

**HEREDITARY OFFICIALS AND THEIR
TRADITIONAL DUTIES IN KANDYAN *DĒVĀLAYAS*:
A CASE STUDY OF THE GAḌALĀDEṆIYA VIṢṆU
*DĒVĀLAYA***

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Abstract

The *Dēvālaya* is a significant feature in Sinhalese Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka, which engages with venerating various deities within the Buddhist context. The system of hereditary officials and their traditional duties has been shaped through a feudal organisation. Despite its significance, less scholarly attention has been given to the identification of this system. This study examines the hereditary duty system of Kandyan *Dēvālayas* by analysing the Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya* in Pilimathalawa, Kandy, and by drawing on historical sources, archival records, and interviews with current officials. The Gadaladeniya *Śrī Viṣṇu Dēvālaya*, established in the early 14th century alongside the Gadaladeniya *Rajamahā Vihāraya*, is one of two *Dēvālayas* linked to *Śrī Mahā Viṣṇu Dēvālaya* in Kandy. Gaḍalādeṇiya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya* comprises two main staffs: the inner (*Ātulkatṭalaya*) and the outer (*Piṭakatṭalaya*). The *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, typically of aristocratic lineage, serves as the custodian and chief administrator of the *Dēvālaya*, exercising command authority over all staff. The

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officials were granted parcels of land for their service, reinforcing a hierarchical and ritual-based social structure. This study focuses on how caste systems, ritual, and authority come together in *Dēvālaya* tradition, thereby safeguarding the religious and social order in Sri Lankan Buddhist culture. The inner staff, which consists of high-caste families, performs important rituals and other administrative functions, including the officials of *Vidānē*, *Vannaku Rāla*, *Kapu Rāla*, and others. The outer staff, primarily of low castes, is in charge of the logistics, upkeep, and supply functions, with principal members being *Durayō*, *Nilakārayō*, *Tammættaṅkārayā*, *Horāṅkēkārayā*, and the dancers.

Keywords: Caste System, Gadaladeniya Dēvālaya, Hereditary Officials, Kandyan Religious Tradition

Introduction

In Sri Lanka, two types of shrines dedicated to the veneration of deities can be identified: *Kōvils* and *Dēvālayas*. Although Buddhists revere deities in both specifically for the protection, the modes of veneration differ. *Kōvils* are shrines dedicated to deities in accordance with Hindu traditions, whereas *Dēvālayas* are shrines dedicated to deities within the framework of Buddhist culture. The rituals, offerings, and customs observed in these two types of shrines differ from one another. Although the deities may be the same, the modes of veneration often vary. For example, the deity Skanda, known in Sinhalese Buddhist culture as Kataragama, is venerated at the *Ruḥuṇu Mahā Kataragama Dēvālaya* in the Monaragala District, while the same deity, called “Murugan” in the Hindu tradition, is worshipped at the Nallur *Kōvil* in

the Jaffna District. Thus, while the same deity may be venerated in both contexts, the aspects and methods of veneration differ. Generally, Hindus visit *kōvils*, and Buddhists visit *Dēvālayas*, in accordance with their respective cultural traditions.

Munnēsvaram Kōvil in Chilaw and *Nallūr Kōvil* in Jaffna are among the main *Kōvils* in Sri Lanka. Similarly, the four main *Dēvālayas* in Kandy, the *Ruḥuṇu Mahā Kataragama Dēvālaya*, and the *Saparagamu Mahā Saman Dēvālaya* are some of the most prominent *Dēvālayas* in the country. *Dēvālayas* in Sri Lanka are primarily constructed for the veneration of the following deities:

1. *Viṣṇu*
2. *Kataragama*
3. *Nātha*
4. *Pattinī*
5. *Saman*

In addition, some *Dēvālayas* are dedicated to other regional deities such as *Dæḍimuṇḍa*, *Vibhīṣaṇa*, and *Gambhāra*.

In Sinhalese Buddhist culture, the veneration of deities has been practiced since ancient times. As recorded in the *Mahāvamsa*, King *Duṭṭugæmuṇu* constructed the *Ruḥuṇu Mahā Kataragama Dēvālaya* (Wickramage, 2015, pp. 128); King *Dappula* constructed a *Dēvālaya* dedicated to the deity *Viṣṇu* and performed offerings there. King *Parākramabāhu* constructed 13 *Dēvālayas* in Polonnaruwa and 24 *Dēvālayas* in the Southern Province (*Ruḥuṇa*) (Wickramage, 2015, pp. 268). King *Parākramabāhu* II renovated the *Upulvan Dēvālaya* in *Devīnuwara* and commenced the annual *Perahæra* procession there (Wickramage, 2015, pp. 293). He also constructed the *Saparagamu Mahā Saman Dēvālaya* in Rathnapura (Wickramage, 2015, pp. 295). Thus, the veneration of

deities in *Dēvālayas* has been practiced since ancient times under royal patronage and has been a common tradition in Sinhalese Buddhist culture.

Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya*

Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya* is one of the nine rural *Dēvālayas* situated in the Kandy District. Traditionally, this *Dēvālaya* is subordinate to the *Śrī Mahā Viṣṇu Dēvālaya* alias *Mahā Dēvālaya*, in Kandy. According to the Gadaladeniya Rock Inscription, the *Dēvālaya* was constructed by Venerable Silavaṃsa Dharmakīrti, the founder of the Gadaladeniya *Rajamaha Vihāraya*, in the 14th century (Codrington and Paronavitana, 1994, pp. 100–103). The inscription records that this *Dēvālaya* was built to protect the Buddhist *Vihāra*. It was constructed on the western side of the main shrine building of the Buddhist *Vihāra*. The architecture of the *Dēvālaya* strictly follows South Indian Dravidian styles and consists of three sections: the outer pavilion (*piṭamaṇḍapa*), antechamber (*antarāla*), and sanctum sanctorum (*garbhagrha*). Inside the sanctum sanctorum is a wooden statue of the deity *Viṣṇu*, carved from red sandalwood.

The Staff of the *Dēvālaya*

The staff of the Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya* is divided into two main sections:

1. *Ātul Kaṭṭalaya* (inner staff)
2. *Piṭa Kaṭṭalaya* (outer staff).

The *Ātul Kaṭṭalaya* consists of officials engaged in the rituals, administration, and management of the *Dēvālaya*. The *Piṭa Kaṭṭalaya* consists mainly of officials responsible for supplying goods, performing repairs and construction, guarding, and playing musical instruments. The *Ātul Kaṭṭalaya* comprises high-caste officials, while the *Piṭa Kaṭṭalaya* consists of low-caste officials.

The *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, the custodian of the *Dēvālaya*, is the head of both the *Ātul Kaṭṭalaya* and *Piṭa Kaṭṭalaya*. All these officials are endowed with paddy fields and garden lands as remuneration for their service to the *Dēvālaya*, which they use as their source of income.

In the Sri Lankan *Dēvāla* tradition, caste is the main factor determining an official's status and role within the staff. All high-ranking officials are allowed to enter the inside of the *Dēvālaya*, whereas the low-caste officials of the *Piṭa Kaṭṭalaya* are never permitted inside. Even members of the *Ātul Kaṭṭalaya* have certain limitations regarding entry. Here, "inside" refers to the antechamber and the sanctum sanctorum, where the deity's sacred statue is housed.

The *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, as custodian of the *Dēvālaya*, is permitted to enter the sanctum sanctorum at any time. The *Vidānē* also has the right to enter the sanctum sanctorum whenever required. *Vannaku Rāḷa*, *Gamvasaṃ Kārayō*, *Kaṃkānāma*, and *Lēkaṃ* are permitted to enter if they need to fulfil any duty there. The *Kapu Rāḷa*, who performs rituals and accepts vows from devotees, may enter the sanctum sanctorum at any time to perform his duties. The Buddhist monk, mainly the chief incumbent of the *Vihāraya*, is permitted to enter for chanting *Pirit* and may do so whenever necessary.

Officials such as *Kat-tiyana Rāḷa*, *Hakgedi Rāḷa*, and *Ātulkaṭṭalē Rāḷa* are allowed only into the antechamber. *Randōli* Holders may also enter the antechamber, though their presence is rarely required.

