

Kathakali Costume

An Introduction

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The classical Indian dance drama Kathakali is steeped in tradition, including codified forms of music, movement, gesture, character, costume, and makeup. English language scholarship on Kathakali has so far focused primarily on its history, literature, music, and movement aspects. While costume and makeup are equally appreciated components of the spectacle, they are often documented minimally: most researchers list five or six categories of characters, divided and identified by color coding of makeup, but provide even less information on costume. The information available gives costumers little insight into the construction of or materials used in Kathakali costume. This poster / paper presents the results of research and a precise documentation of an authentic male and female Kathakali costume, including vocabulary, patterns, dimensions, materials, descriptions, and photographs. Supplemental information on Kathakali costume traditions comes from interviews with Kathakali teacher/scholar Kunju Vasudevan Namboodiripad of Kerala, India, and veteran Kathakali performer Bhasi Puligari conducted during a collaboration and residence at Butler University in the fall of 2011.

Introduction

Kathakali is a traditional Dance-drama from Kerala, the south western tip of India. It developed as a distinct art form in the mid 17th century, drawing influences from a variety of other performance traditions. All roles are traditionally played by men, but there are some contemporary troupes with or of women. The epic stories come from the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavata Purana. Characters are mostly superhuman archetypes: gods, demons, plus a few animals and humans. While not part of a religious rite per se, they can be performed in temple grounds as well as private and public areas, and there is implicit understanding that Kathakali, like its forerunners, glorifies the gods through dramatic representation, and reinforces moral codes. The performance integrates drumming, singing, cymbals, and dance marked by specific body stances, hand gestures, facial expressions, and eye movements. Costumes and makeup identify characters, bring focus to expressive areas of the body, and provide extravagant spectacle against a minimal set.

Mid century and recent scholarship provides a wealth of information on various aspects of Kathakali. Iyer (1955: 42-54) and Pandeya (1943: 109-124) provide the best details of makeup and costume, including Pandeya's history and symbology. Recent commentary on the complexity and subtlety of characters beyond codified makeup types is provided by Zarilli (2000: 55-7). Most sources identify makeup types and give at least a basic description of the facial appearance (as below). However, current literature is limited in clearly documenting costume details for reproduction. This paper presents documentation of specific authentic costume pieces worn by a strivesham and a paccha character to begin filling that gap.

Makeup

Characters in Kathakali are divided by emotional capacity and corresponding makeup types. They are divided first by a few broadly differentiated types (satvik = heroic, pious, and virtuous, rajasik = passionate, heroic but aggressive, and Tamasik =demonic, rude, evil). These broad character groups are then divided into 7 types which share colors and styles of makeup. Within each group there are variations for different characters and situations, but the primary pattern, color scheme, and headdress usually remains consistent. In practice there are also subtle adjustments of line weight and shape as the patterns are mapped onto the individual's facial features. Colors hold symbolic meaning, as do many of the features. Some sources report that once a performer is in makeup, he is no longer addressed by his own name.

Some elements most indicative of Kathakali makeup include:

Chutti or *cutti*, a rice paste mixed with limestone powder, is traditionally used for the white parts, giving them more dimension than the flat colored paints.

Chutti – also a stiff white curved paper framework for jawline, originally made by a patient layering of rice paste onto the performer's face, now available in pressed paper or molded plastic forms which can be affixed with spirit gum. The shapes vary according to codified character designs, but all serve to bring attention to the facial expressions of the performer, and help to frame and cast light onto the face. As

facial expression is a key component of a fine performance, the cutti is an important component of the makeup process. Pandeya assigns it symbolic value, with the gradient steps / ridges representative of the five rivers of India (122).

Chutti poove, white knobs, from mushroom to doorknob in size depending on character, affixed to nose tip and forehead for some characters, using rice paste (traditionally), or spirit gum and cotton (contemporary); those pictured here were made of carved Styrofoam, 1 ¼ " diameter and were very light weight. There is a slight hollow on the bottom edge to seat the tip of the nose.

Chunda poovu, crushed seeds, are put in the eyes to bring up a bloodshot red color which accents the green base.

Damshtram, dhumstras: fangs are held in the mouth and pushed forward to show when a character is revealing its fierce nature. Kathi (black) roles require them, as well as some other characters. The false canines are connected by a strip which sets at the upper gum line; while the teeth are flat cutouts, they are interestingly curved and resemble shapes found in artistic representations of beasts and demons.

Paccha "green"

The heroes, or good natured characters, are called paccha, after the green makeup that is the base color for their facial makeup. Refinement, heroism, and moral excellence are qualities of satvik characters. Their makeup includes a green base, red lips, wide black eyes, and a trefoil vaisnava (devotional mark on the forehead) surrounded by the white, bow shaped, terraced cutti that frames the face. Most paccha characters wear the kiritam headdress, a multiple layered crown with a large disc framing it and the head.

Payuppu "ripe"

Four specific divine characters wear this makeup, which has the same basic shapes as the Paccha, but with an orange base rather than green. The costumes are red and blue (rather than red and white), with similar ornaments and headdress as paccha characters.

Katti "knife"

Demonic characters who retain some virtues or nobility are in this category. Valor, love, and grace may be retained, but their aggressive and evil tendencies are stronger. Their makeup also has a green base but is broken by a stylized red patch (moustache) outlined in white which 'cuts' the face, running up high on the cheek bones, by the use of white, knob-like cutti flowers on the nose and between the eyebrows, and the wearing of fangs. Katti also wear the face framing cutti.

Tati "beard"

Tati have beards instead of the cutti frame on their faces. There are three subgroups:

Cuvanna tati, cokanna tati - Red -Savage, vicious, vile, power-crazed characters wear the wide full red beard. The base makeup is also red, with black and white contrasts emphasizing fiendish round eyes, enlarged black lips, white bristles from the upper lip to eyebrows, and extra large cutti on the nose and

forehead. The crown, coat, and costume are also larger in scale, and trimmed with more red fur. Cuvanna tadi are the most visually impressive in size and fearsomeness.

Karutta tati, karuppa tadi - Black bearded characters represent forest dwellers, hunters, and aboriginals. The characters are primitive schemers. The base color is black, with white bristles, bracketed eyes, flaming red lips, and a nose cutti flower. The bucket shaped headdress has a ring of peacock feathers rising from the top.

Vella tati, veluppa tadi - White bearded characters are a higher form of being than their other bearded counterparts. Hanuman, the Monkey King is one well known example: his makeup is stylized to represent the animal features, and his coat is made of white fur. The Vella headdresses have a wide flat brim under a bud like / ogee shaped upper crown and tassels.

Kari “black”

Kari are the most grotesque Kathakali characters, including vile ogresses (raksasis). The face is black with white patterns and fangs. The costumes, including grotesque breastplates, are black, and the head gear like that of the karutta with peacock feather trim.

Minukku “radiant” “Shining” “polished”

Minukku includes most humans (Brahmins, sages, princes, and women), including demonesses pretending to be women (but not the raksasis). These characters are gentle, poised, and of high moral quality. Their makeups are much more sedate. For Strivesham characters (females), the base color of the makeup is a warm pink/ gold complexion: rosy but not inhuman. The features are emphasized but not exaggerated to the point of distortion as in the gods’ and demons’ makeup categories. Lips are outlined in black, filled with red; eye liner is extended on both top and bottom lid, and brows are thickened and extended. In addition, stylized black curls of (painted) hair frame the upper half of the face, and white dot decorations sit above the brows. A bindi is also part of the makeup, and a dusting of mica is used to bring radiance to the face. Strivesham costumes are similar to pacca in shape, color, and ornament, but less extreme in size. Other minukku costumes are simple and subdued and more in keeping with worldly dress.

Theppu “special”

Characters **that** do not fit into the five regular groups are called Theppu. They include the snake, goat, swan, and other animal like or human clownish characters. Their makeups are specific to each character. Animal makeups are stylized to simulate the character’s features, and may include artificial beaks and wings.

Masked

There are a few masked characters as well. They fall into three categories: real, symbolic, and imagined. This may be a full face mask (one is of an old woman), or partial (the swan’s beak). Occasionally characters are masked to indicate a major transformation, such as from death to life.

Costumes

Kathakali characters’ costumes have the same basic silhouette and components. Most characters, both male and female, wear huge hemispherical layered skirts (usually white with border stripes), one or more layered jackets (most commonly red), and a series of ornate accessories including four items on each arm, bells on the lower legs, a carved breastplate and cascade of gold necklaces, between two and six lengths of pleated fabric at the neck (uttarayam), two or more waist ornaments of fabric, beads, and carved, decorated wood, and ornate contrasting side panels. All have some form of headdress – relatively simple for minukku, but extravagantly ornamented for gods and demons. There are variations in color, headdress, and some accessories for different characters and some types. The forms, colors, and accessories for each character are standard however, so each presentation of the character is visually recognizable. The similarity is clear to new audiences; it takes time and experience to learn the various subtle differences between characters. Pandeya provides a detailed argument for the development and symbolism of costume pieces.

Costume pieces and ornaments may be made to measure, but generally are by their design adjustable in fit: the costumes are cut amply to allow freedom of movement for any performer, and the ornaments tie the costumes in place on the body as well as fulfilling visual functions. Images of the ornaments are found in appendice C.

A. Undergarments & structure

Pants - pyjama [pattern, appendix D]

White cotton pants are loose fitting very light weight cotton with a high rise and a long drawstring casing. They are cut like most early trouser forms with the side on a lengthwise fold, angled center seams and rectangular inset/gusset. In addition to providing absorbency and modesty, the high waist protects the skin from chafing by the stiff petticoats, and their wide gusset allows freedom of movement in the wide, low stances that are common to Kathakali. The legs are tapered to about 12 inches at the

ankle, with a short inseam split, and are folded and wrapped snug to the ankle, held in place by small padded supports and the bells which are tied to the leg over the trouser.

Leg ornaments

Small crescent shaped pads, *tantappatippu* (shin pad), are worn by men and women to hold the pants snug against the leg at the ankle, to prevent the bells from sliding down onto the foot (female roles), and for decoration, as the feet are usually in view. These men's pads were of thick red wool, a blue cotton center stripe and tips, two strands of small silver beads flanking the blue, and black cotton twill tape backing/ties, stuffed with coconut husk fibers. The female set is red wool with black cotton tips and center instead of blue, similar silver beads, and natural twill ties.

Sets of brass bells tied to the shins which sound in concert with the performer's foot movements. The male version, *keccamani*, is oval, with deeper sounding bells, set below the knee and tied above and below the fullest part of the calf muscle. This set has a dozen brass bells set in curved rows of 3/4/5 bells and anchored to the upper egg shaped leather piece by metal split brads. The sharp tines are covered with a layer of padding and then a cover is whipped onto the back. Two sturdy cotton ties are threaded through the leather top and out the sides of the backing. The female version, *chilanka*, has more (34), lighter and higher sounding bells worn at the ankle. These are set onto straight leather bands, also with split metal brads which are covered on the inside with a padded cloth that also encases the continuous cotton tie.

Support structure

Chanthi (buttock): a pair of hip pads supports the width of the skirts like a pannier. The pads are made of two crescent shaped pieces of heavy cotton bagged out on the outer curve, and the inner curve sewn to a 2" wide twill which sits flat to the body. The points of the two crescents meet center back and leave a little space center front. They sit low on the hips in order to leave room for the volume of petticoats, underskirt and skirts which are wrapped to the body.

