12. PERSONAL APPEARANCE

According to M. E. Roach and J. Bubolz Eicher, while material culture in general is a backdrop against which social interaction takes place, the portable character of clothing and associated decorative items makes them highly visible and flexible in building the setting for behaviour. Clothing has multipurpose functions, expressive and instrumental, or the combination of the two (Roach & Eicher 1965: 2-3, 6). Different authors express the matter using slightly different terms and emphasizing various aspects.

I. C. Brown (1965: 9-10) enumerates some specific purposes that dress and adornment can be used for. These include protection against weather (cold, heat, blowing sand, rain, the sun), thorns and briars. Modesty may demand different forms of concealment in different societies. On the other hand, one function of clothing is to attract another person. Clothing is very often used to decorate the wearer or to show off his or her wealth. The function of clothing as a symbol of sex, age, occupation, status, or ritual condition is general.

George Bush and Perry London (1965: 65) mention as the three main functions of clothing protection against harm, concealment or display of parts of the body, and differentiation of one individual or group from another. E. Adamson Hoebel (1965: 27), again, gives as the chief reasons why people cover, decorate, or mutilate their bodies, status identification, protection against inclemency of climate, and self-beautification or enhancement, and magico-religious requirements. Dress is or used to be a very important means of identification in the social organization for all people. It is evident that the visibility of social-class distinctions based on clothing symbols has decreased in Western countries, as mass-production and even second-hand clothing makes it possible for a large number of people to wear similar looking garments. (Cf., e.g., Roach & Eicher 1965: 57-62.)

Even if modern Western people are free to dress according to their individual tastes, and although they may actually use their dress to hide their background and nature, their attire is nevertheless able to communicate. Rules about dress very often were, and in some places can still be, extremely strict, and wearing the wrong dress can be considered a crime which must be punished according to law. Social control ensures that the more timid people do not break the rules. Where choice is in order, Roach and Eicher (1965: 14) say, the individual is under the influence of the folk-

ways of the society's manners and morals, but where constraint prevails, he is under the sway of society's mores.

The functions of clothing are difficult to classify systematically, because they often overlap. Protection against the climate and harm go together. Magico-religious functions do not only go with the functions of dress as a symbol of ritual condition, for the protection aspect, too, can be combined with magico-religious requirements, as, for instance, amulets are worn to protect people against harm. Modesty, as well, is combined with magico-religious ideas. Beautification and enhancement may be directed towards attracting another person as well as towards gaining or expressing political, social, or economic status.

I will use differentiation of the two sexes as the main division in handling dress and ornaments, as the most distinctive social division is the permanent division of sex. Status in society and family, including age and stage of life, and ritual condition will thus be discussed in my work mainly within the frame of gender, as will the functions of protection and beautification, and the aspect of modesty. (Cf., e.g., Roach & Eicher 1965: 58; Crawley 1965: 72.)

In a caste society dress rules are very strict, as social hierarchy must be demonstrated in a conspicuous way. In Kerala, the oppressed castes were not permitted to wear clean clothes, or slippers, or any clothes at all above their waist. They were not allowed to carry umbrellas either, and they had to accept wearing only coarse cloth. (Ramachandran 1995: 61.) It is understandable that change of dress is used by reformers to demonstrate and make public social change also.

There were certain symbols in the Nampūtiri dress which were particularly attacked by modern minded people in the 1920s and 1930s in Kerala. E. M. S. Namboodiripad mentioned the tuft of hair worn on the crown and the sacred thread as objects of attack on males. With Nampūtiri women it was their garb and jewellery that were the symbols. According to Namboodiripad it took about a decade for men to change their tuft, but some men continued to wear their sacred thread at least at home. For women the new style spread comparatively quickly. (Namboodiripad 1976: 106-109.)

Roach and Eicher (1965: 1) use the terms appearance, clothing, ornament, dress, adornment, and cosmetics, often interchangeably, to connote self-induced modifications of the human body's surface or contour to dress and adorn the same. I will here, however, separately discuss washing oneself, arranging one's hair and applying some substance directly to the skin on the one hand, and wearing textiles and jewellery on the other.

GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS PERSONAL APPEARANCE IN THE LIGHT OF ANCIENT TEXTS

There seems to be spiritual affinity in the general attitude towards personal appearance between the meticulous followers of the Law of Moses and the guardians of ritual purity, the Pharisees, and the ritualists of ancient India. I quote one of the most important exegetical writings of Vedic India, the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (13,4,1,15):

> The priests' fee consists of a hundred garments, for that – to wit, the garment – is man's outward appearance, whence people (on seeing) any well-clad man, ask, 'Who can this be?' for he is perfect in his outward appearance: with outward appearance he thus endows him (transl. Eggeling 1882-1900, V: 353).

Manu (4,18) reminds the householder that it is by no means indifferent how he dresses: he must walk bringing his dress, speech, and thoughts to a conformity with his age, his occupation, his wealth, his sacred learning, and his race.

A quotation about the pharisees from the New Testament contains a critical attitude towards extravagance and excessive interest in outward appearance:

> But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. (St. Matthew 23,5.)

In India, too, there is also an ideal of austerity. It will be seen that for the Nampūtiri Brahmins of Kerala, simple dress and manners used to be the ideal.

The sacred Indian law favours physical health and beauty. Here, again, it is on the same line with Judaic practice. The Old Testament underlines physical perfection, particularly of persons going to the temple, and that of sacrificial animals as well. Manu (7,64) recommends that a king choose as his ambassador one who, in addition to possessing a number of good mental qualities, is handsome. To a distinguished, handsome suitor should a father give his daughter (Manu 9,88). A high caste man should marry a girl who possesses in addition to the characteristics of intelligence and moral conduct that of beauty and health (ĀśvGS 1,5,3). A queen should be charming and possess beauty and auspicious marks on her body (Manu 7,77). The well-favoured woman is one with a beautiful form, because she is apt to become dear to men (ŚB 13,2,1,6). If the wife is not radiant with beauty, she will not attract her husband, and no children will be born (Manu 3,61).

The religious authorities did not restrict themselves to warning against wooing a girl of monstrous appearance, but they had a detailed opinion about what characteristics made a woman beautiful and what did not. ĀpGS (1,1,11), for instance, advises a boy to avoid wooing a hunch-back, a girl whose skin is like a frog's, and a bald-headed girl. The girl should have no bodily defects, but the gait of a goat or an

elephant, a moderate quantity of hair on the body and on the head, small teeth, and soft limbs (Manu 3,10).

These regulations concern the highest castes, the ritual purity of which is a central theme in the sacred books. Special mention is made of the personal appearance of those who are invited to and entertained in certain rituals. The householder is directly forbidden to entertain in a rite for the worship of the dead one who is afflicted with a skin-disease, has deformed nails or black teeth, is one-eyed or club-footed (Manu 3,151-165). The reason for having these defects is revealed in the statement 'he who is afflicted with a disease in punishment for former crimes' (Manu 3,159). NNA (p. 166) wondered how his paternal uncle, such a noble man, could get such a poor fate as falling ill with leprosy. His answer was that maybe it was due to some omission unwittingly done, or sins done in a previous birth.

Even if in their ideal of simplicity of dress and ornament the Nampūtiris differed from the ideal of the Indian sacred books, their attitude towards imperfections of the body seems to have conformed with that. IR's younger sister's skin disease made it difficult to arrange her marriage (IR, II, p. 162) as did, among other things, the lack of good looks of a much younger relative. According to Mary Douglas (1966: 51) the concept of Holy includes the ideas of wholeness and completeness. In this light the above ideas come as a logical consequence.

The comparison between a Western and an Indian woman is presented in a pointed way in the writings of many Indian patriots. I take as just one example the ardent freedom-fighter and close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari. Even if Rajaji (as he was affectionately called) does not necessarily criticize the nature of Western women, because a woman's heart, according to him, is the same all over the world, he takes up, instead, purely external features. The seemingly heavenly beautiful disposition of an English 'angel' soon proves to be totally artificial. Her lips, when not painted, are 'disappointing', her hair is false and her pearl-like teeth so too, while the at first so despised and old-fashioned Indian woman proves to be radiant like a goddess, beautiful and truly refined. Even her lips are a thousand times more beautiful than the Western woman's. (Rajagopalachari 1967: 131-136.)

LIFE STAGES AND DRESS IN THE LIGHT OF ANCIENT TEXTS

The sacred books which deal with domestic rituals concern only upper castes, mainly boys, but even girls are sometimes mentioned in passing. The different stages in the life of a male and female may be marked with special dress.

Very little is said in Vedic texts about the personal appearance of the child in the ceremonies preceeding the initiation, except about the hair in the *cauḷaṃ* ceremony. This was a ceremony to be performed for all high caste boys, and sometimes

for girls too, for the sake of spiritual merit, long life, glory, and welfare. The arrangement of the hair was to be made according to the custom of the child's *gotra*. (Manu 2,35; JGS 1,11.) The tuft of hair which was left on the crown should never be cut off, and during worship it had to be neatly tied, never kept loose (NNA, p. 30). After bathing the child, it was usually wrapped or dressed in a clean new garment, or, as in the hair-cutting ceremony, even two new garments, an upper and a lower, which had not yet been washed.

A new clean dress is, of course, a very common symbol of a new status, and it is a constant symbol in Indian domestic rituals. The universal symbolism of bathing and cutting the hair and nails in rites of passage is that of separation from the previous role by removing surface dirt, purification. Manu (4,221) has a comparison:

> The food of those other persons who have been successively enumerated as such whose food must not be eaten, the wise declare (to be as impure as) skin, bones, and hair. (Transl. Bühler 1886: 163-164.)

The consciousness of the 'sacred', 'taboo' quality of boundaries and margins and the principle that power is located in dirt, is probably seen in the effort of warding off evil before the cutting begins, and certainly in the care that is taken about cut-off hair. (Cf., e.g., Leach 1976: 35, 62; Douglas 1966: 121; ĀpGS 7,16,6; JGS 1,11.)

Different ceremonies in a boy's and young man's life where the hair was cut were the *caulaṃ*, the *upanayana*, the cutting of the beard and other special observances, and the *samāvartana*. The initiation and the cutting of the beard, in the case of the followers of the Sāmaveda (IR's family belongs to its Jaiminīya branch, as told in Chapter 3), started a period of observances. After the cutting-of-the-beard ceremony, during which the hair was shaven, there were observances, which included avoiding many enjoyable matters like shaving, luxurious bathing, combing the head, cleaning the teeth and the feet in a luxurious way (JGS 1,12 & 18; KhGS 2,5,10-12; GGS 3,1,1, note).

A staff made of different kinds of wood for different upper castes seems to be the most frequently mentioned mark of initiation and studentship in the Gṛhya-Sūtras. Next comes a girdle (*mekhalā*), then a black antelope hide (*kṛṣṇa-mṛga*), and a special hair style. The JGS (1,12) orders the staff to be of *palāśa* wood for a Brahmin, of *bilva* for one who is desirous of spiritual lustre, of *nyagrodha* wood for a Kṣatriya, of *udumbara* wood for a Vaiśya, or alternatively of *palāśa* wood for all. The girdle is most commonly recommended to be made of *muñja*-grass for a Brahmin.

In a paper on the ritual dress I have discussed in detail the upper garment (the word actually used, *yajñopavīta*, originally means 'dressed for the sacrifice'), the girdle, and wearing a new garment that has not yet been washed, and their symbol-

ism in the initiation ceremony (cf. M. Parpola 1986). As the English translations of the Gṛhya-Sūtras show, it is usually thought that a student of the Veda (*brahma-cārin*) wore as an upper garment a 'sacred thread' or a 'sacrificial cord'. According to my study of the Gṛhya-Sūtras a string used as an upper garment by the boy to be initiated or the student, is only mentioned in a very late text, i.e. the VaikhGS (2,8-9 & 13). In the GGS (1,2,1) it is mentioned in connection with the rules referring to the householder, not the student – as Kane (1941: 290-291) incorrectly says – that a string or a garment, or a rope of *kuśa* grass is taken as the *yajñopavīta*. What is mentioned instead is a black antelope skin or a piece of cloth (TĀ 1,1; Parāśara-Mādhavīya 1,1,173). In Manu (2,41-44) both a skin and a string are already prescribed. The skin is mentioned as a Kerala custom by Gundert (9):

> Br[ahmin] boys from the day of their initiation (*upanayaṃ*) till the 16 year being counted for Pariar have instead of their Br[ahmin] string (*pūṇinūl*) a leather badge (of the *kṛṣṇamṛgaṃ*).

One who has completed his period of studentship and taken the bath at the end of it (*snātaka*), is ready to get married and start his life as a householder. At the *samāvartana* ceremony the young man was given again new clothes and a staff, but this time the staff was not made of wood, but bamboo or some other reed. A girdle and a skin were not given to him any more, but he got shoes as a new symbol of his status. Some Gṛhya-Sūtras also prescribe a parasol, shelter from evil (PGS 2,6,29) and a turban for him, and describe very carefully how he is to be adorned, with for example the eye ointment *añjanaṃ*, and a three-stringed wooden amulet. The three strings refer to the three Vedas (ŚB 4,6,7,1), the texts that the boy has been learning during his period of studentship. New garments, flowers and a mirror also belong to the ritual (JGS 1,19).

During the study of the Veda, one fulfilling the observances is to avoid a three-stringed amulet (JGS 1,18), as it is logical that one is not allowed to wear articles that signify the Vedas before he masters the latter. Which wood the amulet was made of is also important. According to the JGS (1,19) it must be made of *palāśa* wood if he is desirous of averting evil, of *bilva* wood if he is desirous of spiritual lustre, and of *arka* wood if he is desirous of getting food.

The eye ointment or salve *añjanaṃ*, black ore of antimony, is found in various parts of the Punjab and in the Himalayan range. It is used not only as a cosmetic, but it is also believed to strengthen the sight and through its cooling effect protect the eyes against the injurious effects of the glare of the sun (Watt 1889-93, I: 170-171). Mount Trikakud, often mentioned as the place where *añjanaṃ* ideally came from (e.g. HGS 1,3,11,5), has been identified as modern Trikota in the north of the Punjab and south of Kashmir (Macdonell & Keith 1912, I: 329). The magico-

Fig. 46. The *samāvartana* rite.
Photo MP 1983.

religious aspect of *añjanaṃ* is revealed in various ways in the sacred texts. The ŚB (3,1,3,10-17) gives a very thorough explanation of its mythological background and ritual use. The ointment comes from Mount Trikakud, for when Indra slew the demon Vṛtra, he transformed the latter's eye into that mountain. Although the eye ointment is prescribed for the initiand in the *upanayana* (JGS 1,12), the student who resides with his teacher is not allowed to wear it, especially during some observances. At the end of studentship and during many other ceremonies it is used again.

