Pallava temples of Tamil Nadu. This closeness to Sri Lankan example is due to the similar climatic conditions, availability of materials and the common adherence to Buddhist cultural tradition. To quote Senake Bandaranayake, “There are, however two areas of Indian subcontinent where climatic conditions led to the development of a sophisticated architectural tradition which followed a very different course from that of the classic *sikhara* temples of India. These consist of Kerala and south Kannada, and the various states of Himalayan foothills such as Kashmir, Chamba, Kulu and Nepal. The distinctive feature of this architecture is its multi-tiered, rectilinear, sloping roofs. Moreover in each area there is an intimate connection between the architectural form, the indigenous building tradition and prevailing climatic conditions.[*Sic.*] The flat roof indigenous to the plains of North India and the Deccan plateau, and the curvilinear towers and domes of the *sikhara* temples are clearly not the most suitable architectural forms for these areas. The same can be said of Ceylon and South East Asia and, in fact, of what lies at the heart of Monsoon Asia. In the course of our analysis of the Anuradhapura

⁷³ Elamkulam Kunjan Pilla, *ELAMKULAM KUNJANPILLAYUDE THIRENJEDUTHA KRITHIKAL* – Sam, N [Ed], Part I, [Malayalam], International Centre for Kerala Studies, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 2005, pp. 543

monasteries we have, on several occasions, drawn attention to the parallel architectural traditions and building forms of this zone and to its ecological and cultural homogeneity.⁷⁴

Apart from the climatic affiliation the Buddhist heritage can be observed in the layout of the plans especially the circular shrines as seen in the Buddhist shrine at Bairat [Rajasthan]. Some of the *Sri Koils* in Kerala have circular outer walls encasing a square *mulasthana* which is similar to the encased stupas in the shrines of Sri Lanka. Senake Bandaranayake in her book *Sinhalese MONASTIC ARCHITECTURE VIHARAS OF ANURADHAPURA* traces the origins of Indian architecture tradition from the wooden architecture examples from the Gandhara region, as depicted in the reliefs found by Foucher⁷⁵. Bandaranayake's observations regarding Saindhava and Maitraka temples of Kathiawar [Sourashtra region in Gujarat State] and their wooden antecedents seem logical enough to accept. More over the trade link between Sri Lanka, Kerala, Gujarat and Afghanistan might have acted as a catalyst in transporting religions and religious architecture from one region to the other.

As it happened in Tamil Nadu the growth of Bhakti movement must have acted as a medium for the introduction of Brahmanical religion as well as architecture in Kerala. Kesavan Veluthat observes thus, "One of the more important aspects of the religious history of early medieval South India is the emergence of the temple dedicated to one of the Agamic deities, whether Saiva or Vaisnava. The origin of the worship of these deities, traceable to Northern India, is itself the result of a lot of syncretism through

⁷⁴ Senake Bandaraayake, *SINHALESE MONASTIC ARCHITECTURE VIHARAS OF ANURADHAPURA*, Brill Publishers, 1974, pp 372

⁷⁵ Senake Bandaraayake, *SINHALESE MONASTIC ARCHITECTURE VIHARAS OF ANURADHAPURA*, Brill Publishers, 1974, pp 376

which elements of the folk cults and practices were incorporated into the classical traditions of Vedic-Hindu religion. In the earliest historical period in South India, documented elaborately in what is known as the *Cankam* literature, one does not come across a society in which this religious system had gained acceptance”⁷⁶. Though *Cankam* literature speaks extensively on the life style of the populace of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, describing the minutest details, they are silent about the gods like Siva, Vishnu or Devi and the worshiping centers presided by these deities.

The Bhakti movement worked as the vehicle for the development of brahmanical faith with the gradual withdrawal of Buddhist and Jain religions. Bhakti poems continued the spirit of *Cankam* literature but dealt entirely with propitiation of brahmanical deities. Surely the establishment of Calukyan and Pallava dynasties in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu had given the right impetus for the development of architecture in the respective regions. Their contemporaries in Kerala, Ceras and Ays too might have made efforts in this direction. Two of the Cera rulers themselves were celebrated Bhakti saints namely Ceraman Perumal Nayanar and Kulasekhara Alwar who are considered to be the contemporaries of famous Bhakti saint of Tamil Nadu, Viral Minda Nayanar. Both these saints, have played a consequential part in the introduction of *Agamic/ Puranic* system of worship in Kerala. The construction of Siva Temple at Tiruvancikkulam and the Krishna temple at Trikkulasekharapuram [both near Kodungallur in Trissur District] were accredited to these rulers. Among these Trikkulasekharapuram, probably named after its patron Kulasekhara Alwar, display lot many features of an early construction like the stone sculptures in the *devakosthas* on the *bhitti* of sanctum proper, however, this tradition never seems to

⁷⁶ Kesavan Veluthat, *Source Religious Symbols in Political Legitimation: The Case of Early Medieval South India* Social Scientist, Vol. 21, No. 1/2 (Jan. - Feb., 1993), pp. 23

have flowered further in Kerala and Trikkulasekharapuram becomes a unique example in this regard. Another potent influence on the development of brahmanical system as well as the architecture appears to be the presence of Sankaracharya, who seems to have structured the social and religious behavior of the Brahmins in Kerala. Many temple myths in Kerala attribute Sankaracharya as the founding person of the respective temples.

ARYANIZATION AND SANSKRITIZATION

The socio-cultural process which usually comes up in the discussion on the arrival of brahmanical system in Kerala is the process of Aryanization and Sanskritization. Though these words are not entirely accepted by the scholarly circles, it can be discussed considering its meaning as the arrival of *Vedic/Puranic* tradition in South India. The absence of the brahmanical system of society in the *Cankam* period as corroborated by the *Cankam* literature prompts us to look into the so called Aryanization and Sanskritization. While the word Sanskritization has sociological implications as discussed in detail by MN Srinivas⁷⁷, which is the acceptance of elite culture by the lower strata of society. In the case of Kerala the word can be used in the context of the change which the whole society undergone during the shift from the *Cankam* society to that of a structured brahmanical system. The examples like the mother goddess Kuratti, a tribal deity getting an aura as the manifestation Parvati, the

⁷⁷ "Sanskritization is the process by which a "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in a direction of a high and frequently, "twice-born" caste". MN Srinivas, SOCIAL CHANGE IN MODERN INDIA, University of California Press, Berkley, 1966, Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 1972, Second Edition 1995, Reprint 2004.

consort of Shiva and the *Cankam* goddess Kottavai becoming Kali points towards the process of Sanskritization.

