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ETHNOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CEYLON

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The Kinnaraya—the Tribe of Mat Weavers

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M. D. Raghavan

Assistant in Ethnology, National Museums of Ceylon

(With Eight Plates and Four Text Figures)

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1.—Tribal Ceylon—General Aspects

For a land of the dimensions of the Island, Ceylon is rich in patterns of tribal culture, including the Väddā, among the most interesting of the Island's peoples. Apart, however, from the Väddā, anthropologists have little knowledge of other tribal factors of the Island no less important. One of these is the Kinnarayā in whom has reposed one of the most highly developed technique in the art of decorative mat weaving.

Attachment to traditional habitat, a clan organisation with a rigid matrimonial code, a tribal language and a tribal chief, are among the prime factors that go to form a tribe. At this distance of time when tribes have wandered far from the tribal life of the past, living for ages in the midst of peoples, socially higher, tribes have been fast changing, absorbing traits and characters of the people in whose midst they live and with whom they come into intimate contact in their day to day life. Tribes today thus present a picture of varying degrees of integration. The first to go is the tribal language as is happening today to the Roḍiyā dialect. As a distinct tribal unit, the Kinnarayā very probably have had their own dialect, though nothing of it is known today. Of tribal chief, there is a distinct survival in the person of the *hulavāliyā* in the case of the Roḍiyā and the *duraya* in the case of the Kinnarayā, though their functioning today is but a distant echo of the tribal days. The clan life disappears, or leaves a tale of survivals as seen in the Roḍiyā. Time tells, and tribal orders imbibe extraneous customs and habits, under the impetus of the forces of diffusion of human ways and habits. Thus in Ceylon we find remarkable correspondence today among tribal peoples in such directions as the functioning of the kinship or relationship system and the social ceremonials and customs which in essential respects follow the general Sinhalese pattern—demonstrating what is only too obvious ; that culture is not necessarily a biological heritage.

The problem of small and more primitive groups is a problem of their own. Before they attain to the educational and social status already attained by the other social groups, no question would arise of their getting absorbed into or assimilated with the Sinhalese society. The Väddā is a unique problem in the sense that assimilation with the Sinhalese or Tamil villagers has been proceeding for ages, while an ever disintegrating remnant clings to the tribal pattern of life in the isolated and inaccessible wilds. Not so, with regard to the Roḍiyā and the Kinnarayā—each of whom has an integrated culture of his own, with a technique of handicrafts which has left its impress on the culture of the Island and deserve to be fostered. Nor can you visualise that these communities would be near enough for years to come socially or educationally for absorption into the general Sinhalese society. The very name Kinnarayā is a name best known to the people themselves, a name much less familiar, outside their own tribal setting, than the name Roḍiyā. " Please let me know who or what are the Kinnarayās ", was one of the rejoinders to my inquiries in regard to the Kinnarayā. Of the reality of the Dumbara mats most men are aware, but of the human factor responsible for these artistic products, few know anything much. Anthropology visualises a wider outlook on life and recognises the importance of studying people and societies far and near, primitive or civilized, and reveals the culture and behaviour patterns of societies other than our own, recognising that the world is of all sorts, that the whole cannot be understood, without a knowledge of the parts, and that each is an essential link in the garland of humanity.

In a land where many a custom alien to the indigenous culture has been absorbed by the people in the course of four and a half centuries of European contacts, the simpler tribal cultures have an interest of their own, as patterns of life comparatively uninfluenced by non-indigenous factors. While the tribal cultures have this common background, the cultural conditioning of each gives us a diversified pattern of tribal life. Cultural studies of the different social entities, such as is now being done in the course of the present Ethnological Survey, would stress the essential factors of integration of each group, as also the factors of cultural disintegration as seen today in the Väddā, Roḍiyā or the Kinnarayā.

2.—Custom and Habit in Kinnaraya life

Known by the alternative names of Karmānta Minissu, Karmānta Kārayō, Karmāntayō, or Kinnarō, the Kinnarayā is one of the smallest of Ceylon's social groups. They are found today in tribal villages of their own mainly at Hēnavala in Pāta Dumbara Division, Malhāva in the district of Matale, both in the Central Province, at Irideniya, Siriyāla, Kalālagama, Dikvāhara, and Matava in the North-Western Province and at Ihalagama near Ambepussa in the Western Province. In these pockets of settlements which form their traditional habitat, they lived their simple life for ages pursuing their craft of mat weaving, seen highly evolved today testifying to a long course of development of the art.

Craftsmanship in mat weaving is more vigorous at Hēnavala than elsewhere, and here the art shows at its best. Hēnavala houses 34 Kinnarayā families with a total of about 160 inhabitants. A winding footpath of sandy loam between cocoa plantations and rural habitations from the Mānikhinna junction, where you branch off from the main road to Teldeniya, takes you to the village of Hurikaḍuva Maḍige, the headman of which exercises a supervisory control over the ancient Kinnarayā settlement of Hēnavala, resting lazily on the slopes of a magnificent valley extending from the foothills of the towering Hunnasgiriya, the Hēvāhāṭa and the Haputale range of hills presenting a fascinating setting to this tribal village. Durayā Ukkuvā, the chief or headman of the Hēnavala Kinnarayā, was till recently directly responsible to maintain order and peace of the village, in return for which he was receiving a salary, from the State, of Rs. 25 a month, or Rs. 64·40 including allowances. The separate post of a tribal headman or durayā prevailing from of old seems to prevail no more. The Hēnavala settlement of Kinnarayā covers an area 25 acres of highland grown with cocoa, coconut, arecanut and jak, and 12 acres of paddy land. The annual income from the high ground is not more than Rs. 100 though the land can easily be more productive and support a growing population if more work is put into it. The paddy land in a normal season of adequate rainfall would yield about 160 bushels of paddy. But you hear them complain of lack of water, as a plausible excuse for the fields remaining unworked. The same fields presented a picture of fruitfulness when later I saw it grown with a variety of vegetables such as *bandakkā* (lady's finger), brinjal, the long beans, tomatoes, cucumber, bitter and snake gourds, manioc, &c. Nevertheless, the Kinnarayā is not sufficiently alive to the need to put the fields to the best purpose, if he is to live a fuller life than he does now on the products of his loom. The use of channel water from the Hēnavala anicut across Galamuna Oya, the main source of water supply for the irrigation of the paddy lands of the village, has been a cause of occasional rift in the peaceful life of the village. This is a problem for the people themselves to settle, with the helping hand of the local authorities. This apart, the problem of making the best use of the highland, is the common problem of so utilising the land round about the farmer's homestead that it does not go to waste with noxious vegetation.

Primarily and traditionally a settlement purely of the Kinnarayās, about 35 acres of the high land and one acre of paddy land appear to have passed out of their hands in the course of years. This is a general feature of what has been happening in a number of other tribal areas also where alienation has taken place of tribal property, aggravating the problem of the welfare of the backward classes.

The daily life of the Kinnarayā is largely conditioned by the needs of his craft. Stocking sufficient quantity of *hana* leaves engages his first attention. Men and women leave their home with the first rays of the rising sun for places miles away where abound the *hana* plant and with head loads of the *hana* leaves return home before noon. Hastening with all speed to get back, they are in no mood to pose for photographs (Plate II, figs. 1 and 2). The several processes in preparing the fibre, dyeing and weaving, fill their routine of life. Most of this is

The study of the tribe outlined in these pages was carried out mainly at Hēnavala during four seasons' field work, supplemented by frequent visits to the other Kinnarayā habitat, notably, Malhāva, Ihalagama and Dikvāhara. My acknowledgments are due to Mr. C. M. Austin de Silva, Librarian, Colombo Museum Library, who assisted me in my field work at these villages, and to Mr. K. D. L. Wickramaratne, who was my field assistant on my first season's work at Hēnavala. He has also assisted me in the transliteration of the Sinhalese terms.

full-time work except for the process of spinning the yarn. With little or no interests outside their craft, unlike the Roḍiyā, they practically are in or about their village. Spinning the yarn round the spindle is work which admits of a good deal of relaxation. With the ease of movement that this affords, they enjoy the freedom and with the *Vallaḍuva* or the coil of *hana* fibre thrown across the back and projecting out at the shoulder, they freely loiter about, working as they talk or walk. Thus engaged, they are easily drawn into talking of themselves. They tell you of the past, of their traditions and their ancestors, the brothers Satta Durayā and Gabaḍā Durayā appointed by royal favour to supply mats to the Kandyan court, conferring on them the village site of Hēnavala by a royal decree or Sannas. The king whose memory they treasure is Narendra Sinha (1707–1739) popularly known as the Kuṇḍasāle Rāja.

Morning hours find the women with little of any domestic occupation and one of these would settle herself in front of you on a low wooden seat—the *Kolombuva*, and give you a running commentary of their hard life, with an occasional delving into the past. They respond well to your inquiries and appreciate your solicitude and you are soon surrounded by young and old, not only of the particular household, but by a good many of the neighbours all taking a keen interest in the visitor in their midst and what he is trying to know of them. One of the more knowledgeable type of men among them—not necessarily, a grey beard, would now come forward and narrate to you what you have already been told at your previous visits. You compare notes and find that the narrative you listen to is substantially the same, and this to you is valuable verification of data already collected.

Another day you chance to call when it is the season for jak, and you find the women busy cutting the jak for their meal, grinding the currystuff, and the indispensable *pol sambol*[1] of grated coconut, red chillies and dry fish. (Plate IV, fig. 2.) Jak is a god-send to these poor people and it grows on their family allotment of land. A youngster runs up the tree, and fells one of these fruits, which is sustaining food and taken with the *pol sambol*, quite appetising. In felling the fruits accidents are liable, as unless well experienced, the youngster would slip and fall killing him on the spot or maiming him for life. An accident of the sort has been the unfortunate experience of a young boy, the son of Samaradura gedara Pūla of the village—one of my first Kinnarayā informants—who while felling a jak, himself came down from the top branch of the tree, and fractured his right hand. Though the wound is healed, the fracture is there and the boy disabled for ever. Unable to spin or weave, he has already started to beg. A young life as good as lost to his family and himself !

When rice was in plentiful supply, they enjoyed rice meals both noon and night. In the mornings they used to feed on *piṭṭu*[2] and other rice delicacies. Today as a rule they forgo the mid-day rice meal, taking a meal of rice and curry towards the evening. Preparations for this begin at about noon and the women work almost non-stop, cutting the dry fish, grinding the chillies, scraping the coconut and washing the rice. While the women are busy preparing the food, the men pass the time between chewing betel and sitting and chatting. Some stretch themselves on a mat, and all await patiently for the evening meal. A pot of water stands in the open yard with the mouth covered by a half coconut shell which serves also as a cup and occasionally each takes a drink of water. Rattan or brass betel stands are part of their domestic equipment. With their food, they take a lot of herbs which they gather from the fields. Occasionally they have a mid-day meal of boiled jak, yams, manioc or sweet potatoes when these are in season. In the morning they have tea prepared at home and sometimes a meal of rice left over from the night meal. Festive occasions do not take them unawares. They prepare well in advance to spend the day as befits the occasion. Preoccupied as they mostly are with finding means of enjoying the day, they have no time on festival seasons to waste on the visitor in their midst. Collecting all the articles they have made they dispose of them as best as they can and lay by the cash against the festive occasion. Among the biggest

[1] A savoury of scraped coconut, Maldive fish, chillies, onion and salt to taste, all ground together.
[2] A preparation of rice flour shaped in the hollow of a bamboo mould, with scraped coconut in between each round, and steam cooked.

of such days is the Sinhalese New Year Day. The season draws family members together. Parents from Hēnavala visit their daughters married and settled at Ihalagama and there is family reunion among the scattered villages.

Paddy cultivation as a supplementary source of livelihood makes a great difference to economic security wherever the Kinnarayā is also a farmer as at Hēnavala and to a lesser extent at Dikvähara in North-Western Province, where each family owns some paddy land. At Dikvähara, where mat weaving does not earn a living wage, the family allotment of paddy land is put to good purpose. Mat weaving at Dikvähara is mainly a woman's job, the men mostly engaging themselves in farming work and in raising *chena*[1] crops. Punci-eki, the daughter of Dingiri-durayalāge Pinā, the maid-of-all-work at this household at Dikvähara, has her hands full at harvesting time, collecting the precious paddy, boiling and washing it in a wide mouthed pot, straining the sand and grit, and spreading it out on a mat in the sun to dry, and posting children to watch the paddy against crows and hens. Here, you also see an old and dilapidated *biśsa* or the grain store, a great feature all over Kurunegala, seen in front of every house, in which seed paddy is stored. The high ground is grown with yams and manioc, and the dry land cultivated with *Kurukkan* (ragi), and *menēri* or the green peas. Of avenues of employment in salaried posts, they have little or none. There is a single instance of a man of Malhäva village, Galkoṭuve-gedara Johnny by name, working as a railway porter in Anuradhapura. Where mat weaving brings scarcely any returns sufficient to make ends meet, the men take to other occupations as they do at Ihalagama, engaging themselves in such work as plucking or husking coconuts, felling coconut palms, splitting and sizing them up, and generally finding work in agricultural labour.

The pattern of dress today is basically the same as that of the normal Sinhalese villager, conventions and restrictions of the feudal Kandyan days in the matter of dress having largely gone by the board in the course of the later days. Men wear the sarong[1] secured by a leather belt through which shows out the head of a knife enclosed in a sheath made of the areca palm leaf-blade. The knife is an essential equipment of the men and handy for all odd work such as collecting the *hana* leaf or in the process of weaving. The upper part of the body is generally bare though some wear a banian and even a shirt as when they sojourn out of their village on business visits to Colombo.

Women's dress is the ordinary country wear, the coloured *Kambāya* or *chintz* cloth, forming the lower garment secured at the left side of the waist and reaching well below the knee and an upper garment of white jacket with short sleeves. The hair which is curly or wavy is either combed back or partitioned in the centre as is the Kandyan mode. There is scarcely any neck ornament though rarely a silver chain is in evidence, or a coral string. Of other jewellery too there is pretty little though where economic conditions are not too bad, women have silver trinkets in the ears, silver rings and silver bangles, and the silver *Kūru* or the hair pin with an ornamental head, stuck in the bunch of hair.

The *gè* name, or *vāsa gama* or house name, an essential feature of Sinhalese social system and an index to the history, status and rank of every family, does not obtain among tribal peoples such as the Roḍiyā and Kinnarayā. Nevertheless every family has a separate name, such as: *Pahalagedara*, the "house below" and *Pansalvatta*, "temple garden". This is a clear indication of the essential difference between the Sinhalese and tribal group organisation. Here also is a definite parallelism with Roḍiyā culture, Kandyan Roḍiyā families also bearing the appellation of the land on which the houses stand, such as: *aralugaha gedara*, or the house of the aralu tree (Terminalia chebula) or *demaṭagaha gedara*, the house of the demata tree (Gmelina asiatica). In essence, it answers to the purpose of the Sinhalese *gè* name. Here are a few of the names and surnames in Hēnavala and other villages:—*Kahaṭagaha-gedara* Kiriyā, Kiriyā of the house of Kahaṭagaha; *Egoḍahagedara-vatte* Lapayā, Lapayā of the house

[1] Derived from the Sinhalese term "hena", *chena* denotes the shifting cultivation of the Dry Zone jungles of Ceylon. Selecting an extent of the jungle it is cleared of all but the big trees. The dried clearings are set fire to and the soil fertilised by the ashes, is turned over and grown with quick growing crops.

[2] The popular lower garment worn by men, supposed to be of Malay origin.

on the other side ; *Damunugaha-goda-gedara* Hapuvā, Hapuvā of the house of the Damunu tree village ; *Vedikkāra-gedara Kaluvā*, Kaluvā of the Veddikkāra house ; *Telembugaha-gedara* Dingirī-ekī, Dingiri-ekī of the Telambu tree (Sterculia foetida) house. Present generation has taken new names as Piyadasa, Piyasena, Dingiriammā, Lucy, Jane and Jamis.

A Kinnarayā house is altogether different in plan from the average Roḍiyā house. (Text Fig. I.) It is a structure of two rooms, separated by a blank wall, the smaller end room being the kitchen, dark and dingy, and the bigger one, the living room, provided with a small window. Doors give access to the two rooms, from a long and narrow front verandah about 2 feet wide

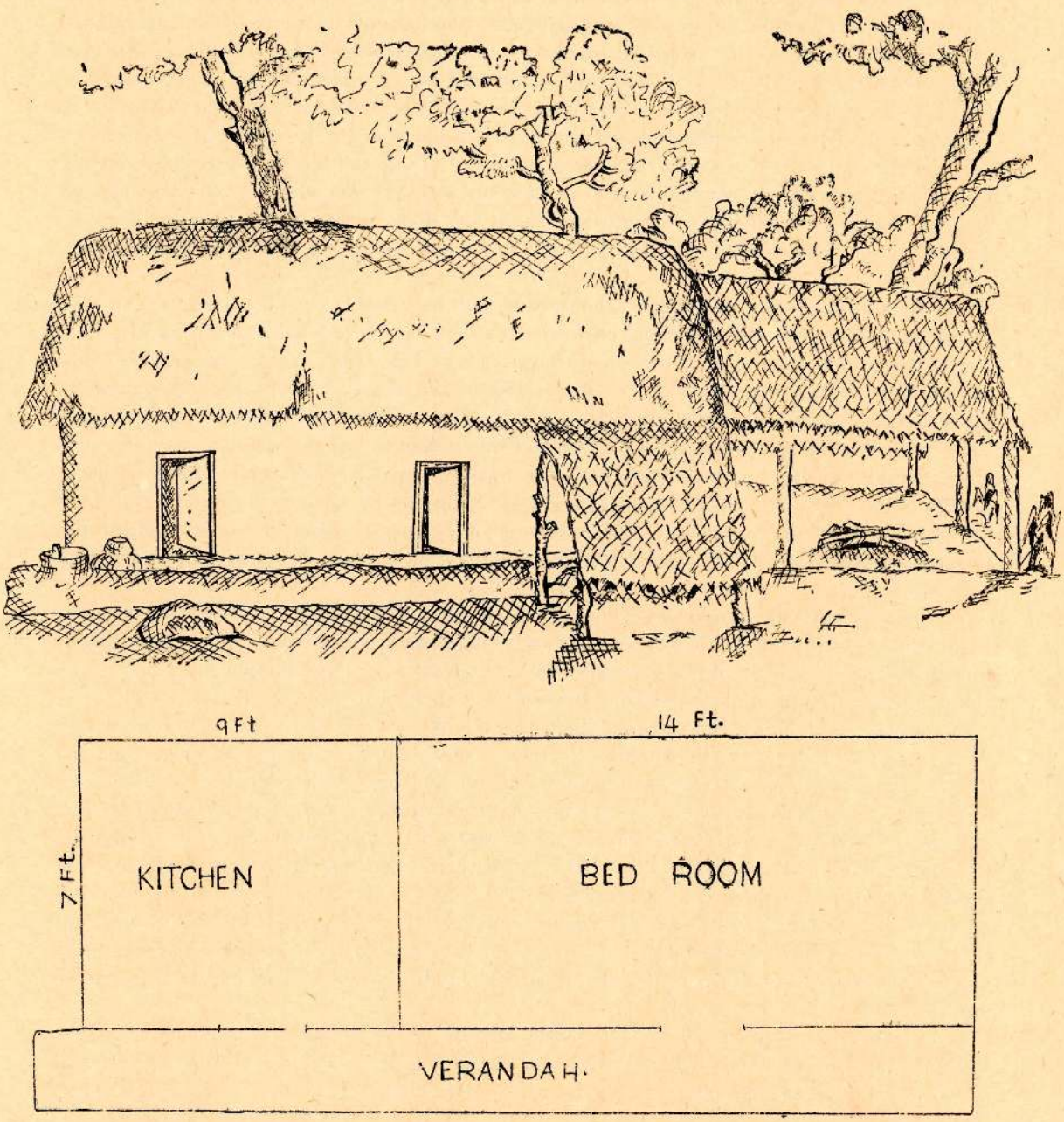

Fig. I

the eaves extending forward so as to give protection to the verandah which has no posts or pillars. The house is more than the wattle and daub that a Roḍiyā house generally is. The mud walls are plastered and white washed and covered over by straw thatch, the houses present a neat look. The kitchen has a single hearth and in a corner are piled pots and pans. Jak seeds preserved in sand may often be seen in another corner, literally against a rainy day, when it comes in handy for a dainty dish. The grinding stone or *miris gala* finds a prominent place in its elevated position at the verandah end near the kitchen door, so as to be handy to grind the currystuff for the jak stew or the delicacy of the *pol sambol*. Too high to admit of squatting, and too low to do the work standing, the Kinnarayā maiden bends over the grind stone and makes a quick job of the grinding process (Plate IV, fig. 2). The living room has a mat or two spread on the floor with occasionally a canvas covered folding cot. From a pair of *āna* or rope-work slings, are suspended mats either completed or incomplete, and bundles of reeds ; the material for the plainer mats. A few *Kolombuva* or low wooden short-legged seats, about 12 in. by 10 in. by 6 in. and a small *bankuva* or bench, completes the household furnishing. Chairs are seldom to be seen except in one of the old houses at Hēnavala. The Kinnarayā shows less of modernisation in his habits of life than the Roḍiyā, and indeed keeps to his traditional ways more than the average villager. That tradition rules his life is obvious from the single trait of wearing his head of hair cut short, though there is nothing today to prevent him from developing a full growth of hair, and doing it up in a bigger knot or *konḍe*. Almost every house has a covered shed supported on posts, which is the weaver's workshop.

