

COCONUT IN SINHALESE LITERATURE

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[Introduction by W. V. D. Pieris.—The following note on Coconut in Sinhalese Literature was sent to me by the late Julius de Lanerolle of the Editorial Staff of the Sinhalese Dictionary for inclusion in my Annotated Bibliography of the Coconut Palm, which was first prepared for publication in 1940 while I was Geneticist of the Coconut Research Scheme (now institute) of Sri Lanka. War intervened, I left Sri Lanka in 1946 and due to various other circumstances also, publication was unavoidably delayed. But now, more than thirty years later, the Coconut Research Institute has generously decided to publish the work at an early date.

Julius de Lanerolle's contribution is, however, too good to be buried in a bibliography: and the Director of the Institute has agreed to publish it separately in the Ceylon Coconut Quarterly. The antiquity of the Coconut palm and of its uses in Sri Lanka is well illustrated therein].

There are five names by which coconut is generally known in Sinhalese literature, viz., *neralu* (SK. *nārikēla*, *nārikēra*, *nālikēra*, *nālikēla*, *maha-ruk* (mā—°) big tree (cf. Sk. *tuṅga*—*ḍrma* tall tree), *kasa* (cf. Sk. *Kauśika-phala*, *Kauśika*'s nut, said to have been created by *Kauśika*, i.e. Viśvāmitra, when endeavouring to form a human being, the nut being the rudiment of a head—Wilson), *pol*, and *pulup*. King-coconut is known as *tāmbili*; other varieties are *taṃpunel*, *navasi*, *bōdili*.

In the *Sikhavalaṅda-Vinisa*, a work of the 10th century (ed. D. B. Jayatilaka, 1934), which records *vinaya* rules and certain traditions handed down from the time of the establishment of Buddhism in Ceylon in the 3rd c. B.C., coconut (*neralu-pak*) is given (p. 56¹⁵) as one of the nine great fruits (*navamahā-phala*), the other eight being *tal* palmyrah, *panā jak*, *del* wild bread fruit, *labu* pumpkin gourd, *komaḍu* water-melon, *puhul* ash-pumpkin, *tiyaṃbarā* and *kākiri*, varieties of melon; there are also coconut trees (*neralu*), coconut jaggery (*pulup-sakuru*) and king-coconut (*tāmbili*) mentioned in connection with various *vinaya* rules (ib. 47⁸, 53²⁰, 66⁶).

A few references to coconut in later literature are noted below:—

Vasaturu-dā-Gāṭapadaya, 11th c. (unpublished), (*neralu*).

Butsarāṇa, 12th c. (ed. Jñānādarāya, 1929), p. 252¹², (*maha-ruk*).

Dahamsarāṇa, 12th c. (ed. Śri Dharmānanda, 1929), p. 15⁴ (P. lw. *nālikēra*), 15⁶ (P. lw. *sannāra* king-coconut).

Thūpavaṃsaya, 12th c. (ed. Vijayaśekhara, 1929), p. 129^{36,37} (*pol* coconut, *kasa-pān* water of young coconut, with which, among other things, people were treated by Duṭṭagāmuṇu during the construction of the Great Thūpa, in the 2nd c. B.C.).

Kavsiḷumiṇa, 13th c. (Government ed., 1926), ver. 261 (*pulup*, *tāmbili*), 748 (*tāmbili*).

Pūjāvāliya, 13th c. (ed. 1928), p. 699²⁷ (*nālikērodya-ānaya* a coconut garden, extending from Kalutara to Bentota).

Sidatsaṅgarāva, 13th c. (ed. Śrī Dharmārāma, 1913), p. 106⁸ (*neraḷu, tāmbili*).

Saddharmaratnāvaliya, 13th c. (ed. D. B. Jayatilaka, 1933), p. 714¹⁸ (*tāmbili-pān water of king-coconut*).

