

INSIDE A TEMPLE THEATRE

A personal account of Kootiyattam

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The first performance of a *Kootiyattam* play that I saw was given in a hall in Kozikode for a special recording by All India Radio in 1960. The fragment from Kulasekhar Verman's Sanskrit play *Subhadra Dhananjaya* was enjoyable. But that introductory experience whetted my curiosity to see this ancient Sanskrit traditional performance in its original setting. According to the 1000 year old convention, Kootiyattam used to be performed in various places in Kerala. But later, performances came to be limited to only within Kottayam district and presently to certain temples in and around Trichur. In olden times full plays used to be produced and presented in the temple theatre (*Koothambalam*) on several occasions. One act alone of a play would take anything between 11 to 15 days to be shown in full, that is, if *Nirvahana* or recapitulation of the previous days' performances were also put on. The whole play takes not less than one month*. Now-a-days, the performances are staged in 3 or 4 temples in and around Trichur, only once a year on a regular basis. This is the Navaratri festival. Only one act is presented commencing on the Dashehra day and the programme lasts 5 nights. Prior to the *Kootiyattam*, in Trichur and Venganoor temples only, a performance of *Chakyar Koothu* is given in the temple-theatre. Delivered as a monologue by the most experienced and senior among the Chakyars, it lasts 41 nights, which is the complete circle or *mandala* though *Koothu* performances can be performed for shorter periods such as 1, 3, 5, 7, 12, 15 or 21 days. Speech is in Malayalam mixed with Sanskrit and is presumably an extension of the Sanskrit *Bhana* style of acting. It is a monologue on *purushartha* both ancient (*dharma, artha,*

*Pandit K. P. Narayana Pisharody, a Sanskrit scholar, and Shri L. S. Rajagopalan both of Trichur inform me that the first act of *Subhadra Dhananjaya* takes 11 days and the 2nd act of *Nagananda* takes 15 days — in both these there is *Vidushaka* who takes about 5 days for his *purapad* and *Nirvahana* (detailing the *purushartha* etc.). In plays without *Vidushaka* it would be less. If the later acts are put on it would take more days since the *Nirvahana* for all the previous acts have to be performed. Approximately it takes 3 days for each act without the *Nirvahana*. If there is *Praveshaka* or *Vishkambha* it would take one day more. Formerly *Ashcharya Choodamani*, *Abhisheka Nataka* and *Prathima Nataka* (3 together) were being presented and it would take one year to complete the 3 plays! This would cover the whole of the *Ramayana*.

kama and *moksha*) and modern (*vinoda*-amusement, *asthana*-food, *vanchana*-deception, and *rajaseva*-government service).

The contents of this presentation are specially prepared compositions or *prabandhas* consisting of prose and verse pieces selected from some well-known old writers and poets such as Narayana Bhatta, Aswathi Tirunal Yuvarajah. The *prabandhas* are about episodes from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* usually, but satirical references to contemporary political and social situations are also deftly introduced. After this chain of monologues is presented in the same *Koothambalam*, the "multilogue" is presented, (which is the literal meaning of *Kootiyattam*; *Kooti* means 'together' and '*attam*' means 'playing'). In the *Kootiyattam* several players participate and it is thus drama proper. But in a *Kootiyattam* performance also, if there is a *Vidushaka* (court jester) in the play, he gives a discourse in the *Koothu* style after his first entry or *purappad*.

Arriving in Trichur on the last day of the programme (October 21, 1972), I was able to see the second part of the Act of the play chosen for the programme. This was, in a sense, lucky for me, because the first three nights of the programme were devoted to *Nirvahana*, that is, recounting the earlier portion of the story from the play by a single actor, so as to give the audience, the background of the play. But the *Nirvahana* being a monologue, it does not give an idea of the conventions and characteristics of speech and overall presentation.

