



The Capping Ceremony of Korea

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JANUARY 11TH, 1898.

E. W. BRABROOK, Esq., C.B., F.S.A., *President, in the Chair.*

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and signed.

Mr. DALTON read Mr. E. B. LANDIS' paper on "The Capping Ceremony of Korea."

The PRESIDENT pointed out the importance attaching to the custom, and was supported by Mr. GOWLAND, who having lived in the country, was able to confirm the account. Discussion was carried on by Mr. MARKOFF, Professor TYLOR, Mr. A. L. LEWIS, Mr. RUPERT JONES and Mr. CROOKE, after which a cordial vote of thanks to the author was passed.

The PRESIDENT announced the election of Professor G. M. DAWSON, of Toronto; Professor SERGI, of Rome; and Signor TRONCOSO, of Mexico.

Mr. LEWIS then read Mr. R. H. MATHEWS' paper on "The Rock Paintings and Carvings of the Australian Aborigines. Part II," and the PRESIDENT, in moving a vote of thanks, pointed out the great accuracy that distinguished Mr. MATHEWS' work.

Mr. A. J. EVANS spoke of similar caves having been found in Northern Italy.

The CAPPING CEREMONY of KOREA. By E. B. LANDIS, M.D.
Third Division, First Class, Order of the Double Dragon.

ALMOST all nations, from the earliest times until now, have had certain rites which were performed at that period of life known as puberty.

The ritualists of Korea lay down the rule that males should be betrothed at from fifteen to twenty years of age. Now, in Korea it will be remembered that the Capping Ceremony and betrothal are synonymous terms, and the one necessarily presupposes the other as amongst the semitic nations of earlier times circumcision implied marriage. Sa Ma, Duke of On, taught that in ancient times males were betrothed at the age of twenty years, and this ceremony implied that the full responsibilities of manhood were now assumed. Later genera-

tions, departing from these ancient customs, were betrothed earlier in life, until now the Capping Ceremony is sometimes performed at the age of ten. This, however, is quite contrary to the teaching of the rigid ceremonialists who hold that a boy is not fit to assume the responsibilities of manhood until he is acquainted with Ritual and Ceremonial Law.

Three days before the ceremony takes place the head of the clan must make an announcement of the approaching ceremony to the spirit tablets in the ancestral temple. In ancient times a day for making this announcement was always chosen by divination, but at present this rule is not followed unless the Capping Ceremony takes place during the first month of the year. This announcement is made because a boy when capped is supposed to add a new link to the chain in the line of descent. It will be remembered that any unusual occurrence is always announced to the spirit tablets in the Ancestral Temple.

In ancient times the tutor, who occupies a prominent place in the performance of this ceremony, was chosen by lot. This rule is not now followed, and one of the friends of the family is chosen instead. He must be good and virtuous and well versed in Ceremonial Law.

The apartments in which the ceremony is to be performed are now prepared. By means of curtains and screens a small room is partitioned off, in the north-eastern part of the Ceremonial Hall. The Ceremonial Hall is one of the large rooms of the house in which all the ceremonies of the family and the clan are performed. If there are no steps leading up to this hall, a drawing is made on the ground to represent steps. Mats are spread out and a basin with towels are placed in a small side room to the East. In the North and South small apartments are also partitioned off.

Early on the morrow the people of the house arise early and get ready the articles enumerated below.

1. Three tables.

2. A black cap. This is made of thick paper and the pieces pasted together after being cut out of a single sheet. In the centre of each end, about half a inch above the band, a hole is pierced for the insertion of the pin. The whole cap is covered with a black material or with black paint.

3. A pin. This is used to stick through the cap. It should be made of ivory, bone or some other white material.

4. A hood. This is placed over the black cap. The hood and the plaited dress (5) are always worn together. It may be made from a piece of black silk or satin.

5. The plaited dress. A dress made of fine white grass

cloth, with a plaited skirt reaching to the heels. The skirt consists of twelve pieces neatly sewn together, and is attached to the jacket in such a manner that the bottom forms a perfect circle. This, Korean ritualists say, refers to the *sun's* orbit, and the twelve pieces of cloth which form the skirt represent the twelve months of the year, the four pieces of which the jacket is made representing the four seasons.

6. A great belt which is always worn with the above garment. It is made of white satin, folded and sewn so that the actual width of the belt is 2 inches. It must be sufficiently long, so that after encircling the waist and being tied in two loops in front, the two ends will reach down as low as the hem of the plaited dress. The edges on both sides are bound with black satin.