Aryanization was used specifically to South India where the Vedic practices are accepted by a society which was predominantly non Vedic. Many scholars of Kerala history like Sreedhara Menon ascribe the development of brahmanical faith and the augmentation of temple architecture to the Aryanization process datable to 5th – 6th centuries. MGS Narayanan considers the Kalabhra or Kadamba suzerainty in around 6th century as the reason of the Aryanization of South India.⁷⁸ The concentration of Brahmin settlements in Kerala, acknowledged by legends as *KERALOLPATTI*, has lead to the sanskritization of culture and distinction of Kerala from other regions of South India. As part of the Aryanization / Sanskritization process Brahmin villages [*grama*] with temple as the centre were established. The texts like *KERALA MAHATMYAM* suggest that Parasurama established Siva, Vishnu, Bhagavati and Sasta temples in Kerala. Sharma quotes from *KERALA MAHATMYAM* thus,

*uttaradin dvijan atra godavaryupasevitan /
kalpayamasa devanam pujartham bhryugusattama //
tantrino dvadasa shreshtan pratistartham akalpayat /
caturvimsasahasram ca devalayam akalpayat //*⁷⁹

Parasurama also established great temples [*dvadasa* (12)] and 24000 minor temples [*caturvimsasahasram*] the priests were invited to officiate the worship in these temples from Godavari region.

Whoever was responsible for the establishment of temples, it is quite obvious that there was an organized process of temple building activity that happened in Kerala in

⁷⁸ MGS Narayanan *Re-interpretations in South Indian History*, Trivandrum, 1977 pp. 7.

⁷⁹ *Kerala Mahatmyam*, quoted by N. P. Unni, *Tantrasamuccaya*, p. 6, cited from S.A.S Sharma *The Eclectic Paddhatis of Kerala*, INDOLOGICA TAURINENSIA, 35 (2009)

the beginning of 8th century along with the activities of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The difference however was on the material chosen for the constructions which lead to the ambiguity on the origin of Temple architecture as the wooden prototypes were completely lost unlike the examples of temples of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, built in stone. One of the key factors in the difference between these regional architectural styles can be observed in the distinction of materials.

IDENTIFYING KERALA *DRAVIDA* - MATERIALS FOR BUILDING

Usually the material used for the architecture will be the most commonly available stone in the region, though there are exceptions to this rule like the famous Taj Mahal or Victoria Memorial of Kolkata, where marble, the prime material for these buildings, have been transported from faraway quarries. The preference of marble had political determinism behind the selection of the material. There were similar instances in ancient period too like the attachment Mauryans had with Chunnar Sandstone. Certain ruling powers had tried to identify their building activities with a preferred material like the Rashtrakutas building with sandstone at Hampi among the granite stone crop. In many cases the sacred architecture was distinguished from that of domestic architecture through the selection and attribution of the material to each of them. For example the royalty of ancient India like the Mauryans, Vakatakas and Hoysalas built the sacred structures in stone but preferred to stay in brick and wooden palaces. This distinction however is completely absent in Kerala where the domestic architecture like the *nalukettu*s [houses of landlords] and the temples are built with a stone commonly available in Kerala known as the laterite stone.

LATERITE

Laterite is the red colored porous stone which is cut out from the quarries. The material is abundantly found in Kerala especially the north and central parts. Northern part of Kerala has the maximum concentration of temples built in laterite. Interestingly the first geological report on laterite was written in Kerala by Francis Buchanan-Hamilton looking at the rock formations in Kerala in 1807.⁸⁰ He named it laterite from the Latin word *later*, which means a brick; this rock can easily be cut into brick-shaped blocks for building. Geological Survey of India has put up a plaque in Kerala in commemoration of this event. Laterite stone is a tropical rock; in India we see it mainly in coastal Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. Unlike granite stone, the laterite needs to be polished and plastered. If the polishing and plastering of the stone is not done properly, the stone can decay quickly in the humid climatic conditions, as in Kerala, forcing periodical renovations of the structures. However, laterite is preferred by the Kerala builders due to the availability of this material and the craftsmen. H Sarkar observes thus, "All the cave temples and their sculptural art followed the granite tradition, which was virtually relegated to the subordinate position soon after eighth century, the main phase of rock-architecture in Kerala. Evidently, the deep-rooted laterite tradition asserted itself with the building of structural temples, because as a building stone, it is available easily and also of tractable nature"⁸¹.

⁸⁰ Francis Buchanan-Hamilton first described and named a laterite formation in southern India in 1807.

⁸¹ H Sarkar, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF TEMPLES OF KERALA, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1978, pp.15

The material of construction as laterite also leads to the mystification of historical understanding of the temples of Kerala. For instance if a temple undergoes renovation, the *adhishtanas* made of granite stone were retained while the *bhitti* made of laterite and the superstructure with wood and metal or terracotta tiles were removed completely including the structural and decorative woodwork. Many temples in Kerala have an inscribed *adhithana* ascribing the date of the temple to an earlier phase while the wall decorations would point a later date. The temples like Sri Rama Temple at Trippayar [Trissur District], which Sarkar places in the 9th century on basis of the inscription on the *adhithana*, have 16th century murals on the walls. Bordering the murals are the carved *kudya stambhas* with *pushpa potikas* which cannot be ascribed to the date provided by Sarkar. Siva temple at Kantiyur though Sarkar places it in 9th century cannot boast of a wall of the same date, as the sculptures appear as belonging to the post - Vijayanagara period. The motifs as *puspa potikas*, *kumbha panjaras* and *kudya stambhas* of these structures cannot be pushed back to the early phase.

GRANITE STONE

Granite stones are used in certain areas in Kerala though the dressed laterite stone, in many cases un-plastered, becomes the prime material for the temple construction, although with occasional use of bricks. The Siva temple at Kantiyur [Pattanamtitta District] can be considered as an exception in early phase of Kerala temple architecture as far as the construction material is concerned. This temple, built entirely in stone with decorative sculptural panels on the *Sri Koil* wall. The Pukayila Pantaka Sala Ganapati Temple at Kollam [Kollam District], Narasimha Temple at Pattanapuram [Kollam District] and Sri Narayana Temple at Sri Narayana Puram

[Thiruvananthapuram District] are fully built with granite stone. The Pukayila Pantaka Sala Ganapati Temple at Kollam and Sri Narayana Temple at Sri Narayana Puram built keeping the Nayaka temples of Tamil Nadu as the role model adhering to the Tamil *Dravida* genre of architecture; however the rest follows truly the Kerala type. Some of the temples in south Kerala especially under the patronage of the Tiruvitankur dynasty like the Sri Padmanabha Temple at Thiruvananthapuram and Kesava Temple at Tiruvattar [Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu] are built completely in granite stone with exception of the sri koil and the Krishna shrine at Sri Padmanabha Temple. Granite becomes crucial in the later phase of Kerala temple architecture, especially in south Kerala, with the expansion of the *valiyambalams* with clustered columns as seen in Mahadeva Temple at Valiya Sala [Thiruvananthapuram District] Janardhana Swami Temple at Varkala [Thiruvananthapuram District] and Mahadeva Temple at Vaikom [Kottayam District]. At Vaikom and Varkala massive granite images were also carved displaying the consanguinity to Nayaka sculptures.

