



The Association for
Asian Studies

The Structure of Sinhalese Healing Rituals

Author(s): Nur Yalman

Source: *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Jun., 1964, Vol. 23, Aspects of Religion in South Asia (Jun., 1964), pp. 115-150

Published by: Association for Asian Studies

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2050626>

REFERENCES

Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

https://www.jstor.org/stable/2050626?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

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

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



Association for Asian Studies is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Asian Studies*

JSTOR

The Structure of Sinhalese Healing Rituals

NUR YALMAN

AS social anthropology has set up new standards for the analysis of social structure, the lag in the study of religious thought and behavior has become increasingly apparent. New departures have been rare in this region and the figures of Freud, Durkheim, and Weber have continued to dominate the scene.

There are three systematic approaches to the study of religious behavior: first, the Freudian approach which seeks to penetrate the unconscious motivations behind religious behavior; second, the social structural approach of Durkheim and Weber which seeks to relate religious phenomena to the fundamental features of the societies under investigation.¹

A third approach, with which I shall be mainly concerned, was outlined by Radcliffe-Brown (1933) and followed up by Srinivas (1952). This approach seeks to examine the internal consistency of religious thought, symbolism, and behavior. It rests on the assumption that the religious categories of primitive societies form a coherent and internally consistent set of beliefs and symbols (like language) which, given the premises, follow logically. To a greater or lesser extent all anthropologists must utilize this approach when they attempt to understand the religious language of an alien society.

The learning of a religious language for the anthropologist is similar to the learning of any other language: the implications of symbols and the contexts in which their use is appropriate must be understood. But although there are these similarities, much of the work in religion has remained in the realm of ideas and has not been concerned with detailed analysis of the language of religion as a symbolic system. There have been few attempts to examine specific myths or rituals in detail, and although Warner (1958:244ff), Berndt (1951) and others have described the symbol system of certain myths and have noted their connections with ritual, there is no accepted theoretical framework for this kind of analysis.²

Recent advances in structural linguistics and communication theory have left their mark on anthropologists.³ In particular Lévi-Strauss advocates the application of the key concepts of structural linguistics to the study of myths, which are to

The author is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago.

¹ In some cases these two approaches have been brought together in a stimulating fashion (e.g., Fortes 1945; Gough 1959; Leach 1958; Nadel 1946, 1954), but in others they have remained complementary methods whose results may not be mutually compatible (e.g., Gough 1955).

² The question of the interconnection between myth and ritual is still wide open: Lévi-Strauss (1956) suggests not a one-to-one consistency but a "dialectic" and Nadel (1954:78) throws doubt on any connection between the two realms.

³ Apart from attempts to adapt mechanical computers which have had great influence on theoretical linguistics (Jakobson 1961:245) for anthropological use, there are suggestions that certain aspects of primitive thought categories are susceptible to linguistic analysis (Conklin 1962; Leach n.d.).

be treated as “communications” in an unknown language (Lévi-Strauss 1955:4.1, 4.2). Communication is made up of “units” (1955:3.0), and each stands in a “context,” or as Lévi-Strauss puts it, “will consist in a relation” (1955:3.3). The analysis of these relations will show that they exist in “bundles” (1955:3.4), and that these bundles recur in different stages of the myth. In other words, the “structure of the Myth” will be analogous either to the recurring themes or rhythms of an orchestra score, or to the recurring problems or worries contained in the communication of a patient to his analyst.

Lévi-Strauss’ proposals for the analysis of myths have had their earlier exponents like Propp, who advocated a similar strategy for the investigation of the “morphology” of the folk tale (1958),⁴ and recently Leach has used Lévi-Strauss’ method in the examination of the structure of the Genesis story (1961a). There is no doubt that the method bristles with difficulties. It is by no means sure that two anthropologists will understand it in quite the same way, nor that they will succeed in analyzing the text of the myth in a truly comparable fashion. But even with these very serious reservations, I find Lévi-Strauss’ examination of various myths extremely illuminating. Although the application of his principles is by no means unambiguous, he does appear to have placed his finger on certain universal attributes of myths. He also brings a new spark to a subject which has been seriously neglected since Malinowski: after all, to say that a myth is a charter for certain institutions, though no doubt true, does not tell us much about the intricacies of the myth itself.

In this paper I am concerned with ritual rather than myth. Rituals present problems similar to those that we face in the analysis of myths, and much of what Lévi-Strauss has to say concerning the structure of myths also applies to ritual. The differences are, however, important. Myth always tells a story. Ritual may be much more abstract and may simply consist of the handling of particular objects by specialists in a stereotyped way. Still the continuous action of a ritual may be broken down into “ritual acts” and these in turn may be analyzed into “items.” In the case of Sinhalese rituals, there is little doubt that a systematic analysis of items (such as limes or saffron) in their particular contexts (e.g., used as anti-pollution agents) gives us a “code” which can be used to understand other communications in that culture. I assume that the ritual acts in which the items occur form part of a logical structure and are never simply meaningless. In fact, there is a logical symbolic structure about the total ritual which brings about the desired effects in the realm of ritual action.

The analysis of the code or the symbolic structure of the ritual is only one level of analysis. We must go deeper into the problems with which the ritual is concerned. Lévi-Strauss states that myths are designed to deal with unwelcome contradictions in human existence, such as life and death, fertility and barrenness (1955:4.10 & 6.2). He treats the Oedipus story as an attempt to answer the riddle of creation: how does one produce human beings from one pair of ancestors without incest? Leach (1961a) thinks that the Book of Genesis is concerned with the same worry. It is my thesis that, in a similar fashion, rituals are also centered around basic con-

⁴I am grateful to Professor T. Sebeok of Indiana University for bringing this work to my notice.

traditions such as pollution and purity, fortune and misfortune, health and illness, and appear to be attempts to turn one side of an "opposed category" into the other.

We thus have three levels of analysis: the contextual analysis of items to allow the construction of a code; the formal symbolic structure of the action; and, the deeper contradictions and problems the action is concerned with.

I shall attempt to put some order into the great mass of descriptive material we possess about Sinhalese religious ideas and healing rituals.⁵ In this paper I shall not try to construct a code, but shall simply provide certain contexts in order to interpret key items.

The Sinhalese, who are culturally similar to the people of South India, are Buddhists. They are divided into castes (Ryan 1953) and also worship the well known Hindu deities called *devaya* (*deva*, male; *devi*, female) such as Vishnu, Pattini, Kataragama, Ganesha. Buddhism in Ceylon is associated with Buddhist temples (*vihara*)⁶ and a priesthood (*sangha*) divided into various orders. Hindu deities are seen as the assistants of the Buddha and are generally associated with special temples (*devale*) in charge of ritual practitioners called *kapurala*. In contrast to the Buddhist priests (*bhikkhu*) who shave their hair, take on a new name, and are vowed to celibacy, the Kapurala wear their hair long, retain their names, marry and have families. In most villages the devale consists of a conspicuous site which is purified and decorated on certain ritual occasions by a kapurala who is invited for this specific purpose. Although the kapurala observe special food taboos, they otherwise lead the same life as ordinary Sinhalese. They are always of the highest Goyigama caste.

The Buddha and the deities do not exhaust the supernatural beings of the Sinhalese. Demons (*yakkūva*) (*yakkā*, male; *yakkini*, female) who are believed to inhabit all parts of the earth and sky, are extremely dangerous, and unless propitiated may bring misfortune and illness; *grahayo*, the "planetary deities" who are associated with the individual's horoscope, determine his fate (*ḥarmaya*) and may bring difficult periods in his life; *peretaya* are spirits or "ghosts," who inhabit polluted places like graveyards and bring illness. Altogether these form an hierarchy of supernatural beings, ranging from the all-benevolent Buddha to the impure spirits of the dead.

The exuberant proliferation of the supernatural ideology of the Sinhalese can be gathered from a brief perusal of Wirz (1954). I shall attempt to show that in contrast to the manifest content of their rituals, their basic structure is exceedingly simple.

The analysis of the connections between the religious ideology and the social structure of the Sinhalese does not lead very far. Aspects of their social structure have been described. (See Leach, 1960, 1961b; Pieris, 1956; Ryan, 1953, 1958; Tambiah,

⁵ Callaway: 1829; Cartman: 1957; Deraniyagala: 1936; Dixon: 1884; Disāve of Vellasa: 1817; de Silva Gooneratne: 1865; Grünwedel: 1893; Gunasekera: 1953; Hocart: 1931; Le Mesurier: 1884; Meerworth-Levina: 1915; Nell: 1881-82; Pertold: 1922, 1925, 1929, 1930; Raghavan: 1951; Sarathachandra: 1953; Wirz: 1940, 1954, to mention a few of the writers on the subject.

⁶ I write *vihara* in shorthand fashion. In fact the temple is a complex around a *pansala* (monastery), consisting of a *vihara* (shrine with image of the Buddha), a *dagoba* (stupa: memorial tomb), a Bo tree, and a *bana maduwa* (preaching hall).

1958; Yalman, 1960.) It is well known that they have named and endogamous castes, and that so far as is known all the castes have a basically bilateral kinship system. Kinship groups take the form of semi-endogamous kindreds (Yalman, 1962c) and although the persons who will attend *rites de passage* or personal health rituals are often members of the kindred, the personnel may change by marriage alliances, and there is no permanent structure of authority in the group. In like manner, none of the supernatural beings of the Sinhalese can be traced to particular social groups—all castes are equally associated with all aspects of Sinhalese religion. Although the castes do have specific duties to perform (Ryan, 1953:95ff.; Hocart, 1931) and the low castes are not allowed into temples, the pattern frequently described for South India in which particular deities are associated with particular castes (e.g., Gough, 1960:43) or with particular lineages (Dumont, 1957) is not to be seen in the dry zone of Ceylon.⁷

The highly individualized nature of kinship ties is reflected in the preoccupation with the personal horoscope and fate (*karmaya*) (see Fortes, 1959). In religious activities there is much concern with pollution, a concept which is also operative in the caste hierarchy. Elsewhere I have shown that female puberty rites, the general idea of rebirth, and the notions of asceticism, are associated with the caste system (Yalman, 1962c, 1963). But there is little doubt that if we confine ourselves to a discussion of those areas of Sinhalese religion which can be approached only through their social structure, much of the complexity of their religious thought is lost.

Since Sinhalese beliefs about disease are primarily supernatural, beliefs and practices concerning ritual healing are best classified according to the specialists who deal with particular types of supernatural beings (Figure 1). The rites usually referred to as “devil dancing” or exorcism, with which I shall be mainly concerned, are those which fall between the double lines in Figure 1. The chanting of pirit (sacred text) by the bhikku does not fit neatly into this scheme, for in this rite, as we shall see, the priest does not deal directly with the Buddha.

Before we describe particular rituals, we should also note that the well-being of the Sinhalese villager is influenced by “good” (*honda*) and “bad” (*naraḥa*) categories which are also associated with the states of purity (*pirisithu*) and impurity (*killā* or *apirisithu*), illness or good fortune, and danger or protection from danger. These positive and negative states are also related to supernatural beings. Impurity (*killā*) is associated with *vas* (“supernatural danger” or literally “poison”). The demons (*yakkuva*) and the deities (*devaya*) as well as human beings may be dangerous by having *vas*. With humans it takes the form of evil eyes (*as vaha*), evil mouth (*ḥata vaha*) or evil thought (*ho vaha*). The patient, in other words, is not directly responsible for *vas*. It strikes him like a weapon from the outside. On the other hand, *vas* is also associated with sin (*dos*) which is the consequence of the “mistakes,” wrongs, or sinful actions (*varada*) of the patient. The individual is responsible for his sins and this responsibility can be carried over from his earlier lives into his present existence as “fate sin” (*ḥarma dos*). The balance of an individ-

⁷ Particular shrines or temples may be owned by a local caste group in one locality (Ryan, 1953:286ff.), but even this is rare.

