

## VEDIC RITUAL TRADITION OF KERALA

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### Introduction

Yajñās or Yāgās are explained in various Brāhmaṇa texts. All Vedas are having their own Brāhmaṇas. Yāgas are coming under the Karmakāṇḍa portion of Brāhmaṇas. In these portions different types of sacrifices and the method of the performance of these sacrifices are explained. The performances of these sacrifices are a combination of Brāhmaṇas representing three Vedas, and the participants of Yāga are also representing three Vedas. The Mantras and the methods of performance of Hotā is explained in Ṛgvedic Brāhmaṇas. The Ṛtvik Adhvaryu is representing the Yajurveda Brāhmaṇas, and the Ṛtvik Udgātā is representing Sāmaveda. The performances of other participants of sacrifices are also explained in the three Brāhmaṇas.

The Śrauta sacrifices can be divided in to two major portions, Haviryajñā and Somayāga. These two portions have seven subdivisions, and each portions are explained thus:

*Agnyādheyam cāgnihotram darśādarśodītakriyā.*

*Tathaiivāgrayaṇeṣṭīśca cāturmāsyāni ca kramāt.*

*Nirūḍhapaśubandhaśca sautrāmaṇyapi saptadhā.*

Agnyādheya, Agnihotra, Darśapūrṇamāsa, Agrayaṇeṣṭi, Cāturmāsyā, Nirūḍhapaśubandha and Sautrāmaṇi are known as Haviryajñās. The subdivisions of Somayāga are also explained thus:

*Agniṣṭomastathātyagniṣṭoma ukthyasca ṣoḍaśī.*

*Vājapeyotirātroptoryāmamsthāstu saptadhā.*

Agniṣṭoma, Atyagniṣṭoma, Ukthya, Ṣoḍaśī, Vājapeya, Atirātra and Aptoryāma are known as Sāmāyāgas.

The Mīmāṃsā System of Indian Philosophy give the answer to the questions like what is Yajñā and what are the objectives of sacrifices. Yajñā or Yāga is being performed as a symbol of sacrifices. In a Yāga the man or the Yajamāna offers a lot of things in to the divine fire and that offerings are only for that particular deity and not for the Yajamāna, and he wishes that these offerings are not for him. “*Idam na mama*” The definition of Yāga instructed by Mīmāṃsakas as “*Devatoddeśena dravyatyāgo yāgaḥ*” means the sacrifice of sacred substances like ghee, rice, etc for the divine power. The motivations behind the ritual performances are absolutely the ultimate

happiness of the entire world. “*Lokāḥ samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu*” This was the sincere prayer of the ancient sages. This Mantra alone proves a secular harmony of those periods.

### Historical background of Kerala ritual tradition.

In this paper the historical background of Kerala ritual tradition is being discussed. According to the tradition, the ritual sacrifices began in Kerala in the time of Melatole Agnihotrī. It is believed that Agnihotrī had performed 99 Yāgas. As far as the period of Agnihotrī is not accurately determined the authenticity of this tradition cannot be accepted. According to the story of *Parayi petta Pntirukulam* the paternity of Agnihotrī is attributed to Vararuci who was considered as a contemporary of the great poet Kālidāsa. But due to lack of clear historical evidences this story cannot be accepted authentically. According to another story Vararuci, the father of Agnihotrī and the Kālidāsa’s contemporary poet Vararuci are two different personalities. There are a lot of contradictions in the story of Vararuci and Agnihotrī, and hence in this paper the period of Agnihotrī is not of great concern.

Now let us analyze other references on the historical background of Kerala ritual tradition. While going through Saṅgha works we will get some indications regarding the ritual sacrifices performed in Kerala. In a song of Akanānūru, there is a reference about Yāga performed in Kerala. According to this song a Yāga was performed by sage Paraśurāma at Cellūr Talipparambu. In the third decade (Daśaka) of Akanānūru it is mentioned that Palyani Chelkkezhu Kuttavan performed nine Yāgas. There is also a reference of Somayāga in Cilappatikāram of Iḷaṅgo Aḍikaḷ.

“*Catukkappūtarai Vañciyūṭtantu*

*Matukkoḷ Veḷvi veṭṭonāyinum*” (XXVIII 147-148)

He brought the four elements (Caturbhūta) from Amarāvati to Vañci Nagara and performed Somayāga. The word Matukkoḷ Veḷvi used for Somayāga.