The presentation began at 9 P.M. and went on, without a break until 2.30 A.M. before an attentive audience. Though the light in the *Koothambalam* was dim, I jotted down some notes on the spot. I had the advantage of having beside me two devotees of *Kootiyattam*, Pandit K. P. Narayana Pisharody who was good enough to explain to me in Sanskrit the action as it went on, and Shri L. S. Rajagopalan who gave me useful information on the background of the *Kootiyattam* tradition. Based on those notes, I give below an account of what I saw. I have refrained from analysing the details in a scholarly way. For that there may be other occasions. This is only a factual account of what was, for me, a unique experience.

The *Koothambalam* in the Vatakkunathan temple, Trichur, is a rectangular hall with sharply sloping roof done in copper and absolutely waterproof. On the sides there is a 6 ft. high wooden fence-like wall so that one can even stand outside and peep in. The rectangular hall inside has four rows of pillars, three stone and one wood. The row nearest the outer perforated wood wall has stone pillars of a lower height. The third row surrounds the higher level of the platform of the auditorium. The *arangam* (stage) pillars are additional to the three stone rows of the auditorium. The design of the auditorium pillars is plain; heavy square stone lower down, a fluted portion higher up and capped by a capital in the typical Kerala style. The pillars of the *arangam* are of wood decorated in lacquer but with no patterns except the circular shape. Thus, these pillars stand out in contrast to the pillars of the auditorium.*

The stage of the theatre is divided into three parts though not rigidly. Right at the back is the door leading into a small green-room which is called

*My observation of the *Koothambalam* being rather brief, I have omitted several details. A full account was given in the article "Koothambalam — Sanskrit Stage of Kerala" by Govardhana Panchal (Sangeet Natak-8).

aniyara. It is a small room with high windows. From the green-room, *nepathya*, voices are also heard. About two feet outside the door of the *aniyara* is the enclosed space for the drumming instruments the *mizavus*. These are copper drums shaped like huge narrow-necked vessels covered on top by skin. Two of these are placed on a wooden framework which has a railing-like appearance from outside. The wooden structure is also used for seating the drummers. One pipe-player stands on the left side of the *mizavu* enclosure. The pipe is called *kuzhal*. By the side of the *kuzhal* player stands another drummer who plays upon the *edakka*, a small drum.¹

