

## **A Historical Assessment of Some Features of Marriage Institution in Medieval Sri Lanka With Special Reference to the Dowry System, Relationship between Wife and Husband, Sāti Practice, Wedding Ceremony and Royal Marriage**

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### **Abstract**

*In this study an attempt is made to study the some features of marriage institution in Medieval Sri Lanka with special reference to the Dowry System, relationship between wife and husband, sāti practice, wedding ceremony and Royal Marriage from about the thirteenth century A. D. to the end of fifteenth century A. D. Any serious study of these aspects is beset with certain difficulties, which must be borne in mind from the beginning. On the one hand, the chronicles provide comparatively little information on those matters to which the student of social history should attach importance. My salient expectation is to describe the factors in brief that existed some main features of marriage system in Sri Lanka. The research is mainly based on primary sources. Wherever necessary material will also be obtained from limited secondary sources on the social history.*

**Keywords:** Dowry System, sāti practice, wedding ceremony, Royal Marriage, Literary sources, Medieval Sri Lanka, immovable property, milking cows

### **1. Introduction**

Some scholars have dealt with marriage of different periods in history. A contribution by Parānavitana appeared in the *Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume*. The essay entitled 'The Glimpses of the Political and Social Conditions of Medieval Ceylon'. This volume contains, however, only a relatively few data on the social conditions in the Island. Another study of this kind, made by S. Parānavitana, is included in the *History of Ceylon*, sponsored by the University of Ceylon. M. B. Ariyapala in his work on the *Society in Medieval Ceylon as depicted in the Saddharmaratnavaliya and other Sinhalese literature of the thirteenth century*, published in 1956 compared some passages in his sources with those of the Anurādhapura period.

Similarly the *Culture of Ceylon in Medieval Times*, a posthumous work of W. Geiger contains a chapter on Social Organization and Caste System during the Anurādhapura period is briefly discussed. Geiger's study is based almost exclusively on the main chronicle. H. Ellawala has done for example research into the period from the fifth century B. C. to the fourth century A. D. He has tried to analyze the marriage system of early Sri Lanka under the family organization. He has described marriage under the subtitle of traditions pertaining to the age of marriage in Indian society, relationship of the ideal marriage partners, types of marriage in Indian society, equality of birth as the most important factor for a marriage settlement, polygamy and polyandry, divorce and re-marriage, marriage outside the normal practice, polygamy in Sri Lanka society and widow marriage.

But he says that the numerous lithic records which are still not deciphered are studied carefully and a careful and a systematic archaeological survey is made on the sites of early settlements of this country, this analysis will remain incomplete. S. B. Hettiaratchi has done it very widely from about the fourth to the tenth century A. D. This period is generally known as the later Anurādhapura period. He has allocated a chapter on the marriage system to the relevant period. He has done it under the themes of age of marriage, the customs of marrying daughters, cross-cousin marriage, the selection of marriage partners, and functions of marriage, love marriage, marriage of the ordinary people, dowry system, political influence and marriage. In this chapter, an attempt is made to study the some certain features of marriage from about the thirteenth century A. D. to the end of sixteenth century A.D.

## 1.1 Dowry System

Dowry was a custom related to the marriage institution of Sri Lanka from early time. It was calculated according to the wealth of the daughter's family. It was composed of movable as well as immovable property. When a prince of royal family got married with a prince a large amount of gold was donated. This can be considered as a special honour to a woman of royal family. *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsa* mention that when King Kāvantissa married Vihāramahadēvi, she was endowed with a large amount of gold. (*Sinhala Thūpavaṃsa*, 1994: 80). This incident apparently shows that this custom was not only maintained by parents of maiden, but it was also done by the bride. Although their characters are relevant to the period before Christian era, both sources were written after the twelfth century. Hence, this custom may have prevailed during the period under survey. Asokamāla married Saliya with a large amount of gold. Here, this custom was observed by King Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, the father of the Prince. (*Saddharmālaṃkāra*, 1954: 575).

King Upatissa I gave his daughter to Silākāla with all resources. (*Mahāvāṃsa*, 1992: XXXX. 7). King Sena I gave a dowry similarly when the time of marriage of Princesses Sangha, Tissa and Kittī. (*Ibid.*, L. 58-60.) Some kings maintained the custom not only for their daughters, but also for the ordinary people. Candrā, a young lady who was very poor and a great devotee to Buddhism, was given a large amount of dowry including villages by the King Saddhatissa, when she married *Lampaka Danda* who was a soldier of the king. (*Sīhālavatthupparāṇaṃ*, 1959: 143-144).

