

RITUAL TO SOCIAL DRAMA-A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ELAVUR TUKKAM IN KERALA

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Abstract: This paper tries to understand the social anthropological subject of debate assumes importance more in a spectacular way than a ritualistic way. It explores the historic factors that divide the specific characteristics of liminality in tukkam as a ritual from that of tukkam as a spectacle. The social drama of the spectacle is not without its actors but only with the difference that the liminal nature of the crucial actors in the social drama of the ritual transformed into that of an entire village brought to a crisis from where it is finding it difficult to re-emerge. It also highlights a social-anthropological exploration of tukkam as a ritual that invokes the devotees to transgress the received notions of body and pain. Further, it aims to look at the roles that constitute the ritual into a social drama. Tukkam is a ritual and its present crisis is manifested in its transition into spectacle which is due to the intervention of the state and the related agencies to protect the efforts to stop the ritual.

KEY WORDS: Ritual, spectacle, social drama, communitas, liminality, performance, redressal, reintegration

Introduction

The ritual 'tukkam' is conducted in various temples in Kerala. Altukkam or man hook swinging is conducted at Elavur village in Ernakulam district of Kerala. Here, tukkam conducted by the devotee using with hooks. It is an offering to Goddess PuthenkavuBhagavati temple in Elavur. According to Edgar Thurstonⁱ, "the ritual of altukkam or man hook-swinging consists in passing two iron tender hooks, tied to the end of a very long lever, through the skin of the swinger's back. This lever is placed at the top of the mast twenty feet high. As soon as the swinger is hung on the hooks, they press the other end of the lever; lift him up in the air. In this state they turn him round as often as he chooses. He commonly has a sword and shield in his hands, and makes the motions of a man, who is fighting".

The ritual that has been stopped today by the agencies of the state on the grounds that its conduct can lead to possible outbreak of violence affecting public tranquility in the village of Elavur in the Ernakulam district of Kerala where the ritual was regularly conducted every year till 1987. In 1987, it was last conducted and then stopped by the initiatives of a Hindu religion has to be shorn of such rituals in order to revive it. A local effort to resume the conduct of the ritual in the year 2004 was again squashed. The state judiciary has adopted the position of the state as valid in its efforts to ban the ritual. The political parties have aligned largely with the cause of 'enlightenment' championed by the ascetic swamiⁱⁱ although a militant Hindu organization the Siva Sena has taken up the alternative course. The local scenario as revealed from the field reports suggest intense strife and tension still continuing amongst the dissenting parties for the revival of tukkam and the efforts to stop such revival.

It focuses mainly on understanding the ritual process of tukkam from the perspective of historical anthropology of performance (Turnerⁱⁱⁱ: 1986). For this the study depends on the case of the erstwhile Elavurtukkam. This study depends on the dramatic sequence in the performance of the ritual re-emerging the representation of the ritual as a spectacle of media attention once the state and related agencies interfered with its performance. Such a transformation of a ritual – from ritual to a spectacle is placed within the historic and genealogical peculiarities of the place called Elavur.

Social drama^{iv} in this study of the Elavurtukkam becomes a potential and meaningful unit of analysis because as a concept it approaches various performative genres like ritual, theater, drama, film and the spectacle as offshoots of diverse cultural milieu in specific historic setting. The derivative space for the social drama arises from the fact that tukkam is a ritual, has specific space and setting for meaningful performances. Sacred space and sacred time together and inseparably provide the setting for meaningful performances of the kind broadly called ritual. (T.N. Madan^v: 1991:173)

The controlled violence and preparations innate to the ritual makes it all the more significant as a social drama. A social drama gradually takes shape out of this attribution of a definite direction and purpose to the flow of events. Drama is derived from the Greek term *dran*, "to do" and in Greek drama means a "deed" or "act" and was only later applied to an action represented on stage. It is a genre of performance universal to all cultures just like ritual, carnival, film and spectacle. All dominant genres of performance constitute what is called a liminal phenomena. A limen, as the French Ethnologist Arnold Van Gennep (1960: 10-11) pointed out is a threshold, the central of the three phases in what he called, "rites of passage"^{vi}.