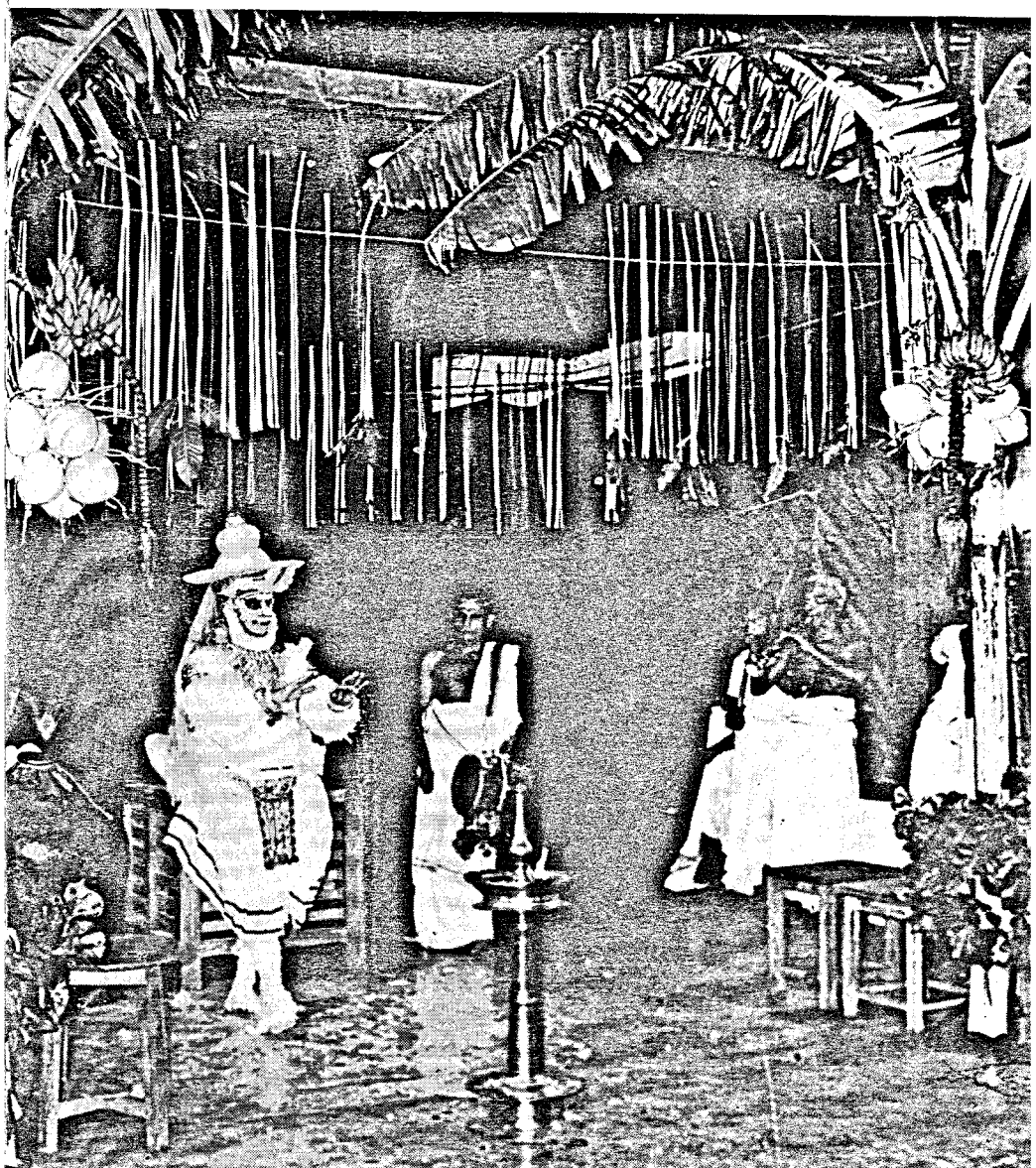
Beyond the *mizavu* enclosure stretches the area of performance, the *aranga*. (In Malayalam this word is pronounced between *aranga* and *arangu*.) The *aranga* consists of a rectangular platform with four pillars each on the sides and two pillars on the front along with the corner pillars. These pillars are made of wood and decorated in lacquer. They are multi-coloured circular pieces as distinct from the square and engraved stone outside the platform. The ceiling of the *aranga* is all wood with carvings of heads of elephants, reminiscent of the *matta-varani* described in Bharata's *Natyashastra*².

On the platform, outside the enclosure for musical instruments, are placed a few items that catch the eye. First, right near the front edge of the platform, at the centre, is placed a big brass lampstand with wicks on two sides; coconut oil was replenished by a young attendant who poured it into the lamp from time to time. This light, mild and limited, created the impression of a dim beautiful circular focus on the performer. It creates a romantic environment and brings out the exaggerated features of the make-up so that they did not appear to be excessive as they do in the sharp bright light of electricity. It seems to me that the performance of *Kathakali* and *Kootiyattam* in modern electric light is inappropriate and unfair to the make-up.

To the left side of the lampstand was placed a one foot high wide-mouthed vessel brimful with grain. It is called a *para* or a measure of rice. On the first day of the performance of *Kootiyattam*, eight auspicious articles — *ashtamangalya* are offered. These include betel leaves, areca nuts, plantain (complete plant with the bunch of fruit), coconut flower bunch, areca-nut bunch, one *para* (measure) full of paddy (inside which the coconut bunch is usually placed), raw rice (*akshat*) and a twig (*toran*) of tender coconut leaves. At the end of the performance, the *para* full of paddy is taken over by the Chakyar. A little to the centre of the platform was placed a stool which is called *peerha*. This was the only 'property' on the stage. The main character sits on it and sometimes it is used for some characters to stand upon, in order to give the impression of their being on the way to the sky. It is a remarkable multi-purpose piece of property in the way it is used in the performance.