Parents considered it is a duty to give a dowry according to their means. According to *Sīhālavatthupparāṇa*, one daughter got married to a man Haritālātissa. Her parents gave her kitchen apparatus including a pot and a plate as dowry (*Ibid.*, 5). Although these conditions come from the early, they may have continued to be in the medieval period too.

The love of parents toward daughters is clearly shown. It should be noted what kind of activities are included upon the wife who started a new life at the home of the husband. The custom was to live by the newly wedded couple in a separate dwelling. Hence, the daughter who is leaving for a new residence should be furnished with home furniture and kitchen utility. According to literature, Munasinghe cites that some parents have given cows for milking to the daughter as dowry. (Munasinghe, 1998: 122).

Some facts related to the dowry system can be gleaned from some Sinhala literature. But those stories emphasize the Indian features. *Saddharmaratnāvali* lists what kinds of items had been given when Visākā married Pūrṇawardhana.

The dowry included five hundred carts full of *masuran*, five hundred carts full of golden pots such as *rantaḷi*, *ranmaṇḍā* and *ranmuṇḍam*, five hundreds carts full of silver pots such as *riḍḍāḷi*, *riḍḍimaṇḍā* and *riḍḍimuṇḍam*, five hundreds carts full of copper and bronze pots such as *tambasāḷa*, *tambakatāra*, *lōkaḍaḷi*, *maṇḍā* and *muṇḍam*, five hundreds carts full of costumes various garments, five hundreds carts full of oil such as gingerly oil, five hundreds carts full of āl rice, five hundreds carts full of axes, mamoties, knives etc, agricultural items, Sixty thousand cows and sixty thousand oxen, fifty four thousand cosmetics worth fifty four thousand kahapanas and slaves or *dāyāda vahallu*. (*Saddharmaratnāvali*, 1985: 379-399).

The aim of this description was to emphasize the wealth of Setṭhi Dananjaya and the merit of Visākha but this description may be an exaggeration. However, it shows what kind of items are included in a dowry in India as well as Sri Lanka. Not only money, food, medicines and instruments were given for dowry, but living people were also donated as dowry items. This story is related to the Indian society and therefore, this kind of large dowry can be relevant to the Indian upper class. But, the author of *Saddharmaratnāvali* would have known the dowry system of Sri Lankan society. From the 13<sup>th</sup> century, commercial activities rapidly developed in Sri Lanka. Many rich people may have emerged in this period. Hence, to some extent, the dowry system may have been implemented in our period. According to the story of Ariyaḡālatissa in *Rasavāhinī*, even though it is not a source relevant to our period, a daughter was given a pot of rice and a rice cooker as dowry by her parents. (*Rasavāhinī*, 1891: 36). Some people have not given a dowry according to *Amāvatura*. It is mentioned as *apagē kulayehi dāriyōnam ran ridi ā dāyāja dī kalatrayāṭa yāvvirihīnam nāti. Yam gihi minihek ovungē vādamaṇaṇaṭa nisi vīnam ōhata pādapariārikā veti*. (*Amāvatura*, 1959: 151).

This exceptional passage says that they do not have daughters to be given in marriage with a dowry. If someone is capable of defeat their arguments, he can marry. Hence, it is revealed that there was a tradition of daughters' marrying without a dowry.

*Butsaraṇa* also says that ‘*apa kulehi dāyāda dī saraṇa koṭa dunnō nāta*’ which means that they do not have anyone to marry with a dowry in their caste. (*Butsaraṇa*, 1931: 186). This hints that the dowry system may have not been implemented by all people. And it was a cultural duty and responsibility of daughters’ parents which was implemented from ancient Sri Lanka. S. B. Hettiaratchi says that a dowry was given to the bridegroom by the bride’s party at least in the marriages of royal persons. Yet, there is no indication as to whether the other paid a bride price to the bride. Also nothing is known about the conditions under which these grants were made, nor does it be clear whether a dowry was involved in marriages of ordinary people. (Hettiaratchi, 1988: 78).