Ullunhari (under pleats), Ulluval: A series of 2 - 4 dozen panels of stiff cloth (val) are tied on as petticoats: originally made of coconut fibers, any strongly stiffened fabrics could be used. Bhasi's costume included dozens of plasticized tarps, in two widths. Two assistants hold a width of sturdy cotton taut while the tarps are folded over it, overlapping; then the assistant pushes/compresses / gathers the cloths together against the performer's body, working the fabrics around the figure into a hemisphere. This step is repeated until the desired fullness is reached, and may include a short then a longer layer of petticoats. The strip of cotton cloth is used to tie the petticoats to the body, and to wrap/smooth the layers in place. It is used also to tie on the underskirt, skirt, and side panels. This piece was about 6" wide, but creased narrower from use, and at least 8 yards long. [At the performer's request, we made casings in the tarps to simplify the gathering process (as the hem lengths are set, and the panels will not shift out of alignment); I am not sure it was helpful, as the stiffness of the fabric was not conducive to gathering at a casing, so more layers around were required to compensate for lack of overlap.]

Under jacket

Atikuppayam: a T-shaped cotton under jacket was worn with the female Kathakali costume. The body and sleeves are cut straight, with overlapping back closure cut in a straight line angling from shoulder/neck line to cross waist. Small underarm gussets provide mobility; simply bound/turned neckline and back edge, simple hems finish the raw edges. The cut is the same as for the outer jackets, male and female. Traditionally all characters are played by men, so no darting is needed to accommodate the female form. The majority of the jacket is covered by ornaments (tied on, not sewn); the back is covered by the wig and/or veil, and the performers almost invariably face forward, so the gap at the back neck is not significant. [Pattern included Appendix D]

Underskirt

Straight length of white cotton, worn on cross grain, banded at hem/selvedge with colored stripe (this one is golden yellow, 1.5 inches wide), about 40" wide and 5 meters long.

This piece was washed and primitive pleated perpendicular to the selvedge by twisting and tying with a string till dry. The center is held and tucked in at the front waist at a length to cover the petticoat, then the back lower corners are drawn up around the skirt across the back, overlapping and tucking in at the side waists. The effect is like the edge of a palm leaf, with the hem band curving from the front around the hem and up the back, overlapping to cover the petticoat. Extra fabric length is tucked into the cotton band or tied by a string. The cotton band used to tie on the stiff petticoats is used to anchor the underskirt then tied off at center front before continuing to dress. It will secure the skirt to the body also.

B. Outer garments**Jacket - Kuppayam**

The traditional color for most Kathakali jackets is red, though there are exceptions for Krishna (usually blue with a yellow skirt) and some bearded characters (such as Hanuman's furry coat) or special characters. This female jacket is red and gold cotton metallic. The cut of this jacket follows that of the under jacket described above (see pattern in appendix) close fitted round neckline, straight sides, slightly tapered sleeves, back tie closure. Color holds symbolic meaning; its but in this case its use is for its bright appearance in the traditional performance, which until the 1960s was lit by a single devotional lamp.

Skirt - uttukettu (male), sari or lehengra (female)

Traditionally white, with several red stripes at the hem; the red are sometimes outlined in black to emphasize their contrast; the decorative section is about eight inches wide. A single long length of about a meter or slightly wider and about 7 meters long is set in one inch accordion pleats while wet and tied to dry. It is tied on as the underskirt, by a simple overlap in back; the skirt gap may be held closed by a safety pin near the hem. The assistants who help dress the performer must hold the cotton

wrap snug to the body while adjusting the lengths of each layer, and will wrap the remaining meters of cloth several times around the body to ensure a smooth and secure arrangement.

Apron – Sthree Uthareeyam

Sthree (lady) Uthariam : The female costume also included a shorter, red – bordered, accordion - pleated cloth, which is pinched at the top and tucked into the front waist, then the bottom edge is spread and tucked to each side, creating a semicircular line of red about a foot in radius at the center front, and rising to the waistline at the side.

C. Ornaments

Neck/Chest

Kuralaram, Kotalaram- Male characters' chest plate: carved, jeweled, and pom-pommed. This impressive decoration is carved in ten major sections, plus the two connecting beads and seventeen tassel tops. Each piece is covered in red wool, gilded, and set with green and red gems and a series of different colored tassels/pompoms (green, maroon, blue, orange, and pink). Worn by most male characters, it is tied around the neck over the jacket.

The female breast plate can have demure or exaggerated breast shape and size, depending on the character. Most female characters use a small/normal sized breast plate, *mulakuralaram*, but Kari (black face) ogresses wear extremely pointed and exaggerated black breasts, *mulamukku*. This piece is carved of wood: one piece for the breasts, five more sections for the lower shield, all covered in red wool, and decorated at the neck, between the breasts, and below with gilt, gems, beads, and thick wool tassels. Holes drilled at the neck edge provide purchase for a cotton tape which ties around the neck. The lower half is similar to the Kuralaram breastplate of the male costume.

Mulakkacha (breast cloth), or *gatrika* (scarf), red bordered white cotton, about 4'x2', hand pleated lengthwise and set around the neck and over the breastplate, covering the breasts (which may be revealed in the story). Can also be a red cloth with black border.

Kazhutharam, gold strand beaded Necklaces, are set by the dozens onto a lightly padded neckband in cascading U shapes. The outside strand is of larger diameter beads, and another strand of larger faceted beads sets a third of the way in from each end. Each of these larger bead strands has a red wool pompom at its base. The full length is 18" including the neck band of horizontal beads. They can be used by the actors to gesture – as when the demoness Poothana tries to cajole baby Vishnu.

Kazhuthu nada – A collar for male and female costumes, w/silver beading ½-5/8" wide, holds the breastplate down and muktavali up: it is threaded under strands of bigger bead/pompon strand at outside edge of kazhutharam.

Uthareeya, Uttarya (2-5) are scarves of primitive pleated white cotton organdy, tied over a form to pleat into ball; the banded ends are released from pleats to fan out into a “flower”. The colored ends usually are similar to those on the skirt: these include red and gold bands edged in black. The first is tied in to the sleeves with the upper arm ornaments while the arms are outstretched. The remaining ones are sometimes looped through the upper back ties of the jacket to control their length as well as to anchor them behind the neck. In order to reach to the waist/hip, they are about a meter wide (pleated down to ~3”) and about two meters long. The fullness is controlled by small ties (string or thread) set at intervals along the cloth. They are sometimes used to gesture, and while hanging help accentuate the subtle body movements as they hang in contrast to the shifting lines of the body.

Kotta Uthareeyam, a contrasting colored uttiarya, has mirrors in the decorative ends. The color of the cotton generally matches the jacket and pattu val, swaths of fabric which hang at the sides of the skirt (red being the most common). The ends of the cloth are attached to solid cup shaped supports, set in with 3” round mirrors, and trimmed with braid, horizontal pleats, and an edging of wool yarn fringe in several colors (pink, blue, gold, green). They are used practically by the actors offstage to check their makeup, but also are interesting in that they throw reflected light around the theatre, enhancing the magical atmosphere. Both male and female characters wear uttariyam.

Marumala, a waist length floral garland, is worn over the uttariyam by some characters; Vana mala is an enormous garland of flowers worn by Krisna (Iyer, 46).

Waist/hips

Pattu Val (silk fabric), or *choppu val* (red fabric) - Side panels hang from waist to hem on sides of skirt. They often match the colors of the skirt stripes, enhancing the color theme of the costume, but are more ornate than the other fabrics. These red ones are woven with gold vertical stripes, banded with brocaded ribbons, edged with yellow, and hemmed with multi colored yarn fringe. About 1 meter in length, ¼ meter wide (these were 9” x 39”). They are tied in with the skirt wrappings to meet the hem of the skirt, and any remaining fabric is folded into the waist and secured with the cotton wrappings.

Katibandha: a two-part waist ornament for male and female characters which includes the *Pati arayan* (next entry) and the *Ottanakku*, a stiffened red wool Apron panel with silver crescents, beads, woolen fringe, and pompom (*kalanchi*) decorations is tied to the waist directly over the skirt at the center front. Visually it carries the complex color and texture down the figure. This one measures 18” long, about 6 inches wide, and is backed with cotton and bordered with black bias, neither of which is visible from the front, but which provide structural support.

Patiarananam – carved Beaded belt w/ gilt foil, red wool, gems. This is made of seven graded sections in the main belt, each carved, covered in wool, and decorated on the raised surfaces with gilt foil and plastic gems. The end sections have three holes in the lower rim through which strings of hand carved and gilded beads are suspended. Our woman’s belt had only two strings of beads. While the third string is missing, it presumably existed at one point and will be replaced when this set is next refurbished. Red

cotton cords hold the pieces together and fasten the belt to the performer's waist over the mutti and side panels.

Arms and hands

Men's and women's arm treatments are similar in construction, function, and aesthetic. Of the two examples we had, the female character's accessories were slightly smaller in scale than the men's, and/or had fewer beads.

Tolputtu Epaulette like upper arm ornaments, are carved of wood tied around the bicep at the hinge point of the arm and around the chest. It is tied on while the arm is raised to secure the sleeve to the body. Carved in 6 pieces, the upper part has a shield or rosette shaped decoration on a base shaped like a section of a dome; the rectangular area below is made of five shaped rectangles, similarly adorned with red wool or flocking, gold gilt foil, stamped brass rosettes, silver toned beads, and gemstones. This set measured 3 ½" wide, 5" tall, 1 ¼ "deep with red cotton cords.

Paruttikkaimani are tied immediately below the tolputtu at the bicep. They consist of three strands of gilt foil covered carved wooden beads: a center row of seven carved baubles (each 1" diameter x 1 ½ "length) is flanked by two relatively plain globe strands. The center row of baubles is ogee shaped on the protruding side and slightly flattened on the bottom/arm edge. Red cotton cord ties secure it to the arm and are tucked into the tolputtu.

Kalases - Each bangle is carved as a single 3" wooden section of a cone but indicating a row of four bangles, covered in gilt foil, and separated by (3) rows of small silver beads. The jacket sleeve is folded to pleat on the outside of the forearm, and the bangle slides over the jacket sleeve to secure it.

Kastakatakam – meaning "hand" ornament, are tied immediately below the bangles to secure sleeve at wrist and keep bangles in place. The ornament is carved in a curved shape to follow the wrist, about 3" wide and 2" tall at the center circle. It is decorated with gilt foil, red wool felt, red and green plastic jewels and green tassels. Four wool pompoms or tassels anchor the corners. Red cotton cord is used to tie them on. In addition to securing the sleeve and Kalases, the ornaments accent the arm and hand movements of the performer.

Nakham or *vellinakham* - Fingernails, long polished silver toned tips, are added to the left hand after completing the other preparations. They serve to lengthen the fingers and draw attention to the mudras (hand gestures) which are a critical part of the storytelling.

Rings – Personal jewelry of the performer may be worn.

A small amount of bright pink or gold powder can be rubbed between the palms before entering the stage to bring attention to the hands. Henna is also used for this, and to highlight the edges of the feet.

Headdress

Female:

Strivesham (female) characters are veiled rather than in ornate headdress. Their head coverings include:

Chutti Thuni headband, 8 ½ " x ½ " black cotton and red wool over cotton tape with rows of silver toned beads

Kontakettu, a cap, has a black cotton base with an oval top and straight cut/hemmed band gathered into crown. The left side has a stuffed cylinder of projecting up and to the side; it is decorated with a thick fringe of multicolored yarns, and used to support the veil. The cap splits center back, and ties to fit the individual actor's head. It simulates an old fashioned hairstyle and is worn by strivesham characters.

