

X.—NUMERALS.

Their system of numeration is that known as the *vigesimal*, and the method employed, though at first sight somewhat complicated, is easily mastered.

Unlike Malay and Burmese the numeral precedes the substantive with which it is employed.

The chief point to bear in mind is that in counting coconuts and money,¹ the Nicobarese of the Central² Group reckon by pairs (*tafūal*), scores (*inai*), and four-hundreds (*momchīama*), other objects, save a few shortly to be mentioned under "Collective numbers," are reckoned by scores (*momchīama*).³

The term *dòktai*³ when used with reference to coconuts (or money) signifies 200, but it can be employed only with *momchīama* or any multiple of 400; it cannot, therefore, be used for any smaller number of such class of objects than 600. When, however, it is employed in reference to other objects, e.g., men, huts, canoes, &c., this term (*dòktai*³) signifies 10, but it can, in like manner, be used only with *momchīama* or some multiple of a score; the lowest number for which it is employed is, therefore, 30, e.g., *hēang momchīama dòktai lōe inai tanai tafūal (yūang⁴ oyāu)* (lit. 400 + 200 + 3 scores + 5 pairs coconuts) = 670 coconuts.

Hēang momchīama dòktai tanai (danò⁴ dūe) (lit. 20 + 10 + 5 canoes) = 35 canoes.

The words *tanai* (5), *inai* (20), and *dòktai* (10) are evidently derived from *taⁱ*; *kanetai*, fingers.⁵

¹ Edible birds' nests, of which a small quantity are annually exported are also reckoned by pairs.

² A study of the comparative table (Appendix C) of the numeric terms employed by the six tribes shows that while the Central and Southern Groups (including the inland tribe) count by "scores" and "four-hundreds," the natives of Teressa and Chowra reckon by "scores," "two-hundreds," "two-thousands" and (at Chowra only) "four-thousands," and those of Car Nicobar by "scores," "two-hundreds," "four-hundreds," "two-thousands," and "twenty-thousands." The presence in the last-named dialect of the term *lāk* to denote 10,000 pairs (20,000) of coconuts creates at first sight a suspicion that it is borrowed from the Hindustani *lākh* (100,000), and mis-applied in adoption, but as we find that the Malays employ *sa-laksa* (derived from the Sanskrit *lakṣha*, 100,000) to denote 10,000, it may be reasonably inferred that the Car Nicobar term is of Malay origin. The fact of extensive individual transactions in coconuts with traders having been always hitherto confined to that island—the exports from which exceed the aggregate of the rest of the Group—sufficiently explains the absence in the other dialects of any single terms denoting more than two or four thousands.

³ The double use of the terms *momchīama* and *dòktai* creates no confusion when it is known to what object the speaker refers.

⁴ See the list of numeral co-efficients on page xlv.

⁵ Strange to say they possess, now-a-days at least, no specific word for "hand" or "foot," the terms employed being as follows:—*ok-tai* (back of hand); *oal-tai* (palm of the hand); *kanetai* (and *tai*) (finger); *kodī* (arm, including the hand). Similarly *lāh* (leg, including the foot); *ok-lāh* (the instep); *oal-lāh* (sole of foot); *kanelāh* (the toes). In Malay also the same word serves for both "arm" and "hand."

In furnishing the following list of the numeric terms employed by the natives of the Central Group it should be noted that (b) indicates those which are applied to coconuts and money, and (a) to all other objects; where *inai* and *tafūal* are shown within brackets it denotes that they may, in such cases, be left to be understood.