However, all officials must follow strict guidelines before entering the inner area of the *Dēvālaya*. These include:

1. Avoiding attendance at funerals for at least the past three days
2. Avoiding the consumption of meat

3. Avoiding occasions that cause *killā* (impurity), such as funerals, puberty ceremonies, childbirth, or the death of a blood relative

Generally, officials are not permitted to attend funerals. The *Vidānē* and *Kapu Rāḷa* are strictly forbidden from entering a funeral house, paying respects to the dead, or carrying coffins. If an official attends a funeral, he must refrain from entering the *Dēvālaya* premises for 3–7 days. If a blood relative dies, the official must suspend his duties for at least three months.

| Type of the staff | Official | Type of the caste | Variety of the caste |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Inner Staff (<i>Ātul Kaṭṭalaya</i>) | <i>Basnāyaka Niḷamē</i> | High caste | <i>Radaḷa</i> |
| | Buddhist monks | - | - |
| | <i>Vannaku Rāḷa</i> | High caste | <i>Govigama</i> |
| | <i>Vidānē</i> | High caste | <i>Govigama</i> |
| | <i>Gamvasam Kārayō</i> | High caste | <i>Govigama</i> |
| | <i>Kapu Rāḷa</i> | High caste | <i>Radaḷa</i> |
| | <i>Kattiyana Rāḷa</i> (offering bearer) | High caste | <i>Govigama</i> |
| | <i>Kaṃkānāma</i> (overseer) | High caste | <i>Govigama</i> - <i>Patti</i> |
| | <i>Lekam</i> (Secretary) | High caste | <i>Radala</i> |
| | <i>Hakgedi Rāḷa</i> (conch-shell player) | High caste | <i>Govigama</i> - <i>Patti</i> |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| | <i>Ætulkaṭṭalē Rāḷa</i> (Officer in Inner Staff) | High caste | <i>Govigama</i> |
| | <i>Randōli</i> Holder | High caste | <i>Govigama</i> |
| | <i>Talpatvaḍana Rāḷa</i> | High caste | <i>Govigama - Patti</i> |
| Outer Staff (<i>Piṭakaṭṭalaya</i>) | <i>Nila Kārayō</i> (Regular officials) | Low caste | <i>Padu</i> |
| | <i>Durayō</i> (Superintendent Officers) | Low caste | <i>Padu</i> |
| | <i>Baḍahælayā</i> (potter) | Low caste | <i>Baḍahæla</i> |
| | <i>Badal kārayā</i> (Goldsmith) | Low caste | <i>Navandaṇḍa</i> |
| | <i>Navandaṇḍā</i> (Blacksmith) | Low caste | <i>Navandaṇḍa</i> |
| | <i>Pandaṃ Kārayā</i> (Torch Bearer) | Low caste | <i>Padu</i> |
| | <i>Radavā</i> (Dhobi) | Low caste | <i>Radā</i> |
| | <i>Næṭṭuvō</i> (Dancers) | Low caste | <i>Beravā</i> |
| | <i>Tammæṭṭam Kārayā</i> (Twin-Drum Beater) | Low caste | <i>Beravā</i> |
| | <i>Bera Kārayā</i> (Double-Headed-Drum Beater) | Low caste | <i>Beravā</i> |
| | <i>Horanæ Kārayā</i> (Temple Clarinet Player) | Low caste | <i>Beravā</i> |
| | <i>Tambōru Kārayā</i> (<i>Tambōru</i> Drum Beater) | Low caste | <i>Beravā</i> |

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| | Officer of Salt Supply | - | <i>Muslims</i> |
| | Officer of Elephant Fodder Supply | Low caste | <i>Padu</i> |

Table 1
The Staff of the Gadaladeniya Devālaya and their Castes

The whole staff of the Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya* consists of more than a hundred individuals.

| Official | <i>Paṅguva</i> | Quantity |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <i>Basnāyaka Niḷamē</i> | - | 01 |
| Buddhist monks | <i>Pirit Paṅguva</i> in Gadaladeniya | 01 |
| <i>Vannaku Rāḷa</i> | <i>Vannaku Paṅguva</i> in <i>Govindala</i> | 01 |
| <i>Vidānē</i> | - | 01 |
| <i>Gamvasam Kārayō</i> | <i>Pamuṇuvegedara Gamvasam Paṅguva</i> | 04 |
| | <i>Kaṃkānigedara Gamvasam Paṅguva</i> | 03 |
| <i>Kapu Rāḷa</i> | <i>Kapu Paṅguva</i> in <i>Hæpāna</i> | 02 |
| | <i>Kapu Paṅguva</i> in <i>Piligama</i> | 01 |
| <i>Kat-tiyana Rāḷa</i> (offering bearer) | <i>Kat-tiyana Paṅguva</i> 1 in Gadaladeniya | 02 |
| <i>Kaṃkānāma</i> (overseer) | <i>Kaṃkāni Paṅguva</i> in Gadaladeniya | 03 |
| <i>Hakgedi Rāḷa</i> (conch-shell player) | <i>Hakgedi Paṅguva</i> in <i>Ilukvatta</i> | 01 |
| | <i>Hakgedi Paṅguva</i> in <i>Govindala</i> | 01 |
| <i>Talpatvaḍana Rāḷa</i> | <i>Talpatvaḍana Paṅguva</i> in <i>Gōvindala</i> | 01 |
| <i>Nila Kārayō</i> (Regular officials) | <i>Nila Paṅguva</i> in <i>Gōvindala</i> | 01 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----|
| | <i>Nila Paṅguva 1 in Gadaladeniya</i> | 02 |
| | <i>Nila Paṅguva 2 in Gadaladeniya</i> | 02 |
| | <i>Four Nila Paṅguvas in Pamūṇuva</i> | 04 |
| | <i>Three Nila Paṅguvas in Hīyavala</i> | 10 |
| | <i>Nila Paṅguva in Kirivavula</i> | 02 |
| | <i>Nila Paṅguva in Tirappuva</i> | 02 |
| <i>Ætulkattalē Rāḷa (Officer in Inner Staff)</i> | <i>Ætulkattalē Paṅguva 1 in Pamūṇuva</i> | 01 |
| | <i>Ætulkattalē Paṅguva 2 in Pamūṇuva</i> | 01 |
| | <i>Ætulkattalē Paṅguva in Kirivavula</i> | 02 |
| | <i>Ætulkattalē Paṅguva in Hæpāna</i> | 01 |
| <i>Randōli Holder</i> | <i>Randōli Paṅguva in Gadaladeniya</i> | 01 |
| | <i>Randōli Paṅguva in Gōvindala</i> | 01 |
| | <i>Randōli Paṅguva in Pamūṇuva</i> | 01 |
| <i>Durayō (Superintendent Officers)</i> | <i>Three Dura Paṅguvas in Pamūṇuva</i> | 03 |
| | <i>Megoḍa Dura Paṅguva in Hīyavala</i> | 06 |
| | <i>Egoḍa Dura Paṅguva in Hīyavala</i> | 06 |
| | <i>Kuḍā Dura Paṅguva in Hīyavala</i> | 03 |
| <i>Baḍahælayā (potter)</i> | <i>Baḍahæla Paṅguva in Gadaladeniya</i> | 01 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Badal</i> (Goldsmith) <i>kārayā</i> | <i>Badal Paṅguva</i> in <i>Gadaladeniya</i> | 01 |
| <i>Navandaṇḍā</i> (Blacksmith) | <i>Navan Paṅguva</i> in <i>Gadaladeniya</i> | 01 |
| | <i>Navan Paṅguva</i> in <i>Pamuṇuva</i> | 01 |
| <i>Pandaṃ Kārayā</i> (Torch Bearer) | <i>Pandam Paṅguva</i> in <i>Gadaladeniya</i> | 01 |
| <i>Lekam</i> (Secretary) | <i>Lekam Paṅguva</i> in <i>Piligama</i> | 01 |
| <i>Radavā</i> (Dhobi) | <i>Radā Paṅguva</i> in <i>Kirivavula</i> | 01 |
| <i>Næṭṭuvō</i> (Dancers) | <i>Næṭṭum Paṅguva</i> in <i>Pamuṇuva</i> | 03 |
| <i>Tammæṭṭam Kārayā</i> (Twin-Drum Beater) | <i>Tammæṭṭam Paṅguva</i> in <i>Gadaladeniya</i> | 03 |
| | Three <i>Hēvisi Paṅguvas</i> in <i>Pamuṇuva</i> | 03 |
| <i>Bera Kārayā</i> (Double-Headed-Drum Beater) | <i>Bera Paṅguva</i> in <i>Gadaladeniya</i> | 02 |
| <i>Horanæ Kārayā</i> (Temple Clarinet Player) | <i>Horanæ Paṅguva</i> in <i>Pamuṇuva</i> | 01 |
| | <i>Horanæ Paṅguva</i> in <i>Gōvindala</i> | 01 |
| <i>Tambōru Kārayā</i> (Tambōru Drum Beater) | <i>Tambōru Paṅguva</i> in <i>Pamuṇuva</i> | 01 |
| Officer of Salt Supply | <i>Luṇu Dena Paṅguva</i> in <i>Pamuṇuva</i> | 06 |
| Officer of Elephant Fodder Supply | <i>Koḷadena Paṅguva</i> in <i>Pamuṇuva</i> | 01 |
| | <i>Koḷadena Paṅguva</i> in <i>Hiyavala</i> | 03 |
| Total | | 102 |

