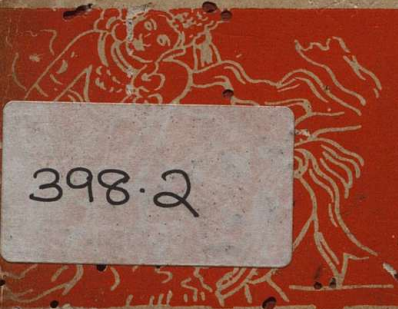




SINHALA NÄTUM



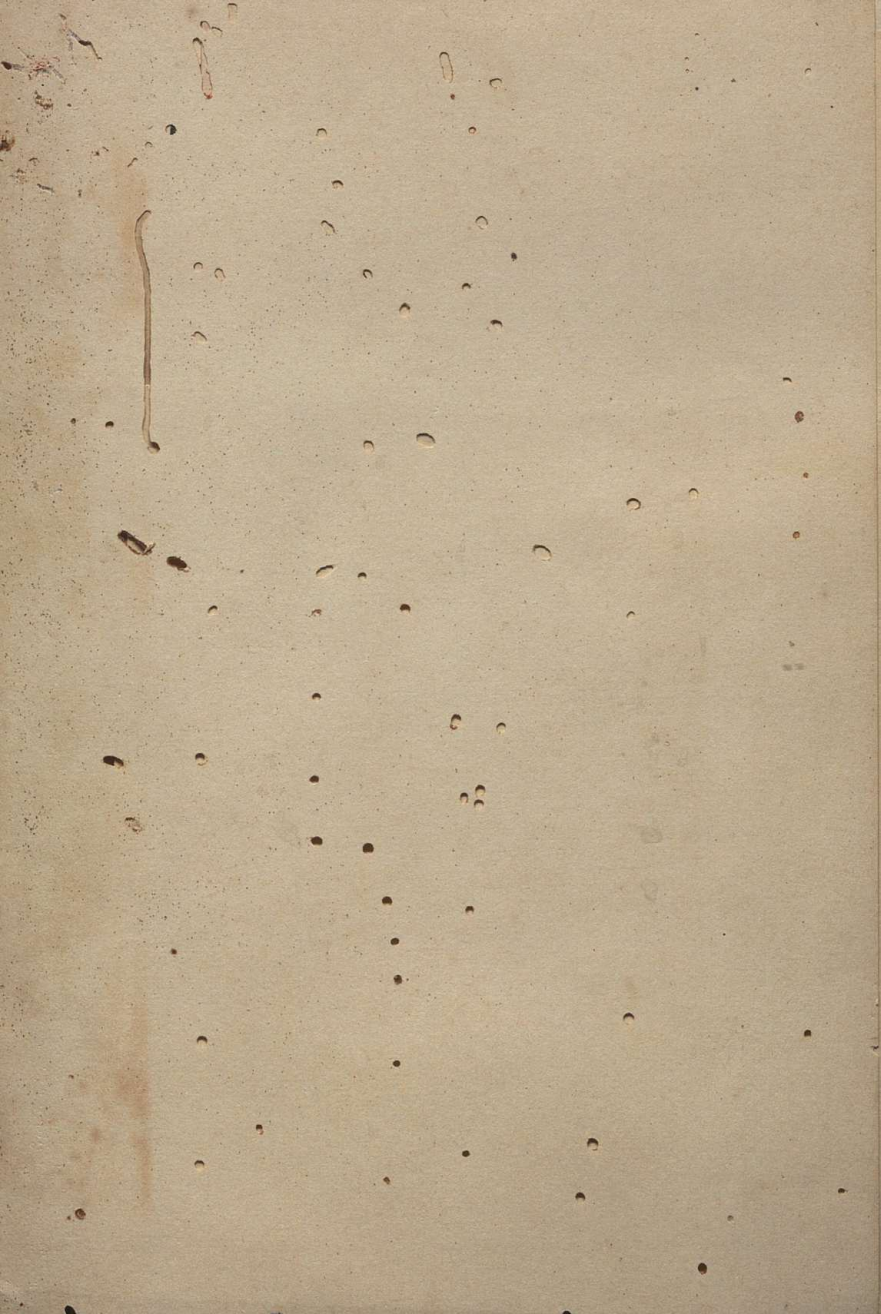
M.D.RAGHAVAN

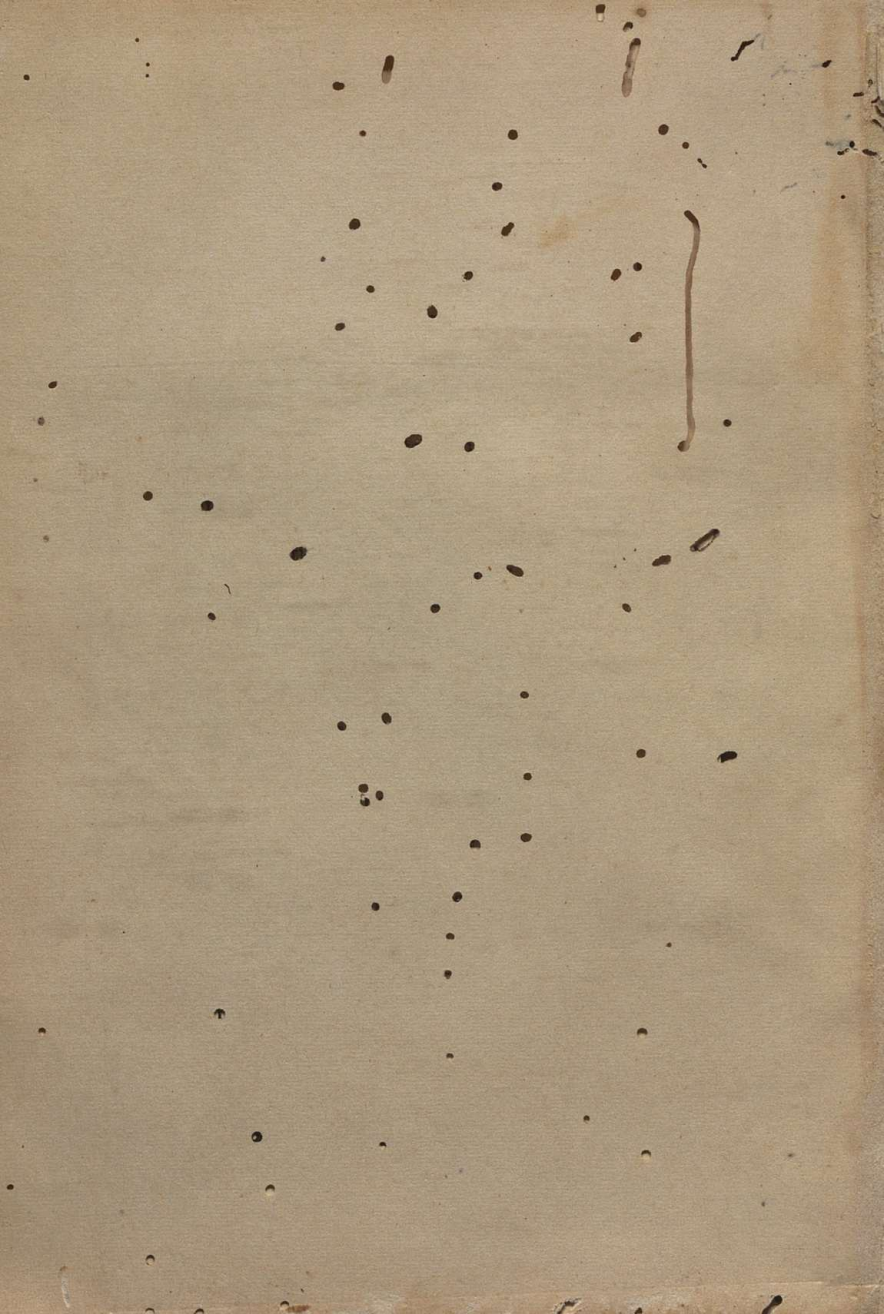


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In the very limited range of literature on the national arts of the Sinhalese this book fills an obvious gap; on the one hand it visualises the manifold aspects of the dance of the past—the technique of the art, the personality of the artistes, their picturesque costumes and jewellery, toilette and make up as well as the numerous musical instruments: on the other hand it provides an elaborate exposition of the many dance forms extant today, the classical dance of the ancient Kohomba Kan-kariya tradition of the Kandyan Provinces, the weird sequences of Yak-Natum of the Southern coastal regions, the magical dances in exorcism in Gam-Madu, Bali and Tovil, the numerous folk dances like Kolam, Rukada, Raban, Kalagedi-Natum, and Li-Keli which form popular recreational pastimes of the Sinhalese villages, while little known tribal dances as those of the Kinnarayas, Veddahs and Rodiyas find their due place. Of special interest to the research worker is the reproduction of a number of original Sinhalese manuscripts hitherto unpublished.

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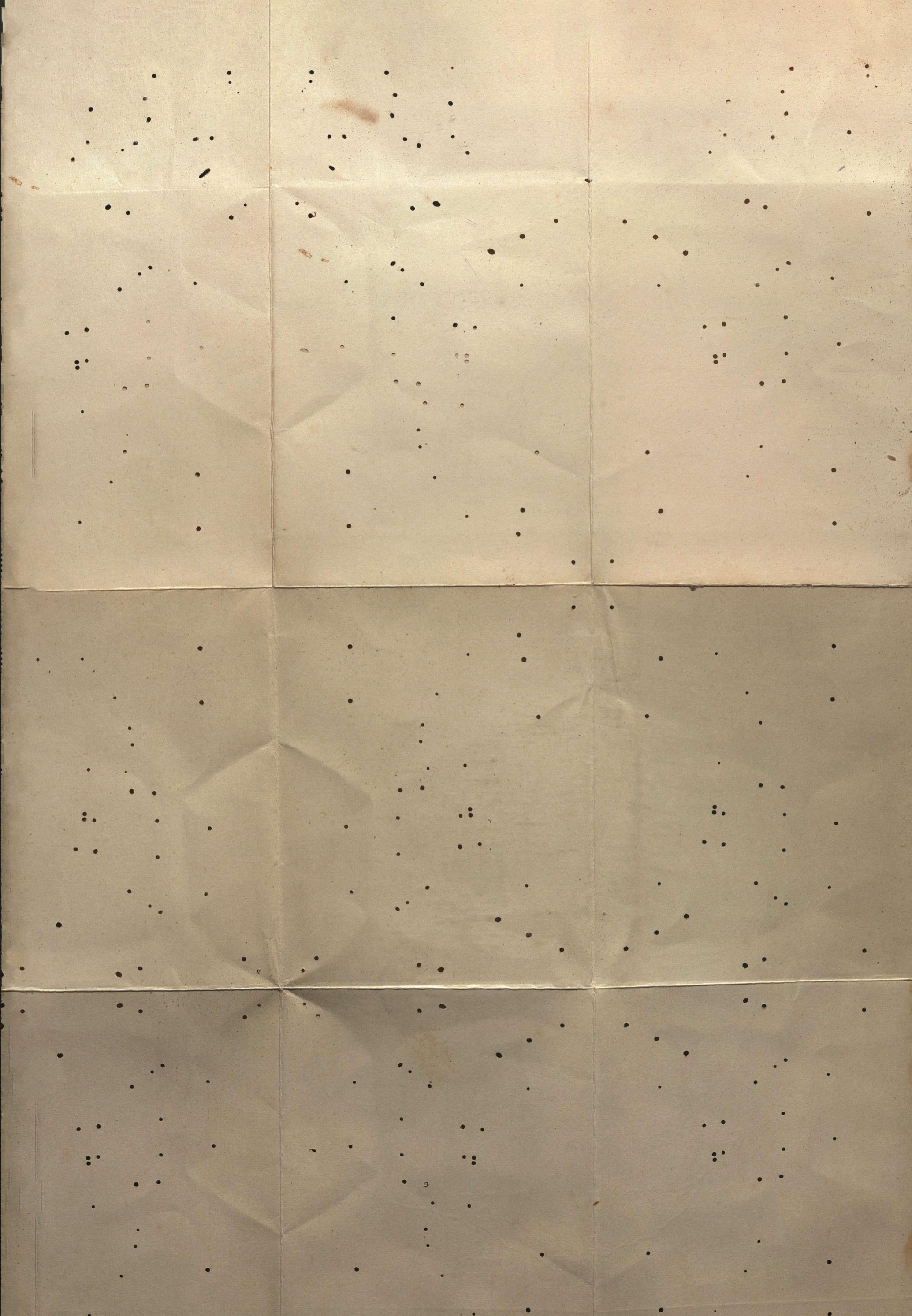




DANCE MAP OF CEYLON

SCALE - ONE INCH = 10 MILES.





SINHALA NÄTUM

By the same author.

Folk Plays and Dances of Kerala.
Handsome Beggars: The Rodiyas of Ceylon.
The Karawa of Ceylon: Society and Culture.
Ceylon: A Pictorial Survey of the People and Arts.
India in Ceylon History Society and Culture.

Publications in the Ethnological Survey of Ceylon,

1. Sigiriya Frescoes.
2. The Kinnaraya: The Tribe of Mat Weavers.
3. The Pattini Cult as a Socio-religious Institution.
4. The Ahikuntakaya: The Ceylon Gipsy Tribe.

SINHALA NÄTUM

DANCES OF THE SINHALESE

By

M. D. RAGHAVAN

With the Collaboration of

R. C. de S. MANUKULASOORIYA

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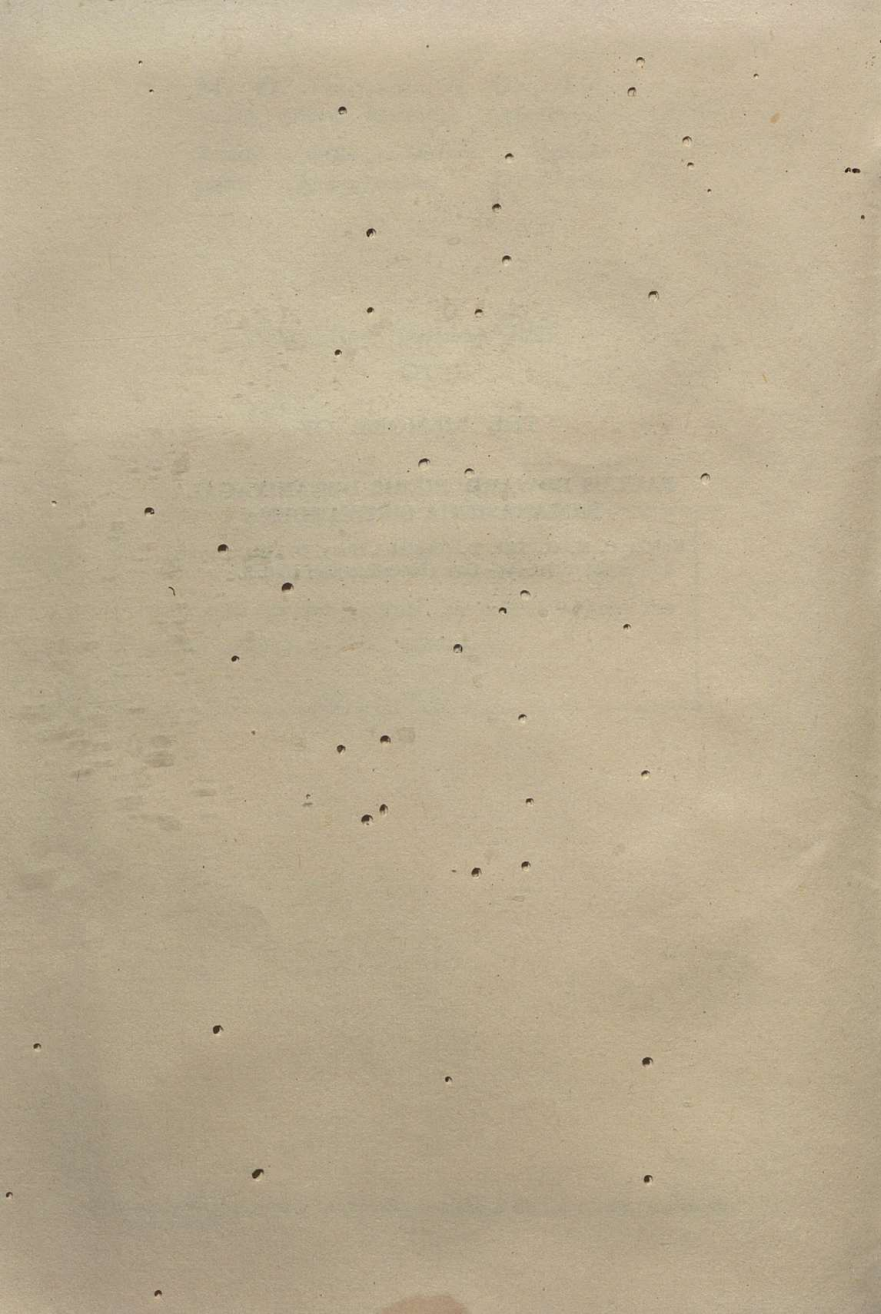
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TO

THE MEMORY OF

**PAULUS EDWARD PIERIS DERANIYAGALA
SAMARASINHA SIRIWARDENA**

Knight; C. M. G., Litt. D. (Cantab.), Hon. D. Litt., (Ceylon),
Barrister - at - Law (Inner Temple); C. C. S.



FOREWORD

THE Book "Sinhala Natum" by Sri M. D. Raghavan is a scholarly contribution to the literature on Dance in general and Sinhalese Dance in particular. Evidence of patient research and careful study of the available literature on the subject are patent right through. The author has done a lot of field work. Himself a distinguished Anthropologist and learned in the art of Kathakali, he has the requisite equipment for the task. His stay in Ceylon extending over a number of years has helped him to make an on-the-spot study of the subject in all its theoretical and practical aspects.

Research scholars of India will find plenty of material in this book for the subject of "Vestiges of Indian Music and Dance in Ceylon." It is interesting to find references to Grama-raga, Bhasha and Vibhasha and to technical terms like Sthana, Murchana and Laya and to talas like Chach chat-Putta in Sinhalese literature. The author has shown that the *adavu* of Bharatha Natyam has its parallel in the *adavu* of the Kandyan dance; the Deva-dasi, the dedicated danseuse of the South Indian temples has had her parallel in the Sinhalese Nalangana: the Kolattam or the Dandarasana, has its parallel in the Li-Keli of Ceylon. He has also established that as far as the sacred dance of the mediaeval period of Ceylon is concerned, it has an intimate connection with Bharatha-Natya.

In the sphere of Aharya, an amazing wealth of detail has been presented in the book. Fascinating accounts of jewels worn by the dancers are given. Alluring accounts of the folk dances of different parts of Ceylon are also given. The numerous musical instruments mentioned in the *Thupavansa* and other works have been referred to. There are references to Nakula-Veena, Kshudra-Veena and Bhringa-Veena, Udekki and Davandai. The sculptures in stone, wood carvings, metallic images and figures carved on ivory combs have provided valuable source material.

The book will be of use not only to those who are interested in Sinhalese Dance but also to the students of comparative dancing of other countries. The book is exceedingly well written and sustains the interest of the reader from start to finish. It is an education to go through the pages of the book.

PROF. P. SAMBAMOORTHY, B.A.B.L
*Professor of Musicology, Sri Venkates-
wara University College, Tirupati.*

15-11-'65

PREFACE

THE Sinhalese period of the history of Ceylon, may rightly be termed the age of Sinhalese Civilisation. It was the age when Sinhalese life and thought, found its fullest expression in what was essentially a homogeneous and integrated Sinhalese culture. Pervading the whole course of Sinhalese monarchy it witnessed the moulding of the pattern of Sinhalese life, shaping the intellectual and aesthetic outlook of the people, from the earliest recorded historical event, the coming of Vijaya round about 500 B.C., to the Kandyan Convention of 1815, under which the whole of Ceylon became a British Colony. During this long period of Ceylon's life, despite wars and invasions, people lived a simple, happy and contented life which we find reflected in a picturesque variety of folk amusements, folk songs and folk arts, the art of the common man.

The Dances of the Sinhalese find a conspicuous place in this heritage of the past. An added interest are the links that the studies reveal between the arts of Ceylon and those of the other lands, India in particular. The contiguous lands of South East Asia have been so much inter-related over the ages, that this has left accultural features and analogous elements in the arts of the several lands.

To understand therefore the true significance of the dances of the Sinhalese it is necessary to refer to the classical Indian dances and their analysis. The English word "dance" does not differentiate between the threefold forms of the dance in the East: Nr̥tta. Nr̥tya and Natya. "Nr̥tta is pure dance, rhythm expressed in *tāla* or time-measure. Nr̥tya is pure dance in combination with *abhinaya*, the interpretation of the emotions (*bhāva*). Natya is the dramatic representation of the particular theme or story in the form of interpretative dances". This is the classical analysis recognised in the *Abhinaya Darpana* of Nandikeswara

thus expounded by Ananda Coomaraswamy :¹ "Nāṭya is dancing used in a drama (*nāṭaka*) combined with original plot. Nrṭta is that form of dance which is void of flavour (*rasa*) and mood (*bhava*). Nrtya is that form of dance which possesses flavour, mood and suggestion (*rasa, bhava, Vyamgam* etc.) and the like."

Sinhalese dance of the present day is, largely though not solely, of the category of Nrṭta, pure dance. This is true of the Kandyan dance, as of the rest of the dances of the Sinhalese. Nonetheless, the story of the dance in Ceylon reveals that "the dramatic representation of a particular theme or a story in the form of interpretative dances" prevailed in Ceylon of the Middle Ages, attaining its summit in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Evidence of this comes to us from a variety of sources—historical, literary and the evidence of the sculptural and metallic arts. This will become clear as we proceed. There is also the recent growth of Sinhalese dramatic art with the dance in the form of dramatic representation of a story. We have too the backing of *Cilappadikāram*, the epic poem of South India of the second century A.D. with its specific name of Sinhala Natyam. While all this would support the presumption that interpretative dances very much prevailed in the Middle Ages, such dances are scarcely representative today of the art of the Sinhalese dance in the aggregate.

It would therefore be unrealistic to entitle a comprehensive study of the dances of the Sinhalese, such as herein outlined, *Sinhala Nāṭya*. An objective view of the field inclines us therefore to favour the term Sinhala Natum, as appropriate to the studies.

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An awareness of traditional arts is among the signs of the times. Kandyan dance is now taught in the State Central schools, besides selected folk dances. Competitive demonstrations sponsored by the Department of

1. Coomaraswamy, Ananda K: The Mirror of Gesture.

Education are held in the metropolis of Colombo, in the course of a full day's programme, by pupils, boys and girls from Central Schools all over Ceylon.

State interest in rural arts has been growing from the days at least of the organisation of the Rural Development Department over two decades ago. Rural Development Societies and the Community Centres started under the auspices of the Department are largely cultural in outlook. The Backward Communities Development Board, inaugurated in 1951 for the Socio-economic advancement of the three groups—the tribal Veddah, and the Kinnaraya and the Rodiya, the two groups on the fringes of the Sinhalese Social System, has had its own role in conserving “adaptable values” in the life of these three backward groups.

State activity came to a head with the inauguration of the Arts Council of Ceylon in 1952. Its comprehensive character is evident in its twelve constituent panels — Oriental Music, Kandyan Dancing, Oriental Dancing, Sinhalese Drama, Folk Songs and Folk Dancing, Painting and Sculpture, Handicrafts, Tamil Drama, Western Music, Western Drama, Western Ballet Dancing and Films. That “undue emphasis is given by this body to Western Art in comparison with the meagre interest shown in the national arts and crafts”, were comments freely made against the constitution of the Arts Council. Society being what it is, with Western arts playing a definite role in the social life of the land, the State could not obviously be oblivious to the needs of the different sections of the society.

The opening, in recent years, of several schools of Kandyan dancing in the different parts of the Kandyan provinces, is a significant contribution of the State and the Arts Council to the promotion of national arts. It was a happy augury that the visit of Her Majesty the Queen synchronised with the early days of the Arts Council. The “Gala Performance” produced

at the Regal Theatre in honour of the Queen's visit was a splendid achievement of the Panel of Folk Dances and Songs, in association with the other panels concerned.

State recognition of matters cultural advanced a step further with the establishment of a separate Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1956.

State interests apart, Society, Sinhalese and Tamil, is culture conscious. The main organisations in the social sector are the Lanka Mahila Samiti, the Institute of Sinhalese Culture, and the Kalalaya, the last devoted to Tamil arts.

Ruhunu arts found vigorous protagonists in the Ruhunu Kaja Kavaya. To judge from the high standard of the annual festivals of arts produced in successive years in Colombo and in the Districts, this organisation, is the spearhead of the movement for the promotion of the ancestral arts of the South.

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The material presented in the accompanying pages has been steadily accumulating over a decade and half of my field work in Ceylon. More than any other factor, my love of the subject has been my main motivation in the pursuit of the study. My work in the field of the folk dances and plays of Malabar was an experience that helped me to appreciate the place of folk dances in the life of the rural Sinhalese, who have a good deal in common with the traditional arts and culture of the Malayalees, the people of Malabar.

It may rightly be said that my studies in Sinhala Natum began in 1947, the year in which my monograph on Folk Dances and Plays of Kerala was published by the Rama Varma Research Institute, Trichur.

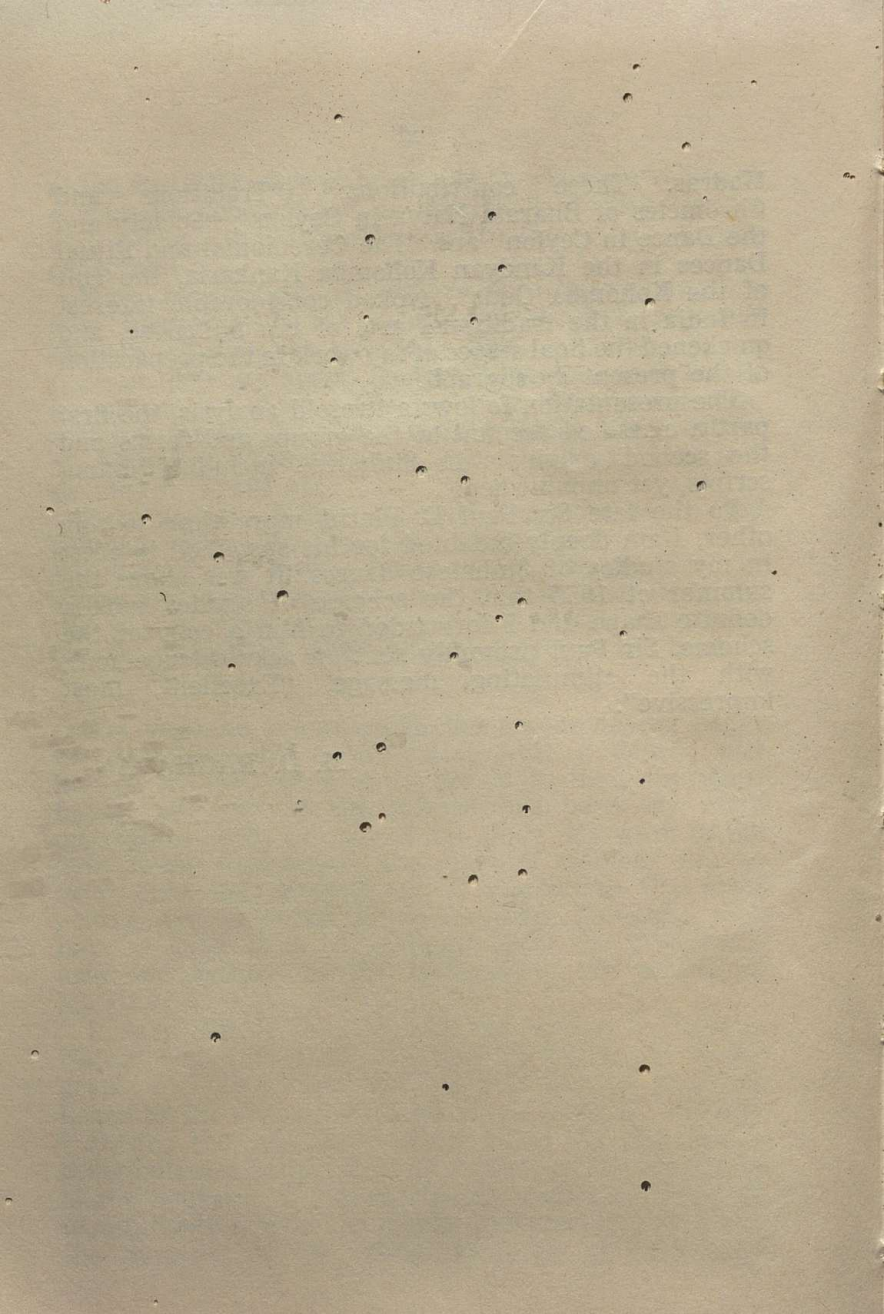
During the past three years, I had the pleasure of contributing a series of three studies on Ceylon dances to the Souvenir of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth South Indian Natyakala Conference, held under the auspices of the Indian Institute of Fine Arts,

Madras. These contributions: "Traditions and Chronicles of Bharata Natya in Ceylon"; "Society and the Dance in Ceylon" and "The Ceremonial and Ritual Dances in the Kandyan Kohomba Kankaria, the cult of the Kohomba Gods", evoked considerable interest in India in the traditional arts of the Sinhalese, and quickened the final stages of my work in the preparation of the present monograph.

The presentation follows a twofold analysis, the first part a classified account of the groups and forms and the second, originals in Sinhalese including manuscripts, yet unpublished.

To the late Sir Paul E. Pieris, more than to any other, I am deeply indebted for his sustained interest in my studies of Sinhalese dances. It was about the summer of 1955 that the scheme of studies took a definite shape and I forwarded to him a copy of the scheme. Sir Paul promptly sent an acknowledgement, with the stimulating message, "Excellent, most impressive".

M. D. RAGHAVAN



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the University of Ceylon for an award of the Hilda Obeyesekere Research Fellowship for a study of The Dances of the Sinhalese. Awarded for a period of three years with a possible extension for another year, the Fellowship was terminated after a period of two years from December 1955. This caused inevitable interruption and the consequent delay in completing the work, faithful to the original plan of studies. Despite this handicap, the work was pursued ever since carrying out the scheme of studies in its entirety, even transcending the original outline, and writing up the results with the assistance of Mr. R. C. de S. Manukulasooriya, my collaborator in this project. His assiduous application and deep interest in the studies were an invaluable asset in the publication of the book in the form in which it is now presented to the public. Some of the features - the costumes and the decorative motifs in the personality of the dancers in Kandyan Dancing and Folk Cults of the Gods and the chapter on the musical instruments are his special contributions. I am happy to acknowledge his great help and give him my grateful thanks.

I am indebted to Mr. K. D. L. Wickramaratne, Assistant Librarian, Colombo National Museum Library for facilities to make a study of a Bali Ceremony with the dramatic appearance at its close of Gara Yaka; as also to see a Gam-Madu at Piliyandala and make a study of its fascinating ceremonials.

To Mr. Alahakoon Jaliyagodge Elias Appuhamy of the Colombo Museum Office, I owe my introduction to a Tovil in early 1947. I am thankful to him for this first opportunity to understand the ceremonials and technique of a Tovil.

Among the manuscripts published for the first time in the scheme of the book are the following from the collection of the Colombo National Museum: AC/14 and 7/K5 on Kolan Natanawa; 7/F10—Vaduru Kali Kolama; AM/14 Vadiga Patuna; AR/10 Giri Devi Kathawa and 7/A1 Daha Ata Sanni Paliya. I tender my acknowledgments to the Director, National Museums for this privilege and to the Librarian and his staff for the facilities extended in making copies of these manuscripts. The translations of these manuscripts are by Mr. C. A. Wijesekera of the Department of National Languages, to whom my thanks are due.

The typing of the major portion of the manuscript was done by Mr. W. K. Wickramasinghe at present attached to the Kachcheri, Moneragala. My thanks are due to him. Mr. A.B.C. Fernando, Senior Assistant Librarian, National Museum, Colombo, has prepared an exhaustive index and has also been of invaluable assistance in compiling the Bibliography. I am deeply indebted to him for his services.

The pen and ink drawing of the Dance Map of Ceylon is by Miss Lillian Rajasuriya of the Staff of the Buddhist Ladies' College, Colombo. My thanks to her for this timely help.

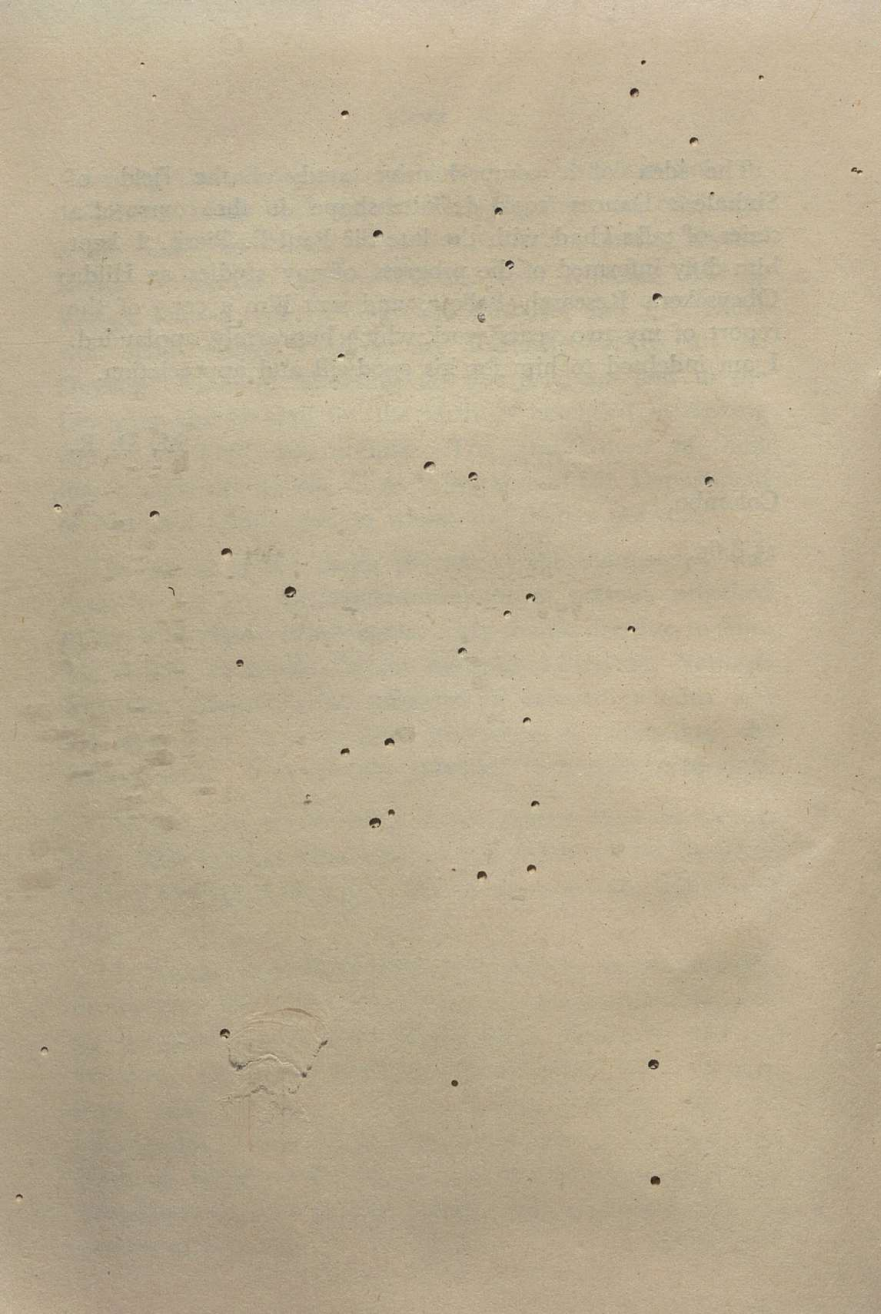
My thanks are also due to the following for the photographs to illustrate the book: to the Commissioner of Archaeology for the photographs of Yapahuwa Main Staircase and the Window, Dedigama Dancing Figures and Li-keli Dancers from Gadaladeniya; to the Tourist Bureau for the photograph of the Kalagedi Natuma; to the Director, National Museums for the picture of the Embekke Devale Wood-carving and to Mr. Hudson Silva, Matara, for the picture of Rukada.

The idea of a comprehensive study of the field of Sinhalese Dances took definite shape in the course of a series of talks I had with the late Sir Paul E. Pieris. I kept him duly informed of the progress of my studies as Hilda Obeysekere Research Fellow, and sent him a copy of the report of my two years' work which he warmly applauded. I am indebted to him for his goodwill and appreciation.

M. D. R.

Colombo.

15.8.65.



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CHAPTER I

TRADITIONAL SINHALESE ARTS

THE traditional arts of the Sinhalese are a living part of the rural society. Their influence spreads to suburban and urban centres. It is significant that the first *tovil* I saw, in the summer of 1947, was at Colombo at a house in Fourth Cross Street, not far from Victoria Hotel, Norris Road*. I owed this to the thoughtfulness of a member of the subordinate staff of the Colombo Museum, who happened to be interested in the *tovil*. He was good enough to arrange facilities to enable me to watch the proceedings under the best of conditions. This gave me my first opportunity to observe a *tovil* at first hand. It was elaborate in ceremonials which lasted all night and well into the morning hours. To the right of the entrance doorway, was a decorated shrine of interlaced plantain stem strips topped over with the pattern of a crown in the same material. As my first introduction to the curative magical rituals and ceremonials in exorcism and incidentally to the aesthetic sense of the people, it recalled to my mind parallel scenes and artistic appliances at exorcist ceremonials of North Malabar.

A usual division of the traditional arts of a society, is in terms of "Useful Arts" and "Aesthetic Arts". "Useful Arts" are arts primarily utilitarian, arts which serve the day-to-day needs in the business of living. Such are the arts of pottery, basketry, weaving etc., arts more commonly known as handicrafts.

* Since re-named Olcott Mawata.

“Aesthetic arts” are products of the aesthetic sense of a people, arts which appeal to the sense of beauty. The distinction cannot be too rigidly applied in practice, as an object can be at once ‘useful’ and ‘aesthetic’. In the pages of his “Mediaeval Sinhalese Art”, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy has left us an account of both categories of the traditional arts. The field covered in this survey volume, calls for monographic treatment in respect of the more significant of the arts.

“Aesthetic arts” fall into two divisions. On a higher level are the Fine Arts, poetry, classical music, classical dance and painting. Of a lower order are the aesthetic arts of the rural folks.

Among the more dynamic of the motivating forces that have fostered Sinhalese rural arts, stands religion, specifically, folk religion, distinguished from the dominant religion of the land, Theravada Buddhism, essentially a system of doctrines with a disciplined way of life leading to ultimate Nirvana, salvation from the round of births and deaths. The need for a practical faith which would assuage the cares and anxieties of material life, surged in the mind of the villager. This is amply met in the cult of Spirits and Yakkas—the cult which was presumably already there on the soil, from days anterior to the spread of Buddhism. The Buddhist who observes the way of life enjoined by the Buddha, may, side by side, have faith in the Gods, Vishnu or Kataragama. He may even hold a Bali ceremonial at his house, as a protective rite against evil influences. Seasonal celebrations in the cult of the Spirits and Yakkas, commonly denoted as demon cults, are an inseparable element of rural society.

A rigid demarcation obtains between the two categories of popular religion, the worship of the Gods and the cult of Spirits and Yakkas. The abode of the Gods are the sacred devalayas. The rest of the deities have no fixed habitation. Their seasonal cults are held in temporary structures of bamboo and cadjan, the *Gam Madu*, erected for the occasion at rural centres.

Each of these two divisions of popular religious system sustains a priesthood, and a dance category of its own.

The priests of the High Gods are the Sinhalese *Kapuralas* well versed in the sacred liturgy of chants and songs. *Kapuralàs* come of hereditary priestly families of the Middle Ages.

The shamans (priests) of folk cults are the *Kattà-diyas*, a word obviously derived from two Tamil terms, *Kattu* or *Kettu*, literally denoting, disguise, in the appropriate make-up and costume; and *adi*, the dancer. Two well marked shaman groups of Ceylon, are the *Beravaya*, the community in whom vests the highly evolved art of the Kandyan dance, and the *Oli*, an interesting community of masked dancers, exorcists and astrologers of South Ceylon.

Side by side with the dances, sacred and magical, developed a picturesque variety of dances and dance-plays, of amusement and recreation. That a number of these have had their rise in a spiritual background in the distant past, sustains the principle of the devotional roots of *Natyam* in Ceylon, the one common strand that runs through the traditions and chronicles of the dance in Ceylon as in India.

Different deities serving different needs and functions, we may recognize in Ceylon, a hierarchy of functional deities. The making of the several accessories and appliances in the rituals and ceremonials of folk cults, stimulated the aesthetic sense of the villager. Conspicuous in the rural aesthetic arts are the staturaries in the Bali and other rites in exorcism; the numerous decorative objects, the *toranàs* in a *tovil* or *gam madu*; the *mal yahan*, the flower altars and altars for food offerings. Plantain stems, tender leaves of the coconut palm (*gok-kola*), coconut and arecanut inflorescence, are the composite elements in the ceremonial decorative appliances seen at folk cults.

Besides the decorative objects seen in their setting in folk ceremonials, a specific contribution of folk religion to aesthetic arts is the Sinhalese mask. Masks fall

into two categories; Masks used in the several *Yak Natum* and the *Daha Ata Sanniya*, the pageant of the eighteen Sanni demons, are of the first category. In the second category are masks worn in the colourful masquerade of South Ceylon, the *Kolam* which, in its earlier stages, has had a good deal in it of the character of the spirit cult.

In the folk religion of the Sinhalese, we have an apt illustration of the elementary definition that "all socially recognized relations with the unseen, is religion", that "religion is the cult of the sacred, constituting something separate". Magic enters so much into the cult of the spirits that the term magico-religious best expresses the complex of rituals and ceremonials in the cult of the spirits. Far from being primitive in any sense, or illiterate, the society among whom these cults prevail is an educated society educated in Sinhalese, with a rich background of cultural heritage going back to almost two thousand five hundred years.

The phenomenon of the folk cults, finds an explanation by Christmas Humphreys in the course of a paper, "On Buddhism" in the *Wesak* Number of *Ceylon Daily News*, 1947: "The world of Buddhism is organised, if at all, on a national basis and no one nation takes much interest in the affairs of its brothers on either side. All virtues have their corresponding weakness and the Buddhist virtue of tolerance can appear as laziness and apathy. This is the reason why Buddhism is nowhere pure. Wherever it went, the Dhamma adopted and took into itself, the indigenous religion. There is much Shinto in Japanese Buddhism. In China it is difficult to speak of Buddhism, of Taoism or the followers of Confucius, for all alike are eclectic and synthetic and most Chinese are content to believe and use a combination of the principles of all three. In India and Burma, the Dhamma is heavily involved in the ancient worship of Nats and the same applies to some extent in Ceylon. It is useless therefore for a Buddhist country to point a finger of scorn at another's impure Buddhism and such energy can be

better spent in studying the Buddhist history, the spread of the same eternal doctrines from an Indian centre in all directions through the Buddhist East. True, it is difficult to reconcile some doctrines and practices of the Mahayana with the Buddha's dying injunction, "work out your own salvation, with diligence", but it is equally difficult to reconcile with the teachings of the Buddha much of the belief and practice of Ceylon.

A process of adjustment, if not of reconciliation, has been a feature of folk religion in practice. Austin Jayawardhana gives us an insight into this in the course of a paper read at the International Seminar on Traditional Cultures in South East Asia, held in Madras in November, 1958, under the auspices of the Institute of Traditional Cultures—UNESCO:¹ "If the original settlers of our Island were prone to believe in demoniacal powers, the introduction of Buddhism three centuries later made them more rational in their outlook on life. The beliefs of the early era were either abandoned in full or were modified. An interesting example of the effect of a subsequent culture on the beliefs and superstitions of the people, is the complete change in the fundamentals of the exorcism cult of the Sinhalese. Before Buddhism gained its control over the minds of the people of this country, the magician, with his incantations, charms and dances, promised redemption from misery and promotion of welfare. He invoked the deities and demons of his day and believed himself potent enough to control these invisible powers. But when Buddhism came and afforded little encouragement to such rites, the people began to revise their attitude towards them. The magical powers attributed to their charms were now transferred to the Buddha and the same magician invoked the same gods and demons and

1 International Seminar on Traditional Cultures in South-East Asia—Published under the auspices of UNESCO., Orient Longmans, Institute of Traditional Cultures (Madras, 1960), pp. 138—139.

sought to control them by reference to the sublime virtues of the Buddha. His charms were partly or wholly replaced by passages from the Buddhist Canon. This tendency grew and with each successive wave of foreign ideas, was accepted and integrated into the existing mass of beliefs and superstitions. For instance, when the gods and goddesses of South India came to be worshipped by the Sinhalese Buddhists, they merely accepted them into a loosely formulated Buddhist pantheon. The god or goddess was considered to be either a devotee of the Buddha or one aspiring to be a future Buddha. Thus, Vishnu, in the eyes of the Buddhists, is the guardian deity of the Island, who had received his commission from the Buddha himself through the king of gods, Indra. The Sinhalese, like their forefathers in India, were always ready to borrow any cultural traits of another people and adopt them as their own. This phenomenon caused a swift change in the life and the attitudes of the Sinhalese right down the ages. We could, in spite of twenty-five centuries of recorded history, find immense difficulty in tracing the gradual evolution of our culture, if it were not for the faithful records which human memory has preserved for us in the form of folk-tales. Therefore, the preservation as well as the interpretation of these tales has become a vital necessity for the correct understanding of the cultural developments of the Sinhalese race.

Similarly, the customs of the by-gone days, which are gradually being over-shadowed by more modern and westernized attitudes, indicate the true traits of our traditional culture."

The arts of a people reflect their personality. Sinhalese arts in general have a marked individuality, no less evident in the folk arts than in the fine arts. Foremost of the qualities of folk arts, is their simple charm, a subtle quality that appeals to the aesthetic sense of the spectator. Seen at a *gam maduwa*, are a number of altars. Dominating the whole scene is the high altar, the main *torana*, a multi-storeyed structure of plantain

stem strips, the making of which follows a traditional pattern. In the style of its structure, as in its well proportioned and symmetrical outlines, it is a thing of beauty.

Behind the aesthetic effect, is the sense of mystery that pervades the cult, as a whole, a mystery and a feeling of obscurity, that are inseparable from the cult of the spirits. In the seasonal harvest ceremonials of the Sinhalese, customs which are steadily losing ground under modernization trends, we have a group of traditional arts which for ages animated the life of the countryside, colourful arts which brought the participants in harmony with Nature. At the back of these customs is the objective, more implicit than explicit, of conserving the food supply. Ceremonies for the productivity of food supply and the propitiation of the gods, go back to the early days of humanity.

The present study is limited to but one aspect of the traditional arts of the Sinhalese — the dance, Sinhala Natyam—either related to the spiritual life of the peoples, spiritual in the widest sense of the term, or unrelated to the religious scene.

At the back of these arts, whether spiritual or non-spiritual, is the extensive field of folk literature, the collection of which looms large in the cultural field today. This aspect of traditional arts found emphasis at the Madras Seminar on Traditional Cultures, of November 1958 :— “ This Seminar holds that it is uncritical and incorrect to imagine that traditional cultures and ways of life (including those of tribal peoples) are necessarily outmoded or retrogressive while equating what is usually described as Western Civilization with ‘progress’.”

Specific recommendations were made by the Seminar for the establishment of folklore societies on a local and national basis in South East Asia, societies which should have *inter alia* the following functions:

1. Recording ballads, songs, tales etc. to be published¹ in folklore journals;

2. To establish museums and organise festivals and exhibitions of folklore and folk arts and crafts.

3. To encourage study and research in Folklore and Folk Arts.

In the direction of the collection of legends, and folk songs, there has been rather intermittent efforts in the past by various workers. Perhaps the largest of these collections was by Hugh Nevill in the eighties, collections which have been acquired for the country by the personal efforts of Sir Paul Pieris over a decade ago. These collections have been published by the Director of National Museums in three volumes, the "Sinhala Kavi", 1956.

In these volumes we have a visualisation of the vast range of the legendary lore. We are indebted to Nevill as much for the collections he has made, as for their interpretation. With these as a background, it should be possible to plan a programme of collection work and implement it by the co-operative efforts of a team of competent workers. Left to their own fate, many of these chants and verses in folk cults may soon get submerged and lost.

The country owes much to the rural folks who have kept alive the traditional cultural heritage in the numerous folk compositions. Sinhalese rural society is anchored in a bed-rock of traditions, which have been gaining vitality in the last few decades. Coupled with this is the circumstance that modern westernized higher education, has barely touched the fringes of the two shaman groups of the Sinhalese, the Berawa and the Oli. As things are, these groups still pursue their traditional vocations of a wide variety of folk cults and ceremonials, and while the going is good, it is opportune to gather all that has to be collected, of their liturgical chants and songs.

1 Resolution, 1—International Seminar on Traditional Cultures in S. E. Asia. p. 192.

Resolution, 3—International Seminar on Traditional Cultures in S. E. Asia. pp. 192—193.

Research on these lines opens up a vast vista of fruitful studies and will reveal much that remains obscure of the legendary past. A number of these legends seem to have a background outside Ceylon, in the Tamil, Andhra and Kerala regions of South India.

An interesting example of an interrelation of this sort, is revealed in the ceremonials of the Punava,¹ in the legend of *Seraman Yadinna*, related to the life of Chèraman Perumàl, the most spectacular of the Perumàls of Kerala, a line of Kings in the dawn of Kerala history. The legend unfolds what reads like the early days of the Pūnava of the Sinhalese cults. The study is worthwhile following up, and may shed more light on the ceremonials, as on the traditions of the Oḷi, a very interesting group in the social landscape of South Ceylon.

Traditional oral songs and chants that accompany the cults, will obviously enable us to view the ceremonial dances that accompany the rituals, in their correct perspective. Without correlating the dances to the legends, an intelligent interpretation of the dances is not possible.

The cults may be viewed both as phenomena of social life, of interest to the rural society as a whole, and as dealings with the supernatural, called for in the passing crises in the life of an individual.

First to claim our attention in a comprehensive approach, are the cult objects. In an *An-Keliya*² in the cult of the goddess Pattini, attention is primarily directed to the Sambhur horns, which are temporarily housed, each in a separate shrine room. At a *gam-maduwa*, the cult objects that matter most, are the insignia of the goddess Pattini, the sacred anklets. The

¹ Gunasekara, U. A.—The Punava, or the Scape-Goat Idea in Ceylon. *Spolia Zeylanica*—Vol. 27, Part I, 1953.

² For an illustrated account of the An-Keliya and Gam-maduwa See Raghavan, M. D. *Ethnological Survey of Ceylon*. No. 3. The Pattini Cult as a Socio-religious Institution. *Spolia Zeylanica*, Vol. 26, Part II, 1951.

several objects and appliances, receive individual propitiation accompanied by appropriate ceremonial dances.

Inherent in the functioning of the cults, are certain practices whose meaning or motive is not obvious. One such is the custom of the ribald jokes. Instances of these are conspicuous in a *Gara-Yak natuma* and in the episodes in a *gam maduwa*. A certain element of frivolity, even of obscenity, has been inherent in the folk cults of early societies. In the ribald jokes of the Sinhalese folk cults, we may well see a mild survival of such customs. Incidents of this character now appear as "dramatic interludes", which Saratchandra discusses in the course of his studies.¹

Another element that pervades folk cults, is "the conditional curse". This invokes unpleasant consequences to the god propitiated, if the latter does not accede to your entreaties. 'Conditional curse', as a means of compelling benediction, may be found featured in the folk songs and cults of Malabar. How far this is a factor in the Sinhalese folk cults is one of the aspects that needs exposition.

A category altogether of a different order is the worship of the High Gods, distinguished from the cult of the spirits. Apart from the Hindu temples of Koneswaram, at the extreme North-East, Tirukketeeswaram in the North-West, and Munneswaram in the West, the ancient devalayas of Ceylon, are mainly the Maha Saman devalaya of Ratnapura, Maha Vishnu devalaya, reputedly known as the shrine of Upulvan, the 'lily-coloured' God, of Dondra, the southern-most point of Ceylon, and the shrine of Kataragama, God Kadira, in the jungle setting of South Ceylon. The ceremonial worship of these gods has contributed an art on a higher plane, the sacred dance, the *dig-ge natuma*. Literally 'the long-hall dance', it was a specialised art of the dancing girl, the art which finds graphic description in the *Sandesa Kavyas* of the fourteenth and

1 SARATCHANDRA, E. R. The Sinhalese Folk Play and the Modern Stage, 1953—Chapter II, pp. 25-50.

fifteenth centuries. Indeed the dancing girl figures through the corridors of time from the days of King Dutthagamini (101-77 B.C.) to the later ages. This chapter in the history of the *Sinhala Natya* is of such interest that it is dealt with in some considerable detail, separately.

In early Ceylon history, we are told of a threefold division, the Pihiti, the Maya and the Ruhuna; Pihiti or Raja Rata, the North; Maya, the Central, and Ruhunu, the South. The tradition of these divisions persists, in a cultural sense. Of the three, Raja Rata had priority as the division within which were situated the ancient capitals of the Kings. If legend speaks true, the ceremonial dances in exorcism to cure King Panduwas, of his incurable malady of *divi-dos* were staged at what is now the Mahanagavana of Anuradhapura. Of these old divisions, the name that resounds today in the context of the present cultural renaissance, is Ruhuna. The political upheavals of the Middle Ages that so much disturbed the serene life of Raja Rata, left Ruhuna largely untouched. Governed by the Yuva rajas, Ruhuna enjoyed over the ages, a life of comparative peace and plenty. Uninfluenced by extraneous factors, the aesthetic, emotional and spiritual life of South Ceylon expressed itself in a wealth of folk arts—the ostentatious and satirical masquerade, the Kolam; the group play of Raban; the uppet dance-play, the Rùkada; the Tovil, rites in curative magical ceremonies and a vast range of folk cults of spirits. The heritage of the past and the rural environment have combined to foster the Ruhunu traditional culture. Despite traditional values, priced in the South, theirs is not a traditional society, in the sense of a stagnant society. It is really a progressive society with considerable urbanisation in ways of life.

Advancement in traditional arts, is today particularly marked in the ancestral Ruhuna and in the Kandyan Zone, the two areas each of which sustains a distinct school of dances and dance-plays. These two regions may be better visualised in terms of a two-fold division of more recent times, corresponding to differences in traditional culture and ways of life—the *Uda rata*, the Kandyan hill country and the *Pata rata*, the Plains of the South. Nevertheless, a growing sense of integration, of oneness in life and thought, is evident today between these two cultural zones.

CHAPTER II

THE FIELD OF THE DANCE

THE conventional classification of the dance into two categories, the Classical Dance and the Folk Dances, finds general application to the dances of the Sinhalese. Within the range of folk dances, are nevertheless dances distinct in character from dances and dance plays of amusement. Such are the ceremonial dances in the cult of the Yakkhas and spirits, certain features of which have been presented in the foregoing chapter. It will be more proper to give these, a category of their own — the Ritual Dance.

Ceylon indeed has a wealth of dances. The modern and the traditional exist almost side by side. Ball-room dance is the social product of the Westernised section of society, evident particularly in the social life of the city of Colombo. The pace of Westernization, the influence of over forty decades of European occupation, has nevertheless witnessed a restraint in the last one decade. A dynamic national revival has awakened society to a sense of its traditional values, and national arts are advancing in rapid strides all over Ceylon. In point of time, dance and music go back to a far distant epoch. As Vijaya landed (543 B.C.,) he heard sounds of music and the dance. A wedding was in progress in Yakkha society and there was much merriment.

It is significant that our first introduction to Sinhala *Natya* is from the *Cilappadikaram*, the South Indian epic poem of the second century A.D., a source book of value for the study of the dance. Assimilating the wealth of data, presented in the pages of the chronicle, we recognise two main divisions of the dance — *Sântyam* and *Vinçdam*.

Sântyam falls into two classes, *Cokkam* and *Mei*. *Cokkam* is pure dance, composed of 108 *Karanas*, a number which agrees with the analysis presented in Bharata's *Natya Sastra*. *Mei* is a large group of three constituent units, *Dèsi*, *Vadugu*,¹ and *Sinhala*. These three terms are regional. *Dèsi* is obviously the indigenous, the dance of the Tamils. *Vadugu* is the dance of Andhradesa, and *Sinhala*, the dance of Ceylon. The co-existence of different forms and styles of dance in South India of the far off days is an index to the harmony of social life and cultural relations of the age. Speaking of the dance of Madavi, the courtesan, we are told that "she also danced the *Vadugu* dance. Then it appeared as if the five beat mode of each of the two styles of dancing, *Desi* and *Vadugu*, was concentrated in one style, so captivating was her dance." Of *Sinhala*, we have nothing in *Cilappadikaram* more than the name. It is nonetheless of supreme interest that the specific term *Sinhala* should occur in the South Indian chronicle. Implicit in this is the inter-relation of the arts of South India and Ceylon, and an integrated approach is vital for a fruitful study of the dances of the Sinhalese.

In Ceylon, as elsewhere, the distinctive attributes of folk dances are obvious, more impulsive and instinctive than the classical dance. Nevertheless the distinction

1 *Vadugu*—"the Country of the North", in relation to the Tamilnad to the South, applied to denote the modern Telugu country, the country of the *Vadukas*" (Kanakasabai, V: The Tamils, Eighteen Hundred Years Ago, Madras, 1904, p. 29 and 104).

The term *Vaduka*, generally signifies the Telugus, the people of Andhradesa. It is not a name for a particular caste.

between classical and folk dances is less thin in Ceylon than in India. The status of a classical dance is something that the Kandyan dance has acquired, possibly in the last few decades, by virtue of its refined technique, which bespeaks its growth over a long period of time, attaining its present standard of perfection in its field of pure dance, *Nritta*, sustained by a highly developed system of *tala*. From sources in *Cilappatikaram* we are indeed tempted to identify *Sinhala Natyam* mentioned in the South Indian epic poem, with the art of the Kandyan dance, an aspect of the study, which we have occasion to revert to as we proceed.

The two principal forces that promoted the dance in the Middle Ages were the Royal courts on the one hand and the sacred devālayas, the shrines of the High Gods on the other. Though the one was secular and the other religious, an undercurrent of affinity obtained between the two, all through the long course of the Sinhalese monarchy. As the head of the State, the responsibility of the King extended to the welfare of the society as a whole. Not the least of these royal obligations were the celebrations of the Buddhist festivals and the seasonal festivities of the devālayas, the shrines of the high divinities, to the accompaniment of the sacred dance, the *dig-ge natuma*, referred to already.

Culture changes with time. This is true of Sinhalese dances, as of other aspects of Sinhalese culture. Except for vestigial remains, the sacred dance, the *dig-ge natuma*, has altogether disappeared. A lost art today, it has left its trails in its passage over the years, in the plastic arts of the Sinhalese and in their poetical literature, the *Sandesa Kāvya*s. Such studies as have been conducted over these and other vestiges of the art, lead us to conclude that the *dig-ge natuma*, the art of the Nalangana of the *Sandesa Kāvya*s, is one with the art of the *devadāsīs* of the South Indian shrines, at about the same period of time—the classical art of Bharata Natya.

Bharata Natya is the art expounded in the Natya Sâstra by Bharata Muni, a comprehensive work on Natya, ascribed to the Second Century A.D. In the different parts of India the dance developed under various influences, social, historical and environmental, inspired directly or indirectly by the basic art of Bharata Natya. In its pristine purity, in its spiritual background, and in aesthetic expression, it retains its original charm in South India. That this classical art found its way to Ceylon and influenced the dance of the Sinhalese, becomes increasingly evident as we come to know more of the history of the Sinhalese dances and their technical background. This is true of the Kandyan dance which as an art, in its technique as in its expression is the foremost of all forms of the Sinhalese dance.

Among the most elementary of the pointers in this direction, is the term *adavu* of Bharata Natya, the *adau* or *adavu* of the Kandyan dance. In the technology of Bharata Natya, *adavu* is a dance unit, "a synchronisation of gestures and footwork true to rhythm and pose". *Adavu* in Tamil corresponds to the Sanskrit *Karana*, "a combination of *sthana* (static pose) and *chari* (footwork) and *Nrta hastas*, hand gestures"¹ In Kandyan dancing, the term *adau* primarily meant the same, though the term is extended now to refer more specifically to spinning and jumping dances featured as the finale of the Kandyan dance.

At a performance of the Kolam, the masked play of South Ceylon, nothing of the finer points of technique can be seen. Nevertheless, that something of the essentials of the Bharata Natya has been basic to the equipment of a competent exponent of the art, was revealed at expositions of the dance poses by the well known exponent of the Kolam, Gurunanse Aryapala of Ambalangoda — dance poses that harmonised with rhythmic movements of the neck and the eye, with hands in *hasta*, in Bharata Natya technique.

1 Ramaswami Sastri, K. S., Indian Dance as a Spiritual Art, Madras, 1961, p. 47.

Dances and dance plays of the Sinhalese have kept pace with their ways, habits and customs of life over the ages. The dances are of both classes, the individual dance and the group dance.

In the field of dance, new forms are occasionally seen under present trends, national and cultural. A few are denoted by traditional names. Of this class may be mentioned the *Kumaran Natuma*, a dance reputedly of Sinhalese princes. New dances are generally the product of the creative impulse of the masters in Kandyan dance, training in which is now given systematically to boys and girls of the Government Central Schools. The dances are seen displayed by children individually or in pairs, at special social occasions, at receptions of welcome to a distinguished visitor, or public exhibitions of national arts. Mention has already been made of the annual dance festivals in the last few years, presented by the *Ruhunu Kala Kavaya* at the open air theatre improvised for the occasion, at Campbell Park, Colombo. The dances maintained a high standard of production from year to year. Three of the new dances were particularly good. One was the solo dance, the *Giridevi Natuma*, the tragic story of Giridèvi, a narration of which will be found elsewhere. The passions and emotions surging in the mind of the heroine, were skilfully rendered in the technique of the dance-play.