However, granite stone was used throughout Kerala for the construction of *adhithana*. Other areas where granite was used are the architecture members which would bear the elaborate designs like *balipithas*, *pranalas*, *phalakas* of the balustrade and doorframes as the desired intricacy cannot be realized in laterite stone due to the cavities. Granite columns, plain and decorated are occasionally used in *mukha mandapas*, *namaskara mandapas* and corridors of the *cuttambalams*.

WOOD

The central zone of Kerala consisting of Kottayam, Pattanamtitta and Alappuzha districts have maximum number of temples built exclusively in wood like the

Narasimhamurti temple at Chengannur [Alappuzha District], Trikkaviyur Mahadeva temple at Kaviyur [Pattanamtitta District], Narasimha Temple at Turavur [Alappuzha District] and Siva temple at Ettumanur and Siva Temple at Vazhappalli [Both Kottayam District]. In these temples the *adhisthana* is made of granite stone and the *bahya bhitti* is made exclusively with wood. The prime woods used for the construction are of the teak and jack fruit trees. Due to the climatic conditions and the geographical layout of Kerala, these trees are seen in abundance. Teak wood is found in the forest areas in the mountain ranges on the eastern side of the state, jack fruit tree on the other hand grows in the plains and the coastal region. Almost every household, at least few decades back, have had a jack fruit tree in their land, which is used profusely for its fruit, which cooked as a raw vegetable, eaten as fruit when it is ripe and to make sweet dishes. Even the leaves of the jack fruit tree are used as spoons and containers in making sweet dishes in the traditional Kerala cooking. The less fibrous wood of jack fruit tree is ideal for creating sculptures. Many images worshiped in Kerala temples are made of jack fruit tree examples of which can be seen at Sri Kurumba Devi temple at Kodungallur [Trissur District] and Bhagavati Temple at Tirumandhankunnu [Malappuram District]. Jack fruit tree because of its thick stem becomes ideal wood for creating panels in the architectural space, teak wood however used for areas like the wood work on the roofs and pillars. Both these trees were used for domestic architecture too.

LAYOUT OF KERALA *DRAVIDA* TEMPLES

“In its entity” writes Jayashanker⁸², “the temple complex of Kerala fall under the *panca prakara* scheme of temple architecture. *Prakara* means enclosure or limit and

⁸² Jayashanker S, TEMPLES OF KERALA, Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala, 1997

therefore *pañca prakara* denotes five enclosures around the *Sri Koil* or principal shrine. As mentioned earlier, this *pañca prakara* layout can be considered as the unique feature which differentiates Kerala *Dravida* with that of Tamil and Karnata *Dravida*. Unlike Tamil Nadu and Karnataka where the prakaras are constructed structures, Kerala architecture has imagined or ritualistic *prakaras* duly demarcated by certain symbols. For example there are no constructed structure between the *sri koil* and the outer circumambulatory path except the placement of few stones symbolically representing the *dikpalas* and *parivara devatas*. The devotees are not allowed to enter inside this imaginary wall doing which s/he will be trespassing into another *prakara*. Similarly in Siva temples nobody is allowed to cross the *pranala* and have to do an anti clockwise circumambulation back to the main entrance. Nowadays there are mobile barriers and signage kept to remind the devotee of the imaginary wall but earlier the devotees were aware of this symbolic barrier.

The *pañca prakaras* appear more as a ritualistic space rather than architecture space. The architectural canons of Kerala like *Tantrasamuccayam* and *Kuzhikkatt Paccha*, which eloquent more about the tantric/ritualistic space more than the design and construction of architecture. Among these texts, *Kuzhikkatt Paccha*⁸³, defines *Panca prakaras* thus:

⁸³ Kuzhikkatt Maheswaran Bhattatirippad, *KUZHICKATT PACHA [Tantra Grandham]* [Tantrik Text] [Malayalam] Pancankam books, Kunnamkulam, Eighth edition, 1183 Malayalam Era [2008CE], pp.39

Prakara	Name	Space defining Element	Structure/Space included
1	<i>Antar mandala/ akatte Balivattam</i>	<i>balikkals</i>	<i>Sri koil [garbhagriha], mukha mandapa</i>
2	<i>Antar hara</i>	<i>nalambalam</i>	<i>Antar mandala + Namaskara mandapa</i>
3	<i>Madhya hara</i>	<i>vilakkumadam</i>	<i>Antar hara + Valiyambalam</i>
4	<i>Bahya hara/ puratte Balivattam</i>	<i>sivelippura</i>	<i>Madhya hara + Vilakkumadam</i>
5	<i>Kshetram/ Maryada</i>	<i>outer wall + Gopuram</i>	<i>Bahya hara+ sivelippura</i>

Antar mandala/ Akatte-Balivattam:

Antar mandala/ Akatte-Balivattam or the inner sacrificial area encompasses (a) *Sri Koil (mula-prasada)*: which includes [1] *Garbhagriha* also known as *mulasthan* where the cardinal image is installed surrounded by an [2] *Antarala* or *madhyani*. [3] *Mukha mandapa* or the axial hall comes next. The flight of steps called [4] *Sopana* comes in front of the *mukha mandapa*. [5] *Pranala* or the water sprout is also included in the *akatte balivattam*. Only the priest of the temple has access to these areas except to the *pranala* which is approached from outside. In Shiva Temples nobody is allowed to cross the *pranala*.

SRI KOIL

As far as *Sri Koil* is concerned Kerala architecture adheres to the *Dravida* architecture tradition Kerala temples following the tri-fold approach of *Sri Koil* shapes, the *caturasra*, *Vrttakara* and *gajaprastakara*. The shrine of Mahadeva temple at Vaikom

[Kottayam District], datable to 16th Century has the unique vruttayata [elliptical] form. The layouts of the *Sri Koils* are comparable to the *Sri Koils* of Pallava and Chalukyan temples, with the central *Garbhagrha* and a *pradakshina patha* or *Madhya nadi* around it though the latter two is not a must for all. Compared to other regions of the *Dravida desa*, Kerala has the maximum concentration of *Vrttakara* and *gajaprstakara Sri Koils*. Many multiple temple complexes as Tiruvallam [Thiruvananthapuram District], Mahadeva Temple at Tiruvegappuram [Malappuram District] and Valiya sala [Thiruvananthapuram District], [have retained all the three shapes in the *Sri Koils*. *Vrttakara Sri Koils* are usually preferred for Siva while Vishnu shrines retain the *caturasra* forms. Deities as Sankaranarayana or Kartikeya at many instances are enshrined in *gajaprstakara Sri Koils*. It may be also mentioned here that the exterior shape of the *Sri Koil* can be different to that of the *garbhagrha* as the circular *Sri Koils* in Trikkaviyur Mahadeva Temple at Kaviyur [Pattanamtitta District], Mahadeva Temple at Ettumanur [Kottayam District] and Bhagavati Temple at Tiruvalattur [Palakkad District] with square *garbhagrha*.