1. *hēang*.
2. ^b*hēang-tafūal*; ^a*ān*.
3. ^b*hēang-tafūal-hēang*; ^a*lōe* (or *lūe*).
4. ^b*ān-tafūal*; ^a*fōan*.
5. ^b*ān-tafūal-hēang*; ^a*tanai*.
6. ^b*lōe-tafūal*; ^a*tafūal*.
7. ^b*lōe-tafūal-hēang*; ^a*issāt*.
8. ^b*fōan-tafūal*; ^a*enfōan*.¹
9. ^b*fōan-tafūal-hēang*; ^a*hēang-hata*.
10. ^b*tanai-tafūal*; ^a*shòm*.
11. ^b*tanai-tafūal-hēang*; ^a*shòm-hēang*.²
12. ^a*shòm-ān*; ^b*tafūal-tafūal*.
13. ^a*shòm-lōe*.
14. ^a*shòm-fōan*; ^b*issāt-tafūal*.
19. ^a*shòm-hēang-hata*; ^b*hēang-hata-tafūal-hēang*.
20. ^a*hēang-momchīama*; ^b*hēang-inai*.
21. ^a*hēang-momchīama-hēang*; ^b*hēang-inai-hēang*.
26. ^a*hēang-momchīama-tafūal*; ^b*hēang-inai-lōe* (-*tafūal*).
34. ^a*hēang-momchīama-dòktai-fōan*; ^b*hēang-inai-issāt* (-*tafūal*).
60. ^a*lōe-momchīama*; ^b*lōe-inai*.
100. ^a*tanai-momchīama*; ^b*tanai-inai*.
220. ^a*shòm-hēang-momchīama*; ^b*shòm-hēang-inai*.
400. ^a*hēang-inai-momchīama*; ^b*hēang-momchīama*.
- 1,000. ^a*ān-inai-shòm-momchīama*; ^b*ān-momchīama-dòktai*.
- 3,000. ^b*issāt-momchīama-dòktai*.
- 5,010. ^b*shòm-ān-momchīama-dòktai-tanai-tafūal*.
- 5,100. ^b*shòm-ān-momchīama-dòktai-tanai* (-*inai*).
- 20,000. ^b*ān-inai-tanai-momchīama*.
- 40,000. ^b*tanai-inai-momchīama*.
- 100,000. ^b*shòm-ān-inai-tanai-tafūal-momchīama* (i.e., 250 × 400).
- 200,000. ^b*hēang-inai-tanai-tom-momchīama* (i.e., 25 × 20 × 400).

To denote that a round number is referred to the term *yūh-ngare* (no more and no less) is sometimes added to the numeral, e.g. *hēang-momchīama yūang oyau yūh-ngare*, exactly 400 coconuts. When the numeral referred to falls short of some round number the

¹ Probably derived from *ān* (2), *fōan* (4).

² Of the six dialects two only (viz., those spoken at Car Nicobar and by the inland tribe of Great Nicobar) express the numerals from 11 to 19 inclusive, according to the Malay system, viz., 1-10, 2-10, 3-10, &c., the remaining four dialects adopt the Burmese method, viz., 10-1, 10-2, 10-3, &c.

³ As they never have occasion to count anything except coconuts beyond 1,000, it is unnecessary to furnish the higher numerals for other objects.

word *tanpla* (to reach) is employed, e.g. *lōe tare tanpla hēang-inai* (lit. 3 more reach one score) = 17.¹

No conjunctions are employed in expressing numbers involving the use of several numeral terms, e.g. *āi momchīama enfōan inai tanai* (*tafūal*) = $2 \times 400 + 8 \times 20 + 5$ (pairs) = 970.

In order to express "only" a certain number or measurement the particles *ma*, *am*, &c.,² are used as follows:—

hēang (one); *hemēang* (only one); *hēang tamāka* (1 fathom);
hemēang tamāka (only 1 fathom).

āi (two); *āima* (only two); *ennāyo* (2 fathoms); *mennāyo*
(only 2 fathoms).

lōe (three); *lamūs* (only three); *lennōiyo* (3 fathoms); *lamen-*
nōiyo (only 3 fathoms).

fōan (four); *fomōan* (only four); *hennōanno* (4 fathoms);
mahennōanno (only 4 fathoms).

tanai (five); *tamanai* (only five); *tennēyo* (5 fathoms); *tamen-*
nēyo (only 5 fathoms).

tafūal (six); *tamafūal* (only six); *tenfūalo* (6 fathoms);
tamenfūalo (only 6 fathoms).

issāt (seven); *missāt* (only seven); *enshāto* (7 fathoms); *men-*
shāto (only 7 fathoms).

enfōan (eight); *menfōan* (only eight); *enfōanno* (8 fathoms);
menfōanno (only 8 fathoms).

heäng-hata (nine); *hemeäng-hata* (only nine); *heäng-hata*
tamāka (9 fathoms); *hemeäng-hata tamāka* (only 9
fathoms).

shōm (ten); *shamōm* (only 10); *shinnāmo* (10 fathoms); *shamin*
nāmo (only 10 fathoms).