Two others, were group dances, the *Chamara Natuma* and the *Puja Natuma*. In the *Chamara Natuma*, girls in colourful costume, dance in graceful movements harmonising with the gentle waving of the *chàmara* held in the hand. *Puja Natuma* as the name signifies, is a devotional dance, invoking divine grace and guidance, in a series of graceful movements, artistically danced by a group of girls in effective costume.

The spirit of the play and the general enthusiasm in folk arts today find vent in a new genre of plays best seen at the annual demonstrations held at Colombo by

pupils of Government Central Schools — plays based on paddy cultivation processes, the sowing of seeds, transplanting seedlings, and reaping the harvest.

With sickles tucked at the waist, seven girls enter in the garb of peasant women. Swaying their lithe bodies, and tripping about in short steps to the tune of their singing of the *Goyam Kavi*, they wield the sickles in the act of reaping the ripened paddy. As the field is all harvested, each girl removes the *talappa* (cloth wrapper) wrapped over the head to shield them from the heat of the sun; and presently leave the field, something of a conventionalisation of the lines of the poet:

“I watch the mowers as they go,
Through the tall corn, a white sleeved row;
With even strokes the scythes they swing
And toss the thick swathes in the sun”.

Of this class too, is the play of the transplantation of seedlings. Girls in cloth and jacket, enter the field with a handful of *goyam* paddy plants, hands in the act of holding the bunch of seedlings. To the singing of songs and invocation of the *Tun-Saranaya*, Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, the players move about in rhythmic steps, mimicing the act of transplantation. One of the girls stepping about with a pot of water, offering betel-nut and water to the peasant girls, heighten the realism of the scene.

Against the paucity of plays inspired by tasks of daily life is the vast range of Sinhalese folk songs singing away the cares of life and lightening the daily round of work. Such are the boatmen's songs, carters' songs and the songs of harvesting.

CHAPTER III

DANCE AND MUSIC IN THE SINHALESE ROYAL COURT

OUR main source of information of the court life of Sinhalese royalty is the sacred chronicle, the *Mahavamsa*. Such evidence as we have from this and other sources leaves us in no doubt that in their personal life Sinhalese royalty lived a life of regal splendour, in the best traditions of the oriental potentates. A handy summary is what Saratchandra¹ gives in these words:

“As would be natural to expect, the culture of the Sinhalese Court has been entirely Indian in the early period, but it is interesting to note that it seems to have continued to be so right through the centuries, the difference being that in later times, the influences come more from South India than from the North. The fact that kings became Buddhists and actively patronised the religion, made no change in this state of affairs, for in his lay life the king was as free to adopt Hindu culture as the villager was free to adopt the non-Buddhistic folk culture.

The king was installed as a ruler according to the Hindu custom of *abhiseka*, and in respect of his paraphernalia, such as the White Parasol, the State Elephant, the State Carriage, the State Horse, dancing girls and harem, he was similar to an Indian king.

1. SARATCHANDRA, E. R. The Sinhalese Folk play and the Modern Stage, p. 14-15.

The King had the Brahmin as chaplain (*Purohita*) and very probably, Brahmins were responsible for at least the secular education of princes. Hindu rites were performed in the court in addition to Buddhist rites such as *pirit*, and kings held up before themselves the ideals of *dasarajadhamma* and the laws of Manu.

In view of occasional statements made in the *Mahavamsa*, it is not unlikely that Sinhalese kings although they embraced Buddhism, continued to follow the tradition of Kshatriya princes in most of their non-religious activities. They enjoyed water-sports and hunting and in some cases, celebrated Hindu festivals like the Spring Festival and the Rain Festival (*ascalha*). Wickramasinghe¹ opines that the description of Kshatriya life found in *Kavsilumina* is based, not so much on books as on the personal experience of the writer himself. If we accept this view, on the impression of genuineness which, he says the description leaves in the mind of the reader, we can obtain a fairly detailed picture of the life of the court of Sinhalese kings from the *Kavsilumina*. It is not at all unlikely that just as kings enjoyed water-sports and garden sports, they occasionally held a bacchanalia of the kind described in this poem. In other respects as well, the court-life depicted in the *Kavsilumina* is Indian in character. A number of technical terms current in practice in Indian music, are referred to in the poem. The literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries also make reference to terms in Indian classical music. The *Mahavamsa* mentions instruments like the *mrudanga*, the *Kahala*, *Maddala* and *Vina* which are still in common use in various parts of India. Two exhaustive lists of musical instruments occur in the *Thupavamsa* and *Dalada Sirita*, which belong to a period roughly between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Most of these instruments are of Indian origin, some of the drums being identified with South-Indian varieties."

1 Wickramasinghe, Martin—Sinhalese Literature, p 38.

This epitome gives us the right perspective to an understanding of the place of music and dance in the life of Sinhalese royalty, and incidentally, of the contribution of the kings to the promotion of the arts.

The earliest mention of dancing in the Mahavamsa goes back to the time of king Pandukabhaya (377-307 B.C.) when on festival days "having gods and men to dance before him, the king took his pleasure in joyous and merry wise"¹. It is, however, only when we turn to the annals of the great king Dutthagamani (101-77 B.C) that we find sufficient evidence to conclude that dancing and dancers had become an established feature in the normal life of the royal court. The king, after his great victory over the Damilas, sits in his royal chamber "in the midst of dancers and ministers"². These dancers figure prominently both in his court and in his religious activities. In the many festivities connected with the construction of the Ruwanwelisaya Dagoba in his retinue are "many dancers richly clothed like to celestial nymphs"³. According to the Pujavaliya there were 12,000 dancing girls. At the enshrining of the relics of the same dagoba he is "surrounded on every side by all his dancing women"⁴. And finally reference is made to them at the time of his demise —: "Even where the dancing women who had come hither laid off their head ornaments there was a hall built called Makutamutta sala"⁵.

The place of dancing in sacred Buddhist ceremonies, finds emphasis in the passage which speaks of "diverse mimic dances and concerts with the playing of all kinds of instruments of music in honour of the Great Thupa."⁶ This takes us to the reign of king Bhatikabhaya (38-66 A.D.).

A more sumptuous reference lets us into the court life of the great king Gajabahu (1137-1153 A.D.), "when he had thus made peaceful the province of Malaya, where owing to its inhabitants there had been no peace,

1. Mah. Ch. X — 87.

3. Mah. Ch. XXIX — 24—25.

5. Mah. Ch. XXXII — 78.

2. Mah. Ch. XXV — 99.

4. Mah. Ch. XXXI — 37.

6. Mah. Ch. XXXIV — 60.

he dwelt at ease in his town and passed the time with games in the garden and in the water, with dance and song and the like, fulfilling the duties of a king".¹ In the words "fulfilling the duties of a king", we recognize that the kings harmonised royal patronage to the arts, with their own relaxation and amusement.

The chronicle gives more pointed reference of royal patronage to the arts during the reign of King Parakramabahu the Great (1153-1186). The great king's early education consisted, among other accomplishments of perfection "in dance and song".² The king's own deep knowledge of the subject is revealed in the line "he tarried there harkening to the singing given by numerous songstresses, feeling out the underlying motif as one who is first among those versed in the knowledge of moods".³ That this great king extended his full patronage of the arts is clear: "With the wish that people skilled in dance and song, in court service should increase in number, the Sovereign brought up many of the sons, brothers and grand-children of distinguished families in his own palace. Of the many groups such as Sihala gandhabba.....he supported several thousands of each of them at the royal court."⁴ Such skill was not confined to the males of his court. His own consort Queen Rupavati among her many other accomplishments "was skilful in dance and song."⁵

Amid such royal patronage a close association steadily grew between the sacred Buddhist ceremonials and dance and music. Thus at a festival for the worship of the Tooth Relic—"Round about the mandapa, he (the king) placed splendidly attired dancing girls in many hundreds of (other) costly mandapas, each of these being accompanied by people bearing lutes, flutes, drums and the like in their hands and by bands of female musicians who were like unto the heavenly musicians, to do honour with their dance, their

1. Cul. Ch. 70—31.

3. Cul. Ch. 72—94.

5. Cul. Ch. 73—141.

2. Cul. Ch. 64—4.

4. Cul. Ch. 69—22—26.

songs and their music (to the relics).¹ Decades later in the reign of Parakramabahu II more abundant testimony is found. The variety of dances and characters is the central idea in the description that the "festival was ravishing by reason of the many exquisite dances and songs of the dancers who on splendid stages erected here and there performed while assuming different characters, diverse dances and sang various songs".²

In the subsequent centuries singing and dancing continued to play an all-important part in the religious ceremonies. In the great festival for the Tooth Relic and the Alms Bowl held by king Vijayabahu IV (1270-1272 A. D.) dancing and singing to the accompaniment of the fivefold music is thus described: "It was filled with the songs of praise of the bands who sang festive songs, making thereto on the five instruments fine music which spread abroad and charmed the hearers, also with the songs of the minstrels who again and again let their praises resound. In devotion there surrounded it the dancers and the actors who performed dances and sang songs delightful to see and hear".³ The devotional aspect of the dancing and singing is quite clear. There was undoubtedly great solemnity in their execution.

A similar festival held by King Parakramabahu IV (1303-1333 A.D.) is "beautified by the reverberating sound of the five musical instruments, far through the dances and songs performed by the dancing girls and the actors, preparing delight for the world".⁴

In more recent years during the times of the Kandyan kings, the *Kavikara maduwa* and its dependent institutions, the *Vahala ilamgama*, the *nayitum ilamgama*, and the *piccamal ilamgama* were regular features of the Kings' Court.⁵ These provided relaxation for the king with their songs, mostly in praise of the king, and dancing. Often the king was

1. Cul. Ch. 74—215—17.

2. Cul. Ch. 85—43.

3. Cul. Ch. 89—33—36.

4. Cul. Ch. 90—74—76.

5. Dolapihilla P. — Some Aspects of Traditional Sinhalese Culture: A Symposium — 1956, pp. 41—42.

accompanied by the Queen and sometimes by his chief ministers. Sometimes the king himself joined in the dancing.

The honoured place given to dance and dancing women, is manifest in these several passages. We may visualise too the essential elements of a theatre as an institution in the court life of the Sinhalese monarchy, in the pointed references to "mandapas" and "splendid stages". Altogether the data abundantly testify to the regal life of splendour the kings lived and their patronage of the arts of dance and music.

Recent studies by Deraniyagala¹ have made a significant contribution to our knowledge of the little known field of the personal life of the Sinhalese royalty with particular reference to dance and music, glimpses of the technique of the dance, with details of the dancer's costume, the make-up and the jewellery:

"The *Manika Mahagala* also known as *Alathi Ammala*, were women dancers who performed as feudal service before the king or at the temple when they would dance in the drumming or preaching hall known as the *Dig ge*."

Tradition affirms that king Parakramabahu I in the twelfth century A.D. kept a team of 24 dancing girls to dance and sing to him until he fell asleep after an arduous day's circuit or *Uyan Keli* by chariot or on an elephant's back. This team was subdivided into *Katana* or groups of four or five each with its leader. While one group danced, another sang and kept time with the cymbal or *talam potaval*. The men drummed upon the *davul* (drum) and if the performance was in the king's chamber, they remained outside, while those

1. P. Deraniyagala: *Sinhala Ivory Carving: Spolia Zeylanica*, Vol. 27, part II, Page 308; note 1. Jana Sammatha Kaviya, a book which contains 3 dig-ge songs was published about six years ago. Note 2. Pieris, P. E. *Sinhale and the Patriots*, p. 254 mentions the dancers of Maha Saman devala whirling in the Bahum Ranga.

in attendance within the chamber were the queen, the Prime Minister or *Maha Nilame*, the treasurer or *gabāda mohottala* and two equaries or *amathiyo*.

The dancers would sing their petition to the guard to be permitted to enter the palace and after this was granted, they begged king's permission to perform and in doing so, ascertained whether his mood was gay, tired or angry and danced to suit it and the *Samaya*, i.e., whether he was after food, after sport or about to sleep. The dancing ended when the king fell asleep when a pair of virgins would fan him."

CHAPTER IV

DIGGE NATUMA, THE SACRED DANCE OF THE DEVALAYA

IN the preceding chapter has been briefly outlined the available data from the *Mahavamsa*, of the role of the arts of dance and music in the personal life of royalty, linked with the participation of these spectacular arts in the sacred Buddhist ceremonials and festivals. More could not possibly have been expected of Mahanamā, the author of *Mahavamsa*, a Buddhist monk of the orthodox Mahavihara fraternity, under the rigid code of conduct of Theravada Buddhism, a code which governed the life of the monks, with its repercussions on the laity of the Middle Ages. We are indeed grateful to the *Mahavamsa* for the insight it gives into the early stages of a most significant chapter in the cultural life of the Sinhalese.

An elusive factor, is the interpretation of the art of the early ages, in terms of modern dance terminology. Nevertheless, we have something of the elements of the framework, from which we may attempt a reconstruction of the probable lines on which the art evolved. Such terms as "diverse mimic dances", "the knowledge of the moods", and "feeling out the underlying motif", are pointers to the type and technique of the dances of these dancing women, "bands of female musicians who were like unto the heavenly nymphs". In these suggestive references, it is more the personality of the dancer, than the art of the dance that

stands prominent. The phraseology of the references to the dance is such that it rules out the art of the Kandyan dance, as we know it today.

Apart from, and supplementary to, the descriptive passages to dance and music in the pages of *Mahavamsa*, we have a body of sources which aid us towards a definite understanding of the art of the dancing women, the danseuse, who figures in the pages of Sinhalese literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, under the name of the Nalangana. On a chronological approach to the studies, we may easily visualize a progressive development of the dance from the early to the later ages, reaching the zenith of its attainment during the specious times of the *Kotte* dynasty of kings of the fifteenth century.

The sources which are basic to the study of the dance, may be grouped under five main heads; stone sculptures; wood carvings; figures carved in low relief on ivory combs; metallic images recently revealed in the course of explorations by the Archaeological Department of Ceylon, and Sinhalese literature.

Among Stone Sculptures, is the frieze of dancers from Polonnaruwa Vishnu Devalaya, No. 2, now in the collections of the Colombo National Museum. (Text Fig. 1). The figures are in sharp outline. The movements are vigorous and vibrate with swinging and swaying action. One of the figures has a long drum slung from the shoulders, possibly the drummer accompanying the dancers. He is also footing a measure, along with the drumming. Right top, is a striding dancer, hands in *hasta*. This dancer has a dwarf squatting figure on either side. From the suggestive wings of these little beings, they seem to symbolise the Kinnari minstrel of mythology.

The frieze from the Gadaladeniya temple in the vicinity of Kandy, shows three dancing figures. Worn and weathered as they are, the figures depict dancers in different dance poses, which recall the art of the Bharata Natya.

More fully illustrative of the art, are dance sculptures on the balustrades flanking the steps of the staircase (Plate 2) of Yapahuwa,¹ the capital of the kingdom for a few years in the reign of Bhuvanekabāhu I (1271-1282). Early in his reign, he repelled a Pandyan invasion, and for reasons of security shifted his capital to Yapahuwa, southward, with a natural escarpment of rocky hill. At the base of the hill was built a palace and on one side of the palace, the Temple of the Tooth Relic, the Sacred Relic which accompanied the Kings who shifted the capital from time to time to suit the changing fortunes and state craft. A high stair-case in a succession of three flights of tiered steps, leads to these structures. The final stage has a flight of thirty-five steps, on either side of which is a balustrade profusely ornamented with sculptured figures of dances. In the entrance hall on either side is a window (Plate 3), "perforated into forty five rings or circles, of rare and exquisite carving.....In each circle is a sculptured figure and scarcely two figures are alike. The circle of the lowest row contains grotesque bacchanalian figures which represent jolly, laughing fellows and are executed with great humour. Above them are nautch girls all slightly different in attitude. They occur again and again in four circles near the centre of the window and in a row near the top." These observations from the writings of John Bailey, C.C.S., 1864, convey a realistic idea of the richness of the Yapahuwa sculptures of dancing women.

1 "Yapahuwa is certainly the finest specimen of exquisite work. In point of architectural beauty and richness of design, it far excels all the ancient capitals of the Island". J.R.A.S. (C.B.), Vol. XIII, No. 44 (1893-94); and Codrington, H. W., A Short History of Ceylon, 1926, pp 78-80.

Thirty two miles North-East of Kurunegala, Yapahuwa, is 767.5 feet above sea level. The proper Sinhalese name is considered to be Yasapauwe, the "grand mountain". S and H being interchangeable, Yasapauwe became Yahapauwe, mutated in course of time to, "Yapahuwa".

The figures on the balustrades are more conspicuous. In their exposed condition, they appear weathered and worn. An examination of the figures reveals the bare upper half of the body, as generally in the wood and ivory carvings of dancers. The lower half is obviously draped, though at a glance, some of the figures may give the impression of the nude, which evidently, they are not.

Noted for its impressive series of fine wood carvings, is the Embekke Devalaya at Gampola in the vicinity of Kandy. The wood carvings of dancing women (Text. Fig. 4) are remarkable for the wealth and precision of detail, well proportioned figure, expressive face, appropriate jewellery, attractive drapery, with its central feature of graceful frills and folds and braided coiffure. The costume in details as in ensemble, is pleasing from the elaborate hair-do to the disposition of the frills and folds. Over her shoulders, the danseuse, sports a shawl the ends of which spread fan wise on either side, — may be a stylisation of the two ends of the shawl. It is equally indicative of speed in movement. The personality of the dancer presents a picture altogether of gay abandon which we may well compare with a Bharata Natya dancer of the present day. The scarf indeed makes a difference.

Almost of the same period as the Embekke Wood carvings are the carvings of dancing figures, on ivory combs, an art distinctive of the Sinhalese art in ivory.¹ The motifs are practically the same in both. If a distinction may be pointed out, it is in the face, more graceful and round in the ivory combs, than in the wood carvings. The scarf is a common feature.

The dancing figure on the ivory combs is labelled, “dancing goddess” in the picture post cards at the Colombo National Museum. The shawl has a significance of its own in relation to goddess Pattini whose birth seven times in this world, sung in Ceylon legends,

1 P. Deraniyagala: Sinhala Ivory Carvings, S. Z. Vol. 27, Part II. Raghavan, M. D. : Souvenir of the Fourteenth South Indian Natya Kala Conference; The Indian Institute of Fine Arts, Madras; “Society and the dance in Ceylon”, 1961.

includes her birth in the "shawl". The shawl has thus a ritual sacredness in the cult of the goddess Pattini. The presumption is strong that the figure is of a dancing goddess, eloquent of the dance in the cult of the gods, and the dance is very much the same as the dance of almost the same age in the temples of South India.

And now we come to the recent finds of two metallic images discovered by the Ceylon Archaeological Department, finds which open a new chapter in the story of the dance in Ceylon. These are the three bronzes of small size (Plate 5) discovered in excavations of the stupa of Dedigama in Kegalla district.¹ "In the four corners of the relic chamber were found four bronze lamps, evidently placed lit when the chamber was closed, as was noticed from the soot and pieces of burnt wicks which were found in their oil containers,"—in the words of the Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, 1951, para 151. The two images are strung in a chain interlinking one of the lamps called the Elephant Lamp, from the ornamental design of the lamp. The stupa of Dedigama has been proposed by Codrington to be the Punkhagama of *Culavamsa*.² "In the province (Dakkhina-desa) of the Yuvaraja (Manabharana), the discerning sovereign Parakramabahu I (1153-1186) had numerous works of various kinds constructed at a number of places. On the site of the house where he was born in Punkhagama, he erected the Sutighara-Cetiya, 120 cubitshigh."

The figures are definitely in dance poses typical of Bharata Natya, particularly the more conspicuous of them (Plate 5) in pose which reflects the cosmic dance of Siva as Nataraja. The costume has remarkable affinity to the attire of a Bharata Natya dancer of the present day.

1 Bell, H. C. P.— Report on the Kegalla District, p. 83.

2 *Culavamsa* (Ch. 79, 60-62); also C. J. Sc. Sect. G. Vol II, pp. 135-136.

The second figure has an abbreviated and unusual costume. The hands form a hollow with the fingers bent, recalling the *hasta* generally employed to denote a blossoming lotus in Bharata Nātyam or Kathakali.

These three miniature bronzes go a long way to a realistic understanding of the dance art of mediæval Lanka. The discovery holds out hopes of more finds of metallic images of this class, coming to light in later years. Incidentally, these have an additional interest in the story of the growth of the art of bronze casting in Ceylon.

Sinhalese literature bears abundant testimony to the dance as an institution vital to the social and religious life of the land. Favoured and patronised by royalty, it was a source of delight to all levels of society. It is particularly from the Sinhalese poetical compositions such as the *Kav-silumina*, *Guttala Kavyaya* and the *Sandesa Kavyas* that this data are to be gathered.

Kav-silumina, a thirteenth century composition by the royal poet Parakramabahu II of Dambadeniya is particularly interesting for the life it reveals of the royalty of the middle ages. One of the cantos pictures a bacchanalia in the King's Court in the royal presence. Though such scenes are a necessary ingredient for the *Mahākavya*, most critics¹ are agreed that this particular drinking festival bears the stamp of a genuine description from the personal knowledge of the writer. However vivid and lively this description may be, for the present study it is of little avail, being mostly confined to the costumes and jewellery and the glamorous beauty and alluring charm of the dancers, while very little attention is paid to the technical aspect of their art.

Scanty though this data may be, an important factor as regards their dance tradition is to be deduced in

1 Wickramasinghe, Martin—Sinhalese Literature, and M. B. Ariyapala—Society in Mediæval Ceylon.

that it closely followed the Indian as expounded in Bharata Natya Sastra. Thus in v. වෙ නුණල්ලියක 307 සමදරන ගම් රා —the reference to *gramaraga* and *laya* is significant as they are essential ingredients in the Indian tradition. In v. 308 ලිය දෙන් අන්ත ලී රා —refers without a doubt to *anthaliraga* which is sub-divided into two sub sections, *bhasa* and *vibhasa*. Again the reference in v. 601— සරසත් උනු පණස් තැන් - මුස එක් විසි වජ්ඣනා, to 49 *Sthana* or Registers and 21 *murchanas*, finds support in the Bharata Natya Sastra.

The perfect synchronisation of the movement of hands and feet termed *Karana* in Bharata Natya Sastra is also referred to in v. 308 — සපිරුණු නොසපිරුණු සහස සිල මහ කරණ.....

Guttala Kavya, one of the finest poetic gems in the diadem of Sinhalese poetry, by the poet Vetteve, is yet another of the poetical compositions that contribute to our knowledge of the role of dancing in Sinhalese social life of the age. Some of the most famous verses of the *Guttala* are those describing the dance of the celestial maidens who had come down to earth charmed by *Guttala's* music. "The rhythmic pattern of the verses, falling as they do into the pattern of a well-known dance step, marvellously suggests the slow movement of what is very likely a variety of Bharata Natya".¹ To illustrate this it would suffice to quote the following stanza:—

“රු ධ සේ අදිනා ලෙසේ අත් ලෙල දිදි විදුලිය පබා
 ර න් ර සේ එක් වන ලෙසේ වෙන නාදනු පා තබ තබා
 ක මි ප සේ දෙන සැර ලෙසේ දෙස බල බලා නෙතගින් සබා
 මම කෙසේ පවසමි එසේ වරසුර ලදුන් දුන් රහ සුබා”

Their arms, bright as the lightning's glow,
 move like myriad pictures painted;
 Their feet, like gold and mercury mixed,
 with the strains of the veena harmonise;

1 Wickramasinghe, Martin—Sinhalese Literature—p. 174.

Their side-long glances like Ananga's flowery darts
Towards the onlookers cast;
Oh, the dances these celestial maidens performed,
How can I describe?"

These lines and the four stanzas that follow are unsurpassed for their beauty in the poetry of the period. The poet by subtle variations of his rhythmic pattern, by the clever use of his imagery, and by his lilting metre, has been able to paint an exquisite picture of a highly developed art. They reveal details of technique, the style of movement in harmony with the musical melodies, and such minute points, as the make up, costume, jewellery, and all that is implied in the term *aharaya abhinaya* of *Bharata Natya Sastra*.

The material available from the above literary sources is altogether too scanty to obtain a comprehensive picture of the art of dancing of their relative periods. We are more fortunate, when we turn to the Sandesa Kavyas which open to us a vista of the glorious cultural heritage of the Kotte period. Hence we now proceed to an examination of these works in considerable detail.

The poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries found in the Sandesa Kavyas, a congenial forum for presentation of the dances of the age. They were, perhaps, following a literary convention in describing such dance performances either in a King's Court as in Tisara, Kokila and Gira Sandesas, or in a Devalaya in Mayura, Hansa, Parevi, Selalihini and Savul Sandesas. It is fortunate that the chronicle of the dance has been handed down to us in this manner. In the language of imaginative poetry, the Sandesa Kavyas project a picture of a moving pageantry of dances with all the artistry and glamorous imagery that characterized the art.

In chronological order, the Mayura and Tisara Sandesas of the fourteenth century appear to have been the first of this series of poems, followed by Parevi and Selalihini of Sri Rahula; Gira, Hansa and

The most important feature of these performances is their consonance with Bharata Natya Sastra. Most of the Sandesa poets assert this in no uncertain terms. Thus the author of the Hansa Sandesa says — v. 110 —

කියන	යුතු මෙ යැයි සුර ගදඹ මේ	ලම
වියන	එසබ ඇමගේ නො සෙලවා	ලම
බරන	සතර රඟටම කළ හැසා	ලම
වයට	නො හැර මද්දල සුද්දතා	ලම

Playing the pure *maddala* rhythm
 True to the art of Bharata Sastra
 Rouse the hearts of all present
 Who liken them to the art of the heavenly musicians.

Familiarity with Bharata Natya Sastra is also seen in the Tisara Sandesa in v. 164.

“ නියෙනග බරතූදරන් කී ලෙස ටා..... ”

“In accordance with the teachings of Bharata sage.....”

It is however only when we turn to the Kokila and Savul Sandesas that we begin to realize the actual implications of Bharata Natya Sastra. The dancer's knowledge had to be deep and comprehensive; the exponent had to work hard to achieve this end. Thus the author of Kokila Sandesa in v. 284 says —

වෙසෙස	සියලු නො වරදු බරන තොරතු	ර
ස ක ස	ගී රැගුම් වැයුමේ දැන විත	ර
අ ල ස	නොව නිලීන් නළුවන් පෑ නො හැ	ර

Learning all Bharata's doctrines unmistaken,
 Songs, dances and music;
 The dancers perform unslackened, with no laxity.

A detailed analysis of these descriptions leaves us in no doubt that these dances follow the traditional art of Bharata Natya of South India. There is abundant

data in these poems to handpick the four main constituents of Abhinaya — *Angika*, expressive of movements of the limbs; *Vacika*, vocal music; *Aharaya* denoting costume, toilet and coiffure, the jewellery and stage equipments; and *Sattvika*, the complex emotional manifestation too subtle for words, all contributing towards rousing in an appreciative audience, aesthetic and emotional response summed up in the word. 'Rasa'. To understand how far the technique of the art sung in the Sandesa kavyas conforms to the general characteristics of Bharata Natya style, calls for detailed comparative study. Space forbids this. The essence of the Bharata Natya technique is thus summed up in the *Abhinaya Darpana*:—

The Song proceeds from the mouth
The meaning is conveyed by the hands,
Eyes express the *bhava* (*emotion*), and
Feet move to the rhythm.

The perfect synchronisation of the movements of the eyes, eyebrows, hands and limbs, harmonising with the music played and the songs sung, has been elaborated in these words of Kay Ambrose¹ : "What is said traditionally by our ancestors must be kept in view. Having made the invocation.....the dancing may begin. The song should be sustained in the throat; the mood (*bhava*) must be shown by the glances; time (*tala*) is marked by the feet. For, wherever the hand moves, there the glances follow; where the glances go, the mind follows; where the mind goes, there is the flavour (*rasa*)".....This is the hard core of Bharata Natya Sastra. *Rasa* in the audience is the fruition of an ecstatic performance of Bharata Natya, and the test of a competent exponent of the art. The Sandesa poet was well aware of this, as is evident from the vivid delineation by the poet of Hansa Sandesa, of the dancers at the Vibhishana Devalaya :

ගන් ගන් වෙසින් විලුවා දන නුවන් ර

ස

1. Ambrose, Kay: Classical Dances and Costumes of India, p. 25.

“Delighting the audience by their expressive *abhinaya*.”

In the terminology of the Bharata Natya, *rasa* signifies emotion — analysed into nine classes — the *nava rasa* — *Sringara*, the erotic; *Karuna*, the pathetic; *Hasya*, the comic; *Roudra*, the furious; *Veera*, the heroic; *Bhayanaka*, the fearful; *Bhibhatsa*, the revolting; *Adbhuta*, the marvellous and *Shanta*, the devotional: The dramatic representation of the emotions, by the expression of the eyes and every lineament of the face, and movements of the limbs and hands, is the elaborate system of *abhinaya* perfected by the Bharata Natya.

That this has been abundantly realised in the dances sung in the Sandesa Kavyas, is clear from the several passages graphically portraying the harmony of movements of the eye-brow, the eyes, the arms and feet. An apt illustration is this verse (v. 175) from Parevi Sandesa.

මුදුනින්	බැම	යුවලින්	දිගු	නුවනින්	ගෙල	පසි	නි
යුගලින්	රතැහිලියෙන්	උර	තලයෙන්	මැද	දෙසි		නි
වටොරින්	පුළුල්	කලින්	දහ	යුවලින්	පතු	ලෙසි	නි
දහමන්	කළ	කරණින්	සොඳ	අහනන්	දකු	තොසි	නි

Behold with joy the beautiful maidens, the dances
perform

Moving their heads, eye-brows, long eyes and necks
Their hands and fingers, their breasts and the
centre region

Their shoulders, broad hips, legs and feet.

According to the Bharata Natya Sastra traditions there are “nine basic movements of the head, eight glances of the eye, six movements of the eye-brows, four of the neck and at least four thousand single and combined gestures of the hands, specific postures of the body, the legs”¹ The Sandesa poet accordingly portrays the enticing movements of the eye and the arms and in words of equal charm and grace. Thus in Selalihini Sandesa, v. 76.

1 Ambrose, Kay, Classical Dances & Costumes of India—p. 12

“හෙළන නගන අත නුවන’ග බැලුම් දි දී”

“Who shoot side-long glances at their arms as they rise and fall,”

or as in Parevi Sandesa — v. 181

ලා නෙත් කෙළවර කළ අත් වැනුම ට

“Glancing from the corner of the eye at the arm that moves;”

and in Kokila Sandesa,—v. 274

“කෙළවා දිගු නුවනනලා බැලේ මා”

“Shooting side-long glances at the arms that move”.

The most significant in this respect is the direct reference in *Mayura Sandesa*—v. 128 to *abhinaya*

“රත් සබල ශක් අයුර අත් අබිනු පා නේ”

“With hands like red tender leaves they gesture”.

Absolute perfection in the harmony of the movements of the eye, the arms, and feet to the rhythm of the *maddala* drum expounded by sage Bharata is seen in the dance at the Saman Devalaya described by poet Alagiyavanna in *Savul Sandesa*—v. 175 —

“බ ර න සනෙහි පෙණ ඉසිවර කී ලෙස ට
දෙනෙත යුගතා දෙපදෙහි පමණ සරි කො ට
ස ම න තාල මද්දල ගයට එක්කො ට
දී මු න නළඹ රතදෙහි දිව නළ ලෙස ට”

“Following Bharata Sastra’s sage of old
Harmonising eyes, hands and feet
To the tune of the *maddala* drums
Beauteous maidens like goddesses perform.

One of the important technical ingredients for a physical mastery of Bharata Natya is an irreproachable instinct for time and rhythm. Time in Bharata Natya sastra is termed *tala* and the classical texts speak of 108 *talas*. That the Sandesa poets were fully aware of the classical divisions of *tala*, is seen from the references made to them at various times. Thus in *Savul Sandesa*, v. 176—

“ඉගෙන නිසි ලෙසට නිසි තාල බේද ය”

“Learning in the proper manner the various divisions of *tala*”.

Likewise the poet in Parevi Sandesa, v. 182 refers to the *tala* divisions by quoting the first of these—

“වත් වත් ප්‍රථ ඇ දන තල බේද ත්
සත් තත් මියුරුව සහ වෙන නාද ත්”

“Versed in the range of rhythms “*Chatch chatch puta*”

To the music of the veena and sweet seven-fold notes”.

Present day classical Sinhalese music as found in the Kandyan province speaks of only 60 *talas*¹ and of these the above mentioned *tala* is the first.

Raga loosely translated ‘melody’ is another important technical element in Bharata Natya. South Indian literature on music refers to an innumerable array of *ragas* and their sub divisions. The author of Hansa Sandesa in v. 107 refers to 36 *ragas* —

“නගන වෙන වෙනම සතිසක් රා ගි ය”

“Expounding thirty six distinct *ragas*”.

The dancer to be perfect in the art had also to be a vocalist of equal perfection. She sang while she danced. The idea is most exquisitely expressed in a melodious couplet that echoes the idea fully, in Mayura Sandesa v. 127:—

“ව යන්තන් පෙදෙසි පා තබා ගි රවන් තේ
ඇඟිත්තන් රඟන්තන් ලදුන්වන් සුරන් තේ”

“The dancers, beautiful as maidens divine, sing
As they place their feet to the tune of the musicians”.

and in the Kokila Sandesa, v. 272 —

“බසිමිත් සබමද රඟදෙනි කියමිත් ගි මියු රා”

1 Sedaraman, J. E. : *Nrutya Chintamani*—1947—p. 43.

ගතවර බහුරි රඟ අඟනක් වෙයි නඹ C
 ඇයවෙර අවට දිසි රඟ විසිරි සළ හෙ C

As one damsel commencing the 'Bahuri' dance
 swirled round
 The white skirt she wore spread out from her
 body

Other specific dances are mentioned in v. 180;

බු සාරි අහස් සාරි අග සාරි ලෝ සාරි ද
 මේ සිරිමත් රැගුම් පෙත්වනි සුරඹ ලෙ ද

Like celestial maidens, they display such dances
 exquisite

As Bu sari¹, Ahas sari¹, Aga sari¹, and lo sari¹.

Among the most significant of these, is the "nude dance" referred to in v. 179 —

" නදකොට කිකිණි පුළුලුකුලෙහි සර න්දමා
 මනතුට වඩන නළුගන දිව සර න්දමා
 පළකොට තුනු රුසිරු කෙළ රඟ වස න්දමා
 දු පුච්ච නොම නිබෙයි තවසර වර න්දමා "

These dancing maidens who, in exquisite beauty the
 Apsaras outdid,

Sounding the jingles in the golden girdles their
 broad hips adorned

Casting off their clothes their beauteous forms
 displayed;

How could the virtue of the hermits survive such
 a sight!

The nude dance before the Gods was really an ancient custom and certainly not peculiar to this country. The custom appears to have survived in a modified form up to recent times. There are eye-witnesses of the Digge natuma at the Maha Saman devalaya in Ratnapura who tell us of female dancers with the upper part of the body bare, except for jewellery and garlands.

The Sandesa Kavyas hold up to our mind's eye, a fascinating picture of the art of dancing that dominated Ceylon at the time, the art that is revealed to be none

1 Names of different forms of dances.

other than Bharata Natya, "the resplendent gem adorning the crown of Indian culture", the art elaborated in the pages of Bharata Nātya Sāstra, the art that reached the height of artistic excellence at the hands of the Dēvadāsīs of South India, and their counterpart in Ceylon, the Nalangana of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. No poet has sung of the art of the ages of Dutthagamini, Gajabahu or Parakramabahu. In expressions, "mimic dances and concerts", and "feeling out the underlying motive as one skilled in the knowledge of the moods", freely used in the *Mahāvamsa*, we may well discern the early days of an art which evolved and blossomed into its full splendour in the dances of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We may also fairly assume that women dedicated to singing and dancing were a factor in the social and devotional life of the land. From the Sandesa Kavyas, and figures of dancers sculptured in stone, we may conclude that group dances largely prevailed in these ages in Ceylon, perhaps more so than is evident today in South India.

In the inspired lines of the Sandesa Kavyas, the art and the artist, come to life, as in the days of the Kotte dynasty. These Kavyas are an index to the culture of the age, an era of all-round advancement and harmonious social and cultural relations between Lanka and Dakshina Bharata, a positive reflection which is the art of Bharata Natya, common to both the lands.

Of the technique of the art sung in the Sandesa Kavyas, we may rightly affirm that the general characteristics of a dancing girl highlighted in Indian works on Natya, the body beautiful, expressive face, gentle smile, speaking glances, lotus-like eyes, emotional expression, gem-set jewellery and the tranquil mind — are all attributes that ring a true echo in the portraiture of the art of the Nalangana sung in the Sinhala Sandesa Kavyas. The vivacity and the sparkling gaiety of the Nalangana is evident in these Kavyas, a picture as true of the Ceylon dancer as of the Devadasi, the erstwhile dancing girl of the South Indian temples.

Expounded by the Sinhalese poet in chosen phraseology, the art of Bharata Natya has been as much a creative art in Ceylon as in South India. It has also been an art essentially of spiritual values — an art which found an honoured place even in the celebration of sacred Buddhist festivals of the early days of Sinhalese monarchs as the *Mahavamsa* informs us, despite the taboo on spectacular arts enjoined by the rigid code of conduct of orthodox doctrines of Theravada Buddhism. This divine inspiration — the spiritual Sadhana witnessed its ultimate realisation in the ceremonial worship of the Gods of the Sinhalese divinity, who in their exterior manifestation as in their traditional background, correspond to the High Gods of the Hindu pantheon. Primarily designed for the joy of the Gods, in the words of Bharata's Natya Sastra, dance and music canalized the life of man towards the life divine. Interlinked with religious and temple rituals, music and the dance have been in India, arts basically spiritual, the outward expression of the inner spiritual urge. In Ceylon likewise, music and dance found early participation in sacred Buddhist ceremonies and festivals as in the ceremonial worship of the Gods. The process is one that began "deep down in the primitive soul" and steadily advanced with the march of mankind. The Devadasi — the dedicated danseuse of the South Indian temples of a past age, finds her parallel in Ceylon in the Sinhalese Nalangama who danced the digge *natuma* the "long hall" dance of the devalayas, the shrines of the high divinities.

Detailed studies of dance figures sculptured in stone and carved in wood and ivory, will no doubt reveal much more than what we are aware today of the technique of the art in relation to Bharata Natya. A foretaste of the fruitfulness of an intensive study of the field may be gathered from these observations of Saratchandra: "In the stone friezes at Yapahuwa and Gadaladeniya and the wood carvings at Embekke Devalaya, women are represented in traditional Bharata Natya poses. The dancing figures at Yapahuwa are

similar to the figures on the walls of the Hindu temple at Chidambaram, and among the dance poses one can recognise the Siva Nataraja pose, Catura, Karihasta, Gandasuci and Nikuncita. Besides this a large number of female figures are represented both in the sculptures as well as in the paintings of various periods, in Bharata Nātya poses.”¹

The poetical descriptions and sculptures reveal the fundamental oneness of the art of Bharata Nātya in Ceylon and South India of the time. These studies lead us to conclude that the art spread over from South India to Ceylon with its specific development and expression in the devotional dances of the sacred shrines which endure to this day.

If there is a gap in our knowledge of the arts, it is in the *vacika* part of the art, the vocal musical accompaniment. Of the character of the songs that accompanied the dance of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we have no evidence. It is a reasonable presumption that the original dancers who introduced Bharata Natya into Ceylon, brought with them the Carnatic music which is so much an inseparable part of Bharata Natya in South India.

On the subject of the development of the indigenous music in Ceylon, Sarathchandra² has given us some interesting observations. These are of interest in the present context of the dance in Ceylon and are extracted below for the information they embody on the little known subject of the early days of Sinhalese music: “There is reason to believe, at least with regard to music and dancing, that when these arts came into contact with more developed forms from South India, and also began to receive the patronage of the religion and of the educated, they developed considerably, although in some cases, sporadically. The beginnings of an indigenous tradition in music took place, as far as the evidence available shows, only

1 Sarathchandra, E. R. The Sinhalese Folk Play and the Modern Stage, p. 16.

2 —Do— —Do— pp. 11 — 13.

during the time of the Kandyan kings. The folk music, such as carters' songs, fishermen's songs, boatmen's songs and other songs associated with village toil and sport, are elementary chants not comprising a range of more than four or five notes, and simple in their rhythmic arrangement. In this body of folk music would be included the equally simple tunes to which poetry is chanted. The *vannams*, on the other hand, do not seem to have existed very much earlier than the time of the Kandyan kings, and judging from their language, their rhythms, and the style in which they are sung, one might easily surmise that they sprang up as a result of some strong Tamil influence during that period. The *vannams* although melodically still undeveloped, have fairly complicated and systematised rhythmic patterns. Their mode of measuring time by the stressed accent (*tit*) and not by the ordinary *matra* or beat, also links them with varieties of Tamil folk music and dance. At the same time, *vannams* display a sort of continuity with the earlier folk music and the poetical chant. What seems to have happened therefore, is that the Sinhalese folk music came in contact during Kandyan times, and perhaps earlier, with the music of South India, and, deriving inspiration from it, developed on its own lines.

The growth of another body of Sinhalese music, which received the general appellation of *viraha*, a term applied in the Kandyan period to a poetic genre dealing with love and separation, may be traced to a similar contact with Tamil music. This music seems to have grown out of themes which sing of the longings of separated lovers. On their model, other love songs were composed, based on legends popular among the people. There are a large number of songs, for example, having the Kusa and Pabavati theme.

The same kind of melody was also employed for the composition of Buddha *stotras*, hymns in praise of the Buddha, and songs describing incidents in the life of the Buddha. A large number of Jatakas, too, have

been put into song, and these are called *varnanas*. There are, included in this same body of music, hymns to Hindu Gods like Skanda Kumara or Kataragama Deviyo, and generally known as *Bhajanam*. These religious songs are written in a highly Sanskritized language with a large mixture of Tamil words.

Viraha music, as this body of songs is generally termed, is strikingly different from the earlier Sinhalese folk music. It arose, no doubt, as a result of the contact with the Tamil music that came through the medium of the Nadagams. The songs have a large melodic range, and a considerably developed structure. Their language is rough and rugged and bears the unmistakable stamp of the folk composer, and the folk singer has introduced into them the natural linguistic and phonetic changes that would result from their being sung by those untrained in the learned tradition.

The contact with Tamil culture as well as patronage, religious and secular, brought about some interesting developments in Sinhalese music besides those we have mentioned above. For the first time we find, in the Kandy period, the beginnings of a Buddhist religious music, attached to the ritual of the Sacred Tooth. The *Dalada Sinduva* sung by Kandyan musicians to the accompaniment of cymbals (*Kaitalan*), as they sit by the Sacred Tooth during its exposition, is perhaps the earliest example of a tuneful melody sung in praise of the Buddha. It is the same religious impulse seeking to find expression in music that produced the later Buddha *stotras* and songs like *Mara Yuddhaya*, mentioned above although they were inspired by a different tradition."

Before I finish this account of a fascinating phase of the cultural life of Ceylon, let me refer to another of the contemporary data of the sacred dances. These are the chronicles handed down to us by travellers and historians, based on their personal impressions.

The most picturesque of these is the narrative of the Arab historian and pilgrim, Ibn Batuta¹ of the fourteenth century. "From this place we proceeded and in two days arrived at the city of Dinaur, which is large and inhabited by merchants. In this is an idol, known by the same name, placed in a large temple; and in which there are about a thousand Brahmans and Jogeas and five hundred young women, daughters of the nobility of India,¹ who sing and dance all night before the image. The officers of the city revenue attend upon the image. The idol is of gold and as large as a man. In the place of eyes, it has two large rubies which, as I was told, shone in the night time like two lighted candles."

Dinaur is the Devi Nuwara, the City of Gods of Medieval Ceylon, Dondra until very recently. The temple is well known as the shrine sacred to Upulvan, the Lily-coloured God, of the colour of the blue lotus, the Nilotpala, the temple popularly known as the Maha Vishnu devale. Despoiled and sacked by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century on the site of the ancient small shrine, has been raised in recent years the magnificent building conspicuous today. The sacred dance has long ceased to be an institution of this temple.

One of the ancient devalayas where the sacred dances have been a long established institution is the Saman Devale of Ratnapura. I had the privilege with the kind courtesy of the authorities of the devale, to examine the registers of the land holdings granted to the families of dancing girls for the regular maintenance of dances on the night of temple festivals and the annual perahera celebrations. These registers give the names of the families of dancers with the extent of land given to each family. For

¹ Evidently the beauty and personal appearance of the dancing girls, would have been so striking as to leave in the mind of the Arab Traveller, the impression of aristocratic descent. Lee: Rev. Samuel; The Travels of Ibn Batuta, p. 191.

informative data of the sacred dances at Ratnapura and Alutnuwara, we are indebted to Sir Paul Pieris:¹ "There were twenty dancers; they dress in white clothes with a *Mantha Hatta* (jacket) the frill behind falling eight inches below the nape of the neck, and short sleeves. They receive instructions from their leader, known as Manikka Mahàge. They have to dance in the night when the last Kumbal Perahera takes place. Then on the day previous to the last Dewale Perahera and again two days previous to the Water Cutting Ceremony, then in the night of the day of return from the Water Cutting ceremony.

At the Alutnuwara Kataragama Dewale, at present 8 women perform services. After the perahera returns to the Dewale, women dance in the Diggè (Hall) in front of Wèdahitina Maligawa. This service is only done during the annual Mahaperahera and five days during the *Avurudu Karthiga* and five days during the *Ilmaha Karthiga*."

The Sacred dance of the devalayas of the Gods, in the form it prevailed in the fifteenth century, is no more. Nevertheless, vestiges may here and there still be traced. At the All Ceylon Rural Development Dance Recital held on the 13th March, 1952, at the open air theatre at the Victoria Park, Colombo, on the occasion of the Colombo Exhibition, one of the fifteen items in the programme was a performance of Diggè Natuma, by the descendants of the family of dancers attached to the Horaguna Dewale, Badulla. The dance was entitled, "a presentation of the ancestral dance performed at the festival of the devalaya in invocation of God Kataragama." The performance had little of the devotional spirit of the dance of the Middle Ages. The decadence was evident in the art as in the artistes. Nevertheless as a survival of the art of the Middle ages, the staging of the dance by dancing girls in direct line of the ancestral family of dancers was an event of intense cultural interest.

1 Pieris, Sir Paul: *Sinhale and the Patriots, 1815—1818*, (1950), p. 480.

AHARYABHINAYA

The sacred dance in the medieval ages of Ceylon, is so much inter-related to the dance on the mainland of India, that in fundamentals it strikes a close parallel to Bharata Natya, the main school of Indian dance standardised by sage Bharata Muni in his Natya Sastra. This perhaps is part of the explanation that, despite vast strides of the dance in Ceylon presented in a variety of sources, no code existed in Ceylon of the technique of the Sinhala dance until in recent times towards a standardised code of the art of the Kandyan dance.

An analytical study of the footprints of the dance in Ceylon of the Middle Ages reveals the main elements of the *abhinaya* harmoniously blended; *angika*, body movements and foot-work; *vacika*, the musical accompaniment; *aharaya*, expressive of the complex of several constituents—the costume, the coiffure, the jewellery and ornaments, the make-up and the stage fitting; and the *sattvika*, expressive of subtle emotions, all contributing to the aesthetic appreciation in the audience, summed up in the word *rasa*. Some of these we have alluded to already. Here we shall present in some detail the fundamental factors of *aharyabhinaya*, a term which corresponds in its general significance to the Sinhalese term *aiththum*.

To take the last of the several factors of *aharyabhinaya* first; the Stage-Setting: Data relating to a structural stage or the stage equipment, are so scanty

and Sinhalese mythology. Dominating the scene is the main dancer in vigorous swaying strides, the skirt flowering wide in harmony with the body movements.

Of obvious interest are the wood carvings of Embekke Devale (Plate ... 4...) and the ivory combs bearing engravings of the Dancing Goddess. The costume in these are of a pattern different from the costume of the dancer in Polonnaruwa Vishnu Devale. The pose and poise of the dancer in both the Embekke figure and on the ivory combs bear an affinity evident too in the costume. The skirt is wide and expansive, harmonising with the dance pose with spread-out knees, one hand in *hasta* and the other resting on the knee. The form of the skirt is generally the same, though the costume of the Dancing Goddess in the ivory combs is more elaborate and ornate than the costume of the dancer in the Embekke wood carvings. Worn in front in both the figures, and suspended from the waist, are linear ornamental folds in tiers. If a distinction may here be pointed out, the frontal decorative feature is in two tiers in the Embekke carvings and in three in the costume of the Dancing Goddess. Pleated folds on either side artistically done up, one long reaching down to the ankles and the other reaching the knees, add grace and poise to the charming ensemble of the Dancing Goddess.

An accessory of distinction to the costume in both is the shawl, the *salupota*. Passing under the arm-pits, the two ends of the shawl fly on either side, pleated and fan-shaped. This is obviously a symbol of the goddess. The shawl is sacred to Goddess Pattini, and the dancing figure either at Embekke or the one engraved on ivory art may well be the dancing Pattini, the only Goddess of Ceylon. The swirling scarf is also conspicuous in the cosmic dance of Nataraja.

Yet another frieze of dancers is the group of sculptures on the balustrades on either side of the staircase of the palace at Yapahuwa, the capital of King

Buwaneka Bahu I (1271—1282). Though nothing precise can be assessed of the character of the costume of the Yapahuwa dancers, much weathered as they are in their exposed condition, nevertheless from what we see it is definitely Bharata Natya.

The last in the series of sculptures is the frieze of dancers at Gadaladeniya Devale in the vicinity of Kandy, a temple which in common with the Lankatilaka temple nearby, may be assigned on grounds of architecture to the Vijayanagar period (1350-1600 A.D.). In pose as in costume, the Gadaladeniya art is distinctly the Bharata Natya.

The last to claim our attention are the two bronze figurines discovered at Dedigama (Plate 5 Figs. 1 & 2) which we have noticed already elsewhere. In its general bearing as in pose and costume, these figurines bear a striking similarity to Bharata Natya, particularly marked in the pleated and fan-shaped frontal adornment of the costume.

In matters of details such as the material of the dancers' costume, we get glimpses from the Sandesa Kavyas. Soft white silk seems to have been generally favoured, as we may presume from references in Kokila Sandesa:—v. 272.

අදිමින් සුදු පටසළ.....

Wearing white silk robes.....

and in Savul Sandesa:—v. 174.

සුනිමල් දුහුල් හැඳ.....

Wearing soft transparent silk.....

The skirts falling in graceful curves and ripples are other aspects indicative of the fine quality and texture of the material. Outstanding in the whole range of Sinhalese literature is this verse from Guttala Kavya with the picture it projects of the graceful movements in harmony with the alluring charm of the dancer's personality:

පුත් මදාරා මල් දමින් මුදු දිගු සුනිල්	
	වරලස හො නා
මත් මදා කිතුලිය ලෙසින් ළර තැර සරා දිලි	
	මුතු ල නා
මත් මදා වන මිණි මෙවුල් නද වෙණ නදින්	
	එක් කොට ඉ නා
උන් එදා දුන් රඟ දුටොත් තව සක් සැපත්	
	කවරෙක් ප නා

We may now pass on to personal ornaments. Mention has already been made of the *Makuta*, the head gear which sets off the costume of the principal dancer in the Polonnaruwa Vishnu Devale No. 2. The *Makuta*, which the *Mahavamsa* chronicles, of the days of Parakramabahu I, altogether disappeared in the later days. The head gear seems to have given place to the bunched head of hair, the elaborate coiffure. In the Embekke Devale figure as in the figure of the Dancing Goddess on ivory combs, the hair is combed back and coiled up in a large ring *Konde* slung at the temple. A form of coiffure scarcely evident in the earlier ages or of the later days, this particular mode seems to have had a limited usage in the ceremonial costume of the Dancing Goddess.

In the dancing scenes of the Sandesa Kavyas, the dancers have their hair done up in tresses decked with jasmine as featured for instance in the passage in *Kokila Sandesa*: v. 281.

බදිමින් නිල් වරලස ලා කුසුමන් සෙව්ව න් දී
 Their blue tresses with jasmine flowers
 bedecked.

Worn over the forehead and going over the line of the central partition of the hair is the *ran-bandi*, of strands of gold or strings of pearls, set off centrally with a gem-set pendant. An ornament still worn in different parts of India, it goes by the general name of *bindi* in Rajasthan and elsewhere.

Of ear ornaments we have different forms. Widely distended ear lobes were apparently the custom in the early Middle Ages as illustrated in the figure of the dancer engraved on ivory combs. The ear ornament

here is distinctly of the type classically known as the *patra kundala*. As its name signifies, this was originally the simple palm leaf scroll—from *patra* for leaf. The type imitated in gold is the *swarna Kundala*, keeping true to the form of the palm leaf scroll, of gold beaten out and rolled into narrow long scrolls, fitting the wide ear lobe.

In the Embekke Devale dancing figure, the ear ornament is different. Large in size to fit the ear lobe, it is ornamented with floral designs.

Let us now consider the waist ornament, the girdle. Swathed round the dancer's lovely wide flanks as the Selalihini Sandesa has it, the girdle has had a beginning from simple forms. What we see on the constricted waist of both the Embekke figures and the Dancing Goddess is not the metallic girdle. It is the plain waist band. Bearing simple ornamental designs, perhaps of *podu podu bindu* (small dots) and *podu podu mal* (small flowers), the ornamentation looks more pronounced in the Embekke costume. The simple waist band developed into the more ornate form of *udarabandana*, the gem-set ornamental belt, such as we see in the ensemble of the Dedigama bronze figure of a danseuse in typical Baharata Natya pose.

In the line from Savul Sandesa:—v. 179.

නදකොට කිකිණි පුඵලකුලෙහි සරන් දමා

මන තුට වඩන නලගන දිව සරන් දමා

Beauteous dancing maidens, who the Apsaras
outdid,

Sounding the jingles on the girdles their hips
adorned.....

we have another evidence of the gem-set waist band adorning the broad hips. Here the waist band is evolving into the metallic girdle. This seems evident from the term "*mini-mevul-dama*", suggestive of the golden girdle fringed with the small bells, which tinkled as they danced. The Selalihini Sandesa completes the fascination of the girdle in verses 76 and 77, freely translated in these lines:

76. Flickering lamp-flames they seem, these dancers
 in array
 On whose broad hips hang the heavy waist folds
 that ripple and flare,
 Who shoot side-long glances at their arms as
 they rise and fall
 Transfigured their form in the glare that beats
 from their jewels.

විදෙන ලෙලෙන නරු බර පුඵලුකුලු	රු	ආ
හෙලෙන නගන අන නුවන්ග බලුම්	දී	ආ
රුවින දිලෙන අබරණ කලුම ගත	යෙ	ආ
සැලෙන පහන සිඵ. වැනි රගන ලිය	සැ	ආ

77. Drink in the charms of these women who
 dance
 Stamping feet of lotus to beaten out
 rhythms
 To swing the girdles that are swathed round
 their lovely flanks,
 And their anklets hung with bells that wake
 into sound.

ලකළ පුඵලුකුලු බද මිණි මෙවු	ලේ
සමග රන් සලඹ රැවි දී වේවු	ලේ
වයන පදට තබමින් පද කම	ලේ
රගන ලඳුන් බල රුසිරි සිය	ලේ

In the latter verse we have both the girdle and the
 anklet in a harmonious blend producing soft music.

This introduces us to the anklet—our first insight
 into the anklet is from the frieze of dancers in the
 Polonnaruwa Vishnu Devale No. 2. The principal figure
 in this sculpture has a broad anklet. This particular
 type of anklet falling wide over the feet, seems to have
 gone out of vogue in the later days. Neither the
 figure of the Embekke Devale nor the Dancing Goddess
 of the ivory combs has any anklet. The Sandesa
 Kavyas bear abundant evidence of the use of anklets
 as a part of the dancer's costume. The first reference
 occurs in the Kokila Sandesa:—v. 273.

සලසින් රන්රසුයෙන් නද දෙවමින් පා කම	ලේ
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The golden jingles on the anklets resound
 from their tender feet.

These verses almost ring to the sound of the tinkling bells that fringe the golden anklets gracing the delicate feet. Parevi Sandesa goes one better with the anklet set with blue gems: v. 169.

නුරු වැළ නිල් මිණි දුල සුග පන	ෆ	ලා
බිඟු වැළ වට කළ වැනි රත කම		ලා

Like a swarm of bees surrounding a red lotus
The glittering gem-set anklets their feet
adorned.

Selalihini Sandesa in the lines already quoted, gives the finishing touch to the place of the anklet in the *aharayaabhinaya* of the dance of the times with the resonance of the “anklets hung with bells that wake into music.”

Now to consider the necklace. A series of necklaces one below the other graced the neck. The necklaces are not of the pattern that hang down below the breasts. What we see is the tight fitting type of necklaces one below the other. The last in the series is a rather broad one, set off centrally with rounded beads, possibly of coral, encased in gold or plain golden globules. The breasts are encircled with close fitting strings of pearls.

We have now to deal with a more sensitive factor—the make-up, which so much heightened the charm of the dancer and her art. The eyes received special attention, “the blue lotus eyes that shoot side long glances”, eyes “painted with finely made salve”. Savul Sandesa: v. 174 features this in the expression, “*neta rasandun thana*”.

The skin glowed and softened with sandal paste freely applied to the body. This is aptly conveyed in the lines:

“*hela sandunen thunu thavara*”; and body salved freely with the white sandal paste” (Kokila Sandesa: v. 272).

Sandal paste finds mention in Parevi Sandesa: v. 169, under the name *Vilavun*. For a vivid presentation of this and other features of the dancer's personality and adornments we may turn to Selalihini Sandesa: verse 46:—

“With kadupul blossoms adorning their dark hair;
And bright jewelled girdle swathed round their
hips;
Their breasts assuaged with sandal paste and
pearls,
Casting dark beams from wide eyes, this way,
and that.”

The free use of the make-up and cosmetics that the Sandesa Kavyas reveal may be regarded as a general reflection of the customs in fashion that obtained among the society women of the age.

This resume of the fundamentals of the *Ahary-abhinaya* of Sinhalese dance we may best conclude with the observations of Deraniyagala who spot-lights some of the more distinctive of the ornaments and costumes of the dancers.¹

“The dancers wore anklets each with three *gigiri* or bells attached to the outer side. An ornate foot chain of *pa-valalu* was looped round the foot and across the arch of each foot. A *hatta-kada* or cobra hood shaped metal ornament covered the back of the hand with the cobra's head directed towards the middle finger to which the binding cord was attached. The dancer also wore a throatlet and a necklace termed *pappu male* which supported two sups of breast protectors and on the side of the head was *Oliyal*. A *manthe hatte* or flounced jacket was worn for dancing in public in the temple, but this was discarded when they performed at royal command. Extending far below the breasts and down the ankles was a sort of skirt with a loose

1 *Spolia Zeylanica*, Vol. 27, part II, Sinhala Ivory Carvings—Appendix.

fold of three pleats on each side coloured white, red and blue respectively. These fanned out as the wearer danced while the *salupota* or light shawl was also employed most effectively.

The ear lobes were pierced and artificially elongated down to the shoulders and inserted into each was a bejewelled *todu* cylinder which was replaced by a palm leaf scroll after dancing."

To set off this general summing up by Deraniyagala against the Devale figures of dancers leads us to interesting disclosures. The *Oliyā* for the hair, *todu* for the ears, and *papu male* supporting the breast cups, the quaint *salupota* and the pleated skirt, are all there. The colourful costumes of the previous era, the bejewelled ornaments of precious metal, the intriguing waist *banū*, *mevul dama* which formed the pride of the Sandesa Kavya, are no more. There is a marked simplicity and lack of ornament, even to the point of bareness (Fig. 17), indicated in the costumes.

CHAPTER V

THE KANDYAN DANCE

IN an Island of Dances, the Kandyan Dance leads, favoured and patronised by the State and Society. The art predominantly of Kandy, Kandyan Dance has spread all over the Sinhalese provinces, exercising a unifying and integrating influence over the land and its peoples.

In the course of its history, Ceylon has perfected that unique institution, religious and cultural, the Perahera, a pageant of national and traditional arts, which developed alongside of the celebrations of the festivals to the Gods. The foremost of the Peraheras, is the Kandy Esala Perahera in celebration of the annual festivals of the Temple of the Tooth (Dalada Maligawa) blended harmoniously with the Peraheras of the four devales of Kandy, the Maha Vishnu, the Natha (Sakra), Kataragama (Skanda) and Goddess Pattini.

Kandy sets the pace for the peraheras of the devales of the rest of Ceylon. In the wealth of its gorgeous setting as in the exuberance of the dances, Kandy perahera is supreme. Most impressive are the Kandyan Ves dancers, in their full panoply of glittering crown (*Sikha Bandanaya*) and the decorative bead work, covering the bare torso (*Avul hera*), flounced and frilled skirts, jingling bells and anklets.

The name Kandyan dance covers four distinct types, the Ves, the Naiyadi, the Pantheru and the Udekki.

We shall first deal with the three latter, reserving the Ves of which we have much to say, to the last.

NAIYANDI

A very showy dance is the *Naiyandi*¹ with strides and steps employing both the "close" and the "extended" movements. The dancer has an appropriate costume of white garment, chest covered with bead-work decoration, rows of beads round the neck, waist-band, strings of silver chains, ear pendants, brass shoulder bands, jingles and anklets and a head dress of white turban. A dance of graceful movements, it possibly found favour as a court dance of Sinhalese royalty.

UDEKKI

The Udekki is the dance named after the accompanying instrument of the same name, the hour-glass shaped drum. Held by the narrow waist, it is played by hand producing the weird metallic mystic vibrations which fill the air. An instrument favoured in the ritual dances of India, a diminutive type under the name of Damaruka, is held in the hand of Siva in the *Nataraja* dance. A drum symbolising speech and magic, its place in this dance is highly suggestive of its original ritual role.

PANTHERU

The *Pantheru* takes its name after the accompanying instrument, a metallic hoop much like a gipsy tambourine without its parchment covering. Danced to the accompaniment of the *Geta Bera* by a group of dancers in serried ranks holding the pantheruwa, turning and twirling it, alternately changing it with a flourish from hand to hand, the dance has a distinctly graceful charm.

