



# A Handbook of Kalaripayattu



സർവ്വ തന്ത്ര സ്വരൂപായ  
സർവ്വ തന്ത്ര സ്വരൂപിണി  
സർവ്വഗായ സമസ്തായ  
ശിവായ ഗുരുവേ നമഃ

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**This is a rough copy of the original work.**

May subjected to Grammar or Spelling errors.

# Introduction

The word 'Kalari' is from the word 'Khaloorika Bhagavathy' (Khaloorika goddess). Khaloorika Bhagavathy is the presiding deity of the Kalari. The term 'Khaloorika Vidhya' was later changed into the term Kalari or Kalaripayattu (Payattu = Fight).

There are mainly two Sri Vidhyas:

Kadhi Vidhya – Agastya Vidhanam, Starting with 'Ka' sound.

Hadhi Vidhya – Lopamudra Devi Vidhanam, Starting with 'Ha' sound.

The words 'Kalari' and 'Khaloorika' are from the first 3 letters of Srividhya mantram mentioned in Kadhi Vidhya.

This ancient land was always the Mother land of all martial Arts.

During 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century a monk from ancient Chera – Chola Kingdom (Present day Kerala – Tamil Nadu areas) travelled to China, his name is Bhodhidharma. Bodhidharma is one of the greatest enlightened men who has ever existed, and one of the most unique amongst all the enlightened men. In many ways he surpasses his own master, Gautam Buddha.

The Kung – Fu was developed by Bhodhi Dharma, a well-respected Zen monk in Japan and China even today.

He is the one who firstly taught Kung Fu to the monks in Shaolin Temple in China.

The back-end philosophy of Kung Fu are Zen , but the Backend philosophy of Kalaripayattu is Shaktheyam or Shuddha Shaaktha Sambrathayam (Shankthism – worship of Shakthi).

Shaolin KungFu uses the flow and regulation of 'Chi' whereas Kalaripayattu uses flow and regulations of 'Pranan' (പ്രാണൻ).

The Poothara represents Uma-Maheswara Sanghalpam ,beside that there will be a coconut tied down representing Gulika,then beside Poothara there will be Ganapathy Thara , then Guru Thara and at the center of kalari conceptualize Bhairava. The ashta Dikh Palakas guard the kalari from 8 directions.

After the regular training , Kalari is offered to Bhootha Ganas who protects the Kalari.

Weapons called as 'otta', regarded as the Soul of Kalari is said to be developed by Shiva while explaining the fight between an Elephant and a Lion to Goddess Parvathy while they were living in a Jungle in the form of Hunters. Lord Shiva after the fight absorbed the entire valor of the fight into a wooden stick.

Otta deals 64 deadly Marma points of the human body. Otta Payattu deals with only these deadly Marma points such that when hits accidentally will kill the opponent instantly.

More advanced techniques are also in the names of deities in Indian Philosophy and theology such as Hanuman Vazhi ( Way of Hanuman , advanced techniques which was advised Hanuman to Bheema before the commencement of the Mahabharatha War ) ,Bali Vazhi ( Way of Bali , techniques to attack/defend the opponent with his own power) , Saraswathi Kayy ( Hands of Saraswathi ) , Ganapathy Kayy ( Hands of Ganapathy / Ganesha) , Arjuna Mardhanan (Used in Uzhichil) etc..

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# A Brief History of our Kalari tradition

Kalaripayattu has 2 styles – The Vadakkan Kalari (Northern Kalari) and The Thekkan Kalari (southern Kalari). The martial arts what is now called as Southern Kalari or Thekkan kalari is not actually Kalaripayattu. It is another martial arts called Adi murai of Kerala-Tamil Nadu border areas such as Kanyakumari. It involves mainly bare hand techniques.

The actual Kalaripayattu is what is today called as Kalaripayattu of North or Vadakkan Kalari (Northern Kalari) which is found in areas of ancient Chera kingdom or present-day Northern Parts of Kerala.

It is the actual Payattu Kalari or ‘Yuddha Mura’ or involving Warfare techniques.

Northern Kalari is further divided into 3 schools

1. അറപ്പ കയ്യ , Arappa Kayy
2. പിള്ള താങ്ങി ,Pilla Thangi
3. വട്ടേൻ തിരുപ്പ ,Vatten Thirupp

Further there are geographical variations such as Tulunadan, Kadathanadan etc...

