

Syncretism of the God Katharagama, at the shrine in the jungle

SRILAL PERERA

Ruwanwella

SRI LANKA

Email address: srilalp@ymail.com

Abstract: The divine power of Kataragama Deviyo consists of the syncretism of God of Love, God of War and the God protecting the water tanks in the jungles. He is referred to as Murugan, Skander, Shanmukam, and MinneriyaDeviyo etc. The legend as God of Love conveys how KataragamaDeviyo at meditation was disturbed by sighting Valli, later his 2nd consort. The annual Perahera celebration is escorting the divine on elephant as veneration, toValliAmmaKovil situated right opposite the MahaDevale, and back. The syncretism of God of War at the MahaDevale reveals the legend of deified Alexander the Great, God Skander of north India and KandeYaka of the Vedda aborigines. KataragamaDeviyoworshipped as a young boy is narrated in the legend of God Murugan of South India and is associated with DevayaniAmma, the 1st consort. Another annual celebration is performed for him at the Kataragama shrine on another month of the year. Finally the syncretism of MinneriyaDeviyo, the god king of Minneriya is revealed in the legend as the one protecting the water tanks in the jungles and is preserved at the annual celebrations of the Kataragama shrine at Huruluweva in the Anuradhapura district. (*UranKeliya*) Hunting the wild boar which reveals this legendry story of syncretism is enacted annually as part of the intangible heritage of this shrine.