## 1.2 Relationship between wife and husband

Buddha has preached about the ethics relevant to the married life of a woman. According to him, a girl should be an expert in the day to day household affairs. She should honour clergy and Sumanavagga of *Aṅguttara Nikāya* mentions that responsibilities of wife to husband such as being obedient to husband, protection of husband’s wealth, protection of the chastity, waking up before others and sleeping after all others etc. H. Saddhatissa points out those instructions to girls about to marry are recorded in *Aṅguttara Nikāya* as having been given by the Buddha at the invitation of a man whose daughters were shortly going to their husbands. The Buddha advised them to rise early, work willingly, order their affairs smoothly, and to cultivate gentle voices. They should honour and respect all persons honored and respected by their husbands, whether parents or recluses, and on the arrival of these should offer them a seat and water. Other instructions were similar to those given to wives, namely, skill in the various handicrafts, care of servants and sick people, and care of the wealth brought home by the husbands. A further point raised by the Buddha concerned appreciation of the trials of women who, in addition to the disabilities of their sex, were called upon to leave their and to live with their husbands. From that time on, the wife was cut off from her former associates and was entirely dependent for her happiness on the new conditions and surroundings. (Saddhatissa, 1970: 135-136). Tachibana says that chastity is a virtue included in the five precepts which are incumbent upon all lay Buddhists to keep. The contingency of the married is considered as important as the single life of the unmarried. The unchanged life of the married man is absolutely repudiated as unbecoming for a Buddhist. (Tachibana, 1926: 106). According to different behavior of wife towards husbands or between husband and wife – the Buddha has identified in the Satta Bhariya Sutta seven kinds of wives, viz., Those are as; the wife who is unkind to her husband (*vadhaka bhariyā*); The wife who robs wealth of the husband (*caura bhariyā*); The wife who dominates her husband (*swāmi bhariyā*) The wife who is like a sister of the husband behaving very good manner. (*bhaginī bhariyā*); The wife who is like a girl- friend (*sakhī bhariyā*); The wife who is like a servant of the husband (*dāsi bhariyā*); The wife who protects her husband like a mother (*mātu bhariyā*) (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*, 2005: 414-418).

The *Pūjāvali* written in the thirteenth century commented on that seven. It mentions that Vadhaka Bhariyā means a wife, who does not love her husband, does not admire activities of her husband, going to paramours, always scolding her husband. (*Pūjāvali*, 1997: 700). Caura Bariyā means a wife who is trying to do mischievous work with her husband, a wife who tells the personal things which was told by husband, a wife who does not treat relatives of the husband and a wife who always gives to her relatives. (*Pūjāvali*, 1997: 701). Swāmi Bhariyā means a wife who always likes to make trouble for her husband, a wife who likes to gossip, wife who does not know another’s hunger, a wife who behaves as a husband. (*Pūjāvali*, 1997: 701). Mātu bhariyā means that a wife who is like a mother to her husband, protecting husband’s wealth, discussing all the activities of day to day work. (*Pūjāvali*, 1997: 702). A message was given via Yasodhara to Sri Lankan women as to how a wife shall behave after marriage.

As mentioned earlier, commercial activities and Māgha’s invasion developed very rapidly and therefore, various sections of society underwent changed in many ways. Multi- cultural forms came to Sri Lanka and the author of *Pūjāvali* may have been shown all these changes including those of women. Family organization of Sri Lanka may have been deeply affected by this time. Therefore, these kinds of stories were told to people. The ethics which are described in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* may have helped develop peace and harmony of the family life of both husband and wife. For instance, the husband expected Matu bhariya mother’s love and kindness from the wife. The character of Vishākhā is a good example for this. She married Pūrṇawardhana and all family members of the Pūrṇawardhana became Buddhists including Migāra Setṭhi and after that Visākhā was called Migāra Mātā. Even the ancient Sri Lankan society had very highly admired such wives who are similar to mothers. *Saddharmālamkāra* describes that the Vessamitta was treated very well by her husband, because of her high qualities. It is mentions as follows;

...*Evēlehi vadā gannā pembara mavakasē bisovun dātin osavā gena, lehi hovāgena...rājāsana mama mastakayehi vadā hinduvā... dohot mudunehi tabāgena, Kśatriya kanyāvan duṭu chaṇḍālayakusē, ādarayen name ekatpasvasiṭa, rajjuruvo ē bisovun khamā karavā, mahat sē satkāra koṭa, ada paṭan nuba mage māniyan vahanseyyāi kiyamin bisovun tamanṭa mavu tanaturehi tabā tumūda tisanarayehi pihīṭiyaha.*(*Saddharmālamkāra*, 1954: 111-113).

