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DAUGHTERS OF GOD
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A FINAL YEAR PROJECT

SUPERVISOR: MS. LAU JOON-NIE
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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

1.1 Foreword

The main body of this report is divided into three chapters: pre-production, the production and post-production.

These chapters, however, in reality, are not separate and independent from each other. Filming this documentary was done in stages, hence, there was a constant need to go back and forth in terms of these steps.

In this report, there are also a few terms that are used to describe different groups of people. For the reader’s convenience, the names and their meanings are explained below

*Onbadhu* is a Tamil word for number nine. The Indian transsexuals in Singapore are known by this name. However, it carries a negative connotation of being in between.

*Sisters* is a name that Indian transsexuals in Singapore prefer to be called with.

*Hijras* are transsexuals who live in India. Most of them earn a living by dancing at weddings and childbirths. They live under one guru in a house.

*Thirunankai* is a name that is preferred by the Indian transsexuals in Malaysia.

Please note that the name sisters and thirunankais are interchangeable in this report as the transsexuals who are the subject of this report come from Malaysia and Singapore.

1.2 The Title

Thirunankai is a Tamil word which means “daughter of god”. Ms. Parameswary, the founder of the Thirunankais’ temple in Klang, explained that it is a name that they (Indian transsexuals) prefer to be called. It was the name (Thiru Nangai) of an effeminate male in a royal
family in India, who wanted to be bear and give birth to a child. The *matha* (the Hindu goddess Bahuchara Mata) granted him his wish and helped him give birth by tearing his stomach.

For the purpose of this documentary, the term *Thirunankais* will refer to the group of Indian transsexuals whom we have found in Klang.

1.3 Statement of Objective

We want to give our audiences a glimpse into the lives of the Thirunankais. There is a high probability that the only ones who know them are those who live in India, because of the presence of the Thirunankais’ counterparts- the Hijras of India.

Here in Singapore and in other first world countries, modernisation has touched everything. We are more familiar with gays, bisexuals and lesbians. Through this documentary, we want to present a different group of gender deviants, a group whose beliefs and practices seem anachronistic in today’s times.

By showing their religious customs and traditions, we want to inspire a sense of wonder in our audiences. Here in Singapore and in other first world countries, religion or the act of worship has been stripped of the feel of ethnicity and ritualism.

We also want our audiences to erase any of their simplistic notions about what happens when transsexuals change their gender. Most people understand that they undergo surgery, but many do not know the extent of how the surgery alters their life physically and emotionally. We highlight their struggles and their pains not only to invite our audience to empathise with them but more importantly, we want our audiences to think. We want our audiences to make certain

---

1 Here in Singapore, “all religious processions” (Straits Times, 2011, Jan 15) including Thaipusam, over the years, have increasingly been regulated. This year, to address “issues of crowd and noise control”, playing loud music by drums
connections and realize the ironies in the lives of the Thirunankais, and where all their efforts leave them in the end.

1.4 Synopsis

“Daughters of God” is a story about a Hindu temple built by Thirunankais in the Muslim majority country of Malaysia. It is a story about two Thirunankais- Anusha and Varsha, who, on the days of prayers, attend the temple *pooja* (worship), but at night, roam the streets as prostitutes. The temple is run only through the contributions by the Thirunankais- a majority of them working in the same profession. Despite being different in terms of their gender and also their choice of livelihood, through the presence of the temple, the thirunankais, in one form or another, have gradually gained the acceptance of the people living in the neighbourhood.

1.5 Appeal

There are many aspects to the film that could appeal to many audiences. The film could appeal to Hindus as the film features a lesser known but interesting deity, the goddess Bahuchara Mata. As the film touches on gender, it could also appeal to those who consider themselves as members outside the conventional gender categories, such as the gays, lesbians and also the transsexuals. More specifically, the documentary could appeal to sociologists or ethnographers. Much of what is shown in the film is about the folklore of the Thirunankais, their customs and practices in the temple.

The uncanny mix of religion, prostitution, gender and social acceptance could also draw people to watch the film.
1.6 Target Audience

This documentary is targeted at film festival audiences, particularly at LGBT (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transsexual) film festivals. In 2009 alone, there were over 90 international queer film festivals\(^2\). We hope to send this film to as many film festivals as we can, to increase the chances of the film being screened internationally.

1.7 Duration of Documentary

The running time of the documentary is approximately 26 minutes.

1.8 Format

Our choice of format is High Definition, so as to keep up with the industry’s standards, and the final product will be in DVD form because of its high quality and portability.

1.9 Choice of Camera

We had two choices, the SONY EX1 camera or the PANASONIC P2 camera. We opted for the SONY EX1 camera as it had more options for variable frame rate recording. It also has the ability to store more footage in its memory cards than the P2 cards in PANASONIC. During the test shoots that we had done, the colour of the footage taken from the SONY EX1 camera appears more crisp and brighter than the footage shot using the PANASONIC P2.

\(^2\) List of film festivals came from Wolfe Video website, see Bibliography
CHAPTER 2: PRE-PRODUCTION

2.1 Idea Conceptualisation

Brainstorming for Topic

Each group member suggested a topic for the whole group to consider. These were the ideas that were put up for consideration:

- Patient refusal in the hospitals in the Philippines
- Male escorts in exclusive clubs in Singapore
- Baby dumping in Malaysia
- How children grow up in Singapore

This was further narrowed down to half before meeting the FYP supervisor. Patient refusal in the Philippines and male escorts in Singapore remained for our consideration.

Both topics, however, presented problems of access. For the topic on Patient Refusal, hospitals would not expose themselves even if they indeed adopt this practice. For the topic on Male Escorts, there is a very low probability of catching the real action if patrons knew that we were filming them. We had to start our search again for a good documentary topic.