Here he sits before his primitive house, and plies his trade ; and on a bench you sit, and watch him as he pulls out individual coloured strands from the *tuṁ-pā-kolla* or the tripod of sticks from which hand coils of the coloured yarn (Text Fig. III, 2) and as the weaving progresses, the patterns take shape as *kurulu* or bird, or the elephant, deer or cobra designs in pleasing tones of colour. Village houses in Ceylon are of varied patterns, and a Kinnarayā hut obviously reflects the needs of the craft and the craftsman. Though the houses are clean and generally well kept, and of congestion there is none, over thirty houses at Hēnavala being distributed over the extensive high land of 35 acres, considerable insanitation yet prevails over the grounds between the houses. This tells upon the general health of the settlement, the tiny tots getting the worst of it, indicated in scabies and other skin affections from which they patiently suffer.

Of the former existence of exogamous clans we have no trace today. Nor is any survival to be found of clan names. Clan system is a vanishing phenomenon wherever it once prevailed, though the memory of it serves to recall a clan organisation which functioned as among the Roḍiyās and a few other social groups in the not too distant past.

Houses or families bear ditinguishing names. Whether these names ever represented clans in the ages past and whether in these house names we may discern a survival of clan organisation, we have no indication. Different villages intermarry and bonds of kinship prevail. Cross-cousin marriage is the most favoured form. Tikira aged 35, son of Mānika Durayā of Malhāva in the district of Matale, is married to his cross-cousin from Hēnavala, daughter of his father's sister, Punci-ekī. Failing cross-cousins, matrimonial alliances are entered into between those distantly related. The bridegroom brings the bridal apparel and some jewellery and he gives a piece of about 4 yards of white cloth to the bride's mother and the *pōruva* ceremony [1] is performed. The standard of celebration of the marriage and the marriage feast varies with the means of the parties. Both *dīga* and *binna* forms [2] of marriage prevail.

Ceremonial pollution such as is observed at birth, puberty and death is denoted by the word *kili*, a word which generally corresponds to the English word *taboo*. The conventional period of pollution at child-birth is three months during which the mother abstains from meat,

[1] The ceremony conducted on the *pōruva*—a wooden dais on which the bridal couple stand during the course of the ceremony.

[2] When the bride is conducted after marriage to the bridegroom's house, where she stays, the marriage is in *dīga*. Where the bride remains at her house and the bridegroom comes and lives with her, the marriage is in *binna*—a matrilocal marriage.

pork, ash-plantains, or ash pumpkin. Nine days after the confinement, the mother is given a bath of a hot decoction of medicinal leaves, *tel eṇḍaru* (Ricinus communis), *pāvaṭṭa* (Pavatta indica) and *dehikola* or lime leaves. In the course of the bath the body is well massaged with handfuls of these leaves. Three such hot baths are taken in a month, after which she resumes her normal cold bath.

Puberty pollution is observed for a period of over a week, for the duration of which the girl is confined to a life of seclusion. After the fourth day, a number of women relations take her out for a bath and she returns dressed, when she pays obeisance to her elders and is seen by all men and women.

Death pollution is termed *marana kili*. A coconut oil lamp is kept lit at the place where the corpse is on view, awaiting burial. Until the body is removed out of the house, one of the inmates sits all through the night keeping awake by reading a book of jātaka tales in verse. No cooking is done until the corpse is removed from the house for burial or cremation. No sooner is it removed, than the women clean the house by an application of cowdung solution to the floor, after which the hearth is kindled. These habits of ceremonial taboo or pollution follow the customary practices observed by the Sinhalese villager.

The Hēnavala Kinnarayās are not altogether an illiterate lot. Out of a total of 60 men, 20 are literate in Sinhalese. The village has the benefit of a school, established about 1914 by Rev. H. C. Campbell, late of Trinity College, Kandy, which still maintains a controlling authority over it with a trained teacher. A mixed school for boys and girls, there are 38 children on the rolls and the school is open from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Plate V, figs. 1 and 2.) Government inspections are conducted annually in October. The children receive education in Sinhalese up to the 4th standard when most of the children leave and take to their own traditional pursuits.

At Malhāva, two little girls of six to seven years of age, reciting and singing in unison, was a refreshing sight in the gloom of their poor surroundings. The singing does credit to these little children who sing at village fairs and make a tiny or tidy collection for themselves—which they proudly hand over to their mother. Children who show off in public are a source of gratification to mothers, and Roḍiyā and Kinnarayā mothers feel themselves twice blessed in their precocious children displaying their skill in balancing feats and singing, earning a few cents for themselves and their proud mothers. Accompanying are the verses the girls sang :

1	1
Saban puyara gāvā nāvapu Ammā,	O'mother thou didst bathe me, applied soap and powder,
Nitin mihiri gī kiyamin nalavapu Ammā,	O'mother thou didst fondle me, singing melodious songs,
Rasin yutu ahara käv Ammā,	O'mother thou didst feed me with delicious food,
Nivanpuré siri säpa vindapan Ammā.	O'mother may thou enjoy the bliss of Nibbana.
2	**2**
Eka mohotak leḍin sitiyot memā piyē,	O'father the moment I fell ill,
Dukayen mā rägena veda gedara giya piyē	Thou with heavy heart didst take me to the physician,
Yakadurukan vedakan kala magē piyē,	With all medical attention, thou also wrought exorcism,
Däka Met Muni nivan däkapan magē piyē.	On meeting Maitri Buddha, may thou attain Nibbana.

3	3
Sellamaṭahita väti sellam kalōtin numba malliyē,	O'brother if thou art bent on play and sport all time,
Silpayaṭa äti āsā nätivi mōḍayek veyi malliyē	No crafts will thou learn and a silly man thou will be,
Allayaṭa singaman kakāvat kiluṭu-ändagana malliyē,	Though clad in rags and going abegging, give up not the love to learn,
Silpa ugatot neduk vindalā eyin väda veyi malliyē.	With knowledge thus acquired, a bright future will thy reward be.

These lines have an interest of their own for the simple sentiments of family affection they reveal.

Seldom given to grouse or grumble, they are wise to endure what cannot be cured, and take life rather easy. One of them runs a *boutique*,[1] the only one at this village—a cheery sort of man. As one who has benefited by the education he received at the school in the village where he studied up to the fourth standard, he showed some appreciation of our efforts to understand their ways of life, which prompted me to ask if he has any music in him. He did not wait to be asked a second time, letting himself go, reciting a few rhyming verses in folk style. As among the few examples of folk literature I could gather in any Kinnarayā village, I produce them here with a free English rendering—

1	1
Pun sanda gäba tulō rivi nädda eli velā	Does the sun not shine in the face of the moon ?
Bim neti talāve diya nädda boravelā	Aren't even deep waters muddy ?
Mam misa vena gānu lové nädda ledavelā	Aren't there women sick in this world besides me ?
Pun sandaṭat kälalak nädda sidu velā	Aren't there stains even in the moon ?
2	2
Udak udāran ganaran liyage säṭi	Behold, the golden hued proud damsel,
Kadak aran mē veladiya genena saṭi	Carrying the *pingo* [2] over the fields of water
Ädak nätuva äge varalasa kelin säti	With her hair falling down in tresses straight ;
Edat mehema uninam ek veṅḍa hiṭi	If so it was those days, we would today have been one.
3	3
Galaṭa vätuna diya pä ihirī yanavā	Water falling over a rock runs scattered,
Velaṭa yana kalaṭa anḍahära leladenavā	In the fields, the sound of the singing floats in the air,
Bohō kalak mē duk man usulanavā	My worries I have borne for long,
Talapa bedanā viṭa maṭa nidi mata enavā	When serving *talapa*,[3] I am drowsy.
4	4
Masuṅ marati maś vikunati kindaṅ vala	Fishes in pools are caught and sold.
Lēnun duvati duva äviditi kandaṅ vala	Squirrels frisk about on trees
Gōnun duvati duva äviditi damaṅ vala	The sambhur gambols in the jungle.
Gānun kuḍi basiti miturē Ambanpola	O, friend, at Ambanpola women marry in binna.

[1] A small shop selling food provisions or refreshments.
[2] The shoulder pole with basket at either end, the popular mode of transporting things about.
[3] A porridge of *Kurakkan* (Ragi) flour.

5

Taksalāva sanda mudunē tiyeṅnā
Duksālāva sita yaṭa karakāveṅnā
Malvelāva bambarindu ronaṭa eṅnā

Mak unāda ada maṭa nidi no eṅnā.

5

The moon is now over Taxila.
An undercurrent of sadness runs in me.
It is blossoming time. And the bees come humming.
What has happened ? I do not get any sleep today.

6

Ira sūriya pāyālā Ira mudunē
Sanda sūriyā pāyālā sanda mudunē
Gan sūriyā mala pipilā gasa mudunē
Gan kīriyā mal pusbayi numbe mūnē.

6

The sun shines and is at its highest
The moon shines and is at its zenith.
Gansuriya [1] flower blossoms in the tree.
And your face smells of *Gankiriya* [1] flowers.

The ideas conveyed in these lines have some poetic charm about them, which had better not be subjected to a prosaic analysis. The theme of romance that runs through them is obvious. Folk songs give meaning to life and express subtle feelings and emotions of the human breast in a more direct and telling manner than the higher poetical literature of a people.

The Kinnarayā has been talked of as having a knowledge of magic. Very probably this has been a heritage of his secluded and isolated mode of life, lending colour to such an idea in a rural environment very much receptive and credulous to a magical complex. Once he is reputed or suspected to have magic in him, this feeling would in time develop a sense of avoidance or taboo operating against the Kinnarayā. Magic will not be practised, unless there is a clientele who go in for it, for good or for evil, and the practitioner or pretender to magic, finds it easy money, and magic thrives on a soil of blind credulity. Generally speaking this keeps alive magic and its practices, wherever people are disposed to it. Searching for magic in a Kinnarayā village is a quest scarcely worthwhile, for the Kinnarayā today is rarely a magical phenomenon, which he may or may not have been in the past. On or two of the men at Hēnavala answer to a knowledge of charms.

As part of the practice of social medicine, curative charms have their own place in the countryside, besides special charms of the kind that one of the " grey beards " at Dikvähara regales you with. The charm called Maha Mātangēsvari Yantraya, which he prides in, is according to him the ancient *yantraya* [2] that King Duṭugämunu carried on the top of his crown, when he went to wage war with Elara, a charm which the Kinnarayā magic man now employs, no doubt for a consideration, specially indicated to gain official favour or for specific benefits.

Both at Hēnavala and Dikvähara you see the Kinnarayā woman in her role as the village midwife (Plate IV, fig. 3), in which capacity she enjoys a reputation in the pursuit of the profession. At Dikvähara, the household of Dingiridurayalāgē Pina has seven inmates, D. D. Pinā, the father, Tikiriyadurayalāgē Pinī, the mother, three sons, Kirā, Mānika and Uttiyā and two daughters, Punci-ekī and Bindu. Pinī, their mother, is a midwife, and has practised her profession for about 25 years. It runs in her family which has practised it for generations. Her daughter, Punci-ekī also takes to it. When the mother goes on a professional visit, she spends about two days in the house of confinement. In difficult cases she even prescribes medicines. A preliminary treatment of *uluhāl kasāya* or decoction is administered, made of these ingredients :—*uluhāl* (Fennel seeds ;—Trigonella—Foenum Graecum)

[1] Do not seem to correspond to any known flowers.

[2] *Yantraya* are magical diagrams and designs inscribed in copper, silver or gold foils, or even drawn on paper and duly " charmed ". The metallic foil or the paper so charmed is tightly rolled and inserted in a narrow casing of silver or gold. The *yantraya* so encased is worn on the person as a protective talisman. In Kérala, where the same magical charms prevail, such talisman are largely worn round the waist. Suspended from the neck by women as in Ceylon or Kérala, it serves the dual purpose of a talisman as well as an ornament. In Ceylon men too wear it hanging by a chain from the neck, but in Kérala this mode of wearing from the neck prevails as a rule among the women.

and garlic taken in equal quantities and boiled in four cups of water until the mixture is reduced to one cup. In the second stage of treatment, she takes equal quantities of *ät-demata* (Gmelina arborea) and *rasa-kinda* (Tinospora cordifolia) and set to boil in 4 cups of water, reduced to one cup, and the dosage administered with a teaspoonful of ghee.

Leading a quiet settled life and engaged in a vocation equally peaceful, their tribal religion must have been quite simple, unlike the religious complex of the hunting tribes and jungle peoples of the north-central parts of the Island, of which Parker and Nevill have given us glimpses. The Kinnarayā as a tribal factor finds early mention with Roḍiyā traditions, and is presumably a tribe of the far off days, co-existent with the Roḍiyā. There is, however, no survival or trace of any Kinnarayā tribal religion. The folk cult of gods and spirits that prevails in the villages today no doubt has had a long antiquity and all early peoples were drawn within its dynamic force. Such cults apart, the Kinnarayās are Buddhists by religion, just as the Roḍiyās are. They respect the convention which prevents their going to the local temple. According to themselves, they freely mix with the mass of devotees to the Dalada Māligāva at Kandy on sacred and festive days, such as the Poson,[1] and the Vesak,[2] and the days of the Kandy Perahära. One of the largest of Bo-trees grows at Hēnavala and is an object of veneration, true Buddhists that they are. At the foot of it are some crude figures and drawings. There is no temple. An abortive attempt was made to build one a few years ago. Ihalagama, near Ambepussa, is a small Kinnarayā village of 7 huts, housing 50 souls, who I understand are not denied freedom of worship at the local temple. On *poya* [3] days they observe *sil*, and take part in the religious ceremonies. Of the popular deities there is a dēvāla erected at Nātagama in Dikvähara, to goddess Pattini deviyō. On *Kemmura* days (days sacred to the dēvās—Wednesdays and Saturdays) they visit the dēvāla and also erect flower altars in front of their houses, and light lamps to the goddess on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Lamps are also lit to Hūniyam dēvatāvā [4].

3.—Race and Social Status

The tendency to apply the Väddā yard stick to every tribal society seems to have been a favourite mode of approach. The Kinnarayā had their due share of this method of study at the hands of Parker [5] who reached the obvious negative conclusion that their mode of life does not indicate any connection with the Väddās " none of them being either hunters or fishers ". As almost the only observer who has had something to say of these people, his observations [5] reproduced below, have a value of their own :—" There is only one race in Ceylon with curly hair ; they are the Kinnarās or Karmāntayō, the mat weavers, the lowest caste in the Island. In the case of some of the men the whole hair of the crown consists of a mass of very short thick curls, while the lips of those I have seen were invariably rather thick, although the jaws were not prognathous. Their faces resemble in other respects those of Kandians, and are not of the Mongolian type. The hair of the women is tied up in knot like that of the ordinary Sinhalese. The men never allow their hair to hang down beyond the upper part of the neck even in the case of those whose locks are not so curly as others ; it is always cut off when it reaches this length. The colour of these people is the same dark brown as that of the average Kandian villager ; I have seen none who were much darker than this."

" Their mode of life does not indicate any connection with the Väddās, none of them being either hunters or fishers ; all gain their living by weaving mats in frames and cultivating millet and rice. They have village tanks and rice fields, and keep cattle ; their villages and houses are clean and neat, being exactly like those of the Kandyan Sinhalese. They have no

[1] Sacred to Mahinda, who introduced Buddhism into the Island—the day falls on the full moon day in June.

[2] The day of the nativity, the enlightenment and the passing away of the Buddha. Usually the first full moon in the month of May.

[3] Poya days :—Days of the four quarters of the moon, sacred to the Buddhists.

[4] Hūniyam dēvatāvā :—The Hūniyam or Sūniyam yakā, is a god feared for the evil he is capable of. To ward off evils and to protect the household from all harm, a little lamp burning a wick of coconut oil is kept lit in front of houses in villages all night.

[5] Parker, H. *Ancient Ceylon*, 1909, pp. 44–45.

tradition regarding their origin, and no dialect of their own, knowing not one word, except Sinhalese ; and nearly all their folk stories are the same as those of the Kandians. Those which vary from the latter are chiefly Buddhistic, the race being all Buddhists, though not permitted by the Kandians to enter the Viharas or the houses of other villagers. Their rank is so low that, as some of them admitted to me, they address even the Roḍiyās, whom many wrongly believe to be the lowest race in the Island, as Hamuduruvo, ' my Lord ', and do not pass them on a path without first asking permission to do so. I was informed that the Roḍiyās at once interfere if any of the men attempt to allow their hair to grow beyond the upper part of the neck, and order them to cut it shorter. "

" I believe that they are now found only in the district immediately to the north and north-west of Kandy and near Kurunegala ; but a Sinhalese folk tale places some on the western coast. This may indicate that we have in them the remnant of another tribe who came from the Malayalam country. It is interesting to note that, like the Veddas, they have completely abandoned their original language. "

These remarks find reiteration in Parker's " Village Folk Tales of Ceylon [1] " :—" Nothing is known regarding the origin of the Kinnarās, the lowest caste of all, in whose case there are several anomalies that deserve investigation. They do not hunt as a profession. They have village tanks and rice fields, own cattle, and have good houses and neat villages. Their caste occupation is mat weaving in frames, with *Niyanda* fibre alone or combined with grass. "

" Some have their heads covered with a mass of thick, short, very curly hair, being the only people in the Island possessing this distinctive characteristic. The features and the colour of the skin are of the ordinary type of the lower castes, and would not enable them to be recognised from others. Social rules forbid the growth of the hair beyond the neck. The dress of the woman is restricted like that of the Durayās. Though they can never enter Buddhist temples, or the enclosures round them, they are all Buddhists. I was informed that their social ceremonies, as well as the religious ones, that is those for propitiating evil spirits, whether demoniacal or planetary, closely resemble those of the other castes ; and that they, as well as the Roḍiyās, have their own medical practitioners, astrologers, soothsayers, and *kapuvas* or officiators at demon ceremonies. "

Parker in his remarks extracted above, makes a great point of the " mass of very short thick curls ", and " the rather thick lips " of some he has seen. Of more specific racial affiliation as such, Parker is however silent. Actually, the curliness that Parker refers to is nothing more than what is generally associated with the cymotrichous or the wavy or curly-haired races of mankind. It is not the wooly-haired type or the short spirals seen in the Negroid peoples. In racial classification individual variations scarcely affect the racial type. There is a good deal of the straight hair also present though the wavy hair predominates. Skin colour varies between light to dark brown, more medium than dark. Nose is perhaps the more noticeable of their facial characters. The older generation have mostly rather high-pitched nose, thick and heavy at the base.

The observable somatic characters are mainly—medium stature, brown skin colour, more medium than dark, rather long, large and thick nose in full grown adults, eyes set deep, lips not thick or everted, hair more wavy or curly than straight, a variable head form, and no prognathism or heavy brow ridges. The elder generation presents rather rugged features, with scant body hair and the chin tuft. These traits make it rather a problem to place them racially, presenting generally a composite make up of Mediterranean and Australoid admixture. The specialised traits seen among the elderly members may even be considered as effects of a highly " domesticated " tribal life, living under the same unchanging conditions of life and work, food supply and shelter, for ages living like domesticated animals—a life, in the words of Kroeber of " self-domestication [2] ". This specialised form of life in a " protective environment " has been changing fast. The isolation of Kinnarayā villages is a thing of the past. With increasing social

[1] Parker, H. *Village Folk Tales of Ceylon*, 1910, Vol. I, pp. 30–31.
[2] Kroeber. *Anthropology*, 1948—Sections 34 and 73. " Specializations associated with self-domestication."

contacts and improved means of communication, all villages being easily accessible, the changing environment is finding its expression in the changing bodily characters of the youth and the juvenile in whom may be seen a lighter skin colour with slender body build and short straight nose, instead of the heavy stumpy nose of the age grades above the present generation of juveniles, answering more to the Mediterranean racial form. Though low in the eyes of the feudal social system, theirs was not a servile service. That they were not numerically strong is what we may gather from Robert Knox, the chronicler of Kandyan times. Highly informative as Knox is in speaking of the Roḍiyās, he dismisses the Kinnarayās in a few words :—" Then follow the Kinnerahs Whose Trade is to make Matts—These men may not wear anything on their Heads—The Women of none of these sorts ever do—These are but few."[1] Davy, no doubt following Knox, tells us that " The Kinnera badde is a very small caste that had to provide the royal stores with ropes and mats. Their dress is similar to that of the other very low castes, with the exception that they are not allowed to confine their hair with a handkerchief"[2]. Besides mats, an important service of the Kinnarayā is revealed to be the making and supplying of whips for State occasions. Roḍiyās supplied whips of hide, and the Kinnarayās supplied whips made of *Niyanda* fibre. It is stated that " the villagers of Ambale, Dumbara, Dunuvila, Nugatänna, Bamberebädde and other villages get them made by Kinnereyās of these villages and other villages, and supply them to Kinnera Badda Rala." The Kasakārayās were the whip-bearers who preceded the King when he went in state and the whips were supplied to the King's Kasakāra Maḍuva by Kinnara Bädde Nilame. " The King's whips were made of dyed Niyanda fibre of various colours. The two Adigars were also supplied whips by the same Kinnara Bädde Rāla from the above villages ".[3]

There has obviously been a good deal of improvement in the social status of the Kinnarayā from the days of the Kandyan Kingdom when the Kinnarayā struck the bottom in the hierarchy of social divisions. Philalethes [4] writing in 1816 refers to them as *Hiene Jati*. The word *hīna* as an attribute connotes all that is despicable though below them is mentioned the *Antere Jati*, or the outcast—which is the Roḍiyā. Parker alludes to the Kinnarayā " the lowest caste in Ceylon " lower than even the Rodiya, though this is not borne out by other chroniclers. So far as the present position of Kinnarayā is concerned, he is not a victim to social taboos, of the sort that operates against the Roḍiyā. He has a freedom of movement and of direct communication with his neighbours that the Roḍiyā does not enjoy. With the long *valladuva* or the coil of the *hana* fibre thrown over his shoulder, he loiters about in the vicinity of his village and freely goes to the house of the Village Headman of Hurikaḍuva, within whose jurisdiction falls the Hēnavala Kinnarayā settlement, though this may be no index to freedom of access to Kandyan houses in general.