A *snātaka* should take as a *yajñopavīta* a string or garment, or simply a rope of *kuśa* grass (GGS 1,2,1). Normally the *yajñopavīta* is worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm (cf., e.g., GGS 1,2,2), but in ceremonies in honour of the ancestors the cord is worn over the right shouder (cf., e.g. Manu 3,279; ĀpGS 1,1,8). The *snātaka* is to avoid nakedness when walking, bathing, and lying down. He is not supposed to look at a naked woman, except during sexual intercourse (ŚGS 4,11,1; ĀśvGS 3,9,6).

Number three is repeated in the wedding, as the groom gives to his bride's right hand a (no doubt three-spotted) quill of porcupine and a string of three twisted threads, and her relations tie to her body a cord with three amulet gems (ŚGS 1,12,6-8). Marriage-rites, which are lawful for the highest caste, may include the decking of the daughter with costly garments and honouring her by presents of jewels (Manu 3,20-28). The bridegroom addresses his bride with the verse: 'Auspicious ornaments does this woman wear.' (HGS 1,6,19,4). The bride is given a new dress that has not yet been washed also by the bridegroom in the wedding, a lower as well as an upper garment (GGS 1,18; KhGS 1,3,6; PGS 1,4,12-13; ŚGS 1,12,3 and 1,13,14). The dress of the bridegroom does not get special attention in the texts.

When it was time for the householder to move to the next life-stage, that of the hermit, the instructions about his appearance were that he should wear a skin or a tattered garment and always have his hair in braids, the hair on his body, his beard, and his nails being unclipped (Manu 6,6). In his final ideal life-stage, that of an ascetic, coarse worn-out garments, and indifference towards everything worldly were, among other things, the marks of one who has attained liberation (Manu 6,44).

NAMPŪTIRI BODYCARE AND ADORNMENT

In outward appearance there is no difference between Āḍhyan and Āsyan male Nampūtiris, but there is some difference between the females (cf. also Nampūtirippāṭŭ 1963, Chapter 10).

Bath

The ritual aspect used to be in the foreground in bathing. Itti Ravi writes in his memoirs about the *brahmacārin*:

> I shall now say about the daily routine of a *brahmacārin* (and Nampūtiri also). Get up early. After going to toilet he has to wash with his left hand in an elaborate way. Taking a little mud he washes 12 times, then washes the hand again with mud; then again 12 times wash with mud (taking the mud in the right hand and putting it on left hand), again wash the hand with mud; again 12 times wash; thus 12 times, that is 12 x 12; after that washing for urine – this is 7 x 7. Then before taking bath, after washing teeth and tongue with mango leaves, he should wash the *kaupīnaṃ* and wear it again, then wash the *śikha* (tuft) and then twist it again, then wash the feet (up to the knee) with mud and then perform *ācamana*: – Take a little water (just enough to cover one grain of *tilaṃ* (*eḷḷŭ*) in the right palm and sip; then again 3 times. After that smear the face with water from right ear to left (2 times), then from the upper edge of forehead to the chin (once) (the hand should be washed in between). Then touch the tip of the thumb of right palm with the ring finger of the same palm, dip in water and touch first the right eye, then the left. Then thumb and point finger – dip in water and touch first the right nostril then the left. Then thumb and little finger, dip in water and touch

first the right ear (inside) and then the left. Of course washing of the hand in between. Then all the fingers except the little finger – dip in water and touch the chest. Then with all the fingers dip in water and touch the middle of the head. Repeat all this (from the sipping) once more. For every washing of the feet *ācamana* should be done twice. After that again wash the feet with mud and so the *ācamana*. Thus after four times wash the feet without mud and so *ācamana*. This should be done after every toilet and urine.

So after wetting and tying the *śikha* and after washing feet and doing *ācamana* come down into the water have three dips and come up to the steps and sitting there wash the feet once more. Then after *ācamana* take some water in the right hand and reciting the mantra sprinkle water on the head three times.

...There is a wit about *ācamana*. On an *upanayana* day the *ācārya* was giving instructions to the boy how to do *ācamana* and the boy was doing it. It took a long time to complete it – After that the *ācārya* (it was the boy's father) did *ācamana* within a second – roughly and quickly. Then the boy asked his father when will he be able (or allowed) to do it in this speed.

...Bath and *sandhyāvandana* should be done early in the morning. Just at the time when we can see the hair on the arm without a lamp we can conclude *sandhyāvandana*. (IR, II, pp. 68-78.)

The anecdote quoted above may give a hint of how all these very complicated rules could be followed. NNA and PS's father more or less followed these rules.

The night is divided into three parts of four hours. The first two are considered to be the night. The time when the third part begins is called *ahassŭ pakaruka*, the beginning of the day. The morning bath can take place only after this. During the time between this limit and the sunrise or twilight the Nampūtiris should repeat the Gāyatrī mantra (dedicated to the solar deity Sāvitri) or do the *sūryanamaskāraṃ* (prostration before the sun) many times. The last mantras of the twilight worship (*sandhyāvandana*) should be recited at the time of the sunrise, not earlier. Even if they cannot see the sun itself, because it may still be hiding behind the hills, but there is so much light that they can see the hair on their arms, it is time to say the last mantras of the *sandhyāvandana*. (MS; Uṇṇi.)

According to Logan (1951: 127), the Nampūtiris rise at 3 a.m., and immediately bathe in cold water. NNA indeed got up at 3 o'clock in the morning while his wife was still living, because he had to be ready to perform the *agnihotra* at sunrise every day. After his wife's death he postponed getting up to 4 o'clock. He took his bath and started repeating the Gāyatrī mantra, and the sacred songs (*sāman*) of the Sāmaveda, which are to be memorized daily to keep them in mind. About 6.30 he said the *sandhyāvandana* touching the earth. In the evening he took the bath after 5 o'clock and did *sūryanamaskāraṃ*, and after the sunset, around 6.30, he finished the prayer. In the temple, other pious Nampūtiris had their baths in the tank, and worshipped Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa with their own Vedic mantras. (MS; Uṇṇi; NNA, p. 58.)

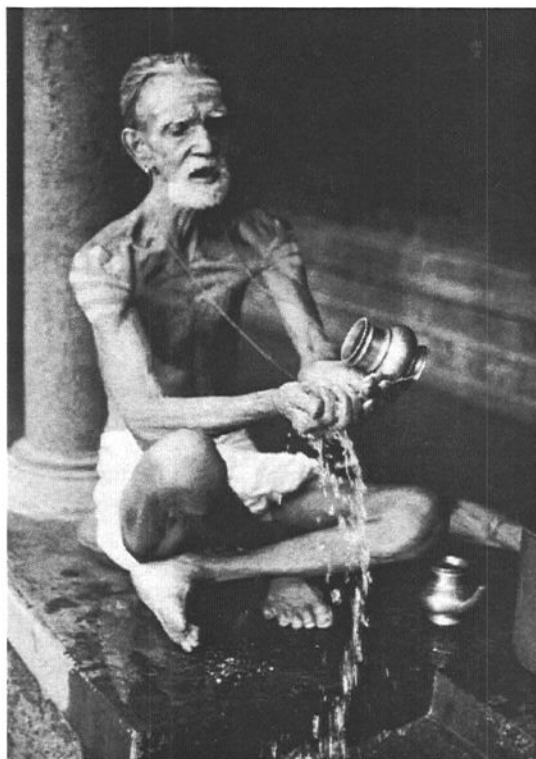

Fig. 47. NNA performing his morning ritual. Photo AP 1983.

Fig. 48. The Ravipuram *kuḷaṃ*. Photo MP 1983.

There seems to be a contradiction between that Śaṅkara's rule of conduct (AP 4) which says that one should avoid submerging oneself in a bath before twilight (or sunrise), and IR's account about having to finish bath and morning prayer early in the morning, just when the hair on the arm can be seen without a lamp. The decisions made by the Nampūtiri youngsters' organization Nampūtiri Bāla Vidyā Poṣiṇī Sabha in Panjal included one stating that the members should take a bath before sunrise (IR, II, pp. 106-108). The wording of the habit prescribed by Śaṅkara which mentions the submerging of oneself also rules out the possibility that the prayer would be meant, not the bath. Also S. V. Iyer (1977: 43-44) points out that the rule is peculiar, because in most other works *sandhyā* is ordained to be worshipped during twilight and the bath should precede this. He suggests that the rule for an unusually late bathing and prayer would have arisen from considerations of safety, the land in Kerala being uneven and full of poisonous snakes.

Twilight is earlier than sunrise as is seen from the definition in the commentary to the rule. It is defined as the period from the first lighting of the eastern horizon up to the sunrise. If in the rule the word twilight is used, the contradiction is smaller than in the case of sunrise. At twilight, then, one can bathe, not having to wait for sunrise. If an individual performs the bath and the morning prayer very quickly, and can even perhaps finish it before sunrise, there may be a very small, if any, difference when following this *anācāra* instead of the way IR mentions. The fact remains that in theory they have an opposite message. This confirms what IR kept saying, namely, that these Nampūtiris follow the Manu-Smṛti. At least they do so consciously. But in many other cases it can be demonstrated that they also follow the Śāṅkara-Smṛti.

A rule of conduct (AP 33) orders the Nampūtiris to avoid the work of the washerman. Another rule (AP 2) says that the Nampūtiris should avoid having clothes on at the regular bath, and a third that they should avoid wiping their limbs with the cloth worn at the bath (AP 3). Is there a contradiction? I asked AP to be as exact as possible in finding out what is really meant, and he added the latter words in parenthesis, so that the rule reads: (one should avoid) wiping the limbs with the cloth worn at (the time when one is coming to take) the bath. These words remove a possible contradiction, because the cloth is not worn in the bath itself any more. Although there are separate rules for men and women, many rules are common to both sexes. I will describe how I saw a Nampūtiri lady usually take her bath.

The woman used to take off her *muṇṭu-vēṣṭi* and untie her underwear loincloth (*onnara muṇṭu*) from behind so that instead of looking like briefs it looked like a petticoat. The lady washed her *muṇṭu-vēṣṭi* slapping it against a rock. She tied a small piece of cloth around her waist and took off the underwear *muṇṭu* as well as her jacket and brassière, and washed these garments as well. She washed herself with soap and water. Then she waded to a deeper place if bathing in a river and,

facing the east, took a dip there three times taking care that the water covered her head as well. After that she dried herself with a towel (not the bathing cloth), and tied a clean underwear *muṇṭu* around her waist and took off the wet piece of cloth. After that she put on a clean brassière, jacket and *muṇṭu-vēṣṭi*.

The women are not naked for a second even during their bath, and I was told that this is true about the men as well: they always wear their *kaupīnaṃ* when the *muṇṭu* is removed. On the other hand the Nampūtiris do not go bathing with their *muṇṭus* on, only *kaupīnaṃs*, and this is probably what is described by the rule. S. V. Iyer (1977: 44) says that other works ordain a Brahmin, after rising from the bath, to wring out the water from the edges of the cloth with a particular mantra which shows that the water thus let loose will propitiate those who have died issueless in the family. He thinks that the absence of any sanctity of the water in the private pond is behind this prohibition, while Brahmins in other places usually bathe in a holy river or temple tank, i.e. a *tīrtha*. As I said in Chapter 8, I do not think that the pond in the Nampūtiri compound is not considered holy. This rule, however, deviates from the custom of other parts of India and is still followed.

About the rule of Śaṅkara advising a Nampūtiri to avoid wiping the limbs with the cloth worn at the bath (AP 3), S. V. Iyer (1977: 44) says that since Nampūtiris are seen wiping off the water on the body after the bath with the cloth which they have been wearing before the bath, have dipped in the water and kept aside, it makes him think that rubbing and washing the body with this is not recommended. But drying oneself with the cloth would not be objectionable. According to MS, the rule is not about washing and rubbing oneself in the water with any cloth, since it is not relevant. (If anything, the Nampūtiris used mud for rubbing.) The point of the rule is that the *muṇṭu* is never used for drying the body, only the upper garment (*tōrttu-muṇṭu*) worn on the shoulder. The rule, then, is still followed.

Next about avoiding the work of the washerman (AP 33). It is a common practice for the people to rinse their clothes while taking the bath and so it has been earlier. Fawcett (1900: 53) even says that from the practice of wringing out the cloth worn when the bath was begun and for which another has been substituted, the Nampūtiris have a patch of thick indurated skin between the first finger and the thumb of the right hand. In IR's description the *brahmacārin* is ordered to wash his own *kaupīnaṃ*.

Also Nampūtiri women wash some of their clothes nowadays, although female Śūdra Nāyar servants, the Veḷutteṭattŭ Nāyar washermen and, in special cases, the Maṇṇān females, do the main part of the washing of a household. S. V. Iyer (1977: 48-49) has interpreted the rule so that it does not relate to the daily washing of clothes which are put on, but washing by the special processes that are the washerman's. Whether he means by that slapping the clothes against a stone or some other

Fig. 49. Nampūtiri lady taking her bath in the tank of the Taravāṭŭ. Photo MP 1990.

special process is not clear. The ladies that I observed and described were slapping the clothes, which they took off, against a rock. It is difficult to know whether this is the right interpretation, and therefore it is also impossible to know whether the Nampūtiris still follow the rule or not.

Although according to Thurston (1909, V: 173, quoting Aiyar) the Nampūtiris avoid a hot-water bath as far as possible, as only plunging in a natural pond would confer ablutional purity, IR indulged in such a bath every evening. Water was boiled in a big kettle in the kitchen and before nightfall U carried it to the outer verandah where IR, sitting on the seldom used side steps facing the rice fields, washed himself before retiring into his room. His son Muṭṭattukkāṭṭu Nīlakaṇṭhan Nampūtiri living in Ernakulam, for instance, has a hot bath every morning.

If one was not feeling well and therefore not able to take a proper bath one could just smear oneself with water from the head to the feet three times. This was called *toṭṭukkuḷi* or *toṭṭu tuṭaykkuka* (MS; cf. Nampūtirippāṭŭ 1963, Chapter 5). Sometimes only wetting one's hands and face would have to do for a bath. After her morning bath DA greeted Sūrya, i.e. faced the sun standing up and sprinkling some water and uttered a *śloka* in Sanskrit:

anyathā śaraṇaṃ nāsti tvam eva śaraṇaṃ mama /
tasmāt kāruṇyabhāvena rakṣa rakṣa prabhākara //

The meaning of the *śloka* is approximately the following:

There is no other refuge, You alone are my protection.
Therefore through your mercy, Save, save, oh Maker of light!