FIGURE 1.—RITUAL SPECIALISTS AND THEIR RITUALS (Central Ceylon)

Specialist	Super-natural Being	Rite	Principal Object	Main Offering	Activity	
<i>bhikkū</i>		<i>pirit bana</i>	<i>pirit</i> book sermon	<i>dhana</i> (food)	Chanting Preaching	
Rites involving <i>natanava</i> (dancing) and the <i>bera</i> (drumming) of tom-tom beaters	<i>kapurala</i>	<i>devaya</i> (deities)	<i>deviyange sellama*</i> <i>yatika**</i>	ayuda (weapons)	<i>adukka</i> (food)	Possession Dancing Singing
i.e. "devil dancing"	<i>bali adura</i>	<i>yakkuva</i> (demons) <i>grahayo</i> (planets)	<i>bali</i>	<i>bali rupaya</i> (<i>bali</i> image)	<i>dola</i> (food)	Possession Dancing Singing
	<i>yakkuva adura***</i>	<i>yakkuva grahayo</i>	<i>tovil</i>	<i>yantaraya</i> (charm) or <i>dehi</i> (limes)	<i>dola</i> (food)	Possession Dancing Singing
	**** <i>sastra kariya</i> (astrologer)	<i>grahayo</i>		<i>yantaraya</i> (personal horoscope)		Horoscope interpreting for good and bad times
	<i>vedarala</i> (general practitioner)			<i>behet</i> (medicine) <i>yantaraya</i> (charms)		Reciting charms etc.

- * (Play of the Gods) subsumes all rituals concerning the devaya: i.e., an keliya, gam maduva (see below), maleliya, perahera (Processions)
- ** Prayers directed to the deities.
- *** Also known as: kattandiya, yakku vedarala, dehi vedarala.
- **** Also known as nekatrala (time master).

ual's sin (*dos*) against his good deeds or merits (*pin*), determines his chances for attaining a better or worse state in his next birth. Poison (*vas*) and sin (*dos*), impersonal and personal inauspiciousness, are often spoken of as a single category of *vas-dos*. All health rituals with which we shall be concerned are directed towards the elimination of *vas-dos* and their common source in pollution.

With these preliminaries I turn to the formal analysis of the *pirit* rituals. After drawing attention to the relatively simple formal structure of the rites and the use of certain items in their contexts, I will discuss the *bali* and *maleliya* (*gam maduva*) types of rituals.

1. *Pirit Ritual in Teripehe Village*

The occasion for this pirit ritual is the consecration of a new hut for the Rural Development Society. The priests of the Amarapura sect have been invited by the officers of the society. The ritual is to take place inside the new hall. A special cage-like structure, *pirit maduva* (pirit hut) has been constructed for this purpose, and is decorated by clean cloths brought by the washermen. Inside is a table covered with a white cloth (*viyan*) and on it are some water bottles (*pirit pen*) as well as certain charms (*yantaram*) (also horoscope).

The priests arrive from the temple in order of their ordination carrying one of the main ritual objects of the Buddhist temple, the "relic casket" (*karanduwa* or *kota*), made of gold and containing precious stones which symbolize the relics (of bone, tooth, hair, and nails) which remained behind after the cremation of the Buddha (*dhatu*). A brass pitcher full of water which is decorated with coconut flowers (*malwattaya*) is placed on the table.

After the priests enter the enclosure (*pirit maduva*), the tom-tom beaters start beating the round drum (*davula*). The small oil lamps around the enclosure are lit, and one of the priests sprinkles some rice over the table. A string called the *pirit nula* is attached to the white cloth above the enclosure. It is then passed around the table and held by each priest. The string then goes to the *malwattaya* and thence to the audience outside the hut.

The pirit itself is a Pali text recorded in a book (*pirit pota*) which tells of the struggle between the Buddha and his rival, Maraya. The tom-toms stop and the priests start chanting the initial prayer. At this point the string is handed around among the audience so that every person can have contact with it.

At the beginning of the ceremony, the seven priests chant together. Later two of them pick up the text, and in this fashion, taking turns, they keep up the chanting the entire night. The audience often goes to sleep; but it is considered important to hold onto the string.

As the priests are chanting, they hold fans in front of their faces. Two explanations are given of this act: The ordinary people say that the priest's chanting is very powerful (*saraya*) and that this may strike (*gahanava*) the audience (an idea which is similar to that of *katavaha*, mouth poison, see above). Others say that in this fashion the priest cuts himself off from the world around him (see Yalman, 1962a).

In the morning after the book is finished, the priests leave with the tom-tom beaters. The string is cut into small pieces and members of the audience tie portions of it around their wrists or necks for added protection (*arakhava*) from any kind of danger. Some drink the water (*pirit pen*) on the table; others put it on their faces.

Later in the day there is a *dhana* offering (mainly food) to the priests. As usual every day the Buddha figure in the temple is given the *dhana* of rice. The offering is made by the priest; laymen make offerings of flowers (*mal puja*). After the food offering to the Buddha, the priests move into a specially purified place where they are offered food by members of the Goyigama caste. Since the food is offered in a pure place, the priests wash their feet before entering the enclosure. Moreover, the place where the priests consume their food is surrounded on all sides by white cloths (*viyana*) brought by the washerman.

This type of pirit is commonly found in any Sinhalese village. Sometimes, when the pirit takes place on a national scale—such as for the arrival or departure of the Prime Minister at the airport—the numbers of the priests or tom-tom beaters may be much larger, but the ceremony remains much the same.

The essential aspects of the pirit ritual can be brought out by contrasting the above with a simpler example.

2. *Pirit Ritual for a New House*

A pirit takes place in the house of a newly married couple on the occasion of their completion of a new house. There is only one priest present. He has not brought the relic casket, but only the pirit book. There is no hut, but the chair for the priest is covered with a white cloth. There is another chair beside him on which he has some betel and tea. There is a table covered with a white cloth on which there is the pirit water, some coconut flowers, and the pirit book.

The priest chants the pirit alone in three half days (*varuva*). The string (pirit nula) comes from the book and is held at the other end by the young bride only. The priest holds his fan in front of his face and chants. When the chanting is finished, the pirit nula is tied around the wrist of the woman and the neck of the man. The priest ties the string himself and recites prayers.

The formal symbolic structure of the pirit may be indicated as follows: a. There are one or more bhikku (or sometimes laymen who are empowered to act in their place); b. A pure place is provided (the viyana, pirit maduva, etc.); c. The sacred text (pirit) is chanted by the priests; d. The text is connected by a string to the audience. (The connection may be established in various ways: the priest may hold the end of the string in his hand or, the sending end of the string may simply be tied to the enclosure which contains the sacred area, the relic casket, the water bottle in the middle of the table, or the pirit book); e. At the end of the rite the string which has been activated is tied around some part of the body of those who witness the ceremony.

The core of the ceremony consists of the transmission of the goodness of the sacred text to a recipient or recipients. A pirit chanted by one or more bhikkus, is more effective than are those chanted by lay singers.

The difference of elaboration around the basic pattern (the text, the string, the recipient) suggests that it is useful to distinguish between the primary structure and secondary structures in the rite. Thus, returning to the first version, we may refer to the enclosure, the white cloth covering the table inside the enclosure, and the relic casket as secondary structures of the ritual.

But there are also distinct subsidiary ritual acts connected with the primary structure. Giving of food (*dhana*) to the Buddha and his priests at the end of the first pirit ritual is one of these and is intended as an elaboration of the primary structure. There are many such special ritual acts which recur in other Sinhalese rituals. In the same ritual, the leaving of the horoscopes and charms in the pirit is a similar subsidiary act: it is expected that the charms (*yantaram*) will absorb some of the sacredness of the pirit text.

Having described the basic structure of the pirit ritual, I now turn to the *bali*

(image) ceremonies. In contrast to the pirit ritual, which is a general palliative utilizing the power of sacred Buddhist texts, the bali ceremony is specifically directed against he-and she-demons (*yakkuva*) and against the planets (*grahayo*) and is conducted by members of the tom-tom beater caste (*Beravayo*). The specialist in bali rituals is known as *bali gurunnanse* or as *bali adura*. He usually has helpers of the same caste, some of whom dance while others beat the elongated cigar-shaped drums (*bera*).⁸ Bali rites are distinguished from all others not only because they are the specialty of tom-tom beaters but also because they involve the construction of elaborate painted clay images and figures. These figures (*bali rupaya*), which are often seven feet high, depict the planetary beings or particular demons.

A bali ritual may be held whenever an individual has been consistently unlucky, or weak and ill. A bali is thought to be particularly appropriate when the individual suffers from epilepsy or forms of neurosis and hysteria. Two explanations are often given for the cause of the patient's difficulties. First, it may be said that a *yakkuva* is "eating flesh and drinking blood" of the patients; for they are known for their partiality to flesh (which is polluting) and blood (which is even more polluting). Second, it may be stated that the particular configuration of the stars under which an individual was born has produced a period of difficulty (*apele*). The *apele* period can be predicted accurately from the horoscope of the individual by the astrologers. Hence the bali rituals are often recommended by the astrologer.

Whether the difficulties are caused by the planets or the demons, the ritual is intended to get rid of the *vas dos* of the patient, to get the *yakkuva* out of the patient's body, and to appease them by the offering of food and flesh. This offering to such creatures is known as *dola*—in contrast to the *dhana*, offerings of food to the Buddha and the priests and *adukka* food offerings to the *devaya*. With these explanations we can turn to a description of the bali rituals.

1. Bali Ceremony in Teripehe Village

A bali is held in the tom-tom beaters' hamlet of Teripehe village. A large bali figure has been prepared inside a special enclosure made of plantain trunks which has open sides but the top of which is covered by white cloths. This separates the bali area from the rest of the village. The center is occupied by a large figure referred to as *Senasura*; who is standing on a cobra. There is another small figure on top of him whom some people call *Gini Devi*, but others suggest that he is *Maha Brahma*, "the creator of the earth." These figures are surrounded by the nine planets, the *grahayo*. (For the association of *Giri Devi* and the theme of incest, see *Wirz*, 1954: 129f.)

Opposite this effigy a small cage-like structure has been prepared for the sick person (*leda*) or (*aturuya*) who in this instance is a member of the tom-tom beater caste.

On a narrow ledge in front of the effigy, the offering (*dola*) is placed. It consists of fried foods (special offering to *yakkuva*), fried rice, fried oil cakes, fried jack fruit, also manioc, jaggory (sugar) and some grain. Near these foods is the skull of a

⁸ The *davula* which looks like an ordinary drum is normally used for functions in the *vihara* or those connected with the Buddha and his priests. The elongated drum mentioned here (*bera*) is normally used in connection with *devale* or exorcism rituals. More generally, whenever the ritual practitioners have to "dance" (*natanava*) the *bera* will be used.

wild cat; yakkuva food can be cooked in this. There is also a mirror, some hair, a comb, red flowers, betel leaves, sandalwood candles, incense, and plantains. On the floor there are some coins on betel leaves called *pandura* which are a frequent offering to deities and yakkuva and rice in plantains. Also on the floor, apart from the dola, are two large coconuts and a rice pounder. There is a pot of saffron water (*ḥaha pen*) nearby. The entire dola is covered up with plantain leaves.

There are a considerable number of spectators inside the bali area. The proceedings start with the bali gurunnanse and his son and brother's son dressed in special decorative clothes, singing and dancing to the rhythm of two tom-toms. The patient is isolated in his special little cage (*maduva*) covered with a white cloth.

The string (*nula*) which has a lime (*dehi*) attached, comes from the top of the effigy and is held by the bali gurunnanse. After some dancing and singing, the end of the string is passed on to the patient behind his cloth.

Two torches (*pandam*) are brought and lighted. The proceedings now take a new turn. The cloth covering the patient is taken away. The nine grahayo and the yakkuva are separately invoked, and the lighted torches are placed on either side of the effigy.

The "saffron water" is placed beside the patient, and two young girls (ideally virgins) hold arecanut flowers in their hands and with a sweeping gesture move the flowers from the patient's head toward his feet. At the same time they chant *ayu bowan* (long life!—also used as a general greeting in Sinhalese). It is said that with this gesture, *dos* descends lower (*dos bas venava*) and falls away from the patient.

The covering on the dola is removed. The cobra on which the main figure Senasuru stands receives a lighted candle on his head. The dola is being offered. There is singing and dancing for each of the nine grahayo and the four yakka which takes a long time.

The dancing and singing proceed in this pattern through the night. The patient may get excited and start shrieking and dancing to the tune of the bera drum. He may get violent and fall unconscious.

At the end of the ceremony, the patient throws the lime with the string straight toward the effigy. As the figure is of soft clay, the lime usually sticks to some part of it. The arecanut flowers with which the patient was being given "long life" are also thrown at the effigy. Finally the effigy is covered with the white cloth which originally covered the patient. The patient has some food taboos for three half days, and must eat from specially clean plantain leaves.