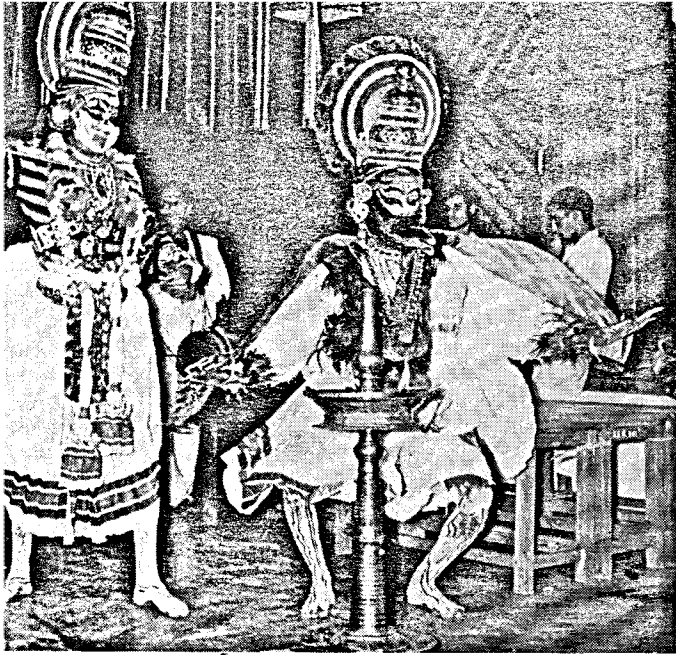
On the right side of the stage sits the *Nanyar*, that is, the girl from the drummers' family. The drummers are the Nambyar community. This girl, *Nanyar* recites *shlokas*. She also sings the invocatory and concluding verses. The *shlokas* in the text of the play are spoken by the characters themselves. But sometimes *Vidushakas* and "lowly" characters introduce

Illustrations: P. 23. The stage, showing ritual decor. Character performing is Hanuman. P. 24 Above: The great brass oil-lamp is lit. Below left: Mizavu, the big copper drum; right; Nanyar, the singer.









quotations from other works too. These are interesting or amusing and embellish the play. To recite some *shlokas*, and invocatory and concluding songs is the privilege of the *Nanyar* girl. Her pronunciation of Sanskrit was excellent. Usually, she has to be as well-trained in the text as the Chakyar performers.

The auditorium consists of two levels of rectangular spaces, one extending from the *aranga* and facing it. It was at a level about two feet lower than the *aranga*. Below that, on its three sides ran a gallery at a further lower level. In the past, the upper level of the auditorium was for the Brahmins, and the lower gallery for other castes. Now-a-days, this distinction is not observed. The only division in evidence is that women sit on the left side and the rest of the auditorium is occupied by men and boys. Every male in the auditorium wore a *dhoti*, the upper portion of the body being bare. One could wrap a towel around the shoulders if one liked. As I sat there thus, on the hard ground, I could see how democratic that auditorium is. The dress made us all look equals also. It is a remarkable environment of equality and yet one of discrimination and good taste.

Before a play or an act begins, the *Nambyar*, i.e. the drummer sprinkles holy water on the stage. This ceremony is called *Arangu theli*. Special *shlokas* are recited on this occasion. Since the Act to be performed that night was of *Panchavati*, the *Arangu theli*, while praising the hero Rama praying for protection from him, referred also to the river Godavari. According to a legend, the right of the *Nambyars* to perform the *Arangu theli* was granted to them by King Kula Sekhara Verman when there was a dispute between the Chakyars and the *Nambyars*.

Since it was a subsequent day of the chosen act or *anka* of the play, the appearance of major performers was not from behind the *yavanika* or curtain. Such ceremonial appearances must have been made on the first day of the performance. Likewise, the lighting of the lamp is a ritual performed on the first day. The play, *Ascharya Choodamani* is based on the *Ramayana* and the Act was placed in the background of *Panchavati*. Rama comes and sits on the stool in an *asana* in which the left leg is placed over the right leg but both the legs are above the stool.