In this case she used a name for Sūrya, the sun, which has four syllables (Prabhākara). In other contexts she would use the same *śloka* using a four syllabled variant of the names for Viṣṇu (Janārdana), Śiva (Maheśvara), or Ayyappan (Bhūtanātha), or even the goddess, Śrī (Bhagavati).

Nowadays the bathing in the temple is still common for those who have no tank of their own, and even MS used to bathe in the temple tank, although he has his own. But bathing there or anywhere is not absolutely necessary before breakfast any more.

About his early childhood IR writes that a nurse would wash the hands, feet and face of the children in the morning in the room until they were old enough to have a dip in the pond. In the evening she used to bathe them using oil and *vāka* powder, which is supposed to be antiseptic. This is pulverized bark of the *nenmēni vāka* tree (*Acacia odoratissima* according to Gundert 1872: 927). The English name according to Uṇṇi is fry wood tree or women's tongue tree. In the morning after washing the children the nurse put on them a fresh *kaupīnaṃ*, and after that the feet were washed again. (IR, I, p. 62; II, pp. 44ff.)

I saw a baby in Ramaṇi's family bathed by her mother in the following way. The head and hair of the baby were rubbed with coconut oil, and then the body. The oil was then washed away with soap and water. The nostrils and ears were cleaned with a rolled up corner of the towel. After drying the baby some Johnson's baby talc was applied on its skin. Babies seem to be bathed in a very international way, and babies of IR's generation were also bathed as if only physical cleanness were the goal. Only an extra washing of the feet was perhaps done solely for ritual purity. *Kālu kaḻuku* 'after having washed the feet' is a very common phrase in Malayalam texts concerning Vedic rituals.

Fawcett (1900: 55) writes that as a rule men used to bathe three times a day, ladies and children but once. Also Uṇṇi confirms that it was enough for ladies to bathe only once a day in earlier times, but the bathing had to take place before cooking in the morning (cf. Chapter 11, AP 5). The first bath was considered to remove pollution, any later bath meant removing visible dirt. Nowadays this rule is not strictly followed. A lady like U does not consider it necessary to bathe before cooking in the morning, especially if she does not feel well. The bath has come to have a practical purpose, and the ritual aspect in it is losing strength. U does not necessarily even use the tank every morning for her bath, as the bathroom is also

available. She says that she feels fresh and enthusiastic after she has bathed. As we have seen, even children were given a bath twice a day in IR's childhood. Nowadays men, women and children bathe twice a day as a rule, in the morning and in the evening.

The Nampūtiris take an oil bath when they have time for it and can afford it, provided that there is no ritual prohibition for it. Oil is then rubbed on the skin, left there for a few hours and washed away with soap and water. Mixtures of different oils or plain coconut oil is used. A discussion about using oil in body- and haircare follows in the next section. If the *śrāddha* is performed in a grand manner, the guest (who represents the deceased), but not the performer, should take an oil bath (MS; AP). The guest is the representative of the deceased, and oil is applied as an honour to the deities. The time when taking either an oil bath or water bath was prohibited, was under certain periods of observances and restrictions. The prohibition to take a bath during the menstruation was discussed in Chapter 10. One case of restrictions is for the *yajamāna* and his wife in the *somayāga* (NNA, p. 148), but there are also prohibitions in many other situations.

Hair and nails

The women wetted their hair twice a day as a rule, i.e. during the morning and evening baths if they were taken properly, but washed it only twice a week. This was not enough as the Muṭṭattukkāṭṭu Nampūtiris said without hesitation that nearly all ladies had lice in their hair. A lady with a preoccupied air scratching her hair was a common sight. Sometimes daughters cherished their old mothers by catching lice from their hair, and mothers did the same to their young daughters.

In Thuravoor the Kainikkara Mana women said that gingili or sesame oil or coconut oil was used for hair care. Sesame oil is mentioned also by Fawcett (1900: 38). Kallampiḷḷi Mana women in Kidangoor boiled henna and coconut oil for the purpose. Sesame oil that had been used for smearing the deity in the Guruvayur temple was used by the women in Kainikkara Mana every day. Perhaps, because it is considered efficacious in the treatment of rheumatism (Vaidyanathan 1981: 63), they also smeared IR's new sandals with it. They had a special bell metal container with two cups (VK 5874: 109, the National Museum of Finland) one of which was used for thickened oil made of ghee, gingili and castor oil and medicines boiled together for body oil. The other cup was used for gingili and coconut oil for the hair.

Panjal ladies said that before washing they first applied oil in their hair. The women crushed leaves of some plant, such as a creeper called *tāḷi* or *sītappaḻaṃ* (*Anona*), *cemparatti* ('shoe-flower' *Hibiscus rosa sinensis*), *kuṟuntōṭṭi* (*Sida retusa*), or *veḷḷila* (*Mussoenda frondosa*) to make a paste for shampooing their hair.

Near the bath place there is usually a granite slab on which the plants can be crushed by rubbing them against it. I saw Līla, daughter of Vāsudēvan of the Taṟavāṭŭ, wash her hair on the stairs leading to the tank, using *tāḷi* leaves for making her shampoo. In recent times soap was also used, but industrial shampoo was not common in villages. The women were happy to get some of mine and use it.

The ladies should wash their hair on Tuesdays and Fridays, men on Wednesdays and Saturdays, as these days were considered lucky days for women and men respectively. New clothes should also be taken into use only on these lucky days. The days of the week were said to be significant for the different gods and goddesses in the following way:

Monday sacred to Śiva.
Tuesday sacred to Bhagavati. (Good day for women.)
Wednesday sacred to Ayyappan. (Good day for men.)
Thursday sacred to Viṣṇu.
Friday sacred to Bhagavati. (Good day for women.)
Saturday sacred to Ayyappan. (Good day for men.)
Sunday sacred to Sūrya.

The days significant for the goddess, Bhagavati, then, are good days for ladies, and the days significant for Ayyappan good for men. The first Friday of every month is most significant both for Bhagavati and Gaṇapati. Gaṇapati oblation (*homa*) should then be performed by men. Not only the first Friday, but the first seven days of every Malayalam month are special, and it is not surprising that oil (both for the body and the hair) should also be used on the Monday, Thursday and Sunday of this important week, these days being the special days of three such important gods as Śiva, Viṣṇu and Sūrya. The rules of significant days are not necessarily followed any more.

Thurston (1906: 252) speaks of auspicious and inauspicious days for anointing the body, and of ways of avoiding the evil effects if a person is obliged to anoint himself on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday. Anointing oneself on Monday, although it is not given as a special day either for men or women, seems to give good results. A restriction concerning the use of oil is seen in the custom according to which women can apply hair oil on the important Friday only in the morning, and that on the *ēkādaśi* days and on the lady's own, husband's and children's birth star day every month no oil at all is applied. Why, is not known.

According to Fawcett, Nampūtiri men wore a top knot (*śikha*), but the whole body excepting that was shaven, and no moustache was worn.

> An oval patch, from the vertex or a little behind it to a little back from the forehead, the hair is allowed to grow. This is the regular Malabar fashion. The hair thus grown is done into a knot hanging over the forehead, or at one side according to fancy, never hanging behind. (Fawcett 1900: 38.)

The Kerala customs according to Gundert include the following information. Kerala Brahmins have no moustache, but they can let their hair grow behind or their nails grow long if they wish (10). The Veda-less Brahmins, the so called *paṭṭan* Brahmins, who are lower than the Nampūtiris, wear their hairlock at the back of their hair, while the Nampūtiris wear a forelock (18). Kerala Brahmins could be half-shaven, i.e. have only their head and chest shaven contrary to the custom of the Brahmins in other regions of India (56), and a Brahmin could get himself shaven after noon was passed (52).

I saw old Nampūtiris, like PS's father from Palghat, wear a top knot in the front part of their crown, and the hair around shaven. In 1971 AP could still photograph many more old men wearing their hair in the traditional fashion. No young Nampūtiris wore their hair in the traditional style, and, as was said before, even the ceremony of the first trimming of the hair (*cauḷaṃ*) was usually performed only immediately before the *upanayana*, if at all during our field-work. Even old Nampūtiris, who do not emphasize their orthodoxy or those who oppose othodoxy, wear their hair in any way they wish, as other Indian men who are influenced by Western culture, and mostly their hair is cut short nowadays.

The old-fashioned men wore no long beard or elaborate moustache, although they often looked simply unshaven. Their body hair was not carefully shaven either. But in general Nampūtiri men shave their body hair, especially their arms, because when performing *homas* the fire can burn the hair, and burning hair is not a good omen (Uṇṇi). A beard is sometimes worn and the moustache is very common. Some of the men also wear whiskers.

When a Nampūtiri woman was pregnant, the husband and another Nampūtiri used to say prayers and perform rituals every day for the sake of good progeny. The prospective father used to let his beard, hair and nails grow. This is called *garbha-dīkṣa*. There were many other situations where a male person was supposed to remain unshaven in India, like the *brahmacarya* period and the *dīkṣa*. I understood from what NNA said that cutting of these bodily margins, dangerous as such, was counted as an act of violence as well, as was speaking harshly and cutting trees. (NNA, p. 26.) Nowadays the husband of a pregnant woman may shave daily and cut his hair every month (Uṇṇi), but in the *dīkṣa* after a death some men, like MS, remained unshaven.

A Kerala rule according to Gundert (37) remarks that in other countries Brahmin widows cut off their hair, but not in Kerala. This is so even today. Other Kerala customs according to Gundert tell that the barber-wives must monthly give their shaving feat to every woman (57); even the women have their faces polished by shaving (56). I could observe a concern about excessive hair growth in their faces and body among the Nampūtiri women, but no custom of others doing the shaving for them.

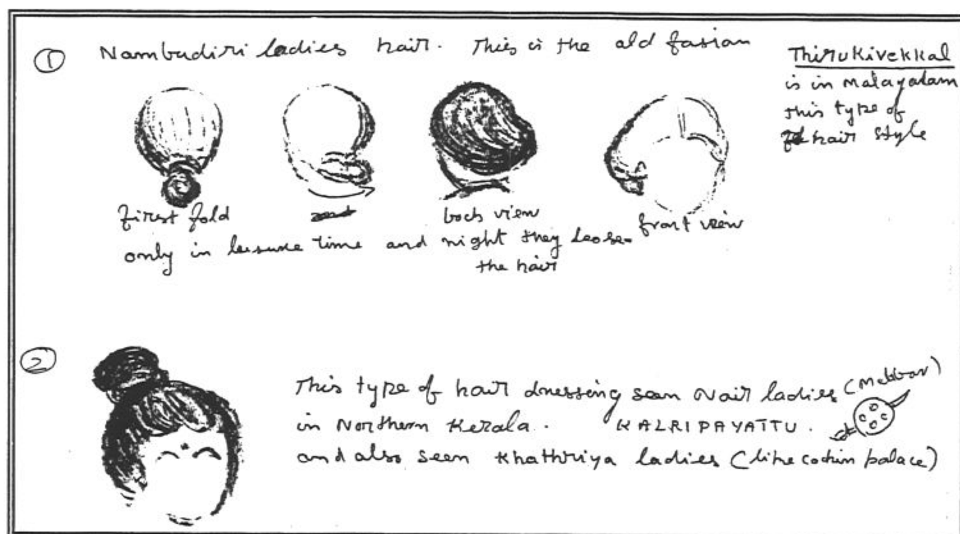

Fig. 50. Women's hairstyles. Drawn by MS.

According to Fawcett (1900: 39), Nampūtiri ladies' hair was parted at the crown and drawn tight to the ears and gathered into a knot at the back. The use of false hair was, according to him, also recognized and common. What he says should be worn in the place of false hair is the yak tail, which he interprets to be *kṛṣṇamṛga*. The latter is referring to the Indian antelope or blackbuck, not yak. If the tails of the two animals are compared, the yak undoubtedly wins, but that tail would have to be fetched from distant northern regions, the valleys of Ladakh or Sutlej.

According to the information of both PS's mother and his wife, Nampūtiri ladies used to wear their hair folded on the right side of their head. This old-fashioned hair style was said to have its explanation in the need to work early in the morning, e.g. arranging the ritual utensils with the hair still wet after the bath. A loose fold made the drying of the hair easier than a tight knot would have done. At the same time the style was neat and practical. Hair hanging all loose during the drying time would have been out of the question. According to my Nampūtiri informants, even nowadays some old ladies may wear their hair in this fashion in a *śrāddha*, or in a *yāga*. As will be remembered, only Āsyan, not Āḍhyan ladies sit in a *yāga*. Otherwise, nowadays, there is said to be no difference in hair styles between the different sub-groups of Nampūtiri ladies, and even the elaborate performance of *śrauta* rituals has become very rare.

The Nāyar women may wear their hair in a knot on the neck or in a tight obtruding bun at the back quite high up. The bun may even be on the crown. A special style is wearing the bun leaning forward from the front part of the crown. This last style is said to be the Kṣatriya style or the *kaḷari-p-payaṟṟŭ* fencing school style. Even Nampūtiri girls may wear their hair in this way during the *kai-k-koṭṭi-kaḷi* or *tiruvātirakaḷi* dance. Nowadays even old Nampūtiri ladies usually wear their hair parted slightly on one side or in the middle of the crown. The hair is pulled over or behind the ears, and collected at the back in a knot or bun, or left loose down near the ends where the hair is tied together.

Sometimes a small portion of the hair on both sides of the face is twisted into a very thin whip and the whips pulled to the back and separately tied together on top of the rest of the hair. Tightly plaited hair is not common except with very young girls, who can also wear their hair in a pony-tail or cut short. I never saw a Nampūtiri lady wear any kind of false hair, human or made of animal tails, but I was told by Uṇṇi's mother that in earlier times animal hair was used. Human hair for this purpose was worn only by low caste women.

Mouth hygiene

According to Śaṅkara's rules (AP 1) one should avoid tooth-picks. This is against the practice in other parts of India. A Kerala rule recorded by Gundert (50) says that although foreign Brahmins clean their teeth daily, those in Kerala do so only on good days (*nalla āḻci-dantadhāvanaṃ*). S. V. Iyer (1977: 43) suggests that the prohibition against the use of tooth-picks on certain days like the *ēkādaśi* and the *amāvāsya* made the Nampūtiris adopt a material which was both easily available and could be used without restriction on all days. According to him a leaf of the mango and a splinter of coconut were used. A leaf of the mango tree is mentioned by L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer (1909-12, II: 234) as the 'toothbrush' for all Nampūtiris, and the only means for cleaning one's mouth for the *brahmacārin*, widows and those under a vow. Married men could resort to rice-bran burned and reduced to charcoal for tooth powder.