Table 2
The number of staff members

1. *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* (Custodian of the *Dēvālaya*)

The term *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* refers to the chief custodian of a *Dēvālaya*. In earlier times, this position was appointed by the king himself, on the recommendation of the chieftain (*Disāva*) of the district where the *Dēvālaya* was located. At that time, the position was known as “*Basnāyaka Rāḷa*” or “*Bannāhāka*.” The person appointed to this role was required to pay a certain amount of tax to the king for holding the position. Typically, an aristocrat belonging to the Kandyan *Radaḷa* caste was selected for this role, and they held a high rank in the ancient social hierarchy.

Since 1815, when Sri Lanka became a British colony, the authority to appoint *Basnāyaka Niḷamēs* for the *Dēvālayas* was transferred to the British Governor General. However, Christian missionaries and clergy later objected to the Governor General's authority to appoint administrators for Buddhist temples and *Dēvālayas*, arguing that it constituted the promotion and support of a religion outside Christianity (*Commission on the Tenure of the Buddhist Temporalities, 1956, pp. 16–25*).

As a result, under Ordinance No. 2 of 1846, the Governor General transferred the authority of appointing administrators for Buddhist temples and *Dēvālaya* to Sinhalese Buddhist chieftains, and a committee was established for this purpose. Nevertheless, the Sinhalese Buddhist chieftains expressed dissatisfaction, feeling that the British government had withdrawn state support for Buddhism. This discontent contributed significantly to the 1848 rebellion against the British government (*Commission on the Tenure of the Buddhist Temporalities, 1956, pp. 16–25*).

In response, Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom abolished Ordinance No. 2 of 1846 and appointed Sir John Parkington to investigate the matter. Based on his report, dated 04 December 1852, it was decided that a committee of Sinhalese Buddhist chieftains would recommend suitable administrators for Buddhist temples and *Dēvālayas*, and these recommendations would then be approved by the Governor General (*Commission on the Tenure of the Buddhist Temporalities*, 1956, pp. 16–25).

The committee comprised the *Korālas* and *Ratēmahattayās* (local administrators of divisions) of the district where the *Dēvālaya* was located, as well as the *Basnāyaka Niḷamēs* of other *Dēvālayas* in the district. If the *Dēvālaya* was situated in Kandy, the *Diyavaḍana Niḷamē* of the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic was also included (*Commission on the Tenure of the Buddhist Temporalities*, 1956, pp. 16–25). Later, under the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance of 1931, the same officials retained the authority to appoint *Basnāyaka Niḷamēs*. The tenure of the position was initially set at 10 years but was later reduced to 5 years. At present, *Basnāyaka Niḷamēs* are appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance of 1931. If there is more than one candidate, elections are held.

The *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* of the Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya* is also appointed in accordance with the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance of 1931. The appointing committee includes the *Diyavaḍana Niḷamē* of the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, the *Basnāyaka Niḷamēs* of other *Dēvālayas* in the Kandy District, the male divisional secretaries of the Kandy District, and the lay trustees of the Buddhist temples listed in Section 1 of Article 4 of the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance of 1931, located within the Divisional Secretariat Division of Udunuwara.

The responsibilities of the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* include administering the affairs of the *Dēvālaya*, overseeing maintenance, supervising rituals performed by officials, managing the lands belonging to the *Dēvālaya*, ensuring the proper execution of all official duties, conducting the four main ceremonies, and managing the *Dēvālaya*'s income and expenses.

2. Buddhist Monks (*Pirit Paṅguva*)

In the tradition of *Dēvālayas*, an important custom and ritual is the chanting of *Pirit* (sacred recitations of the Buddha's teachings). This practice varies from one *Dēvālaya* to another. In the *Gadaladeniya Viṣṇu Dēvālaya*, the duty of chanting *Pirit* is entrusted to the chief incumbent of the *Gaḍalādeniya Vihāraya*. During the final three days of the Annual *Perahæra* Procession, the chief incumbent, either alone or accompanied by other monks, visits the sanctum sanctorum (the inner chamber of the *Dēvālaya*) to chant the *Pirit*. For fulfilling this duty, a land belonging to the *Dēvālaya* is allocated to the chief incumbent for his maintenance (Lawrie, 1898).

This practice demonstrates that, although the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* is formally the head of both the inner and outer staff, the chief incumbent holds a higher status. In the Sinhalese Buddhist tradition, monks were regarded as socially superior—even above the king—and were highly respected. Accordingly, due to both tradition and his position as chief incumbent of the *Vihāra*, the monk outranks the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*. This hierarchy is reflected in the customs observed during the *Pirit* chanting ritual (*Bandara Dissanayake, 2025*).

During the Annual *Perahæra* Procession, the ornaments of the deity are carried outside the *Dēvālaya* with the utmost respect and various forms of veneration. When these

ornaments are carried, officials hold objects such as *Viyana* (canopy), *Tal-atta* (palm-leaf parasol), *Mutukuḍaya* (traditional brass umbrella), *Paliha* (brass shield), and *At Pandama* (hand-held fire torch). For the deity *Viṣṇu*, the *Viyana*, *Mutukuḍaya*, *Paliha*, and *At Pandama* are used. For the deity *Dædimuṇḍa*, only the *Tal-atta* and *Kīla Pandama* (special hand-held fire torch) are used. Additionally, instruments such as the *Davula* (double-headed drum), *Tammæṭṭama* (twin drum), *Horanæva* (temple clarinet), and *Hakgediya* (corn shell) are played (*Bandara Dissanayake, 2025*).

When the chief incumbent is taken to the *Dēvālaya* for chanting *Pirit*, all these objects are carried, and the instruments played as a sign of respect until he enters the sanctum sanctorum. In contrast, when the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* participates in the *Perahæra*, only an umbrella and two separate *At Pandamas* are held. The ceremonial objects used for the deity's procession are never used for the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*. Instead, all these objects, typically reserved for the deities *Viṣṇu* and *Dædimuṇḍa*, are used for the chief incumbent, signifying his higher status than the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*. In this context, the chief incumbent is accorded respect equal to or surpassing that of the deities.

Furthermore, representing the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, the *Vidānē*, and lay priests formally invite the chief incumbent by presenting a tray of betel leaves for chanting the *Pirit*. This is the only occasion on which a tenant of the *Dēvālaya* is formally invited by the officials to perform his duties. As part of the responsibilities of the *Pirit Paṃguva*, the chief incumbent is also required to supply a *Tal-atta* to the *Dædimuṇḍa Dēvālaya*. This custom can also be observed at the *Æmbækka Kataragama Dēvālaya* and the *Ganegoda Kataragama Dēvālaya* (Lawrie, 1898).

Thus, the chief incumbent of the Gadaladeniya *Vihāraya* holds the highest status in the traditions of the Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya*.

3. *Vannaku Rāḷa* (Managing officer)

Vannaku Rāḷa is one of the high-ranking officials of the Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya*. He is mainly responsible for supervising the functions of the *Dēvālaya*. In addition, he must cultivate one *Pāḷa* (80 perches) of the *mutteṭṭuva* (fields belonging to the *Dēvālaya*, dedicated to producing rice for the daily offerings) in Gadaladeniya Village, supply seed paddy (*Bittara Vī*) and buffaloes, and provide one *Pāḷa* of *Nelum Vī*. He also assists in thatching the *Dēvālaya*, constructing an *Anamestaraya* in the compound for the *Perahæra*, and cleaning the premises. Furthermore, he must maintain five cubits of the *Vaṭadāgē*, decorate it for ceremonies including the *Perahæra*, prepare lodging for the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, and provide meals during his visits to Gadaladeniya Village. He is also required to assist in repairs, give two and a half *Ridī* (an ancient currency) to the *Dēvālaya*, and present sweetmeats and betel to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Paṃgu, Yatinuwara, n.d.*).

