

# THE GADI RACE of CEYLON



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with my compliments  
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# The Gadi Race of Ceylon

*Numbers*  
Numbers of a race who call themselves the 'Gadi' people are found in a few villages in the North Central, Central, North Western and Uva Provinces of Ceylon. They are a race of outcasts and are called "Rodiyas" by the Sinhalese who shun them as untouchables. History throws little light upon their origin, though there are certain legends come down from ancient times to account for their debased condition.

The ethnic connection of the Gadi race of Ceylon with the other races of this Island had not until quite recently been determined. Hugh Neville who made a careful study of this race published the results of his investigations in the "Taprobanian", which are an invaluable source of information regarding their culture, language and habits at the time he wrote.

In dealing with these people we should always bear in mind the principle laid down by Tyler in his "Primitive Culture" where he points out that 'In anthropological and archaeological research attempts to explain by the light of reason things that want the light of history to show their meaning should be avoided.'

The facts definitely known about this race are -

- (1) They are called 'Rodiyas' by the Sinhalese, but they resent this appellation though they cannot afford to show their resentment; They call themselves the 'Gadi people'.
- (2) They are outcasts and have been regarded as untouchables by all Sinhalese Buddhists. Only one other caste treats them with respect - viz the Kinnaraya.
- (3) They have a language of their own but this after more than a millennium has become debased and many Sinhalese words and inflexions have been incorporated into it.
- (4) Dancing was an important feature of their culture, but this too has nearly died out.
- (5) These people had up to quite recently no lands of their own for paddy cultivation, and had been forbidden by the Sinhalese kings of Kandy to hunt in the forests or shoot any game.
- (6) They earned something by making drums, ropes, especially the strong ropes for catching elephants with.



- (7) The women and men usually go round collecting food. They are very particular to say that they do not beg but "ask for food and eat it" - somewhat like the Buddhist priests collecting dana.
- (8) The headman of each Gadi village or settlement is called a 'Hulu Waliya' a term which means a 'torch-bearing dancer'. His cultural status and function will be dealt with later.
- (9) In bali ceremonies where the hulawaliya acts as priest, they worship the clay images of the planetary deities ("all the hosts of Heaven") set on wooden altars in groves of leaves of the coconut tree.
- (10) These people sing a Kavi known as the "Ratnavali Kavi" which has come down from ancient times and is regarded as sacred by them.
- (11) In their funeral ceremonies the Gadi people are very careful to place a bit of silver in the mouth of a woman before she is buried. The reason for doing so is not known but it is a practice that has come down from very ancient times, which will be referred to later on.

From early times the women of this tribe have been branded as prostitutes, while the men are reputed to have a knowledge of charming, both curative and exotic.

There are two Gadi races in Dravidian India - but it has not yet been possible to ascertain whether their language has any affinity with the ancient language of the Ceylon Gadi race.

A book dealing with this tribe entitled "Handsome Beggars" (referred to as "H. B." hereafter) has been published by Mr. M. D. Ragharan (who deserves credit for his attempt to rehabilitate a degraded race) but the conclusions arrived at by him are in many cases, erroneous. In this book the author seeks to establish a connection between the Rodiyas and Veddahs and Gangetic hordes that followed the introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon. (vide p. 107 of H. B.) This cannot be correct for there is proof that the Gadi race (i. e. the so called Rodiyas) were in Ceylon before the introduction of Buddhism, while from the ethnological point of view the Veddhas and the Rodiyas are quite different, the former being an Austroloid or Negroid race, while the latter are of the mediterranean type as the author of H. B. himself admits (Vide p. 31 of H. B.)

We have not yet been able to trace the origin of the Rodiya dialect. It may be pointed out that the statement in H. B. that "both Rodiya and Veddah dialects contain a large number of periphrastic expressions" is not correct. The Rodiya and the Veddah dialects are quite different from each other, the latter being a form of Prakrit, probably the dialect of the first Sinhala settlers in Ceylon e. g. for "come along" the Veddah says "Man gachcha" or "take the road", for salt he says "Karan pojja". The periphrastic expressions are used by Veddahs (and also Sinhalese) in hunting, as it supposed not to be lucky to use the usual name of the game hunted, e. g. for monkey "wanderoo" or "rilaw" the expression "gas-gona" (tree deer) is used for "hare" "Kan-Kotta" (short cars). The Rodiya dialect has no such periphrastic expressions, but there are many prefires which are used with different words with connected meanings.