This rule of conduct was mostly still followed in 1983. The right hand index finger was used for cleaning the teeth, but on the dentist's orders some few Nampūtiris had started to use a modern toothbrush, without showing the common disgust for again having to use an artefact which had been defiled by saliva. In 1985 toothbrushes were more common than in 1983, and in 1990 even more so. Many people, especially elder and poor people, still used their index finger only. According to the oral information given to me, crushed mango leaf was the traditional tooth paste, sometimes still used. Old people crush it by chewing. Either ground paddy husk powder roasted on the pan, or a commercial article 'K.P. Namboodiri tooth

powder' was used by everybody. Western-type tooth paste was sometimes purchased in 1985 and later. Some Nampūtiris had their teeth damaged in such a way that the enamel of the front side of the teeth was worn out, and the inner layers of the teeth were exposed. It is possible that this was due to the corroding effect of the burnt tooth paste or the betel-chewing.

The tongue was separately cleaned with the edge of a mango leaf, used only once. The factory-made metal or plastic tongue cleaner, which is used over and over again, was not popular in Panjal during my field-work. It was said that the tongue can give a louder click (a frequently used signal) and the pronunciation be clearer when the tongue is cleaned properly.

Marks and colours on the face and body

When Fawcett (1900: 2, 43) writes that it is a mistake to say that turmeric is never smeared on the face by Nampūtiri ladies, as it is sometimes used on festive occasions, he is probably referring to Malabar district, where he spent three-and-a-half years. According to Aiyar, among the Travancore Nampūtiri women turmeric powder as a cosmetic wash for the face was not in vogue (Thurston 1909, V: 171, quoting Aiyar). I never saw turmeric powder being used as a cosmetic, only paste obtained by rubbing a turmeric root against a flat stone kept especially for this purpose near the bath place, but it is probable that Aiyar refers to the same. The ladies that I was mainly observing in Kerala live closer to Malabar than Travancore, which explains the custom.

In Chapter 9 I told about the use of turmeric in the marriage and *tiruvātira* ceremonies. A Nāyar woman would also smear oil and turmeric on the body of the newly wed wife when she took the ritual bath (*kuṭi-kuḷi*) on the fourth day after the marriage ceremony, the day when the marriage was consummated. When bathing in the tank in the morning, Ravipuram women in their mature years, after taking one dip in the water, could rub turmeric on their face, and take another dip after that. Younger women could apply it on special days, like the birthday and *tiruvātira*. R told me that turmeric is thought to have a hair removing and purifying effect. After delivery, from the 4th day to the 40th day, turmeric paste was applied on the whole body, after the skin had been oiled and washed with soap and water. Some more water was poured on the woman, but the turmeric was not rubbed away, so that the body remained slightly yellowish. (MS; U; R; Rv.) From contexts where turmeric is ceremonially applied it can be inferred that it is strongly connected with the sexuality of women.

A Kerala custom reported by Gundert (8) was that, while Brahmins in other places put many marks on the forehead (*gopināmakkuṟi*) and seals on the arms and face, they only put holy dust (*nilaccānta*) in Kerala. Fawcett describes somewhat

elaborate marks on the forehead or above the bridge of the nose of Nampūtiri men. Sandalwood paste, black and red spots plain or edged with yellow or cream colour and yellow or white stripes were mentioned by him. White and yellow stripes or only a dab could be applied on the arms, chest and breast bone. Tattooing was prohibited. (Fawcett 1900: 40, 42.)

According to Fawcett (1900: 43), Nampūtiri ladies should have three stripes of sandalwood paste across the forehead, to which was sometimes added a dab of saffron over the nose. Eye-liner or lamp black was used for the eyes. Tattooing was also prohibited for women. Even according to Aiyar, Nampūtiri women applied three horizontal lines of sandal paste after bathing. In the case of Āḍhyan women these marks had a crescent shape. According to the same source, red powder (*kuṅkumaṃ*) was never applied by Nampūtiri women to the forehead. (Thurston 1909, V: 170-171, quoting Aiyar.) According to Iyer (1909-12, II: 283), a Nampūtiri lady could not ornament her forehead with dots in a beautiful pattern.

Even nowadays, after their morning bath and greeting Sūrya, men and widows apply ashes (*bhasma*) mixed with water on their head, forehead (three horizontal lines), neck (one stripe), chest (three horizontal lines), shoulders (three horizontal lines, and maybe above them three dabs), upper arms (usually three horizontal lines, but sometimes many more) and back above the waist (a dab or line). This is the full set, and often only the forehead seems to be important, or at least some of the lines or dabs are missing. According to the information given by PS's mother (who passed away 28th December, 1986), widows should apply ashes on the crown, abdomen, thighs and calves in addition to the places listed above. She said that this makes altogether 12 places, but according to my calculations it makes 13. She was an Āḍhyan lady, but according to her knowledge there was no difference between the Āḍhyan and Āsyan ladies in this respect. In the evening everybody, not only men and widows, can apply ashes without water in the same places. This time ashes are applied more casually and one line is enough on the forehead.

Śiva's (and Kālī's) body is smeared with white ashes, and when used by humans ashes are connected with this god. On the evening of the *pradoṣaṃ* days and the *śivarātri* day, which are sacred to Śiva, ashes mixed with water are applied to the forehead by men and widows, and the mantra '*namaś śivāya*' is used. The ashes are normally taken from the kitchen stove but on the *śivarātri* day burnt cowdung should be used. In Ravipuram this used to be prepared by the servants but by 1990 the custom had almost died out in Panjal. In 1985 in the local paper *Mātṛbhūmi Vārāntappaṭippu* there was an article 'Bhasma-Purāṇaṃ', just at *śivarātri* time, where it was described how these cowdung ashes are prepared. It is probable that some modern Nampūtiris living in towns may have forgotten how they are prepared but in the villages it still seems to be common knowledge. I saw dung balls drying in the sun at this time of the year.

This is how the preparation is described in the Malayalam weekly (translated from Malayalam by MS):

> Some very pure girls prepare the ashes beginning one week or more before the day. They take, after bathing, fresh cowdung without any dust into their hands and make small balls out of it. These they place to dry in the sunlight at least for five days. The dried cowdung will be burnt with rice husks at least through one whole day, so that the husks will be completely burnt and no charcoal will result. Then the ashes will be washed, and again made into balls and again burnt with the husks up to three times. The ashes will become purely white. Then, after washing the ashes again with water so that any possible dust will go down, the *bhasma* is taken into a cloth and a good scent is added to it. Again, the ashes are made into balls, and taken into sunlight to dry. These ashes can be kept a long time. On the *śivarātri* day, early in the morning, men smear these cowdung ashes on their bodies. (*Mātṛbhūmi Vārāntappatippu* 17.2.1985: 1-2, article "Bhasma-purāṇam" by Bi. Harikumar Valettu.)

The rule (AP 58) stating that one should avoid religious beliefs other than those proclaimed by the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava systems, is more or less followed by the Nampūtiris (MS). The peculiarity, however, is that the Nampūtiris do not choose between the two high gods. In Fawcett's (13) translation a particular mode of marking the forehead with ashes is prescribed. In parenthesis he adds that this particular mode is otherwise described as three horizontal lines on the forehead with pure burnt cowdung. In AP's translation (AP 13) of Śaṅkara's rules and in that by S. V. Iyer, both vertical and horizontal marks are prescribed on the forehead. Viṣṇu's symbol is vertical while three horizontal strokes with pure or holy ashes are Śiva's symbol. Iyer, it is true, suggests that there is a slight leaning towards Śaivism indicated by the fact that the Śaiva mark is compulsory irrespective of the Vaiṣṇava mark. (Iyer 1977: 49-50.)

While one can assume, as my informants do, that this custom refers to Kerala Brahmins, as the Kṣatriyas or the Śūdras are not expressely mentioned in the versions that I mostly lean on, Wariyar's version shakes this assumption. According to his version this is the mode of putting holy ashes on the forehead: a Brahmin should make a figure in the form of a long *gōpi*, a Kṣatriya a semi-circle, a Vaiśya a circular figure, and a Śūdra three parallel lines. Wariyar has also included four drawings, of which the first can be identified as theVaiṣṇava, the last as the Śaiva mark. The slight leaning towards Śaivism in the case of Brahmins would here be replaced by a clear leaning towards Vaiṣṇavism. Perhaps it is safe to ignore Wariyar's version and not to presume that the Nampūtiris did not put vertical marks of holy ashes on their foreheads.

The main idea of the first two translations, namely, that the same person could wear both the symbols of Śiva and Viṣṇu, is lost in the Logan/Fawcett translation. That translation probably corresponded to current usage in Fawcett's time, as it does with that of the present time. In spite of the fact that the Nampūtiris do worship both gods, they do not necessarily demonstrate that on their forehead with

vertical marks, but in another mode. While *bhasma* is connected with Śiva, sandal paste (*candanaṃ*) is connected with Viṣṇu, and it is by connecting ashes and sandalwood paste on one's forehead that the Nampūtiris can demonstrate their worship of both gods.

In the same places as ashes men and widows can wear also *candanaṃ* acquired by rubbing a piece of sandalwood against a special flat stone kept for this purpose. While rubbing, the stone is kept wet by adding water. The sandalwood paste is applied after the morning bath, or after a *pūja* or *kriya*. Married women and young girls also use *candanaṃ*, but usually only on their foreheads and necks. Āsyan Nampūtiri ladies used to wear three stripes of *candanaṃ* across their forehead in the morning. The lines were applied with three fingers. Otherwise, cosmetics can be applied with the help of the midrib of a coconut leaf to make the lines fine and beautiful. Nowadays the three lines of *candanaṃ* are often not worn any more. If a woman has a complete bath in the afternoon, with the single line of ashes she applies a little sandal paste. The Āḍhyan ladies wore a curved *candrakala*. If a *candanaṃ* dab is used in addition to *bhasma* lines, it is used on or above them. For instance, if there are three lines of ashes on the forehead, the sandalwood paste dab is probably placed on the middle line.

All people can wear black eye-liner (*kaṇ-maṣi* or *kaṇ-ṇ-eḻuttu*) in some ceremonies like their birthday or the *ōṇaṃ*. Ladies may wear it every day. The modern make-up substance, which can be purchased in ordinary shops, is commonly used. This, as well as a home made variety, is called *kajjaḷaṃ*. *Kajjaḷaṃ* is used in weddings by the bride and groom, but not the purchased product, only the home-made variety prepared of soot in the following way. A piece of cloth is repeatedly dipped into the juice of *pūvvāṃ kuṟunnilla* (*Vernonia cinerea*), letting the cloth dry between the dips. When all the juice is absorbed into the cloth the latter is burned in sesame oil in a lamp placed near the mouth of an upturned new mud pot. The soot which deposits on the surface of the mud pot is collected. It is mixed with a cream-like substance made of castor oil, *kayyanni* (*Eclipta prostrata*) juice and camphor evaporated above a glowing ember. (Uṇṇi.)

Sometimes *añjanaṃ*, the ore of antimony, the traditional eye-liner familiar from the Vedic texts, is used and that can be bought in Āyurvedic shops. *Añjanaṃ* is considered to be healthy for the eyes. I asked whether it is used to ward off evil spirits like it was in the Vedic times. DA admitted that when applied to the eyes of small babies it may have that function. In the *annaprāśana* ceremony, for instance, real *añjanaṃ* is used. In some very delicate situations, where real *añjanaṃ* is used by adults, its evil-repelling function is felt strongly. That must be the case e.g. in the *āyini-y-ūṇŭ* ceremony and likewise in the *śrāddha* ceremony, where *añjanaṃ* and *candanaṃ* are mixed with water and poured over the *piṇḍa* cakes (Uṇṇi).

Red powder (*kuṅkumaṃ*) is nowadays applied to their foreheads also by Nampūtiri women. Even old ladies, on leaving for the temple or preparing for some domestic ritual, apply this red mark (*poṭṭu*), and, sometimes in addition, a black spot (*kuṟi*) of compound ointment (*kaṟuttu cāntŭ*), on their foreheads. Widows cannot wear the red or the black spot for beautifying themselves as they are also used for the good health of the ladies' husbands. Menstruating women follow the same rule during the first three days and that is also natural, as they are not supposed to be sexually attractive as intercourse is then forbidden. Widows as well as men can apply *kuṅkumaṃ* to their foreheads as a temple offering (*prasādaṃ*) of Bhagavati, and this seems to have been the original use of *kuṅkumaṃ* with regard to married ladies as well. There is a yellow ochre (*gōpi*) which is especially worn by widows, and which can be obtained in Dwarka, Kṛṣṇa's capital on the coast of Kathiawar. (DA; MS; U.)

Kuṅkumaṃ is connected with Bhagavati, i.e. all goddesses, but *kaṟuttu cāntŭ* more specifically with the goddess Kālī. *Kuṅkumaṃ* used to be made of turmeric with alum and lime (*cuṇṇāmpŭ*), which turns it red. Nampūtirippāṭŭ (1963, Chapter 12) says that it was made of rubbed fresh turmeric and castor-oil plant (*Ricinus communis*) seed. Nowadays it is not normally mixed at home, but is a commercial product, powder or an adhesive spot. According to MS, turmeric with lime may still be used for ritual purposes.

DA got the black liquid from the Kodungallur temple situated 40 km southwest of Trichur, or from the Chorattur temple near Ottappalam, the Tirumantham Kunnun temple in Annatippuram village, Malappuram district, or the Chottanikkara temple near Tripunithura. According to Uṇṇi, *kaṟuttu cāntŭ* is available in any Bhadrakāḷi temple. The Kodungallur temple is described by K. R. Vaidyanathan (1982: 117-129) as the Bhagavati temple consecrated to Kaṇṇaki, an incarnation of Kālī. In this connection *cāntŭ* is said to be black paint of burnt rice distributed to pilgrims on *kārttika* day during the famous *bharaṇi* festival (Vaidyanathan 1982: 128-129).

Kuṅkumaṃ is used on or above *candanaṃ*, *cāntŭ* below *kuṅkumaṃ*. There is, according to PS's mother, no difference in the make-up customs of even married Āḍhyan and Āsyan ladies nowadays. Like turmeric, also *bhasma*, *candanaṃ*, *kuṅkumaṃ*, and *cāntŭ* are used by some lower castes as well. One still does not see tattoos on Nampūtiris, but the Nāyars may be tattooed. The women are not willing to wear lip-stick even if they see Westerners wearing it, as it is not customary in the countryside or small towns.