The figures of the grahayo and yakka are then taken into the jungle and abandoned. This marks the end of the ceremony.

There is not much agreement on what the figures signify. During the ceremony it was said that the Gini Devi was troubling the patient and that the cobra was her agent. The large figure in the middle was likened to the patient. The mother of the patient, when questioned the day after the ritual, claimed that two planets, Angaharu and Rahu, had been troubling her son.

I obtained no explanation concerning the limes thrown upon the figure except that they "belong to the deities." In view of the great importance attached to limes in many Sinhalese rituals, this is particularly unsatisfactory (see below). Some com-

ments on the contexts of the items used in rituals are called for before we go on to compare this account with other versions of bali ceremonies.

First attention should be drawn to the string, which has a similar function in other Sinhalese rites. It is clear that the string (*nula*) used in the bali serves the same general purpose as the *nula* used in the pirit ritual: it connects the ritual objects with a person or persons. But the intention of the string in the bali is the opposite of pirit. In the bali ceremony the illness of the patient is made to travel along the string *back* to the bali effigy, while in the pirit ritual the purity of the text travels *to* the audience (cf. Gunasekera, 1953:73). The bali figure represents the demon in its corporeal form outside the patient. The demon moreover, is presented with an offering of food (*dola*) to appease its hunger and to induce it to depart from the patient.

Second, the reversal aspect of the ritual is particularly obvious with respect to the white cloth and the string. At the beginning of the bali ceremony, the patient is covered with a white cloth and the string is brought to him. Then the cloth is removed and the patient is left face to face with the terrible *yakkuva* to which he is connected by the string. At the end of the ceremony, the string is thrown back to the demon and the connection is broken. Moreover, the *yakkuva* is now covered with the white cloth. In this sense, the patient and the figure have changed their places. The figure now contains the illness and is therefore taken away to be destroyed.

Third, the *dola* is offered to the *yakkuva* in lieu of the patient. Here again is a stream of ideas which associates the *yakkuva* and the illness with impurity (*killa*). The patient is in an impure state and hence the ritual of long life (*ayu bowan*) whereby the poison (*vas*) and sin (*dos*) are made to leave him. Because the *yakkuva* are particularly interested in pollution and are always said to hang around polluted places and objects, the *dola* (offering) contains many items which are considered polluting to the Sinhalese. Thus the food for the *yakkuva* is cooked in a skull, preferably one found in a graveyard. Hair and a comb are offered. The mirror into which boys and girls are not allowed to look until puberty may perhaps stand for the patient. Fried foods are conspicuous in the offering. According to Sinhalese folk ideology, fried foods are difficult to digest, and they are considered to remain as feces inside the body for a long time and thus to endanger one's health. But the *yakkuva* love fried things, which are associated with impurity.⁹

Fourth, the lighting of torches (*pandam*) or lamps (*pahana*) accompanied by the recitation of charmed verses (*mantaram*) is sometimes known as *jivan karanava* (make alive). It signifies that the object of attention is now "alive." The rite of *jivan karanava* is often said to be applied to objects used in sorcery (*humiyam*), but the lighting of candles on the cobra and torches stuck on the sides of the bali figure imply that the images have been activated.

Fifth, the saffron water is used much like pirit water, as a purifying agent. Saffron water is often used in contexts where *killa* and/or *vas-dos* is being counteracted. It is well known that the robes of the Buddhist priests are ritually dyed in saffron.¹⁰

⁹ The usual offerings to the *yakkuva* are five kinds of fried foods (*pulutu pas vagei*) consisting of two kinds of fried flesh (*killi mas*: water flesh, *die mas*, i.e., fish, and land flesh, *goda mas*, i.e., meat), and three kinds of fried grains.

¹⁰ It is relevant to note here that the cloth from which the sacred robe is made should ideally be picked up in graveyards, which are places polluted by corpses (*mini killa*). (See below, and Yalman, 1962a).

Incidentally, we may also note that pollution houses (*ķilla gedara*), i.e., houses in which a death, a birth, or menstruation has taken place, will be cleansed either by spreading a new coat of cow dung (*goma*) or by the sprinkling of saffron water. The decoration of the pot with coconut and/or arecanut flowers—again like the pot in pirit ceremonies—indicates the association between the flowers and the water; and it is true that the flowers in question are again used as pure decorations with the white cloths (or with betel leaves—also considered very pure) or agents with which to counteract pollution. Hence, again, the receiving end of the pirit string may be tied around a bunch of coconut or arecanut flowers and betel leaves. In the bali ritual in question, the virgins chanting “long life” were in fact sweeping the pollution and *vas-dos* away with bunches of arecanut flowers.

Sixth, all that has been said about saffron water also applies to limes. They are a specific purifying agent against pollution. One of the main anti-pollution rituals of the Sinhalese consists of the cutting of numerous limes with sweeping gestures over each and every joint of the patient. The patient's end of the string in bali rituals may be tied to a lime. At the end of the funeral ceremonies, the persons who have come into contact with the corpse will cleanse themselves of pollution by rubbing limes onto their hands.

It is useful to compare this account with another bali which I observed near Monaragala in the Wellassa province.

2. Bali Ceremony in Maķulle Village

An extremely elaborate structure (*maduva*) has been erected with plantain trunks and decorated with the usual objects used in many of the rituals of the Sinhalese. This bali is referred to as a *ķiri maduva* (milk hut; milk signifying purity). At an auspicious time (*honda valava*) specified by the astrologer on the examination of the personal horoscope of the patient, a six-foot pole is erected inside the enclosure. The act, known as *ķap hitavinava*, is simply the erection of a milk exuding tree (*ķiri gaha*) to mark the beginning of the ceremony at the correct moment. The particular pole in this ritual is painted and decorated at the top.

Two large yakkuva images, referred to as Ririyakku Baliya and Dalakumara Baliya, have been prepared. They both stand on animal figures. The Dalakumara stands on a buffalo and the Ririyakku stands on a cow. Both the yakka have their faces painted black. They have terrible aspects with conspicuous teeth, some of which protrude like tusks. They both have numerous cobras forming a headdress. Dalakumara Baliya is flanked by six smaller figures who are called *pirivel* and are like the *grahayo* in the first bali. Ririyakku has a fowl in either hand and some rats on two sides of his face.

Near the center of the square is another figure which I had never come across in other bali ceremonies. It consists of an ordinarily dressed female *yakķini* sitting on a stool. She wears blue and white clothes and is referred to as Katina Rupaya. Along the side of the square four *pidaniya* (objects with flowers and limes in them) have been prepared.

The animals upon which the yakka stand are their “vehicles.” (The high deities [devaya] also have their vehicles—like Kataragama's peacock—who are at the same time their symbols.)

Facing these figures there is another hut covered with white cloths and intended

for the patient. A woman of twenty-five sits in this structure. The reason for the ceremony is that she is "mad" (*pissu*). Her madness, however, is partly the result of sorcery. Someone has made *huniyam* against her by charming part of a jack fruit and placing it across her path. The act is considered to be a specialty of the Veddah people but no specific accusations are made. She has been subject to fits and trembling. She falls down in her hut and starts wailing. The form of the wailing, which I have heard many times, is long drawn out, blood curdling "Hooo! Hooo!" sounds. The same sound is made when a patient gets possessed in bali ceremonies. The reason for her wailing is again stated to be that *yakkuva* have entered her and are "eating her flesh and drinking her blood." The bali ceremony is intended to induce the *yakkuva* to leave her.

The specialists for the ceremony are again the tom-tom beaters from a neighboring village. Two are dancing and singing and two others are beating a rhythm on the bera drums. The specialists are wearing their appropriate costumes.

It is stated that the two *yakkuva* images want fowls and blood; Katina Rupaya wants meat.

The ceremony commences by covering the patient with a white cloth. After much dancing and singing the string which connects the Katina Rupaya with the *yakkuva* figures is handed on to the patient. Later the white cloth which hides the patient is taken away. The dola offerings are offered to the *yakkuva* figures. A fowl is killed and offered to the *yakkuva*. Parts of it are given to the sitting female demon on skewers which are set all around her. Much incense is burned near the sick woman and she starts trembling. The explanation is that when the bera is played the vision of the *yakkuva* appears to the woman and that then the woman will simply go mad (*pissu hadanava*). The possessed woman throws herself on the ground and shrieks, "Hooo! Hooo!" Saffron water is sprinkled upon her and her excitement subsides. She is carried back to her enclosure in an exhausted state.

The specialist tom-tom beaters resume their dancing. Arecanut flowers are given to them which they hold in their hands instead of the usual bells. They chant "long life" while sweeping the *vas-dos* away from her toward the sitting *yakkini*. Later parts of the arecanut flowers are broken off in small pieces and again with sweeping gestures are thrown away from the patient towards the demoness.

The bali ends with the string thrown at Katina Rupaya. The *yakkini* is then covered with the cloth which covered the patient. There is much singing and dancing before the ceremony is finally concluded.

The bali figures, the *pidaniya*, the pole are then taken into the jungle to a place where they can no longer "see" the house. They are placed on the ground facing upwards and the tom-tom beaters make some feeble attempt to burn them with kerosene. The act is only symbolic and with the final recitation of *mantaram* they abandon the figures.

When we compare the two bali rites the main differences between them are as follows: (a) In the second bali ceremony three figures were involved. While the figure stands on a cobra vehicle in Bali 1, the vehicles of the second bali are cattle with cobras on their heads. This is part of the difference in the character of the *yakkuva* concerned. (b) Bali 1 has no special *pidanya* offerings, but the dola stand serves the same purpose. (c) Bali 1 did not commence with a pole erection ceremony. (d) Bali 1 is directed against ill health in general whereas Bali 2 is specifically against

madness and sorcery. The patient in Bali 2 becomes possessed by the *yakkuva*. (e) The *dola* in Bali 2 is a newly killed fowl. In Bali 1 the *dola* is more complex but exploits the same theme. In both cases the *dola* contains pollution.

As against the differences listed, the basic symbolic structure of the rites is remarkably similar: (a) The *bali* area is demarcated and isolated by a hut (*maduva*). (b) *Bali* figures are created by the specialist. (c) The patient is covered at the beginning of the ceremony. (d) *Bali* figures are sacralized. (e) *Bali* figures are connected with the patient with string and the patient is uncovered. (f) The *dola* offering of *yakkuva* delicacies is presented. (g) The *vas-dos* of the patient is swept away. (h) When the *yakkuva* is out of the patient, the string is thrown back, the connection is broken and the figure covered. (i) The figures are destroyed or taken away into the wilderness. (j) The patient, still in a heightened state, is told to observe certain food taboos while gradually returning to ordinary life.

The *bali* ceremonies described in an unsystematic but detailed fashion by Wirz (1954:105ff.) also conform to this symbolic structure.

The description of *pirit* and *bali* rites forms an introduction to the sphere of ritual healing among the Sinhalese. The structure of these rituals is meaningful only when placed in the context of rituals directed toward the Hindu deities (*devaya*) and the rest of the complex of Buddhist concepts and ideology. In this section I provide an analysis of a *maleliya* rite, intended for the deities. I hope in this fashion to indicate some of the further implications of the category of supernatural beings under the Buddha which the Sinhalese refer to as the *devaya* and the *yakkuva*.

Maleliya is an elaborate ceremony undertaken by the *kapurala* on behalf of a village or a family. The Sinhalese would consider it to be part of the general category of sacred ceremonies referred to as "play of the deities" (*deviyange sellama*); "horn play" (*an keliya*); "village hut" (*gam maduva*); "procession" (*perahera*), or simply "ceremony" (*mangalaya*).

1. *Maleliya* at Teripehe Village

The ceremony takes place in the Galpitiya hamlet of Teripehe, and is intended for the ill grandson of a neighbor of the Goyigama caste. The main *kapurala*, Appuhami (my cook), has invited other *kapurala* to add to the occasion. The *kapurala* from Ekassa Temple (*kovil*, i.e., small *devale*) has brought the weapons (*ayuda*) of the deities in a box. The Ekassa *kovil* particularly is associated with the deity of the locality (Ekassa *deva*), but there are also numerous other deities associated with it.

A large hut has been prepared with plantain trunks and has been elaborately decorated with arecanut, coconut flowers, and white cloths brought by the washerman. At one end of the hut a small altar (*masa*) has been constructed about five feet off the ground. The altar is again decorated with white cloths and covered with plantain leaves. The most conspicuous objects upon the altar are the weapons of the deities (*ayuda*)—arrows, swords, and tridents, which are arranged vertically in an orderly fashion.