More than any other factor it is the tribal art that holds the people together—the art of the Dumbara mat which is their great contribution to Ceylon art. Apart from this the tie that welds them is their habitat and the person of the tribal Chief, the Duraya, factors which promote the feeling of a self-conscious local group. The family with its kinship bonds is the dynamic unit. Members of each family work hard on their mat weaving craft—men, women and children. Begging has no place in their scheme of life, and work they must, if they have to live. In a Kinnarayā household, the woman is as much a " workman " as the man. Apart from her responsibility of feeding the household, she does a good deal of mat making herself, weaving mostly the plain, or hävan mats of reeds, and she does this with all the dexterity of a practised hand, sitting at the loom, and working until a mat is finished. Family life with the Kinnarayā is strongly correlated to the economics of the group.

Living in enclaves surrounded by progressive groups, many have been the influences which have been at work causing changes in the cultural pattern of both the Roḍiyā and the Kinnarayā, changes which are best denoted by the term " acculturation ". Two main spheres

[1] Knox, Robert. *A Historical Relation of Ceylon*, 1681, p. 110.
[2] Davy, John. 1821, *An Account of the Interior of Ceylon*, p. 129.
[3] Pieris, P. E. 1950, *Sinhale and the Patriots*, 1815–1818, Notes to Chapter I, p. 445.
[4] Philalethes. 1817, *The History of Ceylon from the earliest period to the year 1815*, p. 331.

of acculturation may be observed—the religious and the social. Of tribal religion as such there is none, Buddhist influences spreading into their tribal life, submerging any trace of original tribal religion. Living for ages in close proximity to the higher Sinhalese culture—with their colourful celebrations of the great festivals such as the Vesak and the Poson—theirs has been a case of unconscious absorption into the Buddhist fold. The passage too from tribal religion to Buddhism must have been easy with the prevailing folk cults of spirits and deities, which fulfilled their day to day needs of communion with the unknown. This process of cultural integration with Buddhism, is a process that is gaining strength, and will obviously continue until the Roḍiyā and the Kinnarayā are accepted in the fulness of time, as two units of the Sinhalese social structure which they scarcely are today. This obviously is the ultimate goal of these two lower orders who have been steadily copying and absorbing the social ways and habits of the Sinhalese. In this latter process, we have the second aspect of culture change—on the social plane. In their social customs such as those centering round the three main stages of life—births, deaths and marriages, as the observance of *Kili* or ceremonial pollution attendant on births and deaths, and in their marriage ceremonials and practices, as in their kinship or relationship system, we see the essential culture traits of the Sinhalese, which have been adopted in the social life of both the Roḍiyā and the Kinnarayā, though in the matter of ceremonials everything is on a small and modest scale, consistent with their economic position and restricted to the bare essentials. The cultural adaptation of social institutions, has been so thorough, that we have no knowledge of the tribal patterns that may have regulated their life in the ages past. Nor do we know the stages in this process of cultural change, from a tribal to a higher social concept. We can only surmise that living in an ecological setting of Buddhist culture, unlike the Väddā living in the woods, religion was the first to change as we know in the case of the Roḍiyā, who had their own tribal religion, which gave way to Buddhism. Beginning with religious change, social changes followed. So far as the social structure is concerned, the Kinnarayā is just on the borderland of the Sinhalese social system.

Side lights of social attitude such as now prevails give us an insight into their place in society today. Though the women seldom go outside their village, being ever busy in the business of preparing the fibre, spinning, weaving or cooking, they are generally looked upon with some regard. Practically all classes just higher to them in social scale address them as *nändā* (aunt), while the higher castes call them *Kollammo* literally boy's mother. A maiden is referred to as Kella (girl) in popular parlance [1]. An elderly Kinnarayā man is addressed as Durayā, the term which in its stricter usage is applied to the chief or the tribal headman.

Their own behaviour towards others is highly respectful, without the trappings of modernisation that is evident in the Kandyan Roḍiyā. As a class, they are as peaceful a sort as any in Ceylon. Peace at any price would seem to be their rule of life even towards the Roḍiyā, between whom there is the tradition of an old rivalry, the precise nature of which we are left to surmise. They freely admit, as at Ihalagama they narrated to me, how in days of yore they were disgraced and insulted when one of their class asked for a Roḍiyā girl in marriage and the Roḍiyā in a fit of fury, cut off the hair of the Kinnarayā man who has ever since worn his hair short. Submissiveness such as this may have led observers like Parker into believing the Kinnarayā to be " the lowest caste of all ".

The Roḍiyā and the Kinnarayā provide interesting parallels and contrasts. Each is a distinctive tribal unit which still presents an integrated picture, while each has its own speciality of handicrafts. The one begs as a matter of habit, the other does not. Each is endogamous and while the Roḍiyā has today something more than a memory of functioning exogamous

[1] Regard for elders is traditionally ingrained in the social behaviour of the Sinhalese and the words *māmā* and nändā, applied in addressing an elderly man or woman inferior in social status, is only an indication of this conventional attitude of regard for age, irrespective of the position in society.

A woman is *kolla ammo*, or the abbreviated form, *kollammo* or *kollamo*, meaning " the boy's mother ". The boy's proper name is also used as for example, *Sirisena ammō*, or *Sirisenalage ammō*, Sirisena's mother; *Gunapala ammō*, Gunapala's mother, &c. If the woman has a daughter, and no sons, she may be addressed as " *Somavathie ammō* ", Somavathie's mother or " *Visakā ammō* ", Visakā's mother.

Kella is colloquial for a girl, lower socially than the person speaking.

clans, the Kinnarayā social set up shows no trace of any clan organisation. The Roḍiyā has had a vigorous tribal language which still survives, while the Kinnarayā has no vestiges of a tribal language. Each has its habitat in what was once the Kandyan Provinces, with its own chief, surviving under the changed conditions of the present day. The Kinnarayās are not numerically the equal of the Roḍiyā. Though the Kinnarayā does not suffer under such great social inhibitions as the Roḍiyā does, the latter has had more opportunity of contacts with society within the Kandyan domains with the consequent cultural changes, which has left the Kinnarayā comparatively uninfluenced. He is thus more true to his primitive ways and habits of life. The Kinnarayā is not quite so hardy or robust as is the Roḍiyā, whose more active life has endowed him with a sturdy frame of body, while the Kinnarayā's leisurely life of spinning and weaving has left its stamp on him of a rather weak and even effeminate personality. This possibly developed a submissive outlook in his behaviour towards the Roḍiyā, which has given rise to the opinion that he is lower than the Roḍiyā. A profitable line of work would be to develop forms of tests for a full study of their social psychology for which the Kinnarayā presents an interesting field. The rolled up bunch of hair, which does not ever develop into the shapely Sinhalese *konde*, may or may not be a tribal trait, though it is more probably a tribal trait than arising from a habit forced on them by the Roḍiyā, a story which even the Kinnarayā does not hesitate to tell you, provided you get him in a chatty and leisurely mood. I have however heard it asserted by Kandyans that their mode of wearing the hair is a definite sign of their social inferiority, if not of real subordination to the Roḍiyā.

Of social contacts, friendly or otherwise, between the Kinnarayā and the Roḍiyā, there is scarcely any today. The Kinnarayā's is a job that ties him to his village and its immediate vicinity, while the Roḍiyā has necessarily to be on his feet in his begging jaunts. They don't ordinarily cross each other's path, though in such expressions as "Roḍiyāṭa Kinnarā hamba unā vageyi"—like the Roḍiyā meeting the Kinnarayā; "Roḍiyāṭa Kinnarayā munagāhunā vageyi"—"like a Kinnarayā confronting the Roḍiyā," we have reflections of the tensions of the past. The Roḍiyā's mental complex cannot be better expressed than in the saying that I listened to at a Kandyan village during my tour with the Backward Classes Development Board, that by the side of a Kinnarayā, the Roḍiyā would even step on a lump of cowdung, if only to insist that he is the bigger man. This throws interesting sidelight on the Roḍiyā sentiment towards the Kinnarayā and possibly is a pointer to a former superior rank occupied by the Roḍiyā before the days of the Kandyan monarchy. In the social thinking of the present, he is however, relegated to a position inferior to the Kinnarayā.

A few of the case histories of typical lives are given below :—

(1) Telambugahagedara Ukkuvā Durayā of Hēnavala is 59 years of age, and has been durayā or headman of Hēnavala for the last 33 years. He is educated in Sinhalese, which he reads and writes, and has a sheaf of certificates from Government Officers testifying to his ability. The office of durayā is hereditary and he comes of a long line of durayās.

His father was Tettuva and mother Tikiri. He married, at the age of 25 years, Kiri of the same village who died about 8 years ago, leaving five children—3 sons and 2 daughters T. G. Hapu and Tikirimudi, both married. Havaḍiya his son is at Malhāva in Matale, married and settled there.

Ukkuvā Durayā has been a much travelled man, having been to Germany, Holland, Italy and America, where he was taken by Mr. John Hagenbeck, the German, who organised shows of Dumbara mats demonstrating the art to interested spectators. In Germany, he visited Berlin, Hamburg, Nuremburg, Leipzig, Bresslau and Halle, where Ukkuvā Durayā displayed the art of weaving Dumbara mats, and he was well rewarded.

(2) Damunugahagoda-gedara Mānikā, hiṭapu or the ex-durayā of Malhāva is 77 years of age. His father, Uḍagedara Lapayā and mother, Uḍagedara Guru, were long-lived too, dying at 73 and 63 years of age respectively. His wife Koṭagaha-gedara Hapu, died aged 45 years, leaving three children, Māniki, daughter, aged 40 years; Tikirā, son, aged 35 years and Kalu, daughter, 25 years old. His daughter Māniki married in the same village—Lost her husband

about 5 years ago—Has one child, Poḍḍi, a girl of 8 years. Tikirā married from Hēnavala, his cousin (uncle's daughter, and child of his father's sister) Punci-ekī. He has three sons and one daughter. Two of the children attend school.

Mānikā Durayā has an interesting life history. Migrating to Colombo in 1892, he proceeded to Welitara where he was ordained at 12 years of age and received his education under Rev. Welitara Ñānavimala. Studying both Pali and Sinhalese, he received the *upasampadā* ordination at the age of 20, taking the name of Rev. Ñānavimala. On his return to his village he disrobed at 33 years of age and married. Took to agriculture and mat weaving. Was appointed headman or the durayā of the village on a salary of Rs. 20 per mensem, holding the post for some years. He was recommended for a pension of Rs. 4·50 which he drew for about 4 months and which was later stopped. He is now dependent on his children, but hopes to get an old age pension.

(3) At Ihalagama Kinnara village, lives the 75 years old Punci ekī. Her father was Kirā and mother Lapī. She married Puncinā from Dumbara, where three children were born to her. After the death of her husband, she returned to her own village, Ihalagama, where she is an interesting personality. Has three children—one son, Kulā and two daughters, Ukku and Poḍikella. Her brother-in-law Puncā, was one of those who was taken to Germany during the first Great War by the German, John Hagenbeck.

4.—Traditions and Legends

" Janavaṃsa, " a Sinhalese composition ascribed to 15th century or earlier, has something of its own to say of the Kinnarayās. Nevill's translation published in the *Taprobanian*, Vol. I, gives us the following account [1] :—

" Those who weave from grass and the like, matting (kalāla), pillows and mats for sleeping, covering, treading under foot, and sitting on, whether of hemp, Niyanda (Sansivieria), plantain, pandanus, grass or rushes, are called " Panakara, " " Kat-tha-kara, " as in the work called Saṇdhi Kalpa, in the Karaka chapter ; because they weave kalāla matting with niyanda, hemp and rushes and the like ; because being stubborn in anger they had pannarakam (obstinacy), the name called " Tinakara " was expressed as " Kinaraya, " because on kalal pillows and the like, in the four corners, each in an appropriate place, they made, and tied, and hung white hemp tassels, and *niyanda* tassels, so as to cause pleasure, their name became ' Henawalaya. '

To this Nevill adds his own comments:—" Kat-tha-kara, Panna-kara, Tinnakara, Henawalaya, are given as synonyms of Kinnara. The Kinnara are undoubtedly an Egyptian race, the followers of the house of Palastiya ; in Ceylon they are distinguished by their mat-weaving of exquisite designs on a strong woof, made with the threads at a great distance apart. They always wore the hair cut short, and a hempen fillet bound round it, and still do so, just as they are carved on the rail of the Sanchi Tope [2]. The name Kat-tha-kāra suggests Cathay and Kathiawar, no doubt correctly. The Panna kāra are perhaps the Banniyas of Western India. Henawalaya is most interesting ; it probably refers also to the Senayar, a race of weavers of South India, a branch of which migrated to Chilaw under the Dutch rule. Tinnakara is perhaps also a form of the name Senayar, as Shenayar ". These derivations and theories are scarcely convincing. The variants of the name Kinnarayā, seem to be capable of more sensible interpretation. Upham's Collection of Buddhist Tracts [3] gives the following comments :— " Because they weave a kind of leaves, they are called Pannakārayō, that is, leaf-workers. Because they beat some kinds of trees till they become of a woolly substance, which substance

[1] Nevill, Hugh. *The Taprobanian*, Vol. I, 1886—p. 93 and Note 24, p. 113.

[2] Hovering Kinnaras are found in the Sanchi sculptures as guarding sacred trees with wreaths and offerings. The mythological Kinnaras are " winged human figures with tails, legs and feet of a bird ", and in the Sanchi sculptures their human head has abundant hair made up into elaborate coiffures with projecting tufts secured by bands. Little or no verification can thus be found in Sanchi, as Nevill tells, of the Kinnaras, wearing the hair in a roll secured by strands as the Kinnarayā mat weaver of Ceylon does.

[3] Upham, E. *The Mahavansi, the Raja-Ratnacari and the Rajā-vali* also *A Collection of Tracts*, Vol. III, 1833, pp. 350–351.

they take and make into mats, they are called Cattakārayō, that is, workers in hard matter, or in wood. Because they make some kinds of grass into mats, they are called Tinakārayō, that is, workers in grass ; and by changing the *ti* into *ki*, and doubling the *n*, and suppressing the *k*, and by changing the *ra* into *ru*, the Cingalese call them Kinnaru, which signifies the same thing—workers in grass. Because they make some mats with fringed selvedges, they are called Hainawalayō, that is, fringe-makers. " Nevill has Katha Karayo instead of Caṭṭa Kārayo, the former rendering no doubt is more in keeping with his idea of tracing the tribe to Cathai in China, or to Kathiawar in India. The meaning of Kaṭṭa Kārayō in the extract above as : " workers in hard matter or in wood " would indicate that the word is from Kaṭṭa, the Tamil name for wood. Could this have been derived from their mode of preparing the fibre from the leaves of the hemp, which they lay on a block of wood, or Kaṭṭa, scraping off the green by a wooden implement ? Both " Janavaṃsa " and the extract from Upham quoted above agree in referring the term Hēnavalayā to their art of making pillow cases with a row of hemp tassels or fringes. Vāli or Valī may well signify a row, as in muttā-valī, a row of pearls, ratnā-valī, a row of gems. From this analogy, hēnāvali may mean a row of the hemp fibre, as in the tassels all in a row on the fringes of cushion covers which they still make ; and henavalaya, the maker of such things. Yet another interpretation is what we may gather from Philalethes [1] who refers to the mat-weavers as " Hiene Jaty " in the statement : " Hiene Jaty and Antere Jaty, two castes of the lowest order, not reckoned among the rest, and more despised than all the rest. The first of these two castes, who are sometimes called Kinneas, weave fine mats ". Hiene Jaty no doubt is Hīna Jāti or the low caste : Could " hēnavalayā " have been the same as " hīnavalayā, " or a man of the low caste, and Hēnavala, the village of the men of the low caste ? Antere Jaty here refers to the Roḍiyās, the outcasts.

That the name Kinnara and the people answering to the name have aroused not a little speculation, would appear from the pages of the Ceylon National Review [2], where we find it stated that Kinnaras—, " sometimes called Kimpurusha [3] was another non-human race which is said to have lived in prehistoric Ceylon. "

A story that recalls a legendary origin comes from the village of Dikvähara as narrated by Pinā, an old Kinnarayā. The story is that their ancestors came from Duluvaradēsa—, wherever that may have been. It is said that King Mahasammata had a nephew called Kuru Mudaliyā. The story is that heavenly nymphs were visiting the king's flower garden by nightfall and stealing away the flowers. Kuru Mudaliyā was ordered to detect this raiding of the garden. As the shades of night were thickening, he was charmed to see seven nymphs alighting from the heavens and collecting flowers. Dumbfounded as he was, he managed to capture one of them who later became his wife. They grew so leisurely that Mahasammata one day threatened that they would both be beheaded if they rendered no service to the palace. This

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[1] Philalethes. 1817, *The History of Ceylon from the earliest period to the year 1815*, p. 331.

[2] Kinnaras (sometimes called Kimpurushas) were another non-human race which is said to have lived in prehistoric Ceylon. They belonged to a class of demi-gods who had a human body and the head of a horse, or the reverse, with the body of a horse and the head of a man. They were reckoned among the celestial choristers and were attached to the service of Kuvera. There were also three kinds of Kinnaras, viz., Liyakinduru (creeper Kinnaras), Vana Kinduru (forest Kinnaras), and Muhudu Kinduru (sea Kinnaras). There was also a species which had the body of a bird with the face of man. There is still in the up-country of Ceylon a small race, who are probably descendants of the ancient Kinnaras, known by the name Kinnaras. They are lower in grade than the Roḍiyās. They are mat-makers and are illiterate. There is a similar class in India called Haivos, i.e., Hayāsyas (Lit. ' horse-faced '), who were Kinnaras. There is a tradition among them that they originally came from Laṅka, having left this after the defeat of their king Rāvanā whom they still regard as their hero and god. Their physical traits are said to justify the term ' horse-faced '. Gunasekara, A. M. *Prehistoric Ceylon, Ceylon National Review*, No. 2, July, 1906, pages 146–47.

" Mudaliyar Gunasekera in his article on prehistoric Ceylon in our last number speaks of the people known as Kinnarayas, who are mat weavers in the Kandyan provinces, as being inferior to the Rodiyas, and altogether illiterate. This is not the case, as they are always considered to form a caste superior to the Rodiyas and we have met some Kinnarayas who were far from illiterate, and have even been able to obtain useful ola mss. from them. With regard to mythical Kinnaras, it appears that three varieties are recognized by Sinhalese artists ; of these, the canda kindura has a human body with wings, dwelling in the air, and exactly corresponds to the Christian angel in general appearance ; the jala kindura is a regular mermaid, with a fish tail, and inhabiting water ; the liyakindura is the best known form, half human, half bird and inhabits forests ". Notes to Ceylon National Review, No. 3, January, 1907, p. 370.

[3] Kin–nara–, literally, what-man ;
Kim–purusha–, a man of the woods—Pali Text Society's ; Pali English Dictionary, 1925, pages 41 and 42.

made them despondent when god Sakra appeared, to whom they represented their difficulties. Sakra promised to help them and the god taught them the art of making Kalāla mats. Two mats were accordingly made, one of which was presented to the king. The Kinnarayā tribe is supposed to be the descendants of Kuru Mudaliyā and his wife Kinnara Dēvi. This legend thus ascribes a divine origin to both the art and the man who practises it. It also accounts for the name Kinnarayā.

Another interesting legend also from Dikhvähara village is this :—One of their primitive ancestors was hunting in the woods when he sighted a herd of elephants about a thousand, doing homage to a Bo-tree. He reported the matter to the chieftain of the place who erected a temple at the site, the Dikhvähara Purāna Vihāra, where stands today the sacred Bo-tree, in the precincts of the temple. This village of ten houses with a population of about forty is obviously a very ancient village and the tradition is that they came to settle there during the time of King Dēvānampiya Tissa.