Purāṇa-Sūpaśāstraya, 13th c. (unpublished), ver. 48, 237 (*neraḷu*).

Bhēsajjamañjūsā-Sanne, Pali Text 13th c. (ed. 1924), p. 5128 (p. *nālikēra*, regarding its medicinal value).

Yōgārṇavaya, 13th c. (unpublished), *polpakak* a coconut, *neraḷu-kiri* coconut milk, *mārukmal-āḷa* seeds of the coconut flower). —Med.

Kaṅkhāvitarāṇi-Piṭapata, 13th c. (ed. 1936), p. 88²¹ (p. *nālikēra* = Sinh. *pol*, as one of the eight great fruits).

Daḷadā-Sirita, 14th c. (ed. 1920), p. 43²¹ (*neraḷu*, a gift of coconut gardens etc. to Danta and Hēma-mālā who brought the sacred Tooth Relic to Ceylon in the 4th c.).

Daṁbadeṇi-Asna, 14th c. (ed. 1917), p. 8⁸ (*māruk, tāmbili, bōdili, Navasi*).

Saddharmālanākāraya, 14th c. (ed. 1924), p. 654¹ (*maharuk*).

Saddharmaratnākāraya, 14th c. (ed. 1912), pp. 83²⁰, 98⁹ (*nālikēra*).

Purāṇa-Nāmāvaliya, 15th c. (ed. 1923), ver. 136 (*maharuk, neraḷu kasa, pulupu*).

Ruvanmala, 15th c. (ed. 1904), ver. 232 (*neraḷu, pol, maharuk, kasa, pulupu*).

Paravi-Sandēsaya, 15th c. (ed. 1925), ver. 65 (*neraḷu*).

Kavsēkara, 15th c. (ed. Richard de Silva, 1915). 2.22 (*tāmbili*), 8.22 (*māruk*), 10.100 (*tāmbili*).

Prayōgaratnāvaliya, 16th c. (unpublished), *pulupu-rā* coconut toddy). —Medicinal.

Vaidyacintāmaniya, 16th c. (ed. 1909), pp. 38¹⁸, 38¹⁰, 146¹² (*neraḷu-diya* coconut water, *neraḷu-pān id.*, *pulup-rā* coconut toddy). —Med.

Yōgaratnākāraya, 16th c. (ed. 1930), ver. 983 (*pol-kiri* coconut milk), 2199 (*pulup-diya c. water*), 2304 (*neraḷu-kiri c. milk*), 2448 (*neralu-pān c. water*), 2570 (*pol-bāya* one half of a coconut), 2572 (*pol-kiri c. milk*), 2574 (*pol-sunu c. refuse*), 2927 (*kasapān-diya* water of young coconut). —Med.

Kusajātaka-Kāvyaya, 17th c. (ed. A. M. Gunasekara, 1897), ver. 264 (*māruk*).

Vadankavipota 18th c. (ed. 1922), ver. 61 (*tāmbili, tāmbunel, navasi, bōdili*).

Kavmiṇikoṇḍola, 18th c. (ed. 1905), ver. 127 (*neraḷu*).

Lōkōpakāraya, 18th c. (ed. 1921), ver. 233 (*neraḷu*).

Nīlakobō-Sandēsaya, 18th c. (ed. 1915), ver. 25 (*neraḷu*).

Kāpinsirasapādaya, modern (Demonology), pp. 1-2 (regarding the origin of coconut; varieties mentioned: *ran-tāmbili, gon-tāmbili, navasi, bōdili*).

Dolahadeviyangē Kavipota, mod. (Demonology), ver. 97 (*kahapān-geḍi* young coconuts).

Mahasohon-Samayama, mod. (Demonology), ver. 48 (*rantāmbili*).

Jñānādarāyaya, a modern literary journal, ed. A. M. Gunasekara, VII (1903), p. 208, gives the information that in the Philippines a certain disease produces pearls (*pol-mutu*) in coconuts.