72. Women's Cloths in the Cuddapa District, South India.

Author(s): S. Nicholson

Source: *Man*, Vol. 20 (Oct., 1920), pp. 149-152

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2840126>

Accessed: 18/12/2014 05:33

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Man*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

on to a pointed stick by its under-beak. A number of birds are carried on the one stick for ease of transport (Fig. 11). The women pluck them after they have been scalded. The feet are cut off and the entrails removed, after which they are thrown on to the grass to cool. They are afterwards packed in pickling casks for export. The principal trade is done with Tasmania, from whence they are despatched to other countries. I was informed that quite a large number were formerly sent to Germany.

I am indebted to Dr. G. Horne, of Melbourne, for the photographs given in this paper.

LITERATURE.

- BERRY, R. J. A.—A Living Descendant of an Extinct (Tasmanian) Race. *Proc. Roy. Soc. Vict.*, 1907 Vol. XX.
- BONWICK, J.—The Last of the Tasmanians. 1870.
- Daily Life and Origin of the Tasmanians. 1870.
- The Lost Tasmanian Race. 1884.
- CALDER, J. E.—Some Account of the Wars of Extirpation and Habits of the Native Tribes of Tasmania. *Journ. Anthropol. Inst.*, 1874, 728.
- Boat Expeditions round Tasmania, 1815-16 and 1824. 1881. Hobart.
- JEANNERET, Dr.—Vindication. 1854.
- KELLY. See Calder, J. E.
- STEPHENS, E.—The Tasmanian Half-Castes of the Furneaux Islands. *Journ. Manchester Geogr. Soc.*, 1898 Vol. 14, Nos. 10-12, 355-360.
- Journal of G. Bass. *Hist. Rec. N.S. Wales*, Vol. III.
- Despatch from Governor Hunter to the Duke of Portland, 1st March 1798.
- Annual Report for 1912-13. Dept. of Public Health, Tasmania.
- TASMANIA, BISHOP OF.—Mutton Bird Island. *The New Review*, Aug. 1892.
- Inseln, Die, der Bass-Strasse und ihre Bewohner. *Pet. Mitth.*, 1863, 156-7.
- ROTH, H. L.—The Tasmanians. 1890.
- The Aborigines of Tasmania. 1899.

India.

Nicholson.

Women's Cloths in the Cuddapa District, South India. By **72** Rev. S. Nicholson.

Everyone at all acquainted with India is aware of the differences which exist in the way women wear the cloth or Sari. It is chiefly through the women that it is possible to discover which people belong to the Right and Left hand castes.

After a little practice, too, it is comparatively easy to distinguish the Tamilian from the Telugu and the Canarese women from both, through the way in which the cloth is worn. In the same way it is easy to say whether a woman is a Braman or a Komati (merchant).

It is not, however, so far as I can learn, at all generally known that the pattern of the cloth often carries with it significant information. Apart from the fact, which is known to the most casual observer, that widows wear either white or red cloths, there seems to be quite a large amount of information to be gathered from the patterns of the cloths themselves. Accidentally I discovered that women, in the choosing of a cloth, were not in every case governed merely by fashion or caprice, and the following information is a part of what I was able to collect.

All this information is particularly local, and I find that even in the boundaries of this one district there is considerable variation of custom; but, generally, what is afterwards written applies to the greater part of the Cuddapa and Kurnool districts.

As a rule new cloths are worn for the first time, though they may have been purchased or prepared before, in the month of Kartika, the eighth month of the Telugu year and corresponding to October or November of the Christian calendar. About this time the annual festival for the worship of the dead, *Peddala Amawasya*,

is celebrated. Before being worn the cloths are worshipped with full ceremonial of frankincense and offerings.

As a rule, although it is possible to tell at a glance the name of the particular pattern of cloth worn by a woman, it is not possible to say for what purpose it has been adopted unless the inner border is seen. The two borders at the ends of a woman's cloth are termed *kammi* and *boddhu* respectively. The *kammi* is the portion which is thrown over the shoulder after the cloth has been tied, whilst the *boddhu* is the portion of the cloth which is first tied round the waist and which is completely hidden after the cloth is tied.

It is the *boddhu* which is the most important part and which is indicative of the god in whose honour the cloth is being worn. All cloths, for instance, which are worn in honour of the snake god, Naga, have as *boddhu* a double set of four rows of blue. Cloths which are offered to Peddamma, or any of the seven sister goddesses, have two stripes of blue, four red, two blue, four red and two blue, white alternating with every colour.

The pattern of the *boddhu* does not seem to be so rigidly adhered to in the east of the district as in the west, though an east country weaver to whom I shewed my sketches was able to name all the *boddhu* correctly.

There are a few cloths which not only carry their names but their significance also plainly for all to view. These are:—

Katirevuni Koka.—A blue check cloth with white and blue border and *kammi* and *boddhu*. This cloth is worn if a woman has been subject to frequent miscarriages or if the children have died soon after birth. A vow is made to *Katirevudu*, the god of the graveyard, and the cloth is offered with the usual sacrifices in the graveyard itself.

Kanakanagalu Koka, is a red, white and blue checked cloth and is worn after being offered to the snake god.

Veyyikandla Koka (the cloth of a thousand eyes).—A blue and white check cloth worn in honour of Peddamma, the ceremony of which is hereafter described.

Yeluka Pandla Koka (rat's tooth cloth), a sketch and description of which is given later.

These cloths can be recognised at a glance, but it does not necessarily follow that because they are worn the wearer has performed the ceremony connected with the particular pattern. She may wear any cloth from choice, and, indeed, so far as I can gather, the significance of the different patterns is rapidly being forgotten.