NAMPŪTIRI DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

Dress

From boys to men

The lower garment of a very young boy was and often is just a string of cotton, where a *kaupīnaṃ* can be fixed if wanted. The babies began to wear a *kaupīnaṃ* on their first birthday. A gold bordered loincloth (*kasavu muṇṭu*) was, and still is, much appreciated. The border is very often not made of real gold thread any more. On their first visit to the temple, the Nampūtiri boys wore a small *kasavu muṇṭu*. IR mentions, as a characteristic of a pet boy, that he was wearing a *kasavu muṇṭu* at the age of four. (IR, I, p. 76.) Boys that had not yet been initiated were supposed to wear a cloth *kaupīnaṃ* only in rituals. IR writes about his childhood:

> I was wearing a *kaupīnaṃ* of cloth and that is something which cannot be forgotten; only after *upanayana* boys used this cloth *kaupīnaṃ*, before that only for rituals. The *kaupīnaṃ* for the boy before *upanayana* is made of banana leaf or sometimes made of slender *pāḷa* from the Areca nut tree, which is painful. So we felt very elated when we were allowed to wear cloth *kaupīnaṃ*. (IR, I, pp. 60-62.)

The spathe of the areca flower (*pāḷa*) was wetted to make it soft, but when it dried it was very stiff and painful. The plantain leaf was made flexible by slightly heating it near the fire, but it often had a knot which caused discomfort. Also Nampūtirippāṭŭ (1963, Chapter 5) tells about his fascination when he was allowed to wear a cotton *kōṇakaṃ* during the *śrāddha* feeding. The boy was supposed to wear only the *kaupīnaṃ*, a cloth *kaupīnaṃ* after the *upanayana* ceremony, until the fifth year of his studentship.

Boys in Sāmaveda families started wearing a *muṇṭu* in a closer *tar̲r̲' uṭukka* way in the last, i.e. the fifth, year of their studentship period, and they wore it every day for the whole year. The length of their *muṇṭu* was four times a *tōrttu-muṇṭu*, and they never took it off during their bath. They removed two lengths, i.e. that half which was only tied around the other end (which was tied in a *tar̲r̲' uṭukka* way) during their bath, washed that end and tied it round their body. After the *samāvartana* ceremony the boy started to wear a *muṇṭu* tied in a normal way on top of the *kaupīnaṃ*. (MS; Uṇṇi.)

The plantain-leaf underwear or the spathe underwear are not worn any more. Readymade elastic pants are usually worn nowadays from the beginning by small boys. Uṇṇi's generation wore a *kaupīnaṃ* for two or three years and got pants after that. At that time the period from the *upanayana* to the *samāvartana* lasted two years. Young boys nowadays wear European type shorts. Western-type underwear is getting popular among the grown up younger generation as well.

Fawcett (1900: 41) tells about a skin sash, one inch wide, made of yak skin and worn by a student. This kind of skin sash is not referred to by my informants or observed by myself. We have seen above that Fawcett mistakenly understands *kṛṣṇa-mṛga* to denote 'yak' instead of 'black antelope'. In the *upanayana* ceremony the Muṭṭattukkāṭṭu Māmaṇṇu Mana boys are given a sacrificial cord and a strap of black antelope skin donated by the former Mahārāja of Cochin to this family, to be worn as upper garments, and a belt of *muñja* grass made at home, as well as a staff, a branch of *palāśa* tree. In Nellikkāṭṭu Māmaṇṇu Mana they got the black antelope skin for NNA's *somayāga* from the Rāja of Kollengode, Palghat district, who had extensive forest lands in the Western Ghats, where the black antelope was available (NNA, p. 136).

In recent years, even though the Nampūtiri boy had worn Western-type pants before the *upanayana* ceremony, he still got a cloth *kaupīnaṃ* in the ceremony. The usual ritual bunch of flowers was kept on his head for a while, and black ointment applied to his eyes. In the *upanayana* ceremony a *muṇṭu* tied in the *taṟṟ' uṭukka* way and a towel were also ritually given to the boy. As the majority of boys do not learn the Vedas any more and do not have a *brahmacarya* period, they do not carry the skin, the belt and the staff any longer than the ceremony lasts.

The *samāvartana* ceremony is nowadays performed very soon after the *upanayana*, and during that ceremony boys are given a rolled upper garment of the same kind as the bridegroom is wearing in his wedding, a pendant (not three-stringed) of *palāśa* wood, a staff of bamboo, and shoes. In his *samāvartana* ceremony performed in Panjal in 1983 by his grandfather IR, Sājan Gaṇapati wore plastic sandals for the three steps, for which leather shoes were earlier worn (see below). The above mentioned articles are worn only during the ceremony except for the shoes. It is, however, from the initiation ceremony onwards that the boys can start wearing a *muṇṭu* and a towel, like the grown-up men do. The marriage dress of a Nampūtiri does not differ from other ritual dress. It includes the ritual type of *muṇṭu*, the sausage-like upper garment, and the bunch of ten flowers.

Men

In Śaṅkara's rules there is only one remark about the dress of a Nampūtiri: he should wear only one sacred thread (*yajñopavīta* = *pūṇūl*) (AP 59). In other parts of India, as S. V. Iyer (1977: 49) points out, a single sacred thread was laid down for a *brahmacārin* and two for the wedded man with a third one to represent the upper garment which may not be worn at times. Fawcett (1900: 41) records a triple string of country-grown, not English, cotton, and mentions that no change of string is made after marriage, as is the custom elsewhere.

According to Kerala customs recorded by Gundert (33-34), the workmen (craftsmen) were not given the thread in Kerala, but the 'Samanter' could wear it if

they made a golden cow, crept through its mouth and womb and divided it to Brahmins. According to MS, male members of princely families, counted as Kṣatriyas, were allowed to wear a sacred thread, but not Zamorins, lower rulers, counted as being between Kṣatriyas and Nāyars. A single actual case was known to him where a Zamorin was given a sacred thread in the way described above. The Vāriyārs do not have the thread in Panjal, but, according to Thurston (1909, VII: 221-228), the Tīyāṭṭ' Uṇṇis, an Ambalavāsi sub-group in Travancore, wear one. The Nampiyārs that I met in Panjal wear a thread, which would suggest that they are counted as Ambalavāsis. The Pāṇṭi Taṭṭans of Tamil origin wear a *pūṇūl*, but in Panjal and in Central Kerala in general, the goldsmiths do not, nor do the carpenters.

The single thread as prescribed by Śaṅkara is worn by the Nampūtiris and a triple one by other married Brahmins. But the sacred thread in Kerala is in itself a triple string of hand spun Indian cotton with a knot (*brahma-granthi*) uniting them. One thread is wound three times around a Nampūtiri's knees, and the ends tied into a knot so that it both unites the ends and goes round the two other circuits, which can move freely through the knot when pulled. MS wears one which cannot be pulled through. Although the Nampūtiris wind this triple string themselves, in accordance with the rules AP 32 and Fawcett 29, they do not spin the single thread that they start with. The way the string is usually made fully explains the seemingly deviating report given by Fawcett. What he calls a triple string is only a single threefold string, a fact which is also confirmed by Fawcett's remark that it was not changed after marriage.

As in earlier times, Nampūtiri boys are still given the sacred thread at their initiation ceremony. Most Nampūtiri men that I met still wear such a string, but for instance IR's son Nīlakaṇṭhan has chosen not to carry it regularly, only in certain ceremonies. MS wears his string all the time, and he did so even during his trip to Europe. Rv did not wear his string in the 1980s, but his connection through marriage to a wealthy *mana*, where religious ceremonies are respected, changed his manner.

Traditionally Nampūtiris would only wear a white locally manufactured loincloth, 4-5 cubits (about 175-280 cm) in length, which had to have a coloured border. Plain white cloth or coloured cloth could not be worn, and silk was also prohibited. The loincloth was worn slightly higher than the navel. Although the Kerala customs according to Gundert (1) emphasize that men only want a *muṇṭu* of 5 yards (457 cm), a second cloth, 3-4 cubits (about 130-225 cm) in length, was worn over the shoulders and chest outside home. (Fawcett 1900: 40.)

Even today old and middle aged men in villages usually wear the dress described above, with the exception that it can be powerloom made and shorter than as described in the sources. The length of the modern double *muṇṭu* according to my

measuring is 340-355 cm, and a single one 170 cm. A gold-bordered loincloth was slightly longer, 189 cm. Men's loincloths are 120-125 cm wide, a gold bordered one which I measured 117 cm. As the double *muṇṭu* is worn twofold, the actual length of the garment is practically the same as that of the single one. Even if the Kerala rule according to Gundert (1) meant a double *muṇṭu* the length given is ample. The loincloth recommended for AP was powerloom made, and double only in length, i.e. it did not have the coloured borders in the middle, which after cutting would have been in the ends of the two individual loincloths. Men, especially those with a pot belly, still like to wear their *muṇṭu* higher than the navel.

According to PS in his youth Nampūtiris used to wear a very small *muṇṭu* at home, and a bigger one only when they went out. His opinion is that the double loincloth is a relatively new invention. According to MS the small *muṇṭu* was called *tōrttu-muṇṭu* and is the same as the shoulder cloth or towel. Nowadays young Nampūtiris often wear a chequered or otherwise figured coloured loincloth (lungi) as an everyday lower garment. This is slightly longer and narrower than men's white loincloths. The lungis are made in big manufacturing centres to be worn all over India. The end of the *muṇṭu* and lungi which comes above is tucked in on the right side. The loincloth is often shortened by lifting the lower edge up and tying it loosely a little below the waist.

For a lower undergarment the Nampūtiri men wore a strip of cloth (*kaupīnaṃ*) passed between the thighs and fastened to a string round the waist at the back and front. A Brahmin who professed to be a *saṃnyāsin* had, according to a Kerala rule recorded by Gundert (2), only the *kaupīnaṃ*, which, says this source, had been prescribed for Pāṇan and Paṟayan by Śaṅkarācārya. The *kaupīnaṃ* is usually just a rectangular piece torn out of an old cloth, but this underwear can also be purchased in textile shops. The belt that the cloth is attached to can also be a strip of old cloth. Western-type underwear is getting popular among the younger generation.

In rituals the Nampūtiri men wore a lower garment which was tied in a closer (*taṟṟ' uṭukka*) way, different from their everyday fashion. The latter dress was described as being like the Nāyar dress. (Fawcett 1900: 40; Thurston 1909, V: 169-170, quoting Aiyar.) In certain rituals even the young Nampūtiris still only wear a white cloth tied on in this particular *taṟṟ' uṭukka* way. The material and measures of this dress are two or four *tōrttu-muṇṭus* not cut apart, nowadays also a big double *muṇṭu*. After tying it around the waist men slip out with their left hand the *kaupīnaṃ*, which is not supposed to be worn with this dress.

In 1983 and 1985 a few Nampūtiri men, and in 1990 a considerably larger number of them, wore Western-type long trousers especially when travelling outside their village. For young men of all castes long trousers are becoming more common even in the village. Those who wear them are working in Trichur or Cochin or some other town where modern ideas are easily acquired.

The upper garment is often only a small towel, *tōrttu-muṇṭu*, carried folded on one shoulder, but when needed spread around the shoulders or even the head. Men are particularly sensitive to chilly and damp weather and think that it is dangerous not to protect one's head with a towel or cap whenever the hot weather eases up a little at night during the winter. Men do not wear a proper turban in ordinary circumstances, but in the *atirātra* ritual the *yajamāna* wears one tied of a new cloth for three days (NNA, p. 196).

In rituals a double, triple or fourfold cloth means two, three or four complete individual garments of handloom-made material which have not yet been cut apart into individual cloths having end stripes. These are worn as overall covers by brides and, wound in a special way, as upper garments (*uttarīyaṃ*) by men and women. This type of upper garment is worn for instance by the sacrificer (*yajamāna)* and his wife in the *agnicayana* ritual, and by the bridegroom in his wedding, in the fashion of a sacred thread. It is made in the following way. A four-fold handloom *muṇṭu* is tied into a ring around which the rest of the cloth is wound. The result is like a sausage joined at its ends.

A shirt of European type or a khadi *kurtā* is thought to be necessary for a Nampūtiri to wear on any longer trip outside home. Even in his own village MS wore a white shirt when he went, for instance, to his school. I seldom saw a Nampūtiri wear a silk *kurtā* so common among other Brahmins in India. Young men wearing a lungi may likewise have bare upper bodies, or they can wear a towel. They usually wear a Western-type shirt of matching colour tailored for them in town, whenever they go outside their village. A T-shirt may also be worn.

When I suggested that a plain green cloth be bought for a shirt to be tailored and worn with a blue and green chequered lungi, Rv rejected the idea because the colour, in his opinion, was suitable for lower castes only. He chose a blue and white chequered cloth instead. This shows that even though Rv claims to be modern and expresses his indifference to traditional Nampūtiri customs, he still cares to be distinguished from the lower castes.

Leather was supposed to be polluting in normal conditions for the Nampūtiris. Exceptionally they could touch it without being polluted. Such exceptions were according to Kerala customs recorded by Gundert (49, 61) the time of childhood, journeying, warfare, conflagrations and holy feasts. Bringing it in contact with musical instruments did not pollute either. The Nampūtiris still perform Vedic rituals and follow Vedic traditions and the domestic rituals include Vedic practices. Those of course date back to pre-Hindu times, which explains why the killing of living beings is not prohibited in Vedic rituals. It also explains why leather is not considered polluting to the Nampūtiris in ritual contexts. About the *samāvartana* ceremony Fawcett says that the boy should take three steps in leather shoes, but never wear them again after that. Wooden shoes were prescribed for other times.

According to Fawcett this rule was not always followed except by those who had given up the world. In any case the heel of the foot was not supposed to be covered. (Fawcett 1900: 40, 50.)

Even the Nampūtiris, men and women, often walk barefooted. Some elder men tell that they used to wear wooden shoes earlier and the village carpenter can still make the traditional toepeg sandals to order. These and wooden shoes with a leather strap can be found in Nampūtiri *manas*, but I did not see them worn any longer. Nowadays most Nampūtiris wear leather, rubber or plastic sandals in which the heel, indeed, is not covered, but in 1990 I saw young men without any scruples wearing leather boots of Western-type covering not only the heel, but also the ankle. This footwear is of course not suitable for the hot climate, but is worn as a sign of the wearer's knowledge of Western culture and thus as a status symbol.

NNA's dress, when he became a kind of hermit, did not change compared to the dress that he was wearing in his previous life stage, as he continued to live in his own house, and did not move to live in the forest. As will be remembered, Manu prescribed a skin or a tattered garment and the hair to be in braids, and the body-hair, beard, and nails to be unclipped. A Nampūtiri *saṃnyāsin* did not follow Manu's instructions and start to wear coarse worn-out garments and look untidy. If a Nampūtiri performs a *saṃnyāsa* initiation, he stays at a *saṃnyāsa maṭhaṃ*, shaves his head, stops wearing a sacred thread, but wears a *rudrākṣa* and an ochre robe and carries a stick (*daṇḍa*) and a water-pot (*kamaṇḍalaṃ*). (MS.)

