

# MARRIAGE AMONGST THE CASTES & TRIBES OF SOUTHERN INDIA



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## PREFACE.

The scheme for a systematic and detailed ethnographic survey of the whole of India received the formal sanction of the Government of India in 1901.

For information relating to the tribes and castes of Cochin and Travancore, I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to Messrs. L. K. Anantha Krishna Aiyer and N. Subramani Aiyer, the Superintendents of Ethnography for their respective States.

## INTRODUCTION

THE vast tract of country, over which my investing investigations in connection with the ethnographic survey of South India have extended, is commonly known as the Madras Presidency, and officially as the Presidency of Fort St. George and its Dependencies. Included therein were the small feudatory States of Pudukottai, Banganapalle, and Sandur, and the larger Native States of Travancore and Cochin. The area of the British territory and Feudatory States, as returned at the census, 1901, was 143,221 square miles, and the population 38,623,066.

Briefly, the task which was set me in 1901 was to record the 'manners and customs' and physical characters of more than 300 castes and tribes, representing more than 40,000,000 individuals, and spread over an area exceeding 1 50,000 square miles. As, however, nearly all the castes and tribes which inhabit the Mysore State are common to it and the Madras Presidency, I have given here and there some information relating thereto.

### **Caste Mobility**

The Matti Brahmins were formerly considered low by the Shivallis, and were not allowed to sit in the same line with the Shivallis at meal time. They were only permitted to sit in a cross line, separated from the Shivallis, though in the same room. This was because the Matti Brahmins were supposed to be *Mogers* (fishing caste) raised to Brahminism by one Vathiraja Swami, a Sanyasi. Having become Brahmins, they could not carry on their hereditary occupation, and, to enable them to earn a livelihood, the Sanyasi gave them some brinjal (*Solanum Melongend*) seeds, and advised them to cultivate the plant. From this fact, the variety of brinjal, which is cultivated at Matti, is called *Vathiraja gulla*. At the present day, the Matti Brahmins are on a par with the Shivalli Brahmins, and have become disciples of the Sodhe mutt (religious institution) at Udipi.

Sir Alfred Lyall somewhere refers to the gradual Brahminising of the aboriginal non-Aryan, or casteless tribes. He writes:—

"They pass into Brahminists by a natural upward transition, which leads them to adopt the religion of the castes immediately above them in the social scale of the composite population, among which they settle down; and we may reasonably guess that this process has been working for centuries."

Popular traditions allude to wholesale conversions of non-Brahmins into Brahmins. According to such traditions, Rajas used to feed very large numbers of Brahmins (a 100,000 Brahmins) in expiation of some sin, or to gain religious merit. To make up this large number, non-Brahmins are said to have been made Brahmins at the bidding of the Rajas. Here and there are found a few sections of Brahmins, whom the more orthodox Brahmins do not recognise as such, though the ordinary members of the community regard them as an inferior class of Brahmins.

As an instance may be cited the *Marakas* of the Mysore Province. Though it is difficult to disprove the claim put forward by these people, some demur to their being regarded as Brahmins. Between a Brahmin of high culture, with fair complexion, and long, narrow nose on the one hand, and a less highly civilised Brahmin with dark skin and short broad nose on the other, there is a vast difference, which can only be reasonably explained on the assumption of racial admixture; and it is no insult to the higher members of the Brahmin community to trace, in their more lowly brethren, the result of crossing with a darkskinned, and broad-nosed race of short stature. Whether the jungle tribes are, as I believe, the microscopic remnant of a pre-Dravidian people, or, as some hold, of Dravidians driven by a conquering race to the seclusion of the jungles, it is to the lasting influence of some such broad-nosed ancestor that the high nasal index of many of the inhabitants of Southern India must, it seems to me, be attributed.



TALIS (TOKEN OF MARRIAGE) IN USE IN SOUTH INDIA.

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## MARRIAGE AMONG THE NON-BRAHMIN CASTES AND TRIBES OF SOUTHERN INDIA

### 1. Agamudaiyan.

The Agamudaiyans, a cultivating caste found in all the Tamil districts. In Chingleput, North Arcot, Salem, Coimbatore and Trichinopoly. They are closely allied to the Vellalas

Of the three castes, Kallan, Maravan and Agamudaiyan, the last are said to have alone been greatly influenced by contact with Brahminism. They engage Brahmin priests, and perform their birth, marriage, and death ceremonies like the Vellalas.

The ordinary title of the Agamudaiyans is *Servaikkaran*, but many of them call themselves, like the Vellalas, *Pillai*. Other titles, are *Adhigari* and *Mudaliar*.

At the census, 1891, the following were returned as the more important sub-divisions of the Agamudaiyans: — Aivali Nāttān, Kottaipattu, Malainādu, Nattumangalam, Rajaboja, Rajakulam, Rajavasal, Kalian, Maravan, Tuluva (cf. Tuluva Vellala) and *Servaikkaran*.

#### Wedding ceremonies.

The marriage ceremonial, as carried out among the poorer Agamudaiyans, is very simple.

1. The sister of the bridegroom proceeds to the home of the bride on an auspicious day, followed by a few ladies carrying a sari, a few jewels, flowers, etc.
2. The bride is seated close to a wall, facing east. She is dressed up in the sari which has been brought, and seated on a plank.
3. Betel leaves, areca nuts, and flowers are presented to her by the bridegroom's sister, and she puts them in her lap.
4. A turmeric-dyed string or garland is then placed round the bride's neck by the bridegroom's sister, while the conch shell is blown.
5. On the same day the bride is conducted to the home of the bridegroom, and a feast is held.

The more prosperous Agamudaiyans celebrate their marriages according to the Puranic type, which is the form in vogue amongst most of the Tamil castes, with variations.

The betrothal ceremony is an important event.

1. As soon as the people have assembled, the bridegroom's party place in their midst the *pariyam* cloth and jewels. Some responsible person inspects them, and, on his pronouncing that they are correct, permission is given to draw up the *lagna patrika* (letter of invitation, containing the date of marriage, etc.).
2. *Vigneswara* (Ganesa) is then worshipped, with the *lagna patrika* in front of him. This is followed by the announcement of the forthcoming marriage by the *purohit* (priest), and the settlement of the amount of the *pariyam* (bride's money).

For the marriage celebration, a *pandal* (booth) is erected, and a dais, constructed of clay and earth, is set up inside it.

1. The contracting couple have to go through the *nalangu* ceremony separately or together. This consists in having their bodies smeared with turmeric paste and sesame oil.
2. On the wedding day, the bridegroom, after a clean shave, proceeds to the house of the bride.

3. The finger and toenails of the bride are cut.
4. The pair offer *pongal* (boiled rice) to the family deity and their ancestors.
5. A square space is cleared in the centre of the dais for the sacred fire (*homam*).
6. A many-branched lamp, representing the thousand-eyed Indra, is placed to the east of the square.
7. The purohit, who is regarded as equivalent to Yama (Dharma-rāja), and a pot with a lamp on it representing Agni devata, occupy the south-east corner. Women representing Niruti (a devata) are posted in the southwest corner. The direction of Varuna (the god of water) being west, the bridegroom occupies this position. The best man, who represents *Vāyu* (the god of wind) is placed in the north-west corner. As the position of Kubera (the god of wealth) is the north, a person, with a bag full of money, is seated on that side.
8. A grinding-stone and roller, representing Siva and Sakthi, are placed in the north-east corner, and, at their side, pots containing nine kinds of seedlings, are set.
9. Seven pots are arranged in a row between the grinding-stone and the branched lamp.
10. Some married women bring water from seven streams or seven different places, and pour it into a pot in front of the lamp. The milk-post (*pal kambam*) is set up between the lamp and the row of pots. This post is usually made of twigs of *Ficus religiosa*, tied together and representing Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Sometimes, however, twigs of *Odina Wodier*, and green bamboo sticks, are substituted.
11. The sacred fire is kindled, and the bridegroom goes through the *upanayana* (thread investiture) and other ceremonies.
12. He then goes away from the house in procession (*paradesa pravesam*), and is met by the bride's father, who brings him back to the pandal.
13. The bride's father and mother then wash his feet, and rings are put on his toes (*kalkattu*, or tying the leg).
14. The purohit then ties a protective thread (*kankanam*), on the the bridegroom's right wrist. A thread is also tied on the left wrist of the bride. The pair being seated in front of the sacred fire, a ceremony called *Nandi-śrāddham* (memorial service to ancestors) is performed, and new clothes are given to the pair.
15. The next item is the tying of the tali (marriage badge). The tali is usually tied on a turmeric-dyed thread, placed on a coconut, and taken round to be blessed by all present. Then the purohit gives the tali to the bridegroom, and he ties it on the bride's neck amidst silence, except for the music played by the barber or *Melakkaran* musicians. While the tali is being tied, the bridegroom's sister stands behind the bride, holding a lamp in her hand. The bridegroom ties one knot, and his sister ties two knots.
16. After the tali-tying, small ornaments of gold or silver, called *pattam*, are tied on the foreheads of the pair, and presents of money and cloths are made to them by their relations and friends.
17. They then walk seven times round the pandal, and, at the end of the seventh round, they stand close to the grinding-stone, on which the bridegroom places the bride's left foot.
18. They take their seats on the dais, and the bridegroom, taking some puffed rice (*pori*) from the bride's brother, puts it in the sacred fire three times.
19. Garlands of flowers are given to the bride and bridegroom, who put them on, and exchange them three or five times.
20. This is followed by the waving of *hārati* (coloured water), and circumambulation of the pandal by the pair, along with showing the *ashta-mangalam* or eight auspicious

things, viz., the bridesmaid, best man, lamp, vessel filled with water, mirror, ankusam (elephant goad), white chamara (yak's tail fly-whisk), flag and drum.

21. Generally the pair go three times round the pandal, and, during the first turn, a coconut is broken near the grinding-stone, and the bride is told that it is Siva, and the roller Sakti, the two combined being emblematical of *Ardanarisvara*, a bisexual representation of Siva and Parvati.
22. During the second round, the story of Arundati is repeated to the bride. Arundati was the wife of the Rishi Vasishta, and is looked up to as a model of conjugal fidelity. The morning star is supposed to be Arundati, and the purohit generally points it out to the bridal pair at the close of the ceremonial, which terminates with three homams.

The wedding may be concluded in a single day, or last for two or three days.

## **2. Ambalavāsi.**

While according to one view they are fallen Brahmins, others, such as the writer of the *Keralolpatti*, would characterize them as advanced Sudras. The castes recognised as included in the generic name of Ambalavasi are: — Nambiyassan, Pushpakan, Puppalli, Chakkiyar, Brahmini or Daivampati, Adikal, Nambidi, Pilappalli, Nambiyar, Pisharati, Variyar. Tiyattunni. Kurukkal, Nattupattan, Poduval.

### **Wedding ceremonies.**

In the matter of *tali-kettu* (tali-tying) marriage, and marriage by union in *sambandham* (alliance), they follow customs similar to those of Nayars. Their females unite themselves in *sambandham* with their own caste males, or with Brahmins or Kshatriyas. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, or Nambudiris cannot take water from them.

So far as the employment of Brahmin as priests, and the period of birth and death pollution are concerned, there are slight differences.

The threaded classes have Gayatri mantra. The purificatory ceremony after birth or death pollution is performed by Nambudiris, but at all funeral ceremonies, such as piṇḍa, śrāddha, etc., their own caste men officiate as priests.

The Nambudiris can take meals cooked by a Brahmin in the house of any of the Ambalavasis except Marars. In fact, if the Nambudiris have the right of purification, they do not then impose any restrictions in regard to this.

All Ambalavasis are strict vegetarians at public feasts.

## **3. Ambattan.**

The Ambattans are the Tamil barbers, or barber-surgeons. As a community the Ambattans are divided into Saivites and Vaishnavites. Members of the latter sect, who have been branded by their Brahmin guru with the conch and chakram, abstain from animal food, and intoxicating drinks. Intermarriage between the two sections is allowed, and commonly practised.

### **Marriages**

It is an interesting fact that, though the Ambattans are one of Manu's low castes, they are one of the most Brahminised of all. Nothing, perhaps, shows this so well as their marriage ceremonies, throughout which a Brahmin officiates.

1. On the first two days, homam is done.
2. On the third day, the *tali* (mangala sutra) is placed in a circular silver or brass *thattu* (dish), and touched with the forefinger of the right hand first by the presiding Brahmin, followed by other Brahmins, men of superior castes, and the caste-men headed by the *Perithanakkaran* or head-man.
3. It is then, amid music, tied to the bride's neck before the sacred fire. During this ceremony no widows may be present.
4. The relations of the bride and bridegroom scatter rice on the floor in front of the bridal pair, after the Brahmin priest and head-man. This rice, which is called *sesham* (remainder), is strictly the perquisite of the local washerman. But it is generally purchased by the headman of the family, in which the marriage is taking place, and handed over, not to the washerman, but to the *Perithanakkaran*.
5. The Brahmin receives as his fee money and a pair of silk-bordered cloths; and, till the latter are given to him, he usually refuses to pronounce the necessary mantras (prayers).
6. During the fourth and fifth days, homam is offered, and *shadangu*, or merry-making between the bride and bridegroom before the assembled spectators, takes place, during which the bride sings songs, in which she has been coached from infancy.
7. On the fifth day the removal of the *kankanam*, or protective threads which have been tied round the wrists of the bride and bridegroom, is performed, after the priest's account has been settled.
8. Among the Konga Vellalas of the Salem district, it is the Ambattan who officiates at the marriage rites, and ties the *tali*, after formally proclaiming to those present that he is about to do so.
9. Brahmins are invited to the wedding, and are treated with due respect, and presented with money, rice, and betel.

### **Ambattans of Travancore.**

The barbers of Travancore are called by various designations, those in Central and South Travancore preferring to be known by the name of *Kshaurakan* or *Kshaurakkaran*, a corruption of the Sanskrit *kshuraka*, while Ambattan seems to find general favour in the south. A curious name given to the caste throughout Travancore is *Pranopakari*, or one who helps the souls, indicating their priestly functions in the ceremonials of various castes. The members of those families from which kings and noblemen have at any time selected their barbers are called *Vilakkittalavan*, or more properly *Vilakkuttalayan*, meaning literally those who shave heads. In North Travancore many families are in possession of royal edicts conferring upon them the title of *Panikkar*, and along with it the headmanship of the barber families of the village in which they reside. Others have the title of *Vaidyan* or doctor, from the secondary occupation of the caste.

Endless endogamous clans occur among the barbers, and, at Trivandrum, there are said to be four varieties called Chala Vazhi, Pandi Vazhi, Attungal Vazhi, and Peruntanni Vazhi. But it is possible to divide all the Kshaurakans of Travancore into three classes, viz.,

- (1) Malayalam-speaking Ambattans, who follow the *makkathayam* law of inheritance;
- (2) Malayalam speaking Ambattans who follow the *marumakkathayam* law of inheritance;
- (3) Tamil-speaking barbers, who have in many localities adopted Malayalam as their mother-tongue, and indicate their recent conversion in this direction by preserving unchanged the dress and ornaments of their womenkind.

#### 4. Badaga.

Though the primary occupation of the Badagas is agriculture, there are among their community, schoolmasters, clerks, public works contractors, bricklayers, painters, carpenters, sawyers, tailors, gardeners, forest guards, barbers, washermen, and scavengers. Many work on tea and coffee estates, and gangs of Badagas can always be seen breaking stones on, and repairing the hill roads.

Writing concerning marriage among the Badagas, Harkness states that:—

"it is said to be common for one who is in want of labourers to promise his daughter in marriage to the son or other relative of a neighbour not in circumstances so flourishing as himself. And, these engagements being entered into, the intended bridegroom serves the father of his betrothed as one of his own family till the girl comes of age, when the marriage is consummated, and he becomes a partner in the general property of the family of his father-in-law."

A man may marry a girl belonging to the same village as himself, if he and she are not members of the same exogamous clan. In most cases, however, all the inhabitants of a village are of the same clan, and a man has to take as his wife a girl from a village other than his own.

#### Wedding ceremonies.

Marriage is preceded by a simple form of courtship, but the consent of the parents to the union is necessary. A girl does not suffer in reputation if she is rejected by a number of suitors, before she finally settles down. Except among the Udayas, the marriage ceremony is of a very simple nature.

1. A day or two before that fixed for taking the girl to the house of her husband-elect, the latter proceeds to her village, accompanied by his brothers, who, as a token of respect, touch the feet of all the Badagas who are assembled.
2. The bride is taken to the house of the bridegroom, accompanied by the Kota band. Arrived there, she stands at the entrance, and her mother-in-law or sister-in-law brings water in a vessel, and pours it into her hands thrice. Each time she lets the water fall over her feet.
3. The mother-in-law then ties round her neck a string of beads (*male mani*) and leads her to the outer room (*edumane*), where cooked *samai* (*Panicum miliare*) and milk is given to her. This she pretends to eat, and the bridegroom's sister gives her water to wash her hands with.
4. The bride and two married women or virgins (preferably the bridegroom's sisters) go to a stream in procession, accompanied by the Kota musicians, and bring therefrom water for cooking purposes in decorated new pots.
5. The bride then salutes all her new relations, and they in turn give her their blessing.
6. The ceremonial concludes with a feast, at the conclusion of which, in some cases, the bride and bridegroom sit on the raised verandah (*pial*), and receive presents.

The marriage ceremony of the Udayas is carried out on an elaborate scale, and is based on the type of ceremonial which is carried out by some castes in the plains.

1. Before dawn on the marriage day, the brothers and cousins of the bridegroom go, accompanied by some Udayas and the Kota band, to the forest, whence they bring two sticks of *Mimusops hexandra*, to do duty as the milk-posts.
2. The early hour is selected, to avoid the chance of coming across inauspicious objects. The sticks should be cut off the tree at a single stroke of the bill-hook, and they may not be laid flat on the ground, but placed on a blanket spread thereon. The Udayas, who

- joined in the procession, collect twelve posts of Mimusops as supports for the marriage booth (*pandal*).
3. In front of the house, which is to be the scene of the wedding, two pits are dug, into which cow-dung water is poured. The pujari does puja to the milk-posts by offering sugar-cane, jaggery (crude sugar), etc., and ties two threads thereto. The posts are then placed in the pits by five people — the parents of the bridal couple and the priest. The booth, and dais or enclosure, are then erected close to the milk-posts.
  4. On the second day, the bridegroom's party, attended by Kota musicians, dressed up in dancing costume, go to the house of the bride, where a feast is held.
  5. The bride then salutes a lamp, and prostrates herself at the feet of her parents, who bless her, saying "May your body and hands soon be filled (i.e., may you have a child), and may your life be prosperous."
  6. The bride is taken in procession to the house of the bridegroom, accompanied by some Udayas, and a Toreya carrying a bag of rice.
  7. At the entrance to the house she is blindfolded, and her mother-in-law pours water over her feet, and waves coloured water (*arati*) in front of her. She then enters the house, right foot foremost, and sits on a mat.
  8. Three married women, nearly related to the bridegroom, proceed, with the Kota musicians, to a stream, carrying three pots decorated with leaves of *Leucas aspera*. The priest does puja, and the pots are filled with water, and brought back in procession to the marriage dais. The water is poured into three vessels placed thereon three times by each of the three women.
  9. Within the marriage enclosure, two raised platforms are set up by a Toreya. The bridegroom, after going round the enclosure three times with his brothers and sisters, enters it, and bathes with the water contained in the vessels.
  10. He then dresses himself in new clothes, and is carried to the outer room by his maternal uncle. The bride is then treated in like manner, but is taken to the inner room.
  11. At a fixed auspicious hour, the bridal couple repair to the enclosure, where the bridegroom stands on a mat.
  12. A screen is held up by four or five men between him and the bride, who stands facing him, while the priest ties the ends of their clothes together.
  13. They then link their little fingers together, the screen is removed, and they seat themselves on the mat. The bridegroom's sister brings a tray with a mass of rice scooped out into a cavity to hold ghee for feeding a lighted wick (*annadha arathi*) on it, and, placing it before the bridal pair, sits down.
  14. The tali, consisting of a golden disc, is worshipped by the priest, and given to the bridegroom, who ties it on to the bride's neck.
  15. In some places it is tied by four or five elders, belonging to different villages, who are not widowers.
  16. The contracting couple then garland each other — called *sammandha malai*, or garlands establishing relationship, and the wrist threads are tied on.
  17. The bride's sister brings some rice and milk in a cup, into which the linked fingers of the bride and bridegroom are thrust. Taking up some of the rice, they put it into each other's mouths three times.
  18. After they have washed their hands, the maternal uncle or priest asks them if they have seen Aranjoti (the polestar), and they reply in the affirmative.
  19. On the third day, presents are given to the newly-married couple, and the wrist threads are removed.
  20. Going to a stream, they perform a mimic ceremony of sowing, and scatter cotton and rice seed in two small pans made by a Toreya with cow-dung.

Widow remarriage is permitted among the Udayas, and a widow may marry a cousin, but not her dead husband's brother. At the marriage ceremony, a priest makes a mark with sacred ashes on the foreheads of the contracting couple, and announces the fact of their union. It is noted by

A ceremony is performed in the seventh month of a woman's first pregnancy, which is important, inasmuch as it seals the marriage contract, and, after its performance, divorce can only be obtained through the decree of the panchayat (tribal council). Moreover, if it has not been performed, a man cannot claim the paternity of the child. The ceremony is called *kanni kattodu* or *kanni hakodu* (thread tying or throwing).

1. The husband and wife are seated in the midst of those who have assembled for the occasion, and the husband asks his father-in-law whether he may throw the thread round his wife's neck, and, having received permission, proceeds to do so.
2. If he gets the thread, which must have no knots in it, entangled in the woman's bunch of hair (*kondai*), which is made large for the occasion by the addition of false hair, he is fined three rupees.
3. On the day of the ceremony, the man and his wife are supposed to be under pollution, and sit in the verandah to receive presents.
4. The mats used by them for sleeping on are cleaned on the following morning, and they get rid of the pollution by bathing.
5. A first confinement must not take place within the house, and the verandah is converted into a lying-in chamber, from which the woman is, after delivery, removed to the outer apartment, where she remains till she is free from pollution by catching sight of the crescent moon.
6. If a woman has been delivered at her father's house, she returns to the home of her husband within a month of the birth of the child on an auspicious day. On arrival there, the infant is placed near the feet of an old man standing by a lamp within the milk-house.
7. Placing his right hand over the head of the infant, the old man blesses it, and a feast is held, before the commencement of which two cups, one containing milk, and the other cooked rice, are produced.
8. All the relations take up a little of the milk and rice, and touch the tongue of the baby with them.

## **5. Badhoyi.**

The Badhoyis are Oriya carpenters and blacksmiths, of whom the former are known as Badhoyi, and the latter as Komaro. These are not separate castes, and the two sections both interdine and intermarry. The Badhoyis are Paramarthos, and follow the Chaitanya form of Vaishnavism. They further worship various village deities.

### **Wedding ceremonies.**

1. At a marriage among the Badhoyis, and various other castes in Ganjam, two pith crowns are placed on the head of the bridegroom.
2. On his way to the bride's house, he is met by her purohit (priest) and relations, and her barber washes his feet, and presents him with a new yellow cloth, flowers, and kusa grass (also called darbha grass).
3. When he arrives at the house, amid the recitations of stanzas by the priest, the blowing of conch shells and other music, the women of the bride's party make a noise called huluhuli, and shower kusa grass over him.
4. At the marriage booth, the bridegroom sits upon a raised platform a

5. The bride, who arrives accompanied by his maternal uncle, pours salt, yellow-coloured rice, and parched paddy (rice) over the head of the bridegroom, by whose side she seats herself.
6. One of the pith crowns is removed from the bridegroom's forehead, and placed on that of the bride.
7. A bundle of straw is now placed on the platform, on which the contracting parties sit, the bridegroom facing east, and the bride west.
8. The purohit rubs a little jaggery over the bridegroom's right palm, joins it to the palm of the bride, and ties their two hands together with a rope made of kusa grass (*hasthagonti*).
9. A yellow cloth is tied to the cloths which the bridal pair are wearing, and stretched over their shoulders (*gontiyala*).
10. The hands are then untied by a married woman.
11. Śrāddha is performed for the propitiation of ancestors and the purohit, repeating some mantrams (prayers), blesses the pair by throwing yellow rice over them.
12. On the sixth day of the ceremony, the bridegroom runs away from the house of his father-in-law, as if he was displeased, and goes to the house of a relation in the same or an adjacent village.
13. His brother-in-law, or other male relation of the bride, goes in search of him, and, when he has found him, rubs some jaggery over his face, and brings him back."

## **6. Balija.**

The Balijas are the chief Telugu trading caste, scattered throughout all parts of the Presidency. It is said to have two main sub-divisions, *Desa* (or Kota, a fort) and *Peta* (street).

The general name of the caste is *Naidu*. The Balija Naidu, is to be met with in almost every walk of life — railway station-masters, head coolies, bakers, butlers, municipal inspectors, tappal (post) runners, hawkers, and hotel-keepers.

The title *Chetti* is by some used in preference to *Naidu*. It is noted in the Bellary Manual that the Balijas have by common consent obtained a high place in the social system of South India.