Finding the Right Topic

An article on the website Details.com about American eunuchs piqued our interest. It was a story about men voluntarily cutting their sexual organs to stop their sexual urges from controlling their lives. We started searching for something similar in Singapore and Malaysia. We found out about the Hijras in India, who like the American eunuchs, practice castration.
What initially drew us in was the primitive practice of castration by the Hijras. However, our subsequent research unearthed a rich backdrop – the cultural and religious context against which these people exist. The unconventional mix of issues such as gender and sexuality, culture and religion appealed to us. Instinctively, our group felt that this mix of issues would create a good and thought-provoking documentary. Visuals would also be our advantage as seeing the religious rituals and the spectacle of seeing many Hijras onscreen would make for a rich viewing experience. It was a unanimous decision to finally choose this as the topic for our documentary.

2.2 Background research and Literature review

There are two aspects that we needed to research on, when we decided to make this film. We needed to understand Hinduism and also about the Hijras in India. Though our documentary focuses on the Malaysian counterparts of the Hijras in India, we had to rely on the literature written about the local groups in India. There is a dearth of information written about the Hijras who live in Malaysia. Most literature relating to Indians in Malaysia are about migration, their jobs in the oil palm plantations and their under-representation in politics.

Hinduism- The Religion

The name Hindu was derived from the River Indus, coined by the Muslims who were advancing in India. The name was given to differentiate the Indians who are not Muslims (Hattstein, 2005). Hinduism, unlike other major religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam, does not have a fixed dogma. It also does not have a central founder. This is the reason why there are many schools of thought and cults in Hinduism. There is no single path to salvation. A person can have a personal god and each person’s convictions and interpretations can be equally true (Hattstein, 2005).
The religion’s traditions were passed down to many generations through word of mouth. Hence, compared to other religions, it is more likely to have a variation of methods and meanings to different people (Ringdal, 2004).

**Hinduism and Karma**

Some refer to Karma as the resulting repercussions of an individual’s actions in an earlier life. If this is true, then a person can do very little to change what will happen to him in his present life as he cannot undo his past actions (Bowen, 2005).

To other people, Karma applies to groups of people than to the individual. To illustrate this, Derr (1989) gave the scenario of a fire that happened in a North Indian Village. Most of the houses that were damaged by the fire belonged to the Brahman landowners (Brahman - the highest social class in India), who had a long history of oppressing their labourers. The fire was then interpreted as a just punishment for the Brahmans, because they were “eating the earnings” of sin. The reason attributed as to why some Brahmans escaped the fire was that these particular Brahmans did enough good deeds to counter balance their Karma.

Thus, the notion of Karma working like a balance sheet comes into the picture. Karma is like a balance sheet of a person’s merit and demerit. A perfect example was given by Daniel (1983), when he talked to a local temple priest in India. According to the priest himself, he earned a lot of “merit” because he did frequent acts of worship. However, the same priest admitted to having a lot of extramarital affairs, actions of which he needed to offset. (He figured from his own calculations that he was still ahead).
At the very least, Karma is comparable to what the West calls “fate” (Bowen, 2005). Karma is invoked when no other everyday cause can be attributed to what has happened. It is one way of the Hindus to explain misfortune.

Hinduism and Rituals

A Hindu’s life revolves around many rituals (McClymond, 2008). From birth to death, a Hindu experiences life-cycle rituals. Every year, depending on the dates, there are calendrical rituals. Lastly, depending on the deity that a Hindu worships, he performs devotional rituals.

The rituals performed by Hindus may be difficult to understand because under Western traditions, traditions go by the “book”. The Word is more important in Christianity and other religions like Islam, while in Hinduism, imagery and sensory experience takes centrestage (Eck, 1998).

Also, Hinduism appeals to devotees through “colourful and symbolic imagery, the sounds of chanting and song, purposeful gestures, varied food offerings and complex scents” (McClymond, 2008).

Hinduism and Gender

Compared to other religions, Hinduism is able to accommodate “ambiguities such as transvestism and transgenderism” and view them in a “meaningful and powerful way”3. Hinduism recognizes that “dual sex-ism is not a condition which one could have chosen”

3 Please refer to the next page for the references about the “meaningful and powerful” interpretations of transgenderism, specifically about hijras in Hinduism.
Hinduism and Prostitution

During a social reform in the late nineteenth century, a caste of women who performed dance and religious rituals at Hindu temples, later became prostitutes. They are the devadasis (Sariola, 2010).

Devadasi means servant of god. The devadasi tradition dictates that once a girl is given to the temple and dedicated to the Yellama, the goddess of fertility, they are no longer allowed to marry mortals. Once she reaches puberty, her virginity goes to the highest bidder (Colundalur, 2011, January 21). According to the National Commission for Women in India, there are still more than 48,000 devadasis throughout India (The Hindu, 2006, Jan 30), despite the institution being officially abolished in the 1950s (Sariola, 2010).

Understanding Hijras in the Indian Context

May people are quick to categorize Hijras as gays or transsexuals. However, Hijras cannot be understood in the simplistic gender categories of the West (Nanda, 1990). Hijras have their own set of customs and beliefs derived from references about them in Hindu mythology. Below are examples of references from which their identity and rituals were derived from.

Sisters are believed to have the power to confer fertility

Siva reappears to begin the process of creation, but finds out that it has already been done. He then breaks off his linga (penis) and throws it onto the earth. As soon as it hit the soil, it became a source of universal fertility.

After castration, the hijras bury their severed organ in the ground, as Siva did. The belief in the power of hijras to bless people with fertility came from this reference. (O’Flaherty, 1993).