Kerala temple architecture disregarding the regional and dynastic distinctions followed the common *Dravida* style of ground plan that is based on the *caturasra* plan of the *Sri Koil*. Except the circular Vishnu temple at Perumpaladur [Thiruvananthapuram District], all the temples ascribed to Ay dynasty are built with *caturasra Sri Koil*. Early temples of the Musaka country as Eramam Chalappurattu Siva Temple [Kannur District] and Annapoornesvari Temple at Kannapuram [Kannur District] also follow the *caturasra* plan with no *mukha mandapas* and *madhyanadis*. Siva temple at Netirimangalam [Palakkad District] can also be placed in this group.

The temples at Parthivasekharapuram [Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu] Kazhakuttam [Thiruvananthapuram District], Panniyur [Palakkad District], Kaitali, Tiruvancikkulam, Vadakkunnatha [all in Trissur District], Triccambaram [Kannur District], Pullur and Anantapuram [Kasargode District] all have *caturasra* plan of the *Sri Koil* with a square *madhyanadi*. The *gudhamandapa* abutting the *Sri Koil* appears in all the examples except that of Pullur. The Parthasarathi Temple, at Parthivasekharapuram is dated to 857 AD on the basis of the inscription mentioning the Ay king Karunandadakkan, has *caturasra Sri Koil* with a square *garbhagrha* and square *madhyanadi*. The *Mukha mandapa* has openings on the north and south apart from the cardinal entrance on the east. The existing structure, as Sarkar observed, must have undergone renovation. Mahadeva temple at Kazhakuttam [Thiruvananthapuram District] follows similar pattern of architecture though the open *mandapa* abutting the *Sri Koil* in the latter structure seems to be a later addition. Ceras also follows the layout of the Ay temples at Trikkulasekharapuram, Tiruvancikkulam and Kaitali temples [all in Trissur district] dedicated to Krishna and Siva respectively.

Another variation of the *caturasra* type can be observed in the Mahadeva Temple at Kantiyur, [Pattanamtitta District], Krishna Temple at Trikkulasekharapuram [Trissur District] and Rajarajeswara Temple at Talipparambu [Kannur District] temples. These temples built in large scale have two *madhyanadis*. All of them, like the examples mentioned above, have openings into the outer *madhyanadis*. At Talipparambu these openings enter into the inner *madhyanadi*, while Kantiyur keeps three openings on the north and one on the south sides of the inner *madhyanadi*. Similar principles of *madhyanadi* and *bahya bhitti* works in the *vrttakara* structures

of the early phase as seen in the Vishnu Temple at Perumpaladur [Thiruvananthapuram District] and Siva temples at Kaviyur [Pattanamtitta District] . The *garbhagrha* in these examples are of *caturasra* shape. A special feature of distinction of the shape between the *antara bhitti* and the *bahya bhitti* can be observed in Kaviyur. The *garbhagrha* at Kaviyur has a *vrttakara bahya bhitti* and a *caturasra antara bhitti*. This pattern is followed in the later structures as the Sankaranarayana shrine in the Vadakkunnatha temple complex [Trissur District]. *Gajaprastakara* structures are rare in the early phase except the temples in the northern regions as in Siva Temple at Tiruvannur [Kozhikkode District], and Siva Temple at Trikkandiyur [Malappuram District], retaining the *gajaprastakara* for the *garbhagrha*.

MADHYANADIS

The *Sri Koils* have *madhyanadis*, though at present, no one uses it for circumambulation nor it has any usage in the ritual context of the temple. KR Srinivasan observes that the function of the *madhyanadis* as to shield the *garbhagrha* from the extreme hot and humid climatic conditions. However this explanation seems too simplistic to accept. Another possibility is that the *Sri koil* architecture of Kerala temples are borrowed from the Tamil and Kannada *Dravida* where the *madhyanadis* are infact used for circumambulation of the devotees but with Kerala system it became obsolete. The Siva temples at Kazhakuttam, [Thiruvananthapuram District], Mahadeva Temple at Talipparambu [Kannur District] and Sri Rama Temple at Tiruvangad [Tallassery in Kannur District] and Siva Temple at Kaitali [Palakkad District] have doorways opening into the *madhyanadi*; however these doorways too were never put into use.

MUKHA MANDAPAS

Many temples in the Ay-Cera region have *mukha mandapas* abutting the *Sri Koil* on the cardinal axis. The total lay out of the *Sri Koil* and smaller *mukha mandapa* reminding the Pallava and Pandya traditions. Sarkar observes thus, "Idea of diminutive shrine fronted by a larger *mukha mandapa* is totally absent in Kerala"⁸⁴ The *mukha mandapas* of Parthivasekharapuram [Thiruvananthapuram District], Kaitali [Palakkad District] and Tiruvancikkulam [Trissur District]; temples have lateral entrances which are redundant in the current ritual function. The introduction of *namaskara mandapas* might have reduced the function of *mukha mandapas*; if originally, it was created to accommodate the Brahmin devotees. The *mukha mandapas* do not seem to be popular in the Musaka region except in the Krishna temple at Triccambaram [Kannur District] and the Anantapadmanabha temple at Anantapuram [Kasargode District]. At Kazhakuttam Mahadeva Temple [Thiruvananthapuram District] the *mukha mandapa* is an open platform with serving the alternative for the otherwise absent *namaskara mandapa*. The *mukha mandapa* in other examples of this group have columns inside them like that of Tiruvancikkulam, Vadakkunnatha [both in Trissur District], Anantapuram and Triccambaram [Kannur and Kasargode Districts respectively]. All the *gajaprastakara* structures of this phase as the Siva Temples at Tiruvannur and Trikkandiyur [Kozhikkode and Malappuram Districts], have built in *mukha mandapas* with no lateral entrances. *Vrttakara* Siva temples at Kaviyur and Vazhapalli [Pattanamtitta and Kottayam Districts], have open verandahs on the eastern side serving the purpose of the *mukha mandapa*. In other *vrttakara* shrines, this feature is missing.