The *Manusmṛti*, refers to the wife as Chāyā. (Manu, 1975, Ch. 9, pp. 8, 26, 257-259). Ancient Sri Lankan society expected from the wife the chastity, devotion to Buddhism and talking in a very pleasant way. The *Mahāvamsa* describes Queen Rūpavati who was an example of a wife to the society

Who loved him, the highest of rulers, as Sita (loved) Rama. Amongst all ladies of the harem, many hundreds in number, she was by far his best loved. She loved the triad of the jewels and beyond her own husband who was like to the King of the gods (Indra), she cared for none even as much as grass whoever he might be. She did what the Lord of men wished, had friendly speech, was adorned with the ornament of many virtues such as faith, discipline and the like, was skillful in dance and song, possessed and intelligence (sharp) as the point of the kusa grass, her heart was ever cooled by the practice of the virtue of pity. She the Queen Rūpavati. (*Mahāvamsa*, 1992: LXXIII. 137-142.).

Ulakuḍayadēvi who was the daughter of King Parākramabāhu VI, is praised in the *Sālaḷihīni Sandēśa* and *Kāvyaśekhara*. The *Sālaḷihīni Sandēśa* describes the Ulakuḍayadēvi as follows;

Mihiri tepala tanvāsi kivikam puru	du
Itiri bāti pemāti pela dahamehi muni	du
Nohāri pōya aṭasil rākuma pirisi	du
SasiriUlakuḍayadēvi haṭa pasi	du ( <i>Sālaḷihīni Sandēśa</i> , 1972: v.102).

The *Kāvyaśekhara* describes the Ulakuḍayadēvi as follows;

Rusiri guna si	tā
Sura tura dinu dā	tā
Vilasin vinī	tā
Lovaṭa kuḷunen sadisi mā	tā ( <i>Kāvyaśekhara</i> , 1946: 1, v. 16).

The tight connection between husband and wife has been described by the author of *Kavsiḷumiṇa*.

Noyādā mā deviyān sārā no daham	digāsiyō
Piyanāṭa kaḷa uwasarin sagamok vet	digāsiyō ( <i>Kavsiḷumiṇa</i> , 1994: v. 535).

During the time of *Kavsiḷumiṇa*, the attitudes of the society towards women was that they should not worship gods but treat husbands as gods. She can attain Nibbāna by respecting her husband. Although this opinion cannot be seen in the Jataka or Commentary, *Manusmṛti* mentioned a similar idea. According to that she cannot perform any ritual or fasting without the husband. She goes to Swarga only by being obedient to her husband. (Manu, 1975: 155, 169). Husbands' protection of the wife was the main attitude of society towards the wife. Author of *Kavsiḷumiṇa* has mentioned that when flowers are on trees, bees associate those flowers. But, if they were on the floor, many people keep trample the flowers. This means that wife should be given protection by the husband.

Dumāsiruvan pull iyavē bamara pirivara

Nirāsirayin vat hot nusuhu da ka māḍamaṭa (*Kavsiḷumiṇa*, 1994: v. 540).

Totagamuve Sri Rahula who was the author of *Kāvyaśekhara*, praised the father and mother of Senaka Pandita who lived very faithfully to each other without of being attached. It is mentioned as follows;

Sililē bindu tolagavana pokuru mata me	na
Noālē ā situ himi desa misa tāneka ve	na
Vīpulē bāndi senehasa in ovunovu	na
Ekalē visu samagava ran rasa lesi	na ( <i>Kāvyaśekhara</i> , 1946:Cantos.10, v. 42).

The *Kāvyaśekhara* further describes what kind of qualities should there be after marriage. The advice given by an aged Brahman to his young daughter on the day of her marriage to a Brahman of no less an age than the age of the young bride's father, as composed in verse by Sri Rahula Thera. Without informing your husband and without your upper garment and with quick strides, do not step out from your residence. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 17). Never keep the company of other types of men than elderly folks, physicians and priests; and do not engage in amorous conversation with anyone else than your own husband. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 18).

