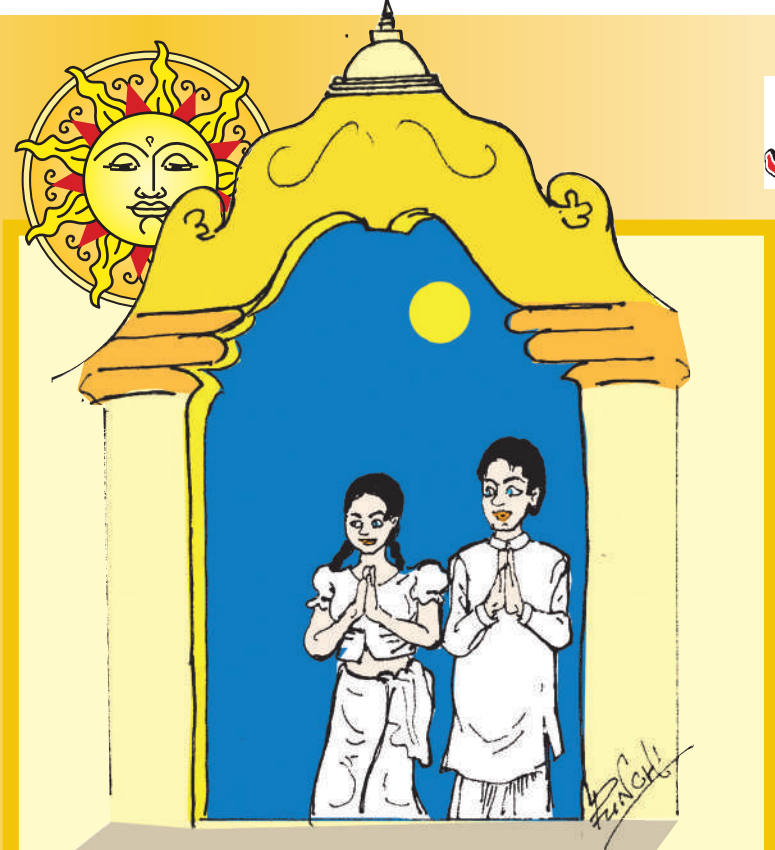


**Sighting of the New Moon**

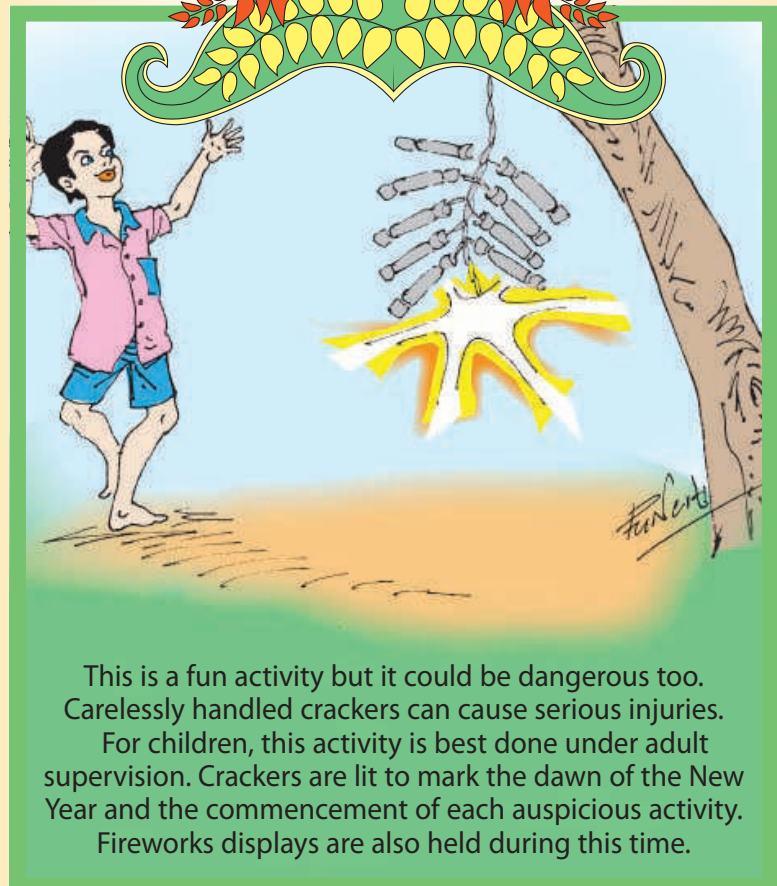
(Nava sada baleema)

Keeping a lookout for the Moon and watching it is an important part of the New Year rituals.

