

Ganga Rajinee Dissanayaka

BATH MALAVA :THANKSGIVING AFTER HARVEST. ALIMENTATION FOR DEITIES

Abstract:

‘Bath Mālāva’ is a ritual embedded in the agricultural community of ‘Nuvara Kalāviya’ in the Anuradhapura District. The ritual is performed after the paddy harvest is shifted into the house before Wesakh full moon. Fifteen deities are evoked in this kind of thanksgiving ritual, which is the heritage of the ‘Ratna Kambili Paraṃparāva’. The text has been preserved in the oral tradition over seven generations, and after a long process of negotiations the elders of the community agreed that the text be published. I have focused on the following aspects in my publication ‘Bath Mālāva’ (2013).

‘Bath Mālāva’ as a mode of communication viewed from an ethnographic and socio- cultural discipline. The Origins of the ‘Bath Mālāva’ and the tradition as preserved in the ‘Ratna Kambili Paraṃparāva’. Innovative features of the ritual and the poetry.

The text is sung to the beat of ‘Udākki’. At this conference I shall present the structure of the ‘Bath Mālāva’, its origin and discuss aspects of the Ritual Kitchen in this region practiced by the ‘Ratna Kambili Paraṃparāva’. Excerpts of the ‘Bath Mālāva’ will be performed by a member of the community.

Biography:

Ganga Rajinee Dissanayaka is a PhD Candidate and Research Assistant of the HETC Samkathana Project at the University of Kelaniya. She is ethnographer and art historian who has researched and published on snake charming communities of Sri Lanka, the ‘Ahikuṇṭkaka’. She has produced many documentary films on Kandyan art and architecture focusing on the Ṭampiṭa Vihāras. Currently she is coordinator of the HETC Samkathana Research Archive at the University of Kelaniya. Her research focus is in Discourse Communities who were responsible to build and maintain Image Houses in the Kandyan Region.

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