7. The cord is fastened to the great belt and may be made from material of any one of the five colours.

8. Black silk or cloth shoes with white laces.

9. The *Mo* cap. Of this cap there are two kinds, a large one which resembles the hat now commonly worn, and a smaller one of gauze. The small one resembles the military cap of the Chow dynasty of China with this addition, that along the seams are loops of jade beads.

10. The black shirt resembles a black jacket. It is now often made of an azure material.

11. A leathern belt which is always worn with the black shirt.

12. Embroidered shoes.

13. The cowl is like the hood usually worn by graduates who have been successful in the examinations.

14. The graduate's gown is made of indigo or jade-coloured silk. It should have a collar of blue-black silk.

15. A belt which is worn with the graduate's gown. It is sometimes called the "Tasselated Belt" or the "Bell Belt." It is made of woven silk and encircles the waist twice, and at the place where it is fastened two bells are usually attached. Lower down the two ends are again fastened and a larger bell or tassel attached.

16. Boots.

17. A comb in a case. This is for combing the hair before it is fastened up.

18. A *Yang*. This somewhat resembles the ordinary head-band. It is made from hair obtained from a horse's mane and is used to enclose the hair.

19. Three trays covered with cloth. It is on these that all the above articles of dress are arranged.

20. Dried meats and pickled meats.

21. Horn spoons.

The head of the clan with other members of the family and people concerned will arrange themselves in proper order according to their rank and relationship. Those who take part in the ceremony wear full ceremonial dress, the others their holiday clothes.

The boy to be capped has his hair tied up in two coils, and wears a dress resembling the holiday attire of boys.

A prompter for the boy and an assistant for the tutor having been chosen from among the relatives, they retire to the outer gate and are escorted back to the hall by the head of the clan with many ceremonial prostrations.

The boy is placed in the centre of the room and faces the south. The tutor occupies a position on his right and faces the east. The assistant takes a comb and combs the boy's hair, and uniting the two coils into one makes a top-knot and puts on the head-band (No. 18). The cap is then handed to the tutor, who slowly advances to where the boy is and, facing him, he hands the cap to the assistant. He then solemnly blesses the boy for the first time thus :

"In this fortunate moon and on this lucky day an addition is made to your dress. You must now discard all childish thoughts and obey, so that you may attain perfect virtue. May you live long and attain much happiness by the aid of this blessing."

The tutor then kneels while the assistant fastens the pin in the cap. The assistant then advances and kneeling hands the cap to the tutor, who receives it and places it on the boy's head whilst the assistant ties on the belt.

The capped boy now attires himself in the plaited skirt, the large belt with tassels and the laced shoes. He stands erect for a short time and with a dignified countenance faces the south.

The second blessing now follows, after which the boy is attired in the black shirt, the leathern belt and the embroidered shoes.

The second blessing :

"In this fortunate moon and at this good time you are attired in other garments. You must be careful of your demeanour that it be grave, and of your heart that it be pure and sincere. May you live long and receive many blessings from the gods."

The Secretary now advances with the cap, and the tutor kneeling places it on the boy's head as before. The capped boy rises, takes off his plaited dress and puts on his black shirt and leathern belt.

The third blessing now follows, after which the cowl, the graduate's gown, and the boots are worn. This ceremony is similar to the previous one.

The third blessing:

"During this good year and in this lucky moon, you have added to your attire, in the presence of all your brothers, all that which is worn by adults. May your virtues reach perfection, and may you attain that golden (lit. yellow) age which has no limit, and receive many blessings from Heaven."

The tutor kneeling places the cowl on the boy's head. The capped boy then takes off the black shirt and putting on the graduate's gown, leathern belt and boots, and retires.

Libations are now poured in the next room. The capped boy facing the north invokes the gods as follows:

"Good wine, pure and fragrant, is now offered to you with prostrations. Accept these our offerings for your benefit. Grant to us the excellencies of Heaven, not forgetting as well to grant us long life."

Then having received a cup of wine and a tray of dried and pickled meats from the assistant, he pours out libations three times, slightly inclining his head whilst doing so.

In order to obtain the greatest efficacy from these libations, a room should be made (with the aid of screens) in the courtyard, and the libations should be poured on the earth.

The tutor now gives a new name to the capped boy by which he is hereafter known, the name which he bore during his infancy and childhood being discarded.

The tutor gives him a new name, thus:

"You, the eldest (or second or third son as the case may be, (name given) having completed the rites on the attainment of manhood, on this lucky day of this fortunate moon, I give you an excellent name. May you make that name distinguished and virtuous and live long to enjoy it."