Sisters form the “third sex” in India
Rama, on his way to leave his hometown Ayodhya, found himself being followed by many people. When he came to the edge of the forest, he told the men and women kindly to turn around and not follow him out of the city. When he came back 14 years later, he found strange snakehills on the road. As he was removing them, he found people with long beards and long nails, meditating. “You told the women and men to go, but we are neither so we stayed”. Rama blessed them for their faith (Suthrell, 2004)

This is the reason why hijras are recognized as the third sex in India (Nanda, 1999). It is also the reason why some people believe they are blessed by the gods.

*Hijras can throw powerful curses because their bodies are half man, half woman.*

One of the forms of Siva represents him as an *Ardhanarisvara*- which literally means “the lord who is half woman”. In this form his body is equally divided into two- half man, half woman. Siva is also the god of destruction and unparalleled anger. This is probably the reason why people associate sisters as being half woman, half man. Also, just like Siva cursed the earth, people believe that a Hijra’s words are just as powerful (Hiltebeitel, 1980)

It is through these references that Hijras find meaning about their identity and origin. They link themselves to these stories and “develop a positive definition” of their femininity (Nanda, 1999). The process of “decoding” these various myths provide hijras with a legitimate right to their existence (Schacht & Underwood, 2004). “Being out of the ordinary in terms of anatomy, Hijras claim clear association with the divine, ordering legitimacy from Hindu cosmology” (Suthrell, 2004).

*Castration is done in order to gain respect*

Castration has a deeper meaning for hijras. They believe it liberates them from the cycle of birth and rebirth, hence they call it “nirvana” (Chiland, 2003).
Having had the operation also elicits respect within the Hijra community. It indicates the possession of *himmat* or strength necessary to acquire seniority (Reddy, 2004). The younger Hijras look up to them because she was able to save enough money for her surgery, money to support herself during her recovery and also money to spend during her *dawat* or the celebration 40 days after her operation.

The same surgery that elevates them within their own community, stigmatizes them in the eyes of mainstream society (Nanda, 1990).

**Their Position in Society**

Since sisters have “rejected the centrality of procreation”, sisters are considered outsiders in mainstream society (Kira, Hall, 1997). They are “a people freed from the constraints of decency that regulates most of society”.

“If people give us respect, then we are also respectful. But if they do not show us respect, then we also abuse them verbally and lift our saris. Then they bow their heads in shame and give us respect. It is like that” (Nanda, 1990).

Because of the presence of hijra references in Hindu myths, sisters seem to be a special group. While their existence is accepted as part of the Indian culture through the deities and associated mythology in Hinduism, sisters hold a precarious position in society (Suthrell, 2004). In contemporary India, ritual and religious respect is not given to them per se. They “negotiate and command respect” (Hall, 1997) in order to empower themselves, regardless of being excluded in society. Because times have changed, and less and less people are familiar with the references about them in the Hindu myths, their position has now shifted from being “quasi-religious” to them being considered as trouble makers and prostitutes (Suthrell, 2004).
2.3 Research from Internet Articles and Videos

Most of the documentaries we have found online highlight the same problems that hijras face, as documented in books. There were a select few however that were very helpful and insightful.

The documentary produced by the National Folklore Support Centre in India was a departure from all the documentaries we found online, as it focused on the unique practices, rituals and traditions of the hijras in India. It was nearer to the style we wanted to have for our documentary. *I Am That*, a short documentary, brought out the importance of the bonds within the hijra community as most of the hijras were forced to leave their families because of the dishonour that their identity brings to the family. The BBC documentary, *The Hijras of India*, had a more in-depth interview with one Hijra, Laxmi. We learnt about the possibility of hijras being prostitutes as Laxmi openly admits in the film that she earns her income through prostitution.

The documentary on transgenders produced by Mediacorp's Vasantham channel, provided an interesting medical personnel point of view from a surgeon from the Singapore Gender Identity Clinic about the pre-operation procedures. However, he did not talk about the surgery in detail.

Online articles also provided great insights to the issues faced by Indian transsexuals especially on websites dedicated to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Fridae reported that transsexuals in Malaysia are unable to change their gender status even though sex change surgery is legalised in the country. In contrast, India has recognised the third gender for the transsexual community and legalised it (Dominique, 2011, March 7)
2.4 Possible Themes

From all the videos and articles we have seen online, we were able to shortlist a few aspects that we wanted to try to explore in our documentary. We would try to talk more in details about the sex reassignment surgery which other documentaries appear to brush off. Instead of just highlighting discrimination, we would search for stories about social acceptance. We would also ask our subjects about the problems or issues about their identification cards. Lastly, we agreed that if our subjects turned out to work as prostitutes, we would substantiate that point, we would dig deeper, rather than just having our subjects admit to working in that profession.

2.5 Findings from Pre-Production Trip

1st Pre-Production Trip: Shops and Temples Around Little India

We began our search in Little India because it is a place where most Indians in Singapore go to or at least frequent. The shopkeepers do not know the term “Hijra”. In Singapore, Hijras are known as number nines or nines or more appropriately, in Tamil- “onbadhu”. A Tamil friend explained that onbadhu was a derogatory term for being in between. Women are considered number 8, while men are assigned the number 10. A gardener at the Sri Veerakaliamman Temple, along Serangoon Road told us that there would always be a group of the onbadhus, every Tuesday at the temple, for the pooja at 2:30pm. We deduced that for the gardener to notice them, they must either attend in big groups or come to the temple very often.

2nd Pre-Production Trip: Approaching the Hijras in the Temple

The next Tuesday, we saw the onbadhus ourselves. They arrived in batches, in groups of three or four. The low register of their voice gave them away, more than their physical appearance.
The onbadhus frequent this temple because of the temple’s Mother Goddess statue or the Goddess Durga. They come regularly, every Tuesday to pray to her, sing devotional songs and offer flowers and small lamps of ghee. We learnt through a friend of the onbadhus that we should call them “sisters”- a more polite but casual term that they like being called by. In the temple, we happened to meet Ms. Anitha, one of the members of a committee running a temple that the sisters built in Klang. She handed us a pamphlet for an event at their temple which will happen in three weeks time, a festival to celebrate the completion of the renovation of the temple.

