

Abstract No 09

Investigative study of *Alaththi* Oblation (offering), alias *Alaththi Bema*

Ven. Opatha Samitha thero

Undergraduate, Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies
University of Kelaniya
opathasamithathero@gmail.com

According to the history of fane, the king *Duṅgemuāu* had constructed the *Katharagama* Fane and appointed 552 officials to make offerings to the god *Katharagama* forever. Therefore these officials still continue fane offerings since 2245 years by traditionally with their utmost devotion as per the king's order. Though all the offerings are done by males, there are 12 women who are permitted by the god *Katharagama* and these women are known as “*Alaththiammala* (*Alaththi* mothers)” The meaning of the Tamil word “*Alaththi*” is “**bless with love**”. Women, who were appointed to serve *Walli Amma* at the time of her marriage, still continue the tradition of lighting oil lamps to bless the god *Katharagama*. These women, who are dressed like ancestors, join with morning oblation at 4.30am and evening oblation at 6.30 p.m., while serving at *Nanumura Mangalle* (a weekly festival) on every Saturday. According to the daily schedule, *Alaththi* Oblation is the first offering for the god *Katharagama*. *Alaththiamma* takes a wick from the *Kapuwa*, who is at beside of the curtain of the fane and bless the god with a long life by lighting the wick after going to a place called “*Wattarama*”, which is located outside. The *Alaththi* position is given to the daughter of the mother, or her sister. A payment or rice is provided for the women who are doing *Alaththi* Oblation since past. The objective of this research is to investigate about *Alaththi Bema*, a special offering done for the god of *Katharagama*. Primary and secondary sources were used as the research methodology.

Keywords: *Alaththiamma, Alaththi Bema, god Katharagama, Walliamma*