



Ceremonies Observed by the Kandyans in Paddy Cultivation

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dance round with discordant cries, and try to seize and torment it. (Pl. VIII.) The angels drive them back, but at last consent to abide by the test of weighing. It is beyond the purpose of the present note to do more than recall the interest attaching to such a representation of a very early primitive religious idea. A pair of scales is brought, and the guilty soul is placed in one of them, its good actions being assumed to occupy the other. (Pl. IX.) A short pause, while the devils make feints with their weapons; then the soul's scale slowly sinks; its condemnation is pronounced, and it is given over to the tormentors, who struggle over it, gnaw it with their teeth, and make believe to impale it on their tridents, snarling and squealing with fiendish joy the while. The chorus pronounces a short epilogue, and points a seasonable moral—"If you would escape the miser's doom, *put your pennies in the box.*" The play is over; the miser rises in the sight of all, takes up his bed, and walks off with the rest of the troupe to the next convenient spot.

The performance is evidently got up with some care, and the actors, especially the archangel, are not without dramatic power of a kind. The dialogue is in rhyming iambic catalectic tetrameters (8,6,8,6 of our hymn-books), which is the regular Greek ballad metre; but as the words themselves are preserved with some jealousy, it is not easy to get a copy of them. Another version is said to be current in which the soul is at last redeemed from torment; and this statement is supported by the fact that in most other representations of the judgment of the balance, the good and not the evil is put with the soul into the scale which sinks; but this year (1893), at all events, the only rendering given in Athens was that described above.

CEREMONIES *observed by the KANDYANS*¹ in PADDY CULTIVATION.

By T. B. POHATH KEHELPANNALA.

It may not be uninteresting to the members of your honourable Society to know something about the ceremonies observed by the Kandyan paddy cultivators, and I trust that the information which I have collected and embodied in this paper will not be considered altogether unprofitable reading.

After having selected a suitable plot of land for cultivation, the goiya (cultivator) presents himself before the Neket-rāla (village

¹ The Sinhalese of Ceylon are divided into two classes: those occupying the mountainous districts are called Kandyans, while those bordering the maritime districts—low country Sinhalese, whose habits and traditions differ much from their brethren—the uplanders. The Kandyan country was ceded to the British only in 1815.

astrologer) on a Monday or Wednesday with the customary offering of forty betel leaves and areca-nuts, and expresses his wishes in a humble attitude. The Neket-ràla then informs his petitioner, after certain astrological calculations, the circumstances upon which the success or failure of his undertaking depends. On an auspicious day (according to the Neket-ràla), the goiya, after partaking of *heel-bat* (the morning meal) wends his way to his land with a mamoty (a kind of hoe), his face turned towards the favourable direction of the horizon as indicated by the astrologer. Should the goiya on this journey encounter sights or sounds which portend failure—*e.g.*, the hooting of an owl, the cry of a house lizard, the growling of a dog, the sight of persons carrying weapons capable of inflicting injury, &c.—he immediately turns back and retraces his steps homewards. Again the Neket-ràla has to be approached in the manner before described, and consulted as to a lucky hour. Were the goiya to meet with a milk cow, vessels filled with water, men dressed in white, &c., when he sets out towards his land, it is considered very propitious.

Assuming he has arrived at his land without the occurrence of any untoward event, the goiya begins to turn up the soil with his mamoty, this process being called *Gevadenawa*. On the following day the goiya entertains such of his fellow-villagers with *keun* (rice cakes), *kiri-bat* (milk-rice), &c., as are willing to co-operate with him in the cultivation of his field. At the lucky hour, these villagers armed with mamoties proceed to the land, headed by the owner, and turning their faces in the direction of Adam's Peak give out the cry of "*Hà purà hodai*." (Ha! a good beginning.) At sun-turn (midday) the workmen retire for their midday meal. During the time the villagers help the goiya in the cultivation of his field, they are supplied by him with food and other necessities.

No particular ceremony is observed in ploughing, except that wreaths of sweet smelling flowers are twined round the horns of the buffaloes, and the ploughmen keep intoning the words "*uvé uvéuvé uvé uvéuvé*," which are considered pleasant and encouraging to the animals.

When the field is ready for sowing, the ceremony of *Pela mala Hadanawa* takes place after the following manner:—On the advent of a lucky hour, the goiya leaves his dwelling after having recited a number of religious stanzas, bearing an areca-nut flower and a pata (handful with the fingers stretched out) of paddy. Having arrived at his field, with his eyes turned towards the favourable region of the sky, he buries the paddy in a corner of a ridge, having first moulded the earth at the spot so as to represent a peculiarly shaped symbolic figure,

and lays the areca-nut flower on the top of the mound. On inquiring into the significance of this ceremony, Kēhelpannala Pohath Nāyaka Unnānsē, High Priest of Kotmalē Pansala, informed me that the areca-nut flowers were intended as an offering to the gods, who are held to have a great love for them, while the paddy is believed to be taken away to provide for a meal. After a lapse of five days all preparations are made to sow the field.