Each locality has apparently its own tradition. At Iriyadeniya, a village in the vicinity of Kurunegala, the tradition is that the founder of the settlement—Moriya Biso Bandara—came from India with a retinue of 18 vannams or clans, and settled themselves first at Mahagama close to a Batgama village. The new-comers did not remain there long for the older residents frightened them by throwing the carcase of a dead buffalo into their well. Thereupon they left the place and approached the King for a place on which to settle. The King allowed them to mark 40 acres of land giving them the choice of " picking " the land. This practice was termed Atu Kaḍanavā or " breaking of twigs ". Selecting a spot the villagers would go about breaking twigs along the limits of the land decided upon by them. They thus settled themselves where they now are with about 40 acres of land. Of these only 5 acres now remain in their possession, the remaining 35 having passed out of their hands !

Yet another tradition visualises them in the role of bird catchers according to the folk tale which Parker [1] narrates. This gives us a picture of their life no longer in evidence, as bird catchers of mediaeval Ceylon. That the business in birds was among their traditional mode of living, we get a glimpse in the tradition already given elsewhere, which accords to them royal favour at the hands of the Kandyan King, reputedly the Kuṇḍasāle Raja, King Narendra Sinha (1707–1739) the last of the Sinhalese Kings, who endowed the present hamlet of Hēnavala on the two brothers, Satta Durayā and Gabaḍā Durayā. The first of these besides providing a supply of mats for the royal household, captured birds for the kitchen and rare birds for the royal court, as you are told at Hēnavala. The folk tale referred to runs thus :—In a large forest there is a great banyan tree. In that tree many parrots roost. While they were doing so, one day, having seen a crow flying near, a parrot spoke to the other parrots and said " Bolavu, do not ye ever give a resting-place to this flying animal ", he said.

While they were there many days after he said it, one day, as a great rain was falling at night, on that day the flying crow, saying, " Kā, Kā ", came and settled on the tree near those parrots.

That night one parrot out of the flock of parrots was unable to come because of that day's rain. Having seen that this crow was roosting on the tree, all the parrots, surrounding and pecking and pecking the crow, drove it out in the rain.

Again, saying, " Kā, Kā ", having returned it roosts in the same tree. As the parrots getting soaked and soaked were driving off the crow in this way, an old parrot, sitting down says, " What is it doing ? Because it cannot go and come in this rain it is trying to roost here. What (harm) will it do if it be here this little time in our company ? ", thus this old parrot said. So the other parrots allowed it to be there, without driving away the crow.

While it was there, the crow in the night left excreta, and in the morning went away. At the place where the excreta fell a tree sprang up (from a seed that was in them) ; it became very large.

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[1] Parker, H. *Village Folk Tales of Ceylon*, 1910, Vol. I, No. 34, pages 224–227.

As it was thus, one day as Kinnaras were going near that (crow's) village, having seen that another tree was near the tree in which the parrot roosted, the Kinnaras spoke with each other, " In these days cannot we catch the parrots that are in this tree ? ", they said.

Before that, the Kinnaras were unable to catch the parrots in the tree. There was then only that tree in which the parrots roosted. When the Kinnaras were going along the tree to catch the parrots, the parrots got to know (owing to the shaking of the tree), so all the parrots flew away.

Because of that they were unable to catch the Parrots.

The Kinnaras having (now) gone along the tree which had grown up through the crow's dropping the seed under the tree, easily placed the net (over the Parrots' tree). All the parrots having come in the evening had settled in the tree. Having settled down, and a little time having gone, after they looked, all the parrots being folded in the net were enclosed. The parrots tried to go ; they could not.

While they were under the net in that way, the Parrot Chief says to the other parrots, " How has another tree grown up under this tree that we live in ? " thus the Parrot Chief asked the other parrots. " At a time when I was not here did ye give a resting place to any one else ? "

Then the parrots say, " One day when it was raining at night, a crow having come and stayed here, went away ", they said.

Then the Parrot Chief says, " I told you that very thing, " Don't give a resting-place to any one whatsoever. Now we all have become appointed to death. To-morrow morning the Kinnaras having come and broken our wings, seizing us all will go away. "

When a little time had gone, the Parrot Chief (again) spoke to the parrots, and said " I will tell you a trick. Should you act in that way the whole of us can escape ", the Parrot Chief said. " When the Kinnaras come near the tree, all of you, tightly shutting your eyes and months, be as though dead, without even flapping your wings.

Then the Kinnaras, thinking we are dead, having freed us one by one from the net, when they are throwing us down on the ground, and have taken and placed all there, fly away after they have thrown down the last one on the ground ", he said.

" That is good ", they said.

While they were there, a Kinnara, tying a large bag at his waist, having come to the bottom of the tree, says, " Every day (before) I couldn't (catch) ye. To-day ye are caught in my net. "

Having ascended the tree, as he was going (along it) the Kinnara says, " What is this, Bola ? Are these dead without any uncanny sound ? " Having climbed on to the tree, after he looked (he saw that) a part having hung neck downwards, a part on the branches, a part in the net, they were as though dead.

Then the Kinnara saying, " Aḍa ! Tell ye the Gods ! Yesterday having climbed the tree I had no trouble in spreading the net ; today having come to the tree I have no trouble in releasing the net. Aḍa ! May the Gods be witnesses of the event that has occurred ! What am I to do with these dead bodies ! " and freeing each one from the net, threw it down on the ground.

As he threw them to the ground he said " One " at the first one that he threw to the ground, and having taken the account (of them) after all had fallen, at the time when the Kinnara, freeing the net, was coming descending from the tree, the whole flock of parrots went flying away.

This story of the parrots outwitting the bird catching Kinnarayā illustrates a static mind which accepts a situation without demur, much as he accepts the proverbial account of the Roḍiyā cutting off his *Konḍe* of hair in a fit of retaliation when the Kinnarayā in a romantic vein made advances for a Roḍiyā girl.

Parker's reference to a Sinhalese folk tale which places some of them on the Western Coast, indicating " the remnant of another tribe who came from the Malayalam Country ",[1] is one of the many links with Malabar that Parker theorises about in his writings. So far as the idea is concerned of their having come from the Malayalam Country, I find nothing to support it. Though mat weaving has been an ancient cottage industry in parts of Southern Kērala, the art is altogether different from the patterned designs and motifs of the Dumbara weavers. The plain *havan* mat they weave is nevertheless much like the reed mats of Kērala, where this particular line is considerably more advanced than among the Kinnarayās—with whom the plain reed mat takes a very secondary place.

5.—Kinnaraya Art and Culture

The " *Niyanda* " hemp or *Sansevieria Zeylanica* to call it by its botanical name, has for long been the raw material in the mat making craft, that the finer type of mats has come to be popularly known *Niyānda Kalāla*, and the plain ones, *Hävan Kalāla*. Supplies of *Niyanda hemp* have got so scarce that they are not easily obtainable ; and its place has been largely taken by the *hana hemp*[2] (crotalaria juncea). Even this is not locally available and men and women have to trudge long distances to collect it. The long blade of leaf is cut at the base and heavy head loads (Plate II, figs. 1 and 2) carried to the village, where they reach about noon time. The thorny point and the edge being cut and removed, each leaf is slit vertically into two. The cut halves are each laid on a log of *käkuna* or *telambu* wood, known as the *pōruva* (Text Fig. II). This is usually a woman's job. Keeping the log tight under her toes, she scrapes off the green of the leaves by a sharp-edged instrument of Kitul wood (caryota urens), the *Gävilla* (Text Fig. II and Plate II, fig. 3). The resultant white fibre receives a cold water wash after which it is dried, oiled and brushed with the *Niyanda Kossa* or the comb of Kitul fibre (Text Fig. II). The process may rightly be likened to the attention a woman pays to her tresses. The mass of combed fibre is now loosely knotted by means of strings at intervals of about 2 inches over the whole length, the strings hanging loose at the thin end (Text Fig. II). The roll of fibre now acquires the name *Vallaḍuva*. The next step is to convert the fibre into warp threads. The coil of fibre is thrown over the back of the Kinnarayā cross-wise, projecting over the left shoulder, the loosely knotted slender end being tucked in tightly at the right side of the waist. From the thicker end of the *Vallaḍuva* the Kinnarayā man or woman pulls out a number of strands between the thumb and the fingers of the left hand, the strands getting rolled and twisted round the spindle the *nul-iḍḍa* which each carries in his right hand. (Text Fig. II and Plate III, fig. 1.) This process of making the warp threads is leisurely work which proceeds without interruption sitting, standing, walking or talking. Once the warp threads are ready the mat weaving, *Kalāla Gähuma*, begins. Before the weaving can be proceeded with, sufficient quantity of the fibre has to be dyed in appropriate colours.

A mat of decorative patterns is a work of art with a colour scheme of its own. Red, blue, black, yellow and white are the principal colours. Red is made from leaves of the *kora-kaha*) Memecylon umbellatum) and *patangi* wood (Caesalpinia sappan) pounded together and mixed in water. In the solution so prepared the *hana* fibre is immersed and set to boiling over a fire. Yellow is made from turmeric well ground into a thick paste and dissolved in water. Nuts, *aralu* (Terminalia chebula) and *bulu* (Terminalia beleria) yield the black dye. The nuts are ground and well stirred in water and set to boil and the fibre is soaked in this solution.

Taking the fibre out of the bath, it is immersed in a solution of mud and water where it soaks for about 24 hours, after which the fibre is taken out and given a good wash and spread out on a clothes line to dry. The black colour thus imparted is the fastest of the dyes. Blue is the ready made foreign blue of the market. Immersing the fibre in a solution, it is set to boil with a

[1] Parker, H. Ancient Ceylon, 1909–p. 45.

[2] *Hana*—Crotalaria Juncea—is an erect annual, growing two to four feet high, with leaves about four inches broad, and two and a half feet long, shaped like a spear head, with a sharp apex. Trimen. A Handbook of the Flora of Ceylon. 1894, Part II, pages 16–17.

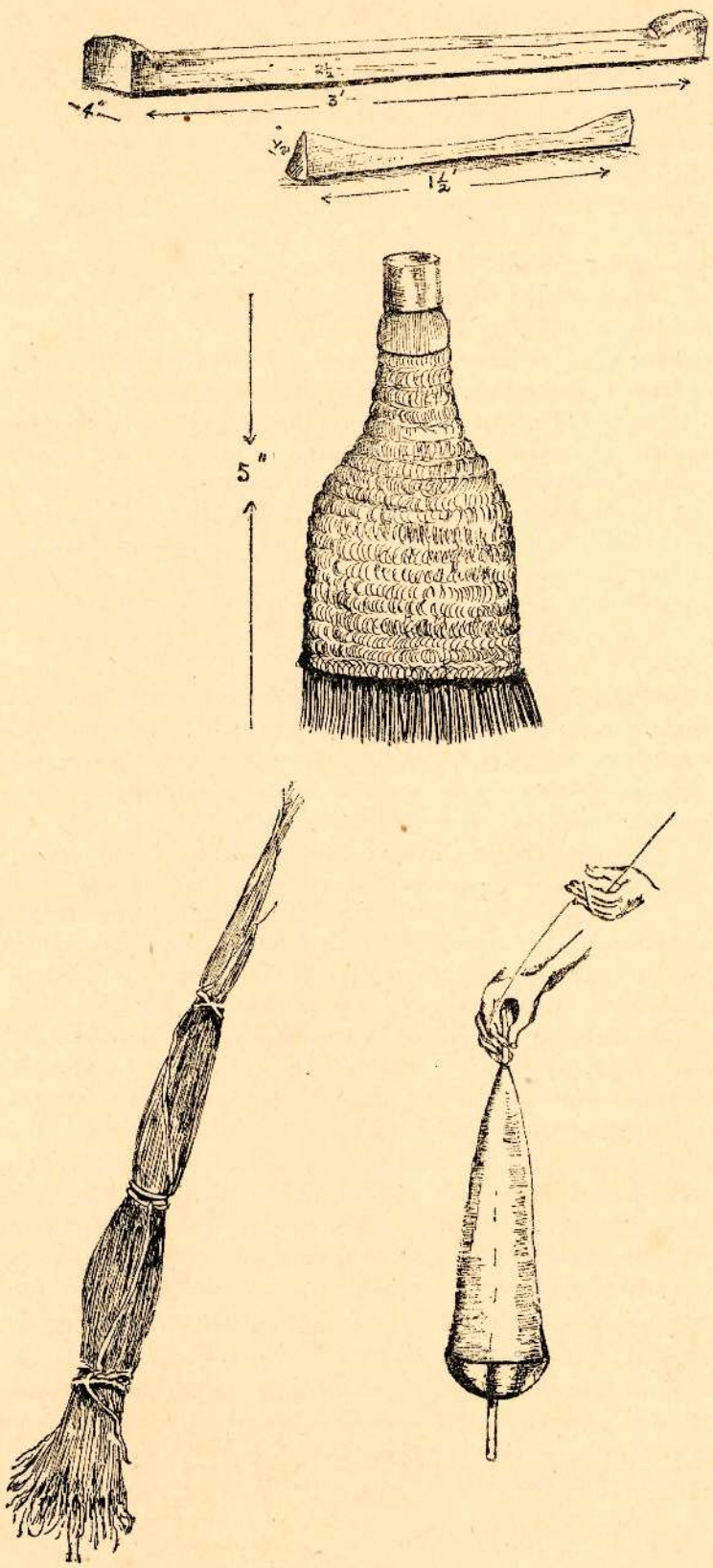


Fig. II

little salt added. Except for the blue, foreign dyes are as a rule avoided, the duraya and his son-in-law being the only craftsmen of the village who use foreign dyes mainly under influences of modernisation. The dyes used are those manufactured by the Imperial Chemical Industries. As adopted by the duraya, the recipe for 1 lb. of *hana* fibre is this : Dissolve ½ oz. soda ash in water and immerse 1 lb. *hana* fibre in the solution and bring to boil for about an hour. Take it out and wash well. The next step is to prepare the dye bath. A paste is made of ½ oz. of the particular dye with a little water, to which is added a quantity of boiling water. To this dyestuff solution, is added water sufficient to form a dye bath of sufficient consistency to dye the 1 lb. of *hana*. Stir well and introduce the 1 lb. of prepared boiled fibre into this dye bath, and boil for about half an hour. Remove the fibre and add 3 oz. common salt to the dye bath. Stir well and reintroduce the fibre and continue boiling for another 1 hour. Remove the fibre which is now ready for use without further washing. They are indebted, I am told, for this recipe to a certain social worker of the gentle sex. The mats and sets of table-mats turned out of fibre thus dyed appear attractive and I hope would be fruitful of results.

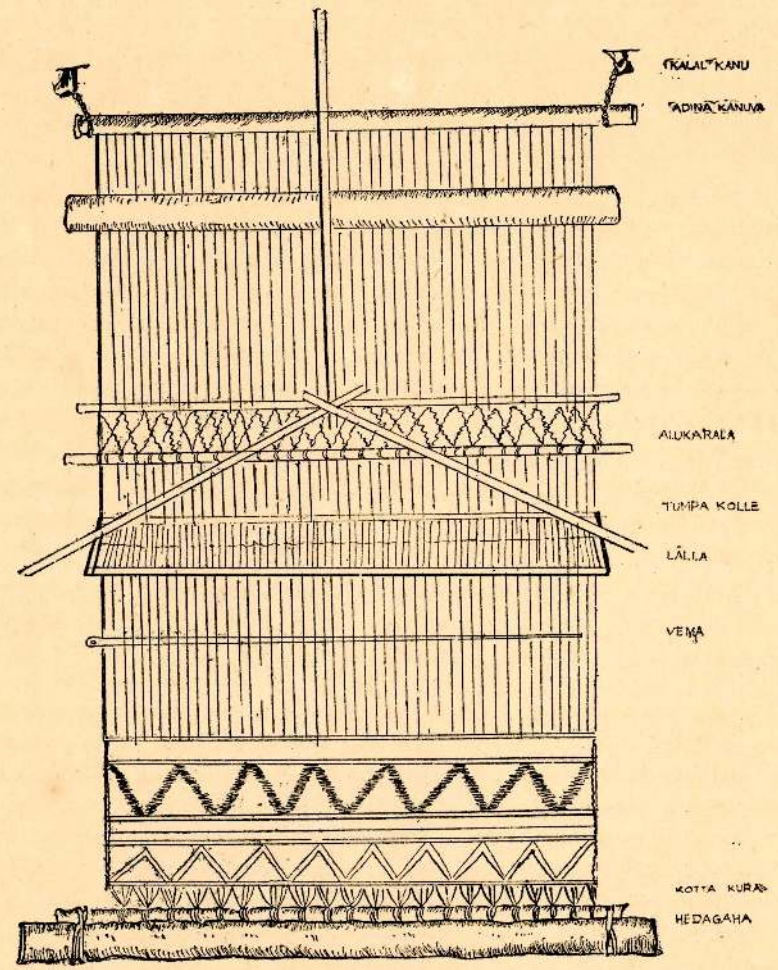
Among the features of Kinnarayā art, is its pleasing colour scheme and a refined sense of colour values, which comes of long tradition, and technical skill in handling of colours. The totality of the art—the colouring, the symmetry and rhythm of patterns and designs—produces an aesthetic expression which impresses Kinnarayā art as creative art, as distinguished from the later imitations or copies. Rectilinear figures and patterns are the designs worked into the weaving of a mat. Figures of realism are difficult to produce in a mat weaving medium. Such decorative motifs therefore as the bird, the duck, the elephant or the cobra woven in the pattern of the mat, result in a stylistic art, harmonising with its rectilinear structure.

The loom (Plate III, fig. 2, Text Fig. III) is a primitive type erected on the floor, the Kinnarayā squatting in front of it. The yarn that he spins on his spindle forms the warp thread (the *kalal häḍa*) and the weft is formed of parallel threads the spacing differing according to the size of the mat. The weft threads are drawn through the alternate warp threads, working up the pattern by means of a small lath (the *vema*) or a wooden bodkin with an eye at one end. The weft is driven home by a *alu karala*, the sleay. A tripod arrangement of sticks (*tum-pā-kolle*) which is shifted along, as the work proceeds, is the most conspicuous feature of the primitive loom. The tripod frame supports the primitive heddles (*väla-kadduva*) which raise and separate the alternate warp threads, which pass through a loop of the heddle. Two rods, *Kotta kūra* and *adina kanda* carry the warp, the first tied to a stout rod, *häḍa kanda*, or hāḍagaha fastened to stakes firmly driven into the ground. At the opposite end of the loom, the other rod, the *adina kanda*, tightly stretched by cords (*Kaḍu pā lanuva*), is attached to the *kaläl kanu*, the two posts on the ground. On the far side of the tripod are two wooden rods—or *Kontaliya*, resting on the warp, and the other, *pannam-baṭe*, passing between the alternate warp threads. The weaver unwinds the spun warp thread (*nūl*) from the spindle, breaks it and passes it through the heddles and through the teeth of the sleay. The ends showing out through the teeth, are temporarily tied up to prevent them slipping out. The remaining warp thread is cut to the required length and tied to the short ends projecting through the heddles. When a mat is done, a thread is tightly drawn along the edge and each of the projecting fibre ends on either side of the mat, is turned over it and tied in a slip knot, making for a strong binding.[1]

The handloom even in its simplest form is a complex structure. The Kinnarayā mat loom has an interest of its own, as representing a type in the line of evolution of the more developed forms in the weaving of textiles. Each part of the loom can be studied comparatively, the form varying in different parts of the world and developing on its own lines.

As a contrast to the elaborate weaving technique of the Kinnarayā, is the simpler craft of weaving of reed mats by Sinhalese villagers, a brief account of which is appended to this paper (Plate III, fig. 3).

[1] A short description of mat weaving by Kinnarayās appears in Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Mediaeval Sinhalese Art, 1908, p. 243.



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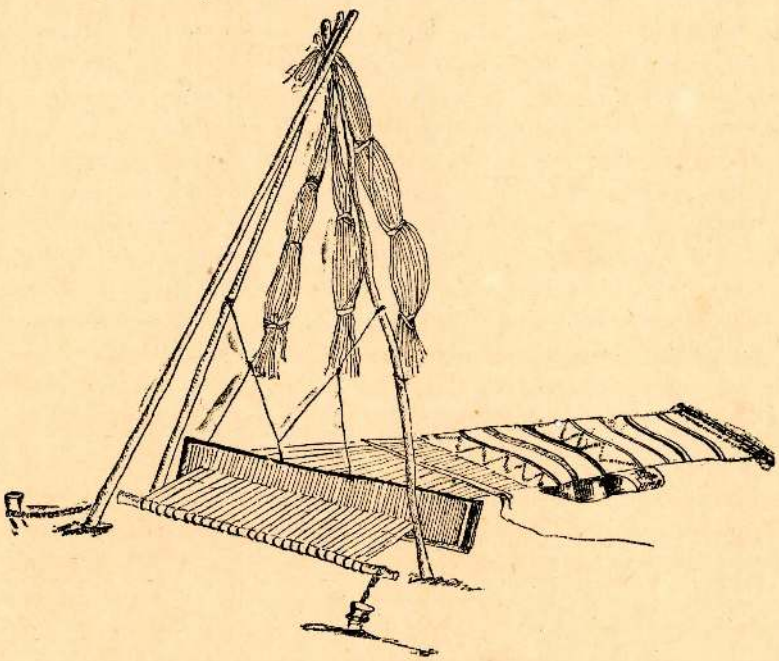

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Fig. III

Hēnavala is a great centre of mat making and allied industries. Mats, cushion-covers, bags, table-mats, dusters, kalāla mats, whips and twine are the main lines of the craft. Mats with decorated patterns are sold for prices ranging from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 each, plain mats about Rs. 3 each, cushion covers Rs. 2, a set of 7 table mats with coloured designs at Rs. 8 to Rs. 15, duster with ornamented handle, Re. 1, one with plain handle, 50 cents ; kalāla mat, Rs. 2·50 ; whip, Re. 1·75, and twine, Rs. 2·50 a pound.