These variations are similar to the variations such as ‘Shaolin KungFu’, ‘Tai Chi Quan’ , ‘Wing Chun Quan’ with respect to the martial arts KungFu.

Our Kalaripayattu is Vadakkan Kalari or Northern Kalari of which we follow 'Kadathanadan Arappa Kayy'.

We don't know the origin of our Kalari nor the exact line of successors. There may be many fierce fighters to even those who reached the path of Shiva as a Yogi or those who got enlightened.

The oldest available record of our kalari's legacy goes back to Kingdom of Kozhikode (Calicut) and its Army under the Kings of Calicut (Kozhikode) called Samuthiri or Zamorins of Calicut.

During those days there were 9 houses who were responsible for training the Army of Calicut.

These 9 houses were teaching kalaripayattu for the royal army in these traditions of Kalaripayattu which we follow even today.

Of those one of the major and prominent family were 'pullerickal' meaning 'those who fight like a Tiger'.

All those 8 houses except Pullerickal had lost their tradition and there is no kalari in any of these places today.

My guru's guru Sri Pullerickal Govindhan Gurukkal, the last successor of that family, and my Guru Sri. Nochipoyil Gangadharan Gurukkal Perambra, Kozhikode was is the last member in this long line of succession of this style of Kalaripayattu, **Kalari which Army of Calicut, the richest kingdom of India practiced once.**

My Guru was also the disciple of famous Sri Vadakara Thandar Vally Shankar Gurukkal.

(Gurukul's father was also an expert in Kalaripayattu who was trained under two prominent Gurus of that time)

Chirackal T Shreedaran Nair, one of the prominent persons in reviving Kalaripayattu in early 19s was also the disciple of Sri.Pullerickal Govindhan Gurukkal.

His Son Sri.SRD Prasad has written a well-known book 'Kalaripayattinte VignanaKosham '(Encyclopedia of Kalaripayattu), in which he has written about my Gurukkal Sri. Nochipoyil Gangadharan Gurukkal.

(One of the top viewed documentaries on Kalaripayattu posted on Youtube is also of Sri.SRD Prasad, Sree Bharath Kalari Sangham).

One of the famous kalari in Kerala is CVN kalari, which is following the traditional kalari of Kottakal Kanaran Gurukkal.

Even though both ours and CVN are 'Arappa kayy 'sambrathayam but our Kalari is different from CVN Kalari.

Also, all other Kalariputhara, a semi cone structure where abode of presiding deity, is of 7 steps, but ours is of 9 steps.

We are still following those ancient kalari tradition taught by our Gurus without any alterations.



# Stages and Levels in Kalaripayattu

Kalaripayattu has many levels of training, after only completing the required level disciples are advised to move to the next level.

They are,

1. Meythaari (മെയ്താരി) : The word 'മെയ്' or 'Meyy' meaning body and 'താരി' or 'Thaari' meaning way. This is the initial level of Kalaripayattu. Here we learn 'മെയ്പയറ്റ്' or 'Meypayattu', Meyy = body and 'പയറ്റ്' or Payattu = fight.

In Karate there is Kata ( 1 to 8) , In KungFu are 7 steps , 10 steps etc. In Silat there is 12 Juru , same way in Kalari we have different Meypayattu.

These can be considered as the letters of Martial Arts - Containing all types of stances , Moves , Kicks, Blocks, Punches etc.

**Practicing Meypayattu daily is alone enough, you don't need to study the entire Kalaripayattu – Ancient Gurus' say.**

In Kalari Gurus' say 'മെയ് കണ്ണാവുക' or 'Meyy Kanavuka' (കണ്ണ് = eye ) , meaning **practicing Meypayattu makes one's body equal to the eye.**

Also 'കിതപ്പ് അറ്റുക' or 'Kithapp Attuka' , meaning daily practicing makes body rid of panting.

There are different Meypayattu like കാൽ ഉയർത്തി പയറ്റ് or Kaal Uyarthi Payattu (Kaal =Leg ,Uyarthi = Raise,Payattu = Fight), കയ്ക്ക് കുത്തി പയറ്റ് or Kayy Kuthi Payattu (Kayy = Hand,Kuthi = Punch,Payattu = Fight) , Iruthi Kaal or ഇരുത്തി കാൽ (Iruthi = to Sit , Kaal = Leg) , കാൽ എടുക്കൽ or Kaal Edukkal, തഞ്ച പയറ്റ് or Thanja Payattu ect.

