

A comparative study of Slavian and Sinhala culture based on Sinhala New Year festival and Maslenitsa

A.P.S.Lakshani Wijethunga¹, Y.S.Abeysinghe

Sinhala New Year which is celebrated after gathering harvest from paddy field marks the transition of the sun from the House of Pisces to the House of Aries. It's usually takes place on April 14th every year. In that new year festive week entire Sinhala Buddhist folk follow and observe various custom and rituals such as household preparations, firing crackers, playing 'Rabana' which signal coming of Sinhala new year, lighting hearth, preparing special 'Aurudu' meals, exchanging money (Ganu Denu), treating neighbors with various aurudu sweets, anointing of herbal oils (Hisatehel gema) and traditional folk games. In Slavian culture most cheerful festival is Maslenitsa. At the beginning, in older days Maslenitsa was a festival dedicates to remember the dead. But with the time it transformed into a entertaining joyful festival. The Maslenitsa marks the end of the winter festive season and beginning of new spring festival and ceremonies. In contrary to the Sinhala New Year Maslenitsa is aim to promote a rich harvest. This Slavian festival continuous for the week preceding the Lent. Each day of Maslenitsa week devoted to special activities. Monday – meeting day, Tuesday – games day, Wednesday – gourmand day, Thursday – walk about, Friday – mother-in law evening, Saturday – visiting sister – in law and Sunday – the day of forgiveness. During whole festive days people are treated and served with many special foods, most often blini (pancakes). Most peculiar feature of the Maslenitsa festival is making the dummy of Maslenitsa, which is burned at the end of the festival and ash is spread on the field a ritual observed believing for rich harvest. Comparisons study shows that there are many similarities between these two traditional festivals that witness a certain relationship of Sinhala culture with Slavian culture. The aim of this study is to examine about the celebration of New year based on the concept of the sun in two countries Sri Lanka and Russia. For this research, the author has used primary and secondary sources as research methodology.

Keywords: *Cultural festivals, Russian, Sinhala, Similitude, Diversity*

¹ yuganthie@yahoo.com