



Glory of Bharath » INDICA

Ochira Kali

Oachira is a small town in the district of Kollam in Kerala. The Ochira Kali is a martial arts festival held on the first two days of the Malayalam month of Mithunam to commemorate the historic battle between the Kayamkulam and the Ambalapuzha kingdoms in the medieval times. It is also a festival associated with the Ochira Parabrahma Temple. The 'padanilam' is a wetland close to the temple. Men dressed as warriors enter the waterlogged wetland and engage in a mock fight using sticks to commemorate the historic battle.



The mock battle is fought in a spirit of harmony and festivity. The battle decorum is for one side to advance for some time and then retreat to enable the other side to advance. The retreat and advance take place rhythmically to the beat of drums. Hundreds of people gather on the sides of the wetland to witness the event. Small groups too engage in their own mock fights. It is a festival in which people of all age groups participate. Children make the most of the opportunity to splash around in the knee deep water.

History

Oachirakali is one festival celebrated in Oachira Temple in the month of June every year. This is a unique festival in the sense that it marks the battle that was held 300 years ago between Kayankulam and the Venad kingdoms on the paddy fields of Oachira. The Ochira kali festival involves a mock fight among the two kalaripayattu groups with a display of martial arts, representing different regions, on the two fields, Padanilam, set up for this purpose. They stand in knee deep water, brandish swords and shields and splashing water on all sides.

The Festival

This is an annual festival celebrated at Ochchira, a village near Kayamkulam in Thiruvananthapuram district. This festival is celebrated in memory of a battle between the Rajas of Quilon (Kollam) and Kayamkulam. The fight is the final part of the festival of the Ochira Parabrahma temple here. The Dynasty of the king of Kayamkulam was spread over eight provinces. The battlefield is known as 'Ettukandam' or the eight fields. Ochira Kali is conducted on the first and second days of the Malayalam months Mithunam or Avany (June-July) annually during the monsoon season. For seven days beginning with the first, it is popularly believed that there will be incessant rain.



The participants fight each other in a mock battle standing in knee-deep water, brandishing mock swords and shields while splashing water and mud. On the first day, the fight is conducted from 8 am to 11 a.m. and on the second from 12 pm to 3 pm. Only men, usually from the Nair community could take part in it. The appearance of a kite hovering in the air summons the players to arms. Each player is dressed colourfully in

- [History](#)
- [Aims](#)
- [Concept](#)
- [Parenting](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Training Programmes](#)
- [Expansion](#)
- [Development](#)
- [Syllabus](#)
- [Bal Vikas Administration](#)
- [Past Students](#)
 - [June 2010](#)
 - [September](#)
- [Home](#)

[Activities from States](#)[At the Lotus Feet](#)[Gurus Corner](#)[Children's Corner](#)[From the Annals of the World History](#)[Special Page](#)[Glory of Bharath](#)

Old Editions

[» 2011](#)[» 2010](#)[» 2009](#)[» Home](#)

the native attire and armed with a sword and shield. The combatants do not fight in pairs but in sets. The parties advance towards each other, perform a number of movements forwards and backwards, with a single individual standing in front on each side. The movements are first slow, but as the fight progresses they become quicker and quicker. These resemble the movements of assault and retreat in regular warfare. The kite appears again and this time it is the signal for the tournament to stop. The same programme is repeated on the second day.

On the Day of Oachira kali / Play at Oachira

Before starting the Kali / Play the participants undergo 41 days vratam. The presiding deity Lord Shiva is taken out of the temple in a procession and the warriors who participate in the kali / play follow the procession to the field. The mock fight of the two groups start off and in the evening they stop their fight and pledge to return the next day. Again on the second day the fight starts and the winners are chosen by the evening. The prizes are distributed to the best warriors.

Cattle and Agricultural fair at Oachira in Kollam

There are two Karas on the east and west of the Oachira which form themselves into two groups under the leadership of a kalari Asaan. After this mock fight / Oachira kali there is a cattle and agricultural fair is held inside the Padanilam.

Ochira Parabrahma Temple

The Ochira Parabrahma temple is dedicated to universal consciousness. The uniqueness of the temple is that there are no idols. The temple is of the Parabrahma Murthy or the Omkara Murthy who is considered to be a supreme God who has no idol worship here. The Aal Tharas are prayed upon and Pradakshinams done around these Banyan tree foundations.