Ordinal numbers.

As will be seen on referring to the Calendar³ in Appendix D the ordinal numbers, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, &c., denoting the days of the month are expressed by the mere addition of the suffix "she" to the cardinal. Only, however, in this sense and in order to denote the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, &c., day (or night) since any event can this suffix be so used, e.g. *linheñ ānshe dām na leūt kaiyīnga*, this is the second night since his departure.

¹ In lieu of this phrase *lōe tare tāk inai* has been given in a recent work on this subject, and the explanation there afforded is that it signifies "3 less than 20," and *tare* is given as meaning *less*, whereas it can only bear the opposite meaning. The sentence, moreover, conveys no meaning of any kind to a native.

² See Sections II and III, pages xvi and xx, also Section XI, page xlvi.

³ On referring to the Calendar in Appendix D, it will be seen that this remark does not apply to the terms denoting the *days of the month* where by means of the suffix "she" added to the cardinal numbers the various *dates* (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, &c., days of the moon) are indicated.

N.B.—Appendix D here referred to is included in the Monograph on the "Nicobar Islanders," in course of publication.

In order to express 1st, 2nd, 3rd, &c., in any other sense, such as in a race, row, &c., the following few terms are used, and these even are so rarely employed as to be known only to the more intelligent natives:—

- 1st, *morēh*.
 2nd, *tanoē-ok-morēh*.
 3rd, *mong-yūang-ñe*.
 4th, *tanōe-ok-mong-yūang-ñe*
 5th, *menyāh*.
 6th, { *menyāh-ka*, also
 and last { *manā(k)-nga-shian*.

The only explanation (if such it can be regarded) which has been afforded by way of accounting for so meagre a list of ordinals is that the number of "moons" in a monsoon never exceeds 6 or 7, while neither in denoting the result of their canoe races nor in any other connection, do they experience the want of any higher ordinal numbers.

Fractional numbers.

These are expressed in an imperfect manner:—

- hēang-molkanta* = $\frac{1}{2}$.
hēang-mishēya = $\frac{1}{3}$; $\frac{1}{4}$; $\frac{1}{5}$; $\frac{1}{6}$, &c.
lōe-mishēya = $\frac{2}{3}$; $\frac{3}{4}$; $\frac{4}{5}$.
hēang-hēang-molkānla = $1\frac{1}{2}$.
āñ-hēang-mishēya = $2\frac{1}{4}$ (or thereabouts).

Collective numbers.

For the purpose of denoting pairs or sets of four or more of certain objects the following terms are employed:—

- tafūal*, in reference to a pair of coconuts, rupees, or edible bird's nests.
tāk, in reference to a pair of bamboo utensils containing shell-lime.
amok, in reference to two pairs of (i.e. 4) bamboo utensils containing shell-lime.
amok, in reference to a pair of cooking pots.
kamintap, in reference to a set of 4 or 5 of the smallest size of cooking pots (see Apper.lix N, item 102).
noang, in reference to a set of 10 pieces of tortoiseshell, e.g. *āñ nōang ok-kāp*, two sets (i.e. 20 pieces) of tortoiseshell.

Such phrases as "by pairs," "by scores," "by four-hundreds," are rarely used, but would be expressed as follows:—

- by pairs, *hēang-tafūal-hēang-tafūal*.
 by scores, *hēang-inai-hēang-inai*.
 by four-hundreds, *hēang-momchīama-hēang-momchīama*.

Recurrent time.

Shuá is the term most commonly employed as the equivalent for the English "times," e.g. *fān shuá*, four times; but several other terms are in use, each of which, however, can be employed only in a certain sense, e.g. *lōe kota-tai* = 3 times (in reference to hammering or other hand-work).

fōan ko-chat = 4 times (in reference to jumping).

tanai ko-nga-láh = 5 times (in reference to going).

tafūal ko-ñe-ngē = 6 times (in reference to talking, singing, &c.).