⁸⁴ H Sarkar, *Architecture Survey of Kerala Temples*, New Delhi, 1978 pp. 64

BALIKKALS

The space immediately surrounding the *Sri Koil* is also included in the *antar-mandala/ akatte balivattam*, defined by a series of sacrificial stones called *balikkals* each representing a deity including the *ashta dikpalas* like [1] Indra, [2] Agni, [3]Yama, [4] Nirti, [5] Varuna, [6] Vaayu, [7] Soma, [8] Isaana along with Ananta and Brahma. A single *balipitha* having 9 *Devatas* [Sapta-matrikas] with Ganapati and Veerabhadra is placed on the northern side of the *sri koil*. Other deities who are represented through the *balikkals* are Sastha, Durga, Subramanya [Kartikeya] and Kubera. These deities are represented regardless of the affiliation of the cardinal deity of the temple. This feature is quite unique in Kerala temples as this feature is seldom seen in other *Dravida* versions in Karnataka or Tamil Nadu. Every day after the worship of the cardinal deity known as *usha puja*, these *parivara devatas* are worshiped by the chief priest with *akshatam* [cooked rice and *tulsi* leaves] accompanied by musicians playing *timila* [a type of drum] in a ritual known as *sri bhoota bali* or *siveli*. This system is probably is part of the tantric ritual practices affiliated to the Kerala temples.

NAMASKARA MANDAPA

Namaskara- mandapa and the *vahana* comes next as part of the *akatte-balivattam* but placed outside the *antar-mandala*. The *vahana* of the cardinal deity is placed in the *namaskara mandapa* but the real function of the *namaskara mandapas* is providing special space for the Brahmins to do the prostration [*namaskara*]. The *vahana* of the cardinal deity is moved towards the rear end of the *namaskara mandapa* to give ample space for the prostration. There are attempts to place the *namaskara mandapa* in the ritual structure of the temples as Jayashanker have done

stating thus, “The *namaskara-mandapa*, as the very name indicates, is the place for prostration by the priests. It is considered as the *gala* (neck or throat) of the gross (*sthoola*) body of the deity of the temple where all *kalasa pujas* and chanting of the *mantras* are done”⁸⁵. Except in the festival period when special *pujas* are performed, *namaskara mandapa* remains purely serving its prime function that is to provide the space for prostration by the priestly caste. Mahadeva Temple at Ettumanur [Kottayam District] has a Yakshi image under worship in the *namaskara mandapa* and few other examples where *Nandi* is kept. Except these examples no icons are kept in the *namaskara mandapa*. Another instance where sacredness is ascribed to the *namaskara mandapa* comes from Rajarajeswara Temple at Talipparambu [Kannur District] where even Brahmins are not allowed to use it as it has been said to have been used by Lord Sri Rama himself.

Interestingly *namaskara mandapa* remains the most decorated portion of the temple in Kerala temple architecture. Apart from sharing an equally decorated *adhithana* with the *Sri Koil*, *namaskara mandapas* are ornate with exquisitely carved pillars supporting the intricate the ceiling. The rafter ends are usually occupied by the *naga* figures. The decorated tiers of the ceiling many times narrate the story of Ramayana or Krishnalila themes. The central portion is usually occupied by the *dikpalas* [Indra, Agni, Yama, Niruti, Varuna, Vayu, Soma and Isana] with Brahma in the centre or *Navagrahas* [Budha, Sukra, Soma, Kuja [Mangal], Rahu, Sani, Ketu and Bruhaspati] with Surya in the centre⁸⁶.

⁸⁵ Jayashanker S, TEMPLES OF KERALA, Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala, 1997, pp.91

⁸⁶ Jayashanker S, TEMPLES OF KERALA, Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala, 1997, pp .88

The Tamil and Karnata *Dravida* structures do not have any provisions comparable to the *Namaskara mandapa* thus making Namaskara Mandapas a unique feature in the architecture of Kerala temples. The *Nandi mandapas* or *Vahana mandapas* are placed outside the *Mukha mandapas* and *dvara mandapas* [portals] as seen in Kailashnatha Temple at Kanchipuram, Virupaksha Temple at Pattadakal and Bruhadesvara temple at Thanjavur. Kerala architecture seemed to have aversion for the *vahana mandapas* as they are seldom seen in Kerala, the *Garuda mandapa* at Tiruvalla [Pattanamtitta District] being a major exception.

CUTTAMBALAM & VALIYAMBALAM

Antara-hara or *Cuttambalam* or *Nalambalam* consists of components like *Tidappalli*, *Valiyambalam* (*Mahasala* or *Dvara-gopuram*) and *Balikkalppura*. This area has the functional purposes where the everyday affairs of the temple handled. The activity of the *antarala jati* or *ambalavasi* community like Warriors, Marars, Poduvals are usually done here. *Valiyambalam* is also used for keeping the musical instruments, making garlands and sandal paste and storage. *Tidappalli* is the place where the *prasadam*s [food used for worship] are cooked, usually by the Brahmins assisted by female members of the *ambalavasi* caste. *Antara hara* also includes *balikkalppura* the enclosure where the main *balikkal* [Sacrificial stone] is kept. Every day during the *sri bhuta bali*⁸⁷ [*siveli*] the *balikkal* is worshipped. *Madhya-hara* or *Vilakkumadam* is the outer most of inner enclosure of the temples. This is the structure first seen while entering into the *prakara* wall of a Kerala Temple. In major temple complexes of Kerala like the Vadakkunnatha Temple at Trissur, the *vilakkumadam* will be made of wood and separated from the outer wall of the

⁸⁷ The worship system of Kerala temples are explained below

nalambalam. The space created thus is not used for any ritualistic purpose in the temple. The space between the *nalambalam* and *vilakkumadam* is most elaborate in the case of Bhagavati Temple at Tiruvalatur [Palakkad District].

PURATTE BALIVATTAM

Bahya-hara or *Puratte-balivattam* or *Sivelippura* is the massive space around the core of the temple. Often the *Valiya-balikkal* [the cardinal sacrificial stone] which can be of the height from 3 to 10 depending on the importance of the complex is placed in the *Sivelippura* rather than in the *balikkalppura* as in Subrahmanyaswami Temple at Payyanur and Rajarajeswara Temple at Talipparambu [Kannur District]. This does not seem to be a north Kerala tradition as one can see the placement of *Valiya balikkals* in the *Sivelippura* of Vadakkunnatha Temple at Trissur [Trissur District] and in Mahadeva Temples at Vaikom [Kottayam District] and *Valiya Salai* [Thiruvananthapuram District]. If it is a *mahakshetra* with more than one deity as Vadakkunnatha Temple at Trissur [Trissur District] or Tiruvegappura [Malappuram District] where Shiva, Sankaranarayana and Sri Rama are worshipped, there will be more than one *valiya-balikkals*. There are many minor *balipithas* dedicated to *parivara devatas* and *dikpalas* as in the inner enclosure of the temple is repeated on the *puratte balivattam* placed on the pathway around the *vilakkumadam*.