The capped boy then answers, "Although I am far from bright intellectually, yet I dare not but receive this name with reverence, and early and late regard it with respect."

The capped boy then prostrates himself.

The tutor now takes his farewell.

The head of the clan, accompanied by the capped boy, now pays a visit to the ancestral temple. The announcement in the ancestral temple is similar to that made when a son is born.

The capped boy now pays his respects to his seniors.

A festival is held on a subsequent day or days at which libations are poured, and all who took part in capping rites have their healths drunk with much ceremony, and receive presents of linen, silk, and paper.

Girls go through a ceremony also, which in many respects resembles the Capping Ceremony, and which is called "The Tying up of the Hair." This is done when a girl reaches the age of fifteen, even though she is not betrothed. If, however, she is not betrothed she only wears it done up on festival occasions, on ordinary days wearing it plaited as usual. After a girl is betrothed she never wears her hair plaited.

The mother takes the place which is taken by the head of the clan in the case of boys.

Three days before the ceremony a governess is chosen from amongst the female relatives of the family. She must be good and honest, and possess a certain knowledge of rites and ceremonies. She must of course be a married woman.

If the girl is betrothed, the mother invites one of the female relatives of the husband to assist in doing up the hair. But if the girl is not promised in marriage a relative of her own household acts.

Preparations are now made as in the Ceremony of Capping, mats being spread in the inner apartments for the sisters and female relations of the girl. Early in the morning of the day set apart for the ceremony, the following clothing is prepared:

1. A jacket, which with the comb and wine cups is placed in the middle of the room as in the Capping Ceremony.

2. A cap and hair-pin. These are placed on a tray at the bottom of the western steps, and are in charge of an attendant.

3. The bride's coronet. This is also called the "Phoenix Cap" or "Glorious Cap." With it is placed a pin.

4. A band or net for enclosing the hair. It is made of black silk 6 feet in length folded, and reaches from the nape of the neck over the head to the forehead, where it is turned and tied around the head. In ancient times both men and women wore this, but now it is only worn by the women, the men having discarded it for the horsehair band.

5. A long mantle which is made of silk or satin and reaches as far as the trousers. The collar is cut round. It is sometimes made so as to cover only half of the shoulders, and is sleeveless. The sleeved jacket reaches as far as the knees.

The mother, governess and girl all face the south; the first two are of course in holiday attire.

The mother goes out to meet the governess and escorts her into the house, but as it is not customary for women in Korea to leave the house she need go no farther than the outer gate. The mother enters by the eastern steps and the governess by the western steps, whereupon all the guests go to their proper places. The mother takes up her position in the east, the

governess in the west, and the attendant to the east of the eastern steps. They all face the south.

Just before the hair is done up the governess retires from the room and dresses the girl in the sleeveless jacket. After she returns to the room, the attendant takes the comb and goes to the left side of the mat followed by the governess, leading the girl. The girl now leaves the mat and kneels facing the west, while the assistant loosens the hair and combs it, after which it is again tied together. The governess and mother then descend the stairs and wash their hands, after which the mother requests the governess to return to her mat. The attendant then brings in the coronet and the pin on a tray, whilst the governess advances to where the girl is kneeling and blesses her in precisely the same words as are used for the first blessing in the case of boys. The governess kneels and places the coronet on the girl's head, fastening it with a pin, after which she rises and returns to her mat. The girl also rises and retires to the next room, where she removes the sleeveless jacket for the sleeved one. She now returns to the room and libations are poured. The attendant pours out wine and takes her position to the left of the girl. The governess bows while the girl goes to the right of the mat and stands facing the south. The governess now takes the wine and advancing to the mat where libations are to be poured, repeats the same invocation as in the case of the Capping Ceremony. The girl now prostrates herself four times and the governess once, after which the girl takes the wine and kneeling pours out libations, drinking the remainder. She then rises and again prostrates herself four times.

A name is now given to the girl. The mother and governess together descend the steps, the mother on the east and the governess on the west. The girl descends by the western steps and going a little to the east of them, stands facing the south. The governess goes through the same ceremony as takes place in boys, after which the girl prostrates herself four times and retires. The mother and girl now go to the ancestral temple and announce the completion of the ceremony to the spirit tablets. The announcement reads thus :

“ — (Name) — (No. of daughter, whether eldest, second, third, etc.), has to-day had her hair done up, and we therefore beg to present her in the ancestral temple.”

The governess is now formally thanked, her health is drunk, and presents are given to her. This is all similar to the ceremony described above in the case of boys.