án ko-shī-chaká = twice (in reference to eating, &c.).

án ko-shī-ánha = twice (in reference to washing, &c.).

Numeral co-efficients.

Among the many facts connecting the Nicobarese with the Indo-Chinese races is the existence in full force in all their dialects (including that of the inland tribe) of the system which requires in the enumeration of objects the employment of a term—known to grammarians as numeral affixes or auxiliaries—descriptive of the particular object referred to.

These co-efficients are invariably inserted between the numeral and the substantive and not after the latter as is always or generally the case in Burmese and Malay.

- (1.) *yūang*¹ (fruit); *kōi* (head); *tat*; *tat-yūang*; *tat-kōi* are used in reference to mankind,² e.g. *án yūang Pigu* (two Burmese); *lōe kōi kōan* (three children); *hēang tat kenyūm* (one child); *fōan tat-yūang Maláyu* (four Malays).
- (2.) *nōang* (cylindrical) is applied to animals, birds, fishes, insects, fruits, eggs, spears, boxes, baskets, ropes, legs, fingers, lips, nose, eyes, teeth, dhás, fish-hooks, rings, seeds, &c., *án nōang káa* (two fishes).
- (3.) *ták* (wide), in connection with flat objects, e.g. planks, paddles, coins, tortoiseshell, finger-nails, leaves, feathers, cloth, clothes, thatch, also cooking pots and fishing nets, e.g. *hēang ták pōwah* (one paddle).
- (4.) *hen*³ in reference to dwellings and other buildings, *án hen ñi* (two huts).
- (5.) *chanang*,³ to trees, posts, hairs, &c., *lōe chanang oñihan* (three trees).
- (6.) *dandì*,³ to ships, boats, canoes; *fōan dandì chōng* (four ships).

¹ The Car Nicobarese equivalents of these are respectively as follows:—(1) *taka*; (2) *nòng*; (3) *ták*; (4) *monti*; (5) *má*; (6) *nòng*; (7) *káhà*; (8) *lamnáha* and *tum*; (10) *chumvi*; (13) *mitima*.

² Also to the carved wooden figures (called *karsau*) representing men and women, and which serve as charms to scare away the demons.

³ The original meaning of this term is not known to the present inhabitants.

- (7.) *hinle*,¹ to bamboo utensils containing shell-lime.
- (8.) *tôm* (bunch), to bunches of plantains, betel-nuts, *Pandanus*, &c., or to single pineapples and papayas.
- (9.) *manoal* (also *mokôinha*), to bundles of prepared *Pandanus* or *Cycas* paste.
- (10.) *pomâk* (bundle), to large bundles of split cane, also to the large trimmed bundles of imitation firewood offered by mourners at grave.
- (11.) *mekûya*,¹ to small bundles of cane, ten of which equal one *pomâk*.
- (12.) *minôl* (bundle), to small bundles of firewood.
- (13.) *lamem*,¹ to bundles of Chinese tobacco.
- (14.) *amoka*,¹ to books only.
- (15.) *chaminkâa*,¹ to ladders only.
- (16.) *shamanap*,¹ to pieces (of say 40 yards) of calico, &c.
- (17.) *kamilâng*,¹ to ropes and fishing lines.

To the above may be added the following:—

- het-nōang*² (used with *ñi-nâu*, green coconut) in order to express distance by sea, e.g. *fōan het-nōang ñi-nâu hē tang* (we could arrive there in four green coconuts' time).
- kohòt*² (used with *maiýá*, take a betel-quid), in order to indicate distance by land or time spent on a visit; e.g. *lōe kohòt ind maiýá tang* (you two could reach that place in three betel-quids' time).

A
DICTIONARY
OF THE
CENTRAL NICOBARESE LANGUAGE

(ENGLISH - NICOBARESE AND NICOBARESE - ENGLISH),

WITH

Appendices containing a Comparison of Synonymous Words
in the remaining Nicobarese Forms and other matters,

PRECEDED BY

NOTES ON THE GRAMMAR OF THE CENTRAL FORM.

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