Little of the articles made is sold on the spot and not much is hawked about nor is there an organisation for the sale of these worth-while goods to the benefit of the craftsmen. One or more among them often assumes the role of an agent for the sale of the goods. At Hēnavala, H. G. Ukkuvā is one such middleman who collects the products and disposes of them, it is reported, through the medium of the Marketing Department, or the Lankā Mahilā Samiti, who purchase them at varying rates. In April of last year he is said to have sold articles to the value of Rs. 600 which he distributed to the workers in proportion to their contribution—some making about Rs. 100, others Rs. 50, or Rs. 25 each. Ukkuvā himself is not of this village, but comes from Kalālagama in Hiriyāla on the Dambulla Road, 12 miles from Kurunegala. The economics of the group clearly turns on effective marketing, and a satisfactory organisation in this direction is among the greatest needs of this village, the centre of this cottage craft in Ceylon.

A bye-product of recent growth is the *havariya*, or the blackened fibre, made into a semblance of false hair of luxuriant tresses. As an article of essential feminine toilet it bids fair to command a good market at the rate of one to two rupees each.

Mat weaving, turning as it does on a variety of conditions, scarcely active outside Hēnavala, though Malhāva in the district of Matale takes next place in the tribal art, nestling behind a large rubber estate, down the slopes of which the straw-thatched roofs of the humble Kinnarayā huts open to view. Here the problem of sales is even more acute than in Hēnavala, and unless the forces of economic depression are adequately handled, it will not be long before both the art and the artist perish at Malhāva. This picture is as true of Malhāva as of the other smaller Kinnarayā hamlets elsewhere. At Malhāva a branch of the Grāmavardhana Samitiya or Rural Development Society has been opened with Veḍikāragedara Mānikā, son of durayā Mānika as the President, and his brother Tikirā the Secretary, and the society shows promise of good service. A few of the aged and disabled receive aid through the agency of the Department of Social Services. Thus the 80 year old Dingiri Ekī gets an old age pension of Rs. 7·50 per mensem, Punci Molli aged 30 years with 4 children, Rs. 10 per mensem, and Baiyyadurayāla-gedera Tikiri kollā, 70 years of age, Rs. 10·50 per mensem. A number of men freely take to cooly work in the estates but there is not always work to go the round of the unemployed. Except old Dingiri Ekī who has a field of 12 lahas[1] none owns any paddy land. On either side of the village is a wide extent of paddy fields which cuts the village into two sections. Seeing the village and the fields one would naturally conclude that as at Hēnavala these fields would be part of the Kinnarayā property. Inquiries soon revealed that it was not so. Situated in such close proximity to the Kinnarayā settlement, if these fields could vest in them, it would go a long way to help them to a fuller life. If there is one thing that distinguishes the Ceylon craftsmen from craftsmen elsewhere it is that he is not merely a craftsman but also a farmer in his own right and in these days when arts and crafts scarcely enable him to keep the wolf from the door, it is the little farming that keeps him alive.

While the human factor behind the art still languishes, the art itself is finding new expression outside the old design areas, under the influence of external stimuli, both governmental and non-governmental. The Cottage Industries Department has taken the cue and has been slowly developing the mat weaving art in the course of the past few years, and at

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[1] One Laha = 4 measures, seers or neli.
Seven Lahas = 1 bushel.
One Lahas sowing extent is about 10 *perches*, 1/16 of an acre—
Sinhalese Weights and Measures—Frank Modder—J. R. A. S. Vol, XII, p. 180.

their centre at Velona turns out a whole range of objects, such as mats and table mats, hand bags and cushion covers. In other directions too, such as in textiles and in sari designs Dumbara art is setting a new fashion, and inspiring new patterns.

To the Kinnarayā his art is his life, and his life is his art, of which he feels an intense pride. Little does he realise, the secret of the Dumbara mat is no longer his monopoly. It has as good as passed out of his hands, and others engaged in the craft would steal the food out of his mouth, unless timely efforts are made to foster the village craft and make it more of an economic proposition than it now is. An effort seems to have been made, about 15 years ago, as advised by the then Industrial Adviser to develop the industry[1]. A school hall was built with two instructors. They seem to have tried new methods of preparing dyes, and introduce Sinhalese letters in the patterns. They are said to have embarked also on a scheme of teaching the women how to weave cloth. The villagers could not absorb these new ideas, and the instructors after about an year's experiment left the village and formed a mat weaving centre of their own elsewhere, producing mats of the Kinnarayā pattern. In front of the Bo-tree stands the school hall then erected, to remind us of this fateful chapter in the life of the Hēnavala Kinnarayā. The villagers occasionally use the place now for amusement, as when on one of my visits a special performance of the rustic play Sokari was staged. Tradition conditions the life of simple folks and so it is with the Kinnarayā. In his own line, there is still great scope for advancement, for the output whether by the Kinnarayās or by Government agency can scarcely outstrip the demand for these articles, for which there is bound to be an ever growing demand in the world market provided the demand is properly exploited. The Kandyan Art Association is one among the few forces which could deliver the goods, if they would address themselves to the task in the interests not only of the craft, but also of its human element, the Kinnarayā. Kinnarayā art is real art with a tone which does not obtrude. While aesthetically pleasing as a work of art, and the articles have the quality of durability, certain of the colours do not retain the original freshness. Improvement in this direction by a judicious use both of the foreign and the indigenous dyes is one of the possibilities.

The pattern of Kinnarayā culture is motivated by his special mat weaving art and technique. Viewed against the background of his needs, the culture was not meagre. It fulfilled all his wants and aspirations until a few decades ago, when forces outside his control led to the technique being adopted and planted elsewhere where it developed in a new setting—a unique instance of a tribal art going out of the tribal setting and functioning in a higher plane. That the Kinnarayā has to this extent made a valuable contribution to Ceylon art is what we may readily recognise. Speaking of the Kinnarayā art, it has been a style of art which has been peculiarly their own—evolving a pattern of mat-making and keeping themselves true to it. It is no doubt work in a limited range, and committed to one particular style. Their psychology is canalised in this particular line and shows no response to evolution of new ideas or new pattern of style and his temperament is not conducive to progressive ideas. The problem of the Kinnarayā society is that it does not take kindly to other pursuits, so well shown by the failure of the attempts to introduce handloom cloth

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[1] My main source of information on this point is Gate Mudaliyar N. Wickramaratne, who contributed an article to the local Press some time last year, entitled, " The Cottage Industries of Ceylon, No. 2, Mat Weaving ". In the course of the article the following observations appeared :—

" Some 15 years ago, in 1935, I represented the position of these weavers to the then Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce and asked for assistance to improve their lot. He was very sympathetic and instructed the then Industrial Adviser to help improve the industry. Mr. Guha visited the village with me. A hall was built with the help of a local resident and a scheme was drawn up to develop the craft and craftsmen. Two instructors were stationed in the village. But all they did was to prepare dyes by a new method and to include Sinhalese lettering in their designs. They then started a loom to teach their womenfolk to weave cloth. The villagers did not want this and the Instructors left the village after about a year. The villagers were disappointed and lost faith in such improvement plans.

But something more happened. The instructors after leaving the village organised a mat-weaving centre in another part of the country and started a *pan* mat weaving centre where mats similar to those *hevan* mats woven by the Kinnara weavers were produced. These villagers have reasons to feel there has been a breach of faith. "

Though I have not been able to get official corroboration of the above, I understand from one of the officers associated with the work whom I recently met, that the observations are largely true.

weaving, experimented upon more than a decade ago. Generally speaking, the salvation of the simpler societies in Ceylon today very much lies on their taking to fresh pursuits. Groups such as the Näkati and the Oli, have put their hands to work in directions other than their hereditary functions in the feudal times. The Kinnarayā is an example of a tribe who have clung to their mat making craft. His attaining to perfection in the art, is the result of his age long participation in the tribal culture from which he has not deviated. The limitation that this has placed on the individual has reacted against his initiative and inhibited outside lines of expression. The tribal traditions and the individual temperament and psychology have acted and reacted, in a reinforcement of the tribal culture. Nevertheless all Ceylon craftsmen—Kinnarayā included—are farmers too, the silver lining in the feudal sky of the Kandyan royalty, when craftsmen were settled on villages with paddy lands in return for their services to the State and the society. In the course of the changed times and the economic exploitation and depression of later days, much water has flown under the bridge, and the Kinnarayā suffered loss both of his high land as of his paddy lands. To re-plant him in his role as a farmer supplementary to his craft is among the problems of promoting the economics of his life.

Numerically "but a few" in Knox's days, they have presumably gained in numbers since. Altogether they would be in the neighbourhood of 600 with an approximate distribution as below :—

Province	*Division*	*Village*	*Families*	*Population*
Western Province ..	Botalae Ihalagama ..	Ihalagama ..	6 ..	41
Central Province ..	Pata Dumbara ..	Hēnawala ..	38 ..	160
Do. ..	Matale	Malhāva ..	32 ..	130
North-Western Province ..	Dewemeddi ..	Dikwāhara ..	9 ..	39
Do. ..	do.	Heenepola ..	19 ..	86
Do. ..	Weuda Willi ..	Iriyadeniya ..	4 ..	16
Do. ..	Hiriyala	Kalālagama ..	15 ..	61
Do. ..	Dambadeni	Marawita ..	1 ..	5
Do. ..	do.	Meewewa ..	9 ..	44
Do. ..	do.	Murutenge ..	10 ..	47

It cannot be said that they are "a nearly extinct tribe". They possess considerable individuality and with a helping hand to lift them up and keep them steady, they should still be able to stand on their own legs. Sounder economics of production and distribution of their products, better food supply, improved sanitation and medical services are in the main the basis on which their life may yet be rebuilt, and signs are not wanting of welfare planning on these and other lines, in the interests of our tribal brethren—the Väddās, Roḍiyās and Kinnarayās.

6.—Recreation and Amusements

Whatever plays or pastime the Kinnarayās may have rejoiced in, there is little cheer in their life today. Children, who about five years ago when I first visited them, were frolicking about with *bambarayas* in their hands, are today listless and dull. The *bambaraya* has been a feature of interest all over Hēnavala, the bigger boys playing with big sized ones and the smaller boys with small *bambarayas* made of reed. (Text Fig. 4.) From the hands of boys they have found their way to the tops of trees, and a number of the *bambarayas* turning in the wind from the top branches produce a continuous droning noise, which is anything but pleasing to the ears. They no doubt serve their purpose, which is to scare away birds and crows from vegetable plots and paddy fields.

Each village favours its own pastime. At Dikvähara, they have kept up the *Uḍākki* dance and Mänikā, Kiribaiyyā and Pinā of this village, dance a measure to the tune of their own singing. They don a colourful costume of a sash of red band over a white loin cloth, with

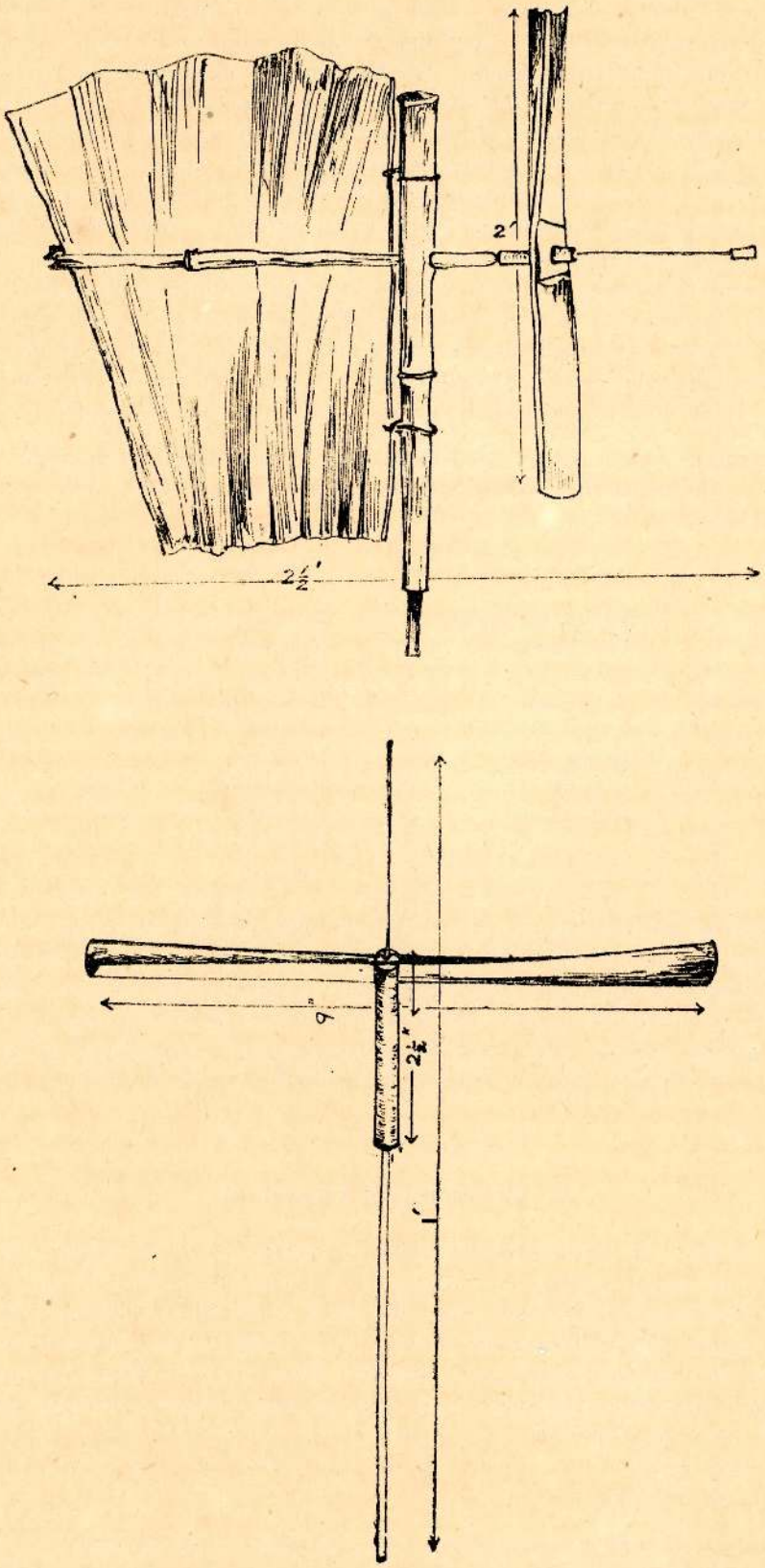

Fig. IV

a silver girdle over the red sash. Over the chest is worn coloured bead work decoration; *silambu* or anklets adorn the feet, and armlets their hands. They dance the Uḍākki dance at weddings for a consideration as well as on national festival days and temple celebrations and processions.

Hēnavala has its *Kōlama* and the *Sokari*. The Sanda Kinduru Jātaka is staged in the Kōlama technique. The story is the life of the Bōdhisatva born as a Kinnarā living with his wife in the Himalayas. The characters are dressed in the garb of the legendary figures, with the wings and tail feathers of a bird and a human face. Their best show is obviously the *Sokari* which they were good enough to play for my study on one of my recent visits.

Among the folk plays of the Island, Sokari has a place of its own. The word may best be derived from the colloquial word for girl, chokri as in Marathi and Hindustani languages. That the play has found favour with the masses is obvious from the well known Sinhalese composition in verse entitled "Sokari Kathāva" narrating the story and its incidents. As played by the Kinnarayās of Hēnavala, it is a source of great amusement to beguile the tedium of their life.

The play opens with three characters, the Gurunānse or the Guru, supposed to be from Delhi, Sokari his young wife and Paraya his attendant. The couple decides to leave their homeland and travel to Sinhala (Ceylon) and preparations are made for the journey. The poem gives a description of their dress and deportment. The Guru has a turban on his head and a girdle round his waist. Round his neck he has a string of sacred *rudraksha* beads and behind his back is slung the sacred chank. His left and right arms and forehead are daubed with the *vibhūti* or the sacred ash and altogether he strikes you as a holy person. In traditional style, he has an umbrella in one hand, a book of fortune in the other, and a roll of deer skin under his arm. Sokari as befitting a woman, has ornaments in her ears and a hair-pin adorns her hair-knot [1]. Round her waist she wears a waist-girdle, strings of beads round her neck, and she is apparelled in a rich silk saree. Thus attired, she is not without some claims to beauty [1]. After a long journey on foot, they reach the sea coast and they embark on a ship for Ceylon. As the ship is about to set sail, a crow caws. The Guru consults his book of fortune and interprets it as an ill omen. He forecasts that on their reaching Sinhale, his wife was destined to be enticed by a Vedarāla (physician). This sets him thinking. They land at Puttalam [2] on the west coast and halt at a "*maḍama*" or a wayside inn at Tambaravila. They prepare to cook a meal of rice. A quantity of paddy is purchased, and Sokari dries the paddy in the sun. She pounds the grain and winnows it and prepares curries of pumpkin and green peas. They look for water and the Guru carrying his gourd-skin vessel goes out to fetch water.

On the way he is bitten by a dog and falls seriously ill, and his wife and friends tend him. Sokari goes to the Vedarāla of Tambaravila. He is very pleased to see Sokari and immediately responds. The Vedarāla examines the patient and prescribes a medicine made of 60 "Kalans" of the following ingredients:—black sesamum, big sesamum, cummin seed, "sivanguru" (red ochre) and "siddhinguru" (dried ginger). He also performs a charm to cure the Guru. Meanwhile the Vedarāla makes love to Sokari and wins her. Both Sokari and the Vedarāla disappear by morning. The Guru goes to a Kapurāla and requests him to find out and reclaim Sokari. The Kapurāla tells him that Sokari is now living with the Vedarāla and advises him to invoke the gods to get her back. The Guru implores the gods Visnu and Kataragama as well as the *Sat-Pattinis* [3], making offerings and vows to the gods and the goddess. The vows take effect. The Guru goes to the village of Tambaravila and brings back his wife Sokari.

This in brief is the story round which has grown in its passage through the years many a scene of rural life. Besides the three main characters, the Guruhāmi, his wife and the Vedarāla the full cast as staged at Hēnavala includes a Heṭṭiya or a Cheṭṭy from India, a Paraya alias

[1] All actors in this play are males.

[2] Puttalam—on the North-West Coast has been one of the ports where has landed successive waves of colonists from India to Ceylon from the dawn of history.

[3] The allusion here is to goddess Pattini and her birth seven times in the world.

Rāmā, a servant of the Guru, Soktṭana, the Vedarāla's son, and last but not least the Gurunanse or the preceptor who accompanies the play with his rhythmic tatoo on the long drum, and Nayikārayā or the Ahikuṇṭakayā, of the tribe of India snake charmers, the Ceylon gypsy tribe. With the Gurunānse, or the preceptor as the central figure, all the cast move round him in a circle. Presently he starts singing a couplet, which is taken up in chorus by the rest, who move about in sidelong and rhythmic strides. Re-assuming the circular form, they soon tread a lively round dance (Plate VI, figs. 1 and 2). The verses sung are the introductory quartrains of the Sokari poem. Rāmā, the Guru's personal attendant, has a clothes bundle on a pole slung on his shoulder, and under his arm pit he has a roll of peacock feathers, such as devotees to Kataragama shrine carry. The roll of peacock feathers is symbolised by a roll of areca palm leaves. At the very outset, the Vedarāla develops a passion for Sokari, nudges her at every opportunity and tries to attract her attention. Her husband grows jealous and deals him an occasional blow with a whip. Persisting in his attentions, he asks Rāmā to strike him down, which he promptly does. The Vedā rolls on the ground and bellows. The son utters some charm and revives him. His ill-timed passion for Sokari again overpowers him. He struts about boasting of his wealth, his money and his lands. An interlude here ensues between the father and son, in the course of which he recollects his wife and bemoans her absence. His son promises to find her out. Vedamahatmayā dances for joy that he has got such a fine fellow of a son and expatiates on his wife's beauty. (Plate VII, fig. 1.) As the dialogue proceeds, the son cuts jokes at the expense of the father. He asks him what his bulging stomach contains. He rejoinds that there are babies in it and cattle and poultry. His son enjoys the joke and comments that he could hear them cry. The Vedā touches his distended belly and his hands simulate the action of rocking the baby. Presently he pretends to tend the cattle and mind the fowls, and imitates cries of the cattle and cock. The Veda is duly invited to dance. He prances about to the accompaniment of a rhythmic tatoo on the drum. The others sing in chorus. Approaching Sokari and her husband, he solicits their appreciation. Both applaud his art. Asked to dance the " frog-dance ", he presently goes on all fours and imitates the leaping frog. The Vedā now gaining confidence, dances a special dance—the *Keṭala-käpuma* (cutting of the Keṭala—Lagenandra toxicaria)—to please Sokari. He improves upon his familiarity and narrates the story of his birth. The Vedā described in comic verse that he is the well known Tambaravila Veda-mahatmayā, whose skill as a physician is the talk of all, and admired all over the land. Winning her favours, he steps yet another dance—the " *Henagana Näṭṭuma*, " to please the woman Sokari. He dances and dances until he is exhausted and drops in a swoon before Sokari. The son wails, fearing his father to be dead. He pronounces a charm which acts and brings him back to life.

