




Priest, Woman and Mother: Broadening the Horizons through Transgender/*nachchi* Identities in Sri Lanka

KAUSHALYA ARIYARATHNE¹

Centre for the Study of Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo

kaushe2006@yahoo.com

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9749-6636>

ABSTRACT

This article is based on a case study of (the pseudonymous) Karu Māmā's life as a *gurunnānse*, his community, his practices and ultimately the negotiation of his identity as a transgender person within his community. To be more precise, it explores the lives of Karu Māmā and his transgender/*nachchi* (a local term used by a particular transgender group in Sri Lanka) daughters around the little Pattini shrine in his house and the annual *gammaduwa* ritual he performs as goddess Pattini. This ritual, I argue, is a unique illustration of his transgender and embodied performativity. It reminds us of the fact that we need to revisit and rewrite certain established discourses on transgenderism in Sri Lanka. Karu Māmā, who grew up with heteronormative, Sinhala-Buddhist discourses on birth, rebirth, family, notions of good and bad, as well as perspectives of gender, counters those dominant ideologies through his practices around his Pattini shrine and associated rituals. Moreover, I argue that this case study challenges the divisions that exist between genders, social classes, and castes around the Pattini ritual and narrates new interpretations. On the one hand, the rituals and practices associated with the Pattini *devalaya* in Daluwatte make a significant contribution to transgender identity negotiation. On the other hand, through well-known discourses of traditions, practices, rituals, and worshipping, this offers us new insights into motherhood, femininity, sexuality, and gender in contemporary Sri Lanka.

Keywords: motherhood, Pattini, ritual, transgender, *nachchi*

¹ The author is grateful to late Dr. Malathi de Alwis and Dr. Eva Ambos for their valuable comments on early drafts. Also, Dr. Kiran Grewal and Prof. Iresha Lakshman supervised the doctoral research and provided feedback.

“We take the anklets used on her tender feet
And make a flawless and beautiful casket to keep them
She who brought back life to the dead body
Surely there’s no other divine being like the goddess Pattini”

- Pattini recitals from *Dēvābharana Vadamaveema*: (Obeyesekere, ‘The Cult’ 120)

Introduction

The article discusses Karu Māmā’s life as a *gurunnānse*, his community, his practices and ultimately the negotiation of his identity as a transgender person within his community. To be more precise, it explores the lives of Karu Māmā and his transgender/*nachchi* daughters around the little Pattini shrine in his house and the annual *gammaduwa* ritual he performs as goddess Pattini. This ritual, I argue, is a unique illustration of his transgender and embodied performativity. The article is written with the data collected throughout a doctoral study conducted under the approval of its Ethics Committee, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo during the period from 2016 to 2020. The data is gathered through an ethnography along with informal discussions and observations during my numerous visits to the place. All names and places are hidden to protect the confidentiality.

To examine his life as a *gurunnānse* is important for two reasons. Firstly, life stories of individuals who engage in ritual practices like Karu Māmā have not been marked important in the history of transgender literature in Sri Lanka. The body of literature on ritual practices has discussed the *gurunnānse*’s performances to a certain extent, but within the frame of the certain practices of the *gammaduwa* ritual as a male practitioner. Therefore, individuals like Karu Māmā stand outside of the dominant norms and meta-narratives of culture. Therefore, the overall objective of the study was to critically discuss the existing frameworks of gender identity discourses in contemporary Sri Lanka through exploring alternative, subaltern stories that may have been suppressed by hegemonic gender discourses.

Karu Māmā’s story is therefore, neither a representation of all contemporary transgender lives, nor exclusive or final since there are numerous other possibilities to produce knowledge on trans identities in contemporary Sri Lanka. However, by bringing ‘everyday lives’—i.e., Sri Lankan experiences—to the discussion, the broader research intended to contribute to a global South discussion on decolonising current gender and queer theory.

This study uses critical feminist theory as a lens to study the underlying normative biases entrenched in the foundations of conventional gender roles in society and

discusses how gender relations are negotiated by a person who identifies himself as a transgender person, through his performance. Further, it adopts intersectional theory to conceptualise knowledge as situated, contextual, relational, and reflective of diverse social, political, and economic hierarchies. Through this, I intend to highlight the importance of adopting multiple frameworks that avoid universal or essentialist claims regarding transgender communities in Sri Lanka. At the same time, I acknowledge the limitation of the term ‘transgender’ in scholarly work on Sri Lankan diverse gender identities.

The conventional feminist use of the term ‘gender’ is based on the contrast between socially constructed gender and biologically determined sex, which has been extensively contested in critical feminist theory. For example, based on Simone de Beauvoir’s (1952) observations about gender, Judith Butler identifies gender as performativity; “Gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*.” (1988:519) In other words, gender is “stylized repetitions of acts through time” (Butler, 1988:520). If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style (Butler, 1988).

An emerging body of scholarship on gender/sexuality discourses in the global South has critiqued the colonising of the studies of gender and sexuality (Adam et al, 1999; Blackwood & Wieringa, 2007; Jackson, 1999, 2001, 2009; Wieringa, 1999; Wijewardene, 2007; Winter, 2008). However, it is important to recognise the fact that the term ‘transgender’ may not necessarily be a foreign or colonising term; rather, its hegemonic position in discourses of activism and funding may reflect inequalities. LGBTIQ² studies have been alienated in mainstream literature on sex and gender in Sri Lanka (Wijewardene, 2008), while research on sexuality has either been overlooked or enclosed in a rights-based framework (Kuru-Uthumpala, 2014). However, some scholars have explored transgender subjectivities in Sri Lanka beyond the rights perspective (Ariyaratne, 2020; Chandimal, 2014; Nichols, 2010; Wijewardene, 2007). Therefore, this paper intends to fill the gap in the literature on transgender subjectivities in Sri Lanka, which are currently dominated by pathologizing and rights-based activist research. Even though there is significant literature from Asia and the Pacific region on transgender subjectivities, in Sri Lankan literature there is a lack of alternative narratives of transgender lives which might disrupt our conventional

2 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Questioning (or Queer)

understanding of them as a homogenous / ‘marginalised’ community and open new ways to seeing them as ‘agents’.