The three phase or the sub divisions of the rites of passage according to Vann Gennep is rites of separation, transition rites and rites of incorporation. They may be also classified as pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal (Van Gennep, 1960:10). The 'social drama' a concept styled by Victor Turner after the 'rites of passage' of Van Geneep which he held as the generative realm in culture of all performance genres including theater, ritual, games and carnivals have four instead of the original three phases of the 'rites of passage'. These are, *breach* of regular social relations, *crisis* representing the threshold or limen between stable phases of the social process, *redressive* action implying various modes (ritualistic, rational or otherwise) of resolving the crisis and *reintegration* of the disturbed social group, with a recognition of the social conflict

that caused the breach. A 'social drama' is the process by which a society deals with the conflict – situations in the modern –secular society or a pre-modern atavistic society alike (Turner^{vii}, 1986: 74)

Of the three phases of the 'rites of passage', the second phase forms the generative realm of theater, of marginality or liminality that puts everything into the subjunctive mood as well as the reflexive voice, dissolve all factual and common sense systems into their components and "play" with them in ways never found in nature or in custom, at least the level of direct perception (Turner, 1986: 25). Central to the concept of social drama is the aspect of liminality derived from the word *limen*, meaning threshold, it is the central in the three phases of 'rites of passage'. The three phases were derived from his observation of ritual experiences in different regions and different societies of the world. "Rituals separated specified members of a group from everyday life, placed them in a limbo that was not any place they were in before, and not yet any place they would be in, then returned them, changed in some way, to mundane life" (Turner^{viii}, 1986: 25)

The Liminal stage dissolves all factual and common sense systems of quotidian life and play with them in a subjunctive mood^{ix} detached from all direct correspondences to reality.

In the conduct of Elavurtukkam distinct phases of the breach, crisis, redressal and reintegration may be observed. The breach is established with the taking of the vow before the *kalarigoddess* of forty one day *vratha* by the hook swinger. Prior to this, in anticipation of the festival the devotees make individual offerings to the goddess of *altukkam* or man hook swinging. It is in accordance with such offerings that the breach is established with the normal life in the village of Elavur as preparatory for the conduct of tukkam. This also marks the liminal stage in the ritual where the central aspect is the ritualistic transformation of the body of the swinger from that of an ordinary mortal to that of a devotee preparing for the highest form of sacrifice to the goddess. The swinger's body is taken from the daily routine of social life and by methods of *kalari* a traditional form of martial arts transformed into the body that will represent the related myth on the day of tukkam. This is done under the guidance of the *kalariassanor* the hereditary trainer for the performance of this ritual.

The Significance of the Role of the Swinger

In tukkam an act of performance, the swinger's body plays a crucial and irreplaceable role. This is how tukkam becomes an act of performance. The pain of the swinger creates such empathy in the spectator that grounds the performance to the devotion to the goddess.

This endorses the view that rituals originate in collective constructions such as myths, legends, and other traditions and to perform a ritual is to re-substantiate them and to re-affirm their effects^x. [Erika Fischer -Lichte: 2003 : 231-235]

Besides the swinger, the oracle or *velichapadu*, the votary or, the priest or *pujari*, the trainer or *kalariasan*, and hook-fixers perform significant roles. But these performances are performed for the propitiation of kali. So the myth of Bhadrakali is a significant for this performance.

Tukkam is performed once a votary by him/herself never performed the swinging except in cases cited by Thurston^{xi} (1989:487-501) where a young man performs the ritual for getting a bride. Will power and special training is necessary for practicing this. Also the swinger must take a prescribed of rigorous *vratha* or a form of purification before the performance.

Liminality and its Redefinition of the Body

As mentioned earlier, in Elavur, the swingers^{xii} traditionally performed it for the votary.^{xiii} Nairs^{xiv} have the hereditary right for hook swinging in Elavur. Both the swinger and the votary keep forty one days *vratha* or penance. The swinger eats only vegetable food, avoids animal food and alcoholic beverages and he remains a celibate, during the *vratha* period. He goes to the temple early morning after bath and worships the Goddess.

During the liminal phase or the *vratha* period, the body of the swinger is prepared for fixing the hook. This is achieved through an elaborate cycle of exercises and massaging that loosens the skin from the flesh. For this, the body is rubbed with *ayurvedic* oil, ghee, castor oil and other things and is shampooed particularly his back where a portion of the flesh is, by manipulation, stretched and made thin by constant rubbing. These preparation it is believed make the body ready to delight the Goddess.

The swinger begins *vratha* after accepting the traditional *kaduthala* (a traditional sword from the *kalari* master, known as *purayattukalari* Kumaram master). The swinger starts studying *kalariabyasam*^{xv} from *meenam*^{xvi} first onwards.