4. *Vidānē* (Director)

The *Vidānē* is the official responsible for the directorial management of the *Dēvālaya*. His primary duty is to oversee the performance of the four principal ceremonies of the *Dēvālaya* by the other officials. In the Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya*, there is no separate cadre (*Paṃgu*) for the role of *Vidānē*. Typically, one of the two *Gamvasam Kārayō* (heads of the villages belonging to the *Dēvālaya*) is appointed to act as the *Vidānē*. This appointment is made by the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, who holds the authority to select him.

5. *Gamvasam Kārayō* (head of the villages belonging to the *Devālaya*)

The *Gamvasam Kārayā* is one of the highest-ranking officials of the Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya*. There are two *Gamvasam Paṃguvas*, namely:

1. *Pamuṇuvegedara Gamvasam Paṃguva*
2. *Kaṃkānigedara Gamvasam Paṃguva*

Their primary responsibilities include overseeing the performance of the four principal ceremonies and supervising the maintenance of the *Dēvālaya*. The post of *Vidānē* of the *Dēvālaya* is appointed from one of these two *Gamvasam Paṃguvas*.

In addition to these duties, the *Gamvasam Kārayō* are responsible for ensuring the cultivation of the *mutteṭṭu* (paddy fields belonging to the *Dēvālaya*, which provide rice for the daily *dēva pūjā* – offerings) by the *Nilakārayō*; assisting in thatching the roofs of the *Multængē* (the *Dēvālaya* kitchen where offerings are prepared) and the *Vāhalkaḍa* (gateway of the *Dēvālaya*) and providing twenty bundles of straw for this purpose; constructing an *Anamestaraya* (ceremonial arch) and decorating it in the *Vīdiya* (street belonging to the *Dēvālaya*); providing a yoke of buffaloes for threshing the paddy from the *Dēvālaya* fields; assisting with repairs and supplying timber; organizing the four main ceremonies including the *Perahæra*; supplying materials for erecting arches; providing one *Næli* of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony; assisting in providing meals for the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* during his visits to the *Dēvālaya*; and presenting sweetmeats and betel at each ceremony (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveṇi Paṃgu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

Additionally, the representative of the *Pamuṇuvegedara Gamvasam Paṃguva* is responsible for erecting the *Æhæla* tree (used to plant the *Kapa* for the *Perahæra*) and attending the *Diyakæpīma* (water-cutting ceremony at the end of the *Perahæra*). The representative of the *Kaṃkānigedara Gamvasam Paṃguva* is responsible for applying cow dung to the floor of the *Siṃhāsanagē* (the throne hall of the *Dēvālaya*, where the sacred ornaments of the deities carried in the *Perahæra* are temporarily placed and rituals are performed, situated at the end of the *Dēvālaya* street) and lighting a lamp inside it each day of the *Perahæra* (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveṇi Paṃgu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

6. *Kapu Rāḷa* (Lay priest)

Kapu Rāḷa is the official ritual attendant responsible for maintaining all sacred rituals for the deity in the *Dēvālaya*. All the sacred objects, including the ornaments of the *Dēvālaya*, are under his safekeeping. He must attend all four main ceremonies, including the *Perahæra*, and perform the necessary rituals. He is also responsible for handling vows (*bāra*) and offerings (*pūjā*) made by devotees. Acting as a mediator, he conveys the intentions of devotees to the deity, invokes blessings upon them, and ensures their wishes are fulfilled with the deity's grace.

The most important duty of the *Kapu Rāḷa* is to carry the sacred ornaments of the deity during the 16-day annual *Perahæra* procession. He alone is entrusted with this responsibility.

In the Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya*, there are two *Kapu Paṃguvas*:

1. *Kapu Paṃguva* in *Hæpāna*
2. *Kapu Paṃguva* in *Pīligama*

Representatives of these two *Kapu Paṅguvas* serve as *Kapu Rāḷa* for six months each, working in shifts.

Additionally, the representative of the *Kapu Paṅguva* in *Govindala* is required to attend all ceremonies, including the fifteen days of the *Perahæra*. He must construct and decorate an *Anamestaraya* (ceremonial arch) for the *Perahæra*, assist in weeding the *Maḷuva* (temple compound), and help with whitewashing the *Dēvālaya*. Furthermore, he is obliged to supply one quart of *Kækuṇa* oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony and present forty betel leaves to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* at each ceremony. In recognition of his service as *Kapu Rāḷa*, he receives one meal per day during his term of duty (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveṇi Paṅgu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

The representative of the *Kapu Paṅguva* in *Pīligama* performs the same duties, except supplying the quart of *Kækuṇa* oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveṇi Paṅgu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

7. *Kat-tiyana Rāḷa* (Offering Bearer)

Kat-tiyana Rāḷa is the official responsible for bringing the offerings from the *Multængē* to the antechamber of the *Dēvālaya* for a period of six months. He also serves as the *Kapu Rāḷa* of the *Pallē Dēvālaya*. In addition to these duties, he is required to assist in the *Multæn Bæma* (offering of meals) three times a day, watch over the *Dēvālaya* at night, and make offerings at the *Pallē Dēvālaya* every Saturday. He must also attend various ceremonies, including the *Perahæra*, and carry the ornament of the deity *Dæḍimuṇḍa* during the procession. Furthermore, he participates in maintaining the premises by weeding the compound, whitewashing the *Dēvālaya*, and applying cow dung to the floor of the *Pallē Dēvālaya* once a week during his term

(Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.).

Kat-tiyana Rāḷa is also responsible for supplying one quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, constructing an *Anamestaraya* in the *Pallē Dēvālaya*, and building and decorating an arch. He must cultivate two *Lāha* (16 perches) of *Mutteṭṭu*, thresh and guard the paddy harvested from the fields belonging to the *Dēvālaya* at the *Kamata* (threshing-floor), and assist in thatching the *Multængē* and *Vāhalkaḍa* as well as repairing and supplying timber. Additionally, he provides a broom, helps in supplying meals to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, presents sweetmeats and betel during ceremonies, and offers betel to the *Vidānē* on four occasions. He is also required to work for the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* for three days and receives meals while on duty *(Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.)*.

8. Kaṃkānāma (Overseer)

Kaṃkānāma is the official who serves as the director by overseeing the duties of the *Dēvālaya*. He is also responsible for cultivating and threshing two *Kuruṇis* (16 perches) of *Mutteṭṭu*, supplying one quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, constructing and decorating an *Anamestaraya*, and assisting in thatching the *Multængē* and *Vāhalkaḍa*, weeding the compound. Holding the canopy during the *Perahæra* and other ceremonies, helps supply meals to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, and presents sweetmeats and betel during ceremonies. He should present betels to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* on being appointed as *Kaṃkānāma* *(Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.)*.

9. *Hakgedi Rāḷa* (Conch-shell Player)

Hakgedi Rāḷa is the official responsible for playing the conch shell during daily offerings and the four main ceremonies, including the *Perahæra*. There are two *Hakgedi Paṃguvas* in the Gadaladeniya *Viṣṇu Dēvālaya*:

1. *Hakgedi Paṃguva* in Ilukvatta
2. *Hakgedi Paṃguva* in Govindala

The *Hakgedi Rāḷa* representing the *Hakgedi Paṃguva* in Ilukvatta is also responsible for cultivating two *Lāhas* (16 perches) of the *Pallē Mutteṭṭuva* in Gadaladeniya Village, supplying seed paddy, buffaloes, and *Nelum Vī*, thatching the *Dēvālaya*, and constructing a thatched *Anamēstaraya* for ceremonies, including the *Perahæra*, within the compound and assisting in decorating it. Additional duties include weeding the compound five times a year, assisting with repairs of the *Dēvālaya*, supplying half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, guarding the *Dēvālaya* for one month, and guarding the granary for four days each month. He must also supply 200 betel leaves and 100 areca nuts daily for six months, cook multæn every Saturday during his shift, and present betel at each ceremony to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, *Vidānē*, and *Vannaku Rāḷa* (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

The *Hakgedi Rāḷa* representing the *Hakgedi Paṃguva* in Govindala must cultivate and harvest one *Lāha* (8 perches) of the *Mutteṭṭuva* in Gadaladeniya Village, construct a thatched *Anamēstaraya* in the compound for the *Perahæra*, and maintain and decorate three cubits of the *Vaṭadāgē* for ceremonies. He is also required to supply half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, blow the conch shell for six shifts of thirty days each, supply 200 betel leaves and 100 areca nuts monthly, guard the granary for four days per month,

cook *multæn* for the *Pallē Dēvālaya* every Saturday, and present betel every Saturday (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Yatinuwara, n.d.*).

