

ENGLISH
ESSAYS AND POEMS
OF
MAHAKAVI ULLOOR

Selected and Edited

BY

N. VISWANATHAN, M. A., Ph. D.
*Reader, Institute of English,
University of Kerala*



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MAHAKAVI ULLOOR

Onam Festival

It need hardly be stated that the three pre-eminent National Festivals of Kerala are Onam, Tiruvatira and Vishu, and that even among these three, the festival *par excellence* is the Onam which falls on the Sukladvadasi day in the month of Chingam (August-September). The term 'Onam' is derived from the Sanskrit word Srona or Sravana, the name of the twentysecond lunar mansion, and it is common to both Tamil and Malayalam¹.

The Onam festival is associated with the name of Vamanamurti, the fifth avatar of Vishnu. Vamana was born at noon on the Sukladvadasi day in the month of Bhadrapada (August-September)² and that auspicious day is known as Sravanadvadasi, because the Sravana asterism manifests itself in conjunction with Devadasi, the twelfth tithi (of the bright half of the lunar month) on that day. It would be interesting in this connection to remember that the avatar of Matsya took place on the Krshnatrayodasi day in Chaitra (March-April), of Kurma on the Krshnavadasi day in Jyeshtha, (May-June), of Varaha on the Kshnapanchami day in Chitra, of Narasimha on the Suklachaturdasi day in Vaisakha (April-May), of Parasurama on the Krshnavitiya day in Margasirsha (November-December), of Srirama on the Suklanavami day in Chaitra, of Balarama on the Suklavitiya day in Vaisakha.

and of Srikrishna on the Krishnashtami day in Sravana (July-August).

Puranic Story. The episode of Vamana is narrated in detail in the eighth Skandha of Srimadbhagavata. It is summarised in several other Puranas also, eg., Vamana and Padma, and in Harivamsa. Mahabali, the grandson of Prahlada, the greatest of Vaishnavite saints, for whose protection from his father, the dreadful demon Hiranyakasipu, Vishnu assumed the shape of Narasimha (man-lion) and slew him, was a mighty emperor of the Asuras. He extended his sway not only over the whole earth, which he governed wisely and well, but also conquered Svarga (heaven).

Aditi, the woe-begone mother of the Devas consequently sought the help of Vishnu, and the Lord, as already mentioned, was born to her and Kasyapa (father of the Devas) as Vamana (Dwarf), with the specific object of humbling the overweening pride of Mahabali, and wrest both heaven and earth from him. Hearing that Bali was then performing a great sacrifice and knowing that his one weakness was not to refuse any request that might be made to him, Vamana proceeded to Bhrgukachcha (Broach) on the banks of the Narmada where the sacrificial ceremony was in progress³ and prayed him for the grant of a tiny piece of land, just enough to cover three of his little foot-steps, and not more. Mahabali readily granted this prayer, in spite of the protestations of his preceptor Sukracharya who knew the underlying plot, and Vishnu, thereupon, occupied the whole earth and sky with the first foot and the entire heaven with the second, reaching Satyaloka, the abode of Brahma. Since Bali was unable to find accommodation for his third foot-step, the Lord caused the Asura to be bound with the varuni noose when, nothing daunted, that generous foe, true to his word, bared his head and showed it for that foot also being planted. Vishnu then pushed him down to the nether world, Patala (Rasatala according to some authorities), with the promise, however, that he would be installed on the throne of Indra, the king of the Devas, in the Manvantara of Savarni (eighth Manu).

Was Mahabali King of Kerala? The surmise that Mahabali was the earliest king of Kerala with his capital at Mavelikkara in Central Travancore, is far too fantastic to stand in need of

refutation. This conjecture, which is of very recent origin, is due to the misinterpretation of certain ancient Tamil texts. To cite only one instance, *Utiyan Cheral "Vana-varmapan,"* mentioned in the Sangham work *Patittuppattu*, by which expression is meant the Chera King Utiyan whose territory is bounded by the sky, is metamorphosed into Udayan Banavarman, leading to the glib inference that Bana, the son of Mahabali, was a Chera ruler.⁴ It is well-known that Bana's capital, Sonitapura, was situated in Kumaon on the banks of the Mandakini four miles from Umamatha⁵ while according to a few authorities it stood at Tripura on the banks of the Narmada. It has already been mentioned that Mahabali's sacrifice was performed at Broach. There was a petty dynasty of Banas in South India who ruled over small portions of the Chittoor and North Arcot Districts within historical times,⁶ but they had nothing whatever to do with Kerala. The fact cannot be too strongly emphasised that the Onam festival originated with the worship of Vamana and that it was absolutely unconnected with Mahabali at the commencement.