The scene shifts to the building of a house for Sokari. The Guru decides to approach the Vedamahatmayā to give him a plot of land. Summoning his servant in stentorian tones— " Rāma, Rāma, Rāma, Rāma-Rāmō, Rāma, " a request is sent to the Vedā who exploits the situation, and the Vedā sends word that Sokari should herself ask. Sokari responds and the Vedā is in feverish excitement at her coming. He agrees. Guru tricks him into getting possession of all his land. The Vedā cries that he has been played out, that he has been robbed. Enraged at being deprived of his patrimony, the son assaults the father, who does his best to pacify him. Taking a stick in hand, the Vedā now runs round drawing circular lines. This is marking the boundaries of the land bestowed on Sokari. The foundation is to be laid for a house and a *Kapurāla* is summoned. He dances the ritual dance to propitiate the gods. Guruhāmi cuts the first sod. A snake is disturbed and causes a fright. Rāma the servant is dispatched to fetch a Ahikuṇṭakayā to trap the snake. Rāma brings one and he is promised arrack and several gifts. The piping charms the snake and it is trapped. (Plate VIII, fig. 1.) With the cobra in the basket, the snake charmer begins to dance, and the actors sing verses describing the origin of the snake dance. The Ahikuṇṭakayā goes round and all of us drop coins in his basket. The servant is now sent for a supply of paddy. The Vedamahatmayā insists that Sokari Ammā should in her own person make the request. She comes and the Vedā is again excited. He welcomes her and gives her a chew of betel and promises to send a quantity of paddy, which is duly transported on the back of a bull. The servant makes

a spirited bull—a high-blooded animal difficult to control. The Vedarāla sitting astride him acts as the cart man. The paddy is delivered, and is pounded, washed and put out in the sun to dry. The pounding, washing and the spreading of the paddy on a mat to dry, are represented in a series of symbolic movements and step dances. All join in a dance round the mat of paddy. (Plate VIII, figs 2 and 3.) The Vedarāla tests a few grains in his mouth and pronounces the paddy dry. The paddy is duly deposited into a mortar, round which they keep dancing. All hands go up and down alternately in the typical movements of pounding. (Plate VIII, fig. 2.) The paddy is taken out and the winnowing proceeds. Cooking the rice is the next step. Rāma goes for the water. On the way he is troubled by an ache in his ears and he sleeps. At his delay in returning, Guruhāmi himself goes to the Vedarāla who refuses the water. The Guru attemps to take it by force. He sets his dogs on the Guru who is badly bitten and drops down. Rāma goes to the Vedarāla—who prescribes absurd remedies such as the milk of the fowl, and the shoots of the grinding-stone! The Vedarāla comes and examines the patient. He feels the pulse and pronounces that the patient is very bad. With strokes of the roll of peacock feathers, he pronounces a charm. (Plate VII, fig 2.) The Vedā next injects medicines, poking him with a stick in hand. Failing to cure him he decides on a Bali [1] performance. The Bali altar is erected—a drawing on the ground represents the altar. Assisted by his son the Vedā conducts the Bali ceremony. That also fails. At last, he prescribes elaborate herbal pills and decoctions. The various ingredients are duly weighed—two members of the cast squatting face to face with hands extended and fingers interlocked, the feet raised and the soles meeting. The bodily frame swaying sideways and up and down symbolises the process of weighing and balancing. The ingredients are now grounded. All hands turn in imitation of the grinding process on an imaginary grinding stone. Gathering the ground stuff, it is rolled into pills. Four pills are prescribed for a dose ; a mistake is made and all the pills are administered in a single dose. The overdose works harm and the patient is in a coma. They sit round the supposed corpse ; everyone wails, Sokari Ammā being the chief mourner. Meanwhile the Vedā appears and appropriates Sokari as his wife. His son remonstrates that he must have her. The son is silenced. A Kapurāla now enters the scene. He propitiates the gods for his recovery while the Vedarāla blows a *Kālama* (magic horn), to counteract the *Kapuralā's* spell. The spell triumphs and the Guru revives. In the midst of this episode Sokari and the Vedarāla run away. The Guru is distracted with grief ; a search ensues and Sokari is traced and brought back. He gives vent to his suspicions in a series of questions—such as how her hair is dishevelled, breasts scratched, and her garment torn ; to all of which she gives clever replies.

The scene changes, the Vedā is reduced to serious straits. He and his son take to selling dope and go about hawking *ganja*. Guru and his party dope themselves and indulge in gambling and play the *Soktana*. The Vedā's son joins in the merry-making, and all sit and smoke *ganja*. The fumes soon overpower them, and under the influence of the ganja they fall asleep ; and here the play ends.

Towards the close of the play a tendency is noticeable, of taking on new elements and incidents, which however does not detract from its main theme or the interest of the play. Now for a few comments on the actors and the acting. Each of the cast was strikingly suited to the several parts. The Guru or the Sokka has had a quiet dignity about him, which stood by him in all his trials. In his own person, he is a finer type of a Kinnarayā with a light complexion and good features. His wife was quite womanly, whose charms captivated the impassioned Vedarāla. The latter and his son were the real comedians of the piece. The Vedarāla in particular was very impressive, embodying in himself the fertility and the richness of the countryside. He and his son, a real chip of the old block—have the distinction of wearing face masks, a feature with an interest of its own. The masks enable them to do their part without revealing their identity and which greatly aided them in their comical hits. The

[1] Bali. Literally meaning sacrifice, Bali has a special application Ceylon to rituals and offerings in propitiation of the planetary deities supposed to influence lives of men. Images representing the deities, made specially for the purpose, are among the most striking of the many features of this form of social magic.

Hetți or the Chetți in his realistic make up, could easily pass off for a real Chetți. Last but not least was the trainer, the Gurunānse, who accompanied the show with considerable skill in singing and drumming.

Replete with scenes of rural life as the play is, its fertility function is the most conspicuous of its values. The Vedarāla's distended stomach is symbolic of a pregnant woman, and in his stomach are babies, cattle and poultry. He rocks the baby, tends the cattle, and minds the fowls and mimics their cries. We have an insight too into the domestication of livestock. Of operation in rural farming, also we have most vivid symbolisms. The dance round the mat of paddy spread out in the sun to dry, is eloquent of the place of paddy in the economy of the village. We have also a good deal of rural medicine in practice, and of magic and counter-magic, bali rituals and house building ceremonials. The Kapurāla and the Ahikuntakayā snake charmer are among other interesting factors and each plays his own part. A folk play with a strong dramatic appeal touching on varied aspects of rural life, Sokari has amused villagers for ages and still has its place among rural sports and recreations. Sokari nevertheless is not a mere laughing matter. Dramatising as it does in simple symbolisms and in episodes with a good sense of humour, the life activities of the peasant, its effect is by no means transitory. We have here a progressive psychological influence beneficially reacting in the mind of the participants, whether of players or spectators, by a process of sympathetic magic, which underlies the idea of a fertility play. For an interesting parallel of a fertility play, we may go to North Kērala, [1] where however the players instead of staging it at village centre, make a round of visits once in the year to the houses in the village at harvesting time wearing face masks of the spathe of the areca palm, accompanied by a drummer and a boy in the make up of a girl round whose body is encased the realistic effigy of the " divine cow of plenty. " Folk songs invoking a rich harvest, wealth and plenty, and a healthy progeny, are sung by the players interspersed with many a frolic and jesting. Plays embodying fertility ideas, belong to the old order of things, which is fast vanishing under the stress of modern life.

The folk culture of the Kinnarayā is more than what one would expect of a small tribal group of a few hundred souls. It has a richness and variety about it, ranging from folk tales to myths and popular stories such as the Sanda-Kinduru Jātaka, and the Sokari stories which they have turned to good account producing them in the form of plays which have a deep and abiding value in terms of communal welfare. In the range of their folk culture, the Kinnarayā shares in the wealth of folklore that characterises Ceylon's folk life in general.

Appendix.—Mat Weaving in Sinhalese Village

The technique of the Dumbara mat weaving with its elaborate appliances, forms an interesting contrast to the simpler art of weaving of reed mats, which as a cottage craft has been very popular with the Sinhalese women of the villages from ancient days. Reeds grow in swampy fields and the villager acquires, what is termed a " *koraṭuwa* " which signifies a pen or an enclosure measuring about 20 ft. by 10 ft., in a field of reeds and rushes. This costs the villager about Rs. 20. The reeds are of different kinds, named respectively, Boru pan, Hāl pan, Hünässa, Hambu, Tunhiriyā, Potukola and Gallāhā, the best being the last. The rushes growing to maturity in a *koraṭuwa* provides for about 8 mats. Mats are named after the kind of reed of which they are made as *Gallāhā pāduru, Tunhiriyā pāduru, Hambu pāduru,* &c. A period of 3 months is the average time for the reeds to grow to maturity. When full grown, the reeds are collected, a few bundles at a time, and stored. Spreading out in the sun to dry is the first process, which takes a fortnight. *Gallāhā* rushes are used unsplit. They get flattened in the course of drying. *Tunhiriyā* rushes are split into three in the case of a big reed ; and into two in the case of a smaller reed.

At the start, the weaver takes three main reeds and keeps them two vertical and parallel to each other, and the third horizontal laid across connecting the two. Between this main framework the rest of the rushes are worked into and interlaced until a mat is woven. The interlaced rushes are held in position under the weaver's right foot ; she weaves dexterously taking each strand in turn and interlacing it with the other. It is a quick process, fingers moving with speed and skill that comes of long practice. Working only during leisure hours a woman takes about a week to finish a mat. A plain mat is called *çān pāduru.* Mats decorated with designs in colour are termed " *kalāla pāduru* ".

The picture (Pl. III. fig. 3) shows a woman from Seeduwa—Anthonidura Maria Nona Silva Gunatilaka, to give her full name—a fine type of Sinhalese rural womanhood. Putting her leisure hours to good purpose, she earns a tidy income supplementary to the income of the household, where all the women are good at the art.

[1] Raghavan, M. D., 1947. *Folk Plays and Dances of Kērala,* pp. 29–31 and 54–55.

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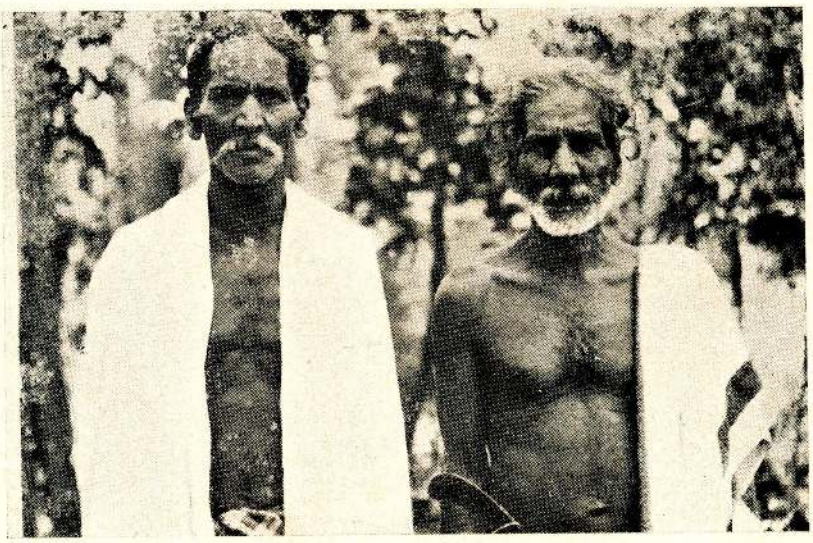

Fig. 1—Durayā Ukkuvā and an elder

Fig. 2—Types of Men

Fig. 3—Women and Children

Fig. 1—Taking home *hana* leaves

Fig. 2—Women bringing in the leaves

Fig. 3—Smoking off the green

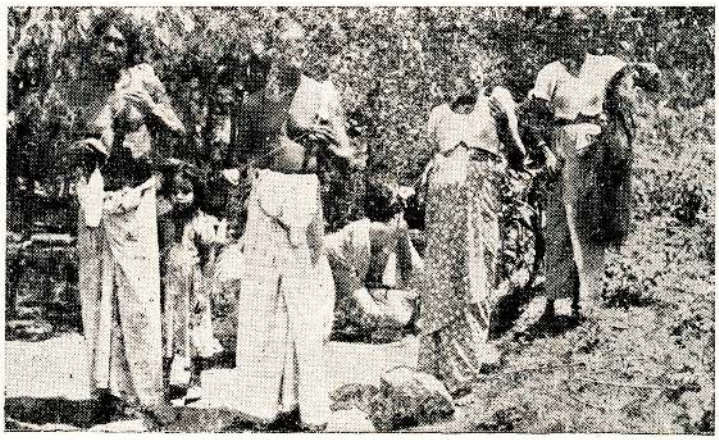

Fig. 1—Spinning the yarn and combing the havariya

Fig. 2—Man at the loom

Fig. 3—Mat weaving in a Sinhalese village

Fig. 1—Kiṁnarayā woman selling Jak

Fig. 2—Grinding the Pol-sambol

Fig. 3—Kiṁnarayā midwife

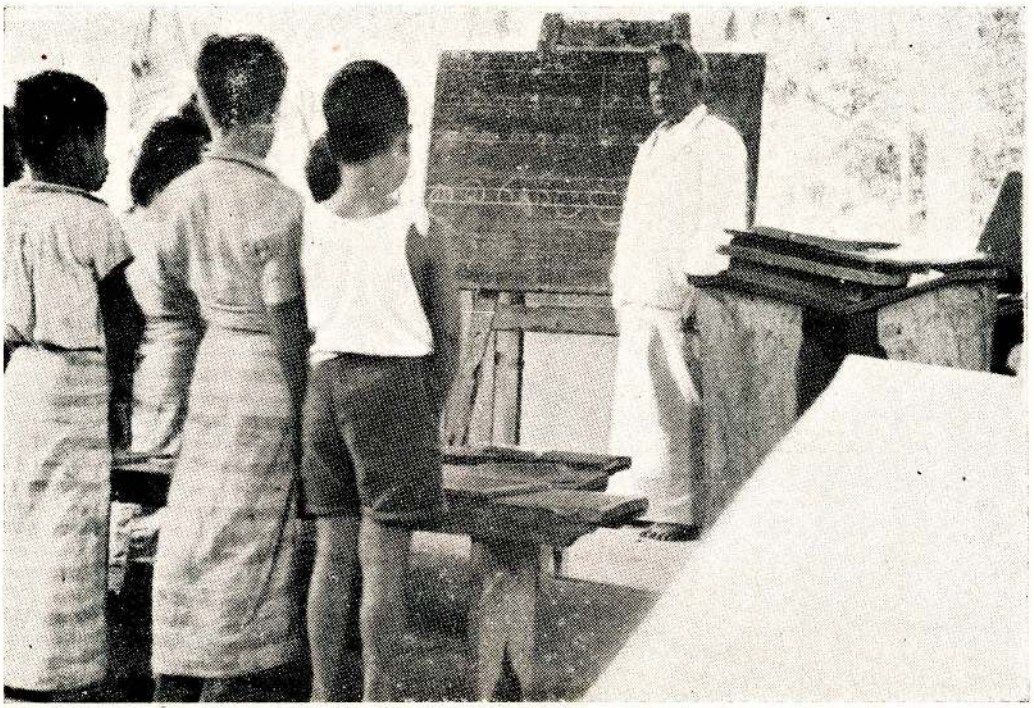

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Kiṅnaravā children at school

Fig. 1—Sokari—Enter the Dancers

Fig. 2—Sokari—Dancers lining up

Fig. 3—Sokari—Dancing in a circle

Fig. 1—Vedarāla in a characteristic pose

Fig. 2—Reviving the Guru

Fig. 1—Sokari—Snake Charming

Fig. 2—Sokari—Drying the Paddy

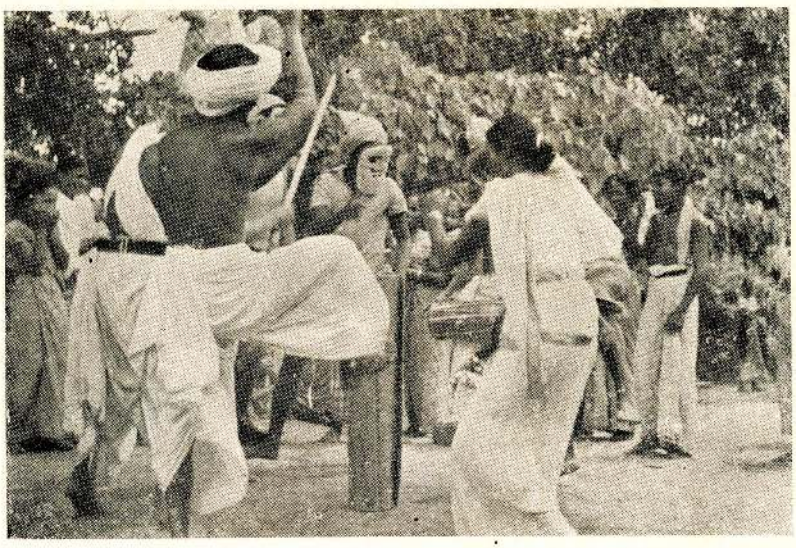

Fig. 3—Sokari—Pounding the Paddy

Separated from

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ETHNOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CEYLON

No. 3

The Pattini Cult as a Socio-Religious Institution

By

M. D. Raghavan

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(With Five Plates)

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The Pattini Cult as a Socio-Religious Institution

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Pattini cult has evolved through the ages. Both in South India and Ceylon, the cult of goddess Pattini found favour with the people from the time that Senguṭṭuvan, the mighty king of the Cērā Kingdom of South India, in the second century A.D., consecrated the first Pattini temple, with an image of the goddess sculptured from a block of stone brought by the king in person from the holy Himalayas. At this, the first installation of the goddess, kings of the neighbouring kingdoms were present including Lanka, represented by no less a person than King Gajabāhu (174-196 A.D.). These events are chronicled in the *Silappadikāram*[1], the Tamil *Kāvya* or epic poem singing the story of the *Silambu* or anklet, the symbol of the goddess, culminating with a description of her consecration. The installation of Pattini under the joint auspices of the reigning monarchs of the time, was a unique event. As *Silappadikāram* describes, King Senguṭṭuvan "circumambulated the shrine thrice, and all kings assembled including the King of Mālva, and Kayavāgu (Gajabāhu), the King of sea-girt Ceylon, prayed reverentially to the deity" thus: "Please grace our countries by your presence just as you have done this auspicious day". Then a voice from the welkin issued forth: "I have granted the boon", and the kings and their valorous armies praised the deity in eulogistic terms. Ceylon traditions agree that King Gajabāhu returning from South India with the insignia of the goddess, dedicated temples to the goddess and thus inaugurated the cult of Pattini in Ceylon [2]. Pattini

[1] Dikshitar, V. R. R. *The Silappadikaram*, 1939, pp. 35 and 342–343.

[2] Ceylon folk songs sing the deeds of Gajabahu. Incidents connected with the introduction of Pattini cult, culled from an unpublished ola manuscript "Gajaba Katava" in the Colombo Museum Library—and translated by W. A. de Silva, appear in the Ceylon National Review for January, 1907, extracts from which are here reproduced :—

> "Gajabahu brought away from the Choli capital the most venerated relics of the Cholians, the golden anklets, the image and the books used in the worship of Goddess Pattini. The origin of the Devalas in Ceylon and of the Pattini ceremonies now current among the Kapuwas of Ceylon can be traced to this time. Gajabahu has ever since become a national hero. At ceremonies held in connection with Devalas and on national holidays, Gajabahu songs are very popular."

Verses 65 and 66—"King Gajabahu was given away the golden Salamba displayed by noble beings." "Constructed of gold and precious stones, the goddess' image was like unto real sapphire gem. The scent of natural flowers, scented sandal wood and scents were sprinkled everywhere. The goddess' image was taken away after proper astrological calculations had been made.

Verse 67—For a week the story was repeated by invited dancers three times a day. "Give the book which marks the story of goddess for one week's recitation." The golden chief, the powerful chieftainess obtained worship in Sri Lanka from that day. "Goddess Pattini help us always to obtain the prosperity of heaven."

Verse 70—"King Gajaba enjoyed the prosperity of Sakra and Cakrawarti kings. Four temples were dedicated to powerful gods and may sorrow be removed by the help of these gods, and may they protect me long with my children and wife."

The Ceylon National Review, January, 1907, page 341 and 351–352.

2—J. N. B 17821-506 (6/52)

found a receptive soil in Ceylon, where legends grew round the original incidents, and her cult took new forms and aspects in the different parts of the Island. These developments themselves open up a vast field for study, which cannot be attempted in the course of the present Paper, devoted to a study of the more popular forms of the cult in Ceylon, mainly, the Aṅ-Keliya and the Gam Maḍuva.

