

Folklore: Lullabies among Bangkok-Malays

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Abstract

The researcher began to take interest in Bangkok-Malay folklores during her fieldwork research on 'The assimilation of Bangkok-Malay communities in the Bangkok metropolis and surrounding areas'. Folklores in terms of lullabies, which are sung by the Bangkok-Malays particularly by the elderly, are observed to reflect various aspects of their lives. The content of the lullabies basically revolves around the traditional stories and legends, which relates to the Islam religion and good conducts and practices as a Muslim. These lullabies are found to be unique as although the lyrics vary amongst the Bangkok-Malay communities, the lullabies share the same tune and are all sung with opening lines referring to the oneness of God and 'Muhammad' (peace be upon him) as the messenger of God. This is deemed to be significant as these lullabies, which are transmitted orally from generation to generation amongst the Bangkok-Malays, may provide an insight in understanding the religion and culture of these people.

The researcher plans to select some common lullabies (sung in both Malay and Thai language) in which the content and meaning are to be investigated. The view of the youngsters on Bangkok-Malay lullabies is also of interest as to determine the continuity of this form of folklore.

This study can give background information in the field of anthropology especially which focuses on language, religion and culture of minorities in a given society. Furthermore, eyewitness evidence about past event spassed down through oral traditions may provide some background material about people and their history.