Three tom-tom beaters have been invited. Large amounts of pure food have been prepared and these will be offered later to the ritual practitioners who take part in the ceremony.

The maleliya starts with an initial slow dance and song sequence. The kapuralas take turns dancing. At certain points there are no songs but only dancing. Eventually the kapurala become possessed (*amaru* or *mayan*) one by one. They sing epics concerning the birth, life, and deaths of the deities associated with the weapons on the altar. Each weapon stands for a different deity, and as the songs are continued, betel and arecanut flowers are offered to the gods.

After an interval, the Ekassa kapurala becomes possessed. The tom-toms beat out a frenzied rhythm and the kapurala, swinging his hair, dances wildly. He is given some lighted torches which he "eats." After eating fire, the kapurala, still in a state of possession, turns to singing charms. He has a long staff in his hand and touches people gently as he dances. Some persons in the audience offer him money wrapped in betel leaves (*pandura*). He takes this, and standing in front of the person foretells the future. The assumption is that a deity has entered into him and is speaking through him. Some of the audience, particularly some young people, do not believe that the kapurala is really possessed and make fun of him. The audience is uncertain as to which deity has possessed him and different informants give contradictory answers. On the whole, they appear to say that this is the Ekassa deva speaking through his kapurala. There is another interval.

As the night proceeds, the other kapurala become possessed one by one and recite the stories of the deities. The kapurala appear to become possessed, particularly when the dancing and the tom-tom beating reach a certain intensity. The handling of the weapons of the deities or the offering of food-stuffs to them also appears conducive to possession.

The final rite in the morning consists of the Ekassa kapurala doing a dance for a goddess. This dance, known as the *ķiri amma natanava* (the dance of the grandmothers), is said to be the offering of pardon for mistakes to those who have provided milk, i.e., the mothers. It is also said that during this dance the kapurala becomes the goddess Pattini. The Ekassa kapurala, in an appropriate fashion, wears a sari over his shoulder. During the dancing, the grandchild who is ill is given to the kapurala, who holds the child in his arms and dances violently near the weapons. Many of the words he utters are incomprehensible; but he is said to be relating his visions (*pehena*).

At the end of the dance of the grandmothers there is a final outburst of dancing by all the kapuralas concerned.

The symbolic structure of the rite is as follows: (a) A hut (*maduva*) is constructed; (b) Pure food (*adukka*) is prepared; (c) The symbols of the deities are brought and placed on an altar (*mesa*); (d) The symbols (*ayuda*) are sacralized by singing and dancing and beating of tom-toms; (e) *Adukka* is offered to the deities; (f) Each deity is handled separately and his history from birth to death is recited. The kapurala becomes possessed by the deity and speaks as an oracle (see below); (g) Possession (i.e., *amaru vima*) is repeated with variations for each deity; (h) The *ayuda* are taken back to the temple.

In fact the most complicated and formal version of the rite is a repetition for each male and female deity of the offering of *adukka*. Secondary structures may be elaborated around this basic theme. Thus in the preparation of the food, the utensils may be singled out for purification and worship; the men (women are impure) who do the cooking may cover their mouths with clean cloths to prevent saliva (very

polluting—bodily excretion) from falling on the food. The purification of ayuda by the blacksmiths with lime and saffron and the washing of Pattini with milk fall into this category. While these ritual acts are of vital significance when we construct the code for the analysis of the contexts in which milk or saffron or limes are used, they may or may not be considered necessary parts of the formal symbolic structure of the rituals.

Up to this point, I have been concerned with the formal structure of Sinhalese healing rituals, and hence have had to translate many of the ritual objects and acts involved in the rite by indicating their contexts in the symbolic code used by the Sinhalese. These are the first two levels of the procedure I previously outlined. I now turn to the third level of analysis. What is the significance of these rites? What problems are they concerned with? The best approach to these questions is to examine certain features of the categories of devaya and yakkuva.

I must point out immediately that I have not discussed here the more elaborate ceremonies intended for the devaya. Some of these are annual rituals and have nationwide importance. For instance, the mysterious ceremonials in the jungle shrine of Kataragama last a full fortnight, and pilgrims from all over Ceylon and even South India visit the shrine to worship the god Kataragama and his mistress Valli Amma. (Wirz, 1954:145ff.; Yalman, 1962b.) Similar annual ceremonies which culminate in colorful nocturnal processions with elephants, tom-tom beaters, and diverse castes take place in most important temples in Ceylon. (Ryan, 1953:211ff.) But even with the limited material presented, we may proceed with our analysis.

We have noted, first, that both the devaya and the yakkuva are concerned with this life. The sins of an individual in his earlier lives (*karma dos*) may still cling to him in his present existence and may render him more susceptible to misfortune. But the benefits the deities will bring or withhold, and the attacks of the demons, do not affect his future rebirths.

In contrast, the Buddha and his priests are concerned with the next existence and eternity. The priest comes into the life crises of a person only at his funeral. If his merit (*pin*) outweighs his sins, he will be reborn in a higher state or even reach Nirvana. The teaching of the Buddha expresses the interests in the other world. The way to Nirvana is to minimize the importance of wealth, family, friends, and all things which tie the person down to this existence. The individual is urged to give up everything and turn to good deeds and purity, prayer, and meditation, to reach Buddha-hood in his next existence. On the other hand, immediate disaster and happiness are associated with the devale, the devaya, and the kapurala. They can give health, money, children, good crops, and fertile wives. It is noteworthy therefore that the ritual acts at the vihara consist of "prayer" (*vandanava*) whereas people go to the devale to "beg" (*nyaknya kirima*) or to "request" (*illasitima*) the help of the deities.

The Buddha and his priests are superior to the deities and their kapurala. The latter are seen as the servants of the former. The relationships between the Buddha and the devaya are expressed in a most suggestive fashion by the transfer of merits (*pin*) from the Buddhist temple (*vihara*) to the devaya. Thus, the layman can acquire merit by the performance of good deeds and by making offerings (*puja dhana*) to the Buddhist temple. He may then go into a devale or simply turn aside in a

private place and offer a share (*pangu* or *ḱotas*) of his pin to the devaya. In return for giving some of this merit to the devaya, the individual is supposed to receive “protection” which will immediately aid him in this existence.

There are very important category oppositions in the realm of high Buddhism (see Figure II). Thus while the Buddha stands for Eternity, Maraya, his cross-cousin, his rival in all his lives, stands for Death. Yet both Maraya and the Buddha are one; for Maraya is sometimes described as only a thought in the mind of the Buddha. Here again is the polarity between eternal existence and finite death, which Lévi-Strauss notes is a recurring theme in mythologies and religions (1955:59–62).

Such oppositions also exist in the categories of the devaya and yakkuva (Figure II). Let us note immediately that the yakkuva and devaya are similar in many respects. There are males and females in both categories (*deva*, *devi* and *yakka*, *yak-kini*). Both are supernatural beings in human form. Both have vehicles (*yantarava*) on which they can travel and which they can delegate to act on their behalf. When they are depicted as images, such as the bali effigies, images of the yakkuva, or the pictures of the devaya in Wirz (1954), there are remarkable similarities between their external manifestations. Of course the yakkuva are often distinguished by their black faces or blood-thirsty aspects and long teeth, but their general appearance seems similar to the manifestations of the devaya. Both the devaya and the yakkuva have supernatural power (*balaya*, *dishtiya*, *vas*) which can make people mad (*pissu*). The devaya and the yakkuva are so similar that sometimes the distinctions between them get blurred even for experienced specialists such as the kapurala.¹¹

One of the best known kapurala in the Walapane district was my cook Appuhami. While taking down the names of the devaya who were expected to make their appearances for a gam maduva rite, we arrived at a group of Bandara devaya: Vannia Bandara, Alut Deva, Menikbandara Deva, Kumara Bandara Deva. Appuhami claimed that these last were really yakkuva, but yakkuva “who lived in the jungle like elephants” and who were respected in the same way as elephants (see Leach, 1962).

Although the devaya and the yakkuva are similar as a general category, they are diametrically opposed in all their vital aspects. The devaya are considered to be extremely pure (*pirisithu*), and the devale in which they reside is also an extraordinarily pure place. Persons afflicted with even a minute amount of pollution (*killa*) must avoid the devale and the devaya. Hence persons from “birth, menstruation, and death houses” (*killa gederu*) cannot go into the devale. Persons who have eaten *killu* food (flesh, fried foods, smelly things) would be endangered in the devale for the god would attack them. The nature of the attack is expressed in various ways: there are “white cobras” in the devale that will attack impure persons; the devaya will attack impure persons with *vas* (*vas gahanava*) and will make them mad or cripple them; the devaya do not have *vas*, but there are yakkuva in the devale who do have *vas*, and they will attack and make the impure person mad.¹²

In contrast to the devaya, the yakkuva are extremely impure. They live in filthy places, hang around graveyards, and thus are associated with the most intense

¹¹ Gooneratne (1865, *passim*) also notes the similarity of the devaya and yakkuva.

¹² This last statement comes from a kapurala who wanted to distinguish between *vas* and *dishtiya*.

pollution of all—death pollution (*mini killa*). One has to take ritual precautions when approaching graveyards because the *yakkuva* go through graves, and if they happen to go through one's body, all is finished!

The opposition of the *devaya* and the *yakkuva* is manifested in the food they like. The *devaya* will be offered only the purest food. The *adukka* prepared for them must be specially cooked by men—women menstruate and are not as pure as men. The food must be offered in specially purified places. Hence the cleansing of the house with cow dung or saffron water before preparing *adukka* and hence the closing up of the mouth with cloths like surgeons in an operating theatre. The boiling of milk (*ķiri uturanava*) is a special ritual offering to the *devaya*.

The *yakkuva* may be offered "five kinds of burned things" or "three kinds of flesh" (*mas tun vage*), i.e., land-pig (*uru malu*); air-peacock (*madara malu*); sea-fish (*magula malu*); all polluted condiments (*kili malu*).

As noted above, both the *devaya* and the *yakkuva* have a similar kind of power which ordinary people refer to as *vas*.¹³

The specialist *kapurala* is more careful in his distinctions. *Appuhami kapurala* claimed that the *devaya* have *dishtiya* (power, also *deva balaya*) whereas *vas*, which is mainly negative, belongs only to the *yakkuva*. The *devaya* use it for good purposes, whereas the *yakkuva* use it for bad purposes.

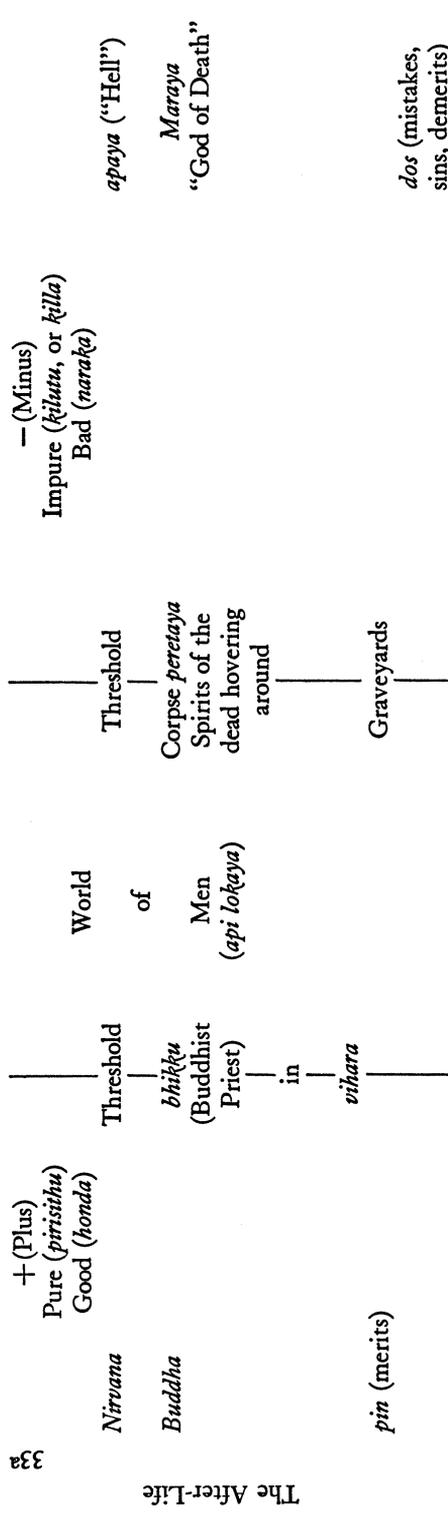
An important aspect of this power is that it "makes madness" (*pissu hadanava*). It has different manifestations in the case of the *yakkuva* and the *devaya*. When the *dishtiya* falls on the *kapurala*, who has observed food taboos, has kept himself ritually pure, and is in a pure place, then he is relatively safe. He will start trembling and shaking. He will start swinging his head round and round and will become "possessed" (*mayang venava*) by the *deva* or *devi* in question. His progressive entrance into the trance state is explained by saying that he becomes "difficult" (*amaru venava*—also used in the case of serious illness, loss of consciousness) or "mad." It will be said that his blood becomes heavy (*bara le venava*). The *kapurala* thus becomes an oracle for the particular deity *devaya* who has possessed him. The people will offer *panduru* to the deity who is speaking through the *kapurala*. The *kapurala* will tell his "vision" (*pehena ķiyana*: foretelling the future) and will advise the worshipper. Such possession is always accompanied by frenzied tom-tom beating and much incense. I witnessed no difficulty in the *kapurala*'s getting out of the trance state. Some of these trances were quite genuine, but in many others the specialists showed indications of faking the manifestations.