1 In South Indian folk art, *Naiyandi Melam* is the name for the distinctive orchestra, consisting of two players on the *Nagaswara*, two on the *tavil* (the drum), one playing the *pambai* (pair of drums) and one drumming the *Kirikatti*.

The dancer has a white pleated garment, flounced round the waist, the chest enclosed in gleaming bead work, rows of beads round the neck, waist girdle, shoulder plates, ear pendants, armlets and bracelets, jingles and anklets. It is considered likely that this particular dance served the purpose of a military band stimulating the fighting forces in their march to battle.

THE VES

The most alluring of the Kandyan dances is the Ves. The earliest probably of the field of the Kandyan dances, its ritual and magical role is revealed in its place in the ceremonials of the Kandyan *Kohomba Kankariya*, the elaborate cult of the Kohomba Gods, an account of which appears elsewhere.

The radiant and resplendent panoply of the Ves dancer (Plate 6) is regarded as an echo, a replica, of the regalia of the Malayaraja of Malaya-rata, the royal magician who was supernaturally lured to Lanka to cure King Panduvas, the successor of King Vijaya, of the incurable malady from which Panduvas suffered. The story is separately narrated further on. The costume of the Ves dancer is styled, the "*Su seta Abharana*", the sixty-four ornaments. Though not all the sixty-four can be counted on the person of the dancer today, about half the number has been reckoned in the gorgeous costume of the Yakdessa, the Ves dancer. Among these are features which point to a certain affinity in the Ves dancer's costume, to the highly ornamental and elaborate make-up of the dancer in Kathakali of Kerala.

The technological parallelism between the Ves and the Kathakali is best seen in the character of *Tandava* type of dance, that both are. "Kathakali dancing belongs essentially to the *Tandava*, masculine and

vigorous type and this is in accord with the general character of the drama, for Kathakali is pre-eminently a male art. *Tandava* movements are characterised by strength and majesty, speed and expansiveness. Their curves have a broad sweep and every movement is urged by an imperious elemental force. There are many conspicuously angular movements in Kathakali *Tandava*. Even the position that the Kathakali actor takes is angular. He scarcely stands erect, certainly not when he is acting. When he stands with slightly spread out knees, the legs form a sort of rhomboid, the hands bent at the elbow, with the palms placed on the hips, echo the angular position of the legs. The very stance of the pose from which the actor commences his other movements, is dynamic and nothing can upset his balance."¹ This description of pose and stance of a Kathakali actor is equally true of the Kandyan Ves dancer.

Kathakali did not materialise as such until the seventeenth century. Nevertheless the constituent elements that have snow-balled into Kathakali, prevailed for ages past in the social life of the land, the Chakkiyar Kuttu and a number of other Kerala folk arts.

There is also the remarkable parallelism between the Kandyan Haramba Salava and the Kalari of Kerala, the highly specialised school of training in martial arts of Ceylon and Kerala respectively. The Kalari of Kerala, we know, has been in the past and largely is today the preparatory training ground for pupils who enter on the long and arduous career of a Kathakali actor.

In the legends of the *Kohomba Kankariya*, we have a distant echo of Malabar traditions in the dances set on foot by the Malayaraja, the royal magician who cured the Sinhala King Panduvas of his incurable malady.

¹ Bharatha Iyer, K. : The Sacred Dance Drama of Malabar, 1958, p. 113.

It is relevant to point out that we have evidence of direct cultural influences and even of reciprocal social relations between Kandy of the days of the Kandyan kingdom, and Kerala, centred round the institution of the *Angam*, the art of the single combat with deadly weapons, that prevailed in both the lands at the same period of time.¹

On a balanced consideration of these several sides of the study, we may possibly postulate subtle cultural forces of the Kathakali in the later phases of the art of the Kandyan dance.

The arts themselves are altogether different in content, apart from the primary and basic pose and stance, which may be ascribed to the *tandava* type of either art. Kathakali is a pantomimic dance-drama with its elaborate code of *hasta* and *abhinaya*. Kandyan dance is pure *nrtta*, and in its own field of pure dance, has grown into the height of its rhythmic expression with a highly developed system of *tala*.

A point of significance that we have to reckon with in a study of Kandyan dances, is the testimony of the *Cilappadikaram*, which speaks of "Singala Natym" as one of the three forms of dances of the time, second century A.D. The implications of this term will be found separately discussed. The name Singala or Simhala disposes us to visualise it as indigenous to Sinhala, Ceylon.

VANNAM

In the art of the Kandyan Dance, the Vannam are a body of constituent solo dances, each expressing a dominant idea. A late development obviously in the story of the Kandyan Dance, the composers of the Vannam have given us in this assorted collection of solo dances, a varied fare, drawing sustenance from the material round about the Kandyan country.

1. RAGHAVAN M. D.: "India in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture", I. G. G. R; New Delhi, 1964; ch. XII, The Angam, Pages 133-139.

Covering a wide field of culture, a variety of themes short of the sentiment of sex, are artistically presented in song and dance.

The naturalism in art characteristic of the Kandyan period, was a stimulus to the lyrical impulse, expressed in a whole series of dance compositions, deriving inspiration from nature, from history, legend, folk art, folk religion and the sacred lore.

The classical Vannam are eighteen in number. The introductory piece is the Nr̥tta Vannama, a prologue to the whole series—"Vannam dahata ragatamayi pavasanne mahatunne asanne"—"hearken ye, gentlemen, to the eighteen Vannam I recite."

Gajaga Vannama, the first, enacts the majestic gait of the elephant of the sacred legends — the Iravanā, sporting in the cool waters of the lotus tanks and ponds. The dignified features of the heavenly elephant are delineated in choice diction. Bathing and frolicking about, the strides and movements of the elephant are conventionalized with considerable technical skill. Danced with stately steps, the Gajaga Vannama is among the most spectacular of the series.

Naiyandi Vannama is the second. The background is the jataka story embodied in the Bhuridatta Jataka. Bodhisattva was born a princely Naga in the world of Nagas. Going out into the world of men, he betook himself to the banks of the river Yamuna to fast on the top of an ant-hill in the guise of a snake. There a snake charmer captured him by means of a magic spell and subjected the Naga to dance to his tunes. He illtreated the princely Naga and made a big fortune by displaying his dances before the king and the country.

The snake charmer's art featured in the story nevertheless finds little reflection in the actions of the dancer. In the course of his dancing, he no doubt displays the cobra hand — the hasta, sarpa sirsa, cobra hood of the *Abhinayadarpana* used by the Kathakali dancers, the hasta formed by bending the tips of the fingers of the hand.

Imitating the notes of the bird kirala is the Kirala Vannama. In his search for food, the bird with black and red bands round its neck, hops from tree to tree. The bird, it is said, hatches its eggs lying on its back so that it may catch the sky, should it fall.

An episode in heroism follows, dramatising the exploits of Bandula, the warrior. To the din of the clash of swords, shields, spears and clubs, the army marches. Bandula's shafts fly with deadly effect.

Royalty is presented in the next, the Udara Vannama. Adorned with the 64 ornaments, the king strolls through the streets of the city riding on an elephant, accompanied by his retinue of foot soldiers. The procession goes in all stateliness and pomp. The music of the fivefold instruments rends the air. People pay homage and the city is jubilant. The King thus idolized by the people is presumed to be King Narendra Sinha, the last of the Kings of Kandy of Sinhalese descent.

A folk tale follows — the Vannama of Sinha Raja: the cunning devices of a tortoise to lure the lion to a deep well, down which it falls and perishes. That a similar destiny awaits all who act without forethought, is the moral of this Vannama.

The Hanuma Vannama is the seventh—a dance in masquerade, imitating the actions of the monkey. The Hanuman masquerade has been a dance of mimicry in parts of South Travancore where the Pandaram, or the wandering mendicant, was in the habit of going on his rounds with the mask of Hanuman, the monkey god. As he approached a house, he put on the mask and performed the antics of Hanuman, enacting scenes from the Ramayana. In the actions of the Hanuma Vannama, the monkey jumps and sways from tree to tree. With wrinkled face and eyes sticking out, it scrutinizes passers by. Alternating with frightened

look, it covers its face with twigs and leaves. The Hanuma Vannama is rarely or never played at the present time.¹

In praise of God Gana (Ganeṣa) is the eighth Vannama. It enjoins men to win the favours of the God, "Graceful in form, with the head of an elephant, tusks half emerged, face pink, gently waving ears like the lotus leaf, eyes coloured with the collyrium, forehead spotted with the sapphire, arms hanging loose and Goddesses flanking the sides". The Vannama is attributed to the great Rishis in invocation of the God.

A dance with gentle and slow movements is the Kukkuda Vannama. In the long drawn out war with the Devas, the Asuras are discomfited. God Skanda enters the field, and with a sword and spear cuts the Asuras in two, lifting each half. From one half, suddenly emerges the Savul, the chanticleer.

Eulogy of God Sakra follows, presented in the medium of a divine orchestra in which God Sakra, Brahma, Visvakarma and Isvara blow the horn and play the lute. Isvara blows the conch before the King of the Universe.

Worthy of the subject and admirable in composition is the next, the Vairoḍi Vannama, which pictures the palace of God Isvara. It concludes with the moral, "the wicked make false boasts and are detestable. The learned are always triumphant. Why show mercy?"

Mayura Vannama sings the praises of the noble peacock, the vahana of God Kadira, the War God, residing at Kataragama, with the long spear as his weapon, the glorious God, compassionate to his devotees.

Turaṅga Vannama sings the adventures of Kantaka, the steed of Prince Siddhartha. The prince mounts the horse led by Canna. The three march along jovially, until they come to a halt by the river Anoma. Standing musing, Kantaka leaps across, the prince on its

1 An interesting survival is the masked dance Play, the Hanuman Attam, one of the folk plays of the Nalaver of Jaffna.

back, Canna clinging to the tail. Noble born, high minded and of form beautiful, Prince Siddhartha blesses these lines, composed to the lasting glory of the good steed Kantaka.

Isvara in a triumphal dance is the theme of the next Vannama. Isvara is worried, not finding Uma. The God, in disguise goes in search of her, until he finds her. Overjoyed Isvara dances the triumphant steps.

The contrast is striking, presented in the next, the Musaladi Vannama in imitation of the movements of the hare. It hops about, crouching and trembling with fear. Scared, it runs zig-zag. Tired, it takes rest, as the moon beams up. One of the popular pieces.

The flight of the hawks is the action of the Vannama that follows. Two hawks flying leisurely float in the air, like two tender buds growing out of the same seed. Soaring high with the current of the wind, they swoop down like an arrow and carry off small fish.

Naga Vannama or a day in the life of the cobra, is the next. The Cobra, with body brightly speckled, preys on frogs and feeds even on vipers. It crawls everywhere even on the floor of the Court hall. With hissing and shrill sounds, the cobra emerges out of the hole and with the hood raised assumes various forms.

Last but not the least, is the delightful Asadissa Vannama, singing praises to Lord Buddha, the Supreme Being unequalled. "I pay homage to the lotus feet of Lord Buddha, honoured by Kings, Brahmins, Vishnu and the Gods. I adore the Dhamma proclaimed by the great Lord, salute the noble eightfold path and pay homage to Sariputta and Moggalana, who renounced the world to follow the Buddha. Praying to Gods Saman and Vibhishana, with the permission of all assembled, I dance with joy, the delightful Vannama."

The eighteen Vannam reviewed here are products of the Kandyan age, an age which witnessed the blossoming of the best in Kandyan art in all its richness. Popular themes, popularly expressed in simple

style appealing to the common man, are the main features of this departure from the massed dance technique of Kandyan dance.

Short, descriptive and eulogistic stanzas that these compositions are, the term *Vaṇam*, signifies them best, as easily derivable from the Sanskrit *Varnana*, meaning description. These solo dance forms of the Kandyan art, may rightly be recognised as the counterpart of the creative urge in Oriental dances in general.

Solo performances that the *Vannam* are, they are conveniently handled at an evening's programme of Kandyan dance, at receptions to distinguished visitors and other special social occasions. Girls, mostly students trained in Kandyan dancing, lend grace and colour to an evening show of a few hours' duration. Typical of first impressions of a visitor are these words of Projesh Banerjee:¹

"The sinuous arms of the males and the wonderfully supple bodies of the belles were moving in perfect accord in a unison of rhythm and feeling. Their grace and expression kept me enthralled. The simple and appealing mimicry with queer music provided a fitting setting for the virtuosity. There was charm and freedom in their *Gajagawannama*. By looking at the undulating sinuous movements of male dancers, one feels that one is actually seeing herds of wild elephants taking their bath in a jungle stream, and at the serene faces of these little damsels as if the trees and lawns have all vanished, and in their place, a remarkable picture of *Bodhisattwa* spring up to the throb of strings and drums and soft pipes discoursing elusive music, clear, cool and translucent. Rhythm of the rippling river, a swan's grace, daintiness of a flower, a melody in motion, a lyric and war song, was the dance of the girls of Ceylon. It was one of the most remarkable experiences, I have ever had.

¹ Banerji, Projesh, *The Folk Dances of India*, Allahabad, 1959, p. 188.

In villages nearby it has maintained its purity and originality, but as is evident and natural, it has undergone some sophistication in the towns, being influenced by modern trends in dance art.

Undoubtedly the Kandyan dance art bears affinity to Bharata Natya type of dancing of South India in technique, grace, female costume to some extent and movements, especially the gesture of standing with knees bent sideways and the movements of the hands and palms. Occasionally the dancer comes forward with slow steps as the singing goes on, stops standing bow-legged with head stooping down and hands outstretched, palms moving in all directions and with the finish of a strain retraces his steps, moves sideways and then violently dances with wild steps. Sometimes he jumps, whirls and slithers keeping his hands drooping down. Everything he does keeping intact with the emotion and expressing the theme of the music in accordance with the rhythm emanating from the big drums and the cymbals.

His costume consists of a frilled white cloth garment with gathers at the waist in all directions and having bold and deep red white border from the waist falling up to the knees, in a somewhat skirt-like fashion. The upper part of the body from the waist remains bare. The girls put on cholis (short bodice)."

Unlike South Indian dances in general, Kandyan dancing finds expression almost day-to-day, at the numerous ceremonial occasions, social or sacred, apart from the annual peraheras. This has promoted professional skill and virtuosity. More than anything, is the high standard set by the great masters of the art.

The key to the perfection of the art is to be sought primarily in the systematised training imparted to the pupils at the schools of Kandyan dance that have come up over the past decade in the Kandyan rural region, the training classes at the Heywood School of Art, the headquarters established in Colombo in recent years, and the progressive courses in Kandyan dancing, at the Government Central Schools.

Among the Kandyan dance schools, is the Madhyama Lanka Nrutya Mandalaya (Plate 7) where one could watch the boys in training from the first steps to the more evolved stages. These children of the soil easily take to the art. In Kandyan dancing as in Bharata Natya, early adolescence attunes best emotionally and physically to the discipline of the dance floor.

The short resume of Kandyan dancing given here is based on many an hour, following the course of training at the dance schools, supplemented by what I have gathered from J. E. Sedaraman, one of the few exponents, born to the rich heritage of the art, eager to impart to the interested visitor a knowledge of the essentials of the art of Kandyan dancing.

The first stage of training is termed the 'trapeze' exercises. By 'trapeze' is here meant a bamboo planted horizontally to the height approximately of the pupils' waist at one end of the long hall of the dance school. About two yards of moving space is allowed to each pupil. Standing in a row, the pupils hold the bar with the thumb turned towards the body. (Plate 8) In this position, they move about in rhythmic steps, harmonising with the *tala*, the scale played by the preceptor on the drum—the *magul bera*, the 'auspicious' long drum, the *mridanga* or the *udekki*. The series of twelve exercises are so designed as to evoke and develop the rhythmic sense in the pupil. In this initial training in Kandyan dance we may well see a correspondence in the training imparted to girls at a Bharata Natya class, with the preceptor seated at ease on the floor with a staff in hand, with which he beats the *tala*, keeping time with the pupil's steps and movements. The training is individually for each pupil.

Each exercise in the 'trapeze' series, is a lesson in simple or composite footwork in a co-ordination of steps and movements, the right arm synchronising with the right leg, the left arm with the left leg, with the eye glancing at each palm in turn.

Typical of the series is lesson No. 8 played to the drum scale: "*Tei ta tei ta, Kita tei Kita, tei tam*". "The first *tei ta* is taken in two beats; with *tei* the body is turned to the left to touch the ground with the toes of the right foot; with *ta*, the left foot is raised and lowered. To the second *tei ta*, the right foot is brought to the ground, turning the body to the right. *Kita* should be beaten with the left foot; to the next *tei*, the right foot is taken backward to touch the ground with the toes and to the *kita*, left foot hops on the spot. To the seventh beat, *tei* the right foot is taken backward to touch the ground with the toes, and to the *kita*, left foot hops on the spot. To the seventh beat *tei*, the right foot is brought to the original position, and with the last beat, it is kept on the ground". (Sedaraman.)

When the pupils have had enough of this series of exercises, they leave the bar and emerge into the open for the next course of twelve lessons, the series named the Ground Exercises.

These twelve lessons are danced to the accompaniment of standardised verses which are in the nature of melodic accompaniments.

In language charged with emotion, the verses are calculated to arouse in the pupil a sense of pride in the traditional heritage and inculcate in them intense love and appreciation of the art. As an illustration I may quote lesson No. 3. Rendered in English the verses give this in prose:

"The reputation of the traditional arts of this renowned Island has spread to the four quarters of the world. Among these arts is the dance, an ancestral heritage, the art that long prevailed in the courts of kings, performed by families of artistes, the art that has had its place even in temples and monasteries. Let our dancers appreciate this and develop a love of the art. Be one with the art and dance lined up in rows. Bestow particular attention to synchronised movements of the feet and hands, and the glance of the eyes".

The sacred origin of the dance underlies Dance No. 4:
 "Our literature extols that devas and rishis of Mount
 Kailasa,

Relaxed in joy performing the dance;
 Enjoyable indeed are these dances, limbs moving
 true to rhythm,
 In harmony with attractive glances".

The idea of a divine association is kept up in the
 next, danced to *Vadiga* scale:

"To the credit of Mother Lanka,
 The fame of our dance has spread far and wide;
 The art that rose in the heavenly setting of gods
 And spread to the world of mortals;
 You, who are gathered on this stage, concentrate
 On correct understanding and production of the art
 Patronised by great kings and rishis like Ravana!"

The occurrence of the name *Vadiga* in this particular
 number is a reflection of the *Vadiga* dance, of *Cilap-
 padikaram*.

The splendour of the art of the Sinhalese dance is
 developed further in the next verse:

"Various were the arts of the ancient Sinhalese,
 And they enjoyed every happiness;
 Sinhalese dancers emulated the heavenly artistes,
 So our poets proclaim;
 Neglected for ages, the art languished,
 Until re-awakened by great minds
 Inspired by love of the land;
 Let's forget the past,
 And raise our banners to the whole world".

The next two verses continue to sing the praises of
 the art, the eighth in particular:—

"Let all children of Mother Lanka
 Be opulent and rich in merit;
 May all unite and incessantly advance
 Up the ladder of progress;
 Better trained, dance in rhythmic steps and strides
 And restore the art of the Sinhala Dance
 To its pristine vigour and glory".

The twelfth and the last is termed the "balcony type". The dancer, footing the measure, "moves his hands and eyes as if he is gazing at a balcony". The accompanying verse is simple and direct:

Learn the dance from the real masters;
 Be absorbed in the spirit of the art;
 And dance in rhythmic harmony
 Delightful to behold".

Whatever may be the age of these compositions, and this is easy for a student of the language to assess, it certainly is an idea wisely conceived arousing the pugnacity and pride of the pupil in the national heritage, providing at the same time a melodic accompaniment to the dance lessons.

That the drum is the soul of the Kandyan dance cannot be over-emphasised. True of all dances, this is particularly true of Kandyan dance, an art in *nritta*, pure dance. The drum scale, the *tala* is both simple and most involved, skillfully developed, built up from the primary fourfold symbolic beats—*tat*, *jit*, *tom*, *nam*. Sanctity has been ascribed to these primary scales.

"*Tat*, is a salutation to Lord Buddha; *jit*, to gods, *tom*, to the guru, the preceptor; and *nam* to the audience".

Based on these primary scales, have grown the manifold combinations of the Sinhalese drum scale. Corresponding to the latter is its vocal counterpart, the *tanam*, the memorising of which helps the dancer to dance to the rhythmic scale played on the drum.

THE COSTUME IN KANDYAN DANCING

The costume and the ornaments of the Kandyan dancer are collectively called *Su-seta Abharæra*, by tradition a replica of the ceremonial regalia of the mythical King of Malaya Desa of the legends of the Kohomba Kankaria.

The most striking feature of the Ves dancer is his head-gear, a composite crown of inter-related parts—a semi-circular silver tiara, *Sikha bandanaya*, the *Nalal Hede* or *Netti Malaya*, the bow shaped forehead plate; fringed with an array of *Bo* leaves; *payim potha*, seven silver spokes rising like rays overtopping the crown, the stylised *Jatava* of carved wood, immediately behind and the *jata patiya* (*jata rala*), the long embroidered ribbon, about 45 inches long trailing down from the top of the *Jatava* down to the dancer's back. Bordering the ears are the elaborately engraved *Todu patti*. The shoulders are ornamented with *Ura bahu*. Three sets of bangles, *Bandi Valalu*, grace the arms, six on each arm. Rows of coloured beads encircle the neck.

Adorning the chest is the *avul hera*. Radiating from an ornamental ivory disc over the chest are eight sets of colourful strings of beads of four strands each. Four of these, two on either side, tied at the back encircle the bare torso. Above the shoulder and

secured round the neck are two strands of beads. At each point of intersection of two sets of beaded strings, is a boss of ivory or buffalo horn ornamented with silver. The concentric circles of glittering floral designs recall in shape the daisy with petals spreading from a central boss of ivory, three such sets of daisies, one central and one on either side, covering the broad chest.

Extending from the waist down to the ankle is the pleated white cloth, the *uludaya*; the full length of this is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ yards. Above this is another heavily pleated half-cloth about 32 inches broad and no less than 20 yards long extending up to the knees. Finally the *yoth pota*, another cloth of very thin texture folded several times to the width of about 2 inches, round the waist with the ends flounced to form the *neriya*. A silver ornamented belt with richly decorated clasp, the *bubulu patiya* about three or four inches broad is worn above the clothes. Extending from the centre of this belt down to the knees, is the *inahediya* generally made of glossy velvet or satin silk and decorated with silver bosses. This strongly resembles the elongated feature hanging in front from the waist of the costume of the Kathakali dancer. Disposed in front of the outfit this is known in Malayalam as the *Mundi*, literally the "front".

Round the calves are worn the *rasupati*, two pieces of leather with several sets of brass jingles attached to them. On the feet are worn the *silambu*, anklets attached to the second toe with strings. This completes the costume of the Ves dancer, easily the most elaborate, yet refined and stately, in the whole range of Sinhala Natya today.

Comparatively less embellished is the costume of the other categories of the Kandyan dancers. There are also considerable variations in the costumes of the Hevisi dancers, Pantheru and Udakki players and Naiyandi dancers. Nevertheless the basic elements, the head-dress, the decorative covering for the neck

and chest, waist cloth and waist band and anklets are the same.

The simplest is the costume of the Hevisi dancers. This consists of the *uā-malaya*, a large white turban wrapped round the head to a height of about 4 inches, with the two ends often decorated with coloured tassels falling on either side. The upper part of the body is generally bare except for those taking part in the Esala Perahera in Kandy who wear the *avul hera* as well. From the waist is worn the *selaya*—a five yard length of white cloth, worn with pleats on both sides with the end pieces, the *neriya*, to fall to the left. Above this is tightly worn the *banda veluma*, a fine piece of red cloth about eight to ten inches broad. A pair of anklets complete the equipment. There is hardly any ornament except perhaps a pair of large gypsy ear-rings, the *kadukkan* for the ears and a simple brass armlet.

The costumes of the Pantheru and Uḍakki players are slightly more elaborately ornamented. Over the red waist band are worn two types of silver chains, *tharaka havadi* and *sura vela*. Several decorated armlets, the *bandi valalu* ornament the hands.

Further elaboration is presented in the costume of the Naiyandi players—mainly the *avul hera* over the chest, *karapatiya* round the neck and a *rāli mantha*, a three tiered flounced skirt of white cloth with a red edging extending from the waist downwards.

In modern times the traditional details in dress and adornments are not always strictly adhered to. Considerable variations are often noticed, the general tendency being to simplify dress and reduce ornaments and jewellery, a change, no doubt, conditioned by the changing economic standards and modernisation trends. The one exception, however, is the costume of the Ves dancer. For him his costume, called the *Ves thattuwa*, is most sacred. From the time he ceremonially dons it at his initiation at his Kohomba Kankariya, he is tacitly avowed not to perform without his full equipment.

CHAPTER VI

DANCES AND PLAYS OF AMUSEMENT

CILAPPADIKARAM has a category of its own, *Vinoda*, *Koothu*, to denote dances of amusement. It is hard to think of a more expressive term to signify plays and dances purely of recreation. Dances originally magical and ritual have in time lost their ritual role and are today largely dances and plays of entertainment and amusement. Among such are the *Li-keli*, the dance-play of the striking of sticks; the *Kalagedi Natuma*, the play of the Projection of Pots, a dance play of the maidens; and the *Vadugu* of South Ceylon, an intensely magical and ritual cult of the Middle Ages. In fact it is hard to pick out any dance-play which has not had its stage of magical or spiritual affiliations. A number of constituent dances have both the spiritual, and the sportive harmoniously blended. The term "Social Dances" which find currency today is too fluid a term, to apply to dances solely of amusement.

Within the scope of this chapter, I have assembled all dance-plays prevailing primarily as leisure-time recreations, diversion and amusement.

I. KOLAM, THE ART OF SOUTH-WEST MARITIME COAST

There is perhaps nothing more hilarious and joyous in the whole range of Sinhalese folk arts than the *Kolam*, the masquerade of the South-West coastal. Specifically the art of the maritime South-West, it is conspicuously absent in the Kandyan country. Though

there are grounds to believe that it possibly existed more widely than today in the South-West coastal land, it has virtually ceased to exist outside Ambalangoda and its immediate environs.

Kolam is a Tamil word of wide significance. It literally means "representation", a "figure very much out of the ordinary." It is applied specifically to signify man wearing a strikingly distinctive costume, a person altogether disguised. This latter is the extended sense in which the term is applied to the art of Kolam of Ceylon. Figures disguised by masks, different for each character, are the essence of the art of Kolam.

The texts revealed in the extant Kolam manuscripts, have presumably had an earlier stage as songs sung impromptu, handed down from mouth to mouth, until reduced to writing at different times by different enthusiasts.

The Kolam is a many-sided study. A point of general interest is the origin of the Kolam. The commonly accepted origin of the Kolam, ascribed to the *doladuka*, the craving of the pregnant queen finds an interesting counterpart in the old world custom of providing a woman with bangles in the fifth or the seventh month of a woman's pregnancy, a custom which in the past went by the name of Kolam, as the Tamil Lexicon tells us. The association of *dola-duka* becomes more revealing, viewed in the light of this custom of the past. It may well have been that the Kolam as a masked dance-play, was traditionally performed as part of the pregnancy rites.

A purely recreational pastime that Kolam of Ceylon is today, traditions and folk literature strongly support a derivation in magical rituals and rites of exorcism. Going a long way to favour a magical function to the Kolam of Ceylon, is the Kolam Tullal of Kerala, which I recall seeing several years ago at my own house in Malabar, performed as a protective rite against evil influences supposed to have been inflicted on the head of the family. For details, we may turn to the account

given by M. Raja Raja Varma Raja of Travancore¹:—“Kōlam Tullal is a devil dance in which a number of demons appear and perform their midnight revels before a fire-place. The actors wear masks made of the spathe of the areca palm (pala), cut in various shapes of demons and painted in black and red colours. They appear weird in the torch light and make horrid noises. They dance round and round singing and joking, fighting and wrestling. Faggots are burned and some of the participants walk on the embers in frenzy. These horrible demonstrations continue till early morning. They are supposed to be the emissaries of the Goddess Kali, come on earth to ward off evil spirits. This ceremony is also held by house-holders in rites of demon possession”. Raja Raja Varma Raja concludes with the observation that the *Kolam Tullal* has a great resemblance to the Lamaic dance of Tibet, with the difference that in the former, the actors are of the lower orders, while the latter is acted by the priestly or the holy class.

The functions of the Kolam Tullal of Kerala, as here described, give us a footing of interest from which to view the early history of the Kolam of Ceylon, which is today entirely a play in amusement. In Kerala, nevertheless it never developed into a play for amusement, nor did it inspire the rich lines in the art of mask-making that it developed into, in Ceylon. In the art of mask-making, as of the masquerade of Ceylon, there possibly are other cultural elements.

A positive link of the Kolam, with folk-cults is revealed to us in the Vadurakali Kolam (MS 7/F—10 of the Colombo Museum Library), an invocation to the goddess Vadurakali (Bhadrakali), one of the many manifestations of Goddess Kali. This particular invocation, is addressed to goddess Pattini, in her frightful role of Kali or Bhadrakali.

The masks strongly recall the cult of the gods, the masked demon cults, which are so much an integral

1 Raja Raja Varma Raja M. 1940—“Selected Essays”, Trivandrum, p. 141.

part of the life of South Ceylon. Kolam is easily a child of the cult of the demons. That it comes in direct heritage of the demon cult, is what may be concluded from an understanding of the traditional cult of the Kolam Tullal of rural Malabar, already alluded to. Kolam Tullal literally means "disguised dances", weird dances by the devil-dancers of rural Malabar, in a ritual ceremony against evil influences. The dancers wear grotesque masks impersonating spirits. The masks are crudely made of the broad leaf sheath of the arecanut palm.

THE ART OF AMBALANGODA

Kolam as an art has passed through several stages until it has evolved itself into the colourful folk play that it is today in the hands of the Karavas of Ambalangoda. A well-known exponent of the art here is J. W. Aryapala. Ambalangoda has a rich heritage of the art and men of all ages practice the art here. Proficient in the technicalities and the fine points of the art is Gurunanse Aryapala. That he is an accomplished exponent of the art, it was easy to see from a demonstration that he gave one evening following an elaborate display of the art. The dance pose he demonstrated harmonising with arched neck movements and movements of the eye, with hands in hasta, was strongly reminiscent of the essential elements of the art of Bharata Natya.

TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN

The conventional derivation of the art is traced to that mythical entity, King Mahasammata who, it is obvious, exists more as an impersonal or idealised concept than as a personality. *Dola-duka*, the craving of the pregnant queen is said to be the immediate stimulation of the art. The Queen longed to see a masked dance, which was a phenomenon uncommon to that part of the land. Unable to meet the King's commands to provide masks or masked dancers, the King's minister was distracted to the point of desperation, when a

miracle happened, attributed to the intervention of the supernatural Sakra. Masks of all forms suddenly appeared as a gift of the God. Masked dances followed and the Queen was pleased.

THE CONSTITUENTS OF THE KOLAM

Kolam is an open air show. The audience sits round, leaving a large arena for the players. A structure or *aile*, may or may not be a feature of the arena. An *aile* is a frame work of green leaves and branches resting from a cross beam supported on posts on either side. The *aile* adds to the charm of the setting, relieving the otherwise barren look of the grounds. It is also a convenient screen for actors to come and go in the course of the play. At the entrance are seated two drummers. A *horana* player and a couple of singers form the rest of the Kolam orchestra.

In the more formal performances adapted to the stage, a Pote Gurunanse is evident, with the text in hand. He begins a chant of the verses embodying a narration of the origin of the art. A late introduction evidently is the Sabhapati, who now appears, a character corresponding to the Sutradharan in Sanskrit drama and Tamil Nadagams. In the latter, the Sutradharan is accompanied by his wife, the Nati. These two join in a dialogue in the course of which the audience is introduced to the purpose of the day's events. The dialogue ends in a song of welcome. This is often done by two children dressed in the Hindu style wearing dhoti and turban. They sing a song of welcome.

The several characters now appear. A variety of actors coming and going, each playing his individual part and making his exit, is a feature of the play. The first to enter in a Kolam as at present shown in village displays, is the King's Crier, the Anabera Kolama. He is called the King's crier, as his ostensible role is to deliver messages, which he is supposed to do beating the drum he carries slung on his shoulder. He wears a very becoming mask with a flowing white and flaxen

beard, and a striped head-dress the two ends of which hang on either side. Almost on his heels, without his knowledge nevertheless, comes his old and wizened wife, Nonci Akka. The two make a well matched pair and the audience is highly amused. The appearance of Nonci Akka is dramatic. She enters and walks about in an ambling gait. Her mask is most expressive of her hard lot in life and advanced age. She is agitated where her old man is, and why he is late to come home. Her son now appears. She sends him to look out for his father. All now join in a quest of the old man. They come upon him flat on the ground, drunk and senseless. He is revived and after a few words of friendly reprimand, Nonci Akka and her husband are reconciled. Together they do a dance of exhilaration and they make their exit to the cheers of the spectators.

Though the Anabera karaya and Nonci Akka appear first in village shows, this does not seem to have been their formal order of appearance as prescribed in the chronicles of the art.

Among the extant Kolam manuscripts is the one in the Colombo Museum Library, No. AC/14, *Kolam Natanawa*, "The Kolam Dance-Play", a reproduction of which will be found in Part II. The first to appear, according to this text, is the Liyana Rala, the Scribe, walking-stick in hand. Conscious of the authority he gains from the King, he uses strong words. His business is to deliver messages. As a contrast to this serious character, comes a comic figure the "Badajala", literally "one who speaks through the nose." He coughs incessantly and suffers from a severe cold.

With sword in one hand, now appears the Hewarala, the Warrior. Eying the assembly keenly he looks around and jumps into the arena. At this stage appears the Anabera Gura, the King's Crier, already featured. He is old with palsied limbs and trembles continuously. He carries a *davula* (drum) slung on the shoulder. He beats the drum in different villages according to the orders of the King. He has a

paccavadam (red cloth) round his waist, and on the head is a *uramaliya* tied in the form of a turban. His mouth and chin have a sharp pointed aspect. He dances vigorously despite his advanced age and his unsteady limbs. Coming from different places, he is proud of his long beard, which he shows to the assembly. The worse for toddy, the crowd is unkind to him and pursues him; he is assaulted and he departs.

Next enter the V.I.P's of the place. First, the "good gentleman who has just received the rank of Mudaliyar"¹ the man who enquires into what is right and wrong. He is adorned with a sword and wears royal ornaments. Fixed on his head is a shining comb, and he wears a glittering coat.

The King now comes wearing a crown that comes from ancient days. He comes decked in the sixty-four royal ornaments, in golden garments, and armed with a golden sword. The King is Usirata who holds sway over all Dambadiva (India). A white parasol is held over his head. He comes bestowing long life and prosperity.

The alternation of comic, ceremonial and serious characters is another of the features of the Kolam.

In quick succession are now presented a bull led by Yonas (Muslim, Moor) of the Vadiga² country (Andhra desa). The bull comes loaded with all sorts of things. It has slots on the forehead, his legs are well set and it comes serenely. The bull dances to the tune. Leopards come terrifying the bull. A narration here follows, of the description of the leopards. Beautiful to behold, leopards have bold stripes, a strong body and black spots. The bull is ready to perform a dance before the

1 "Mudaliyar", in the administrative set up of the Sinhalese denotes an official, the head of the office establishment, e.g. the Kachcheri Mudaliyar. It was once a titular rank conferred on persons for their loyal and devoted public services. It more or less corresponded to the Rao Bahadur title in the erstwhile series of Indian honours.

2 Vadiga country refers to the Andhradesa with its several cultural influences on medieval Ceylon.

assembly, and the leopard gets ready to jump on the neck of the bull. The bull trembles at the roar of the leopard. The leopard dances.

The Colombo Museum Manuscript concludes with a full dramatisation of the story of King Maname and his faithless wife.

VARIATIONS IN SEQUENCE OF CHARACTERS

Descriptions of the Kolam vary with the different texts. To conform precisely to traditional pattern, the Kolam should properly begin in the presence of the King and Queen, the very purpose of the Kolam being to please the queen. Actually, the King and Queen appear after a number of miscellaneous characters have come and gone. This is the first stage, the prelude to the appearance of Royalty. The prelude closes with the entry of the King and Queen. They take their allotted seats, and enjoy the rest of the presentation. This follows a twofold division. In the first part are presented mythological and demoniacal characters. Such are the striking Rakshasa personalities, Naga Rakshasa, Maru Rakshasa, and Gurulu Rakshasa. The last is an elaboration of the bird Garuda flying with a coiled snake in its beak. Flying with its tail feathers raised in the course of the flight, the mask of Gurulu Rakshasa, is a triumph of craftsmanship in mask-making.

In a performance elaborate in all its details, mythological stories founded on rural life are staged at the end. Such are the stories of King Maname and his faithless wife, the Maname Kathava and the Sanda Kinduru Kathava, a Jataka story. These are stories with a wealth of emotional appeal and dramatic situations, stories which "point a moral and adorn a tale".

THE DANCE IN THE KOLAM

The dance in the Kolam is suited to the particular character. The steps vary with the action conveyed. The old characters, the Anabera karaya and Nonci Akka dance to the drumming with a shuffling, ambling gait suited to their age and their role. The Naga Rakshasa, as becomes the spirited demon, dances in

vigorous strides all over the arena, steps synchronising with the drumming.

The Hewaralas are entertaining in their mock fight. With drawn sword they stand, the two facing each other and soon engage in hand to hand combat. They fight with all vigour with many a striking movement. They cut, thrust and pierce. It is all a dramatisation of the single combat. At the end of the contest, each dances a triumphant dance, dancing in wide strides.

Mask-making is as much an active art today as the art of the Kolam. Each keeps the other alive. Kolam masks are not made to speak, but to impress and convey emotion by the expression stamped on each mask to suit the character.

CHANGES IN PATTERN

The Kolam in the past ages had been an art altogether in pantomime, more than it is today, an art essentially of action, dancing and playing. The idea of each scene is conveyed by the singer, accompanied by the drummer.

That the Kolam in the early days was solely in pantomime, we may well conclude from its present setting and from what we can gather of the art as Callaway¹ describes it. According to the latter "a regular masquerade is said to begin with the night and end with the dawn. A tom-tom beater in the court attached to the house announces that the maskers are come, and that the people must be ready to witness the performance. After reading the prologue, the actors advance, while two chanters, accompanied by torches, stand up, and as the performers act their respective parts, repeat the legend, chanting alternately two verses each". This description leaves us in no doubt that the players did no singing which was done by the two chanters.

That its original character as a play solely in pantomime, has been steadily changing, is evident from the place of the dialogue in the modern shows, considered

¹ Callaway, John - Yakkun Natanawa and Kolam Natanawa, p. ix.

against the background of the writings of Pertold¹ on what purports to be his personal observations. The "Anabera Karaya", the first to appear, begins with a narration of the *doladuka* of the Queen to see a masked dance. The Hewarala speaks of his experiences in the martial campaigns. He has an argument with his wife, which ends in a quarrel. Generally, Pertold's account would support the idea that the actors talked or sang as they danced.

ACCULTURATION

The enactment of the Jataka stories, Sandakinduru Jatakaya, or the Maname Kathava now featured as the finale of a performance of kolam, does not seem to have originally formed part of the scheme of a Kolam. The staging of a full drama seems to be a concept outside the fundamentals of the Kolam, traditionally an art in masquerade, showing individual parts disconnected with each other, short skits of popular flavour. That the staging of Jataka stories of ethical background is a late introduction may be presumed from the fact that Callaway, whose account of Kolam reveals its character as a pantomime, is silent about the enacting of whole stories in the scheme of the Kolam. These very likely arose independently as rustic plays with their strong emotional and ethical values, and in course of time were added as additional features bringing to a close, a long drawn out programme of a Kolam.

We may also see in it, a steadily growing process of Buddhist influences on traditional folk arts, engrafting traditional Jataka themes to folk arts which in its original character, have had little or no such setting in traditional Buddhistic literature.

EXPRESSION IN MASKS

Kolam masks have a variety of expressions about them suited to the particular character. This distinguishes the art of the Kolam masks, from masks in demon cults, as Dahata Sanniya or the numerous Yakkha

¹ Pertold, O. — Ceremonial Dances of the Sinhalese, in *Achiv Orientalini*, vol. No. 2. p. 218 seq.

cults of South Ceylon. Police Kolama (the Policeman), Hewa Kolam (the Combatants), Anabera (the King's Crier), his wife Nonci Akka, Pedi Vidane (the Dhoby), Lencine, his wife, Mudali (the Mudaliyar), Raja and Bisu (the King and Queen), Hetti Muna (the Chetti), and Mahatmaya (the Westernized "gentleman") are some of the many comic characters in Kolam. Each mask highlights the distinctive attributes of the several types.

Characters whose part gives scope for much comic acting, as the Anabera Kolama and his wife Nonci Akka, evoke a variety of emotions strikingly caught in the changing nuances reflected in the lively mask in the course of the varied movements of these two figures. Though of set features, these masks develop a mobility harmonising with the jocular action of the comic characters. In the alternating light and shade of the lurid torchlight that lits a rural scene, masks gain in liveliness and dramatic effect in the thickening shades of the evening when the play as a rule finds its greatest vent. This mobility of expression abundantly manifest in the course of acting and dancing is the highest testimony to the technique of the Kolam mask.

In this respect, the art of the Kolam mask has something in it which recalls the Noh masks of the masked dance-play of Japan, which dates from the early days of the fourteenth century. These Noh masks convey a wide range of expressions, and delicate shades of feeling. The art of the Noh masks with the lips carved half open, enables the actor to convey different feelings by different turns of the head, a subtle quality seen in the acting of such essentially comic parts as the Anabera Karaya and Nonci Akka of the Kolam.

2. KALAGEDI NATUMA

An example of a folk-play which has its origins in folk religion is the Kalagedi Natuma or Kalagedi Sellama, the popular dance-play of the maidens all over the Sinhalese provinces. Performed by groups of young girls, the play has a charm all its own, with

pots flying in the air from hand to hand, pots dexterously projected up and down, or thrown about across the stage. Today it is largely a play staged by school girls at seasonal festival celebrations.

The distinctive features of the play have inspired poets to compose verses which reveal the picturesque setting of the play and of its gay participants. Verses of this character — the Sinhala Kavi — are among the main elements of the folk literature of the Sinhalese. One such composition is the “Kalagedi Malaya”, “A Garland of Kalagedi Verses”, in 68 quatrains by an unknown poet. (Catalogue of the Sinhalese Printed Books in the Library of the British Museum by D. M. de Z. Wickremasinghe, p. 106.)

These verses embody a graphic description of the play and its distinctive, spectacular appeal. The ritual and sacred background is revealed in a number of effective lines. These recall the dedication of the play primarily to the Sun God on the eve of the New Year Day, the National Day *par excellence* of the Sinhalese:

යහපත් අවුරුදු කෝන් බලා	ලා
පැහැපත් ආබරණින් සැරසී	ලා
අරගෙන කළගෙඩියක් තෝරා	ලා
රඟදෙන් මෙලෙසට පිඹින ලමා	ලා

Select pots at the auspicious time

On the New Year's Eve;

Let maidens gaily attired, with jewellery
bedecked,

Blow into the pots and dance.

උදයට ඉරු දෙවියන් වැඳ ගල්	ලා
පොළොවට මිහිකත බිම් වැඳ පල්	ලා
සබයෙන් අවසර ඉල්ලා ගල්	ලා
කළය පිඹින් නට බෙර ගහපල්	ලා

Pay homage to the morning Sun God,

Homage to the Goddess of Earth,

And begin the pot dance, to the sounding of the
drum

With due salutation to the audience assembled.

The spiritual basis of the play is further continued:

නි න ර එමා මුනිසුන් වැද පල්	ලා
ස න ර වරන් දෙවි සිහිකර පල්	ලා

Do obeisance to the Buddha,
And invoke the blessings
Of the four Guardian Gods (Satara Varan
Deviyo).

Special stress is laid on the selection of the pots. These have to be of the same size and shape. Pots used at the present day are brass pots, which have given it the alternative name, Chembu Dance. It has a traditional place in the Kandy Esala Perahera; the players here are men in women's garb, throwing up the brass pots and catching as they come down, one of the many folk arts in this sacred Perahera procession.

The traditional technique of the play prescribes the making of the pots of the right composition of clay. Pots are selected of uniform size and quality:—

ලත් පමණට මැටි ඉදි කරවා	ගෙන
පත් බිඳලා කළගෙඩි තනවා	ගෙන
අත් නැරම කුළගෙඩි තෝරා	ගෙන
සිත් සනොසින් කළ පිඹිනට වෙන	වෙන

Get pots moulded of the right clay
And select the pots desired;
And let the dancers each
Blow into them with joy.

The joyous exuberance of the players is among its marked characteristics.

පළ ද ව මී න්	ගෙන සේල සුබාව	ට
බොළඳ වදන්	කියමින් සබයේ සි	ට
මෙලඳ රුවින්	සොඳ අහනක් විලස	ට
තුසිත පුරෙන්	ආවයි කළ පිඹුම	ට

Maidens of beauty in bright sari apparelled
 Pronouncing sweet words of love,
 Appear before the assembled,
 Matching scenes of divine dancers in Tusita
 heaven.

දේශ වෙමින් සන රැස්වී වට පි	ට
වේග වෙමින් ලද ලියෝ සුඛාව	ට
රාග කියති කට හඬදී පිට පි	ට
නාග ලොවින් ආවයි කළ පිඹුම	ට

In sweet and resonant tones, the dancers sing
 With people assembled all round,
 Recalling scenes resplendent, in the world of the
 Nagas
 Of Nagaloka, footing out the dance.

ගොපළ එරන් මාලේ කරලා	ගෙන
රුවානි වලලු ගෙන දැන දරා	ගෙන
ඔසරි පටින් තන රන් නැටි වහ	ගෙන
පිඹින කළය ගෙන දැන දරා	ගෙන

Wearing glowing golden necklace
 Hands ornamented with shining bracelets,
 Sari ends cover the golden breast plates,
 And pots held in both hands are blown into.

ව තේ එපුන් සඳ මෙන් බබලා	පී
අ තේ වලලු මෙන් සබ නද දේ	පී
නෙතේ අඳුන්ගා ඔමරි කරා	පී
අ තේ කළය ගෙන නැටුමට පී	පී

Resplendent like the full moon is the face of the
 damsel;
 The audience applaud in tune with the tinkling
 bangles;
 Eyes brightened with finely made salve;
 Pot in hand, she comes for the dance.

උ ද ගිරේ සඳ පැවූ විලස	ට
ක ද වලලු දැනේ නද දී සි	ට
පු ද වරල මල් මාලය කරව	ට
බෙද ගනිති කළ බාල ලියන් සි	ට

Bright as the full moon rising in the east,
Sounding the bangles adorning their hands,
Tresses flowing and garlands round their necks,
Youthful damsels pose selecting their pots.

වටකර සිටගෙන අත් අල්ලා	ගෙන
වරලස පිරා සිටටහෙලා	ගෙන
දැනට කුරුන් දෙකික් ගසා	ගෙන
පිඹිමින් කළයක හඬ ලෙලවා	ගෙන

In a circle they stand
With the flowing hair;
Holding hands, they dance in graceful steps;
In rhythmic harmony moving, blow into the pots.

කැකුළු දෙනන ඔසරියෙන් වසා ගෙ	න
රුකුළු වලලු ගෙන දැනේ ලා ගෙන	න
ඔපලු එරන් මාලය කරලා ගෙ	න
සෙදළු කළේ පිඹිනා හඬ වෙන වෙ	න

In varying tunes they blow,
Their flower buds of breasts, with sari ends
draped;
Rukul bangles in both hands
And shining gold necklaces; they are a feast to
the eyes.

අහසේ දෙවියෝ එළිය කරන්ට	ත්
පොළොවේ මිහිකත බිත් බැඳගන්ට	ත්
සතරවරම් දෙවි බලා සිටින්ට	ත්
අද මේ කෙළියෙන් අප දිනවන්ට	ත්

May gods of the heavens illumine,
May the goddess of earth protect our land,
And may the four Guardian Gods guard us,
And grant us a triumphant dance display.

Blowing inside the earthen vessel on New Year Day has a deep symbolism and significance about it. Breath, in early cultures was synonymous with the soul. The first breath of a new born child fills it with life. It was held "that the soul was drawn into the body with the first breath at birth". Breathing by priests on the sick and diseased is a phenomenon that still prevails.

The psychical value of breath is obvious in the sonorous and mystic sound of expiration that accompanies the chanting of charms and magic. Jesus breathing upon his disciples when inspiring into them the gift of the Holy Ghost (St. John—20), aptly conveys to us the spiritual values of breath. From the time of the Vedic Aryans, high religious and spiritual values are associated with breath, and Yoga is imbued with the importance of regulating and controlling the vital breath.

The water pot has inspired folk dances in different parts of India.¹ The tribes of Madhya Bharat, the Banjaras have the Lota and the Saundarya dances. In the Lota dance, "women balance pitchers with water on their heads". In the Soundarya dance, "women form two rows facing each other, swinging back and forth". This finds some reflection in the Sinhalese play of Kalagedi Natuma with the maidens swaying and reeling in rhythmic steps and forming themselves into patterns of varying groups.

An ancestral play of the South Indian pastoral tribes and shepherds, was the Kuda Koothu, the Play of Pots, in which the players "gave vent to their exuberance of joy", as the *Cilappadikaram*² tells us.

It is part of the story of the origin of the Dance play of Pots, in general, that it may have found its source in the gathering of village maidens at the village well, and the open air baths in tanks. Water sports and frolics generated in rural life may well have developed into the Kuda Koothu of early Tamils and the highly refined Kalagedi Natuma of the Sinhalese.

3. LI-KELI, THE STICK DANCE PLAY

The striking of sticks, is perhaps the simplest form of an instrumental accompaniment in rhythmic dance. Widely prevalent in different parts of India, it is known

1 Folk dances of India, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. p. 28.

2 *Cilappadikaram*, Swaminatha Iyer's Edition, Madras, "Periyalvar Tirumoli", 2-7, Commentary.

by different names in different regions. In Kerala, it is Kol Kali, the Play of Sticks; in Tamilnad, it is Kolattam, Stick Dance among the most popular of the group plays of the school girls. In parts of North India as in Bombay and Rajasthan it is Dandiya Ras. In the Sinhalese provinces it is Li-Keli, the Stick-play, and it finds distribution all over the Island. Its sacred associations and its spectacular appeal, have given it a place of its own in peraheras and in Buddhist ceremonial processions generally. In these festival processions, groups of boys ranged in distinctive and colourful groups are a pretty sight. In peraheras, occasionally we find antique patterns of the play, an index to the variety of forms that the simple stick-play has generated in the course of the ages. At competitive shows, and programmes of plays sponsored by Community Centres, performances of li-keli are conspicuous, played by groups of girls from different schools. At these shows, we see the form of the stick-dance known to the Tamils, as the Pinnal Kolattam. Chords or ribbons of different colours are wound round a central post. The free ends of the chords are held by each of the players, who go round the post striking sticks, winding and un-winding the strands in the process of their dancing movements. The little sticks click in rhythm as the skirts of the gay girls flare and swirl to the lilt of song.

A folk play of sacred associations, many are the gods invoked in Li-keli songs:—

“May meritorious Sri Vishnu
 Shining resplendent like the golden Meru Mount
 Bless us and bestow favours;
 May evils all be dispelled and kings protected;
 May Sri Vishnu accord us leave to do the stick
 dance.”

Invocations are addressed to god Kadavera of Kadapura, Gods Natha and Saman of Samanala Giri (Sri Pada), and the Lord of Sages, Dipankara:

“Cutting six sticks of the same tree
 Choose six boys of equal height
 With acknowledgements to the preceptor
 Let us form into two groups and play the stick
 dance”

A progressive orientation of folk arts with the fundamentals of Buddhism is evident in the invocation to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha:

“Taking refuge, first in the Buddha,
 Next in the Dhamma
 Third, in the Sangha;
 May goddess Earth permit us to do our steps”.

“Attaining Buddhahood
 After much meditation;
 The Earth trembled with the movement
 And the Brahmaloaka;
 From thenceforth began the stick-dance”.

“Mounted on the horse Kantaka,
 Prince Siddhartha left home to practice austerities;
 On enlightenment, the elephants of the *danta* clan
 danced in joy.

Kantaka came from the city
 To the sea-port “Sinhapura”;
 Let us start the dance, “*danta gatam*” first
 With the “Devaraja Vannama”.

The players are pictured stepping from the high land to the low:

“Bowling in reverence to the sacred Bo-tree
 We turn back, and
 Face each other;
 May Bo-Pattini give us permission”.

“Pay homage to the sun god, that rises in the
 morning,
 To the moon god that rises in the evening,
 To our parents who nurtured us,
 And dance, so we may attain Nibbana”.

Rural and romantic scenes are occasionally pictured:

“Anchi Tudiya”, I saw after handling the
Talampota,
 And beating the tom-tom of a bottle gourd,
 May you unravel, clear in thoughts,
 Who the maiden is, adorned with
 Beauty specks, seated on a spike in the field”.

“Seated on a chair with rings on her fingers
 And hair bedecked with flowers,
 With cloths worn in a fold, of colour blue,
 Thy golden body, is worth five thousand
 And thy waving hands are those of a goddess”.

4 THE RABAN AND RABAN NATUMA

Nothing is perhaps more typical of the buoyancy of the folk mind, or illustrative of the recreational life of the rural Sinhalese women in particular, than the Raban, the large single-faced circular drum of the villages.

The term “Raban” admits of a two-fold division, the large drum played by Sinhalese women to the singing of the *Raban pada*, the accompanying folk songs; and the group dance-play, the Raban Natuma, largely of South Ceylon, played by men.

First to claim our attention is the Raban play by women of the villages. On festival days and joyous domestic events, the Raban is brought out, and its skin-covering tempered over a fire. Installed on a high stand, women range themselves round it, sitting on low stools or seated on their haunches, and sing the *raban pada* to vigorous drumming with their outstretched fingers. Raban play is particularly conspicuous in the villages on the New Year Day. Nothing rings out the old and rings in the New Year in the village, as playing the Raban.

Among the many scenes of Raban that abide in my mind, is the one on the picturesque occasion of the ceremonial reaping by the Premier, the late Right

Honourable D. S. Senanayake, of the Pokkali harvest, in the fields of the Negombo Dutch Canal, fields experimentally sown with saline resisting Pokkali paddy seeds. As the pageant of slow moving barges which conveyed the party, entered the mouth of the wide lagoon, resonant raban-drumming issued forth from the occupants of houses by the bank of the canal. At the shamiana erected to receive the distinguished gathering were women ranged round large raban drumming and singing a vociferous rural reception to the Premier.

Typical examples of Raban songs are the following collected from Veyangoda of the Western Province:

In tall, tall trees are long, long leaves;
 Leaves in the trunk are cut;
 Twenty five leaves from the top of the trunk;
 Twenty five, dear fellow, twenty five.

Alla, Malla leaves and Gandapana leaves,
 With small pieces of "pittu", are for women;
 Aramala, tiramala, tekka kundana
 And rice cooked from hill paddy, for men.

The Idda flower and a wreath of flowers, Donta
 Kapiri Ta;
 The red lotus flower and a wreath of flowers,
 Donta Kapiri Ta;
 The Idda flower and a wreath of flowers;
 The red lotus and a wreath of flowers, Donta
 Kapiri, Donta Kapiri, Donta Kapiri Ta;

Tirikita Singho
 Dirikita Singho
 Tarikita Singho, Dirikita Singho, Tak Singho,
 Dik Dik Singho, Kunda Kuna Kundat Ta.

Gold in the land on the other side
 Gold in the land this side;
 On the land that side and on this side
 There is gold to the weight of an elephant.

Seated on either side of the verandah
 Women extract oil from the flower of the "Rasa-
 kinda" creeper,
 And bedeck their hair with beautiful flowers.

O golden female bird, O golden female bird
 Where is the golden male bird?
 Takkita Tarikita; it has got caught at a house,
 And now found in the prison at Kannanpila.

If the highland is enjoyed, so let it be ;
 If the lowland is enjoyed, so let it be.
 If both the highland and lowland are enjoyed,
 So let it be.

Carrying on their heads winnow
 With the rind of jak fruits,
 Women tether cattle, Tetei Tei;
 O Women, tether cattle.

Though fried in oil it is a wild pigeon
 Though fried in milk, it is a wild pigeon ;
 In whatever it may be fried,
 Whether oil or milk, it is the self-same wild-
 pigeon.

Women tether cattle near the bakery at Panadure
 Putting a "madu" creeper, round the neck
 They cry "Indok", "Indok".¹

Takka Don Don
 There have bloomed teak flowers
 O friend, look now, O friend, look here,
 Flowers are bent towards the road.

The red pumpkin (creeper) bore fruits at the
 top
 The red pumpkin (creeper) bore fruits at the
 bottom;
 Small, small pumpkin fruits are borne
 Both on the top and bottom.

1 Sounds uttered in driving cattle.

May the learned forgive, if there be any faults,
 Let us play Raban for the (New) Year,
 As in the early days.

Young men sit and play raban,
 Young women group around commercing raban
 play.
 All play *Sural* in competition;
 Some repent, standing still.

Today is pre-nuptial day; tomorrow the nuptial
 day;
 Curd and honey is given at the wedding, worth a
 country.

Taking rice from "Hamban Vella"
 Fish from the sea shore at Modera
 Gathering faggots from the Cinnamon Gardens
 O mother, I shall come without delay.

The seven merchants of Bengal
 Discoursing together,
 Purchase merchandise to the value of Lanka
 And dance to the tune of "Runda Takita".

Few, few, are the babblers
 Many, many, are the magpies;
 A handful and a handful of thin coral
 Enough the quantity of spices.

Surrounding the wedding house
 They play *Sural*
 Warming two rabans they come out.

Although (you) may have a sip of toddy and
 arrack,
 Kill a dog or two per day;
 And come hither renouncing your village lands
 and household,
 (You) cannot obtain employment as a foreman.

There are hares in the bush of arrow grass
 There are hares in the bush of red grass ;
 The sound of rabar spreads in the ten directions,
 The hares fly from the bush.

O Parrot, (pettappu), may you come from high
 and high

O parrot, may you come from the ground and the
 ground;

O parrot, may you come to eat "Pittu";
 Stay not but come from Petangala today,

Takkita Tirikita "Pettappu."

Why do you want tender oranges,
 Why did you gather tender oranges ?
 Putting the large fruits in the bag of tender coco-
 nut leaves

Give the tender oranges to the girl.

On the other side of the land, canes are cut from
 the talipot palm ;

On this side of the land, canes are rent from the
 talipot palm ;

Slender Cochins flee carrying banners;
 (They) row boats in Hoipura (in Kalutara).

Here O sister, are betel leaves from trees,
 Here O sister, are betel from the vine,
 In our house now, we always chew tender betel.

The Takkita Tal Veddah who lives under the
 rock in Ahala Kaditta
 Shot a deer now, keeping his foothold on the rock.

O Menike, come for the dance today
 And be rewarded with three Tumba flowers, a
 handful of spices and two kernels of groundnut,
 O fellow, although I may earn and earn ;
 I am not given to eat, O fellow ; nor am I allowed
 to stay.

These crows, a black crow perched on the top
 A white crow eats, perched on the ground
 In between, a young cobra spreads its hood;
 Punchihamy stays at home playing Raban.

On the top of the hill and in the centre of the city
 stands the pinnacle,
 High is the mountain Pidurutalagala ;
 To the golden dagoba studded with blue gems
 A glimpse is seen of the holy foot print on
 Samanala.

Who oh! who is it that quarrel?
 The aunt and uncle quarrel;
 Why oh! why do they quarrel ;
 They quarrel over the tobacco stalk.

From the foregoing specimens of verses in Raban songs, their engaging simplicity is obvious. Sensitive touches of domestic life or of Man in relation to Nature, are the scenes graphically presented in these folk songs, in a style of their own.

We shall now present some of the main features of Raban Natuma, the Raban Dance-play, of South Ceylon and elsewhere. It is a play solely of men, who dance in close rhythmic movements holding in their hands Raban of handy size to which they give many an artistic flourish in the course of their dancing. Panegyric verses and jataka tales set to music, are sung to the rhythmic drumming by the bare fingers.

Balancing feats have been skilfully incorporated in the play. With the Raban finely poised on the tip of sticks long, short, bent, or crooked, with the other end resting on the hand or on different parts of the face, the forehead or the chin, players grouped together exhibit their dexterity in balancing feats. The more skilful of the lot are the elderly, past masters in the art.

The dancers have a showy dress ; a large turban on the head, a *mante* cloth round the loins, set off with

a silver girdle chain of two or three links round the waist, ear pendants and *gigiri* bangles on the hands and feet.

A background of sacred legends invest the Raban with an interest of its own, revealed in the following verses freely translated :—

Lying on his bed one night
Iswara had a dream ;
In the morning the God
Directed his steps to the woods, adze in hand.

Reaching the centre of the forest,
Iswara cut a piece of wood from near the root
Of the sandalwood tree.
Sweet scented.

Taking note of the markings
The God selected a block of wood
And measured its girth

A wheel round, Iswara made of it
And put it on his shoulder ;
Stretching over the rim a length of skin,
Iswara adjusted it with care.

Pulled the stretched skin all-round,
And round the rim fitted
Golden bands ;
And brass nails over these, he fixed.

Three long days
It dried in the air
Three days after
In the right hand was held (the instrument),
“*Bahuvajjamaya*”.

Everything about the Raban is holy. On the wheel, abides the Sun-god who shines in golden colour bearing the five-fold arms. In the leather covering, the deity “*Ramasri*” resides, casting glances. The deity *Pattigarra* casts glances at the leather belt. The deity *Viraksha* casts his glances about the sixty brass nails.

Four sounds are distinctive of the Raban. *Tat*, the first sound originated in the beginning of Maha Kalpa and produced in the air. Following this came the sounds *Dit*, *Tom* and *Nam*. These four sounds were given by Maha Brahma to Iswara who played the drum after he made it.