In this connection it may not be out of place to quote the words of Dr. Albright, the well known anthropologist and archaeologist in his book "From Cave Man to Christianity". "It is no longer necessary to emphasise the fact that a common linguistic inheritance does not necessarily carry with it a common racial origin, since language may be borrowed, whereas physical inheritance cannot. It may be said most emphatically that most efforts to prove language relationship in opposition to the views of competent specialists are doomed to failure. In few fields of learning has more nonsense been written by enthusiasts who are not willing to submit to the painfully rigid discipline of linguistic method".

The Ratnavalli Kavi throws much light upon the origin and history of the Rodiyas and their cult. The author of H. B. has translated and commented on this Kavi in pages 61-63 of the book, but the translations given are in several cases incorrect as will be realised from the following notes:

Verse 1. The Theluambu tree was sacred to the goddess worshipped by the Rodiyas.

Verse 2. more correctly  
"Coming from afar with bodies whirling in the dance  
and approaching nearer with mincing steps"

Verse 3. This has been mis-translated and misunderstood by the author.



Neville, who had an excellent knowledge of Sinhala and Tamil and many other oriental languages, and who had the assistance of a learned Sinhalese Pundit has translated "Sal Oliyal" correctly as "head stone ornament" but did not know what this referred to. There is no Sal tree in Ceylon, the flowers of which are made into wreaths. The local Hal tree is sometimes called sal but it does not bear flowers that could be made into wreaths. (A tree introduced into Ceylon within the last hundred years by the Botanical Gardens Peradeniya — the "cannon-Ball Tree" has been wrongly called "Sal" by many) The word Sal in this Verse is the root of the word Sala (සලා) meaning a pebble or stone (c. f. the word "සලසන" — stone seat; also used to mean the throne of Indra) Mount Meru) and "Sal Oliyal" the "stone head ornament" is nothing but the "Moon of Ashtoreth" an alabaster half moon inscribed with zodiacal figures bound on the heads of officiating priests and votaries of the goddess in their sacrificial dances. The translation should more correctly be "with head encircled with cold mists and adorned with the alabaster moon". The significance of this will be explained further on.

Verse 5. quite wrongly translated.

The correct translation of line 2 is "I will perform rituals (e. g. a toil ceremony,) so that your youthful vigour (or lust of life may not leave you."

Rissa means desire, strength, Noyama-not to leave. Line 3 Vissa vaiyasa does not mean "20th year." The word "vissa" means heedlessness, wantonness, playfulness of a child - and the expression "vissa vaiyasa passuwenekota" - "When you have grown up" i. e. attained virginity. Line 4 is correctly given by Neville as "Maessa aran missa pitapa noyanne" which means "do not leave the precincts unless you have taken the maessa" (which was a small silver coin.) The author of H. B has changed maessa "a coin", to "Mass" meaning "meat" and translated the line thus: "You whose 20th year has passed, you shall not go without a feed of flesh". Why should the woman addressed wait till her 20th year to have a feed of flesh? The alteration of maessa (a coin) to mcass (mcats) has also spoilt the rhythm of the verse and makes nonsense. The significance of this verse will be explained later on.

Handwritten notes:

mas  
maesa

sal. & no. mte. excellent  
Oliyal. galad & flowers

Lo & Ala - from a book which is in the library

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Verse 6. Should be translated more correctly "O great king caught in the toils (i.e. of the two religions) do not begrudge me my telambu tree, do not consider it inauspicious, but remove all ill effects by offering sacrifices, causing blood to flow like the waters of a river, and build in my name a golden dagoba."

The above Kavi furnishes us with a picture of the rites of the cult of which the priests and votaries were the Rodiyas. On page 61 of the book reviewed the author states "The verses given by Neville are here reproduced with a rendering in English more free and revealing better its ritualistic import." I would point out that though the translation is certainly "mord free" it is not correct, and the alteration of the word *Maessa* (a coin) to *mass* (flesh) is quite unjustified. To alter the text and mistranslate a document to support the erroneous views of a translator is hardly a commendable method of historical research. Having dealt with the correct translation of the Kavi I propose to focus the light of history upon the Rodiaya and this verse of the Kavi; supplemented by the tradition referred to by Neville, that when the grove of telembu trees in Anuradhapura were cut down to build the Ruwan-Welisaya Dagoba, a great pestilence, attributed to Kali's wrath, broke out.