Śālas were very prominent in the educational history of Kerala. These Śālas were the centers of Vedic and ritual studies. A copper plate issued by Ay king Karunantaṭakkan in the ninth year of his rule (AD 864 - 865) provides the detailed information about the regulation laid down for admission to the Śāla attached to Pārthivaśekharapuram. This Śāla was an institution where the Vedas and ritual topics are being taught. Besides this, Kāntallūr, Pārthivapuram Śālas were also considered as the educational institutions for Veda and ritual sacrifices.

In the history of Kerala Sanskrit literature, there is a brief description of Putumana Comātiri and Keḷallūr Nīlakaṇṭha Somayājī. Putumana Comātiri, who performed Somayāga and became a Somayājī, who was famous astrologer and the author of Karaṇapaddhati, who was also lived between 1375-1475 AD. In Keraḷiya Samskr̥ta Sāhitya Caritram there was no any reference on his sacrificial performances. But by the title of Comātiri

(Somayājī) it is can assume that he performed Somayāga. Nīlakaṇṭha Somayājī of Keḷallūr (1450–1540) was a famous commentator of Āryabhaṭīya and the author of Siddhāntadarpaṇa. He was born in Gargagotra. He belonged to Keḷallūr Mana south side of the Tṛkkaṇḍiyūr temple in Malappuram district. His father's name was Jātaveda. Vadakumkūr Rājarājavarma Rājā observed that Nīlakaṇṭha Somayājī was performed several Somayāgas (KSSC –I P- 348) From the brief description of these two scholars it can be assume that the ritual tradition in Kerala was developed in a remarkable position, in the period of 15<sup>th</sup> century AD.

### **Some Peculiar Features of Kerala Ritual Tradition**

While explaining the Kerala ritual tradition Dr. Frits Stall states “The Namboodiri performances are not artificial or scholarly reconstruction nor are the result of recent revivals. The tradition is authentic and alive. They perform rituals as they have learned from their preceptors it is their tradition” (Agni Vol: I Introduction P 4) According to him, the ritual tradition of Kerala follows an oral method of teaching and learning process in the sacrificial performances. The Namboodiries of Kerala uses Malayāḷam language also in these oral methods of teaching and learning process. The influence of Malayāḷam language can see not only in the teaching learning process but in the performance also they use many Malayāḷam sentences. In Varaṇa or R̥tvigvaraṇa (choosing the participants for ritual sacrifice) the Yajamāna addresses the chief priest and other advisers in Malayāḷam. In the beginning of Agnyādhāna, Yajamāna request Rakṣāpuruṣa or Patron to protect the sacrifice thus:

Agnyādhānam Rakṣiccu Tareṇam (you must protect the Agnyādhāna). The Rakṣāpuruṣa may be a prominent person in that village or he may be the king of that country. His reply will be “Am” (yes). Then the Yajamāna put another request before the Rakṣāpuruṣa— Agnyādhānattinnu sādhanan̄ṇa| ellām uḷavāyittareṇam (you are requested to arrange all the articles for Agnyādhāna. The reply will be same as to the first request. After that the Yajamāna approaches his family preceptor and request him – “Agnyādhānattinnu Taittarīyaccaṭan̄ṇu Kāṭṭittareṇam” (you are requested to guide me through Taittarīya procedure for Agnyādhāna). Through the same method he asks to Vaidika also to guide him for completing the sacrifice successfully. Vaidika, Rakṣāpuruṣa and family preceptor (Ottikkan) are the most prominent personalities in ritual sacrifices.

Then the Yajamāna submit the same request before the Sāmavedin priest. After getting the approval from Sāmavedin priest he approaches all of the other R̥tviks and requests them one by one to fulfill the sacrifice. “Agnyādhānattinnu Ādhvaryavam/Hautram/Audgātram ceytu tareṇam” (You are requested to performs Adhvaryū/ Hotā/Udgātā etc., in this Yāga). For

Agniṣṭoma and Atirātra the same process will be followed. The word Agniṣṭomattinnu or Atirātrattinnu will use instead of Agnyādhānattinnu. During the Somakraya ceremony they also use both Sanskrit and Malayāḷam languages. The Soma seller will be a Tamil Brāhmin who is believed to be a representative of the Gandharvas looking after the Soma plants flourishing in the mount Mujawat. They are Swāna, Bhāja, Aṅghāri, Bambhāri, Hasta, Suhasta, Kṛśānu. (Ekāhāhinasatraññaḷ, P 29).