Onam in Tamilnad. In this context, it is also worthy of note that this festival was not confined to Kerala, but extended over the whole of Tamilnad in early times. There are references to Onavizhavu (Onam festival) in Tamil literature. Maturaikkanchi, the well-known Sangham work composed by Mankutimarutanar in praise of Netumchezhiyan, the Pandyan king, which forms the sixth poem in the Pattuppattu collection contains a significant passage describing that on the Onam day when Mahavishnu was oborn (as Vamana) to destory the Asuras, able-bodied men fought in opposite camps and received wounds on their foreheads.⁷ This proves that the Onam festival and the mock-fight which formed one of the main amusements on that day are at least as old as the second century A.D. Several ancient social customs of the Tamils continue to flourish intact in Kerala while they have disappeared in other parts of Tamilnad and this is one of them. Onappiran, the Lord of Onam, is one of the names of Vishnu in Tamil. It may also be remembered that the devata (divinity) of Tiruvonam is Vishnu.

Kerala Legends. At the same time it has to be remembered that the Puranic version of the avatar of Vamana has undergone

some modifications in Kerala with the advance of ages. Onappattu, also known as Mahabali-charitam, is a small anonymous poem, in Malayalam, composed about two centuries ago. It possesses no merits as a work of art, but some of its lines are universally known.⁸ That poem narrates the legend that, when Mahabali was the ruler of the earth, he organised the Onam festival in the Trikkakkara temple in North Travancore, that it fell into disuse when he departed for the other-world, and that when Srikrishna, and Yudhishtira succeeded him he complained of this neglect to Srikrishna, with the result that he permitted Mahabali to revisit the earth once every year on the Onam day and arranged with Yudhishtira for the re-institution of the festival on even a grander scale than before, so as to elicit the encomium of Mahabali at the time of that visit.⁹

The author of this poem was in no sense a scholar and he never had even a nodding acquaintance with Puranic literature. Another version of this tradition is that, before his exit from the earth, Mahabali prayed Vamana to allow him to visit it on the Onam day annually and that this prayer was granted by the Lord.¹⁰ There is no foundation for either of these versions in any of the Puranas, and one modern scholar rightly calls it a grandmother's tale.¹¹

A different tradition based on the authority of Keralamahatmya, an anonymous Sanskrit work of the 17th century A.D., is also current, according to which Sriparasurama once cursed the Nambutiri Brahmins of Kerala on their attempting to test the truth of one of his promises, and that on their expression of regret for that sinful act, he agreed to visit Kerala on the Onam day at Trichur¹² or at Trkkakkara as per another version.¹³ This tradition is also wholly unfounded.

Trikkakkara Temple. Almost every time-honoured belief in this respect converges to the view that Trikkakkara Appan, or the Lord of Trikkakkara, is the deity that has to be worshipped during the Onam festival. This deity is none other than Vamana. Trikkakkara, situated about two and a half miles to the south-east of the Idappalli railway station in the Kunnatnad taluk in North Travancore, is noted for its ancient shrine of Vamana. It is one of the thirteen Divyadesams (holy spots) of Malainad (Kerala),

sacred to Srivaishnavas, and its greatness has been praised in rapturous verses by Nammazhvar, the greatest of Srivaishnava saints. Trikkakkara Appan was one of the tutelary deities of Chera rulers, and several inscriptions of the time of Bhaskara Ravi-varman, the last Cheramanperumal (Circa 978-1036), have been discovered in that shrine.¹⁴