From girls to women

In the days of DA's early childhood a waist string could serve as an outfit for baby girls as well. As was mentioned before, at the age of one they were given a leaf *kaupīnaṃ*. In spite of the fact that the lives of the boys and the girls went in different directions there seems to be some parallellism in the change of dress, even at the age of 6-7, when there was no dramatic physical change in their bodies. At that age, after their *cauḷaṃ* ceremony, girls got a *tōrttu-muṇṭu* to go over the *kaupīnaṃ*, now made of cloth. This was the age when boys were soon to have their initiation performed, and after this they were not supposed to play with girls any more. The change in social status was marked by a new outfit for the boys, too, as was said above. (MS.)

Well before their first menstruation, at the time of the first symptoms of the coming of puberty, the girls got an *onnara muṇṭu* for underwear. A good day was chosen with the help of the calendar or someone well versed in astrology for the tying of the first underwear *muṇṭu*. *Tiruvōṇaṃ* day was good, but the calendar could advise when exactly that particular day started. The first underwear *muṇṭu* always used to be double. Later they wore a single *muṇṭu*. On top of this a *tōrttu-muṇṭu* was worn as before. Even after puberty this dress remained the only dress

for the girl until her marriage, as she was not allowed to go out of the house. The boys had the ceremony performed that marked the end of their studentship around the age of 12. Again, that too was marked by a distinctive dress. In the babyhood of U's generation there was no change in the dress of a baby girl compared to the previous generation. After the age of six or seven, because they could now go to school, the girls sometimes wore a jacket.

Baby girls may still wear just a waist string with or without *kaupīnaṃ*. Western-style panties are now very common and with them the girls may wear a short Western-type gown. This is usually bought ready-made in a shop contrary to the bodice, jacket, shirt and men's shirt, which are normally stitched by a tailor or seamstress to order. The baby dresses may be very elaborately decorated. Also ready-made blouse-and-panties combinations are worn. The girls between baby age and teen age wear a jacket and a short skirt made of cotton cloth or elastic material of some artificial fibre. The two youngest age groups are dressed in the most Westernized fashion.

In the last thirty years young Nampūtiri girls have worn an outfit which is common among all castes and in other parts of South India: a jacket and a wide long skirt which is gathered tightly to a waist band. The jacket is much longer than a full grown lady's bodice nowadays. It reaches well below the waist. It is rather tight fitting and has short sleeves, or sleeves which reach just above the elbows. It is open in front or back, and closed with hooks, and in Panjal is usually, but not always, without a collar. Elsewhere a collar and sleeves gathered at the place where they are fitted into the holes were in fashion in recent years. Instead of an underwear *muṇṭu* young girls have started wearing Western-style panties.

Slightly older young girls added an upper garment to their dress in order to cover their growing breasts. This is called *dhāvaṇi*, often referred to as a half sari in south India. Girls are even said to be at the *dhāvaṇi* age. IR's daughter Śrīdēvi did not wear a *dhāvaṇi*, but R did. Although it is not very common in the 1990s, girls still sometimes wear a *dhāvaṇi*.

The women's marriage dress conforms to that of the old description of costly garments and presents of jewellery in Manu's Laws. Jewellery donated by the girl's family, and a new garment given by the groom are elements in the wedding, and even Nampūtiri ladies nowadays usually wear in their marriage ceremonies a costly silk sari instead of a separate upper and lower garment as described in the Gṛhya-Sūtras.

The indoor and outdoor outfits of the old-fashioned Nampūtiri lady was the next step. An unmarried women did not need the outdoor dress at all because she had to remain within the compound unseen by strangers. For a grown-up woman the blouse had become common among U's generation. Only old ladies continued

to wear the old-fashioned home and covering dress. A grown-up woman's dress will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

I will illustrate with one more example the particular ages when the different outfits were used, and compare it with the current practice. R started wearing a long skirt instead of a short one at the age of 7 or 8. Nowadays the shift takes place at the age of 12 or 13. R started wearing an underwear *muṇṭu* at the age of 10 (and she began to menstruate at 11). Even nowadays the shift will take place between 10 and 12, if not Western panties are worn instead. R wore a *dhāvaṇi* when she was 16 and 17. In the 1980s girls wore a long skirt and jacket up to the age of 20 or 21. Nowadays schoolgirls may even wear a Western-type skirt, and the *śalvār-kamīs* a little later. At the age of 18, when she began her career as a teacher, R started wearing a sari. After marriage she started wearing a *muṇṭu-vēṣṭi* as well. A sari is more rarely worn by housewives in villages than by career women in towns. R still wears these two dresses alternately as will be described below.

Girls generally get married later nowadays than they used to. From the customs connected with the different kinds of dress it is also possible to see that the childhood and girlhood of a Nampūtiri female have become longer than they used to be, and that schooling and career have much influenced their lives.

Women

According to Śaṅkara's law (AP 47), it is not desirable for the Brahmin woman to wear anything other than white clothes. According to Kerala customs recorded by Gundert (31), all Kerala women had white clothes and no coloured ones. Another peculiarity, according to this source (1, 43), was that they had no breast cloth. A hiding-umbrella, in addition to the company of a Śūdra woman, was compulsory for a Brahmin woman when going out (32). According to Fawcett (1900: 40), a second cloth was often worn in his time by Nampūtiri women, but one only was orthodox, and silk clothing, coloured cloth, jackets and bodices were prohibited. The Antarjanaṃs used to wear a gold-bordered white double *muṇṭu* only, 10 cubits in length (around 4.5 m), fastened round the loins, twisted round the legs, reaching well below the knee, and covering the chest. Kerala customs according to Gundert (1) give the measurements as 10-16 yards, which sounds like too much. Perhaps cubits, not yards, are meant.

According to my informants, when going out, the old-fashioned Nampūtiri lady wore a double *muṇṭu* tied in such a way that it covered everything except the head and the feet (*putappŭ*). A large single *muṇṭu* could be worn as a covering dress in recent years. A palmyra-palm-leaf umbrella or parasol (*koṭa* = *kuṭa*) was carried to give more protection against sunshine, rain and strangers' stares. This old-fashioned dress was still worn in Panjal by a few ladies when walking to the temple. In 1983 and 1985 I saw Śrīdēvi, widow of Bhāskaran Nampūtiri, and

Āryya, widow of Śaṅkara Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri, both of Vaikkākkara Mana, pass Ravipuram every morning wearing such a dress when going to the Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa temple, but the former changed to a *muṇṭu-vēṣṭi* and jacket for the rest of the day. The latter continued to wear the old-fashioned dress at home, too. Āryya died in 1988, and Śrīdēvi stopped wearing the old-fashioned dress by 1990, but according to my informants there was still a Vaikkākkara lady called Uṇṇyēma on the eastern side of the village walking outdoors in this dress in 1990.

Thurston (1909, V: 170) says that Nampūtiri women have two styles of dress, viz., *okkuṃ koḷuttuṃ vecc' uṭukkuka* for the Āḍhyans, and *ñeṟiṅṅ' uṭukkuka* for what he calls ordinary Nampūtiris, obviously meaning Āsyans. DA and other old Nampūtiri ladies could show how the tying of the loincloth differed among the Āḍhyan and Āsyan women respectively. DA demonstrated how the so-called *onnara muṇṭu* was worn in *okkuṃ koḷuttuṃ vecc' uṭukkuka* (Āḍhyan) and *ñeṟiṅṅ' uṭukkuka, pāppaṃ vecc' uṭukkuka* or *okku vecc' uṭukkuka* (Āsyan) styles. No additional underwear was worn by the old-fashioned Nampūtiri ladies at any time.

The old-fashioned home dress of a Nampūtiri lady, according to my informants and my own experience, indeed left the upper part of the body bare. Inside the Taṟavāṭŭ I saw the mother-in-law of Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri, hailing from Iriññālakuṭa Grāmaṃ, Kōvūr Mana, sitting in the ladies' rest room during a celebration, together with other ladies, without any jacket. I also saw the grandmother of Dāmōdaran Nampūtiri in Kallampiḷḷi Mana in Kidangoor, walking with her upper body naked even in rooms where there were male members of the family. A small cloth loosely thrown over the breasts and shoulders could temporarily be added to the loincloth.

I heard that Priyadatta Antarjanaṃ, mother of Śivōttaman Nampūtiri of Kaippañcēṟi Mana, exceptionally wore a jacket during my visit, because she was afraid that I might have wished to photograph her. The other three Nampūtiri ladies, well past their fertile age, had not had anything against my photographing them in their normal attire. The old ladies had thus different feelings about their half-nakedness: some of them did not think that there was anything peculiar about it, others were shy, because they had been influenced by the rapidly changing society. Still, they preferred to remain old-fashioned among their own families.

Also old Nāyar servants might wear, in the *mana* where they were serving, only the loincloth without covering their breasts. The Veḷuttēṭattu Nāyar washerman's old mother never wore a blouse even when walking outside. On her shoulder she carried a towel. The old rule for all lower castes, no matter how young or old the persons were, was not to cover their breasts, particularly in front of higher castes (cf., e.g., Logan 1951: 127-128). Covering one's breast in that situation would have demonstrated disrespect.

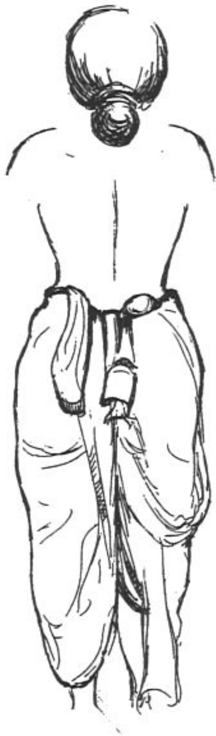

Fig. 51. DA demonstrating how the *onnara muṇṭu* is worn in the *okkuṃ koḷuttuṃ vecc' uṭukkuka* style by the Āḍhyan ladies. Drawing from a photograph MS.

Fig. 52. DA demonstrating how the *onnara muṇṭu* is worn in the *pāppaṃ vecc' uṭukkuka* style by the Āsyan ladies. Drawn from a photograph by MS.

A white cotton four-fold hand-loom ritual garment (*mantra-k-kōṭi*), the overall covering garment for a bride, which left nothing to be seen except the hands, was very rarely worn during our field-work. We saw it worn at one Nampūtiri wedding probably for our sake. But even if it was not worn, it was still prepared for every Nampūtiri bride. Beginning from the two corners of the cloth at the ends of one of the long borders, the edge was folded into pleats towards the middle. Each of the two gatherings was tied with a string.

IR writes about his wife DA:

> In 1109 [AD 1934] she came with me taking off the *ghōṣa*, that is not as an Antar-janaṃ, but as a modern woman. Of course we were a little bit afraid. We went to a studio in Trichur to take our photo. (IR, II, p. 280.)

A lot of courage was still needed in the 1930s for a Nampūtiri lady to wear a loincloth with an upper garment (*muṇṭu-vēṣṭi*) with a bodice, and only occasionally, when DA left the village with her husband, she wore a blouse and did not cover herself in the Antarjanaṃ style (IR, II, pp. 284-286). I was told that DA became permanently a 'modern woman' only after her daughter R was born in 1949.

As the rules and customs used to be, Nampūtiri ladies most commonly wore white cotton loincloths and upper cloths with coloured borders. It was said that the white colour was chosen for general use, and not only as a colour of mourning, to emphasize the purity of the Nampūtiris. After all, white is the colour of the Brahmins. The modern garment, the bodice, is also white or has the same colour as the borders of the *muṇṭu-vēṣṭi*. Off-white was very popular in the 1980s and the ladies took care that sunshine did not bleach the cloth too much. Old and young, married and unmarried ladies could choose the colour of the borders according to their taste. A gold border, although generally not woven of real gold thread any more, was still preferred in festivities. The traditional dress lacked the splash of colour that the bodice could add.

The Nampūtiri women nowadays also wear power-loom material for their clothes, although they still appreciate the hand-loom garments which are usually slightly more expensive. The power-loom ladies' *muṇṭus* which I studied in Panjal measured between 183-189 cm in length and 113-117 cm in width. The *vēṣṭis* measure between 193-215 cm in length and 90.5-97 cm in width. The hand-loom garments are usually a little wider, but not longer. Men's loincloths are a little wider than women's, which is natural as men are generally taller than women. The ladies' *muṇṭus* are considerably longer, however, because women make pleats in front as they do when wearing a sari. The modern double *muṇṭu* is shorter than the traditional one. The *muṇṭu* is tied around the hips clockwise, contrary to the way the women tie their sari in south India. The end which comes on top is plaited before it is tucked at the waist. When working the women often tuck in the lower corner of the end also so that it does not get dirty.

The bodice was made of thin power-loom cotton cloth, and it could be made to open either at the front or at the back. The fashion of the bodice varied, and sometimes the neck was wider, sometimes smaller. The back of the bodice could be very open indeed, or reach up to the neck. Also the length of the sleeves and the bodice itself varied. In the 1950s the bodice also covered the waist. My host family was ashamed of me wearing my short-sleeved bodice made in Madras in 1971 as the sleeves were supposed to be comparatively long in 1985. The bodice always seemed to be too tight fitting to feel comfortable on a Western woman accustomed to wearing elastic or loose clothes. In Panjal the bodice was made by the Ambalavāsi seamstress for many Nampūtiri women. The material for this was purchased in town by the women themselves.

The women who had moved to live in places which were not traditional Nampūtiri villages, and even some modern ladies in Panjal, also admired and wore colourful saris, sometimes and especially made of silk. Many of the features of this dress – power-loom material, colourful cloth, silk, the way of tying it, and the bodice – would have been out of the question earlier. Most Nampūtiri ladies whose place of origin is Panjal changed to a white *muṇṭu-vēṣṭi* whenever they came to visit their native place. This dress was a must in rituals except for the bride, who wore a silk sari even under the all-covering old-fashioned robe. Actually, the *vēṣṭi* was regularly worn only by the younger ladies including the approximately 50-year-old. Old 'modern' ladies normally wore the bodice and the *muṇṭu*, and only occasionally in ceremonies or when travelling outside the village did they add the *vēṣṭi* to their dress. All younger Nampūtiri ladies wore a long cotton petticoat under their *muṇṭu*, but not the old ladies.