Rama begins with the *Nirvahana* or *poorva katha* (previous story). Seated in this posture on the *peerah* Rama recalls the story beginning from the marriage of his father Dasrath with the three queens and coming down the episodes about himself and other members of the family. The entire *poorva katha* is given in summary. The events are recalled through *angika abhinaya*, that is, silent acting through gestures. In between *shlokas* are recited occasionally. Besides *shlokas* from the first Act there were *shlokas* from other sources. The singing is by the *Nanyar*.

On the preceding day, the first half of the Act on *Panchavati* was presented. The portion covered was of Surpanakha approaching Rama and being directed by him to Lakshmana. She has been appearing as a comely woman — Lalita. After Rama has finished the *Nirvahana*, Surpanakha appears again as Lalita, and offers herself to Rama. Rama asks her

Illustrations: P. 25. *Sutradhar*, who links the scenes of the marathon plays. P. 26, above: *Jatayu* challenges *Ravana*; below: the fight. (Photographs: Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi.)

why she has not been to Lakshmana. Then there is an exchange of questions and answers. Rama explains that as he is already accompanied by his wife Sita, he is unable to accept her offer. Sita is supposed to be sitting with him though physically no actress is present in the role of Sita. Her presence is made known through gestures. Rama's pose suggests that he is holding her by one hand. Again and again in the course of the conversation he comes back to that pose. The gestures are so vivid that as the play progresses, one almost believes that Sita is sitting there by the side of Rama.

A detailed description of some of the points involved in the *shlokas* follows and this bit of dialogue takes very nearly an hour-and-a-half. Thereafter, Rama departs. Lalita appears again by herself on the *arangam* and gives an indication of her strong feelings and her *rakshasi vritti*, her demoniac temperament, when she angrily shouts that if this time Lakshmana turns her down she is going to show her real person. Rama comes again. The dialogue between Rama and Sita is expressed by Rama alternately taking the role of Sita without changing clothes but only through change of pose and facial expression. An argument between Lakshmana and Surpanakha is heard from the *Nepathya* (the green-room). Surpanakha shouts loudly. That means something unusual has happened and Rama points this out to Sita. Then Rama leaves.

Lakshmana and Lalita appear for sometime engaged in an argument. Then Lakshmana goes away. A curtain held by two persons, i.e. the *yavanika* is brought on the stage. This *yavanika* is used when a character appears for the first time. The appearance is of Surpanakha, not as Lalita but in her real person, a *rakshasi* (a she-demon). She is shown dancing behind the screen. The dancing behind the screen before appearance is called *marayil kriya*. The content of the *marayil kriya* depends upon the nature of the character. Here since it is a *rakshasi*, the *marayil kriya* consists of strong thumping of feet and shouting. An environment is prepared for the arrival of Surpanakha. She appears as her real self; her face black, lips red, the whole body painted jet black; a *trishul*-like red mark on her forehead and on her cheeks, her bare breasts pointed and repulsive. The make-up is according to the *Kootiyattam* texts. She keeps one hand raised and most of the time she is shouting. Her speech is not easily intelligible nor is it meant to be. She speaks in the dialect of certain tribals. While Lalita's role was performed by a woman, that of the demoness is played by a man, an experienced and senior Chakyar, in fact the leader of the group.