During the period of Dīkṣā Yajamāna is not allowed to speak in Malayāḷam. He should speak in Sanskrit itself and he should not exposes the teeth while laughing. There are also many restrictions for Yajamāna during the Dīkṣā period. Another peculiar feature of Kerala ritual tradition is that on the fifth day of Agniṣṭoma after the offering of Soma juice during the ceremony of Dvidevatyagrahāpracāra, there is a custom among Namboodiris to place money offerings for the tutelary deity (Paradevatā) of the Yajamāna on the thigh of Hotṛ. It is considered as highly important According to Kerala tradition, rice gruel is distribute to all those who attend the sacrifice at about 2 PM each day. The expenditure for this is met by the Yajamāna or his relatives. It is customary to conduct a delicious feast, each day after the Vapā offering on the fourth day. Indra and other Gods are believe to be present in the sacrificial hall till the end of the Sāma chants on the last day and according to tradition, the feast is for them.

Paśvāmbhana or animal sacrifice was very common in Kerala ritual tradition also. But during the Atirātra performance at Pāññāḷ on 1975, there was a protest from the public that an animal should not be killed during the Yāga. As a result of this public protest, Vedaratnam Erkara Raman Namboodiri, Cerumukku Vallabhan Somayaji, Taikkad Vaidikanand other scholars engaged in a serious discussion on this matter. After analyzing various theories and rules of sacrifice they reached in a conclusion that Paśvāmbhana can be performed by Piṣṭapaśu. (The artificial meat which is prepared by rice powder, hot water and Ghee) Since the Pāññāḷ Atirātram on 1975 the ritual sacrifices performed by Namboodiries are follows the method of Piṣṭapaśu instead of Pratyakṣapaśu.

The peculiarities of Kerala ritual tradition mentioned here are not completed. There are many other special features in Kerala sacrificial tradition, which are based on the social culture of Namboodiri Brahmins. This paper is intended to point out only some important customs and rules of Kerala ritual tradition.

### **Discription of Śrauta rituals performed by Namboodiri Brāhmins.**

According to the śrauta ritual tradition of Kerala the Namboodiri Brāhmins used to perform only three types of sacrifices mainly. They are Agnyādhāna or Ādhāna, Agniṣṭoma or Somayāga and Atirātra or Agni. A Namboodiri couple married from the same caste is only eligible to perform

Agnyādhāna or Ādhāna. The duration of the Ādhāna is one day. After the performance of Ādhāna, a Namboodiri is called Aḍitiri. An Aḍitiri who performed Agnyādhāna is only eligible to perform a Somayāga. In Agnyādhāna, there are only five Ṛtviks as the participants. They are Adhvaryu, Hotṛ, Agnīṭ, Brahmā and Udgāṭṛ. The mode of performance of Agnyādhāna is an abridged form of Somayāga. At the present time there are only two Aḍitiris in Kerala, they are Perumbaṭappu Vaidikan Śaṅkaranārāyaṇan Aḍitiri and Naduvil Pazhayiṭam Aḍitiri.

Agniṣṭoma is popularly called Somayāga or simply Yāga. The duration of Somayāga is six days. Only an Aḍitiri is eligible to perform Somayāga. After the performance of Somayāga Aḍitiri gains the title as Somayājī. There are seventeen Ṛtviks in a Somayāga. Among these Adhvaryu, Brahmā, Hotṛ, Udgāṭṛ and Sadasya are more important than the other twelve. The names of these twelve Ṛtviks are Pratiprasthāṭṛ, Brāhmaṇācchamsi, Maitrāvaruṇa, Prastotṛ, Neṣṭṛ, Agnidhra or Agnīṭ, Acchāvāka, Pratihāri, Unnetṛ, Potṛ, Grāvastotṛ, and Subrahmaṇya. Apart from these Rakṣāpuruṣa, Śālavidya, and many other supervisors will be there in the Yāgaśālā. A detailed description of Somayāga is explained by Vedaratnam Erkara Raman Namboodiri in his work Ekāhāhīnasatraṅṅaḷ.