Like other Telugu castes, the Balijas have exogamous clans (*intiperu*) and gotras. Of the former, the following are examples: —

In like manner, a Brahmin orphan, whose gotra cannot be traced, is made to adopt the *Vatsa* gotra. Among the Musu Kammās, the consent of both the maternal uncle and elder sister's husband must be obtained before a girl is given in marriage.

### **Wedding ceremonies.**

1. At the betrothal ceremony, the future bridegroom's relations proceed to the house of the girl, carrying the following articles on an odd number of trays beneath a cloth canopy (*ulladam*): mustard, fenugreek, cummin seeds, curds, jaggery, dhal, balls of condiments, tamarinds, pepper, 21 cakes, 11 coconuts, salt, plantains, flowers, a new cloth, black beads, a palm-leaf roll for the ear lobe, turmeric, a comb, and kunkumam (colour powder). A few rupees, called kongu mudi, to be given to the future mother-in-law, are also placed on the tray.
2. The contracting parties exchange betel and a coconut, of which the latter is taken away by a member of the bridegroom's party, tied up in his body-cloth.

3. The girl is seated on a plank, goes through the ceremony (nalagu) of being anointed with oil and paste, and is presented with a new cloth. Wearing this, she sits on the plank, and betel, flowers, jewels, etc., are placed in her lap.
4. A near female relation then ties a string of black beads round her neck.
5. Among the Musu Kammas, the milk-post, consisting of a green bamboo, with sometimes a branch of Odina Wodier, must be set up two days before the commencement of the marriage ceremonies.
6. It is worshipped, and to it are tied an iron ring, and a string of cotton and wool twisted together (*kankanam*).
7. A small framework, called *dhornam*, made of two sticks, across which cotton threads or pieces of cloth are stretched, is brought by a washerwoman, and given to the maternal uncle of the bridegroom, who ties it to the marriage booth.
8. The marriage pots are brought from a potter's house beneath a cloth canopy (*ulladam*), and given to married couples, closely related to the bridegroom, who fetch water, and place the pots on the dais.
9. Some married women pour rice on a clean white cloth spread on the floor, and rub off the bran with their hands, while they sing songs.
10. The cloth to be worn by the bridegroom is dipped in turmeric water by these women and dried.
11. The Balijas are very particular about the worship of their female ancestors (*perantalu*) and no auspicious ceremony can be commenced until perantalu puja has been performed.
12. Among other sections, the wall is simply painted with turmeric dots to represent the ancestors. The ancestor worship concluded, the finger and toe-nails of the bridegroom are cut, and a Musu Kamma bridegroom is conducted to a temple of Vigneswara (Ganesa), if there is one near at hand. By other sections it is considered sufficient, if Vigneswara worship is performed at the marriage booth.
13. The Musu Kamma bridegroom is dressed up at the temple, and a *bashingam* (chaplet) tied on his forehead. An old-fashioned turban (*paghai*) is placed on his head, and a dagger (*jimthadu*) stuck into his waist-cloth. It is said that, in olden times, the Balijas used to worship the dagger, and sacrifice sheep or goats at marriages.
14. The bridegroom is next brought to the house where the wedding is being celebrated, and his brother-in-law washes his feet, and, after throwing flowers and rice over them, puts toe-rings and shoes thereon.
15. The Brahmin purohit lights the sacred fire (*homam*), and pours ghee (clarified butter) therein, while he utters some verses, Vedic or other. He then ties the *kankanam* (thread) on the bridegroom's wrist.
16. The parents of the bride next proceed with the *dhāradhattam* (gift of the girl) by pouring water and grains of rice into the hands of the bridegroom.
17. The *bottu* (marriage badge) is blessed by those assembled, and handed to the bridegroom. He, placing his right foot on that of the bride, who is separated from him by a screen, ties it round her neck.
18. The couple then exchange seats, and rice is thrown in front of them.
19. They next go thrice round the dais and milk-post, and, at the end of the first and second rounds, the foot of the bride is placed on a grinding stone.
20. After the third round they gaze at the pole-star (Arundati).
21. Into one of the marriage pots are put a pap-bowl, ring, and bracelet, which are picked out by the couple. If the pap-bowl is first got hold of by the bridegroom, the first-born child will be a boy; if the ring, it will be a girl.
22. This rite concluded, the bridegroom makes a mark on the bride's forehead with *kājal*.

On the second day, the bridegroom makes a pretence of being angry, and stays in a garden or house near that in which the marriage ceremonies are conducted. The bride, and some of her relations, go to him in procession, and, treating him with great respect, bring him back.

1. The sacred fire is lighted, and the bride enters the room in which the marriage pots (*araveni*) are kept.
2. The bridegroom is stopped at the entrance thereto by a number of married women, and has to call his wife by her name, and pay a small sum of money for the *arathi* (coloured water), which is waved by the women, to ward off the evil eye.
3. In some places, the sister of the bridegroom extracts a promise that his coral (daughter) shall be given in marriage to her pearl (son). He is then permitted to enter the room.
4. On the third day, after homam has been performed by the Brahmin priest, the newly married couple go through a burlesque imitation of domestic life, after they have worshipped the posts of the booth, and perform a mimic ploughing ceremony, the bridegroom stirring up some earth in a basket with a stick or miniature plough. This, in some places, his sister tries to prevent him from doing by covering the basket with a cloth, and he has to say " I will give my coral to your pearl." His brother-in-law tries to squeeze his fingers between a pair of sticks called *kitti*, which was, in former times, a very popular form of torture as a means of extracting confession. The bride gives her husband some *conji* (rice-gruel) to refresh him after his pretended labour.

At a marriage among the Perikes, a gunnybag is said to be worshipped before the *bottu* is tied. A quantity of rice is measured on the first day of the ceremonies and tied up in a cloth.

On the third day, the cloth is opened, and it is considered an auspicious sign if the quantity of rice exceeds that which was originally put into it.

Among the Rajamahendram Balijas, just before the *nalangu* ceremony, the knees, shoulders, and cheeks of the bride and bridegroom are touched with a pestle, while the names of their clans are called out. On the third day, the same process is repeated, but in the reverse order.

A Gazula Balija bride must, when the *bottu* is tied, be dressed in a white cloth with red stripes, called *sanna pappuli*. With other sections, a white cloth dyed with turmeric is de rigueur. Balija, it may be noted, is, in the North Arcot Manual, returned as a division of Dasaris and Idigas. The better classes of Medaras (cane-splitters and matmakers) are also taking to calling themselves Balijas, and assume the title Chetti. Oddes and Upparas sometimes style themselves Odde Balija and Uppara Balija. They belong to the right-hand section, which is headed by the Desayi, who is a Balija, and so describe themselves as belonging to the Setti or Chetti samayam (section). Some members of the Mila and Vada fishing castes have adopted Oda or Vada (boat) Balija as their caste name.

## **7. Bant.**

The Bant, were originally a military class corresponding to the Nayars of Malabar. The term Nadava instead of Bant in the northern portions of South Canara points, among other indications, to a territorial organisation by *nāds* similar to that described by Mr. Logan as prevailing in Malabar. "

The Nayars, were, until the British occupied the country, the militia of the district.

It is necessary to explain that, in both ancient Keralam and Tulu, the functions of the great military and dominant classes were so distributed that only certain classes were bound to render military service to the ruling prince. The rest were lairds or squires, or gentleman farmers, or the labourers and artisans of their particular community, though all of them

cultivated a love of manly sports. " Few traces of any such organisation as has been indicated now prevail, great changes having been made when the Vijayanagar Government introduced, more than five hundred years ago, a system of administration under which the local Jain chiefs, though owing allegiance to an overlord, became more independent in their relations with the people of the country.

Most of the Bants rank as Sudras, but some of them are Jains others are Vaishnavites or Saivites.

The Bants do not usually object to the use of animal food, except, of course, the flesh of the cow, and they do not as a rule wear the sacred thread. But there are some families of position called Ballals, amongst whom heads of families abstain from animal food, and wear the sacred thread. These neither eat nor intermarry with the ordinary Bants.

Those who have the dignity called *Pattam*, and the heads of certain families, known as Shettivalas or Heggades, also wear the sacred thread, and are usually managers or mukhtesars of the temples and shrines within the area over which, in former days, they are said to have exercised a more extended jurisdiction, dealing not only with caste disputes, but settling numerous civil and criminal matters.

Under the *aliya santana* system of inheritance, the High Court has ruled that there is no marriage within the meaning of the Penal Code. But, though divorce and remarriage are permitted to women, there are formal rules and ceremonies observed in connection with them, and amongst the well-to-do classes divorce is not looked upon as respectable, and is not frequent.

The Bants are divided into a number of balis (exogamous clans), which are traced in the female line, i.e., a boy belongs to his mother's, not to his father's bali.

Children belonging to the same bali cannot marry, and the prohibition extends to certain allied (*koodu*) balis. Moreover, a man cannot marry his father's brother's daughter, though she belongs to a different bali. In a memorandum by Mr. M. Mundappa Bangera,<sup>1</sup> it is stated that "*bali* in aliya santana families corresponds to gotra of the Brahmins governed by Hindu law, but differs in that it is derived from the mother's side, whereas *gotra* is always derived from the father's side.

### **Wedding ceremonies.**

There are two forms of marriage, one called *kai dhāre* for marriages between virgins and bachelors, the other called *budu dhāre* for the marriage of widows. After a match has been arranged, the formal betrothal, called *ponnapathera* or *nischaya tambula*, takes place.

1. The bridegroom's relatives and friends proceed in a body on the appointed day to the bride's house, and are there entertained at a grand dinner, to which the bride's relatives and friends are also invited.
2. Subsequently the *karnavans* (heads) of the two families formally engage to perform the marriage, and plates of betel leaves and areca nuts are exchanged, and the betel and nuts partaken of by the two parties.
3. The actual marriage ceremony is performed at the house of the bride or bridegroom, as may be most convenient.
4. The proceedings commence with the bridegroom seating himself in the marriage pandal, a booth or canopy specially erected for the occasion. He is there shaved by the village barber, and then retires and bathes.

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, 1891.

5. This done, both he and the bride are conducted to the pandal by their relations, or sometimes by the village headman.
6. They walk thrice round the seat, and then sit down side by side. The essential and binding part of the ceremony, called *dhāre*, then takes place. The right hand of the bride being placed over the right hand of the bridegroom, a silver vessel (*dhāre giṇḍi*) filled with water, with a coconut over the mouth and the flower of the areca palm on the coconut, is placed on the joined hands.
7. The parents, the managers of the two families, and the village headmen all touch the vessel, which, with the hands of the bridal pair, is moved up and down three times. In certain families the water is poured from the vessel into the united hands of the couple, and this betokens the gift of the bride. This form of gift by pouring water was formerly common, and was not confined to the gift of a bride. It still survives in the marriage ceremonies of various castes, and the name of the Bant ceremony shows that it must once have been universal among them.
8. The bride and bridegroom then receive the congratulations of the guests, who express a hope that the happy couple 'may become the parents of twelve sons and twelve daughters.
9. An empty plate, and another containing rice, are next placed before the pair, and their friends sprinkle them with rice from the one, and place a small gift, generally four annas, in the other.
10. The bridegroom then makes a gift to the bride. This is called *sirdachi*, and varies in amount according to the position of the parties. This must be returned to the husband, if his wife leaves him, or if she is divorced for misconduct.
11. The bride is then taken back in procession to her home.
12. A few days later she is again taken to the bridegroom's house, and must serve her husband with food. He makes another money present to her, and after that the marriage is consummated.

According to another variation of the marriage ceremony among some Bants,

1. the barber shaves the bridegroom's face, using cow's milk instead of water, and touches the bride's forehead with razor. The bride and bridegroom bathe, and dress up in new clothes.
2. A plank covered with a newly-washed cloth supplied by a washerman, a tray containing raw rice, a lighted lamp, betel leaves and areca nuts, etc., are placed in the pandal.
3. A girl carries a tray on which are placed a lighted lamp, a measure full of raw rice, and betel.
4. She is followed by the bridegroom conducted by her brother, and the bride, led by the bridegroom's sister.
5. They enter the pandal and, after going round the articles contained therein five times, sit down on the plank.
6. An elderly woman, belonging to the family of the caste headman, brings a tray containing rice, and places it in front of the couple, over whom she sprinkles a little of the rice.
7. The assembled men and women then place presents of money on the tray, and sprinkle rice over the couple.
8. The right hand of the bride is held by the headman, and her uncle, and laid in that of the bridegroom. A coconut is placed over the mouth of a vessel, which is decorated with mango leaves and flowers of the areca palm. The headman and male relations of the

bride place this vessel thrice in the hands of the bridal couple. The vessel is subsequently emptied at the foot of a coconut tree.

The foregoing account shows that the Bant marriage is a good deal more than concubinage. It is indeed as formal a marriage as is to be found among any people in the world, and the freedom of divorce which is allowed cannot deprive it of its essential character. Widows are married with much less formality. The ceremony consists simply of joining the hands of the couple, but, strange to say, a screen is placed between them. All widows are allowed to marry again, but it is, as a rule, only the young women who actually do so. If a widow becomes pregnant, she must marry or suffer loss of caste.

### **8. Bedar or Boya.**

The Boyas are the warrior caste under the heading of *Gentu*.<sup>2</sup> Some are carpenters, others blacksmiths who manufacture all sorts of agricultural implements. Some, again, are engaged as watchmen, and others make excellent snares for fish out of bamboo. But the majority of them are agriculturists, and most of them work on their own lands.

The titles of the Boyas are said to be *Naidu* or *Nayudu*, *Naik*, *Dora*, *Dorabidda* (children of chieftains), and *Valmiki*.

Each village, or group of villages, submits to the authority of a headman. The headman presides at all functions, and settles, with the assistance of the elders, any disputes that may arise in the community regarding division of property, adultery, and other matters. The headman has the power to inflict fines, the amount of which is regulated by the status and wealth of the defaulter. But it is always arranged that the penalty shall be sufficient to cover the expense of feeding the *panchayatdars* (members of council), and leave a little over to be divided between the injured party and the headman. In this way, the headman gets paid for his services, and practically fixes his own remuneration

The Urus, moreover, celebrate their marriages with the ordinary ceremonial of the *halu-kamba* or milkpost, and the bathing of the happy couple;

the bride sits on a flour-grinding stone, and the bridegroom stands on a basket full of *cholam* (millet), and Brahmins officiate.

But the Myasas have a simpler ritual, which omits most of these points, and dispenses with the Brahmin.

Both divisions eat beef, and both have a hereditary headman called the *ejaman*, and hereditary *Dasaris* who act as their priests.

The Machi or Myasa Bedas comprise a distinct sub-division, also called the Chunchus. They do not, however, eat fowl or pork, but partake of beef.

### **Circumcision**

The Myasa Bedas are the only Hindu class among whom the rite of circumcision is performed,<sup>3</sup> on boys of ten or twelve years of age. These Myasas seem quite proud of the custom, and scout with scorn the idea of marrying into any family in which it is not the rule.

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<sup>2</sup> *Gentu* or *Gentoo* is "a corruption of the Portuguese *Gentio*, gentile or heathen, which they applied to the Hindus in contradistinction to the Moros or Moors, i.e., Mahommedans. It is applied to the Telugu-speaking Hindus specially, and to their language." Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*.

<sup>3</sup> Circumcision is practised by some Kallans of the Tamil country

The rite is performed when a boy is seven or eight. A very small piece of the skin is cut off by a man of the caste, and the boy is then kept for eleven days in a separate home, and touched by no one. His food is given him on a piece of stone. On the twelfth day he is bathed, given a new cloth, and brought back to the house, and his old cloth, and the stone on which his food was served, are thrown away.

Girls on first attaining puberty are similarly kept for eleven days in a separate home, and afterwards made to do worship to a tangedu bush. This tree also receives reverence at funerals."

Myasa Bedar women are debarred from wearing toe-rings. Both Uru and Myasa women are tattooed on the face, and on the upper extremities with elaborate designs of cars, scorpions, centipedes, Sita's jade (plaited hair), Hanuman, parrots, etc.

Men are branded by the priest of a Hanuman shrine on the shoulders with the emblem of the conch shell and chakram.

### **Wedding ceremonies.**

At Hospet, the preliminaries of a marriage among the Myasa Bedars are arranged by the parents of the parties concerned and the chief men of the *ceri* (street). The marriage ceremony among the Uru Bedars is generally performed at the bride's house, whither the bridegroom and his party proceed on the eve of the wedding.

1. On the wedding day, the bride and bridegroom sit on a raised platform, and five married men place *akṣata* on the feet, knees, shoulders, and head of the bridegroom. This is done three times, and five married women then perform a similar ceremony on the bride.
2. The bridegroom takes up the *tāli*, and, with the sanction of the assembled Bedars, ties it on the bride's neck. In some places it is handed to a Brahmin priest, who ties it instead of the bridegroom. The unanimous consent of those present is necessary before the tali-tying is proceeded with.
3. A feast, called *tuppatuta* or ghee (clarified butter) feast, is held, towards which the bridegroom's parents contribute rice, coconuts, betel leaves and nuts, and make a present of five bodices (*ravike*).
4. At the conclusion of the feast, all assemble beneath the marriage pandal (booth), and betel is distributed in a recognised order of precedence, commencing with the guru and the god.
5. On the following morning four big pots, smeared with turmeric and chunam (lime) are placed in four corners, so as to have a square space (*irani square*) between them.
6. Nine turns of cotton thread are wound round the pots. Within the square the bridegroom and two young girls seat themselves. Rice is thrown over them, and they are anointed.
7. They and the bride are then washed by five women called *bhumathoru*.
8. The bridegroom and one of the girls are carried in procession to the temple, followed by the five women, one of whom carries a brass vessel with five betel leaves and a ball of sacred ashes (*vibuthi*) over its mouth, and another a woman's cloth on a metal dish, while the remaining three women and the bridegroom's parents throw rice.
9. Coconuts and betel are offered to Hanuman, and lines are drawn on the face of the bridegroom with the sacred ashes. The party then return to the house.
10. The lower half of a grinding mill is placed beneath the pandal, and a Brahmin priest invites the contracting couple to stand thereon.

11. He then takes the tali, and ties it on the bride's neck, after it has been touched by the bridegroom.
12. Towards evening the newly married couple sit inside the house, and close to them is placed a big brass vessel containing a mixture of cooked rice, jaggery (crude sugar) and curds, which is brought by the women already referred to. They give a small quantity thereof to the couple, and go away.
13. Five Bedar men come near the vessel after removing their head-dress, surround the vessel, and place their left hands thereon. With their right hands they shovel the food into their mouths, and bolt it with all possible despatch. This ceremony is called *bhuma idothu*, or special eating, and is in some places performed by both men and women. All those present watch them eating, and, if any one chokes while devouring the food, or falls ill within a few months, it is believed to indicate that the bride has been guilty of irregular behaviour.
14. On the following day the contracting couple go through the streets, accompanied by Bedars, the brass vessel and female cloth, and red powder is scattered broadcast.
15. On the morning of the third and two following days, the newly married couple sit on a pestle, and are anointed after rice has been showered over them.
16. The bride's father presents his son-in-law with a turban, a silver ring, and a cloth. It is said that a man may marry two sisters, provided that he marries the elder before the younger.

The following variant of the marriage ceremonies among the Boyas is given. When a Boya has a son who should be settled in life, he nominally goes in search of a bride for him, though it has probably been known for a long time who the boy is to marry. However, the formality is gone through. The father of the boy, on arrival at the home of the future bride, explains to her father the object of his visit. They discuss each other's families, and, if satisfied that a union would be beneficial to both families, the father of the girl asks his visitor to call again, on a day that is agreed to, with some of the village elders.

1. On the appointed day, the father of the lad collects the elders of his village, and proceeds with them to the house of the bride-elect. He carries with him four *moottus* (sixteen seers) of rice, one seer of *dhal*, two seers of ghee, some betel leaves and areca nuts, a seer of fried gram, two lumps of jaggery, five garlic bulbs, five dried dates, five pieces of turmeric, and a female jacket.
2. In the evening, the elders of both sides discuss the marriage, and, when it is agreed to, the purchase money has to be at once paid. The cost of a bride is always 101 madas, or Rs. 202. Towards this sum, sixteen rupees are counted out, and the total is arrived at by counting areca nuts.
3. The remaining nuts, and articles which were brought by the party of the bridegroom, are then placed on a brass tray, and presented to the bride-elect, who is requested to take three handfuls of nuts and the same quantity of betel leaves. On some occasions, the betel leaves are omitted.
4. Betel is then distributed to the assembled persons. The provisions which were brought are next handed over to the parents of the girl, in addition to two rupees. These are to enable her father to provide himself with a sheet, as well as to give a feast to all those who are present at the betrothal. This is done on the following morning, when both parties breakfast together, and separate.

The wedding is usually fixed for a day a fortnight or a month after the betrothal ceremony. The ceremony differs but slightly from that performed by various other castes. A purohit is consulted as to the auspicious hour at which the tali or bottu should be tied.

1. The bridegroom goes, on the day fixed, to the bride's village, or sometimes the bride goes to the village of the bridegroom. Supposing the bridegroom to be the visitor, the bride's party carries in procession the provisions which are to form the meal for the bridegroom's party, and this will be served on the first night.
2. As the auspicious hour approaches, the bride's party leave her in the house, and go and fetch the bridegroom, who is brought in procession to the house of the bride.
3. On arrival, he is made to stand under the pandal which has been erected.
4. A curtain is tied therein from north to south. The bridegroom then stands on the east of the curtain, and faces west.
5. The bride is brought from the house, and placed on the west of the curtain, facing her future husband.
6. The bridegroom then takes up the *bottu*, which is generally a black thread with a small gold bead upon it. He shows it to the assembled people, and asks permission to fasten it on the bride's neck. The permission is accorded with acclamations. He then fastens the *bottu* on the bride's neck, and she, in return, ties a thread from a black cumbly (blanket), on which a piece of turmeric has been threaded, round the right wrist of the bridegroom.
7. After this, the bridegroom takes some seed, and places it in the bride's hand. He then puts some pepper-corns with the seed, and forms his hands into a cup over those of the bride.
8. Her father then pours milk into his hand, and the bridegroom, holding it, swears to be faithful to his wife until death. After he has taken the oath, he allows the milk to trickle through into the hands of the bride.
9. She receives it, and lets it drop into a vessel placed on the ground between them. This is done three times, and the oath is repeated with each performance.
10. Then the bride goes through the same ceremony, swearing on each occasion to be true to her husband until death.
11. This done, both wipe their hands on some rice, which is placed close at hand on brass trays. In each of these trays there must be five seers of rice, five pieces of turmeric, five bulbs of garlic, a lump of jaggery, five areca nuts, and five dried dates.
12. When their hands are dry, the bridegroom takes as much of the rice as he can in his hands, and pours it over the bride's head. He does this three times, before submitting to a similar operation at the hands of the bride. Then each takes a tray, and upsets the contents over the other.
13. At this stage, the curtain is removed, and, the pair standing side by side, their cloths are knotted together. The knot is called the knot of Brahma, and signifies that it is Brahma who has tied them together.
14. They now walk out of the pandal, and make obeisance to the sun by bowing, and placing their hands together before their breasts in the reverential position of prayer.
15. Returning to the pandal, they go to one corner of it, where five new and gaudily painted earthenware pots filled with water have been previously arranged. Into one of these pots, one of the females present drops a gold nose ornament, or a man drops a ring. The bride and bridegroom put their right hands into the pot, and search for the article. Whichever first finds it takes it out, and, showing it, declares that he or she has found it. This game is repeated three times, and the couple then take their seats on a blanket in the centre of the pandal, and await the preparation of the great feast which closes the ceremony. For this, two sheep are killed, and the friends and relations who have attended are given as much curry and rice as they can eat.
16. Next morning, the couple go to the bridegroom's village, or, if the wedding took place at his village, to that of the bride, and stay there three days before returning to the marriage pandal.

17. Near the five water-pots already mentioned, some white-ant earth has been spread at the time of the wedding, and on this some paddy (unhusked rice) and dhal seeds have been scattered on the evening of the day on which the wedding commenced. By the time the couple return, these seeds have sprouted. A procession is formed, and the seedlings, being gathered up by the newly married couple, are carried to the village well, into which they are thrown. This ends the marriage ceremony.

At their weddings, the Boyas indulge in much music. The bridegroom, if he belongs to either of the superior gotras, carries a dagger or sword placed in his cummerbund (loinband). A song which is frequently sung at weddings is known as the song of the seven virgins. The presence of a Basavi at a wedding is looked on as a good omen for the bride, since a Basavi can never become a widow."

In the North Arcot Manual it is stated that the Boya bride, " besides having a golden tali tied to her neck, has an iron ring fastened to her wrist with black string, and the bridegroom has the same.

Widows may not remarry or wear black bangles, but they wear silver ones. Divorce is permitted. Grounds for divorce would be adultery and domestic violence. The case would be decided by a *panchayat* (council). A divorced woman is treated as a widow. The remarriage of widows is not permitted, but there is nothing to prevent a widow keeping house for a man, and begetting children by him. The couple would announce their intention of living together by giving a feast to the caste. If this formality was omitted, they would be regarded as outcastes till it was complied with. The offspring of such unions are considered illegitimate, and they are not taken or given in marriage to legitimate children. Here we come to further social distinctions.