When your husband returns home after a journey, you should willingly go and wash his feet instead of sending your servants to do it. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 27). If your husband does not give enough expenditure or if he is extravagant, explain to him with affection the quantity of wealth you possess. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 29). If you notice that your husband has transferred his affection to another, you do not complain to him in words, but do so in tears. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 31). Always protect the various household goods from loss and decay; do not even give your own children any article without the consent of your husband and without a sense of proportion. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 30). Even when your husband is displeased, do not utter any harsh words, but be kind in your heart; and never think of bigamy. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 37). The floor of your residence should be cleaned by smearing with cow dung on the day of the transit of the sun, or the day of an eclipse, on the day of fasting (i.e. first day of any lunar quarter) and on Monday and Friday of the week. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 24). Make it your hobby to grow in your garden spices like ginger and cumming plants and bowers of flower plants. Also enquire from your servants as to the state of your cattle. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 23). You must also bear in mind that if you keep company with women who are wanton, who are fickle, who are thievish, who are immoral, and also with servant women, flower women, nautch women and washerwomen, it will be a great obstruction to harmony and love at home. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 22). On going to your husband adorn yourself with charming jewellery, fragrant perfume and brilliant silk, like the Goddess of Fortune. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 33, v. 29). When you go to bed, wear a white thin cooling dress; adorn your neck and ears with ornaments and deck yourself with pleasant flowers and perfumes. (*Kāvyaśekhara*, 1946: 10, v. 34).

Existing interaction between husband and wife is depicted in the figures of men and women in the doors of ancient Sri Lankan religious and royal buildings. Four Guardians who were named as Drtarāstra, Virūḍha, Virūpākṣa and Vaiśravaṇa and their wives have been figured in these doors. (Wickramagamage, 1995: 26). The small female figures and big figures of males can be considered as depicting a patriarchal society was of the opinion of Chandra Wickramagamage who has done a research on Doors of Ancient Buildings in Sri Lanka. (*Ibid.*, 27). But, this craftsman would not have forgotten that husband and wife should live together and she was protected by the husband. Some bronze figures including male and female figures were found in the *caitayagarbha* of Mahiyangana. Those depict the interaction of husband and wife.

Relationship between husband and wife is depicted in the Sandēśas. It is evident that the interaction of the husband and wife which existed relevant to our period from the poem below.

Valandina adahasin men suraganga anga	na
Nala bala sasala daḷa raḷa peḷa nuba nāge	na
Velaḷasa gāvasi mutu sak pabaḷu babala	na
Bala maha muhuda emasanda uturin pene	na ( <i>Sāḷalihīṇi Sandēśa</i> , 1972: v. 27).

The sea is the husband of the Celestial River named woman. Rows of waves of the sea are like the husband trying to kiss the woman named the Celestial River. The reason is love. The love of the husband and wife is depicted in another place.

Tavara kara kokum sandunen tunu siya	la
Pavara suvanda mal dam peḷanda mana ka	la
Behera situ nolu himinambuvo keḷilo	la
Epura hinditi sandapānē sandaluva	la ( <i>Sāḷalihīṇi Sandēśa</i> , 1972: v. 59).

It is mentioned in this poem, that husbands and wives use various kinds of perfumes and entertain on balconies. *Mayūra Sandēśa* also describes the love of the husband and wife.

Turu himiyo liyaliya valandami	ni
Sāmuva daru vadamin sā ati	ni
Bingu san suratal bas mal muvi	ni
Kiyamin naḷavana vāni leḷavami	ni ( <i>Mayūra Sandēśa</i> , 1928: v. 109).

In the praising of Uggalbāvula forest, the mayura or pea-cock saw a husband was kissing his wife, with talking to his children with loving words. According to the customs of ancient Indian society, the relationship between husband and wife is different from Sri Lanka. There were some strict rules and regulations for the wife in the Indian society. Yet, the concept was in Sri Lanka was that the wife and husband should live together and under with the protection of the husband. But some modern scholars misunderstand this idea to say that Sri Lankan

woman was always under the man. (Jayawardhana, 1994: 114).

Women worked themselves even without the consent of the husbands. They had freedom to engage in religious and social activities. A subha Story of *Atthasāḷini* commentary mentions that one woman quarreled with her husband and she wore a like goddess and went out from home early in the morning. (*Atthasāḷini*, 1916: 194-196). It is not shown that women always lived under the husbands.