Dhvaja-stambha or the flag post is placed on the cardinal axis of the temple. *Dhvaja-stambha* is usually are made of wood then covered with brass sheets. The *Dhvaja-stambha* is raised on stone pedestals with exquisite carvings. The *Dhvaja-stambha* at Sri Vallbha temple at Tiruvalla [Pattanamtitta District] is the most elaborate *dhvaja-sthambha* in Kerala where a separate structure is dedicated to it called the *Garuda*

mandapa. All the *dhvajastambhas* will have the image of the vehicle of the cardinal deity on top, as in for Vishnu temples it will Garuda, Nandi for Siva, tiger or horse for Ayyapa and rooster or tiger for Bhagavati. Another element placed on the *puratte balivattam* is the *deepa-sthambha* [lamp pillar] though this feature seems to be popular in south Kerala. *Puratte-balivattam* can also have added structures like the *Sri Koils* of parivara devatas or any deity who is not a parivara devata of the cardinal deity based purely on the popularity, like the shrine for Hanuman in Siva temple or an Ayyappa shrine in a Vishnu temple. The secular structures as *Koottambalam* [performance hall] *Oottupura* [dining hall] are placed in the *puratte balivattam*.

MARYADA

Maryada or Puram-Matil (Outer-Wall) is the outermost wall of the temple complex. The cardinal axis would have *gopuram* or *padippura*. The grandeur of the *gopuram* will depend on the importance of the temple and the patronage it receives from local rulers. *Gopuram* is not an absolute requirement for Kerala temples, but at least one *padippura* is a must. The *gopuram* in Kerala are very different to that of the Tamil or Karnata *Dravida* structures. The Kerala *gopuram* will have the pyramidal roofs akin to the temple proper with decorated wall with *ghanadvaras* supporting an *arpita hara*.

It is interesting to note that this area is called as '*maryada*' because in Malayalam language the word *maryada* means discipline. So does this structure get its name based on the fact that it was used to keep the discipline of the society? Prime function of the *maryada* [or *prakara*] was to keep out the impurities outside including the impure castes. Till 1936 in Tiruvitankur region the outcastes were not even allowed

walk on the road around the *maryada* of the temple. This point is further explained in the following chapters of the present thesis.

TANTRIK ASPECTS IN KERALA TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

If one has to pick up the most characteristic feature of *Kerala Dravida* which distinguishes it from that of Karnata and Tamil *Dravida* traditions, it will be the *tantrik* practices in the worshiping systems and its expression in the architectural layout. To begin the discussion I would like to bring in proceedings of the legal suite between Vishnu Narayanan Nambutiri vs. Travancore Devasvam Board [Judgement on 9/11/2001 in the Kerala High Court] in which the complaint of the complainants is as follows:

“There is no competent *Melsanthi* in Sree Vallabha Maha Temple, who is capable of performing “*Pancharaatra School of Vaisnava Puja*” in the Temple. The conduct of *pujas* in the *Devasvam* Temples is devised mainly as per the principles contained in *Tantrik* Texts. The authority in this field could be traced to the text “*Tantrasamuccayam*” written by Brahmasree Chennas Manackal Narayanan Namboodirippadu in the year 1427. According to the *Tantri*, various *pujas* conducted in Sree Vallabha Maha Temple are unique and rare. The *pujas* are conducted according to the “*Yajanavali Text*” on the basis of *Pancharaatra System* contained in *Sree Durvasa Samhita*”⁸⁸.

⁸⁸ JUDGMENT, KERALA HIGH COURT BENCH: S Sankarasubban, A Lekshmikutty, Legal suit between Vishnu Narayanan Nambutiri vs. Travancore Devaswom Board on 9/11/2001, from <http://www.indiankanoon.org/doc/890599/>

As mentioned in the above complaint, each temple had a designated *Tantri* and a prescribed text to follow. In Kerala the temple rituals are systematised by certain textual injunctions based on tantrik texts like *Tantrasamuccayam* [by Chennas Narayanan Namboodirippadu], *Sesha Samuchayam* [by Sankaran Namboodirippadu, son of Chennas Narayanan Namboodirippadu] and *Kuzhikkatt Paccha* [by Kuzhikkatt Maheswaran Bhattathiripad]. These texts clearly designate the process of temple building and everyday ritual of the temples, though lion share of the texts are dedicated to latter aspect. There are more than twenty Nambutiri families in Kerala who has the hereditary right to be the *tantris* of temples.

Many scholars attribute the prevalence of *Tantra* in Kerala temples to the popularity of Buddhism and Jainism in Kerala prior to the arrival of brahmanical religion in Kerala. "The integration of elements of Jainism", writes N.M.Namboodiri, "into the temple culture during this period also should be noted. It is highly possible that the growth of typical Kerala rituals was the result of this effort at integration. Major rituals like installing of idols in a temple and festivals in Kerala are not based on the prescriptions in other parts of India. The opinion of various scholars that Kerala followed the Vedic-tantrik ritual order of Southern Recension indicates this integration"⁸⁹. It can be also due to the influence of Vajrayana Buddhism which existed in Kerala. There is gradual merger of Buddhist/ Jain systems into brahmanical system of religion. Otherwise it is difficult explain the scant number of Jains and Buddhists at present in Kerala, whistle both these religions had great influence on the society of ancient Kerala. "The Kerala Brahmanas have preserved the

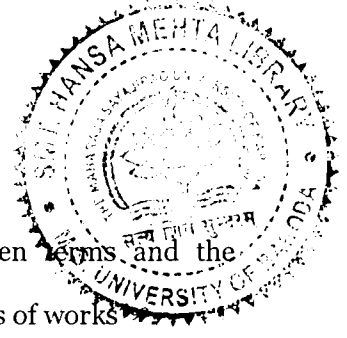
⁸⁹ N.M.Namboodiri, *Cultural Traditions in Medieval Kerala*, P.J.Cherian (Ed), PERSPECTIVES ON KERALA HISTORY- The Second Millennium, KCHR, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999

forms of offering based on the Vedic-sacrificial (Yajna) culture. Sixteen formal pujas, including their histrionic element, should be studied from this point of view. It can be generally stated that there emerged the Tantrik culture that combined the elements of Yajna culture, Puranic culture, various components that helped to attract and ensure the subordination of the regional society, and parts of the culture of the Jains and other sets of people⁹⁰” writes NM Nambutiri.