Owing to promiscuous unions, the following classes spring into existence: —

1. *Svajātī Sampradayam*. Pure Boyas, the offspring of parents who have been properly married in the proper divisions and sub-divisions.
2. *Koodakonna Sampradayam*. The offspring of a Boya female, who is separated or divorced from her husband who is still alive, and who cohabits with another Boya.
3. *Vithunthu Sampradayam*. The offspring of a Boya widow by a Boya.
4. *Asampradayam*. The offspring of a Boya man or woman, resulting from cohabitation with a member of some other caste.

## **9. Bhondari.**

The Bhondaris are the barbers of the Oriya country, living in Ganjam. The name Bhondari is derived from *bhondaram*, treasure. The zamindars delivered over the guarding of the treasure to the professional barbers, who became a more important person in this capacity than in his original office of shaver in ordinary to His Highness." The Bhondaris occupy a higher position than the Tamil and Telugu barbers.

The hereditary headman of the caste is called *Behara*, and he is assisted by a Bhollobaya. Most of the Bhondaris follow Chaitanya Vaishnavism and known as Paramartha matham. They wear as a necklace a string of tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) beads, without which they will not worship or take their food. Many Hindu deities, especially Jagannatha, and various local Takuranis are also worshipped by them.

## Marriage

A man should not marry his maternal uncle's or paternal aunt's daughter. If a girl has not secured a husband before she attains maturity, she has to go through a mock marriage ceremony called *dharma bibha*. She is taken to a *Streblus asper* (sahada or shadi) tree, and married to it. She may not, during the rest of her life, touch the *Streblus* tree, or use its twigs as a tooth brush.

Sometimes she goes through the ceremony of marriage with some elderly man, preferably her grandfather, or, failing him, her elder sister's husband as bridegroom. A divorce agreement (*tsado patro*) is drawn up, and the pseudo-marriage thereby dissolved. Sometimes the bridegroom is represented by a bow and arrow, and the ceremony is called *khando bibha*. Widows and divorcees are permitted to remarry. As among various other castes, a widow should marry her deceased husband's younger brother.

## Wedding Ceremonies

The wedding ceremonies proper last over seven days.

1. On the day before the *bibha* (wedding), a number of earthen pots are placed on a spot which has been cleaned for their reception, and some married women throw *Zizyphus Jujuba* leaves and rice, apparently as an evil-eye removing and purificatory ceremony.
2. A ceremony, called *sokko bhondo*, or wheel worship, is performed to a potter's wheel.
3. The bridegroom, who has to fast until the night, is shaved, after which he stands on a grindstone and bathes. While he is so doing, some women bring a grinding-mill stone, and grind to powder *Vigna Catiang*, *Cajanus indicus* and *Cicer arietinum* seeds.
4. The bridegroom then dresses himself, and sits on the marriage dais, while a number of married women crowd round him, each of whom touches an areca nut placed on his head seven times with a grinding stone.
5. They also perform the ceremony called *bhondaivaro*, which consists in throwing *Zizyphus Jujuba* leaves, and rice dyed with turmeric, over the bridegroom.
6. Towards evening, the bridegroom's party proceed in procession to a temple, taking with them the various articles required on the morrow, such as the sacred thread, jewels, cloths, and *mokkuto* (forehead ornament). After worshipping the god, they return home, and on the way thither collect water in a vessel from seven houses, to be used by the bridegroom when he bathes next day.
7. A ceremonial very similar to that performed by the bridegroom on the eve of the wedding is also performed by the bride and her party.
8. On the wedding day, the bridegroom, after worshipping *Vigneswara* (Ganesa) at the marriage dais with the assistance of a Brahmin purohit, proceeds, dressed up in his marriage finery, *mokkuto*, sacred thread and wrist thread, to a temple in a palanquin, and worships there. Later on, he goes to the bride's house in a palanquin. Just as he is about to start, his brother's wife catches hold of the palanquin, and will not let him go till she has received a present of a new cloth. He is met en route by the bride's father, and his feet are washed by her brother. His future father-in-law, after waving seven balls of coloured rice before him, escorts him to his house.
9. His future mother-in-law, taking him by the hand, leads him into the house. As soon as he has reached the marriage dais, the bride is conducted thither by her maternal uncle, and throws some salt over a screen on to the bridegroom.
10. Later on, she takes her seat by his side, and the Brahmin purohit, after doing *homam*, ties the hands of the contracting couple together with *darbha* grass. This is called *hastagonthi*, and is the binding portion of the marriage ceremony.

11. The bride and bridegroom then exchange ten areca nuts and ten myrabolams (*Terminalia* fruits).
12. Two new cloths are thrown over them, and the ends thereof are tied together in a knot containing twentyone cowry (*Cypraea Arabica*) shells, a coin, and a few *Zizyphus* leaves. This ceremonial is called *gontiyalo*.
13. The bride's brother strikes the bridegroom with his fist, and receives a present of a cloth.
14. At this stage, the couple receive presents from relations and friends.
15. They then play seven times with cowry shells, and the ceremonial closes with the throwing of *Zizyphus* leaves, and the eating by the bride and bridegroom of rice mixed with jaggery (crude sugar) and curds.
16. On the two following days, they sit on the dais, play with cowries, and have leaves and rice thrown over them. They wear the cloths given to them on the wedding day, and may not bathe in a tank (pond) or river.
17. On the fourth day (*chauti*), the bride is received into the gotra of the bridegroom. In token thereof, she cooks some food given to her by the bridegroom, and the pair make a show of partaking thereof.
18. Towards the evening the bride is conducted by her maternal uncle to near the dais, and she stands on a grinding stone. Seven turns of thread dyed with turmeric are wound round the posts of the dais.
19. Leading his wife thither, the bridegroom cuts the thread, and the couple stand on the dais, while four persons support a cloth canopy over their heads, and rice is scattered over them.
20. On the fifth day, the newly married couple and their relations indulge in throwing turmeric water over each other.
21. Early on the morning of the sixth day, the bridegroom breaks a pot placed on the dais, and goes away in feigned anger to the house of a relation.
22. Towards evening, he is brought back by his brother-in-law, and plays at cowries with the bride. The *Bhondaivaro* ceremony is once more repeated.
23. On the seventh day, the sacred thread, wrist-threads and *mokkuto* are removed.

### **10. Bilimagga.**

The Bilimagga weavers of South Canara, who speak a very corrupt form of Tamil. The remarriage of widows is permitted.

The betrothal ceremony is important as being binding as a contract. It consists in the father of the girl giving betel leaves and areca nuts in a tray to the father of her future husband, before a number of people. If the contract is dissolved before the marriage is celebrated, betel and nuts must be presented to the father of the girl, in the presence of an assembly, as a sign that the engagement is broken off.

#### **Wedding Ceremonies**

1. On the day previous to the marriage ceremonial, the fathers of the contracting couple exchange betel leaves and areca nuts three times.
2. On the following morning, they proceed to the house of the bridegroom, the bride's father carrying a brass vessel containing water. From this vessel, water is poured into smaller vessels by an odd number of women (five or more). These women are usually selected by the wife of the headman. The pouring of the water must be carried out according to a recognised code of precedence, which varies with the locality. At Udipi,

for example, the order is Mangalore, Barkur, Udipi. The women all pour water over the head of the bridegroom. The rite is called *mariyathe nīru* (water for respect).

3. The bridegroom is then decorated, and a *bashingam* (chaplet) is placed on his forehead. He sits in front of a brass vessel, called Ganapati (the elephant god), which is placed on a small quantity of rice spread on the floor, and worships it.
4. He is then conducted to the marriage pandal (booth) by his sister's husband, followed by his sister carrying the brass vessel and a *gindi* (vessel with a spout), to which the bride's *bashingam* and the tali (marriage badge) are tied. A red cloth, intended for the bride, must also be carried by her.
5. Within the pandal, the bridegroom stands in front of a cot. The bride's party, and the men in attendance on the bridegroom, stand opposite each other with the bridegroom between them, and throw rice over each other.
6. All are then seated, except the bridegroom, his sister, and the bride's brother.
7. The bridegroom's father waves incense in front of the cot and brass vessel, and hands over the *gindi*, and other articles, to the bridegroom's sister, to be taken to the bride.
8. Lights and arathi water are waved before the bridegroom, and, while the bride's father holds his hands, her brother washes his feet.
9. He then goes seven times round the cot, after he has worshipped it, and broken coconuts, varying in number according to the nagara to which he belongs — seven if he is a member of the seven hundred nagara, and so on.
10. He next takes his seat on the cot, and is joined by the bride, who has had the *bashingam* put on her forehead, and the tali tied on her neck, by the bridegroom's sister.
11. Those assembled then call the maternal uncles of the bridal couple, and they approach the cot. The bridegroom's uncle gives the red cloth already referred to to the uncle of the bride.
12. The bride retires within the house, followed by her maternal uncle, and sits crosslegged, holding her big toes with her hands. Her uncle throws the red cloth over her head, and she covers her face with it. This is called *devagiri udugare*.
13. The uncle then carries her to the pandal, and she sits on the left of the bridegroom.
14. The Gurikara asks the maternal uncle of the bridegroom to hand over the bride's money, amounting to twelve rupees or more. He then requests permission of the three nagara people, seven gotra people, and the relatives of the bride and bridegroom to proceed with the *dhāre* ceremony. This being accorded, the maternal uncles unite the hands of the pair, and, after the cloth has been removed from the bride's face, the *dhāre* water is poured over their hands, first by the bride's father, and then by the Gurikara, who, while doing so, declares the union of the couple according to the observances of the three nagaras.
15. Those assembled throw rice on, and give presents to the bride and bridegroom. The presents are called *moi*, and the act of giving them *moi baikradhu* (Tamil).
16. Some women wave *ārati*, and the pair go inside the house, and sit on a mat. Some milk is given to the bridegroom by the bride's sister, and, after sipping a little of it, he gives it to the bride.
17. They then return to the pandal, and sit on the cot. Rice is thrown over their heads, and arathi waved in front of them.
18. The bridegroom drops a ring into a tray, and turmeric-water is poured over it. The couple search for the ring.
19. The wedding ceremonies are brought to a close by bathing in turmeric-water (vokli bath), after which the couple sit on the cot, and those assembled permit the handing over of the bride to the bridegroom's family (*pennu oppuchchu kodukradhu*).

Any number of marriages, except three or seven, may be carried on simultaneously beneath a single pandal. If there are more than a single bridal couple, the *bashingam* is worn only by the pair who are the elder, or held in most respect. Sometimes, one couple is allowed to wear the *bashingam*, and another to have the *dhare* water first poured over them.

### 11. Billava.

The Billavas are the Tulu-speaking toddy-drawers of the South Canara district. The derivation of the word *Billava*, as commonly accepted in the district, is that it is a contraction of Billinavaru, bowmen, and that the name was given as the men of that caste were formerly largely employed as bowmen by the ancient native rulers of the district.

*Baidya* and *Pūjari* occur as caste names of the Billavas, and also as a suffix to the name, e.g., *Saiyina Baidya*, *Bomma Pujari*. *Baidya* is said to be a form of *Vaidya*, meaning a physician. Some Billavas officiate as priests (*pujaris*) at bhomeasthanas and garidis. Many of these *pujaris* are credited with the power of invoking the aid of bhomeas, and curing disease.

The Billavas, like the Bants, have a number of exogamous clans (*balis*) running in the female line. There is a popular belief that these are sub-divisions of the twenty *balis* which ought to exist according to the *Aliya Santāna* system (inheritance in the female line).

#### Wedding Ceremonies

At the betrothal ceremony, the bride-price (*sirdacchi*), varying from ten to twenty rupees, is fixed.

A few days before the wedding, the maternal uncle of the bride, or the *Gurikara*, ties a jewel on her neck, and a pandal is erected, and decorated by the caste barber (*parel maddiyali*) with cloths of different colours.

The bride has to undergo a purificatory ceremony a day or two before the marriage (*dhare*) day. A few women, usually near relations of the girl, go to a tank or well near a temple, and bring water thence in earthenware pots. The water is poured over the head of the girl, and she bathes.

1. On the wedding day, the bride and bridegroom are seated on two planks placed on the dais.
2. The barber arranges the various articles, such as lights, rice, flowers, betel leaves and areca nuts, and a vessel filled with water, which are required for the ceremonial. He joins the hands of the contracting couple, and their parents, or the headman, place the nose-screw of the bridesmaid on their hands, and pour the *dhare* water over them. This is the binding part of the ceremony, which is called *kai* (hand) *dhāre*. Widow remarriage is called *bidu dhare*, and the pouring of water is omitted.
3. The bride and bridegroom stand facing each other, and a cloth is stretched between them. The headman unites their hands beneath the screen.

If a man has intercourse with a woman, and she becomes pregnant, he has to marry her according to the *bidu dhare* rite. Before the marriage ceremony is performed, he has to grasp a plantain tree with his right hand, and the tree is then cut down.

### 12. Chenchu.

The Chenchus or Chentsus are a Telugu speaking jungle tribe inhabiting the hills of the Kurnool and Nellore districts. The Chenchus are wisely employed by the authorities as road-

police or *Taliaris*, to prevent highway dacoities. This is an astute piece of diplomacy. The Chenchus themselves are the only dacoits thereabouts, and the salary paid them as road-police is virtually blackmail to induce them to guarantee the freedom of the forest highways.

### **Wedding Ceremonies**

The Chenchus do not follow a uniform custom in respect to marriage ceremonies. The remarriage of widows is permitted, and the second husband in most cases is a brother of the deceased. Their marriage is performed in three ways.

# 1.

A man wishing to marry selects his own bride, and both retire for one night by mutual consent from the *gudem*. On the following morning, when they return, their parents invite their friends and relatives, and by formally investing them with new clothes, declare them duly married. To complete the ceremony, a meal is given to those assembled.

# 2.

A small space, circular in form, is cleaned and besmeared with cowdung.

In the centre a bow and arrow tied together are fixed in the ground, and the bride and bridegroom are made to move round it, when the men assembled bless them by throwing some rice over them, and the marriage is complete.

Sometimes the bride and bridegroom sit opposite each other with four arrows stuck in the ground between them. On other occasions the bridal pair sit with a single arrow between them, and, when there is no shadow, some elderly men and women throw rice over their heads. The importance of the arrow with the Chenchus, as with the Yanadis, is that the moment when it casts no shadow is the auspicious time for the completion of the marriage rite.

# 3.

a Brahmin is consulted by the elders of the family. An auspicious day is fixed, and a raised platform is erected, on which the bride and bridegroom being seated, a *tali* (marriage badge) is tied, and rice poured over their heads.

The services of the Brahmin are engaged for three or four days, and are rewarded with a piece of new cloth and some money. This ceremony resembles that of the *ryot* (cultivating) class among the Hindus. It is evidently a recent Brahminical innovation.

## **13. Cheruman.**

The *Cherumans* or *Cherumukkal* are members of caste in Malabar, who are, as a rule, farm labourers. The most important of the sub-divisions are *Kanakkan*, *Pula Cheruman*, *Eralan*, *Kudan* and *Rolan*. *Kanakkan* and *Pula Cheruman* are found in all the southern taluks, *Kudan* almost wholly in Walluvanad, and *Eralan* in Palghat and Walluvanad.

### **Wedding Ceremonies**

Concerning the wedding ceremony of the Cherumans the bridegroom's sister is the chief performer. It is she who pays the bride's price, and carries her off. The consent of the parents is required, and is signified by an interchange of visits between the parents of the bride and bridegroom. During these visits, rice-water (*konji*) is sipped. Before tasting the *konji*, they drop a fanam (local coin) into the vessel containing it, as a token of assent to the marriage.

1. When the wedding party sets out, a large congregation of Cherumans follow, and at intervals indulge in stick play. The men and women mingle indiscriminately in the dance during the wedding ceremony.
2. On the return to the bridegroom's home, the bride is expected to weep loudly, and deplore her fate.
3. On entering the bridegroom's home, she must tread on a pestle placed across the threshold.
4. During the dance, the women have been described as letting down their hair, and dancing with a tolerable amount of rhythmic precision amid vigorous drumming and singing.
5. According to another account, the bridegroom receives from his brother-in-law a kerchief, which the giver ties round his waist, and a bangle which is placed on his arm.
6. The bride receives a pewter vessel from her brother.
7. Next her cousin ties a kerchief round the groom's forehead, and sticks a betel leaf in it. The bride is then handed over to the bridegroom.

Of the puberty and marriage ceremonies of the Pulayas of Cochin, the following detailed account is given by Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer.

1. When a girl comes of age she is located in a separate home. Five Vallons (headmen), and the castemen of the kara (settlement), are invited to take part in the performance of the ceremony.
2. A song, called *malapattu*, is sung for an hour by a Parayan to the accompaniment of drum and pipe. The Parayan gets a para of paddy, and his assistants three annas each. As soon as this is over, seven cocoanuts are broken, and the water thereof is poured over the head of the girl, and the broken halves are distributed among the five Vallons and seven girls who are also invited to be present. Some more water is also poured on the girl's head at the time.
3. She is lodged in a temporary home for seven days, during which food is served to her at a distance. She is forbidden to go out and play with her friends.
4. On the morning of the seventh day, the Vallons of the kara and the castemen are again invited. The latter bring with them some rice, vegetables, and toddy, to defray the expenses of the feast.
5. At dawn, the mother of the girl gives oil to the seven Pulaya maidens, and to her daughter for an oil-bath. They then go to a neighbouring tank (pond) or stream to bathe, and return home.
6. The girl is then neatly dressed, and adorned in her best. Her face is painted yellow, and marked with spots of various colours. She stands before a few Parayas, who play on their flute and drum, to cast out the demons, if any, from her body.
7. The girl is again bathed with her companions, who are all treated to a dinner. The ceremony then comes to an end with a feast to the castemen.

The ceremony described is performed by the Valluva Pulayas in the southern parts, near and around the suburbs of Cochin, but is unknown among other sub-tribes elsewhere. The devil-driving by the Parayas is not attended to. Nor is a temporary home erected for the girl to be lodged in. She is allowed to remain in a corner of the home, but is not permitted to touch others. She is bathed on the seventh day, and the castemen, friends and relations, are invited to a feast.

Marriage is prohibited among members of the same *kūṭam* (family group). In the Chittur taluk, members of the same village do not intermarry, for they believe that their ancestors may have

been the slaves of some local landlord, and, as such, the descendants of the same parents. A young man may marry among the relations of his father, but not among those of his mother

1. The ceremony consists in tying a ring attached to a thread round the neck of the bride. This is provided by her parents.

In other places, the marriage ceremonies of the **Era Cherumas** are more formal.

2. The bridegroom's party goes to the bride's home, and presents rice and betel leaf to the head of the family, and asks for the bride. Consent is indicated by the bride's brother placing some rice and cloth before the assembly, and throwing rice on the headman of the caste, who is present.
3. On the appointed day, the bridegroom goes to the home with two companions, and presents the girl with cloth and twelve fanams. From that day he is regarded as her husband, and cohabitation begins at once.
4. But the bride cannot accompany him until the ceremony called *mangalam* is performed.
5. The bridegroom's party goes in procession to the bride's home, where a feast awaits them.
6. The man gives sweetmeats to the girl's brother. The caste priest recites the family history of the two persons, and the names of their masters and deities.
7. They are then seated before a lamp and a heap of rice in a pandal (booth).
8. One of the assembly gets up, and delivers a speech on the duties of married life, touching on the evils of theft, cheating, adultery, and so forth.
9. Rice is thrown on the heads of the couple, and the man prostrates himself at the feet of the elders.
10. Next day, rice is again thrown on their heads. Then the party assembled makes presents to the pair, a part of which goes to the priest, and a part to the master of the husband.

Divorce is very easy, but the money paid must be returned to the woman.

Among the Pula Cherumas of the Trichur taluk the connection is called *Merungu Kooduka*, which means to tame, or to associate with.

A young man, who wishes to marry, goes to the parents of the young woman, and asks their consent to associate with their daughter. If they approve, he goes to her at night as often as he likes. The woman seldom comes to the husband's home to stay with him, except with the permission of the *thamar* (landlord) on auspicious occasions.

They are at liberty to separate at their will and pleasure.

Among the **Kanakka Cherumas** in the northern parts of the State, the following marital relations are followed.

1. When a young man chooses a girl, the preliminary arrangements are made in her home, in the presence of her parents, relations, and the castemen of the village. The auspicious day is fixed, and a sum of five fanams is paid as the bride's price.
2. The members assembled are treated to a dinner. A similar entertainment is held at the bridegroom's home to the bride's parents, uncles, and others who come to see the bridegroom.
3. On the morning of the day fixed for the wedding, the bridegroom and his party go to the bride's home, where they are welcomed, and seated on mats in a small pandal put up in front of the home.
4. A *muri* (piece of cloth), and two small *mundus* (cloths) are the marriage presents to the bride.

5. A vessel full of paddy (unhusked rice), a lighted lamp, and a coconut are placed in a conspicuous place therein.
6. The bride is taken to the booth, and seated by the side of the bridegroom. Before she enters it, she goes seven times round it, with seven virgins before her.
7. With prayers to their gods for blessings on the couple, the tali (marriage badge) is tied round the bride's neck. The bridegroom's sister completes the knot. By a strange custom, the bride's mother does not approach the bridegroom, lest it should cause a ceremonial pollution.
8. The ceremony is brought to a close with a feast to those assembled. Toddy is an indispensable item of the feast.
9. After this, the bridegroom goes along to his own home, along with his wife and his party, where also they indulge in a feast.
10. After a week, two persons from the bride's home come to invite the married couple. The bride and bridegroom stay at the bride's home for a few days, and cannot return to his home unless an entertainment, called *Vathal Choru*, is given him.

The marriage customs of the **Valluva Pulayas** in the southern parts of the State, especially in the Cochin and Kanayannur taluks, are more formal.

Before a young Pulayan thinks of marriage, he has to contract a formal and voluntary friendship with another young Pulayan boy of the same age and locality. If he is not sociably inclined, his father selects one for him from a Pulaya of the same or higher status, but not of the same *illam* (family group). If the two parents agree among themselves, they meet in the home of either of them to solemnise it. They fix a day for the ceremony, and invite their Vallon and the castemen of the village.

The guests are treated to a feast in the usual Pulaya fashion. The chief guest and the host eat together from the same dish.

After the feast, the father of the boy, who has to obtain a friend for his son, enquires of the Vallon and those assembled whether he may be permitted to buy friendship by the payment of money. They give their permission, and the boy's father gives the money to the father of the selected friend.

The two boys then clasp hands, and they are never to quarrel. The new friend becomes from that time a member of the boy's family. He comes in, and goes out of their home as he likes. There is no ceremony performed in the home, or anything done without consulting him. He is thus an inseparable factor in all ceremonies, especially in marriages.

1. The first observance in marriage consists in seeing the girl. The bridegroom-elect, his friend, father and maternal uncle, go to the bride's home, to be satisfied with the girl. If the wedding is not to take place at an early date, the bridegroom's parents have to keep up the claim on the bride-elect by sending presents to her guardians. The presents, which are generally sweetmeats, are taken to her home by the bridegroom and his friends, who are well fed by the mother of the girl, and are given a few necessaries when they take leave of her the next morning.
2. The next observance is the marriage negotiation, which consists in giving the bride's price, and choosing an auspicious day in consultation with the local astrologer (Kaniyan).
3. On the evening previous to the wedding, the friends and relations of the bridegroom are treated to a feast at his home.
4. Next day at dawn, the bridegroom and his friend, purified by a bath, and neatly dressed in a white cloth with a handkerchief tied over it, and with a knife stuck in their girdles,

- go to the home of the bride elect accompanied by his party, and are all well received, and seated on mats spread on the floor.
5. Over a mat specially made by the bride's mother are placed three measures of rice, some particles of gold, a brass plate, and a plank with a white and red cover on it.
  6. The bridegroom, after going seven times round the pandal, stands on the plank, and the bride soon follows making three rounds, when four women hold a cloth canopy over her head, and seven virgins go in front of her.
  7. The bride then stands by the side of the bridegroom, and they face each other. Her guardian puts on the wedding necklace a gold bead on a string. Music is played, and prayers are offered up to the sun to bless the necklace which is tied round the neck of the girl.
  8. The bridegroom's friend, standing behind, tightens the knot already made. The religious part of the ceremony is now over, and the bridegroom and bride are taken inside, and food is served to them on the same leaf.
  9. Next the guests are fed, and then they begin the *poli* or subscription. A piece of silk, or any red cloth, is spread on the floor, or a brass plate is placed before the husband. The guests assembled put in a few annas, and take leave of the chief host as they depart.
  10. The bride is then taken to the bridegroom's home, and her parents visit her the next day, and get a consideration in return.
  11. On the fourth day, the bridegroom and bride bathe and worship the local deity, and, on the seventh day, they return to the bride's home, where the tali (marriage badge) is formally removed from the neck of the girl, who is bedecked with brass beads round her neck, rings on her ears, and armlets.
  12. The next morning, the mother-in-law presents her son-in-law and his friend with a few necessities of life, and sends them home with her daughter.