In theorising ‘identity’ it can be argued that contemporary transgender identities can be regarded as the outcomes of particular historical and institutional formations within particular discourses and practices. Therefore, terms such as ‘transgender’, ‘male’, ‘female’ in this paper are not used as terms with essentialist or fixed meanings—rather, they are positions that are always in negotiation with the outside world; positions arising as a result of the intersectional hierarchies and power relations in a particular place, at a particular moment.

The Story of Karu Māmā: A Journey from the Personal to the Political

The story begins with my visit to a small Pattini *dēvalaya* (shrine) in the middle of a coastal shanty area called Daluwatte in Southern Colombo. The sight of tin sheets on the roofs of adjoining small wooden houses, the scorching heat of the afternoon sun, the dust emanating from the ground with the circulating dry sea wind - still fills the memory of my first visit with an unforgettable bitter taste on my tongue. From the main road to the shanty area along the narrow coastal road, my *nachchi* friend who accompanied me stopped to greet several people we met on the way. She was friendly with almost everyone in the area and introduced me to her friends. She revealed that we are going to meet ‘Karu Māmā’ (Uncle Karu).³ By observing their facial expressions and responses, I realised that everyone we met knew this person called Karu Māmā and they had a certain respect towards him.⁴

Karu Māmā was introduced to me by my transgender friend as ‘a *gurunnānse*⁵ you must meet’. With an innate distrust and lethargy towards divine beliefs and practices, I accepted the invitation with the mere intention of pleasing my friend and until I went there for the first time, I could not have imagined such a clean and interesting place in the messy neighbourhood; neither could I have imagined that Karu Māmā’s house and his small shrine surrounded by a cement half-wall situated in a corner of Daluwatte was going to be a destination of frequent trips for me within the next two years.

3 The term ‘māmā’ (uncle) is used among Sinhala/Tamil speaking people, not only to address a relative, but also to address a respectable man in the community.

4 Karu Māmā, when I asked, told me to write about him with his male identity (he/him).

5 The term *gurunnānse* is a respectful term to address those conducting rituals for the gods, demons and *pretas*. *Gurunnānse* does a mixture of all the activities, i.e. dealing with a range of non-human beings of the Sinhalese Buddhist pantheon. It has been widely translated as ‘exorcist’ or ‘shaman’ which are both colonially derived terms that found their way into anthropological literature.

Karu Māmā began his story, sitting on the bed in his small, tidy little room behind the *dēvālaya*. The wall of the room was decorated with framed colour photos of Karu Māmā wearing beautiful attires as different gods taken during several *gammaduvas*. Sitting in a broken old cane chair, I was eagerly waiting to listen to him, impressed by the statues of gods I just saw in his *dēvālaya* and the photos on the wall. Two or three young transgender / *nachchi* persons in their twenties were hanging around us, sweeping the floor, folding clothes, and making tea for me in the kitchen. They all were wearing jewellery, had long hair and one of them was wearing a long skirt and a blouse. Unlike all of them, Karu Māmā was in male attire when he entered the room; dressed in a sarong and a sleeveless T-shirt, he sat in a chair facing me putting one leg over the other, hands folded across his chest.

“People call me ‘Shyama’ when I dance on the stage. People call me ‘Nimal Karunarathne’ [my real name] when I sing. But in day-to-day life now, I’m known as Karu Māmā or *gurunnānse*.” (Discussion with Nimal Karunarathne, 09 May 2019, Colombo)

Karu Māmā with the birth name Nimal Karunarathne was born in Daluwatte, to a family with two sisters and two brothers. His father passed away when he was 15 years old, and his mother did not have a job. Therefore, as the eldest of the family, he faced the extra burden of supporting his mother as the breadwinner. When he was 15, he started learning hair dressing and dress making from elderly women in Daluwatte. During this period, he began dressing up like a woman, started growing his hair, wearing earrings and sometimes make-up. “I always thought of myself as a woman. I never felt myself as a man since my childhood”, Karu Māmā recalls his childhood. (Discussion with Nimal Karunarathne, 09 May 2019, Colombo)

After the death of his father, life was hard for his family. His schooling was disrupted by economic hardships and the lack of support from the family and relatives. To earn money, young Nimal Karunarathne started odd jobs within his community, such as cooking for weddings, bridal dressing and saree blouse making. Nimal was a good singer and a dancer in school. In the small village community in Daluwatte, he organised musical shows every year and sang popular Sinhala cinema songs on stage. In some events he wore women’s clothing and danced with female dancing groups to movie songs. Nimal practised dancing on his own, by watching Hindi and Tamil movies. His hairdressing styles were inspired by popular hairstyles of Hindi cinema actresses in the 1970’s. Karu Māmā recalled his friends circle during this period, which consisted of several other transgender persons; those who self-identified as well as those who did not identify themselves as *nachchis*. Nimal used to worship a picture of Saraswathi, the Hindu goddess who is believed to be the custodian of music and art forms. He

even practised a dance form called ‘Saraswathi Pooja’ (offerings to Saraswathi) and performed at village events. In local stage dramas he was always selected to perform female roles.

During his 20’s Nimal realised that he had the ability to attain trance states (*ārooda*) without his knowledge. He does not remember any triggering factor for his trance states but observed that he could see ‘different’ things (in his terms ‘*venas dewal*’), such as information about his and others’ past lives. During that time, he started seeing his dead grandfather in his dreams very frequently: “...my grandfather came to me through my dreams” (Discussion with Nimal Karunarathne, 09 May 2019, Colombo). His grandfather also knew certain healing practices (*śhānti karma*), but he did not have a shrine or any particular god that he worshipped. After a few years, Nimal met another *gurunnānse*, a woman from the northern Colombo area, who was running a small *dēvālaya* at her residence. He went to meet this *gurunnānse* and she explained to him that he has *Pattini varama* (special power given by goddess Pattini) that can be used for the benefit of the society. She further explained to him that his grandfather wants him to use this *varama* for the benefit of humankind.

During that period, he started listening to the sermons of Buddhist monks and read Buddhist texts, especially about *karma phala* (the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences, according to Buddhist teachings) which gave him “...an aspiration for life” (Discussion with Nimal Karunarathne, 11 June 2019, Colombo). With the support and guidance from his *gurunnānse* and the Buddhist monks in the nearby temple, he started a small shrine for Pattini at the front yard of his house in Daluwatte. When he started his shrine, Karu Māmā slowly started moving away from the recreational side of his life. His singing became limited to two recordings of his own songs in a hired studio and his acting life became almost non-existent. People gradually started calling him *gurunnānse* and came to ask for help and therefore, he had to avoid them due to bigger responsibilities at the *dēvālaya*.