Katila are eggplant shaped earrings worn by female characters. 1 ¾" x 3 ¾", they tie onto the head above and below the jawline; they are decorated with gilt, plastic gems, and silver beads.

Veils are finished lengths of rectangular yardage or scarves, about 1 meter by 2 meters long, enough to fall past the waist on both sides and be used as an expressive tool by the performer of female roles. A gilded fabric such as tissue lame is preferred. Sometimes a length of cotton twill or bias is sewn to the center edge of the veil to help anchor it on the forehead. Two examples here include a pink and gold floral brocade, and a blue/gold changeable cotton lame with contrasting borders. Both added brilliance to the stage picture, but we found the blue one offset the golden pink of the minnuku makeup better, creating a dark complimentary colored frame and bringing focus to the expressive facial movements.

Kurunira, a decorative black cotton head band, covered by narrow silver cylinders and dangling diamond shaped spangles, is put on over the base cap to blend the cap and makeup lines, as well as to bring sparkle to the facial area: the eyebrows of Kathakali performers are a particularly expressive tool, so bringing focus to this area of the face is important. A second narrow band of silver bead strands holds both the veil and the ties from the earrings (Katila) in place over the hat base (kontakettu).

Mookkuthi A small nose ring provides the final touch for female Kathakali characters.

Male:

After the makeup is complete and the costume in place, the performer begins the process of dressing the head. First a length of black cotton is folded on the bias and used to wrap the head from hairline to nape, providing a means to absorb sweat and begin padding to make the headdress more comfortable and stable. *Netti (forehead) nada* (any piece of long cloth a few inches wide).

The paper cutti are tied to the face over the head wrap and may be secured to the face with spirit gum or rice paste. Touch up makeup is applied around the cutti and neck.

Chevippuvu are ear ornaments worn by all male characters. Ornately carved concave wooden discs are set above the ears and tied to the head with cotton cord. Another black cotton cloth, *netti nada*, is wrapped over the ties to secure them and to pad the head for the crown.

A shaped headband, *chuttittuni*, of red wool backed with cotton and decorated with rice paste is tied on to bridge the space between makeup and headdress. Some characters will add *cutti poove* to this headband, or a *naman bindi* decoration.

Headdress: There is a variety of large ornamental headdress for characters in Kathakali – most of whom are supernatural. The types and shapes are part of a codified system of identification, and all of them bring focus to the performer's face. They are carved of one or more pieces of wood and ornately decorated with gilt foil, gemstones, and metallic beads. Originally pith or rice paste was used to build up white detail, and beetle wings provided a shimmering green texture in some areas (both now are replaced with plastic materials). Because of the complexity of the headdress, each is stored in a heavy bag. Before unwrapping it, the dresser makes a brief devotion. Also, before putting on their headdress, each performer says a prayer of thanks and reverence to his teachers.

The *Kesabharan Kiritam*, pictured here (Appendix C) and recognizable by the circular back portion, is worn by most *paccha* characters and some others.

Chamaram - This wig is roughly 40" long, 8- 10 wide at the top, where multiple strands of jute are half hitched to a cotton tape then braided and stitched to a tie. In the female costume, the wig was tied around the head and the padded stump that supports the veil on the left. On the *paccha* costume, the wig strings were tied through pierced areas of the side decorations on the *Kiritam* crown, but could have been tied directly to the head instead. The wig rustles as the character moves (not usually heard over drumming), following the movement of the body, and can be thrown wildly about as in the transformation of a demoness from her beautiful disguise to her natural fanged state or in the death of a character. The wig does cover the overlapping back closures of the jacket, though the performer would not likely turn his back to the audience.

Thalekkettuval Decorative headband : At the edge of the headdress, 3 rows of silver beads on ½-5/8th inch black cotton band fills the gap and keeps the crown from rocking.

Thoda: Large round convex ear ornaments are tied to side projections on the headdress at about temple height. As with the other accessories, ornaments, and headdress, they are carved of wood, covered in red wool and gilt foil, and decorated with silver beads and red and green gemstones. Cotton cords and a stabilizing rod are used to secure them in place.

In all, the performer and his assistants will have more than 60 ties to fasten during the dressing process.

Preparation process

Devotional practices are integral to preparation and performance. In the dressing room, the performer lights a lamp, first the east facing wick, then the westward wick. He then makes prayers to the deities

who are represented by the lamp flame (particularly Vishnu and Ganesh). He will also make devotions at specific times during dressing, and to his teachers before donning the headdress. Flame is carried from the Dressing room lamp to light the stage lamp; originally the only light source, now more often this gesture is symbolic as other lights are available.

A single room, *aniyara*, serves a dressing, makeup, and greenroom for the performers. Costumes are stacked or hung, and ornaments and headdress suspended from a rope or beam along one side of the room. Bronze oil lamps provide lighting and soot used in mixing makeup. Palm-leaf mats are spread on the floor for the performers.

The performer begins with the basic application of makeup. Traditionally, he would then lie down to rest or meditate while the makeup artist applied the *chutti*, a process which could take up to several hours to complete. Nowadays, with the use of paper and plastic *chutti*, the time is much less. When the interior of the face is complete, the performer will be dressed in the body parts of the costume. Next any *chutti poove* are applied, and the makeup touched up around the *chutti*. Then the items of headdress are arranged and tied in place and final touches put on the makeup. Fingernails and a little glitter on the face (ladies) and some pink/red powder on the palms of the hands complete the visual preparations. Before leaving the dressing room, the performer repeats devotional rituals, getting permission from the makeup artist (who has the status of Lord Brahma, god of Creation), and saying a short prayer.

Production

Kathakali has enjoyed increasing interest worldwide, and seen rise to many schools. Makeup and costume crafts are taught in the national Kathakali training center, Kerala Kalamandalam, and other schools, but the traditional carving skills were passed on through artisan families. Makers' marks are seen carved into the inside faces of the different pieces. Currently there is only one family left making wooden based ornaments in Kerala.

Given the time consuming nature of hand carving ornamental objects, it is not surprising that costume ornaments are recycled. The wooden bases are durable, so when the gilt foil wears away the gold color or tears, when wool fades, gems fall off, strings break, or the *chutti* decorations crack, the items can be stripped down and refurbished. Evidence of these types of practice is available on existing pieces. For example, the *Kiritam* headdress *Bhasi* brought from Kerala still had its original iridescent beetle wings and metal beads as part of the circular decoration (like a nimbus), but the crown (head portion) had plastic strips substituted for the wings, plastic gems for glass, and silver colored plastic beads instead of metal ones. The women's ornaments showed definite wear and the need to replace the gilt foil on the intricately carved beads. On the belt, one of the three strings of beads was missing (though holes remain to attach a set), and the remaining strings were not symmetrically balanced, indicating that some extra beads had been used to replace lost or broken ones (or, that an inexperienced carver had made them – perhaps both).

Introduction of new materials is not surprising either. Economics certainly plays a part in the formation of cultural artifacts. Originally glass gemstones, beetle wings, silver or silver toned metal beads, wool fabrics, and a rice / lime paste or pith were used in the construction of ornaments. Since the 20th century however, factors of cost, ease, and durability have led plastics to replace glass, wings, metal, and rice paste/pith; polyester has replaced wool for tassels and backing, and fiberglass castings are replacing carved wood.

Ownership of costumes and ornaments is varied. Some performers own their own costumes, and bring them when hired to perform. Schools and theatres may own costumes for their own performance needs when they are sufficiently established to have the financial resources or staff to provide them. Craft artisans will make ornaments to order, and may have a small stock of items for sale or rent. As of 2011, rental costs are about \$60-70 USD per day per costume. Additionally, some crafts persons have turned to making ornaments from non-traditional materials. While this practice may accelerate the loss of traditional skills, it also allows some Kathakali to expand its reach around the world because investment in costume pieces is much less expensive than the traditional hand crafted ornaments.

Materials for makeup, storage, tools have also seen modernization: Precious material such as Lapis Lazuli, turquoise, gold, & silver have been replaced by synthetic equivalents. Vegetable +/or mineral powders ground from Indigo, chrome, zinc, lime, rice paste, and mica, are still used, but also available in synthetic forms as well. Soot used to make black makeup is still collected on tiles placed next to an oil lamp in greenroom, or is available as purchased charcoal powder. Coconut oil remains a staple for mixing powdered colors; makeup is still applied with the spine of coconut leaf. The time consuming art of chutti applications are considerably shortened by the use of paper or plastic shaped pieces that can be tied to the head with string and affixed to the face with either a base of chutti paste or with spirit gum adhesive (or medical adhesive such as duo). Styrofoam for chutti poove instead of pith/lime paste constructions has also simplified the makeup process.

Within the codified structures of makeup and costume, one wonders how much personal flexibility/input actor/artists have in personalizing their performance. Several authors refer to individual variations in makeup, and there must be some as faces vary and the anchor points for facial designs will fluctuate to fit each face if makeup is to enhance and fortify facial expressions. However, variations would be subtle – hardly recognizable to westerners - as the colors and divisions of faces as well as size and shape of headdress and costume are codified into specific roles and types. Symbolism of color, exaggeration of features/expressions, and decorations are prescribed for particular stories, characters, and situations. Bowers (1950) and Singha (1967) suggest variations based on schools or training methods, membership in a particular company, and personal preference, but do not specify what differences might exist.

Costume is still primarily made of the same fabrics – cotton lengths of fabric for skirts, jackets, pants, and undershirts. The availability of machine made, synthetic, and less costly materials is consistent with their usefulness, particularly as (despite the revival of interest in Kathakali over the last half century) theatres are struggling to maintain economic viability. The petticoat pieces however are no longer only

of palm fiber, but may be synthetic stiffened fabric such as plasticized tarpaulin. Veils for strivesham characters are often woven with gold: now, metal bouillon is frequently replaced with Mylar, Lurex or other synthetic metallics. These newer textiles are much cheaper than real bullion, do not oxidize, and are more fluid in draping than their metal infused counterparts.

The most significant change in costuming now is in the production of ornaments. Dhananjayan (2004) cites past use of golden bees wings, and metal epaulettes. While it is highly unlikely that headdresses would be entirely covered in the real gold, silver, and gemstones that are fundamental to its decoration, the use of materials has changed. Gold foil is replaced by gilt, silver beads by cheaper metals then by toned plastic, real iridescent beetle wings by plastic tubing, glass gems by plastic jewels, and white pith by extruded plastic. The greatest change, however, is in the transition from intricate carved wooden pieces to molded fiberglass or other materials that are faster, easier, and cheaper to manufacture. This practice, while making ornaments available to tourists, foreign theatre groups, and others interested in Kathakali, has severely impacted the artisan base for traditional manufacture. Even though wooden pieces last for generations, and can be refurbished repeatedly, they are losing ground to inexpensive reproductions.

Appendix A: Diagram of Kathakali Costume with Labels



KATHAKALI
Simplified Paccu diagram wym
/2012

Appendix B: Select Glossary of Costume Related Terms

NB: spelling of terms varies across authors; this glossary uses Menon as a standard. There are variations in the body of the document as it includes a compilation of sources with differing transliteration. Phonetic reading will help alleviate any confusion.