### **14. Dhobi**

Dhobi is name used for washerman by Anglo-Indians all over India. The word is said to be derived from *dhoha*, Sanskrit, *dhav*, to wash.

They are usually Vaishnavites, but some of them also worship Kali or Durga. They employ Bairagis, and occasionally Brahmins, as their priests. Their titles are *Chetti* (or *Maha Chetti*) and *Behara*. Widows and divorced women may marry again.

#### **Wedding Ceremonies**

1. The bridal pair bathe in water brought from seven different houses.
2. The bridegroom puts a bangle on the bride's arm (this is the binding part of the ceremony);
3. The left and right wrists of the bride and bridegroom are tied together
4. betel leaf and nut are tied in a corner of the bride's sari, and a myrabolam (Terminalia fruit) in that of the bridegroom;
5. and finally the people present in the pandal (booth) throw akṣata over them.

### **15. Domba**

The Dombas, are a Dravidian caste of weavers and menials (and sometimes thieves), found in the hill tracts of Vizhagapatam. Dombas eat beef, pork, horse, rats, and the flesh of animals which have died a natural death, and both are considered to be Chandalas or Pariahs by the Bengalis and the Uriyas. The Dombs weave the cloths and blankets worn by the hill people.

They are great drunkards! In many villages, the Doms carry on the occupation of weaving, but, in and around Jaipur, they are employed as horse-keepers, tomtom beaters, scavengers, and in other menial duties.

A man can claim his paternal aunt's daughter in marriage. The remarriage of widows is permitted, and a younger brother usually marries the widow of his elder brother.

### **Wedding ceremonies.**

1. When a proposal of marriage is to be made, the suitor carries some pots of liquor, usually worth two rupees, to the girl's house, and deposits them in front of it.
2. If her parents consent to the match, they take the pots inside, and drink some of the liquor. After some time has elapsed, more liquor, worth five rupees, is taken to the girl's house.
3. A reduction in the quantity of liquor is made when a man is proposing for the hand of his paternal aunt's daughter, and, on the second occasion, the liquor will only be worth three rupees.
4. A similar reduction is made in the *jholla tonka*, or bride price.
5. On the wedding day, the bridegroom goes, accompanied by his relations, to the bride's home, where, at the auspicious moment fixed by the Desari, his father presents new cloths to himself and the bride, which they put on.
6. They stand before the home, and on each is placed a cloth with a myrabolam (Terminalia) seed, rice, and a few copper coins tied up in it.
7. The bridegroom's right little finger is linked with the left little finger of the bride, and they enter the home.
8. On the following day, the newly married couple repair to the home of the bridegroom. On the third day, they are bathed in turmeric water, a pig is killed, and a feast is held.
9. On the ninth day, the knots in the cloths, containing the myrabolams, rice, and coins, are untied, and the marriage ceremonies are at an end.

## **16. Elayad.**

A caste, which is supposed to be the last among the numerous sub-divisions of Malabar Brahmins. They make use of two titles, Ilayatu and Nambiyatiri, the latter of which has the same origin as Nambudiri, meaning a person worthy of worship. The Ilayatus are divided mostly into two clans or gotras, called Visvamitra and Bharadvaja. Women are generally known as *Ilayammas*, and, in some parts of North Travancore, also *Kunjammass*.

The house of an Ilayatu is, like that of a Nambudiri, called *illam*. It is generally large, being the gift of some pious Nayar. The dress and ornaments of the Ilayatus are exactly like those of the Nambudiris.

The wedding ornament is called *kettutali*. Children wear a ring tied to a thread round the neck from the moment of the first feeding ceremony. The chief occupation of the Ilayatus is the priesthood of the Nayars. In performing such services, the Ilayatus recite various pauranic texts, but hardly any Vedic mantras. The Ilayatus have also been the recognised priests in several North Travancore temples, the chief of which are the Kainikkara Bhagavata shrine, the Payappara Sasta shrine, and the Parekkavu Siva temple at Kuttattukulam

No bride-price is paid, but a sum of not less than Rs. 140 has to be paid to the bridegroom. This is owing to the fact that, in an Ilayatu family, as among the Nambutiris, only the eldest son can lead a married life. All male members of a family, except the eldest, take to

themselves some Nayar or Ambalavasi woman. The Ilayatus resemble the Nambutiris in all questions of inheritance.

The Ilayatus observe all the sixteen samskāras of the Brahmans. The Ilayatus belong in the main to the white and black branches of the Yajurveda, and observe the sutras of Bodhayana and Aśvalāyana. They recite only 24 Gayatri mantras, thrice a day. Women are believed to be polluted for 90 days after childbirth.

## **17. Eravallar**

The Eravallars are a small forest tribe inhabiting the Coimbatore district and Malabar. Eravallars are a wild tribe of inoffensive hill-men found in the forests of the Cochin State, especially in the Chittur taluk. They are also called Villu Vedans (hunters using bows). Their language is Tamil, though some speak Malayalam. Names in use for males are Kannan (Krishna), Otukan, Kothandan, Kecharan, and Attukaran, while females are called Kanni, Keyi, Kaikayi, Otuka, and Ramayi.

### **Wedding Ceremonies**

The father of the groom visits the parents of a girl with his brother-in-law and a few relatives, who make the proposal. If the parents agree, the wedding day is fixed, and all the preliminary arrangements are made at the home of the bride, where the relatives assembled are treated to a dinner. The bride's price is symbolically only one rupee.

1. The parents of the bride and bridegroom visit their respective landlords with a few packets of betel leaves, areca nuts, and tobacco, and inform them of the marriage proposal.
2. The landlords give a few paras of paddy to defray a portion of the wedding expenses.
3. They celebrate their weddings on Mondays. On a Monday previous to the wedding ceremony, the sister of the bridegroom, with a few of her relations and friends, goes to the bride's home, and presents her parents with the bride's money, and a brass ring for the bride.
4. On the Monday chosen for the wedding, the same company, and a few more, go there, and dress the girl in the new garment brought by them. They are treated to a dinner as on the previous occasion.
5. They then return with the bride to the home of the bridegroom, where also the parties assembled are entertained.
6. On the Monday after this, the bridegroom and bride are taken to the bride's home, where they stay for a week, and then return to the bridegroom's home. Marriage is now formally over.

The tali tying is dispensed with.

This custom of marriage prevails among the Izhuvas of the Chittur taluk. The bridegroom gets nothing as a present during the wedding, but this is reserved for the Karkadaka Sankranthi, when he is invited by his father-in-law, and given two veshtis and a turban, after sumptuously feeding him. A widow can only marry a widower. It is called *Mundakettuka* (marrying a widow).

When they both have children, the widower must make a solemn promise to his castemen that he will treat and support the children by both marriages impartially. The present of a brass ring and cloth is essential. A man can divorce his wife, if he is not satisfied with her. The divorced wife can mate only with a widower.

## 18. Gudigara.

These are a Canarese caste of wood-carvers and painters. They are Saivites and wear the sacred thread. Shivalli Brahmins officiate as their priests. Some follow the *aliya santana* mode of inheritance (in the female line), others the ordinary law. Among those who follow the *aliya santana* law, both widows and divorced women may marry again. Their ordinary title is Setti

### Wedding Ceremonies

When a marriage is contemplated, the parents of the couple, in the absence of horoscopes, go to a temple, and receive from the priest some flowers which have been used for worship. These are counted, and, if their number is even, the match is arranged, and an exchange of betel leaves and nuts takes place.

1. On the wedding day, the bridegroom goes, accompanied by his party, to the house of the bride, taking with him a new cloth, a female bodice, and a string of black beads with a small gold ornament.
2. They are met *en route* by the bride's party. Each party has a tray containing rice, a coconut, and a mirror. The females of one party place kunkuma (red powder) on the foreheads of those of the other party, and sprinkle rice over each other.
3. At the entrance to the marriage pandal (booth), the bride's brother pours water at the feet of the bridegroom, and her father leads him into the pandal.
4. The new cloth, and other articles, are taken inside the house, and the mother or sister of the bridegroom, with the permission of the headman, ties the necklet of black beads on the bride's neck.
5. Her maternal uncle takes her up in his arms, and carries her to the pandal. Thither the bridegroom is conducted by the bride's brother.
6. A cloth is held as a screen between the contracting couple, who place garlands of flowers round each other's necks. The screen is then removed.
7. A small vessel, containing milk and water, and decorated with mango leaves, is placed in front of them, and the bride's mother, taking hold of the right hand of the bride, places it in the right hand of the bridegroom.
8. The officiating Brahmin places a betel leaf and coconut on the bride's hand, and her parents pour water from a vessel thereon.
9. The Brahmin then ties the *kankanams* (wrist-threads) on the wrists of the contracting couple, and kindles the sacred fire (homam).
10. The guests present them with money, and lights are waved before them by elderly females.
11. The bridegroom, taking the bride by hand, leads her into the house, where they sit on a mat, and drink milk out of the same vessel.
12. A bed is made ready, and they sit on it, while the bride gives betel to the bridegroom.
13. On the second day, lights are waved, in the morning and evening, in front of them.
14. On the third day, some red-coloured water is placed in a vessel, into which a ring, an areca nut, and rice are dropped.
15. The couple search for the ring, and, when it has been found, the bridegroom puts it on the finger of the bride.
16. They then bathe, and try to catch fish in a cloth. After the bath, the wrist-threads are removed.

## 19. Gurukkal.

The Gurukkals are priests of castes, whose religious rites are *not* presided over by Ilayatus. They are probably of Tamil origin. Males are often called *Nainar* and females *Nacchiyar*, which are the usual titles of the Tamil Kurukkals also. In the Keralolpatti the caste men are described as *Chilampantis*, who are the *aḍiyārs* or hereditary servants of Padmanabhaswami in Trivandrum. They seem to have been once known also as Madamutalis or headmen of matts, and Tevara Pandarams, or Pandarams who assisted the Brahmin priest in the performance of religious rites in the Maharaja's palace.

It is said that the Kurukkals originally belonged to the great Vaisya of caste, and migrated from the Pandyan country, and became the dependants of the Kupakkara family of Pottis in Trivandrum. These Pottis gave them permission to perform all the priestly services of the Ambalavasi families, who lived to the south of Quilon. It would appear from the Keralolpatti and other records that they had the *kazhakam* or sweeping and other services at the inner entrance of Sri Padmanabha's temple till the time of Umayamma Rani in the eighth century of the Malabar era. As, however, during her reign, a Kurukkal in league with the Kupakkara Potti handed over the letter of invitation, entrusted to him as messenger, for the annual utsavam to the Tarnallur Nambudiripad, the chief ecclesiastical functionary of the temple, much later than was required, the Kurukkal was dismissed from the temple service, and ever afterwards the Kurukkals had no *kazhakam* right there. There are some temples, where Kurukkals are the recognised priests, and they are freely admitted for *kazhakam* service in most South Travancore temples.

Some Kurukkals kept gymnasia in former times, and trained young men in military exercises. At the present day, a few are agriculturists. The Kurukkals are generally not so fair in complexion as other sections of the Ambalavasis. Their houses are known as *bhavanams* or *vidus*. They are strict vegetarians, and teatotalers.

The females (*Gurukkattis*) imitate Nambutiri Brahmins in their dress and ornaments. The Kurukkals are Smartas and are under the spiritual control of certain men in their own caste called *Vadhyars*.

### Wedding Ceremonies

The Kurukkals observe both the **tali-kettu kalyanam** and *sambandham*.

The male members of the caste contract alliances either within the caste, or with *Marans*, or the *Vatti* class of Nayars. Women receive cloths either from Brahmans or men of their own caste. The maternal uncle's or paternal aunt's daughter is regarded as the most proper wife for a man.

The erection of the first pillar of the marriage pandal (booth) is, as among other Hindu castes, an occasion for festivity. The ceremony generally lasts over few days, but may be shortened.

1. On the wedding day, the bridegroom wears a sword and palmyra leaf, and goes in procession to the house of the bride.
2. After the tali has been tied, the couple are looked on as being impure, and the pollution is removed by bathing, and the pouring of water, consecrated by the hymns of Vadhyars, over their heads.
3. For the *sambandham*, which invariably takes place after a girl has reached puberty, the relations of the future husband visit her home, and, if they are satisfied as to the desirability of the match, inform her guardians of the date on which they will demand the horoscope.

4. When it is received on the appointed day, the astrologer is consulted, and, if he is favourably inclined, a day is fixed for the sambandham ceremony.
5. The girl is led forward by her maternal aunt, who sits among those who have assembled, and formally receives cloths. Cloths are also presented to the maternal uncle.

Divorce is common, and effected with the consent of the Vadhyar. Inheritance is in the female line (*marumakkathayam*). The Kurukkals observe most of the religious ceremonies of the Brahmins. No recitation of hymns accompanies the rites of *namakarana* and *annaprasana*.

The chaula and upanayana are performed between the ninth and twelfth years of age. On the previous day, the family priest celebrates the purificatory rite, and ties a consecrated thread round the right wrist of the boy. The tonsure takes place on the second day, and on the third day the boy is invested with the sacred thread, and the Gayatri hymn recited. On the fourth day, the Brahmacharya rite is closed with a ceremony corresponding to the Samavartana. When a girl reaches puberty, some near female relation invites the women of the village, who visit the house, bringing sweetmeats with them. The girl bathes, and reappears in public on the fifth day.

Only the *pulikudi* or drinking tamarind juice, is celebrated, as among the Nayars, during the first pregnancy.

## 20. Haddi.

The Haddis are a low class of Oriyas, corresponding to the Telugu Malas and Madigas, and the Tamil Paraiyans. The Haddis play on drums for all Oriya castes, except Khondras, Tiyoros, Tulabinas, and Sanis. The Haddis may be divided into Haddis proper, Rellis, and Chachadis, which are endogamous divisions.

The Haddis work as coolies and field labourers, and the selling of fruits, such as mango, tamarind, *Zizyphus Jujuba*, etc., is a favourite occupation. In some places, the selling of dried fish is a monopoly of the Rellis. Sometimes Haddis, especially the Karuva Haddis, sell human or yak hair for the purpose of female toilette.

### Wedding Ceremonies

1. On an auspicious day, the bridegroom's party go to the home of the bride, and place, on a new cloth spread on the floor, the brideprice (usually twenty rupees), and seven betel leaves, myrabolams (*Terminalia* fruits), areca nuts, and cakes. Two or three of the nuts are then removed from the cloth, cut up, and distributed among the leading men.
2. After the wedding day has been fixed, an adjournment is made to the toddy shop. In some cases, the marriage ceremony is very simple, the bride being conducted to the home of the bridegroom, where a feast is held.
3. In the more elaborate form of ceremonial, the contracting couple are seated on a dais, and the Behara or Nayako, who officiates as priest, makes fire (homam) before them, which he feeds with twigs of *Zizyphus Jujuba* and *Eugenia Jambolana*.
4. Mokuttos (forehead chaplets) and wrist-threads are tied on the couple, and their hands are connected by the priest by means of a turmeric-dyed thread, and then disconnected by an unmarried girl.
5. The bride's brother arrives on the scene, dressed up as a woman, and strikes the bridegroom. This is called *solabidha*, and is practiced by many Oriya castes.

6. The ends of the cloths of the bride and bridegroom are tied together, and they are conducted inside the house, the mother-in-law throwing Zizyphus leaves and rice over them.

## 21. Relli

The Rellis are a caste of gardeners and labourers, found chiefly in the districts of Ganjam and Vizhapatam. Widows are allowed to remarry, but the string of beads is not tied round the neck.

### Wedding Ceremonies

1. The bride-price is paid sometime before the day fixed for the marriage. On that day, the bride goes, with her parents, to the house of the bridegroom.
2. The caste deities *Odda Polamma* (commonly known as *Sapiri Daivam*) and *Kanaka Durgamma* are invoked by the elders, and a pig and sheep are sacrificed to them.
3. A string of black beads is tied by the bridegroom round the bride's neck, and a feast is held, at which the sacrificed animals are eaten, and much liquor is imbibed.
4. On the following morning, a new cloth, kunkumam (red powder), and a few pieces of turmeric are placed in a small basket or winnow, and carried in procession, to the accompaniment of music, through the streets by the bride, with whom is the bridegroom.
5. The ceremony is repeated on the third day, when the marriage festivities come to an end.

## 22. Holeyas.

The bulk of the Holeyas are found in South Canara, but there are a considerable number in Coimbatore and on the Nilgiris (working on cinchona, tea, and coffee estates). Holeyas are the field labourers of South Canara, Pulayan being the Malayalam and Paraiyan the Tamil form of the same word.

Divorce is easy, and widow marriage is freely practiced. Holeyas will eat flesh including beef, and have no caste scruples regarding the consumption of spirituous liquor.

### Wedding Ceremonies

1. The bridegroom's party goes to the bride's house on a fixed day with rice, betel leaf and a few areca nuts, and waits the whole night outside the bride's home, the bridegroom being seated on a mat specially made by the bride.
2. On the next morning the bride is made to sit opposite the bridegroom, with a winnowing fan between them filled with betel leaf, etc. Meanwhile the men and women present throw rice over the heads of the couple.
3. The bride then accompanies the bridegroom to his home, carrying the mat with her.
4. On the last day the couple take the mat to a river or tank where fish may be found, dip the mat into the water, and catch some fish, which they let go after kissing them.
5. A grand feast completes the marriage.

The Holeyas are chiefly employed as labourers in connection with agriculture, and manufacture with hand-looms various kinds of coarse cloth or home-spun, which are worn extensively by the poorer classes.

It may not be amiss to quote here some interesting facts denoting the measure of material well-being achieved by, and the religious recognition accorded to the outcastes at certain first-class shrines in Mysore. At Melkote in the Mysore district, the outcastes, i.e., the Holeyas and Madigas, are said to have been granted by the great Visishtadvaita reformer, Ramanujacharya, the privilege of entering the Vishnu temple up to the sanctum sanctorum, along with Brahmans and others, to perform worship there for three days during the annual car procession.

On Ramanujacharya going to Melkote to perform his devotions at that celebrated shrine, he was informed that the place had been attacked by the Muslim King of Delhi, who had carried away the icon. He immediately set out for that capital, and on arrival found that the King had made a present of the image to his daughter, for it is said to be very handsome, and she asked for it as a plaything. All day the princess played with the image, and at night the god assumed his own beautiful form, and enjoyed her bed, for Krishna is addicted to such forms of adventures. Ramanujacharya, by virtue of certain mantras, obtained possession of the image, and wished to carry it off. He asked the Brahmans to assist him, but they refused; on which the Holeyas volunteered, provided the right of entering the temple was granted to them. Ramanujacharya accepted their proposal, and the Holeyas, having posted themselves between Delhi and Melkote, the image of the god was carried down in twenty-four hours. The service also won for the outcastes the envied title of *Tiru-kulam* or the sacred race. In 1799, however, when the Dewan (prime minister) Purnaiya visited the holy place, the right of the outcastes to enter the temple was stopped at the dhvaja stambham, the consecrated monolithic column, from which point alone can they now obtain a view of the god. On the day of the car procession, the Tiru-kulam people, men, women and children, shave their heads and bathe with the higher castes in the kalyani or large reservoir, and carry on their head small earthen vessels filled with rice and oil, and enter the temple as far as the flagstaff referred to above, where they deliver their offerings, which are appropriated by the Dasayyas, who resort simultaneously as pilgrims to the shrine.

Besides the privilege of entering the temple, the Tiru-kula Holeyas and Madigas have the right to drag the car, for which service they are requited by getting from the temple two hundred seers of ragi (grain), a quantity of jaggery (crude sugar), and few bits of the dyed cloth used for decorating the pandal (shed) which is erected for the procession. At the close of the procession, the representatives of the aforesaid classes receive each a flower garland at the hands of the Sthanik or chief worshipper, who manages to drop a garland synchronously into each plate held by the recipients, so as to avoid any suspicion of undue preference. In return for these privileges, the members of the Tiru-kulam used to render gratuitous services such as sweeping the streets round the temple daily, and in the night patrolling the whole place with drums during the continuance of the annual procession, etc. But these services are said to have become much abridged and nearly obsolete under the recent police and municipal regime. The privilege of entering the temple during the annual car procession is enjoyed also by the outcastes in the Vishnu temple at Belur in the Hassan district. It is, however, significant that in both the shrines, as soon as the car festival is over, i.e., on the ioth day, the concession ceases, and the temples are ceremonially purified.

Marriage among the **Mari Holeyas** is called *porathavu*. At the betrothal ceremony, the headmen of the contracting parties exchange betel leaves and areca nuts. The bride-price usually consists of two bundles of rice and a bundle of paddy (unhusked rice).

### Wedding Ceremonies

1. On the wedding day the bridegroom and his party go to the home of the bride, taking with them a basket containing five seers of rice, two metal bangles, one or two

coconuts, a comb, and a white woman's cloth, which are shown to the headman of the bride's party.

2. The two headmen order betel leaf and areca nuts to be distributed among those assembled. After a meal, a mat is spread in front of the home, and the bride and bridegroom stand thereon.
3. The bridegroom has in his hand a sword, and the bride holds some betel leaves and areca nuts.
4. Rice is thrown over their heads, and presents of money are given to them.
5. The two headmen lift up the hands of the contracting couple, and they are joined together.
6. The bride is lifted up so as to be a little higher than the bridegroom, and is taken indoors.
7. The bridegroom follows her, but is prevented from entering by his brother-in-law, to whom he gives betel leaves and areca nuts. He then makes a forcible entrance into the home.

### **23. Idaiyan.**

The Idaiyans are the great pastoral or shepherd caste of the Tamil country, but some are landowners, and a few are in Government employ.

The Idaiyans are Vaishnavites, and the more cultured among them are branded like Vaishnava Brahmins. Saturday is considered a holy day. Their most important festival is Krishna Jayanti, or Sri Jayanti, in honour of Krishna's birthday. They show special reverence for the vessels used in dairy operations. All Brahmins, except the most orthodox, will accordingly eat butter-milk and butter brought by them. In some places they have the privilege of breaking the butter-pot on the Gokulashtami, or Krishna's birthday, and get a new cloth and some money for doing it

#### **Wedding Ceremonies**

The marriage ceremonies vary according to locality, and the following details of one form therefore, as carried out at Coimbatore, may be cited.

1. When a marriage between two persons is contemplated, a red and white flower, tied up in separate betel leaves, are thrown before the icon at a temple. A little child is told to pick up one of the leaves, and, if she selects the one containing the white flower, the omens are considered auspicious, and the marriage will be arranged.
2. On the day of the betrothal, the future bridegroom's father and other relations go to the girl's house with presents of a new cloth, fruits, and ornaments.
3. The bride price (pariyam) is paid, and betel exchanged.
4. The bridegroom-elect goes to the girl's cousins (maternal uncle's sons), who have a right to marry her, and presents them with four annas and betel.
5. The acceptance of these is a sign that they consent to the marriage.
6. On the marriage day, the bridegroom plants the milk-post, after it has been blessed by a Brahmin purohit, and is shaved by a barber.
7. The bride and her female relations fetch some earth, and a platform is made out of it in the marriage pandal (booth).
8. The Brahmin makes fire (homam), and places a cowdung *Pillayar* (Ganesa) in the pandal.
9. The bride then husks some rice therein.

10. The relations of the bride and *bridegroom* fetch from the potter's house seven pots called *adukupanai*, two large pots, called *arasanipanai*, and seven earthen trays, and place them in front of the platform. The pots are filled with water, and a small bit of gold is placed in each.
11. The bridegroom goes to a Pillayar shrine, and, on his return, the bride's brother washes his feet, and puts rings on his second toes.
12. The *kankanams* (wrist-threads) are tied on the wrists of the contracting couple, and the bridegroom takes his seat within the *pandal*, to which the bride is carried in the arms of one of her maternal uncles, while another carries a torch light placed on a mortar.
13. The bride takes her seat by the side of the bridegroom, and the light is set in front of them.
14. The *tali* is taken round to be blessed by those assembled, and handed to the bridegroom, who ties it on the bride's neck.
15. The couple then put a little earth in each of the seven trays, and sow therein nine kinds of grain.
16. Two vessels, containing milk and whey, are placed before them, and the relations pour a little thereof over their heads.
17. The right hand of the bridegroom is placed on the left hand of the bride, and their hands are tied together by one of the bride's maternal uncle's sons.
18. The bride is then carried into the house in the arms of an elder brother of the bridegroom.
19. At the threshold she is stopped by the maternal uncle's sons, who may beat the man who is carrying her.
20. The bridegroom pays them each four annas, and he and the bride are allowed to enter the house.
21. On the night of the wedding day, they are shome up in a room.
22. During the following days the pots are worshipped.
23. On the seventh day, the ends of the cloths of the newly married couple are tied together, and they bathe in turmeric water.
24. The wrist-threads are removed, they rub oil over each other's heads, and bathe in a tank.
25. The bride serves food to the bridegroom, and their relations eat off the same leaf, to indicate the union between the two families.
26. Into one of the large pots a gold and silver ring, and into the other an iron style and piece of palm leaf are dropped. The couple perform the pot-searching ceremony, and whichever gets hold of the gold ring or style is regarded as the more clever of the two.
27. The bridegroom places his right foot, and the bride her left foot on a grindstone, and they look at the star Arundathi. The stone represents Ahalliya, the wife of the sage Gautama, who was cursed by her husband for her misconduct with Indra, and turned into a stone, whereas Arundathi was the wife of Vasishta and a model of chastity.
28. The newly married couple, by placing their feet on the stone, indicate their intention of checking unchaste desires, and by looking at Arundathi, of remaining faithful to each other.
29. The bride decorates a small grindstone with a cloth and ornaments, and takes it round to all her relations who are present, and who bless her with a hope that she will have many children.