There has been potential Buddhist and Jain schools of philosophy existed in Kerala prior to the works of Sankaracharya who initiated the systematized brahmanical worshipping system. Kesari Balakrishna Pilla⁹¹ argues that the *mimamsa* school of thought of Kumarilabhata was quite popular in Kerala. There are many *agamic* and *tantrik* texts written in Kerala between 8th and 16th centuries. Interestingly this was also the period when the Temple architecture of Kerala developed. Kerala temples may display their consanguinity with Tamil *Dravida* in elevation but the architecture lay out is purely indigenous adhering to the *Tantrik* system. Here I am not intending to go deep into the definition of Tantra as it would shift us away from the focus of the present thesis, however the definition given by Winternitz seems to be more appropriate in the context of Kerala which reads, “Strictly speaking, the *samhitas* are sacred books of the Vaisnavas, the *agamas* those of Shaivas, and *Tantras* those of

⁹⁰ Dr.N.M.Namboodiri, *Cultural Traditions in Medieval Kerala* , P.J.Churian (Ed), PERSPECTIVES ON KERALA HISTORY- The Second Millennium, KCHR, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999

⁹¹ Kesari A Balakrishna Pilla, *CHARITRATTINTE ATIVERUKAL* [Malayalam] [Eng. Roots of History] Chapter 3 *Parayi Petta Pantirukulam*, Kerala Sahitya Akademi, Trissur, 1984, Reprint.1995, pp.103



Saktas. However there is no clear line of demarcation between terms and the expression *Tantra* is frequently used as a general term for this class of works

Legends attribute the initiation of *Tantra* system to Parasurama himself as *KERALAMAHATMYA* states that Parasurama after establishing twelve Great Temples and twenty four thousand other temples brought Brahmins to Kerala to do the worship in these temples. The word used for worship in the text of *KERALAMAHATMYA* is *tantrin*, meaning one who is conversant with *Tantra* practices of worship. However the reference from *KERALAMAHATMYA* should not be taken on the face value as an ancient text as it is written around 14 century when the *Tantrik* system was very much in action in Kerala temples. Sankaracharya, a historical figure, is also attributed as the initiator of the *Tantrik* system through the text erroneously attributed to him called *Sankara Smruti*. “The earlier tantrik preceptors in the Kerala mode of worship”, writes Jayashanker, “were Narayanattu Bhranthan, Sankaracharya (8th century), Isanasiva Gurudeva (12th century), Putayur Vasudevan Namboodirippadu (14th century), Chennas Narayanan Namboodirippadu (15th century), Chennas Sankaran Namboodirippadu (15th century) and Kuzhikkal Maheswaran Bhattathiripad (19th century). Of late the contributions of Kakkad Narayanan Nambutiri (author of *SA PARIVARAM PUJAKAL*) and Mangalappady Sankaran Namboodirippadu (author of *TANTRA DARPANAM*) deserve special mention. The contributions of Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboodirippadu in editing

⁹² Winternitz, HISTORY OF INDIAN LITERATURE, pp.587, as quoted by NV Mallaya, STUDIES IN SANSKRIT TEXTS ON TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE. With Special reference to *Tantrasamuccaya*, Annamalai University, 1949, pp. 99

and publishing tantrik allied texts are noteworthy. Their contributions are still remembered and followed by the priests of Kerala”⁹³.

SAS Sharma in his article titled *The Eclectic Paddhatis of Kerala*⁹⁴ enumerates the *Tantrik* texts starting from the treatise by one Bhavatrata, greatly acknowledged as an author in the *PRAYOGAMANJARI* of Ravi⁹⁵ who claims the lineage of Bhavatrata. *Prayogamanjari* also known as *SAIVAGAMASIDDHANTASARA* by Ravi⁹⁶ is the other major text on the tantrik practices. The date of the text is assigned to 10th to 11th centuries by scholars. The author of *PRAYOGAMANJARI* acknowledges the existence many tantrik texts and points towards the need of compilation which he attempts in the text⁹⁷. *SAIVAGAMANIBANDHANA* by one Muraridatta is another not so well known text on the temple rituals specifically to Shiva worship.

ISANAGURUDEVAPADDHATI, also known as the *TANTRAPADDHATI*, is the first text to combine both the Shaiva and Vaisnava systems of worship. Written by Isanagurudeva, its references to *PRAYOGAMANJARI*, *NARAYANIYAM* of Melpattur Narayana Bhattatitri and a musical instrument called *timila*, which is unique to Kerala, proves that the author belonged to Kerala. Most popular text among the

⁹³ Jayashanker S, *TEMPLES OF KERALA*, Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala, 1997, pp.166

⁹⁴ SAS Sharma, *The Eclectic Paddhatis of Kerala*, INDOLOGICA TAURINENSIA, 35 Turin (2009)

⁹⁵ *prathitabhavatratakula* as quoted by SAS Sharma, *The Eclectic Paddhatis of Kerala*, INDOLOGICA TAURINENSIA, 35 Turin (2009)

⁹⁶ *ravinā harapādābhajhrungena racitā krtih /*

prayogamañjari nāma samkshekusumojjvalā // 21:95 // as quoted by SAS Sharma, *The Eclectic Paddhatis of Kerala*, INDOLOGICA TAURINENSIA, 35 Turin (2009)

⁹⁷ *durjñeyāni bahunī mandamatibhis tantrāni gauroepater*

udgirnani mukhāmbujād avikalās tv ekatra tesham kriyāh /

noktās tena sivāgamāms ca sakalān udvikshya tās tāh kriyāh

sam kshipyā pravadāmi yās ca vihitā lingapratishṭha vidhau // 1:6 // as quoted by SAS Sharma, *The Eclectic Paddhatis of Kerala*, INDOLOGICA TAURINENSIA, 35 Turin (2009)

tantrik texts from Kerala is the *TANTRASAMUCCAYAM* written by Chennas Narayanan Namboodirippadu in 15th century which structured the *tantrik* system of Kerala temples. Most of the scholars working on the Kerala temple architecture base their data on this text. More than architecture the text deals with the ritual practice of Kerala temple. As the title of the text denotes it is the compilation of all Tantrik practices in Kerala temples. The importance of *TANTRASAMUCCAYAM* is based on the fact that it is combined all the hagiographical compilations as *Agamas*, *Samhitas*, *Tantra* and the canonical texts like *MAYAMATA* and *AJITAGAMA* written prior its execution.

Tantra inherently has three aspects within it, called *Mantra*, *Tantra* and *Yantra*. *Mantra* denotes the chant, or 'knowledge' which will be sutras based on *agamas* or *Samhitas*. Nambutiris do *pujas* in temples based on *Tantra Vidhi*. *Tantra Vidhi* clearly describes the *Mula* (Basic) *mantra* of the gods and goddesses and their form, and weapons they hold on their arms etc. It begins with chanting of *Punyaha Mantra* which is in the *Samhita* part of Vedas. Many *Mantras* from *TAITERIYA SAMHITA* of *YAJUR VEDA*, *RIG VEDA* and *SAMA VEDA* *mantras* are used in special *pujas* and *Kalasam*, *Panchagavyam*, *Sribhutabali* and *Navakam* rituals done by Nambutiris in Temples⁹⁸. *Tantra* denotes ritual actions. The ritual actions also involve materials of propitiation based on *pachabhuta*. *Tantrasamuccayam* states thus,

*"Tatra pruthveva gandha, akasa eva pushpam
Vayureva dhupa, teja eva dipa
Apa eva jalam nivedyam ca. Iti vibhaga"*⁹⁹

⁹⁸ <http://www.namboothiri.com>

⁹⁹ *Tantrasamuccaya* with the commentary *vimarsini*, Vol.I, p.2 (TSS Edition) as quoted by NV Mallaya, *STUDIES IN SANSKRIT TEXTS ON TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE*, With Special reference to *Tantrasamuccaya*, Annamalai University, 1949, pp. 79

This verse links the *pancabhutas* with the materials of offering used in the Kerala temples. The following table will explain it further.

