

Kalamandalam Rama Chakyar

Scheme for "Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India"

Progress report of work done out of the 1st instalment received

Reference: Your letter No 28-6/ICH-Scheme/55/2015-16 dated 28 January 2016

Vide the above referred letter a grant of Rs.500,000/- has been sanctioned to me to perform the fast dying tradition of Manthrankam. It is the performance of the third act of Bhasa's *Pratitnayougandharayanam*.

Retaining the training and performance tradition of Manthrankam is the most crucial elements in the sustenance of the pristine tradition of Kutiyattam. An expertise in the performance of Manthrankam, that last for three to four weeks, provides the strong base for the rhetoric elements for the court jester (Vidooshakan) of Kutiyattam and the Chakyarkoothu performance.

The last reference with regard to Manthrankam, until recently was Guru Kidangoor Raman Chakyar, who passed away on Sept 2nd 2015 at the age of 89. He held the record of performing Manthrankam continuously for 52 years at the Annamanada temple in Thrissur district. Though earlier it was a crucial part of the legacy of the art, sadly at present none of the temples are conducting Manthrankam due to several reasons like prolonged days involved, the expense involved for the same and lack of proper and timely patronage.

Manthrankam cannot be taught much through class room training; artists must learn it through by hearting the entire text and by watching the performances of masters. As it is myself is the sole artist capable to perform it entirely. I am already in my mid sixties. The programmes were conducted with the involvement of my disciples such as Kalamandalam Sangeeth Chakyar.