General Kathakali terms:

Aharybyabhinayam: makeup and costume used in dramatic performances

Angam: one of the six parts of the body used in dramatic expression. The six angas are: the head, the chest, the sides, the waist, the feet

Angikabhinayam: dramatic expression with body postures and hand gestures

Aniyara: green room/makeup room

Arangu: stage, performance, and/or audience watching dance-drama

Ashan (Asan): guru, master in any of the arts/sciences, an honorific title

Attam: performance of kathakali

Attakaran: a kathakali actor

Bhavam: emotional condition of the character portrayed; the emotional state as experienced and projected by the actor

Bheeru: a comic character of a defeated soldier

Chatangu: established practice observed by actors

Chuttikkaran: makeup artist who applies chutti to actor's face

Itattaram: actor of secondary roles, also Randam Taram

Kaimudra: 24 basic hand gestures

Kali: dramatic performance

Kali Vizhakku: heavy bronze lamp, 4' high, with coconut oil, lights stage

Kaliyogama: kathakali company

Karutta Tadi: Black beard. A makeup type with black predominating. Used for characters representing the aboriginal forest-dweller. The makeup has a semicircular black beard.

Katti: character, makeup type where egoism predominate

Kuttittaram: role performed by a minor actor

Nara rasa: the nine sentiments

Pettikkaram: valet/stage hand

Strivesham (strivasem): makeup/ female types

Tadi: bearded characters, three varieties (red, white, black)

Teccha vesham: makeup class having a chutti (white border along the jawline) for such types as paccha, katti, pazhuppu, etc.

Vesham: specific makeup role, personality of character

Shanku: (conch) blown to signal beginning of prologue and to indicate presence of a divine being

Tirashshila: 2.7m x 1.8m rectangular cloth/curtain

Kathakali Costume:

Chamaram: false hair worn by actors, including male characters

Chevippuvu: ear ornaments worn just above ear by all female characters

Chilanka: ankle bells worn by strivesham characters (female)

Chiraku: the wings of bird characters such as Jatayu, Hamsa, etc...

Choppu tuni (Kuttiyatam): red silk tape with black borders, about 90cm long and 4 cm wide, tied on the forehead-a small but important part of the costume: tying it is a ritual signifying that the chakiar has transformed himself into the role he is portraying.

Choppu val: strip of red cloth or silk generally worn by male characters on either side of ututtukettu (bulging skirt worn by most characters)

Chuttittuni: headband which frames makeup and supports headgear

Hanuman muti: headgear worn by Hanuman in Kutiyattam performances

Hastakatakam: ornaments worn below vala by all male characters

Kaccha: a piece of cloth 4.50 m. long and 20 cm. wide wound tightly round the waist of the dancer when doing physical exercises in the kalari

Kalanchi: ornamental pom or tassel, attached to kuralaram (chest plate ornament) or ottanakku

Karimuti: the ornate bell-shaped headdress of karutta tadi and kari

Katila: earrings worn by female characters

Kazhuttaram: gilt necklace, beads and poms, covers lower neck and upper chest

Kecchamani: bells on leather pads worn on the legs of male characters

Keshabaram: headdress (with nimbus is kiritam), worn by paccha and katti

Kiritam: short for Keshabaram kiritam

Kokku: birdbeak, used in makeup of Jataya, Hansa, etc...

Kontakettu: side bit for head/hairstyle, strivesham, old-fashioned style, covered by veil

Koppu (meykoppu): costume and ornaments

Kundalam: ear ornaments, large, worn with kiritam (nimbus headdress)

Kuppayam: jackets, red for paccha and katti, hairy and white for vellatadi, black for Krishna and karotta tadi

Kuralaram: massive breast ornament worn by male characters

Kurunira: a silver ornament worn by female characters on the forehead along the hair-line.

Kuttichamaram: the head gear of the chuvanna tadi.

Kutuma: false hair worn on the head by Vidushaka.

Makutam: the head gear for the characters like Shurppanakha, Hanuman, etc...

Kathakali Makeup

Chuvannatadi: red bearded makeup type, demonic or villainous character

Chuntappuvu: chunta seed put in eye to redden

Chutti: white border of rice and lime paste on shaped paper which frames faces of paccha and katti characters

Chuttikkaran: makeup artist who applies chutti to actor's face

Chuttiuvu: a white knob of pith worn on the nose and the forehead of katti and tadi characters

Damshtram: fangs

Gulika: white knob on nose (forehead) katti and tadi characters

Kannu: eye, the actor's ability to express different emotions with eyes

Karappu nar: false hair used in makeup

Kari: black makeup

Karutta Tadi: Black beard. A makeup type with black predominating. Used for characters representing the aboriginal forest-dweller. The makeup has a semicircular black beard.

Katti: character, makeup type where egoism predominate

Manayola: yellow makeup pigment

Minukku: makeup type in which the face is painted a creamy yellow. Used in the makeup of characters like sages, messengers, women etc...

Mukham: face, actor's ability to express emotion by facial expression

Neelam: indigo blue pigment used in makeup

Netumkatti: makeup for rakshasas, similar to katti with long moustache

Ninam: the gory figure of a rakshasi (kari) after she has been punished by the hero for her aggression; artificial blood is made by treating water with a mixture of turmeric and lime. Sometimes appears in Narakurvadam and in Kutiyattam play Shurppanakhankam.

Paccha: makeup type in which the face is painted green within the white ridge known as the chutti. Used for the noble, virtuous and heroic characters.

Pazhuppu (pulappu): female/sage/human makeup, rosy base

Shyamam (Ku): green pigment

Strivesham (strivasem): makeup/ female types

Tadi: bearded characters, three varieties (red, white, black)

Teccha vesham: makeup class having a chutti (white border along the jawline) for such types as paccha, katti, pazhuppu, etc.

Vellattadi: white beard, makeup type which includes Hanuman

Vesham: specific makeup role, personality of character

Appendix C: Photographs –Costume Details

All photographic images taken by Wendy Meaden

Bell Stays

Tantappatippu

Description:

- Male and female roles
- Red wool, black cotton backing/ties, batting, blue sateen, silver toned bead strings
- 8" crescent, 4½" inside crescent, 3¼" circumference at center



- Red wool, black cotton faille trim, silver toned plastic bead string, black cotton end caps, heavy cotton/jute tapes



Knee Bells

Kecchamani

Description:

Male characters

- leather, cotton backing, batting, whip stitched, brass bells on metal findings
- 11 bells per piece
- 4 thick cotton tapes to tie above and below knee
- 5" x 5 ½" pads



Women's Ankle Bells

Chilanka

Description:

- 3"x6" leather rectangle, corners trimmed
- 34½" small round brass bells, diagonal grid spacing, on metal ring findings
- Flat rolled black cotton (12 layers) on back over brads, whip stitched to leather at top and bottom edges, black cotton tape (rolled selvedge) to fasten along center: one inside, one on front



Hip Pads

Chanthi

Description:

- Tan cotton drill, 2" cotton twill tape, coconut husk stuffing
- Outside crescent 22", inside crescent 12", pad width 6", depth 3"
- Two padded crescents machine stitched to twill waist band/ties, touching center front
- Whip stitched closure on outer edge of crescent

Hips

22"

cotton



Petticoats

Ullunhari or Uluval

Description:

- previously made of many layers fabric
- measure ~38"x51"
- about 3 dozen pieces plasticized tarp



Skirt

Ututtukettu

Description:

- 7 meters cotton, 1 meter +wide
- Bold border stripes on selvedge
- Worn on cross

Jackets

Atikkuppayam (under jacket) Kappayam (jacket)

Description:

- T shaped tunic
- Tapered sleeve, square gusset
- Back lapped closure
- Lightweight Cotton lame

Men's Breastplate

Kuralaram

Description:

- Ten carved wood pieces
- Neck bound with stitched cotton tape
- 17 wool tassels stitched together
- Wood is covered in red felt, gilt foil and red and green plastic jewels



Women's breastplate

Mulakkuralaram

Description:

-natural looking breasts

-red wool felt

Decorated with gilt foil, wool
multicolored tassels, green and red
plastic jewels with gilt underneath

-15 wool tassels with gilt covered
carved wood toppers that are sewn
together

-Ties to body with red cotton cord and
cotton twill

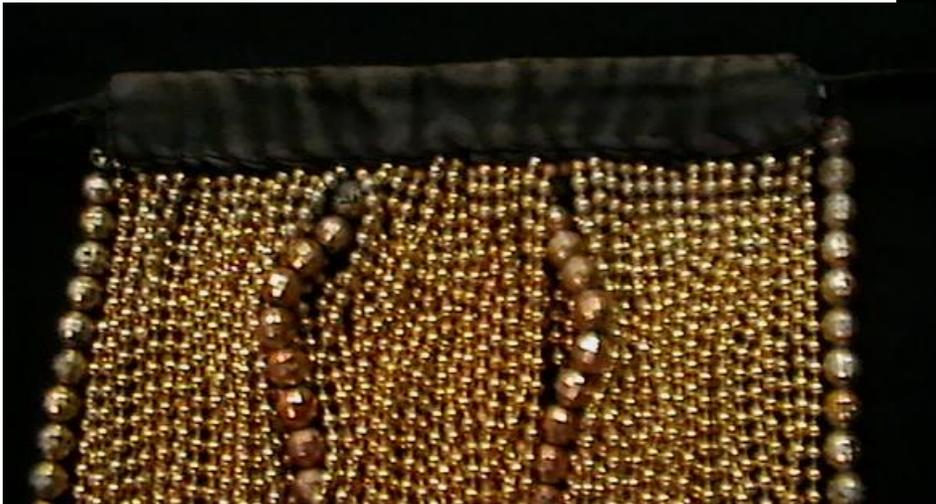
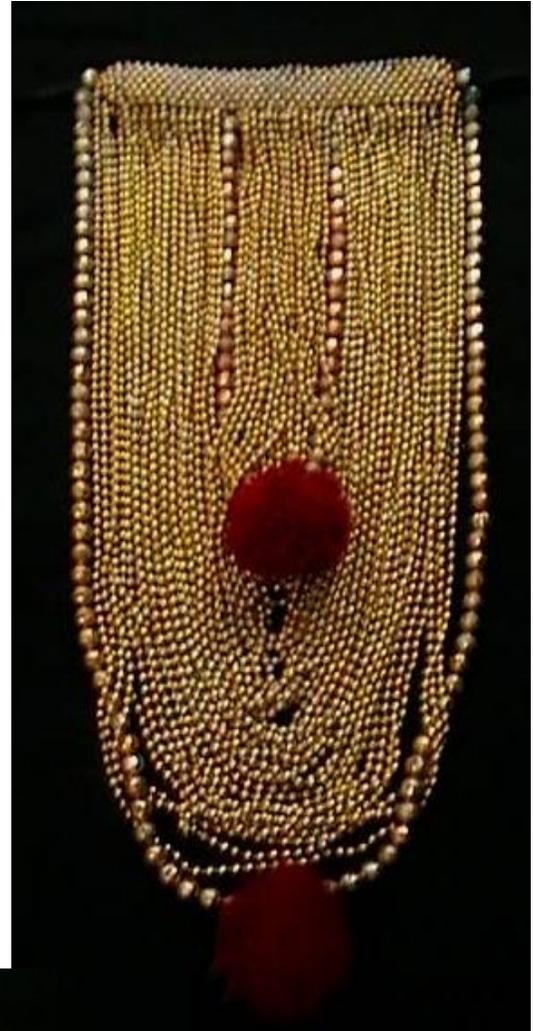


Men's Necklace

Kazhuttaram

Description:

- 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long
- neckpiece of 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ " x $\frac{5}{8}$ "
- plastic and metal gold toned beads, $\frac{1}{4}$ " round and $\frac{1}{2}$ " faceted
- two red wool pompoms
- mounted on heavy cotton fabric
- ties around neck at the back



Women's Necklace

Kazhuttaram

Description:

- 9"x18"
- many strings of gold colored plastic beads
- two red wool pompoms
- black polyester backing with polyester ties on neck band



Men's or Women's choker

Kazhuthu nada

Description:

- black cotton and red wool over cotton tape
- visible part is 13 5/8 x 3/4" wide
- decorated over 8 1/2 x 1/2" with Silver toned beads
- worn over kazhuttartam to keep in place



Neck Streamers/scarves

Uttariya

Description:

- A. Red cotton, 36"x66" tied at quarter lengths with white cotton string; bead or stuffing inset above dome with mirror inset (Kotta Uthareeyam)
- B. White cotton, 36"x78", tied at center and third marks; striped area at edge tied off with folded/pleated self ruffles and stuffed full at stripes plus smell ball above.