5 RUKADA : THE PUPPET PLAY

An ancient art that shows signs of revival as a folk art today, is puppetry, the play of puppets. In lands of the East where it prevailed as a traditional art in China, Java and Malabar, it was intimately allied to religious worship. The particular form of puppetry with sacred associations is the shadow play, using puppets of leather. Puppets in the Pavakoothu, the shadow play of Malabar, are of the skin of the deer, termed *Olapava*, "of the thinness of the cadjan leaf." The Tolu Bommalattam of Andhradesa is a play of rural entertainment, staged in open air theatres. The leather figures are of fine skin, of the deer or goat. The figures are coloured. Except for this distinction, and the fact that in Malabar it is not a secular entertainment, inter-linked as it is to the cult of goddess Bhagavati, the technique of the two arts seems primarily to be the same. The themes in either are drawn from the sacred epics.

In a Tolu Bommalattam performance of Andhradesa, in front of the stage hangs a white cloth screen. Behind the screen, on either side, are two lamps. The players stand behind the screen and deftly manipulate the puppets against this white background. Silhouetted against the white screen, the puppets enact their several roles.

In Andhradesa, puppetry very possibly took different forms. Puppetry in the round, is not evident in Andhradesa today. That it did not exist earlier, we cannot be positive. Not many years ago, a simple form of Bommalattam, was practised by Telugu mendicant women going from door to door in Madras, carrying a well-dressed figure in the round, about a foot long, in the garb of a danseuse. As one woman

approached a house she would uncover the doll from its wrapping, and sing. As she sang, she would work the doll, which kept the *tala* with its tiny hands.

The Madras State Sangeeta Nataka Sabha has stimulated interest in the wealth of the folk arts of South India. In its annual programme of performances of South Indian folk dances and plays, among the attractive features, is the Bommālattam, the play of puppets. The marionettes in the Tanjore Bommālattam, are figures in the round gaily coloured, appropriately decorated in the costume and trappings of the characters represented. The puppets are worked by black strings held by skilled craftsmen standing behind a dwarf screen.

The puppetry of the Sinhalese, is named Rukada. (Plate 9). How far back the art goes, we cannot be positive about. From its present standard of the technology of the art, it evidently has had a long period of growth from initial stages.

A medieval reflection of the art may perhaps be read in the passage of the *Culavamsa*,¹ describing a festival held by Parakrama Bahu II in celebration of the transfer of the sacred relics from Jambuddoni to Sirivaddhana. The precincts of the monastery at Sirivaddhana were decorated with "rows of figures of Brahma, that danced in line holding white umbrellas and were beautiful because they were worked by a mechanism, with diverse-hued mechanical figures of the gods which moved to and fro with hands folded before the brows, with rows of mechanical figures of horses which ran hither and thither and possessed the grace of rows of raging waves of the sea, with elephants wearing the ornament of elephants, which were (likewise) mechanical figures feigning to be clouds descended to the earth". This description finds reproduction in the *Pujavaliya*.² In this depiction, two or three factors stand conspicuous. The figures are not static but are

1. *Culavamsa*, Ch. 85, 15—18.

2. *Pujavaliya*, p. 695.

in active movement. The figures are mechanised and the mode of working, mechanical.

Another relevant passage in the *Culavamsa*¹ speaks of "leather dolls", in describing the system of espionage in the domains of King Gajabahu, started by prince Parakramabahu of the province of Ruhunu. It is stated that the prince "made such as were practised in dance and song appear as people who played with leather dolls and the like". This passage is strongly reminiscent of the observation that is often made, of interrelation of the arts of dancing and puppetry. A specimen of this inter-action is spotlighted in the observation: "If the shadow play has taken from the real dancers the convincing gripping truth of life, the dance has borrowed from the shadow theatre, the coercion to move the limbs in silhouette so to speak, "dancing as though moved by another's will". The reference in the *Culavamsa* does not warrant us to speculate how the people played with leather dolls, or whether any form of shadow play prevailed in the medieval days.

The passages in these chronicles are not as explicit in details as one would wish. In giving a general indication of the place of puppetry in the life of the people, with something of the characteristics of the art, short of a fuller account, the sacred chronicles conform to the restrained and self-controlled tone followed in speaking of the spectacular social arts. From the diffusion of South Indian influences in the other spheres of Sinhalese art, it is very likely that puppetry too may have found its way to Ceylon in the Middle ages.

The term Rukada is not sufficiently connotative of the play of the puppets. An extended form is Rukada Natuma, which nevertheless is not in common vogue. The term certainly harmonises with the naming of Sinhalese plays in general, names which end in the suffix, keliya or natuma, play or dance.

1 *Culavamsa*, Ch. 66 - 133.

Whether in India or Ceylon, puppetry finds expression only in certain localised areas. In Malabar it is only in a particular place in South Malabar where it actively prevailed. In Andhradesa it is an art of the Bellary district where one of the places is named after the art, Bommalattapalli. In Ceylon, it is a speciality of Ambalangoda, an area which has a reputation for another colourful folk art, the Kolam, the art of the masquerade.

For an account of the puppet play of Ambalangoda, we may best turn to the graphic description by Saratchandra, reproduced below with acknowledgements:

"There are about five troupes of puppet players in Ceylon at present, and all of them are at Ambalangoda. These troupes display great skill in the manipulation of puppets, but in the arrangement of their stage, their scenes and the costumes of the puppets, they need to reach a higher degree of refinement before city audiences can be made to take an interest in their art. Even the puppets themselves could be constructed so as to enable them to move the limbs more freely than they do now. Present-day puppets are round and from three to four feet in height. They are manipulated by means of strings tied to a plain horizontal bar or two bars fixed crosswise and held in hand. A raised platform serves the purpose of the stage. This is divided into two wings and a centre. The wings are constructed so that they form an angle with the back of the stage, opening out towards the auditorium. The centre recedes further back forming a small cubicle. This is used as the audience-chamber of the king, where he sits in state on his throne and summons his prime minister at the beginning of each play. This cubicle is known as the *pattirippuva*. These three divisions of the stage are fitted with dark back-curtains. The proscenium arch is so constructed as to give the stage a height of not more than four feet. The *pattirippuva* and side-wings are fitted with separate drop-curtains which can be rolled up. At the back of the stage is a

circular railing about six feet in height standing immediately behind the wings and *pattirippuva*, and from railing there projects backwards a ledge, a foot high from the level of the floor of the stage.

Puppets are shown on all three divisions of the stage, but not simultaneously. While one division is being made ready, the show continues in the other. The players stand on the ledge described above, and leaning on the railing, manipulate the puppets from behind. Their hands and the strings are not seen on account of the low proscenium.

The orchestra, which nowadays consists of a seraphina-player, violinist, and tabla-players, sit facing the stage, with their backs to the audience. They strike up a tune, and presently the curtain of one of the wings is rolled up, and a puppet representing a dancing girl does a dance on the lines of the "Bombay dancing" that was once a popular feature in the Colombo theatres. Next are introduced the jester and the Sellapille of the Nadagama. They dance, however, mostly to the rhythms of the tabla and not to the rhythms of the *maddala*. The puppets are dressed in the costumes which these characters originally wore in the Nadagama. Only these two stock figures of the Nadagama appear on the puppet stage. The *maddala* and *horana* of the Nadagama have now been dropped, on account of the influence of the theatre. The characters are not presented any more in the conventional Nadagam style, with the Pote Gura describing them before their entry on the stage. The use of drop curtains makes this unnecessary. The chorus, however, sings from behind the stage as the puppets dance. Traditional Nadagamas, like *Vessantara* and *Ahalepola* are popular among puppet players, but even in these, a large number of typical Nadagama songs are now dropped and songs composed to Hindustani tunes have been substituted in their place.

It is very likely that the puppet play migrated to Ceylon from South India where it exists in a form which is quite similar to ours. The puppets are manipulated

in the same way by means of strings tied to bars held in the hand, and the players, similarly lean forward against a railing behind the stage. South Indian puppets are round, like the Sinhalese ones, but much more skillfully carved than ours. The players attach puppet strings to their turbans as well, and since Sinhalese players do not wear turbans, we can well understand why this method has not been adopted here. Puppet players in South India use similar operatic plays as an accompaniment to the puppets, based on episodes from the Ramayana, and Mahabharata, and, very likely, adapted from the Tamil Terukkuttu.

The puppet play, although of recent origin, has acquired the position of a folk art, since puppetry already occupied a place in the village organisation. Besides, the puppet play was the one form of entertainment that was not open to the objections brought against Nadagam and Kolam. Since no human beings took part in it, it did not receive the censure of the serious-minded, like other dances and dramatic entertainments with their buffoonery and unseemly behaviour. It could be seen too, that manipulation of the puppets demanded a practice and skill which was not readily associated with drink and other vices. Hence the puppet play, with religious and historical themes, could be used like the dancing Brahmas and gods of Parakrama Bahu's time, even on occasions like Pin-kamas and Vesak, to call forth religious emotion in people. For all these reasons it survives as a folk entertainment to which many other entertainments have given way, and which is capable of developing into a very popular dramatic form in our country."

6 THE VADIGA PATUNA

Vadiga Patuna¹ is one of the folk dances of South Ceylon, the region which has preserved a number of ancestral dances and folk cults of the Sinhalese. Today it is a showy dance-play within the large category of the folk arts of Ruhunu (the ancient name for this part of the Island). Players wearing the typical South

1 See also Part II, Ch. V.

Indian dress of the bifurcated *dhoti*, the lower garment and large ornate turbans to match (Plate 10), the Indian ancestry of the dance is most striking, the only dance-play of the Sinhalese in purely South Indian costume.

Vadiga is obviously derived from Vadugu, Andhradesa, the land which has had profound cultural influence on the arts of the Sinhalese. *Cilappadikaram* speaks of a distinct division of the dance named Vadugu, obviously a regional classification denoting the dance of the Andhras. Vaduga or Vadukam is "the country to the north", in relation to the Tamilnad to the South, and applied to mean "the modern Telugu country", the country of the Vadukas who spoke a language called Vaduku."¹

That Vadiga Patuna had its rise in a ceremonial dance intensely magical in purport, is among its many interesting features. Saratchandra tells us that Vadiga Patuna is today featured as an interlude in demon ceremonies lasting a whole night of which Dahata Sanniya is the most typical example, an interlude, "introduced with the purpose of entertaining the audience and keeping them awake." I herein reproduce the description as Saratchandra gives it: "The Vadiga Patuna dramatises the arrival in Ceylon of Brahmans well versed in the exorcist ritual of Huniyam.² It begins with the entry of two (sometimes more, the required number being seven), men dressed in Indian dhoti and turbans, who dance, for a while, to the beat of the drum. After the dancing, the two of them converse with each other and indicate to the audience that they have arrived from India and are curious to know the customs of this country. Presently they see that a ceremony is taking place, and go to the spot. The exorcist who is conducting the ceremony spies them and speaks to them, but realising that they do not understand Sinhalese, finally addresses

1 Kangasabai, V: "The Tamils eighteen Hundred Years Ago", Madras, 1904, pages 29 and 104.

2 Suniyam and Huniyam are alternative forms.

them in Pali. A great deal of fun is provoked by the inability of the Brahmins to understand Sinhalese and by the mistakes they make as a result of their ignorance of the language of the country. When they discover a common medium of conversation, a dialogue of the following nature ensues between the exorcist and the Brahmins:

Ex: Why have you come here?

Br: I like to know what is happening here.

Ex: This is a sacrificial ritual (yaga homa kammam).

Br: For whose benefit are you doing it?

Ex: For the benefit of the patient.

Br: What is he suffering from?

Ex: He is suffering from the effects of the evil eye, the evil mouth, and certain other charms. It is for these in general that this ritual is performed.

Br: What is the structure that I see here?

Ex: That is the *atamagala* or the *suniyam vidiya*.

Br: What demon or god do you seek to appease in this ceremony?

Ex: In this ceremony we seek to appease the demon Suniyam Yaksaya also known as Oddi Suniyam Devata, born of the king Oddi Vadiga in the country of Oddi Vadiga.

Br: O, indeed, is that so? I come from Vadiga myself. Would you let me too, perform a sacrifice?

Ex: Well, yes, I don't see any objection to that.

Br: Are there any cats here?

Ex: Yes, here is a cat.

Br: O, how horrible. Then I must go away.

Ex: Please don't. We will get rid of the cat.

Br: Will you let me see the patient?

Ex: Yes, certainly. (The Brahmin goes up to the patient and examines his pulse).

Br: Yes, I can see that he has come under the influence of a *kodivina*.

Ex: You seem to know the science of examining the pulse.

Br: Yes, I am an expert in it. I should like to perform this ritual now. But, what will you give me in return? I must at least have something to cover up my travelling expenses.

Ex: What do you want travelling expenses for? You told me that you were only passing this way.

Br: I am prepared to do it only if you can give me fifty rupees.

Ex: No, no. We cannot give you anything. If you succeed in curing the patient, we might consider rewarding you for it.

Br: I am agreeable. Well, then, let us start the ceremony. (Here the drummer begins to beat the drum, and the Brahmins dance for a while, mutter incantations over the patient, and depart.)

The intensely ritual and magical import of this ceremonial dance is revealed in the thirty two verses of the yet unpublished manuscript in the collections of the Colombo National Museum Library:

The Seven ascetics
Coming from the country of Vadiga
Performed a *yaga*
Brought from Vadiga patuna in times gone by.

The Yaga was performed in the name of the king
In languages, unmixed Sinhala, Magadha, Sanskrit
Pali and Tamil
And in the eighteen languages.

Thus did the ascetics perform the *yaga*
In languages, Gurulu, Telugu
Pattadi and Tamil

Thus was the *yaga* performed in the name of
the king,
With stanzas
Mantharams, Kavāca.

The Brahma *Yaga* was performed
By reciting verses in the Yaksha language;
To the Tamils in this manner
Was the Tamil language used.

The eighteen languages
Were thus used;
The verses at the end of the book
Were in the Andi language.

Composed it was in Nagara (Sanskrit)
By the Thera Maliya;
That day it was recited, in unmixed Sinhala
language.

This pure book
Found within the golden cave;
The demon seeing it
Kept watch over it.

Powerful Pilila yakkas
The Oddi yakkas and the Suniyan yakkas
All these demons stood around the book.

Demons such as "Rama giri"
And those of the eighteen languages
Including Tamil and Sinhala
Thus surrounded the book.

At the outset Tamil was spoken
This aeon came into existence in the morning;
The *yaga* was performed in the Vadiga language
Together with armlets and charms.

Thus was the Vadiga patuna recited,
By the four Guardian gods;
The book was called Vadiga Patuna
When it had to be named.

When the gods plotted against Prince Malsara
 This book reached the country of Vadiga
 And came into the possession of the line of
 ascetics.

Such was the origin,
 The seven ascetics having come,
 Wrote the *dapana* in Sinhala
 In the city of Malsarā.

At the beginning the verses are in Sinhala
 Thereafter, in the Tamil language;
 In the centre of the book
 The verses are in Anđi language;

The Vadiga patuna was rehearsed
 By the gods Sakra, Brahma, Iswara
 And Vishnu Maheswara,
 And the Sages.

They speak the eighteen languages;
 The book is worth a thousand
 And it contains twenty four stanzas;
 These are charms for the "Aravali"

There five hundred "Dapana" and "Abina",
 Seven hundred verses,
 Three hundred Tamil "Dapanas"
 And five hundred "Ashta Kavici".

Gods on that day, thus
 Sang verses of the Vadiga Patuna;
 Gods brought this about
 That the people of the world may be protected.

Bearing the golden style in the right hand
 God Sakra
 Wrote in Nagara characters on that day.
 And kept (the book) in the golden rock cave.

The book was guarded
 By the four Guardian gods,
 The Demala (Tamil) Pilli demons
 And the Vadiga and the demon of sensuous
 pleasures.

Offerings were made to the chronicle, of
 Nine leaf-cups each of blood and rice,
 Jasmine and campak flowers,
 And rice with five kinds of fried flesh.

Goats and fowl are tethered;
 Offerings made of gold, and
 Flesh of the gaur;
 And pigs and sambhur deer too tethered.

These several were the offerings made,
 And the door of the library opened;
 The chief of gods saying this, granted authority
 And assigned the book to the demon.

The Buddha æon having duly passed
 The sage Gautama attained Buddhahood;
 There they assembled
 And fled that they may reassemble.

The ascetics of Vadiga Pura that day
 Saw the library;
 And offering a lakh
 They obtained the book.

From that day onwards
 The powerful Vadiga Patuna came into existence
 On that day the ascetic performed a *yaga*
 On behalf of Prince Malsara.

May the *vina* and *bandana* disappear
 And the sensuous Vadiga demons come hither
 By the power of Vadiga patuna
 May the *devil* and *perati* disappear.

May the demons perform the dance
 In respect of eight hundred joints
 Nine hundred veins
 And three lakhs of hair on the body.

May the demons with burning heads perform
the dance

And come hither making the heart tremble

O, the demons, may you come

So that the "Abaragiri Bandana" may disappear.

May the Sun dance

And gods of the earth and sky;

Let the four corners of Mahameru dance

O, demon, come hither, that you may be subdued.

I shall offer fire in order that the demon may
tremble,

The "Henagini Mandala" may dance,

The portal of Yama may come hither

And six hundred parts of flesh in the body may
disport.

CHAPTER VII

THE DANCE IN THE CULT OF THE GODS

Folk cults of rural Ceylon are among the most resplendent sights of the Island. Vital in the life of the villager, they serve a two-fold purpose. Intensely purposeful as they are to the participants (the *aturayas*) they are entertaining and recreational, to the villagers, and to the spectator in general. And they have a cohesive value in the life of the people, and deserve well of the society, at least on grounds of their values of social integration, as for their contribution to a distinctive line of traditional arts, which an organised system of folk cults has fostered over the ages.

As facets of folk religion, these folk cults may perhaps be best understood viewed against the background of the universal concepts of religion in human societies. We cannot be positive what the religion was of prehistoric Lanka, though we have some sidelights in the Mahavamsa, as the one that speaks of Pandukabhaya as the king who year by year offered sacrifices to the Yakkas.¹

Ravana, reputedly the Lankadhipati of prehistory, was himself a devotee of God Siva, as Ramayana picturesquely describes. This may perhaps be interpreted in terms of his genetic heritage, as the son of the ascetic Vishravas, by the daughter of Sumali, a Rakshasi. Such incidental allusions apart, it is

¹ Mahavamsa, Ch. X, 87.

reasonable to presume that the religion of the early ages of Lanka, conformed more or less to the general pattern of religion in early societies all the world over.

Early in the history of mankind, religion and magic were inseparable, so that we may more properly speak of a magico-religious complex than of a religion. In general "all socially recognised dealings with the unseen, is religion". The germs of religion are evident in the rituals and ceremonials early man devised so as to befriend the unseen forces. Folk cults as a rule, whether in primitive or in modern traditional societies, conform to an institutionally organized system, subject to regional variations as in the different parts of Ceylon.

The magico-religious phenomena have both an internal view and an external. The internal view attempts to discover the meanings and values of the several rituals, ceremonials and charms. This demands painstaking studies into the meanings of the ceremonials and of the associated legends and songs. Externally, are the forms that the ceremonials have steadily developed into over the ages, the several manifestations presented to outside view.

For a working classification, we may divide the entire field into Social and Personal. As phenomena of social life, we have numerous institutionalised cults, seasonal or periodical for the general welfare of the community held at different rural centres. This answers to the basic idea that the good of the community is the test of religion.

In the second class are the series of ceremonial cults designed to counteract evil influences in particular situations or passing crises in the life of an individual.

Now for a brief mention of some of the terms devised by anthropologists to denote the stages of primitive religion — terms which have served as pigeon-holes for preliminary classification and steps for further

studies. First in the series stands Fetishism, a word of African origin (Portuguese Fetico, Latin—Factical; charm), — a word which prevailed for a century — the worship of a Fetish, an inanimate object endowed with divine or magical power. This term has steadily been replaced by Tylor's Animism, with the appearance of his "Primitive Culture" (1871). Beginning as "belief in the universal animation of Nature", it was extended to cover spiritual beings of a lower order, each with an independent personality. This definition finds general application to the hierarchy of spirits that enliven the entire range of Sinhalese folk cults.

We are not much concerned about the rest of the categories of world religion or of the theories that have followed in their wake.

The cult of the vast hierarchy of the minor gods, and spirits opens up a vast field of rituals, with the dance as an essential or accessory accompaniment of the rituals and ceremonials. The field is so extensive that, for the purpose of the present study, I have limited myself to four of the more typical cults, the Kohomba Kankaria, the cult of the ancestral Kohomba Gods of Kandyan rural scene; the Bali, the cult of the Planetary deities, the cult of Goddess Pattini, the popular goddess of the rural folks and the cult of Devol Deviyo.

The Dance in these differs with the different cults. In the Kohomba Kankaria, the Ves, the most spectacular of the Kandyan dances, finds magnificent display. In the cults of the goddess Pattini and of Devol Deviyo the dances are of a different order. The movements are more restrained than in Ves, in keeping with the ceremonials of the cult.

I KOHOMBA KANKARIA THE CULT OF THE KOHOMBA GODS

The most resplendent and spectacular perhaps of the several folk cults of the Sinhalese, though not so widely known as the more popular ones, is the Kohomba Kankaria of the Kandyan villages, the elaborate series

of ceremonial dances and rituals, centering round the incurable malady that afflicted King Panduvasudeva (466 — 414 B.C.).

When Vijaya banished Kuvēni so that he could marry the Pandyan princess from Madura, her rage was such that she resorted to black magic and charms designed to kill Vijaya. The story is that she took the form of a leopard and attempted to enter the bed-chamber of the King. On this being foiled by counter charms, she created a flaming tongue of crystal and extended it where Vijaya lay. The Minister, who had foreknowledge of the charms, cut off the tongue and placed it in a golden vessel and showed it to the King. It then took the form of a leopard and fled away. The King did not recover from the affliction that followed, and passed away without any issue.

The *Divi Dos* (the evil caused by the leopard) continued to perplex King Panduvasudeva who succeeded Vijaya. Divine intercession revealed that the only person well versed in the magical lore and practices that could cure the King of the spell of *Divi dos*, was the King Male of Malabar. At this time in the country of Malabar, were living three brothers born respectively of Kusa grass, the Blue lotus and the Mother's Womb. When it was resolved to get King Male to Lanka, Rahu was persuaded to entice the King to leave his home and to land in Lanka. Rahu took the form of a wild boar and began to devastate the King's garden. The three brothers of Vaikuntha prasada, and a host of Veddas gave chase. King Male followed the course of the hog to Lanka, where he landed at a place called Santana Adaviya. At this place, King Male struck the hog with his golden sword. Thereupon the hog turned into stone. This disclosed to the King that it was something prearranged by the gods.

The ceremonial dances and rituals were soon set on foot. The site where the elaborate ceremonies were held is said to be the present location of Maha Megha Vana of Anuradhapura. Sixty-five sheds were built

there. Golden and silver archways, and archways of plantain stems were erected. The effect of the whole proceedings, was such that the King was fully cured.

In a land of ceremonials and rituals, Kohomba Kankaria is manifestly the most exacting of the folk cults of the Island. To conform to the traditions, the *Kap*, the ceremonial post, has to be planted three months ahead. The cloths for the dancers' costume, are given to the washermen seven days prior to the day of the cult. The washermen are remunerated by twelve *Kadas* of provisions, each *Kada* consisting of 5 measures of rice, 5 coconuts, a bunch of plantains and 1 pumpkin.

On the site are erected two cadjan thatched shelters, a store-house (*gabada*) and *Yak ge*, the dance hall. This latter is believed to follow the dimensions of the traditional dance hall assumed to have been originally erected in holy Anuradhapura, 40 cubits in length.

The master of the ceremonies, the *Gambara Yakdessa* invites the *Mul Yakdessa* and a band of twelve *Yakdessas*. The latter are detailed, six to work outside and six within the *maduwa*. Those within, prepare the altars (*yahana*) both big and small (the *aila*), collect and store the coconut oil, make torches of cloth rags (*pandam*) and pound the paddy. Those who work outside go and fetch the articles needed. The supply party proceed in their collecting mission (*polbulath yama*), dressed in white and wearing "Mukhavadam", the mouth-gag, bringing the vegetables, yams and plantains—*Keselkan Kapima*.

It is singular that Kohomba Kankaria should show variations in their cultural content as in details of rituals and ceremonials in different regions. The account given below follows the sequences of dances and rituals in a highly elaborate presentation held on a day in September 1950 at a Kandyan village:

Before twelve noon, the ceremony of *pebath yadinava*, the ceremonial offering of rice at the *yahana*, the high altars, started the day's proceedings. The

insignia of the Gods, the symbolisms and the weapons, are ceremonially conducted from the devale in the village to the *Yak-gæ*, the dance hall. The *pettiya*, the box of the dancers' regalia, the *abaranas* of the *Mul yakdessa*, and the *Mul bera-karayyas* are also accorded a place in this ceremonial.

At the *Yahana*, offerings are placed of a variety of dainties and delicacies. These include *Pan miriya*, (a cut king-coconut), *palaturu* (fruits), *hakurupol*, (jaggery and coconut), cooked rice with *hatmaluwa* (the vegetable curry of seven ingredients) *ratambula* (salad of hibiscus flowers) etc., fish or wild boar flesh curry; *Kevun* (oil-cakes); *roti* (the round cake of rice flour); *telka* (coconut oil sedimented extraction) and *mellun*, of green plantains sliced and cooked dry.

At about 2 p.m. pupils under training perform the *Melayi Yakkun Natuma*, the prelude to making offerings of food—rice, coconuts, pumpkin, a fowl, a leg of wild boar at the *aila* (the minor altar), erected twenty yards from the main altar. The dances and the ceremonial offerings occupy about three hours. By now the *Yakdessas* will have robed themselves in white *piruvata* and their ornamental accoutrements. All assemble in their panoply with the drummers on either side. At the main and minor altars, lamps and torches are lit.

All is set for the long series of dances and ceremonials of the night.

The first is the invocatory dance, the *Yak-anuma*, by the full troupe of dancers. The *devas* are invoked in dances of the most potent and vigorous character to the resounding drumming by the array of drummers.

In the *Aila Yadima* which follows, the names of the gods are intoned individually and severally, with a narration of their respective pedigrees. The *Asne yama*, literally the "prayer-moment", is a long drawn-out course of dances. Each of the *yakdessas* dances in circular formation (the *Vattam*), vying with each other to show off their virtuosity to the utmost. *Yak-tumpade*

which follows is a group dance by four of the senior yakdessas noted for their professional skill. These dances are sacred to a trio of gods. The three include two kings, Panduvas, and the Malaya Raja. The third is designated the Muni. His identity is not specified.

The dance of the "Guru Gods", is the Guruge Malaya. The Guru gods so named are Maha Guru and Kuda Guru. In the invocatory verses, the latter is featured as Kasi Nanda Guru, the Guru from Kasi, India. Another of the Guru gods, is the Soliya Guru, the Guru from Soliya (the Chola land). These obviously are the deities from outside Ceylon, deities perhaps engrafted into the hierarchy of the cult in the course of the ages.

A dance performed before the high altar (the *Yahana*) is the *Kol-paduva*, prelude to the *Dunumalappuwa*, the dance with bow and arrow by the *mul-yakdessa*, the chief of the dancers before the *yahana*.

Offering of a ceremonial sheaf of betel leaves to the gods, with rhythmic and controlled steps, is *Bulath-Yakuma* or *Yahan Dakima*. The *Mul-Yakdessa* reverentially offering a jug of saffron water respectively at the *Yahana* and *Aiylas* (the main and subsidiary altars), to appropriate dance steps, is the *Pan Vadime Natuma*.

Dancing all through the *Yak Ge* (the dance hall) with the lighted torch in hand, setting aflame in the course of the movements, handfuls of resin, is *Dum-mala Natuma*.

Fanning the gods with a cloth in the process of dancing, is *Pavan Saleema*. At the close of this dance, offerings are made to the *Kadavara Yakka*.

A dance in honour of god, Viramunda is *Polmal Natuma*, with the *polmal* (coconut inflorescence), in the dancer's hands.

All the Yakdessas dancing, four at a time, is the magnificent dance, a series called the *Avaduma*.

Panduvas Kattia Natuma, and *Vijaya Kattia Natuma*, are dances in pantomime, one following the other, featuring stories of King Panđuvas and King Vijaya.

Incantation to the hog (*Ura*) with offering, underlines the highly expressive dance, revealing the animated look at the sight of the *Ura*, the hog. The dance (*Dunumal Akkama*) is a dramatisation of the episode of Sakra, conventionalised as god Kohomba in the language of the Kohomba Kankaria, the god who took the form of a hog and ravaged the garden of Malaya Raja. The hog, in hot pursuit by the King, covered enormous distances. Reaching the margin of the sea, it jumped over to Lanka, at a site which has come to be known as Santana Adaviya, as the *Rajavaliya* has it. At this point, the King struck a blow with his golden sword, as the legend says, and the hog was turned into stone. *Dunumal Akkama* and *Yammam Paha*, dramatise in frenzied dances, the King's adventurous chase, with the King closing in upon the hog.

The entire series of dances are so designed as to fall in an ascending sequence reaching their apex in the strikingly dramatic scenes of the central theme of the story, the pursuit of the hog by the King who finally comes in close and effective contact with the animal.

The sun is already rising high up in the heavens as these scenes are staged, brightening the region all round. At this stage of the story, something of a scene in a lighter vein is danced, the five *yakkamas*, a dance in pantomime in which the Veddas are featured. Though rather comic in execution, a serious touch probably a modern ascription, is given to this scene, spoken of something of a truce, a mediation by King Male in the affairs of the State, to bring about concord between the vanquished Yakkas, alternately styled the Veddas (who, it is believed, are in direct lineage from the Yakkas), and the Sinhalese monarchy just taking roots in Lanka, the Yakka homeland.

A dance by all the Yakkessas, is the *Kohomba Halla Natuma*, dances of thanksgiving to the gods.

Either before this, or immediately following, is the *Gabada Kolla*, the pulling down of the Gabada the stores shed. Every one helps himself to whatever is left of the provisions, and the shed is set fire to. Destruction of temporary structures raised is a normal feature in the cult of the Goddess Kali (an aspect of Bhagavati) in the rural tracts of Kerala.

The closing scene in these long drawn-out rituals and ceremonies is the *Muva-mala-vidima*, ("shooting the plantain bud"). This is in the nature of dispelling the evil influences, the external manifestation of which, is believed to be popularly noticed in a bunch of the plantain fruits in which the fruits are not in a continuous series but separated by a length of bare stalk. The ceremonial "Shooting of the Bud", dispels the evil. Following the ritual shooting by a ceremonial bow and arrow, the whole bunch is thrown away.

The most elaborate of all the propitiatory dance rituals of the Sinhalese rural folks, Kohomba Kankaria is so expensive an undertaking that the performance is a rare event today.

To the mysticism underlying Kohomba Kankariya, has been added another interpretation of the festival, more material than mystic. A political colour has been attributed to these ceremonies by Sedaraman.¹ This may here be briefly outlined. According to this view, the *Hetapas Mangalaya* was instituted by the three Rajas of Malayala to bring about political peace between the Sinhala King and the Yakka Chieftains. To this great conference, Yakka Chieftains from eighty Yakka strongholds were invited. Among these are named Atalagala, Kotalagala, Kokkagala, Sandagirigala, Mudagirigala, Mulgirigala, Dodamvatukabala and Hunasgiriya. Alternatively these chieftains are addressed as Veddas:—

1 This interpretation does not seem to have been yet published. It is here included with acknowledgements to Sedaraman, who gave this view in the course of a personal discussion I have had with him.

O come Ye Veddas of Atalagala, Kotalagala and
 Kokkagala,
 And Ye of Sandâgirigalâ, Mudagirigala, and
 Mulgirigala,
 From Ramasine, Dodamvatu-Kabala and Badulu
 Oya, Come Ye all,
 And from Uduveyana, Raᅅgalle and Dolos Bavila.

The Vedda chieftains are introduced in the ceremonial of *Aiyla Yadum*. The *Hetapas Mangalaya* failed of its purpose to effect a truce. A deputation of twelve chieftains was then formed. These are severally, Kohomba, Alut Kohomba, Parana Kohomba, Valiyak deviyo, Viramunda, Irugal Bandara, Kande Bandara, Kalu Bandara, Mani Maniyan Vahamse or Amparapati, Kotuvattu Rajâya, Maha Guru, Kuda Guru, Melliya Yakku, Kadavara Yakku.

In the Kohomba Kankaria, each of these Chieftains is ceremonially presented. In this deputation three main groups are regarded as represented. The Bandaras are Kuveni's people; Veli Yakka, Ambarapati and Kadavara are from India. Maha Guru, Kuda Guru and the rest, are minor aborigines of the Island. The Malaya King declared that all these chieftains should live in concord and unity and eat and live together. The Malayala suzerain also confirmed that this Kohomba deputation will be responsible in future to maintain peaceful relations among the different groups.

2. RITUALS AND CEREMONIALS IN THE CULT OF GODDESS PATTINI

Of all the folk cults of the Sinhalese, the one that has the closest links with South India, is the cult of goddess Pattini. From the time Sengottuvan, the King of the Cera Kingdom of South India, 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, Pattini has been the

favoured Goddess of the Sinhalese. At this, the first installation of the goddess, Kings of the neighbouring kingdoms were present. Lanka was represented by King Gajabahu (174—196 A.D.). These events are chronicled in the *Cilappadikaram*, the Tamil epic singing the story of the Cilambu, the sacred anklet, the symbol of Pattini. The consecration of the goddess under the joint auspices of the neighbouring monarchs, was a unique event in the social and cultural life of Ceylon as of South India. Ceylon traditions agree that King Gajabahu on his return from South India, brought with him the insignia of the goddess and inaugurated the cult of Pattini in Ceylon. Pattini found a receptive soil in the Island where legends multiplied round the central theme.

At Navagamuwa, a village about 25 miles from Colombo, is the ancestral seat of the goddess, who has shrines distributed all over Ceylon. One of these is the Pattini Devalaya of Kandy and the goddess has her allotted place in the scheme of the Kandy Esala Perahera.

The insignia of the goddess are replicas of the sacred anklet in conventionalised designs, and the large ceremonial mango fashioned in bronze, a reflection of the legend of the birth of the goddess from a mango. In the Pandyan king's orchard was a mango unusually big in size. Perplexed at it, the king decided to get it down, and ordered his marksmen to aim at it. The king's men failed in their attempt to bring it down. At this moment god Sakra appeared in the guise of an old man, and pleaded with the king to allow him to try a hand. The old man shot an arrow and the mango fell, split in two — within it was the baby goddess Pattini, the Amba Pattini, Pattini born of a mango.

Other legends speak of Pattini's birth from a variety of sources — the Water, the Flower (the Demata flower, *genelina asiatica*), the Rock, the Fire, the Shawl and the Elephant's Tusk. These seven forms are collectively termed the Sat Pattini (the Seven

Pattinis) named severally, Jala Pattini, Mal Pattini, Sirima Muni Pattini, Gini Pattini, Orumala Pattini and Teda Pattini. Legends speak too of her descent from the Naga's Tear Drop and the Dew Drop. She is endowed with a Naga jewel, the Naga Manickam and she has a vase of flowers in her hand.

Incidents and events relating to her mythical origins are ceremonially dramatised in the course of a night's propitiation at the seasonal celebrations held at selected rural centres. At a central spot is erected, an enclosed structure of bamboo and cadjans, 60 feet by 20 feet, the *Gam Madu*. At the entrance to the hall are erected three flower altars, the *Mal Yahan*, for offerings of flowers. Adjacent to these is planted a high post of the arecanut palm stem, suitably decorated. On the top of this is lit, at the appropriate moment in the course of the ceremonials, the *Kala Pandama*, the Torch of Prosperity. Inside the hall are a number of altars. Dominating the scene, and situated centrally, is the high altar, the sacred torana, fully veiled by a white cloth curtain.

Such in brief is the technology of a *Gam Madu*, the ceremonials of which last a whole night. An air of mysticism pervades the arena, lit up by a number of flaming flambeaus, and flickering flames of oil wicks at the several altars heavily laden with flowers, fruits and offerings of food, in an atmosphere charged with the scent of burning incense. The dominating figure in the entire ceremonials is the *Pattinihami*, the Kapurala, the priest in the outfit of a woman, a frilled sari, one end of which is thrown over the shoulder and a jacket. A white scarf covers the head. The feminine apparel is possibly reminiscent of the early days, when a real priestess conducted the ceremonials of the cult of the great goddess of feminine virtue and chastity. The *Pattinihami* has a number of boy attendants dressed in white, a red sash round the waist and a white wrapper on the head.

The several stages of the devotional rituals in the long drawn-out ceremonials are occasions for dancing

in well modulated and measured gait. The narration of the episodes in the life of the goddess, sets the pace for the ceremonials. The *Pattinihami* enlarges on the glorious landmarks of her life and the benefits to be gained by pleasing the goddess. A small procession presently comes to view, heralded by preliminary drumming, the ceremonial bringing of the coconut oil to feed the lamps. The oil is carried in a *tel-gotuwa*, a receptacle formed of the leaf sheath of the arecanut palm, on the head of a devotee under a white canopy. The *Pattinihami* receives the oil and consecrates it to the chanting of prescribed verses, moving as he does so, towards the high altar in rhythmic and slow dancing movements. Similar processions are staged in taking the oil to each of the other altars. Fed with the consecrated oil, the lamps burn with a brighter glow. The lamps at the high altar are dedicated to Pattini, and those at the minor altars, to Gods Vishnu, Saman, Vibhishana and Kataragama, and to the minor spirits Bandara Deviyo and Dedimunda Devol Deviyo. Invocations are addressed to these deities for divine aid, guidance and blessings on the *aturayas*¹.

On the conclusion of the incantations, the "*Solu Liya*", the cane of Dedimunda Devol Deviyo is conducted in procession to the high altar. Legend has it that Pattini triumphed over Devol Deviyo when the latter attempted to land at Sinigama, by the sea. At Hikkaduwa, she created seven mountains of fire so as to obstruct him, but was finally prevailed on to confer a *Varam* (boon) enabling Devol Deviyo and his retinue to land ashore.

The ritual of the *Solu Liya*, is followed by *Pandam Paliya*, the Torch Dance to the accompaniment of drumming. Harmonising with his measured steps, *Pattinihami* inflames large quantities of resin

¹ Aturaya is the general term for a sick or suffering person for whom a protective magical ceremony is performed. At a *Gam-madu* all the people assembled are *aturayas* seeking the grace of goddess Pattini for protection against disease.

powder in propitiation of God Kataragama. As the Torch Dance reaches the climax, the *Kala Pandama*, the Torch of Prosperity is lit and planted at the top of the lofty arecanut post at the entrance to the *maduwa*. The *Kala Pandama* burns all through the night and sheds its holy illumination over the entire village.

Buddhist influences find some orientation in the present day folk ceremonials. As the *Pattinihami* moves towards the high altar, verses are intoned in praise of the Buddha. In like manner two of his attendants chant praises of the Dharma and the Sangha.

A series of dances follow. Advancing, dancing — towards the high altar, *Pattinihami* gently removes its white curtain veil. This reveals to view the magnificent *torana*, the high altar. Brilliant in its perfect proportions of vertical and horizontal strips of the plantain stem, it is an eloquent testimony to the creative artistic impulse that folk religion has generated over the ages—a gabled structure with a series of gables symmetrically disposed, parallels of which are hard to find in the context of folk cults on the Indian mainland. The name *torana* generally signifies an ornamental arched gateway, the classical example of which is the Sanchi Makara Torana. What would normally have been a central open passage, is covered so as to provide a *sanctum sanctorum*, within which to deposit the sacred insignia of the goddess. The whole structure in essentials is a sacred shrine in miniature. To resume our narration of the rituals, turning to the assembled devotees squatting in front, the *Pattinihami* with the folded curtain cloth in hands waves the cloth in the direction of the devotees squatting on the floor. This symbolic blessing is the ritual of *Salu Selima*, the ritual fanning with the curtain cloth removed from the sacred high altar. The *torana* is now sung of in descriptive classical Sanskrit verses chanted in expressive tone, dancing as he does so—the ritual of *Toran Paliya*.

As the *Toran Paliya* is concluded, the ceremony is conducted of *Deviyan Vadamavanava*. This highlights the rituals. The sacred insignia of the goddess arrive in procession from their abode in a temporary shrine. The *Pattinihami* dances the full length of the ground with crowds of devotees on either side. Advancing in well timed dancing strides, the *Pattinihami* receives the anklets and bracelets and deposits them on the high altar. This is the time for offerings of food (*muruthan*) to the gods. Oil cakes, sweets and fruits are brought ceremoniously and the *Pattinihami* places them on the high altar and the minor altars to the singing of consecratory verses (*stotras*).

The ritual of *Mal gehilla* follows, a dance with sprigs of coconut flowers in hand, danced by two of the attendants. At the climax of the dance, one of the two gets into a trance of spirit possession, the influence of "*dummala distiya*", in the process of his igniting the resin.

The *Amba Vidamana* (shooting the mango) comes next. This commemorates Pattini's birth from a mango, already told. Two mangoes made of brass are suspended by a string near the high altar. An archer in the god's attire comes with bow and arrow and shoots at the string. The mangoes drop down.

The comic interlude of *Ali Allanta Yanawa* (Going to Hunt the Elephant) is the next. In the trapping of an elephant, a man appears with two long coconut leaf sprigs for tusks, to the singing of verses. *Pattinihami* cuts the tusks of the mock elephant.

The interlude gives place to the last but one in the long drawn-out series — the ritual of Fire Walking (*Ginipaganava*). Within a square enclosed by the leaf stalk of the plantain is a quantity of live embers. A length of cloth curtain (*tiraya*) held in front marks off the place. *Pattinihami* steps forward, washes his feet in turmeric water, fumigates them with incense, jumps on the live coals and tramples them for some minutes. Coming, he rushes before the high altar and bows down in adoration.

The dramatic appearance of Gara Yaka in his colourful mask in the *Aila Padinava*, the swinging ritual, is the finale of the ceremonials. In the centre of the hall are planted two strong branches of the goraka tree. Spanning them are two cross bars, one below the other. On the upper sits Gara Yaka, the playful and jesting Yaka of the Sinhalese folk cults. He swings forward and backward to the tune of drumming and intoning of verses. After he has entertained himself and the beholders with his antics and frolics, he is handed a tray of offering of *Kiribath* (rice cooked in coconut milk), oil cakes and plantains. He eats with gusto, the voracious yaka that he is, and dismounts from the *aile*. He gets hold of a lighted *pandama* (torch). With this in hand, he strides over the arena projecting handfuls of powdered resin, which ignited by the torch goes up in flames and smoke. This is the concluding event at almost all the folk cults.

A ceremonial feeding is now held, the *Deiyanne Dane*, in the name of the goddess. All those who sat through the whole proceedings are given a meal of rice and vegetable curries served on plantain leaves. A symbolic offering of the food is first made to the gods. A receptacle of plantain leaf (*kehel gotuwa*) is taken round. Each drops a handful of rice for feeding the crows.

Pattini today is the sole goddess of the Sinhalese. Her counterpart is Kannaki Amman of the Tamils. In the several legends that have evolved round the cult of Pattini, we have glimpses of her complex character, of the precise nature of which we have little knowledge. In the reflections of the past, are legends of goddesses who have faded out of the social setting of Ceylon. One such very possibly is the legendary Ratnavali sung in Ratnavali kavi of the Rodiya, an analysis of which is included in my first study of the Rodiyas.¹ Ratnavali is here revealed to have been a goddess once

1 Barnett L. D: Guide to Sinhalese Folk-lore 19, 17, pp 86—87; Raghavan M. D: Cultural Anthropology of the Rodiyas, *Soplia Zeylanica* vol. 6 Part I, pp. 102 — 106; and Handsome Beggars, the Rodiyas of Ceylon, Colombo, 1956.

worshipped in the North Central Province, the goddess who occupied a grove of telembu trees at Anuradhapura, cut down by King Dutugemunu to clear the site on which was erected the famous Ruanvelisaya Dagoba.—

“Covet not the Telembu tree, I so esteem,
 Oh! King, do not think evil;
 Prosperity do I bring thee, with blood flowing
 like the waters of the Ganges;
 Oh! King, erect in my name, the Golden Dagoba.”

That Ratnavali as portrayed in the song has attributes of goddess Pattini in her role as Kali has been suggested by Nevill.¹

The minutiae of her cult: “the references to her worship in a sacred grove of trees, her braided bluish tresses, her resplendent figure, the continuous dancing movements, strings of pearls, incantations against diseases, her fearsome necklace, her triumphal progress, the house-to-house visits accompanied by drumming, the rejoicings of the Nàga world, and the offerings of flesh and blood flowing like the Ganga”, all these are unmistakable as strongly reminiscent of the cult of Goddess Bhagavati in the shrines of Kerala.

For earlier signs, we may turn to the Ramayana.² Hanuman searching for Sita in the wilds of Lanka, encounters Lanka Sri, “the Deity who presided over the capital protected by Ravana, she of monstrous aspect, who barred the way of that heroic son of Vayu. Emitting a great roar, she challenged him, saying, “Obedient to the mandate of the magnanimous Ravana, the King of the Titans, I guard the city..... I am the city of Lanka itself. None may pass me, yet, if any should contrive to enter here, he will soon fall under my blows, deprived of his life breath.” How that day saw the last of Lanka Sri, and forecast

1. Nevill, Hugh: the Taprobanian, Vol. II Part III, 1887, p, 88, footnote.
2. Hari Prasad Sastri: The Ramayana of Valmiki, Vol. III, Lanka, 1957.

the doom of Ravana, are matters which Valmiki narrates. Here what concerns us is the classical name Lanka Sri, the Deity of Lan̄ka, the goddess who identified herself with the very city of Lanka.

Lanka Sri and Ratnavali are nothing more than legends of the past. Nevertheless they are of value, as indications that Ceylon over the ages has not been without its own goddesses. It is only the label that varied. At least from the days of King Gajabahu of the second century A.D., Pattini has been a most favoured goddess of the Sinhalese. There is contemporary evidence of the active prevalence of the cult in the days of the Kandyan kingdom, as Knox¹ tells us. Today it prevails widely in the villages and in the outskirts of the city of Colombo.

To a certain extent, it is a link between the urban and the rural folks. Evidence of this may be found in the propitiation of the goddess at a *Gammadu* already narrated, and in the domestic rite of the *Kiriammas*. The latter finds a brief description in my studies: "The Pattini cult as a Socio-religious Institution," in the *Spolia Zeylanica*. (Vol. 26 part 1).

The *Kiriammas* are seven women, symbolic of the Sat Pattini, (the seven Pattinis), the seven forms of her allegorical descent, already recounted. The women who for the moment, are the seven Pattinis duly come, led by an elderly man the *Kiri Appu*. Held in fulfilment of a vow, *Kiri Appu* and the *Kiriammas*, intone incantations in propitiation of Goddess Pattini invoking the blessings of the Goddess to safeguard the family against future visitations of infectious diseases.

A line of study that interested anthropologists of a few decades ago, was the possible correlation of the cult of goddesses to the society in which Goddesses dominated, and the question was posed how far

1. Robert Knox: An Historical Relation of Ceylon (1681), pp. 157, 158.

matriarchal societies have goddesses. A classical example is set by the Bhagavati cult of matriarchal Kerala, where Bhagayati was the dominant deity, much more so than it is today. Evident traces of a matriarchal social alignment may be found in the Sinhalese society of the medieval ages. Nevertheless the co-existence of matriarchy and the cult of the goddess does not entitle us to draw general conclusions. The strongest factor against such a generalisation is the status of Devi in Hinduism, the Female Principle in Divinity, impersonated as Sakti, the complement of the Male Principle, God Siva, in particular. Devi is the general term signifying female, the counterpart of God, the consorts of the several Gods, each Devi bearing a different name and distinctive functions in the Hindu religion.¹

Several symbolic characters have emerged out of the one multi-personal feminine principle, the Sakti of Siva, variously designated Uma, Parvati, Durga, Kali, Gowri, etc. The ambivalence of the divinities is an aspect of the sacred in Hindu religion, the benign and the terrific, at once both loved and feared. An aspect of the Goddess Pattini in her role as the controller of infectious diseases is Mariamma of the Tamils. In this particular function Pattini of the Sinhalese finds her counterpart in Mariamma of the Tamils. In the extended prevailing forms of the cult of Pattini we may discern an integrated Aryo-Dravidian cult. Amma is the Dravidian form of the Sanskrit Mata (mother). In the characters of the Saptamatrikas, the Seven Mothers, we have an evolved form of the cult of the divine mother. The seven mothers of orthodox Hindu mythology are "symbolic of the seven maidens who helped Siva by drinking the blood of the demon as it oozed out of his body before it fell to the ground". Excepting the outward ceremonials of the Pattini cult, we have not gathered much of the background of the

1. G. S. Churiye—Gods and Men, Bombay, 1962.

cult, several aspects of which remain obscure. Vestiges of the cult of the Saptakannyakas (the Seven Maidens) have been observed among certain tribal groups of the ancestral North of Ceylon, on which Nevill¹ enlightens us.

3 THE WORSHIP OF DEVOL DEVIYO

The practice of the worship of Devol Deviyo is widespread among the Sinhalese of most parts of the island. It is almost inextricably inter-woven with the Pattini cult. A Devol Maduwa, which is the particular mode of the worship of Devol Deviyo, is as much a Gam-maduwa which is the method of propitiating goddess Pattini. Even from their legendary origins the two deities appear to be closely associated with each other and, therefore, it appears quite natural that they should be worshipped together at the same ceremony.²

Devol Deviyo was one of the seven sons born on seven consecutive days to the seven queens of King Sri Ramasingha of Kuduppura city in India. These seven princes grew up to be accomplished youths but unfortunately became somewhat wild in their behaviour. The unfortunate subjects who were being harassed by them complained to the King who decided to banish them from the country. Accordingly they were made to leave their homeland as traders with a ship load of rich merchandise. The ship came towards Lanka and as she approached the shores, attempted to land at Panadura, Gintota, Unawatuna and Uggalpitiya, but each time was prevented by adverse weather, till finally she got wrecked. The seven princes and their followers swam the seas for seven days till God Sakra in his mercy created a stone raft on which they took refuge. On this they sailed to Seenigama which was sacred to goddess Pattini and

1 Nevill, H: The Taprobanian.

2 Raghavan, M. D. The Pattini Cult as a Socio-Religious Institution: Spolia Zeylanica, Vol. 26, Part 1, P. 257.

when they attempted to land the goddess created seven mountains of fire. Devol Deviyo however knew how to get over this and thus they landed at Seenigama. He then sought a boon (*waran*) from goddess Pattini to receive offering on the same *asana* promising to cure all sicknesses in the land in return. This was granted with the intervention of god Kataragama. Devol Deviyo took up his abode a few miles away at a place which subsequently was called Veragoda, where he showed his powers by planting his walking-stick on the ground and making it grow instantly. He is said to have married a girl from the village; she bore him a son.

The Devol Maduwa or the Devol Kankariya too has a legendary origin. The first Devol Kankariya was said to have been held to cure an incurable headache of King Seraman of Seramanpura.¹ The performance was done by eight Brahmins who put up a large hall, (*maduwa*), 90 ft. in length and 22½ ft. in width, gaily decorated with various pandals, banners, tinkling bells etc. Inside were also placed elaborately decorated *mal yahan* — (flower stands) for Devol Deviyo, Pattini and the Dolaha Deviyo. The Kapuralas, duly purified after bathing and dressed in fresh white clothes, commenced the ceremony with the "*dalumuru*" i.e. consecrating each "*Mal yahana*" to its respective deity. Next they danced the 14 *Paliyas* or *scenes* such as the 'Kalagedi Paliya', 'Kalas Paliya', etc. This was followed by the performance of the eleven *Yakkam*, the 'Panthis Kolmura' and the singing of the ballads regarding the lives of Pattini; then the *yaga* on the Kurumbara thorana followed by the '*gabada Kollaya*'. The final item was the *seth-kavi*. After the performance of this elaborate ritual it was found that the King's headache had completely vanished.

1 The Reference here is obviously to King Cheraman Perumal of Kerala, another link in Sinhalese folklore with this colourful Kerala King.

In a modern Devol Maduwa the general scheme followed is more or less the same but of course vastly condensed so that it can be performed in the course of a single night. The ritual commences with the erection weeks ahead, of a *kapa* which is actually a "bara" or vow to hold a Devol Maduwa once the sicknesses for which the "bara" is taken, are cured. Then at an auspicious time, the place where the maduwa is to be constructed is prepared for the ceremony. A new *Kapa* called the *Biso kapa* is erected and at its southern end, small sheds called the "Yaga Maduwa" with "mal yahan" for Pattini, Devol Deviyo and the Dolaha Deviyo are erected and decorated with tender leaves of the coconut palm. In front of the "Yaga Maduwa" and "mal yahan" are placed several "pun kalas". Instead of a large shed the area in which the ceremony is performed is enclosed by stringing tender coconut leaves, so that the people assembled could view the performance from outside this enclosure. As the evening advances the kapuralas are ready duly purified and properly attired in white, some of the dancers tying a broad red band round their waists. Two or three "yak bera" are used to keep time for the dances. The Kapurala commences with the "dalumura" ritual. At each "Mal yahana" which is now filled with flowers and betel leaves the Kapurala recites incantations, burning incense the while; in the background is a single drummer keeping time. This is the method of consecrating the "mal yahana" to its respective deity. Then the dancing of the different "paliyas" commences. Sometimes two or three dancers and two drummers take part at once. Generally they perform some vigorous dances which keep the crowd entertained. However, not many "paliyas" can be performed in a single ceremony. Then follow the Yakkam during which the entire legend of Devol

Deviyo and his miraculous performances are recalled in song; then the "*mela pageema*" or fire walking ceremony commences.

This ceremony is a somewhat elaborate affair and certainly adds movement to an otherwise static drama. A necessary prelude to this is the performance called the "*millagaha kepeema*," or felling of the milla tree. (*Vitex altissima*). A milla tree brought from the forest is planted close to the dancing arena (this is done before the actual ceremony commences). A single dancer with an axe on his shoulder followed by a drummer dances down to the milla tree. One or two of the other Kapuralas follow, singing incantations. The dancer then sprays turmeric water "*Kahadiyara*" or '*Kaha pan*' round the tree and starts felling it. The tree is brought in procession to the arena, cut into small pieces, heaped together and set fire to. The dancer later tramples this smouldering heap or red-hot coals in a frenzied dance.

Of course much of the glamour of 'fire walking' is lost in these performances as the fire is only a very small one reduced merely to a symbolic representation of the real fire.

This is followed by a few episodes from the "*Panthis Kolmura*" and the chanting of a few ballads of Pattini. Then follow the "*seth-kavi*" of the "*seth-santhiya*", offering blessings particularly on the sick people on whose behalf the performance was originally started and generally on the entire assembly present. This is the penultimate act in the drama and is completed as the day dawns. The final act is an alms-giving in the preparation of which the entire village participates, after which invocations are made to God Kataragama, Pattini, Devol and the Dolaha Deviyo to keep the people free from sickness and generally to give them their blessings.

A Devol Maduwa is as much a social event as the Gam Maduwa. Though activities commence for the fulfilment of a vow of a single family which has been stricken with illness, practically all the people in the village are active participants. They flock to the maduwa with "panduru" (offerings) and take the opportunity to get their own vows fulfilled; they bring their little infants and get the Kapuwa to invoke special blessings on them to keep them free from disease. The vigorous dancing and the various episodes such as the "*millagaha kapeema*", the invocations and chanting keep them alternately entertained or awe-struck as they sit practically through the live-long night.

4. THE BALI, THE CULT OF THE PLANETARY DEITIES

Literally meaning "a sacrifice", the Bali is a sacrifice to the gods, a ritual offering with elaborate ceremonials.

The basis of the cult is the faith that the particular *graha* under which a man is born, has a subtle influence on the man all through his life. Each *graha* has its specific deity. When a man passes through adverse times and things go awry in business life or is afflicted with an infirmity that baffles normal medical treatment, the remedy is to propitiate the concerned *graha*, or the whole group of the nine *grahas*, the NAVA GRAHA BALI.

A Bali may be a ceremonial devoted to the particular individual to whose benefit it is held, or to the entire household or even to an entire village. Kinsmen, friends and others interested lend a hand in the successful conduct of this time-honoured institution, at once religious, domestic and social.

The collection of essential materials engages the first attention. Plantain stems are among the things largely needed. Wherever, a plantain bunch happens to be cut, the stem is requisitioned. Another party goes collecting flowers of five different colours, including the red variety largely needed. Coconut flowers, and arecanut flowers, are among the essentials. Unopened sheaths of these are cut from the trees. Plastic clay is needed in quantities to mould the Bali statuaries, moulded in life size to represent the planetary deity whose blessings are invoked. Moulded on frames of arecanut palm strips or split bamboo, these are gorgeously painted in bright colours of red, yellow, green and black. Rag wick torches are required in large numbers. Clean rags are collected from the houses near by. Powdered resin is another essential. In his frenzied dancing, handfuls of the resin are projected by the *Bali edura* against the uplifted lighted torch, held in his hands. For the *hat maluwa* or the curry of the seven essential vegetables, needed for the offerings, the seven kinds of vegetables are stored. Coconuts and limes, betel and betel-nuts, and raw rice, are among other things collected and stored to be handy in the rituals. With several people preparing the hundred and one things needed for the elaborate ceremonies, the house is a hive of activity.

At one end of the compound are stood the Bali statuaries. Facing them on the opposite side, is erected a platform of areca palm strips, topped over with string work covering of tender coconut leaves interspersed with mango leaves. Here the *aturaya*, the person for whose benefit the Bali is held, reclines on a couch.

All who come to witness the rituals, or to help in its preparations, are fed on this and the following day. The women of the household strain every nerve to

prepare the food and serve the guests who arrive continuously. As the evening advances, guests and spectators arrive and settle at various parts of vantage to view the rituals. Dressed in a white cloth with a red cummerbund round the waist, and a girdle of gleaming silver chain, the drummer appears. Preliminary strokes on the drum, announce that it is the commencement of the ceremony. From behind the stage, the sound is heard of jingling anklets, and little bells.

First to appear is the *Bali edura's* assistant. Dressed in white tights, with pads of bells round his legs, he displays his skill in tumbling and acrobatics. The drummer in the corner calls the pace for the dance and the acrobatics, and the boy in tights readily responds. A series of somersaults, and acrobatic feats entertain the spectators who await the chief priest. The latter soon arrives from behind the stage. Dressed in a bright red jacket adorned with fringes of tinsel and coloured beads glittering in the blaze of the lights, wearing white tights, anklets and bell pads on the feet and a lighted torch in hand, his appearance is impressive. (Text Fig.) All through the night he dances, throwing in the process handfuls of the powdered resin burning in bursts of flames and smoke. The drummer suits his drumming to the tempo of the dance, from a slow beating to a quick tattoo, just sufficiently, not unduly loud.

The chants and the dance continue non-stop until midnight. The chanting of the songs in rites of exorcism now assumes a more resonant tone to the throbbing of the drum. The chanting proceeds till dawn, when the final stage is reached in the proceedings. Dancing, frenzied in the finale of the dance, at the close of the accelerated steps the dancer falls in a trance flat on the ground. His assistant advances and places on his chest, an ash pumpkin which he cuts in two with a stroke of the cutting knife.

Possessed of the very spirit, the dancer rises and runs amock pulling down the several gadgets set up for the rituals. He continues his rhythmic steps as he does so, throwing handfuls of resin against his lighted torch. Here now end the ceremonials, signifying that the evil spirits have departed, often indicated by signs of the crashing of a branch of a tree near-by.

The *aturaya*, the patient, now leaves the couch on which he was reclining over the whole course of the rituals, with a look of weariness pervading the features from the all night vigil, nevertheless fortified with the feeling that it has done him a world of good.

Songs in praise of the planetary deities sung by the assistant mark the concluding stage of the ceremony. All retire to rest until the time approaches for the mid-day meal, when the chief priest re-appears dressed in a white costume and his jingling pads. To the chanting of verses in modulated tones, he dances lightly until the mid-day sun reaches its zenith. The drummers, dancers and the rest proceed up the garden path, accompanied by others bearing the clay images, and the altars of offerings. Reaching the junction of the roads, these and other stuff used in the ceremonials are here deposited. A final chanting is here done of magical verses, and as the sun moves away from its zenith in the sky, all return home impressed with the satisfactory performances of the ceremonials. All the participants are now entertained to a good meal.

In further elucidation of the technology of the Bali, I herein reproduce the accounts by Hugh Nevill,¹ entitled "Maeti Bali Yagaya" and "Rakusu Bali San-grava".

"Maeti Bali Yagaya is an incantation to avert sickness caused by the Graha or planets. We are told to

1 Nevill, Hug: Sinhala kavi, edited by P. E. P. Deraniyagala (Govt. Press), 1955, Vol. 3, page 349.

have the house cleared. A frame 13 spans 10 finger-widths long, 6 spans 5 finger-widths wide should be taken, and on this the bali image is to be made of clay. Above Iru, Sikuru and Guru are to be shown moulded in relief, on the right **Buda, Sandu, Sani**. On the left **Kuja, Pani** or **Rahu**, and **Ketu** are to be depicted. When the nine planets are thus exhibited, and offerings of flowers, and betel given, the celebrant is to dance.

If one's body has been fouled, as often happens in thatched huts, by cobras, geckos, crows, or skink lizards, or if nests of black ants (geri) have come, the evil will be averted. The evils caused by the planets in their ascendancy will also be averted. The incantation is two or three centuries old, and my copy contains only 8 verses of very long lines.

Example,

Tirasa Iru Guru Sikuru ambamin dakuna Budu
Sandu Saeni sadala

Tirasa siwu Sin satara ambamin wamata Kuja
Pani Ketu sadala

Mese nawa graha rupa watakara samaga bali
rukada yodala

Satosa me maeti sanduge piri-pata duraera gan
krodaya bala.

At the head, designing Iru, Guru, Sikuru, on
the right making Budu, Sandu, Sani—

At the head designing the four Four Sin, on the
left making Kuja, Pani, Ketu,

Thus having arranged the bali image with the
images of the nine graha around,

Gladly take and dispel the evil spells of this
illustrious minister, having seen the hostility.

Rakusu Bali Sangarawa is intended for use at a bali ceremony in which Vishnu and other spirits are invoked to cure sickness. The image of Vishnu used at the ceremony should be made as follows. The face of a Rakusu, a cobra's hood on each shoulder, three eyes, a Rakusa's face on the belly, six hands, a lotus flower on each knee, and on each ankle a cobra's hood.

