

FOLKLORE OF KURUNEGALA DISTRICT

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This survey of folklore of Kurunegala District was conducted by three members of the Department of Sinhalese with the assistance of a number of informants from various villages in the district. This has been an on going project started in 1987. Kurunegala is an area rich of folklore and where hundreds of sites and temples and devalayas of archeological, historical and cultural interest draw the attention of scholars .

The methodology adopted in this survey mainly constituted of field visits, interviews, survey of classical and folk literature, investigation of classical sites and collection of folk tales and poems .

A number of sites with archeological, historical and artistic significance such as ancient temples, caves, mountains and rocks such as Etugala, Ibbagala, Viharagala, Yakdessagala and Dolukanda were visited by us for collecting data .

Some religious and historical personages having direct relationship in the district around whom a large volume of legends are to be found have drawn our special attentuon. Examples for such personages are; Vijaya, Kuveni, Pandukabhaya and Arahant Maliyadeva.

Remains of many historical and religious buildings are scattered all over this district. Some of these sites have not yet been explored or studied by archeologists (Nathagane, We Uda). Hence it seems to be a storehouse of folklore . Four of the former capitals of Sri Lanka viz, Kurunegala, Dambadeniya, Yapahuva and Panduvasnuwara are located in the district . About and around each of these ancient cities there exists a plethora of folk tales and poems .

Gods and dieties of the area was another subject of this survey . Of special interest was the legend of a local girl promoted to the status of goddess called Valane Pattini .

We have also gathered information on all these aspects of the folklore of Kurunegala district which would be, after documentation with necessary analysis, sufficient for a valuable monograph on the subject . A more comprehensive report with illustrations on our survey will be presented in the paper we are planning for the seminar.