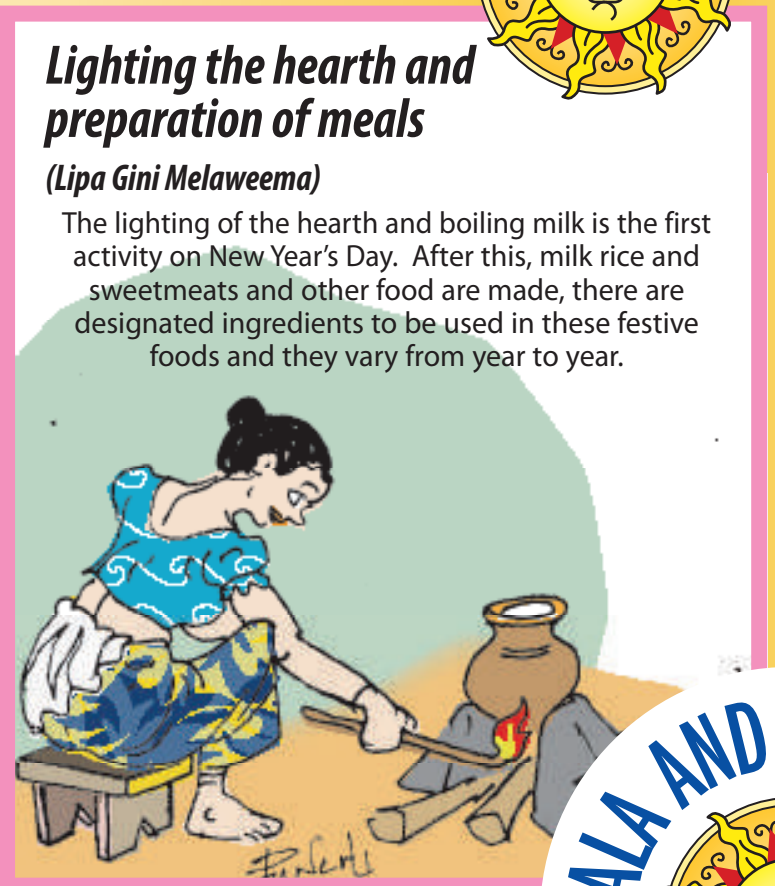


**Inauspicious time (Punya Kalaya)**

Observing religious rites during the inauspicious time known as the *nonagathaya* or *punya kalaya* is another important part of the New Year traditions.



This is a fun activity but it could be dangerous too. Carelessly handled crackers can cause serious injuries. For children, this activity is best done under adult supervision. Crackers are lit to mark the dawn of the New Year and the commencement of each auspicious activity. Fireworks displays are also held during this time.



**Lighting the hearth and preparation of meals**

(Lipa Gini Melaweema)

The lighting of the hearth and boiling milk is the first activity on New Year's Day. After this, milk rice and sweetmeats and other food are made, there are designated ingredients to be used in these festive foods and they vary from year to year.



Tamils prepare Pongal rice at the auspicious time and they too make many sweetmeats.



CUSTOMS IN PICTURES



**Lighting the traditional oil lamp**

Lighting the traditional oil lamp is generally done before partaking of the festive meal.

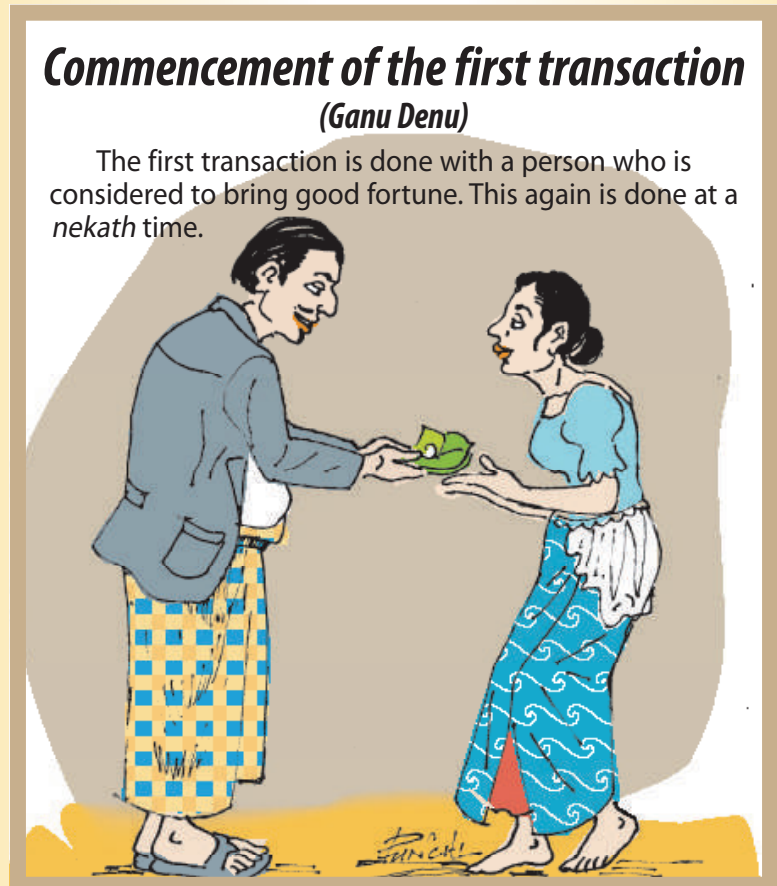
The New Year sees people observing many traditions dressed in the designated auspicious or lucky colours.



