



Tholpavakkoothu

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- Tholpavakkoothu is a ceremonial **shadow puppetry of Kerala**. Tholpavakkoothu literally means 'leather puppet game'. In it, leather puppets are **performed in the religious rituals of Bhadrakali. Bhadrakali is worshiped in Kerala as the Mother of Gods.**
- The basic theme of this art is based on Kamb Ramayana, which is commonly performed in dialects of Malayalam and Tamil schools of languages. The performance depicts events from the birth of Lord Rama to his coronation in Ayodhya.
- Chaya Puppet is **performed in 'koothumadams**, a large theater, built in the temple complex. The puppets are in the form of buffalo and deer, in which the **buffalo denote the evil character and the deer the good character. Earlier puppets were made with deer skin, but now goat skin is being used for this. Puppets are dyed with colors obtained from vegetables because these colors are more durable.**
- A classic example of the integration of Aryan and Dravidian cultures, this art was in vogue around the ninth century. Presently this art is confined to the Pulawar families of Palakkad district. It is noteworthy that this **shadow puppetry is being conducted by a robot for the first time.**

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