There can be no doubt that the Kavi gives us a picture, however obscured, it may be of the cult from pre-Buddhistic times to the introduction of the Buddhist religion in the year 246 B.C. when the people, following the example of their king, embraced the new religion, and the priests and followers of the old faith became outcasts. The Ratnavali Kavi holds the key to the origin and history of these much despised people. It may be likened to the picture by a good artist who can with one sweep of his brush emphasise some prominent feature he wishes to portray.

The first verse of the Kavi refers to the ceremonies when a girl attains puberty. She is led to a tree "rukata pitadiunnu." Verse 2 introduces a Ratnavali as the dancer "coming from afar with body whirling in the dance and approaching with mincing steps." Verse 3 shows that the dance described in verse 2 is of the nature of a sacrificial rite. Verse 4 expresses praise of the dancer. Verse 5 refers to ancient customs of this community, while the sixth and last verse explains how the race became outcasts. The correct translation and interpretation of this Kavi will be dealt with later on.



Pandukabhaya

We may now proceed to focus the light of history upon the origin and customs of the Rodiya. The Mahawansa tells us that in the 4th Century B.C. King Pandukabhaya allowed the Phœnicians to settle in Anuradhapura outside the western gates. The Phœnicians were the great seagoing traders of ancient days and established settlements in the East and Far-East. In the first millenium B.C. Hiram of Tyre, a Phœnician, brought King Solomon goods from the East for the construction of the great temple. It was Hiram who brought a colony of Jews to S.W. India (Kerala) in the first millenium B.C. The descendants of those Jews are in India to this day, having retained their religion and nationality for over two thousand years owing to their not having been persecuted by the local rulers. Mantota, Galle and Weligama were ports of call for the Phœnician traders. It was at the last port that the Phœnicians met the Chinese trading fleet from the Far-East which first touched at Hambantota (Port of the sampans). From very early times goddesses of fertility played a great part in the social system of Eastern races. The great goddess of the East was Ashtoreth (Astarte), who was worshipped by the Phœnicians. There can be no doubt that the Phœnicians were well-known in Ceylon, and had settlement in Mantota (where Phœnicians remains have been discovered) and Weligama, long before King Pandukabhaya granted them lands near the capital. There is a road in Weligama called "Yen Vidya" to this day. The Phœnicians would have introduced the Ashtoreth cult into their settlements in Ceylon as they did in other countries. We read in the Old Testament of the Bible that King Solomon went after Ashtoreth and later other kings did the same "offering sacrifices in groves in high places and worshipping all the host of heaven". This was the Ashtoreth cult introduced by the Phœnicians. The ritual dances and sacrifices of this cult centered around the great female principal of nature, represented in India by "Kali the Mother" and in Egypt by Isis. The Dravidians in Ceylon before the Buddhistic era would naturally have practised these rites; indeed all the inhabitants except the Veddahs must have been Hindus by religion. To the Indian mind all existence was of a dual nature,—Purush and Prakrite—Soul and Energy. In the vedic sacrifices the fire was regarded as a personification of Siva, while Kali, his consort and one of his powers was personified by one of the red names. This is symbolised in the Kali image by her protruding tongue.

Phœnicians H. G. V.?

Veddah (Nagayau Cult.)



To return to verse 3 of the Kavi—Moon Worship was a feature of the Ashtoreth cult. The full moon day was the great day of ecstasy and sacrifice. On full moon nights the priests and votaries repaired to the sacred groves and offered sacrifice to the moon goddess Ashtoreth. The priest, holding a torch in his left hand, and a sacrificial knife in his right, followed by the votaries all danced around the sacrifice placed on the altar of stone (on a high place) singing a theogony to the goddess; worked up into an ecstatic state by song and dance the votaries sometimes gashed their own bodies. The ritual came to an end with the priest driving his sacrificial knife into the heart of the victim on the altar. If an animal was the offering, the priest cut the body up and took away all for his own use except the right foreleg which was left on the altar. If the victim was a human being, as was the case sometimes, the whole body was left on the altar to be disposed of afterwards. The dance was an essential part of the ritual of all sacrifices. The reason for this can be realised only when we can understand the psychology of the dance as part of a ritual inducing an ecstatic condition in which the worshippers feel themselves united with, and protected by, the spirit of nature around them. Kurt Sachs in his "World History of the Dance" says "In the ecstasy of the dance man bridges the chasm between this and the other world to realm of demons, spirits, and God. Captivated and entranced he bursts his earthly chains and tremblingly finds himself in tune with the world. "Whosoever knows the power of the dance dwelleth in God" cries the Persian dervish poet." The dance inherited from savage ancestors as an ordered expression in action of an exhilaration of the soul, develops and broadens into a search for God, into a conscious effort to become a part of the powers beyond the might of man which controls our destinies. The dance becomes a sacrificial rite, a charm, a prayer and a prophetic vision. It summons and dispels the forces of nature; it heals the sick, and links the dead to the chain of their descendants. Even the highest culture have as an inheritance from the past a lofty conception that all abundance and superhuman motion is the dance. Turning about in divine rhythm Siva creates the world. For the Chinese cosmic harmony originates in the dance and late Jewish theology, indeed even Christianity, ever hostile to the dance, cannot visualise the lot of the redeemed except in the picture of an ethereal world revolving round about the shining throne of God".