10. *Nila Kārayō* (Regular Officials)

Nila Kārayō are officials responsible for various duties in the *Dēvālaya*. There are several *Nila Paṃguvas*:

1. *Nila Paṃguva* in Govindala
2. *Nila Paṃguva* 1 in Gadaladeniya
3. *Nila Paṃguva* 2 in Gadaladeniya
4. Four *Nila Paṃguvas* in Pamunuva
5. Three *Nila Paṃguvas* in Hiyavala
6. *Nila Paṃguva* in Kirivavula
7. *Nila Paṃguva* in Tirappuva

The *Nila Kārayō* of the *Nila Paṃguva* in Govindala serve on a rotational basis between two tenants. No. 1 must provide 12 *Lāhas* of paddy annually, while No. 2 must provide 2 *Pælas* and 4 *Lāhas* of paddy annually. They must also feed the goldsmiths and painters working at the *Vihāra*, attend ceremonies, and present sweetmeats and betel at each ceremony (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Yatinuwara, n.d.*).

The representatives of *Nila Paṃguva* 1 in Gadaladeniya and *Nila Paṃguva* in *Kirivavula* must assist in cultivating and harvesting one *Amuṇa* of the *mutteṭṭuva* in Gadaladeniya, construct an *Anamēstaraya*, an arch, and a *Pæn Gē* for the *Perahæra*, and a shed for the *Diyakæpīma* (water-cutting ceremony). They must also attend ceremonies, weed the compound, guard the *Aṭuva* (granary) for two months, assist with repairs and timber work, hold hand-held torches during ceremonies, supply one quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, assist in providing clay and firewood for roofing tiles, carry pingos presented to the *Basnāyaka*

Niḷamē by the tenants in Gadaladeniya Village, work three days in the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*'s fields within five miles of the village, work and travel for three days for the *Pamunuva Gaṃvasama*, and attend the *Perahæra* of the *Mahā Viṣṇu Dēvālaya* or *Mahā Dēvālaya* in Kandy (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

The representative of *Niḷa Paṃguva 2* in Gadaladeniya must assist in cultivating the *mutteṭṭuva*, threshing and storing the crops, receive meals during weeding, supply twenty bundles of straw, assist in thatching the *multængē* and granary, clear the compound, construct two *Anamēstarayas* (one in the street of the *Dēvālaya* and one on the rock) and decorate them, whitewash the *Dēvālaya*, guard the granary for one month, fell and prepare timber, assist with repairs, supply laths, hold the *Kīla Pandama* (hand-held torch used before the ornaments of the *Pallē Dēvālaya*) during the last five days of the *Perahæra*, supply half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, put up a shed for the *Diyakæpīma* at the ferry, carry gifts for the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* from the *Gaṃvasam Paṃgugas*, carry and prepare clay, supply firewood for roofing tiles, and work for the *Gamarāḷa* (village head) for seven days (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

The *Niḷa Kārayō* of the four *Niḷa Paṃgugas* in Pamunuva must assist in *Mutteṭṭu* work, tie twenty bundles of straw, construct two *Anamēstarayas* (one in the street of the *Dēvālaya* and one on the rock) and decorate them, put up decorations for the *Perahæra*, clear the compound, whitewash the *Dēvālaya*, hold flags during ceremonies, fell and transport timber, assist in repairs, provide clay and firewood for roofing tiles, supply half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, put up a shed for the *Diyakæpīma* at the ferry, carry pingos of vegetables supplied by other tenants

to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, prepare a threshing floor, provide sheds, supply goods and torches, and guard the granary for five nights each month.

The *Nila Kārayō* of the three *Nila Paṅguvas* in Hiyavala must assist in cultivating one *Amuṇa* (2.5 acres) of the *mutteṭṭuva*, carry crops to the granary, tie thirty bundles of straw, construct a *Pæn Gē* (2 cubits) and an *Anamēstaraya* on the rock and decorate them for the *Perahæra*, weed and decorate the compound, attend ceremonies and the *Perahæra* (one representative for ten days, another for five days of the *Mahā Perahæra*), assist with repairs and upkeep, supply timber, clay, and firewood for the tile kiln, attend the last day of the *Perahæra* in Kandy, and carry pingos for the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* provided by the *Durayō* (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

The *Nila Kārayō* of the *Nila Paṅguva* in *Tirappuva* must cultivate 5 *Lāhas* (40 perches) of the *mutteṭṭuva*, thresh and store its crops, supply thirty bundles of straw, construct a six-cubit shed in the street and an *Anamēstaraya* on the rock and decorate them for the *Perahæra*, decorate the *Dēvālaya* and hold flags during ceremonies, whitewash the *Dēvālaya* and *Vāhalkaḍa*, fell timber for repairs, supply clay, firewood, and laths, carry four pingos of vegetables from the *Durayō* of Hiyavala to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* for ceremonies, assist three days in cultivating the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē's* fields within five miles of the village, and attend the *Perahæra* of the *Mahā Viṣṇu Dēvālaya* or *Mahā Dēvālaya* in Kandy for three days.

11. *Ætulkaṭṭalē Rāḷa* (Officer in Inner Staff)

Ætulkaṭṭalē Rāḷa is an official included in the inner staff, responsible for fulfilling specific duties related to the sacred

rituals of the *Dēvālaya*. There are three *Ātulkaṭṭalē Paṃguvas*:

1. *Ātulkaṭṭalē Paṃguva* 1 in Pamunuva
2. *Ātulkaṭṭalē Paṃguva* 2 in Pamunuva
3. *Ātulkaṭṭalē Paṃguva* in Kirivavula
4. *Ātulkaṭṭalē Paṃguva* in Hepana

The *Ātulkaṭṭalē Rāḷa* of *Paṃguva* 1 in Pamunuva must serve as the *Kat-tiyana Rāḷa* for three months (thirty days at a time) and perform night watch duties. He must offer *multæn* at the *Pallē Dēvālaya* every Saturday, carry the sacred ornaments of the *Pallē Dēvālaya* during the *Perahæra*, whitewash and apply mud and cow dung inside the *Dēvālaya*, put up decorations, supply one quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, construct two *Anamēstarayas* (one in the street of the *Dēvālaya* and one on the rock) and decorate them for the *Perahæra*, provide twenty bundles of straw, clear the compound, assist in cultivating the *Mutteṭṭu*, thresh and store the crop, supply timber and assist in repairs, provide *Aḍukku* (meals) to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* during his village visits, and appear before him at each ceremony with sweetmeats and betel.

The *Ātulkaṭṭalē Rāḷa* of *Paṃguva* 2 in Pamunuva must supply vegetables daily for nine curries over six months, hold the *Mutukudaya* (traditional brass umbrella) during ceremonies including the *Perahæra*, put up decorations, supply one quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, construct two *Anamēstarayas* (one in the street of the *Dēvālaya* and one on the rock) and decorate them for the *Perahæra*, clear the *Maluva* (temple compound), assist in *Mutteṭṭu* work, tie twenty bundles of straw, provide half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, prepare clay, supply firewood for roofing tiles, fell timber, supply laths, assist in repairs, and present

betel at each ceremony to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* and the *Vidānē*.

The *Ætulkaṭṭalē Rāḷa* of *Paṃguva* in *Kirivavula* must supply plantain (banana) leaves and three types of vegetables daily for six months, attend ceremonies including the *Perahæra* while holding the *Paḷiha* (brass shield), assist in thatching the granary and *Vāhalkaḍa*, assist in repairs, construct an *Anamēstaraya* and a *Pæn Gē* and decorate them for the *Perahæra*, assist in weeding the compound, assist in cultivating one *Amuṇa* (2.5 acres) of the *Mutteṭṭu*, assist in supplying clay for roofing tiles, present betel at ceremonies, and work three days in the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*'s fields within five miles of the village (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

The *Ætulkaṭṭalē Rāḷa* of *Hepana* serves on a rotational and voluntary basis.