The time of ploughing is one of great solemnity to the Kandyan paddy cultivator. The *Neketrāla* is again consulted for the purpose of finding a nekata (lucky hour).

Exactly at the time appointed the goiya puts into a large earthen vessel of water the paddy that is to be sown. Having allowed the paddy to soak for a time, it is heaped on the cow-dunged floor in a pyramidal or conical shape. Dangomuva Bandar, Ratēmahatmayao¹ of the Badulla district, informed me that a peculiar preliminary ceremony was observed by the cultivators of that part in connection with the sowing of paddy. Images of Buddha in recumbent, sitting, and erect postures are brought with every mark of solemnity to the place where the paddy to be sown is stored, and certain religious performances are gone through by the officiating Kapurāla. Four days after the soaking referred to above, the ceremony of *yān karanaṇḍa* takes place, that is, the separating of the germinated seeds from the general mass. A part of the *pīla* (verandah) or other convenient place is then rubbed over seven times with a thick solution of cow-dung, and the paddy is placed on this prepared floor and covered over with leaves of the *Habarala*, *Enduru* or *Maru*. The field is then got ready for sowing and the goiya proceeds to the astrologer to consult him as to a lucky hour and day for sowing. Very early in the morning on this day the cultivator anoints himself with sandal wood or other oil, and repairs to his field with the seed to be sown, the paddy being placed on plantain leaves and a mixture of cow-dung and water poured over it. The goiya, as he sows the paddy, repeats to himself certain religious stanzas and meditates on the *Hatarāvaran Devīyo*, the gods of the four regions of the globe. Every precaution is taken to prevent trespass of all kinds on the field, and the goiya fences in his land with stones or sticks. Much of the time of the cultivator is now necessary for watching his field. When the paddy is about a month old, weeding, *Wal Ederema*, is done. This part of the work is exclusively done by women, who are required to be thoroughly clean.

¹ A chief of a Kandyan district.

Thinning and planting, or *Neluma*, is done by the women when the paddy is about three months old. On a day which is not considered unlucky the women call upon the owner of the field for the *attankaiya* (this means return service), and the owner, according to recognized custom, treats the women to *keun* and *kiribat*, and directs them to commence work. The women, while transplanting, intone verses of poetry, making pleasant music. No one dare cross the ridges with an open umbrella while the women are at work, unless there be urgent need for so doing, and permission be first obtained, otherwise mud, &c., are thrown on the intruder whoever he be. The President (a judge of a village tribunal) of Uda Bulatgama mentioned to me that it is recorded of a certain king of Kandy, that while crossing the field known as Gurudeniya in Kundesalé Kandy, where some women were engaged in transplanting, he was bespattered with mud by them. The women proved themselves no respecters of person in the carrying out of their duty, while the king himself passed on without a word of censure against the treatment which no doubt he thought he deserved.

Paddy is liable to be attacked by a grub known among the Kandyans as *Kok-panuwoo*, which sucks the juices of the plant. To avert such attack a *Kema* or charm called *pas-pulutu-kema* is arranged for by the Kapuràla. Five kinds of grain seeds are fried in a pan and afterwards spread on some mud which is moulded over a cocoa-nut shell. About dusk, *gomman vena vèlawa*, the Kapuràla after going through a process of purification, proceeds to the infested field with this preparation, carrying a lighted torch in his hand. The *Kema* is placed on a piece of wood, and the lighted torch is allowed to burn till the fire is extinguished. After this the Kapuràla returns home, but not by the same road he went to the field, and to nobody must he utter a word on the way.

Another method of dealing with this pest is to submerge the crop with water for a time. In some parts of the Kurunegala district an oleaginous mixture with a pleasant scent is smeared over areca-nut flowers by the Kapuràla, after reciting the *Ithipiso Gātha*, and suspended on sticks in different parts of the field. In the Anuradhapura district, sand, after being "charmed," is scattered over the field, and offerings are made to *Jyan* and *Abimāna Dewiyo*s with a view to inducing their intercession to stay the ravages of the pests. Mr. Bell, of the Ceylon Civil Service, in writing about the cultivation of hill paddy, describes another *Kema* called *nava nilla*, practised by the cultivators of the Sabaragamuwa district.