### 1.3 Sati practice

Hettiaratchi has pointed out that there was no the *sati* custom in Sri Lanka. Although Hindu writers taught this method, this was not practiced by the ordinary people. It was limited to one part. It was practiced by a small group in Rajaputana in India. (Altekar, 1956: 126). Deccan and Far South India were maintained it at very low level. According to Arab writers, it was not mandatory. Hence, Hettiaratchi said as follows;

In so far as popularity in the extreme south of India is concerned Altekar opines that among the members of the Pallava, Cola and the Pandya ruling families, so well known to us from numerous inscriptions, we do not come across any case of sati down to c. 900 A. D. It is therefore, clear that the custom was yet to obtain a footing in south India. On the other hand, Buddhism discouraged the people from any sort of inhuman deeds like killing, suicide etc., and different kind of rites. (Hettiaratchi, 1988: 69).

There is no any information about the *sati* practice also in the relevant period.

### 1.4 Wedding and marriage

Referring to wedding ceremony, it was a grand festival. The traditional custom was the having the wedding according to an auspicious time.

Rā danvā nirindu pabavata ingi siyan kān  
Kiū **su mohut nakatin** dadan vadan pivituren  
(*Kavsiḷumiṇa*, 1994: v. 371).

Here 'sumohot nakatin' gives meaning as auspicious time relevant to the Pabavati's marriage. Even today, there is a *mangu lmaduva* or wedding hall for the wedding ceremony. According to the *Kavsiḷumiṇa*, there was a wedding hall in that time as follows;

Vaḍā **mangulhal** puvaha nanacharaṇa dev  
Tohā vē kiyā mudun pivituru toyin sanahā  
(*Kavsiḷumiṇa*, 1994: 372).

Isolation from the parents after the wedding was the general habit of the couple. The relatives of bridegroom go to the bride's house on the wedding day and they send a message saying that they came, to the bride's home according to the *Saddharmaratnāvali*. (*Saddharmaratnāvali*, 1985: 335). This custom is prevailing even today. *Saddharmaratnāvali* mentioned about a custom of blessing the couple with putting hands into a pot of water. It is mentioned as follows;

Saraṇak vicārā dasvas niyamat karavā kumārāyan sarahalā maha peraharin kumārikāvange geṭa giyaha. Gosin vivāha mangul koṭa sarana pāvā devālā depakṣayē nāyan rāsvū kalhi rantaliyakaṭa ata bālā mē rantaliye pān yam sē nobindī tibēda, emen topa depakṣayat nobindī vasavai kiyālā kumārikāvaṇṭa vāḍa kāmativa tela topagē muttaniyan suva sampath lesa suva sampatut labā unsēma bohō dasvas jīvatvi nāyo kīha. (*Saddharmaratnāvali*, 1985: 493).

Today we cannot see such a custom, but the custom of *atapān vat kirīma* prevails. Visākhā Vastuva of *Saddharmaratnāvali* shows that there was a speech as an advice from both the parties to the wedded couple. *Pūjāvali* confirms us that after the wedding festival, wedding couple leaves by a vehicle showing all others mentioned as follows; *paṭicchanna yānāven yemnam... bohōdenā dākka noheti*. (*Pūjāvali*, 1997: 338). We have little information about the wedding ceremony from the inscriptional evidence.

In Sinhala Customary Law, for marriage, especially, among the upper classes, certain ceremonies had to be performed to effect a marriage. Chief among them is the Poruva ceremony which the Sinhala people had observed from ancient times. We might say at the outset that its origin is not quite clear. It is probable that it originated in some Hindu ceremony based on the Gṛha sūtras. The ceremony of pouring water in the *oruwa* is certainly of Hindu Law origin. De Queyroz notes the use of the ceremony. He writes among the Chingalas however though the lower folk buy wives and the man brings a dowry and furniture with him and the woman (brings) only her personal ornaments.



Among the nobles, there is a different fashion for the bridegroom elect sends a present to the parents of the bride an article for each as a token of the contract and they are obliged to give him the dowry agreed upon along with the daughter. In other things, there is a considerable diversity for among them. There is no stable matrimony or union except as long as they like, though they also are most observant of not marrying except those of their caste which they do in this manner. When they are in the bower or the *manduwa*, Poruva (platform of plank) is meant here. The nearest kinswoman of the man takes the two right hands of the Bride and Bridegroom and placing one on the other. She binds with a thread the two small fingers together and pours over the two bound fingers. Some water out of a pitcher and unites them, they are married. Then the parents of one or other instructs them in grave and modest words on the great obligations imposed by matrimony on married persons and the quality and state of married happiness along with other things suitable to their life or state. (De Queyroz, 1930: 90-91).