12. *Randōli* Holder

A *Randōli* Holder is the official responsible for carrying the *Randōliya* (the palanquin of the *Devālaya*) in the *Perahæra*. There are three *Randōli Paṃguvas*:

1. *Randōli Paṃguva* in *Gadaladeniya*
2. *Randōli Paṃguva* in *Govindala*

The holder belonging to the *Randōli Paṃguva* in *Gadaladeniya* must carry the *Randōliya* in the *Perahæra* and decorate it for the procession. In addition, they must present betel to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*.

The holder belonging to the *Randōli Paṃguva* in *Govindala* must carry the *Randōliya* during the last five days of the *Perahæra*. They are also required to cultivate and harvest one *Lāha* (8 perches) of the *Gadaladeniya Mutteṭṭuva*, thatch the *Devālaya*, construct an *Anamēstaraya* for

ceremonies and the *Perahæra*, keep the compound clean, repair and decorate three cubits of the *Vaṭadāgē* for festivals and the *Perahæra*, attend the festivals and the fifteen days of the *Perahæra*, assist in decorations for the festival days, provide half a quart of oil for the Kartika Ceremony, and present sweetmeats and betel (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

13. Durayō (Superintendent Officers)

Durayō are officials who serve as superintendent officers and also provide messenger services. There are several *Dura Paṃguvas*:

1. Three *Dura Paṃguvas* in Pamunuva
2. *Megoḍa Dura Paṃguva* in Hiyavala
3. *Egoḍa Dura Paṃguva* in Hiyavala
4. *Kuḍā Dura Paṃguva* in Hiyavala

The *Durayō* of the three *Dura Paṃguvas* in Pamunuva must cultivate the *Mutteṭṭu* together with all tenants of the village, thresh and store the crop, construct an *Anamēstaraya* (8 cubits long) in the street of the *Dēvālaya* and decorate it for the *Perahæra*, clear the compound, tie twenty bundles of straw, supply laths, dig clay for roofing tiles, provide one quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, supervise the work of the *Nila Kārayō*, provide six pingos (one per month), and present vegetables to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* at each ceremony.

The *Megoḍa Durayā* of the *Megoḍa Dura Paṃguva* in Hiyavala must assist in cultivating one *Amuṇa* of the *Mutteṭṭu* at Gadaladeniya, thresh and deliver paddy to the *Vidānē*, tie and remove straw to the *Dēvālaya*, assist in thatching the *Aṭuva* and *Vāhalkaḍa*, help with *Dēvālaya* repairs, and supervise the supply of clay and firewood for

tile making. He must also attend festivals and the *Perahæra*, weed the *Maluva* once a year, construct and decorate an *Anamēstaraya*, present betel to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, *Vidānē*, and *Āracci* four times a year, provide two yokes of buffaloes for threshing the *Muttettu* crop, supply four pingos of plantains to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* for festivals, and give six pingos and two quarts of oil. The tenants receive one *Amuṇa* of paddy and a meal of rice at the *Diyakæpīma* (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

The *Egoḍa Durayā* of the *Egoḍa Dura Paṃguva* in Hiyavala performs the same duties as the *Megoḍa Durayā* (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

The *Kuḍā Durayā* of the *Kuḍā Dura Paṃguva* in Hiyavala performs all duties of the *Megoḍa Durayā* except supplying pingos and oil. Instead, he must provide three *Pirivæhi* (baskets made of coconut leaves) for each pingo and half a quart of oil to the *Dēvālaya*, assist in carrying paddy to the granary, and accompany the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* to the Kandy *Perahæra* (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

14. *Badahælayā* (Potter)

Badahælayā is the official who performs the duties of a potter for the *Dēvālaya*. He is responsible for supplying twenty-five chatties (pots) at each ceremony and providing two pingos of pots for the elephants during the *Perahæra*. He also supplies three chatties for chanting Pirit, six pottery pots for soaking paddy, and roofing tiles for the *Dēvālaya*, including tiling the roofs. At each ceremony, he presents a pingo of earthen vessels to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* and provides cooking utensils when the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* visits the *Dēvālaya* or the village. Additionally, he supplies a

pot to hold oil and twenty-five pots for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, and presents a pingo of earthenware to the *Vidānē* (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

15. Badal kārayā (Goldsmith)

Badal Kārayā is the official responsible for all gold, silver, and brass work in the *Dēvālaya*. He is tasked with supplying silver amulets, polishing and repairing the sacred ornaments of the deities before the *Perahæra*, and providing two silver rings to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* and the *Vidānē* at each ceremony. In addition, he assists in weeding the compound, constructing and decorating an *Anamestaraya*, and supplying one *Huṇḍuva* (half a quart) of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

16. Navandaṇḍā (Blacksmith)

Navandaṇḍā is the official responsible for fabricating iron objects for the *Dēvālaya*. There are two *Navan Paṃguvas*:

1. The *Navan Paṃguva* in Gadaladeniya
2. The *Navan Paṃguva* in Pamunuva

The *Navandaṇḍā* of the *Navan Paṃguva* in Gadaladeniya is responsible for supplying iron utensils to the *Multængē*, performing all blacksmithing tasks for the *Dēvālaya*, and cleaning the *Randōli* (the palanquin used to carry sacred objects in the *Perahæra*) and the *Pandams* (hand-held torches) before the *Perahæra*. He is also required to nail laths, supply pairs of scissors and arecanut cutters for the *Dalumura Taṭṭuva* (betel container), clear the compound, construct and decorate an *Anamestaraya*, and supply one *Huṇḍuva* (half a quart) of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony. At each ceremony, he presents arecanut cutters to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* and the *Vidānē* (*Register under*

Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.).

The *Navanḍaṇā* of the Navan *Paṅguva* in Pamunuva is tasked with supplying a pair of scissors, an arecanut cutter, and a chunam box to the *Pallē Dēvālaya* once every five years, making keys for locks when required, and cleaning the brass lamps once a year (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.).*

17. *Pandaṃ Kārayā* (Torch Bearer)

Pandaṃ Kārayā is the official responsible for bearing the hand-held torch at night. He must hold the *Pandama* for six months, thirty days at a time, and guard the *Aṭuva* for two nights in every thirty. His duties include clearing the *Maluva*, putting up and decorating an *Anamēstaraya*, whitewashing the *Dēvālaya*, assisting in *Muttetṭu* work, threshing and storing the crop, supplying ten bundles of straw, helping in thatching the *Multængē* and *Vāhalkaḍa*, and providing half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony. He must also prepare clay and provide firewood for tile-making, assist in repairs, present betel to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* at each festival, and once to the *Vidānē*, and work three days for the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, receiving food in return (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.).*

18. *Lekam* (Secretary)

The *Lekam* is the official who maintains accounts of all revenue and expenditure of the *Dēvālaya*. In addition, he must attend ceremonies and the fifteen days of the *Perahæra*, and present betel to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* at each ceremony (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.).*

19. *Radavā* (Dhobi)

The *Radavā* is the official responsible for washing the clothes of the officers of the *Dēvālaya* while they are on duty. He must also provide *Piruvaṭa* (white cloth) for the *Perahæra*, tie up canopies in the *Vihāra* and in the lodgings of the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, and spread *Pāvaḍa* (carpets) for the *Deviyan Vēḍamavīma* (carrying of sacred ornaments). Throughout the year, he must supply *Dambu* when required and present a white Kandyan hat or a *Taḍuppu Lēnsuva* (Kandyan handkerchief) to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* at ceremonies (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

20. *Næṭṭuvō* (Dancers)

The *Næṭṭuvō* are the official dancers of the *Dēvālaya*. They must perform dances at the *Perahæra*, ceremonies, and on Saturdays. In addition, they must construct two *Anamēstarayas* (one in the street and one on the rock) and decorate them, clear the compound, carry and prepare clay, and supply firewood for making roofing tiles. They must also fell timber and supply laths, assist in repairs, whitewash the *Dēvālaya*, and supply twenty bundles of straw. At each ceremony, they must present the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* with vegetables and betel. During the *Perahæra* and the *Kārtika* Ceremony, they must present betel three times to the *Vidānē* and *Kaṃkānama* (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

21. *Tammæṭṭam Kārayā* (Twin-drum Beater)

The *Tammæṭṭam Kārayā* performs the twin-drum. There are two *Paṃguvas*:

1. *Tammæṭṭam Paṃguva* in Gadaladeniya
2. *Hēvisi Paṃguva* in Pamunuva

In addition to performing the twin-drum for six months during ceremonies and the *Perahæra*, the *Tammættam Kārayā* in *Tammættam Paṅguva* (Gadaladeniya) must clear the compound, construct and decorate an *Anamēstaraya*, whitewash the *Dēvālaya*, supply clay and firewood for making roofing tiles, provide timber, assist in repairs, present the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* with vegetables and betel, and present betel to the *Vidānē* at each ceremony. He must also work for the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* for three days (receiving meals), supply twenty bundles of straw, and provide half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony.