Side Streamers

Pattu Val

Description:

- Worn over Men's Kathakali Skirt
- Red panne w/ gold pinstripe (5/8" interval); gold brocaded ribbon trims, 1 1/2" wool yarn fringe, 1/2" straight grain cotton saffron binding, red cotton backing. Overall measurement 9x39"
- Red ones called Choppu val (red fabric)

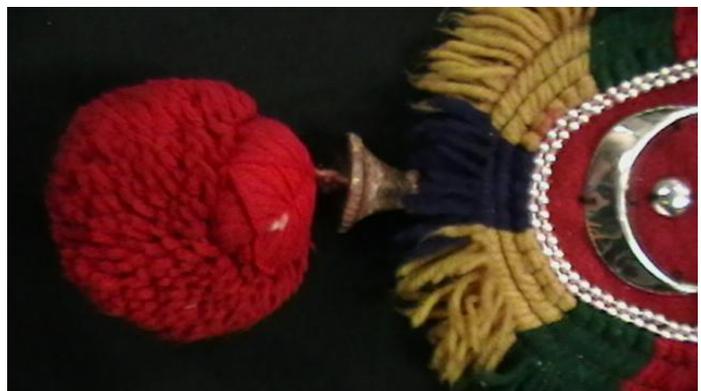


Apron

Ottanakku

Description:

- red wool tassel with wooden bell shaped topper decorated in gilt foil
- chrome decoration with silver tone beads
- red cotton cord to tie around waist
- 14 3/8" along center
- Full is 15 1/2" (18 inches total)
- 5 3/8" width



Man's Belt

Patiarannam

Description:

-decorated with gilt foil, plastic jewels and red wool felt

-plastic jewels have gilt under them

-7 carved tapered belt pieces

-1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide @ center, 1" @ ends,

- 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ " long

-The three belt lengths are:

21 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

26"

29 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

-2 strings faceted beads:

$\frac{1}{2}$ " - $\frac{7}{8}$ " diameter

Lower string with carved beads:

1 $\frac{1}{8}$ " spacers

Complex beads graduated

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long @ top

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long @ center

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " tall

-ties with white cotton cord



Woman's Belt

Patiarananam

Description:

- carved wood, 7 belt pieces, two strings of beads
- red wool gilt foil, plastic gems, red cotton cord
- not symmetrical, but balanced
- upper strand 25 beads @ $\frac{3}{8}$ " round to $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x 1" beads, 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long
- Lower strand 25 beads, 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ " cylinders to $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " bullet beads



Man's Epaulettes

Tolputtu

Description:

- 6 pieces carved wood
- decorated with gilt foil, woven red wool felt, plastic gems, stamped brass rosettes and silver toned beads
- measure 3 3/8" across bottom, 3 1/2" at widest point, 5" long and is 1 1/4" deep
- cotton cords tie around body & bicep



Woman's Epaulettes

Tolputtu

Description:

- carved wood, red wool, gilt foil, green & red plastic jewels, cotton cord
- 4 3/8" tall, 3 5/8" wide at base, 2 1/8" deep



Woman's Upper Arm Beads

Indian Name: Paruttikkaimani

Description:

- 6 ogee domes 1 3/4" - 2" tall, 7/8"-1" diameter, with (7) 3/4" wedge spacers/end caps
- red cord
- These are slightly mismatched, as if carved by student/apprentice, or combined from two or more existing sets



Man's Upper Arm Band

Paruttikkaimani

Description:

- wooden beads and baubles with gilt foil
- cotton cord
- tied below tolputtu at bicep with all three strings to outside of arm
- center row of baubles has a double row of beads supporting it
- 7 baubles at 1 5/8 " with 1 inch diameter

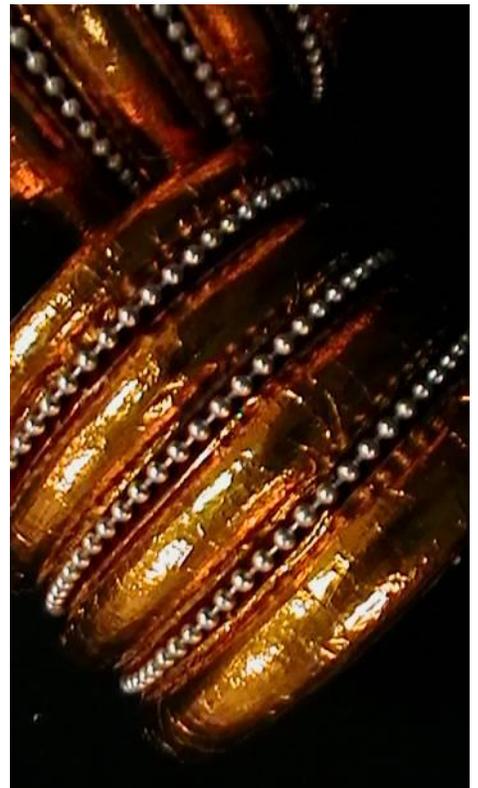


Men's and Women's Bracelet Cuffs

Kalases

Description:

- carved wood
- gilt foil, strings of silver toned beads
- $2\frac{3}{4}$ " tall, 3" inside diameter, $3\frac{1}{2}$ " outside diameter at wrist, 4" outside diameter at base



Men's and Women's wrist decorations

Kastakatakam

Description:

- carved wood
- red wool, gilt foil, plastic jewels
- green wool tassels, red cord ties
- tied to wrist below Kalases

-2 2/3 wide x 1 7/8 diameter x 1 3/8"
rise plus 1 3/4 x 1 1/4 tassels (woman's)



-measures 3" across, 1 3/4" deep; circle has 2" diameter (man's)



Woman's Earrings

Katila

Description:

- carved wood
- decorated with gilt foil, plastic silver tone beads, plastic jewels
- tied around head with red cotton cord
- 3 3/4" x 1 3/4" x 3/4"



Ear Ornaments A (larger)

Thoda

Description:

- Convex hemisphere 4" diameter x 1 3/4" deep
- decorated in gilt foil, silver beads, plastic jewels and red felt
- with a 3 3/4" stem (4 3/4" total length)
- worn with Kiritam headdress



Ear Ornaments B (smaller)

Chevippuvu

Description:

- Convex carved wood disc 2 1/2" diameter
- attached to headband of cotton tape and silver beads
- headband is 16.5" plus ties
- decorated in gilt foil, silver beads and red felt
- with 3 1/2" stem (4 3/4" total)



Women's Headband A & B

Kazhuthu nada

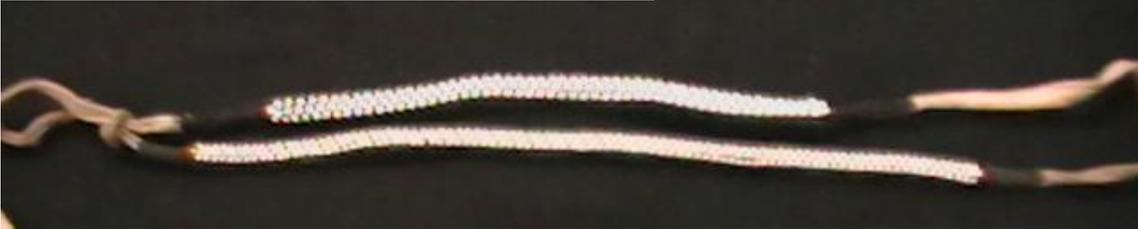
Description:

- A. 15" long
- B. 13 1/2" long
- silver tone beads
- red wool with black cotton backing over tan cotton twill tape

head

*

Cotton and
beads



Women's Headband

Kurunira

Description:

- red wool with black cotton backing
- measures 11" x 1 5/8"
- 10" x 1 1/2" of silver toned beads +
- chain of dangling ornaments



Wigs

Chamaram/ Karappu Nar

Description:

- Black jute
- half hitched in multiple strands over cotton tape then stitched or woven into tapes in herringbone formation
- 9x42"



Headbands

Chuttituni

Description:

- red wool felt
- black cotton backing
- rice paste décor
- measured 3" long and 1 ³/₄" wide



Women's Veil Support

Kontakettu

Description:

- black cotton cap
- 2 1/2" high with 1 1/2" in diameter
topper set asymmetrically on the left
side of the head
- red cotton and multicolored wool
- Twill tape fastener at back
- 21 1/4" circumference
- 2 1/4" at front
- 2 1/2" at back with crown of 5 3/4" in
diameter



Veils

Indian Name

Description:

- A. blue/gold tissue, 45" w x 41" l
Red cotton tie sewn from 2" past
midpoint along 3rd quarter for ~10"
brocaded ribbon sewn to finish cut
edges similar to woven warp stripe at
selvedge
- B. Pink / gold poly tissue brocade,
leaf pattern,
black cotton strip sewn to top center
43" wide x 68"
rolled hem 1/4"



Headdress/Crown

Keshabaram Kiritam

Description:

2 pieces carved wood: disc & crown

Red wool, gold foil, beetle wings,
metal beads

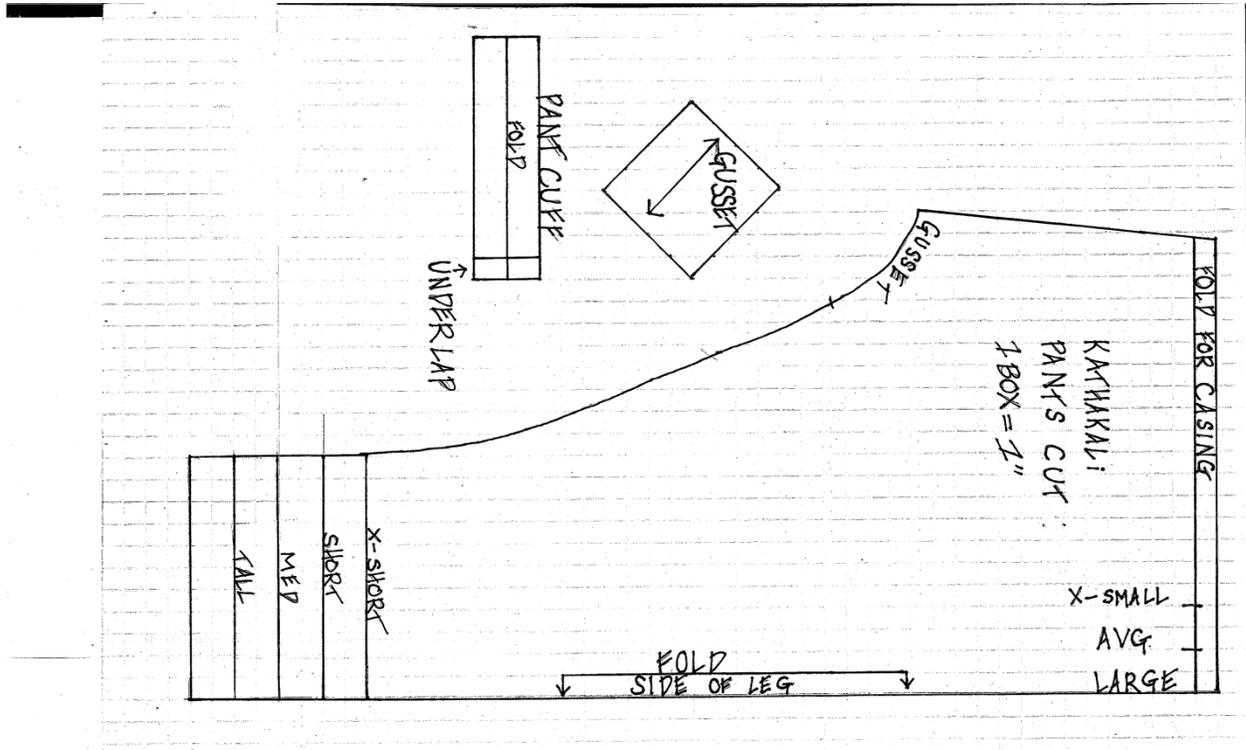
plastic tubing, beads, & gems

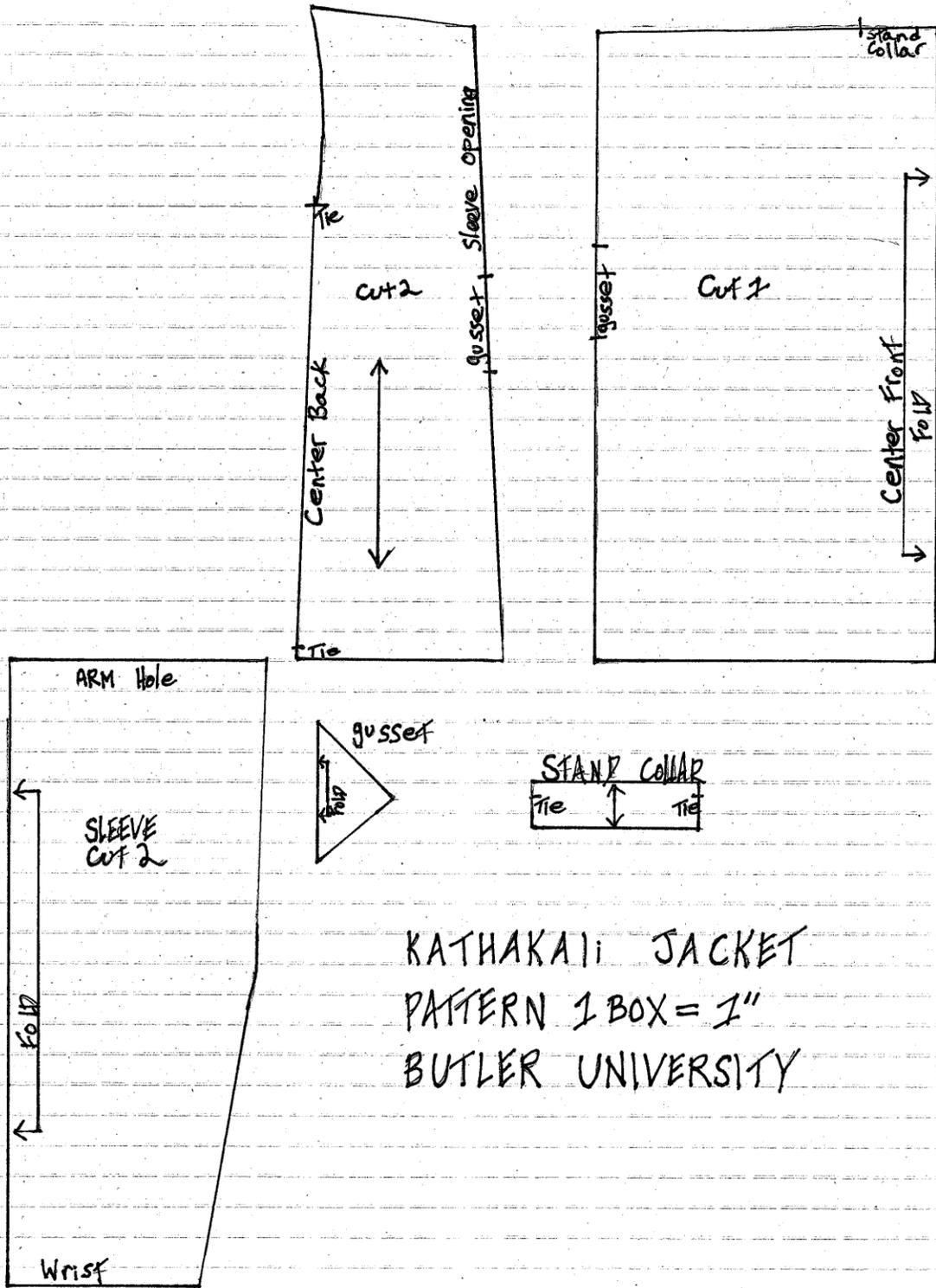
cotton wrappings

~24" diameter (disk)



Appendix D: Patterns





KATHAKALI JACKET
PATTERN 1 BOX = 1"
BUTLER UNIVERSITY

Appendix E: Kathakali Costume References

Ambrose, Kay. Classical Dances and Costumes of India, 2nd ed. Revisions by Ram Gopal. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1983.

Balakrishnan, Sadanam P. V. Kathakali. New Delhi: Wisdom Tree, 2004. Dances of India Series, Alka Raghuvanshi, ed.

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Brandon, James R. The Cambridge Guide to Asian Theatre. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1993. reprinted 2009.

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Dhananjayan, V.P. Dhananjayan on Indian Classical Dance. Delhi: B.R.Rhythms, 2004.

Iyer, K. Bharatha. Kathakali: Sacred Dance-Drama of Malabar. London: Luzac Co., 1955.

Standard reference: readable, informative scholarly text. Costume and makeup considered in detail with reference to symbolic and aesthetic effect in performance.

Jones, Clifford R. and Betty True Jones. Kathakali: Introduction to the Dance-Drama of Kerala. NY: Theatre Arts Books, 1970.

Informative text reads as personal narrative/travel journal. Extensive black and white photographs of Kerala, school, students and performers in preparation and performance. Glossary, pronunciation guide, contents; no index or references.

Menon, K.P.S. A Dictionary of Kathakali. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1979.

Invaluable resource including majority of items of dress. Scant illustrations hand drawn (presumably by author).

Pandeya, Avinash C. The Art of Kathakali. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1943. Reprinted 1999.

Primary resource, frequently cited by later authors. Comprehensive (from mid-century) history, physical action, emotional action, visual effects, rhythm and music, performance practices, texts, bibliography, and documentation of major performers and families. Limited diagrams and photographs. This text has the most extensive information on character-specific costumes.

Puligari, Bhasi. Interviews in residence at Butler University. September - November 2012.

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Van Zile, Judy. Dance in India: an annotated guide to source materials. Providence: Asian Music Publications, 1973.

Dated, but includes some primary research material of great value.

Vasudevan, Kunju. Interviews in residence at Butler University, September – November, 2012.

Zarrilli, Phillip B. Kathakali Dance Drama: Where Gods and Demons Come to Play. London: Routledge, 2000.

Studied analysis of all areas of Kathakali: context, history, texts, music, dance, training, physical, emotional, visual aspects plus videography of performances, extensive bibliography/references, glossary and transliteration of terms, index.

Kathakali Costumes Ornaments of Indian Dance Drama



Wendy Meaden
Angela Malone
Hali Bickford
Katie Powell

USITT
Long Beach 2012

A Strivesham and a Paccha Character



Performers make devotions to the Gods to begin thier preparation



Costume pieces are similar for most kathakali characters., including

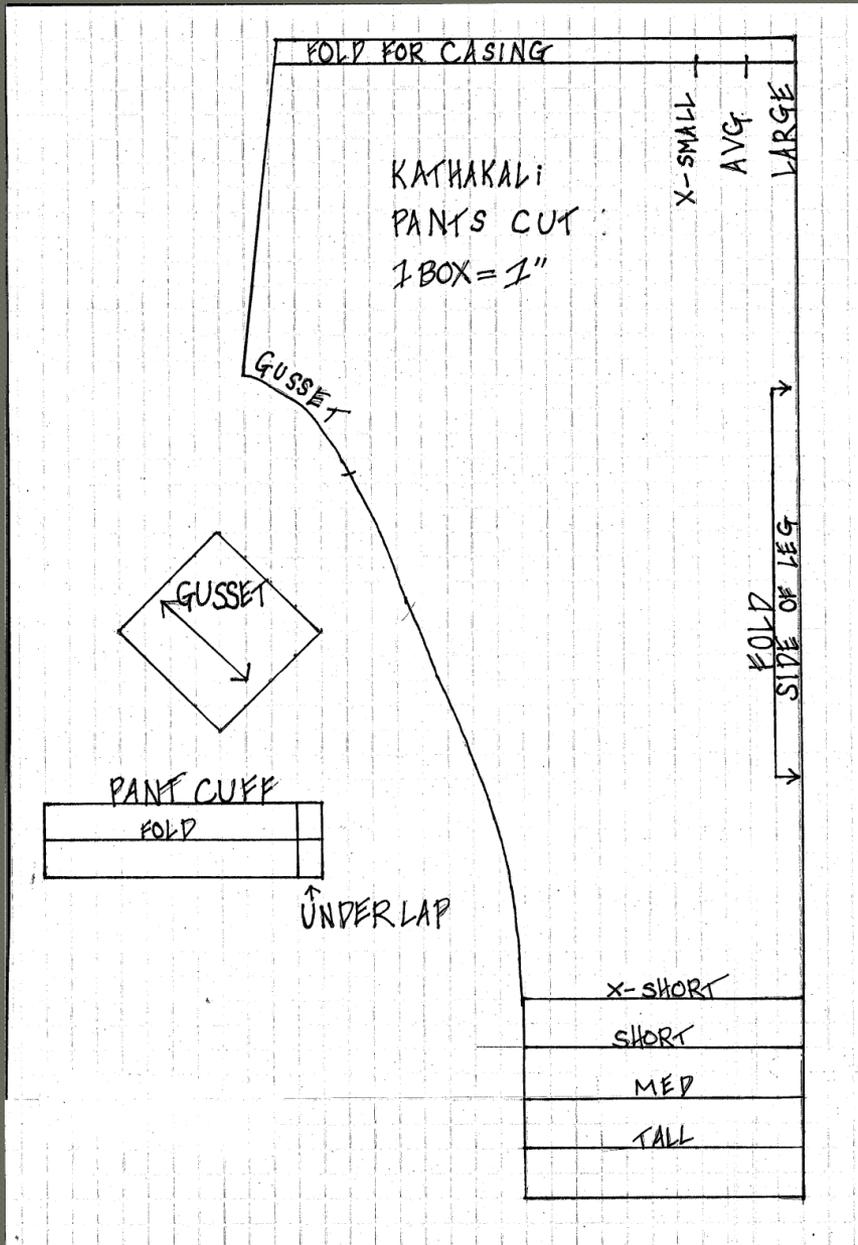
- Elaborate makeup
- Intricate headdress or veil
- Wig
- Simple jackets
- Layers of skirts
- Loose pants
- Variety of ornaments on
 - Ears
 - Neck
 - Arms
 - Waist
 - legs