According to tradition, the Onam festival at Trikkakkara, which began on the Attam (Hastham) asterism in Chingam and lasted for twenty-eight days, was celebrated with great eclat in ancient times¹⁵ and every potentate of Kerala made it a point to participate in that celebration from the very commencement. It is believed that the Attachchamayam procession, which is even now celebrated by the Maharajas of Cochin and the Zamorins of Calicut, serves to commemorate that custom. Neither the Maharajas of Travancore nor the Kolattiris of North Malabar have ever celebrated attachchamayam, because their territories did not fall within the direct suzerainty of the Perumals. People of all castes, classes and communities in Kerala from far and near witnessed the festivities and worshipped Vamana at Trkkakkara. It is stated that it was only after this festival dwindled in importance that the worship of Trikkakkara Appan in every house was started; but this view cannot be accepted as correct. It has to be presumed that while those who proceeded to Trikkakara took part in the local festivities, the majority who stayed behind celebrated the festival in their own houses. The festival does not commemorate either the close of the Perumal era, the advent of the Christian Community, or the worship of the sun, as wrongly supposed by several modern scholars.

Festival of Spring. It should not be forgotten that there are also certain special reasons for the celebration of the Onam festival in Kerala, apart from its association with the worship of Vamana. Otherwise it is inexplicable how Tiruvonam here has become a day of sumptuous eating and hilarious playing while elsewhere Sraavanadvadasi is a day of fasting and austerity.¹⁶ Chingam is the month of harvest in Kerala, and it is a season when peace and plenty reign again after the incessant rains of Karkatakam. It is, therefore not without a sense of propriety that the month of Karkatakam is stigmatised as Kalla (rogue) Karkatakam while Chingam is extolled as Ponnun (golden) Chingam in popular

parlance. The ceremonies of Nira (filling the house-hold granary with newly harvested paddy) and Puttari (eating of the newly secured rice) are performed on an auspicious day generally before Onam. Inclemency of weather disappears, days and nights are fresh and delightful, nature puts on a new garb and flowers bloom in abundance. Fr. Bartolomco, the Carmelite friar who was an intimate friend of Maharaja Ramavarma of Travancore (1758-98) and who lived for several years at Varappuzha and studied, as few other foreigners have done, the culture and antiquities of Kerala, has recorded in his *Voyage to the East Indies*: "All nature seems as if renovated; the flowers again shoot up and the trees bloom; in a word this season is the same as that which Europeans call Spring. This festival (Onam) seems, therefore, to have been instituted for the purpose of soliciting from the Gods a happy and fruitful year¹⁷." There can be little doubt that it is for this reason that Onam becomes a season of all round mirth and regalement and that it was associated with the worship of Vamana to secure spiritual, in addition to temporal, happiness. As a Malayalam poet of the 17th century has put it: "The festival was instituted in order that all people might enjoy themselves"¹⁸

Gathering Flowers. The festival, as already indicated, commences on the Attam day, and while the religious portion of it lasts only for ten days ending with Tiruvonam, two more days are set apart for recreational purposes. The great secret of gaining and giving happiness lies in our becoming as children, and this is what every Malayali, strives to do during the Onam season. The festival, of course, appeals most to children with their God-given capacity for concentrated enjoyment and every boy and girl sets out each morning to collect flowers, singing devotional songs in praise of Onattappan (Vamana) and Onam, all the way, and returns by 9 A. M. They then carpet the central portion of the front-yard of their houses, already cleansed and purified, with those flowers arranged as artistically as possible. A conical image usually made of clay is also set up in the middle of it, supposed to represent Trikkakkara Appan. This floral decoration and worship proceed with increasing vigour and devotional fervour each succeeding day.

Presentation of New Clothes : The more important portion of the festival commences on the Utradam day, and hence it is

appropriately termed the first Onam. All the food-stuffs necessary for sumptuous feasting on the four days commencing therefrom and especially on the Tiruvonam day are stored up in advance with punctilious care. In well-to-do families the tenants and other dependents present the fruits of their labour such as vegetables, and this is known as Onakkazhcha. At about 4 A.M. on Tiruvonam a portion of the courtyard is decorated with flowers and festoons, lamps are lit in front of the images of Trikkakkara Appan and other deities, and worship is offered on an elaborate scale. This over, all the inmates of the house go and pray in the local temple, and on their return, the head of the family presents them and his tenants and other dependents with new unbleached clothes. In former times, members of the military castes and children also received bows.