In addition to performing the twin-drum three times daily for six months and fifteen days of the *Perahæra*, the *Tammættam Kārayā* in *Hēvisi Paṅguva* (Pamunuva) must construct two *Anamēstarayas* (one in the street and one on the rock) and decorate them, clear the compound, supply twenty bundles of straw, provide half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, guard the *Dēvālaya* at night, fell timber and assist in repairs, carry and prepare clay for making roofing tiles, and supply firewood. He must also present the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* with vegetables and betel, and present betel to the *Vidānē* and *Kaṃkānama* at each ceremony (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

22. Bera Kārayā (Double-headed-drum beater)

The Bera *Kārayā* performs the *Davula* (double-headed drum) for six months during ceremonies and the *Perahæra*. In addition, he must fulfil the same duties as the *Tammættam Kārayā*, except that he performs the double-headed drum instead of the twin-drum (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

23. *Horanṅṅ Kārayā* (Temple clarinet player)

The *Horanṅṅ Kārayā* performs the *Horanṅṅva* (temple clarinet) in the *Dēvālaya*. There are two *Horanṅṅ Paṅguvas*:

1. *Horanṅṅ Paṅguva* in Pamunuva
2. *Horanṅṅ Paṅguva* in Govindala

The *Horanṅṅ Kārayā* belonging to the *Horanṅṅ Paṅguva* in Pamunuva must perform the *Horanṅṅva* for six months and sixteen days during the *Perahæra*. In addition, he must guard the *Dēvālaya* at night, construct two *Anamēstarayas* and decorate them, clear the compound, supply half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, provide clay and firewood for making roofing tiles, fell timber, assist in repairs, and present the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* with vegetables and betel at each ceremony. During the *Perahæra* and *Kārtika* Ceremony, he must present betel three times to the *Vidānē* and *Kaṃkānama* (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

The *Horanṅṅ Kārayā* belonging to the *Horanṅṅ Paṅguva* in Govindala must perform the *Horanṅṅva* daily for the *Tēvāva* (daily rituals) in four shifts of one month each, as well as at the ceremonies and during the fifteen days of the *Perahæra*. In addition, he must construct an *Anamēstaraya* for ceremonies and the *Perahæra*, keep the compound clean, repair and decorate three cubits of the *Vaṭadāgē*, thatch the *Dēvālaya*, provide half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, and present vegetables and betel to the officers of the *Dēvālaya* at each ceremony (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Yatinuwara, n.d.*).

24. *Tambōru Kārayā* (*Tambōru* Drum Beater)

The *Tambōru Kārayā* performs the *Tambōruva* (a traditional drum made of brass and buffalo skin) during ceremonies and the *Perahæra*. Additionally, he must

construct two *Anamēstarayas* (one in the street and one on the rock), decorate them, clear the compound, carry and prepare clay, supply firewood for making roofing tiles, supply laths, assist with repairs, and provide eight *Pirivæhi* of vegetables for the ceremonies. During the *Perahæra*, he must present betel to the *Vidānē*, *Kaṃkānāma*, and *Āracci*, and perform any other assigned work for seven days (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

25. Officer of Salt Supply

These officials must supply fourteen seers of salt yearly, calculated at the rate of half a seer per one *Lāha* of rice, or make an equivalent payment (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

26. Officer of Elephant Fodder Supply

This official, who belongs to the *Koḷadena Paṃguva*, is responsible for supplying fodder (leaves) to the elephants at the *Dēvālaya*. There are two *Koḷadena Paṃguvas*:

1. *Koḷadena Paṃguva* in Pamunuva
2. *Koḷadena Paṃguva* in Hiyavala

The representative of the *Koḷadena Paṃguva* in Pamunuva must supply fodder for the elephant whenever one is present at the *Dēvālaya*. If no elephant is present, he must construct an *Anamēstaraya* on the rock and decorate it for the *Perahæra*, clear the compound, provide half a quart of oil for the *Kārtika* Ceremony, tie five bundles of straw, cultivate one *Lāha* (8 perches) of *mutteṭṭu*, and thresh and store the crop (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

The representative of the *Koḷadena Paṃguva* in Hiyavala must supply fodder for the elephant at the *Dēvālaya* for six

months, five days at a time. During the other five days, the Pamunuva representative provides the fodder. When there is no elephant, the Hiyavala representative must assist in cultivating and harvesting the *mutteṭṭu*, construct an *Anamēstaraya*, and supply oil at one *Kāla* (quarter) per *Pāla* (8 perches) (*Register under Ordinance No. 4 of 1870 of Paraveni Pangu, Udunuwara, n.d.*).