Just as the *devaya* enter into the specialist and possess him, the *yakkuva* enter into ordinary persons and make them mad. The ceremonies for the *yakkuva* are intended to induce them to leave the patient. The outward manifestations of such madness often appear to follow the same lines as the possession of the *kapurala*. In fact the *kapurala* in the trance is spoken of as mad (*pissu*).¹⁴

¹³ It may also be said that the *vihara* has no *vas* for the "Buddha is uninterested in such things." And hence women who are polluted may be allowed into the *vihara*. But these are probably theological points which would stand much disputation, for the Buddha obviously has great power (*balaya*) but does not make men mad.

¹⁴ The convergence of the cultural manifestations of possession and epileptic fits raises important questions (see Nadel, 1946). The entry into trance states, the simulation of epileptic fits, the tom-tom beating, all seem very similar in Africa, Asia, or Haiti (Metraux, 1959:120ff.).

FIGURE II.



Above: *vihare* Pattern: No dancing (*natanava*) ceremonies; tom-tom beaters use round drum (*davula*); no spirit possession.

Below: Devale Pattern: Dancing, gods' "games" (*deviyange sellama*); tom-tom beaters use elongated drum (*bera*); possession rites; may not be seen by Buddhist priests.

<p><i>deva lokaya</i></p> <p><i>deva</i> <i>devi</i> (in pure places)</p> <p><i>dishtiya</i> (power of deity)</p> <p>White Cobra</p> <p>Bring <i>pihita</i> (luck, fertility, happiness)</p> <p>This Life</p>	<p>(<i>api lokaya</i>)</p> <p><i>kapurala</i> in <i>devale</i> or <i>maduwa</i></p> <p><i>bali adura</i> <i>yakka adura</i> in charmed enclosures (<i>maduwa</i>)</p>	<p><i>apaya</i></p> <p><i>yakkuwa</i> <i>yakini</i> (hang around graveyards, polluted places)</p> <p><i>vas</i> (poison, super- natural danger)</p> <p>Black Cobra</p> <p><i>polanga</i> (Russels viper)</p> <p>Bring <i>leda-duka</i> (illness, barrenness, misfortune)</p>
---	---	--

Planetary
Deities
+
brings: "Good time"
(*honda velava*) +

Personal
Destiny (*karmaya*)
Fate—
dependent upon configuration of
grahayo at moment of birth or conception.
Specialist: Astrologers (*nekhat rala* or *sastra*
kariya) constructs horoscope (*yanitaram*)

—
brings: "Bad time"
(*apele*)—illness, mis-
fortune

There is a similarity between being hit by *vas* or falling under the power of the deity (*dishitiya vetanava*). The terminology utilized for *yakku* or *devaya* possession is identical. The *kapurala* and the patient start shivering and trembling (*vevulanava* or *kili pelume*); they may lose consciousness (*sihi neti vanava*); the *yakkuva* will appear (*yakku pehanava*) to the patient in the same way as the *kapurala* will have visions (*pehenna*). The usual term for the possession of the *kapurala* is *mayang venava*, whereas the term for madness is *pissu hadanava*.

The Buddha or *Maraya*, on the contrary, are never involved in possession rites. The Buddha or the state of Buddha-hood are approached by meditation and the relinquishment of all desire. The active nature of the *devaya* and *yakkuva* compared to the passivity of the Buddha is part of the opposition between their concern with this life and the next.

The *devale* are said to have white cobras in them, which are sacred or divine. The poison of the cobra is also referred to as *vas*. The *yakkuva* are also associated with snakes (e.g., *bali*, above) and particularly with the black cobra. The two aspects of the snake are also manifested in the mythology concerning the rivalry between the cobra and the Russels Viper which are both among the deadliest creatures on the island.¹⁵

The polarity between the *devaya* and the *yakkuva* is best clarified by what the ceremonies are intended to accomplish. The rites for the *devaya* if carried out correctly have the following effects: (a.) Happiness and health (*sepa sanipa*) increases in the village; (b.) The fertility of Women, Cattle and Lands (*sampata*) is enhanced; (c.) The village becomes lucky (*vassanava*); (d.) Deaths decrease.

If the rites are forgotten, however, the village gradually relapses into the opposite state:¹⁶ (a.) (*Leda duka*) Illness and sorrow increase; (b.) Fertility is reduced; paddy yields are lower; (c.) The village becomes unlucky (*avasanava*); (d.) Deaths increase.

This contrast in the state of the individual or community is summed up in Sinhalese by the expressive words *honda* (good, auspicious) and *naraka* (bad, inauspicious). The same words are used to speak of low (*naraka*) and high (*honda*) castes, and of impurity and purity.

The essential contrast is that the rites and offerings (*adukka*) to the *devaya* are intended to bring about the set of positive effects, and the rites (*bali*) and offerings (*dola*) to the *yakkuva* are intended to oppose the set of negative effects. This simple dichotomy underlies all the complexity of Sinhalese thinking on the subject of the supernatural.¹⁷ All the rites and their minor details are directed towards the contrast between these basic issues:

¹⁵ Elephants, who also have divine attributes, have their positive and negative aspects. The white elephant is sacred and fertilized the mother of the Buddha, *Maya*, in a dream. The elephant of *Marea*, *Nalagiri*, however, tried to kill the Buddha.

¹⁶ The negative state can also be induced by sorcery (*huniyam*): the charms and rites which are directed towards the *yakkuva* to bring about the death or illness of a particular person (see *Gooneratne* 1865:68ff.).

¹⁷ Our observations are directly borne out, e.g., by the ritual activities at harvest time. There are elaborate precautions taken on the threshing floor to assure the increase of paddy and keep away the *yakkuva* who hover around. Thus, the threshing floor is made like a *devale* and is especially pure. No impurities, even women, are allowed to enter into it. A special language, *kamata bhasava*, is spoken which the *yakkuva* will not understand. If the precautions are not carefully observed the *yakkuva* will enter the threshing floor and the paddy will decrease.

Life	—Death
Happiness	—Sorrow
Health	—Illness
Luck	—Misfortune
Fertility	—Infertility

All of these dichotomies are related to the opposition between purity and pollution, an opposition constantly reiterated in all Sinhalese rituals.

We must emphasize again that the logical connection between the positive and negative sides of the equation is so close indeed¹⁸ that it seems as if the positive qualities are the negative qualities turned inside out. The purpose of the ritual is precisely to accomplish this conversion of pollution into purity. The rituals appear to oscillate between all that is impure and all that is pure. There are such oscillations at every level of Sinhalese religious thought. The ideology of pollution, for instance, has associations with life as well as death. Death is polluting, but the corpse, people say, becomes fertilizer (*pohora*) for the fields. The corpse is intensely polluting because “the feces cannot be excreted.” But feces and manure pits are also fertilizers. In Buddhist ideology too a death brings about immediate conception in some womb. At the same time, birth is intensely polluting (bodily excretions). Sexual intercourse which results in birth is polluting. The same dichotomy that life and death and purity and pollution are opposed but bring about one another is also embedded in the preoccupation with female puberty, which though it is the sign of female fertility is itself very polluting (Yalman, 1963).

Feces are impure, but the feces of the cow (*goma*) are very pure and auspicious. The ashes of cow dung, just as the relics of the Buddha’s corpse after cremation (see below) are even more intense in their purity and sacredness.

Just as the rituals may be said to oscillate between positive and negative states, it is also noteworthy that the ritual practitioners are themselves “mediators.” I discuss the Buddhist priests below, but let me draw attention to the position of the *kapurala*. The word *kapurala* carries the meaning of “middleman.” The ordinary *kapurala* in the Sinhalese villages is a “marriage broker” who brings two families together and mediates between them. This type of *kapurala* has nothing to do with the healing ritualist and may be distinguished from the latter by the qualification “wedding” (*magula*) *kapurala*. Interestingly enough, the marriage *kapurala* is always the object of much joking. The Radcliffe-Brown point regarding the ambivalence of “joking relationships” certainly applies to him (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952:90ff.).

The ritual specialist *kapurala*, on the other hand, is a mediator between men and the gods and goddesses. During his role as a mediator, he wears special costumes which have the characteristic that his breasts are carefully covered by a red sash. He also has to observe severe sex taboos. I suggest that the costumes and the taboos are intended to disguise or submerge his virility and render him sexless. When, however, he is possessed by a deity he will usually dance with one of the weapons and partakes of the sexuality of the god or goddess that has possessed him. In contrast, when pos-

¹⁸ So close that some writers miss the differentiation between *devaya* and *yakkuva* completely (e.g., Pertold, 1930:127).

essed by a god, he uses the weapons which are pointed objects; but when possessed by a goddess, he dances with the symbols of the female deities: round objects which often have holes—necklaces, rings, brass mangos,¹⁹ etc.

We must also note in this context that the kapurala mediates not merely between the deities and men, but also between male and female deities. We have mentioned that the maleliya rituals include the recitation of epic songs concerning the birth and death of the gods. A number of other rituals which are beyond the scope of this paper, however, are directly concerned with sexual intercourse between male and female deities (*ganu-purussiya sambandam*) (Yalman, 1964).

The oscillation between impurity and purity at the level of the devaya and yakkuva is to be noted in the realm of high Buddhism as well. Consider the relics (dhatu) of the Buddha. These are parts of his body (*sarira*)²⁰ which are supposed to have remained behind after his cremation. They are described as his bones (*hakuru* and *lalata* dhatu), his teeth (*denta dhatu*—in the Temple of the Tooth [Hocart, 1931], his hair (*khesa dhatu*), his nails (*nyepata dhatu*). It is not simply that parts of his corpse become sacred by being purified by fire during the cremation. Quite apart from the bones, some of the relics selected for religious attention are precisely the most polluting parts of the body, e.g., the nails and the hair (cf. Leach, 1958). These relics of the corpse become extra sacred, and extra fertile. Hence the belief is that it always rains when the dhatu are shaken, or when the tooth relic in Kandy is taken on a procession in its relic chamber.

Hair is selected for special attention. The hair of ordinary humans is very polluting (but women's long hair symbolizes fertility). The Buddhist priests must be very pure (and celibate, i.e., infertile) so their entire body is shaven from head to foot. But the Buddha figure has tightly curling black hair in all his representations; and as we suggested, his hair relic is again sacred and fertile (Leach, 1958, *passim*).

Consider the implications of the robe (*siura*) of the Buddhist priest, which should be made from cloths found in graveyards. In the funeral ceremony of the Sinhalese, a piece of cloth is left at the head of the grave with the recitation of the *pansakulaya* prayer. The cloth is thus imbued with death-pollution. But when stitched (in 108 pieces, which is said to be like the 108 sections of *dos* [sin]) and then dyed with saffron, the robe becomes extremely pure, sacred, and auspicious. It is then said to symbolize the ripe paddy fields of the Buddha's father which the Buddha saw during his ascent to Nirvana. Thus just as the bhikku mediates between life and death at funerals, the robe he wears reiterates the same polarity at the symbolic level.²¹

There is an important difference between the bhikku and the Buddha, which is partly brought out by the handling of hair in the case of these sacred persons. The bhikku is extremely sacred and is revered as a holy man. He is, however, still involved in the contradictions of purity and pollution. His hair is shaved to emphasize his purity. But he also has a negative aspect: to meet a bhikku first thing in the morning

¹⁹ The mango (*amba*) is the symbol of the goddess Pattini and in popular use stands for vagina.