When the paddy is approaching maturity, other ceremonies are gone through, the *goiya*, after purification, places three ears

of grain on a leaf of the Bo-tree,¹ which is held in great veneration, for reasons too well known to need mention, and buries them in the *kalavita* or threshing floor, at the same time chanting some mystic words, invoking the gods to protect the crop from flood, fire, birds, and wild beasts. A day or so prior to the harvesting a few women are set to smear the threshing floor with cow dung. The crop must not be taken in on days on which *pōḍa* (the sabbath of the Buddhists), *Sangrāhandi* (when the changes in the moon occur), and *Vitti* (inauspicious days) fall. Again the Nekkēṭṭāla, attired in fantastic dress, describes a peculiarly-shaped figure with ashes on the *kalavita* with a view to preventing *huniyam* (sorcery) and other evil influences. This ceremony is known as *aluwanwadanawa*. Another rite of a peculiar nature follows this, known as *arkavalētiyanawa*. It consists of digging a circular hole in the field and placing inside a model of the sacred footprint of Buddha (Sripade), a husked cocoa-nut, a creeping plant, clusters of areca-nuts, leaves from the *hēeraspalu* (*Vitis quadrangularis*), and *Tolabō* (*Crinum asiaticum*), and covering these with about three bundles of straw. The figures of the *pōru lella* (leveller), *lāha* (measure), sun and moon, are also described with ashes in the *kalavita*. The village astrologer is also resorted to in order to ascertain a lucky day to reap the field. On such a day a number of men with their eyes directed towards Adam's Peak, and assuming a joyful mood, proceed to the field with their sickles, and verses are sung in turn by the reapers. Another ceremony which precedes threshing consists in three nursing mothers clad in white, having to go round the field seven times carrying paddy on their heads, and then suddenly coming to a standstill and retreating, without uttering a word, to the three corners of the *kalavita*. Then after giving utterance to some incantation, they drop their burdens on the ground, and this is the sign for threshing to begin.

One word more. Threshing is of course conducted by buffaloes yoked together. During this ceremony women are not permitted to intrude on the *kalavita* or threshing floor on any pretence whatever, as the Kandyan goiyas harbour an ill-defined notion of their impurity. But in Beligal Koale, in Kegalle District, and also in Seven Korres (Kurunegale District), women are not altogether subjected to this prohibition. When the ears of paddy are well trodden down by buffaloes so as to separate the paddy, it is winnowed in order to remove the dust and other

¹ This tree is held in the highest veneration by the Buddhists, in consequence of the fable that the day on which Buddha attained his sacred character, he went and seated himself in a certain place, when this tree instantly sprung up for the purpose of sheltering him. The tree at Aunuradhapare is the oldest historical tree in the world. Its botanical term is *Ficus Religiosa*.

refuse which are very often found along with paddy. If the threshing is likely to continue for more than a day, a rude watch hut called a *pela* is constructed by the goiya, and a watcher is set as guard to prevent theft and ravages of wild beasts.

After winnowing, the paddy has to be measured. This process is termed *yāl karanawa*. It is noteworthy that because the Kandyan cultivator often happens to be illiterate, he resorts to a seemingly queer method of measuring the crop his field had produced. For this purpose a ripe areca-nut is taken, and when 40 lahas (1 amunam) are counted, a line is drawn on the areca-nut, and so on, as many lines as there are amunams. A *nilakḍaraya*, or tenant, when he goes to his landlord to tell him the quantity of paddy his field yielded, takes great precaution not to express the number in words, but to offer the areca-nut, which would clearly indicate the number.

The following is a list of the measures of paddy current among the Kandyans:—

4 Miṭas	= 1 Atalossa (a handful with the fingers slightly bent inwards).
8 Mitas	= 1 Pata (a handful with the fingers stretched out).
2 Patas	= 1 Manàwa (two handfuls).
2 Manàwas	= 1 Neli (sheer).
4 Neli	= 1 Kuruni.
4 Lahas	= 1 Timba.
5 Kuruni	= 1 Bera.
10 Lahas ¹	= 1 Pèla (one bushel).
2 Beras	= 1 Pèla.
4 Pèlas	= 1 Amunu (6 bushels or $5\frac{3}{4}$ more correctly ; or 2 or $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres in English standard measurement).
6 Pèlas	= 1 Yel-amunu.
20 Amunams	= 1 Yàla (180 bushels).

The removal of paddy from and to the house is exclusively performed by women, who are required to go through a process of purification.

There are many receptacles of paddy, among which I shall mention the principal ones. Paddy is generally stored in an *atuwa*, or a barn or granary, which is the largest possible receptacle. It is made of wooden planks in the shape of a square, and set usually on stone pillars. The best site for the construction of an *atuwa* is in front of or in the middle of a house. The *atuwa* has an opening at the top which is reached by means of

¹ These differ according to size, some 7, others 8, while a few 9 lahas for a *pèla*.

a ladder. A *Bihi* is next in size and importance. This is a huge vessel conical in form, and constructed of sticks or split calamus (rattan). The largest sized one is capable of holding about a hundred amunams or 400 bushels.