The bali of Divi Rakusa is to be made with five cobra hoods, three eyes, and a Rakusa face, a Rakusa face on each shoulder and a cobra hood at the arm-pit, a cobra hood at each knee, and at the ankles, and a Rakusa face on the stomach.

The image of Maha Sohona is to be made, with a huge body, the face of a bear, and curly tangled hair, a javelin in the left hand, and an elephant in the right, from a wound in which he catches and drinks its blood.

The bali of Graha Bhairava, is to have a sword in hand, a mace raised up, a mouth large enough to swallow a thousand elephants. He rides a golden stag. Twelve faces should be near him. The name of this spirit is not given in verse, but a prose note follows which says, Graha Bhairava.

Oddisa bali has four cobras twining round the body as far as the neck, he rides on a man, holds a sword; a golden coloured cloth should be spread over it.

Suriya or the sun bali has three eyes for the face, and a crown on the head, the hands are red, one holds a bird, the other a string of beads. The figure rides a peacock.

Kili-saka has red eyes, and three faces of a Rakusa. He has six hands, with an iron mace in each, and carries a red garland, and has a sign-mark on one hand. On each side of him should be shown a female figure, of red, blue and black colour, with the face of a man, but with female breasts, and four hands holding iron clubs and axes. This is invoked to cure impurities of women.

Yaksa Rakusa bali, has the head of a Rakusa, with three cobra hoods, a cobra at each corner of the mouth. On the left is shown Molan Gara, on the right Wata Kumara. He rides a buffalo.

Chaturvahana Rakusa has four faces, seven hands, wears jewels, and a flowered cloth. He rides an elephant, a horse, a chariot, or a man.

Bhairava Rakusa has seven cobra hoods, and five heads, at his shoulders and cheeks, a cobra hood, on his belly three faces and five cobra hoods. In his hand he holds a face, he rides a bull.

Nilaya Rakusa has five faces, seven cobra hoods and four hands. His body is entirely entwined by snakes. Three faces are at each shoulder, and seven cobra hoods. Five faces are on each side. He rides a man. This cures burns, swelling, chills, and dysentery.

Pusanga Rakusa has a Rakusa's face with five cobra hoods, four hands, and bears about him 154 cobra faces. He rides a goat.

Rassa Rakusa has the form of a man, six horns, a garland in his left hand, and a "soliya" in his right. Over his head is a white standard.

Kama Rakusa has one hand, one foot, wears three cloths, and a crown.

Raja Rakusa has five faces like a deva's five crowns, four hands, and holds a sword, axe, and a human skull in his hands. He has five cobra faces. This cures the evils from fouling by snakes, growth of toadstools or fungi, and swearing upon the earth.

Goli Rakusa has five faces, a crown, four hands, cobras writhing round his body, a sword and lotus in his right hand. He rides an elephant. On his belly are three Rakusa faces, and on his knees a bullock's face. At his knees and feet are four Rakusa faces. At the navel a goddess with a golden face.

Polaba Rakusa has a golden body, nine faces, and nine more on his belly. At his two knees are six faces, on his shoulders two faces; he rides on a cobra and wears a blue cloth. He holds a sword, shield, bow, and arrows.

Asurindu Rakusa has a white body like Isuru or Siva, he rides on a horse, and wears all royal jewels.

Mas-gan Bhairava, or the monthly Bhairava has three eyes, a Rakusa face, new jewels, four hands, an axe in the right one. He rides a goat, his body is white.

Sarva Rakusa bali has either a figure with golden face; white belly, on which are eight Rakusu faces, or the face white, with three cobra hoods on the belly. He rides a black horse. This removes the evils caused by fouling of a house or person by rat snakes, cobras, or oil-ants.

Vayu Rakusa has a sword and club, and a human victim in his hand. His teeth are irregular, he has horns on his head, and his canine teeth protrude like tusks. He wears a crown, and is of red and blue colour. He rides a goat. He is also represented with three faces, each with a cobra hood, six white hands, five of which hold instruments, and rides on an aeti-kukula or pheasant cuckoo, literally an aeti cock. This is a large bird, black, with bright chestnut wings, in shape like a magpie.

Jora Ankusa has three red eyes, three Rakusu faces, with one tooth in each. He holds a shield, axe, bow, arrow, and has six hands, three feet. His faces are black.

This is then followed by a verse in honour of Vishnu, who is said to have five faces, a crown, the sun and moon as *Todu* ear-jewels. He rides an elephant, and has serpent faces on his hips. In his right he carries a Parasatu tree, and in his left he holds Maha Meru. His arms have each a cobra hood. Brahma and Vishnu are stationed on the south. In another form Vishnu has twelve faces, and twenty-four hands, holding 24 instruments. Again he has ten hands, and holds a sword, a full water-jar, a girdle or sash, a nemasa fish, a bow, and yagadawa or iron mace. He is of blue colour.

These verses seem chiefly composed as a memorandum to guide the celebrant, when preparing any of the bali images for the bali ceremony. It is an important record for comparative mythology, and is especially remarkable for following the general form of bali offering to the planets, without importing those planets. For the astronomical element, is here substituted the belief in certain composite and grotesque

figures of demons that cause sickness. These figures are now accepted literally by the votary as correct representation but are doubtless only the survival of figures made up with symbolical intention, probably even with an express intention that they should not be construed as the likeness of any living thing, whether of earth, air, or water.

The poem is about three or four centuries old in its present form. My copy has 64 verses.

Example,

At dasayeki kaduweki punkalasyedi
 Bandawelu remasaya dunu yagadawa saedi
 Nilpae wan watawat sudu wasun baendi
 Nawa mal nawa bulat nawa miti bandiwu yedi.

Furnished with ten hands, a sword, a full pitcher,
 Arranged with girdle, Salmon, bow, and mace,
 Tying a blue coloured cloth or white over the
 concealed-offering,
 Furnish and tie nine handfuls of new flowers, new
 betel."

Muthuswami Dikshitar of South India, a renowned authority on Carnatic music and well known for his musical compositions, is reputed to have composed a set of invocatory songs entitled the *Nava Graha Kirtanas*, hymns in praise of the nine planetary deities. The story goes that Tambi Appa, one of his disciples suffered from an acute abdominal pain. Medical aid proved futile. Divining the cause, the astrologer ascribed the malady to malignant planetary influences. A ceremonial propitiation of the *Graha* was decided upon. Muthuswami Dikshitar composed a *Kirtana*, a devotional piece in praise of the deity, and the disciple was enjoined to sing it a number of times. The abdominal malady steadily vanished. Stimulated by the successful reaction, the Dikshitar composed eight more *Kirtanas* addressed to the rest of the *Grahas*. Thus came into being the *Nava Graha Kirtanas* of Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar.

5. DAHATA SANNIYA

THE CULT OF THE EIGHTEEN SANNI YAKKAS

The Southern Province of Ceylon, which for ages enjoyed a life of comparative detachment from the rest of the Island, has within its borders a multiplicity of cults of spirits and Yakkas, each with its own system of rituals and spectacular ceremonial dances. These cults, which are a living part of rural society, have in recent years attracted the attention of scholars from far and near. The studies conducted have contributed to an intelligent appreciation of the several cultural facets of these traditional arts. Endeavours are also being made by different organisations to stimulate interest in these ancestral cults and to make them more widely known to the rest of Ceylon and incidentally to the world outside. Among such organisations may be mentioned the Ruhunu Kala Kavaya, which in recent years have been holding annual festivals of indigenous folk art at the metropolis of Colombo.

From the rural arena to the modern stage is a welcome phase in the story of these traditional folk arts, a measure of their spectacular and entertaining values.

Of the cults of the deities and spirits in general, it may rightly be stated that to the rural folks themselves, the seasonal or occasional propitiatory ceremonials, are not devoid of their attributes of a wholesome diversion, if not, of amusement. For, to the folk mind, the faith is real in the miraculous powers of these beings for good or evil, for positive benefit when duly invoked and propitiated.

A class of spirits whose intercession is sought in incurable maladies, are the Sanni Yakkas. Sanni Yakkas is the generic title to a group of eighteen Sanni dances. The Sanni Yakkas are Bhuta, Abuta, Maru, Amukku, Vedi, Vata, Pit, Ginijal, Gulma, Jala, Bihiri, Kana, Golu, Kora, Sitala, Deva, Demala and Kola.

Some of the names are names of the diseases themselves. The story of the origin of the Sanni dances is thus featured in legends.

When the Lichchavi king Sankhapala was living with his queen Asupala, he had to wage a war in a foreign land. At this time the queen was with child. Not knowing this, the king proceeded. The queen had a prenatal longing to eat a *Mi-amba* variety of mango. On the ministers being informed of this, they managed to supply her with one fruit with great difficulty as that was not the season for those mangoes.

A female servant of the palace also had the longing to partake of a *Mi-amba* fruit. When the servant saw the queen eating the mango, she too begged for a piece. The queen saying, "When this is hardly enough even for me, how can I give you?" ate the mango all alone. Greatly angered at this the servant girl thought of taking revenge on the queen.

The king returned triumphant, gaining victory. Reaching the sea-port, he directed the queen to decorate the palace. In the meantime, the servant managed to approach the king, and told him that it was as the consequence of an illicit love affair with a minister that the queen was big with child. Very much enraged at this story, the king ordered the executioner to remove the queen to the cemetery and rend her in twain. The executioner took the queen Asupala to the cemetery and having hung her on a "*Pubberiya*" he rent her in twain and returned.

By the power of the prince she had conceived, he protected himself in one half of the body. Later these two halves joined and after the passage of ten months the prince was born. He lived on the human flesh of the bodies in the cemetery. Fortunately for him he enlisted the help of a company of eighteen demons. As he ate human flesh he came to be known as Raja Mulu Yaka. Accompanied by his retinue, the prince reached the top of the mountain called Wadureliya.

On their way they ate the herbs of the forest. While on the top of the mountain they felt very hungry and

thought of making pills. Fatigued by hunger they fell asleep while the pills were being prepared. God Isvara who came there mixed every pill with honey and disappeared.

On partaking of the pills, the prince was endowed with the knowledge of previous existence. The others were rejuvenated. By this new power, it was revealed to the prince that his innocent mother was killed by his father. Therefore accompanied by his army of demons he attacked his father's kingdom of Visala Maha Nuwara. Many men and women were killed and eaten. Along with the evil demons in this city, disease and famine also set in. Thereupon the Buddha visiting there from his Vihara in Jetawana recited the *Ratana Sutta* and ordered that the demons be propitiated each with offerings of a leaf-cup of rice. This brought about happiness. The gods Natha and Saman were appointed guardians to see that the demons perform their duty.

Elaborate preparations are made for holding the Dahata Sanni. The shed is first decorated with tender coconut leaves and plantain stems; offerings are made of food, flowers and betel. The demons are invoked to cast their glances and receive offerings.

The Sanni dance is performed during the three watches of the night, the *Sanda Samayama* (evening watch), *Maha Samayama* (midnight) and *Aluyama Samayama* (dawn). The representatives of the eighteen Sanni demons appear separately and the dances are performed. Thereafter the company of demons of Vesamuni is represented with bodies painted in black. There are eight such companions. The first armed with an incense-burner, the second has a large torch, the third a vessel containing water mixed with turmeric, the fourth a pot in which there is a coconut flower, the fifth a shawl, the sixth a king-coconut, the seventh betel, and the eighth a stick.

Every dancer clad in *Burulla* leaves and painted in black has a weird appearance. This dance is per-

formed during the live long night bearing torches, and burning incense.

It is believed that the performance has a magical influence not only over the patient but also over persons who witness this Yak Natuma.

The eighteen Sanni demons are invoked severally, in a series of dances, named after the main offerings of each dance. Such are the *kendiya paliya*, the dance of the ceremonial *kendiya*; the *kalas paliya*, the water pot; the *tembili paliya*, the king-coconut; the *dalumura paliya*, the betel; and the *polu paliya*, the gata (the mace). Each day of the week, is under the influence of the particular Sanni of the day.

The Sanni demons are invoked to come to the *aile*. This is a structure of sticks placed cross-wise on either side. Spanning these is a horizontal pole, on which the dancer possessed of the demon swings. This is part of the ceremonials at all dances in the cult of the yakkas.

THE COSTUME IN FOLK CULTS

In contrast to the rigid adherence to elaborate and conventional patterns of dress as seen in the Kandyan and classical traditions, is the keynote of simplicity in the costumes of the folk cults and folk ceremonies. There is almost a complete absence of bejewelled ornaments of silver and gold so characteristic of the ancient traditions. Their place is taken by new elements that show the dancer as the artist *par excellence* not only in the exposition of his art but also in the manner in which he makes use of the modest means available to him to obtain the necessary background provided by the dancer's costumes. In the case of *Gām-madu* and *Devol madu* and the propitiatory dances such as *Bali natum*, the dancers wear nothing more than a *Selaya*, a cloth for the waist and jingles for the feet and the decorative element is provided by the tender coconut leaves—*gok-kola*—from which they turn out various ornaments for the head, arms and body. In the case of *Yak natum* such as *Daha-ata-Sanniya*, most colourful costumes are turned out by the masterly use of multi-coloured beads, cheap brocades and coloured thread. A typical example for such a costume is that of the *Gara-Yaksaya* described by Ananda Coomaraswamy¹: "This consists of a red hand-made cotton cloth skirt

1 A. K. Coomaraswamy—*Medieval Sinhalese Art* (1956) pg. 239.

and jacket, the skirt with three flounces. The jacket fastens behind. The whole is covered with very elaborate blue and white cotton applique embroidery, the edge of the applied cloth being turned in and sewn with white cotton. The design on the chest (flower in vase) might almost be called "braided" as it is executed by sewing down very narrow strips of applied cloth following the pattern."

The exorcist in the *Vadiga Patuna* appears in a most fascinating costume. On his head is a Brahmin's turban of generous size and elaborately decorated with beads and coloured braid. His face is made up of a white paste and eyebrows and eye lids marked with black salve. He dons a black beard and whiskers. He wears a colourful long sleeved velvet jacket elaborately worked with coloured beads and trimmings of various types. His neck is adorned with several strands of coloured beads worn as necklaces. Round the waist is a variously decorated belt, on top of a short skirt falling up to the knees. He wears a pair of white trousers underneath the skirt with the fore legs wrapped up to the knees with a long strip of black cloth. Two sets of jingles for the calves and *silambu* for the feet complete the ensemble. As he moves majestically along in front of the picturesque *Ata magala* under the incandescent light of the petromax lamp he makes a most colourful and impressive sight.

An important feature in the costume of the propitiatory dance called *Yak natum* is the use of masks to impersonate the *Yakka* or demon who is to be propitiated in the dance. The illusion of reality is further enhanced by the costume. Thus the *Maha Sohon Yakka* is depicted by a dancer wearing the mask of a weird wolf with an abundance of long shaggy hair on his head and round his body. The only ornaments worn are the jingles for his feet.

The reference to masks would naturally lead us to the Kolam dances of Ruhunu. Here again masks and dress are appropriate to the personality

represented in the dance. Further, Kolam masks have a variety of expression about them suited to the particular character. Though of set features, as the dancers move in the lurid torch light that lights up the rural scene, these masks gain a peculiar liveliness and dramatic effect—a certain mobility of expression which undoubtedly is the highest testimony to the perfection of the technique of the kolam mask.

Characteristic of the simple unsophisticated rural life and redolent of the country air are such folk dances as the harvest dance and the *Kalagedi natum*. These traits find expression in the simplicity of their costumes too. The young girls taking part in a harvest dance for instance, have no more ornament than what the flowers afford them for their dark long tresses or their shapely necks and the *rukul* bangles and silver-plated *todu* earrings that the village smith turns out for them for a song. A white pleated *selaya* with the picturesque *neriya* is their main garment. The upper part of the body normally had a shawl which the dancer wielded in a particular fashion. On the modern stage however these costumes have changed considerably and their places have been taken by the latest colourful prints and batiks characteristic of modern times.

CHAPTER VIII

TRIBAL DANCES:

1. DANCES OF THE VEDDA

True to their primitive tribal life, the Vedda religion is simple faith in the "guardianship of the living by the spirits of the dead, not only of the forgotten nameless dead, long merged in a general spirit world, but more especially of the recent remembered dead, called collectively Nae Yakku". These "stood towards their living kindred in the light of friends and relatives, who if revered manifested benevolence, but if neglected, remained indifferent to their sorrows or evinced active hostility". The cult of the deceased and the ancestral cult take the form of ceremonial dances.

"Dominant over the Nae Yakku were the spirits of a few traditional heroes, chief of whom were the brothers, Kanda Yaka also called Ala Yaka, and Bilindi Yaka."

"Next in importance to Kanda Yaka was Bambura Yaka, also called Ala Yaka, who, though he might provide Yams and help to kill pigs, might also if angered, cause illness or lead dogs astray and have them killed by leopards. Similar in nature was Panniki Yaka."

In the pages of his *Vanished Trails*, R. L. Spittel gives us a graphic description of the dances:

"The morning of the seventh day found all the Veddas, men women and children gathered at their dancing place by the foot of the hill — merely a flat

clearing of the jungle that also served as their bartering ground. *Wadipola* they called it. This was their sylvan temple amidst the towering trees. It contained no emblem of God, no altar. Here they were now to enact a ritual as old as the rocks around them — the dance to the Nae Yakku.

Neela, chieftain, priest, and dancer all in one, stepped into the middle of the space, stabbed an arrow into the ground, and set beside it a gourd of water, and some boiled yams on a tripod of sticks. Holding an arrow in both hands he moved round the offering and began the ancient incantation :

• My departed one, my departed one, my God,
Where art thou wandering?

The monotonous chant, inviting the spirits to the feast, went on and on. Almost imperceptibly the kapurale's walk became a shuffle, his paces lengthened. With each step he patted the ground twice with the ball of the advanced foot and his body swayed rhythmically from the waist in a half turn. His movements gained momentum as his excitement increased. Each half turn of the body forward was accompanied by a lowering of the head, the dishevelled hair falling over the face; and at each half turn backward, the head was tossed up.

Some of the men joined in with snatches of song and dance, marking the rhythm by tapping their chests or abdomens, while the onlookers clapped their hands in unison.

The general invocation now gave place to one in which each of the more prominent Yakku was individually addressed. Kande Yaka, Lord of the Dead, was the first invoked. His powers in hunting as a man were recalled.

“Going from hill to hill, tracking from spoor to spoor
the path of the sambhur,”

The vehemence of the dancer's movements, his utter obliviousness to his surroundings, soon indicated that the ceremony was gathering to its climax. Neela, imbued with a belief in the reality of the Yaka about

to possess him, surrendered himself to a frenzy. Streaming with sweat, he panted and gasped, his shaggy hair tossing wildly. Then, as the Yaka entered him, he moaned and screamed and with a tremor of the body collapsed, unconscious, into the hands of one who closely followed him.

Worked to a contagious excitement, two of the other Veddas became possessed.

Recovering dazedly from his fall, Neela bent over the offerings as if inspecting them, and, to show that the Yaka within him was pleased, he sprang suddenly away, shouting "Ah! Ah!"

Other Yakku were invoked in turn: Bilindi Yaka, Bambura Yaka and the rest of them. With each possession kapurale, going into paroxysm, panted out instructions he received in hoarse, guttural accents and shouts of "Ah! Ah!"

The spirits, having declared their approval of the gifts promised protection from evil and help in hunting. The kapurale pointing to the sky, indicated the auspicious hour for starting; like a nosing hound he gave the direction it should take; and marked on his forearm the length of the quarry's horns. The ceremony ended with an invocation to the Nae Rakku:

Hail, Hail

Come wherever you may be;

On a tree, on a rock, or in the forest, come

Come and partake of this.

Grant us your aid as you did when alive.

Eat and drink. Think no wrong of us.

We also eat and drink.

Neela paused a few moments, and then continued:

You who sought us, whom we failed to save,

Grieve not, whoever you may be,

But lie at rest. We have your child;

He shall be as one of ours.

And should the man who wronged you live,

May his fate be as he deserves.

Going up to Selli, who stood with the foundling in her arms, Neela, passed his hands over its face and

chest. Then Bandaradua, who had been a silent spectator, stepped out and with bowed head stood before Neela for his blessings. The Veddas thought that a strange thing for the dour old Bandaradua to do.

Finally, all, including the children and even the dogs, gathered round the simple offering of yams and water and partook of them.

Thus did those folk of the woods make communion with the spirits of their newly dead."

The Vedda invokes for success in hunting a class of spirits invoked in ceremonial dances, the *aduku mangala*, the propitiatory ceremony to the hunting spirits. A typical ceremony of this kind, is the one Spittel describes in the following terms:

"It was now evening, and the Veddas repaired to their dancing ground within the forest bordering the Balana Plain. While the men prepared a framework of sticks and embellished it with bundles of green leaves the women cooked the food for the offering. The heart, lungs and liver of the pig were chopped up and stewed with a seasoning of salt and chillies; rice was boiled. Six portions were shared out on broad *Kanda* leaves and set on the platform. To each of these was added seven betel leaves, which, proving insufficient, were substituted by leaves of jungle pepper of similar appearance.

The crescent moon had risen over the hill-encircled plain when the ceremony began. Neela, clad in a white cloth Tissahamy had brought for the occasion, holding an arrowhead in each hand, paced round the offerings to the throbs of a drum of langur skin. Up and down, and round and round he danced and sang the long night through, adjuring the jungle gods.

As in all such rites, the spirits first invoked were Kande Yaka and Bilindi Yaka, and also Indigola Yaka, male and female. Then followed a list of beings who, as their names implied, were once men. These hunting

spirits were the gods who fell from a hill, the new god pierced by an elephant, the new god of the hunting plain, and the phantom of the foot hill.

The ritual reached its climax when the priest, taking a betel leaf from the trestle, placed it against the right shoulder of a hunter and split it down one side with the arrow-head; then against the left shoulder, cleaving it on the other side; and finally against the chest, dividing it through the middle. Then he cast the leaf down. If it fell smooth surface uppermost that man would have luck, but not if it fell reversely. And thus each hunter — Tissahāny, Ado, Poromola, Vēla — was tested in turn to ascertain who would be favoured and who not.

It was long past midnight when the ceremony ended; and all the Vedḍas, together with their dogs, partook of the oblation, leaving nothing to the spirits. Finally they lay down and slept.

At dawn, keen and confident in the portents, the men set out on the trail. After three days of successful hunting, they returned laden with meat, dried and fresh, of a sambhur, pig, monkey and monitor lizard."

2. SOKARI AMONG THE KINNARAYA

A pastime of the Kandyan peasantry, Sokari is an entertaining folk drama with its several incidents strung together to yield a play of intense rustic appeal. With its sensitive touches of artless rural life, it is unique in the field of the rural arts of Ceylon. As almost the only story of its kind centering round the experiences of a family of immigrants from India, in contact with the main elements of Ceylon's folk culture, it gains in perspective. Deeply symbolic in its presentation, the several incidents are presented, from the felling of the tree and making a boat to cross over to Ceylon, to the last scene, the weaving of the mat for the couple to sleep on, symbolic of partnership in domestic life.

The most intriguing factor of Sokari, is its cultural complex. The name Sokari is Indian, from the colloquial word Chokri, a girl, in Marathi and Hindustani. In the name, *Andi*, we have a term reflective of Tamil origins. The particular character, the husband of Sokari, according to old versions of the story, is from the country of Kasi, North India. There is nothing strange in this, for the Andis have been on their feet for ages and with their veneration of religiosity, may have found their way to holy Kasi.

How it happened to be a folk play of Kandyan peasantry, is another intriguing element. The incidents of the story, do not relate to anything Kandyan. Nevertheless, as a folk play, it does not prevail outside the Kandyan area. It is so intensely Kandyan, that it has found its way to the matweaving tribe, the Kinnaraya of the Kandyan villages. My own knowledge of Sokari in action centres round the play as it obtains among this picturesque tribe of the weavers of mats of exquisite colourful Kandyan patterns. As a group, the Kinnaraya is a peripheral group on the border land of the Sinhalese social system and the tribal, sharing this social trait with the Rodiya.

The incidents in the story are all staged in what has traditionally been called the Low Lands, the *Pata Rata*. Its occurrence in the *Uda Rata*, the Hill Region, may be interpreted as an interesting link between the two topographical zones. Perhaps no such cultural distinction existed in the early days between these two zones, as appears to have evolved in later Middle Ages and continued to modern times.

That a folk story undergoes changes in the telling of it and a folk play in the playing of it, cannot be better visualised than in the passage of Sokari over the ages.

In the Kandyan district it long enjoyed popularity as a rural play during the harvesting season, when

farmers have had to keep awake the whole night at the threshing floor (Plates 11 & 12) in the paddy fields.

An account of the Sokari, its several cultural aspects, the different versions and its presentation at different places, will be found in the pages of Saratchandra¹. The presentation of the play by the Kinnarayyas dramatises the several incidents of the play, which nevertheless vary in certain respects from its mode of presentation by the Kandyan peasantry in general. The narration herein of the play is adapted from the description in the pages of my monograph on the Kinnarayyas.² The play opens with three characters, the Gurunanse or the Guru, supposed to be from Delhi, Sokari his young wife, and Paraya his attendant. The couple decide to leave their homeland and travel to Sinhala (Ceylon) : 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 *vibhuti*, the sacred ash. 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. 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. 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. This sets him thinking. They land at Puttalam on the west

1 Saratchandra, E. R. The Sinhalese Folk Play and the Modern State Ch. IV, pp. 73—82.

2 Raghavan, M. D. The Kinnaraya; the Tribe of Mat Weavers, Spolia Zeylanica, Vol. —20—Part II (1951).

coast and halt at a "madama", 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 gourdskin vessel goes out to fetch water.

On the way he is bitten by a dog and falls seriously ill, his wife and friends tend him. Sokari goes to the Vedarala of Tambaravila. He is very pleased to see Sokari and immediately responds. The Vedarala 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 Vedarala makes love to Sokari and wins her. Both Sokari and the Vedarala disappear by morning. The Guru goes to a Kapurala and requests him to find out and reclaim Sokari. The Kapurala tells him that Sokari is now living with the Vedarala and advises him to invoke the gods to get her back. The Guru implores the gods Vishnu and Kataragama as well as the *Sat-Pattini*, making offerings and vows to the gods and the goddess. The allusion here is to goddess Pattini and her birth seven times in the world. The vows take effect. The Guru goes to the village of Tambaravila and brings 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 Guru-hami, his wife and the Vedarala the full cast as staged at Henavala includes a Hettiya or a Chetty from India, a Paraya alias Rama, a servant of the Guru, Sokattana, the Vedarala's son, and last but not least the Gurunanse the preceptor who accompanies the play with his rhythmic tattoo on the long drum, and Nayikaraya, the Ahikuntakaya, of the tribe of Indian snake charmers, the Ceylon gypsy tribe. With the Gurunanse, as the central figure, all the cast move round him in a circle.

Presently he starts singing a couplet, 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. The verses sung are the introductory quatrains of the Sokari poem. Rama, the Guru's personal attendant, has a bundle of clothes 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 Vedarala 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 Rama to strike him down which he promptly does. The Veda 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. Vedamahatmaya dances for joy that he has got such a fine fellow of a son and expatiates on his wife's beauty. As the dialogue proceeds, the son cuts jokes at the expense of the father. He asks him what his bulging stomach contains. He rejoins that there are babies in it and cattle and poultry. His son enjoys the joke and comments that he could hear him cry. The Veda touches his distended belly and his hands stimulate 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 tattoo 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 Veda now gaining confidence, dances a special dance—the *Ketala-Kapuma* (cutting of the *Ketala—Lagenandra toxicaria*)—to please Sokari. He improves upon his familiarity and narrates the story of his birth. The Veda describes in comic verse that he is the well known Tambaravila Vedamahatmaya whose skill as a physician is the talk of all, and admired all over the land. Winning her favours, he steps yet another dance—“*Henagana Natuma*” 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 Vedamahatmaya to give him a plot of land. Summoning his servant in stentorian tones — “*Rama, Rama, O Rama,*” a request is sent to the Veda who exploits the situation. The Veda sends word that Sokari should herself ask. Sokari responds and the Veda is in feverish excitement at her coming. He agrees. Guru tricks him into getting possession of all his land. The Veda 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 Veda 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 Kapurala is summoned. He dances the ritual dance to propitiate the gods. Guruhami cuts the first sod. A snake is disturbed and causes a fright. Rama, the servant is dispatched to fetch an Ahikuntakaya to trap the snake. Rama brings one and he is promised arrack and several gifts. The piping charms the snake and it is trapped. 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 Ahikuntakaya goes round and all assembled drop coins in his basket. The servant is now sent for a supply of paddy. Vedamahatmaya

insists that Sokari Amma should in her own person make the request. She comes and the Veda 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 Vedarala sitting astride him acts as the cart man. The paddy is delivered, 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. 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. The paddy is taken out and the winnowing proceeds.

Cooking the rice is the next step. Rama goes for the water. On the way he is troubled by an ache in his ears and he sleeps. At his delay in returning, Guruhamy himself goes to the Vedarala who refuses the water. The Guru attempts to take it by force. He sets his dogs on the Guru who is badly bitten and drops down. Rama goes to the Vedarala — who prescribes absurd remedies, the milk of the fowl, and shoots of the grinding stone. The Vedarala 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. The Veda next injects medicines, poking him with a stick in hand. Failing to cure him, he decides on a Bali performance. The Bali altar is erected — a drawing on the ground represents the altar. Assisted by his son the Veda 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, feet raised and soles

meeting. The bodily frame swaying sideways and up and down, symbolises the process of weighing and balancing. The ingredients are now ground. 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 Amma being the chief mourner. Meanwhile the Veda appears and appropriates Sokari as his wife. His son remonstrates that he must have her. The son is silenced. A Kapurala now enters the scene. He propitiates the gods for his recovery, while the Vedarala blows a *Kalama* (magic horn), to counteract the Kapurala's spell. The spell triumphs and the Guru revives. In the midst of this episode Sokari and the Vedarala run away. The Guru is distracted with grief; a search ensues, Sokari is traced and brought back. He gives vent to his suspicions in a series of questions — how her hair is dishevelled, breasts scratched, and her garment torn; to all of which she gives clever replies.

The scene changes, the Veda 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 Sokttana. The Veda'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. 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 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 Kinnaraya with a light complexion and good features. His wife was quite womanly, whose charms captivated the impassioned Vedarala. The latter and his son were the real comedians of the piece. The Vedarala 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 Hetti, (the Chetti) in his realistic make up, could easily pass off for a real Chetti. Last but not least was the trainer, the Gurananse 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 as played by the Kinnara tribe. The Vedarala'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 Kapurala and the Ahikuntakaya (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.

An adaptation of their own, with a good deal of the original episodes, the Kinnaraya production, highlights the fertility motif, one of the constituents of the ritual element expressed in the concluding verses of the formal version of the story, verses which invoke the Nature gods, the Sun and Moon and gods Kataragama, Ganesa and Pattini, for cattle wealth, plentiful crops and the great need of the villager by the jungle, protection from wild animals.

3. DANCES OF THE RODIYA

In the variegated and picturesque social setting of Ceylon, the Rodiya occupies a unique place. An outcast of the Kandyan social order, he has yet a dignified bearing, evident more in the Rodiya of the Vanni than elsewhere. Claiming descent from royalty, he has a cultural heritage of his own.

In isolated Rodiya villages of the Kandyan region in particular, the Rodiya woman is proud of the title Nattukkari. Meaning literally, the dancing maiden, it evidently is a legacy of the days when the Rodiya danseuse was the only woman dancer of Ceylon. The point was brought home to the members of the Backward Communities Development Board, during a visit to one of the remote Rodiya habitats in the Kandyan district. Since the art of the Nalangana of the Middle Ages vanished, dance as an art of the fair sex had altogether disappeared, until the Rodiya stepped in and took up the trail in her own way.

Dance, with the Rodiya, is one of the many amusements which are primarily his own. As a class, the Rodiya is conscious of the role of recreation. More than anything, it balances his book of life; it lends grace to his technique of soliciting alms of a society, which while it takes his exiled status for granted, is yet

tolerant and even appreciative of his entertainment value. Destined to beg his way through life, dance to the Rodiya was one of the main avenues of his earning a living. Echoes of the past recall the days, when the Rodiya danseuse danced "the alluring maiden dance, draped in a silken sari, trailing down in folds of grace", to the accompaniment of songs "sweet as the Cuckoo's clarion call".¹

Rodiya dances may be viewed under three more or less different categories. First, is the round dance jointly danced by men and women. In the form it prevails today, (Plate 13) it is no doubt a heritage of the vigorous tribal past. The round dance is a feature of early communities in general, all the world over. Danced in the precincts of his domestic circle on joyous occasions, it is not a dance which is generally open to public view.

Of the other forms, two distinct strands may be recognised. The most common is the dance, largely capitalised in the business of soliciting alms and gifts, already alluded to. Dances of this character are steadily giving way under modern conditions with increasing opportunities to advance the economics of their life.

The third type is a refinement on the ancestral dance heritage, under the influence of the art of the Kandyan dance in an environment, intensely Kandyan, as evident in the village of Udugalpitiya, Kaduganava, in the vicinity of Kandy. Here, Sasira, the grand old man of the village, has had a reputation as an exponent of this phase of Rodiya dance art. Among his credentials is a certificate given him by the Ceylon Industries Fair Association which testifies that he "brought a troupe of Rodiya women dancers for dancing and they danced at the Exhibition. The

1 Descriptive accounts of the Rodiya dance with specimens of accompanying songs, will be found in the studies published in "Cultural Anthropology of the Rodiya".

S.Z. Vol. 26 Part I, and in the monograph "Handsome Beggars": "The Rodiya of Ceylon" (K. V. G. de Silva & Sons, Colombo), "an eminently readable and concise little book".

dancing was appreciated by the audience." This was in May 1939 and he was still active in giving dance shows at his house at Kadugannava at the time of my studies and the visits of the Backward Communities Development Board later. Men and women whom State or Society exiled to Rodiya life in the feudal days of the Kandyan Kingdom, may very possibly have had their own share in spreading a knowledge of the Kandyan dance among the Kandyan Rodiyas. Udugalpitiya Rodiya village treasures the tradition of such an origin. Here indeed, the Rodiya has taken to education, more intensely than in most of the other villages. A number of boys of this village are students of the Government Senior School, Kadugannava, and two of the youths — one of whom is a grandson of Sasira — have qualified themselves by a pass in the Junior School Certificate Examination.

CHAPTER IX

SINHALESE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Familiar to us from classical Sinhalese literature is the term "*Pancha-turya-nada*" meaning five-fold music. References abound in the pages of the *Mahavansa*, the Jataka stories, such prose works as the *Thupavansa*, *Pujavaliya*, *Saddharmalankaraya*, and *Sandesa Kavya*, in fact throughout almost the entire range of Sinhalese literary works. Generally associated with royalty and with the activities of Kings either in the life of the Court, or in the battle field or participating in religious ceremonies, the five-fold music is a regular accompaniment in annual festivals such as the Esala festival and in rituals connected with temples and devalas.

The term itself is a complex of the variety of music emanating from the five kinds of musical instruments classified under the terms *ATATA*, *VITATA*, *ATATA-VITATA*, *GANNA* and *SUSIRA*. The generally accepted interpretation of the five terms is as follows:¹

ATATA—Drums with leather on one side.

VITATA—Drums with leather on both sides.

ATATA-VITATA—Instruments in which strings are stretched across on a single face and tightened with pegs, e.g. Vina.

GANNA—Percussion instruments of bell-metal or other resonant metal, e.g. cymbals, bell.

1 M. B. Ariyapala, Society in Medieval Ceylon, p. 259.

SUSIRA—Wind instruments like flute, conch, *horana*.

The Kandyan tradition¹ gives a different interpretation to the first three terms, viz. *Atata*—Drums played with the hands only; *Vitāta*—Drums played with sticks; *Atata-Vitāta*—Drums played with the hand and sticks. It is obvious that the absence of the *Vina* from the Kandyan tradition has influenced this interpretation. This version, however, cannot be accepted as conclusive in view of the significant place given to the *Vina* in the ancient tradition as we shall see later.

It is evident that drums receive the greatest emphasis in this classification. Their significance becomes more evident as we proceed to examine the large variety of drums known to the Sinhalese. Even in *Bharata Natya* and other dance schools of India, in both classical and folk traditions, the drum, particularly the *mrdanga*, is the most important and most frequently used musical accompaniment. It would therefore be quite natural for local traditions which (as we have seen earlier) closely follow the Indian, give much emphasis to drums.

Sinhalese literary works have given us a formidable array of musical instruments. The most comprehensive of these is the list found in *Thupavansa* which mentions 79 musical instruments. Of these 56 are used by the army that accompanied the king in his march against the Tamils². In this list there are no less than 32 varieties of drums, viz. *Gata bera*, *Pana bera*, *Ekas bera*, *Mihingu bera*, *Maddala*, *Pataha*, *Loho bera*, *Yuwala bera*, *Maha bera*, *Daduru bera*, *Roda bera*, *Karandi bera*, *Ghosa bera*, *Talappara*, *Virandam*, *Tammatta*, *Nisana*, *Ranaranga ghosa*, *Samudra ghosa*, *Anukattuli*, *Timbulivi*, *Davul*, *Morahu*, *Mallari*, *Sirivili*, *Tappu*, *Tatsara*, *Dakki*, *Udakki*, *Mandala*, *Damaru*, *Dindi madhvani*.

The wind instruments mentioned are *Nagasara*, *Uccambhayangi*, *Kombu*, *Dalaham*, *Sakuna viridu*,

1 Sedaraman - *Udarata Natum Kalava* (Colombo) p. 48.

2 *Thupavansa*, pp. 153-4.

Surana, Kala, Dam dara, Loham, Sinnam, Sak sinnam, Ran sinnam, Ridi sinnam, Ruwan sinnam, Randara, Ridi dara, Gavaraham, Vijayayodhvani. Three percussion instruments—Kaitalam, Samuttalam and Gi-talam are also included. The stringed instruments mentioned are Tantri, Patasiri and Kinnara.

Two other references to musical instruments are made in connection with religious ceremonies; one at the commencement of the construction work of the Ruwanweliseya¹ and the other at the enshrining of the Relics.² The vast array of drums mentioned earlier had been reduced by about half. An addition is a drum called Davura. A large variety of conchs and some new wind instruments are noted: Ran sak, Ridi sak, Ruwan sak, Alavatti, Vangi, and Vasdandu. Three fresh stringed instruments are also mentioned—Nakula vina, Bhranga vina and Ksudra vina.

The Dambadeni Asna, Dalada Sirita, Kavyasekhara and the Sandesa Kavyas are some of the other important literary sources from which information about musical instruments can be gathered. The Dambadeni Asna³ which gives a description of Sinhalese Court life of the Dambadeni period mentions 54 different types of musical instruments.

Sixteen of these are not found in any other work. These instruments are Loho Davul, Jina Davul, Nada bera, Vayana bera, Burulu bera, Mahan kuttam, Vadigakkumba, Yaturukulal, Dara sak, Viduru sak, Veni vina, Mrdanga vina, Hasti vina, Maha vina, Davani vina and Madina vina. A particularly interesting feature is the large variety of stringed instruments.

The Dalada Sirita⁴, a thirteenth century literary work which gives a history of the Sacred Tooth Relic and enumerates the elaborate ceremonials connected with the offerings made to it, also mentions a number

1. Thupavansa p. 177.

2. do p. 205.

3. Dambadeni Asna (ed. 1923), p. 4.

4. Dalada Sirita-Sorata (1945) p. 49.

of musical instruments used at these ceremonies. Of these the following are not mentioned elsewhere; Vaddaru, Bobili, Gatapahatu and Vaskula.

The most significant reference in the Sandesa Kavyas to contemporary musical instruments is in Tisara Sandesa—(v. 162).

කහලම් කල බෙර නම්මුට පට නන් නිරි	ඛමරු
නබමේ සැක බෙර බොබිලි විණා මිණි	සුසිරු
බෙර මද්දල කහලම් රසු නිගලම් බද	සොළුරු
මෙ සියල් මහ ගිගුමෙන් පළ කෙරෙමින් සිදු අයුරු.	

Trumpets, pot-drum, double kettle drum, pata tantiri, damaru •

Udakki, bobili, vina producing sweet music;
Maddala, gentle music of the cymbals, anklets and tinkling bells,

Drums numerous roared and reverberated.

A similar list is also mentioned in Sri Rahula's Kavyasekera (Canto 8—v. 32).

සක් සින් නම් දළහං සිරිවිලි ලක	ළ
ඩැක් කි, උඩැක් කි බෙර මිනිගු මද්ද	ළ
වස් දඩු කැලල් විණා කනක කාහ	ළ
කළෝ එසද තුරු රැවි දසදිග් පන	ළ

Conchs, flutes and beautiful long trumpets,
Dakki, udakki and drums, mihingu and maddala,
Flutes, vina, cymbals and trumpets

Caused music to flow in the ten-fold directions.

The seventeenth century work Kustantinu Hatana also gives a list of wind instruments—(v. 91).

දාර එසක් සින් නම් සහ කොම්බු	ත්
වීර කැලල් කාහල නා සර මු	ත්
සාර තුරම් පෙත්තන් සර මේල	ත්
තැර පුම්බා නෙක මිග විරිදු	ත්

Noteworthy in this verse are the two words තුරම්පෙත්තු (turampettu) and සරමේල (saramela) which indicate that the Sinhalese had already assimilated instruments of Portuguese origin.

It is not possible today to identify most of this vast array of musical instruments. It can however be said that as in the case of the dance forms and dance

techniques, a considerable degree of affinity with Indian musical instruments of the past can be traced. The names of some of the drums such as *Dakki*, *Udakki*, *Maddala*, *Mrdanga* are the same as those found in India even today. The use of various types of conchs in Indian temples is a very ancient practice which has survived to modern times. Different forms of *Vina* called *tantiri*, *eka tantiri*, *pata tantiri* are obviously of Indian origin. So are the wind instruments and percussion instruments; words like *Kahala*, *nagasara*, *kombu* and *gejji* show definite South Indian origins.

Sinhalese traditions assign a sacred origin to most of the musical instruments. The stories most current are those relating to instruments still in use such as the *Gata bera*, *Udakki*, *Pantheru*, *Tammatta* and *Davul*. Thus the *Gata bera* was constructed on the orders of Maha Brahma and the Sun and Moon are said to dwell on its inside and outside respectively. Similarly the *Udakki* was constructed, on the order of Sakra, out of two tusks that emerged from the ocean; other deities like Moon, Natha, Iswara, Vishnu and Asura Rahu contributed various parts of it. The *Tammatta* was also a creation of Iswara for the use of the Court of King Maha Sammata. The origin of the *Davul* is associated with the enlightenment of Lord Buddha and it may be for this reason that this instrument is invariably used in all Buddhist ceremonials. The *Pantheru* is the *Chakraudhaya* captured from the Asuras in their great war with the Suras. In this way there is a considerable body of folk literature¹ still in manuscript which gives detailed accounts of these origins and an intensive study of them will be of obvious interest.

Foremost in importance among Sinhalese musical instruments is the drum. Its variations are manifold and each one serves its own particular purpose.

¹ See Catalogue of Palm Leaf Manuscripts, Vol. 1, pp. 385-86, Colombo Museum Library.

Among them, the *Gata bera* is the most frequently used and undoubtedly the most important. It is the *sine qua non* for all types of Kandyan dancing and for all festive occasions. The latter use may be the reason for its other name *Magul bera*.

The reason why it is called *Gata bera* may be on account of its shape, there being a *gate* (boss) about three inches thick at the centre of the *bera kanda* (the cylinder). The actual purpose of the *gate* is not known; perhaps it gives rigidity.

The total length of the *bera kanda* is traditionally laid down as 27 inches but today it is often varied to suit the person using it; but the drum-head remains always the same—8 inches—and the circumference at the centre—25 inches.

The material used generally is *jak* (*Atrocarpus integrifolia*) of the *Varaka* variety; *Kohomba* (*Azadirachta indica*) and *Ehela* (*Cassia fistula*) are choice varieties more suitable for the purpose but due to the difficulty of procuring suitable pieces, are not frequently used. *Rat-handun* (*Pterocarpus santaliuns*) is still rarer.

The method of its construction is, to say the least, ingenious. From a single undamaged block of wood is scooped out the *bera kanda*. The chiselling is so finely done that the thickness of the shell is no more than a quarter of an inch. The edge of the left drum-head is rounded off while that of the right is slightly turned out. In one place on each head a slight indenture called the *anda ira*, is made. For the two drum-heads two different kinds of vellums are used in order to produce two highly contrasted tones. The right is usually of monkey skin and the left, the much tougher ox-skin.

The drum-head consists of two pieces of leather, the top one in the shape of a ring about an inch broad round the margin superposed on the other which completely covers the eye. The two drum-heads are pressed down and kept in place by two circular loops called the *veni-vara-valalla* woven out of finely

cut ox-skin or deer-skin. A long band of leather about 50 feet in length and half an inch wide called the *varapataya* (braces) is repeatedly passed through the loops eight times in all at regular intervals along its circumference. The two ends of this band are then tied together. The desired tension is obtained by tightening these braces.

Paralleled almost in age and analogous in structure is the famous Indian drum *Mridanga* mentioned in ancient Sanskrit works and pictured on the walls of Ajanta. The method of construction too appears to be almost the same the only difference being that the Indian drum has 16 braces and 8 cylindrical blocks of wood over which they are passed. Unlike in the *gata bere* the drum-head is also loaded with a black composition.

The drummer holds the drum at his waist with the help of a sling^g called the *ura-pota*. He stands with the left leg bent slightly so that the drum tilts up slightly towards the right. He plays it with his bare hands.

The counterpart of the *gata bere* in the South is the *Ruhunu* or *Yak bere* which is universally used in devil dancing, *bali*, *devol*, *gammadu* and similar ceremonies. The drum itself is much longer than the *jate bere*, but is absolutely cylindrical in shape. The method of construction is similar. The drummer holds it at the waist with a sling but keeps it parallel to the ground. It is also played with the hands.

Generally turned out of well-matured kitul wood (*Caryota urens*), deer-skin is frequently used for the drum-heads.

The *Udakki* or the hour-glass drum is one of the most interesting musical instruments used by the Sinhalese. Its origin, no doubt, is in the Indian *Damaru* associated with *Nataraja*. Sinhalese tradition also attributes a mystic origin to this instrument. *Udakki* players always form an impressive feature in the famous *Kandy perahera*. Exclusively used also

in the *Yak natuma* called *Dala Kurumbara Yagaya*,¹ several observers² have noted it as "a favourite domestic instrument" as in entertainments at the houses of the Sinhalese upper classes. However in contrast today its use is fast dying out perhaps because it is one of the most difficult instruments to handle. Generally the *Udakki* player also sings as he dances. He beats it with one hand while with the other he tightens the straps at the centre to obtain the necessary variations of pitch.

It is made of *gam-suriya* (*Thespasia populnea*), *ehela* or even *jak*. The outside is carved out to the shape of an hour glass. There are traditional measurements given in its construction, but the present day craftsmen do not strictly adhere to them. The length of the drum is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches and the diameter of the head about 8 to 9 inches. The waist at the centre is about 2 inches. A very thin skin, either of hare or *talagoya* is used. This is mounted on a detachable wooden ring called *valayan* at each head. There are six holes on each ring and through these the *lanu* (braces) of *niyanda*³ is passed.

Round the *lanu* at the centre is passed a *patiya* (strap) by means of which the *lanu* can be compressed thus increasing the tension on the vellum thereby raising the pitch. On the left head is also placed a *thatha* (snare) which helps to increase the vibrations. The instrument is finished off in brilliant lacquer.

The hour-glass shaped drum is not peculiar to Ceylon. There are quite a number of examples throughout India. *Damaru* itself is quite similar except that it is played in a different way. A string with a knot at the end is fixed to the waist of the drum; this strikes the two faces when rattled. A similarly played instrument is the *Gudu-Guduke* used

1 Hugh Nevill - Sinhalese Verse, Part III, p. 213.

2 John Davy (1821).

3 *Sansiviera Zeylanica*.

by itinerant fortune tellers in South India. Similar in construction to the local Udakki is the *Idakku* used in Malabar; but this is not played with the hand but with a stick. Used in the temple services in Malabar is also *Ittu Tudi* which is a kind of *damaru*. The closest that comes to the local instrument is the one called the *Idai Surungu Perai* used in the *Mariamman* temples and in temples of village deities. The instrument is held in the left hand and beaten with the right. But the shell is not made of wood as in Ceylon but of either brass or clay. Other forms known in South India are *Davāndai*; *Dakka* or *Dakkai*, *Karadi Vadaya*, which is much larger in size and *Kaitiri*; but all these are played with sticks and not by hand.

A larger edition of this instrument used in Ceylon is the *Dakki*. This is also similarly constructed as the *Udakki* but is much bigger in size. It is not held in the hand but suspended with a *banda patiya* (sling) from the shoulder. This is rarely used in Ceylon now.

Davula is the most ubiquitous and best known drum. It is used along with the *Tammattama* and the *Horanewa* in all Buddhist functions both in the temples and outside. The combination of these three instruments is called *Hevisi*. The colourful annual *perahera* procession conveying the Sacred Tooth Relic at Kandy is always led by a number of *Hevisi* players. In certain parts of the country even funeral processions are led by a band of *Hevisi* players. During the times of the Sinhalese Kings *Hevisi* formed an important part in Court ritual.

The *Davula* has another use. It is the *aṇḍa-bere*—tom-tom—employed to announce royal edicts. In this respect its use is still common in most village areas.

It is a cylindrical drum hung from the waist in a horizontal position and beaten with a curved stick called the *Kaduppuwa* on the right face and with the

hand on the left. As in the *gata bere* the two faces have contrasted tones—the right hand end is louder and higher in tone, the other lower and muffled. *Kos* (Jak) and *Kitul* are normally used and rarely *rat-handun*. The vellum is either of spotted deer or calf skin at both ends. The *Kaduppuwa* is made of either *atteriya* (*Murraya exotica*) or *ratmal* (*Ixora coccinea*). Ivory also has been used in rare instances. The vellum is kept in place with the help of the *vara pata* made of *niyanda*; these strings are tightened by moving the sliding thongs of rings called *illam*, so as to obtain the required tension. The drum is given a lacquer paint with some artistic design and other embellishments like tassels hung on to it. The traditional method of tuning it is to obtain the note made by the bird *Kirala*.

The length of the drum varies considerably, the commonest sizes are 16 and 18 inches. The one used as *anda bere* is much smaller—about 12 inches in length. The size of the drum head also varies according to its length.

Tammettama also called *Pokuru bere*, a term somewhat rare today, consists of two *bayas* (literally halves) in the shape of two very large cups. The right hand drum called the *anda-baya* has a drum-head like that of the right hand drum-head of the *gata-bere*. It is tensioned to a much higher pitch than the left one which is called the *mandama*. The wood used in both, is often *Kos* (jak of the *varaka* variety). Two *Kadduppus* made out of *vevel* or *kirindi-vel* (*Rourea Santaloides*) or *pupula-vel* (*Veronia Zeylonia*) are used. The right hand drum is beaten with both sticks in fast tune while the left is only used to punctuate the other.

A rather uncommon Ceylon drum is the *Davunde*. This is in use not too frequently, almost exclusively at the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy and a few places of worship in the vicinity of Kandy. It is somewhat like an hour glass drum in shape but the waist is

not so thin. The *vara pota* which holds the two drum-heads in place are passed through *illam* as in the case of the *Davula*. Though it has two drum-heads it is hung vertically from the shoulder on the left side and played with both the hands and a *kaduppuwa* on the top head.

Another drum used exclusively today in the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy, and a few other Raja Maha Viharas is the *Tamboruwa*. This is a very large drum constructed in the shape of a *Davula* and played in the same manner. But the drum-heads are not tightened to the same extent as in the *Davula*; as a result it emanates a rather muffled sound.

Patawa, a drum once exclusively used for female dances is now completely unknown except in name. This drum is played only on one side. It is constructed somewhat like a *gata bere*, but on the drum-head a black spot of *badama* is placed in order to dampen the vibrations of the head. The drum is slung across the shoulder. This type of drum is also found in South India.

An essentially folk drum of the past is the *Bummadiya*, perhaps unheard of today except in the remote villages of the Kandyan District. This is constructed out of a pot similar to the ordinary clay pot commonly used for fetching water in village homes. The mouth of the pot is covered with vellum and at the bottom an aperture is made. It is slung from the shoulder and played with the fingers.

The *Bummadiya* is known to be used to accompany songs and dances at harvest festivals and on similar occasions. (Plate—24).

This instrument may not be essentially Sinhalese. There are analogous instruments in South India such as the *Gummati* of the Telugu districts, used by the rural folk as a rhythmic accompaniment in singing the well known ballad *Bala nagamma katha*; and the *Pulluwa Kudam* used by the Pulluvans of Malabar

in the cult of the Snakes, the Nāga cult. These are constructed almost in the same manner and played in the same style as the Kandyan Bummadiya.

Of more recent origin and almost dying out is the drum called the *Demala Bere* which some writers¹ appear to think is the same as *Mihingu Bere*. This is much shorter in comparison with *Gata bere*, about 18 inches in length; but the circumference at the middle is much greater than the *Gata bere*, though the drum-head is of the same size. The material used for making this drum is the same as in others—the most frequently used being jak. The vellum is of deer or ox-skin and the head is tightened with *vara pata* of leather and is woven in the same way as in the case of the *Tabla*. On the left hand vellum the black spot of *badama* is placed. This drum is normally placed on the ground or on the lap of the player who squats on the ground. Sometimes it is suspended with a sling from the neck and held at waist level. This drum is never used singly; two drums tuned to two different tones are used, at the same time; it is most frequently used now to accompany *nadagam* and *rukada* (puppet shows).

Modern *nadagam* and *rukada* players however seem to prefer another accompaniment called the *Dole* or *Dolak* which appears to have developed from the *Demala Bere*. This *Dole* itself has changed much in shape and at present there are various shapes and sizes. Originally it was barrel-shaped and was not more than 12 to 14 inches in length. The more recent ones are conical in shape with the drum-head where the *badama* is kept being about three or four times the size of the other head. The vellum is the usual type of skin kept in place by *vara pota* or cord, and *illam*. A late innovation is the presence of two rings carved out of the shell itself round about the middle of the barrel. On these, holes are

1 See Sinhalese Drums "Leander", Ceylon Observer Pictorial, 1960.

made and through them the *vara pota* on the respective drum-heads are passed and are tightened by rings (*illam*). This instrument is extremely popular in all types of musical entertainments today.

The instrument used universally for all domestic rituals and entertainments is the *Rabana*, the only form of a single-faced drum among the Sinhalese. It is extremely simple in structure being a circular ring of about 3 to 8 inches in height and one side covered with a skin. In order to obtain greater tension it is kept on a detachable three-legged stand and some glowing embers placed underneath. The wood most used today is *gan-suriya* (*thespana populnea*). Other varieties are also used.

Sinhalese mythology¹ attributes the origin of the *Rabana* to a minister named Atoja of the Brahmana caste. He was a Minister of King Nandagupta and this instrument was invented in order to proclaim the presence of the King. The *Rabana* or the *ekaes bere* as it was called at that time, is said to be the precursor of all other types of drums.

The *Rabana* used for the *Raban* dance and by the *Virudu* players is slightly different in structure. Its rim is much smaller in comparison being not more than 2 to 3 inches in width. The vellum is more carefully fixed and studded with brass nails. In comparison it is much more costly.

The wind instrument best known today is the *horanava* which forms an essential part of *hevisi* and is always used with the *davula* and *tammattama*. Its length varies from 11 to 14½ inches and the number of finger holes between 6 to 8. The open end is a bell-shaped cone of brass or bronze. The centre portion called the *kanda* is either ivory, buffalo horn or wood often beautifully ornamented with coloured lac. The end from which it is played

¹ Janawansa - H. Nevill (The Taprobanian, 1886) pp. 89-91.

is also of brass or bronze. At this end the reed, usually made of a piece of talipot leaf, is fixed into a narrow tube with a circular metal disc against which the lips are pressed when blowing.

A special variant not commonly used today is the *Dirghā Horanava*, which is about 22 inches in length and has two sets of finger holes, eight and four.

The most popular instrument of this category both in village and town is the flute or *wasdanda*. It is evident from the references to it in *Mahavansa*¹ and other literary works, that this was commonly used even in ancient times on various occasions. In modern times it is made out of the common reed (*bata*) found in all parts of the country. Its general popularity may be due to its simplicity.

An instrument somewhat similar to the *horanava* but much longer is the *nagasara*. Obviously an introduction from South India, during the Kandyan era it came into use in the Sinhalese temples and Devalas. It is constructed of wood in the same way as the *horanava* but it is about twice its length.

Frequently associated with temple and devala ceremonies both in India and Ceylon is the *conch*, (*sāk*). From literary sources we are able to gather no less than 8 different types of instruments made of the conch shell. Today it is an unornamented plain conch that is used in most temples and devalas; but in ancient times the conch was heavily ornamented in gold, silver or other metals. Elaborately designed mouth-pieces were often attached to them. Ananda Coomaraswamy reproduces photographs of two such conchs in his work, "Mediaeval Sinhalese Art"² It is also represented in ancient sculptures in Polonnaruwa and Anurādhapura, as in Amaravati and Sanchi in India. Its great sanctity is due to its sacred associations with gods like Lord Vishnu whose attribute it is, and Lord Krishna associated with the conch Panchajanyam.

1 Mahavansa—ch. 72, 264; 74, 216.

2 Medieval Sinhalese Art. Plates. XLI and XLIII A.

An instrument that has almost died out is the *Kombu*. In ancient times this had, most often, been used in the battle field. Today a few specimens are preserved in ancient temples and are hardly used. It is crescent-shaped and is about four to six feet in total length. It is made up of several brass tubes of gradually widening conical bore one fitting into the other. It gives a very shrill note.

Its counterpart in South India bears the same name while in North India it is called *Sringa*¹. It is used in public amusements and is also known to be used to welcome high officials and dignitaries who happen to visit the village.

Among the percussion instruments the commonest is the *Talampota* or the cymbals. The *talampota* is of various sizes; but the commonest is about two or three inches in diameter. It is made of some heavy metal with two discs connected together by a string running through the centre. The instrument is also used to keep time in all types of Kandyan dances, as well as in temple and devala ceremonies.

A series of Sinhalese verses entitled "*Talampota Kavi*" gives the mythological origin of this instrument. It is stated that Meragal Risi furnished the metal which Vishvakarma moulded into its proper shape. The chord was furnished by Maha Brahma and the instrument thus turned out was played by the celestial musicians, the *Gandarvas*.

The *Taliya* is a rather rare instrument. It is a metal gong about eight inches in diameter. Held with a string which passes through a hole at its edge, it is played with a *kaduppuwa* of hard wood. It is generally used among the Kandyans to keep time in certain dance performances; it is essentially an instrument of the Kathakali of Malabar.

The *Pantheruwa* is an instrument much like a gypsy tambourine without the vellum used exclusively in the type of Kandyan dancing, the *Pantheru natuma*.

¹ P. Sambamoorthy: A Dictionary of South Indian Music and Musical Instruments, Madras.

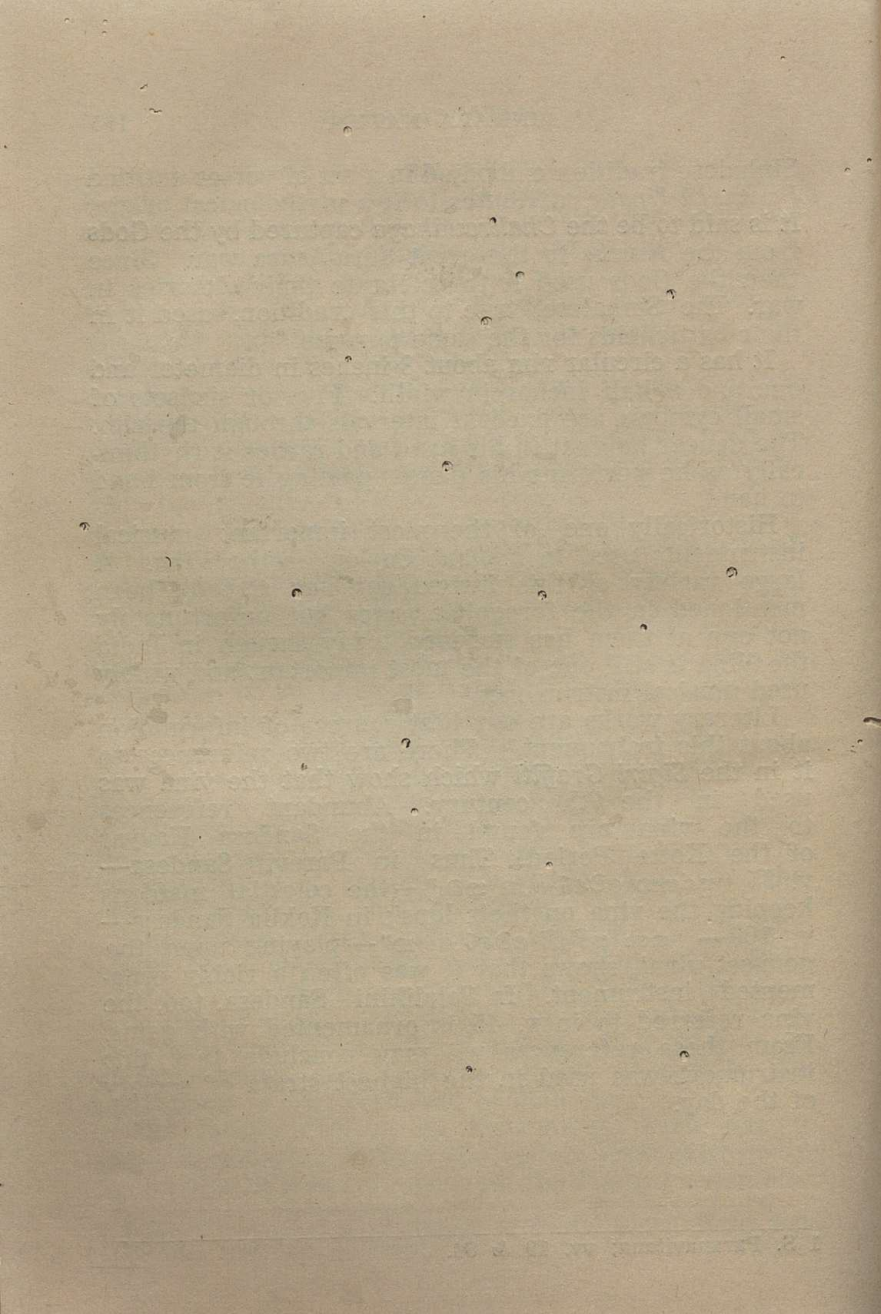
Sinhalese tradition embodied in a set of verses entitled *Pantheru Upata*, attributes to it a mythological origin. It is said to be the *Chakraudhaya* captured by the Gods from the Asuras in the great Sura-Asura war. Since then the Gods used it to celebrate their victories in war. The Sinhalese, true to this tradition, used it in their battlefields for the same purpose.

