

THE WORSHIP OF ST ANNE IN CEYLON

(Concluded).

During this time, at St. Anne's of Navagomawa, the feast was being quietly organized. It began in the evening of the eleventh. A tree, the highest and finest in the forest, had been brought on the shoulders of these good people, and awaited only the priest's blessing to be raised in the air and let wave in the breeze the flag of St. Anne. I blessed it in the midst of a good crowd of Catholics and Buddhists, after which, by dint of pushing, and hauling and shouting, everybody working together, Buddhists as well as Catholics, we succeeded in planting it.

To the Souâmi (priest) was reserved the honor of hoisting the flag : a few seconds later, the imago of St. Anne was floating with the breeze and announced to all that the feast had begun.

From that moment, the pilgrims began to arrive. Every evening, at 8 o'clock, the church was illuminated as if by enchantment ; more than forty globes, and more than a hundred, sometimes as many as two hundred, wax tapers burned in honor of the illustrious and beloved patroness. The Cingalese, somewhat of the same nature as butterflies, like so many others, are passionately fond of illuminations ; at night, in brilliantly lighted chapels, it seems that they pray with more ardor.

The following is the order of exercises ; recitation of the chaplet of St Anne followed by a sermon ; a procession in the interior of the church, which consists in the priest taking a small statue of the Saint and bearing it from the altar to a throne prepared in the centre of the church. Then follows a long series of prayers in Cingalese, all in honor of St Anne. They are sung more or less melodiously by the *Mouppomale* or lay dignitaries of the church. The people equally respond by singing. The novena often ends by a display of fire-works.