During the last fourteen days of the *vratha*, another stage is crossed in the crisis or the liminal period, when *mukkut* oil^{xvii}, smeared on the back of the swinger. These processes enhance the elasticity of back muscles. The above treatments are given to his body to give him more power to withstand the pains of tukkam.

There are some difference in massaging a veteran swinger and a fresh swinger. The former is subjected to massaging only fourteen to fifteen days, while a fresh swinger need twenty-one days massaging, hereditarily done by the masters in their *kalari*, early in the morning. The *kalari* master makes him fit for swinging by *kalari* methods in fourteen to twenty-one days. Seven to twelve *muzham* (yard) long cloths (*kacha*) is used for the massage. The time of massage extends from 5-30 am to 9-30.

Foot massaging is conducted on the day of swinging after the swinger's body is completely shaved^{xviii}. A cock is slaughtered in front of the deity *veerabhadra* in *kalari* before conducting tukkam thus marking the end of the liminal period of preparing the swinger's body for the ritual by the *kalariasan* in the presence of the hook fixer.

On the day of tukkam, the swinger goes to the barber of the village and cuts hair in a specific manner and during this day; the swinger gives *dakshina* (gift) *tokalariasan* and goes to the *puthenkavate* temple.

Prior to that the Virabhadra temple situated in *kalari* on the day before tukkam is a host to several preparatory as well as propitiatory rituals conducted in *kalari*, such as *kalamezhuthu*^{xix}, *thalappoli*^{xx} and special *pujas*^{xxi}.

Tukkam or the Redressal of a Crisis

On the morning of the prescribed day or in the framework of a social drama on the day of the redressal of the crisis marking the forty one days of *vratha* of the swinger, the *kalari* master and the swinger go to the votary's house. They drink *palkanji* (a special food made of rice boiled in milk) prepared by the votary and given to the swinger. The votary offers a grand feast to the swinger and all the devotees present during this time. The *chamayam*^{xxii} for the swinger is also arranged by him. The votary gives a new white dhoti and *kasavu* dhoti (special dress worn before tukkam) to the swinger. In addition, he also gives the swinger an amount of rupees three thousand or more, as the remuneration or reward for tukkam^{xxiii}.

From the votary's house the swinger now goes to Sreekandeswaramsiva temple, which is almost 200 meters from the puthenkavudevi temple, with people and take rest. Siva is the main deity in this temple. Goddess Bhadrakali is considered a daughter of siva. The myth is that devi went to her father for getting permission and willingness, for killing the demon darika.

From here the swinger is dressed up in a manner evocative of the myths thus justifying the liminal stage of his preparations for the ritual with a turban on the head and carried on the shoulders of devotees to the puthenkavudevi temple in the form of a procession accompanied by *panchavadhya*^{xxiv}. The presence of temple oracles in trance leading the swinger inside the temple is a necessary part of the ritual. In the tukkam ritual the presence of *velichapadu* or oracle is inevitable.

Oracle is commonly found in devi temples. He is considered as oracle of the deity. A group of *tantris* or the main priests of the temple appoint the oracle. The person must observe forty one days *bhajans* or meditative chants to the goddess before being appointed as the *velichapadu*. Only one oracle is there in a temple. He continues to hold his position until death or resigns due to ill-health^{xxv}. Before the beginning of the swinging, the swinger is welcomed by the oracle. The swinger gives *dakshina* to him. Temple priest or *pujari* has no special role in this ritual.

The swinger then asks the permission of the representatives of the Paravur king by presenting a token amount of money to him/ her and later to the temple priest thus reaffirming the redressive nature (insofar as it confirms the existing social ties) of the ritual about to begin. The priest gives him a flower garland and he is taken out of the temple and is brought under the wooden scaffold. The scaffold is made of teak wood. It is fitted with two large pillars in the centre of two giant wheels. The scaffold has a heavy weight that it takes about 100-150 men to pull it. According to elders, earlier it was taken by 40-50 men, with strict fasting. The swinger swings about 40-50 feet high on the scaffold. He circumambulates the temple three times that lasts about 3.5 minutes^{xxvi}. Hooks are fixed on the centre of the back muscle of 'swinger' by punching and making four holes in the skin. The hooks to be pierced on the body of the person are fixed on the end of the pole. This end of the pole is lowered by virtue of a lever and the person is brought just below it. The act of piercing the skin is the traditional duty of Kottaykkal Menon. Menon is a sub caste of Nairs with a slightly higher status^{xxvii}.