The shrine consisted initially only of a Pattini statue, but later it became a shrine for a range of gods including Kataragama, Saraswathie, Vishnu, Dedimunda, Sooniyam and Kali.⁶ However, Karu Māmā’s immense devotion to Pattini remains uncontested for two reasons; first, he got his *varama* from Pattini; second, Pattini is on her journey to become a Buddha in her future life after being born as a man. Karu Māmā believes that he supports this purpose by doing good *karma* (actions/deeds). This is what ultimately all Buddhists including himself (who is

6 Obeyesekere (‘Medusa’s Hair’) writes extensively about this new class of Sinhala ecstatic who are both Buddhist and Hindu serving several gods in both traditions. He argues that they cater to the needs of urban Buddhists for whom Buddhism is the political and civil religion but not an emotionally satisfactory one.

doing good *karma* to obtain a ‘complete life’) should pursue. His understanding about the ‘complete life’ will be further discussed in this paper.

Karu Māmā lives in a small house that consists of two rooms and a kitchen behind the shrine. Karu Māmā sleeps in one room and five other young transgender/*nachchi* persons sleep in the other small room. The relationship between the five youngsters and Karu Māmā is an interesting one. One of them is a transgender friend who came and supported his work when he started his shrine. Moreover, when Karu Māmā gradually became an ‘important person’ within the community, he started supporting young transgender folks, who have been expelled from their houses and were looking for an income. As is the case for many of the other members of the transgender community, their only means of income was sex work. Karu Māmā supported them by providing accommodation and a few meals. At times, there were many transgender sex workers staying with Karu Māmā. They would leave when they found accommodation or any other support. In this way, there are always a few transgender sex workers staying at Karu Māmā’s house. Karu Māmā is supported by the money they earn to meet the household needs during times when the income of the shrine is insufficient.

Every time I visited Karu Māmā’s house, there were two or three young transgender/*nachchi* persons who were busy with housework - cleaning, cooking, folding clothes and sweeping the floor. They all were called not by their original male names, but by female names taken by them later. I could observe that their gestures towards Karu Māmā were respectful and obedient, like towards a parent. During the daytime, they supported Karu Māmā’s work in the shrine by greeting his clients, providing necessary items for prayers, opening and closing the doors of the shrine, and making tea for visitors. Later I learned that they earn an income by providing sex work during the night-time or, less commonly, by dancing in processions in the Colombo area and cooking for weddings in the neighbourhood. The economic support is, therefore, reciprocal. Whenever Karu Māmā does not earn sufficient income, they support the ‘family’ with what they have earned.

Karu Māmā’s client base is diverse. The clients mainly consist of people from lower middle classes around Colombo and the suburbs. Karu Māmā works every day except on full moon days. People come to him to obtain help for various everyday problems; for instance, middle aged women coming to ask a prophecy (*shasthra*) about a valuable item they have lost or about an extra marital affair of their husbands are very common. There are couples who come to seek blessings for their child’s illness or a bad period (*apala*) or to get good results in an exam they are going to face soon or to find a new job. Often, he refuses to undertake activities when people request him to take revenge on their enemies.

“Some people come and ask me to pray for Kālī Amma⁷ to get revenge from their enemies, which I often refuse. My journey and ultimate aspiration are to end this *samsāra*⁸. I should be able to collect good *karma* for this journey. All the things I do in my life should contribute to it. If I support getting revenge by harming other people, not only them, but I too collect bad *karma*.”

Karu Māmā first inquires the needs of the people coming to him and only then decides whether it is necessary for him to enter an *arudha* state / to become possessed by a god in order to tell a prophecy. His *yāthu karma* (prayers to god/healing rituals) sometimes requires more than one visit, especially for astrologically bad periods. Some clients, he advises to get their horoscope read by another expert *gurunnānse* to check the stars or to see whether they have done a bad *karma* in their previous births. If there is a bad *karma*, he advises them to do Buddhist religious rituals such as *bodhi pooja*⁹. Thus, his rituals are very much connected to contemporary Buddhist practices and beliefs.

Buddhist beliefs about *karma* and man/womanhood have shaped the thinking of Karu Māmā about himself too. According to popular Buddhist belief, Buddhahood can be attained by men only. Being born as a woman means that you have done negative *karma* in your past life. I was born into this life as an ‘incomplete man’ because I may have done bad *karma* in my previous births. To attain *nibbāna*,¹⁰ I should collect good *karma* and become a man” (Discussion with Nimal Karunaratne, 10 November 2019, Colombo).

Contemporary Sinhala Buddhism is a “system of belief and action, with a distinctive ethos, integrated within a Buddhist framework” (Gombrich and Obeyesekere 4). Karu Māmā, having grown up in a Buddhist family, is no different from Buddhist laymen/women in ascribing a higher value to manhood. The traditional Theravada Buddhist practices in religious spaces do not offer professional roles to women. According to Gombrich and Obeyesekere, various ‘impurities’ are considered to make a woman unfit to be in communion with gods, and menstruation and childbirth are among these impurities. The concept of *karma* (with underlying notions of purity) acts as a “powerful influence on action and cognition” (Obeyesekere, ‘Medusa’s Hair’ 112) in Karu Māmā’s life.

7 Kali is a Hindu goddess who is considered as a goddess and a demon at the same time. She is considered as one of the most powerful goddesses who can destroy evil forces.

8 Samsāra is the journey of infinite birth, rebirth, and death of a human being according to Buddhist teaching. Samsāra is considered to be a source for suffering and therefore, all Buddhists should be working to end samsāra, and thus suffering.

9 Bodhi pooja is performed fervently by Buddhist devotees seeking blessings of the Bodhi tree in a temple. Several oil lamps are lit around the Bodhi tree. Devotees also offer flowers, fruits, coins as well as milk rice to the Bodhi tree and they water the tree during this ritual.

10 The ultimate bliss and the end of Samsāra in Theravada Buddhism

However, the ‘imperfect life’, as Karu Māmā perceives it, provides a crucial frame for him to negotiate his identity and life realities, as discussed later in this paper.