Verse 3 depicts the dance in full. The time is night. In a tropical country in the day time and at sea level there could be no cold winds encircling the head of the dancers. The wind could not be visible unless some visible object was carried by it. Hence the idea is that cold mists surround the naked dancer. The alabaster moon of Ashtoreth—"Mooned Ashtoreth, Heavens queen and mother both" as Milton calls the goddess, is bound on the foreheads of the priest and the dancers. The goddess worshipped is indicated by the necklace of skulls. The Phœnician goddess Ashoreth and her sister Anath were always represented in iconography as naked. They are represented in Egypt as goddesses of War, naked on horseback, sword in hand, massacring mankind, causing heads and hands to fly in all directions. The heads are tied round the neck, and hands round the girdle.

Verse 4 shows the Rodiya going her rounds through the village collecting her offerings, just as the Buddhists bhikkus did later. The Rodiyas are very emphatic about their not being beggars.

Verse 5 refers to the practice of sacred prostitution. One of the most common forms of the goddess is that of a naked woman holding symbols of fertility, such as lily stalks and serpents, in her upraised hands. In the last lines of this verse we have a clear reference to the old Babylonian practice thus described by the Greek historian Herodotus:—"Now the most shameful of the Babylonian customs is as follows. Every woman must sit down in the precincts of Aphrodite and have commerce with a man. In the precincts of Aphrodite sit many women and there are passages in straight lines going through the women in every direction so that men may pass and take their choice. Hence when a woman sits down, she does not depart till a stranger has thrown a silver coin into her lap and has had commerce with her outside the temple. After throwing the coin he must say these words, "I demand thee in the name of the goddess Mylitta" (i.e. Aphaodite), and the silver coin may be of any value. Whatever it is she will not refuse it, for that is not lawful for her, seeing that the coin is made sacred by the act, and she follows the man who has first thrown it. After that she departs to her house, and you will not be able to give her any gift however great so as to win her." On page 21 the author of H.B. refers to the Rodiya custom of placing a piece



of silver in the mouth of a corpse before burial, but he has given no explanation of this practice. This piece of silver was originally the silver coin which was treasured as sacred and at death was buried with the receiver.

At the present time the Hulawaliya is the Headman of a Rodiya village or settlement. The word "Hulawaliya" means a "torch-bearer dancer," but in the old days, before the Rodiyas become outcasts, he was the priest who officiated at the offering of the sacrifice of the Moon goddess. As explained above, the ritual dances or sacrifices were at night, and the dancers were led by the priest who held a torch in his hand, hence his name. The explanation of the name given by the author of H. B. on page 16 is incorrect and borders on the ridiculous. The Rodiyas were not a tribe of hunters, and even if they were, no hunter would enter the forest with a torch as this would scare away all the game for miles around. The Hulawaliya was an important person. He knew all the charms and wisdom of his sect. The statement on page 61 of H. B. with reference to this is correct, but the author has not recognised the significance of these facts. Herodotus mentions that no sacrifice to the Gods could be offered unless a priest officiated and killed the victim. In the old Asthoreth ritual dance the priest who headed the sacrificial dance and worshipped "all the host of heaven" had a half-moon of alabaster curiously carved with zodiacal figures bound on his forehead. The author of H. B. very correctly points out that "moulding and modelling of clay images of the planetary deities fostered a degree of plastic art which attained a degree of artistic sensibility in the figures that go to form the "statuary." Again in page 61 the author refers to the Rodiya kattadiya and the bali ceremonies where the nine planetary deities were worshipped in groves made of coconut leaves." This is a clear indication that the Rodiyas followed the old Asthoreth cult referred to above, where Asthoreth was worshipped in groves.