At the time of fixing the hooks, the swinger is given a combination of betel leaves and areca nut to chew. Dried areca nut pieces (one year old dry areca nut) and betel leaves are given to the swinger in order to avoid or decrease the intensity of pain. Then two persons play flutes right into the swinger's ears. Other traditional musical instruments are also played. Oracle comes into his full form wearing his sword with boisterous laughter. At this peak time, the swinger's back skin is stretched and the gingly oiled^{xxviii} hooks are placed or fixed into his skin.

If there is a strong wind, the swinger's body can swing to both sides or in all directions, causing wounds in his skin, especially at the point of the hooks piercing his skin. To avoid this, the swinger balances his body using the sword and shield in both his hands. The swinger thus completes three *pradakshinas*^{xxix} around the temple. People help him to keep the balance, from the beginning of tukkam till the end. According to Narayankutty Karthaa man who has witnessed the ritual many times the loud chants of the devotees help him overcome his pain. A group of devotees carry this scaffold on their shoulders and run around the temple thrice. On the completion of the third round the scaffold is laid on the ground and the person is brought down and the hooks pulled off. Then he completes an *ottapradakshina* (it is a kind of *pradakshina* by running and done to avoid swelling and non-clotting of blood).

Soon after the tukkam, the swinger is removed from the hooks. Drops of blood begin to spill from the wounds on the swinger's back once he is completely removed. In order to stop this *manjalprasadam*^{xxx}, *bhasmam*^{xxxi} and *kalapodi*^{xxxii} are applied on this wound. On the day of tukkam, a drum of water is boiled with *pullaniyila*, *kurunthotti* (herbal plants commonly seen in Kerala) and jack fruit tree leaves. After the swinging, the swinger is brought back to the kalari and the preparations begin for the healing of his wounds. His body that symbolized the entire phase of liminality for the whole village has to be now restored into its pre-liminal state so that he can consume his routine along with the rest of the village^{xxxiii}.

He is massaged with a mixture of oils (castor oil, ghee and *dhanwantharam*) by the kalari master and laid facing east. It is called *tetchukidathu*. Later, the swinger is made to bathe in steaming water. After this bath, *kalabham* (sandal powder) is applied in the hole of the wound on the back of the swinger. After this, a *kachamundu* and a small towel would be folded and tied up on the hole with betel leaves. For avoiding the pain, the swinger is made to drink liquor and laid on the back and *kalabha* powder is filled in the wounds so as to enable the skin to tighten^{xxxiv}.

The Sacrificial Rites of Reintegration

After the swinging, a *guruti* is conducted also as part of the tukkam that points to its sacrificial origins as well as marks the stage of reintegration and the resumption of normal social ties in the village. Also known as *guruti* (*kuruti*) or *thambilam*, it is an offering of a mixture of turmeric powder, slacked lime and water^{xxxv}. In Elavur temple, before conducting *guruti*, a cock is sacrificed or slaughtered outside the temple ground where the *balikkallu* is situated. In ancient day's animals, cocks or even human beings were sacrificed as *guruti* according to both the swinger and his master the *kalariasan*. But it is also the ceremonial duty of the velans to perform the cock-slaughter.

Velan is a lower caste that spends most of the year singing in temples on festival occasions. In addition to this which is their traditional occupation, they are also washer men and climbers of, areca palm trees, the panavelans take sawing as a supplementary employment. Members of the sub-castes bharatavelan and vahavelan are also physicians. (Edgar Thurston and K. Ranagachari: 1987:342-357)^{xxxvi}

In the *kalari*, there is also *gurutharpanam* performed on the day of tukkam, along with cock slaughter and *ninaguruti* conducted as an auspicious ritual before the tukkam. The martial artists prepare a *thoni* (boat) filled with *guruti*-a mixed form of calcium carbonate and turmeric and perform *gurutharpanam* in front of the deepasthambam or the sacrificial lamp of the deity Veerabhadra, the kalari temple. Veerabhadra and Bhadrakali according to mythology were born from siva's *sjada* or his long matted hair and his third eye. The idol or deity of *tukkambalam* (Elavur temple), *kalari*, are Bhadrakali and Veerabhadra respectively.