Next prominent sacrificial performance of Kerala is Atirātra or Sāgnicayana Atirātra which is popularly known as Agni. This sacrifice will go upto twelve days. The number of Ṛtviks in Atirātra is same as Somayāga. Most of the ritual activities of Atirātra are expansion of those in Somayāga. The number of Pravargya, Upasat, etc. will be double. The most important distinguishing factor in Atirātra is the construction of Vedi or Citi. This Citi is being constructed with the bricks in the shape of an eagle with wings spread ready to fly. The method of construction of Śyenaciti is based on the Kārikā of Yogiyār known as Yogiyāruṭe Kārikā, a work written in Sanskrit which deals with different units of measurements used for the layout of Prāgvamśa, Mahāvedī, Citi etc, dimensions of different types of bricks used for Citis and the mode of measurements accepted in Kerala tradition. Baudhāyanaśulbasūtra Explains the method of construction of various types of Vedis and Citis generally. But in Kerala tradition, the Kārikās of Yogiyār is being considered as the most authentic. Instead of a detailed description of Atirātra, this paper focuses on the other sacrifices which are used to perform in the house of Yajamāna.

Apart from these three sacrifices, there are ten types of Iṣṭis being performed in Kerala. They are Darśapūrṇamāsa, Nakṣatra, Āyuṣmatī, Anvārambhiṇī, Mṛgāra or Pavitramṛgāra, pathikṛt, Surabhīmati, Vibhraṣṭa, Vaiśvānari and Traidhātavi. In the category of Paśubandha there is only one ritual known as Prāyaścittapaśu. Soma sacrifices are of two types; Agniṣṭoma and Atirātra with Agnicayana. Here a question may arise. Why Namboodiris are performing only two types of rituals. An authentic and

detailed answer has been given by Dr. Frits Stall in his most eulogized work ‘Agni’; Namboodiris preserve a very early stage of ritual development. It is quite possible that Agniṣṭoma represent the original Indo-Iranian Soma ritual. This would have been a product of Indo- Iranian fire cult, which developed into a celebration of Soma, when Vedic nomads had entered the Indian plain. When Agnicayana was combined with Soma ritual, some ceremonies were extended so as to last through the night. Hence Atirātra with Agnicayana would have developed as the first composite ritual of an Agnicayana and Soma sacrifice. A remarkable fact accords with this hypothesis. Namboodiri Sāmavedins belong to archaic Jaiminīya School. The subdivisions of Jaiminīya Samhitā mention none of the seven varieties but Agniṣṭoma and Atirātra”.

Here a list of Namboodiris who performed Somayāgas and Atirātras during that many years is given. The details are being listed according to alphabetic order and this list includes the year of performance in Malayalam era as well as Christian era.

1. Azhakappura - 1074 (1899)
2. Alampilly – (Kavalappara) - 1104 (1929)
3. Alampilly- (Kizhayoor) - 1116 (1941)
4. Amettur - 1102, 1145 - (1927, 1970)
5. Anjam - 1067, 1105-(1892, 1930)
6. Adakkaputhur Kunnam - 1102 (1927)
7. Bhatti Thekkedam - 1062, 1098 (1887, 1923)
8. Bhattipputhillam - 1078,1103,1140,1164,  
1185, 1178 (1903, 1928, 1965,  
1990, 2003, 2011)
9. Bhatti Vadakkedam - 1084 (1909)
10. Cherumukku - 1044, 1058, 1070, 1105, 1114,  
1129, 1140, (2) 1048 (A) 1060  
(A), 1130, 1150 (A),1180. 1188.  
(1869, 1883, 1895, 1929, 1939,  
1954, 1965 (2), 1873 (A), 1885  
(A), 1955, 1975 (A), 2005, 2013)
11. Cherupoyilam - 1091 (1916)
12. Chola - 1104 (1929)
13. Eledam - 1101, 1140 (1926,1965).
14. Ezhikkode - 1090 (1915)
15. Ennazhi - 1078,1102 (1903,1927)
16. Eratta - 1104 (1929)
17. Erkkara - 1062, 1068, 1104 (1887, 1893, 1929)
18. Edathara Moothedam - Date Not Available.
19. Kakkad - Date Not Available.
20. Kaliyath - Date Not Available.