Among some Idaiyans, it is customary for the *tali* to be tied by the sister of the bridegroom, and not by the bridegroom, who must not be present when it is done

## 24. Izhava.

The Izhavans or Ilavans, and Tiyans, are the Malayalam toddy-drawing castes of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. Izhava is said to mean those belonging to Izham, a corruption of Simhalam, one of the old names of Ceylon. Jaffna, in the north of that island, appears to have been specially known by the name of Izham, and from this place the Izhavas are believed to have originally proceeded to Malabar. In support of this theory, it is urged that, in South Travancore, the Izhavas are known by the title of Mudaliyar, which is also the surname of a division of the Vellalas at Jaffna; that the Vattis and Mannans call them Mudaliyars; and that the Pulayas have ever been known to address them only as Muttatampurans.

### Marriage

The marriage of Izhava girls consists of two distinct rites, one before they attain puberty called tali-kettu, and the other generally after that period, but in some cases before, called *sambandham*. It is, however, necessary that the girl must have her tali tied before some one contracts sambandham with her. The tali-tier may be, but often is not, as among the Nayars, the future husband of the girl. But, even for him, the relation will not be complete without a formal cloth presentation.

The legitimate union for a person is with his maternal uncle's or paternal aunt's daughter. Generally there is a separate ceremony called *Grihapravesam*, or entrance into the house of the bridegroom after *sambandham*. Widows may contract alliances with other persons after the death of the first husband. In all cases, the Izhava husband takes his wife home.

### Wedding Ceremonies

The method of celebrating the tali-kettu differs in different parts of Travancore. The following is the form popular in Central Travancore.

1. All the elderly members of the village assemble at the house of the girl, and fix a pillar of jack (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) wood at the south-east corner.
2. On the Kaniyan (astrologer) being three times loudly consulted as to the auspiciousness of the house he gives an affirmative reply, and the guardian of the girl, receiving a silver ring from the goldsmith, hands it over to the *Vatti* (priest), who ties it on the wooden post.
3. The carpenter, Kaniyan, and goldsmith receive some little presents. The next item in the program is the preparation of the rice necessary for the marriage, and a quantity of paddy (unhusked rice) is brought by the girl to the pandal ground, and formally boiled in a pot.
4. The pandal (booth) is generally erected on the south side of the house.
5. On the day previous to the marriage, the girl bathes, and, wearing the bleached cloths supplied by the *Mannan* (washerman), worships the local deity, and awaits the arrival of the bridegroom.
6. In the evening, the wife of the Vatti applies oil to her hair, and after a bath the rite known as *Kalati* begins, as a preliminary to which a thread passing through a silver ring is tied round her right wrist. *Kalati* is recitation of various songs by the women of the village before the girl.
7. This is followed by *Kanjiramala*, or placing the girl before a line of carved wooden images, and songs by the Vatti women.
8. On the following day, the girl is introduced, at the auspicious hour, within the *katirmandapa* or raised platform decorated with sheaves of corn within the pandal.

9. The *minnu* or marriage ornament, prepared by the goldsmith, is handed over to the priest, along with two cloths to be worn by the bride and bridegroom. A string is made of thread taken from these cloths, and the *minnu* attached to it.
10. The mother-in-law of the bridegroom now stands ready at the gate, and, on his arrival, places a garland of flowers round his neck.
11. The new cloths are then presented by the Vatti and his wife to the bridegroom and bride respectively, after some tender coconut leaves, emblematic of the established occupation of the caste, are thrust into the bridegroom's waist by the headman of the village.
12. The *minnu* is then tied round the neck of the bride, and all parties, including the parent or guardian, give presents to the bridegroom.
13. The day's ceremony is then over, and the bridegroom remains at the house of the bride.
14. The string is removed from the bride's wrist by the Vatti on the fourth day, and the couple bathe.

More than one girl may have the tali tied at the same time, provided that there are separate bridegrooms for them. Only boys from the families of Machchamps can become tali-tiers. The sambandham of North and Central Travancore differs from that of South Travancore in some material respects. In the former, on the appointed day, the bridegroom, who is a different person from the tali-tier, accompanied by his relations and friends, arrives at the bride's house, and the guardian of the former offers a sum of money to the guardian of the latter. A suit of clothes, with ten chuckrams or ten rasis (coins), is presented by the bridegroom to the bride, who stands in a room within and receives it, being afterwards dressed by his sister. The money goes by right to her mother, and is known as *Ammayippanam*. Now comes the time for the departure of the bride to her husband's house, when she receives from her guardian a nut-cracker, limecan, a dish filled with rice, and a mat. A red cloth is thrown over her head, and a few members accompany the party for some distance. In South Travancore, the bridegroom is accompanied, besides others, by a companion, who asks in the midst of the assembly whether they assent to the proposed alliance, and, on their favourable reply, hands over a sum of money as an offering to the local shrine. Another sum is given for the maintenance of the bride, and, in the presence of the guardian, a suit of clothes is given to her by the bridegroom. The wife is, as elsewhere, immediately taken to the husband's house. This is called *Kudivaippu*, and corresponds to the *Grahapravesam* celebrated by Brahmins.

The following is an account of marriage among the **Izhavas of Malabar**. A girl may be married before puberty, but the consummation is not supposed to be effected till after puberty, though the girl may live with her husband at once.

If the marriage is performed before puberty, the ceremony is apparently combined with the tali-kettu kalyanam.

1. The bride is fetched from the devapura or family chapel with a silk veil over her head, and holding a betel leaf in her right hand in front of her face.
2. She stands in the pandal on a plank, on which there is some rice.
3. On her right stand four enangans of the bridegroom, and on her left four of her own.
4. The elder of the bridegroom's enangans hands one of the bride's enangans a bundle containing the tali, a *mundu* and *pava* (cloths), some rice, betel leaves, and a coin called *meymelkanam*, which should be of gold and worth at least one rupee. All these are provided by the bridegroom.
5. He next hands the tali to the bridegroom's sister, who ties it.
6. After this, all the enangans scatter rice and flowers over the bride.

7. The girl is then taken to the bridegroom's house. If very young, she is chaperoned by a female relative.
8. On the fourth day there is a feast at the bridegroom's house called *nalam kalyanam*, and this concludes the ceremonies.

## **25. Jalagadugu (Jalaris).**

A caste of gold-finders, who search for gold in drains and in the sweepings of goldsmiths' shops. A modest livelihood is also obtained, in some places, by extracting gold from the bed of rivers or nullahs (water-courses). The name is derived from jala, water, gadugu, wash. The equivalent Jalakara is recorded, in the Bellary Gazetteer, as a sub-division of Kabbera. In the city of Madras, gold-washers are to be found working in the foul side drains in front of jewellers' shops

In their puberty, marriage and death ceremonies, they closely follow the Vadas and Palles. The prohibitions regarding marriage are of the Telugu form, but, like the Oriya castes, the Jalaris allow a widow to marry her deceased husband's younger brother. The marriage ceremonies last for three days. On the first day, the pandal (booth), with the usual milk-post, is erected.

### **Wedding Ceremonies**

For every marriage, representatives of the four towns Peddapatnam, Vizagapatam, Bimlipatam, and Revalpatnam, should be invited, and should be the first to receive pan-supari (betel leaves and areca nuts) after the pandal has been set up.

1. On the second day of the marriage ceremonies, the tying of the *sathamam* (marriage badge) takes place.
2. The bridegroom, after going in procession through the streets, enters the house at which the marriage is to be celebrated.
3. At the entrance, the maternal uncle of the bride stands holding in his crossed hands two vessels, one of which contains water, and the other water with jaggery (crude sugar) dissolved in it.
4. The bridegroom is expected to take hold of the vessel containing the sweetened water before he enters, and is fined if he fails to do so.
5. When the bridegroom approaches the pandal, some married women hold a bamboo pole between him and the pandal, and a new earthen pot is carried thrice round the pole.
6. While this is being done, the bride joins the bridegroom, and the couple enter the pandal beneath a cloth held up to form a canopy in front thereof.
7. This ceremonial takes place towards evening, as the *tali* is tied on the bride's neck during the night.

An interesting feature in connection with the procession is that a pole called *digametlu* (shoulder-pole), with two baskets tied to the ends, is carried. In one of the baskets a number of sieves and small baskets are placed, and in the other one or more cats. This *digametlu* is always referred to by the *Vadas* when they are questioned as to the difference between their marriage ceremonies and those of the *Jalaris*. Other castes laugh at this custom, and it is consequently dying out.

Two or more married couples are invited to remain at the house in which the marriage takes place, to help the bridal couple in their toilette, and assist at the *nalangu*, evil eye waving, and other rites. They are rewarded for their services with presents.

At every Jalari marriage, meals must be given to the castemen, a rupee to the representatives of the patnams, twelve annas to the headman and his assistant, and three rupees to the Malas. Like other Telugu castes, the Jalaris have *intiperus* (clans), which resemble those of the Vadas. Among them, Jonna and Buguri are common.

## 26. Kadir

The Kadirs or Kadans are a tribe that inhabit the Anaimalai or elephant hills, and the great mountain range which extends thence southward into Travancore.

### Marriage rituals

When a Kadir youth desires to marry, he goes to the village of his bride elect, and gives her a dowry by working there without pay for a year.

1. On the wedding day a feast of rice, sheep, fowls, and other luxuries is given by the parents of the bridegroom, to which the Kadir community is invited.
2. The bride and bridegroom stand beneath a pandal (arch) decorated with flowers, which is erected outside the home of the bridegroom, while men and women dance separately to the music of drum and fife.
3. The bridegroom's mother or sister ties the tali of gold or silver round the bride's neck, and her father puts a turban on the head of the bridegroom.
4. The contracting parties link together the little fingers of their right hands as a token of their union, and walk in procession round the pandal.
5. Then, sitting on a new grass mat, they exchange betel.

The marriage tie can be dissolved for incompatibility of temper, disobedience on the part of the wife, adultery, etc., without appeal to any higher authority than a council of elders, who pronounce judgment on the evidence.

## 27. Kaikōlan

The Kaikolans are a large caste of Tamil weavers found in all the southern districts, who also are found in considerable numbers in the Telugu country, where they speak Telugu.

Most of the Kaikolans are Saivites, and some have taken to wearing the lingam, but a few are Vaishnavites. The hereditary headman of the caste is called *Peridanakaran* or *Pattakāran*, and is, as a rule, assisted by two subordinates entitled *Sengili* or *Gramani*, and *Ural*.

### Marriage rituals

A peculiar method of selecting a bride, called *siru tali kattu* (tying the small tali), is in vogue among some Kaikolans. A man, who wishes to marry his maternal uncle's or paternal aunt's daughter, has to tie a tali, or simply a bit of cloth torn from her clothing, round her neck, and report the fact to his parents and the headman. If the girl eludes him, he cannot claim her, but, should he succeed, she belongs to him.

1. In some places, the consent of the maternal uncle to a marriage is signified by his carrying the bride in his arms to the marriage pandal (booth).
2. The milk-post is made of *Erythrina indica*.
3. After the tali has been tied, the bridegroom lifts the bride's left leg, and places it on a grinding-stone.

Widows are allowed to remarry if they have no issue, but not otherwise;

## **28. Kalian**

The kalian are a caste of robbers and stock-thieves. They also work as village guards and labourers. They practice circumcision.

Every Kalian boy has a right to claim the hand of his paternal aunt's daughter in marriage. This aunt bears the expenses connected with his circumcision. Similarly, the maternal uncle pays the costs of the rites which are observed when a girl attains maturity, for he has a claim on the girl as a bride for his son.

The two ceremonies are performed at one time for large batches of boys and girls. On an auspicious day, the young people are all feasted, and dressed in their best, and repair to a river or tank (pond).

The mothers of the girls make lamps of plantain leaves, and float them on the water, and the boys are operated on by the local barber. It is stated, in the Census Report, 1901, that the Sirukudi Kalias use a tali, on which the Muhammadan symbol of a crescent and star is engraved.

At the Mattupongal feast, towards evening, festoons of aloe fibre and cloths containing coins are tied to the horns of bullocks and cows, and the animals are driven through the streets with tom-tom and music.

In the villages, especially those inhabited by the Kalias in Madura and Tinnevely, the maiden chooses as her husband him who has safely untied and brought to her the cloth tied to the horn of the fiercest bull. The Kalian considers it a great disgrace to be injured while chasing the bull.

The most proper alliance in the opinion of a Kalian is one between a man and the daughter of his father's sister, and, if an individual have such a cousin, he must marry her, whatever disparity there may be between their respective ages.

A boy of fifteen must marry such a cousin, even if she be thirty or forty years old, if her father insists upon his so doing. Failing a cousin of this sort, he must marry his aunt or his niece, or any near relative. If his father's brother has a daughter, and insists upon him marrying her he cannot refuse; and this whatever may be the woman's age.

### **Puberty ceremonies.**

By some Kalias pollution is, on the occasion of the first menstrual period, observed for seven or nine days. On the sixteenth day, the maternal uncle of the girl brings a sheep or goat, and rice. She is bathed and decorated, and sits on a plank while a vessel of water, coloured rice, and a measure filled with paddy with a style bearing a betel leaf stuck on it, are waved before her. Her head, knees, and shoulders are touched with cakes, which are then thrown away. A woman, conducting the girl round the plank, pours water from a vessel on to a betel leaf held in her hand, so that it falls on the ground at the four cardinal points of the compass, which the girl salutes.

### **Betrothal**

For the betrothal ceremony, the father and maternal uncle of the future bridegroom proceed to the girl's house, where a feast is held, and the date fixed for the wedding written on two rolls of palm leaf dyed with turmeric or red paper, which are exchanged between the maternal uncles.

## 1. Wedding Ceremonies

1. The sister of the bridegroom goes to the house of the bride, and presents her parents with twenty-one Kali fanams (coins) and a cloth, and, at the same time, ties some horse-hair round the bride's neck<sup>4</sup>.
2. She then brings her and her relatives to the house of the bridegroom, where a feast is prepared. Sheep are killed, and stores of liquor kept ready, and all partake of the good cheer provided.
3. After this the bride and bridegroom are conducted to the house of the groom, and the ceremony of an exchange between them of *vallari thadis* or boomerangs is solemnly performed.
4. Another feast is then given in the bride's house, and the bride is presented by her parents with some rice and a hen. She then goes with her husband to his house.

A divorce is easily obtained on either side. A husband dissatisfied with his wife can send her away if he be willing at the same time to give her half of his property, and a wife can leave her husband at will upon forfeiture of forty-two Kali fanams. As a token of divorce a Kalian gives his wife a piece of straw in the presence of his caste people<sup>5</sup>. In Tamil the expression "to give a straw" means to divorce, and "to take a straw" means to accept divorce. A widow may marry any man she fancies, if she can induce him to make her a present of ten fanams.

Among the Nattar Kalians, the brother of a married woman must give her annually at Pongal a present of rice, a goat, and a cloth until her death. The custom of exchanging boomerangs appears to be fast becoming a tradition. But, there is a common saying still current "Send the *valari tadi*, and bring the bride."

The richer Kalians substitute for the horse-hair a necklace of many strands of fine silver wire. In Tirumangalam, the women often hang round their necks a most curious brass and silver pendant, six or eight inches long, and elaborately worked.

In their marriage customs, some Kalians have adopted the Puranic form of rite owing to the influence of Brahmin purohits.

## 2. Wedding ceremonies

1. On the wedding day, the sister of the bridegroom goes to the house of the bride, accompanied by women, some of whom carry flowers, coconuts, betel leaves, turmeric, leafy twigs of *Sesbania grandiflora*, paddy (unhusked rice), milk, and ghee (clarified butter).
2. A basket containing a female cloth, and the tali string wrapped up in a red cloth borrowed from a washerman, is given to a sister of the bridegroom or to a woman belonging to his clan.
3. On the way to the bride's house, two of the women blow conch shells.
4. The bride's people question the bridegroom's party as to his clan, and they ought to say that he belongs to Indra kulam, Thalavala nadu, and Ahalya gotra.
5. The bridegroom's sister, taking up the tali, passes it round to be touched by all present, and ties the string, which is decorated with flowers, tightly round the bride's neck amid the blowing of the conch shells.

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<sup>4</sup> As a rule, the tali is suspended from a cotton thread, and the horsehair necklet may be worn by girls prior to puberty and marriage, and by widows. This form of necklet is also worn by females of other castes, such as Maravans, Valaiyans, and Morasa Paraiyans.

<sup>5</sup> Census Report, 1891

6. The bride is then conducted to the home of the bridegroom, whence they return to her house on the following day.
7. The newly married couple sit on a plank, and coloured rice-balls or coloured water are waved, while women yell out " killa, ilia, ilia; killa, ilia, ilia." This ceremony is called kulavi idal, and is sometimes performed by Kalian women during the tali-tying.

### 3. Wedding ceremonies

The following details relate to the marriage ceremonies of the Tanjore district.

1. Mounted on a horse, and attended by his maternal uncle, the groom is met by a youth from the bride's house, also mounted, who conducts the visitors to the marriage booth.
2. Here he is given betel leaves, areca nuts, and a rupee by the bride's father, and his feet are washed in milk and water, and adorned with toe-rings by the bride's mother.
3. The tali is suspended from a necklet of gold or silver instead of cotton thread, but this is afterwards changed to cotton for fear of offending the god Karuppan. A lamp is often held by the bridegroom's sister, or some married woman, while the tali is being tied. This is left unlighted by the Kalians for fear it should go out, and thus cause an evil omen.

The marriage bond is in some localities very loose. Even a woman who has borne her husband many children may leave him if she likes, to seek a second husband, on condition that she pays him her marriage expenses. In this case (as also when widows are remarried), the children are left in the late husband's house.

### Child-birth ceremonies

A ceremony is generally celebrated in the 7th month of pregnancy, for which the husband's sister prepares pongal (cooked rice). The pregnant woman sits on a plank, and the rice is waved before her. She then stands up, and bends down while her sister-in-law pours milk from a betel or pipal (*Ficus religiosa*) leaf on her back. A feast brings the ceremony to a close.

Among the Vellur-nadu Kalians patterns are drawn on the back of the pregnant woman with rice-flour, and milk is poured over them. The husband's sister decorates a grindstone in the same way, invokes a blessing on the woman, and expresses a hope that she may have a male child as strong as a stone.

When a child is born in a family, the entire family observes pollution for thirty days, during which entrance into a temple is forbidden.

Among the Nattar Kalians, children are said to be named at any time after they are a month old. But, among the Puramalai Kalians, a firstborn female child is named on the 7th day, after the ear-boring ceremony has been performed.

According to Mr. H. A. Stuart<sup>6</sup> "the Kalians are nominally Saivites, but in reality their chief deity is Alagar-swami, the god of the great Alagar Kovil twelve miles to the north of the town of Madura. To this temple they make large offerings, and the Swami, called Kalla Alagar, has always been regarded as their own peculiar deity. The men of this caste have the right to drag his car at the car festival, and, when he goes (from Alagar Kovil) on his visit to Madura, he is dressed as a Kalian, exhibits the long ears characteristic of that caste, and carries the boomerang and club, which were of their old favourite weapons. It is whispered that Kalian dacoits invoke his aid when they are setting out on marauding expeditions, and, if they are

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<sup>6</sup> Madras Census Report, 1891.

successful therein, put part of their ill-gotten gains into the offertory (*undial*) box, which is kept at his shrine.

### **jellikattu — bull games**

At the bull games (jellikattu) at Dindigul, the Kilians can alone officiate as priests, and consult the presiding deity. On this occasion they hold quite a Saturnalia of lordship and arrogance over the Brahmans. The best jallikats are to be seen in the Kalian country in Tirumangalam, and next come those in Melur and Madura taluks.

## **29. Kamma.**

Kammas, Kapus or Reddis, Velamas, and Telagas, all four of these large castes closely resemble one another in appearance and customs, and seem to have branched off from one and the same Dravidian stock. Originally soldiers by profession, they are now mainly agriculturists and traders, and some of them in the north are zamindars (land-owners).

Among the Kammas of the Tamil country, the bridegroom can be much younger than the bride. Widow remarriage is not permitted. Widows of the *Goda chatu* section wear white, and those of the *Gampa chatu* section coloured cloths.

### **Marriage rituals**

Prior to the betrothal ceremony, female ancestors, Vigneswara, and the Grama Devata (village deities) are worshipped.

1. A near relation of the future bridegroom proceeds, with a party, to the home of the future bride.
2. When the girl's house is reached, her lap is filled with flowers, coconuts, turmeric, plantains, betel leaves and areca nuts, combs, sandal paste, and coloured powder (kunkumam). The wedding day is then fixed.
3. Marriage is generally celebrated at the house of the bridegroom, but, if it is a case of *kannikadānam* (presenting the girl without claiming the bride's price), at the house of the bride. The bride-price is highest in the Gampa section.
4. On the first day of the marriage rites, the *petta mugada sangyam*, or box-lid ceremony is performed. The new cloths for the bridal couple, five plantains, nuts, and pieces of turmeric, one or two combs, four rupees, and the bride-price in money or jewels, are placed in a box, which is placed near the parents of the contracting couple. The contents of the box are then laid out on the lid, and examined by the *sammandhis* (new relations by marriage).
5. The bride's father gives betel leaves and areca nuts to the father of the bridegroom, saying "The girl is yours, and the money mine." The bridegroom's father hands them back, saying "The girl is mine, and the money yours." This is repeated three times.
6. The officiating purohit (priest) then announces that the man's daughter is to be given in marriage to so-and-so, and the promise is made before the assembled Deva Brahmanas, and in the presence of light, Agni, and the Devatas. This ceremony is binding, and, should the bridegroom perchance die before the bottu (marriage badge) is tied, she becomes, and remains a widow.
7. The milk-post is next set up, the marriage pots are arranged, and the nalangu ceremony is performed. This consists of the anointing of the bridal couple with oil, and smearing the shoulders with turmeric flour, or Acacia Concinna paste. A barber pares the nails of the bridegroom, and simply touches those of the bride with a mango leaf dipped in milk.

8. A small wooden framework, called *tornam*, with cotton threads wound round it, is generally tied to the marriage pandal (booth) by a Tsakali (washerman) not only at a marriage among the Kammas, but also among the Baliyas, Kapus, and Velamas.
9. After the return of the bridal couple from bathing, the bridegroom is decorated, and taken to a specially prepared place within or outside the house, to perform *Viragudimokkadam*, or worship of heroes in their temple. At the spot selected a pandal has been erected, and beneath it three or five bricks, representing the heroes (*viralu*), are set up. The bricks are smeared with turmeric paste, and painted with red dots. In front of the bricks an equal number of pots are placed, and they are worshipped by breaking a coconut, and burning camphor and incense. The bridegroom then prostrates himself before the bricks, and, taking up a sword, cuts some lime fruits, and touches the pots three times. In former days, a goat or sheep was sacrificed. The hero worship, as performed by the Goda section, differs from the above rite as practiced by the Gampa section. Instead of erecting a pandal, the Godas go to a pipal (*Ficus religiosa*) tree, near which one or more daggers are placed. A yellow cotton thread is wound three or five times round the tree, which is worshipped. As a substitute for animal sacrifice, lime fruits are cut. The hero worship concluded, the wrist-threads of cotton and wool (*kankanam*) are tied on the bride and bridegroom, who is taken to the temple after he has bathed and dressed himself in new clothes.
10. On his return to the booth, the purohit lights the sacred fire, and the contracting couple sit side by side on a plank.
11. They then stand, with a screen spread between them, and the bridegroom, with his right big toe on that of the bride, ties the bottu round her neck. The bottu of the Gampas is a concave disc of gold, that of the Godas a larger flat disc.
12. They then go three times round the dais, with the ends of their cloths knotted together.
13. On the following day, the usual nagavali, or sacrifice to the Devas is offered, and a nagavali bottu (small gold disc) tied.
14. All the relations make presents to the bridal pair, who indulge in a mock representation of domestic life.
15. On the third day, pongal (rice) is offered to the pots, and the wristthreads are removed.
16. Among the Kammas, consummation does not take place till three months after the marriage ceremony, as it is considered unlucky to have three heads of a family in a household during the first year of marriage. By the delay, the birth of a child should take place only in the second year, so that, during the first year, there will be only two heads, husband and wife.

### **30. Kammalan**

The Kammalans are made up of five occupational sections, viz., Tattan (goldsmith), Kannan (brass-smith), Tacchan (carpenter), Kal-Tacchan (stone-mason), and Kollan or Karuman (blacksmith).