The myth surrounding these two temples holds that during the Dakshaprajapathi Yagam, siva the husband of his only daughter is not invited by Dakshan a sage. Knowing this, Satidevi (wife of Siva and daughter of Daksha), throws herself into the sacrificial fire pit. Upon seeing this Siva becomes angry and opens his third eye, fire emerges from which and joins his *jada* or hair locks. Thus *agni* (fire), eye and *jada* from siva's body together them set out to kill Dakshan. It was very difficult to kill him because, every once Daksha's blood touched the earth, thousands of dakshas originated from every single drop. So Veerabhadra and kali lift him into the air and kill him, in the air and pluck his head. Then, both of them drink his blood without touching the earth and then distribute his flesh to the ghouls. In the ritual tukkam, the swinger is represented as Daksha, and so the swinger swings on the scaffold by the hook. The temple conducts this ritual in reminiscence of this myth^{xxxvii}. Here it has to

be noted that, Elavurtukkam may be regarded as a genre of social drama also because, it includes many interrelated narratives of myths and legends, which are performed in the ritual by the swinger. Besides, cock sacrifice is also conducted as part of the ritual that consummates the social drama. The ritual function of tukkam yet climaxes with the performance of the swinger. From the time of raising the swinger on to the scaffold till the time of completing the three *pradakshinas* the participants experience the solidarity of the community as a part of this ritual. The structure of 'liminal' events in ritual and the form of their emotionalism is defined by Turner as giving the symbolic character of the personal and social ordering they conjoin (Kaferer, Bruce, 1988:40).^{xxxviii} Further this symbolism is marked as dangerous and often filled with the action and imagery of violence. It is filled with the powerful conjunction of contradictory forces in the personal and social process of transition and transformation.

The Communitas of Tukkam

The social drama of tukkam has today revealed the existence of a community of unity and conflict. The conflict over the performance of tukkam and consequences have created a community of mostly educated upper caste and middle class people who strongly believe in the need for the changes in the tradition within the legality of the state. So they are strongly opposed to the tukkam. The communitas of tukkam that included all sections without caste-class discrimination does not exist today. The village of Elavur today retains no liminal character in their social relations as prescribed by the tukkam in the event of the ban.

Elavurtukkam was banned to avoid the occurrence of accidents while performed. Such accidents as happened in the 1980s when the hook fixer was trapped with the swinger on the hook. This event could have made it real to the authorities about the danger of ritualistic symbolism involved in its performance. The authorities' persistence in the fear of such danger has irretrievably affected not only the personal but also the social set up of Elavur by splitting them into two sections of people which favour and oppose such decision.

CONCLUSION

The study tries to point out that both the ritualistic and spectacular way of the ritual Elavurtukkam. As Turner has himself observed the transition point in his study of performance is the focus on the stage of liminality that symbolizes human subjects in a state of threshold that carries them through to a different stage but with the necessary points of 'schism' or departure reaffirmed and reintegrated. The study of tukkam and the case of Elavur in particular help us focus the wide possibility or range of characters such liminal stages can deploy in their procedural aims of performing culture.