It has a circular rim about 8 inches in diameter and one and a half inches in width. Five or six sets of small cymbals are fixed at intervals through the rim. The dancer holds it in his hand and rattles it rhythmically as he performs his dance, passing it from hand to hand.

Historically one of the most important musical instruments used in ancient Ceylon is the *Vina*. A large variety of this instrument has already been mentioned in the foregoing pages but unfortunately not one of them has survived today though in India the *Vina* is still one of the most important and widely used musical instruments.

Literary works are our best sources of information about this instrument.¹ There are two references to it in the *Sigiri Graffiti* which show that the *vina* was used in the 7th century. Abundant references to the *vina* are found in the *Sandesas* of the Kotte Period. Thus in *Parevi Sandesa*—v. 35 “සුරගන වෙණ ඇත නබා” —‘the celestial maidens keeping the *vina* on their laps’; in *Kokila Sandesa*—v. 169—“ගඟ සුමිණි වෙණ ගෙන”—‘playing upon the gem-set *vina*’, shows that it was often a richly ornamented instrument. In *Selalihini Sandesa*, too, the *vina* referred to in v. 45 is ornamented with gems. From these references we may conclude that this instrument was used in the highest strata of society of the day.

1 S. Paranavitana; vv. 19 & 84.



PART II

PART II

CHAPTER I

KOHOMBA, KANKARIYA

An alternate version of the legend of Kohombā Kankariya, a variant of the commonly accepted account, is the theme of a book in the Lihini Series (published by M. D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd). The legend as given herein is noteworthy for an articulation of Kohomba Kankariya with the story of Pattini and Kovalan. Pattini meets the powerful Yakka princes who figure in incidents of Kohomba Kankariya under the name of Valiyakkas, who are deified by Pattini. The legend also contains a narration of the origin of the Kohomba God. The story as given in the monograph, is herein briefly narrated, with acknowledgements to the Publishers.

The incidents narrated, of Kuveni's black magic and its baneful influences on Vijaya and his successor Panduvasu Deva, are substantially the same as in other accounts of the legend. The subsequent incidents find some variation. The efforts of the Ministers failing to effect a cure, invocation is made to Kohomba yakuma, a goddess presiding over the white parasol. The Goddess approaches God Sakra and pleads that by the death of King Panduvas, the kingdom of Lanka established with such difficulty by King Vijaya would

certainly perish. Therefore Sakra, knowing that the only person in the world capable of removing this *Divi Dos* is the King of Malaya, summons a meeting of Devas attended by a number of deities, Iswara, Vishnu, Kataragama, Saman and Vibhishana.

Of the deities who officiate in the *Kohomba Kankariya*, the three Vali Yakkas occupy a prominent place. It is said that these are three powerful princes who lived in Ceylon at the time of Vijaya's landing. These princes meet Pattini and Palanga while they are returning from the abode of their preceptor. Pattini was in the act of plucking mangoes with a forked stick; when it got entangled with the stick of Palanga she found it difficult to get it released, and appealed to these princes for help. Thereupon the princes pulled the stick and got it released for Pattini. As a result of the impact, Palanga's forked stick snapped. Pattini, being very much pleased, is said to have deified these princes. This event is also supposed to be the origin of "Ankeliya".

The verses describe the birth of *Kosamba devi*:—

සස ඉසුරු සුල	බා
සිරි ලකේනි යුත් ගජ	බා
මල රජුගෙන් සු	බා
වරන් ගත්තේ නමින් කොස	බා

King Gajaba of prosperous Sri Lanka
Derived authority from King Malé
In the name of Kosamba

The queen one night dreamt the full moon, and on the full moon day of Asela (July-August) she gave birth to this prince.

සුන් මස බිත් ක	වා
කොසඬි යයි නම් තබ	වා
අබරණ පලද	වා
දෙගුරු කුමරුන් මෙලෙස සැදු	වා

Weaned after seven months,
The child was named Kosamba
Decked in ornaments:
And brought up in manner below:

සත් ඇවිදිවි	යේ
මහවනයකට වැඩි	යේ
වැඩ සිටි අඩවි	යේ
නමය කොසඹා දෙවිඳු වූ	යේ

At the age of seven years
The prince was conducted to the thick jungle
There he was renamed Kosamba Devindu
After the place where he settled.

There are a few more verses which describe the wanderings of Kosambadevi in India. A number of deities were invoked:

අළුත් කොහොඹ දෙවි මෙරගල්	පායේ
පරණ කොහොඹ දෙවි දොරගල්	පායේ
මහ කොහොඹා සියඹල ගල්	පායේ
වැඩ වසමින් සත් හට සෙන් පිරි	යේ

The new Kohamba Devi abides in the mansion of Meragal,

And the old Kohomba Devi, in that of Doragal,
The deity Maha Kohomba is in the mansion of Siyambalagal

And all shower blessings on mankind.

කොසඹ නූරේ මුල වැඩ හිඳ අව	වා
වෙසඟ දෙපෝ දා පෑ සඳ ලෙස	වා
නොලස යකුන් එලවති දස අත	වා
මෙලෙස වදිමි කොසඹා මහ රජු	වා

Seated at the foot of the Kosamba tree
Like the full moon on Vesak day,
All demons are driven in ten directions;
Homage to King Kosamba Devi.

සළුන් එකංගං සළු පලදින	වා
දළුන් මුරක් දෙවියන්ට පුදන	වා
මළුන් එමානෙල් මල් පලදින	වා
අළුන් මෙ කොසඹා දෙවියෝ වඩින	වා

Clad in Kangan cloth
Betel is offered to the deity
Adorned with the blue lotus
The new Kosamba deviyo comes hither.

බැඳුණු උඩින් සඳපායන එළි	ශ්‍රී
සඳු ද දිදී බඹරිඳු නද කෙලි	යා
සුදු ද කරන අසටන් උනගනි	යා
සුදු ද උතුම් කොසඹා දෙවි වැඩි	යා

The Moonlight shines through the forest
And the bee sings making sport;
Thus it happens to those at war.
Here comes Kosamba devi, pure and noble.

Among other gods invoked in the Kohomba Kankariya, are Irugal, Bandara, Kande Bandara and Vira Munda. Melli Yakka of Dumbara is also invoked. His services are obtained as a mark of recognition of the assistance he rendered to Vijaya and his followers. Other gods invoked in the ceremony are Maha Guru, Kuda Guru, and Kadavara. Kuda Guru is thus featured:—

පටියෙහි මුණ්ඩාසනය බදි	නේ
සැටියෙහි ගෙන රතු කුකුළන් ක	නේ
තැටියෙහි මැන ලා ගෙන රා බො	නේ
සැටිය නමයි මේ කුඩා ගුරු	නේ

Hair on his head is tied up with a string
And he eats red fowls
And quaffs toddy in a ceremonial plate
That is the nature of Kuda Guru.

කාසි රවේ සිට ආ ගුරු මුත්	නේ
උඹසිකටුව ගෙන සැටිට මසන්	නේ
යදියන් හට උරුදී රවටන්	නේ
කාසිනාද ගුරු මමෙයි කියන්	නේ

Thus the Guru comes from Kasi
Taking the needle he stitches the jacket;
Beggars are duped unhesitatingly,
And he says, "Kasi nada Guru am I".

CHAPTER II
KOLAM NATUMA: KOLAM DANCES

පනිවිඩ කරව	නා
ලෙසට සබයට එමි	නා
බස්නමක් රැගෙ	නා
එන්ඩ සැරසී සබයෙ සිටි	නා

Walking stick in hand
(He) is ready to come to the assembly
That he may discharge
The duties of a messenger.

සොබන ගුණ වඩව	සි
දමන අත් පොඩි සුරල	සි
ගමනොහුගෙ කොමල	සි
සබයටෙන්තෝ ලියන රාල	සි

His hands are tender and small,
Manners pleasant,
And his walk, serene;
He is the Liyana Ràla¹, and he comes to the
assembly.

පනිවිඩ කරවනා ලෙසට සබයට එයි මෙවි	වා
සනහට වැර සැර කරමින් බස්නම ගෙන අත	වා
එමවිට එයි සැර සිපගෙන කොමල කොමල ලෙස	වා
මෙලෙසට පැමිණුනි සබයට රජු එන යන ලෙස	වා

¹ The Scribe.

Stick in hand and using strong words against the people

(He) comes to the assembly to deliver messages;
Well clad and serene;
Much like a king he comes, to the assembly and walks about.

නිරිඳුන්ගෙන් පොර	ණ
සිටින තනතුරු ලැබගෙ	න
නම බලපෑම	න
බොලඳ මුක්කං කුණා දෑන් ඵ	න

Now comes Badajari¹

He has received office
From ancient kings.

කිළි කප දෝ	සේ
වැල්ලි පිනස් නා	සේ
සිඳි ගොස් නා	සේ
සැරව ලේ කුණු නිතර වෑ	සේ

The phlegm disturbed,
(He) suffers from catarrh and cough;
The nose is dried up
And matter and blood flow constantly.

කග පලග අතක	ට
ගත් සැරමිටිය සුරන	ට
වෙන කෝලම් කුම	ට
වරෙන් හේවාරාල හනික	ට

With the sword in one hand
And a walking-stick in the right,
Comes the hēwaràla;²
Of what avail is the other Kolam?

තලපත කිසිල්	ලේ
ඉස්පයි දෑලුර සෙල්	ලේ
පතක් ගෙන ලොල්	ලේ
දුවයි සේවකයා ඇසිල්	ලේ

1 One who speaks through the nose.

2 The soldier.

With palm-leaf in his arm-pit
And bags on his head;
The servant runs instantly
With palm-leaf in hand

විතර වෙස්නන	මා
දුටුවන් බිය කරන	මා
පනක් ගෙන පන	මා
ඔන්න හේවාරාල එන	මා

Taking various forms

(He) strikes fear in those who behold him,

Here comes the hevarala

Gladly bearing a leaf.

සිටින සඳ දැක	පි
දෙරණන අඬ ගසා	පි
වට පිට බලා	පි
සිතූසෙ සබයට ඇවිත් පැන	පි

Keenly eyes the assembly, as he waits,

And with firm steps,

(He) looks around

And jumps into the assembly like a demon.

ඉදින ලෙසින් නිරිදුන් වෙත පුරුදුව නිතර	මා
වැදුණ ලෙසින් කපසෙන් කිව්දෝමය මෙන් හැ	මා
අදින ලෙසින් අවලේ පොර කැකුළන් බමබ	මා
කොතන හිටන් එන හේවාරාලද නුබ න	මා

(You) who are used to associate with kings

Seem subject to phlegmatic diseases;

O! Hewarala, whence do you come,

Swinging fowl?

අල්ලා සීනස් නහයෙන් සැරව ගලමී	නා
ඉල්ලා රා මිනිසුන් වෙත දබර කරමී	නා
සොල්ලා පා දෙක කර කර තබයි තැන තැ	නා
මුක්කන් හේවා බබජාරි නටයි උඩ පැ	නා

Afflicted with catarrh, matter comes out of
the nose

He begs for toddy and creates disturbance;
 With unsteady steps
 Greedy "mukkan" soldier, jumps and dances,
 ඉක්මන් පණිවිඩ කෙරුමට නිරිඳු වෙත ය නා
 සක්මන් කර කර ඇවිදිත් අඛණ්ඩ ඇ නා
 යක්කන් කර බලයි එවිට විහිළ වෙසකි නා
 මුක්කන් හේවා බඩජාපි නටසි උඩ පා නා

He has urgent messages to the King
 And he comes limping
 Attired in the form of a clown, he performs
 devil-dancing and casts glances;
 The greedy "mukkan" soldier, jumps and dances.

පණිවිඩයක් නුමුත් ආවාට මේ සබේ මැද ට
 ගිනිකඩියකු සේම මොකද ඇති නැති අණ යමක්
 බඩගින්නක් නැතුවානං සුරා පිකක් බිලා සි ට
 බඩ බැලියක් නොවෙයි හේවාරාලු නවාපං හනික ට

Though you come to the assembly with a message,
 Why do you behave like a *Gini kadiya*¹ without
 serving?

If you are not hungry, have a little toddy,
 And Hewarala, may you quickly do the dance.

මේ මුත්තේ ගතියක් මයි පණයනවා නො ම දැනි තී
 බී එත්තේ සුරා මනින් වෙන්තේ සිත් කැමති නි තී
 මේ වත්තේ මොකද කියා සමහර සිත් දැනි තී
 මහනුත්තේ අණක් කියා සටනක් මුත් කර තී

This is their manner; they do not know until life is
 extinct;

Being intoxicated, they cherish desires;
 Well aware as they are of what is actually
 happening;

To eternally quarrel, is the way with certain men.

බීමන ලෙසින් තේ
 දවුල උරලා ගන් තේ
 නොහැර වෙවුලන් තේ
 මෙවර අණබේර ගුරා එන් තේ

1. A species of ants.

With the *davul*¹, slung on the shoulder
 Now comes the Anabera² gura;
 And he trembles continuously,
 Like a man intoxicated.

සැරමිටිය අතක	ට
දවුල් ලාගෙන උරපි	ට
ගම්ගම්වලම සි	ට
කරයි අඩ බෙර රාජ පනන	ට

With walking stick in hand
 And a *davul* on the shoulder
 (He) beats the drum under the orders of the King
 In different villages.

ඕඩොක් කුව මහන	ට
පව්ව වඩුමක් ඉණව	ට
උරමාලය ඉස	ට
එන්ඩ සැරසි සිටිනි සබය	ට

Dressed in a *paccavadam*³ around the waist
 And head adorned with an *uramalaya*⁴
 He is ready to come to the assembly.

අත පය වෙවුල්	ලා
ඉස කට නිකට උල්	ලා
දවුල උර එල්	ලා
එන්ඩ සබයට ගැරු මහල්	ලා

With trembling arms and feet,
 With the *davul* hanging on the shoulder;
 May the old gura come to the assembly;
 His head, mouth and chin have a pointed aspect.

ඉතාමත් තද මහලු වයසකි මෙබහුලජී ජාරිය ද	නා
පතාගත් පෙර ජාති කරුමෙට මහලු වයසට පැමිණ	ණා
පුතාවත් නැතුවා ද අඩබෙර කරන්නට ආවේනි	නා
පුතා පයකින් නටයි සබමැද මෙබහුලජී ජාරිය ද	නා

1. A drum.
2. The long drum.
3. Red cloth.
4. Kerchief.

This "Bahulajjariya"¹ is very old in age;
 He reached old age as the result of his previous
 "Karma";
 Has not even a son to beat the tom-tom;
 This "Bahulajjariya" dances vigorously in the
 assembly.

කිසිල්ලට නලපනක්, ගනිමින් සැරමිටිය ගෙන අතක වා
 දවුලකුන් උරලමින් බැඳගෙන පව්ව වඩමක් ඉණ ව වා
 රැවුලමත් දිගු කරනි සබයට පැමිණ නැත නැත සිට සි වා
 වෙවුලමින් බැස නටයි සබයේ මහලු වූ තද වයස වා

A palm-leaf in the arñ-pit and walking stick in
 hand.
 He has a *paccavadam* round his waist and a *davul*
 tied to the shoulder
 Coming from different places, he shows his beard
 to the assembly;
 In this advanced age, he dances in the assembly.

බීලා රා මත්වී නැත නැත වැටෙමින් වෙවු ලා
 පාලා රැවුලත් සත හට බැම දෙක නෙරවා ලා
 වේලාසන පිසි නැත අණබෙර කෙරුමට සිට ලා
 මේලාගෙන් අණබෙර ගැරු යන්නේ බැට කා ලා

Intoxicated with toddy, and trembling,
 (He) shows his beard to the assembled, raising his
 eyebrows;
 He does not like to beat the tom-tom early;
 In this manner the *anabera guru* departs, jeered
 and assaulted.

සිහි විපරන් නුව න
 ඇදින රට කරවන දි න
 රජුන් එන වග දැ න
 එන්ඩ සැරසෙති සබේ වෙන වෙ න

(People) possessed of wisdom
 And knowing the way of ruling the country,
 Get ready to come to the assembly separately,
 Aware that kings too will be present.

1. This much ridiculed man.

එපුරෙහි වසන ද	න
නිතර වට රැකෙමි	න
සෝ වයඤ්ඤ සමගි	න
රාළහාමිත් සබේ දැන් එ	න

The people of that city
Are constantly protected;
*Ralahamy*¹ comes to the assembly
Accompanied by a servant.

එනුවරෙහි වස	නා
මුදලි නම් ලැබ සොදි	නා
නඩු අනඩු සොය	නා
සොබන මැති සද සබේ වඩි	නා

The good gentleman who abides in that city
Having received the rank of "Mudaliyar"
Enquires into what is right and wrong
And comes to the assembly.

මුදලි නම් ලැබගෙ	නා
කස්තන ගෙන පලදි	නා
රාජකාරිය ගැ	නා
රාළහාමිත් සබේ වඩි	නා

Adorned with the sword
And holding the rank of Mudaliyar,
Ralahamy comes to the assembly
To perform his duty.

එපුර දන පලමු	ව
රජසන මුදලි දෙවනු	ව
ඇඳලා රන් කඩු	ව
මුදලි කර රජබරණ පලඳු	ව

In that city, (the people) come first
Second with the king and the Mudaliyar;
Bedecked with the sword
The Mudaliyar is adorned with royal ornaments.

1. An honorific term used for a Sinhala village headman and other officials.

ගිරිය මෙ සිරි කග උර දරමින් නේ
 මැනිඳුගෙ සිරසට ගැසූ පනාව දිලිසෙන් නේ
 මැනිඳුගෙ ගත පළඳින කබාය පිලිසෙන් නේ
 මැනි මුව පිරිමැද මැද ලෙන් සුව කරලන් නේ

A sword hangs from the gentleman's shoulder,
 A decorative comb adorns nis head;
 And the coat that he wears is golden, too;
 Cleans his face with the handkerchief and puts it
 on his shoulder.

මෙසබෙහි වසන ද න
 එවග අසමින් සැම දෙ න
 කෙලෙස දැන් වෙසෙසි න
 එවග රජු හට සැල කලෝ ද න

The people in this assembly
 Having heard that story
 Related it to the King.

පෙර සිට පැවත එ න
 දරමින් ඉස ඔටුනු මෙ න
 බඳිමින් කඩුව ඉ න
 මෙලෙස සැරසී රජුන් දැන් එ න

Wearing a crown
 That comes from ancient times,
 And armed with a sword,
 Now comes the King.

ඔටුනු ඉස පළඳි න
 සිවුසැට බරණලා ගෙ න
 මැනිසෙන් පිරිවරි න
 සොබන නිරිඳුන් සබේ වඩිමි න

The King comes to the assembly
 With a crown on his head,
 Bedecked with the sixty four royal ornaments
 Accompanied by men and ministers.

රන් සඵ පැළඳගෙ න
 රන් මිණි බරණලා ගෙ න
 රන් කගපත රැගෙ න
 සොබන නිරිඳුන් සබේ වඩිමි න

Dressed in golden garments,
Adorned with gold ornaments set with gems;
The good King comes to the assembly
Armed with the golden sword.

•	මුළු දඹදිවටස	න
	සනට රජකම් කරගෙ	න
	සේසත් අල්ලම්	න
	එළසිරන නම් නිරිඳු වඩිමි	න

The King called Usirata
Who holds sway over all Dambadiva¹
And governs the people thereof
Comes, holding a white parasol.

•	අශ්ට සතකින් ව	න
	දුශ්ට දුසිරින දුරල	න
	ඉශ්ට ආඝිරිදෙ	• න
	එළසිරන නම් නිරිඳු වඩිමි	න

The King, Usirata by name,
Who removes evils
Wrought in seventeen ways
Comes bestowing long life and prosperity.

ඉන් පසු පෙර කිවු දිනිදන් දෙ	න් නා
අන් අණසක කී දේ හිමි ව	න් නා
දැන් මිග සැන සුර කිම නාස	න් නා
ගන් මැද බැස සැණෙකින් ඇවිදි	න් නා

Thereafter the orders
Of the above gentlemen were maintained;
Now why do you not listen to "Migasanasura"²
He comes down to the village and walks instantly.

ගහ ඔය ඇති තැන පාලම් සද	වා
මග දෙපසේ සුදු වැල්ලෙන් තළ	වා
රහ කරුවන් ගම් ඉම්වල සද	වා
ලහ ලහ දොළෙ හිස සරසා සොද	වා

1. India.

2. The sense of the word is obscure.

Bridges are built over streams and rivers
 And roads strewn with white sand;
 Dancers stand at the village boundaries
 And every "Tolehisa"¹ decorated.

වග වලසුන් ගජවුන් සේ සම	ගේ
කග ලෙළදෙවමින් කොද වන සම	ගේ
මග බල රුපුසෙන් ඔද බිද සම	ගේ
රග බල වියනැති කලගුන් රජු	ගේ

Brandishing swords
 As (if to fight) tigers, bears and elephants
 Or vanquished the might of the hoards of the
 enemy;
 Wise men, note the manner of the coming of this
 King of Kalinga.²

ගොන් සුමගින් ගොසි	න
නොයෙක් දන රුස් කර ගෙ	න
නීති වෙලෙදන් කර	න
කියමි මෙලදන් උපන මෙලෙසි	න

People go to trade
 With much wealth and oxen
 I shall now recount in this manner, the birth of
 this maiden.

රජ පනත විලස	ට
පටවා නොයෙක් ලටප	ට
යන ලෙස දන් සල	ට
ගොනෙක් ගෙන එති මෙසබ මබල	ට

A bull loaded with all sorts of things
 According to the orders of the king
 Comes to the assembly.

නලල උප පිහි	ට
අන් දෙක නොවී ගැහැ	ට
ඉතා හුරු බුහු	ට
ගොතා කදිමයි ගමන එන සැ	ට

1. sense obscure.

2. In North East India corresponding to the present state of Bihar, very much associated with Ceylon history.

The bull with spots on the forehead
And well-set limbs,
Enters confidently.

අඩ හැරලා දෙම	ළ
වැඩිගේ නොගේක් අරග	ල
බසින් කර කොලන	ල
ඒය දක්කා ගොනා මහ තු	ළ

After disturbances
In the Wadiga¹ country,
(He) comes driving his bull on the road.

සාළ සඳ සදිසි උසිරන රජු දු	න් නු
යාළ වන ගොනා පිට පැට විලි දු	න් නු
යාළ කියා අඩ හැර දෙමලෙන් දු	න් නු
ඒළ ගොනෙක් දක්කා වඩිගේ යො	න් නු

The bull which shines like a moon and gifted by
King Usirata
Has been loaded;
Called "friend," in Tamil
The "Yònàs"² of Wadiga³ come driving the bull.

ගොනා රුසිරු දුක්කු මිනිසෙ ඉද රොසා	ලේලා
ගොනා දෙයක් කෙටිටක් තල පනක් රුගෙන ඒ	ලේලා
ඔනා සතක් තුඩු කරමින් සුරනින් පද අ	ලේලා
ගොනා සැටිය බල සබයේ ගොනුගේ සොම්පු	ලේලා

The beautiful bull is brought
With a rod and a palm-leaf;
Look at the bull which dances to the tunes.³

සොබමන් සකියනි නොප කළ සනි	නේ
මවිසින් පවසනු බොරු තුන ඉනි	නේ
දිවියන් ගෙන් උවදුරු ඇත මෙදි	නේ
එබැවින් ගොනු රුකගන් බිය සිනි	නේ

1. The Andhradesa, which has had considerable relations with Ceylon of the Middle Ages.
2. The Muhammadans, corresponding to the Moors of Ceylon.
3. The fourth line is obscure.

O friend, I shall unravel your riddle
 Without any fault;
 This day evil is caused by leopards,
 Hence protect the bull from fear.

රට රටවල වෙළෙඳම් කර ඇවිදි	න
විට විටලෙයි ගිනි දුක් උසුලා ගෙ	න
තට වඩවන ගැල් දහසක් ඇද ගෙ	න
මෙලෙසට පැමිණුණි වෙළෙඳම් බඩු ගෙ	න

They roam from one country to another, ¹
 Undergoing much difficulty
 Pulling thousands of carts;
 Thus they come bringing wares for sale.

පෙළකට වන් කළ සුදුවන් පාවිති බබලන්	නා
කෙළකට හැර ඇස් රවමින් කිපි රෝසයපෙන්	නා
කෙළනට මිනී සිටින සබේ ගොනට මරණ වෙන්	නා
කැලලට පනිනා විලසට කොටියා සැරසෙන්	නා

It shines in colours of black and white
 Frowning with an open mouth, it shows its anger;
 The bull is here to perform a dance before the
 assembly,
 And the tiger gets ready to jump upon the neck
 (of the bull).

සන නසන දිවි	යා
වල් වැර රකින දිවි	යා
බියෙන් දුටු දිවි	යා
කියම් ඇති රඟ ලකුණු දිවි	යා

The leopard which destroys mankind
 And which has gone into the wilds
 Strikes terror;
 I shall recount here the character of the leopard.

නිය අවිමුණ ලෙ	සේ
දිගු දළ විදුරු පෙළ	සේ
බල කෙසරිඳු ලෙ	සේ
සිරුර සිතියම් කරපු විල	සේ

1. Generally called "tavalam", carts of merchandise.

Like sharp weapons are the claws,
The long teeth shine like crystal;
In power, it matches the lion
the body looks painted in colours.

එබී ඉඳ පඳු	ඊ
සිවුපා යනෙන අත	ඊ
පනිමින් අරත	ඊ
ගනිති නිරිඳුන් මහත් ගොඳු	ඊ

Hiding in the bush
It pounces upon quadrupeds
While they pass the place;
Thus it gets its prey incessantly.

අඳුන තිත් කැ	වියා
දුටු සත වඩන අ	වියා
ගත හුරු බුහු	වියා
ඇවිත් සබයට පැනපි කො	වියා

The spots are black
It is beautiful to behold;
Strong in body
The tiger jumps into the assembly.

කොටියකු හඬන්	නා
ගොන් ඇඟ කිලි නගන්	නා
කරුම පලදුන්	නා
මින් කොටියා සබේ පැන්	නා

The tiger roars
And the king-bull trembles;
The *karma* has borne fruit
Alas! the tiger has jumped into the assembly.

විදුරෙන් කළ විලසින් දුල වැනසුන් සත දිවි	යා
තිසකින් සත බොහෝ සෙමින් තිති රකිමින් දිවි	යා
නොමදිත් පෙම වඩමින් දුටු පමණින් සත දිවි	යා
දූන මත් තොස වඩමින් පැන රඟ මත් ලෙස දිවි	යා

The leopard that shines like crystal, kills the
people.

Cleverly way-laying them;
The assembled people are enamoured at the sight

of the leopard.

May the leopard dance as much as it likes.

ගවසින් යන අතු මන්වල එබෙමින් ඉද සැද	ලා
ගවසින් මස් පුරවයි කෑස ගවයන් මස් කැද	ලා
සිනියම් කළ විලසින් ගත විහිදෙන ගත දිවු	ලා
සුපසන් ලෙස දනමන් සෑම රඟවන් ලෙස පද	ලා

Hiding in the paths where bulls roam,
(The leopard) fills its belly with the flesh of oxen;
Its body shines as if painted;
May (the leopard) dance and gladden the minds of
people.

ගිරි අරන වස	නා
දඩයම් සොයා රැකෙ	නා
සෙනගක් සමගි	නා
වසයි වැදි රජ එවන සොදි	නා

In that jūngle the Vedda King lives
Hunting for food;
His place of abode, over mountains and forests;
He lives accompanied by his hosts.¹

වැදි රජ වසන ව	ර
නිරිදෙක් පැමිණි වන තු	ර
එ බිසොවට ලොබ ක	ර
බලව වියතුනි කරන කරද	ර

The Vedda King while thus living there,
A King comes to the jūngle,
Falls in love with the queen;
O wise men! behold the troubles this causes.

මනමේ රජුන් සහ බිසොවුන් දෙදෙන තො	සා
එම කල ගොසින් බැස වැදි වනයට විම	සා
භීමයට වැදි ගිය දඩයම් සොයා බැ	සා
රජු හට මරණ පැමිණුවේ අග බිසොව නි	සා

King Maname and his queen
Go hunting in the forest;
At that time there appears the Vedda;
Because of the chief queen, the King meets with
his death.

¹ Here is introduced the story of King Maname and his faithless wife.

රජු නසා යුද කො	ට
බිසොව ගනි මැයි පෙම කො	ට
යුද කළ රඟ දැන	ට
මදක් පවසමි දැනෙන පමණ	ට

I shall recount as far as I know
 How a battle was fought,
 And the King killed,
 In order that (he) may capture the queen whom
 (he) loved.

ගෙන අතකින් බිසවුන් රන් කඩුව ගෙ	නේ
දුනු ඊ රැගෙන මනමේ රජු වසින දි	නේ
ගුණ සන වසන ගෙවුයන් මග ගෙවෑග	නේ
වන පන වැදී දෙදෙනා සමග යන තැ	නේ

The royal couple reaches the forest,
 The King is adorned with his golden sword, on one
 side there sits the queen;
 They pass houses and gardens where dwell the
 virtuous;
 And the King carries bow and arrow.

මෙසේ වසින රජ සහ බිසොව ශූඛ	ර
ලසේ එවැදි වසනා වනපත අත	ර
තොසේ දැක බිසොව වැදී සෙනග ලොබ ක	ර
මෙසේ වදින වර එබිකම් කරන ව	ර

The King who thus comes accompanied by his
 handsome queen
 Reaches the forest where the Veddas dwell;
 Enamoured of her beauty
 They cast wistful glances at her.

එදින නිරිඳු දැක වැදී රජ සරොසාවෙ	ලා
තදින ඇවිත් යන මග තහනම් කර	ලා
සොදින බිසොව ගනිමැයි සිත සතොස වෙ	ලා
එදින නිරිඳු කිවු යුද කරන ලෙස පු	ලා

Seeing the King that day
 The Vedita King comes forth and closes the road in
 anger;
 Glad at heart, he is determined to take the queen;
 The King challenges him to battle.....

ගුණෙන් උතුම් කරනිඳු සමග යුදය	ට
ගණන් නැතිව වැද්දන් ආවයි එව්	ට
විකුම් බලෙන් කරනිඳු ඔවුන් සුන් කො	ට
රජුන් දෙදෙන සබයට බැසපි යුදය	ට

Many Veddas assemble
 To give battle to the virtuous king;
 The King annihilates all;
 The two Kings now reach the assembly, and wage war.

හෙළා වැදි රජුන් මනමේ නිරිඳු ස	ද
බලා බිසව දෙසකිගපත ඉල්ලු ස	ද
හෙළා නිබුණු ලෙස කඩුවේ කොපුව ඇ	ද
මෙලාගයෙන් රජු හට කොපුව දුන් ස	ද

King Maname knocks down the Vedda king
 And beckons the queen to hand him the sword;
 The scabbard she takes out instead,
 And that the queen gives to the King.

ඇදලා කඩුව වැදි රජ සුරතට රැග	නේ
සිදලා දැමිය නිරිඳුගෙ හිස විගසකි	නේ
එකලා නැගිට බිසවුන් සමගිව ගොසි	නේ
බැසලා ගත තෙරට වැදි රජ විගසකි	නේ

Taking the sword the Vedda king
 Beheads the King instantly;
 Thereupon the Vedda King takes hold of the queen
 And with her goes to the bank of the river.

බල විකුමන් ගුණවන් කරනිඳුන් අ	ද
සෙනහසයෙන් පුරුදුව විසු කලක් සො	ද
මට ලොබයෙන් එරජුට පැමිණුණ ලෙස	ද
නුඹ සමගින් සිටියොන් වෙයි එලෙස න	ද

“The mighty King whom you loved for long is killed
 Because of the desire you cherish for me;
 If I were to live with you
 The same fate would overtake me ”.

කියා මෙලෙස බිසවුන් පැළඳි අබර	ණ
මෙලාගයෙන් ගලවා පොදි බැද නදි	න
දයා නොවී බිසවුන් ඇරලා එත	න
ගියා වැදි රජුන් ගත එතරට එදි	න

Thus saying

(He) makes into a bundle, the ornaments which adorned the queen

And leaves the queen to her own fate ;

The Vedda King crosses to the other bank of the river.

After this there are a few verses which describe the lamentation of the queen who now realises her act of folly and treachery. At this juncture Sakra seeing the plight of the queen, takes the form of a jackal, and visits her. The story is thus continued.

සක් දෙවියෝ සිවලකු මෙ	න් දා
මාතලි තෙම මසකු ලෙසි	න් දා
ආ දෙවි තෙම උකුසු ලෙසි	න් දා
• බිසවට කළ ලෙස තද නි	න් දා

God Sakra takes the form of a jackal

And Matali (his charioteer) that of a fish;

Another god appears like a hawk ;

The queen is put to great shame.

සක් සිවලු මසු දා ග	න් නේ
එන කල මසු දක ගොඩ තබමි	න් නේ
මසු ආවිදිත් ගන් තෙර ගොඩ උ	න් නේ
ගිය දැයි මසු ගන් නට විගසි	න් නේ

Sakra, the jackal, comes with a piece of flesh in its mouth,

Seeing a fish, it keeps the flesh on the ground;

The fish comes to the bank of the river

The jackal goes instantly to get the fish.

මසු තෙම, ගිය උඩු ගන් තර බලමි	න් නේ
ගොඩ නිබු මස් උකුසුද ගනිමි	න් නේ
ගිය සද සිවලුද එහි සිට ග	න් නේ
දුකසේ සිටි වට පිට බලමි	න් නේ

The fish swims towards the upper reaches of the river;

The piece of flesh that was on the ground is snatched by the hawk,

The jackal stands there

And looks all around in great grief.

බිසොවද මෙපවන් දකිමි	න් දා
සිවලුට කියමින් මෙලෙසි	න් දා
අනුවණ කම් නොකරන් මෙ	න් දා
මෙලෙසින් සිවලුට කළ නි	න් දා

The queen seeing all this
 Remonstrates with the jackal
 Not to act in such a foolish way
 And thus she spoke derisively of the jackal.

බඩ සා දුකට ගෙන යනා මස් කැටිය ලො	ලා
ගොඩ තබමින් දිය යන මසුට ලොබ වෙ	ලා
උඩ යන උකුසු අරගන ගිය පසු නොබ	ලා
දූන දූන මෝඩකම් කළෙ ඇයි තෝ හිව	ලා

“The piece of flesh which you were taking to
 appease your hunger,
 You left on the ground with a desire to catch the
 fish in the water,
 A hawk snatches the piece of flesh
 O jackal! what foolish act did you commit!”

මනමේ රජුට අග මෙහෙසුන් බිසෝ වෙ	ලා
කැලේ උපන් වැදි රජකුට ආලෙ වෙ	ලා
පැළදි ආබරණ ගහකින් එගොඩ ක	ලා
මටන් වැඩිය අනුවණ කම් බිසොව ක	ලා

“The chief queen that you were of King Maname,
 You loved a Vedda King born in the forest;
 The ornaments in which you were bedecked were
 bundled away across the river;
 You, O queen, acted more foolishly than I”.

සකිය නොකිය නොකියන රහස කාට	න්
සකි උඹ නොකිව්වේ සැලවේද කාට	න්
කොපුව අනට දී හිමි මැරෙව්වාට	න්
පපුව අද නැවෙයි ලියනිද කාට	න්

“O friend, do not disclose the secret to any;
 If you do not speak out, it will not be known to any;
 Because of my giving the scabbard so that my
 husband may be killed
 Today I suffer from repentance.

Thereafter the story of the Sanda Kinduru Jataka is recounted.

2

7/K. 5. කෝලන් නැටුම - (KOLAM DANCES)¹

The *Doladuka* motif is the theme of this text. Describing the origin of the Kolam dance, the author of this work states that during the rule of King of Ceylon, his chief queen felt pre-natal longings. To satisfy these longings various dances were performed.

The following is the text with a free translation:

පසන් ගුණන බිසවන සිහිමන්	විය
නිතින් දිනිති ගබ පිරි සපන්	විය
උතන් රුසිරු රස බො ජුන් අතින්	විය
නැටුන් සිනා කෙළි දකිනු කැමැති	විය

She who had her belly full developed,
 Cherished no dainty dishes;
 But longed to witness dances
 Which provoke merriment.

පාබ්ලයෙන් ගි නාලං රැගෙන	නේ
කී නලයෙන් රජ නො වරදවමී	නේ
ලී කෙළි නොපමණ රඟ දෙනි නිති	නේ
ඒ කළමුත් බිසවගෙ සිත නොවැ	නේ

¹ The Colombo Museum Library Palm Leaf Manuscripts Series.

Thereupon the King caused men
To perform the stick-dance (Leekeli)
To the accompaniment of songs ;
Even these gave the queen no satisfaction.

වසිරිත් රට සිට විත් සපි	ඊ
නිසා මලක්කන් දමමින් බුහු	ඊ
රාසි ගණන් අලලා මිණි දෙ දි	ඊ
සිසි කියා එබ්සව විය අපි	ඊ

Men from different countries came
And performed, "Malakkan" and "Buhuri" dances
With many tinkling bells;
These the queen disliked intensely.

නොසන් සිඳුණු බව දක දෙළහර	නා
නැතින් සොයා නිසි ගැනුවක් ලෙසි	නා
ත ම න් වෙනට මැනියෙක් කැඳවමි	නා
ක ර න් ඩ කිටු කෝලම් රුව ලෙසි	නා

The King who felt that the longing of the queen
Had not been satisfied
Summoned one of the ministers
And ordered him to get the "Kolam" dance per-
formed.

වඩු දන නොපමණ කැඳවා එනන	ට
අඩු කප්පා පලවා දී ඔහුහ	ට
අඩු නොව පතිරුව කරවා නිසි කො	ට
දඩු රුව කෝලම් දක්වනු බිසව	ට

Getting together carpenters,
An image was fashioned of wood in proportions
correct,

Thereafter the Kolam dance featuring the image,
Was performed before the queen.

වදාල බස් පිළිගෙන රජු එදි	නේ
සදා කැපු කෝලම් නොව පම	ණේ
නිදා සනින් රඟ දැක්වු සදි	නේ
එදා බිසවු දොල දුක සන් සිඳු	ණේ

Under the directions of the King
 Many were the "Kolam" images that day modelled;
 On the dances being-duly performed
 The queen had her longings satisfied.

7/F.10. *Vaṭura Kali Kolama* ¹

An earlier stage in the evolution of the Kolam is obviously revealed to us in the accompanying songs, in the cults of the Gods, in the cult specifically of the Goddess Kali.

සරා වරල මල් ගවසා නිල සයුර මෙ	න්
ඉරා ලමැද ඇලි ගෝමර එමල් පෙනි පියු	න්
පුරා දැන වදුරු හලඹ නාද හඬ ගිගු	න්
නුරා ගමන් කවසි කෙලනි ලෙසට ගජ ඇතූ	න්

Blue as the waters of the sea, is her hair,
 With flowers dressed, and hand adorned with the
 tinkling "Salamba",
 She walks like the noble elephant, in gait serene,
 Indulging in the game, "Kavasi".

රුබර කැඹු දෙපයෝදර හස මේන් තැඹු දී	ලා
ගෝමර මල්පෙනි සෙ සුනිල් වරල මිදි	ලා
ආදර දිවා පට ඔහොරිය දෙවුර වසා	ලා
කෝසර හඬ නද විසිටී මුව පැහැලා	ලා

(Your) swan-like breasts are so beautifully formed
 The flowing dark blue tresses shine like petals of
 "Gomara" flowers,
 The divine silken shawl covers both your shoulders,
 And you utter sounds like the lion's roar.

අකුණු හඬින් මෙර ගුගුරා අරින දෝව සෑ	ර
ලකුණු බලා බුදුවෙන් නට කරන විකුම් වෑ	ර
වැකුණු තැනක වත් නොතබා පිරිපත දුරු ක	ර
ද කුණු අතේ හක් බොන්දිය යකුහට ගෙන සෑ	ර

1. The Colombo Museum Library Palm Leaf Manuscripts Series.

Darts of the gods fly with thundering sounds,
 shaking Mount Meru
 By the power of the chank which thou holdeth in
 thy right hand
 And by the grace of efforts which thou maketh to
 attain Buddhahood
 May the Yakkas be frightened, and sickness
 driven without a semblance thereof.

මෙරට වලා එන සුරිය ලෙසින් උදා ක	ර
දණපට ලා නාග බරණ බදට අවුල් හා	ර
කරවට ලා මිණි තවඩිද හිහිරි නාද ක	ර
පරල වෙලා වඩින කලට වෙවුලයි මහමේ	ර

When you come in a trance clad in cobra de
 capellos
 And adorned with gem-set ornaments
 Shining like the rising sun; to the sound of
 "gigiri" bracelets
 Even the great "Meru" trembles.

ගතේ බොළඳ සිතේ නුරා කන ආඩම්බ	ර
ලතේ වංග අතේ හලඹ ගින්දර දුම සා	ර
මෙතේ සුරඹ කතේ පතිනි දකුණේ මුර ක	ර
මෙතේ කපට තෙතේ වරන් සිරිලක හිමි ක	ර

Proud art thou in disposition, though tender in
 body and amorous in mind
 After guarding the Southern region, O Pattini!
 You come with burning flames
 Having obtained authority over the whole of Sri
 Lanka.

CHAPTER III

THE LI-KELI, THE STICK DANCE.

A folk play of wide distribution in Ceylon as in India is the Li-keli, the Stick Dance play. Despite its high entertainment value, it is yet a play with an intense religious background and a respectable ancestry. Its sacred character is indeed more evident than in most of the folk dances of the present day, obvious in the invocatory verses, invoking gods for a successful performance. Specimens of the verses have already been given. Following are the songs in full, with verses in original: ¹

පින් ඇති ගුණ ඇති වෙනු දෙවි නිල් පාවිත් බබළව න්ඩ
රන් ගිර මෙන් එළිය එලා දෙවියන් කරුණා කර න්ඩ
දැන් පැමිණෙන සෑම වස් දොස් දුරලා සත රැක දෙව න්ඩ
විශ්ණු දෙවිඳු අවසර දෙන් ලිකෙළි සෙල්ලම් කර න්ඩ

May meritorious and virtuous Sri Vishnu shine in
blue

And bestow kindness, shedding light like the
golden Meru mount;

May all evils be dispelled and all beings protected,
May Sri Vishnu grant us leave to perform the
stick-dance.

¹ Reproduced with acknowledgments from de Silva, W. A., and Malalasekera, G. P. "Folk songs of the Sinhalese".

කදිර පුරේ යකු කඩවර යකුට යකඩ හුල දෙව	න්ඩ
ගුගුරා එන රැල නවතා වෙරල වටේ වැඩමව	න්ඩ
වෙරල වටේ වැඩ සිට ගෙන සිනිගමදි බලපා	න්ඩ
කදිර දෙවියෝ අවසර දෙන් ලී කෙළි සෙල්ලම් කර	න්ඩ

May the iron spike be given unto the demon
 "Kadavara" of Kadira pura;
 Having traversed round the sea shore and stayed
 the roaring waves,
 May (the deity) assert his powers at Seenigama
 standing on the sea shore;
 May God Kadira grant us leave to perform the
 stick-dance.

ආත එපිට දීපන් කර මුනිඳුන් විවරණ ලබ	න්ඩ
මෑත මෙතර ලොව සෑම තැන දිවස් බලා වැඩමව	න්ඩ
එ තම දිව විමඳන් සිට මේ තරලොව බලපා	න්ඩ
නාත දෙවියෝ අවසර දෙන් ලී කෙළි සෙල්ලම් කර	න්ඩ

May he who obtained authority from Dipamkara,
 the Lord of sages,
 Cast divine eyes upon all parts of this human
 world,
 Assert his powers over this world of human beings
 from his divine abode,
 May god Natha grant us leave to perform the
 stick-dance.

සමනල ගිරිකුල පර්වතයට දෙවි දිවනෙන් හෙල	න්ඩ
පමණ නොවන ලෙස දෙවියනි සියලු සතට පිහිටව	න්ඩ
විමන එ බැලී ආත් වාහන පිට නැග දෙවි වැඩමව	න්ඩ
සුමන සමන් දෙවි අවසර ලී කෙළි සෙල්ලම් කර	න්ඩ

May the God cast divine glances on Samanala
 Giri (Sri Pada mountain)
 And come hither mounted on his vehicle, the
 white elephant,
 That he may give protection to all beings;
 May God Sumana Suman grant leave to perform
 the stick-dance.

පුරාණ ලී කෙළි කවි'

එක ගහකින් ලී හයක් කපා ග	න
එක උස ඇති හඳෙනෙක් ගෙන්නාගෙ	න
ගැරැන් අතට දී අවසර ඇරගෙ	න
ඉතින් කෙළිමු ලීදෙපිළ බෙදී ගෙ	න

Cutting six sticks from the same tree
 And selecting six persons of equal height
 And having obtained permission, hand them over
 to the preceptor,
 Let us now form into two groups and perform the
 stick-dance.

පළමුව බුද්දන් සරණේ නමක	ර
දෙවනුව දම්මන් සරණේ සිහික	ර
තෙවනුව සංගන් සරණේ අවස	ර
අඛිය නගන් නට මිහිකන් අවස	ර

Paying obeisance and taking refuge, first in the
 Buddha
 Second in the Dhamma,
 Third in the Sangha;
 May Goddess Earth grant us permission to raise
 our feet.

ඉ ද ගන්තෙමි සොද පුටුවක දෙර	ණා
ආද ගන්තෙමි සළ බැද ආබර	ණා
ශාද ගන්තෙමි නාරායන සර	ණා
චාද ගන්තෙමි මගෙ ගැරුවර සර	ණා

I sat on a good chair upon the earth
 Bedecked with ornaments and clad in garments
 I take refuge in Narayana (Vishnu)
 And I salute the feet of my preceptor.

උඩ මලුවේ ලී කෙළිමු කියන්	නේ
මැද මලුවේ ලී කෙළින බසින්	නේ
මැද මලුවේ ලී කෙළිමු කියන්	නේ
පල්ලේ මුලුවට කෙළිනට යන්	නේ

Let the stick-dances be performed on the upper terrace,
 And the central terrace;
 Descending from the central terrace,
 (We) go to the lower terrace and perform the dance.

බෝ අත්තට වද සිරස නමින්	නේ
ආපස්සට වද මුණ පෙරලන්	නේ
ඒ වැත්තේ වද අපි අඳුනන්	නේ
බෝ පත්තිනි මට අවසර දෙන්නේ	නේ

We bow in obeisance to the bough of the Bo-tree;
 We turn back
 And recognise one another;
 May Bo-Pattini grant us leave.

සතර දෙනයි අප ආවේ ඔක්කො	ම
නිතර කියන කවි පදවල ඒකක්	ම
අතර තැරේ වදු දෙවිඳුන් මක්ක	ම
කතරගමට බාරයි අප ඔක්කො	ම

Only four of us come singing verses,
 Let homage be paid to the God at Mecca;
 We are all given over to the care of Kataragama.

එක පඳුරෙන් ලී සයක් කපා	ලා
එක නම ඇති සදෙනෙක් ගෙන්නා	ලා
ගැරුන් අතට දී ලී බෙදවා	ලා
අපින් කෙළිමු ලී දෙපිළ සැදී	ලා

Cutting six sticks from the same bush
 And selecting six persons bearing the same name
 The sticks are duly given to the preceptor for
 distribution;
 Let us form into two camps and perform the
 stick-dance.

උදයට පායන ඉරි දෙවියන් ඩ	ත්
සවසට පායන සඳ දෙවියන් ඩ	ත්
අප ඇති කළ අපෙ දෙමවුපියන් ඩ	ත්
වැද වැද පින් දෙමු නිවන් දකින්න	ත්

Let us pay homage to the Sun god that rises in the morning,
 The moon god that rises in the evening,
 The parents that nurtured us
 So that we may attain Nibbana.

සුද්ද ඇතු ව නෙලී සිදුවා ග	න් නේ
සුද්ද පහන් කඩ අඹරා ග	න් නේ
සුද්ද කරන මරුවා නොපෙනේ	න් නේ
සුද්ද සිරිපා පතුල වදි	න් නේ

Extracting the oil in purity
 The wicks are twisted properly
 The cleansing Mara is not seen
 (May you) Salute the holy foot-print.

ඉරිදෙව් වැඩි තැන පිනිබිදු	නොතිබෙයි
සඳ දෙව් වැඩි තැන කරුවල	නොතිබෙයි
ගජතුන් වැඩිතැන කණුමුල්	නොතිබෙයි
අපෙ ගුරු වැඩිතැන ලී දඟ	නොතිබෙයි

Where the Sun God comes, the dewdrops vanish,
 Where the Moon God comes, darkness vanishes,
 When the elephants come, there remain no
 pillars or roots;
 Where our Guru has visited, there's no rivalry in
 stick-dance.

ඉරට ඔබිය ඉර මුදුනේ සිටි	යා
සඳට ඔබිය සඳ වට තරු සිටි	යා
ලියට ඔබිය සුදු සෝලේ ඇදි	යා
අපට ඔබිය සබමැද ලී කෙළී	යා

The Sun at its zenith is well placed
 The Moon is well placed with stars around;
 The maiden looks comely with a fold on her white
 cloth,
 It is but meet that we perform the stick dance in
 this assembly.

ඉරි දෙවියන්ගේ එළවනු පැටි	යා
රත්වත් බානක් බැදලා සිටි	යා
බාන කඩාගත කණුමුල සිටි	යා
සොයා දෙන්න මගේ එළවනු පැටි	යා

The white calf of the Sun God
Was tethered in a golden rope;
Having snapped the rope, it stood at the pillar;
Fetch me my white calf.

උඩින් වඩින දෙවියෝ ඉරි	දෙවියෝ
එක්ක සමන වඩිනා ඝඳ	දෙවියෝ
නුවණ දිදි වඩිනා ගණ	දෙවියෝ
නිති අප රැක දෙන්න පත්තිනි	දෙවියෝ

The Sun God comes from above
The Moon God comes with a company
Gana Devi comes bestowing wisdom,
May Goddess Pattini protect us for ever.

බාලේ සුරතලේ අපි දරා බා	ලේ
ලීලේ වඩවන මහනු නි ලී	ලේ
ලෝලේ සබමැද ආවෙමු ලෝ	ලේ
රාලේ අද අපි නටමුව රා	ලේ

O gentlemen,
Tender children are we,
Come joyous to this assembly,
To perform the dance today.

වියන් ද වට තිර බිඳිමින් මඩුව	ට
උඩින් සයක් ලනු දවමින් කණුව	ට
දෙමින් ගිනි නද තාලන් මෙලෙස	ට
අපිත් කෙළිමු ලී තැගි ලබන්න	ට

The shed with canopies and curtains adorned
And six ropes wound round the post;
Let us perform the stick dance
And sing, that we may receive gifts.

එනකොට එන් නට සිහිවිය ගෙදරි	න්
යනකොට යන් නට සිහි නෑ මෙතැනි	න්
දහමේ බුදුගුණ ඇසුවොත් සනොසි	න්
පස්වා දහසක් අවසර මෙතනි	න්

Prompted to come from home to dance, to sing
I have no mind to depart from here;
If you listen to the virtues of the "Buddha
dhamma",

May permission be granted, five thousand
times.

අහසේ දෙවියෝ රැස්ව සිටින්	ටසි
පොළවේ දෙවියෝ බිම බැදගන්	ටසි
හතර වරම් දෙවි බලා සිටින්	ටසි
අද ලී කෙළියෙන් අප දිනවන්	ටසි

May the Sky Gods assemble in the sky
And the Earth Goddess and
The four guardian gods witness
And make us win this game of stick-dance this day.

පින් කළ රජු රුවන් ගෙන් නුවර	ට
රන් කළ දහසක් ඉසවෙයි එනන	ට
නන් කළ ගෙවලුන් සොයමින් උළු කු	ට
බන්ගල දේසෙන් ආයෙමු කෙළිය	ට

Eighteen pots full of gold will accrue
To the city of the meritorious King
Tiling various houses;
May (people) from the land of Bengal come for
the stick-dance.

උසන් ගොඩට ගොඩ බසිමින් එන	දා
එරන් ගනේ දිය නාමින් එන	දා
වරන් දාපු පොලු ගනිමින් එස	දා
මංගර දෙවිඳුගෙ පොලුගන් සමු	දා

Setting foot on Usangoda
And bathing in the golden river
Sticks of authority are received that day;
Hosts of men received sticks from God Mangara.

ගොඩනිත් දුවන් නට රනය මවා	ලා
මුදෙන් යන් නට පහුර තනා	ලා
දැනට ගිනි දෑල් දෙකක් මවා	ලා
විෂ්ණු දෙවියෝ එතියෝ ගිනි කෙළ	ලා

God Vishnu having created the vehicle to run on land
 Constructed a raft to sail the sea
 And bearing two torches on either hand
 Disported thus.

ඉන්දු පුටුපිට රං මුදු අතලන ගවසන කොන්ඩේ ම	ල්
ඇන්දේ සේලේ තෙරිය නියාගෙන සාය කබාය ද නි	ල්
පන් දහසක් නුඹෙ වටිනා ගනරන් බදිනා දැනේ	
නින්දා නොමකර දෙනවකො මහනු නි දෝන පුරා රූපිය ල	සුරඹ සුර ල

Seated on a chair with gold rings on fingers
 (Her) hair bedecked with flowers, and
 Cloth, worn with a fold and the colour of the shirt
 blue;
 Your golden body is worth five thousand and
 your waving hands are like those of
 a Goddess.
 Gentlemen, may you freely give rupees with both
 hands.

අංතූඩියා නාලම් පොටදිලා සේවාකම් කරනවා උටි	න්
අලබඩ සපුරා ලබුගෙඩි ඇතුළේ සුරල් සෙවිසි	
ලෙඩ දිඹුලේ සිටි ගෝනුසු පැටියා දිවපුර සැප	කරනවා දුටි න්
වෙල මැද උලපිට ගෝමර ඉසිනන රෝරන් සිහි	විදිනවා දුටි න්
	කල්පනා වකි න්

I saw "Antudiya" (deer) serving after handing
 "Talanpota,"
 And beating tom-tom within a bottle-gourd fruit;
 I saw too the scorpion in the rotten wood-apple
 enjoying heavenly bliss;
 May you unravel with a clear memory, who is the
 maiden adorned with specks
 Seated on a spike in the midst of the field.

ඊදි විහාරේ වග අහප	ලීලා
ඊදි කදන් පැන නැගැනි බොල	ලීලා
අලුත නො වෙයි පරණයි දැන ග	ලීලා
ඊදි විහාරේ වදිමු සිය	ලීලා

Hear the story of Ridi Vihara;
 Friends, silver bars sprang out (of the earth)
 Know that this is not new but old;
 Let us all worship at Ridi Vihara.

ලී කෙළි පුවත

විකලා බුලතන් කට දොඩව	න් නේ
උරලා රා වික වෙපි පවස	න් නේ
මැනලා විස ගැස්සට කපමි	න් නේ
කෙළලා ලී කෙළි රහ පවස	න් නේ

After a hearty chew of betel, (he) indulges in
 light-hearted talk
 And having taken just a little toddy, says he is
 intoxicated;
 After the sticks have been cut to the size of a
 short span
 The stick-dance is performed.

සවස අනත විදුරක් සරසවි	යේ
මවෙන අදර වඩමින් සුබ සිරි	යේ
දෙවන නිතර සිරි සැප පස නිති	යේ
උපත අසවි වියතුනි ලී කෙළි	යේ

Gods Skanda, Ananta, Sakra
 And the goddess Sarasvati
 Bestow blessings and prosperity on me ;
 May you listen to the story of the origin of the
 stick-dance.

කළ වීරිය බුදු වෙත් නට බෝ මු	ල
බුදුවී ලොවිතුරු මුනිසඳු බෝ මු	ල
සෙලවී මිහිකත මෙරගල බඹන	ල
පලවී ලී කෙළ එම ආබෝ මු	ල

Having attained Buddhahood
 With much effort at the foot of the Bo-tree
 (He) caused the earth to tremble along with
 Mount Meru and Brahma Loka;
 From thence forth originated the stick-dance.

සොබමන් දෙව්වරු සදෙනෙක් එනන	ව
බහිමින් වාමර ගෙන සැලු සුරන	ව
නටමින් වාමර සැලුවේ මුනිඳු	ව
අපි දැන් දක්වමු ඒ රඟ සබය	ව

Six handsome gods having descended thereto
 Danced fanning the Lord of Sages with *chowries*
 We shall now perform that dance in this assembly.

සුවිකර දෙපය ද බිම ගහප	ල'ලා
කවි සොදවා රන් සිහිකරප	ල'ලා
කොව්වර් වස් සකි බසක් තොග්	ල'ලා
දෙව් පිහිටයි අද ලී කෙළප	ල'ලා

Setting (your) two feet firmly on the ground
 Remember the sweet verses and songs ;
 Friends, do not have any fear
 With the grace of God, may (you) perform the
 stick-dance.

ඕසෙන් බැරි ලෙස රා බි ගෙන හැ	ම
තාලෙට කියවෙන්නේ නැති විය හැ	ම
ආලෙට බැලුවොත් සුරනල් සෙල්ල	ම
පෝයට ලී කෙලිමුව අද දවසෙ	ම

All having taken toddy beyond limit
 (They) cannot sing the verses to the proper tune,
 Let the tender game be witnessed with love
 And let us perform the stick-dance, this livelong
 poya day.

සැදෙමු පෙලින් පෙළ සෑම දෙන එකවි	ව
කියමු රාග කවි ඉමියුරු විලස	ව
නටමු තාල නොවරදවා සබය	ව
පනිමු දෙව්වටම සොද රඟ බලන	ව

Let all of us together stand in different rows
 And recite amatory verses sweetly ;
 Dancing in this assembly without infringing the
 " tāla ",
 Let us jump the two rounds.

හොතා පෙළින් පෙළ මල් දම් සේ හැ	ම
ඉතා හොදයි කවි තාල ද ඇල්ලු	ම
කතා නොකර ඉන්නේ ඇයි සේර	ම
ඉතා හොදින් පනිමුව තුන් වට	ම

All appear like garlands of flowers.
 And the singing is very sweet, indeed.
 Why all keep silent?
 Let us jump the three rounds quite well.

• අපි දැන් සදෙනෙක් ඇවිදින් මෙනන	ට
බැලුවට නම් නැත ලස්සන කීම	ට
සමූහට දා යන්නා සේ අහස	ට
පුළුවන් ලෙස පැන පන් සකි තරහෙ	ට

Six of us are here
 It is scarcely possible to describe them;
 Friends, may you jump in competition
 As a cloth set on flame rises in the air.

තුන් ලොව දෙවියන් වරම් ලබාගෙ	න
පින් ගෙන රැක දෙන් සෑම දෙවි දින දි	න
මින් මතු බෝකල් පවතින විලසි	න
තුන් වටවම පනිමුව අපි සනොසි	න

Obtaining authority from deities of the three
 worlds
 May all gods gain merit and protect us every day ;
 Let us jump the three rounds gladly
 That we may foot it lively and long.

කන්තක අසුපිටට පැනපු සිදත් කුමරු ගියෙ තපස	ට
දන්ත කුලේ බුදුවෙනදා නැටුන් ගත්තු බුදු මගුල	ට
කන්තක අසු පිටින් අවුත් සිංහල පුර පටුකු ගම	ට
දන්ත ගතන් දේවරාජ වන්නම අල්ලමු මුල් කො	ට

Mounted on horse Kantaka, Prince Siddhartha left
to practise austerities

On the day of enlightenment (the elephants) of
the danta clan danced to celebrate the event,
Kantaka came from the city to the sea-port
“Sinhala pura”;

Let us start the dance “*Janta gatan*” first with
the “*devaraja vannama*.”

CHAPTER IV

THE RABAN

ලෝවැසි පසිතුමන් සමාවෙන් ඔ වරද අපෙන් ඇතත්
අවුරුද්දට ගෙමු රබන් මුත්ත නත්ත කරපු සිරිත්

May the learned forgive, if there be any faults
•Let us play Raban for the (New) Year, as in the
early days.

තරුණන් ඉදහෙන රබන්	ගසන්නා
තරුණියෝ වටකර රබන්	පුරන්නා
තරගෙට කවුරුන් සුරල්	ගසන්නා
සමහර දැන් දැන් තිකන්	තුවෙන් නා

Young men sit and play raban,
Young women group around commencing raban
play.

All play Sural in competition;
Some repent, standing still.

අද පෙර ගං හෙට කරනං
රටක් වටින මඟුල් ගෙදර කිරි පැණි දෙත්,

Today is pre-nuptial day; tomorrow the nuptial
day

Curd and honey is given at the wedding, worth a
• country.

හම්බන් වැල්ලෙන් හාලුන්	අරගෙන
මෝදර වැල්ලෙන් මාලුන්	අරගෙන
කුරුන්දෙ වත්තෙන් දරන්	කඩාගෙන
අම්මේ මම් හනිකට	එන්කම්

Taking rice from "Hamban Vella"
 Fish from the sea shore at Modera
 Gathering faggots from the Cinnamon Gardens
 O mother, I shall come without delay.

බංගලී දෝසෝ වෙළෙඳුන් සන්දේන
 එක්ව කතා කරලා
 ලංකා වටිනා වස්තුව අරගෙන
 රුන්ද නකිට කියා නටන්නා.

