

## **Syncretism of the God Katharagama, at the Shrine in the Jungle**

**SHARNI JAYAWARDENA & MALATHI DE ALWIS**

**Abstract:** The divine power of Katharagama 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 Minneriya Deviyo etc. The legend as God of Love conveys how Katharagama deviyo at meditation was disturbed by sighting Valli, later his 2<sup>nd</sup> consort. The annual perahera celebration is escorting the divine on elephant as veneration, to Valli Amma kovil situated right opposite the Maha Devale, and back. The syncretism of God of War at the maha devale reveals the legend of deified Alexander the Great , God Skander of north India and Kande Yaka of the Vedda aborigines. Katharagama deviyo warshiped as a young boy is narrated in the legend of God Murugan of South India and is associated with Devayani Amma, the 1<sup>st</sup> consort. Another annual celebration is performed for him at the Katharagama shrine on another month of the year. Finally the syncretism of Minneriya deiyo, the god king of Minneriya is revealed in the legend as the one protecting water tanks in the jungles and is preserved at the annual celebrations of the Katharagama shrine at Hurulu weva in the Anuradhapura district. (*Uran Keliya*) Hunting the wild boar which reveals this legendry story of syncretism is enacted annually as part of the intangible heritage of this shrine.