HMS Trincomalee had her keel laid down in the Upper Old Dock at Bombay on 25th April 1816.

A custom of the Bombay Dockyard at that time was the performance of the Silver Nail Ceremony. It was on 29th May 1816 that HMS Trincomalee received her original silver nail.

The “Asiatic Journal “ of January 1820 contains the following report of such a ceremony:

“The ceremony of driving the Silver Nail into the keel of the new 80 gun ship took place, in the presence of the Hon. The Governor, His Excellency the Naval Commander-in-Chief, the Superintendent of the H. C. Marine and their respective suits. They were received by the builders in their robes of ceremony, and a new hammer being presented to the Hon. The Governor, he gave the first stroke and was followed by the Admiral and Superintendent and the final stroke having been given by our venerable architect, Jamsetje Bomanjee the party separated. This ceremony is as follows:

When the keel is laid, the stern post set up, the stern ready to be fixed, the ceremony is performed. The day being appointed, the stern is suspended ready to be put in the mortise, the parties attend, the owner with his friends and sometimes the Governor and parties of ladies are invited, they are received in the Dockyard by the builders in their robes of ceremony, and a Parsi Priest attends who has the nail in his possession, which he keeps constantly holding over a pot of frankincense.

The nail is six or seven inches in length and is in value of about 10 or 15 rupees: a certain quantity of sugar, sweetmeat and rose water having been provided for the occasion, the owner of the ship, preceded by the builders, approach the keel and the ceremony begins by an invocation ( Sulee ) from the Bunder Lascars, or perhaps from a few Arabs who volunteer on the occasion, to God and Mohamed; some verses from the Koran are also recited.

The nail is then produced with a blessing from the Parsi Priest, it is put in the hole and driven down by the hand of perhaps some fair lady; a piece of wood is put on the Nail, the stem is put into its mortise and firmly secured, when another invocation from the Lascars and crowd announces the stem to be fixed. The owner, the Governor or some Lady as may have been previously agreed on, now presents the shawls, six in number, to the builders by putting them over their necks. A sprinkling of rose water next is given to all the party, and the most distinguished of the visitors are marked on the forehead with a little red paint; sugar and sweetmeats are distributed to the people of the yard and the party disperses.”

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