The seven merchants of Bengal
 Discoursing together,
 Purchase merchandise to the value of Lanka
 And dance to the tune of "*Runda Takita*"

දෙමලිව්වන් විකයි විකයි,
 පොල්කිව්වන් හුඟයි හුඟයි,
 හීන් පබළු මිටයි මිටයි,
 පස් කුළු බඩු හොඳ තරමයි.

Few few, are the babblers
 Many many, are the magpies ;
 A handful and a handful of thin coral
 Enough the quantity of spices.

මහලු ගෙදර වට කරගෙන සුරලු ගසන්නා
 රබන් දෙකක් රන් කරගෙන දොව්ට බසින්නා,

Surrounding the wedding house, they play "*Sural*"
 Warming two rabans, they come out.

රුන් අරක්කුන් ඩිංගක් බිවට
 දවසට බල්ලෙක් දෙන්නෙක් මැරුවට
 ගම්බිම් ගේ දොර හැර මෙහෙ ආවට
 බාස් කමක් ගන්නට හැකි දෑ!

Although (you) may have a sip of toddy and
 arrack,
 Kill a dog or two per day ;
 And come hither renouncing your village lands
 and household,
 (You) cannot obtain employment as a foreman.

රිතන පඳුරෙන් හාවො සිටි	න් නා
රත්තන පඳුරෙන් හාවො සිටි	න් නා
රබන් නාදෙ දස දිග පැතිරේ	න් නා
පඳුරෙන් හාවෝ තොසිට දුව	න් නා

There are hares in the bush of arrow grass
 There are hares in the bush of red grass ;
 The sound of raban spreads in the ten directions,
 The hares fly from the bush.

උසිං උසිං වර පෙත්තප්	පු
බිම්බි බිම්බි වර පෙත්තප්	පු
පිට්ටු කන්ඩ වර පෙත්තප්	පු
පෙත්තන් ගල උඩ තොසිද වරෙන්	
අද තරිකිට දිරිකිට පෙත්තප්	පු

O parrot (pettappu), may you come from high
 and high
 O parrot, may you come from the ground and
 the ground
 O parrot, may you come to eat Pittu ;
 Stay not but come from Petangala today, *Tari*
 Kita Dirikita, Pettappu (parrot),

උඹට මොටද ගැට දොඩම්
 කැඩුවෙ මොටද ගැට දොඩම්
 ගොක්කොල මල්ලට ලොකු ගෙඩි දාගෙන
 කෙල්ලට දීපන් ගැට දොඩම්.

Why do you want tender oranges,
 Why did you gather tender oranges
 Putting the large fruits in the bag of tender coco-
 nut leaves
 Give the tender oranges to the girl.

එගොඩහ ගොඩේ තලවේ වැල් කපන්	නා
මෙගොඩහ ගොඩේ තලවේ වැල් ඉරන්	නා
හීන් තොවිවි කොඩි බැඳගෙන දුවන්	නා
හොසිය පුරේ ගල් තොට මරු පදින නා	

On the other side of the land, canes are cut from
the talipot palm ;

On this side of the land, canes are rent from the
talipot palm ;

Slender Cochins flee carrying banners ;

(They) row boats in Hoipura (in Kalutara).

ඔන්න නගේ ගස් බුලත්
මෙන්න නගේ වැල් බුලත්
අපේ ගෙදර දැන් නිතරම කන්නෙ දළ බුලත්.

Here, O sister, are betel leaves from trees,
Here, O sister, are betel leaves from the vine,
In our house now, we always chew tender betel.

ඇහැල කඩිත්තේ ගල යට ඉන්නා නක් කිට තල් වැල් දා
ගලේ නිබු පය අහකට නොගෙනම මුවෙකට දැන් විද්දා.

The *Takkita Tal Vedda* who lives under the
rock in *Ahala Kaditta*

Shot a deer now, keeping his foothold on the rock.

තුංතුඹ මල් තුනක් ගත්ත පස්කුළු බඩු මිටක් ගත්ත
රට කපුමද දෙකක් කන්න වර මැණිකෝ අද තටන්ත
හමිබ කරගෙන හමිබ කරගෙන ගියත් බොල මට
කන්නොදෙනවා බොල මට ඉන්න නොදෙනවා

O Menikè, come for the dance today
And be rewarded with three *Tumba* flowers,
a handful of spices and two kernels of
groundnut.

O fellow, although I may earn and earn ;
I am not given to eat, O-fellow ; nor am I allowed
to stay.

කළු කපුවෙක් උඩ ඉදගෙන කරවි කරන්නා.
සුදු කපුවෙක් බිම ඉදගෙන ගොදුරු ගිලින්නා.
ඊට මැදින් නයි පැටියෙක් පෙනේ කරන්නා.
පුංචි හාමි ගෙයි ඉදගෙන රඹන් ගසන්නා.

These crows, a black crow perched on the top
 A white crow eats perched on the ground
 In between, a young cobra spreads its hood ;
 Punchihamy stays at home playing Raban.

කඳ් දෙ රටට කොත මැද නුවරයි කළු
 පිදුරුනලාගල උසින් පෙනේ
 නිල්වන් මිණි බැදි දඹ රන් වෙහෙරට
 සිරිපා සමනොල මදක් පෙනේ

On the top of the hill and in the centre of the city
 stands the pinnacle
 High is the mountain, Pidurutalagala ;
 To the golden dagoba studded with blue gems
 A glimpse is seen of the holy foot print on
 Samanala.

• කවුදුයි කවුදුයි රණ්ඩු කර නතේ
 නැන්දයි මාමයි සණ්ඩු කර නතේ
 මොකදුයි මොකදුයි රණ්ඩු කර නතේ
 දුන්කොල නැවටට රණ්ඩු කර නතේ

Who oh! who is it that quarrels?
 The aunt and uncle quarrel ;
 Why oh! why do they quarrel?
 They quarrel over the tobacco stalk.

උස් උස් ගස් වල දික් දික් පත් කොළ
 කන්ද කැපු කොළ කඳ මැද පත් කොළ
 අග්ගිස්සේ කොළ පස් විස්සයි.
 පස් විස්සයි බොල පස් විස්සයි.

In tall, tall trees are long, long leaves ;
 Leaves in the trunk are cut ;
 Twenty-five leaves from the top of the trunk ;
 Twenty-five, dear fellow, twenty-five.

ඇල්ල මැල්ල කොළ ගදපානා කොළ
 හීන් පිට්ටි කැට ගැනුන්ඩයි.
 අරමල තිරමල තේක්ක කුන් දං
 ඇල් හාලේ බන් පිරිමින්ඩයි.

Alla, malla leaves and Gandapana leaves,
 With small pieces of pittu, for women ;
 Aramala, tiramala, tèkka kundam
 And rice cooked from hill paddy, for men.

ඉද්ද මලින් මල් වඩමයි දොන්ත තරිකිතා
 නෙලුම් මලින් මල් වඩමයි දොන්ත තරිකිතා
 ඉද්ද මලින් මල් වඩමයි නෙලුම් මලින් මල් වඩමයි
 දොන්ත තරිකි දොන්ත තරිකි දොන්ත තරිකිතා

The "Idda" flower and a wreath of flowers,
Donta Tariki Ta;
 The red lotus flower and a wreath of flowers,
Donta Tariki Ta;
 The "Idda" flower and a wreath of flowers ;
 The red lotus and a wreath of flowers, *Donta*
Tariki, Donta Tariki, Donta Tariki Ta.

තරිකිට තරිකිට තරිකිට සිඤ්ඤෝ
 දිරිකිට දිරිකිට දිරිකිට සිඤ්ඤෝ
 තරිකිට සිඤ්ඤොයි දිරිකිට සිඤ්ඤොයි
 කුන්ද කුදං කුදංතා.

Tarikita, Tarikita, Tarikita Singho
Dirikita, Dirikita, Dirikita Singho
Tarikita Singho, Dirikita Singho,
Kunda Kundan Kundan Ta.

එගොඩ ගොඩෙන් රත්තරං
 මෙගොඩ ගොඩෙන් රත්තරං
 එගොඩ ගොඩෙන් මෙගොඩ ගොඩෙන්
 ඇතකු බරට රත්තරං.

Gold in the land, on the other side
 Gold in the land, this side ;
 On the land that side and on this side
 There is gold to the weight of an elephant.

තෝන දෙපිල පිල ඉදගෙන
 රසකිද මල් තෙල් හිදගෙන
 අනංග මල් කොණ්ඩේ.

Seated on either side of the verandah
 Women extract oil from the flower of the
 "Rasakinda" creeper
 And bedeck their hair with beautiful flowers.

රාන් කිරිල්ලියෙ රාන් කිරිල්ලියෙ
 රාන් කුරුල්ලා කොයි
 තක්කිට තරිකිට ලියකට අසු වී
 කන්දෙ පිලේ හිර ගෙයි

O golden female bird, O golden female bird,
 Where is the golden male bird?
Takkita Tarikita, it has got caught at a house
 And now found in the prison at Kandepile.

වත්ත කතත් කතත්තා
 කුඹුර කතත් කතත්තා
 වත්ත කතත් කුඹුර කතත්
 දෙක ම කතත් කතත්තා

If the highland is enjoyed, so let it be ;
 •If the lowland is enjoyed, so let it be.
 If both the highland and lowland are enjoyed,
 So let it be.

කොස් කටු කුල්ලක් ඔළුවෙ නියාගෙන
 ගැනු හරක් බඳිනෙයි තනෙයි තෙයි
 ගැනු හරක් බඳිනෙයි තනෙයි තෙයි,

Carrying on their heads winnows
 With the rind of jak fruits ;
 Women tether cattle, tatei tei,
 O women, tether cattle.

තෙලෙන් බැද්දන් කොබෙයිසා
 කිරෙන් බැද්දන් කොබෙයිසා
 තෙලෙන් බැද්දන් කිරෙන් බැද්දන්
 කොහොම බැද්දන් කොබෙයිසා

Though fried in oil, it is a wild pigeon
 Though fried in milk, it is a wild pigeon ;
 In whatever it may be fried
 Oil or milk, it is the self-same wild pigeon.

පාණදුරේ පාන් කඩේ ලත
 ගැනු හරක් බඳිනෙයි
 මදුවාල් කෙන්දක් කරේ දමාගෙන
 ඉදොක් ඉදොක් කිය තෙයි

Women tether cattle near the bakery at Panadure
 Putting a "madu" creeper round the neck
 They cry "Indok" "Indok"¹

තාක්ක දොන් දොන් තාක්ක දොන් දොන්
 තේක්ක මල් පිපිලා
 ඔන්න බලන් සකි මේන් න බලන් සකි
 පාරට මල් නැමිලා.

Takka Don Don Takka Don Don ...
 There have bloomed, teak flowers
 O friend, look now O friend, look here,
 Flowers are bent towards the road.

උඩ පල ගන්නෙත් වට්ටක්කා.
 බිම පල ගන්නෙත් වට්ටක්කා.
 උඩ පල ගන්නෙත් බිම පල ගන්නෙත්
 පුංචි පුංචි ගෙඩි වට්ටක්කා.

The red pumpkin (creeper), bore fruits on the top
 The red pumpkin (creeper), bore fruits at the
 bottom
 Small, small pumpkin fruits are borne
 Both on the top and bottom.

The spontaneous character of the varied range of folk life is evident in these lines, reflecting the simplicity and gaiety of rural Sinhalese society. Unconnected as they are in content, the separate sets of verses are yet so many links in the chain of traditional Sinhalese rural culture, the values of which are revealed to us in the passages of the *Raban-pada* with all the attributes inherent in Sinhalese folk music.

The intimate relation of the *Raban-pada* to rural social life is among its many noteworthy features, in further illustration of which are reproduced the following excerpts.²

¹ Sounds uttered in driving cattle.

² Extracted with acknowledgments, from Perick Appuhamy of Walgama, (1905), *Raban pada Pota*.

THE RABAN : A SACRED LEGEND

ඉසුරා ඔත් යහ	නේ
දැකලා එර සිහි	නේ
ඉරිමා උදයේ	නේ
ගොසින් පොරවක් රැගෙන එව	නේ

Lying on his bed one night
Iswara had a dream ;
In the morning the God
Directed his steps to the woods, adze in hand.

ගොසින් ඔහු හිම මැ	ද
සුවදැනි තැර සඳුන් ක	ද
එසින් ලොක විස සො	ද
මුලින් සිදලා ගත්තු එ ක	ද

Reaching the centre of the forest
Iswara cut a piece of wood from near the root
of a sandal wood tree,
Sweet scented.

වඩුවෙන් දිග එක	ද
සුළුලෙන් පුළුල මැන සො	ද
මැන ලකුණු දැන සො	ද
එසින් තෝරා ගත්තු එ ක	ද

Taking note of the markings
The God selected a block of wood
And measured its girth.

රෝදය ලියා ගෙ	න
ගෙන තම උරෙහිලා ගෙ	න
මල සම ව ලාගෙ	න
කෙමෙන් ඇස ඇද බුරුල හරිමි න	

A wheel round, Iswara made of it
And put it on his shoulder ;
Stretching over the rim a length of skin,
Iswara adjusted it with care.

එ බුරුල හරිමි	න
යොදලා දකු නැකති	න
රත් පටි වටට ගෙ	න
එබු පිත්තල කොමලි මොහොති	න

Pulled the stretched skin round
 And round the rim fitted
 Golden bands
 And brass nails over these, he fixed.

තුන් දිනක් ගිය තැ	න
පවතෙහි තබා වේලේ	න
එතුන් දින ගිය තැ	න
ගනිති බහු වජ්ජරමය සුරඟි	න

Three long days
 It dried in the air
 Three days after
 In the right hand was held (the instrument)
 "Bahuvajramaya".

CHAPTER V

THE VADIGA PATUNA

As seen today in performances of the dances of South Ceylon, Vadiga Patuna is a colourful dance, with dancers wearing the Indian *dhoti* and turban to match. It is obviously a dance play that has had its beginnings as a ceremonial dance in rites of exorcism,¹ evidently brought to Ceylon by Indian ascetics from Andhradesa, a land which has had considerable cultural relations with medieval Ceylon. Vaduga, as one of the dances of South India, figures in the South Indian classic epic poem, "Cilappadikaram" of the second century A. D.

The verses reproduced here are of the Manuscript in the collections of the Colombo National Museum Library, numbered AM/14 :—

වඩිග පුර දේසෙ	න්
සද්දෙන සමඤ්ඤ ආවිදි	න්
පෙර වඩිග පටුනෙ	න්
එදා නිරිඳුට යාග කරමි	න්

The Seven ascetics
Coming from the country of Vadiga
Performed a yaga
Brought from Vadiga patuna in times gone by.

¹The Vadiga Patuna is featured as an interlude in the exorcist ceremony of Huniyam and Kapima; Saratchandra, E. R. "The Sinhalese Folk Play and the Modern Stage", Colombo (1953), pp. 42—44.

එළුමගද නාගරේ	න්
පාලි ද දෙමළ බාසෙ	න්
දස අට බාසයෙ	න්
මෙසේ නිරිඳුට යාග කරමි	න්

The Yaga was performed in the name of the king
In languages, unmixed Sinhala, Magadha, Sanskrit,
Pali and Tamil
And also in the eighteen languages.

ගුරු එ නෙලිකු බාසෙ	න්
පට්ටඞි ගුරු එ බාසෙ	න්
ගුරු දෙමළ බාසෙ	න්
මෙසේ සමනෝ යාග කරමි	න්

The ascetics performed the yaga in this manner
In languages such as Gurulu, Telugu,
Pattadi and Tamil.

යාග සොලොකයෙ	න්
කටඞි මන්ත්‍රා නොලසි	න්
දු පන අරවලියෙ	න්
මෙසේ නිරිඳුට යාග කරමි	න්

The yaga was performed in the name of the king
in this manner,

With stanzas

Mantarams *Kavaca*

(The third line is very obscure in meaning).

බුන් ම යාගය මෙ	සේ
කී කවියක් බ	සේ
දෙමළ බ මෙලෙ	සේ
කී කවි දෙමළ බා	සේ

The Brahma Yaga was performed
By reciting verses in the yaksha language ;
To the Tamils, in this manner
The Tamil language was used.

දස අට බාසයෙ	න්
වෙන වෙන තුඹු මෙලෙසි	න්
පොත අගට නොලසි	න්
කීය කවි ආචි බාසාවෙ	න්

The eighteen languages
Were used in this manner ;
The verses at the end of the book
Were in the *Andi* language

• නාගරෙණ් කිවු	නේ
මාලිය තෙරිදු විස	නේ
මුළු සිහල බසි	නේ
සොදා එළ කර කිව්ව එදි	නේ

It was composed in *Nagari*
(Sanskrit) by the Thera Maliya ;
That day it was recited in unmixed Sinhala
language.

• නිබ්බ පොත නිකස	ලේ
රත් ගිරි එලෙන ඇතැ	ලේ
යකු දැකී සිත ලො	ලේ
එදා පොතවට සිටි රැකව	ලේ

This pure book
Was found within the golden cave ;
The demon seeing it
Kept watch over it.

තෙදු පිල්ලිය	ක්ක
දපව් මඩ්ඩි ය	ක්ක
සුනියං ය	ක්ක
මෙසේ පොත වට උන්හ ය	ක්ක

Power *Pilaiar* yakkas
The *Oddi* yakkas and the *Suniyan* yakkas,
All these demons stood around the book.

• රාමගිරි ය	ක්ක
දස අට බාසෙ ය	ක්ක
දෙමලි හෙලි ය	ක්ක
මෙසේ පොත වට උන්හ ය	ක්ක

Demons such as "Rama girl"
And those of the eighteen languages,
Including Tamil and Sinhala
Surrounded the book in this manner.

පෙර කීම දෙමළෙ	න්
එළිවී මෙකප සෑදී	න්
කවිවී මන්ත්‍රා යෙ	න්
වහිග බාසේ යාග කරමි	න්

At the outset Tamil was spoken,
This aeon came into existence in the morning ;
The Yaga was performed in the Vadiga language
Together with armlets and charms.

සිවු වරන් දෙවි විසි	න්
වහිග පවුනාය දෙසු මෙලෙසි	න්
පොතට නමී දෙවුමි	න්
වහිග පවුනයි නමක් සදමි	න්

The Vadiga Patuna was recited in this manner
By the four Guardian Gods;
The book was called Vadiga Patuna,
When it had to be named.

මල්සාර කුමරා හ	ට
දෙවියෝ උපා කළ වි	ට
වහිග පුර දේසෙ	ට
උනයි මේ පොත සමුණු කැලය	ට

When the gods plotted
Against Prince Malsara ;
This book reached the country of Vadiga
And came into the possession of the line of
ascetics.

එතනින් උපත උ	නේ
සන් දෙන සමණු ඇවිදි	නේ
මල්සාර නුවර දි	නේ
සිහඟ බාසෙන් ලිවිව දූප	නේ

Such was the origin.
The seven ascetics having come
Wrote the "dapana" in Sinhala
In the city of Malsara.

මුල කවි සිංහලෙ	න්
ඒ ළග දෙමළ බාසෙ	න්
පොත මැද කිවි ලෙසි	න්
කිවයි ආඩි බාසෙ	න්

At the beginning the verses are in Sinhala,
Thereafter it is in the Tamil language ;
In the centre of the book
The verses are in Andi language.

සක් බ්‍රහ්‍ම ඊශ්වර සිටග	න
විශ්‍ව ඉන්‍ර මයෝස්වර සිටග	න
ඉසිවර දෙවියෝ සිටග	න
වහිග පටුන සංගාය	න

The Vaduga Patuna was rehearsed
By the gods Sakra, Brahma, Iswara
And Vishnu Maheswara
And the Sages.

දසඅට බාසා පවස	නි
එක් දහසක් පොත අග ඇ	නි
සුවිස්සක් ගාතා ඇ	නි
අරවලියෙන් මන්තර ඇ	නි

They speak the eighteen languages ;
The book is worth a thousand,
And it contains twenty four stanzas
These are charms from the "Aravali."

දූපන අබින පන්සියය	ක්
බාසා කවිසත් සියය	ක්
දෙමලි දූහන තුන් සියය	ක්
අශ්ට කවිති පන්සියය	ක්

There are five hundred "Dapana" and "Abina",
Seven hundred verses,
Three hundred Tamil "Dapanàs"
And five hundred "ashta kaviti".

මෙසේ එදා දෙවි සිටග	න
වහිග පටුන කවි පවස	න
නරලොව සත රකින ලෙසි	න
උපත කලෝ දෙවි මෙලෙසි	න

The gods on that day
Sang verses of the Vaduga Patuna in this manner ;
The gods brought this about
So that the people of the world may be protected.

එදා ශක්‍ර දෙවි සිට හ	න
රත් පත් හිඳ සුරතට ගෙ	න
නාගර අකුරෙන් ලියමි	න
රත් ගල් ගිරි ලෙන තබමි	න

Bearing the golden style in the right hand
God Sakra,
Wrote in *nagari* characters on that day,
And kept (the book) in the golden rock cave.

සිවුවරං දෙවියෝ එක්	වා
දෙමළ පිල්ලි යකු එක්	වා
වසීග මදන යකු එක්	වා
පොතට මුරේ යකු සිටු	වා

The book was guarded
By the four Guardian Gods
The Demala (Tamil) Pilli demons
And the Vadiga and the demon of sensuous
pleasures.

ලේ ගොටු බත් ගොටු නව ව	ක
පිච්ච සමන් සපුමල් ගෙ	න
පස් පුළුමෙන් බත් ගොටු ගෙ	න
මෙ ලෙසට ගොටු පොතට පුද	න

The book was offered
Nine leaf cups each of blood and rice
Jasmine and champak flowers
And also rice with the five kinds of fried flesh.

එළුවන් කකුලන් බඳි	නී
ගවර මසින් බිලි බඳි	නී
උගරන් ගෝනුන් බඳි	නී
මසුරන් ගෙන යුද කර	නී

Having tethered goats and fowl
Offerings are made of gold ;
Flesh of the gaur,
And pigs and sambhur deer are also tethered.

මේ ලෙස දොළ දුන් තෝ නී	න්
පොත් ගුල් දොර ඇරෙයි ඉනී	න්
කියා දෙවිඳු වරං දෙමි	න්
යකු හට පොත බාර දෙමි	න්

If offerings are made in this manner
 The door of the library would be opened
 The chief of gods saying this grant authority
 And assigned the book to the demon.

මෙසේ බුද්ද කපන් ගෙ	වී
ගෞතම නමි මුනි බුද්ද	වී
වැඩලා එතනට රැස්	වී
දිව දිව එන්නට රැස්	වී

The Buddha aeon having passed in this manner
 The sage Gautama attained Buddhahood
 They assembled there
 And fled away so that they may reassemble.

වසීග පුරේ සමුණු එ	දා
දැකලා පොත් ගැලේ වැ	දා
පුරවා ලක්ෂයක් ප	දා
ගත්තෝ පොත සමුණු	සෙදා

The ascetics of Vadiga Pura on that day
 Saw the library
 And offering a lakh,
 They obtained the book.

එතැන් පවන් උපනි වු	ණා
තෙද වසීගය පවුන දැ	නා
මල් සැර කුමරුට එදි	නා
යාග කළෝ සමුණු සැ	ණා

From that day onwards
 The powerful Vadiga Patuna came into existence
 On that day the ascetics performed a yaga
 On behalf of Prince Malsara.

වින බන්දන ඉගිල වරේ	න්
කාම වසීග යකු නි වරේ	න්
වසීග පවුන අනුභිසයේ	න්
දෙවෙල් පෙනලී ඉගිල වරේ	න්

May the "vina" and "bandana" disappear
 And the sensuous Vadiga demons come hither
 By the power of Vadiga patuna
 May the "devel" and "penali" disappear.

අට සියයක් සන්දිය	ටා
නව සියයක් නහර පි	ටා
අඩු තුන් කෙළ රෝමය	ටා
නොසිට යකුනි නට අණ	ටා

May the demons perform the dance
In respect of eight hundred joints
Nine hundred veins
And three lakhs of hair on the body.

ඉස ගිනි යකුනේ නට	න් ඩ
ලය තද වෙවුළුවා එ	න් ඩ
අවරගිරේ බුදු මැරේ	න් ඩ
වරෙන් යකුනි සලිත වෙ	න් ඩ

May the demons with burning heads perform the dance

And come hither making the heart tremble

O, the demons! may you come

So that the "Avaragiri Bandana" may disappear.

සුරිය මණ්ඩල නට	න් ඩ
අහස පොළොව දෙවි නට	න් ඩ
මහමෙර සිවුකොණ නට	න් ඩ
වර වර යකු දෑ පන වෙ	න් ඩ

May the sun dance

And also the gods of the earth and sky

Let the four corners of Mahameru dance

O, demon! come hither so that you may be subdued.

හෙණ ගිනි මණ්ඩල නට	න් ඩ
යම දොර වෙවුලා වඩි	න් ඩ
සසියක් ඇඟ මස් කෙලි	න් ඩ
ගිනි දෙවියකු සලිත වෙ	න් ඩ

I shall offer fire in order that the demon may tremble

The "Henagini Mandala" may dance

The portal of Yama may come hither

And six hundred parts of flesh in the body may disport.

CHAPTER VI

GIRI DEVI NATUMA

In the hierarchy of the Yakas of Ceylon, the Gara Yaka holds a place apart. With little or no evil tendencies such as those associated with the rest of the Yakkas, the Gara Yaka has a positive beneficent influence in the life of the villager. His role is constructive and not destructive.

The Gara Yaka swinging on the *aille*, is the closing scene of many a ceremony in exorcism. In structure the *aille* recalls the clothes-line, except that the line here is something strong and substantial with a bough of the *Goraka* tree spanning the support on either side. On this, Gara Yaka sits, gambols and swings about. He is quite at ease on the *aille*, voraciously eating the offerings (*pideniya*) of sweets and delicacies handed to him. Buoyant and joyful, he quips with the attendant priest, the (*kattadiya*). The dialogue often ranges from obscenity to innocent fun, reminiscent of the technique of ritual obscenity surviving from early days.

The closing scene in the Gara Yaka ritual is essentially a fertility rite. The officiating priest who impersonates the *Vattaruwa* the legendary grandson of Gara Yaka, dons a bull's head and walks about on all fours, symbolising the puddling of the field by bulls, preparatory to the ploughing. The rest of the

agricultural operations follow from sowing and harvesting, to doling out the share of the produce to the villagers who have lent a hand in the customary services of cultivation.

The Gara group of yakas comprises twelve individual Garas. Their names severally are *Alut Gara*, *Sohon Gara*, *Desa Gara*, *Savun Gara*, *Pushpa Gara*, *Kana Gara*, *Uma Gara*, *Lavuna Gara*, *Vata Gara*, *Tota Gara*, *Kila Gara*, and *Kili Gara*. Each of these Garas has his own individual rituals collectively known as *Dolaha Pelapaliya*.

Allied to his function of dispelling evil, is his role of a cleansing agent. In ceremonies of *Graha Santi* as in ceremonies of exorcism as the Bali, descending from his *aile*, with the lighted torch of rags, the (*pandama*) in hand, the Gara Yaka in quickened steps, covers the premises of the house, throwing handfuls of the powdered resin which, lighted by the flaming torch, go up in flame and smoke.

Legends recount how Gara Yaka set the stage at the wedding of God Kataragama to Valli, the daughter of the wilds. The Veddas collected the flesh of animals they hunted for the wedding feast. The stench of stored flesh was too much for the gods who attended the wedding. Gara Yaka demons were invoked to tidy up the arena. The yakas with their voracious appetite made short work of the collected meat, and cleaned up the place.

The Gara Yakas have their consorts, each of them distinguished by the name Giri. Andun Giri, Sohon Giri, Desa Giri are some of the names of the consorts. The chief of the Gara Yakas is Dala Raja, and Giri Devi is his consort.

At a full scale ceremonial performance, are enacted, the *dolaha pelapaliya*, the twelve different rituals. Twelve dancers impersonate the goddesses, attired in womens' garb, set off with diadems and ornamented by breast bands, bangles and anklets. The life of Giri Devi, the goddess of surpassing beauty, is highlighted in a number of poses.

Giri Devi is a personality of interest. Her life story has been handed down in the folk poem, *Giri Devi Kathava*, (in the collections of the Colombo Museum Library, Ms. A.R./10). A chronicle of value for its cultural content, a free translation of it is hereunder given, with verses in original.

Daughter of King Aravati of Dantapura and Queen Hamsavati, Giri Devi (as the princess is known in the legends) grew up in all the glory of her birth and rank. As she came of age, she was a maiden of radiant beauty and charm. At her birth, the astrologers who were summoned to forecast her future revealed that her *Karma* destined her to marry her brother. This prediction caused untold distress to the father and mother. They decided to bring her up in a concealed trench. This proved no deterrent to the working of fate. Her sensuous and passionate brother, Prince Dala, discovered her secret abode with the aid of the washerwoman. Overpowered by his sensuous longings for his sister, he sent word to his parents that his life would not long endure unless he realised his cherished wishes, and prevailed on the King and Queen to let him see his sister. The negotiations culminated in a meeting of the two. Conflicting passions were aroused at this encounter. The princess would not easily yield to his advances. She gave expression to her dominant feelings of the ignominy that a union of brother and sister would cause. Her lamentations were of no avail and Prince Dala accomplished his desires. The rest of the story may best be gathered from the words of the legend appended.

Brother-sister alliances are known from history in the ancient royal families of Egypt and Persia and the Incas of Peru. Survivals of the custom are known to have prevailed in early days over certain areas of the

world, including the Hawaiian Islands of the Pacific.¹ As an institution, it appears to have been more or less forbidden to those other than royal or chiefly rank. The main motivation seems to have been the belief in the virtues of the royal blood and the desire to keep the blood as pure as possible. (Hastings — Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, "Marriage", Vol. VIII, p.425).

At a comprehensive programme of folk dances held in Colombo in July 1957, Giri Devi Natuma was one of the colourful shows presented under the auspices of Ruhunu Kala Kavaya. The dancing was of a high artistic standard. The vivacious and graceful dancing, fleeting footwork and tempo, did ample justice to the interplay of feelings, emotions and conflicting passions aroused by the story as a whole, and its emotional situations, with a good leavening of the supernatural element.

GIRI DEVI KATHAVA — The story of Giri Devi.

උපත මදක් මම කියමින් කවික	ර
සැපත එදිනිදිව අගපත් එනුව	ර
විපත නොවන රජවලියකි මනහ	ර
උපත කියමි ගිරි දේවිගෙ රැබ	ර

I shall recount briefly the origin
Of princess Giri Devi;
In the capital of Dambadiva
Reigned a prosperous line of kings.

1. Something of the folk psychology in relation to this cultural phase and its implications, has been handed down in the folk-lore of different lands, including Ceylon. See Martin Wickramasinghe—Essays in Sinhalese Culture, 1956. A significant reference to this folklore was made in the course of his paper on "Folk lore, Music and Dance" by Austin Jayawardhana, read at the UNESCO SEMINAR on Traditional Cultures, held in Madras November, 1958.

දන්ත එපුර නුවරකි මන නන්	5
වංස විරාජිත බිසවුන් කැන්	5
වංස උතුන් ආරවති නිරිත්	5
හන්සවතී දේවිය කල් බැන්	5

An attractive city was Danta Pura;
 Summoned princesses of noble lineage
 And the King Aravati of noble birth
 Chose Hansa Vati to be his queen.

මෝරන සදුවැනි දින දින පසු කො	0
ආරන පියයුරු කැකුළු ලැමද පි	0
වාරන රතිකෙලි නැරඹ එලද	0
නැරම දොලදුක් අටගති බිසව	0

Her breasts developed
 Like the moon that waxes day after day
 Enjoying sensuous pleasures
 The queen got pre-natal longings.

පසුව ගොසින් දසමස ගැබ සපි	8
වැදුව නිකිණි මස පුරට කුමා	8
ගැසුව එහඬ බෙර උපන් කුමා	8
ඇඬුව නැකත් වේලාව කුමා	8

Ten months after pregnancy
 She gave birth to a princess in the waxing half of
 the month of Nikini (July-August)
 When the princess was born, a drum was beaten
 announcing the birth;
 The child cried at the auspicious hour.

ගෙන් නම් බමුණෝ නිමිති බලන් න	0
ඔන් න ඉතින් පෙර කලකට අත් පි	0
දෙන් න පතාගන ආවේ පෙර සි	0
දෙන් න කර බැඳ සිටිති සබේ ව	0

I shall summon Brahmins to make a forecast.
 Now the previous "karma" has borne fruit
 The two aspired to join each other from the
 previous existence
 The couple has joined in wedlock.

කොසි දේවත් නොකියන කල් කා	රී
අසියත් එක කුසෙ උපන් කුමා	රී
දෙසියත් චන් බැරි සිදුවන කා	රී
අසියට කල් බැඳ සිටිති කුමා	රී

She does not disclose anything;
The princess had one brother
Even God has not the power to stop that which is
ordained
The princess was in love with her brother.

මවුපිය දෙන් න සෝ ක කිනා	ලා
ලෙවුහිති කඳුළින් බිසවු අඩා	ලා
දෙවු පුරයක් මෙන් බිත් කරවා	ලා
කිවුව නැකත් බිත් ගෙට යන වේ	ලා

The two parents were in great distress
The queen began to shed tears in great remorse;
Constructing a labyrinth like unto a heavenly city
An auspicious time was fixed to enter the
labyrinth.

දිරිතර රජ කුමරිය අනුරා	ගේ
සීරිවර පන්සිය කිරි මවුලා	ගේ
සරිවෙන අය කවුරුන් නැතලා	ගේ
ගිරි ලද බිත් ගෙසි පුන් සඳවා	ගේ

The passionate princess steadfast in disposition
Had a company of five hundred wet nurses;
She was not to be compared with anyone else;
The princess Giri shone like the full moon, inside
the labyrinth.

සන් ඇවිදිද් දට කුමරිය ලා	ගේ
යුන් පවු නලලද අඩ සඳවා	ගේ
සන් බඹ වරලස නිල් මයුරා	ගේ
රන් තරනෙන් රන් පිළිමය වා	ගේ

The princess attained the age of seven years,
The flowing tresses seven fathoms long are like
the blue (feathers) of the peacock
The narrow forehead was like the crescent moon
And she figured like a golden image.

කැමුණු පිලා දේදුනු නෙන් බැම ඇති
 දෙනෙන් කැලා නිල් මැණික් දෙකක් වෙති
 මිනින නාග රන් අකුසක් බබළුති
 කියන මෙලක් සණ මෙලක් දිවේ නැති

The eye-brows were like rainbows
 And the eyes were two blue sapphires
 (Her) nose shone like a golden goad
 Such features were not possessed by anyone else
 in Lanka.

කල් පසුකර සොලසම ම පිරි විවි
 මල් මද ගිරි ලද මල් බැර වෙ විවි
 අල් ප සිතක් මොකකුන් නොලැබි විවි
 ලොල් කර කාමෙම සිත ලොබ වෙ විවි

When she reached the age of sixteen
 The passionate princess Giri attained puberty
 Her mind was not bent on any trivial thing
 But she longed for sensuous pleasures.

වානු බැරිය සිත දැන් ගිරිදේවි ට
 දේනු හත්ස පැටිසේම නුරාව ට
 ජේනු වෙලා සිත එන්නේ කාමෙ ට
 ගැනු කියති ගනුවෙන් දළ කුමරු ට

Now Giri Devi could not resist her temptations
 As passionate as female swans
 Her mind bent on sensuous desires.
 The women carried this news to Prince Dala.

සළ සොද වුණි ගිරිලද සොද වයස ට
 සළ මංගල්ලේ දක්වති බිසව ට
 සළ තෝ වය කරවන පෝ සිත් ට
 සළ මංගල්ලේ දක්වති බිසව ට

The Princess Giri attained puberty at the proper
 age

The ceremony relating to the cloth performed
 By washers engaged for the service of the cloth.

සතක් එතිර බැද බිසවුන් ගාව ට
 මතක් කරති කොට හළ දක්වන්න ට
 ගසති එතාලන් පොට ගෙන දැන ට
 කියන් එහළ මංගල්ලේ බිසව ට

Seven curtains were drawn in front of the queen.
 Bidden to do the rites of puberty,
 The "talanpota" is sounded by both hands
 And the ceremony of the cloth, performed.

ගැනු එපත් සිය සිටුවා දැ	ලේ
වානු සිතින් රත්තලි ගෙන ලී	ලේ
දේනු හත්ස පැටි මෙන් කර ලී	ලේ
පේනු සිතින් ආවචනී දැ	ලේ

Causing the five hundred women to stand on
 either side
 They take golden plates
 Dancing like female swans
 They invoke blessings standing on either side.

එදා පේසියා එනවා දැක	ලා
උදාරයේ දලරජුන් කිපී	ලා
විඩා මතින් ඉන්නේ මග රැක	ලා
එදා දුවපි දල කුමරුන් දැක	ලා

Seeing the PEDIYA (washer) coming that day
 King DALA was greatly angered
 (He) sat on the wayside because of fatigue
 Seeing Prince DALA, he ran from his sight.

පිදී ලියක් බැස එති තනි පා	රේ
පියදීමදල කුමරා රැක පා	රේ
ගැදී මෙතොපි හියෙදැයි මොන පා	රේ
පිදී පිටට ගැටි අසනි දෙපා	රේ

A washerwoman comes along the road all alone
 Prince DALA waylaid her
 And belabouring her
 Asked which way she went.

ඇත්තුවේ වැන්දෙමි නොමරන්න	ට
ඉන්නේ තමුසෙගෙ නගා කදිම	ට
උන්නේ මල්වර හඬ මංගල්ලෙ	ට
එන්නේ මම ගොස් කොට හඬ මගල	ට

I worship you so that you may not kill me,
Your sister is keeping well.
I am returning
After attending her *Kotahalu* ceremony.

රිදී අතින් ඇසු නිගා සිටින නැ	න
කදිම බිත් ගෙයි සද්වෙන ලක්ෂ	න
යෙදී මෙමට බොරු නොකිය වෙනින් වෙ	න
අදී කඩුව දිවුරන් ඔ කියාග	න

The washerwoman was asked where the sister lived
She said that she lives in the beautiful labyrinth;
Saying that she should not lie
He drew the sword asking her to swear.

කොතනද රිදියේ නගා සිටි	න් නේ
දෙරණ තුලේ සට බිත් ගෙයි උ	න් නේ
මනන මදන වෙරි බොරු නොකිය	න් නේ
රනන කඩුව ගසලා දිවුර	න් නේ

O washerwoman, where does (my) sister live?
She lives in the labyrinth in the bowels of the earth.
Utter no falsehood as a result of being intoxicated by sensuous pleasures ;
She swore upon the golden sword.

ගසා කඩුවෙ දිවුරන් නේ එව්	වා
නොසා බයෙන් දුනි මාලය කර	වා
නිසා රිදී ලියයෙනි තම පුර	වා
අසා ලකුණු දල කු මරිදු එව්	වා

Swearing upon the sword at that time
A necklace was gifted
Because of the washerwoman (they) reached the city
Prince Dala thus got information.

දනිමි ඉතින් උපමාව සිතා	ලා
මුනින් වැටි යහනේ පෙරලී	ලා
වෙනින් ලෙඩක් මට නැතෙයි කියා	ලා
නගුන් දකින ලෙස කිවුව අඩා	ලා

Rightly planning that he knows how to act now
 (He) stretched himself on the bed face downwards
 Except for the longing that to see his sister
 He said he had no other ailment and started
 weeping.

ගොසින් කියවු මගෙ මවුපියො දෙන් න	ච
ඉතින් මගේ දිවි නොතිබෙයි කලක	ච
කතූන් කියන බස් නොගනු සැබෑව	ච
නගූන් එවව් මගෙ ආහාට දකින්න	ච

Go and inform my parents
 That my life would not hereafter endure very
 long;
 Do not believe what women say
 Send my sister so that I may see her.

මදමත් ගිජ්දෙකී සේ දල කෑම	රු
කැඳබත් පැන්වත් නොකෑම කර දු	රු
ලද ගිරිදේවිය නොදුටොත් සොදු	රු
අද වත් විස්සන නැත දල කෑම	රු

Prince Dala is like a rutting elephant
 He does not either eat or drink;
 Unless (he) sees beautiful Giri Devi
 The life of Prince Dala is not sure to endure even
 this day.

ගේ ක	උන්තු කුමරිට උනු නපු	රා
මේ ක	එද කීව්වේ බණ තෝ	රා
මේ ක	එද කීව් බමුණෝ තෝ	රා
කෝක	වෙනත් කැඳවා එති යොදු	රා

This is the evil that betook a princess who was in
 her home
 The Brahmins foretold this on that day;
 Whatever it be the Princess was brought hither.

බැන් ද	තිරයක් කුමරුන් වට ක	ර
කැන් ද	කිරිමවු පන්සිය එකව	ර
අන් ද	සිවුසැට බරණින් මපක	ර
දුන් ද	රත්කලි පන්සිය එක්ව	ර

A curtain was hung around the prince
 Having summoned the five hundred wet nurses at
 once
 They were adorned with the sixty-four ornaments
 When the five hundred golden plates were gifted
 at the same time.

ර න් දඹසේ අත් දෙක අල්ලාගෙන	න
කැන් ද ගෙන ගොස් යහනේ ඉන්ද	න
ම න් විදිමද දුක් දුබම සිතාග	න
ර න් රති මද යුද හැසුරුණි කැන්ද	න

Taking her by the two hands which shone like
 golden garlands
 She was seated on the bed
 Saying that he suffered much in trying to win her;
 (He) indulged in sexual pleasures.

වඩාන ගොස් යහනේ ඉන් දා	හ හ හ හ
අඩා වැටී ගිරි ලද මොරගා	
කුඩා නමුත් නින් දාව සිතා	
විඩාමනින් මද යුද පොලඹා	

Carrying her she was placed on the bed
 The maiden Giri uttered lamentations
 Although young she thought of the ignominy
 Her sexual desires roused.

දහස වටින සඵවක් අන් දා	ලා
දහස වටින මාලය කරලා	ලා
පහස විදපි කාමෙට සිත ලොබ	ලා
වෙහෙස විදපි ගිරි ලද නලවා	ලා

Having dressed her in a cloth worth a thousand
 A necklace worth a thousand was put on her neck
 Enjoying sensuous pleasures with Giri Devi
 He became fatigued.

මියුරු සුවද රස කැඳගෙන පොව	ති
විදුරු විලස මුණේ රුව බල	ති
අදුර නියන සෙනගත් නැගු වුව	ති
මිහිරි කතා සිත පොසඹා ගනී	ති

She was given sweet smelling porridge
Admiring the beauty of her face which shone like
crystal

Hosts of men were made to wake
Her passions roused by pleasant talk.

බැන්දා වරලස පිරු රුවක්	○
අන්දා සිවුසැට බරණින් මීප කො	○
කැන්දා කිරිමවු පන්සිය එකවි	○
තින්දා පවසනි ගැනු ඉතින් ම	○

Having combed and tied the hair well
She is bedecked with the sixty-four ornaments
Summoning the five hundred wet nurses at once;
(She said) that these women would now insult her.

නගේ මන්ද නුඹ ඔය හැටි කිවි	වේ
දනේ කියාලයි නුඹ ගෙන් නු	වේ
මගේ රුවට රුව නුඹයි ගෙන්	වේ
මගේ මදන වෙරි නුඹ පා කෙරු	වේ

O Sister; why do you speak so much
You were summoned because of my intense
desires

You are the person who is my equal in beauty
And it is you who appeased my carnal desires.

එමට රුවැනි බිසවුන් නැතුවා	ද
මෙමට ආලෙ මොනවට සිතුවා	ද
නමට උතුම් රජවලිය නොවේ	ද
මෙමට කරපු දේ කිඵු නොවේ	ද

Are there no other queens who are very beautiful?
Why did you cherish a desire for me?
Is this not a noble royal lineage?
Does it not cause a stigma by what has been done
to me?

පිලිසිද එක කුසෙ කවුරුන් උපදි	නි
කලිවට සිත් අහුරා ගෙට එක් වෙ	නි
විලිලඡ් ඡා වේ කියන කෙනෙක් නෑ	නි
එලි නැතුවා මිස එමට ඔහොම ඇ	නි

Many are born in the same womb
 And they agree to indulge in sensuous pleasures
 No one will disclose the fact because of shame
 The fact that it is not known is enough.

නුඹට සිතේ දැන් ලැජ්ජා නැතුව	○
අපට බැරිය දැන් ඔහොම සිතන්න	○
ලොවට දැනෙන කොට කියති කවිත් ක	○
එමට හිතාහෙති ගැනු ඉතින් ම	○

Although you do not feel ashamed
 I cannot think in that way
 When the fact comes to be known people will
 start speaking
 Then the women would laugh at me.

සඳේ ඇන්ද ලප සඳ ඇර යන ව	ද
විලේ එළුපත විල ඇර යනව	ද
මලේ මියුරු රොන් මල ඇර යනව	ද
නුඹට බැඳපු සෙනෙහස් ඇර යනව	ද

Will the mark in the moon leave it?
 Will the spring in the pond leave it?
 Will the pollen of the flower desert it?
 Will the attachment I bear towards you break off ?

දැයි කුස යට මගෙ ගිනි ඇවිලේ	න්තේ
වෙයි මොකවත් මගෙ දිවි නොතිබේ	න්තේ
දෙසියන්ඩත් මගෙ දුක නොපෙ	න්තේ
අසියට කල් බැඳ කොහොමද ඉ	න්තේ

A fire burns within my bowel,
 Something might happen and my life will not last ;
 Even God does not see my sufferings,
 How can I live in love with my elder brother ?

ඇන්ද සඳේ ලප කවුද නොදැක්	තේ
මන්ද මගේ මද යුද නුඹ රැක්	තේ
මන්ද මෙලොව අප කවුද නොදැක්	තේ
නින්ද ගියේ ගිරි ලදගෙ ඔබොක්	තේ

Who is it that has not seen the spot on the moon?
 Why did you appease my carnal desires?
 Who in this world has not seen us?
 (He) slept on the lap of Giri Devi.

තබා සිරසියහනේ තබවා	ප
විඩා මනින් ගිදිලද මොර ගා	ප
අමා ඇසල රුක නැගි බලා	ප
මෙමා රුවින් බොටුවේ වැල ලා	ප

When he kept his head on the bed
Giri Devi started crying
(She) went to an Asala tree
And hung herself.

මලකද ඇර පණ නොගොසින් තිබූ	හි
බල ඇති සක් සුරිඳුගෙ නෙද පැතූරු	හි
කල වැලකින් අත්තේ බැද එල්ලී	හි
බල ඇති දල දෙවිඳුට දල නොපෙනු	හි

The powerful god Dala did not see prince Dala,
She hung herself by a creeper ;
By the power of God Sakra
(Her) life was not found to be extinct.

අත් දෙක මල්දම් සේ එල්ලී	විවි
සත් බඹ වරලස උනා වැටී	විවි
පියයුරු නෙන් කඳුලින් නැවී	විවි
සක් සුරිඳුගෙ දිව නෙතට පෙනී	විවි

The two hands hung like two garlands
The flowing tresses hung seven fathoms long
Her breasts were bathed by the tears of her eyes
This was seen by the divine eye of Sakra.

නිදිව පිබිද එ දල කුමරී	ත් දා
පිබිද බැලිය ගිරිලද නැති සි	ත් දා
ඇවිද මෙසක් වල වියරු මති	ත් දා
ඇවිද බැලිය සක් වල ලුහුබ	ත් දා

When Prince Dala woke up
He did not see Giri Devi
In madness he roamed all the world over
Searching for her.

රාසි ගණන් දේ සවල බලා	ප
රාසි ගණන් අඩ අඩා බලා	ප
කාසි තෝ ස දේ සවල බලා	ප
වාසි කියා ගිරිලද විමසා	ප

He searched in many countries
Weeping and wailing
He searched for her even in Benares
Calling out "Giri, Giri!"

එසින් නික්ම ගම තැන ම බලා	පි
පසින් ගසා ගල් මුල් පොඩිකර	පි
නිතර මහත් කඳු හෙල් පොඩිකර	පි
විතර ගජන් බිම ගසා මරා	පි

From there (he) searched all over
Kicking and smashing roots and stones
Hillocks and dales
Large elephants were dashed on the ground and
killed.

ඉරා දෙරණ නාලොවේ වෙලා	පි
විරාජිතව ගම තැන ම බලා	පි
ගරා මුදේ වැලි ඡගෙන බලා	පි
නුරා මගේ ලද කොයි ද අසා	පි

The earth was rent and tied to *Naga loka*
He searched everywhere
Even in the sifted sands of the sea
He asked O! where is my beloved damsel?

එක් සැණෙකින් දිවලොවේ බලා	ගේ
දක් ස වෙලා දු කෙලිය සැදි	ගේ
ලක් ස ගණන් දු කෙලි දිනවා	ගේ
දක් ස මගේ ලද කොයිද අසා	ගේ

At once he looked in the divine world
And he sat at a game of dice
Gambling thus, he won lakhs
He asked O! where is my damsel?

උතැන් එසුර තැරු සොලවා අස	පි
උතැන් සකු බවනේ ඩිමසා	පි
යොදුන් එපර සතු රුක සොලවා	පි
හඳුන් උයන ගම තැන ම බලා	පි

He searched in the noble abode of Sakra
And all over the Nandana garden
Shaking the noble *Parijata tree*
He made enquiries.

සක් සුරිඳුගෙ දිව නෙතට පෙනී	ලා
එක් සැණෙකින් සුරභන ගෙන්නා	ලා
ලක්ස ගණන් පෙළු පෙළුට සදා	ලා
දක්ස නුඹේ ලද ගනින් කියා	ලා

Sakra seeing this through his divine eyes
Got down the goddesses immediately,
Making them stand in rows by lakhs
He asked him to take his damsel.

සුරසුර අග බිඹ තලවත් නො ව	වි
පරසක්වල දසදහසකැදු නො ව	භි
අඹුනුන් කෙළ සුරභන වත් නොව	වි
ගිරි ලදගේ සුළඟිල්ලක් නොව	වි

The celestial world and the Brahma worlds
And six thousand other world systems
And three kotis of celestial maidens
All these are not worth as much as the small
fingers of "Giri Devi."

තොපගෙ විමානේ ඇසල රුකේ	යා
බොටුවේ කල වැල ලාන දිනේ	යා
දුටුවේ සක් රජ දිව නෙතිනේ	යා
කැටුව කුමරු සෙනසුරා එවී	යා

On the day that she hung by a creeper
On the "Asala" tree in your abode
Sakra saw it through his divine eye
Saturn was sent along with the prince.

මහොරි පොටය ඇග බඳ පිරි මැද	ලා
නිසර ලෙසින් පියසුරු බේ දෑක	ලා
වියරු මතින් වත සිඹ සනසව	ලා
"කියයි ඉතින් දෙනු පණ පිහිටුව	ලා

Having caressed her body
He saw the swan-like breasts
Kissing the face with much gusto ¹
He saw the sawn-like breasts ;

1. The meaning of the last line is obscure.

ලගට ඇසල රුක ගොසින් බලා	ලා
ලදට අතින් දල කුමරු අඩා	ලා
ගහට ගොසින් වැල උනා බලා	ලා
බිමට බාපි මලකද නවතා	ලා

Going near the "Asala" tree
 Prince Dala cried* with grief over the maiden
 Climbing the tree and removing the creeper
 He took down the dead body.

අමා එපැන් සියොගතට ඉසි	න් නේ
පමා නැතුව ගිරි ලද නැගිටි	න් නේ
දමා එවිස පැන් රැගෙන ඉසි	න් නේ
මෙමා නොදැක හිමයම වල් ව	න් නේ

Ambrosial waters sprinkled on Giri Devi
 And she awakens forthwith
 When poisonous water is sprinkled
 She gets into the forest without seeing me.

පිලිසිදි එක කුස දල කුමරි	න් දා
ගිරිලද කල් බැඳ වියරු මති	න් දා
ගිරිලද කල් බැඳ වියරු මති	න් දා
ගිරිලද ගෙන හියෙ සකු සුරි	න් දා

Prince Dala, born in the same womb
 Married the damsel Giri in a state of insanity
 Thereupon God Sakra took away the damsel Giri.

බැඳ ගත්තා කල් නගාම සර	නේ
අද දක්වා පවති මුව දෙර	නේ
බැඳ ගත්තා කපි ගිරි ගේ වරු	නේ
අද දක්වා ගිරි ලද සක් බව	නේ

Up to this day, it is well known in this world
 That the sister was taken to wife ;
 Verses relating to Giri have been composed;
 The maiden Giri sojourns in the abode of Sakra
 to this day.

CHAPTER VII

RATA YAKUMA

A very significant dance in the cult of the spirits, is the Rata Yakuma held to invoke blessings on barren and pregnant women. The chief character in this dance is Queen Riddi born out of a fire that arose on the Maha Meru mountain. Maha Brahma, who sojourned on earth at the time, took her to wife. She begot seven daughters, Na Mal Kumari, So Mal Kumari, Idda Mal Kumari, Picca Mal Kumari, Sapumal Kumari, Vadamal Kumari and Siddi Mal Kumari.

Later Maha Brahma deserted queen Riddi and she went to king Vesamuni with her daughters. From Vesamuni she obtained authority to cause illness to women and children. Owing to the fact that they even exceeded the authority given by Vesamuni, he imprisoned queen Riddi and her daughters at Asuragiri Kotuwa (Fort of Asuragiri) for a period of twelve years. As they had no food during this period they had to find a way to live. Legend has it that they cultivated a new field with cotton and spun thread and wove it into a robe which they offered to Buddha Dipankara, from where they derived their authority to cure the ailments of barren and pregnant women.

A street with seven pandals is made at the site where the Rata Yakuma is held. The dancers came to the assembly along this path decorated with woodland flowers, plantain stems and tender coconut leaves.

After offerings to the demons, the twelve posture dances (*Pelapali*) are performed.

Among the dancers are represented the queens, and the Buddha Dipankara. At the end of the dance a decorated doll is placed in the hand of the patient. This symbolises a safe delivery to the patient.

The origin of betel and cotton is sung during this dance.

CHAPTER VIII

DAHA-ATA SANNIYA

THE CULT OF THE EIGHTEEN SANNIYAKKAS.

The eighteen "Sanni" dances are performed to propitiate the demons who cause various types of diseases. The origin of "sanni" is described as follows in the Palm Leaf Manuscript No. 7/A1 of the Colombo Museum Library.

When King Suddhodana was reigning in this prosperous country of Sri Lanka, hosts of demons were summoned in the name of merchants and husbandmen. When the Lord (Buddha) went begging for alms along the central road of the city of Visala, he found Dammodiya petrified and dumbfounded. Determined to make Dammodiya speak, the Lord showed his powers.

Thereupon he (Dammodiya) made a sound of "Hafti". By the first spittle, the dogs were destroyed, at the second cattle died, and at the third men died. On looking into the reason for this through his divine eyes, it was found that it so happened as a result of the powers of Sohon Yaka who had his birth at the cemetery where Princess Ajapali of Visala was cremated. He has neither mother nor father. This foolish demon, having dug a hole in a street of that city, posed in the

following manner. Having a corpse on the back and one on the belly (he) kept one for his head, and two each on his two hands and two feet. While he was covering himself with the skin of a corpse and munching a dead body, he was asked what type of a demon he was.

When the Lord threatened him not to speak an untruth, he said that he causes windy diseases within a range of eighteen cubits, eighteen types each of burning sensation, coughs and fits, bashfulness, convulsions, pains and also the attitude of looking up, down, around and about, mortal fears and lunacy.

Thereupon the Lord uttered "*yatoham*" at which the demon being weakened in his powers, hid himself under a lump of cowdung. Then he was called a second time to come near (the Lord); whereupon he immediately came and saluted with one hand. When he was asked the reason why he did not salute with both hands, he took the book and saluted with both hands after performing a dance relating to the book.

On asking what are the offerings that should be made to him, he made answer:— the offering unto the head should be rice, that unto the waist rice. Holding leaf-plates on the two hands, and having adorned the body with eighteen twigs, perform the "Kola" Sanni dance. And when one sees that the "Sanni" diseases of the village afflict the other village, and that village after village, and house after house are devastated, take a skull and having put rice therein offer it at the boundary of a village after charms had been chanted. Make further offerings of eighteen plates of food, eighteen lamps properly lighted, a fowl, five leaf cups each of flowers, antimony, sandal, blood, acid, "patan" (Sapan wood), juice of orange peels, water, milk, roast meat and toddy.

By way of illustrating some of the "Sanni" dances, a few Sinhala verses are extracted hereunder with their translation in English.

“ Kalas Pali ” (Plate 22)

(Dance relating to water-pots)

නොලස් වමින් ඉසකඩ ඇර පෙනෙ	න් නේ
වලස් ගවරුනුත් අල්ලා කෙළී	න් නේ
කෙළක් සෙනඟ රු සිනෙන් පෙනෙ	න් නේ
කළස් පාලි දෑක සන් නිය වරෙ	න් නේ

Thou art seen with thy head uncovered and disporting with bears and gaurs. Millions of men are dreamt in dreams. Having seen the dance relating to water-pots, may the “ Sanni ” demon come hither.

මිනී ඔළුව ගෙන සුරතට දර	න් නේ
සරී තෙත් තුණක් විමසා බල	න් නේ
දැනී කරපු ගම පිරිපොත හරි	න් නේ
තැඹිලි පාලි දෑක සන් නිය වරෙ	න් නේ

Holding a skull in his right hand, he looks considerably with three eyes.

May all diseases willfully caused be removed, and the “ Sanni ” demon come hither

Seeing the dance relating to the king-coconut.

කළ ඇදගෙන රු සිනෙන් පෙනෙ	න් නේ
පොළ ඇරගන මණ්ඩල රුක සිටි	න් නේ
මුළු රේවති පිරිතෝ අනුහසි	න් නේ
දල මුර පාලියට සන් නිය වරෙ	න් නේ

He is dreamt in dreams as attired in black cloth And is seen bearing clubs and waylaying on roads. By the powers of the magical charms of (constellation) Revati,

May the “ Sanni ” demon come unto the dance relating to betel.

රූප රුදුරු පෙර විනකළ යකු	න් නේ
පාපයකින් අමු සෝතෝ උප	න් නේ
කීප දිනක් මවු ඇග මස් බුදි	න් නේ
දීප දුම්මලට සන් නිය වරෙ	න් නේ

Demons who have committed cruel acts in the past have hideous dreams.

He who was born in a cemetery as the result of a sinful act

Eats his mother's flesh for several days.

May the "Sanni" demon come hither seeing these lights and incense.

එල්ල කර විසල් පුරයට බැසපු ය	කා
බැල්ම හෙළා එවිසල් පුර නසන ය	කා
ඉල්ලු ලෙසට දුන් දොළ පුදගත් සැණේ	කා
පොල්ලෙ පාලියට බැස වර සන්නි ය	කා

May the demon who enter the city of Visal,
And devastate that city by his glances
Immediately accept these offerings made as desired.

May the demons come unto the dance relating to the club.

දෙමළ මවකැසින් උපදින යකු සොදි	නා
නොමළ මිනි සන් ගෙන ඉන වට අදි	නා
මලල බැමිම බැද හැබපළ පිට නෙළ	නා
දෙමළ බුන මරු සන්නිය පුදට එ	නා

The demon who was born from the womb of a Tamil mother

Has the skin of a living man girt around his waist,

And matted locks of hair falling on his back bound in the "Malala" fashion.

May the "Sanni" demon called "Demala Buta Maru" (Demon of a Tamil Spirit)

Come and accept these offerings.

7/A 1 — Eighteen "Sanni" dances

Daha Ata "Sanni" Paliya

අසන් විදුලි අසමොලගල වැසෙ	න්නේ
රුවන් දොරකසින් මෙරඟට වරෙ	න්නේ
මෙවන් ආතුරන් පිරිපන හරි	න්නේ
එරන් දුන්න ගෙන පාලිය කර	න්නේ

May the demon who sojourns in "Molagala"
 Come unto this dance across the golden threshold
 Take off the sickness which afflicts this patient
 And the dance shall be performed taking the
 golden bow.

වැද්දෙක් ඇවිත් බැසපිස් විසල් පුරය	ට
යුද්දෙ කර ඵ්‍ය එනුවර නසන්න	ට
බැද්දේ ඇවිදලා බැරි මට විදින්න	ට
ඇද්දේ මළමිනි ඵ් නුවරින් පිට	ට

A Vedda approached the city of Visal
 Threatening war and to devastate that city ;
 Having travelled in the woods I lost the power of
 shooting ;
 Dead bodies were taken out of that city.

රෙද්ද සේම දුනු දිය අත හෙලා ගෙ	න
බැද්ද සේම සිට දිවැසින් බලාගෙ	න
විද්ද සැරේ මහමෙර වත් විදහෙල	න
සුද්ද ලෙසට සන්නිය දුරලා මෙන	න

He stood in the midst of the jungle with bow in
 hand
 And looking through his divine eyes
 The arrow that was shot will even pierce Mount
 Meru
 May the "Sanni" demon be driven away from
 this place in proper manner.

දුන්න අතට ගන්නන් විද මරා	යේ
පන්න පන්නවා යකුගට තලා	යේ
වන්න විසල් පුර ජනපොත හරි	යේ
දුන්න රැගෙන නිසි පාලිය කරා	යේ

If the bow is taken into the hand (thou wilt) be
 shot and killed
 The demon is being chased and castigated
 And the epidemic diseases that afflict the city of
 Visal are removed
 Taking the bow the dance is properly performed.

රුහිරුල් කැවුතු ඇත රිසි පමණ බොදුන ට
 එනෙපුල් අසා යකු ගොස් වනිය නුවර ට
 එවිසල් පුරේ ගොස් යකු වනිය විගස ට
 ගිනිජල් සන් නියකු බැස වරෙන් අයිලෙ ට

(The first line of this verse is very obscure in meaning.)

Having heard those words, the demon went and reached the city of Visal;

May the "Sanni" demon called Ginijal come unto this "aile".

රුදුරු තැනට කෝ ලාභිල කරන්න ට
 විදුරු පන් දමක් ගෙන දුනිය දැන ට
 නපුරු එගිනි ජල් ඇරියේ දස අත ට
 රුදුරු සන් නි යකු වර විගස අයිලෙ ට

A "viduru"¹ (crystal) torch was given unto the two hands

In order that disturbances may be created at places of violence

Flames are lighted in the ten directions

May the "Sanni" demons come immediately unto this "aile".