Life around the Pattini Shrine: Perceptions on Motherhood and Purity

Pattini, as Obeyesekere writes, is “.... the ideal chaste and devoted mother and wife of Sinhala religion” (‘Medusa’s Hair’ 24) yet devotion to her, as well as practices of worship, are also an inspiring example for Hindu-Buddhist fusion (‘Invoking the Goddess’). Pattini, who is called Kannaki in Tamil literature, is the central character of the South Indian epic Silapattikaram (Tale of the Anklet). Among Sinhala communities, Kannaki who is known as Pattini is worshipped in several Pattini *devala*.

Pattini is still considered a symbol of purity in contemporary Sri Lankan society. Being worshipped in the form of a mother goddess (Pattini Ammā), she is revered in folklore as a symbol of virginity, devotion, purity, and motherhood. She is “...beautiful, pure, good, and whole” (Warrell 113). Particularly in the Sinhala vernacular, the term ‘Pattini Ammā’ is used to refer to a woman who has a strong subordination to her husband. Scholars have argued that in both Indian and Sri Lankan society, sexual intercourse, conception in the womb, and the physiology of the birth are considered as pollution (‘The Goddess Pattini’ 225). Therefore, in many of the folk stories surrounding Pattini, she is depicted as unpolluted from ‘bodily-impure’ phenomena such as birth, sexual intercourse and menstruation. While this is also a feature of the Sillapattikaram, the story of Pattini’s purity in Sinhala-speaking areas is cast entirely in a “Buddhist mould” (Obeyesekere, ‘The Cult’ 25). For instance, certain myths carry stories about her giving alms to a former Buddha and she is said to aspire for her own enlightenment by the power of her good deeds/acts. Several other stories narrate her seven previous births as unrelated to human conception, the most famous being her birth from a lotus or a mango: “While her conception is unmediated by sexuality, her birth is undefiled by the womb’s impurities” (Obeyesekere, ‘The Cult’ 458). Moreover, De Alwis (‘The Incorporation’) discusses the complex and dynamic interplay of incorporation and transformation of the worship of a Hindu goddess within a primarily Buddhist society; i.e. the transformation of Kannaki into a unique Hindu deity venerated by Tamil Hindus, the largest minority in the country, and the incorporation of the same deity into a Buddhist deity - Pattini - by Sinhala Buddhists, the dominant community in the country. In the case of Karu Māmā, this Buddhist form of deity plays a significant role in shaping his devotion to the goddess and in conceiving of the purpose of his life, as elaborated above.

People in the neighbourhood usually address him as Karu Māmā in day-to-day affairs. But he is generally known as *Gurunnānse* when it comes to matters

relating to his shrine or everyday rituals. This is interesting as the priests who attend to Pattini shrines are usually referred to as '*kapu mahattaya*'. Obeyesekere ('The Cult') further observes that the priests who are affiliated to a Buddhist *devāla* were called '*kapurāla*' until the 1980's and those serving Pattini were sometimes called *Pattinirāla* to distinguish themselves from other priests who serve other gods/goddess (Obeyesekere, 'The Cult' 7). Generally, *kapurāla* positions in *devālas* are traditionally held by males, who belong to *govigama* (farmers), *salāgama* (cinnamon peelers) or *karāva* (fishermen) castes. As Obeyesekere observes in the 1950's, almost all priests of the Pattini cult were males, except one woman he met in Matale, and another priest's daughter who danced in a *gammaduwa* in Southern Sri Lanka. Yet Pieris quoted in Obeyesekere observes that there were female Pattini priests during the 19th century in Sri Lanka ('The Cult' 11). The position of a *kapurāla* is carried through close kinsmen, a son or a cousin brother, of the same lineage. However, Obeyesekere ('The Firewalkers') notices that apart from these 'traditional' *kapurālas*, there is a trend of self-recruited *kapurālas* (male) and *meniyos* (female) in urban areas who are emerging outside of traditional lineage and who do not perform *gammaduwa* in their shrines.

However, it is necessary to mention that during Karu Māmā's everyday work in his small shrine, he is called *gurunānse*, not *kapurāla* or *kapu mahaththaya*¹¹. The terms *gurunānse*, *kapurāla* and *kapu mahaththaya* have different connotations in Sinhala. The term *kapu mahaththaya* is more respectful and refers to a person who performs Buddhist rituals affiliated to a certain *devāla*. The term *gurunānse* is usually used to refer respectfully to a knowledgeable person who performs rituals centred on demons and ghosts. As Obeyesekere ('The Cult' 12) notes, it is not required to carry out *shanti karma* performances such as possession, trance and medium ship; these are desirable or essential skills of a *kapurāla* in some areas of the country, especially in the Sabaragamuwa region. He further argues that "the more Buddhist the area the less likely to have a theory of possession by divine beings" ('The Cult' 13). However, such a distinction between what he calls 'spirit religion' referring to practices such as acting as oracles for gods as Karu Māmā does, and 'Buddhism', that Obeyesekere proposes has been clearly transcended by many of the contemporary, urban *kapu mahaththayas* including Karu Māmā. Priests whom I have met and had discussions with, are involved in many other jobs while practising rituals, as being a priest does not provide a sufficient income for their families. Lifestyles of traditional *kapu mahaththayas* according to Obeyesekere such as vegetarianism (Obeyesekere, 'The Cult' 14), abstaining from sexual activities and non-consumption of alcohol are practised during the period when *gammaduwās* are being held. In this regard, Karu Māmā's views on sexual activities are different from many other priests whom I met:

11 A term for *kapurāla*, which means 'mister (mahattaya) priest'. The term *kapurāla*, is no longer used in urban Sri Lanka and being replaced by *kapu mahattaya*.

“When I was young, I had several relationships with other men. But gradually, I started seeing only one person whom I really loved and had sex with. One reason is that people generally expect their *gurunnānse* to be a respectful person in the community. Therefore, I devoted myself to the person I love. I do not think having sex with a person whom I love as a sin or an impure act. *It is the same love as the gods have for the humankind*” (Personal discussion with Nimal Karunaratne, 10 January 2020, Colombo, emphasis added by the author).

