

Fig. 4: The *kattadiya* with in his right hand the *eegaha* commands the *yakku* (demons) Mahasone and Riri Yakka to leave the possessed person in exchange for the surrogate victim (the cock) he is holding with his left hand above the *dollapideniya*.



Fig. 5: The *athuriya* (possessed person) follows the *kattadiya* to the spot where the sacrificial killing will take place. He carries the *dollapideni* and the surrogate victim (the cock) on his head.



hero in Sinhala history, and lost on his turn (Wirz 1954: 29f.).

Mahasona, a son of a mistress of a king, also looks like a classic example of a scapegoat. He could only rely on his strength as a giant. For the rest he had little backing. He was not liked but "feared by the gods and the human beings." He was powerful and marginal at the same time. There is also a story, that he was killed by the god Vishnu, "who was jealous of his beauty and power over women" (Kapferer 1983: 121).

Although greed can lead to violence, it makes sense to distinguish it from the eagerness to kill. I found in my research in the Low Country a clear

distinction in that way between the *yakku* as the personification of violence and the *prethayo* as the personification of greed, especially in its form of gluttony. *Prethayo* (sing. *pretha*) are spirits of the deceased. The Veddhas (and possibly also the Yak-khas) have or had a cult of ancestors with Aimana as their leader. After the conquest of the island by the Sinhala, this cult has (slowly) been integrated in the system of *yakku*. Aimana had to accept the leadership of the *yakku*, but he received a place in their hierarchy. Although he is not esteemed very much by his colleagues, he was still nearly always present in the exorcism rituals, which I had the opportunity to observe at night in 1992 and 1993.