When the Rodiyas become outcasts on the introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon, they were not supported by the people as the monks took their place in the social life of the former followers of the Varnashrama Dharma, and of the Asthoreth cult. This led the Rodiyas to take to hunting to support themselves as they owned no land and were not agriculturists. Later on they were

deprived even of the privilege of hunting in the kings' forests and were forced to appeal to charity of the people for their subsistence. The author of H.B. seeks to prove that the Rodiyas were hunters whose ancestors were the primitive tribe of hunters "who came over to Ceylon with the Gangetic hordes that accompanied the Bo sapling to Ceylon." He bases his contentions on the following facts :—

- (a) the Mahawansa states that certain tribes of hunters came over to Ceylon as part of the entourage that accompanied the Bo sapling.
- (b) certain people called the Ludako are mentioned by the Mahawansa as being in Ceylon at the time of King Dutugamunu.
- (c) the Tamils call Rodiyas Ludi. *Whee?*
- (d) A. M. Ferguson records that even up to his time (1895) there were certain persons devoted to particular services towards the sacred tree known as Vili-Durayas.
- (e) Every Rodiya's proper name ends with the suffix "Villi."
- (f) Nevill states that the term "Veda" is used by a man of any caste when addressing a Rodiya in a kindly or conciliatory manner.
- (g) Neville states that the Dadda Vaeddahs are identical with the Villi-Durayas and are in no way connected with the true Veddahs.

Therefore, the author states, the Villi-Duraya must be a headman of the Rodiyas. It is very difficult to understand now from the facts mentioned above the Villi-Duraya must be a Rodiya Headman (or Hulawaliya.) Nowhere does Nevill state that any class of Duraya was Rodiya. The only connection in the chain of reasoning is Nevill's statement in para 6 above, but this statement, even if it is correct, does not indicate that the Rodiya is a Veddah. I maintain, however, that the statement is not correct and that there has been some confusion between two words  $\text{Ṽḍḍah}$  (veddah) and  $\text{Ṽḍḍa}$  (Veda) a native physician. The ordinary



villager often addresses as "Veda" such a person as a soothsayer or charmer. The Hulawaliya being the headman of his community and possessing a knowledge of all the traditional lore of the tribe, an expert in protective charms and charms for the cure of certain ailments, would certainly be addressed as "Veda" and this would lead to any Rodiya being so addressed in a kindly way. Not only a Hulawaliya, but also a man of the Næketi, cast is often so addressed. For instance, the owner of a laud in the Hiriyale Hatpattu, is a person of the Næketi caste, but is known as "Ukkuwa Veda" though he is not a Vedarale (native physician.) The Durayas are the same as the Bathgamuwa caste and belong to a separate race altogether. It is hard to reconcile the fact, mentioned in H. B. that the Rodiya was tabooed by the Buddhist dhamma and society, with his statement that the "Villi Duraya who came over with the Bo sapling and performed services towards the sacred tree" were Rodiya headman. The Rodiyas (the Gadi people), the Durayas and the Veddas belong to three quite separate races. The huntsmen who came over from India with the Bo sapling would naturally after a time join their fellow huntsmen in Ceylon (the Veddas) and merge into their class. The Duraya (vide the Taprobanian Vol. I page 112 not 23) were cultivators fetched from Orissa for the royal paddy fields. Although it is admitted (i. e. in the Janawansa) they were of the Govi class, they were despised in Ceylon as one of the lowest classes, doubtless from their being foreigners and having been treated by the Kings with immense prerogatives, such as exemption from prosecution in all inferior tribunals of justice, evidently a boon granted to protect them from jealous prosecution by the (Sinhalese) cultivators. These people are also called "Bathgamuwa" as they were brought over to cultivate the fields assigned to provide rice for the royal household. They were, as Neville states, not originally a low caste. This is borne out by the fact that the retinue that accompanied the two princesses that were awaiting on the top of the Kumari-pannagala, the signal from their consort of victory or defeat, were Bathgamuwa people. When the power of the Sinhalese kings in Ceylon declined and eventually came to an end, the foreign cultivators attached to the royal household fell from grace too, and were ostracised by the indigenous cultivators.