The Hindu Law origin of the ceremony of pouring water becomes quite clear by reference to the text of Manu which states “the gift of a maiden bone by water alone is approved for Brahmanas. But of other castes [the rites] according to their several fancies.” (Manu, 1975: III, v. 35). The ceremony of water was also used for the transfer of ownership of property as we see in the dedication of property to the Sangha. Sen Gupta’s observations show how the transfer by water in the marriage ceremony came about. He states:

It was probably when Aryan society began thus to think that wifhood arose not as a result of magic mantras so much as by transfer of ownership by the father that the idea thus gained ground that as a preliminary to the ritual. The father must part with his ownership by some gift even in the ritual marriage. It was thus that the ceremony of Kanyā pradāna may have been added to the ritual of marriage by merely adopting the ritual for the gift of any property which consists principally of pouring water on the thing given while uttering the formula of gift. (Sen Gupta, 1953: 91).

The Poruwa ceremony which is briefly described in the simplest form by de Queroze had some added rituals like the couple feeding each other with milk rice and the recitation of Jayamangala *gāthās* in Pali in praise of the Buddha.

Regarding the remarriage, this fact gleans from the Mangul Maha Vihara inscription. This is attributable to the Viharamahadevi who wrote to this epigraph after the demise of her two husbands.

Rūnu raṭā raja ka(rana) pārakumbā debā raja daruvan dedenāṭa agamehesun ū vihāramahadevi nam māvisin mul pisā karavā darugam vaṭanā pasa parivāra sahitavā... (badavas) kotā māvisin karavanalada... (*Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. IV, 1934: 165).

The record registers restorations of the Runu maha viharaya by this widow queen. But there are no facts to justify that she had contracted a second marriage. In fact our existing sources do not provide us it the examination of remarriage during the period under survey. As Hettiaratchi have pointed out widows in the latter part of the Anuradhapura period enjoy the freedom extinct to remain marry or to enter the bhikkhuni order. Unfortunately with the downfall of Polonnaruwa period, the Bhikkhuni order came to extinct in Sri Lankan society.

## 1.6 Royal marriage

A notable feature of the marriage institution during the period under survey is the fact that its political influence seems to have increased. Hettiaratchi has shown the political marriages of Anuradhaputa period. (Hettiaratchi, 1988: 71). Many marriages of royal family were under the political influence. Kāragala inscription which can be attributable to the King Vijayabāhu V, Queen Padmāvatie was married by Arthanaya Dalasengamu Migantarun. King Parākramabāhu VI who was the father of Ulakuḍayadevi and Sandavathie married a woman from the generation of Kiravālle. He firstly consecrated in Raigama and again he consecrated in Sri Jayawardhanapura with the marrying of a royal prince. After the death of King Parākramabāhu VI, Vīra Parākramabāhu became the *Yuvarāja*. As has been mentioned Quato, Vīra Parākramabāhu married a widower from Satarakorale. She delivered a son and daughter who were the handicapped.

Both these son and daughter were not mentioned in any sources. Kiravālle family has been mentioned several times in the *Rājāvali* and *Alakēśvara Yuddhaya*. A Kīravālle princess was a queen of Prince Rājasinha who stayed in Menikkadavara. When king Rajasinha was defeating the first Udarata rebellion; Kiravālle maha *Rālahāmi* who was a brother of Kiravālle princess supported the king. The daughter of him was given to King Rajasinha as a wife (*dōliyaka*), after defeating the war. *Alakēśvara Yuddhaya* and *Rājāvali* mention that the king gave that princess to his cousin to marry (*suhuru*) Kiravālle *Maha Rālahāmi*. (*Alakēśvara Yuddhaya*, 1965: 33); (*Rājāvali*, 1997: 224).

From that marriage, seven children were the result as mentioned in *Rājāvali* and *Alakēśvara Yuddhaya*. Senā Sammata Vikramabāhu family also mentions that they descended from the *bōdhāhārakula* as major royal family. Kandure Ekanayaka family and Pilāsse Vidiya Bandara family have connections with the royal family as relatives. Ekanayaka family also had connection with the royal family in the fifteenth century.