The Kammalans call themselves *Achari* and *Patthar*, which are equivalent to the Brahmin titles Acharya and Bhatta, and claim a knowledge of the Vedas. Their own priests officiate at marriages, funerals, and on other ceremonial occasions. They wear the sacred thread, which they usually don on the Upakarmam day, though some observe the regular thread investiture ceremony. Most of them claim to be vegetarians. Non-Brahmans do not treat them as Brahmins, and do not salute them with the *namaskaram* (obeisance). Their women, unlike those of other castes, wear the sari over the right shoulder, and are conspicuous by the nose ornament known as the *nattu*.

## Marriage rituals

1. After the matching of horoscopes the parents of the sons make a deposit of money, or *accharapanam*, four, eight, twelve, or twenty-one fanams according to their means, in the presence of the artisans of the village; and a new cloth (kacha) is presented to the bride, who thus becomes the wife of all the sons.
2. All the brother-husbands, dressed in new clothes and decorated with ornaments, with a new palmyra leaf umbrella in the hand, come in procession to the bride's house, where they are received by her parents and friends, and escorted to the marriage pandal.
3. The bride and bridegrooms sit in a row, and the girl's parents give them fruits and sugar. This ceremony is called *mathuram kotukkal*. The party then adjourns to the house of the bridegrooms where a feast is held, in the course of which a ceremony called *pal kotukkal* is performed. The priest of the Kammalans takes some milk in a vessel, and pours it into the mouths of the bride and bridegrooms, who are seated, the eldest on the right, the others in order of seniority, and lastly the bride.
4. During the nuptials the parents of the bride have to present a water-vessel, lamp, eating dish, cooking vessel, spittoon, and a vessel for drawing water from the well.
5. The eldest brother cohabits with the bride on the wedding day, and special days are set apart for each brother.
6. If one of the brothers, on the ground of incompatibility, brings a new wife, she is privileged to cohabit with the other brothers.

## Child-birth rituals

1. In the sixth or eighth month of pregnancy, the woman is taken to her mother's house, where the first confinement takes place.
2. During her stay there the *pulikudi* ceremony is performed. The husbands come, and present their wife with a new cloth. A branch of a tamarind tree is planted in the yard of the house, and, in the presence of the relations, the brother of the pregnant woman gives her *conji* (rice gruel) mixed with the juices of the tamarind, *Spondias mangifera* and Hibiscus, to drink.
3. The customary feast then takes place.
4. A barber woman (*Mannathi*) acts as midwife.
5. On the 14th day after childbirth, the *Thali-kurup* sprinkles water over the woman, and the Mannathi gives her a newlywashed cloth to wear.
6. Purification concludes with a bath on the 15th day.
7. On the 28th day the child-naming ceremony takes place. The infant is placed in its father's lap, and in front of it are set a measure of rice and paddy (unhusked rice) on a plantain leaf.
8. A brass lamp is raised, and a coconut broken. The worship of Ganesa takes place, and the child is named after its grandfather or grandmother.
9. In the 6th month the *choronu* or rice-giving ceremony takes place.
10. In the first year of the life of a boy the ears are pierced, and gold ear-rings inserted. In the case of a girl, the ear-boring ceremony takes place in the 6th or 7th year. The right nostril of girls is also bored, and *mukkuthi* worn therein.

There is a sub-caste called *Kuruppu*, who are their barbers and priests. They officiate as priests at marriage and funeral ceremonies. When they enter the interior shrine of temples for work in connection with the image of a god, or with the temple flagstaff, the Asari and Musari temporarily wear a sacred thread, which is a rare privilege. Their approach within a radius of 24 feet pollutes Brahmins. On the completion of a building, the Marasari, Kallasari and Kollan

perform certain pujas, and sacrifice a fowl or sheep to drive out the demons and devils which are supposed to have haunted the house till then.

The titles of the Malayalam Kammalans are *Panikkan* and *Kanakkan*. The word *Panikkan* means a worker, and *Kanakkan* is the title given to a few old and respectable Kammalas in every village, who superintend the work of others, and receive the highest remuneration. It is their business to sketch the plan of a building, and preside at the *vastubali* rite.

Vastu is believed to represent the deity who presides over the house, and the spirits inhabiting the trees which were felled for the purpose of building it. To appease these supernatural powers, the figure of a vastu-purusha is drawn with powders, and the Kanakkan, after worshipping his tutelary deity Bhadrakali, offers animal sacrifices to him in non Brahmanical houses, and vegetable sacrifices in Brahmin shrines and homes. An old and decrepit carpenter enters within the new building, and all the doors thereof are closed. The Kanakkan from without asks whether he has inspected everything, and is prepared to hold himself responsible for any architectural or structural shortcomings, and he replies in the affirmative. A jubilant cry is then raised by all the assembled Asaris. Few carpenters are willing to undertake this dangerous errand, as it is supposed that the dissatisfied bhomeas are sure to make short work of the man who accepts the responsibility. The figure of vastu-purusha is next effaced, and no one enters the house until the auspicious hour of milk-boiling.

The Malayala Kammalans, unlike the Tamils, are not a thread-wearing class, but sometimes put on a thread when they work in temples or at images. They worship Kali, Matan, and other divinities. Unlike the Tamil Kammalans, they are a polluting class, but, when they have their working tools with them, they are less objectionable. In some places, as in South Travancore, they are generally regarded as higher in rank than the Izhavas, though this is not universal.

The custom,' says Mateer<sup>7</sup>, 'of one woman having several husbands is sometimes practiced by carpenters, stone-masons, and individuals of other castes. Several brothers living together are unable to support a single wife for each, and take one, who resides with them all. The children are reckoned to belong to each brother in succession in the order of seniority.' But this, after all, admits of explanation. If only the *marumakkathayam* system of inheritance is taken, as it should be, as a necessary institution in a society living in troublous times, and among a community whose male members had duties and risks which would not ordinarily permit of the family being perpetuated solely through the male line, and not indicating any paternal uncertainty as some theorists would have it; and if polyandry, which is much more recent than the *marumakkathayam* system of inheritance, is recognised to be the deplorable result of indigence, individual and national, and not of sexual bestiality, there is no difficulty in understanding how a *makkathayam* community can be polyandrous. Further, the manners of the Kammalans lend a negative support to the origin just indicated by the *marumakkathayam* system of inheritance even among the Nayars.

### 31. Kammara.

The Kammaras are the blacksmith section of the Telugu Kamsalas, whose services are in great demand by the cultivator, whose agricultural implements have to be made, and constantly repaired.

A Kamsala may, according to the custom called *menarikam*, claim his maternal uncle's daughter in marriage.

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<sup>7</sup> Madras Census Report, 1901

1. The relations of the bridegroom first go to the bride's parents or guardians, and ask their consent to the proposed union.
2. On a day that is fixed, the relations of the bridegroom go to the bride's house, where all her relations are present with coconuts, a cloth for the bride, betel, turmeric, etc. On the same occasion, the amount of the dower is settled.
3. The bride bathes, and is adorned with flowers, turmeric, etc., and puts on the new cloth brought for her, and she receives the articles which the bridegroom's party have brought.
4. On the auspicious day appointed for the marriage, the relations of the bride go to the bridegroom's house, and fetch him in a palanquin.
5. A Brahmin is sent for, who performs the ceremonies near the dais on which the bride and bridegroom are seated.
6. After the recital of the mantras (hymns) before the young couple, he sends for their uncles, and blesses them.
7. The bridegroom then ties a pilgrim's cloth upon him, places a brass water-pot on his head, holds a torn umbrella in his hands, and starts out from the pandal (booth), and says he is going on a pilgrimage to Benares, when the bride's brother runs after him, and promises that he will give his sister in marriage, swearing thrice to this effect.
8. The bridegroom, satisfied with this promise, abandons his pretended journey, takes off his pilgrim cloths, and gives them, with the umbrella, to the Brahmin.
9. The couple seat themselves on the dais, and the Brahmin, having repeated some mantras, gives a sacred thread to the bridegroom to place over his shoulders.
10. He then blesses the *mangalasutram* (corresponding to the Tamil tali), and hands it to the bridegroom, who ties it round the bride's neck, his sister or other elderly matron seeing that it is properly tied.
11. The bride's father comes forward, and, placing his daughter's right hand in the bridegroom's right, pours water on them. The other ceremonies are exactly similar to those practiced by the Brahmins.

### **32. Kanakkan.**

Kanakkan is a Tamil accountant caste found chiefly in the districts of North Arcot, South Arcot, and Chingleput and their title is invariably given as *Velan*, which is possibly a contracted form of Vellalan. The caste is said to have four divisions, Sir (Sri), Sarattu, Kaikatti, and Solia. The members of the four divisions cannot intermarry. They wear the thread, are teatotaler vegetarians and disavow widow remarriage. Most of them worship Siva, but there are some who are Vaishnavites, and a very few are Lingayats. Their title is *Pillai*.

In their marriage and death ceremonies, the Kanakkans closely follow the Tamil Puranic type as observed by Vellalas.

A young man may marry the daughter of his maternal uncle, but this is not permissible in some places. Marriage is both infant and adult, and may be celebrated by Patunna Kanakkans at any time between the tenth and thirteenth years of a girl, while the Vettuva Kanakkans may celebrate it only after girls attain puberty. They often choose the bridegroom beforehand, with the intention of performing the ceremony after puberty.

#### **Puberty ceremonies**

When a girl attains maturity, she is kept apart in a part of the house on the score of pollution, which lasts for seven days. She bathes on the fourth day. On the morning of the seventh day seven girls are invited, and they accompany the girl to a tank (pond) or a river. They all have

an oil bath, after which they return home. The girl, dressed and adorned in her best, is seated on a plank in a conspicuous part of the home, or in a pandal (booth) put up for the time in front of it. A small vessel full of paddy<sup>8</sup> (nerapara), a coconut, and a lighted lamp, are placed in front of her. Her Enangan begins his musical tunes, and continues for an hour or two, after which he takes for himself the above things, while his wife, who has purified the girl by sprinkling cow-dung water, gets a few annas for her service.

It is now, at the lucky moment, that the girl's mother ties the tali round her neck. The seven girls are fed, and given an anna each. The relations, and other castemen who are invited, are treated to a sumptuous dinner. The guests as they depart give a few annas each to the chief host, to meet the expenses of the ceremony and the feast. This old custom of mutual help prevails largely among the Pulayas also. The girl is now privileged to enter the kitchen, and discharge her domestic duties. The parents of the bridegroom contribute to the ceremony a small packet of jaggery (crude sugar), a muri (piece of cloth), some oil and incha (Acacia Intsia), the soft fibre of which is used as soap. This contribution is called *bhendu nyayam*. If the girl is married before puberty, and she attains her maturity during her stay with her husband, the ceremony is performed in his home, and the expenses are met by the parents of the bridegroom, while those of the bride contribute a share.

### Marriage Rituals

1. The auspicious day for the wedding is settled, and the number of guests to be invited is fixed. There is also an entertainment for those that are assembled. A similar one is also held at the home of the bridegroom-elect.
2. On the day chosen for the celebration of the marriage, the bridegroom, neatly dressed, and with a knife and stylus, sets out from his home, accompanied by his parents, uncles, other relatives, and men of his village, to the home of the bride, where they are welcomed, and seated on mats in a pandal (booth) put up for the occasion.
3. The bride, somewhat veiled, is taken to the pandal and seated along with the bridegroom, and to both of them a sweet preparation of milk, sugar and plantain fruits is given, to establish the fact that they have become husband and wife.
4. There is no tali-tying then.
5. The guests are treated to a sumptuous dinner. As they take leave of the chief host, each of them pays a few annas to meet the expenses of the ceremony.
6. The bridegroom, with the bride and those who have accompanied him, returns to his home, where some ceremonies are gone through, and the guests are well fed.
7. The bridegroom and bride are seated together, and a sweet preparation is given, after which the parents and the maternal uncle of the former, touching the heads of both, says "My son, my daughter, my nephew, my niece," meaning that the bride has become a member of their family.
8. They throw rice on their heads as a token of their blessings on them. After this, the couple live together as man and wife. In some places, marriage is performed by proxy.

## 33. Kapu/Reddis

The Kapus or Reddis are one of the largest castes in South India and are the great caste of cultivators, farmers, and landowners in the Telugu country and next to the Brahmins are the leaders of the Hindu Society.

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<sup>8</sup> Unhusked rice.

## Marriage rituals

In their marriage ceremonial, the Panta Reddis of the South Arcot and Salem districts appear to follow the Brahmanical form. In the Telugu country, however, it is as follows.

1. On the *pradhanam* or betrothal day, the party of the bridegroom-elect go in procession under a canopy (*ulladam*), attended by musicians, and matrons carrying betel, coconuts, date and plantain fruits, and turmeric on plates.
2. As soon as they have arrived at the courtyard of the future bride's house, she seats herself on a plank.
3. A Brahmin purohit moulds a little turmeric paste into a conical mass representing Vigneswara (the elephant god), and it is worshipped by the girl, in front of whom the trays brought by the women are placed. She is presented with a new cloth, which she puts on, and a near female relation gives her three handfuls of areca nuts, a few betel leaves, and the bride-price and jewels tied up in a turmeric-dyed cloth. All these things the girl deposits in her lap.
4. The fathers of the contracting couple then exchange betel, with the customary formula. "The girl is yours, and the money mine" and "The money is yours, and the girl mine."
5. Early on the wedding morning the bridegroom's party, accompanied by a purohit and washerman (*Tsakala*), go to fetch the bride from her house.
6. The milk-post is set up, and is usually made of a branch of *Mimusops hexandra* or, in the Tamil country, *Odina Wodier*. On the conclusion of the marriage rites, the *Odina* post is planted in the backyard, and, if it takes root and flourishes, it is regarded as a happy omen for the newly married couple.
7. A small party of Kapus, taking with them some food and gingelly (*Sesamum*) oil, proceed in procession beneath a canopy to the house of a washerman (*Tsakala*), in order to obtain from him a framework made of bamboo or sticks over which cotton threads are wound (*dhornam*), and the Ganga idol, which is kept in his custody. The food is presented to him, and some rice poured into his cloth. Receiving these things, he says that he cannot find the *dhornam* and idol without a torch-light, and demands gingelly oil. This is given to him, and the Kapus return with the washerman carrying the *dhornam* and idol to the marriage house.
8. When they arrive at the entrance thereto, red coloured food, coloured water (*arathi*) and incense are waved before the idol, which is taken into a room, and placed on a settle of rice. The washerman is then asked to tie the *dhornam* to the *pandal* (marriage booth) or roof of the house, and he demands some paddy, which is heaped up on the ground. Standing thereon, he ties the *dhornam*.
9. The people next proceed to the houses of the goldsmith and potter, and bring back the *bottu* (marriage badge) and thirteen marriage pots, on which threads (*kankanam*) are tied before they are removed.
10. A Brahmin purohit ties the thread round one pot, and the Kapus round the rest. The pots are placed in the room along with the Ganga idol.
11. The *bottu* is tied round the neck of a married woman who is closely related to the bridegroom.
12. The contracting couple are seated with the ends of their clothes tied together.
13. A barber comes with a cup of water, and a tray containing rice dyed with turmeric is placed on the floor. A number of men and women then scatter rice over the heads of the bride and bridegroom, and, after waving a silver or copper coin in front of them, throw it into the barber's cup.
14. The barber then pares the finger and toe nails of the bridegroom, and touches the toe nails of the bride with his razor. They then go through the *nalangu* ceremony, being

smearred with oil and mung paste, and bathe. After the bath the bridegroom, dressed in his wedding finery, proceeds to the temple. As he leaves the house, a Madiga hands him a pair of shoes, which he puts on. The Madiga is given food placed in a basket on eleven leaves.

15. At the temple worship is performed, and a Bhatrazu (bard and panegyrist), who has accompanied the bridegroom, ties a *bashingham* (chaplet) on his forehead. From this moment the Bhatrazu must remain with the bridegroom, as his personal attendant, painting the sectarian marks on his forehead, and carrying out other functions. In like manner, a Bhogam woman (dedicated prostitute) waits on the bride.
16. From the temple the bridegroom and his party come to the marriage pandal, and, after food and other things have been waved to avert the evil eye, he enters the house.
17. On the threshold his brother-in-law washes his feet, and sits thereon till he has extracted some money or a cow as a present.
18. The bridegroom then goes to the marriage dais, whither the bride is conducted, and stands facing him, with a screen interposed between them.
19. Vigneswara is worshipped, and the wrist threads (*kankanam*) are tied on, the bridegroom placing his right foot on the left foot of the bride.
20. The bottu is removed from the neck of the married woman, passed round to be blessed, and tied by the bridegroom on the bride's neck.
21. The bride is lifted up by her maternal uncle, and the couple sprinkle each other with rice.
22. The screen is removed, and they sit side by side with the ends of their cloths tied together.
23. Rice is thrown over them by those assembled, and they are made to gaze at the pole star (*Arundati*). The proceedings terminate by the pair searching for a finger-ring and pap-bowl in one of the pots filled with water.
24. On the second day there is feasting, and the *nalangu* ceremony is again performed.
25. On the following day, the bridegroom and his party pretend to take offence at some thing which is done by the bride's people, who follow them with presents, and a reconciliation is speedily effected.
26. Towards evening, a ceremony called *nagavali*, or sacrifice to the Devatas, is performed. The bridal pair, with the Bhatrazu and Bhogam woman, occupy the dais.
27. The Brahman purohit places on a tray a conical mass of turmeric representing Vigneswara, to whom puja (worship) is done.
28. He then places a brass vessel (*kalasam*) filled with water, and with its mouth closed by a cocoanut, on a settle of rice spread on a tray. The *kalasam* is worshipped as representing the Devatas. The Brahman invokes the blessing of all the Gods and Devatas, saying "Let Siva bless the pair," "Let Indra bless the pair," etc.
29. A near relative of the bridegroom sits by the side of the purohit with plenty of betel leaves and areca nuts. After each God or Devata has been mentioned, he throws some of the nuts and leaves into a tray, and, as these are the perquisites of the purohit, he may repeat the same name three or four times. The Kapu then makes playful remarks about the greed of the purohit, and, amid much laughter, refuses to put any more leaves or nuts in the tray.
30. This ceremonial concluded, the near relations of the bridegroom stand in front of him, and, with hands crossed, hold over his head two brass plates, into which a small quantity of milk is poured.
31. Fruit, betel leaves and areca nuts (*pansupari*) are next distributed in a recognised order of precedence. The first presentation is made to the house god, the second to the family priest, and the third to the Brahmin purohit.

32. If a Pakanati Kapu is present, he must receive his share immediately after the Brahman, and before other Kapus, Kammass, and others. Before it is presented to each person, the leaves and nuts are touched by the bridegroom, and the hand of the bride is placed on them by the Bhogam woman.

### 34. Kelasi.

Kelasi is the barber caste of South Canara. The barbers of South Canara are of different castes or sub-castes according to the language they speak, or the people for whom they operate. Thus there are (i) the Tulu Kelsi (Kutchidaye, man of the hair) or Bhandari; (2) the Konkani Kelsi or Mhallo, who must have migrated from the north; (3) the Hindustani Kelsi or Hajams; (4) the Lingayat Kelsi or Hadapavada (man of the wallet); (5) the Mappilla (Moplah) barber Vasa; (6) the Malayali barber Kavudiyan;

Bridegrooms have to pay for their brides. Widows are allowed, and, when young, encouraged to remarry.

Horoscopes are not consulted for the suitability or future prosperity of a match, but the day and hour, or lagnam of a marriage are always fixed by a Brahmin priest. The marriage lasts for three days, and takes place in the house of the bridegroom.

#### Marriage rituals

1. The marriage ceremony takes place in a pandal (booth) on a raised or conspicuous place adorned with various figures or mandala. The pair are made to sit on a bench, and rice is sprinkled on their heads.
2. A barber then shaves the chin and forehead of the bridegroom, the hair border being in the form of a broken pointed arch converging upwards.
3. He also touches the bride's cheeks with the razor, with the object of removing what is called *monetha kale*, the stain on the face. The full import of this ceremony is not clear, but the barbers look upon the act as purificatory. If a girl has not come of age at the time of marriage, it is done on the occasion of the nuptials. If she has, the barber, in addition to touching the cheeks with the razor, goes to her house, sprinkles some water over her with a betel leaf, and makes her touch the pot in which rice is to be cooked in her husband's house.
4. At the bridegroom's house, before the assembled guests, elders, and headman of the caste, the man and the girl are linked together in the marriage bond by having water (*dhāre*) poured on their joined hands.
5. Next, the right hands of the pair being joined (*kaipattavane*), the bridegroom leads the bride to her future home.

### 36. Khatri.

The Khatrias are silk weavers, who in manners, customs, and language are akin to Patvegars, but they do not intermarry with them, although the two castes eat together. The Khatrias claim to be Kshatriyas,

The remarriage of widows is permitted, but a divorced woman may not marry again so long as her husband is alive. A man may not marry the widow of his brother, or of an agnate. The custom of *menarikam*, by which a man may marry his maternal uncle's daughter, is prohibited.

## Marriage rituals

The marriage ceremonies last over seven days.

1. On the first day, the deity Bharkodev, who is represented by seven quartz pebbles placed in a row on plantain leaves, is worshipped with offerings of fruit, etc., and a goat is sacrificed. The blood which flows from its cut neck is poured into a vessel containing cooked rice, of which seven balls are made, and offered to the pebbles. Towards evening some of the rice is thrown to the four cardinal points of the compass, in order to conciliate evil spirits.
2. On the second day, the house is thoroughly cleansed with cow-dung water, and the walls are whitewashed. The eating of meat is forbidden until the marriage ceremonies are concluded.
3. The third day is devoted to the erection of the marriage pandal (booth) and milk-post, and the worship of female ancestors (savasne). Seven married women are selected, and presented with white *ravikes* (bodices) dyed with turmeric. After bathing, they are sumptuously fed. Before the feast, the bridegroom's and sometimes the bride's mother, goes to a well, tank (pond) or river, carrying on a tray a new woman's cloth, on which a silver plate with a female figure embossed on it is placed. Another silver plate of the same kind, newly made, is brought by a goldsmith, and the two are worshipped, and then taken to the house, where they are kept in a box.
4. The bridegroom and his party go in procession through the streets in which their fellow castemen live. When they reach the house of the bride, her mother comes out and waves coloured water to avert the evil eye, washes the bridegroom's eyes with water, and presents him with betel and a vessel filled with milk.
5. The bride is then conducted to the bridegroom's house, where she takes her seat on a decorated plank, and a gold or silver ornament called sari or kanti is placed on her neck. She is further presented with a new cloth.
6. A Brahman purohit then writes the names of the contracting parties, and the date of their marriage, on two pieces of palm leaf or paper, which he hands over to their fathers.
7. The day closes with the performance of gondala puja, for which a device (muggu) is made on the ground with yellow, red, and white powders. A brass vessel is set in the centre thereof, and four earthen pots are placed at the corners. Puja (worship) is done, and certain stanzas are recited amid the beating of a pair of large cymbals.
8. On the fourth day, the bridal couple bathe, and the bridegroom is invested with the sacred thread. They then go to the place where the metal plates representing the ancestors are kept, with a cloth thrown over the head like a hood, and some milk and cooked rice are placed near the plates.
9. On their way back they, in order to avert the evil eye, place their right feet on a pair of small earthen plates tied together, and placed near the threshold.
10. The bride's mother gives the bridegroom some cakes and milk, after partaking of which he goes in procession through the streets, and a further ceremony for averting the evil eye is performed in front of the bride's house. This over, he goes to the pandal, where his feet are washed by his father-in-law, who places in his hands a piece of plantain fruit, over which his mother-in-law pours some milk.
11. The bride and bridegroom then go into the house, where the groom ties the tali on the neck of the bride. During the tying ceremony, the couple are separated by a cloth screen, of which the lower end is lifted up. The screen is removed, and they sit facing each other with their bashingams (forehead chaplets) in contact, and rice is thrown over their heads by their relations.

12. The Brahman hands the contracting couple the wrist-threads (kankanams), which they tie on. These threads are, among most castes, tied at an earlier stage in the marriage ceremonies.
13. On the fifth day, seven betel nuts are placed in a row on a plank within the pandal, round which the bride and bridegroom go seven times. At the end of each round, the groom lifts the right foot of the bride, and sweeps off one of the nuts.
14. For every marriage, a fee of Rs. 12-5-0 must be paid to the headman of the caste, and the money thus accumulated is spent on matters such as the celebration of festivals, which affect the entire community. If the fee is not paid, the bride and bridegroom are not permitted to go round the plank the seventh time.
15. On the sixth day, the bride receives presents from her family, and there is a procession at night.
16. On the last day of the ceremonies, the bride is handed over to her mother-in-law by her mother, who says " I am giving you a melon and a knife. Deal with them as you please."
17. The bride is taken inside the house by the mother-in-law and shown some pots containing rice into which she dips her right hand, saying that they are full. The mother-in-law then presents her with a gold finger-ring, and the two eat together as a sign of their new relationship.

### **36. Komati.**

The Komatis form the great trading caste of the South, and are found in almost all the districts thereof. They are further found in the Mysore State, Bombay Presidency, Berar, Central Provinces, and as far north-west as Baroda.