As regards the Ratnevali legends, all the stories about her

cannibalism must be rejected. It is not unusual for accretions of fiction to grow up around happenings of the distant past until after some centuries the actual facts are entirely obscured by the fictitious growths. What probably happened was that Ratnavalli was a pervert and practised the seductive rites of the Ashtoreth worship in offering up a human sacrifice. If the wise king Solomon could have gone after Ashtoreth and built altars in high places in Jerusalem, where he worshipped "all the hote of heaven" in her groves, as we are told in the Bible, there was some excuse for Ratnavali relapsing into the old faith. This gave a new status to the Rodiyas who paid her almost divine honours as a goddess, and wove around her name the story of their cult and origin. It is clear that at the time Ratnavali was driven away there were already Rodiyas in the country as she was sent away with one of these outcasts to join the tribe. We can now understand why the Rodiyas were banned by society and tabooed by the Buddhists after the introduction of Buddhism with its "ahimsa" doctrine into Ceylon. The priests of the old religion were fierce and fond of killing animals. There is also a suspicion that religious prostitution was popular.

On page 87 of H.B. the author states the Rodiya traditions collected by Robert Knox are the starting point from which Rodiya studies are pursued to-day. This is certainly not correct from the ethnological point of view. All facts point to their having been a foreign race, and we must go back to the time of their arrival in Ceylon, and even to a date before that, to know their history. In the last verse of the Ratnavalli Kavi the destruction of the groves in which the Rodiyas worshipped their goddess on the introduction of Buddhism is referred to, and this gives us a definite point in time from which we can date their becoming an outcast community. Buddhism was introduced into Ceylon in the middle of the third century B.C. We read in the Mahavamsa that the Phœnicians were allowed to settle outside the western gate of Anuradhapura in the middle of the fourth century B. C. This shows that before the groves of telambu trees in Anuradhapura were destroyed the Phœnicians had been settled there over a hundred years as the Ruwanwelisaya begun by Dutugamunu was not quite finished when he died in 137 B.C.

The facts that are established by the investigation into the history of the Rodiya are :—



- (1) The Rodiyas worshipped the goddess in groves of telembu trees in Anuradhapura on the spot where the Ruwanwelisaya Dagoba now stands.
- (2) These trees were cut down to build the Dagoba. This must have been sometime between 200 B.C. and 137 B.C.
- (3) The Ratnavali Kavi shows us that the ritual followed by the ancient Rodiyas was that of the Ashtoreth cult.
- (4) The Phœnicians had been allowed a settlement in Anuradhapura sometime about B. C. 350.
- (5) Society and the Buddhists tabooed the Rodiyas. This antipathy naturally was subsequent to the introduction of Buddhism in the second century B.C.

There can be little doubt but the Phœnicians introduced the Ashtoreth worship into Anuradhapura as they had done in other places. The Ashtoreth cult was somewhat similar to that followed by the Hindus and religious prostitution was not uncommon. There were dewadasies attached to the various Hindu Temples.

We may sum up the known facts regarding the ethnology of the Gadi people of Ceylon and the Phœnicians as follows :—

#### The Gadi People.

1. The only location in Ceylon referred to in the Ratnavali Kavi as having been occupied by the Gadi race is Anuradhapura, where the grove of telembu trees sacred to them was cut down for the erection of Ruwanwelisaya Dagoba.
2. Dancing played an important part in their cult.
3. The dancing was at night. A stone head ornament was bound on the head of the dancers, and the dancers were nude. e/
4. They had a language of their own, but this, after more two milleniums, has been modified considerably.
5. In the 'Bali' ceremony they make and worship clay images of "all the host of heaven," that is "planetary deities." %

6. Religious prostitution is referred to in the "taking of the coin" ("Maessa aran misa pitapa noyanne.")
7. A piece of silver must be placed in the mouth of a female before burial.

#### The Phœnicians.

1. In the 4th Century B.C. King Pandukabaya allotted the Phœnicians land for settlement outside the western gate of Anuradhapura.
2. The Phœnicians worshipped Ashtoreth (Astarte) the great eastern nature goddess.
3. The goddess was worshipped in groves and high places at night, and sacrifices were offered to her and all the "host of a heaven."
4. Religious prostitution was practised. "To her were the attributes of fertility and reproduction and the accompanying immorality was perhaps nothing more than primitive magic" (Ency: Britannica). After coming of age every woman had to go to the temple of Ashtoreth and sit beneath the image of the goddess. She could not leave the precincts of the temple until an unknown man threw a silver coin in her lap, with the words "I demand thee in the name of the goddess." She could not refuse and the coin was preserved as sacred.
5. The night of the full moon was the great night of ecstasy and sacrifice when Ashtoreth and all the host of heaven were worshipped in groves, and sacrifices offered to them. The priest followed, by the votaries, danced around the sacrificial altar singing a theogony to the goddess. The priest bore the sacrificial knife in his right hand, and he and the dancers wore the alabaster moon of Ashtoreth (the "sal oliyal" of the kavi,) a half moon curiously carved with zodiacal figures, and were nude ("sita sulan aenda."