එන්ඩ රුදුරු රාජ සන් නියකු සිටියේ යක් සමු දා
 එන්ඩ විසල් පුර නුවරට මලසෝනෙන් බැසපු එ දා
 ඉන්ඩ නොදී යකු දුරුකර ඇරියේ අපෙ මුනිද ස දා
 කෙන්ඩි පාලි දැක දහඅට සන් නි යකු නි වරෙවු මෙ දා

The fierce and cruel demon called "Raja Sanni" came along that day from the cemetery with a company of demons

Unto the city of Visal

Our Lord of the sages drove away the demons without permitting them to stay behind

Seeing the dance relating to the pitcher, may the eighteen "Sanni" demons come hither today.

1. Viduru—from Vajra—As applied to the torch, it may be as showing its brilliance.

වලස් ගජතු එළ ගවයෝන් නැසුණු වැදුණු ජනපොතය ට
 තොලස් ව ආ යකු දුරුකර ඇරියේ මුනිරජ අණ කො ට
 සොළොස් කොනේ අයිල් තොරන් දුන් දොළ පුදවරම්
යකු ට

කලස් පාලි දෑක දහඅට සන්නිය දුරලන් අදනි ට

The bears, elephants, rams and cattle affected and
 destroyed by the epidemic

And by the power of our king of sages the demons
 were driven away

Sacrifices and offerings were made unto the
 demons at the "aile" and archways constructed
 at the sixteen corners

Having performed the dance of the water-pot, let
 us drive away the "Sanni" demons as from
 this day.

කියන් පලමු එවිසල් පුර සන්නි උපත මුල් කර ලා
 පියන් ගණන් දහඅටකට ගෙන් වෙනවෙන තෝරව ලා
 වියන් වළලු මල් පහනින් දුන් නු වරම් කැප කර ලා
 උයන් කෙළිය දුන් පැහිදුම වරෙන් දසට සන්නි වෙ ලා

Let me first describe the origin of the "Sanni"
 demons in the city of Visal

Offerings of flowers and lamps are made after
 decorating the altar with canopies

And dividing it into eighteen apartments

May the eighteen "Sanni" demons come hither
 looking at the uncooked food offerings at the
 garden festival.

මාර යුදෙන් ජය ගනිමින් ඉසිපතනට මුනි වැඩ ලා
 වීර තොවන ජනපොතයෙං නැසුනි සෙනග දිවස් බ ලා
 බාර දුන් නු ගොටු දහඅට උතුරු දෙසට යකු දුර ලා
 ගෝර රුදුරු දසට සන්නි වරෙං තැඹිලි පාලි බ ලා

When the Sage came to Isipatana after having
 gained victory over the hosts of Mara

He saw the men who fell victim to epidemic
 diseases

The demon being driven away to the North,
 eighteen leaf cups were offered

May the fierce eighteen "Sanni" come hither
 looking at the dance of the king-coconut.

පළකර දැමූ මල කැණයට මැවුණු මිනි මස් කා ලා
 රළකර මුනිදුට බලපා බස් නෙපලයි වෙහෙස වෙ ලා
 අළකර යකු බයෙන් දුවයි බුදුරුස් ගින්නට වෙවුලා
 දළමුර පාලිය දැකලා හරිත් සන්නි දොස දුර ලා

(The demon) was nurtured by the flesh of the
 corpse that was dismembered
 And he speaks in harsh tones to the Lord of the
 Sages
 The demon flies in fear of the refulgent rays that
 emanate from the Buddha
 Having seen the dance of the betel may the
 "Sanni" evils be dispelled.

උතුරු දෙසට මුනි වැඩලා යක් සෙනඟට බල පා ලා
 ඉන්ඩ බිමක් නොදී යක්කු ජයකොන්නෝ වැඩ ඉඳ ලා
 උන්නඩ එදා දුන් විවරණ උතුරු දෙසට යකු දුර ලා
 සන්නියකුනි ලෙඩ දුරලා වර පොලු පාලිය දැක ලා

When the Buddha reached northern region
 And asserted his powers against demons, they had
 no place to stay
 Having stayed on the mace they were given
 authority and driven to the North
 May the "Sanni" Yakku came hither seeing the
 dance of the cudgel and remove diseases.

එදින කුරුලෙට ඇදුරා ගොසි න්නේ
 ඇදින සැවුල් බිල්ලක් ගනිලසි න්නේ
 එදින ඇදුරු කොක් හඩලා දප න්නේ
 මෙදින දුන්න ගෙන පාලිය කර න්නේ

The witch doctor having gone to the altar
 That day offers a fowl
 Crowing like a cock he stretches forth
 And bearing a bow in hand performed the dance.

සුරිදා වදහල බස් නෙපල න්නේ
 සැමදා ලෙඩ හැර ඉදිමු සතු න්නේ
 පැහැදා විවරණ අපෙ මුනි දු න්නේ
 ඉරිදා සන්නිය අසිලෙ බල න්නේ

They speak the words spoken by the King of gods
And think that they would cause diseases through-
out

Having obtained authority from our Lord of
Sages

May the "Sanni" demon of Sunday cast his glance
on the "aile".

විදුරාසන මුනි අනුභව් ද	න්තෝ
සිදුකර ජනපොත රෝග හරි	න්තෝ
මුදුන තවත් පිරිපොත දුරල	න්තෝ
සදුදින සන්නිය අසිලෙට එ	න්තෝ

By the power of the Sage who sat on the crystal
seat

The epidemics are removed

Diseases that afflict the head too are removed

May the "Sanni" demon of Monday come to the
"aile".

අභහරු දින සමයන් බැස එ	න්තෝ
සමහරු අය දැක ලෙඩ කරව	න්තෝ
තෙද ගරු වෙසමුනි අණ දැන ග	න්තෝ
අභහරු දින සන්නිය බැස එ	න්තෝ

Haunting on Tuesdays

The demon causes disease to some people

Knowing the power of the respected and powerful
Vesamuni (King of demons)

May the demon of Tuesday descend.

පද බැදි අක්සර විවරන ද	න්තෝ
සොද ලෙස ජනපොත රෝග වදි	න්තෝ
තෙද බල කකුසද මුනි අණ ද	න්තෝ
බුද දින සන්නිය අසිලෙ බල	න්තෝ

Thou knoweth the exegetical meaning of verses

And many are the epidemics caused

Knowing the power of the Sage Kakusanda

May the "Sanni" demon of Wednesday cast
glances at the "aile".

පිරුව සිතා ගවුනම මුනි බලය	○
බැරුව විසල් පුර ජනපොත හරින	○
ගරුතර කෝතාගම මුනි බලය	○
ගැරු දින සන්නිය එන් මේ අයිලෙ	○

The epidemic diseases of the city of Visal
Were not driven away by the power of the sage
Gautama.

By the power of the sage Konagama
May the "Sanni" demon of Thursday come to the
"aile".

පෝවී අක්සර විවරණ ද	න්තෝ
බෝවී ජනපොත රෝගවදි	න්තෝ
පෑ තෙද බල කස්සප මුනිදු	න්තෝ
කිවිදින සන්නිය අයිලෙට එ	න්තෝ

Thou knoweth the exegetical meanings of letters
And many are the epidemics caused
By the power of Kasyapa, the Lord of Sages,
May the "Sanni" demon of Friday come to the
"aile".

පණිදු දරණයට මුනි වැඩ ඉ	න්තෝ
වසින ගණන් පොද නැර වසී	න්තෝ
ගුණ සොද ගවුනම මුනි අණ ද	න්තෝ
සනිදින සන්නිය අයිලෙට එ	න්තෝ

While it rains incessantly
The Sage has taken shelter within the coils of the
cobra king

Knowing the powers of the virtuous Sage Gautama
May the demon of Saturday come to the "aile".

සුද්ද එතෙද බල පෑ මුනි බලය	○
මුද්ද බලෙං සෑම සන්නිය හරින	○
සිද්ද විද්දියා දෙවියන් අණය	○
සද් දින සන්නිය එන් මේ අයිලෙ	○

In order to drive away all the "Sanni"
By the power of the Lord of Sages
May the "Sanni" demons of the seven days
come on this "aile".
Under the influence of the god possessed with
"Siddha" powers.

යකුන් නටනවා — Yakun Natanava (Devil-Dancing)

ඊළු තිස් පය සැතපුණු කල	වා
ඉස කඩ ඇරලා සෙනගක් ලෙස	වා
අනු පතු සොල්ලා බියකර සිත	වා
බිත සන්නි ලෙඩ දැනගනු එවි	වා

If hosts of men are seen with uncovered heads
 during the thirty hours of the night
 When one is asleep and if his mind is trembled
 At the sight of branches being waved
 Then know that these are diseases caused by " Bita Sanni "

ඇත යොදුන් දුර බැල්මේ සිටග	න
පාත බැසපි ඊළුණු බව දැනගෙ	න
ගාත බුතයෙන් සොල්මන් කරගෙ	න
බිත සන්නි එයි පුද ඉල්ලාගෙ	න

Knowing that darkness has fallen
 He descended from a place several yojanas in
 distance ;
 Roaming in a trance
 " Bita Sanni " comes demanding offerings.

පපුවේ ගිනිපල් නිබද කර	න්නේ
නෙත් දෙකරතු වී ඉසරද වෙ	න්නේ
රුනි නැති කෑමට බඩ පෙරලෙ	න්නේ
අමුක් කෑ සන්නිය ලෙඩ දැන ග	න්නේ

There are burning sensations in the heart
 And head-ache is caused with reddened eyes ;
 Vomitting sensation is brought about by un-
 savouring dishes,
 Know these diseases caused by " Amukku Sanni ".

බඩ මොර ගහමින් වැඩි පෙරලෙ	න්නේ
රුදාව ගනිමින් කෑම නොක	න්නේ
පිළිහුඩු පැණි රසමයි ඉල්ල	න්නේ
ගුල්ම සන්නි කළ ලෙඩ දැන ග	න්නේ

He rolls (on the ground) afflicted with sounds in
the stomach
And does not partake of food because of pain ;
He clamours always for sweetmeats
Know these diseases caused by " Gulma Sanni ".

කන්‍යට ගෙඩිගෙන භාරෙ ගල	න්තෝ
මුතෝ ගිනිජලේ නිබද කර	න්තෝ
දැතෝ දෙපයේ සීතල වෙ	න්තෝ
වෙඩි සන් නිය කළ ලෙඩ දැන ග	න්තෝ

Matter comes out from growths in the ear
And there is constant burning sensation in the
Hands and legs become cold
Know these diseases caused by " Vedi Sanni ".

වණ පිළියල් අනපය කොරවීම	ට
උණ ගිනිජලේ ඇස් දෙක නොපෙනීම	ට
එන කල කිරිගොටු දෙත්තෝ දැන	ට
කණ සන් නිය කළ ලෙඩ නැත අද සි	ට

For diseases such as sores, lameness in legs and
arms
Fever, burning sensation and blindness
(the demon) is propitiated with two leaf cups of
milk
Diseases caused by " Kana Sanni " (sanni of blind-
ness) are removed with effect from this day.

සුරනින් යම මුරුරක් ගෙන අ	ලේලා
වමනින් අතු කැටියක් ගෙන සො	ලේලා
සරොසින් රැ සිනෙන් ඇවිදි	ලේලා
කොර සන් නී යකු එයි පුද ඉ	ලේලා

Bearing a "yama" cudgel in the right hand
And waving a twig by the left
He appears in dreams in the night in a ferocious
manner ;
The demon " Kora Sanni " (Sanni of lameness)
comes begging for offerings.

කළු ඇඳගෙන සිනෙන් පෙනුණෝ ති න්
 කළු පාටින් බන් ගොටු දෙක දීප න්
 රළු තද ඊළඟ මුනි අණ දූන ග න්
 ගොළු සන් නිය කළ ලෙඩ ඇර පලය න්

If (he) appears clad in black cloth in dreams
 Give two leaf-cups of rice in black colour ;
 May you know the power of the Sage Revata
 And the diseases caused by "Golu Sanni" (Sanni
 of dumbness) be removed.

APPENDIX
DANCES OF INDIA
BHARATA NATYA

The four well defined traditional dances of India are the Bharata Natya, the Kathakali, the Kathak and the Manipuri. Despite the distinctive character of each of these, it is generally true to say that a common under-current runs through these main schools of the Indian dance. True to its name. Bharata Natya has been fundamentally the parental art of all India, however much it is the dominant art today of South India.

Though conventionally regarded as a creation of Sage Bharata Muni, the comprehensive character of Bharata Natya Sastra as an integrated code of dramatic art, would dispose us to view it as a heritage of ages, an art that spread its influence not only over all India, but also over the contiguous lands of South East Asia. Bharata Natya Sastra has been studied and interpreted by various students of the art over decades past, and a vast body of commentaries has grown round it.

In the South as in North India, several dances developed co-ordinated to the life of the people. In North India, Kathak leads, except in the States of Assam and the little mountainous State of Manipur. An art distinctive of Kerala is the Kathakali. Besides these four main types, a picturesque variety of folk dances lends colour and charm in different parts of

India. What is here presented is a short account of the vast field of Indian dances within the scope of a quick survey.

First to claim our attention is the classical art of Bharata Natya. In a programme of Bharata Natya as presented today, the first is a dedicatory and introductory dance—the Alarippu. Standing erect with feet close and hands extended above the head, in the pose of adoration, the dancer executes a series of rhythmic movements of the neck, co-ordinated to the glance of the eyes and movements of the limbs.

The rhythmic movements of the neck, the play of the eyes and the graceful movements of the hands and feet, are highlighted in the next dance—a dance in *nrtta*, the *Jattiswaram*, a dance in *Jati* or time measure, rhythmic permutations in a particular *tala* rendered on the *mridanga*.

Sabdam, the next is a dance in *abhinaya*—the code of signs and gestures standardised by the Natya Sastra—the dance that sets the pace for what follows, the *Varnam*, the most entrancing of the whole series. A harmonious blend of both *nrtta* and *nrtya*, sentiments conveyed in the accompanying songs (*padams*), are interpreted by appropriate *abhinaya*. Stories are selected for their range of emotional content. One of the most favoured is the classical *Gita Govinda* by poet Jayadeva, who sings of the amorous sports of the divine lover, Sri Krishna. The audience sits enchanted, following every step, the movement, and the *abhinaya* of the dancer, vibrant with emotions aroused in the action of the story. As the most resplendent of the dances in Bharata expressive of the Natya and most technique of the art, the *Varnam* holds the stage the longest in an evening's programme.

A fitting finale to the entire programme, is the short and crisp *Tillana*, a fantasy of vigorous and intricate foot work. A dance in exuberant *nrtta*, with no theme at the back of it, it finds a parallel in

the *Kalasam* of the Kathakali, with its vigorous foot work. It finds a counterpart too in the *Kastirama*, the concluding dance in a bout of Kandyan dance.

Bharata Natyam in the form in which it prevails now in South India, we are told, is an art that evolved in Tanjore just over a hundred years ago, at the hands of the great masters of the art, Chinniah, Ponniah and Sivanandam, "the Tanjore Quartette".

Something more may now be said of the constituents of the technique typical of the art—the fourfold system of *abhinaya*. First is the *angikabhinaya*, poses and movements expressed in *hasta*, the standardised code of signs and gestures. The orchestra, vocal and instrumental is denoted by the term *Vachikabhinaya*, the musical accompaniment that delights the audience with its sweet songs, while it sets the pace to the singing in an undertone, scarcely audible, by the dancer herself as she dances. *Aharabhinaya* conveys the over-all effect of the dancer's impressive personality—the spectacular appeal of her artistic and colourful costume, the make-up and jewellery. Everything contributes to produce the distinctive and subtle effect which goes by the term *Sattvikabhinaya*, expressive of the supreme *Rasa* or exhilaration in the audience.

The dramatic presentation of the subtle emotions stands among the great accomplishments of Bharata Natya. Emotions (*Bhava*) conform to a nine-fold analysis, the *Nava Rasa*. These severally are *sringara* (erotic), *hasya* (comic), *karuna* (compassionate), *raudra* (fierce), *veera* (heroic), *bhayanaka* (terrific), *bheebhatsa* (disgusting), *adbhuta* (marvellous), and *Santa* (serene). Though the *Natya Sastra* analyses human emotions under nine categories, the dominant emotions represented in Bharata Natya are *Karuna* and *Sringara*, the devotional and erotic. This is due to the fact that the original classical compositions are of these two categories—the Spiritual and the Romantic. These two often blend as in Jayadeva's

Gita Govinda alluded to already, dramatically picturing the amours of the divine Sri Krishna. Bharata Natya is essentially a feminine art and the devotional and erotic themes give wide range for an accomplished artiste to display her talents.

KATHAKALI

For an art that dramatises the varied range of emotions and sentiments we may turn to the Kathakali, the dance drama that evolved in the land of Kerala, the region skirting the West Coast between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, with a culture sharply differentiated from the rest of South India. Often spoken as a dumb show, it is not a term that may rightly be applied to the rather noisy art of Kathakali. Though the actors themselves are silent, they convey their emotions and feelings by means more expressive than words—by a highly specialised code of sign-language and an elaborate code of *abhinaya*. Behind the actors, is the Kathakali orchestra of a pair of singers and a pair of drummers, one playing the big drum, the *chenda* and the other, the *maddala*, struck with the fingers. The two singers sing alternately in a stentorian voice, covering between themselves the entire story. The rhythm is kept by a pair of cymbals, the *Kaimani*. One of the singers has a gong which is struck as needed in harmony with the tempo of the acting.

In the gathering shades of the evening you hear the sounds of the *Kelikottu*, the distinctive drum tattoo announcement. This alerts the neighbourhood and the news spreads fast. The venue invariably is one of the prominent households. The travelling Kathakali troupes of the time, over five decades ago, moved about from place to place all over Kerala with their large entourage and equipment, entirely dependent on social patronage to maintain themselves and the art. Following the drum announcement, the open front—smoothly laid out—is soon filled with

interested spectators, who squat on the ground, facing the impromptu stage erected by the troupe. A Kathakali show lasts a whole night, the last scenes closing with the streaks of early dawn.

The performance varies according to the story enacted, dramatisation of the several events featured in the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata*. The characters in Kathakali are mostly devas and asuras, some with their spouses. Among the normal figures, are the saintly personages, the sages (rishis). The impersonation follows closely on their delineation featured in the epics.

The make-up is an elaborate technique which follows a standardised pattern. The four stock characters are known severally by the technical terms, *Paccha* (literally, the Green), the mantle of virtue and nobility, with a soft make-up, of white over a base of cream yellow; *Kari* (the Black); *Kathi* (the Knife) and *Thadi* (the Beard) for the ignoble and asura characters. White borders of thick flour paste, called the *Chutti* outline the contours of the face. This and other designs painted on the face to suit different characters, impart to the face all the look of a colourful though mobile mask.

Femininity is the key note of the costume and make-up of the female in Kathakali, strongly reminiscent of the purdah of the Muslims. How the purdah ideology arose in the characterisation of the female, is hard to account for, except on the plausible view that it best represents the primarily shy and bashful woman.

Kathakali dance is *tandava*, virile and vigorous, in contrast to the *lasya* Bharata Natya. Nevertheless, Kathakali is not all *tandava*. Sringara indeed lends charm and grace in its romantic and domestic scenes. Such are the scenes of the family life of Ravana and his wife Mandodhari, and of picturesque scenes of dances and plays. An illustration of the latter is the insight into the life of the court of King Virata in whose palace Arjuna spends

a delightful period of exile, living *incognito*. Arjuna becomes the dance and music teacher to Uttara, the beautiful daughter of the King. Among the most picturesque scenes in Kathakali is the dance play, the *Kummi*, by the King's daughters.

The stage in Kathakali is in keeping with its sombre and sublime setting. On one side stands a massive and tall brass lamp, the slots of which burn thick cloth rag wicks fed with coconut oil. The glow of the flames lights up and intensifies the lurid scenes of the Asuras and their weird aspect.

In the technique of dramatic representation, Kathakali evolved and perfected a resourceful language of symbolism which for its versatility and refinement stands unrivalled in its presentation of every passing emotion of shade of sentiment however sensitive. Built up on the primary *hastas* standardised in the *Natya Sastra* and *Abhinaya Darpana*—the 24 single handed gestures, 13 double handed gestures and 27 supplementary *hastas*, Kathakali brought into practical application, a code very much its own, running into some hundreds of *hastas* and subtle forms of expression of sensitive feelings.

Kathakali is an example of an art that has grown from a variety of elements—the folk and the classical. Of the well-marked stages of the art, two names stand out Manavedan Rajah of the princely house of the Zamorin of Calicut, and a Rajah of Kottarakara, of the State of Travancore. The former dramatised the story of Sri Krishna in the play he produced *Krishnattam*, in the medium of pantomime. This was the prelude to the production of *Ramanattam* by the Rajah of Kottarakkara with a choreography more directly related to Kathakali than its predecessor *Krishnattam*.

Of the earlier influence, we have the Kuthu and Kudiyattam of early Kerala. Specific evidence of these comes from the pages of the *Cilappadikaram* of the second century A.D. which tells us of a performance of the classical *Koodiyattam* staged before

the Ceran Emperor Sengottuvan. *Kuthu* was the play specifically of the Cakkiyars, a Nambudiri out-caste group, well versed in the Sanskrit lore. Among other indigenous elements are the picturesque folk cults of the land, Bhagavati cult in particular with its colourful dramatic pageant of scenes.

Sanskrit for long influenced and continue to influence Malayalam literature. With the rise and growth of Kathakali as the pre-eminent dramatic art of Kerala, poets and dramatists vied with each other to produce Kathakali dramas, the *Attakathas* of Malayalam literature.

Kathakali has in the past few decades exercised so powerful an influence over India as a whole, that a new art steadily arose, the art of the dance-drama, "in Kathakali technique", as this art production is called. This movement has spread so fast that it has almost eclipsed the original parental art of Kathakali. In its traditional form and choreography, it reposes today only in a few of the institutions such as the Kerala Kala Mandalam, the Darpana, the Kala Kshetra and the Natana Niketan.

K A T H A K

Kathak is an artistic blend of the two main cultural elements of India, the Hindu and the Muslim, a synthesis of the primarily austere outlook of the Islam and the liberal views of the Hindu, over social and aesthetic arts. In its cultural contents as in its technique, Kathak bears the ideologies of the two systems harmoniously integrated. Its early days have been traced to the Mughal Court under the patronage of the Mughal emperors. In succeeding ages, it developed as an integrated social and decorative art with a technique perfected over the decades.

The dancer stands in a supple and erect pose with the right arm held over the head and the left arm extended horizontally. To the swaying of wrists and gentle gliding of the neck—the *rechakas*—the dance proceeds with the eyes sending darting glances co-

ordinated to the movements of the hands and the neck. The feet begin their tapping to simple rhythm of the *thhat*, the body vibrates with the slow undulations of the rhythm. This sets the pace for the *amad*, the piece styled the *salami* or Salutation.

After each movement, the dancer does a stylised walk preparing herself for a series of alternating dance sequences, the *Paran*, the *Gat*, the *Torah* and the *Tukra*. *Paran* is recitation of rhythmic syllables, expressed in *abhinaya*, strictly co-ordinated to the time measures, permutations of metric counts distinctive to the art.

An elaborate version of the *paran*, is the *chukradar uran paran*. A rhythmic dance with descriptive passage is the *Gat* with appropriate *abhinaya*. A dramatic sequence in rapid and brilliant tempo is the *Torah*. "The rhythmic sequence finds brilliant expression in the *Tukra*, which excels in double and treble timing, with all the devices of a tricky tempo."

The metric count is the soul of the Kathak. The *tala* follows the precise metric divisions in their several forms—the *tintal*, the *dhammar*, the *jhaptal*, the *dadra*. Each *tala* is made up of an *avaradi*, a rhythmic arrangement of syllables. The climax of every *tala* in the *sama*. The three different styles of movements are *vilamit* (slow) ; the *madhya*, (medium) and the *druta*, (fast).

A speciality of the Kathak is the spin—the *chukra*—which succeeds almost every dance sequence. The speed may be so fast that the dancer has to pause before regaining balance. The choreography of Kathak is attuned to a technique of contrast—the slow graceful movements of mime contrasted to the swift motion of the pure dance, and rapid changes from a slow to the fast tempo. Fast and prolonged spinning has so much come to be looked upon as the climax of the art, that it is being increasingly recognised as harmful ultimately to the best interests of the art, essentially graceful, lyrical and romantic in appeal.

Unlike Bharata Natya, Kathak is not an exclusively feminine art though performances by such talented artistes as Tara Chowdhary, have a distinctly emotional and artistic appeal, scarcely paralleled by the mere male, however much he may have the gift of virtuosity and excel in the more robust aspects of the art, which call for greater physical endurance.

The costume of the dancer, whether male or female, has been traditionally the dress of the Rajput nobleman—the light *churidar*, with the transparent pleated over-robe. A recent change in costume has been to the full-skirted *lahanga* for the woman dancer¹.

M A N I P U R I

And now we come to the Manipuri, the dance distinctive of the small mountainous State of Manipur, on the eastern frontier bordering Assam. A secluded and peaceful valley, its natural charms and simple life sustained, for ages, a society deeply rooted in their artistic traditions, dedicated to dance and music. Following its discovery in the twenties by Rabindranath Tagore, Manipuri soon spread its fascination over all India. Its latest conquests are over Ceylon, where dance classes in Manipuri have been a feature over a decade now, under the direction of Sukhendu Dutt.

The art of the isolated mountainous tract, Manipuri has features which sharply distinguishes it from other dances. The most striking is in the costume of the dancer. Almost exclusively a feminine art, the dancer wears a tight fitting jacket and colourful skirts in two pieces—a lower skirt, umbrella shaped and stiff in red, blue and green, decorated with rounded reflecting bits of grass. Over this is a short

¹ The account of the Kathak herein given follows the description of the art by Sarla Saigal, in "Indian Dance". The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1955.

white upper skirt, fringed with a beautifully embroidered frill. On her head she has a conical cap set under a thin white veil. The costume in itself with its altogether novel design and its decoration, must have taken long to evolve.

Ras-lila, the most typical perhaps of the several forms of the Manipuri, is the best known by virtue of its emotional and sacred appeal displaying the amours of Sri Krishna, the only male character in the play. The dominant sentiment in Manipuri is the erotic, more specifically divine erotics. Movements in Manipuri are sinuous, more so than in the Bharata Natya. The supple and easy posture of the dancer is another of its points, distinctive from the stance either of the Kathak or the Bharata Natya dancer.

The four main Rasas are the *Kunju*, the *Vasantha*, *Maha* and *Nitya*. The last *Nitya Rasa* is danced on any festive occasion. The first three are seasonal, played in the months of *Asvin*, *Vaisakha* and *Karthika* respectively. The *rasa-mandal*, the special pandal erected for the occasion is a circular structure enclosing a dance arena, round which gather the spectators. The dance begins with a series of invocatory dances.

Rasa-lila dances form an artistic visualisation of the several scenes in the life of Sri Krishna. In the *Maha Rasa*, the Gopis seek Him all over manifesting their heart-felt prayer that He will not forsake them. Everyone of them feels her desires fulfilled and dances a dance of realisation, with Krishna as the central personality.

Danced with the background of the divine love to the players, the dances are a ritual homage to the a visualisation of the divine love.

Rasa-lila is one of the four main forms of the Manipuri dance. The three others are the *Laiharoba*, *Astra-Vidya* and *Chatam-Gathan*. *Laiharoba* is the ancestral classical art, dances inspired by mythology—the creation myths, the creation of the earth, the ideology of the Supreme Being, and the coming

of Man. Gods Indra, Varuna and Kubera, and the Buddha, are worshipped in the form of ceremonial dances, in the first stage of these series of dances. *Astra Vidya*, as the name implies has a good deal in it of the features of a martial play, masculine dances with the sword and spear simulating mock fights.

Chalan-Gathan is danced to the singing of Kirtanas, rendered in the Manipuri mridanga, the Khol. Clad in spotlessly white *dhoti*, *uttariya* and *pagri*, the dancers dance in a semi-circle led by a leader who stands in the centre. As the tempo rises, the dances are climaxed by leaping, whirling and twisting dances by the *Khol* players who enter the arena to display their acrobatic skill.

FOLK DANCES AND PLAYS

Besides these four main schools of dance, distributed all over India is an assortment of picturesque dances. Some of these are classical in background as in technique. Among this small group, perhaps the more prominent today, is the Kuchipudi, known after the village of Kuchipudi in Kistna district of Andhra-desa, where it flourished. That the dance originated with certain Brahmin families is among the significant traditions. It has had the good fortune to enjoy the patronage of successive royal dynasties—of the Satavahana, the Vijayanagar, the Tanjore Kings and the Nawab of Golconda.

The art, it is believed, evolved in the wake of a reformation movement against the demoralising influences of the temple dances by the Devadasis. Female dancers gave place to male dancers—the Raja nartakas, dedicated to temple service in the royal court of the Satavahanas. The master-mind behind the art was Siddhendra Yogi who initiated the novel idea of training Brahmin boys dedicated to the art, excluding women altogether. The custom slowly grew of male children being dedi-

cated to the art as babies. To the waist string was tied a belt as an initiatory rite, a custom which perhaps survives to this day.

Kalapam the lament of Bhama—Satya bhama—at her separation from her lord Sri, Krishna—the Nawab of Golkonda, bestowed on the troupe, the entire village of Kuchipudi shared by eight Brahmin families of players. The dance takes its name after this village of Kuchipudi. A troupe that found its way to the Court of the Maharashtra Kings of Tanjore, was rewarded by a number of villages, including the villages of Melattur. Thus arose the Tanjore art of the Bhagavatalus of Melattur, dance plays of puranic themes.

An art with such romantic appeal could not ever be closed against the ranks of women. The participation of women dancers has been a growth of recent years. Among women votaries of the art, is the talented Yamini Krishnamurthi who displayed the art to audiences in Australia and New Zealand, besides appearances on the Indian stage.

The Kuchipudi dance-dramas give scope for exhibition of emotions of a wide range—the *nava rasas* and the gay graceful *abhinaya* follow the Bharata Natya technique.

An intensely colourful and vigorous dance-play is the *Yakshagana* of the Karnataka State. In common with the Kuchipudi, it arose as an art solely of the male and remains so. In its mythological themes as in its presentation, it approximates the open air play of the Kannatas, the Bayalata, and the Teru-Kuttu, the street play of the Tamilnad. A typical play of rural simplicity and directness it has no need or place for the subtleties of Kathakali. The players sing their own snatches of songs.

Kerala besides its national art of Kathakali, has a number of other dance plays both of the classical as of the folk arts.¹ Of the classical form is the Ottam Tullal, the solo dance of mythological themes in Kathakali costume and technique. A feminine solo dance, is the dance of the Mohini, the divine temples, the Mohini Attam, based on the Hindu mythological theme of the Mohini, the Enchantress.

A seasonal folk-play is the *Kaikotti Kali* in the festival season of Tiruvatira, a round dance played by women in graceful steps and movements to the singing of songs, with the *tala* kept by themselves by the clapping of hands as they move about. Other plays of Kerala, include the *Kolattam*, the play of the striking of sticks, corresponding to the *Li-Keli* of the Sinhalese; and the *Purakkali*, the vigorous folk-play of North Kerala, with a religious background.

Of *Puppetry* we have the *Bommalattam* of the Andhradesa and Tamilnad and the *Pavakuthu* of South Malabar.

Assam has a variety of dances. In the hills of the Naga land, are the tribal dances of the Nagas. Among these are the Spear Dance common to all Nagas. Dancers in their head gear of feathers or horns, necklaces of horns and shining armlets present a picturesque sight. A seasonal festival dance is the *Bihu*, danced in the harvest season. A Dance-drama integrated to the life of the people, is the *Ankia-nata*, dramatising themes from the holy epics.

Typical of the community dance, is the *Kirtan* of Bengal. Performed to the accompaniment of the drum (the *Khol*), it had its early days in the propagation of Vaishnavism by Chaitanya. An ancestral dance is the *Jatra*, performed by professional troupes. Different districts have different forms, as the *Raibeshe* of Burdwan, of the class of martial dances

1 Raghavan, M. D. Folk Plays and Dances of Kerale, Tricur, 1947.

indicative of drawing the bow and hurling weapons. A form of the stick dance, is *Kathi*, a solitary example perhaps of a stick dance with a lingering motif of a martial dance, reminiscent of a war dance of the tribal days. Noteworthy for the pastoral setting, are the dances of the Santhals of Chotz Nagpur.

Punjab dances the *Bhangra* on festival occasions—a national community dance. A dance of the Punjab women is the *Giddha* danced in a circular formation, singing pleasing folk tunes.

In the Himachel Pradesh, are the charming pastoral folks dances as the *Pangi* of Chamba and pastoral dances of the Gaddi, the shepherds. A dance of the Kumaon Hills in the *Chapeli* dance.

Rajasthan has a rich tradition of folk dances as the *Jhumar* (Ghumar) and the Geer group dances of women clad in gorgeous colourful skirts, dances dedicated to goddess Gauri (Parāvatī). Danced with earthen pots balanced on the head are the *Panihari* and *Ghudia* dances, highlighting girls going to fetch water from the well.

A rustic burlesque of a unique character is what is appropriately termed the *Tamasha* of rural Maharashtra traced to the days of Sivaji. A revival of the art is in the form of *Tamasha* troupes who take the art to the cities of the State.

In the wet weather, they are forced to play inside the city theatres. The players are called *Tamasgirs*, comprising boys, men and women. A hereditary art among certain castes, steps are called for by the State to improve this vigorous folk art. Nothing more intensely folk in character can be imagined. The characteristics of the *Tamasha* are vigorous folk dances and traditional love songs, the *lavnis*. In contact with cities these are undergoing changes, with the importation of cinema film "hits", and modernisation of the costume in place of the traditional Maharashtra costume.

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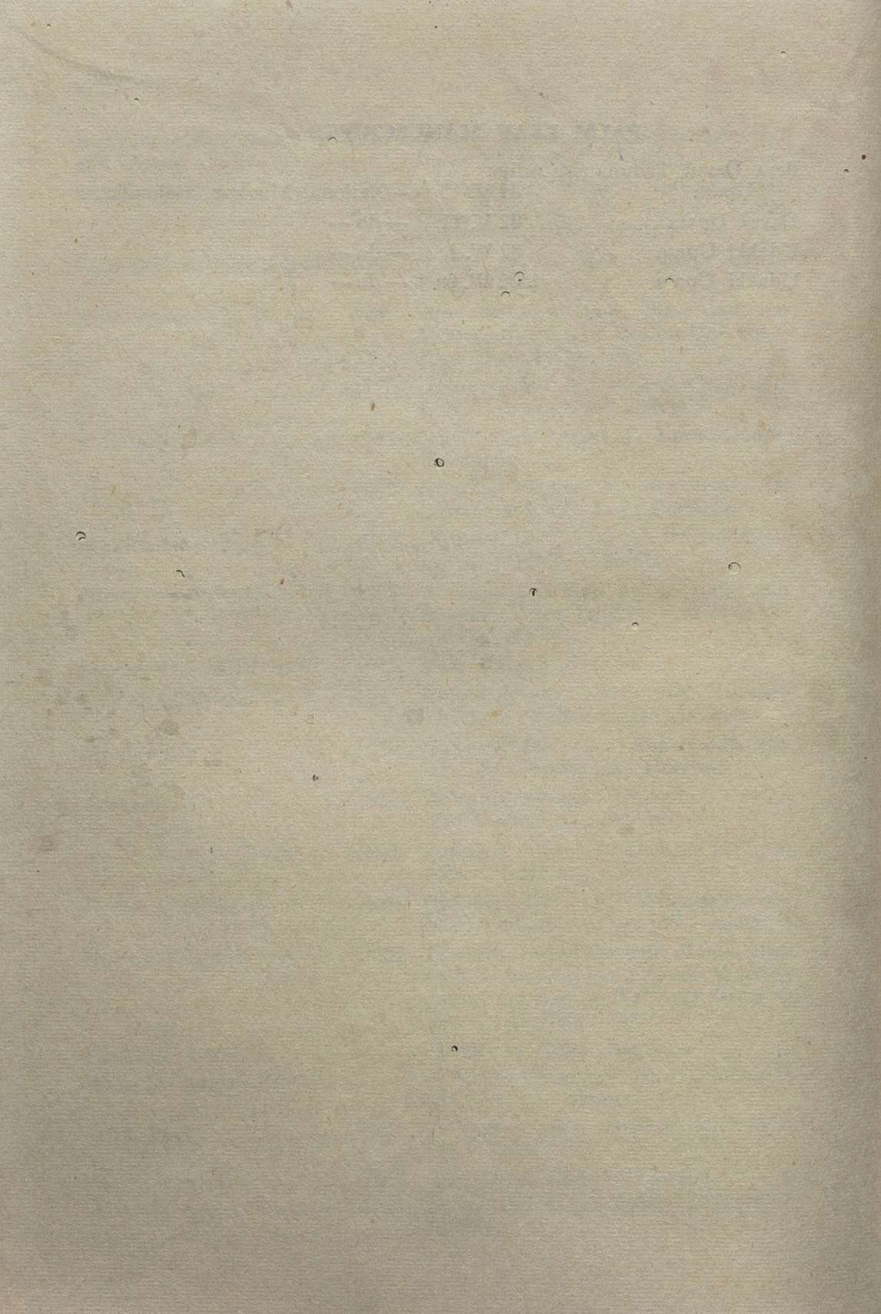
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-

Plate 1.

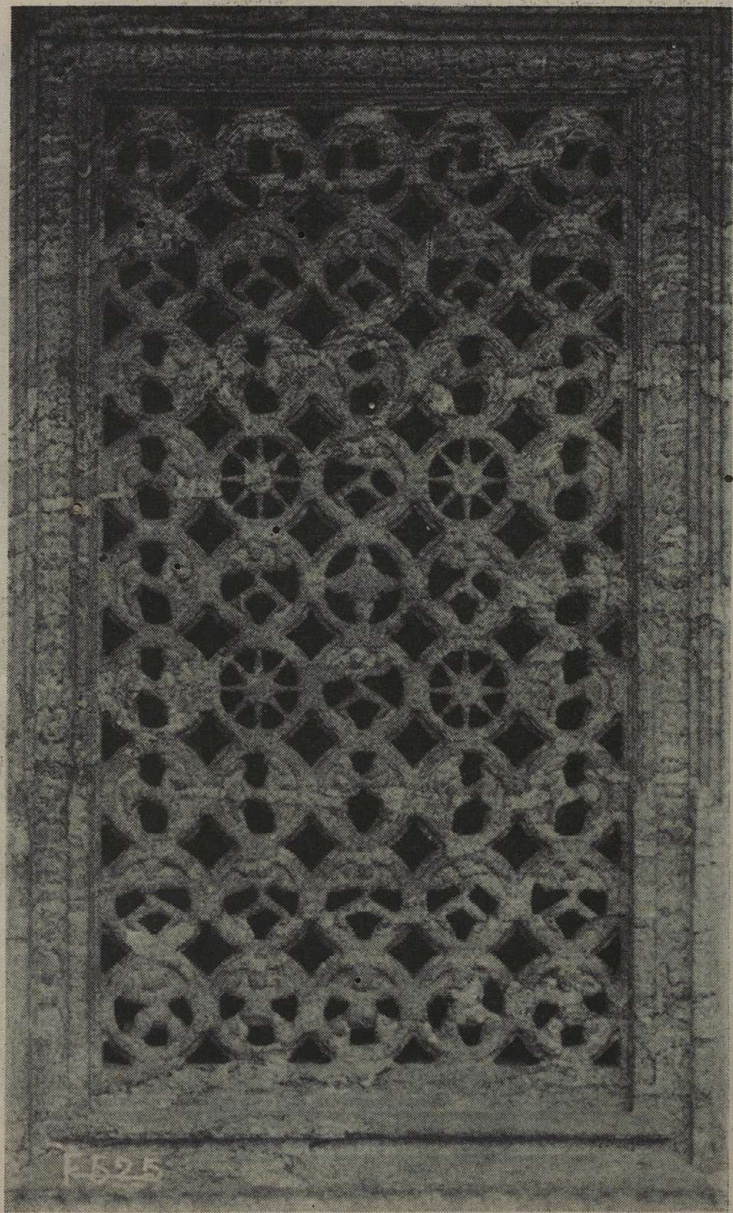


Sketch from the frieze of dancers from Polonnaruwa Vishnu Devale No. 2

Plate 2.



Yapahuwa — Main Staircase



Yapahuwa — Window



Embekke Devale — Dancing Figure



i.



ii.



iii.

Dancing Figures from Lamp Chain, Dedigama.

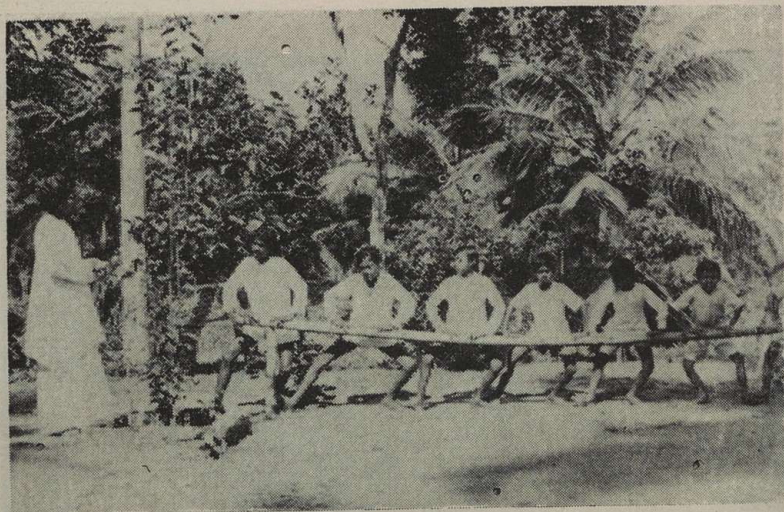
Plate 6.



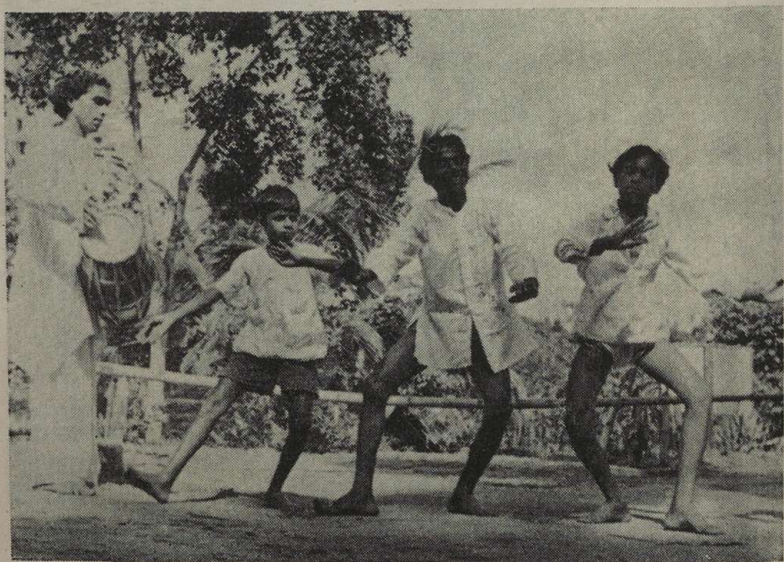
Ves Dancers



Dancing School — Madhyama Lanka Nurtiya Mandala



i. Pupils in Training — The Initial Steps•



ii, Pupils in Training — A More Advanced Step

Plate 9.



Rukada — Puppets



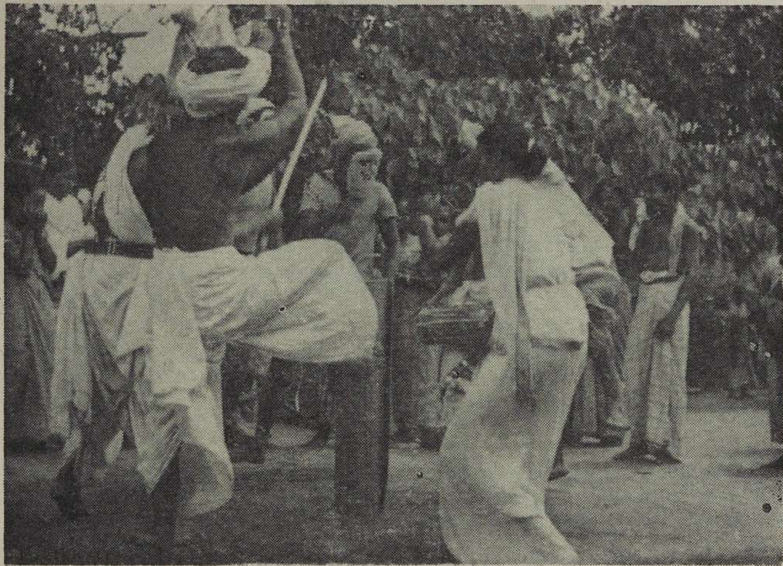
A Scene From Vadiga Patuna

Plate 11.



Sokari — Dance By Kinnarayas

Plate 12.

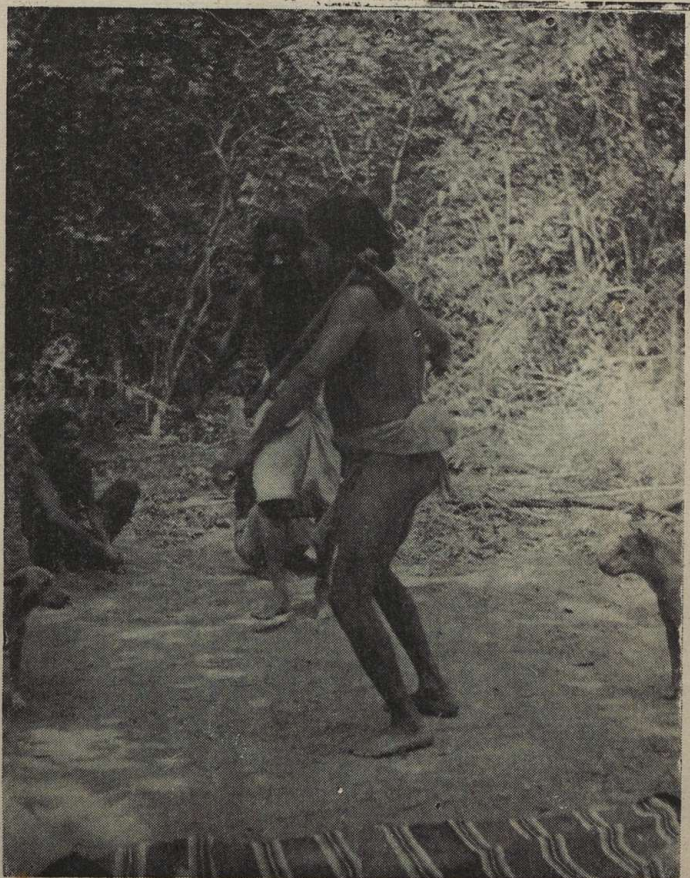


Sokari — Dance by Kinnarayas

Plate 13.



Rodiya Women Dancing — Talawitiya



Veddah Dance



i. Li-Keli Dance from Gadaladeniya



ii. Kalagedi Natuma

Plate 16.



Hewarala Kolama



Dancing figure from an Ivory Comb



Dalada Perahera — Kandy



Scene From a Kohomba Kankariya



A Devol Maduwa in progress



Fire walking at a Devol Maduwa



Kalas Paliya — A scene from a Yak-Natuma



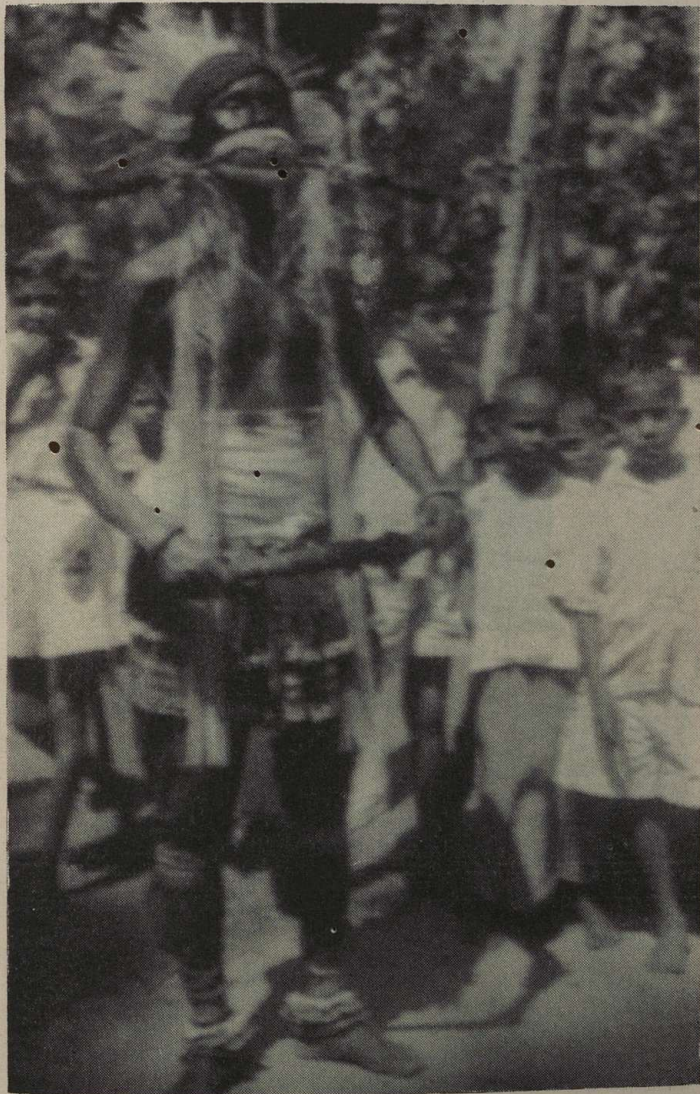
Kandyan Drummer playing the Davula



i. Bummadiya (Pot Drum) Used In a Harvest Festival.
The Other Drum in the picture is the Geta Bere.



ii. A Scene from a Folk Dance from Kerala



Scene from Maha Sohon Samayama

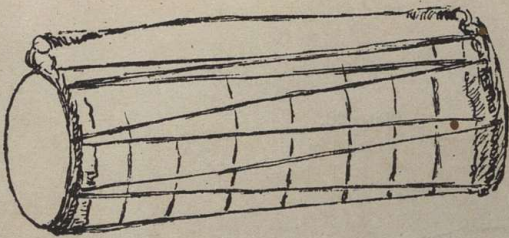
Plate 26.



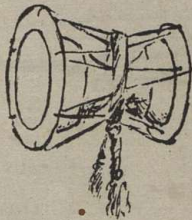
i. Playing the Tammettama



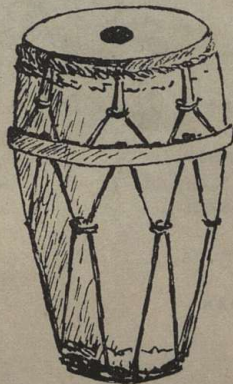
ii. Raban Players at a Festival of Song and Dance



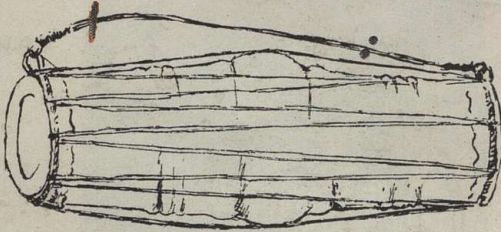
YAK BERE



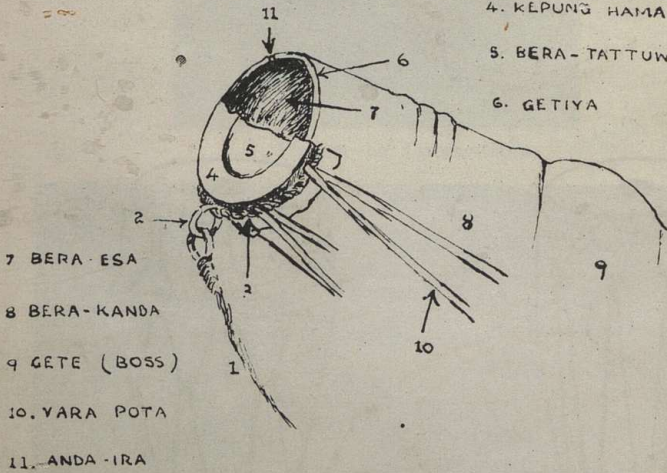
UDAKKI



DOLAKKA
of
DOLE

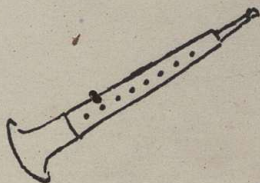


1. URA-POTA (SLING)
2. KANVARAYA
3. VENI-VARA-VALALLA
4. KEPUNG HAMA
5. BERA-TATTUWA
6. GETIYA

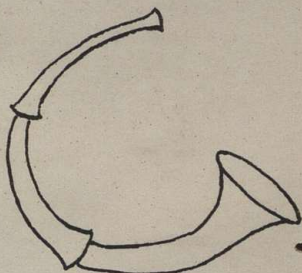


GETA-BERE

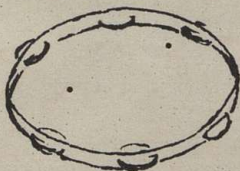
Plate 29.



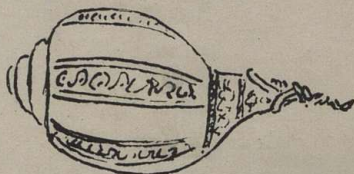
HORANÄWA



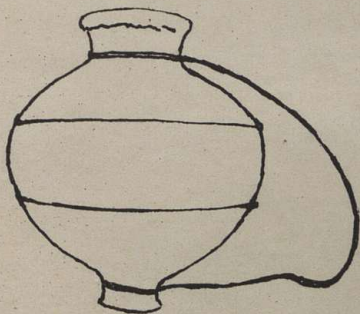
KAMBU



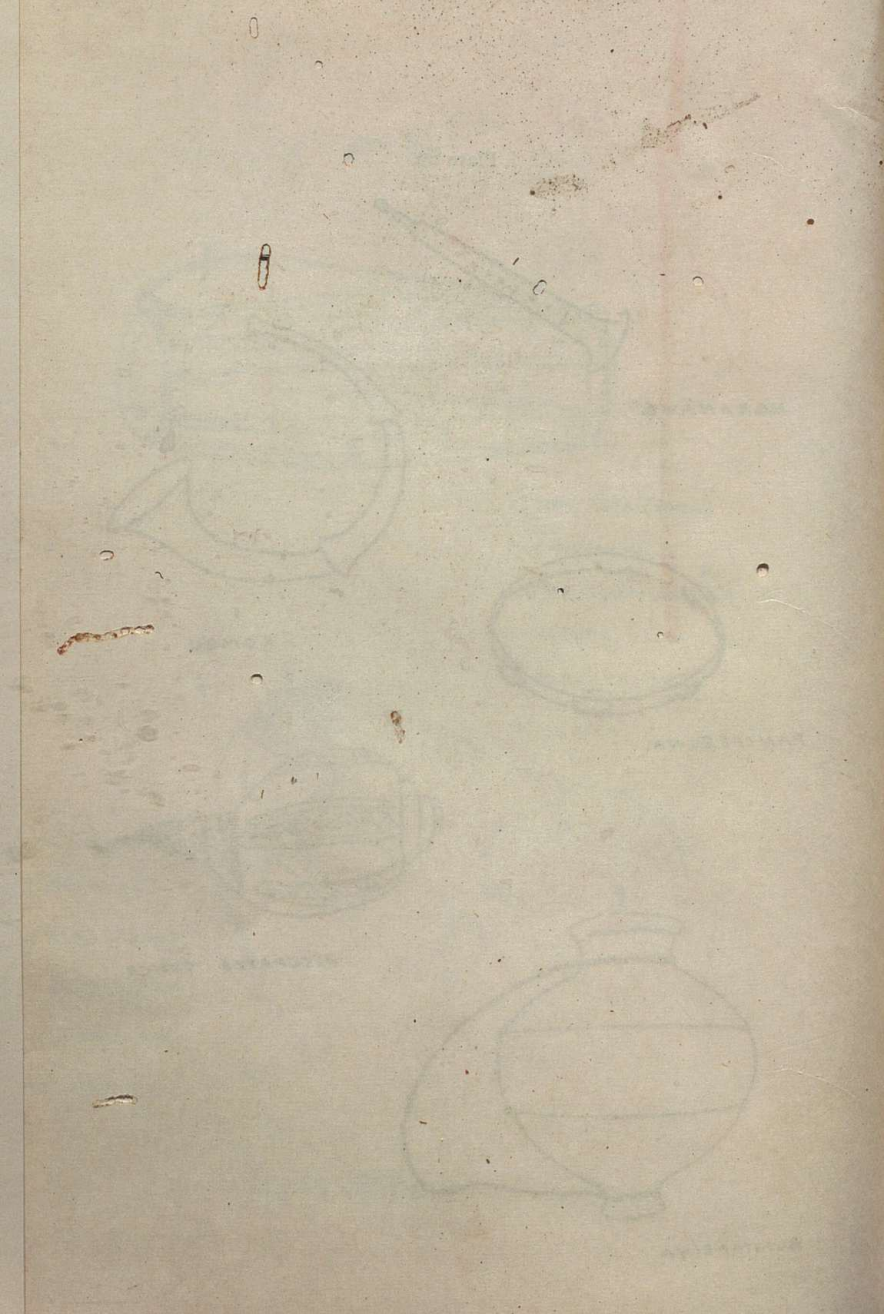
PANTHERUWA

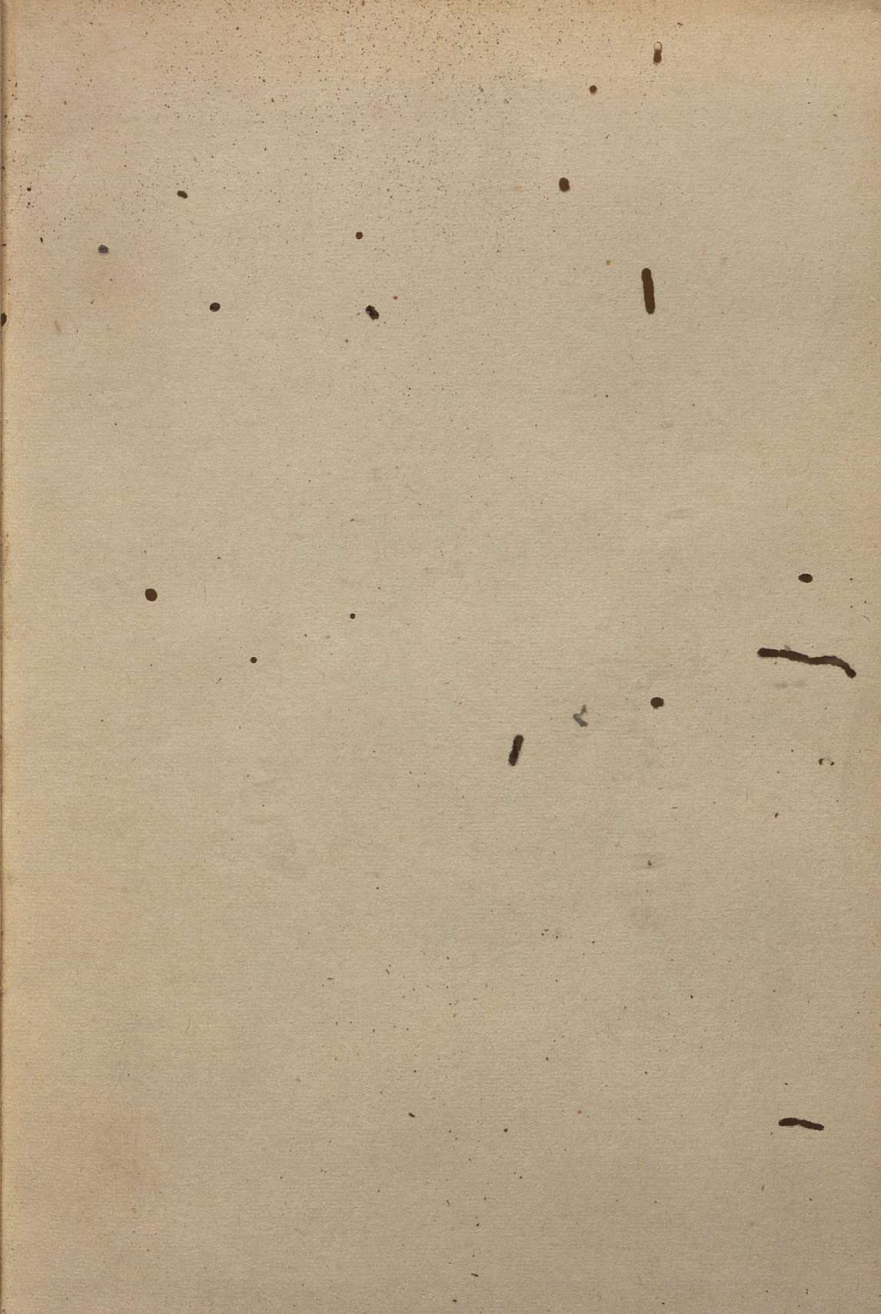


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BUMMÄDIYA







The author, who was for a number of years the Ethnologist, National Museums, Ceylon, is a past President of the Ethnology and Folk-lore section of the All-India Oriental Conference and a member, for a number of years, of the Ceylon Arts Council, Panel of Folk Songs and Dances. As a member of the Backward Areas Development Board he had the opportunity of penetrating into some of the remotest and most secluded parts of the island and studying their cultural content. The results of these studies are reflected in this and his other works. Among his original studies made during his tenure of office at the National Museums are subjects like the **Pattini-cult, Rodiyas, Kinnarayas and Ahikuntakayas** published in the *Spolia Zeylanica*. His chief works besides these are, **Folk Plays and Dances of Kerala, The Karava of Ceylon: Society and Culture, Ceylon, A Pictorial Survey of the People and Arts, and India in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture.**



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SINHALA NĀTUM

DANCES OF THE SINHALESE

By

M. D. RAGHAVAN

With the Collaboration of

R. C. de SĀ MANUKULASOORIYA



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