21. Kallanikkad - Date Not Available.
22. Kanayoor Kapra - 1086,1103 (1911,1928)
23. Karthiyam - Date Not Available.
24. Karuvattu (Vattamkulam) - 1102 (1927)
25. Kizhakke Kuthulli - 1081, 1102, 1129 (1906, 1927, 1954)
26. Keezhe Narippatta - 1070,1140 (1895,1965)
27. Keezhmundayoor - 1060 (1885)
28. Kizhuprakkad - 1113 (1938)
29. Kizhayoor Pallisseri - 1128 (1953)
30. Korattikkara - 1090 (1915)
31. Kodakkattu Kuthulli - 1101 (1926)
32. Koyithadi - 1127 (1952)
33. Krisnath - Date Not Available.
34. Kuzhiyamkunnam - 1091 (1916)
35. Kummini - 1097 (1922)
36. Kunnam - 1128 (1953)
37. Kurissathamanna - Date Not Available.
38. Kuthulli - 1094,1128(1919,1953)
39. Kunnam Kizhayoor - 1068,(1893)
40. Mangalatheri - 1079,1114 (1904,1939)
41. Marath Kapra - 1013, 1043, 1073, 1090, 1097,  
1108, 1121, 1140, 1181 (1838,  
1868, 1898, 1915, 1922, 1933,  
1946, 1965, 2006)
42. Mele Narippatta - Date Not Available.
43. Mepoyilam - 1102,(1927)
44. Mozhikunnam - Date Not Available.
45. Mundayoor (Attoor) -1091, 1103, 1128 (1916, 1928, 1953)
46. Mundayoor (arangottukara) - 1060 (1885)
47. Moorthiyedam - 1078,1102, (1903, 1927)
48. Muttathukattil Mamunnu - 1055, 1086, 1104, 1019 (1880,  
1911, 1929, 1844)
49. Moothedam (Veroor) - 1130 (1955)
50. Nalledam - 1074 (1899)
51. Narath - 1103, 1130, 1140 (1928, 1955, 1965)
52. Neddham - 1068 (1893)
53. NellikkattuMamunnu - 1091, 1116, 1076, 1093, 1131  
(1916, 1941, 1901, 1918, 1956)
54. Nedungottur Moothedam - Date Not Available.
55. Nedungottur Para - Date Not Available.
56. Nilayangod - 1080 (1905)
57. Ottupura Kizhayoor - 1080 (1905)
58. Pakaravoor - 1078,1098,(1903,1923)

59.	Pazhayam	- 1095 (1920)
60.	Pallisseri	- 1078,1128 (1903,1953)
61.	Pandam	- 1085 (1910)
62.	Para	- 1089 (1914)
63.	Padinjattad	- 1091,1102 (1916,1927)
64.	Padinjattukara	- Date Not Available.
65.	Pathirappilli	- 1034,1088 (1859,1913)
66.	Perumangattu	- 1079 (1904)
67.	Pothayath	- 1086,1140 (1911,1965)
68.	Pottakkuzhi	- 1011 (1926)
69.	Pukkuzhi	- 1089,1113 (1914,1938)
70.	Puthumana(Thonnallur)	- 1076,1104)
71.	Puthusseri	- 1086 (1911)
72.	Thekkeppattu	- Date Not Available.
73.	Thekkumparampa	- 1128 (1953)
74.	Thiyyannur	- 1104 (1929)
75.	Thottam (panjal)	- 1087,1100 (1912,1925)
76.	Vadhyan(Attoor)	- Date Not Available.
77.	Vaykkakkara	- 1080,1127 (1905,1952)
78.	Vengallur	- Date Not Available
79.	Venthrakkad	- 1085 (1910)

This list has been prepared with the reference of ‘Agni’ by Dr. Frits Stall. Some other sacrifices which are not mentioned by Dr. Stall given below. Kuṇṭūr Atirātra done by Puttillatt Ravi Akkittarippād in 1990, Somayāga performed by Puttillatt Rāmānujan Akkittarippād son of Ravi Akkittarippād in 2003 at Thrissur and he also performed Atirātra at Paññāḷ in 2011. Cherumukku Vallabhan Akkittarippād performed Somayāga and Atirātra in 2005 and 2013 respectively. Kaimukku Vaidikan Rāman Akkittarippād is another prominent Śrautī who performed Somayāga and Atirātra in 2009 and 2012. Naḍuvam Narayanan Akkittarippād performed Somayāga and Atirātra in 2010 and 2012 respectively. In 2013 a Somayāga was performed by Kāvumpuram Vāsudevan Somayajippād in 2013 at Śukapuram. Among these the Atirātras of Naḍuvam Narayanan Akkittarippād and Cerumukku Vallabhan Akkittarippād was held at outside of Kerala. The previous one was held at Bhadrācalam in Andhra Pradesh and the other was held at Hyderabad.