The prophets of the Old Testament of the Bible inveighed against the followers of the Ashtoreth cult and the practice of religious prostitution e.g. "Thou has set up groves and burnt incense in high places and played the harlot under very tree." "Sacrifices in high places, incense on hills, daughters commit whoredom, and spouses adultery. I will pluck up thy groves in the midst of thee."

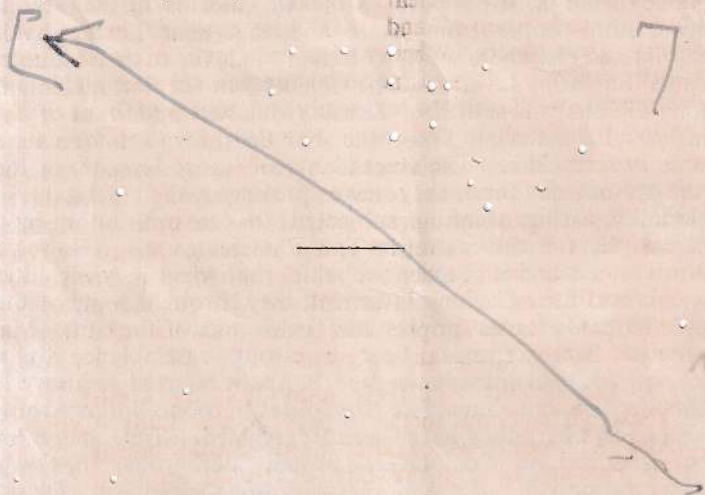


The word "Gadi" has you to be explained. It is a race name and not a "time honoured and highly respected term to denote the wise men of the group" as mentioned in the note on page 58 of H.E., neither is the word Gadi a slang expression used by them having no meaning (vide P 76 of H.B.) I have frequently asked groups of people passing through an estate in Hiriyala Hat Pattu of the N.W.P., not far from Hippawa and Maholiya, who they were and, if they happened to be Rodiyas, I always got the reply "api Gadi minisu" (we are Gadi people). This shows clearly that "Gadi" is a race name.

There are two conjectures to be offered in explanation of the term Gadi. Before mentioning them I must say that I am convinced that the Rodiyas are not a Sinhala race. As the author of H.B. states, they are ethnologically of the Mediterranean type. Gades was the old name for the port of Cadiz, which was one of the Phœnician ports. In Spain at the present day there is a race of people who have been settled by the Government in the south of Granada in the Monte Sacro. They are famous for their dancing and tourists from all over Europe come to see them. Gades was one of the principal ports of the Phœnicians in the Mediterranean, and people from there and the near East, Chaldea, Anatolia and elsewhere went to Indian and far-eastern countries such as Sumatra, Java, and the Celebes. In the first millenium a colony of Jews was settled in Kerala (Malabar) by Hiram of Tyre, who brought materials from the Far East for Solomon's great temple in Jerusalem. The descendants of those Jews are in India at the present day and they have preserved their religion and nationality, as they were not subjected to any persecution by the different rulers of the country. The Phœnicians all followed the Ashtoreth cult and it is quite probable that when they introduced this cult into their Ceylon settlement, they brought some of these people from Gades as priests and celebrants of the cult. Many of Monte Sacro females bear a strong resemblance to the Gadi women. At present the race in Spain referred to above live in the Monte Sacro almost like trogdolites in rooms hollowed out of the hill-side where they have been segregated. The dancers have been described as "colourful, proud, barbarous, backward, the inspiration of poets and despair of sociologists, the dark skinned beauties of the Monte Sacro chase the glowing hours with flying feet. The pragmatistical dispensators of moral edicts had to

exercise indulgence with the fiery-eyed skirt-whirling beauties, who clap the castinets of their grandmothers with the same abandon as did their lissom ancestors." Another possibility is that the Rodiyas may have been originally members of the Gadi tribes who are found in India. These people are not aboriginals and are noted for their folk tunes. It has not been possible so far to obtain further particulars of their language or religion.