**Partaking of meals**

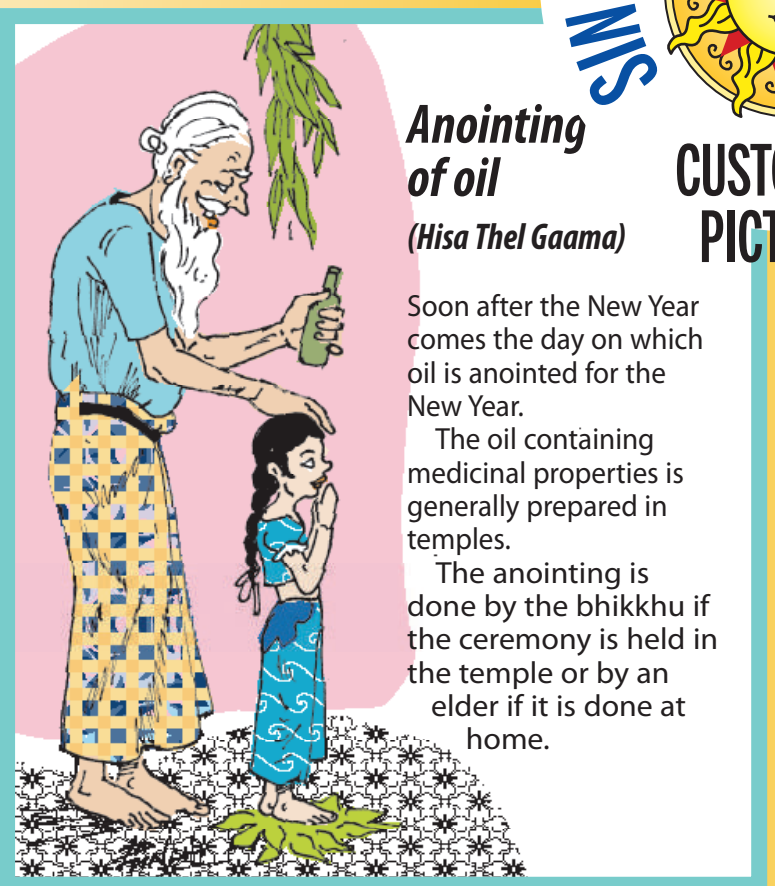
(Ahara Anubhawaya)

The partaking of the first meal too is done to a *nekath* or auspicious time.



**Commencement of the first transaction (Ganu Denu)**

The first transaction is done with a person who is considered to bring good fortune. This again is done at a *nekath* time.

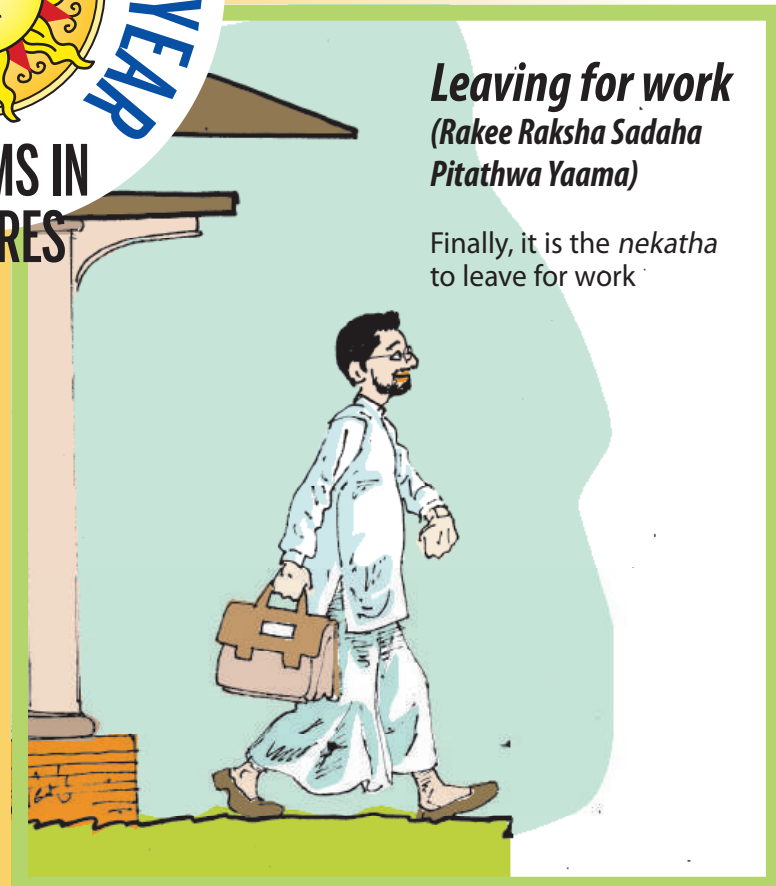


**Anointing of oil**

(Hisa Thel Gaama)

Soon after the New Year comes the day on which oil is anointed for the New Year. The oil containing medicinal properties is generally prepared in temples.

The anointing is done by the *bhikkhu* if the ceremony is held in the temple or by an elder if it is done at home.



**Leaving for work (Rakee Raksha Sadaha Pitathwa Yaama)**

Finally, it is the *nekatha* to leave for work.