Onam Feast : The feast then commences in right earnest, the diet being strictly vegetarian. The wearing of new clothes and feasting in a sumptuous manner are even to-day the distinguishing features of the Onam day. There is a reference to some of these practices in one of the stray verses of Uddanda Sastri, the great Sanskrit poet who adorned the court of the Zamorin in the middle of the 15th century.¹⁹ Jacob Canter Visscher, the well-known Dutch Chaplain of Cochin (1717-23), has also left a descriptive note on this topic in his Letters from Malabar.²⁰ There are several interesting Malayalam proverbs relating to Onam, eg., that a weaver would be very busy when Onam approaches, that one should eat to one's heart's content on that day even if one's Kanam tenancy has to be sold for that purpose, that some persons if they have any money with them spend it in eating as on the Onam day starving when they have spent it away, and that what is not available for the Onam feast may as well be allowed to go to the dog.²¹

Games and Sports : After the feast every one participates in some indoor or outdoor game, the elderly men having a game of chess while the youngsters are engaged in wrestling and foot-ball. The Dutch Captain, Nieuhoff, writing in 1664 has observed : "They (the Nayars) are the best wrestlers in the world and very nimble in foot".²² The younger women and the girls regale themselves with swinging and dancing to the accompaniment of

melodious tunes. Onappattus or songs to be sung on the Onam day have been composed by several authors and they form a distinct branch of Malayalam literature by themselves. Some of these songs are of real artistic value. The elderly ladies watch and appreciate such amusements.

The mock-fight in connection with the Onam festival known variously as Onappata, Onattallu and Ona-eyittu, already referred to, was a favourite form of recreation for the Nayers in former times. In the work Haryakshamasa samarotavam (literally the festival of fight during the month of Chingam) also termed Kandiyur Mattam Patappattu, we find a full and glowing account of that dangerous pastime. The author of that work expresses the popular belief when he says that this fight was originated in the days of Cheraman Perumal and that those who died in the contest would go to heaven, while those who survived would earn conspicuous fame and other blessings.²³ The martial campaigns in Malabar generally commenced in Chingam after the Onam festival, and the Nayar militia practised this game soon after their annual training in Karkatakam in the local gymnasiums, to whet their appetite and test their fitness for such campaigns.

Mock-fights : In the same war-song it is stated after there were two such fights, one on the afternoon of the Tiruvonam day and the other on the forenoon of the Avittam day, that women too witnessed those fights and encouraged the victors by lusty shouting,²⁴ and that kings and noblemen graced the contests with their presence and awarded suitable presents. Syrian Christians also participated in those contests until they were prohibited from doing so by the Synod of Diamper (Udayamperur) held by Archbishop Menezes in 1599. There are records to show that in 1766, 1768 and 1771 the Nayers of Trivandrum were engaged in such mock-fights and that money presents were awarded to them from the temple of Sripadmanabha.

James Forbes, writing towards the close of the 18th century, observes : "The Malabars are very expert with these weapons, especially the Nayers who always assemble under their respective leaders on the festival of the full-moon in September at the breaking of the monsoon, and being drawn up in two divisions commence a serious engagement with bows and arrows, spears and lances ;

this is sometimes protracted for a considerable time, and many fall on both sides, who confer a great honour on their family by this sacrificial to glory. The principal Brahman and Nayar ladies are present on these occasions covered with ornaments, if not, drapery".⁸⁶ Fra Bartolomeo states: "The men, particularly those who are young, form themselves into two parties and shoot at each other with arrows. Those arrows are blunted but exceedingly strong and are charged with such force that a large number are considerably wounded on both sides. These games have a great likeness to the cerialia and the juvenalia of the Greeks and the Romans."⁸⁶ Those semi-sanguinary contests gave place to milder amusements such as foot-ball, after the abolition of the militia in Travancore and Cochin by Colonel Munro in the second decade of the nineteenth century. The archery tournament, in an attenuated form, appears however, to have continued in Malabar until recently as Fawcett says that he witnessed one such, lasting for ten days in the southern part of the Kurumpranad taluk.⁸⁷ The bow is a common weapon of worship on the Tiruvonam day in Kerala, apparently as associated with this ancient military practice, and readers of the superb Malayalam poem, *Krishnagatha*, are familiar with the prayer of Srikrishna to Nandagopa that his Onam bows should be preserved until he revisited Gokula from Mathura.⁸⁸ The occupation of one sub-group of the artisan class, viz., Vilkkuruppus, was the making of bows and their number stood at 915 in the Travancore Census of 1901. The archers of Quilon were well-nigh invincible, and Udayamartanda Varma who ruled over Quilon at the time of the advent of the Portuguese had a contingent of 400 to 500 female archers⁸⁹

