4. Everyday Life

The everyday life of a family, in many ways self-evident and repetitive, is described from early morning to late at night, focusing on food and the house.

Food arrangements and a house-structure closely correspond to a social unit and social order.

The family as a social unit is discussed. A marriage is explained in terms of caste regulation, astrological judgements and a dowry. A cross-cousin marriage is preferred, but it is actually difficult to find such a cousin. A wife moves to her husband’s residence after marriage and they build a new independent house or a room. As a consequence of a virilocal residence custom, relatives living near a family are mainly the husband’s brothers and cousins. A wife’s relatives are considered inferior to her husband’s in terms of family politics except in the case of a large dowry.

Social rank was formerly defined by castes. Goiygama, the cultivator caste, occupied the top of the social ranks. This caste system has been greatly changed during the course of the development of market economy since the late 19th century, and especially after the 2nd World War. Landownership and occupations are definitely important for climbing the social ladder to the top level of society. Higher education is a kind of a channel between landownership and occupations.

5. Religious festivals and merchants

Religions in Galle such as Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Hindu, hold fes-
tivals every year. They are very important and gay annual events. The expenses incurred by these festivals are largely borne by affluent merchants. Merchants attain a good social reputation by sponsoring these events, which also ensure a good life after death. They are alleviate the poor’s jealousy caused by wealth accumulated by the rich. In other words, social order in Galle is maintained by the influence of cosmic belief provided by the religions. Festival activities are opposed to religious ones in everyday life, but complimentary in ceremonial events. Their interaction makes Galle a complete world.