The Komatis are a highly organised caste. In each place where they are settled there is a Pedda Setti, who, among the Kalinga Komatis, is known as Puri Setti or Senapathi. Among the latter, there is also a headman for several villages, who is styled Kularaju or Vaisyaraju. Each Pedda Setti is assisted by a Mummadi Setti, who assembles the castemen for the settlement of important questions, by fines, excommunication, etc. There is further a caste guru Bhaskaracharya, whose duties are more religious than social. Komatis have recourse to the established Courts of Justice only as a last resort.

The Komatis are, broadly speaking, divided into two great sections, called Gavara and Kalinga. The former live as far north of Vizianagram, and are then replaced by the latter.

A Komati can claim his maternal uncle's daughter in marriage, in accordance with the custom of menarikam.

#### **Marriage Ceremonies.**

A Brahman purohit officiates. Each purohit has a number of houses attached to his circle, and his sons usually divide the circle among themselves on partition, like any other property. Polygamy is permitted, but only if the first wife produces no offspring. The taking of a second wife is assented to by the first wife, who, in some cases, believes that, as the result of the second marriage, she herself will beget children. Two forms of marriage ceremonial are recognised, one called *puranokta*, according to long established custom, and the other called *vedokta*, which follows the Vedic ritual of Brahmins.

1. In Madras, on the first day of a marriage, the contracting couple have an oil bath, and the bridegroom goes through the *upanayana* (sacred thread investiture) ceremony. He then pretends to go off to Kasi (Benares), and is met by the bride's party, who take him

to the bride's house, where the *mangalyam* is tied by the bridegroom before the *homam* (sacrificial fire).

2. On the second day, *homam* is continued, and a caste dinner is given.
3. On the third day, the *gotra puja* is performed.
4. On the fourth day, *homam* is repeated, and, on the following day, the pair are seated on a swing, and rocked to and fro. Presents, called *katnam*, are made to the bridegroom, but no *voli* (brideprice) is paid.

### **Puranokta form of marriage**

1. Ancestors are invoked on the first day.
2. On the 2nd day, the *ashtavarga* is observed, and the bride and bridegroom worship eight of the principal gods of the Hindu Pantheon. On this day, the *pandal* (marriage booth) is erected.
3. On the 3rd day, the *māngalyam* is tied, sometimes by the officiating Brahman purohit, and sometimes by the bridegroom.
4. On the 4th day, the Brahmans of the place are honoured,
5. On the 5th day, in most places, a festival is held in honour of the goddess Kanyaka Parameswari. The bride and bridegroom's mothers go to a tank (pond) or river with copper vessels, and bring back water at the head of a procession. The vessels are placed in a special *pandal*, and worshipped with flowers, anilin and turmeric powders. Finally, coconuts are broken before them.
6. On the 6th day, or on the same day if the marriage ceremonies conclude thereon, the festival in honour of the Bālanagaram boys.. Five boys and girls are bathed, decked with jewelry, and taken in procession to the local temple, whence they are conducted to the bride's house, where they are fed.
7. On the 7th day, the ceremony called *thotlu puja* is performed. A doll is placed in a cradle connected with two poles, and rocked to and fro. The bridegroom gives the doll into the hands of the bride, saying that he has to go on a commercial trip. The bride hands it back to him, with the remark that she has to attend to her kitchen work.
8. On the 8th day, the bridal couple are taken in procession, and the bride and bridegroom bathe together, go to the local temple, and return.
9. Then on the 9th day five girls bathe, the five posts of the marriage *pandal* are worshipped, and the *kankanams* (wrist-threads) are removed from the wrists of the newly-married couple.

Widow remarriage is not permitted among any sections of the caste, which is very strict in the observance of this rule. Except among the Saivites, a widow is not compelled to have her head shaved, or give up wearing jewelry, or the use of betel. In the south of the Madras Presidency, if a little girl becomes a widow, her *mangalyam* is not removed, and her head is not shaved till she reaches maturity. Vaishnava widows always retain their hair.

In the Northern Circars, and part of the Ceded Districts, the Vedokta form of marriage now prevails, and its usage is spreading into the southern districts of Mysore. Further, the Komatis perform most of their ceremonies in the same form. This, it is contended, is a latter day development by some of the more conservative members of the caste, but it is stated by those who follow it that it is allowed to them by the Hindu sastras (law books), as they are Vaisyas.

As already stated, there are among the Komatis ordinary Saivites, who daub themselves with ashes; Lingayats or Vira Saivas, who wear the *linga* in a silver casket; Ramanuja Vaishnavites;

Chaitanya Vaishnavas, who are confined to the Kalinga section; and Madhvas, who put on the sect marks of Madhva Brahmins.

### 37. Konga Vellala

Vellalas are cultivators. Their men can generally be recognized by the number of large gold rings which they wear in the lobes of the ears, and the pendant (*murugu*), which hangs from the upper part of the ears. Their women have a characteristic tali (marriage badge) of large size, strung on to a number of cotton threads, which are not, as among other castes, twisted together.

#### Marriage rituals

1. The betrothal ceremony takes place at the house of the future bride, in the presence of both the maternal uncles, and consists in tying fruit and betel leaf in the girl's cloth.
2. On the wedding day, the bridegroom is shaved, and an *Arumaikkari* pours water over him. If he has a sister, the ceremony of betrothing his prospective daughter to her son, is performed.
3. He then goes on horseback, carrying some fruit and a pestle, to a stone planted for the occasion, and called the *nattukal*, which he worships. The stone is supposed to represent the Kongu king, and the pestle the villagers, and the whole ceremony is said to be a relic of a custom of the ancient Kongu people, to which the caste formerly belonged, which required them to obtain the sanction of the king for every marriage.
4. On his return from the *nattukal*, balls of white and coloured rice are taken round the bridegroom, to ward off the evil eye. His mother then gives him three mouthfuls of food, and eats the remainder herself, to indicate that henceforth she will not provide him with meals.
5. A barber then blesses him, and he repairs on horseback to the bride's house, where he is received by one of her party similarly mounted.
6. His ear-rings are put in the bride's ears, and the pair are carried on the shoulders of their maternal uncles to the *nattukal*. On their return thence, they are touched by an *Arumaikkaran* with a betel leaf dipped in oil, milk and water.
7. The tali (marriage badge) is worshipped and blessed, and the *Arumaikkaran* ties it on her neck.
8. The barber then pronounces an elaborate blessing,

### 38. Malayali Kshatriyas

The indigenous Kshatriyas of Kerala are divided into four well distinguishable clans, viz., the Koil Pandala, the Raja, the Tampan; and the Tirumulppad.

Tampan is a corruption of Tampuran, the latter being a title directly applied to the Rajas, while the term Tirumulppad, in its literal sense, conveys the idea of those who wait before kings. Women are known as Tumpurattis in the first two, as Tampattis in the third, and Nampishthatiris in the fourth division.

The Malayala Kshatriyas are as a class learned. Both men and women are, in the main, accomplished Sanskrit scholars. Mr. Kerla Varma, c.s.i., Valiyakoil Tampuran, a finished poet and an accomplished patron of letters, and Mr. Ravi Varma, the talented artist, are both Koil Tampurans.

The Malayala Kshatriyas resemble the Brahmans in their food and drink. The males dress like the Nambutiris, while the dress and ornaments of the women are like those of other classes in Malabar

The Tampans and Tirumalppads, besides being landlords and agriculturists, are personal servants of the ruling families of Kerala, the latter holding this position to even a greater extent than the former.

As a consequence, while the Koil Tampurattis are married to Nambutiri husbands, the Koil Tampurans themselves take wives from the families of Rajas. Rajas may keep Nayar or Samanta ladies as mistresses, the same being the case with the Tampans and Tirumalppads also. The Ranis of Pantalam take Nambutiri husbands, while Tampan and Tirumalppad women live with any class of Brahmans.

The Tampan and Tirumalppad women, as also those of the Pantalam family, have their talis (marriage badge) tied by Arya-pattars. Remarriage of widows is permitted. Polygamy is rare. Divorce may take place at the will of either party, and prevails largely in practice.

### Wedding Rituals

1. Some time before the auspicious hour for the marriage of a Koil Tampuratti, the Brahmanipattu, or recitation of certain Puranic songs by a female of the Brahmani caste, begins.
2. Four lighted lamps are placed in the middle of the hall, with a fifth dedicated to Ganapati in the centre.
3. While these songs are being sung, the bride appears in the *tattu* dress with a brass *minu* and a bunch of flowers in her hand, and sits on a wooden seat kept ready for the purpose. The songs generally relate to the conception of Devaki, and the birth of Krishna.
4. Then a Nayar of the Illam clan waves a pot containing coconut, flowers, burning wicks, etc., before the bride, after which she rises to wash her feet.
5. At this point the bridegroom arrives, riding on an elephant, with a sword in his hand, and the procession is conducted with much ceremony and ostentation.
6. He then bathes, and two pieces of cloth, to be worn by him thereafter, are touched by the bride. Wearing them, the bridegroom approaches the bride, and presents her with a suit of clothes known as the *mantrakoti*.
7. One of the clothes is worn as a *tattu*, and with the other the whole body is covered.
8. The mother of the bride gives her a brass mirror and a garland, both of which she takes in her hand to the altar where the marriage is to be performed.
9. After the *punyahavācana*, accompanied by a few preliminary homas by the Nambutiri family priest, the first item in the ceremony, known as *mukhadarsana* or seeing each other, begins.
10. The bride then removes the cloth covering her body.
11. The next events are *udakapurva*, *panigrahana*, and *mangalyadharana*, which are respectively the presentation by the bride of water to the bridegroom, his taking her hand in token of the union, and tying the tali round the neck of the bride.
12. The next item is the *saptapadi* (seven feet),
13. The last *diksha-viruppu*, peculiar to the Malayalam Kshatriyas. A particular room is gaily decorated, and a long piece of white cotton cloth is spread on the floor. Upon this a black carpet is spread, and a lighted lamp, which should never be extinguished, placed in the vicinity. The bride has to remain in this room throughout the marriage.

On the marriage night commences the *aupasana*, or joint sacrifice to the fire. On the fourth day are the *mangalasnana* or auspicious bath, and procession through the town. On that night consummation takes place.

The procession of the bridegroom (*mappilapurappat*) to the house of the bride is a noticeable item. The brother of the bride receives him at the gate, and, after washing his feet, informs him that he may bathe and marry the girl.

The *udaku-purva* rite is performed by the brother himself.

Every rite is performed according to the method prescribed by Bodhayana among the Koil Tampurans and Rajas, the family at Pantalam alone following the directions of Asvalayana.

On the fourth day, the contracting couple bathe, and wear clothes previously dipped in turmeric water.

At night, while the Brahmani song is going on, they sit on a plank, where jasmine flowers are put on, and the goddess Bhagavathi is worshipped.

The bride's maternal uncle ties a sword round her loins, which is immediately untied by the bridegroom in token of the fact that he is her future supporter.

*Panchamehani* is a peculiar rite on the fifth day, when an atti (*Ficus*, sp.) tree is decorated, and an offering of food made on the grass before it. The couple also make a pretence of catching fish.

In modern times, the Pantalam Rajas do not patronise the songs of the Brahmani, and, among them, the *panchamehani* is conspicuous by its absence.

Women are in theory the real owners of property, though in practice the eldest male has the management of the whole.

There is no division of property, but, in some cases, certain estates are specially allotted for the maintenance of specific members.

The authorities of the Malayala Kshatriyas in all matters of social dispute are the Nambutiri Vaidikas. When a girl reaches puberty, she is kept in a room twelve feet apart from the rest for a period of three days. On the fourth day, after a bath, she puts on a new cloth, and walks, with a brass mirror in her hand, to her house. Among the Kolattunad Rajas there are a few additional rites, including the Brahmani's song. The pumsavana and simanta are performed by the family priest.

On the birth of a child, the jatakarma is performed, when women mix honey and clarified butter with gold, to be given to the child. On the twelfth day, the Nambutiri priest performs the namakarna, after a purifying ceremony which terminates the birth pollution. The eldest child is generally named Raja Raja Varma. Udaya Varma and Martanda Varma are names found among the Rajas, but absent among the Koil Tampurans.

The annaprasana and nishkramana are performed consecutively on the same day. The mother takes the child to the foot of a *jak* (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) tree, and, going thrice round it, touches it with the leg of the child, and then dips a golden ring in the *payasa*, and applies it to the child's lips. The same act is then repeated by the maternal uncle, father, and next of kin. The Yatrakali is attended with much eclat during the night.

The upanayana, or investiture with the sacred thread, takes place as late as the sixteenth year. As a preliminary rite on the same day, the chaula or tonsure ceremony is performed. It is formally done by the Nambutiri priest in the capacity of guru or preceptor, and left to be completed by the Maran. The priest then invests the boy with the thread, and, with the

sacrificial fire as lord and witness, initiates him into the Gayatri prayer. All Kshatriyas are obliged to repeat this prayer ten times morning and evening. On the fourth day, the youth Hstens to a few Vaidic hymns recited by the priest. There is not the prolonged course of discipline of a Brahmanical Brahmachari, such as the Nambutiris so religiously observe. The samavartana, or completion of the pupilage ceremony, takes place on the fourth day. The ceremony of proceeding to Benares, the pre-eminent seat of learning in ancient days, which is the natural after-event of the Vaidic pupilage, is then gone through, as in the case of Brahmans. A would-be father-in-law intercedes, and requests the snataka to bless his daughter, and settle in life as a grihastha.

The Nambutiri priest then reminds the boy of his duty as a Kshatriya, and gives him a sword as a symbol of his pre-ordained function in society. He then becomes a grihastha, and may chew betel leaf. The Saivite panchakshara, and the Vaishnavite ashtakshara are also taught, and are invariably recited after the performance of the daily duties. For girls only the chaula is performed, and that along with her marriage. On the occasion of birthdays, the family priest performs the *ayushya homa*, and *shashtipurti*, or celebration of the sixtieth birthday, is also observed as an important religious occasion. The funeral ceremonies are almost the same as those of Nambutiris.

When a Koil Tampuran dies, he is placed on the bare floor, some hymns being recited in his ears.

The corpse is placed on a stretcher made of plantain stems, and the head is touched with a razor in token of shaving. It is bathed, covered with a new cloth, and decorated with flowers and sandal paste. Kusa grass is received at the hands of a Maran.

The funeral rites are performed by the nephews. Pollution is observed for eleven days and nights. A religious vow is observed for a year. The offering to the spirit of the deceased is not in the form of cooked food, but of presents to Brahmans.

All the Malayala Kshatriyas are adherents of the Yajur-veda. The anniversary of maternal grandmothers, and even sisters is punctiliously observed. If a maternal aunt or grandaunt dies without children, their sraddhas must be performed as for the rest.

The Malayala Kshatriyas hold rank next to the Brahmans, and above the Ilayatus. They are permitted to take their meal in the same row with the Brahmans, and receive prasada from the temples directly from the priest, and standing at the right side of the inner gate.

The Kshatriya community is an intermediate caste between the Brahmin (Namburi) and the Sudra (Nair) classes, and has affinities to both; to the former in matters of ablution, ceremonies, food and drink, and to the latter in those of real matrimonial relations and inheritance, i.e., the constitution and propagation of the family ....

### **39. Kurubas**

The titles of members of this pastoral caste are Gauda or Heggade, and the more prosperous go by the name of Kaudikiaru, a corruption of Gaudikiaru. Many, at the present day, have adopted the title *Nayakkan*

#### **Puberty Rituals**

When a girl reaches puberty, she is kept in a corner of the house for eight days. On the ninth day she bathes, and food is taken to her by an old woman of the house. Kuruba women are invited to be present in the evening. The girl, covered with a blanket, is seated on a raised place. Those assembled throw rice over her feet, knees, shoulders, and head, and into her lap.

Coloured turmeric and lime water is then waved three or five times round her, and ravikes (body-cloths) are presented to her.

### Wedding Rituals

For the marriage ceremony, the services of the guru, a Jangam, or a Brahmin priest, are called into requisition. When a marriage has been settled between the parents of the young people, visits are exchanged by the two families.

1. On a fixed day, the contracting couple sit on a blanket at the bride's house, and five women throw rice over five parts of the body as at the menstrual ceremony. Betel leaves and areca-nuts are placed before them, of which the first portion is set apart for the god Birappa, the second for the Gauda, another for the house god, and so on up to the tenth. A general distribution then takes place
2. The ceremony, which is called *sakshi vilya* or witness betel-leaf, is brought to a conclusion by waving in front of the couple a brass vessel, over the mouth of which five betel leaves and a ball of ashes are placed.
3. They then prostrate themselves before their guru.
4. Early on the wedding morning, the bridal couple are anointed and bathed.
5. A space, called the *irani* square, is marked out by placing at the four corners a pot filled with water. Round each pot a cotton thread is wound five times.
6. Similar thread is also tied to the milk-post of the marriage pandal (booth), which is made of pipal [*Ficus religiosa*] wood.
7. Within the square a pestle, painted with red and white stripes, is placed, on which the bride and bridegroom, with two young girls, seat themselves.
8. Rice is thrown over them, and to each a new cloth is given, in which they dress themselves, and the wrist-thread (*kankanam*) is tied on all four.
9. Presents are given by relations, and *arati* (red water) is waved round them.
10. The bridegroom is decorated with a *bashingam* (chaplet of flowers), and taken on a bull to a Hanuman shrine along with his best man. Coconuts, camphor, and betel are given to the priest as an offering to the god.
11. According to another account, both bride and bridegroom go to the shrine, where a matron ties on their foreheads chaplets of flowers, pearls, etc.
12. At the marriage house a dais has been erected close to the milk-post, and covered with a blanket, on which a mill-stone and basket filled with cholam (*Andropogon Sorghum*) are placed.
13. The bridegroom, standing with a foot on the stone and the bride with a foot on the basket, the gold tali, after it has been touched by five married women, is tied round the bride's neck by the officiating priest, while those assembled throw rice over the happy pair, and bless them.
14. According to another version, a bed-sheet is interposed as a screen, so that the bride and bridegroom cannot see each other.
15. On the three following days, the newly-married couple sit on the blanket, and rice is thrown over them.
16. The couple go on the third day to the Hanuman temple, where married women throw rice over them.
17. On the fifth morning, they are once more anointed and washed within the *irani* square, and, towards evening, the bride's father hands her over to her husband, saying:— "She was till this time a member of my clan and house. Now I hand her over to your clan and house."
18. On the night of the sixth day, a ceremony called *booma idothu* (food placing) is performed. A large metal vessel (*gangalam*) is filled with rice, ghi (clarified butter),

curds, and sugar. Round this some of the relations of the bride and bridegroom sit, and finish off the food. The number of those who partake thereof must be an odd one, and they must eat the food as quickly as possible. If anything goes wrong with them, while eating or afterwards, it is regarded as an omen of impending misfortune.

#### 40. Lingayat

The Lingayats have been aptly described as a peaceable race of Hindu Puritans. Their religion is a simple one. They acknowledge only one God, Siva, and reject the other two persons of the Hindu Triad. They reverence the Vedas, but disregard the later commentaries on which the Brahmans rely.

##### Betrothal

The parties to a marriage have no freedom of choice. It is arranged for them by their parents or by the elders of their family, who come to an agreement as to the amount of teravu that should be paid to the bride's family. In the case of a second marriage, the amount is double.

The presents to the bridegroom generally consist of a pair of cloths, a turban, and a gold ring. These gifts are not compulsory, and their amount and value depend upon the circumstances of the bride's family.

1. For a betrothal, the bridegroom's family come to the bride's house on an auspicious day in company with a Jangam. They bring a *sari* (woman's cloth), a *kuppasa* (blouse), two coconuts, five pieces of turmeric, five limes, betel leaf and areca nut. They also bring flowers for the *susaka* (a cap of flowers made for the bride), gold and silver ornaments, and sugar and areca nut for distribution to guests.
2. The bride puts on the new cloths with the ornaments and flowers, and sits on a folded blanket, on which fantastic devices have been made with rice.
3. Some married women fill her lap with coconuts and other things brought by the bridegroom's party. Music is played, and the women sing. Five of them pick up the rice on the kumbli, and gently drop it on to the bride's knees, shoulders and head. They do this three times with both hands.
4. Sugar and betel are then distributed, and one of the bride's family proclaims the fact that the bride has been given to the bridegroom.
5. One of the bridegroom's family then states that the bride is accepted.
6. That night the bride's family feed the visitors on sweet things; dishes made of hot or pungent things are strictly prohibited.

##### Wedding Rituals

The marriage ceremony, which often takes place some years later, occupies from one to four days according to circumstances.

1. In the case of a four-day marriage, the first day is spent in worshipping ancestors.
2. On a second day, rice and oil are sent to the local mutt, and oil alone to the relatives. New pots are brought with much shouting, and deposited in the god's room.
3. A pandal (booth) is erected, and the bridegroom sits under it side by side with a married female relative, and goes through a performance which is called *Surige*.
4. An enclosure is made round them with cotton thread passed ten times round four earthen pitchers placed at the four corners. Five married women come with boiled

- water, and wash off the oil and turmeric, with which the bride and the bridegroom and his companion have been anointed.
5. The matrons then clothe them with the new cloths offered to the ancestors on the first day.
  6. After some ceremonial, the thread forming the enclosure is removed, and given to a Jangam.
  7. The *Surige* being now over, the bridegroom and his relatives are taken back to the god's room.
  8. The bride and her relatives are now taken to the pandal, and another *Surige* is gone through.
  9. When this is over, the bride is taken to her room, and is decorated with flowers.
  10. At the same time, the bridegroom is decorated in the god's room, and, mounting on a bullock, goes to the village temple, where he offers a coconut. A chaplet of flowers called *bashingam* is tied to his forehead, and he returns to the house.
  11. In the god's room a *pancha-kalasam*, consisting of five metal vases with betel and *vibhomei* (sacred ashes) has been arranged, one vase being placed at each corner of a square, and one on the middle. By each kalasam is a coconut, a date fruit, a betel leaf and areca nut, and one pice (a copper coin) tied in a handkerchief. A cotton thread is passed round the square, and round the centre kalasam another thread, one end of which is held by the family guru, and the other by the bridegroom who sits opposite to him.
  12. The guru wears a ring made of kusa grass on the big toe of his right foot. The bride sits on the left hand side of the bridegroom, and the guru ties their right and left hands respectively with kusa grass. *Hasta-puja* then follows. The joined hands of the bride and bridegroom are washed, and bilva leaves and flowers are offered.
  13. The officiating priest then consecrates the *tali* and the *kankanam* (wrist-thread), ties the latter on the wrists of the joined hands, and gives the *tali* to the bridegroom, who ties it round the bride's neck, repeating some words after the priest. The tying of the *tali* is the binding portion of the ceremony. Before the *tali* is given to the bridegroom, it is passed round the assembly to be touched by all and blessed. As soon as the bridegroom ties it on the bride, all those present throw over the pair a shower of rice.
  14. The bridegroom places some cummin seed and jaggery on the bride's head, and the bride does the same to the bridegroom.
  15. Small quantities of these articles are tied in a corner of the cloth of each, and the cloths are then knotted together.
  16. The bride worships the bridegroom's feet, and he throws rice on her head.
  17. The newly married couple offer fruits to five Jangams, and present them with five coins.
  18. The relatives worship the bride and bridegroom, wash their feet and offer presents, and the proceedings of the day terminate.
  19. On the third day, friends and relatives are fed.
  20. On the fourth day bride and bridegroom ride in procession through the village, on the same bullock, the bride in front. On return to the house they throw scented powder (*bukkittu*) at each other, and the guests join in the fun.
  21. Then follows the wedding breakfast, to which only the near relatives are admitted.
  22. The married couple worship Jangams and the elders, and take off the *kankanam* or consecration thread from their wrists, and tie it at the doorway.
  23. The five matrons who have assisted are given presents and dismissed, and the marriage is now complete.

In a one-day marriage, the above ceremonies are crowded into the short time allotted. The remarriage of widows was one of the points on which Basava insisted, and was probably one of the biggest bones of contention with the Brahmins. A widow cannot marry her deceased husband's brother or cousin. The marriage goes by the name of *Udiki*, and corresponds to some extent to the Gandarva form of the Hindus.

The ceremony is a very simple one; there is no music and no guests are invited. The parties go to the temple in company with the Matapati or headman, and the bangle seller. The latter puts glass bangles on the bride's wrists, and the Matapati ties the tali. This last act ratifies the marriage contract, and makes it indissoluble.

A widower generally takes a widow as his second bride; a bachelor will not as a rule marry a widow. Such marriage is styled, not *kalianam*, but *odaveli* or *kudaveli*. It is not accompanied with the same ceremonies as a *kalianam* marriage, but a feast is given, the bride and bridegroom sit on a mat in the presence of the guests and chew betel, their cloths are tied together, and the marriage is consummated the same night. Widows married in this form are freely admitted into society. They cease to belong to the family of their first husband, and the children of the second family inherit the property of their own father.

Divorce is permitted on proof of misconduct. The husband can exercise his right to divorce his wife by proving before a panchayet the alleged misconduct. The wife can only claim to divorce her husband when he has been outcasted. Wives who have been divorced cannot remarry.