Since the above was written, the writer visited the Maeliya village, where there is a large Rodiya settlement, with Dr. R. L. Wickremasinghe of the Medical Research Institute, who took blood samples of all the villagers present. He has since examined these and he reports that the blood groupings of the Rodiyas are quite different from both the Sinhalese and Veddas. The blood groupings of the Veddas was like that of some of the Bengal tribes. The result of the investigations is very important and supports the view that the Rodiyas are not Sinhalese and that the members of the hunting tribes of Bengal who came over to Ceylon with the Bo-sapling (vide page 76 of H.B.) must have joined, and finally merged into, the Veddas of Ceylon.





It may not be out of place here to add a few notes on the old Ashtoreth cult followed by the Gadi people in Ceylon over two thousand years ago.

Known by different names - Ishtar, Astarte, Ashtoreth, Aphrodite, Mylitta Venus - in different eastern lands, she was the great female principle in nature, worshipped as the goddess of fecundity. Her cult existed in Iran, Babylonia, Syria, Cyprus, Anatolia, and lastly Greece. Her worship transferred by the Phœnicians from Cyprus to their other settlements and colonies, necessitated, as an act of devotion and a duty, that every girl must once in her life go to her temple and "take the coin" as recorded by Herodotus.

When the cult was introduced into Greece about 700 B.C., "the Corinthian state handed over the cult duty to professionals who lived for long years in the precincts of Aphrodite high up on the summit of Acrocorinthus. If their profession involved unchastity, they none the less practised 'poverty' since what they earned went into the coffers of their 'order.' For that reason the girls of Corinthian Aphrodite were not despised among the ancient Greeks. One thing the girls of Aphrodite did receive, and that was honour, being hymned by very great poets. Whenever in a grave crisis the city of Corinth ordered a day of rational prayer to the goddess, the Government would invite as many of these girls as possible to join in with their petitions, adding their supplications and being present at the sacrifices. Accordingly, when the great invasion of the Persians occurred, threatening to enslave all Greece, the Corinthian girls entered the temple of Aphrodite and prayed for the salvation of the Greeks. Hence, when the Corinthians dedicated in honour of the goddess a bronze tablet on Acrocorinthus, they inscribed on it the name of every girl who had made supplication upon that day and the great Simonides wrote them an epigram:-

For the Greeks and their hard-fighting armies  
These girls stood forth to pray to the Lady Cypris,  
And Aphrodite willed that none should betray  
To Persian archers the city of Hellas.\*

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\* Dr Seltman *The Twelve Olympians* - p. 82 - 83

ling - 'making down'; 'rope' for carrying  
elephants (kondan)

<sup>darang</sup> All musical instruments and  
other, such as brass pipes with Tamil names

Hulu = CHOOH ie @oi - lath (Tamil)

Walya = 'VALI' ie seat: way, decorated  
(kondan)  
(Decorative, high ladder)

KAN & KOTTA.

KAN (kottai) cheek, ear

KOTTA (kottai) fat: 'short'

KINIVRAYA (kinniya) one year

18 gulas - plays a role in the story

Tamil name - (Tamil name)

Oliyal (Oliya) Gallium &  
flour

SAL (sal) milk excellent

MATCHAN (matchan) a small

piece of gold Tamil name

5. 12. KATTAYYA

is KATTAN. KATTAN  
a piece of gold  
KATTU: KATTU is a piece of gold



# References

- p 1 7401. 'Amirka Cakra' - page?
- p 6. Maharamsa. Panchakabha - ch. v
- p 7. 'Wata mitya' 'Dance' kurti sac. + page  
(Puthasa)?
- p 3 D. Mitha. 'Four' 'Local' near to  
Chikhal. page?

RATANAVOL. pages 1. entire (?)

Kudam Nefas - Page referred to?

- N-2.
1. Cocum - was not known to the  
Smithsonian. Legend has it that Nala Raja  
introduced it to South Ceylon
  2. The Cocum in A form was  
probably introduced by the Tamil merchants for  
their religious performances as well as  
for cooking.

No mention of the Tamil word 'Ludi' in the  
Tamil word 'Ludi' is mentioned in the  
Tamil word 'Ludi' is mentioned in the  
Tamil word 'Ludi' is mentioned in the

Point 10. a small, open part of the beach

Point 11. on the beach

Point 12. on the beach  
the river is wide

Point 13.

on the beach - rice, grain, (today)

largest of the beach, (today)

Point 14.

one of the largest of the beach (today)

(Point 15) a large part of the beach