REFERENCES

- ⁱⁱ Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic notes in Southern India*, Asian Educational Services, Delhi, 1989, pp-490
- ⁱⁱ Swami BhumanandaTirtha
- ⁱⁱⁱ Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, Paj Publications, New York, 1998.
- ^{iv} Social drama is a story in White's (Philip Auslander, 2003:115) sense, in that has discernible inaugural, transitional, and terminal motifs, that is, a beginning, a middle, and an end. Turner's (ibid) observations convince him that it is, indeed, a spontaneous unit of social process and a fact of everyone's experience in every human society.
- ^v T.N. Madan, *Religion in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1991, pp. 174-178
- ^{vi} Arnold Van Gennep pointed out in Victor Turner's *Anthropology of Performance*
- ^{vii} Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, Paj Publications, New York, 1998
- ^{viii} Ibid
- ^{ix} Subjunctive and indicative are mutually contrasting moods of signification according to Turner (1986). In the indicative mood, there is a direct correspondence of the signifier to the signified, whereas the subjunctive mood, there is a broader leeway of meaning, so that the signifier and the signified may not correspond exactly in a one-to-one relationship. The subjunctive opens up the possibility for transformations of an object from something that it is in the indicative mood of quotidian life to a wider possibility of meaning. A piece of stone according to indicative signification may be a sacrificial altar in subjunctive signification.
- ^{xx} Erika Fischer-Lichte, "The Body in Performance", *Performance-Cultural concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, vol-2, London, pp. 231-235
- ^{xi} Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, Asian Educational Services, Delhi, 1989, pp-490-493
- ^{xii} 'Swinger' means one who swung or perform tukkamvazhipad either for himself or for votary
- ^{xiii} One who dedicated the vazhipad or offering
- ^{xiv} According to field reports from a panchayat member of the village parakkadavu where Elavur is situated, it was a right inherited since the days of the rule of the king of Paravur or paravurtampuran. The kings had their own ancestral temples of kulapratishtha where they worship their kuladevatas or ancestral spirits. This notwithstanding, the Nairs who worked as adayalis or warriors under these kings were given each year, in sacrifice to the goddess kali, at the puthenkavubhagavathy temple on the tukkam day as an offering of the entire realm of the tampuran. Later according to legends when it came to be substituted by hook swinging the same warriors were subjected to perform the tukkam ritual.
- ^{xv} The kalari master teaches the swinger to various feats or martial steps.
- ^{xvi} Eighth month of Malayalam year. Meenam is considered as Goddess Bhadrakali's birth month
- ^{xvii} It is a special mixture of oil, ghee and castor oil.
- ^{xviii} Interview with Ramakrishnan Nair, a swinger
- ^{xix} It is a floor art in which the figure of the deity is pictorially drawn using five colours (representing pancha-bhutas on a leveled square or rectangular place known as kalam)
- ^{xx} It is a traditional mode of welcoming 'deities' by girls holding 'lamps' and 'flowers' in a vessel.
- ^{xxi} Interview with Kumaran Master, kalariansan

^{xxii} It includes special dress and make-up materials

^{xxiii} The full expense for the votary can come to an amount of ten thousand or more. He is required to pay only a token amount of rupees fifty one to the temple

^{xxiv} A traditional music form associated with temples and festivals where five musical instruments are played simultaneously in the form of a concert.

^{xxv} According to Unnikrishnan Master, a member of PDS (powra dharma samiti)(a front organization of the village in the campaign against the revival of tukkam in 2004) in Elavurdevi temple, the position of oracle is inherited matrilineally or through the line of the mother's brother

^{xxvixxvi} The interview with Mary Pathrose, member of ParakkadavuPanchayat

^{xxvixxvii} In the year 1980s (year unknown) during the tukkam at the time of piercing hooks, the hook fixer 'KottaykkalMenon's hand was trapped in the hook and he was also hanged along with the swinger that lead to a commotion and he was also manhandled by the swinger's relatives for this. Then he took an oath in front of the deity, that he would never again fix the hook. Subsequently no one from his family would perform the role of the hook fixer. The traditional duty of piercing the hook was later taken over by the swinger's family. Thus in 1987 the act of piercing hooks on the swinger Sreedharan Nair was performed by his father Govindhan Nair and his brother Chandrashekharan Nair. The schism between the two groups- Menon and Nair-a significant event that later led to the ban of tukkam can be seen as a result of this accident.

^{xxviii} It is used for preserving the hooks

^{xxix} It is the act of circumambulating the temple by the devotees

^{xxx} It is a paste form of turmeric powder, usually found in Goddess's temple

^{xxxi} Holy ashes or vibhuti

^{xxxii} It is the mixture of burnt paddy-husk for black, raw-rice powder for white, turmeric powder for yellow, fine powdered leaves of nenmeni-vaka for green and slacked lime mixed with turmeric powder for red

^{xxxiii} In Elavur the hook swinger was an employee of a saw mill, the kalari master gained income by manufacturing herbal medicine, KottaykkalMenon an expert in playing musical instruments from playing for temple related rites and the ParavurRajavu from his harvest of crops, and the oracle an employee of the temple and remittances of the devotees

^{xxxiv} Interview with Ramakrishnan Nair, the veteran swinger

^{xxxv} In one of the earliest treatises on sacrifices James Frazer 1941 (1890) reports how the human sacrifices of the Meriah in Bastar were conducted for the mother goddess Danteswari for increasing the colour of the turmeric cultivated in the fields by spraying the fields with the blood of the sacrificial victim

^{xxxvi} Edgar Thurston and K Rangachari, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol Vii, Asian Educational Services, Delhi, 1987, pp.342-357

^{xxxvii} Interview with Kumaran Master, kalariansan

^{xxxviii} Bruce Kapferer, Legends of people, myths of state-violence, intolerance and political culture in Srilanka and Australia, Smithsonian Institution Press, London, 1998, pp. 40