Kaal Uyarthi Payattu is in Arappa Kayy Sambrathayam where as Kayy Kuthi Payattu is in Pilla Thangi Sambrathayam.

2. Kolthari (കോൽത്തൊരി) : The word കോൽ or 'Kol' meaning Stick deals with all kinds of Stick weapons. Here we use Kettukari or Valiya Vadi (Valiya = Long , Vadi = Stick) , Muchan or Cheriya Vadi ( Cheriya = Small , Vadi =Stick), Shareera Vadi (Shareera = Body , Vadi = Stick) , Otta Kol ( Otta = Single , Kol = Stick) etc.
3. Angathari (അങ്കതൊരി) : The word അങ്കം means Dual War. Here we use all kinds of metal weapons such as Knifes , Sword and Shield , Spears , Daggers, Urumi etc.
4. Verum Kayy(വെറും കയ്ക്ക്) : The word വെറും means Bare and കയ്ക്ക് = Hand , വെറും കയ്ക്ക് = Bare Hand.At this stage we learn bare hand techniques. Ultimately the weapons of human beings are his two hands and two legs.

At this stage one can fight with an opponent who has any one the above-mentioned weapons such as Long Shaft or Sword , or whatever, with his bare hands and to defeat him.

Here one Learns about Marmam.

5. Kalari Chigilsa (കളരി ചികിത്സ) : Here one learns about Body, Medicines and treatments.
6. Sthithik irikuka (സ്ഥിതിക്ക് ഇരിക്കുക) : Ultimate stage is Meditation - reaching the path of Shiva.

# Meypayattu

There are 12 sets of Meypayattu in Kaaluyarthipayattu , which we follow.

Vaay Thari (vocal syllables to the movements) of first meypayattu is given below.

## Meypayattu 1:

**1<sup>st</sup> Arapp:**

**Valath chavitti edatheth aani kooti vech Amarnnu**

**Valath chavitti edathu kooti maari valathum mari**

**Edatheth aani kooti vech amarnnu**

**Edathu vech valath chavitti**

**Edathu kooti mari**

**Valathum mari**

### **Edathethu eduth nokki**

(Edathu = Left, Edathethu = of Left, Eduth = take , nokki = look)

### **Chaadiketti**

(Chaadi = jump , Ketti = Tie)

### **Chavitti**

(Chavitti = Kick , here kicking the floor and not raising leg and kicking)

### **Neeki**

(Neeki = Push)

### **Valathu nere**

(Valathu = right , nere = forward , here kicking forward with right leg)

### **Edathu nere**

(Edathu = left , nere = forward , here kicking forward with left leg)

### **Thirinju chadi amarnnu**

(Thirinju = rotate or in opposite , chadi = Jump , Amarnnu = In 'Amarcha' posture with hands crossed)

### **Nivarnn**

(Nivarnn = to stand up)

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Arapp:**

(same as 1<sup>st</sup> Arapp , but will be in opposite direction from here)

### **Edathethu eduth nokki**

**Chadiketti**

**Chavitti**

**Neeki**

**Valathu nere**

**Edathu nere**

**Thirinju chadi amarnnu**

**nivarnn**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Arapp :**

**Edathethu eduth nokki**

**Chadiketti**

**Chavitti**

**Valathu vech amarnnu**

(Valathu = right , vech = keep , amarnnu = in Amarcha posture with hands crossed )

**Theruth**

(A kalari word denoting slide sideways by keeping the one leg closer to other and simultaneously moving the other forward sideways)

**Chavitti**

(Chavitti = Kick , here kicking the floor and not raising leg and kicking)

**Neeki**

(Neeki = Push)

### **Edathu maari**

(Edathu = left , maari = Change ,here change the forward leg into backward)

### **Valathu maari**

(Valathu = right , maari = Change ,here change the forward leg into backward)

### **Chavitti ponti amarnn**

(Chavitti = Kick , here kicking the floor backward . ponti = rise ,amarnnu = In 'Amarcha' posture with hands crossed

### **Nivarnn**

(stand up staright)