²⁰ The Buddha image (*rupaya*) is a symbol of the Buddha's sarira and contains precious stones as "relics" (dhatu) inside it.

²¹ The tapasa bhikku (ascetic monks) who make a point of living in graveyards and who meditate on death wear soiled brown robes which bring them even closer into the polarity between pollution and sacredness. They claim to be the true custodians of Buddha's teaching (Yalman, 1962a).

means death; to go to the paddy fields after having met him is believed to decrease the paddy yield; to dream of a bhikku symbolizes Maraya (i.e., death)

While similar oppositions may exist in the case of the Buddha (like the statement that Maraya is a thought in his mind), they are, as it were, resolved. It is said that the Buddha, though sacred and perfectly pure, does not care about pollution. Hence polluted women may enter his temples. Again, though his priests are shaven, he does retain his hair. In him all such contradictions are ended: life and death, purity and impurity, are no longer opposed but resolved. The main achievement of the Buddha is to move out of the cycle of life and death, happiness and sorrow, into Nirvana, where there is neither: the Buddha *is* Eternal Being.

The resolution of the contradictions between life and death comes through with particular emphasis in the case of the dagoba (also known as *stupa*). The word stands for *dhatu-garbhaya*. My informants give the following associated meanings for dhatu: (a.) relics of the Buddha; (b.) seeds; (c.) semen.²² For garbhaya they simply say *gaba*, i.e., a pregnant womb. The explanation is that the relics of the Buddha are safe in the womb. When the Buddha died and was cremated, his body (*sarira*) became like tiny seeds, which were put into a dagoba. Although no direct association is made between the vitality of semen and the fertility of the relics, the dhatu are said to have "life" (*pranaya*) in them. It is also said that the land around a dagoba is particularly fertile. At other times my informants have said, "When the Buddha died his goodness (*gune*) became seeds (*atta*) and went into the earth and created the world." In Buddhist thought it is clear that in the dagoba there is no longer a contradiction between life and death. The sacred object, which is a memorial tomb built upon the relics of the cremated body of the Buddha, also stands for the creation of the universe. More exactly, it is the perfect statement of Eternal Being.

I have been concerned in this paper with the formal aspects of Sinhalese healing rituals. The analysis proceeded on three levels. First, I noted that the items used in the ritual were part of a consistent code and could be examined in terms of their contexts. Second, I drew attention to certain formal arrangements in the rites (e.g., reversal themes in bali, the use of the string) and noted that they follow a logical procedure and bring about the desired effects in the realm of ritual. I also noted that all the rites and all the objects utilized in the rites either reiterated the opposition between positive-negative, good-bad, pure-impure categories or that they mediated between these binary pairs. I conclude that Lévi-Strauss is correct in calling attention to the orchestra score structure of rituals; as in folk poetry (see Sebeok, 1960:233), certain themes and elements are repeated in different forms through the text. In short, the exuberant complexity of the manifest symbolism of the rites we have been describing covers an underlying conceptual structure of extreme simplicity. But the analysis of the structure can be accomplished only by painstaking attention during field work, to identifying and recording the contexts of the ritual items.

My critics may claim that since I did not lay down completely unambiguous and explicit rules to guide my analytic procedure, the results are simply a set of personal opinions and do not indicate that there is any order in Sinhalese thinking on the

²² As the informants put it, "Very high, good word for semen."

subject. They may also claim that I have analyzed only those items which I found convenient.

The second point is easily answered. A complete elucidation of any one of these rituals would mean the analysis of all aspects of Sinhalese folk religion—an undertaking far beyond the scope of this paper. As to whether the structure exists in the rites or in my own mind, I may draw attention to certain independent observations without going into the metaphysics of the question. I want to mention three points made in the paper: (a) the distinction between the after-life and this life, (b) the devaya-yakkuva binary pair, (c) the position of the peretaya in Figure II.

(a) While working on this paper, I came to the conclusion that there was a division of labor between the Buddha and the devaya-yakkuva. I expressed this as the concern with the after-life and this life respectively and noted that the division was reflected in the use of special drums, and also by the taboo on Buddhist priests watching dancing ceremonies, or coming into contact with auspicious ceremonies of this life—i.e., birth, puberty, and marriage. Towards the end of the writing of this paper, I read Gooneratne, who reflects the same opinions, thus, “Buddhism does not hold out worldly advantages or immediate rewards in this life to its votaries . . . Its task is to obtain salvation for the soul . . . a consummation to be attained only in another state of existence . . . Demonism on the other hand deals with the concerns of this life and of this life alone” (1865:5ff.).

(b) Again, I concluded that the yakkuva and the devaya were the two opposed aspects of one category. The point is directly reflected in Gooneratne (1865), who states, for example:

[The devaya cult] like [the yakkuva cult] also refers to the interests of this world; but while the object of the latter is to inflict or cure diseases by the agency of demons, the object of the former is to protect men generally against all manner of evil, and from diseases . . .

(Concerning their similarity, he adds:)

[Neither] Dewo nor Yakseyo are born from the womb of a mother, but suddenly spring into existence full grown . . . Nevertheless the last two classes, viz., Dewo and Yakseyo may have mothers in a peculiar fashion . . . marrying and giving in marriage prevail among them as well as among men . . .

(c) I had found the peretaya, ghosts or spirits of the dead, difficult to place. They were lowly, filthy creatures and could belong with the yakkuva. But they were distinguished by a separate name and did not appear to be so concerned with this life as the yakkuva. I eventually classed them as the category opposite to the Buddhist priests. I have already indicated the close association between the priests and death and I have noted the extreme purity, the sacredness, and the food taboos of the bhikku.

Consider now what Gooneratne says on the subject:

The PRETAS are entirely a different race of beings from all that have yet been mentioned. They are the most helpless and miserable creatures in existence. They live only to suffer. Their only aliment is spittle . . . They can only look at it with burning desire . . . Their skins hang about them in loose folds . . . The Pretayo are not included in Demon workings . . . They are not possessed of power to injure a man . . . [except] by *looking*

with desire at the food he is about to take; but this is a power, which is attributed to . . . men . . . as well as to Pretayo. (He too concludes, finally) The Pretayo . . . are creations of Buddhism, and not mere popular fancy (i.e., like *devayo* and *yakkūva*). (1865:38ff.)

Although not completely explicit, the peretaya category of supernaturals appears to be close to the negative aspects of the priest (the word *bhikku* means beggar) who is supposed to beg his food and who wears a loose robe.

Wirz's (1954) observations on the peretayo also underline the opposition:

Thus, not every individual is turned into a preta or preti after life, but only those who, up to and immediately before their death, fostered all kinds of desires, cravings, or passions, whether it was those who directed all their thoughts to money and earthly goods, those who massed treasures through avarice, those who were always planning the building of houses and palaces . . . (p. 184). (And finally, he says:) . . . a . . . (dane) offered to the bhikshu of a monastery is always a cause to remember the preteō . . . (p. 191).

The psychological implications of the Sinhalese concepts which I have described are beyond the scope of this paper. Obviously, the point that feces, the bad-object *par excellence*, are aggressive and dangerous, and that they are at the root of the pollution complex is frequently met with in psychoanalytic literature. The bad-objects are also part of the self and have good aspects. This close association between the self and polluted but powerful bodily exuviae is also reflected in the sacred relics (hair, nails, bones, teeth, etc.) chosen to represent holy beings in almost all cultures. But these questions, however fundamental, take us into another realm where we cannot wander without expert guidance.²³

APPENDIX I

Versions of Pirit Ceremonies

Pirit 3

The ceremony takes place in a polyandrous household. An infant is ill, and pirit will restore its health. The pirit starts at about 9:30 p.m. and will continue until midnight. The mother of the child is sitting near the doorway of her hut with the infant in her lap. There are no chairs in this poor house and everyone is sitting on mats.

There is no priest, but a group of lay singers take his place. His permission is asked in a formal manner and the priest gives it by reciting certain verses. Those who sing pirit have to be clean; the fact that this is only a ritual cleanliness is evident from the group assembled.

No rule can be made about the relationship of the singers. Some of them are known for their interest in religious matters, and one in particular who lives mostly in the temple is referred to as an *upasaka* (pious man). One of the "fathers" is singing and there are other neighbors and relations. The minimal importance of kinship

²³ The field work on which this essay is based was carried out in Ceylon in 1954-56 and was generously supported by the University of Cambridge and the Wenner-Aren Foundation. I am grateful also to the director and staff of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences for providing the admirable circumstances in which the essay was written.

ties is suggested by the fact that one of the singers is of the washerman caste, (see Yalman, 1960:82–83). Since they all sit on the floor, the problem which the presence of the washerman presents in seating arrangements is solved.

The pirit nula is held by the singers and passes to the woman and her children. There is a water pot (pirit hen) near her with some red flowers in it. This is surprising, for they are usually appropriate offerings to the yakka. The flowers associated with the Buddha are normally white flowers (*sapu*) of the temple trees.

Pirit 4

A bamboo structure (pirit maduva) has been prepared and twelve lay persons, friends and relations of the householder, are singing like priests inside it. The hut is inside an ordinary village dwelling. Just outside the structure, which is also referred to as a *pirit kotuva*, oil lamps (*pahana*) are burning. The tom-tom beaters are seated outside and the washermen who have brought the cloth with which to decorate the structure will return in the morning. The relics (*karanduwa*) have not been brought out this time and only the priests are allowed to handle it. On the table around which the singers are seated, there are water pots, coconut flowers, betel, rice.

A string (pirit nula) is attached to the cloth above the structure and descends to the singers who all hold it. Then it goes around to the wife of the householder, who at the receiving end is holding it with an arecanut flower. The pirit is intended to protect (arakshava) the household and to counteract apele, (*apele dura enta*).

The singers hold the book (pirit pota) in their hands and are divided into two groups. (I am unsure as to whether this choral element involved in the singing represents the contest between the forces of evil [Marea] and the forces of good [Buddha].) The next morning all the singers get together and drink *kanja*, which is some form of milk and rice. They then tie the pirit nula around their wrists or necks and drink the water on the table.

There is another little structure with flowers and a lamp just outside the dwelling. This is known as a *mal palliya* (flower basket) and is of the same category as the *mala bulat tattuva*: an offering to the deities. The householder is unsure as to which particular deity it is intended for and recites the names Vishnu, Kataragama, Saman or “the god of four directions” (*hatara varan deva*). The offering is not a normal part of pirit. The fire is said to be lit to get guidance from the gods.

Pirit 5

A week before a birth is expected, a special pirit called *angulimala pirita* (birth pirit) is held for the pregnant woman. The verses of this pirit are different from the verses that are normally sung. The leda (patient) holds the pirit string. At the end of the ceremony, she has some food taboos imposed on her. She is not allowed to eat any kind of flesh or other dirty things. She may eat betel, which is very clean.* The patient has to avoid heavy fried food which will be difficult to digest.

Pirit 6

The pirit hut has been prepared. There are about nine singers who enter the

* There is a story connected with the betel leaf which describes the way the leaf was brought by a snake. It is thought that the two ends of the leaf contain the vas (poison) of the snake and must therefore be torn off before it is eaten. Here again is the association between extreme purity and vas.

structure at different times. Some are friends and relations, and some are simply the laborers of the owner of the house.

The pirit is being held for an old schoolmaster who owns many fields (Cooray). He has a wound in his hand (*tuwalayaḱ*); it is said that blood is collected in his hand (*le gallanava*) and that he is losing strength (*saraya yanava*).

The sending end of the string comes from the singers and is wrapped around a pot of pirit water. The arecanut flower wrapped in a betel leaf at the end of the string is handed to the patient only after a great deal of singing. The object is being passed back to the singers at intervals. The schoolmaster makes some fuss about the fact that the string has to touch the white cloth (*viyana*) around the structure. The next morning the string will be tied around the wrist of the patient and he will drink the pirit water.

APPENDIX II

Pulutu Pas Vage

(Five Kinds of Burned Things)

Burned or fried objects are part of the more general offerings of *dola* made to *yakkuva*. The rite is also referred to as a *tun mansala arakṣava maturanava*, i.e., lit three street corner protection charm: the charming of protection at the meeting point of three roads which are inhabited by *yakku*.

