

## **The Apotheosis of Seethawaka RajasingheI: The God Ganegoda**

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The tales related to the origin of the ethereal phenomena is one important aspect of folklore. Most of these stories expose the elevation of a famous person in society to divinity through his potent abilities and persona. According to religious concepts and widespread social belief, as a consequence of a person engaged in meritorious deeds will be reborn as a god; a sublime being. However some mortals were turned into gods not because of the good qualities they have possessed or displayed during their life span, but because of their ferociousness. The god Ganegoda who is popular in the regions of Seethawake could be considered a god who demonstrated the latter quality. According to folklore Ganegoda is the incarnation of RajasingheI, who was the greatest ruler of the kingdom of Seethawake. RajasingheI, a war-hero who had massacred thousands of Portuguese was fondly remembered by people as a ruler who fought vehemently for the sovereignty of the motherland. Yet, he has a low estimation as a power hungry son who committed patricide. Further it is a well known fact that he had engaged in sacrilegious acts and later converted into Saivasim. The historical facts and existing folklore prove that RajasingheI was elevated into divinity mainly because of his warrior skills, which the general public fears, and thus honours him. This study aims to examine the concept of the god Ganegoda by analyzing the historical as well as the folkloric sources and data collected during field expeditions.

**Key words-** Birth Stories of god, RajasingheI, the god Ganegoda, Folklore, History.