The modern dress of the Ambalavāsi and Nāyar caste women is very similar to that of the Nampūtiris. Old ladies usually wore no *vēṣṭi*, but the younger did. The Śūdra Nāyar women coming to help in the Nampūtiri households, whether old or young, were dressed only in a blouse in addition to their underwear cloth and *muṇṭu*, no petticoat or *vēṣṭi*. That was the case with all lower castes as well. A white *muṇṭu* was the commonest but not the only alternative for a servant-class woman, and old Ambalavāsi and Nāyar upper-class ladies as well. I also saw flowered and chequered loincloths, lungis, on lower caste women working for the Nampūtiri houses. White was common for the Nāyar household servants probably because they often got old *muṇṭus* from their Nampūtiri employers, for instance on the latters' birthdays. The blouse might be coloured or white and it was usually closed in front with safety pins, and not with hooks like those of the Nampūtiri ladies.

Instead of panties the ladies usually still tied an *onnara muṇṭu* around their loins and between their legs. This was tied around the waist so that the end which comes from the back over the right hip was left under the other end, which was tucked in the waist. The corner of the right lower end was pulled between the legs and tucked in the waist at the back. The hem of the left side was lifted up at the front and tucked in the waist so that the underwear looked like a slip on the front side, and briefs at the back. A Western-style cotton brassière was commonly worn by middle-aged and younger ladies even in villages.

In the 1990s a new type of dress was often worn by this age group at home, but also by young married women. The dress is called 'maxi', and it is a short-sleeved long gown, either closed or buttoned in front. The model seems to have been influenced by Arab dress, but the fashion has spread to Kerala from big Indian cities.

A revolution in ladies' dress took place in cities all over India around 1990. The north Indian dress, *śalvār-kamīs*, characterizing especially the Muslim women,

or *kamīs* with the tight churidars originally worn by Punjabis, was accepted among the Hindu population too and also in south India by old and young women. It is characterized as a democratic and practical dress and as an example of national integration, reflecting a changing lifestyle. While it satisfies the demand for decency, consisting of long trousers and a loose knee-length shirt, it offers more freedom of movement, appreciated by women who have to use public transport when going to their educational establishments and offices. In Panjal village the *śalvār-kamīs* was adopted by some unmarried young women, college girls and graduates, although the Nampūtiris have earlier avoided anything that can be identified as primarily Muslim. Young married women, like Uṇṇi's and Rv's wives, who stay at home, do not wear the *śalvār-kamīs*.

Nampūtiri ladies very seldom cover their head with any cloth or cap, but it sometimes happens that the women protect their head from hot sunshine with the end of their garment while travelling. The reluctance to cover one's head is probably due to the fact that Muslim women are recognized most easily by a cloth on their head, little girls by a separate rectangular cloth and grown-up women by the end of their upper garment drawn above the head. Also a cloth tied around the head is worn by Nāyar and lower caste women at work, and when going to a funeral.

Nampūtiri women's attitude towards Western women's dress, except the underwear, is usually negative. Either they disapprove of it because it may show the legs and sometimes even the shoulders and armpits, or because it is laughable. Sometimes they said that I wore a baby-girl's outfit. They would not wear rain-coats, skirts, or silk scarves, but, as they had started wearing shoulder bags among themselves in the common Indian style, they were very eager to receive Western bags as presents, to show off.

Ornaments

Boys and men

According to Jamila Brijbhusan (1979: 4), strings of black thread or chains of gold or silver tied around the hands, feet and stomach of a young baby are used as amulets to ward off evil influences in India. In addition to a tube-shaped amulet (*ēlassŭ*) threaded on the waist string, young Nampūtiri children wear other ornaments. IR tells that before his *upanayana* ceremony he wore a golden bangle which weighed 40 grammes and had been presented to his uncle by the family's *śiṣyas* in Kidangoor on his *annaprāśana* day in 1047 M.E. (1872 AD). (IR, I, p. 76.)

In his *annaprāśana* ceremony in 1983, a Panjal baby boy, Vāsudēvan of Muṭṭattukkāṭṭu Māmaṇṇu Mana, was initially wearing only a string around his waist. As gifts, the boy got from his maternal uncle a golden bangle, and from his family a golden chain to be worn around his neck, a golden amulet (*ēlassŭ*) to be

carried on his waist, and silver chains (*taḷa*) for his ankles. Only baby girls and boys wear silver chains around their ankles, not adults. In earlier days the presents given to the baby on this occassion would later have been donated to two temples, half of them to the Panjal Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa temple, half of them to the Guruvayur temple. Nowadays this is usually not done but a little money is given instead.

Fawcett (1900: 41-42) mentions a ring hanging on a string in front of the throat of a boy of 12. This ornament, he says, was put on in the sixth month when the boy was named, and would be worn until he was 15. As baby boys and girls were dressed in the same way, it was difficult to tell their gender. For this reason baby boys wore a distinctive golden neck ornament. This ornament is called *puliyā mōtiraṃ* 'tiger ring' and it is made of gold. The boy started to wear the ring in the *annaprāśana* ceremony, and wore it until the *samāvartana*. They have become rare but can still be seen. *Puliyā mōtiraṃ* was only worn on special occasions, like birthdays, in addition to the simple ring which was worn all the time. Tiger nails may have been used in this ornament, but they have been substituted with imitations. Mention was earlier made of a pendant of *palāśa* wood given to the boy in his *samāvartana* ceremony.

About Nampūtiri men's ornaments Thurston writes that beyond plain finger-rings and a golden amulet (*ēlassŭ*) attached to the waist-string the Nampūtiris wore no ornaments. The ears were bored, but no ear-rings were worn unless the man was an Agnihotri, in which case ear pendants of an elongated pattern (*kuṇḍalaṃ*) were in use (Thurston 1909, V: 170).

According to Fawcett, ear-rings called *kaṭukkans* might be worn by the Akkittiri and Somātiri, but they had to be of plain gold. According to the information given to him the ears had to be pierced before a certain age even if the male Nampūtiri would never be entitled to wear the ear ornaments. Fawcett also describes several kinds of finger-rings, among them a gold ring (*pavitraṃ*) of the thickness of an ordinary English wedding-ring having an 8-like figure with a dotted pattern on each side. A *pavitraṃ* was necessary in performing and undergoing certain ceremonies, and those who did not possess a gold ring would make a ritual ring of *darbha* grass. Fawcett makes a suggestion that the ring of *darbha* is orthodox. He mentions gold and silver amulet cases either worn on a string round the waist or at the back, inside which are *yantras* or mantras inscribed on golden or silver plates, used against evil spirits. (Fawcett 1900: 40-42.)

Iyer says that those who have performed the *agnyādhāna* and are Agnihotris [or Aṭittirippāṭŭs] use ear pendants known as *kuṇḍalaṃs*, or less elaborate *kuṇukkŭs* of gold. He also mentions finger-rings made of gold and often set with precious stones, and describes the *pavitraṃ* probably on the basis of Fawcett's discussion. Necklaces of *rudrākṣa* beads or *tuḷasi maṇi* mounted in gold, the middle set with stones and curiously worked, are also mentioned by him. (Iyer 1909-12, II: 283.)

The men's ear-ring called *kaṭukkan*, translated in Gundert's dictionary 'ear-ring for men', which according to Fawcett can be worn by Akkitiri and Somātiri (i.e. Nampūtiris who have performed Vedic *śrauta* rituals), is according to Uṇṇi only worn by old Nāyar men in Panjal. The young Nāyars are shy of wearing it. The shape of the ornament, as drawn by Uṇṇi, resembles a flower. To illustrate *kuṇḍalaṃ*, also translated as simply 'men's ear-ring' in Gundert's dictionary, Uṇṇi sent a photo of a *kathakaḷi* deity mask wearing a pair of these ornaments, and above them a pair of other ornaments, which he calls *tala-p-pūvŭ* 'head flower'. Elsewhere the former type is called *tōḍa* and the latter *cevi-p-pūvŭ* 'ear flower' (*Census of India 1961*, VII A: 59). The family goldsmith had brass dies and parts for making ornaments of this kind. According to him, some lower castes wear them.

The ear ornament which I have actually seen in use among Nampūtiri men is the *kuṇukkŭ*. Gundert's dictionary describes it as being a lotus-like ear-ring or nose-ring. The description better fits the ornament which Uṇṇi calls *kaṭukkan*, whereas the *kuṇukkŭ* according to my informants is just a rather thin plain gold ring. NNA wore one in each earlobe. The one in his right earlobe he was entitled to wear as a badge of honour for his ritual activities, and the other one he wore just for decoration. In 1941 he performed a *somayāga*. Next year when he was 37 years old he performed the *āyuṣmati* ritual meaning 'long-lived'. The weight of the *kuṇukkŭ* is defined individually for each wearer. A man's life span is calculated to be a hundred years. The age of the wearer at the time of the *āyuṣmati* ceremony is subtracted from a hundred, and the remainder is divided by four. The quotient tells how many *paṇa-t-tūkkaṃs* of gold shall be used for one ear-ring. *Paṇa-t-tūkkaṃ* is the weight of a certain gold coin; 21 *paṇa-t-tūkkaṃs* = 8 grammes. In NNA's case each ear-ring weighed about 15.8 *paṇa-t-tūkkaṃs* or approximately 6 grammes (100-37 = 63 divided by 4 = 15.75).

Among the rings the *pavitraṃ* has a special position, as every Nampūtiri must wear one during certain ceremonies. If he does not have a golden one, he wears a freshly made *darbha* grass ring. Both can be worn together in rituals, which shows that the one made of grass has a more immediate ritual function. The motif called 8-like by Fawcett imitates the knot used when making the grass ring. In IR's family only *darbha* grass *pavitraṃ* rings are used nowadays, but in Kerala and Tamil Nadu I saw several gold ones as well. In Kerala the knot of the gold ring is small and the decoration can either be on the upper side only or continue all around. In Tamil Nadu, and among the Tamil Brahmins living in Kerala, the knot is wider than the rest of the ring and in the middle of it is set a ruby. The other rings worn by Nampūtiris were not always plain as described by Thurston, but often set with stones as described by the other sources. Rings with big jewels or imitation gems and rings, usually very cheap, purchased in some temples with a deity depicted on them, are popular.

The Nampūtiris and others may wear an *ēlassŭ* or amulet hanging on their waist string. There is supposed to be a mantra hidden inside this tube-like ornament made of gold or copper. When questioned about the meaning of the amulet people usually tell about an illness or other trouble which has miraculously disappeared since they have started wearing it. *Kathakaḷi* dancers wear a belt with not one but several tubes that are not made of precious metals.

The *rudrākṣa* is still popular. Another comparable symbolic necklace is the *tuḷasi māla*, made of pieces of the stem of the sacred basil (*Ocimum sanctum*). Both can be plain or made in a more elaborate style. I saw *rudrākṣa* beads partly covered with gold and alternating with rock-crystal beads. The pieces of *tuḷasi* may alternate with gold beads and be joined with golden loops. Very often these necklaces are purchased in a holy place even far away from Kerala. For instance, the *rudrākṣa* of Kainikkara Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri was purchased at Badrinath in the Himalayas and his *tuḷasi māla* in Vrindavan in Mathura. Badrinath in Garhwal has a special significance for the Nampūtiris. It is one of the monasteries which are believed to have been established by Śaṅkarācārya and the priest at the temple of Badrinath must always be a Nampūtiri. (Thurston 1909, V: 160; Iyer 1909-12, II: 258.)

A neck ornament with alternately black glass beads and either silver or gold coloured metal beads may be some kind of imitations of the *tuḷasi māla*. On the other hand, tiny black beads connected with links of gold chain already existed in the Indus Civilization in the 3rd millennium BC. Plastic and metal lockets depicting some deity, e.g. Guruvāyūr Appan, and usually purchased in temples, are also popular.

Girls and women

A distinguishing feature in the dress of a very young girl was a neck ornament *mūkkōla-k-kallŭ* which differed from that of a boy. The name refers to a stone, *kallŭ*, brought from Mookkuthala, which is included in the ornament, as is one *rudrākṣa* bead. This ornament is very rare nowadays. Another distinguishing feature, which was referred to in Chapter 9, was that a girl's ornaments might be made of cheaper metal than those of a boy.

Only one among Śaṅkara's rules (AP 48) concerns women's ornaments: it is not desirable for a Brahmin woman's nose to be pierced. According to other sources, gold bracelets were proscribed even for the most wealthy and bangles of brass or bell-metal for ordinary Nampūtiri ladies. Silver ones for the Āḍhyans were in use. (Logan 1951: 127; Thurston 1909, V: 170, quoting Aiyar.) According to Nampūtirippāṭŭ (1963, Chapter 5), brass bangles used to be put into the hands of Āḍhyan girls and bell-metal bangles into the hands of Āsyan girls. According to Fawcett, however, golden bangles were worn as a rule in north Malabar, but bell-metal or brass bangles, even 21 at a time, in south Malabar. He says that gold and

silver ear-rings were also worn. Fawcett and Thurston point out that Nampūtiri ladies' ornaments were mostly distinctive. (Fawcett 1900: 43.)

Iyer says that he quotes Śāṅkara-Smṛti when mentioning rules which have approximately the same content as the above-mentioned rules, but they are not, except the one commenting on the piercing of a woman' nose, found in the set of the 64 rules. Iyer adds another rule: 'The cloth round the loins should not be fastened with a girdle'. He also says that a Nampūtiri woman has a *tāli*, obviously meaning neck-ornament worn as the marriage-badge, hanging from a cotton thread. (Iyer 1909-12, II: 283.)

Namboodiripad (1976: 108), himself a representative of a Malabar Āḍhyan family, told that gold bangles were earlier not worn by the ladies of his subcaste. These aristocratic ladies wore brass bangles and ordinary Nampūtiri ladies bronze bangles. According to Iyer, rules forbidding the extravagant use of ornaments were no longer strictly followed in the beginning of the 20th century, and even Nampūtiri ladies started wearing valuable or many bangles and rings and many different necklaces on their bare breasts. (Iyer 1909-12, II: 173-174, 283-284; Fawcett 1900: 43; Thurston 1909, V: 170, quoting Aiyar.)

In IR's memoirs (II, pp. 278-280; III, pp. 15-17) we read in connection with the early 1930s that he bought 6 golden bangles for his wife with 48 grammes of gold and put them on her wrists, but they were not considered proper. When IR's father's younger brother heard about the bangles he refused to take his meals in the house. DA submitted herself to the family, took off her treasures and wore again the copper alloy bangles. (A more orthodox lady, the wife of IR's father's younger brother, had refused to accept golden bangles although they were offered to her.) The rumour about the sensational bangles had, however, spread beyond the village and other Nampūtiri ladies were eager to see them. This time they were disappointed in their wish, for only after three years were they put on again.