The ceremony consists simply of the recitation of charms and the offering of five kinds of burned things: *die mas* (water flesh), *goda mas* (land flesh), and three kinds of grains: *abba* (mustard), *vilanda* (fried paddy), and one other grain. There are also red flowers (*ratu mal*) and *le* (blood). The red flowers are specifically intended for the *yakkuva* and stand in contrast to the white flowers usually offered to the Buddha. These five kinds of burned things are put into small receptacles (*goduva*) made from jack fruit leaves (*ḱos ḱola*). The jack tree is one of the category of *ḱiri gaha* (milk tree), milk-exuding trees like the sacred Bo tree which stand for the Buddha. But branches of the jack tree are used in sorcery.

APPENDIX III

Bali 3

The usual *bali* hut has been prepared and three effigies have been made which are similar in their general lines to the effigy in Bali 1. The informants suggest that one of the effigies is the figure of Maha Brahma and that the other one is the figure of Valli Amma. They are uncertain about the personality of the third effigy. Other informants would undoubtedly give different interpretations as to what the effigies stand for. What is certain is that two effigies are male and one is female. It is also noteworthy that the names offered by the informant are names of *devaya*, *yakkuva*. (This is the double aspect of *devaya* and *yakkuva* to which attention has been drawn.) All the effigies are standing upon large cobras. On a ledge in front of the effigies, food offerings (*dola*) have been placed, again as in Bali 1. The *dola* is at the moment covered with plantain leaves. Opposite the effigies, again as in Bali 1,

there is a hut which is covered up in front with a white cloth. The patient is inside the hut. The ceremony is an extremely elaborate one with six tom-tom beaters (*bera kariya*). The patient is rich and has spent more than 200 rupees on the ceremony.

After much singing and dancing by the tom-tom beaters led by the bali adura, the sick person is revealed. He is holding the string (*nula*) which connects him with the three figures of the yakkuva opposite him.

The dola is opened up and a mirror and a basket of food—fried rice, fried cakes (*kavum*), plantains, curries, hair—is in evidence. On the opposite side of the dola in front of the patient there is a *molgaha* (paddy pounder) placed on a plantain leaf in front of the sick man and there are pots of water with flower decorations on top (*kaha pen*: saffron water) on either side of the hut in which the patient is sitting.

As the tom-tom beaters proceed with their dancing and singing, a request is made by one of the schoolmasters to sing the *jayamangala sutra*. This is one of the Buddhist texts and is not normally part of a bali ceremony. The tom-tom beaters do sing it. The impression that as long as the singing and the dancing are continued it does not much matter what is actually sung, provided it does have sacred power, is strengthened.*

In the morning, the patient is made to put his feet on the *molgaha* (pounder). (There is a parallelism here; just as the effigies have their feet on the cobras, so the patient has his feet on the *molgaha*.) A special ayu bowan takes place in which the tom-tom beaters address the patient and sweep away the *vas-dos* from him with arecanut flowers. They take some limes and stick these on the effigies. The patient then throws the cloth upon the bali images. He then throws the end of the string with a lime also upon the image.

There are subsidiary rites. Just before the final phase of the ceremony, all the singing and dancing stops. The two younger boys among the tom-tom beaters give their bells back to the older tom-tom beater. They then worship him and he returns the bells. After this, they worship each other. Then the youngest worships the oldest, and after this, the youngest in turn worships the two elder ones without giving the bells back. These ritual salutations are a recognition of the generational hierarchy among the tom-tom beaters. The asymmetry involved is that of kinship status and is not connected with relative age.

The images will stay in the house for three half days (*tun varuva*) and will then be taken into the jungle. The patient has food taboos placed upon him and will eat from pure dishes (plantain leaves).

APPENDIX IV

Versions of the Gam Maduva (Village Hut) Mangalaya (Ceremony) in the Village of Teripehe

(Accounts of Informants)

The leading people in the village will discuss the question of having a gam

* See Gooneratne (1865:52), “. . . much of what now seems . . . gibberish, may at one time have been an intelligible language.”

maduva. If there have been many deaths or misfortunes in the village, it is time to make an offering to the deities. Some people will make the rounds of all the houses in the village to collect contributions in paddy or money. A temporary hut (maduva) will be built for the seven kapuralas and the six or seven tom-tom beaters who are necessary for the occasion. The women cannot take part in the ceremonies but may only watch them. The washermen will provide the white cloth, and the men of the high caste will do all the cooking for the day. They will beat the paddy and prepare the food, and the kapurala will make the first offering of the food to the god.

The blacksmiths have to go to the kovil in Ekassa. There are some weapons (ayuda) which belong to the deities in the shrine. These weapons will be brought back to Teripehe with the procession. The tom-tom beaters will lead the procession and the weapons will be carried under a cloth provided by the washermen. The potters do not take part in this procession; but the cooking has to be done in new pots, and these are offered by the potter caste.

There are thirteen deities in Teripehe and the kapurala will dance to them one by one. They may dance about an hour for each god. At the very end of the ceremony there is a *kiri amma* dance. A man dresses up as a grandmother, wearing a sari, with a baby in his hands and becomes possessed.

The last act is called *at bandima* (literally "the tying of elephants"). Ten people dress up as elephants with a piece of cloth hanging in front of them like the trunk of the animal, and another ten persons hold them from behind. At the beginning of the rite, the elephants will be in the front and the tom-tom beaters behind. The elephants will move up and down and dance. There will be some other people who will hold a crossed pair of paddy pounders in front of the elephants like a gate. The elephants will push on the gateway, saying, "We want to go to the god." The persons holding the paddy pounders will object and will demand some plantains. The elephants will return again and again, saying, "Can we go to the god?" Eventually they will hoot and dance and the tom-tom beaters will play the drums, and the elephants, thinking that the god has done this, will lose consciousness and fall down. They will be shouting, "Hool!" Then the people will carry them into the hut. The elephants will be shivering (*veulanava*). A lot of food (kavum) and plantains remain. These will be given to the kapuralas, the washermen, the blacksmiths and the tom-tom beaters. If anything remains, this will go to the visitors and it will be said, "Hereafter, god, look upon us." The elephants are also a god referred to as *gana deyyo* (i.e., Ganesha).

The Account of the Rite from a Washerman

The ceremony commences with the planting of a large *kiri gaha* (milk-exuding tree) pole (*kanuva*). The act is referred to as *kap hitavima*. Drums will be played, songs will be sung, and a kapurala and some people will be present. This pole is planted near the devale.

Processions will visit the houses of the village collecting rice and money and a date will be fixed for the gam maduva. The planting of the tree is like the foundation stone of a house (*mul gala*, i.e., root stone).

There will be a procession from the village where the paddy pounder (molgaha), the mortar (*van gediya*) and the paddy will be brought in procession under a white cloth with the singing of *kavi* songs and the beating of drums. Only the men will get

together and prepare the food. They will cook some special rice called *de bata?* (god rice?). This food is cooked for the washermen, the tom-tom beaters, the kapurala and the other persons with specific duties (*atara kariya*). It is like a dhana to the gods. The food will be eaten then and there. After this, the tom-tom beaters and most of the villagers will go in procession to bring the weapons from Ekassa kovil.

The washermen will be busy in the village making *haluva*. Haluva are made of starched cloth in the shape of a fan, and are something like a deity. Since fourteen will come, fourteen haluva are needed. Furthermore, each deity needs different colors. Thus, (a) Kiritibandara needs a white haluva; (b) Kohombandara, red; (c) Kalukumara, black; (d) Nile bedde deviyo, blue; (e) Devatabandara, again, white, etc. The *hiri amma deviyo* needs two small haluva of white. All sorts of other deities will come too.

In the meantime, a box is made in Ekassa, and with the singing of sacred texts, all the weapons are put into that box and covered with a white cloth. Then the procession with the tom-tom beaters in the front and the weapons under the white cloth will start toward Teripehe. The blacksmiths will cleanse the weapons with limes and saffron at one of the mountain streams.

The haluva are prepared in a private place. The weapons (*deva ayuda*) are brought to the hut. The haluva will be brought in the same way with singing and dancing to the hut where the weapons have been placed. Both the weapons and the haluva are now outside the *gam maduva* (village hut) on a *masa* (altar or table).

The *atara kariyo* will cook fourteen pots of rice, and they will prepare curries. They will also prepare plantains and *kavum* (fried cakes). At night the washermen, the kapuralas, and the tom-tom beaters will be given food.

The *gam maduva* ritual starts at ten o'clock at night. Then two weapons for each deity will be taken inside the *maduva*. They will be placed on a *masa* (altar). The singing and dancing will last about an hour. The *kavis* that are sung are known as *nyaknya kirima* (begging). The haluva are also taken into the hut one by one.

Then the food which is cooked is brought in procession to the same hut. All this must be done by men because women cannot touch these things. The food is placed on small table-like objects made of sticks and plantain trunks, called *karakala* (*pideniye*). There will be fourteen of these, one for each deity, and they will be arranged around the altar on which the weapons and the haluva have been placed. The small tables with food will have betel and heaped rice and curries on them.

Then the kapurala will recite the names of the gods one by one (*kannalav kirima*) and after this, the food will be placed in a corner. It is only after this that the *magul bere* (tom-tom beating) and the dancing will commence.

The kapurala will be singing the births and deaths of these deities. The good deeds of these gods will be recited, and if the ritual is well carried out, the fields will be more fertile and there will be not trouble with animals. The village will be lucky again.

Another Version of the Rite from Appuhami Kapurala

The necessary paddy is collected seven days before the intended ceremony. The kapurala will go from house to house in the village with the conch (*hak gediya*) and request food from the people. All the offerings will be placed in a specially prepared hut (*maduva*). Seven days after this initial collection of food, *kap hitavima* takes

place (see Version 2). This starts the ritual. The tree is tall and has an arecanut flower on the top of it. The next day the hut is built around this tree.

Then the mortar and pestle are brought by men to the site of the ritual under white cloth. Women who have stopped menstruation may help the men to prepare the paddy and the food. The kapurala will start the initial stroke of beating the paddy and then the men will go on. The women are not allowed to take part in this stage of the proceedings. Three days before the ritual, all this is prepared and the kapurala will send letters to other kapurala, requesting them to attend the celebrations. When they arrive, they will be sent to houses to eat and the next day the celebrations will take place.

The cooking is a very special act which is carried out only by some people. These persons will bathe, will be dressed in white, they will close up their mouths with clean cloths and tie them up before touching the food. This preparation of the food is referred to as *adukka uyanava*. Kavum (oil cakes), *kiribat* (milk rice), plantains, and curries will be prepared.

Next the procession will go to the devale with tom-toms to bring the weapons of the deities. The kapurala in the village are in charge of the weapons. They will bring them and put them aside, but will not take them into the huts right away. They will make a masa (altar) on which the food will be placed. Then the kapurala will sing a *yatika* (see below) with the tom-tom beaters playing their drums inside the hut. At the end of the *yatika* the food is brought out and the people are allowed to eat. Then the kapuralas will dress up and get ready. Then there will be a *yatika* to the arecanut flowers. After this, each kapurala will take a little of the flowers into his hands.

The kapurala will recite the god's verses and dance. The dance is referred to as *pela paliya* (the parade of weapons—also referred to as *ayuda*, or *kanu mangalaya*: weapon or staff ceremony). The weapons will have been cleaned by the blacksmiths with limes and saffron.

There will be dancing to the following deities: Nila bedde deva; Kohomba deva; Kiritibandara deva; Menikbandara; Kumarabandara; Abinnana; Alut (new) deva; Kadavara deva; Davatavabandara; Pallya bandara; Alut nuwara bandara (Alut nuwara: A sacred place in the eastern jungles, also referred to as *Mayangene*); Velassa deva. (It appears from the recitation that the number and names of the deities are somewhat immaterial. Kapurala Appuhami had quite a difficult time filling in the names for the twelve deities.) There are seven *kiri ammas* who are the sisters of the gods. They are also referred to as *ammala hatdena* (the seven mothers). These are the mothers who have given milk, and the intention of the ritual is to ask pardon of those who have given milk for any “mistakes” (*varada*).

After the *ayuda paliya*, there is a *haluva paliya*. All the *haluva* will be taken into the hut singly. The only explanation of the *haluva* is that they belong to the gods (*deviange aiti*).