What amazed and intrigued me the most was the seemingly contradictory, yet interconnected, interpretation of sexuality, sexual labour, and divinity presented by Karu Māmā. On the one hand, the Pattini story, which defines phenomena such as birth and marriage as asexual acts, establishes the notion of Buddhahood and sexuality as two extremely distant discourses. On the other hand, the term ‘*Pattini Amma*’ and its associated connotations in contemporary Sinhala communities reproduce and maintain the idea of a woman’s sexuality in a disciplined and restricted sphere. While this idea of the chastity of Goddess Pattini shows some relevance to the way of life that Karu Māmā follows (i.e. restricting his sexual life to the person whom he loves), at the same time, he, while building their lives in and around the shrine, also maintains a support system for them and their sex work by making the place a safe and comfortable space for them (as the mother of her daughters of the transgender sex workers). All the day-to-day work in and around the shrine is done by Karu Māmā’s transgender/*nachchi* daughters. Due to his financial support, no one starves during difficult times. Yet when the income of the shrine is low, the entire ‘family’ depends on the income they earn by commercial sex work. During the rituals that Karu Māmā does at other houses, a transgender woman dressed in man’s clothes always travels with him as his assistant. I also observed that people who come to the shrine for help did not bother or seemed disturbed by the presence of transgender women around the shrine; rather, they were being treated with the same respect as they showed towards Karu Māmā and the shrine.

Writing about a certain *kapurāla* and his identification with the mother goddess, Obeyesekere argues that it is “...encouraged by an infantile identification... with his own mother” (‘The Cult’ 20). He further argues that the mother-child bond in Sri Lanka and other South Asian societies is stronger, in particular in the absence of the father. According to Obeyesekere, a popular *kapurāla* can be away from his family most of the time, which leads his son to build a strong and close relationship with his mother. This will ultimately produce a son who has similar ‘psychological’ characteristics requisite for a role identification with both the mother and the goddess (‘Medusa’s Hair’ 159; ‘The Cult’ 20). The idea of the mother goddess, as Obeyesekere argues quoting Sigmund Freud, is a “projective system” (‘The Cult’ 428), which gives an individual the psychological security to

cope with his inner (unconscious) anxieties by projecting them outward into a pre-existing cultural belief system i.e., the mother-child relationship and the notion of motherhood, in this scenario.

However, I would rather suggest that this explanation of “erotic-symbiotic mother-son relationship” (“The Cult’ 475) regarding motherhood and divinity provides a limited heteronormative framework which is built around the Victorian monogamous family. Therefore, it has overlooked, perhaps by not being competent enough to understand, the nuances of the social, cultural and historical structures of gender and family formation. For instance, the mother’s role played by Karu Māmā’ can be commonly seen among the practices of transgender communities in South Asia. The role of the transgender mother is thereby not filled in by the biological mother, but by an adult transgender person who keeps young transgender people (mostly, sex workers) in his/her house or accommodation and fulfils their needs as the head of the household. Such a mother role of transgender people is prevalent among the *Hijra* community in India (Ghosh, Nanda, Reddy). This seems to have been also the case in Sri Lanka earlier. During my fieldwork, many elderly male-to-female transgender communities, especially people who identified as *nachchi* have confirmed that this practice was common in Sri Lanka during the 1960’s, 1970’s and 1980’s.¹² But this is rarely seen among transgender communities in Sri Lanka today.

Traditionally, *nachchi* communities were based on a discipleship lineage system, similar to the *Hijra* communities in India. To be accepted into the community, a *nachchi* mother adopts a young daughter into the non-biological *nachchi* kinship network. This network is affiliated with a symbolically organised housing system of *nachchi* families that functions as a centre for training young sex workers. The mother also trains her daughters in skills such as dressing up as a woman, talking to clients, dancing, and music. As my fieldwork revealed, when a young *nachchi* is ready to be introduced to clients, the mother and her *nachchi* family organises a *dehi mangalyaya* (lime ceremony) which resembles a puberty ceremony for a Sinhala Buddhist girl. All rituals associated with Sri Lankan puberty ceremonies are thereby conducted, including the bathing of the girl by an adult woman at an auspicious time in the early morning. In addition, an oiled lime is inserted into her anus, in order to prepare her for anal sexual activities. A party will be organised on the same night to which rich businessmen are invited. On that day, the girl spends her first night with a businessman who pays a considerable amount of money to her and her *nachchi* family. After this date, she is considered as a professional sex worker. Her accommodation, food, health, and safety are taken care of by her mother, but she has to contribute a portion of her earnings

12 All the information about their *nachchi* mothers and families including the ceremonies are collected and verified through several discussions with them over a period of four years.

to the household. While this practice, which was prevalent among *nachchi* communities in Sri Lanka, has been gradually fading due to various reasons, Karu Māmā is still maintaining it in a different, but limited form, by playing the role of the mother and providing a safety network to young *nachchis*.

Embodying Goddess Pattini and her identity is significant for Karu Māmā in several ways; Pattini is a motherly, yet powerful character who symbolises purity and chastity; having Pattini *varama* gives Karu Māmā the ability to play an important, superior deity role for his community through the shrine. Thus, by maintaining such an important family system, Karu Māmā and his daughters embody an institutionalised lifestyle, yet based on resistance to the heteronormative idea of a family and motherhood. The *nachchi* lifestyle is based on a system of informality that provides a space for identity negotiation for Karu Māmā as a woman, mother and the head of the non-heteronormative household. At the same time, he contributes towards producing a counterculture of motherhood and family. Karu Māmā and his daughters are bound together through mutual ties of love, affection, common identity, and connection of care and support to each other as a family which also play an important role in the socialisation of its members. This model of motherhood is considered to be a natural and ordinary form of social organisation within *nachchi*/transgender communities, yet it breaks with the ubiquity of heterosexual motherhood. Thus, Karu Māmā extends the definition of normative motherhood through transgender subjectivities and opens a new avenue for understanding the concept ‘mother’. The next section provides a more elaborate description of the annual *gammaduwa* ceremony performed by Karu Māmā.

***Gammaduwa* and the Negotiation of Trans-identity**

The *gammaduwa* (*gam*+*maduwa* means village + hut) in Daluwatte is an annual festival which has been taking place over three decades now. The *gammaduwa* is usually held on a day in March or April every year. For the first time in the history of Daluwatte, no *gammaduwa* was held in 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The *gammaduwa* is a collective village ritual held overnight to worship deities, mainly in honour of goddess Pattini. It is supposed to bring blessings to a community (traditionally a village) and dispel evil.