From the pamphlet, we were able to obtain the temple’s address, the date of the celebration and more importantly, it had a picture of the goddess Bahuchara Mata- the goddess worshipped by the hijras in India. This confirmed that they are indeed what we were looking for.

As Ms. Anitha became more familiar with us, she openly mentioned that she came as a sex worker in Singapore because it paid better than her previous jobs. Working in an oil plantation and in a factory was insufficient to pay for her mother’s dialysis. Ms. Anita also mentioned that she has a husband, a policeman in Klang.

3rd Pre-Production Trip: Visiting the Temple Before the Celebration

This trip accomplished a few things. We were able to estimate the journey from Singapore to Klang. It would be 4 to 5 hours by car and it would take 6 to 7 hours if we take the public transport with Ms. Anita when we film the celebration. We were able to see the temple firsthand. It was a small temple, in a quiet kampong neighbourhood. It did not have a gopuram (the usual ornate tower found prominently at the entrance of a temple) like the other hindu temples we have seen. We also met Mr. Rama, the head of a household that lives right next to the temple. His house and the temple share the same wall. He mentioned that the temple used to be just a house where a few sisters gathered. Mr. Rama was also kind enough to give us digital copies of the old photos they
took during the first renovation. We also found out that the temple is run completely through the donations of the sisters, as they do not solicit money from the public for the temple upkeep. Mr. Rama told us that almost all of the sisters worked as prostitutes in Klang town. He did not believe that the men who have relationships with the sisters, like Ms Anitha’s husband, do so out of love. These men stay because of the sisters make a good living out of sex work and earn a lot of money.

4th Pre-Production Trip: Getting to Know Other Sisters Who Live in Klang

A few weeks after the celebration, we could no longer contact Ms. Anitha so we decided to find her in Klang. We found out that she was staying in Klang all this time because her mother was hospitalized. Ms. Anitha brought us around Little India, which we shortlisted as one of our possible locations for our b-rolls. According to her, the Little India in Klang is the biggest in Malaysia. Her husband drove us to Lebuh Gopeng, a place with many karaoke bars and pubs in the guise of barber shops or salons. We stopped at a three story shophouse with two adjacent doors. This is where the sisters worked. One door led to the brothel while the other led to where the sisters stayed.

Ms. Anitha introduced us to her “daughters” – the younger sisters who look up to her as a mother. This was how we found our main characters in the film, Varsha and Anusha. Varsha was one semester short of completing her Computer Science course at the Management and Science University in Malaysia. Anusha, on the other hand had many slit marks that covered her lower arm. These qualities were what made them stand out from the rest of Ms. Anitha’s daughters. We were able to get both their handphone numbers and a few more of the others as a backup. We were also able to secure two filming opportunities that would happen in one night- the sisters dressing up and putting on make-up before going to the temple for the Ponggal celebration (Tamil New Year).

5th Production Trip: Finding Other Sisters Online
In an attempt to widen our contacts, we tried searching facebook accounts and we found Ms. Hemaa.

Ms. Hemaa lives in Singapore. She’s married to man who frequently goes back to Kuala Lumpur to visit his family. From the details that she mentioned to us, it seemed like the man has another wife, another family in Kuala Lumpur. We thought she would be a good subject because she and her husband were planning to adopt a child.

Unfortunately, Ms. Hemaa had to attend a funeral in Kuala Lumpur, thus we could not interview her and share her story in our documentary.

2.6 Pre-production challenges

Finding a Reliable Translator

None of the members in our group is Hindu or even Indian. Hence, no one had the ability to speak Tamil. It was a constant struggle finding a translator in all stages of making this film. We were lucky to have a few juniors (studying in the same university) who could speak Tamil to help us, but they were not always available, so we had to arrange our filming dates around their schedule.

Foreign Culture, Foreign Religion

We had to learn everything from the very beginning. We had to read up on Hinduism in order to learn about its customs and practices. We had to recognize and understand the history of the gods and goddesses, their names and why people worship them. We spent a lot of time observing and attending many poojas, in order to familiarize ourselves with what to look out for when we film in the Klang temple.
Time

Time was always against us. By the time we met Ms. Anitha, the one who led us to the temple that we were looking for, the celebration was only three weeks away. When we finally met some of Ms. Anitha’s adopted daughters, it was 2 days away from the next event that was worth filming- the Ponggal (Tamil New Year). We had to plan almost in real time to make the filming happen. Oftentimes, the information they provided on what was likely to happen on an event was so little and vague that we had to be prepared to shoot all the time.

Also, because our subjects worked at night, we could only get hold of them in a short time window, which is during late afternoon to early evening (from 3pm to 6pm). If we call them anytime after 6pm, they would not answer their phones.

There were a lot of times when we had to sit through the whole pooja in order to talk to our subjects. It seemed disrespectful to try to talk to them before or in the middle of the pooja. This ate up a lot of valuable time.

Bridging the Difference Between Research Findings and Actual Field Observations

Our extensive reading about the Hijras in India made us have certain expectations, that did not apply to the Thirunankais. For example, not all of the Hijras in India work as prostitutes, whereas majority of the Thirunankais are sex workers. Their cultural role, which is based on the Hindu myths is not as strong and recognized here compared to India. Their population is not as big here in Singapore and Malaysia as compared to India. Therefore, not many people know what the term “Hijras” mean. Even the officers at the Hindu Centre in Singapore did not know about the Hijras or even their goddess, the Bahuchara Mata, prior to us contacting them

Formulating a Good Documentary Angle
Altogether, we had to change our documentary angle twice before arriving at our current one. For our first angle, we wanted to find sisters whose lives break the standard life stories written about Hijras. We were hoping to find sisters who were accomplished, educated and have understanding and accepting families. We found a sister who satisfied all these criteria, but we could not make a documentary just with one subject. She was also not willing to appear on camera because of her reputation in the community. Most of our contacts that we gathered from Ms. Anitha are sex workers, so we had no choice but to drop this angle.