### **Prominent Śrauta scholars of Kerala**

A Brief life history of some prominent scholars who played a remarkable role in the development of ritual tradition of Kerala in recent years. Among these scholars, Vedaratnam Erkara Rāman Namboodiri is the most distinguished personality. He was born at Erkara family at Mūkkutala



Village in Malappuram district on 1898. He studied Sanskrit from the famous institution known as ‘Pakarāvūr Gurukulam’. Being a reputed scholar in Śrauta sacrifices, he participated more than hundred Yāgas. He also lead more than sixty sacrifices throughout Kerala. He had been honoured with “Vedaratna” by Sanskrit college Pattambi. In 1972 he became the founder and chief editor of Anādi magazine, which was published from Tirunāvāya Brahmasvam Maṭham. A collection of his famous articles based on Vedic literature “Āmnāyamathanam” obtained the Kerala Sāhitya Academy award. He was the key factor and main advisor of world famous Paññā! Atirātram on 1975. He was the only Malayāḷi scholar who obtained the award for Sanskrit scholars from the government of India in 1977. Besides the Āmnāyamathana he wrote four more books namely Ekāhāhīnasatrañña!, Śrautakarmavivekam, Prāyaścittakārikā and Ṛgvedānukramaṇikā with commentary. He passed away in 1983.

Another veteran scholar of Kerala Śrauta tradition was Taikkad Vaidikan Neelakandhan Namboodiri. He was born in 1927 at Vaṭṭamkuḷam village in Malappuram district. He studied Ṛgveda through system and practiced different types of recitation like Padapāṭha, Jaṭā, Ratha etc. But his field of specialization was the ritual sacrifices. He studied all the manuals of Śrauta sacrifices, and was very close to Erkara Raman Namboodiri. He took prominent roles in various Somayāgas and Atirātras. He took also the leadership of more than fifteen Śrauta sacrifices. He was the in charge of Atirātra performed at Kuṇṭūr in 1990. He passed away on 2009.

Puttillat Ravi Akkittarippād was a prominent scholar in Veda, Smarta and Sruta He was born in the village of Chembra in Palakkad district in 1928. He was a well versed scholar in Ṛgveda and was expertise in the chanting of Jaṭā, Ratha etc. He was also an authority in Ṛgveda Sarvānukramaṇī. Being an authority in Gṛhyasūtra, he was a popular instructor of various Gṛhya ceremonies and also very famous as a renowned Purohita. He participated in several sacrifices as Adhvaryu, Hotṛ, and performed Somayāga in 1965. He also performed Atirātra in 1990 at Kuṇṭūr. He received Vedapaṇḍita Award from Oḷappamaṇṇa Devīprasādam Trust. He also participated in Trisandhas and Anyonyams. He passed the rigorous Vedic examination known as ‘Kaṭannirikkal’ Very soft and bold in character, Ravi Akkittarippād passed away in 2014.

Cerumukku Vallabhan Somayājippād was another most prominent scholar in Śrauta sacrifices. He was born in 1900 in Cerumukku Mana in Palakkad district He was known as C V Somayājī among the scholars. As an expert in Śrauta subjects, he was also fluent in English. When Dr. Frits Stall came to Kerala, he was the only person among the Śrauta scholars who could communicate with Stall in English. He carried the key role in Pāññā! Atirātra held in 1975. He passed away in 1990.

Many other scholars have contributed their knowledge to flourish the ritual sacrifice tradition such as Taikkād Keśavan Namboodiri, Nārās Narayanan Namboodiri, Pantal Damodaran Namboodiri, etc.

The ritual traditions of Kerala are spread out mainly in three villages. They are Śukapuram, Peruvanam, and Iriñjālakkuḍa. These are known as Grāmas. According to the ritual tradition of Kerala, Vaidikas are the supreme authorities of ritual ceremonies. There are two Vaidika families in every Grāma. The Vaidika families of Śukapuram Grāma are Taikkād and Cerumukku; Vaidikas of Peruvanam Grāma are Perumpaḍappu and Kapliññād; and the Vaidikas belonged to Iriñālakkuḍa are Kaimukku and Pantal families.

In the modern period, people of Kerala are approaching the ritual ceremonies with a curious mind. Since the last two decades, there is a remarkable development in Kerala ritual tradition. Public involvement in Yāgas has increased and most of them consider the rituals as a cause for rain. But the rain is not an important part of the result of Yāgas. The orthodox people believe that Yāgas are performed for the well being of the whole universe. But many other people consider it as a means for the purification of the atmosphere. Anyway, the popularity of rituals in Kerala is increasing, and in many cases this popularity is being turned to commercial, religious, and political benefits and motives.

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