

***Rāma*'s Character as the Guardian God of Sri Lankan People according to the Historical Legends in Sri Lanka**

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The main objective of this research paper is to examine how *Rāma* influenced and inspired the people of Sri Lanka to absorb a great many elements of the Indian cultural heritage. At the same time, it will examine how the *Rāma*'s character is considered as the guardian god of Sri Lankan People according to the historical legends in Sri Lanka. *Rāma*, who is worshipped in Sri Lanka to this day as *Viṣṇu* was in an earlier times hailed as a hero by the Sinhala race since it was he who brought victory to the Aryans over the non- Aryan *Yakṣas* then inhabiting the Island. The prestigious value accorded to this story has survived till the beginning of the 20th century. *Rājāvaliya*, *Sihabā Asna*, *Maleraja Kathāva Nohoth Dandumonara Yanthraya*, *Hanthane Deviyange Kavi*, *Rāvana Kathava*, and *Rāvana Sanhāraya*, is some of the works worth mentioning in connection with *Rāma* and *Rāvana*. The *Rājāvaliya* emphatically states that the battle between *Rāma* and *Rāvana*. The poetical work *Ran Dunu Paralaya*, praises the heroism and prowess of god *Rāma* over *Rāvana*. This work is important because it says that *Rāma* is at the same time *Upulvan Visnu*. *Ingirisi Hatana*, describing the battle between the Sinhalese and the English, compares the Sinhala leaders to *Rāma* and the British general to *Rāvana*. These examples say that the two characters of *Rāma* and *Rāvana* are the heroes of a pre-historic battle between two race groups. *Rāma*, the victorious, in course of time was defined by his people and remembered with affection. According to the folk legends and beliefs among the Sinhalese people regarding Rama and *Rāvana*, it is clear that *Rāma* lives in the heart of every Buddhist and Hindu in Sri Lanka in the form of god *Viṣṇu*.

Keywords: *Character of Rāma, Historic Battle, Folk Legends, Sri Lankan Beliefs*