On our second attempt, we played with the possibility of presenting how the sisters make their own families after being disowned by their own. We could show how they found love through their companionship with other sisters in the temple, their husbands, and the children they adopt. Again, we could not make this angle work. Although we had the appropriate contacts, we could not get honest answers from our pre-interviews. Probing further did not produce better ones. A good example would be our interview with Ms. Anitha’s husband. He only gave us one word answers. He also lied about the Ms. Anitha’s occupation and the rest of the sisters (he told us that Ms. Anitha worked as a “customer service officer” in Singapore, while the rest of the Thirunankais had office jobs). Yet it was him who drove us to where the sisters worked, in Lebuh Gopeng. If we pushed forward with this documentary angle, our interview questions would always be hard, personal questions that our interviewees may not feel comfortable to share. And if they are not willing to answer certain questions, it was highly likely that they would not grant us access to film cutaways for the film relating to those questions.

The Process of Finding a Documentary Angle
Eventually, it became apparent that not everything that our contacts tell us could be filmed. Not all our observations, even though they tie well with what our contacts share with us could translate into a filming opportunity.

Because having a prescribed documentary angle did not work for us, we decided to employ a more natural course. We decided to prioritise gaining more filming opportunities, rather than looking for specific ones. We planned to grab every opportunity available and then supplement these footages with interviews that relate to what we filmed. By gaining more material to work with, we could work our way backwards and find a documentary angle. Also, access would be a given factor because on most of these filming opportunities, we were invited to come and film them.

Money

We were not able to get a film grant from the Singapore Film Commission, hence we had to use our own resources to fund the project. We were only able to find a way to earn back what we spent in the middle of our production. But the money that will come from doing that project will only be available once the whole project is over.

CHAPTER 3: PRODUCTION

3.1 Visual Style

The documentary adopts an expository style, which places more emphasis on the spoken word than the visuals in presenting information.
Due to the unpredictable nature of the rituals and events during a Hindu festival, we shot most of the documentary handheld. We only used the tripod when our subjects inside the frame have settled into a location.

3.2 Audio

During the temple celebration, mobility was essential. We alternated with using the boom and using the camera’s in-built microphone in recording the audio. In order to have a back-up, we also used an external audio recorder, to record the music on location as long as we can without eating up the memory card space on the camera.

3.2 Rationale

In total, we went back to Klang five times to film.

1st Filming: The Celebration of the Completion of the Renovation of the Temple

We concentrated on capturing the atmosphere, the sights and sounds, in order to give a unique experience for the viewer. We wanted to make the viewer feel as if he was physically there, so we made sure that what we filmed appealed to the senses. We had to consider that not all our viewers would understand what went on in a Hindu festival, so we made it a priority to film what might universally appeal and pique people’s interest. For example, we filmed how the sisters looked- their makeup, their saris, their accessories and also the way they danced. Because the temple renovation celebration only happens once in 10 years, we made it a point to film as much as we can during the festival.

2nd Filming: Shooting the Ponggal or Harvest Festival While Following Main Characters
We used a lot of close-ups and extreme close-ups for Varsha when she was applying makeup because we wanted to isolate certain facial features that looked distinctively female and some parts that were still distinctively male. Varsha still had a more obvious and thicker facial hair than most women, but she has extremely long eyelashes and her lips could be mistaken as a female’s.

We followed the same technique as in the first filming when they attended the celebration, but this time, we pointed the camera more often at our main characters, Varsha and Anusha.

3rd Filming: Shooting the Sisters in Action at Night

The sisters worked during the late afternoons and at night. However, at night, there were more customers. Cars constantly streamed in and some men came down from their cars to talk to the sisters. In comparison, during the day, men only stared at them from across the street. The shophouses around the area also looked grittier. Stray dogs also roamed the streets at night.

For these reasons, we chose to film the soliciting at night. We decided to film inside a car for three reasons. We could park the car right across the street where we could film them from a closer vantage point. Style wise, filming from inside the car would mimic the men who stayed inside their cars and waited for the sisters to knock on their windows and offer their services. Also, the car afforded us greater safety as we could easily drive away in case anything happens.

4th Filming - Conducting Interviews of the Main Characters and Our Secondary Subjects

We only deliberately zoomed in on specific details such as when Anusha showed her slit marks, her Identification Card and the picture of her boyfriend, in order to fill up most of the frame with the objects that she was referring to during the interviews. We also tried to vary our shot sizes
while the interview was ongoing, in order not to always use the same framing when the interviews appear onscreen.

5\textsuperscript{th} Filming - The Temple and B-Rolls

During our interviews, especially with our secondary subjects (the people who near the temple and have contact with the sisters), they mentioned that it took some time before they empathised with the sisters. The more they saw the sisters at the temple, they developed a better understanding about their situation. We filmed a time lapse in order to suggest the passage of time.

Also, we used close-ups for the intricate details in the décor and wall paintings in the temple, to bring out the beauty of the temple more. Using a wider shot could not accomplish this as there we would not be able to control where the audiences eyes would focus on.

Wide shots, on the other hand were carefully composed, in comparison with the photos of the temple when it was in the process of being built. This way, we could juxtapose both images and present a clear change, from how the temple looked at the beginning, to its present state.

We also filmed Little india at night, for ease in combining the shots we had of the taxi driver inside his car (which happened at night).