2. Essentially a socio-religious institution, Aṅ-Keliya, literally the horn-play, or the game of horn-pulling, otherwise called Aṅ-Ädīma or the horn-pulling ceremony, has for ages found great favour with the villagers, and though it is seldom practised today with anything like its pristine vigour, it has still its votaries and even prevails as an annual event in a number of villages. Among such villages is the little rural resort of Vihara Lane (Plate I, fig. I) nestling behind the bustling city life of Colombo between Wellawatta and Dehiwela, where I witnessed its ceremonial performance on June 18, 1950. The region round about has evidently had a long reputation for this celebration, for Mr. H. C. P. Bell [1] speaks of its performance at Kalubovila in its immediate vicinity, on March 3, 1883, observing that small-pox had been prevailing in the villages round for some time, and the villagers had decided to invoke the aid of Pattini-deviyo, the patroness of the sport, with *aṅ-keli-pūjāva*.

The mythical history of Pattini-deviyo is the subject of a small Sinhalese tract, *Aṅkeli-upata* or *Pattini-mālāva* [2], a poem of 74 quatrains in folk style. The first four stanzas relate the goddess's birth in the mango grove [3] of the Pandyan King. Kannaki was her name and she married the merchant prince Pālanga of the city of Madura. The incidents leading to the institution of the *aṅ-keliya*, are described in a few stanzas. Pālanga and his wife sporting in the orchard see a *sapu* flower (Michelia Champaka) reflected in the pond, and the princess desires to get it. Pālanga climbs a tree and tries to reach the flower by a hooked stick. Pattini standing on a lower branch also tries with a long hook to get at the flower. In their effort to bring down the flower, the two hooks get entangled. Round this sporting story has grown the socio-religious play of *Aṅkeliya*. Unable to extricate the hooks, they both descend, Pālanga from the higher bough and Pattini from the lower. They return to the city and a thousand maids and a thousand men are summoned, and the contest begins :—

> " All the maids with Pattini were on the lower side
> All the men with Pālanga on the upper side
> Ranging themselves they pulled the two hooks ;
> Prince Pālanga's hook it was that broke."

The lower side, the *Yaṭipila*, were frantic in their rejoicings.

> The Yaṭipila assemblage, crying " hoiyo "
> Danced, reciting horn-pulling songs ;
> As they sang their scornful ditties
> The Uḍupila stood silent in their shame.

Pālanga is defeated in successive contests until at last Pattini feeling pity for her husband allows him to win the subsequent contests, pacifying him with gentle words. In the subsequent stanzas is described the triumphant progress of the couple over the cities and villages of the Island dispelling all diseases at the places, until they reach a meadow where they establish themselves,—a place which has since come to be known as Aṅ-piṭiya in the vicinity of Kandy. Thus was inaugurated the *aṅ-keliya* the most popular mode of propitiating the goddess which

[1] J. R. A. S. (*c*), Vol. VIII, No. 29–1884, pp. 380–384.
[2] Translation, J. R. A. S. (*c*), Vol. VIII, No. 29–1884, pp. 385–394.
[3] In the garden of the Pandyan King of Madura was a mango of more than usual size. Attempts to pluck it were in vain. Sakra in the guise of an old man appeared, and shot an arrow at the mango. As the king looked up, the sap dropped on his third eye, blinding it. This frightened the king who encasing the mango in a clay vessel sent it drifting in a boat, which flowed down to the city of Conjeeveram. The princess of the place recovering the fruit left it to ripen. On the seventh day, a baby girl emerged out of the clay pot. This is the story of the birth of Kannaki, whose subsequent life events culminated in her deification as Goddess Pattini.

soon assumed the character of a country wide institution, functioning particular in a season of epidemics, when the protection of the goddess is invoked by an *aṅ-keli pūjāva*. Its observance in the form of a contest with two opposing sides, is its greatest novelty and this feature imparts to it an interest of its own in the whole field of folk religion. The participants divide themselves into two sides, *Yaṭipila* and *Uḍupila*, the lower and the upper side.

3. Selecting a suitable day is the first thing, and to this end, the chief men of either side meet and discuss. The villagers contribute towards the expenses. Any deficit is met by the principal collaborators. Kapurālas well versed in the rituals are invited, and together with party representatives, the spade work is gone through for the Pūjāva. On the plot decided upon are erected two cadjan sheds which are to serve as temporary shrine rooms or dēvālas, where the horn belonging to each party is kept in ceremonial worship, with a Kapurāla over each. (Plate I, figs. 2 and 3.) A number of flower altars (*Mal Pāla*) are set up, of tender cadjan leaves, creamy white in colour, supported on thin stakes ; and in these altars, clay lamps burning coconut oil are lit. A vow is now taken with proper invocation to gods, to hold the *Aṅ-keli pūjāva* for seven successive weeks, accompanied by a *gini maḍu* and *pān-maḍu* [1] followed by an alms-giving at which a few hundred persons are fed. A complement of forty persons is, as a rule, selected, 20 from each side, who have charge of all that relates to the proper functioning of the rituals.

Two gaily decorated poles, the *Kāla pandama*, span the site on either side. An areca palm trunk is best suited to the purpose, coloured and decorated with tender cadjan leaves, flags and buntings and links of coloured paper, extending from side to side. (Plate I, fig. 1.) On these are hoisted at the right time, a *pandama*, or a flaming flambeau, carried aloft by a youngster.

Strength and capacity for resistance, are the qualities looked for in selecting a well matched pair of horns. At an advanced age in its life the sambhur sheds its antlers, and such antlers being well matured are greatly prized in this religious contest. Securing a horn in which you have confidence, the branching sides are neatly cut, one long to about 6 inches, and the other short about 2 inches. The cut surface is rubbed smooth to glistening white. A type of horn even more favoured is said to be horns used successfully in noosing wild animals. In this mode of noosing, one end of a stout rope is securely knotted to a cleft antler,and wound round with jungle creepers to a stout tree, with the other end of the rope ending in a noose to entrap wild animals such as elephants or buffaloes. Such deer horns are known as *Vara-madda*, in virtue of their tested quality of resistance. Such horns are, however, so rare that they are seldom a practical proposition. Albeit this would seem to be part of its traditions. What is admittedly true is that a horn with an established reputation for its wins at several contests, is as much prized by the villagers, as a race horse with several governor's cups to its credit, is esteemed by its owner. Conventional names used to be given to the horns, such as *gavara*, yak ; *lihiniyā*, eagle ; *rā-kambaya*, drunkard, &c. Such horns were indeed so highly prized that they are reported to have acquired a high market value and handed down as heir-looms in families that treasure them.

Mimi dīma is the formal measuring of horns before the encounter, the exact measurement of the longer end being taken by each party and handed to the other. The body of the horn except the short head is steeped in gum, and upholstered tight with cord. The horns are each provided with a handle, the *aṅ-mōla*. This is a cross piece of strong wood tied across the middle of the long end. (Plate III, fig. I.) Both parties would have gathered quantities of tough jungle creeper growing in the wilds. These creepers are coiled loose round the Uḍupila and Yaṭipila posts. At the particular celebrations of the *Aṅ-keli pūjāva*, at Vihare Lane a well-grown stout *ruk* tree (Myristica Horsfieldia) growing on the site, served as the Uḍupila post—also called *aṅ gaha* (Plate II, figs. 1 and 2). Coils of jungle creepers are loosely wound round the base of the tree. Five yards away is the Yaṭipila post, a coconut palm trunk, about 10 feet high with its heavy root end up fixed in a neatly dug groove, 3 feet long, 2 feet broad and 4 feet deep. (Plate II, figs. 1 and 3.) The sides of the

[1] Signifying literally, " hall of fire, and hall of lights "—, alluding to the holding of a Gam Maḍuva, with inflaming of *dummala* or resin and lighting of numerous oil lights and *pandam* or torches.

trench are strengthened by a lining of split palm trunks and inside this trench, the post of palm trunk has free play, and can be moved forward and backward with facility. This is also termed *henakanda* or the *valigaha*. Round its base are loosely wound strong bands of the jungle creeper. *Loops* of creepers thus wound round both the posts are called *Pērasa*. Two lengths of stout ropes are attached to the upper part of the *henakanda*, extending to about 40 yards beyond. (Plate II, fig. 3.) Altogether this rural ceremonial sport has a most intricate technology.

4. As a rule the weekly celebration takes place on Sundays. On the previous day, a group of devotees, the "*bāsses*" as they are called, of the two sides and a lad from each party, all clad in white, conduct the two prepared horns to the Kōvils (*Aṅ-päl* or the horn-huts) to the chanting of verses. Prior to this, the horns would have been taken in procession to a temple in the vicinity and the rival parties make vows at the temple praying for victory. Following this ritual, the parties return to the village where an almsgiving is held of an all vegetarian rice meal. On the morning of the Sunday an almsgiving of *kiri bat*[1] is given to all present. Between 12 noon and 1 a.m. the entire assemblage resorts to the arena, or the site of the contest. The crowd gathers and the stage is set for the first step in the celebrations of the big event. Blessing the horn is the first scene in this dramatic ritual. (Plate III, fig. 2.) To the sounding of drums and the blowing of conch, the sacred horn is duly taken and carried on the head of a boy, under a white canopy. (Plate III, fig. 3.) Each of the boys circumambulate the altar of flower offerings erected on either side of the devala, after which the horns are duly removed and handed over to the Kapurāla of the respective side who receives them to the chanting of incantations sacred to the goddess.

The party leaders or "*bāsses*" soon proceed to interlock the horns. Interlocking—*aṅ-avulanavā*, or *aṅ velīma* is a long and tiresome process, occupying about two hours. The two horns being hooked together, the interlocking is perfected and safeguarded by means of strings, of which each party has a coil ready, each coil consisting of twelve individual strings of twisted strands. These strings grip the interlocked hooks in their strong coils, without any risk of slipping. Any overhanging loose strings are pressed tight over or under the horn. This done, the *aṅ-mōla* or handle of each horn, is inserted through the loose ends of the coil of strings and through the coils of creepers round the Yaṭipila and Uḍupila posts. On the Yaṭipila side, the palm stump is given a push in the direction of the Uḍupila tree post, to facilitate the process. The coiled creepers, the strings on either side together with the horns all now form one interlocking unit, which being perfected to the satisfaction of the party leaders, a shout of joy goes forth from all assembled announcing that all is well. An air of excitement and bustle now prevails. The drummers beat a vigorous tattoo, and inside the devalas, the Kapurālas chant benedictions at the flower altars. Coming out, they project into the air handfuls of powdered resin set aflame by the lighted torch in the left hand of each Kapurāla. On each side, a youngster holding a lighted torch runs up and fixes the flambeau on the top of each decorated pole. To the sounding of drums, censing and burning of resins and trimming the oil-lamps to burn brighter, representatives of the rival parties invoke the blessings of the gods. Offerings of coins are also tied to the horns supplicating the gods for victory. These rites take about another hour. It is now time to start the pulling. The *henakanda* palm trunk is now slowly pushed back to farthest end of the trench. (Plate IV, fig. 1.) This helps to keep the horns tight and taut. Men on either side keep them steady. The tradition is for the pull to be symbolically inaugurated by seven women, designated *ammā* or mothers. They presently give place to the men who now come forth and take to the pulling. (Plate IV, fig. 2.) The stronger the horns, the more exciting grows the contest. Hundreds of people may join the tug, pulling with might and main. The successive jerks of the pull cause the *henakanda* palm post to strike with a thud, against the end of the pit ; a sound which keeps repeating all through the pulling—the characteristic rhythmic sound known as "*Valivāṭuma*". Great excitement prevails and all eyes are on the horns.

[1] Rice cooked with coconut milk—cooked soft, with sufficient consistency to be cut into oblong pieces ; it is a favourite item in the menu of the Sinhalese, and popular whether as a ceremonial or domestic food.

5. It is by no means a tug-of-war, with opposing parties pulling from either side. The pulling seems to make all the difference in this sport, directed as it is from one side, all hands laying hold of the ropes and pulling from the Yaṭipila side. The tension and the strain on the Yaṭipila side is most telling and the chances would seem to be for the Yaṭipila horn to give in. This of course is a test at the same time of the resistance of the Uḍupila horn. Actually it was the Uḍupila horn that broke. Nor did it take long to break. It would be an interesting exercise in the study of averages to record the results of a long series of contests and deduce the average of success, in this socio-religious contest. The head of the broken horn goes by right to the party that wins. The vanquished party taking the rest of their horn, keep silent, sportsman-like.

The victorious Yaṭipila sent forth shouts of joy. The victory acted like a heady wine on the Yaṭipila party, who were delirious in their excitement.

The victors reclaiming their horn from its trappings, wrap it in silk cloth, decorate it with garlands and flowers and carry it aloft in a procession under a canopy thrice around the arena and over the whole village, to the resounding shouts of the crowds. (Plate IV, fig. 3.) The demonstration takes the form of a sing-song running dialogue, led by the leader, the rest joining in loud acclamations :—

The Leader : Hōiyō
Others : Hoiyapure Hōiyō
The Leader : Api Yaṭipila Hōiyō
Others : Ekaṭa Dinum Hōiyō
Leader : Uḍupila Ayin veyav (Getout, Uḍupila men)
Others : Hōiyō
Leader : Yaṭipila api (we are of Yaṭipila)
Others : Hōiyō
Leader : Bohoma vasai (very cross)
Others : Hōiyō
Leader : An dun aya (Those given horns)
Others : Rākadenni Hōiyō (be protected)
Leader : An velu aya (those tethered horns)
Others : Rākadenni (be protected)
Leader : An Vaṭṭaḍi (the Bāsses)
Others : Rākadenni Hōiyō (be protected)

It was nightfall as the day's events closed. As the people disperse, the " Valigaha " or Vali tree, is thrown towards the ruk tree on the side of the Uḍupila, shouting " Huddaddara, Devadara, Pattinipura Hōi-yē-yē-yō ".

For seven weeks in succession the ceremonial contest is thus conducted. During the eighth week, " Yaṭipila " and " Uḍupila " parties take the horns in procession to their respective abodes on all the seven days of the week. This is called *Pēli yāma*, or going in *pēliya* or a procession.

6. Among the many features of Aṅ-keliya is its place in rural social life, which it has influenced in its progress through the years. Beginning as a simple co-operative effort, time saw to its fruition into an elaborate two party organization both of co-operation and of conflict.

Membership of a party is a matter of descent, not of choice. This strengthened party loyalty, while it safeguarded the risk involved in members of the same family belonging to different parties.

As a form of Pattini cult scarcely surviving in India but strong in Ceylon, *Aṅkeliya* has an interest of its own. The legend itself has a most popular appeal, turning round the romantic story of Pālanga and Kannaki, a story which we know swayed the minds of men in a variety of ways from 2nd century A. D., when the Pattini cult assumed a systematized form of worship in South India under royal patronage. Exception seems to have been taken to it at a certain stage in its history as Knox [1] informs us in these words :—" this filthy Solemnity was formerly much in use among them ; and even the King himself hath spent time in it, but now lately he hath absolutely forbidden it under penalty of a forfeiture of Money. So that the practice hereof is quite left off. " The mode of rejoicing " expressed by dancing and singing and uttering sordid beastly expressions ", in the words of Knox, would seem to have had much to do with this royal veto. In its technological aspects such as the erect palm trunk, moving in a prepared slit trench and other features, we may possibly see a sex motif. Viewed against the background of early religious feeling, any sex element that may have been present in its equipment or observance, is what may probably have been associated with it in its early days. " The connection between religion and morality is secondary and late, " in the words of Tylor. The meaning is clear—that the earlier forms of religion do not show this connection. With the mystic sanction of custom is bound up its authoritative nature, and all the relevant circumstances taken in detail, help us to verify the value of custom. In the later days of religious development, the notion of sex got modified, and a re-interpretation came to be placed on it, with a sense of uncleanliness that has come to be attached to the biological part of sex. We have thus in any event got to recognise the fact that a certain element of sexualism has been part of early religious feeling and this possibly has been true of *Aṅ-Keliya*. With the march of modernization, the demonstration of victory at an Aṅ-Keliya contest by the successful party, is more subdued in tone—as it was at the one I saw—, from what it obviously used to be in the early days and whatever sex idea may have been present in *Aṅ-Keliya*, nothing much is evident today.

7. Such notions apart, that it has a strong prophylactic function may rightly be assumed. During the whole course of its observance for over seven weeks, the villagers lead a clean life, free of all *Kili* or pollution, subsisting on a strictly vegetarian diet, for flesh food is forbidden. The houses and surroundings are kept cleaner than ever, and on the whole, the villagers have a festive time. All this helps in promoting the health of the village at a time when it is most indicated. The setting aflame handfuls of resin thrown into the air by the Kapurāla, is not the least of the prophylactics of this religious play.

8. The Gam-Maḍuva. A full course of Aṅ-Keliya comprises seven such contests, one every week. The last is followed by a *gam-maḍuva*, which concludes the seasonal celebrations. The term means a " Village hall " (*gam*, village and *maḍuva*, a hall or shed), and a large structure of bamboo and cadjans 60 ft. by 20 ft. in dimensions, is its noticeable aspect. The erection of a *gam-maḍuva* has its own rituals—the *Kap-hitavīma*, or the ceremonial planting and consecration of four *kap* or shafts at the four corners of the village bounds, and a central post on the spot selected for the *gam-maḍuva*. Inside the hall is the high altar made of the leaf sheaths of plantain, gaily decorated with areca palm flowers and tender coconut leaves. Within this altar is a niche—the *sanctum sanctorum* in which are to be deposited in due course, the sacred anklets and other insignia of the goddess, hidden to view by a cloth curtain. At the main entrance to the structure, are erected three flower altars or *mal yahaṅ*. In proximity to the latter, stands a decorated high post, on which is affixed during the course of the ceremonials the *Kāla Pandama* or the torch of prosperity.

Such in very brief is the technology of a *gam maḍuva*, which stands in a large open village square, as at the celebration I was privileged to see on a memorable day in July, 1949, at Piliyandala, a village about 15 miles south of Colombo. Lit up by a number of flaming

[1] Knox, Robert. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, 1681, pp. 157–158.

flambeaus with flickering flames of oil wicks burning at the several altars heavily laden with flowers, fruits and food offerings, and a pervasive smell of incense—, an air of mysticism fills the place. A large concourse of villagers gathers early and the floor space of the hall on either side, is filled with women and children prepared to stay put the whole night from dusk to dawn. The presiding priest is the Kapurāla of the Pattini, the Pattini hāmi, as he is called, in the picturesque garb of a woman, with a frilled sari, one end of which is thrown over the shoulder, wearing the womanly jacket and a white cloth covering his head. The feminine apparel is reminiscent of the very early days when it was a very priestess who officiated at the cult of the great goddess of virtue and chastity. He has a number of boy attendants dressed in white *piruvaṭa*—or the well washed white cloth worn round the waist and reaching down the ankles, with a white wrapper on the head, and a red sash round the waist.

9. The ceremonials themselves are highly dramatic spread over the whole night. The Pattinihāmi duly inaugurates the ceremonials by a narration of the traditions and episodes in the life of the goddess, enlarging on her glories and the benefits to be derived from pleasing her. Presently, a procession comes to view heralded by drumming. This is the ceremonial arrival of the cocoanut oil for the sacred lamps, in a *tel-goṭuva* or a receptacle formed of the leaf sheath of the areca palm, carried on the head of a devotee under a white canopy. Receiving the oil with all ceremony, the Pattinihāmi consecrates it to the chanting of appropriate verses, moving forward towards the altar in measured steps and slow and in rhythmic dancing strides. Similar processions are staged in taking the oil to each of the other altars. Fed with the sacred oil, the lamps burn with a brighter glow. Those at the high altar are dedicated to Pattini, and those at the other altars to gods, Visnu, Saman, Vibhīsana and Kataragama, and the lesser spirits, Baṇḍāra Deviyō and Däḍi Muṇḍa Devol Deviyō. Invocatory verses are addressed to the gods for divine grace and protection and blessings on the *āturayās*[1], or the body of devotees of the Pattini goddess, who is invoked as *Sat-Pattini* or the seven Pattinis, alluding to her birth seven times in this world, including the *demaṭa* flower (Gmelina asiatica), the Nāga's tear drop, the dew drop, the shawl and the mystic mango. (Plate V, fig. 1.) She has a Nāga jewel (*nāga mānikam*) and a vase of flowers in her hand, and presides over her shrine at Navagamuva[2]. Her miraculous deeds are duly sung, such as her turning a section of Mount Anjanakūṭa, into a muddy field wherein she grew rice and gave alms to Sakra within seven hours and thereby became an aspirant to Buddhahood— ; and the goddess is envoked to forgive the poor mortals, the *āturayās*, of their sins of omission and commission and to grant them long life and happiness.

With incantations to the deities concluded, the " Solu Līya " or the staff of Däḍimuṇḍa Devol Deviyō is brought in procession to the high altar. It is said that Pattini triumphed over Devol Deviyō when he attempted to land at *Sinigama*. At Hikkaḍuva, she created seven mountains of fire to obstruct him but finally she was prevailed upon to confer a *varam* or boon which enabled Däḍi Muṇḍa and his retinue to come ashore. The ritual of the " Solu Līya " is followed by a *Pandam Pāliya* or torch dance to the accompaniment of drumming, in the course of which the Pattinihāmi inflames large quantities of resin to propitiate Kataragama Deviyō. As the torch dance reaches the climax the *Kāla Pandama* or torch of prosperity is lit and affixed to the top of the decorated lofty areca trunk post at the entrance to the *maḍuva* so as to be seen from all points of vantage in the village. The *Kāla Pandama* burns all through the night until day dawn. It commemorates the tradition that a *pandama* was offered to the god Kadira after the erection of the sacred temple of Kataragama.