Utrattati Festival at Aranmula: The Utrattati festival at Aranmula in Central Travancore so closely follows the Onam festival that it may well be treated as forming part of it. Aranmula, also known as Tiruvaranmula, on the northern bank of the Pampa river is a health and bathing resort during the summer months. The local temple is another of the Divyadesams of Malainad, whose glories have also been sung by Nammazhavar. Although Tiruvaranmula Appan, the deity of this temple, is worshipped in the form of Srikrishna, at present, there is some evidence to show that it was also originally dedicated to Vamana (Dadhivamana according to Vaishnavite tradition)⁹⁰ On the Utrattati

asterism, the fourth day after Tiruvonam, a regatta is held there, which is at once the most ancient as the most celebrated in all Kerala. As a matter of fact, the regatta Aranmula commences on the Tiruvonam day itself, but only a few boats take part in the beginning. The race on the Utrattati day is the most important and all the available snake-boats, dedicated to Tiruvaranmula Appan immediately after their construction, participate in it. In 1893 about forty such boats were found assembled. Each of them is very long, generally measuring from $36\frac{1}{2}$ to $41\frac{1}{2}$ *kole* (a *kole* being equivalent to 28 inches) and is manned by more than a hundred rowers. There were more than seventy boats, all told, during the current year (1943.) All the rowers are sumptuously fed in the temple before the race which commences in the afternoon. The deity himself is believed to be in all the boats at the time of the regatta and all of them are expected to arrive at their destination simultaneously. Mr. M. Rajarajavarma Raja, retired Devaswom Commissioner, has thus described this rowing match : "Long snake-boats and they are more than fifty feet long, are launched by dozens into the broad stream, adorned with golden knobs at the high helm, golden umbrellas resplendent in the sunshine, flags waving merrily in the breeze, rowers by hundreds in gala dress seated in rows one behind the other, songsters, pipers and a number of people standing in every available spot inside—these snake-boats afford a spectacle simply grand and picturesque. Soon the hurrahs fill the air, echoed by the multitudes who swarm on both sides of the river. It is indeed a pretty sight to see long rows of boats dressed and manned to the full, plough the deep waters of the stream with flying rapidity.³¹ Numerous boatsongs have been composed from time to time for being sung on such occasions, and some of them rise to the level of high-class poetry. All people of the locality place their implicit trust in the infallible efficacy of participation in this regatta for the conferment of health and wealth, and no one speaks ill of it for fear of exciting the wrath of Tiruvaranmula Appan, who never fails to inflict condign punishment on doubters and detractors.

Malayalis are a festival-fond people. Their humorous approach and reaction to vicissitudes of fortune are proverbial. "Festivals," says Southey "when duly observed, attach men to the and and religious institutions of their country ; it is an evil

therefore when they fall into disuse." In these days of fatal fissiparism it would be little less than a national calamity if the energising and integrating influence of such festivals as Onam and Utrattati was held back by the benumbing hand of realism. May those ancient festivals, associated with divine worship and sanctified by national custom, ever grow from more to more and march in triumph from success to success.