A *pes* follows this. It is a large cylindrical vessel made of bamboo or rattan, and will contain about 10 amunams.

The other minor receptacle of paddy are of little importance and too well known to need mention. Certain incantations are uttered by the goiya in the act of storing paddy as a preventative against the attacks of moths and other injurious insects.

The goiya and the parties interested use peculiar technical terms during threshing, to name different agricultural implements, &c. These terms, though used from time immemorial, are never mentioned in ordinary language, and are not in keeping with native idioms and dialects. This mode of communication is called *Govi-bàsava*, or the goiya's language. I was told by a well-informed Kandyan chief that the object of the goiya in adopting this course is in order to prevent the *Yakkhos* (devils) from stealing the paddy and consequent misfortunes.

The following are a few of the technical terms referred to, and I believe they will be of interest to the readers :—

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Gongahanana</i> | .. | for driving the buffaloes. |
| 2. <i>Yatura</i> | | „ winnow. |
| 3. <i>Goi Lella</i> | | „ leveller. |
| 4. <i>Lakawaliya</i> | | „ sweeper. i |
| 5. <i>Bolgediyo</i> | | „ buffaloes. |
| 6. <i>Pubboruwoo</i> | | „ rice. |
| 7. <i>Rattà</i> | | „ fire. |
| 8. <i>Kotabànavà</i> | | „ eating. |
| 9. <i>Rattà Mahatkarapan</i> | | „ to kindle a fire, &c. |
| 10. <i>Pellai</i> | | „ bags. |
| 11. <i>Kola Madinawa</i> | | „ threshing. |
| 12. <i>Beta</i> | | „ paddy. |
| 13. <i>Meduwan</i> | | „ straw. |
| 14. <i>Deṭṭa</i> | | „ flail. |
| 15. <i>Kalavita</i> | | „ threshing floor. |
| 16. <i>Gagulà bànawa</i> | | „ rain. |
| 17. <i>Gon pas</i> | | „ dung of the buffaloes. |
| 18. <i>Galatanawà</i> | | „ yoking. |
| 19. <i>Katumanatta</i> | | „ chaff. |
| 20. | | |

Before taking paddy for household consumption, a portion is first reserved called *Akkiyàla* as *Dehiyangè Panguva* or god's share. This is given in the name of the god to the Kapuràla,¹

¹ Devil priest.

who is supposed to have officiated throughout. Another portion called *Alut Bat Dāne*, is sent cooked to the neighbouring *Pansala* (Buddhist monastery) for the priests.

A quantity of paddy is then put into the mortar and three women clad in white with three pestles in their hands pound the paddy at an auspicious hour. A grand feast is next given to relations, at which all the guests including the goiya and his family make merry, afterwards dispersing with every good wish for the coming harvest.

Sir HUGH LOW said: The interesting paper which has just been read to us applies principally to the wet padi cultivation, and it is interesting to note the general resemblance of customs connected with this important cultivation in countries so far distant as the Malay Peninsula and Borneo from Ceylon itself. I do not propose to go at any length into these practices, but I may remark that as both Borneo and Ceylon have in ancient times been much under the influence of Hindoo civilisation, it is not surprising that these customs should have some considerable similarity though attended by very great differences. My principal object in rising is to ask your attention to a few remarks in connection with the reverence which I have seen paid by the Dyak races in Borneo to a *Liliaceous* plant of the genus *Pancratium* in association with the seed padi. This plant has a bulbous *Amaryllis*-like stem with three or four rounded cordate leaves on petioles about 6 inches long, from amongst which springs a flower stem bearing a crown of beautifully white and fragrant flowers, rising to a height of about a foot above the ground. The plant is, I believe, known botanically as *Pancratium Amboinense*, or *Eurycles Coronata*. By the land-Dyaks it is called Sikudip, and by the Si Buyoh sea-Dyak it is named Si Kenyang, and it is believed to have been given by Tuppa, their Chief Spirit, to the Dyaks with the padi seed with instructions that it should be taken great care of, as the Spirit of the Padi (its "*semangat*," as Dr. Tylor kindly reminds me) could not survive without its presence. It is planted with the grain and taken up when the harvest is gathered in—the root being preserved amongst the seed padi until the next planting season arrives. On the only occasion on which I saw the plant in flower an altar of the ivory bamboo was erected over it on which were offerings of rice, other kinds of food and water. I have never observed more than one or two roots in a padi field, and these are generally planted near the hut occupied by the family of the owner. The plant is not known as a native of Borneo, but from its specific name I imagine that it is a native of the more Eastern Molucca Islands, which may indicate that padi cultivation among the Dyaks was originally introduced from that direction, from which the original immigration of the race may also have taken place. It would, however, be interesting to ascertain whether the plant is held in similar veneration in Java, Ceylon or India.