The *gammaduwa* annual ceremony starts with the ‘*kap situweema*’ by Karu Māmā (planting of a young tree trunk). The *gammaduwa* in Daluwatte was a ritual of vibrant colours, elaborate dresses, dance, singing and chanting. A large ‘*thorana*’ (pandol) was beautifully made from ‘*gok kola*’ (young coconut leaves) displaying images of the goddess Pattini and several other gods in the middle of the playground in Daluwatte. The ‘*maduwa*’ (temporary hut) where the ritual took place was also cordoned off with *gokkola*.

The ceremony commenced in the evening with the villagers gathered around the *maluma*, which had been prepared by the villagers in Daluwatte, with extreme care and cleanliness to welcome gods and deities. Flowers and incense sticks filled the atmosphere with their aroma. Before the commencement of the rituals Karu Māmā invited everyone present to light *vilakku* (torches) and oil lamps. Dancers and drummers, all dressed in white, gathered inside the *maduma*, and the ritual commenced at the beat of the drums. Dancers, wearing dancing attire were performing different dances in great synchronisation while the group of drummers and *kapu mabaththayas* invited from other areas were chanting *kavi* (poems). The magnificence of the performances got more intense as the night progressed with each stage depicted in dance. In addition to the dances, skits were also performed. These were enactments with comic elements that elaborated the story of the birth of the goddess Pattini and the origin of the *gammaduma* ritual as I understood from my limited knowledge of poetic Sinhala (mixed with Sanskrit) which were verified by a few others later.

Similar dances were performed with offerings to different gods before midnight, each executed with great care, calling upon the gods to dispel all evil. After midnight, the dancers dispersed from the *maduma*. While the dancing was performed, Karu Māmā had dressed up as goddess Pattini. After having a bath, the dressing up started with great care for every single item of the attire. Karu Māmā sews his Pattini dresses by himself: the underskirt, the blouse with extra padding to resemble breasts, the sari made of golden colour satin silk material are topped up with artificial gold jewellery including a pearl tiara, bangles, necklace and anklets.

As Karu Māmā mentioned in a conversation with me on another day, dressing up as a woman has always brought him “great pleasure and mental satisfaction.” (Discussion with Nimal Karunarathne, 19 November 2019, Colombo). Karu Māmā, who learned sewing, hair dressing and doing make up from the age of 14-15, refined his skills by sewing saree blouses, and by dressing and styling the hair of young women in Daluwatta. As he elaborated, “*magē sthree svabhāvaya ismathu vuna*” (my femininity emerged) by doing such activities (Discussion with Nimal Karunarathne, 19 November 2019, Colombo). Then, at the age of 18-20, he started growing his hair and wearing jewellery including earrings, rings, toe rings and necklaces. A few times a year, he dressed up as a woman to dance Saraswathi Pooja dances on stage. Moreover, he performed with other *nachchi* friends dressed as women, i.e., in a saree or Indian *choli*, at night parties which were held once or twice a month. In Karu Mama’s youth, these parties were usually organised by a transgender/*nachchi* woman with the support of rich local businessmen. A small fee was charged from everyone to attend, but some parties were free of charge. Most of the transgender women who performed at such parties, either found

partners as customers who paid for sex work or built intimate relationships with businessmen who attended these parties. Those night parties allowed Karu Māmā and his friends to enjoy the freedom of dressing up as women, which was subjugated by the dominant ideologies and regimes of everyday life. In his words, these moments allowed him to “show off his hidden feminine characteristics” and to “have fun without fear” (Discussion with Nimal Karunarathne, 25 November 2019, Colombo). They used to gather at a friend’s lodge and get dressed before attending the party. Karu Mama sewed not only his own dresses but some of his friends’ dresses too. It is worth mentioning the expressions of excitement and pleasure on Karu Māmā’s face when he described the parties and how he returned home afterwards dressed in his usual clothes and removing make-up from the face.

However, starting to act as a *gurunānse* changed these life patterns of performing as a woman in public spaces and the associated enjoyment and pleasure. As the duties of the shrine gradually increased, Karu Māmā refrained from exploring the spaces of his personal entertainment where he performed his femininity. The Pattini shrine and its associated stories related to asexual (in fact, constrained) rituals and beliefs, as well as playing a more masculine role in his community made his work easy, since he observed the community’s receptiveness towards the shrine (Discussion with Nimal Karunarathne, 09 May 2019, Colombo). Karu Māmā was keen to take on a male role as many priests were male and even female priests played asexual, chaste, and ‘pure’ characters. But, as described above, at the same time he managed to maintain the role of a transgender mother. In this context, it is reasonable to assume that the performance of the goddess Pattini he brings at the annual *gammaduwa* is a moment which surfaces and satisfies his subdued feminine desires.

Karu Māmā gets ready for the *gammaduwa* by mending his golden colour saree and jewellery, adding new make-up items to his collection, in order to dress up as goddess Pattini. He showers in the evening and around 9 pm, starts tying the saree carefully, with the support of his transgender assistants, in front of a long, old mirror leaning against the wall of his bedroom. He does his own make up and others do small touch-ups. After applying the make-up, he takes out artificial gold jewellery from a tin box and wears them carefully, together with a beautiful headdress decorated with pearls, bangles, rings, and necklaces. Finally, an assistant ties a garland with white jasmine flowers around her head covering the wig with braided long hair. The dressing up takes about two hours.