A nose ornament is never worn even nowadays by Nampūtiri women, and by that alone it is easy to distinguish a married Tamil Brahmin woman from a Nampūtiri woman in Kerala. The girdle is usually only worn by the Muslim women, but in Kainikkara Mana in Thuravoor there is a ceremonial silver belt which is meant to be worn by Nampūtiri girls on the 4th day of the ritual of their first menstruation. I have never actually seen a Nampūtiri lady wear a belt. The traditional copper alloy bangles are still worn, but more modern plastic and other cheap bangles have mostly taken their place. Gold and gilded bangles are preferred if they can be afforded. Uṇṇi has photographed for me a pair of thick and elaborately decorated golden bangles from Tekkēṭattŭ Mana near Tripunithura.

All ear ornaments are worn in the earlobe, not the upper ear by Nampūtiri women, but as a Kerala rule according to Gundert (43) mentions, the Śūdras may have other customs. The ear ornament called *ciṟṟu* was still worn by old Nampūtiri

ladies. Younger ladies had different varied patterns which were not exclusively worn by the Nampūtiris. After the earlobe was pierced, a small piece of palm leaf rolled in the shape of a cylinder (*kātil ōla*) was stuck through the hole. Gradually a longer piece of palm leaf was rolled into a cylinder of a greater diameter in order to enlarge the hole. Even today some tribal women and women of lower castes wear a *kātil ōla* as a proper ornament, not only as a means to prepare the hole for a golden ornament. According to PS's mother, in the wedding and three days after, cheaper ear ornaments used to be worn. On the fourth day they were changed for more valuable ones. Even today the ear ornaments are of gold.

Needless to say the heavy *cir̲r̲u* made the hole considerably longer over the years. There are true stories told about wives being mistreated by their husbands by having their ears torn by pulling from the *cir̲r̲u*. As was told in Chapter 9, this happened among others to IR's sister Śrīdēvi married to Ār̲ūr Mana. Goldsmith Kr̥ṣṇan in Panjal told me that IR took DA to a doctor in Trichur in 1108 M.E., and had her earlobes operated back to normal size. After this example many other Nampūtiri ladies followed suit and went through the same operation. After that they wore small lightweight ornaments.

During a Nampūtiri wedding in Kidangoor I got the following information from the bridegroom's sister. The bride should be decorated before the wedding with 32 silver rings so that each finger except the thumbs has 4 rings. PS's mother said that it was the middle finger which had no ring, and this piece of information was confirmed by other traditional ladies. On the fifth day after the wedding the silver rings should be taken away and other rings be worn instead. The Kidangoor bride did not, however, wear separate marriage silver rings, and if they are worn nowadays, they are usually fewer in number than earlier (Uṇṇi). In general I only saw ladies wear cheap bazaar or souvenir rings.

Names of certain patterns for ornaments are mentioned by the sources such as *cir̲r̲u* or *cur̲r̲u* for the ear, *cer̲u-tāli*, *kāśu-māla*, *pū-t-tāli*, *kal̲uttila* and *karumala-patta* for the neck. (Fawcett 1900: 43; Thurston 1909, V: 170; Iyer 1909-12, II: 283-284.) Nampūtiri women are as fond of ornaments as women anywhere in the world, but now that they are allowed to wear even costly and many ornaments, few of them can afford them. Only synthetic jewels are used by the village goldsmiths in Panjal, but some ladies showed me family treasures with genuine gemstones in them made by the same goldsmiths earlier.

The golden leaf-shaped marriage token (*tāli*) is said to represent the leaf of *Ficus religiosa* (Brijbhusan 1979, pl. lviii), the sacred pipal tree. The Āḍhyan ladies wear a convex *tāli* and Āsyan ladies a flat one. R is nowadays an Āḍhyan lady through her marriage to PS, earlier she was an Āsyan lady by her father IR. She said that the Āḍhyan ladies' marriage badge is similar to Pārvatī's *tāli* and the Āsyan ladies' marriage token is similar to Mahā-Lakṣmī's *tāli*. These two god-

desses, she said, are always quarrelling about whose husband is greater. If the Āḍhyan ladies imitate Pārvatī, this seems to indicate that Śiva and Pārvatī are more respected than Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī among higher Nampūtiris, and, through their higher position in the hierarchy, also among all Nampūtiris. Otherwise there is no difference between the Āḍhyan and Āsyan ladies' jewellery nowadays. Nāyar women's *tāli* is similar to that of the Āsyan ladies except that it lacks the gold granules of the latter. It is the bride's father with the Nampūtiris, and the bridegroom himself with the Nāyars and Tamil Brahmins, who ties the *tāli* in the wedding.

The *tāli*, though still sometimes worn in the old way hanging from a cotton string, is usually worn with a gold chain nowadays. The cotton string was given to the Nampūtiri bride by the groom's family, the golden ornaments in it by her father. At first there always used to be two leaf-shaped ornaments and five beads, three of them in the middle and one on either side. When the string was worn out the bride put one leaf and two beads into a new string. This new *tāli* she could wear only after a *pūja* or after whispering '*namaś śivāya*' 500,000 times. Not before tying the new string round her neck could she remove the old one. From hereafter the wife would always wear one leaf-shaped marriage badge with two beads, one of the leaves by turns, in a new string. The worn-out string was not to be thrown into a polluted place but it should be dropped into the kitchen well.

In the 1980s only one *tāli* was usually worn from the beginning, without interruption, for the husband's long life and health, prosperity and happiness. In the 1990s there was a new fashion of the bride getting two small *tālis* fixed into a golden hook, which is fixed to a gold chain. The two *tālis* were now worn all the time through married life and the former custom of later wearing only one badge at a time was forgotten. The groom's family might later donate many smaller leaf-shaped ornaments to the daughter-in-law, and these she could wear either on both sides of the marriage badge on the same string, or hanging on a separate string. As the individual pieces are small in size they and the whole ornament as well are called *ce<u>r</u>u-tāli* (*ce<u>r</u>u* 'small'). Nowadays the difference in size between the *tāli* and the *ce<u>r</u>u-tāli* is not considerable, as the *tāli* has generally become smaller for financial reasons.

According to Fawcett (1900: 43) Nampūtiri widows could retain most if not all of their ornaments. According to Iyer (1909-12, II: 284) they were not allowed to wear ornaments except the *tāli*. I was given different information: widows cannot wear the *tāli*. This is logical. The *tāli* is never removed during the lady's lifetime if her husband is still living, but if her husband dies first, the *tāli* is burnt in his funeral pyre. If the wife dies first, the marriage ornament and the string are burnt with her. DA's *tāli* was burnt on IR's funeral pyre. Not all ornaments are, however, forbidden for a widow. Traditionally she could continue to wear only golden ear-rings (*ci<u>rr</u>u*), but DA continued to wear a *tuḷasi-māla* and a golden figleaf-shaped

pendant with a Kṛṣṇa depicted on it on a gold chain on her neck (made by the family goldsmith), light ear ornaments, and some cotton strings on her wrists received as *prasādaṃ* from holy places.

Except for the *tāli*, the ornaments do not necessarily belong to the family members individually, but to the joint family collectively. The metal may be used over and over again for new ornaments for different family members when needed. Some ornaments are kept in the family for all ladies of the household to wear. U was allowed to borrow a *ceṟu-tāli* necklace during her nephew's wedding even from her original house, where the marriage took place. She had been staying for some time in her paternal house helping in the preparations.

DA's *ceṟu-tāli* is now worn by her daughters or daughters-in-law. IR's mother had had a golden *ceṟu-tāli* necklace with 20 leaf-shaped ornaments of 2 grammes each. According to IR, after her death the necklace would have been kept for a second wife if his father had had plans of marrying again. Instead, during the *dīkṣa* of one year on every monthly ritual, one *ceṟu-tāli* was given as *dāna*. (IR, II, p. 182.) If the husband dies first, the *ceṟu-tāli* ornaments may be donated by the widow to poor ladies. This is done for her late husband's peace of soul (*ātma-śānti*). (Uṇṇi.)

Iyer (1909-12, II: 284) mentions that Āḍhyan ladies wear beneath the *ceṟu-tāli* garlands of *maṇis* or gold pieces along with other jewels known as *karumalapatta* and *kaḻuttila*. Uṇṇi was able to photograph the latter, and I saw the daughter of Māttūr Mana wear a similar ornament, which, as they pointed out, resembles a *nāga-paṭa-t-tāli*. No Āḍhyan or Āsyan Nampūtiri who was interviewed could give any information about *karumalapatta*.

Fawcett (1900: 43) mentions an ornament, the drawing of a part of which he gives in his book, as a distinctive necklace of a Nampūtiri lady. This ornament can be identified as a *pū-t-tāli*, also called *erukk'ilam-pū-t-tāli* (Brijbhusan 1979, pl. lviii). The pattern is said to be derived from the flower of the *erukkŭ* plant. *Erukkŭ* is a shrub called *arka* in Sanskrit, *Calotropis gigantea* or *Asclepias gigantea* in Latin (Watt 1889-93, II: 34). The word *arka* is used of the sun, the fire and the lightning, and thus it is said to symbolize both Sūrya and Agni. The flowers of *arka* are especially said to be Agni's eyes. Different parts of the *arka* shrub are used in various ceremonies and if a man is to marry a third time, he may first marry an *arka* to make his marriage the fourth one, because the third wife is feared to die soon. Hanuman, the monkey god, is sometimes worshipped with a garland of the flowers of this tree. (Meyer 1937, III: 70; Watt 1889-93, II: 48-49; ŚB 10,3,4,3 and note 4 by Eggeling 1882-1900, IV: 334.)

How a Nampūtiri woman could be decorated during special occasions can be seen in a picture in an article by Joan Mencher (1966b: 19), the woman being identified by my informants as an Āsyan lady from Vādhyān Mana in Attoor village

near Panjal. They identified the ornaments as well. Here is the list of the names beginning from the shortest neck ornament and continuing towards the longest: *tāli*, *mūn iḻa maṇi*, *ceṟu-tāli*, *kaḻuttila*, *keṭṭurumpŭ*, *pū-t-tāli* and *kāśāli*. In her ears the lady wears a pair of *ciṟṟŭs*. I had an opportunity to photograph some golden necklaces belonging Nampūtiri Āḍhyan and Āsyan ladies and to buy most of the ornaments (now made of brass) for the National Museum of Finland in addition to the golden *tāli* that the family goldsmith made. The rosary type of necklaces, described among the ornaments of Nampūtiri men, except the *rudrākṣa*, are also popular among the ladies, as are the lockets.

Women were not willing to wear alien categories of ornaments, and even if the Western presents that I gave to them, like small golden heart-shaped pendants, belonged to necklaces, i.e. categories of ornaments that they normally wear, they were hesitant about their suitability, as they did not know what they depict and represent. The same goes for bracelets, i.e. chains, as they are accustomed to wear bangles. But they were eager to wear even Western bangles that I gave them, as bangles belong to their set of ornaments.

THE FUNCTIONS AND CHANGE OF NAMPŪTIRI DRESS AND ADORNMENT

Nampūtiri dress was meant to differentiate its wearer from other castes and Brahmins from other parts of India. There were also distinctive features in the dress of different status groups within the caste. Dress regulations derived, like strict distance pollution regulations, more from power than from the hierarchical principle as such (cf. Dumont 1972: 122). Nampūtiri dress was supposed to be plain, not extravagant, to emphasize the spiritual greatness of the group. The almost fully covering dress of a lady was meant to protect her and the blood of the Nampūtiris from other castes and keep them pure. Sexuality and beauty were not strongly emphasized, nor was individuality.

The difference between the outdoor and the indoor costume for a traditional Nampūtiri lady was extreme. The characteristic of the dress which she wore outside her home was that it covered her as much as possible. At home she exposed her upper body completely. This, combined with the fact that she, at least while of fertile age, was not supposed to be seen uncovered by any other male than her husband, made that part of her home where she was allowed to move freely a substitute for the covering dress. Her nakedness was situational (cf. Goffman 1965: 50-51), while the function of the compulsory nakedness of the upper body of the lower castes was expressive of her lower caste. The aged traditional ladies who walk rather freely in their homes even when their breasts are not covered, are not under such strict rules.

Some customs proved more persistent than probably expected by the reformers. Such customs are, in the case of women, wearing the palm-leaf umbrella and covering dress outside homes, but walking half naked in the homes. Women's marriage badges still tell to which group they belong, even within their caste. In the case of men, the wearing of the tuft is a strong demonstration of belonging to the camp of the traditionalists 60 years after the reform movement started. These practices are followed only by very few old people, but wearing the sacred thread is still the rule. The requisite items in the *upanayana* and *samāvartana* ceremonies have defied the centuries and millennia with great tenacity.

The differentiation through dress between the castes, classes, and people from different parts of India, although it still exists especially among the old people, has weakened. This is true in the case of men as well as women. Women of all castes first adopted the all-Indian bodice to be worn with a loincloth, and added an upper garment which makes the outfit look like a sari. The recent adoption of a North Indian outfit even by some Nambuiri women is a revolutionary development because it not only connotes different groups of Hindus but also Muslims. Young Nampūtiri men may wear a colourful lungi also worn by lower castes even outside Kerala. In hair care and styles some old customs are followed especially by orthodox Nampūtiris, but both men and women have mostly adopted all-Indian styles. Only men imitate Western hair styles.

The daily bath is to some degree losing its ritual character. Yet it plays an important part in the domestic rituals, and, as we have seen, there were still orthodox old people following traditional rules. Young people too follow a great number of rules. Some rules which are followed are given in sacred texts common to all parts of India, some of them in the special rules for the Nampūtiris.

The dress of the two sexes was always different, but up to the age of six or seven the main distinctive item was a different necklace. Nowadays, from a very early age boys and girls are often dressed in a markedly different way. For women the wearing of a colourful one-piece sari instead of a white upper and lower garment is also a clearly distinctive dress, as is the Western type of dress for some modern men.

The different stages in life were marked in dress, ornaments and bodycare. Ornaments and body adornment still reveal a lady's matrimonial status and widowhood. The sacred thread and dress still tell about the initiation and end of studentship. Some other distinctive features have disappeared. Even if boys still study the Vedas, their outfit does not reveal their stage of studentship. Childhood and adolescence have become longer and this is also shown in dress.

There is nowadays more possibility for self-expression than before, especially outside the village, and the old ideal of simplicity of dress and ornaments has been forgotten. Dress is used to emphasize beauty and wealth. Although women were in

some respects quicker than men to adopt modern Indian features in their attire, in the Westernization of dress the ladies are far slower than children and men, and there is a distinct ambiguity towards Western items. If they represent a category of dress items that is part of their Indian dress, they love a touch of Western luxury and modernity, but too much deviation from their own customs and style is not tolerated.