Appuhami referred to another god (Dummala paliya?—incense) as the chief deity. He is also referred to as Palle bedde deva. The kapurala dances for half an hour and tells of his visions (*pehena*). He tells of things which have passed and are to come, and he reads people's minds.

No incense is used for the other deities. For the first dance, there is incense but no weapons. In the next dance, the kapurala dances with his staff (*pol kotuwa*:

coconut staff) which is also said to belong to the gods. After this dance, the weapons are handled one by one. Appuhami's account of the kiri amma dance follows version 2 (above).

Appuhami kapurala's account of elephant tying is similar to the earlier versions. Each kapurala holds the elephants from the sides and dances with them. The elephants will eventually become possessed (*mayan*) and will be difficult to manage. Two men will hold the paddy pounders crosswise to form a boundary (*ḡadavata*) which the elephants cannot pass. These two men will ask the elephants for food. "If you want to go to the deity, you must give kavum, plantains, etc." just to pass the time. Then, as soon as the two men take away the boundary which prevents the elephants from approaching the deity, the elephants will go mad (*pissu*). They will dance violently and fall on the ground. They will be like dead bodies. Then they will be taken into the maduva and when the kapurala sprinkle some saffron water upon them, they will revive (See Yalman, 1964).

This account of the gam maduva by Appuhami is similar to the maleliya ceremony described in the text. I recall that when the kapurala was preparing the ceremony of maleliya, he did point out that it was going to be "just like" the gam maduva. In fact the maleliya was a much simpler ceremony than the one described here which leads me to believe that some of the ritual acts are dispensable.

The Mangalaya Davasa (Ceremonial Day) in the Village of Vilava in the Maho District

(Here is an account of a ceremony from an entirely different part of Ceylon which follows in its outlines the gam maduva of Teripehe.)

A small hut is built outside the local devale, called *multen ge*, i.e., "food for the deities" house. The hut is decorated with white cloths, and new clothes are given to the kapurala. The castes involved in this ceremony are, again, the washermen, the tom-tom beaters, the potters and the blacksmiths (who are expected to cleanse the weapons of the deities).

Before the ceremony takes place, the devale is ritually purified. After the preparation of the hut, new oil is prepared and food is brought by procession, by the various castes. The food is referred to as *deva tovil pasdena*, i.e., five offerings to the deities: rice, plantains, the plantain flower, curries, and coconuts. New pots are used.

Before the food offering is made, the kapurala cleanses the weapons. He takes the ayuda one by one and dances with them. The ayuda in question are a trident, a sword, and arrows, symbols which are normally used. For the goddess Pattini, however, there is a *haluva* which is a round object looking like a fan (see above). The kapurala washes Pattini with "sandalwood milkwater" (*handum kiripen*).

In this village the kapurala becomes possessed for five deities. They are listed as follows: Gam devatava, Ayya nayaka deva, Kadavara deva, Kambili deva, and Gama bahirava. The third and the fourth deities are known as elder brother, younger brother, or as cross-cousins.

The ritual is described as follows. At the devale the offering is made. After this there is some recitation (*yatika kirima*) by the kapuralas. They then get possessed and start telling the future. The ceremony starts during the day and ends in the middle of the night. It is clearly patterned on the same lines as the gam maduva in Teripehe.

My informants say that during the ceremonies women may be brought into the devale; if there are yakkuva in them they will come out. The women will be possessed and will hoot and may lose consciousness. After the yakkuva come out, the kapurala will chase them away.

APPENDIX V

Offerings to the Devaya

The boiling of milk (*kiri uturanava*): The ceremony is a simple adukku. It takes place near a devale or any selected pure spot in the village. The people may first come and promise to give the deities some food. When their promises come true, they will prepare seven *mutti* (small pots) of food to the village deity, gam deva. Rice and coconut milk (*pol kiri*) are brought from the various homes and are cooked on the spot. An important part of the ceremony is that the milk must boil over. The mixture is then eaten by the people. (A ceremony of this kind, but much more elaborate, takes place in the annual rituals of the Jaffna Tamils. Huge cauldrons of milk and rice are boiled over in the midst of great crowds of spectators.)

The offering of adukku, or a prayer (*yatika*): A man from Teripehe has lost his buffaloes and does not know where to find them. He has come to request Appuhami kapurala to ask the gods where the animals have disappeared to.

Appuhami has ordered the hut in which the ceremony is to take place to be cleansed with cow dung earlier in the day as a preparation for this event. Saffron water was sprinkled on the cow dung to make it doubly pure. A small altar (*masa*) has been prepared and the food is placed on it. Appuhami wears his special kapurala clothes.

The ceremony proceeds as follows. The kapurala begins to recite the epics concerning the birth and adventures of the deity. He takes a small, shallow basket in his hand which contains some food. After a while, his hand begins to tremble. He goes on speaking and suddenly begins to laugh and grunt to himself. The possession takes hold of him very gradually.

The possession lasts about half an hour. Appuhami comes out of it and walks toward me, smiling. It appears that the god who came was Kohomba deviyo.

References Cited

- Berndt, Ronald M.
1951 *Kunapipi: A Study of an Australian Aboriginal Religious Cult*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Callaway, John (ed.)
1829 *Yakkun Nattanavū: A Cingalese Poem Descriptive of the Ceylon System of Demonology to which is appended the Practice of a Capua or Devil Priest as described by a Buddhist*. London: Printed for the Oriental Translation Fund by A. J. Valpy.
- Cartman, James (Rev.)
1957 *Hinduism in Ceylon*. Colombo: M. D. Gunasena and Co. Ltd.
- Conklin, Harold C.
1962 Lexicographical treatment of folk taxonomies. In: Supplement to International Journal of American Linguistics, 28, ed. by Fred W. Householder and Sol Saporta.

- Deraniyagala, P. E. P.
1936 Some blood games of the Sinhalese. *Man*: 36:46-47.
- Dixon, Sir J. F.
1884 Notes illustrative of Buddhism as the daily religion of the Buddhists of Ceylon and some accounts of their ceremonies before and after death. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 8:297-330.
- Disāva of Vellase
1817 An account of the Kandy Perahera. *Ceylon Government Gazette*, Sept. 13, 1817.
- Dumont, Louis
1957 Une sous-caste de l'Inde du sud: organization sociale et religion des Pramalai-Kallar. Collection: *Le Monde d'Outre-mer, passe et present*, 1 serie Etudes, 1. La Haye: Mouton & Co.
- Fortes, Meyer
1945 *The Dynamics of Clanship Among the Tallensi*. London: Oxford University Press.
1959 *Oedipus and Job in West African Religion*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Gooneratne, Dandris de Silva
1865 On demonology and witchcraft in Ceylon. *Journal of the (Ceylon Branch) Royal Asiatic Society*, 4:1-117.
- Gough, E. Kathleen
1955 Female initiation rites on the Malabar coast. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 85:45-80.
1959 Cults of the dead among the Nāyars. In: *Traditional India: Structure and Change*, ed. by Milton B. Singer. Philadelphia: Publications of the American Folklore Society, Bibliographical Series, 10:240-272.
1960 Caste in a Tanjore village. In: *Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan*. Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology No. 2, pp. 11-61. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Grünwedel, Albert
1893 Singhalesische Masken. *International Archives for Ethnography*, 7:71-130.
- Gunasekera, U. A.
1953 *Puna Maduva* or the Scapegoat Idea in Ceylon. *Spolia Zeylanica*, 27:63-75.
- Hocart, A. M.
1931 The Temple of the Tooth in Kandy. *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon*, 4. London: Luzac and Co.
- Jakobson, Roman
1961 Linguistics and communication theory. In: *The Structure of Language and its Mathematical Aspects*. American Mathematical Society: Proceedings of Symposia in Applied Mathematics, 12:245-252.
- Leach, E. R.
1958 Magical hair. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 88:147-163.
1960 The Sinhalese of the dry zone of northern Ceylon. In: *Social Structure in Southeast Asia*, pp. 116-126, ed. by George Peter Murdock. Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, No. 29.
1961a Lévi-Strauss in the Garden of Eden: an examination of some recent developments in the analysis of myth. *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 23:386-396.
1961b *Pul Eliya, a Village in Ceylon: a Study of Land Tenure and Kinship*. Cambridge: University Press.

- 1962 Pulleyar and the Lord Buddha: an aspect of religious syncretism in Ceylon. *Psychoanalysis and the Psychoanalytical Review*, 49:81-102.
- n.d. A linguistic analysis of rural Sinhalese kinship terminology (Unpublished MS).
- Le Mesurier, C. J. R.
1884 *An Keliya* (a Sinhalese national game). *Journal of the (Ceylon Branch), Royal Asiatic Society*, 8:368-394.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude
1955 The structural study of myth. *Journal of American Folklore*, 68:428-444.
1956 *Structure et dialectique*. In: *For Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday, 11 October, 1956*, comp. by Morris Halle et al. The Hague: Mouton, pp. 289-294.
- Meerworth-Levina, L.
1915 The Hindu goddess Pattini in the Buddhist popular beliefs of Ceylon. *Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register*, 1:29-37.
- Métraux, Alfred
1959 *Voodoo in Haiti*. Translated by Hugo Charteris. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nadel, S. F.
1946 A Study of shamanism in the Nuba Mountains. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 76:25-37.
1954 *Nupe Religion*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Nell, Louis
1881-82 A Huniyam Image. *Journal of the (Ceylon Branch) Royal Asiatic Society*, 7.
- Pertold, O.
1922 The Pilli charm: a study of Sinhalese magic. *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, 12:594-609.
1925 *Inquiries into the Popular Religions of Ceylon, Part I: Singalese Amulats Talismans and Spells*. Prague: Publication of the Philosophic Faculty of Charles University.
1929 The conception of the soul in the Sinhalese demon-worship. *Archiv Orientalni*, 1:316-322.
1930 The ceremonial dances of the Sinhalese: an inquiry into the Sinhalese folk-religion. *Archiv Orientalni*, 2:108-137, 201-254, 385-424.
- Pieris, Ralph
1956 *Sinhalese Social Organization: the Kandyan Period*. Colombo: Ceylon University Press Board.
- Propp, Vladimir
1958 The morphology of the folk tale. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 24:1-134. Publication 10 of the Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore and Linguistics.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. B.
1933 *The Andaman Islanders: A Study in Social Anthropology*. New York: Macmillan.
1952 *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. London: Cohen and West Ltd.
- Raghavan, M. D.
1951 The Pattini cult as a socio-religious institution. *Spolia Zeylanica*, 26:251-261. (Bulletin of the National Museums of Ceylon.)
- Ryan, Bryce
1953 *Caste in Modern Ceylon: the Sinhalese System in Transition*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

- 1958 In collaboration with L. D. Jayasena and D. C. R. Wickremesinghe. *Sinhalese Village*. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press.
- Sarathachandra, E. R.
1953 *The Sinhalese Folk Play and the Modern Stage*. Colombo: Ceylon University Press Board.
- Sebeok, Thomas A.
1960 Decoding a text: levels and aspects in a Cheremis Sonnet. In: *Style and Language*, pp. 221–235, ed. by Thomas A. Sebeok. The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley and Sons.
- Srinivas, M. N.
1952 *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Tambiah, S. J.
1958 The structure of kinship and its relationship to land possession and residence in Pata Dumbara, Central Ceylon. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 88:21–44.
- Warner, W. Lloyd
1958 *A Black Civilization: A Social Study of an Australian Tribe* (rev. edition). New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Wirz, Paul
1940 Die kultische Bedeutung der Kokonuss bei den Singhalesen. *Verhandlungen der Naturforschenden Gesellschaft*, 51.
1954 *Exorcism and the Art of Healing in Ceylon*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Yalman, Nur
1960 The flexibility of caste principles in a Kandyan community. In: *Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan*, pp. 78–112, ed. by E. R. Leach. *Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology*, No. 2, London: Cambridge University Press.
1962a The ascetic Buddhist monks of Ceylon. *Ethnology*, 1:315–328.
1962b Sinhalese-Tamil intermarriage on the east coast of Ceylon. *Sociologus*, 12:36–54.
1962c The structure of the Sinhalese kindred: a re-examination of the Dravidian terminology. *American Anthropologist*, 64:548–575.
1963 On the purity and sexuality of women in the castes of Malabar and Ceylon (Curl Prize Essay). *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 93:25–58.
1964 Dual Organization in Central Ceylon?—or the goddess on the Tree-top (forthcoming).