| <i>Paṃguva</i> | Name of the Land | Area of the Land | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----|-------|
| | | Acre | Roo | Perch |
| <i>Pirit Paṃguva</i> in <i>Gadaladeniya</i> | <i>Gurudiyaattē kuṃbura</i> | - | 02 | - |
| <i>Vannaku Paṃguva</i> in <i>Govindala</i> | <i>Koṭa kuṃbura</i> | 02 | 02 | - |
| | <i>Koṭa Vatta</i> | 02 | - | - |
| <i>Pamuṇuvegedara Gamvasam Paṃguva</i> in <i>Gadaladeniya</i> | <i>Aṃba kuṃbura</i> | 05 | 02 | 16 |
| <i>Kaṃkānigedara Gamvasam Paṃguva</i> in <i>Gadaladeniya</i> | <i>Dulvattē kuṃbura</i> | 02 | 03 | 32 |
| <i>Kapu Paṃguva</i> in <i>Piligama</i> | <i>Kuṃbura</i> | - | 02 | - |
| | <i>Vatta</i> | 02 | - | - |
| <i>Kapu Paṃguva</i> in <i>Hāpāna</i> | <i>Kapu Gedara Vatta</i> | 01 | - | - |
| | <i>Maha kuṃbura</i> | 03 | - | - |
| <i>Kat-tiyana Paṃguva</i> 1 in <i>Gadaladeniya</i> | <i>Palkadē kuṃbura</i> | 02 | 02 | - |
| <i>Kaṃkāni Paṃguva</i> in <i>Gadaladeniya</i> | <i>Galahitiyāvē kuṃbura</i> | 05 | - | - |
| | <i>Kuṃbura</i> | 01 | - | - |
| <i>Lekam Paṃguva</i> in <i>Piligama</i> | <i>Vatta</i> | 01 | - | - |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| <i>Hakgedi Paṃguva Ilukvatta</i> in | <i>Alakoḷaamgē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| | <i>Vatagoḍa Hēna</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| <i>Hakgedi Paṃguva Govindala</i> in | <i>Buccaraullē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | - | - |
| | <i>Hiṭinā Vatta</i> | - | - | 32 |
| <i>Talpatvaḍana Paṃguva Govindala</i> in | - | - | | |
| <i>Nila Paṃguva in Govindala</i> | - | - | | |
| <i>Nila Paṃguva 1 in Gadaladeniya</i> | <i>Galahitivyāvē kuṃbura</i> | 02 | 02 | - |
| <i>Nila Paṃguva 2 in Gadaladeniya</i> | <i>Koholānē kuṃbura</i> | 03 | - | - |
| <i>Four Nila Paṃguvas Pamunuva</i> in | <i>Gæṭadamanē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| | <i>Hakgedi Pælē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | - | - |
| | <i>Hakgedi Assædduma Pælē kuṃbura</i> | - | - | 16 |
| | <i>Siyāmbalāvē kuṃbura</i> | 02 | 01 | - |
| | <i>Kohovilē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | - | - |
| | <i>Aṃbaamgē kuṃbura</i> | - | 03 | - |
| <i>Three Nila Paṃguvas Hiyavala</i> in | <i>Værællaamgē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| | <i>Pallē Værællaamgē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 01 | 24 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|
| | <i>Muttettu Depālē kuṁbura</i> | 01 | - | - |
| <i>Nila Paṁguva</i> in <i>Kirivavula</i> | <i>Navan kuṁbura</i> | 02 | 02 | - |
| | <i>Ælamalpatē kumbura</i> | 02 | 02 | - |
| <i>Nila Paṁguva</i> in <i>Tirappuva</i> | <i>Navan kuṁbura</i> | 02 | 02 | - |
| <i>Ætulkattalē Paṁguva 1</i> in <i>Pamunuva</i> | <i>Kohovilē kuṁbura</i> | 01 | - | 24 |
| | <i>Muttettu Depālē kuṁbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| <i>Ætulkattalē Paṁguva 2</i> in <i>Pamunuva</i> | <i>Vadudeṇiyē kuṁbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| <i>Ætulkattalē Paṁguva</i> in <i>Kirivavula</i> | <i>Ætulkattalē kuṁbura</i> | 01 | 01 | 08 |
| <i>Ætulkattalē Paṁguva</i> in <i>Hepana</i> | - | - | | |
| <i>kuṁbura</i> | <i>kuṁbura</i> | - | 02 | - |
| <i>Randōli Paṁguva</i> in <i>Govindala</i> | <i>Buccarullē kuṁbura</i> | 01 | - | - |
| | <i>Buccarullē Vatta</i> | 02 | 02 | - |
| <i>Randōli Paṁguva</i> in <i>Pamunuva</i> | <i>Paṣgamayē kuṁbura</i> | - | 02 | - |
| <i>Three Dura Paṁguvas</i> in <i>Pamunuva</i> | <i>Hēvāhæṭiyē kuṁbura</i> | 03 | 01 | - |
| | <i>Aṁbēgoḍē Aswædduma kuṁbura</i> | 05 | - | - |
| | <i>Doṁbē kuṁbura</i> | 01 | - | 32 |
| | <i>Kaṭukaḷuaṁgē kuṁbura</i> | - | 03 | 08 |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| | | <i>Kinnaraamgē kuṃbura</i> | - | 01 | 08 |
| | | <i>Kotapālē kuṃbura</i> | - | 03 | 32 |
| | | <i>Hāliyālē kuṃbura</i> | 02 | 02 | - |
| | | <i>Egoḍavattē Aswædduma kuṃbura</i> | - | - | 16 |
| <i>Megoḍa Paṃguva Hiyavala</i> | <i>Dura in</i> | <i>Dura kuṃbura</i> | 4 | 02 | 32 |
| | | <i>Kaṭugampoḷa kuṃbura</i> | - | 02 | - |
| <i>Egoḍa Paṃguva Hiyavala</i> | <i>Dura in</i> | <i>Dēvālē kuṃbura</i> | 03 | - | - |
| <i>Kuḍā Paṃguva Hiyavala</i> | <i>Dura in</i> | <i>Aṭalāhē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| | | <i>Hatnādeṇiyē kuṃbura</i> | - | 03 | - |
| | | <i>Mutukiliyāvē kuṃbura</i> | 02 | - | - |
| <i>Badahæla Paṃguva Gadaladeniya</i> | <i>in</i> | <i>Gurudiyattē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | - | - |
| <i>Badal Paṃguva in Gadaladeniya</i> | | <i>Gurudiyattē kuṃbura</i> | - | 02 | - |
| <i>Navan Paṃguva in Gadaladeniya</i> | | <i>Gurudiyattē kuṃbura</i> | - | 02 | - |
| <i>Navan Paṃguva in Pamunuva</i> | | <i>Nāgahamula Asvædduma kuṃbura</i> | - | - | 16 |
| <i>Pandam Paṃguva in Gadaladeniya</i> | <i>in</i> | <i>Delaṃgē kuṃbura</i> | - | 02 | - |
| <i>Radā Paṃguva in Kirivavula</i> | <i>in</i> | <i>Radā kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 03 | - |
| <i>Næṭum Paṃguva in Pamunuva</i> | <i>in</i> | <i>Deḷunvattē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| <i>Tammāṭṭam</i> <i>Paṃguva</i> in Gadaladeniya | <i>Pasgamayāgā</i> <i>kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 01 | - |
| <i>Three Hēvisi</i> <i>Paṃguvas</i> in Pamunuva | <i>Malabodē</i> <i>kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| | <i>Gorakavaḷadeniy</i> <i>ē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| | <i>Deḷunvattē</i> <i>kuṃbura</i> | - | 02 | - |
| | <i>Kohovilē</i> <i>kuṃbura</i> | 02 | 02 | - |
| <i>Bera Paṃguva</i> in Gadaladeniya | <i>Divalē kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| <i>Horanē</i> <i>Paṃguva</i> in Pamunuva | <i>Baluhapuamgē</i> <i>kuṃbura</i> | 02 | 02 | - |
| <i>Horanē</i> <i>Paṃguva</i> in Govindala | <i>Buccarullē</i> <i>kuṃbura</i> | 01 | - | - |
| | <i>Dācca Vatta</i> | - | 01 | 24 |
| | <i>Hēnēgoḍa Hēna</i> | 01 | - | - |
| <i>Tambōru</i> <i>Paṃguva</i> in Pamunuva | <i>Bakmīdeniyē</i> <i>kuṃbura</i> | - | 02 | 16 |
| <i>Luṇu Dena</i> <i>Paṃguva</i> in Pamunuva | <i>Kohovilē</i> <i>kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 01 | 24 |
| <i>Koḷadena</i> <i>Paṃguva</i> in Pamunuva | <i>Gedara kuṃbura</i> | 01 | 02 | - |
| <i>Koḷadena</i> <i>Paṃguva</i> in Hiyavala | <i>Uḍa</i> <i>Værællaamgē</i> <i>kuṃbura</i> | - | 02 | - |
| | <i>Hatnādeniyē</i> <i>kuṃbura</i> | - | 01 | - |

Table 3
The lands dedicated to the officials of the Dēvālaya

The *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, as the custodian of the *Dēvālaya* and the head of both the inner and outer staff, holds a significant status in the *Dēvāla* tradition. All other officials are under his authority and are required to pay him the utmost respect. No one on the staff holds authority equal to his. However, the Buddhist monks, who are responsible for chanting *Pirit* as part of the *Dēvālaya*'s duties, hold a higher status than him, as Buddhist monks traditionally occupy the highest position in society above the laity (*Bandara Dissanayake, 2025*).

The remaining officials are responsible for conducting rituals, maintenance and repairs, supplying goods, organizing ceremonies, and fulfilling the needs of the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*. The *Vidānē* and the *Vannaku Rāḷa* are particularly responsible for attending to his needs, providing goods and lodging, and ensuring that all his requirements are met when he visits the *Dēvālaya*.

Each official is required to provide specific items to the *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*. The *Durayōs* are responsible for bringing all the supplies provided by the other officials to his lodgings. All officials are expected to show respect primarily by presenting betel leaves and, in some cases, sweetmeats along with betel at each ceremony as a sign of respectful homage (*Bandara Dissanayake, 2025*).

The only exception to these customs is the Muslim officials responsible for supplying salt. They are not required to observe these traditional practices, as their role is limited to providing salt to the *Dēvālaya* without additional ritual obligations. Historically, Muslims held a significant position in trade and business in the country, which contributed to their appointment for this duty.

Therefore, all these officials partake in the *Devālēgama* (the villages belonging to the *Dēvālaya*) and, in return, fulfil

specific duties. The *Basnāyaka Niḷamē* serves as the custodian of the *Dēvālaya* and is regarded as the legitimate authority over these lands. Consequently, the inhabitants who occupy and cultivate the lands of the *Devālēgama* perform their duties with the highest respect towards him, showcasing the features of feudalism. Thus, the maintenance, rituals, ceremonies, repairs, and overall functioning of the *Dēvālaya* are carried out while the people sustain their livelihoods through its lands. In this way, both the continuation of their daily lives and the preservation of the *Dēvālaya* are mutually ensured.

Conclusion

The *Dēvāla* is a distinct feature of Sinhalese Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka that involves venerating various deities within the Buddhist context. The system of hereditary officials and their traditional duties has been shaped by a feudal organisation. In *Gaḍalādeṇiya Viṣṇu Dēvālaya*, there are two categories of officials: the inner staff, consisting of high-caste individuals, and the outer staff, consisting of low-caste individuals. The *Basnāyaka Niḷamē*, who is generally appointed from an aristocratic family, is the head of both staffs and the chief administrator of the *Dēvālaya*. Historically, these roles were supported by land grants in both paddy and highland areas. All of these staff members are assigned specific duties that they must perform to make use of lands. Among these duties, certain features of social hierarchy and feudalism are clearly evident. Similar systems can be observed in many ancient *Dēvālayas* in the country.

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