Dressed as goddess Pattini, Karu Māmā first walks to the *devālaya* with white lotus flowers and yellow garlands in order to worship the Pattini statue. The Pattini statue in the shrine is also decorated with a golden colour saree and jewellery. After worshipping the goddess and garlanding the statue, Karu Māmā,

embodying goddess Pattini, started slowly walking towards the *maduma* in the ground. His assistants covered the ground before him with white cloth and a canopy was held over his head. A bundle of concealed sacred jewellery dedicated to the goddess is carried with great care by Karu Māmā in his hands. He slowly walks to the *maduma* and places them on an altar/shrine (*pandol*) dedicated to Pattini with graceful feminine movements and pride. The *pāvāda* (white cloth) is being laid along the way he walks from his shrine to the *pandol* and another white canopy is carried by four men above his head. After placing the jewellery in the dedicated place, he starts certain easy dance moves as a part of his worshipping, rhythmic to the drumming. Karu Māmā's murky black eyes made up with eye liner, artificial eye lashes and mascara, are slightly closed throughout the dance. There is a faint smile on the red lipstick applied lips. I was mesmerised with his moves and suddenly realised that these dance moves are more elegant, relaxed, and beautiful than those of any of *kapu mahaththaya*'s dancing forms I have seen in other *gammadumas*.¹³ It was quite difficult to understand whether he was in his full sense, or in a trance, however, he seemed rather disengaged from the crowd and appeared 'drowned' in his own thoughts throughout the performance. After the dancing he was sweating and breathing heavily but taking a branch of mango leaves in his hand, he started blessing the crowd, placing mango leaves on their heads. Meanwhile, he did not stop his continuous dance moves and blessed everyone who came in a line and worshipped him before leaving.

This midnight Pattini dance by a *kapu mahaththaya* is being interpreted by scholars as a moment of mediation between sexes, genders and human-nonhuman beings. For instance, Yalman (1964) argues that this dance is significant, since a male priest, by dressing up and dancing as a woman with symbols of femininity, mediates not only between humans and gods, but also between male and female deities. Elsewhere, Obeyesekere ('The Cult') argues that *kapurāla* dressing up as Pattini is a psychological role transformation of the priest. On the one hand, based on the male *kapurālas* he observed, Obeyesekere strongly suggests that they are "psychogenically impotent" ('The Cult' 19) while some of them "had no heterosexual life" ('The Cult' 20). On the other hand, observing a female priest called Premawathi, he ('Medusa's Hair') argues that the possession has given her a 'new identity' - as a relatively independent person, not tied to her family like an ordinary Sinhala housewife - who has abolished the everyday world and moved into an extra ordinary life. He interprets the *arude* (possession) and the associated shaking of her body as a female orgasm which many women in the culture do not ordinarily experience ('Medusa's Hair' 88). In a discussion about possession by gods and ghosts in Southern Sri Lanka, Perera has identified the ways in which a possession can fill the gaps of understanding the death or disappearance of

13 As Warrell describes, a priest dances four dance forms here named: Yahandakma, Pattini pada, Saudama and Arbharanathevava

loved ones by providing the possessed and his/her community with an alternative truth, thus functioning as a healing process.

Meanwhile, Warrell names this Pattini dance as ‘transvestite’ dance (128). The term transvestite is commonly used in the West for a person who wears clothes designed for the opposite sex, or a cross dresser; typically, a man wearing a woman’s clothes on a special occasion. The term was coined in the early 20th century by German sex researcher and political activist Magnus Hirschfeld, in order to provide an avenue for understanding the desires to wear clothes of the opposite sex (Sutton). Warrell argues that “the transvestite costume of the priest, that which was separated by her formalness - male and female, mortal and divine - is subsumed by her in a cosmic dance” (138). Through the interpretation of the dress and the ritual, Warrell further argues that the transvestite dance of the goddess Pattini fills an everyday space inbetween, thus mediating horizontal relations between male and female as it fills the void between cosmic and temporal time and space.

While not contesting the idea of Pattini ritual as a space of mediation between god and human, men and women, a ‘merging’ space for binaries, I, however, suggest that the understanding of a priest’s performance of goddess Pattinias as an act of ‘impotency’, ‘orgasm’ or ‘transvestite’, may limit our understanding of trans-subjectivities. De Alwis (‘Female Deities’), discussing male priests who perform Pattini during *gammaduwa*, suggests that his/her embodiment of goddess Pattini can ‘trouble’ or disrupt our normative understanding of gendered subjectivities. Therefore, I argue that it is significant to recognise the importance for a transgender priest like Karu Māmā to maintain such a tedious ritual with great care and commitment for over three decades and why it matters to him/her. Two days after the successful *gammaduwa* festival, Karu Māmā sits in a broken cane chair, rubbing his hair in the dusty sea breeze, but with a satisfied smile on his face, and reiterates:

“I have been running *gammaduwa* continuously for 35 years now. Looking back on my life, I feel happy that I helped many poor, innocent people. When I was young, I used to apply face powder and make up and dressed nicely to look beautiful. That is my ‘feminine nature’ (*sthree svabhāvaya*). This [i.e., Pattini dance] is also my feminine nature. I dress as Pattini with the ‘bottom of my heart’ [*badavathinma*]. Mother goddess and I are not two selves during that particular moment; we are one [*api dennama ekenek*]. That is why people worship me. Although I was born imperfect because I have sinned in my previous births [*peru pau karapu nisa*], I have been doing many good deeds [*pin*] in this life to be worshipped that way. Therefore, I think my feminine nature itself [*sthree svabhāvayama*] has helped me to end this *samsāra*, [*sasarin ethera wenna udav karanavā*] isn’t it?” (Discussion with Nimal Karunarathne, 28 March 2019, Colombo)

As elaborated in the first part of this paper, the popular (mass) Buddhist belief about bad *karma* in previous lives (i.e., that he was born an ‘imperfect man’ due to *karma*) is rooted in and shaped Karu Māmā’s thinking. However, he also believes that the femininity of goddess Pattini and his ‘feminine nature’ (*sthree svabhāvaya*) becomes one [divine] self at the moment he becomes Pattini (*api dennama ekkeneke*). He can freely embrace his feminine self, which he was forced to suppress by the social norms and heteronormative gaze during his younger age. At this divine moment, for Karu Māmā, the goddess Pattini and he (he/she) blesses (poor, sad) human beings and by helping them, he earns good *karma*. According to him, good *karma* will help him become a ‘fully fledged male soul’ before attaining *nirvana*. A sense of self identity and the life realities of Karu Māmā are constructed around what he understands and how he feels, by this meticulous, extraordinary moment; the moment in which the notion of Goddess Pattini’s femininity and Karu Māmā’s transgender subjectivity become one. Hence, I argue that the traits of the goddess Pattini, such as femininity, motherhood, chastity are closely and inevitably correlated with Karu Māmā’s transgender subjectivity, i.e. his identity and what he sees as the purpose of life. It opens an elusive zone of transgender subjectivity as opposed to colonial frames of understanding gender, which cannot be simply defined as an androgynous act or psychological / sexual impotency.