Refused by Lakshmana, Surpanakha declares her intention to take her revenge on him. She narrates her own story in a dialect type of Malayalam. The language is rough and rustic but the overall effect is awesome. She explains that she was enjoying her life with her husband. Then her husband and Ravana went for a battle to *patala* (nether world). When they did not come back she herself went to *patala* to look for them. It was very dark so she took a torch and in its light she examined the faces of warriors lying in the dark. The whole action is extremely vivid. Without any light effects, the dark and terrifying corners of *patala* are around us and we go around with Surpanakha following her torch. Eventually she discovered that her husband was dead. She was shocked with sorrow. Returning home she began looking for another husband. She went to *swarga*. She saw Indra and the *rishis*. She disapproved of Indra because he had misbehaved with Ahalya. She did not like the *rishis* because they were

not like humans and had long beards and unkept hair in their armpits. Roaming all over, she arrived in Panchavati and saw these two brothers, handsome and attractive. She recalls how she had been from one brother to another. The elder one speaks sweetly, but is deceptive, the younger is harsh and that is how her ire has been roused. While narrating her story, Surpanakha moves about the stage most of the time and often holds her ugly breasts in her hands. Her gestures do not follow the classical texts. Yet, there is a power and force in her narration that holds the audience.

Then Lakshmana and Rama appear on the scene. Rama enquires who this person is with such hideous looks. Some dialogue follows and they exit. Surpanakha comes again. This time she lies on the ground and makes a remarkably effective speech. She declares that she would go from forest to forest, from mountain to mountain, from village to village. But eventually she would return to Panchavati and take Lakshmana and Rama. Their thighs are nice, their bodies are pleasant. They will make good food. This speech heightens the ferocity of Surpanakha. Much of the speech is different from what has been given in the Sanskrit text. Some of the Malayalam dialogue is an interpolation by the Chakyars. In the original text of *Ascharya Choodamani*, Surpanakha speaks in a crude type of Prakrit.

Then Rama and Lakshmana both appear. Lakshmana has a sword. A bout between Lakshmana and Surpanakha follows. Surpanakha manages to take hold of Lakshmana. Sita is disturbed and terrified. Rama explains that after all she has seen pictures of *rakshasis*. Surpanakha is one such. Then Surpanakha lifts Lakshmana on to the *peerha*. This symbolises her taking him by force to the sky. Rama is then left with Sita both wondering what would happen as they gaze at the sky.

Thereafter, some shouts are heard from the *napathya*. Lakshmana appears after some time and touches Rama's feet. He explains how up in the sky, he was forced to use his sword against a woman who had got hold of him and he had, therefore, cut off her nose and breasts.

While Rama and Lakshmana are talking to each other on the stage, the audience sees that at the opposite end of the auditorium, some people have lined up on both sides of the entrance with torches. The flames are stimulated by the *raal* sprinkled on them from time to time. Surpanakha appears between the two rows of torch-bearers. It is a frightening sight. She is wrapped in bloody cloth. Her breasts and nose are cut. As if in a hellish swoon, she stumbles through the audience on to the stage, the torch-bearers high-lighting her dreadful visage and body. This climax of the performance is terrible and yet not unexpected by the audience. There is something epic about the performance of Surpanakha. One sees here how the *Kabuki* form might have been influenced by the *Kootiyattam*. Surpanakha comes on the stage falls down crying out "You are not going to escape revenge. I am going to report to Ravana and Khardooshana. You shall be punished." With those terrifying words, the play ends.

After the performance, one of the performers comes on the stage, takes out the wicks from the lamp, places them on the ground and takes away the *ashtamangalam*, the eight sacred articles.

A striking feature of the performance was the detailed and elaborate

acting. In the first instance, the hero recalls to the audience the complete story before the Act. Thereafter, the Act begins with Rama describing the beauty of Panchavati. Every word and phrase is analysed and depicted through the hand gestures so that the gestures literally correspond to the words and phrases of the text. Even the *sandhis* the conjunctives are explained through gestures.