3.4 Problems Faced During Production

Language Barrier

Not knowing the language meant not knowing exactly when to vary the shot size. The translator could only relay what she asked after the interviewee had already answered. Inspite of this, we still varied the framing by zooming in sometimes or zooming out. Hence the shot sizes for
some parts may not have a specific purpose. Still, we chose to vary the shots because we did not want to use the same frame every time we show the interviewee’s face.

**Translators Becoming Directors on Shoot**

We had one problem with a translator who started giving us orders on set. When we talked to her about it, stating the situation as objectively as we could, but she walked out. Fortunately, we were able to continue filming as we managed to explain our side. We felt that we were losing control of our own documentary because not every conversation that she has with the Thirunankais was translated to us, and we felt helpless about it. It did not feel right having to rely on a translator to make important decisions for our group without explaining the rationale to us.

**Constant Change in Translators**

Altogether we had brought three different translators on shoot. Each time we came with a different translator, Varsha and the rest of the sisters would ask about the previous one that we came with. Fortunately, having a common language is what mattered the most and not the rapport that one translator has over the other. This could also be because our translators were also very interested in our topic and were keen to talk to the sisters.

**Getting Ms. Anitha to Introduce Her “Daughters” to Us**

During our second recce, since we could not contact Ms. Anitha, we had to take a chance to go to Klang and try to find her. Our translator then explained our tight deadline and it was only then that Ms. Anitha agreed to bring us to where the other sisters lived. Our translator explained to us that she had an impression that the sisters are very possessive of people or contacts and that
introducing us to other sisters is akin to giving us away. This explains why Ms. Anitha took us around the whole hospital floor, introducing us to every person she knows. We were her precious friends who came from Singapore to visit her. Because of this, there was a big gap between our first filming and our second filming.

Filming in Dark Environments

Many important events happened at night. During the night parade, we were able to use the sun gun to improve the lighting conditions, but we could not use it for a long time as it became extremely hot to handle. We wanted to be extra careful so as not to damage the bulb inside it, so we had to pace ourselves and only chose important parts of the parade.

When we filmed at Varsha’s room as she was applying makeup, the sun gun was too bright even after bouncing the light on the ceiling or the walls. We did not entertain the use of red lights from the very beginning because their rooms were small and the power points were limited. We had to sacrifice the quality of the footage by using high gain instead of not being able to film Varsha applying makeup at all.

Lack of Control Over Interview Location and Setting

This especially applies to the interview of the sisters. We could only film them inside their rooms. Even though their rooms are on the third floor, the street noises would sometimes overpower the interview audio as they spoke very softly. They spoke in a low volume, according to
our translator because they were answering personal questions. Even if we changed locations, there was no nearby place which would be quieter.

We also had a problem when we spoke to Ms. Parameswary. We could not ask sensitive questions about the sisters because there were a lot of patrons watching us during the interview. It did not feel respectful to ask questions like “Are most of the sisters in this temple prostitutes?”

**Recording Clean Background Sound During Filming**

Not all of our group members could make it for our first filming. Our first filming however was by far the most demanding. Because the crowd conditions were near chaotic and limited manpower, we were not able to record clean background sound at each filming location. This would have made our editing the sound in post a lot easier.

**3.5 Ethical Considerations**

From the beginning, the Thirunankais were very open about their occupation. Ms. Anitha even brought us to where they stayed and worked. We knew that we had to talk about their job in the documentary at some point, so we decided to film them while they were working.

However, we did not have a chance to ask for their permission. By the time we arrived in Klang, the cars and the men were starting to stream in. We did not think it would be a good idea to disturb them while they were doing business. Rather than risk not having any visuals when they talk about prostitution during the interview, we decided to go ahead and film. We only stayed for about 15 to 20 minutes before we stopped filming. When we looked at the footages, the some of the sisters were obviously looking at our direction. Also, they knocked at all the windows of the cars in the street except ours. It is possible that they knew we were inside the car, but we did not have any
problems asking them for an interview the next day. They also did not hesitate to share how they felt about their job and they even talked in detail about why men come to see them.

If we did not film them, we would not have been able to show our audiences the contrast of who they are in the temple and their activities at night.
CHAPTER 4: POST PRODUCTION

4.1 Scripting

Building the Script

We narrowed down the transcribed interviews down to the essential sound bites we needed by laying the sections we wanted on the Final Cut Pro (FCP) Timeline and watching them. This way, we had a better gauge of how long the subject can talk on screen, and at the same time, judge which ones were spoken more succinctly and in a more animated manner. The choice between keeping a good idea even without b-rolls also became easier. We could readily insert the b-rolls that we do have on the relevant parts of the interview. Afterwards, combining, rearranging and watching the chunks of interview altogether helped us keep a good balance between talking heads and the visuals. In this way, we built the bulk of the body of the documentary.

Evaluating What We Still Needed and What Needed to be Omitted

Due to the large amount of footages we have that shows the temple gods, the religious rituals and the temple festivities, we initially thought there was a need for an “authority” to help give the audiences a general idea on Hinduism. In the end, we decided to scrape this part off for the following reasons:

1) Explaining Hinduism takes a lot of screen time. The needed foundation in order to fully understand Hinduism involves an explanation about its origins, about its many deities and about its practices. Including this in the film at the cost of long screen time may cause the viewers to lose interest in watching the film.

2) The only Hindu expert we could find was from the Hindu Centre here in Singapore. Having lived and resided in Singapore, he could not give his opinion about the practices
in Malaysia. Prior to us contacting him, he did not know about the existence of Hijras or sisters in Malaysia or in India, or even the goddess Bahuchara Mata.

The Need for Narration

We decided to use narration in order to seamlessly thread many interviews in one film. We have two main characters, Anusha and Varsha, but our documentary also talks about the existence of the temple and the people who live around it as well.