Conclusion

Karu Māmā’s story tells us more than ‘just’ the facts of his life. It reminds us of the fact that we need to revisit and rewrite evasive discourses on transgenderism. Karu Māmā, aka Nimal Karunarathne, aka Shyama, who grew up with heteronormative, Sinhala-Buddhist discourses on birth, rebirth, family, notions of good and bad, as well as perspectives of gender, counters those dominant ideologies throughout his practices around his Pattini shrine and associated rituals. Moreover, Karu Māmā challenges the divisions that exist between genders, social classes, castes and narrates his own interpretations of them. On the one hand, the rituals and practices associated with the Pattini *dēvālaya* in Daluwatte make a significant contribution to Karu Māmā’s identity negotiation. On the other hand, through hegemonic and well-known discourses of traditions, practices, rituals and worshipping, Karu Māmā opens up new insights into femininity and sexuality. Documenting the life stories of Karu Māmā and his daughters, therefore, is immensely important to subaltern histories.

Bibliography

- Adam, Barry D., Duyvendak, Jan Willem & Krouwel André (Eds) (1999). *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics: National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement*. Temple University Press. Philadelphia
- Ariyaratne, K. (2020). *Kājal Thevaru Dēsin Helana Belum: Nirprabhu Dēshapaalana Prakaashanayak Lesa Sri Lankāve Jōgi Netum* (Gaze of the Kajal Painted Eyes: Sri Lankan Jōgi Dance as a Subaltern Political Expression. *Patittha* Vol. 11. Vidarshana Publishers. Colombo. 13-37
- Blackwood, E. & Wieringa, S. E., Bhaiya A. (2007). *Women's Sexualities and Masculinities in Globalizing Asia*. Palgrave MacMillan. USA
- Butler, Judith (1988). Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *Theatre Journal*. 4(4). 519-531
- Chandimal, Damith (2014). *Analyzing the Culture of Transphobia*. Equal Ground. Colombo
- de Alwis, Malathi. *Female Deities and Devotion in Sri Lanka: Ritual, Representation and Resilience*. Paper presented at the conference. Department of Fine Arts, University of Jaffna. April 24-26th 2014
- The Incorporation and Transformation of a 'Hindu' Goddess: the worship of Kannaki-Pattini in Sri Lanka. *The South Asianist*. 2018. Vol. 6 No. 1. pp. 150-180
- De Beavoir, Simone (1952). *The Second Sex*. Bantom. New York
- Ghosh, Banhishikha. The Institution of Motherhood among the Hijras in Burdwan, Samita Manna and Soumyajit Patra (eds), *Motherhood – Demystification and Denouement*, Levant Books, 2016. Kolkata. pp 189-196
- Gombrich, Richard & Obeyesekere, Gananath. *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. 1988. New Delhi

Invoking the Goddess: Pattini - Kannaki Devotion in Sri Lanka.
<http://invokingthegoddess.lk/> accessed, 01 Sep., 2022

Jackson, Peter A. (1999). An American death in Bangkok: the murder of Darrell Berrigan and the hybrid origins of gay identity in 1960s Bangkok. *GLQ*. 5(3). 361-411

--- (2001). *Pre-Gay, Post-Queer, Journal of Homosexuality*. Routledge, 40(3-4). 1-25

--- (2009). Bangkok's 21st Century Queer Boom: Markets, Media, Rights and HIV. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*. Taylor and Francis. 11:S1. 135

Kuru-Uthumpala, J. (2014). Butching it up: an analysis of same sex female masculinity in Sri Lanka. *Culture, Health and Sexuality, An International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care*. 15(2). 153-165

Nanda, Serena. The Hijras of India: Cultural and Individual Dimensions of an Institutionalised Third Gender Role. *Journal of Homosexuality*. 1986. Vol. 11 No. 3-4. pp 35-54

Nichols A. (2010). Dance Ponnaya Dance. *Feminist Criminology*. SAGE. 5(2). 195-222

Obeyesekere, Gananath The Goddess Pattini and the Lord Buddha: Notes on the Myth of the Birth of the Deity. *Social Compass*. 1973. 20. pp 217-229

--- The Firewalkers of Kataragama: The Rise of *Bhakti* Religiosity in Buddhist Sri Lanka. *Journal of Asian Studies*. 1978. 36. pp 457-476

--- *Medusa's Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience*. 1981. University of Chicago Press. Chicago and London

--- *The Cult of the Goddess Pattini*. 1984. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago and London

Perera, Sasanka. *Spirit Possessions and Avenging Ghosts in Remaking A World: Violence, Social Suffering and Recovery*. 2001. University of California Press. Berkeley. pp 157-200

- Reddy, Gayathri. *With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India*. 2005. University of Chicago Press. Chicago
- Sutton, Katie. "We Too Deserve a Place in the Sun": The Politics of Transvestite Identity in Weimar Germany. 2012. *German Studies Review*. Vol. 35 No. 2. pp. 335-354
- Warrell, Lyndy. *Cosmic Horizons and Social Voices*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, 1991. University of Adelaide.
[https://www.academia.edu/827660/Cosmic Horizons and Social Voices](https://www.academia.edu/827660/Cosmic_Horizons_and_Social_Voices)
accessed, 01 September, 2022
- Wieringa, S. E. (1999). Describing Bodies or Defiant Cultures: Butch-Femme Lesbians in Jakarta and Lima in E. Blackwood & S. E. Wieringa (eds). *Female Desires, Same-sex Relations and Transgender Practices Across Cultures*. Columbia University Press. New York. 206-231
- Wijewardene, Sermal (2007). But no one has explained to me who I am now ...": "Trans" Self-Perceptions in Sri Lanka. Wieringa et al (eds). *Women's Sexualities and Masculinities in a Globalizing Asia*. Palgrave Macmillan. New York. 101-116
- Winter, S. (2008). Language and Identity in Transgender: Gender Wars, Anatomia and the Thai *Kathoey*. in Lin, A. (ed). *Problematizing Identity: Everyday Struggles in Language. Culture and Education*. Lawrence Erlbaum. USA. 119-135
- Yalman, Nur. The Structure of Sinhalese Healing Rituals, *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 1964. Vol. 23. Aspects of Religion in South Asia. pp. 115-150