The acting incorporates the styles explained by Bharata in the *Natya-shastra*—*angika*, *vachika*, *aharya*. *Vachika* and *angika* are not only mixed but also acted in sequence. First the actor speaks his portion of the dialogue to the accompaniment of appropriate acting — pure *angika* follows. As the text has been once heard, the audience can follow the gesture-language. Thirdly, *padanvaya* or analytical explanation of every phrase is undertaken by the actor through a combination *angika* and *vachika*. Every *pada* is repeated and that is followed by a detailed analysis in gestures. Finally, again the same *shloka* is repeated with both *angika* and *vachika abhinaya*. This sequence of four stages is followed only in the case of *shlokas*. There are instances of one *shloka* being explained for a full hour by this process. Straightforward prose dialogue is only repeated twice and not with such elaboration or *padanvaya*. Characters like Surpanakha speaking Malayalam, follows a realistic or *Lokadharmi* form of acting. The pace is slow and words are uttered clearly, bringing out every single syllable.*

One has the impression that one is having a vivid demonstration lesson in the Sanskrit language. It is significant that the performance of the play in the *Koothambalam* is started on what is called the *vidyarambha* day, that is to say, the day on which a young learner begins his first lesson. In the *Kootiyattam* words and phrases are presented to the learner through voice and gestures. Every word, every syllable is carried home. Did the initiators of this form of dramatic performance use it for teaching the language as much as for conveying the story and for entertaining the audience? Could this be education through entertainment? Whatever be the intention, the effect of the performance is of an audio-visual lesson in the Sanskrit language. Some characters in *Kootiyattam* render in Malayalam the original Sanskrit dialogue soon after it is uttered. In the performance of *Subhadra-Dhananjaya* that I saw 12 years earlier, the *Vidushaka* rendered practically every bit of dialogue (both his and that of Arjuna) into Malayalam. Thus, there would appear to be a strong educational purpose in *Kootiyattam*, the object being to familiarise with Sanskrit text and vocabulary, a large number of people. The mixed Sanskrit-Malayalam style known in Malayalam as the *mani-praval* style was apparently another attempt in the same direction. The result is for anybody to see; everybody in the audience in the *Koothambalam* men, women and children — seemed to follow the dialogue.

Another unusual feature of the performance is the way one character sometimes performs two roles and enacts the dialogue between two characters. The other character does not appear in person. In this Act of *Ashcharya Choodamani*, Sita never appears on the stage and yet Rama holds frequent conversation with her. How is this done? It is Rama who plays both the roles. When Ram speaks as Sita, he tucks the lower

*Dr. Raghavan in his paper "Kootiyattam — its form and significance as Sanskrit Drama" has described the elaboration of verses in Rupaka through facial abhinaya as *Vakyantha-bhinaya* and in *uparupakas* through improvisations as *Padarthabhinaya* (The Sanskrita Ranga Annual 1966-67).

portion of his skirt near the waist, unties the *angavastra* (the upper cloth) and ties it again in a new knot. (The *angavastra* has at both its ends lotus-like pieces stitched to it. These are re-tied). The moment he does so he becomes Sita. He also changes his pose and facial expression. His eyes become soft, he clasps his hands together in modesty, the body droops languorously. All these combine to give the effect of a coy lady so different from Rama. This process of Rama changing into Sita was done so often in the presence of the audience (since often the two spoke to each other) that it alone accounted for about 45 minutes being added to the duration of the performance. But the interesting thing is the complete credibility among the audience. Whether as Rama or as Sita the character is convincing. The audience did not seem to be bothered by the odd process of frequent transformation.

Even without this kind of transformation, Sita's presence is felt. Rama in part of the performance is seated with Sita near him; this is depicted by his left arm stretched and bent as if around Sita's body. This particular pose is assumed whenever Rama pauses in between utterances.

There are other conventions too. When a character prepares for the battle, then the two ends of the skirt are tied in a knot. This means that he is for that time a warrior in the battle. Quite often the warrior Rama had also to become Sita. Therefore, he would go through the process of untying the knot then taking one portion of the skirt to the waist and tucking it and then changing his pose. It is doubtful if there is any other form of drama in the world in which this kind of one man action for various characters is done with such facility and credibility.

Hand gestures are expressed with unhurried pose reminding one of the *Noh* dance of Japan. After completing a phrase or a sentence, Rama would put his left or right arm on his thighs in a reposeful way even if it be for a short time. One feels that he has not put any effort into speaking. This effortlessness is a striking feature of the acting.