3. "स नर्मदायास्तट उत्तरे बले-
य ऋत्विजस्ते भृगुकुच्छसंज्ञके
अवर्तयन्तो भृगवः क्रतुत्तमं
भ्यवक्षतारादुदितं यथा रविम् ॥"
4. Vide K. G. Sesha Aiyar's *Ceras of the Sangam age*, p. 9, for a criticism of this view.
5. देवीकोटो बाणपुरं
कोटीवचंमुमावनं
स्याच्छोणितपुरम् (Trikanthasetha, Bhumivarga)
6. *Historical Inscriptions of South India* by R. Sewell and S. K. Aiyangar, P. 328.
7. 'களங்கொளவுணர் கடந்தபொலந்தார்
மாயோன்மேயவீவாணநன்றான்.
... ..
மறங்கொள் சேரிமாறு பொருசெருவின்
மாருதுற்றவடுப்பட்டுநெற்றி."
(Maturaikkanchi, lines 590-591 and 594-595)
8. മാവേലി നാടുവാണിടം കാലം
മാനസരല്ലൊക്കൊന്നുപോലെ . (Onappattu)
cf. the English distich
"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then a gentleman?"
9. 'ചിങ്ങമാസത്തിലെയാണത്തിൻ നാൾ
മാവേലിതാൻ വരമിവിടെ
പടഞ്ഞിനെക്കാൾ വിചിത്രമായി
വേണ്ടുന്നതെല്ലാമൊരുക്കിടണം.' (Onappattu)
10. മുൻപിൽ ജഗത്തിതലിലും ബഹുധർമ്മമുറക്കൊ-
ണ്ടൻപോടു കാമത്തൊരു മഹാബലി ദൈത്യരാജൻ
വൻപൻ വരുന്ന തിരുവോണദിനം ജനങ്ങൾ
സംപൂർണ്ണകേതിപരമോൽസവമാക്കിടുന്നു.
(Malayankollam, by Kochunni Tampuran)
11. മൂന്നം വാമനമൂർത്ത്യവതാരം തിരുവോണമെന്നാലുന
മാബലിതൻ വരവുണ്ടിവിടെനതൊരുമ്മനശ്ശാസ്യം .
(Tiruvonamahatmyam by Aranmula Kochuraman Pillai, published in 1906. The late Kochuraman Pillai who was a good Sanskrit scholar, also says that he was not able to come across any authority in support of this tradition.

12. "श्रावणे संस्थिते भानौ
 श्रवणार्क्षे द्विजोत्तमाः
 आगमिष्यामि मद् भूमौ
 केरलेऽस्मिन् सुवर्षके
 वृषादिपुरमागत्य
 श्रीमूलस्थानमण्डपे ॥"

(Keralamahatmyam, Chap. 99)

13. ശ്രീ പരശുരാമഭവൻ താനമേവം-തന്റെ
 ശ്രീമൂലസ്ഥാനത്തുനിന്നുളളിച്ചെയ്യ
 ശ്രാവണമാസി ചത്തൂർളിനമനുസമനിമേലിൽ-തിരു-
 വോണണിനം മുതലിവിടധിവാസം ചെയ്യിടാം. ഞാൻ
 ഉത്തമ ശ്രാവണമാസം നിങ്ങളെല്ലാപേരും-
 മെത്തണം. തൃക്കാക്കര-ആക്കോവീൽ തന്നിൽ
 അത്ര വരും നന്ദുശ്യാതയെന്നിയെ ഞാനമെന്നാൽ.
14. (Travancore Archaeological series, Vol. II pp. 38-51). The correct form of the word as seen from these inscriptions is Tirukkakara which in Tamil assumes the form of Tirukkatkara.

15. തൃക്കാക്കരപ്പുറമെ റിവ്യമഹോൽസവശ്രീ-
 യിക്കാലമാണ തുടരുന്നതു പണ്ടുപോലും
 ചൊൽക്കൊണ്ടുപോകുമതുകൊണ്ടു നിജാഭിമാനത്തിൽ
 തൃക്കാക്കരപ്പുറനയണിഞ്ഞു നിരത്തിടുന്നു.
- (Malayankollam, 1,30)

Kunjikkuttan Tampuran states in his poem Keralam, Part I (vide pp. 90-92) that the festival was instituted by Bhaskara Ravi Varma, and that its object was the commemoration of the reign of Mahabali. Both these observations are incorrect.