KATHAKALI
Simplified Pacca diagram 4/11/2012

Pyjama pants

Simple full cut pants
Drawstring waist
Ample movement
Comfort, absorbency,
modesty



Bell Stays Tantappatippu

- Male and female roles
- worn at ankle to hold pants snug to leg and to prevent bells from sliding on to foot
- Red wool, black cotton backing/ties, batting, blue sateen, silver toned bead strings
- 8" crescent, 4½" inside crescent, 3¼" circumference at center
- Red wool, black cotton faille trim, silver toned plastic bead string, black cotton end caps, heavy cotton/jute tapes



Knee Bells

Kecchamani

- **Description:**
- **Male characters**
- **-leather, cotton backing, batting, whip stitched, brass bells on metal findings**
- **-11 bells per piece**
- **-4 thick cotton tapes to tie above and below knee**
- **- 5" x 5 1/2" pads**



Women's Ankle Bells

Chilanka

- -3"x6" leather rectangle, corners trimmed
- - 34½" small round brass bells, diagonal grid spacing, on metal ring findings
- -Flat rolled black cotton (12 layers) on back over brads, whip stitched to leather at top and bottom edges, black cotton tape (rolled selvedge) to fasten along center: one inside, one on front



Hip Pads Chanthi

- -Tan cotton drill, 2" cotton twill tape, coconut husk stuffing
- -Outside crescent 22", inside crescent 12", pad width 6", depth 3"
- -Two padded crescents machine stitched to twill waist band/ties, touching center front
- -Whip stitched closure on outer edge of crescent



Petticoats

Ullunhari or Uluval

- Support hemispheric shape
- previously made of many layers fabric
- measure ~38"x51"
- about 3 dozen pieces plasticized tarp



Skirt

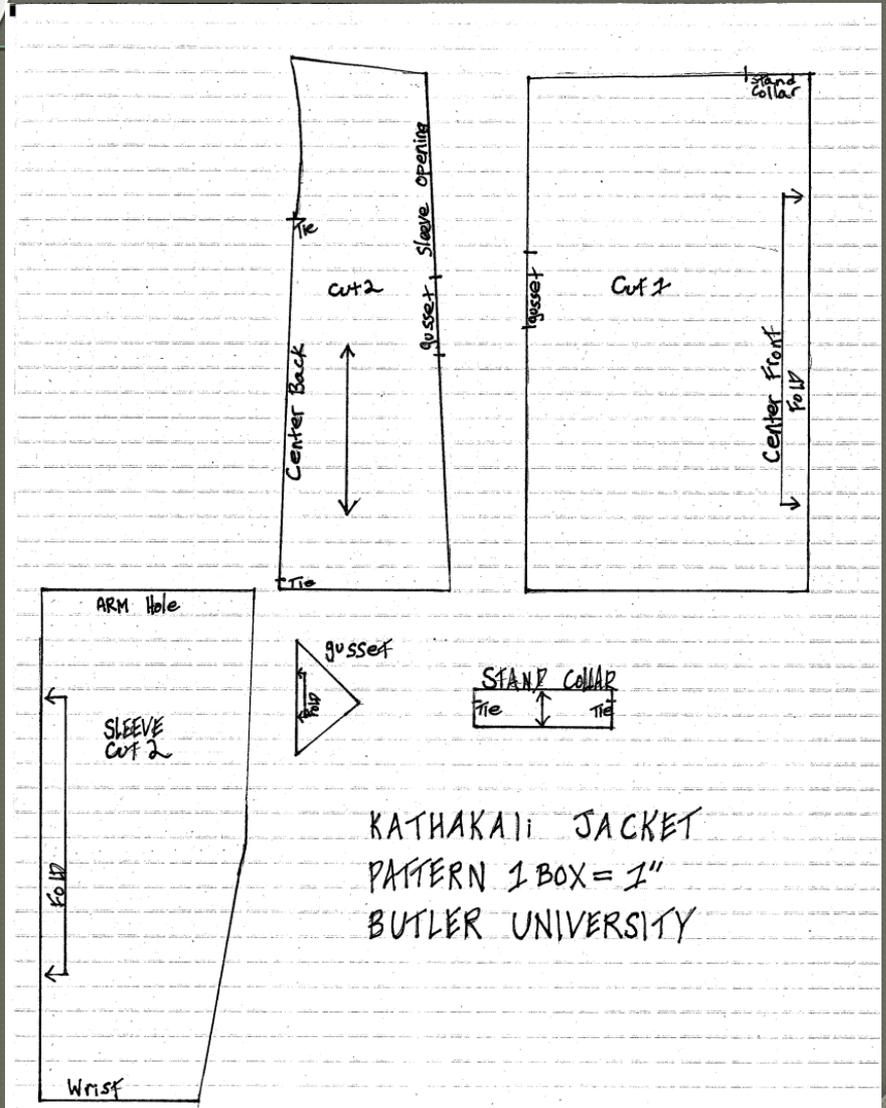
Ututtukettu

- - 7 meters cotton, 1 meter +wide
- - Bold border stripes on selvedge
- - Worn on cross



Atikkuppayam (under jacket) Kappayam (jacket).

- T shaped tunic
- Tapered sleeve, square gusset
- Back lapped closure
- Lightweight Cotton or cotton lame



jackets



- Most jackets are red in color, as it shows well in the traditional torchlight. Strivesham characters' jackets often include gold or silver threads. Some characters wear other colors or textiles, such as Vishnu's Blue jacket and Hanuman's fur coat.

Men's Breastplate Kuralaram

- Ten carved wood pieces
- -Neck bound with stitched cotton tape
- -17 wool tassels stitched together
- -Wood is covered in red felt, gilt foil and red and green plastic jewels



Women's breastplate Mulakkuralaram

- -natural looking breasts
- -red wool felt
- Decorated with gilt foil, wool multicolored tassels, green and red plastic jewels with gilt underneath
- -15 wool tassels with gilt covered carved wood toppers that are sewn together
- -Ties to body with red cotton cord and cotton twill



Men's Necklace Kazhuttaram

- -neckpiece of 7 5/8" x 5/8"
- -plastic and metal gold toned beads, 1/4" round and 1/2" faceted
- -two red wool pompoms
- -mounted on heavy cotton fabric
- -ties around neck at the back



Women's Necklace Kazhuttaram

- - 9"x18"
- - many strings of gold colored plastic beads
- - two red wool pompoms
- - black polyester backing with polyester ties on neck band



Men's or Women's choker Kazhuthu nada

- cotton tape
- -visible part is 13 5/8 x 3/4" wide
- -decorated over 8 1/2 x 1/2" with
- Silver toned beads
- - worn over kazhuttartam to keep in place



Neck Streamers/scarves

Uttariya

-A. Red cotton, 36"x66" tied at quarter lengths with white cotton string; bead or stuffing inset above dome with mirror inset (Kotta Uthareeyam)



-B. White cotton, 36"x78", tied at center and third marks; striped area at edge tied off with folded/pleated self ruffles and stuffed full at stripes plus smell ball above



Side Streamers

Pattu Val

- -Worn over Men's Kathakali Skirt
- -Red panne w/ gold pinstripe (5/8" interval); gold brocaded ribbon trims, 1 1/2" wool yarn fringe, 1/2" straight grain cotton saffron binding, red cotton backing. Overall measurement 9x39"
- Red ones called Choppu val (red fabric)



Apron Ottanakku

- -red wool tassel with wooden bell shaped topper decorated in gilt foil
- -chrome decoration with silver tone beads
- -red cotton cord to tie around waist
- -14 3/8" along center
- -Full is 15 1/2" (18 inches total)
- -5 3/8" width



Man's Belt Patiarannanam

- decorated with gilt foil, plastic jewels and red wool felt
- plastic jewels have gilt under them
- 7 carved tapered belt pieces
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide @ center, 1" @ ends,
- 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ " long
- The three belt lengths are:
 - 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
 - 26"
 - 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
- 2 strings faceted beads:
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ " - $\frac{7}{8}$ " diameter
- Lower string with carved beads:
 - 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ " spacers
- Complex beads graduated
 - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long @ top
 - 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long @ center
 - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " tall
- ties with white cotton cord



Dressing the Waist



- Choppu val (red pattu val) mark the sides of the silhouette
- Ottanakku is centered on the body
- Patiarananam is strung across the body

Woman's Belt Patiarananam

- -carved wood, 7 belt pieces, two strings of beads
- -red wool gilt foil, plastic gems, red cotton cord
- -not symmetrical, but balanced
- -upper strand 25 beads @ $3/8$ " round to $1\ 1/2$ " x 1 " beads, $21\ 1/2$ " long
- -Lower strand 25 beads, $29\ 3/4$ " cylinders to $3\ 1/2$ " x $1\ 1/2$ " bullet beads



Arm Ornaments



- There are four basic ornaments used on both male and female characters' arms:
- Male and female have the same names, and similar decorations,
- though in these examples the female characters ornaments are slightly smaller.

Man's Epaulettes Tolputtu

- -6 pieces carved wood
- -decorated with gilt foil, woven red wool felt, plastic gems, stamped brass rosettes and silver toned beads
- -measure 3 3/8" across bottom, 3 1/2" at widest point, 5" long and is 1 1/4" deep
- - cotton cords tie around body & bicep



Woman's Epaulettes Tolputtu

- -carved wood, red wool, gilt foil, green & red plastic jewels, cotton cord
- -4 3/8" tall, 3 5/8" wide at base, 2 1/8" deep



Woman's Upper Arm Beads Paruttikkaimani

- o ogee domes $1\frac{3}{4}$ " - 2" tall, $\frac{7}{8}$ "-1" diameter, with (7) $\frac{3}{4}$ " wedge spacers/end caps
- o -red cord
- o -These are slightly mismatched, as if carved by student/apprentice, or combined from two or more existing sets



Man's Upper Arm Band Paruttikkaimani

- -wooden beads and baubles with gilt foil
- -cotton cord
- -tied below tolputtu at bicep with all three strings to outside of arm
- -center row of baubles has a double row of beads supporting it
- -7 baubles at 1 5/8 " with 1 inch diameter



Men's and Women's Cuffs Kalases



- o -carved wood
- o - gilt foil, strings of silver toned beads
- o - 2³/₄" tall, 3" inside diameter, 3¹/₂" outside diameter at wrist, 4" outside diameter at base



Men's and Women's wrist decorations Kastakatakam

- -carved wood
- - red wool, gilt foil, plastic jewels
- -green wool tassels, red cord ties
- - tied to wrist below Kalases
- -2 2/3 wide x 1 7/8 diameter x 1 3/8" rise plus 1 3/4 x 1 1/4 tassels (woman's)



Woman's Earrings Katila

- -carved wood
- -decorated with gilt foil, plastic silver tone beads, plastic jewels
- -tied around head with red cotton cord
- - 3 3/4" x 1 3/4" x 3/4"



Ear Ornaments A (larger) Thoda

- -Convex hemisphere 4" diameter x 1 3/4" deep
- -decorated in gilt foil, silver beads, plastic jewels and red felt
- -with a 3 3/4" stem (4 3/4" total length)
- -worn with Kiritam headdress



Ear Ornaments B (smaller)