Speech is delivered with intonations that follows distinct patterns. The patterns of intonations are called *svaras*. The interesting thing is that the intonations differ not only from character to character but also from one speech to another and from one *shloka* to another. Each *svara* or pattern of intonation bears a name like the *raga* or a musical mode. The difference between one *svara* and another is so subtle that an uninitiated person is not able to distinguish it. He might even regard most *svaras* as somewhat monotonous. In the text-books of the *Kootiyattam*, the names of *svaras* are given and there are instructions also on the time when particular *svaras* should be used. The mode of recital seems to be an adaptation, for the purposes of the stage, of the Vedic system of reciting the hymns.

Apart from the language of the hands the eyes and sometimes the legs are also vehicles of emotions or communication. (Incidentally, the legs of Rama were painted white, his face was painted green as also of Lakshmana. The face of Lalita was white, the face of Surpanakha was black). Sometimes the movement of the eyes followed the *tala* faithfully, and in detail.

The close connection between the *tala* (rhythmic pattern) and the speech was another delightful feature of the performance. Six *talas* were

used at this performance the Nambyars on the *mridavu*. An interesting convention is that whenever an actor wishes to speak and switch over from the *angika abhinaya* to the *vachik abhinaya*, he would swing his right hand above his shoulder and immediately the drummer would stop and the speech of the actor would be heard clearly. It was never the case that the speech was drowned by the drum.

The acting of Surpanakha showed that, apart from the introduction of the Malayalam portions in the speech of the *Vidushaka* (an innovation for which King Kulasekhara Verman was responsible), there has been another innovation. Folk type of acting, consisting of wild shrieking, fearful dance-movements and hideous expressions, seems to have been borrowed from some ritualistic Kerala dances. But these have been interwoven with the classical text so deftly and powerfully that a truly tragic impression is created.³ Thus, two styles of acting were in evidence; one, the slow, deliberate, unhurried and highly classical style which must have continued from the time before King Kulasekhara Verman; and the other a modification of the folk style which not only lends variety but also power to the play. Pandit Pisharody sitting next to me was critical of some speeches of Surpanakha because these were a departure from the text. But he admitted that the books with the Chakyars permit them to make such departures. In this case the departure was by the adaptation of the movements and speech from folk forms, giving to the play unique power and communicability. It was obvious that the blend could only be achieved by top-ranking artists such as Madhava Chakyar who played Surpanakha.

There are only four Chakyar families now left in Kerala, the senior-most among them being headed by Mani Chakyar; then comes Raman Chakyar, Madhava Chakyar and the family of one other Chakyar who died recently. Each family gets about Rs. 600 from the temple for the whole year. (The obligation is to perform 40 *Koothu* monologues for 40 days before Vijayadasmi and to put up an *Anka* of a Sanskrit play for five or six days thereafter). Some performers work in offices and some come over to do the performance out of their respect for the old form. The training passes on from uncle to nephew. The families possess the old texts. Out of the Rs 600 that they get from the temple committee, they have to meet the cost of the oil of the lamp etc., and the make-up. The form is likely to die out unless some concerted effort is made for its survival.

FOOT NOTES

1. I am told that the *mizavu*, the *edakka* and the *kuzhal* are considered *Deva-vadyas* (heavenly instruments) as distinct from *Chenda*, an *asura* instrument.
2. According to Prof. Subba Rao, by '*matta-varani*' Bharata meant the friezes containing in relief sculpture rows of intoxicated (*matta*) elephants carved on the Rangapeeth. This is an architectural term. According to Pandit K. P. Narayana Pisharody, *mattavarani*s as such are not a feature of the *Koothambalam* theatres.
3. It is interesting to mention here that the moods and *ragas* sought to be conveyed were *Bibhatsa* (disgust) and *bhayanak* (terror). But the impression transcended both these moods and in a modern sense was tragic. Unfortunately no photographs were available.