Rulers of Kotte kingdom not only maintained marriage connections with rural elites but also they maintained marriage connections with South Indian families. *Rājāvali* and *Alakēśvara Yuddhaya* describe that the daughter of King Taniya Vallabha who stayed at Madampe married a Cōla king and she delivered two princes named Vīdiya Bandara and Tammiṭa Bandara. According to *Rājāvali* and *Alakēśvara Yuddhaya*, King Sakala kalā vallabha was a son of the sister of King Vīra Parākramabāhu's wife. Sakala kalā vallabha was the *Uparāja* in Udugampola, when his brother king Bhuvanekabāhu reigned in Kotte. Therefore he had a right to become the king according to *Alakēśvara Yuddhaya*. After the death of Mahabisō bandāra, her younger sister was a wife of King Vijayabāhu. Her son was Prince Dēvarāja. King Vijayabāhu tried to make Prince dēvarāja the king. Therefore, there was a rebellion named Vijayabāhu Kollaya. The wife of Jayavira Bandara was father's brother daughter of Bhuvanekabāhu, Parārajasingha and Māyādunne. She was also descended from Kiravālle generation. Therefore, under that connection, Jayavira Bandara assisted the three princes. Gradually, the power of King Parākramabāhu of Kotte started to weak.

Main evidence was the matrimonial connection. King Bhuvanekabāhu married a princess from *Gampolavarige*. King Bhuvanekabāhu had not any sons and he got his daughter Samudradēvi to marry Vīdiya Bandāra who was descendent from Madampe dynasty. His mother was a daughter of King Taniyavallabha and her husband was a Cōla prince. This prince was the nānā of King Bhuvanekabāhu. But three brothers including King Bhuvanekabāhu belonged to the Keeravelle generation. King Vijayabāhu and King Bhuvanekabāhu had done all the preparations to get the kingship to the Prince Dharmapala who was the son of his daughter. *Alakēśvara Yuddhaya* mentions as "Dharmapāla raju buvanekabāhu raja tema suta prēmāyēn maharaja kamaṭa yōgya koṭa ātikalaha." Under the aim of that, King Bhuvanekabāhu killed a prince "Jugu Bandara" with the assistance of Vidiya Bandara according to the *Alakēśvara Yuddhaya*. Marriage connections in the royal family were the economic background of the politics in various areas in this time. Although there were some political struggles between two brothers Bhuvanekabāhu and Māyādunne, struggles were not disturbances for the marriage connections of the royal family. After the death of Samudradēvi who was the mother of Prince Dharmapala, Vidiya Bandara who was his father married again the younger daughter (princess Tikiri) of King Māyādunne. Therefore, there was a somewhat peace and harmony among the brother kings.

According to the *Rājāvali* and *Alakēśvara Yuddhaya*, ruler of the Udarata was Jayawira Bandara. His first wife was a prince descending from Keeravella generation. Her daughter was DōnaKatirinā who became the wife of king Dharmapala. Her brother was Karalliyadde Bandara and King Jayawira Bandara married a prince from *Gampolavarige* after the death of queen Kiravālla. After getting children, the condition of Karalliyadde Bandara was unsatisfied. Therefore, Karalliyadde Bandara with the assistance of the army and King Māyādunne fought with King Jayavira Bandara and he became the king of Udarata. King Vimaladharmasūriya I (1592-1604) married Kusumāsanadēvi or Dōna Katirinā who had a legitimate right for Udarata. With that marriage, he stabilized the kingdom and started a new dynasty for the Kandyan Kingdom.

## 1.7 Conclusion

In the light of foregoing discussion, an attempt has been made to study the some characteristics of the structure and function of marriage during our period. It has to be noted that we have tried to compare our data as far as possible with those in both preceding and present periods. In addition to that, some features of marriage in Sri Lanka were compared with that of the Indian subcontinent whenever this seemed necessary. The topic was discussed under the subtitle of the dowry system of Sri Lankan marriage, relationship between wife and husband, *sāti* practice as well as the nature of the wedding ceremony in Sri Lanka. Apparently, it can be suggested that whatever marriage system that prevailed in Sri Lanka, the most popular marriage system was the monogamous one which is greatly admired by Buddhism and which has been stabilized in the whole of Sri Lanka.



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