Narration also allowed us to choose the details that we needed to feed the audiences in order for them to understand the story, in a more concise manner. For example, instead of using the Hindu expert interview, we filtered and kept only the essential information.

Through the use of narration, we were able to bring out the ironies that we realized while making the film. In a short amount of time, without using any interviews, we were able to summarise and juxtapose contrasting details:

“They were born male, but they are not men.
They appear feminine, but they are not women.”

The same method was employed for the placing of the sequences. The prostitution sequence came first before we showed how the sisters prayed at the temple. By using narration, we could direct the way our audiences would think:

“The morality of their actions aside, the thirunankais make up for it in other ways”

The Need to Show the Surgery Photos
Anusha’s explanation about her experience when she went for surgery was quite long. On a practical standpoint, we could not delete any of what she says because it was arranged chronologically. To make the length of her explanation less obvious, we decided to insert the sex reassignment surgery photos we found (with permission).

Putting in the surgery photos gave a whole new meaning to being a thirunankai. The extent of the change from the way a male’s genitals look and how it is transformed, gives a statement about the lengths one has to go through to change one’s gender. We wanted to contrast this with how the thirunankais live their life after surgery, when they end up working in the streets to sell sex. After going through so much to become a “woman”, they end up in the streets, working in a profession that is considered “the worst” and “the last” job any woman should consider (Mr Rama’s interview).

4.2 Theme

There are many issues that are brought up in the film. Some of these include: gender, religion, prostitution and social acceptance. All these issues appear in separate sections of the film. Stripped bare however, the film basically deals with complexity- the complexity of life. Throughout the film, gray areas are introduced. Nothing in the world is clear cut.

Gender

The film talks about gender reassignment surgery and the changing of one’s gender in legal documents. On one hand, once a Thirunankai has enough money, changing one’s physical genitals is made possible. But their transformation falls short because they could not change their gender on their identification cards. It seems convoluted, but it does appear that gender reassignment surgery is easier to do than changing the word “male” on your identification card.
Regardless of how beautiful some thirunankais look, or how feminine their clothes are, they are still not considered as real women in society.

“For me if you are really an original woman, I can accept you”

“But you are not an original woman. You changed your sex”

While there are men who prefer straight women, some actively look for the sisters and do not mind sleeping with people who were formerly males.

(They say) “We can’t find pleasure with women. That’s why we come to you, because you satisfy our needs.”

“Girls are normal, so there’s a risk of pregnancy. Men come to us for lust.”

Religion

Religion, though not overtly discussed in the film, is an important backdrop in the story of the thirunankais. In Hinduism, good deeds are rewarded, and bad deeds are punished through Karma. Karma is like a balance sheet of a person’s merit and demerit (Bowen, 2005). But what do we do in a situation where a person does both at the same time?

Anusha and Varsha work as prostitutes. Prostitution is their rice bowl, but they contribute to the temple. To complicate things, a Hindu temple was built out of the money that they earnt through prostitution. How do we determine whether the Thirunankais are able to redeem themselves in this scenario? In Derr’s story (1989), the Brahmins (the highest caste in the Indian society) were “eating the earnings of sin”. This film can be considered presenting the total opposite. The Thirunankais, who can be seen as the outcasts in society are giving their “earnings of sin” to build a temple and not for their personal gain. How does the calculation of one’s merits against one’s demerits work
like what Daniel’s (1983) character- the local temple priest does? Is it wrong for the Thirunankais to give money to the temple?

*Varsha:* “*We are doing this job and making money. The source of this money might not be very good, but we offer it to God with a pure heart. God will accept it and purify what we offer. The blessing will surely come to us. It is my sweat and blood.*”

In the film, we did not include that the founder of the temple, Ms. Parameswary, reputedly owns the brothel where the thirunankais work. This is according to Mr. Rama and also mentioned off camera by the thirunankais we have met. Adding this to the equation, determining whether the Thirunankais can redeem themselves becomes beyond reason.

**Prostitution**

*Varsha:* “*I’m not stealing or murdering anyone.*”

*“It’s your body, it’s your hard work. I’m being honest*”

Defining “honest” work is not easy. The word honesty can refer to one’s truthfulness or uprightness. The truth can be established easily. Uprightness, however is relative. Who exactly is in the wrong? The seller or the buyer? In reality, the fact that different countries have different stands on who is criminalized proves that it all boils down to perspective. Sweden criminalizes the buyer, while in Moldova, the act of selling sex is a criminal offence (Geetanjali & Westmarland, 2006)

Varsha worked in telecommunication companies previously, but for her, prostitution is “the only path” she could see. She mentioned that she “couldn’t find peace” in her previous jobs, but now she’s working in a profession that many deem to be the “worst” and the “last” option that people should choose when it comes to earning money (Mr. Rama’s interview).
Gaining Society’s Acceptance

“We should realize that they were born out of the same womb as other children”

“There is a very big gap between the normal community and these people. The reason is their profession”

Not everyone mixes with the Thirunankais. Mr. Rama chooses to distance himself away from them because of their profession, while Ms. Malathi and Ms. Vijalakshmi are able to see past that and treat them like anyone else.

Acceptance is also not as straightforward as just attending the temple with the thirunankais (Ms. Malathi) or helping to clean the temple (Ms. Vijalakshmi). It is hard to establish whether the Thirunankais have really gained true acceptance from the community.

4.3 Editing

Throughout the film, editing is used to establish contrast, either directly or subtly. Juxtaposition of photos and videos were often used to create this effect, such as in demonstrating the transformation of the temple from its construction to its completion and also during Varsha’s first appearance. Varsha is first shown dressed in a sari, followed by how she looked like during the interview and later on through her old photos when she was still a male, progressing towards looking more like a female. Putting together the crowds in the temple followed right after by a shot with only four people attending the pooja is also another example. The sequences were also arranged to that end. The prostitution sequence came first, leading to the sequence where the sisters go to the temple to attend Ponggal.