## 41. Madiga.

The Madigas are the great leather-working caste of the Telugu country, and correspond to the Chakkiliyans of the Tamil area. They are also drum makers and beaters at festivals. The Madigas are nowadays mostly field labourers, but some of them till land, either leased or their own. In urban localities, on account of the value in the rise of skins, they have attained to considerable affluence, both on account of the hides supplied by them, and their work as tanners, shoe-makers, etc.

### Wedding rituals

The elaborate marriage ceremonial conforms to the Telugu type, but some of the details may be recorded.

1. On the *muhurtham* (wedding) day, a ceremony called *pradhanam* (chief thing) is performed. A sheep is sacrificed to the marriage (*araveni*) pots. The sacrificer dips his hands in the blood of the animal, and impresses the blood on his palms on the wall near the door leading to the room in which the pots are kept.
2. The bridegroom's party bring betel nuts, limes, a golden bead, a *bonthu* (unbleached cotton thread), rice, and turmeric paste.
3. The maternal uncle of the bride gives five betel leaves and areca nuts to the Pedda Madiga, and, putting the *bonthu* round the bride's neck, ties the golden bead thereon.
4. The ceremony concludes with the distribution of pan-supari.
5. The Pedda Madiga has to lift, at one try, a tray containing coconuts and betel with his right hand. In his hand he holds a knife, of which the blade is passed over the forefinger, beneath the middle and fourth fingers, and over the little finger. This ceremony is called *thonuku tambulam*, or betel and nuts likely to be spilt on the floor.
6. The bridegroom, after a bath, proceeds to the temple, where cloths, the *bashingam*, *bottu* (marriage badge), etc., are placed in front of the god, and then taken to a jammi

- tree (*Prosopis spicigera*), which is worshipped. The bottu is usually a disc of gold, but, if the family is hard-up, or in cases of widow remarriage, a bit of turmeric or folded mango leaf serves as a substitute for it.
7. On the third day, the wrist threads (*kankanam*) are removed, and *dhomptis*, or offerings of food to the gods, are made, with variations according to the dhompti to which the celebrants belong. An illustration may be taken from the Gampa dhompti. The contracting parties procure a quantity of rice, jaggery and ghee (clarified butter), which are cooked, and moulded into an elongated mass, and placed in a new bamboo basket (*gampa*). In the middle of the mass, which is determined with a string, a twig, with a wick at one end, is set up, and two similar twigs are stuck into the ends of the mass. Puja (worship) is performed, and the mass is distributed among the daughters of the house and other near relations, but not among members of other dhomptis.
  8. The bride and bridegroom take a small portion from the mass, which is called *dhonga muddha*, or the mass that is stolen.
  9. The bottu is said<sup>9</sup> to be "usually tied by the Madiga priest known as the *Thavatiga*, or drummer. This office is hereditary, but each successor to it has to be regularly ordained by a Kuruba guru at the local Madiga shrine, the chief item in the ceremony being tying round the neck of the candidate a thread bearing a representation of the goddess, and on either side of this five white beads.
  10. Henceforth the *Thavatiga* is on no account to engage in the caste profession of leather-work, but lives on fees collected at weddings, and by begging. He goes round to the houses of the caste with a little drum slung over his shoulder, and collects contributions.
  11. The Madiga marriages are said to be conducted with much brawling and noise, owing to the quantity of liquor consumed on such occasions. Among the Madigas, as among the Kammas, Gangimakkulu, and Malas, marriage is said not to be consummated until three months after its celebration.
  12. This is apparently because it is considered unlucky to have three heads of a household within a year of marriage. By the delay, the birth of the child should take place only in the second year, so that, during the first year, there will be only two heads, husband and wife.

At the first menstrual period a girl is under pollution for ten days, when she bathes. Betel leaves and nuts, and a rupee are placed in front of the Pedda Madiga, who takes a portion thereof for himself, and distributes what remains among those who have assembled. Sometimes, just before the return of the girl to the house, a sheep is killed in front of the door, and a mark made on her face with the blood.

## 42. Mala

Apart from weaving the Malas work as farm labourers for Sudras; a few cultivate their own land. The Malas of the western part of the Telugu country are wealthier than those of the east, and they have largely retained their lands, and, in some cases, are well-to-do cultivators.

They eat beef and drink heavily, and are debarred entrance to the temples and the use of the ordinary village wells, and have to serve as their own barbers and washermen. They are the musicians of the community, and many of them (for example in the villages near

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<sup>9</sup> Manual of the Bellary district.

Jammalamadugu in the Cuddapah district) weave the coarse white cotton fabrics usually worn by men. Each weaver has his own customers, and very often one family of Malas will have weaved for one family of Sudras for generations.

### **Wedding Rituals.**

The following detailed account of the ceremonies in connection with marriage, many of which are copied from the higher Telugu castes

#### **Bretrothal**

*Chinna Tambulam* (little betel) is the earliest arrangements for a future wedding. The parents of the boy about to be married enquire of a Brahmin to which quarter they should go in search of a bride. He, after receiving his pay, consults the boy's horoscope, and then tells them that in a certain quarter there is loss, in another quarter there is death, but that in another quarter there is gain or good. If in the quarter which the Brahmin has intimated as good there are relations, so much the better; the bride will be sought amongst them. If not, the parents of the youth, along with an elder of the caste, set out in search of a bride amongst new people.

Everything being satisfactory, betel nut and leaves are offered, and, if the girl's people are willing to contract, they accept it; if not, and they refuse, the search has to be resumed. We will take it for granted that the betel is accepted.

After reaching the house of the prospective bride on the second occasion, the party wait outside. Should the parents of the girl bring out water for them to drink and to wash their faces, it is a sign that matters may be proceeded with. Betel is again distributed.

In the evening, the four parents and the elders talk matters over, and, if all is so far satisfactory, they promise to come to the house of the future bridegroom on a certain date. The boy's parents, after again distributing betel, this time to every house of the caste, take their departure.

When the party of the bride arrive at the boy's village, they are treated to toddy and a good feed, after which they give their final promise.

Then, having made arrangements for the *Pedda Tambulam* (big betel), they take their departure. This ends the first part of the negotiations. *Chinna Tambulam* is not binding.

The second part of the negotiations, which is called *Pedda Tambulam*, takes place at the home of the future bride. Before departing for the ceremony, the party of the bridegroom, which must be an odd number but not seven, and some of the elders of the village, take part in a feast.

The members of the party put on their religious marks, daub their necks and faces with sandal paste and *akshintulu* (coloured rice), and are sent off with the good wishes of the villagers.

The father of the groom takes with him as a present for the bride a bodice, fried dal, coconut, rice, jaggery, turmeric, dates, ghee, etc.

On arrival at the house, the party wait outside, until water is brought for their faces and feet. After the stains of travel have been washed off, the presents are given, and the whole assembly proceeds to the toddy shop.

On their return, the *Chalavadi* (caste servant) tells them to which households betel must be presented, after which the real business commences.

The party of the bridegroom, the people of the bride, the elders of the caste, and one person from each house in the caste quarter, are present.

1. A blanket is spread on the floor, and grains of rice are arranged on it according to a certain pattern. This is the bridal throne.
2. After bathing, the girl is arrayed in an old cloth, and seated on a weaver's beam placed upon the blanket, with her face towards the east. Before seating herself, however, she must worship towards the setting sun.
3. In her open hands betel is placed, along with the dowry (usually about sixteen rupees) brought by her future father-in-law.
4. As the bride sits thus upon the throne, the respective parents question one another, the bride's parents as to the groom, what work he does, what jewels he will give, etc. Whatever other jewels are given or not, the groom is supposed to give a necklace of silver and beads, and a gold nose jewel. As these things are being talked over, some one winds *loi* strands of thread, without twisting it, into a circle about the size of a necklace, and then ties on it a peculiar knot. After smearing with turmeric, it is given into the hands of the girl's maternal uncle, who, while holding his hands full of betel, asks first the girl's parents, and then the whole community if there is any objection to the match. If all agree, he must then worship the bridal throne, and, without letting any of the betel in his hands fall, place the necklace round the bride's neck. Should any of the betel fall, it is looked upon as a very bad omen, and the man is fined.
5. After this part of the performance is over, and after teasing the bride, the uncle raises her to her feet, and, taking from her hands the dowry, etc., sends her off.
6. After distributing betel to every one in the village, the ceremony ends, and, after the usual feast has been partaken of, the people all depart to their various homes.

The wedding, contrary to the previous ceremonies, takes place at the home of the bridegroom. A Brahmin is asked for the *muhurtam*.

- A few days before the date foretold, the house is cleaned. In order that the evil eye may be warded off, two marks are made, one on each side of the door, with oil and charcoal mixed.
- Then the clothes of the bride and bridegroom are made ready. These, as a rule, are yellow and white, but on no account must there be any indigo in them, as that would be a sign of death.
- The grain and betel required for the feast, a toe-ring for the bridegroom, and a tali (marriage badge) for the bride, are then purchased.
- The toe-ring is worn on the second toe of the right foot, and the tali, which is usually about the size of a sixpence, is worn round the woman's neck.
- The goldsmith is paid for these not only in coin, but also in grain and betel, after receiving which he blesses the jewels he has made, and presents them to the people.

Meanwhile, messengers have been sent, with the usual presents, to the bride's people and friends, to inform them that the auspicious day has been fixed, and inviting them to the ceremony.

The next item is the preparation of the pandal or bower. As a rule, the whole of the work in connection with the erection of the pandal is carried out by the elders, who receive in payment food and toddy.

By this time, the bride has arrived in the village, but, up to this stage, will have remained in a separate house. She does not come to the feast mentioned above, but has a portion of food sent to her by the bridegroom's people. After the feast, bride and bridegroom are each anointed in their separate houses with *nalangu* (uncooked rice and turmeric). When the anointing of the bride takes place, the groom sends to her a cloth, a bodice, coconut, pepper and garlic. The bride leaves her parents' house, dressed in old clothes. Her people provide only a pair of

sandals, and two small toe-rings. She also carries a fair quantity of rice in the front fold of her cloth.

After entering the house, grain is spread on the floor in the north-east corner, and upon this are placed the pots, one upon the other, in two or four rows. The topmost pot is covered with a lid, and on the lid is placed a lighted lamp. From the beams exactly above the lamps are suspended, to which are fastened small bundles containing dates, coconut, jaggery, sugar, and saffron. Round each pot is tied a *kankanam* (protection-thread). These pots are worshipped every day as long as the wedding ceremonies last, which is usually three days. Not only so, but the lamps are kept continually burning, and there is betel arranged in a brass pot in the form of a lotus ever before them.

Beneath the pandal is now arranged a throne exactly similar to the one which was used on the occasion of the *Pedda Tambulam*. Until now the bride has kept to her separate house, but she now dresses in her new clothes and proceeds to the house of the bridegroom. There she waits in the pandal for her future husband, who comes out dressed in his wedding garments, wearing his sandals, and carrying a blanket, *gochi*,<sup>10</sup> shoulder-cloth, and knife.

Both bride and bridegroom now have fastened on to their foreheads a chaplet called *bhasingalu*. They are also garlanded with flowers, in addition to which the bridegroom has tied on to his wrists the *kankanam*.

In order that the two most intimately concerned persons may not see one another (and up to this point they have not done so), a screen is erected, the bride standing on one side, and the bridegroom on the other. Except for the screen, the two are now face to face, the groom looking towards the east, and the bride towards the west. Upon the bridal throne there is now placed for the bride to stand upon a basket filled with grain, and for the groom the beam of a loom. The screen is now taken away, and the priest, a *Dasari*, asks whether the elders, the Mala people generally, and the village as a whole, are in favour of the marriage. This he asks three times.

Indeed, in hard times, if the bride is of marriageable age, the couple will live together as man and wife, putting off the final ceremony until times are better. The groom now salutes the priest, the bride places her foot on the weaving beam, and the groom places his foot upon that of the woman as a token of his present and continued lordship. After this, the bride also is invested with the *kankanam*.

After the groom has worshipped the four quarters of space, the priest, who holds in his hands a brass vessel of milk, hands the golden marriage token to the groom, who ties it round the bride's neck. This is the first time during the ceremony that either of them has looked on the other.

The priest now dips a twig of the *jivi* tree (*Ficus Tsiel*) into the milk, and hands it to the husband, who, crossing his hands over his wife's head, allows some of the drops to fall upon her. The wife then does the same to the husband. After this, the rice which the bride brought with her in her lap is used in a similar blessing.

The priest, holding in his hand a gold jewel, now takes the hands of the two in his, and repeats several mantras. Whoever wishes may now shower the pair with rice, and, after that is done, the priest publicly announces them to be man and wife.

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<sup>10</sup> *Gochi*, a clout, a truss or flap; a waist-cloth; C. P. Brown, Telugu Dictionary.

The newly-married pair, and all the assembled party, now proceed to the village shrine to worship the god. Before doing so, the cloths of the newly-wed pair are tied together by the priest. This knot is called the Brahma knot, and is a sign that God had ordained the two to be man and wife even in a previous birth.

After entering the home, the whole party worship Lakshmi.

The husband next dips his hands into a plate of milk three times, each time placing his wet hand on the wall. After him, the bride does the same. The two then, sitting down, eat rice and milk off one plate. This is the first and only time that husband and wife eat together.

The *bashingams* are now taken off, and the wife is relieved from the burden of rice she has thus far carried in her lap.

The next ceremony is called the *Bhumalu*, and is a feast for the husband, his wife, and blood relations only. Not more than ten, and not less than six must partake, and these must all be husbands or wives, i.e., the party must consist of either three or five couples.

On the third day is the *nagavalli*. The bride and her husband are escorted under a canopy to some ant heap outside the village. The man digs a basketful of earth with his knife and the wife carries it to the house. There the earth is made into four heaps, one near each post. A hollow is left at the top of each heap, which is filled with water. During the time they have been fetching the earth, the people who remained at home have been worshipping airen pots representing Lakshmi, but they now come outside to the pandal.

The pair are escorted to the pandal, and are seated on the *nagavalli simhasanam*. Four small pots are placed in the form of a square, and round these is wound a fence of thread, which must not be broken in the process. On the pots are placed bread and meal. The bridal pair again put on their *bashingams*, and the man, taking his knife, digs a few furrows in the ground, which his wife fills with grain. The husband then covers up the grain with his knife, after which his wife sprinkles water over the whole, and then gives her husband some gruel.

The bread and meal, which were placed on the pots, are eaten by the relatives of the husband publicly in the pandal. After this ceremony is over, the pair are again anointed, during which process there must be music and singing.

On the fourth day, all, except the relations of the bride, return to their villages, but, before their departure, the bride again pays homage to the departing elders, who bless her, and give her a small present of money.

Malas may be married many times, and indeed it is not considered respectable to remain a widower. A widower is unable to make arrangements for the marriage of others, to take part in any of the ceremonies connected therewith, except in the capacity of a spectator. It is not the correct thing for a man to have two wives at one time unless the first one is barren, or unless there is other good cause. A woman must on no account marry again. She need not, according to Telugu morals, be ashamed of living, after she is widowed, with another man as his concubine.

In the Canarese country, there is a kind of half marriage (*chira kattinchinaru*, they have tied her cloth), which may be attained by widows. It is not reckoned as a proper marriage, nor is the woman considered a concubine. The ceremony for this is not performed at the great length of an ordinary marriage, but it must receive the sanction of the elders. The woman is permitted to wear the tali, but not bangles or other jewels usually worn by a married woman. A man's second wife must wear two talis — that of the first wife as well as her own.

### 43. Pallis or Vanniar

Kulasekhara, one of the early Travancore kings, and one of the most renowned Alvars revered by the Sri Vaishnava community in Southern India, is claimed by the Pallis as a king of their caste. Even now, at the Parthasarathi temple in Triplicane (in the city of Madras), which according to inscriptions is a Pallava temple, Pallis celebrate his anniversary with great eclat. The Pallis of Komalesvaranpettah in the city of Madras have a Kulasekhara Perumal Sabha, which manages the celebration of the anniversary.

A similar celebration is held at the Chintadripettah Adikesava Perumal temple in Madras. The Pallis have the right to present the most important camphor offering of the Mylapore Siva temple. They allege that the temple was originally theirs, but by degrees they lost their hold over it until this bare right was left to them. Some years ago, there was a dispute concerning the exercise of this right, and the case came before the High Court of Madras, which decided the point at issue in favour of the Pallis.

One of the principal gopuras (pyramidal towers) of the Ekamranatha temple at Big Conjeeveram, the ancient capital of the Pallavas, is known as Palligopuram. The Pallis of that town claim it as their own, and repair it from time to time. In like manner, they claim that the founder of the Chidambaram temple, by name Sweta Varman, subsequently known as Hiranya Varman (6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) was a Pallava king.

A curious ceremony is even now celebrated at the Chidambaram temple, on the steps leading to the central sanctuary. As soon as the eldest son of this family is married, he and his wife, accompanied by a local Vellala, repair to the sacred shrine, and there, amidst crowds of their castemen and others, a homam (sacrificial fire) is raised, and offerings are made to it. The couple are then anointed with nine different kinds of holy water, and the Vellala places the temple crown on their heads.

The Vellala who officiates at this ceremony, assisted by the temple priests, is said to belong to the family of a former minister of a descendant of Hiranya Varman. It is said that, as the ceremony is a costly one, and the expenses have to be paid by the individual who undergoes it, it often happens that the eldest son of the family has to remain a bachelor for half his lifetime.

A few Palli families now maintain a temple of their own, dedicated to Srinivasa, at the village of Kumalam in the South Arcot district, live round the temple, and are largely dependent on it for their livelihood. Most of them dress exactly like the temple Battars, and a stranger would certainly take them for Battar Brahmans. Some of them are well versed in the temple ritual, and their youths are being taught the Sandyavandhana (morning prayer) and Vedas by a Brahman priest. Ordinary Palli girls are taken by them in marriage, but their own girls are not allowed to marry ordinary Pallis; and, as a result of this practice of hypergamy, the Kumalam men sometimes have to take to themselves more than one wife, in order that their young women may be provided with husbands.

These Kumalam Pallis are regarded as priests of the Pallis, and style themselves *Kovilar*, or temple people. But, by other castes, they are nicknamed Kumalam Brahmins. They claim to be Kshatriyas, and have adopted the title Rayar. Other titles, "indicating authority, bravery, and superiority," assumed by Pallis are Nayakar, Varma, Padaiyachi (head of an army), Kandar, Chera, Chola, Pandya, Nayanar, Udaiyar, Samburayar, etc.<sup>11</sup> Still further titles are Pillai, Reddi, Goundan, and Kavandan.

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<sup>11</sup> Vannikula Vilakkam

The Pallis are Saivites or Vaishnavites, but also worship Mutyalamma, Mariamma, Ayanar, Muneswara, Ankamma, and other minor deities.

The Kovilars, at the betrothal ceremony, the future bridegroom goes to the house of his prospective father-in-law, where the headman of the future bride must be present.

The bridegroom's headman or father places on a tray betel, flowers, the bride-price (pariyam) in money or jewels, the milk money (mulapal kuli), and a cocoanut. Milk money is the present given to the mother of the bride, in return for her having given nourishment to the girl during her infancy. All these things are handed by the bridegroom's headman to the father or headman of the bride, saying

This performance is repeated thrice, and pan-supari is distributed, the first recipient being the maternal uncle. The ceremony is in a way binding, and marriage, as a rule, follows close on the betrothal. If, in the interval, a girl's intended husband dies, she may marry some one else.

### Wedding ceremonies

1. The marriage ceremony is, in ordinary cases, completed in one day, but the tendency is to spread it over three days, and introduce the standard Puranic form of ritual.
2. On the day preceding the wedding-day, the bride is brought in procession to the house of the bridegroom, and the marriage pots are brought by a woman of the potter caste.
3. On the wedding morning, the marriage dais is got ready, and the milk-post, pots, and lights are placed thereon. Bride and bridegroom go separately through the nalangu ceremony.
4. Water coloured with turmeric and chunam (arathi) is then waved round them, to avert the evil eye, and they are conducted to the bathing-place. While they are bathing, five small cakes are placed on various parts of the body — knees, shoulders, head, etc.
5. When the bridegroom is about to leave the spot, cooked rice, contained in a sieve, is waved before him, and thrown away.
6. The bridal couple are next taken three times round the dais, and they offer pongal (cooked rice) to the village and house gods and the ancestors, in five pots, in which the rice has been very carefully prepared, so as to avoid pollution of any kind, by a woman who has given birth to a first child.
7. They then dress themselves in their wedding finery, and get ready for the tying of the tali. Meanwhile, the milk-post, made of Odina Wodier, Erythrina indica, or the handle of a plough, has been set up. At its side are placed a grindstone, a large pot, and two lamps called *kuda-vilakku* (pot light) and *alankara-vilakku* (ornamental light). The former consists of a lighted wick in an earthenware tray placed on a pot, and the latter of a wooden stand with several branches supporting a number of lamps.
8. When the bride and bridegroom come to the wedding booth dressed in their new clothes, the Brahman purohit gives them the threads (*kankanam*), which are to be tied round their wrists.
9. The tali is passed round to be blessed by those assembled, and handed to the bridegroom, who ties it on the bride's neck. While he is so doing, his sister holds a light called *Kamakshi vilakku*. Kamakshi, the goddess at Conjeeveram, is a synonym for Siva's consort Parvathi. The tali-tying ceremony concluded, the couple change their seats, and the ends of their clothes are tied together.
10. Bride and bridegroom then go round the dais and milk-post, and, at the end of the second turn, the bridegroom lifts the bride's left foot, and places it on the grindstone.
11. At the end of the third turn, the brother-in-law, in like manner, places the bridegroom's left foot on the stone, and puts on a toe-ring.

12. The contracting couple are then shown the pole-star (Arundhati), and milk and fruit are given to them.
13. Towards evening, the wrist-threads are removed.
14. The newly-married couple remain for about a week at the bride's house, and are then conducted to that of the bridegroom, the brother-in-law carrying a hundred or a hundred and ten cakes.
15. Before they enter the house, coloured water and a coconut are waved in front of them, and, as soon as she puts foot within her new home, the bride must touch pots containing rice and salt with her right hand.

A curious custom among the Pallis at Kumbakonam is that the bride's mother, and often all her relatives, are debarred from attending her marriage. The bride is also kept *gosha* (in seclusion) for all the days of the wedding

According to this custom, a girl selects a husband from a large number of competitors, who are assembled for the purpose. Widow remarriage is permitted. At the marriage of a widow, the *tali* is tied by a married woman, the bridegroom standing by the side, usually inside the house.

Widow marriage is known as *naduvittu tali*, as the *tali*-tying ceremony takes place within the house (*naduvīdu*). To get rid of the pollution of the first menstrual period, holy water is sprinkled over the girl by a Brahmin, after she has bathed.

#### **44. Pattanavan**

The fishermen on the east coast are popularly called *Karaiyan*, or sea-shore people. *Pattanavan* means literally a dweller in a town or *pattanam*. The Pattanavans are Saivites, but also worship various minor gods and Grama Devatas (village deities).

The Pattanavans afford a good example of a caste, in which the time-honoured village council (panchayat) is no empty, powerless body. For every settlement or village there are one or more headmen called *Yejamanan*, who are assisted by a *Thandakaran* and a *Paraiyan Chalavathi*. All these offices are hereditary.

Questions connected with the community, such as disrespect to elders, breach of social etiquette, insult, abuse, assault, adultery, or drinking or eating with men of lower caste, are enquired into by the council. Even when disputes are settled in courts of law, they must come before the council. Within the community, the headman is all powerful, and his decision is, in most instances, considered final. If, however, his verdict is not regarded as equitable, the case is referred to a caste headman, who holds sway over a group of villages.

#### **Wedding ceremonies**

No ceremony may be performed without the sanction of the local headman, and the details of ceremonies, except the feasting, are arranged by the headman and the *Thandakaran*.

The consent of the maternal uncles is necessary before a pair can be united in matrimony.

1. When the wedding day has been fixed, the bridegroom's party distribute *grama thambulam* (village pan-supari or betel) to the headman and villagers. The marriage milk-post is made of *Mimusops hexandra*, *Erythrina indica*, *Casuarina equisetifolia*, the green wood of some other tree, or even a pestle.
2. In one form of the marriage ceremony, which varies in detail according to locality, the bridegroom, on the arrival of the bride at the *pandal* (booth), puts on the sacred thread, and the Brahmin *purohit* makes the sacred fire, and pours ghee (clarified butter) into it.

3. The bridegroom ties the tali round the bride's neck, and the maternal uncles tie flat silver or gold plates, called *pattam*, on the foreheads of the contracting couple.
4. Rings are put on their second toes by the brother-in-law of the bridegroom and the maternal uncle of the bride.
5. Towards evening, the sacred thread, the threads which have been tied to the marriage pots and the milk-post, and grain seedlings used at the ceremony, are thrown into the sea.

Some Pattanavans allow a couple to live together as man and wife after the betrothal, but before the marriage ceremony. This is, however, on condition that the latter is performed as soon as it is convenient.

The remarriage of widows is freely permitted. No marriage pandal is erected, and the bridegroom, or a female relation, ties the tali on the bride's neck within the house.

Such marriage is, therefore, called *naduvittu* (interior of the house) *tali*. When a woman, who has been guilty of adultery, is remarried, a turmeric string is substituted for the golden tali, and is tied on the bride's neck by a woman.