16. The details of the worship of Vamana on the Sravanadwadasi day are found in several Puranas. In Agnipurana, Chapter 195, it is stated that the following verses have to be chanted among the pushpanjali hymns that day.
- "वामनो बुद्धिरो दाता
 इष्यत्यो वामनः स्वयं
 वामनः प्रतिगृह्णाति
 वामनो मे ददाति च
 इष्यत्यो वामनो नित्यं
 वामनाय नमोनमः ॥"

17. A Voyage to East Indies, p. 360.

18. “ഹൃദ്യാവർഷം സഖിപ്പാനുജ്ഞായിതാവണിയോണം..”
(Haryakshamasa samarotsavam by Tirunilakanthan, p. 4).
19. चोक्ष्यन्ते पृथुकतनयश्च.पताडिन्य उच्चै-
स्सर्वा नार्यः पतिभिरिति लम्भयन्त्वर्षकामान् ।
बभ्रम्यन्ते सकलपुष्टैर्बलभाम्यः प्रदातुं
चित्रं वस्त्रं श्रवणकुतूहं वर्तते करिषु ॥
20. Visscher says: “They raise a hillock in front of their dwellings, smeared with cowdung and strewed with flowers, on which they set up the image of Vishnu, clothed in a new garment and provided with an open coconut for food. Those castes who are allowed to partake of fish meat abstain from it on this day and the upper people distribute garments to their servants.”
21. (1) ഓണമടുത്ത ചാലിയൻ
(2) കാണംവിററുമോണമണ്ണണം
(3) ഉണ്ടെങ്കിലോണം: ഇല്ലെങ്കിൽ പട്ടിണി.
(4) തിരുവോണത്തിനില്ലാത്തത തീക്കൊള്ളിക്കൊ?
22. Churchill's collection of Voyages and Travels, Vol. II.
23. ഓണമുദ്ധങ്ങൾ ചെയ്ക ആണങ്ങൾക്കുകൈനെ
നാണയം പലവൃണിന്നിന്നിലത്തോർകൾക്കെല്ലാം
ചേരമാൻ കാലത്തിലെ പാരിലുള്ളോർകൾ മോക്ഷം
ചേരവാന്തള കർമ്മം നേരെയുള്ളതിൽത്തന്നെ
വീരന്മാർ നിരൂപിച്ചാർ വിര്യസസങ്ങൾ ചെയ്താൽ
വീരീയസാർഗ്ഗം പൂവാൻ പാരിലെന്നുകൊണ്ടാൻ
പോരിന്നുടുങ്ങിയാൽ കാരണം പലതുമുണ്ടു
മരിപ്പാൻ വിധിയെങ്കിൽ. മരിച്ചാൽ മോക്ഷം തന്നെ .
മരിക്കാതിരിക്കിലൊ പെരുത്തു പുകഴ്ന്നോ-
മതവുമുണ്ടോണം ബുദ്ധിയേയുമുണ്ടോം..”
(Haryakshamasa Samarotsavam)
24. അടുത്തോരരിവുയർ തൊടുത്താർ കരവകൾ.
(Ibid., p. 28.)
25. Forbes's Oriental Memoirs, 1843 edition. Vol. I, p. 245. Forbes was employed in the Anjengo English Factory and his description is correct except for two minor slips. The festival does not fall on the full-moon day; nor could Brahmin ladies have attended it. The author apparently alludes to Kshatriya women. Tirunilakanthan also says that it was the practice to use spears, lances and swords in addition to bows and arrows and that several men died on the field.
26. A Voyage to East Indies, p. 360.

27. Madras Museum Bulletin, Vol. III, pp. 293-94.
28. ചേണററു നിന്നുളളാരോണവിലൊന്നുമെ
 ഞാനെറുപോകല്ല ഞാൻ വരമ്പോം.
29. Barbosa's East Africa and Malabar p. 173.
30. Nammazhvar describes the deity as :
 “അകവിടം മുற்றവും ഞരൂപേ ആകും പരിക
 നിമിർന്ത തിരുக்குறളാപൻ അമർന്തുതെയ്യും
തിരുവാതൻവിനോ.”
31. Malabar Quarterly Review. Vol. V. pp. 144-45.
 “Those who want to know more about regatta would do well to read
 Vilvavattathu Raghavan Nambiar's Aranmula Vilasom (1904) and
 Perumpara Vasudevan Nambutiri's Utrattathicharitham which
 I am publishing for the first time in the forthcoming issue of the
 All Kerala Literary Akademy.”