

**Embodiment of soft power within goddess *Paththini*:  
Cultural heritage of the *Porapol* folk game**

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The Goddess *Paththini* plays a significant role within the Sri Lankan Sinhala Buddhist folk community. As the only female deity worshipped by the Sinhala Buddhists, she is thought of as the bringer of prosperity. Thus, wellbeing and numerous rituals and rites of passage are associated with Goddess *Paththini*. One such ritual is the folk game *Porapol*. The research area focuses on the *Durawa* caste of the *Mirissa* village of the *Matara* District. Field visits and observations were the main methods of collecting data. The aim of this research is to study how the folk game *Porapol* bridges the gap between villagers of the same village due to the caste system. There are many sub rituals and activities connected with *Porapol* such as *Kodi Perahera*, *Peli Perahera* and *Kolam Kala Eli Baseema*. A striking feature of this ritual is the sub culture that is formed within the villagers for a time period before the rituals that promotes a strong concept of self-discipline through abstinence, preventing killing animals and such activities that are thought to be looked down upon by the Goddess. While only the males participate in the folk game itself, all members of the village participate in all other sub rituals. It can be seen that the castes of *Rajaka*, *Govigama* and *Nakathi* contribute actively to the affairs related to the rituals of *Porapol* as equals along with the *Durawa* caste. There is also a widespread exchange of caste based knowledge due to this diversity and harmony. *Porapol*, which centralizes on the idea of worshipping Goddess *Paththini* to get her blessings for the activities of all those who participate in the rituals is concluded by a series of *Kolammadu* and *Gammadu* that bring out the qualities of empathy and social integration.

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