Chevippuvu

- -Convex carved wood disc 2 ½" diameter
- -attached to headband of cotton tape and silver beads
- -headband is 16.5" plus ties
- -decorated in gilt foil, silver beads and red felt
- -with 3½" stem (4¾" total)



Women's Headband A & B

Kazhuthu nada

- -A. 15" long
- -B. 13 ½" long
- -silver tone beads
- -red wool with black cotton backing over tan cotton twill tape



Women's Headband Kurunira

- - red wool with black cotton backing
- - measures 11" x 1 5/8"
- - 10" x 1 1/2" of silver toned beads +
- - chain of dangling ornaments



Wigs

Chamaram/ Karappu Nar

- - Black jute
- - half hitched in multiple strands over cotton tape then stitched or woven into tapes in herringbone formation
- - 9x42"



Chuttituni

- -red wool felt
- -black cotton backing
- -rice paste décor
- -measured 3"
- long and 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide



Women's Veil Support Kontakettu

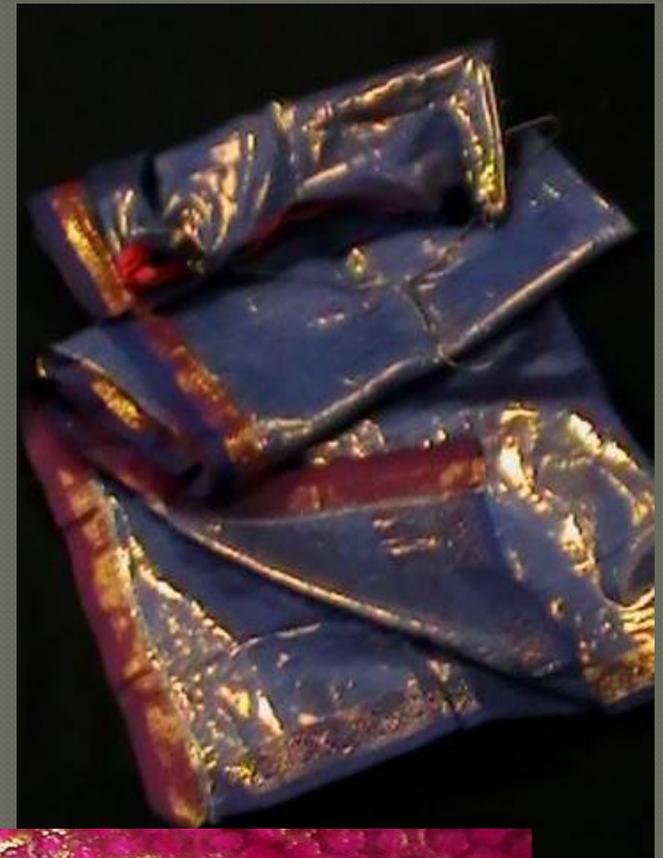
- -black cotton cap
- -2 ½" high with 1 ½" in diameter topper set asymmetrically on the left side of the head
- -red cotton and multicolored wool
- -Twill tape fastener at back
- -21 ¼" circumference
- -2 ¼" at front
- 2 ½" at back with crown of 5 ¾" in diameter



Veils

- -A. blue/gold tissue, 45" w x 41" l
- Red cotton tie sewn from 2" past midpoint along 3rd quarter for ~10" brocaded ribbon sewn to finish cut edges similar to woven warp stripe at selvedge

- -B. Pink / gold poly tissue brocade, leaf pattern, black cotton strip sewn to top center
- 43" wide x 68"
- rolled hem 1/4"



A Paccha and a Strivesam



Headdress/Crown Keshabaram Kiritam

- 2 pieces carved wood: disc & crown
- Red wool, gold foil, beetle wings, metal beads
- plastic tubing, beads, & gems
- cotton wrappings
- ~24" diameter (disk)



Performers make prayers to their teachers before donning the headdress



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Kathakali

The Process of Getting Dressed
Staring Bhasi Puligari



First Layer of Make-up



Second Layer of Make-up



**Knee Bells:
Kecchamani**

**Bell stays:
Tantappatippu**

**Hip Pad:
Chanthi**



**Petticoats:
Ullunhari or
Uluval**





Two assistants help fold the layers of cloth over a long strip of cotton, Distributing fullness and adjusting the length of layers.







Skirt:
uttukettu



Side streamers:

Pattu Val







Belt:

Patiarananam

**Under Jacket:
Atikkuppayam**



**Cuff Bracelet:
Kalases**





Epaulettes:
Tolputtu





Neck streamers/scarves:

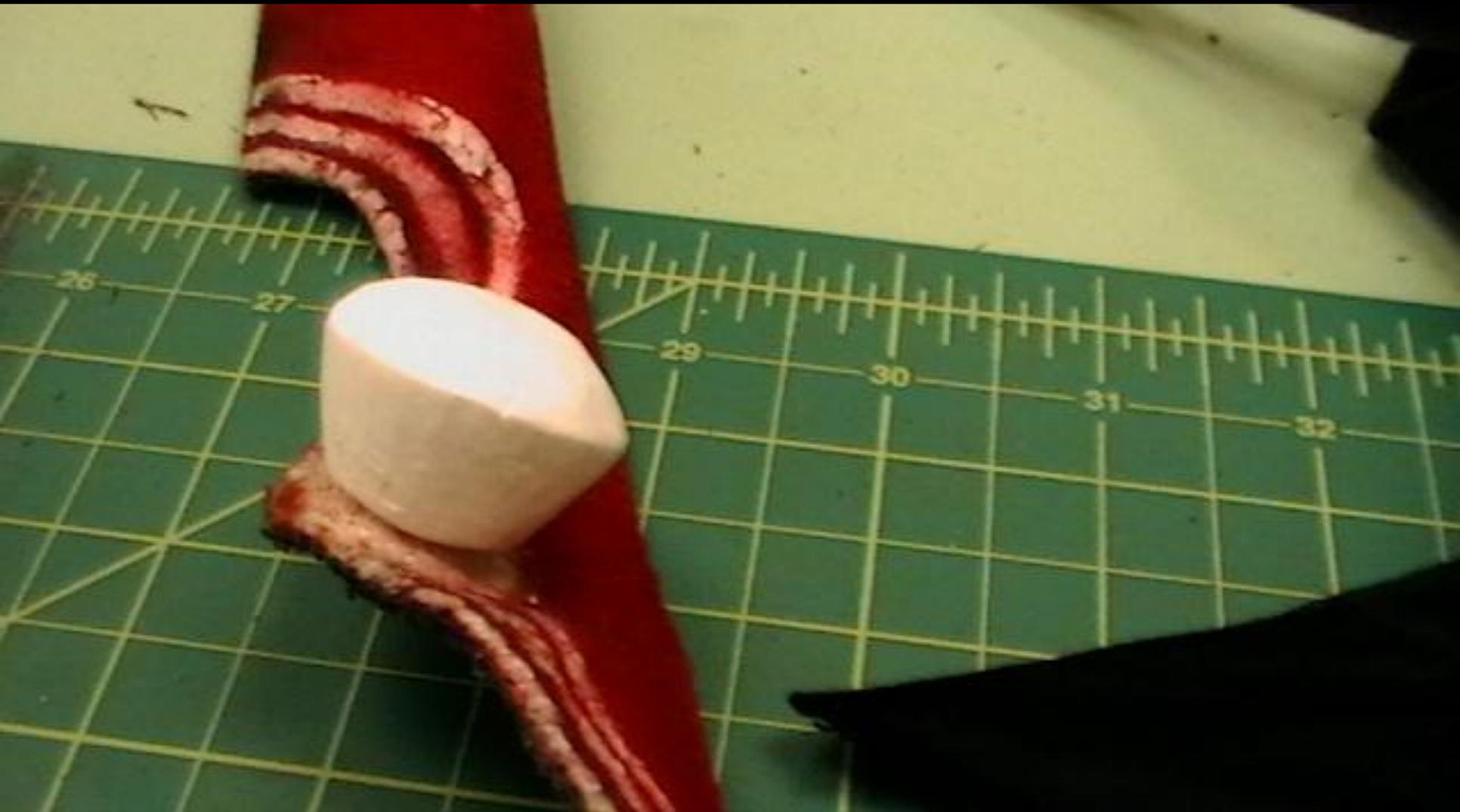
Uttariya



**Upper Arm Beads:
Paruttikkaimani**

**Apron:
Ottanakku**





**Headbands:
Chuttituni**



**White Nose Knob:
Chutti Poove**



**Crushed Seeds:
Chunda poovu**



**Men's Breastplate:
Kuralaram**



**Man's Necklace:
Kazhuttaram**





Warming Make-up so the oils will melt and go on smoothly

**Preparing to
put Chutti on**





**Praying to teacher before
putting on headdress**







White curved paper
framework for jaw line:

Chutti





Touch up Make-up





**Drummers
preparing**



**Ear Ornaments:
Thoda**

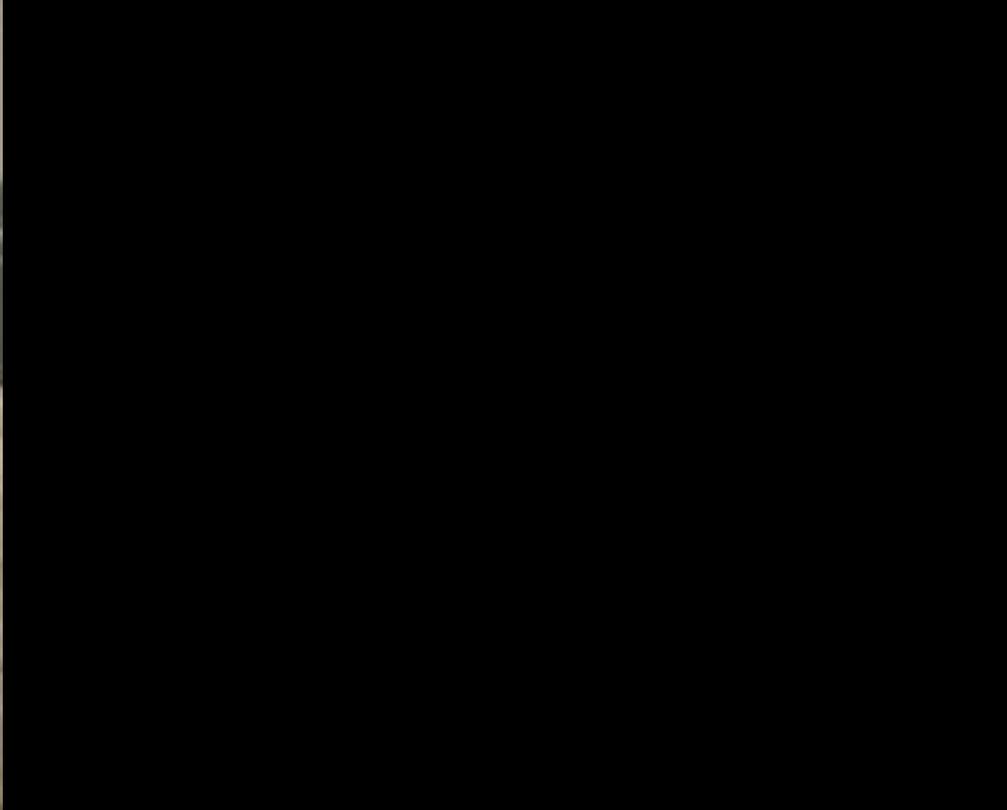


Head wrap to help headdress stay in place:

Netti Nada







**Headdress/Crown:
Keshabaram Kiritam**









Inserting Fangs: Damshtam

