The Magala Koka (snake cloth) is worn by a woman in the first year of her marriage. At the annual snake festival the woman takes the cloth along with other offerings to the snake stones or to the anthill, and after worshipping in the orthodox manner, the new cloth is taken home and is afterwards worn. This cloth is also worn if a snake is known to be about the house, or if there is a nasty discharge from one of the children's ears! As a cure for this latter trouble sometimes a snake charmer is called in and he will clean out the ear of the child with the tail of a cobra!!!

(I have translated "Naga" as snake, but the proper translation should be cobra.)

Kunāla Koka.—If children have persistent sore eyes the mother will make a vow to Kunalamma, who is supposed to be the cause of the trouble, and the cloth will afterwards be worn if the offering has proved effective. The cloth is the same pattern as *Katurevuni Koka*, but is red instead of blue and the *boddhu* is different.

Veyyikandla Koka.—This cloth is often worn in times of cholera and of other epidemic diseases, either amongst men or cattle, and I am told that at such times it is offered to Matamma, a goddess worshipped only by the meanest caste of all the skin dressers. But if this cloth is to be worn even caste people will come to the

Madiga houses and offer the cloth with all the ceremonies. A common earthenware pot is taken and pierced with 1,000 small holes, carefully counted; round the neck

(Kammi.)

(Boddhu.)

FIG. 1.—KATIREVUNI KOKA.

The lines denote blue.

(Kammi.)

(Boddhu.)

FIG. 4.—KUNĀLA KOKA.

Lines denote red.

(Boddhu.)

(Kammi.)

FIG. 2.—NAGALA KOKA

Solid lines denote blue, shaded lines red.

Whole body of cloth blue.

(Boddhu.)

FIG. 5.—VEYYIKANDLA KOKA.

Shaded lines denote red, solid lines blue.

The Kammi is not inserted.

FIG. 3.—YELUKA PANDLA KOKA.

Light lines blue, solid lines red.

(Boddhu.)

(Kammi.)

FIG. 6.—PERUNTALA KOKA.

Shaded lines red, solid lines blue.

(Kammi.)

(Boddhu.)

FIG. 7.—A WEDDING CLOTH.

Shaded lines yellow, solid lines green.

of the pot is tied *kunkamu* or saffron string with cocoanut shell attached, a lighted lamp is placed either inside the pot or on the top, and then the pot and cloth are offered to the goddess.

Yelluka Pandla Koka (the rat's-tooth cloth).—If rats are doing damage to grain, clothes, or other things in the house, worship is made to the king of the rats and a cloth is offered. After the ceremony is finished and before putting on the cloth, a plate of rich food is left in the "god's corner" (S.E.), and all the people go outside and the door is shut for some time. The food is left for the rats, and if in the interval they come and eat it, it is a sign that the offering has been accepted.

Peruntala Koka.—This is a cloth which a man who is married a second time has prepared and worships in the name of the first wife. It is worn by the second wife. Should the husband omit to perform this ceremony it is believed that the spirit of the first wife will trouble the living wife and that she, too, will die.

In this connection it might also be mentioned that now and again jewels are prepared in the name of the dead woman and are given to the second wife. This is a great lever in her hands for making herself comfortable. She has only to say that the spirit of the first wife is taking possession of her and she can get almost anything she wants!

Vanti ancū Koka.—This cloth is given to widows (not among high castes) by their brothers during the first month of widowhood. It is a white cloth with a narrow border along its length, of either red or indigo. If ever a widow buys a cloth it will be of this kind, but often they are very poor and have to depend on charity for their clothes, in which case they will wear whatever is given.

Marriage Cloths.—These are often entirely white without either border or *kammi* or *boddhu*. If such a white cloth is worn at a wedding it must be soaked in saffron before being worn. At other times a cloth with border, *kammi* and *boddhu* of yellow either in silk or cotton will be worn, and if so there is no necessity for the steeping in saffron. On no account, however, must any indigo be introduced into a wedding garment, as indigo is a sign of death.

I also find that in the Eastern parts of the Cuddapa district no indigo is ever introduced into the *kammi*, the end of the cloth thrown over the shoulder. I have not had time to make full enquiry about this and do not know what the reason for the custom is supposed to be.

The length of a woman's cloth is just over nine yards and the breadth about yard and a quarter.

S. NICHOLSON.

West Africa.

The Edo Week. By N. W. Thomas.

Thomas.

73

In his *Back of the Black Man's Mind* (p. 214-8) Mr. R. E. Dennett gives some account of the Edo week. He states correctly that there was a four-day week: *ekē, aho, grie, okwo*, but prefaces the list by the statement that the following has superseded it. This is not the case; the words given for the eight days are not days of the week at all, but numerals compounded with *ele* (day) for the most part. They are as follows:—

<i>ele[owu]</i> , <i>edenele</i>	- to-day	<i>usiele</i>	- - - -	- in four days
<i>axwe</i>	- - - to-morrow	<i>edeha[ele]</i>	- - -	- in five days
<i>ilaxwe</i>	- - - day after to-morrow	<i>edehinoele</i>	- - -	- in six days
<i>uniēle</i>	- - - in three days	<i>edeluane</i>	- - -	- in seven days

The bracket forms are less common, in my experience, than the short forms; I have added the form *edenele* and correct the last word of the series.

These are corresponding forms for the past:—

<i>node</i>	- - - yesterday	<i>nevedēha</i>	- - -	- five days ago
<i>negedia</i>	- - - day before yesterday	<i>nevedehino</i>	- - -	- six days ago
<i>negedene</i>	- - - three days ago	<i>nevedenele</i>	- - -	} seven days ago
<i>nevuse</i>	- - - four days ago	<i>nevedelwāne</i>	- - -	