<i>Pancabhuta</i> [Elements of Nature]	[English Translation]	<i>Nivedyam</i> [Material offered]	[English Translation]
<i>Pruthvi</i>	Earth	<i>Gandha</i>	Fragrance [Sandal paste etc]
<i>Akasa</i>	Ether	<i>Pushpa</i>	Flowers
<i>Vayu</i>	Air	<i>Dhupa</i>	Incense
<i>Tejah</i>	Light	<i>Dipa</i>	Light
<i>Apa</i>	Water	<i>Jala</i>	Water

Sankara in the *vimarsini* or commentary on *TANTRASAMUCCAYAM* states that the devotee offering the substances representing the *pancabhutas* are in fact offering their body itself which is made of the five elements¹⁰⁰.

*Samaradhanam samicina puja/
Pujaya samyaktam namatmadraavyadevatanamailkyam//*

Along with chanting of mantras and offering substances the Kerala temple rituals also involve *mudra* which is quite different from the worshipping system of other areas. *Mudras* are basically hand gestures signifying any object or a person as it is used in dance performances like Kathakali or Bharatanatyam. The Nambutiri Brahmins of Kerala use the *mudra* for *kriyas* [act of propitiation] and *devatas* [signifying a deity]. For example the fingers folded like the fist with the vertically opened thumb would represent Siva *Linga*. Similarly the fist kept parallel to the ground with the opened

¹⁰⁰ *Tantrasamuccaya* with the commentary *vimarsini*, Vol.I, p.1 (TSS Edition) as quoted by NV Mallaya, STUDIES IN SANSKRIT TEXTS ON TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE, With Special reference to *Tantrasamuccaya*, Annamalai University, 1949, pp. 80

middle finger along with the thumb inserted next to the middle finger would represent Ganapati. There are *mudras* where both hands used in unison. While worshipping the god either in the *Sri Koil* or on the *balipitha* the priests would use the *mudra* along with the *mula mantras*. This process can be translated as *Tantra* practice in Kerala temples.

Yantra denotes the means for *Tantra* practise and at the present context it becomes the architecture layout of a temple. *TANTRASAMUCCAYAM* deals predominantly with the *tantrik* layout of Kerala temples. In the context of Kerala the *Yantra* is the temple itself with its grid of *balikkals*. As the *mantra* and *Tantra* represents the god or rather the universal soul with its/his manifestations *Yantra* signifies the *purusa* himself. *VISWAKARMEYYAM* a canonical text supposed to have written none but the god *Viswakarma* himself and used popularly by the *Viswakarma* [builders /architects / wood workers] community in Kerala states thus,

Garbhagruham siraproktam antaram mukham tata
Sukhasanam galameaiva bahuseaivaardhamandapam/
Mahamandapam kuksiyat prakaram janujhanghayoh
Gopuram devapadamasyat yadyeta laksanam subham//¹⁰¹

Jayashanker translates the verse thus “Accordingly the *garbhagrha* corresponds to the head of the deity, the *antar mandala* is his face, the *sukhasanam* [*namaskara mandapa*] is his throat, the inner *pradakshina patha* and *nalambalam* his hands, *Vilakkumadam* and the outer *balivattam* [circle sacrificial stones] his belly, the

¹⁰¹ Jayashanker S, TEMPLES OF KERALA, Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala, 1997, pp.105

maryada [*gopuram* and outer wall] his feet”¹⁰². I am not willing to argue that the concept of the temple as the divine body is a Kerala speciality as the concept of *vastupurusa* is common in other areas too. Even an ancient text like *SKANDHOPANISAD* states that the body of the devotee is the temple or the body of the temple is the god himself [“*deho devalaya*”¹⁰³]. However pertinent point to note is that the, *Yantra* of the *tantrik* system, the temple symbolizes the *purusa* himself. The *purusasukta* of the Vedas states that various *varnas* originated from various parts of the *purusa* thus,

yat purusham vyadadhu: | katidha vyakalpayan |
mukham kimasya kau bahoo | kavooroo pada ucyete | | Verse 11

Translation: When they had divided him up, into what forms did they cast Him? And what of his mouth, His arms, his thighs, His feet? What did they make them?

brahmano asya mukhamaseet | bahoo rajanya: kṛta: |
ooru tadasya yad vaishya | padbhyam shoodro ajayata | |¹⁰⁴ Verse 12

Translation: From his mouth came forth the men of learning [*Brahmins*] And of his arms were warriors [*Rajanya, Kshatriya*] made, From his thighs came the trading people [*Vaisya*] And his feet gave Birth to servants [*Sudras*].

Interesting aspect which manifests here is that the entry level for various castes into the temples of Kerala are coinciding with the area which represents the body part of

¹⁰² Jayashanker S TEMPLES OF KERALA, Directorate of Census Operations, Kerala, 1997, pp.105

¹⁰³ *Skandhopanisad*, as quoted by NV Mallaya, STUDIES IN SANSKRIT TEXTS ON TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE, With Special reference to *Tantrasamuccaya*, Annamalai University, 1949, pp. 4

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.ramanuja.org/purusha/sukta-4.html>

the *purusa* and the *varna* originated from that limb. I would like to illustrate this point further with a table below,

Body part of <i>Purusa</i> according to <i>Purusasukta</i>	Varna originated from the body part of <i>Purusa</i>	Corresponding part of the Kerala temple	Varna /caste permitted to enter the region
<i>Mukha</i> [Face]	Brahmin	<i>Sri Koil, Antar mandala</i> including <i>namaskara mandapa</i>	Brahmin [Nambutiris & Embratiris]
<i>Bahu</i> [arms]	Kshatriya	<i>Cuttambalam, Valiyambalam</i>	<i>Antarala jatis Kshatriya</i> [Nair]
<i>Ooru /jangha</i> [Thighs]	Vaisya	Exterior of <i>Nalambalam</i>	<i>Chakkala Nair, Vanian</i>
<i>Pada</i> [feet]	Sudra	Exterior of <i>Maryada</i>	Sudra

In conclusion one can state that the brahmanical system of worship in Kerala not only brought in the Vedic system of worship but also structured the temple architecture based on the social hierarchies which are substantiated and canonised by texts like *ISANAGURUDEVAPADDHATI* and *TANTRASAMUCCAYAM*. These social changes and the canonisations happened simultaneously in the medieval period probably after the Cola wars.