Lighting the Kāla Pandama marks the time for offerings of the Kalu Kumāra Pidēniya, or *kiribat* in a small pot covered by a " *Kaḍa vasam* "—(a piece of plantain leaf covering). An ignited torch is stuck into the pot. The offering placed on a winnowing fan is carried on

[1] Āturayā :—Ordinarily, a sick or suffering person for whom a bali ceremony is performed. At a gam-maduva all the people participating in the ceremonials are termed āturayās as they seek the grace of Pattini for protection against diseases.

[2] A village near Hanwella on the Colombo-Avissawella Road.

the head of an *āturayā*, with a red kerchief covering his head. At the performance of a Gam Maḍuva it is necessary to offer the Kalu Kumāra [1] *pidēniya* during the three *yāma* ; the first, the second and the third watches of the night. The Kapurāla next moves towards the high altar and intones verses in Sanskrit in praise of the Buddha. Two of his attendants follow in like manner, one chanting the praises of the Dhamma and the other singing praises of the Sangha. This is followed by a series of dances to vigorous drumming. The Pattinihāmi advances dancing towards the high altar, and removes the white curtain that veils it. Turning to the *āturayās* he blesses them by fanning them with the folded curtain cloth. This ritual of fanning is known as *Salu-sälīma* [2]. The magnificent *torana* surmounting the high altar is now fully revealed in all its decorations and the Kapurāla and his assistants begin to describe the *torana* reciting the sacred verses in elaborate and dramatic style to the accompaniment of dance and drumming. This particular ritual is called *toran pāliya* [3] or *toran kiyavanavā*.

At the conclusion of the *toran pāliya*, the ceremony of *Deviyan vaḍamavanavā* [4] is conducted. This marks the high light of the ceremonials. The anklet of Pattini as well as the other insignia of the goddess (Plate V, figs. 1 and 2) now arrive in procession from their abode in a temporary shrine and the Pattinihāmi receives them and deposits them on the high altar to the sounding of *Yahan bera*, advancing in a series of well-timed dancing strides. This is followed by the ritual of blessing the sacrificial food, or *murutan* [5] to be offered to the gods. Offerings such as oil cakes, sweets, plantains, and fruits are brought in procession and the Pattinihāmi places them on the high altar as well as on the minor altars to the singing of sacred *stōtras* or invocatory verses. Next comes the ritual of *mal-gähilla* [6] when two of the men carrying cocoanut flowers perform a vigorous dance to the beating of drums. The dance reaches its climax when one of the two gets into a trance of *disti*, when he is said to be under the influence of the "*dummala disṭiya*" [7]. Carrying two inflamed torches (Depiṭa Vilakku) in both hands he runs all over the Gam Maḍuva, and as he reaches the exit, a conch is blown when retracing his steps, he falls in a swoon. Turmeric water is sprinkled and he revives.

The *Amba Vidamana* [8] ceremony follows the *Dummala Varama*. This ritual is conducted in commemoration of Pattini's birth from a flaming mango. (Plate V, fig. 1.) In the Pāndyan king's orchard, Sakra shot an arrow when a red juice from the fruit blinded the third eye of the tyrant king. Two mangoes made of brass or wood are suspended by a string near the high altar. An archer in a god's attire comes with bow and arrow and shoots at the string and the mangoes drop down. The next item is termed *Ali Allanṭa yanavā* [9]. A man appears in the trappings of an elephant, with two long cocoanut leaves for tusks, to the singing of stanzas and beating of drums. The Pattinihāmi cutting the tusks of the mock elephant, puts an end to this comic interlude.

Gini pāganavā [10] or the ritual of fire walking, is the next ritual. Within a square enclosed by petiole or the leaf stalk of the plantain are a quantity of live embers. The man who does the

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[1] Kalu Kumāraya or the "black prince", a demon with rather aristocratic associations. Has curly black hair, and a black robe. Afflicts mankind and particularly women of dark colour. Receives offerings at junction of roads. Astrologically, the night is divided into three *Yāmas*.

[2] *Salu-sälīma.*—Salu, shawl ; sälīma, shaking or fanning from side to side—fanning with a shawl.

[3] *Toran-pāliya.*—Torana, a pandal and pāliya, a narrative or description—a description in verse of the torana, or pandal.

[4] *Deviyan-vaḍamavanavā.*—Deviyan, gods ; vaḍamavanavā, to conduct—conducting the gods ceremoniously.

[5] *Murutan.*—A term denoting sacrificial food of vegetable curries, sweets, &c., offered to the gods.

[6] *Mal-gähilla.*—Mal, flowers, gähilla, to hit, strike or play—a dance performance with coconut flowers.

[7] *Dummala-disṭiya.*—Dummala, resin ; distiya, trance or spirit possession—the dancer enters into a trance in the course of his igniting the resin.

[8] *Amba-Vidamana.*—Amba, mango ; vidamana, shooting—shooting at the mango.

[9] *Ali-Allanṭa-Yanavā.*—Ali, elephants ; Allanṭa, to capture ; Yanavā, to go—going to hunt the elephants.

[10] *Gini-pāganavā.*—Gini, fire ; pāganavā, trampling—fire walking.

fire walking advances. His progress is obstructed by a curtain or *tiraya* held in front of him. The Pattinihāmi steps forward and washes his feet in turmeric water and incenses them, when he jumps on to the live coals and tramples them under his feet for a few minutes. Coming out he rushes before the high altar and kneels down in a state of adoration.

This is followed by the ritual of *Aila Padinavā* or the swinging ritual. Two strong branches of Cadju or Goraka tree are posted apart in the centre of the hall. Two cross bars are tied between them, one at the bottom and one above. On the upper bar sits Garā Yakā [1] holding the two posts with both hands outstretched. He swings forwards and backwards, when others nearby intone sacred stanzas to the accompaniment of drumming. At the close of this ritual he is given an offering of *kiribat*, sweets and plantains. Partaking the food, he burns resin so as to ward off the evil-tongue and the evil-eye.

Deiyanne Dāne or the ceremony of feeding in the name of the goddess, brings the rituals of the *gam maḍuwa* to a close. Mats are spread inside and outside the hall and all the *āturayās* or votaries sit for a meal of cooked rice and vegetable curries served on plantain leaves. Before the great repast, a portion of the food is first offered to the gods. A *Kehel Goṭuva* or receptacle made of a plaintain leaf is now taken round, in which each drops a handful of the rice. With the rice so collected, crows are fed.

10. Among the other forms of ceremonials practised to propitiate Pattini are the Pol-Keliya or the game of smashing cocoanuts, Mal-keliya or playing with flowers, the Pūnāva [2] and the Ammāvarunge Dāne.

Of these *Ammāvarunge Dāne* or the " almsgiving to the mothers " is a simple domestic ceremonial of particular interest, contrasting with the elaborate forms of propitiating the goddess. Held in fulfilment of a vow, the early morning hours find the household well prepared. The house and its precincts are cleansed and incensed, and the floor sprinkled with turmeric water. At the threshold of the house is kept a basin of saffron water with one or two cut lime pieces in it. One of the rooms is prepared to receive the " seven Pattinis ", with the floor spread with mats and a ceremonial brass lamp kept ready with seven wicks in cocoanut oil. The women who for the nonce are the seven Pattinis duly come, led by an elderly man, styled Kiri Appo.[3] They wash their face, hands and feet with the turmeric water, a little of which is also applied to the head with a little juice of the cut lime. Thus purified, they enter the house and are seated in the room all in a row. Kiri Appo takes a seat all by himself. The seven wicks of the lamp are now lit, and the room incensed. The members of the household come clad in clean dress. Over the mat is spread white cloth, and the savouries and delicacies cooked for the occasion are served in plantain leaves. It is the *āturayā*, the erstwhile patient, now whole and sound, and bathed and dressed in clean clothes, who serves the food. Each of the women and the Kiri Appo is served with large helpings of *Kiribat*, plantains, jaggery and *Kiridodol* [4]. These are served in more than one round or two. Each is also given a king coconut, the betel and arecanut are served last. With the betel, is given a coin each, usually a ten cent piece. From the food thus served, each drops a little on to a plantain leaf, which is for the crows. All the food being duly served, the *āturayā* narrates the purpose of the vow and the malady that had inflicted him. Kiri Appo and the women all join in intoning an incantation to propitiate Pattini. They invoke the goddess to participate in the merits of the

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[1] *Garā Yakā.*—A kindly spirit with a broad smile and a sense of humour, propitiated to ward off the evil-eye and evil-tongue.

[2] Pūnāva takes its name from the wide mouthed clay pot used in the ceremony, with an array of projecting spouts round the middle of the vessel, cobra heads around the neck and a lid with one or more heads of the leopard. The ceremony of *Devol-maḍu-nātuma*, in which this is employed is one of the many cults connected with the goddess Pattini.

[3] Literally " milk father ", the man whose business it is to bring the seven women and take them back.

[4] *Kiri Dodol.* A sort of pudding made of flour, milk and jaggery. Cut and served in square pieces, it is special for the Ammāvarunge Dāne.

dāne, and beg of the goddess to bless the household with good health and to spare it of such visitations in future. Each one bundles the food served to her in the plantain leaf, and they all rise to depart. As they depart, each woman comes up to the ceremonial lamp, extinguishes a burning wick with her fingers, touches a little of the oil of the lamp and applies it to the head of the *āturayā*, as well as of the other inmates. The women go out in silence without turning back or uttering a syllable, for they are supposed to take away with them all traces of infection. Last to leave is Kiri Appo who too performs this simple rite of daubing the head of the householders with a touch of the sacred oil from the lamp.

11. In Ceylon, Pattini the goddess has so much become part and parcel of folk religion that her human history is lost in obscurity. And yet Pattini was more human than divine, and it was her human attributes that have elevated her to spiritual status. Pattini's earthly life as Kannaki, the wife of Kovalan or Pālanga, was just the sort of life that a Hindu wife was expected to live—a life of implicit obedience and tolerance. On a certain day Pālanga passing through his native city of Pūhar was fascinated by the charms of the accomplished courtesan of the day, Mādavi, and on her he lavished all his wealth and fortune. After some years of life with Mādavai, wisdom dawned on him and realizing the worthlessness of his life, he left her for good. Impoverished, he returned to his wife who received him with open arms, as her dear lord and husband. Reduced to serious straits, his only chance was to make a living in the great Pāndyan capital, Madhura. Thither they went and reaching the outskirts of the city, Kannaki found shelter in the cottage of a cowherdess Mādari by name. Pālanga taking one of the golden anklets of his wife wended his way to the busy jewellery mart of the city to effect a sale of the anklet. The wily goldsmith of the king accosted him there and to him, he showed the anklet. The goldsmith who had already stolen the queen's anklet, thought it a golden plan to accuse Pālanga of the theft of the queen's anklet. Leaving him at his house, he directly went to the king, proclaiming innocent Pālanga as the thief. The King who was in no mood to hold a formal enquiry, directly ordered his execution. The news soon spread and reached the ears of his wife in the cowherdess's hut. Kannaki raving mad hastened to see her husband in a pool of blood. Her rage fell with all its awful fury on the king, who was denounced as a murderer. The king realizing the sin of killing an innocent, died on the spot. The chronicle of what followed is a composite picture of the natural and supernatural, such as we read in the story of Eastern lands in this early epoch. All Madhura perished in flames. The subsequent events in this story may best be told in the words of the translator of *Silappadikāram* [1] :—

" Kannaki thereupon left Madura and proceeding West to the Malainadu reached Murugavel-kunram (the hill sacred to Muruga) which she ascended. There she stood under the shade of a *vēngai* tree [1] to the wonder of the people of the place, most of whom were Kuravas. When every one of them was looking at her, Kannaki left the place in the celestial car for Heaven. This they reported to Senguttuvan, their king. The poet Sattanar, who was there, narrated the events that had happened in Madura. The queen desired that a temple should be set up in honour of Kannaki. Senguttuvan who had been thinking for a long time of leading a military expedition to the north to subdue the refractory chieftains there, resolved to secure a block of stone from the Himalayas to carve out an image of the Pattinikkaḍavul, as they called her".—This brings me to where I began,—the inauguration of the cult of Pattini, at which king Gajabāhu was present. Deification has brought in its wake a train of legends and a complexity of cults—, in which Pattini figures as the dominant deity in a hierarchy of spirits and deities.

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[1] Dikshitar, V. R. R. *The Silappadikāram*, 1939, p. 7.

[2] Peterocarpus Marsupium.—A resinous timber tree common in Ceylon and South India.

Note.—Mr. C. M. Austin de Silva, Librarian, Colombo National Museum Library, assisted me in my field work on Aṅ-Keliya and Gam-Maḍuva. My acknowledgments are due to him, and to Mr. K. D. L. Wickramaratna, Assistant Librarian, who helped me with the transliterations of Sinhalese terms. I am also grateful to Mr. W. S. Fernando, of Vihara Lane, Wellawatta, for giving me all facilities to make a study of the ceremonials of Aṅ-Keliya and to obtain photographs.

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Fig. 1—The site.

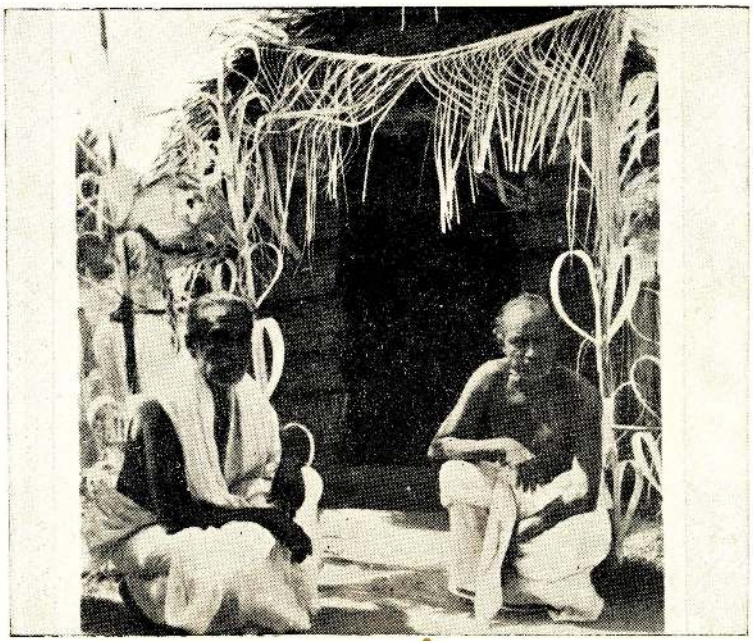

Fig. 2—The Uḍupila Shrine Room—Entrance.

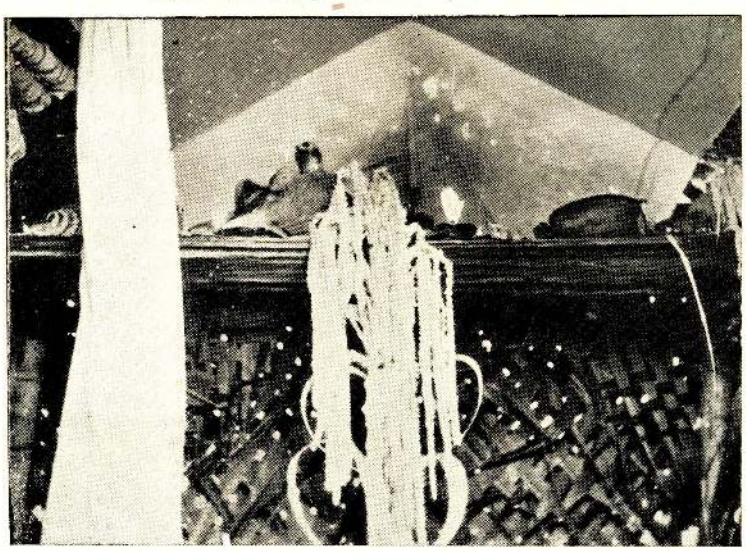

Fig. 3—The Uḍupi[1] Shrine Room—interior—Horn under consecration.

Fig. 1—The Arena Ensemble.

Fig. 2—The Aṅ Gaha (Uḍupila Post).

Fig. 3—The Henakanda (Yaṭipila Post).

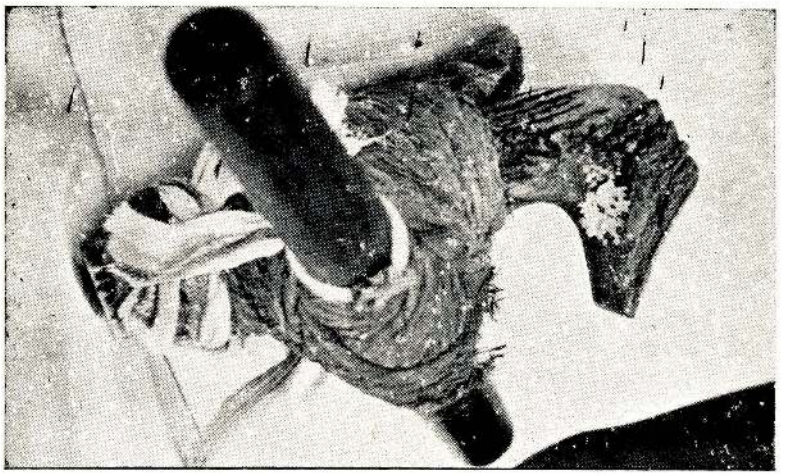

Fig. 1—The Uḍupila Horn.

Fig. 2—Blessing the Horn.

Fig. —Circumambulation under a canopy.

Fig. 1—Swinging the Henakanda.

Fig. 2—Start of the Pull.

Fig. 3—The Procession.

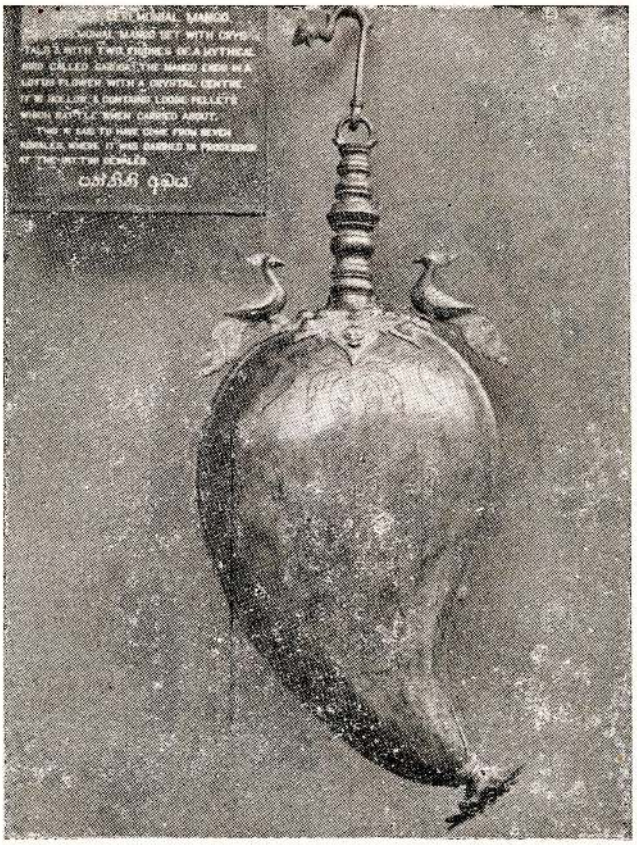

Fig. 1—The Golden Mango.

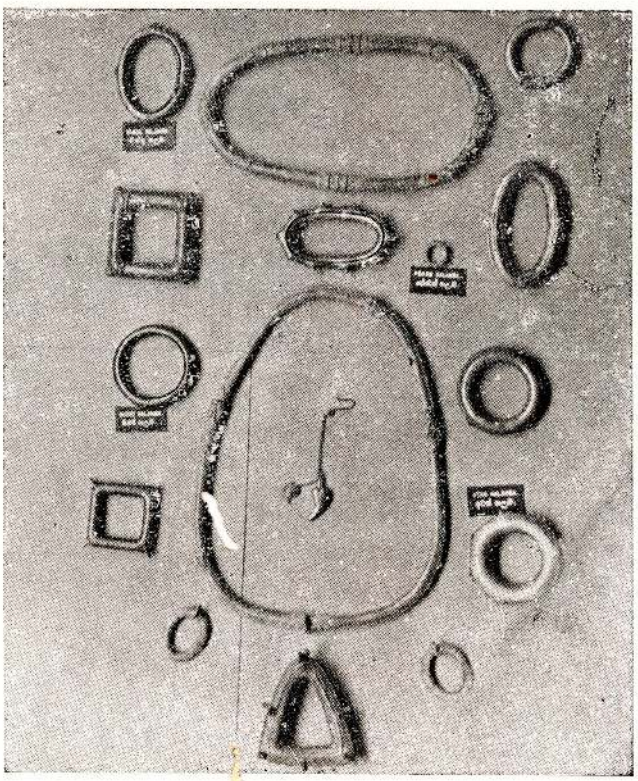

Fig. 2—The Insignia.