

I give the following account of a sacred festival, substantially as received from one of the most intelligent native pastors from this clan :

The Mopgha nation is divided into two parts, under two priests. Each division had a hereditary priesthood before the Gospel reached them. The full number of priests was four, of whom the eldest was high priest.

If any one of the priesthood should die, his place was filled as follows : The elders of the people assembled to determine to whom the office left vacant belonged by right of inheritance. Those who had married into other tribes were considered as well as those who had not. When it was decided who was entitled to the vacant office, the elders prepared earrings, a head-band of silver to go over the forehead, a Karen tunic, and a sword as richly made as they could command. Then a committee of the elders was chosen, who took the articles to the neighborhood of the house where the candidate for the priesthood lived. One then goes forward to see if he is at home. If so, they surround his house, and one takes the articles prepared and casts them down before him, and he is, whether he will or not, henceforth the priest of the people. If he is unwilling to become priest he may, if forewarned, escape ; but when once the prepared articles of his priesthood fall before him there is no escape.

If he is not at home the committee prepare to give him a surprise. Sometimes one of their number hides himself in the roof of the candidate's house, and when he returns, the prepared regalia of his office fall suddenly from the roof at his feet, and he is caught.

Once in three years a great feast is held by this people. The elders appoint the time for this feast, and send messengers to all the surrounding tribes, to notify them of the fact. If, after this notification is sent and the roads are closed, any one ventures to enter the country ruled by a priest, it is counted lawful to put him to death or inflict any other penalty the elders may decide upon.

A place is now selected for holding the meeting at some distance from any village in the jungle. It must have a large tree standing in the middle of it. A small bamboo house is erected near the foot of the tree. The villagers also build booths from the branches of trees about the clearing, which they occupy. No women are allowed within the clearing, but they may stand on the hills about and watch the proceedings if they like to do so.

The young men go to the forest and select a bamboo, one for each village. It must be the tallest and most beautiful one that can be found. Great care is bestowed on its selection. When found, it is carefully cut and borne on the shoulders of fifteen or twenty men, so as not to receive the slightest bruise, to the clearing already mentioned, and placed near the great tree. These are then erected about the tree with shouting and dancing.

Meanwhile a great basket is woven by some one of the elders. The weaving of the basket is a hereditary office. This is placed at the foot of