Editing was used to delay revealing certain details, in order to hold the audience’s interest. In the beginning of the film, the montage of the different shots of the Thirunankais did not reveal any of their faces till after the title came out. Shots where the thirunankais slowly turn their heads
were also used to introduce them to the audiences. Varsha was also introduced in this manner. The goddess Bahuchara Mata was shown in parts, the feet, the chest and her trident before finally revealing her face.

Instead of including their occupation in the supers, we did not immediately give away the sisters’ occupation- prostitution. Anusha only mentions that she knew the nature of the job being offered to her but she did not outrightly say that she is a sex worker until the audience is led to watch the soliciting scene.

Fading to black was often used to transition to different sections of the film. Also fades helped to ease the sudden changes in the kind of shots (day or night) juxtaposed together.

4.4 Audio Design

Since our documentary operates under in a cultural and religious context, the use of music was extremely important. The music helps to set the mood and atmosphere of a sequence. During the rituals, solemn music or chants were used together with the images of the offerings, during prayers and when the goddess is shown.

All music heard throughout the film are diegetic sounds, except for two tracks of music which were composed for the film. These includes the track played during the prostitution sequence and also the track that contains the sound of the sitar.

Sound was also used to punctuate certain parts in the film, using the sound of the sitar. When the narrator says “the daughters of god”, the sound of the sitar gives an added emphasis, at the same time adds an exotic quality to the film.

Cross dissolve in between diegetic audio was used to bridge the differences between certain music tracks coming from different shots. Also, overlapping of music tracks were used at the ending to cover the cut in between three different shots: the audio used when Varsha dances, the
audio when the goddess is being swayed and also the audio when the last scene showing the crowd of thirunankais is shown.

Equalization was mainly done to lessen the background noise in the sound bites that we used.

### 4.5 Problems Faced During Post-Production

**Hard Disk Format**

During the time when we were filming, no one owned a macbook. What the school lent us however, is a hard disk that was compatible with a macbook. In order for us to empty the memory cards, we needed to configure the hard disk to NTFS format, a format which is only readable in Windows (PC). Working through a PC made it possible for us to view the clips right after transferring them from the memory cards through the SONY Clip Browser program that we installed. As such, we were able to quickly shortlist the shots we wanted without competing for the workstations at the editing suite.

However, since we needed to edit using the Macintosh computers in school, we had to transfer our footages from the NTFS hard disk, to another external hard disk that is formatted to FAT32, a format recognized by Macintosh computers. Thus, we needed to transfer our footages three times: from the camera to the NTFS hard drive, from the NTFS hard drive to a FAT32 hard drive, and lastly from the FAT32 hard drive to the SANMP (storage) in school.

**Amount of Footages**

Almost 70 percent of our footages were from the celebration of the temple’s reopening. This alone amounted to more than 1000 clips. Having many clips was both an advantage and a
disadvantage. We had a lot of material to choose from but we also had to go through and log each one of them.

To make the process of logging faster, we divided the footages into four parts. This way, each group member became familiar with certain section. Logging the footages took an entire week, but it would have been slower if we did not delegate the work.

Putting Together Clips That Were Taken at Different Times of the Day

The celebrations were held both inside the temple and outside the temple, with events happening from day to night. Each had its own set of advantage and disadvantage. The shots taken during the day were crisp but at times, were overexposed. The shots taken at night tended to be grainy, as we had to bring up the gain to compensate for low level of light available. The colours at night however, appeared to be naturally more saturated and brighter. Thus, to prevent this difference from becoming obvious, we consistently used only one type of shot (day or night) for a certain sequence, if we could help it. For the interview however, the need for cutaways supersedes the need for consistency. Because we had not choice but to cut from day to night or night to day during the interviews, we could only try our best to ease any sudden changes by using transitions.

Transcription and Translation

This was the biggest challenge we faced in post-production. We had to break the interviews into parts in order to give them to different translators, to speed up the transcription and translation. Since we were only paying our translators a very small amount, (20SGD per hour of footage translated and transcribed), we could not demand a very thorough job of putting the time code per sentence or thought expressed in the interview. Thus, when the translations came in, we could not properly trace where the translations began and ended, for the parts that we shortlisted.
To eliminate the need to constantly have a translator while we edited, we typed the sound bites we selected as subtitles. This allowed us to proceed with inserting possible cutaways and making a general outline of the film first, without a translator on hand. It was only in the final phase when we asked our translators to sit with us, help us look for the specific sound bite and cut it accordingly. Afterwards, we only had to sync the subtitles according to the length of the sound bites.

Subtitling

We had a different set of translators who helped us transcribe and translate the interviews on paper, and a different set of translators who helped us during editing. The translators who sat down with us while we were editing pointed out that some of our sound bites were either oversimplified or were not translated properly at all. Also, some of the sound bites we wanted were sometimes connected to other words and had to be cut abruptly in order to separate them and use them for the documentary.

Hence, we scheduled a lot of review sessions with our translators, to check if the translation is correct and to sync the subtitles with the interviewee’s words. To hide harsh cuts on the audio, we used dissolves.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

During the prostitution sequence, many male patrons were also in frame. Because they were not our main subjects in the documentary, we decided to mosaic their faces. Seeing their backs or their overall frame was enough to establish their identity. Having their faces onscreen could also prove to be a liability.
In contrast, we did not mosaic the photo of Anusha’s boyfriend, Rajaratnam. The photo was not enough to identify and trace him as his face was not completely shown. Rajaratnam was wearing shades, so we felt that it was alright to show his face, despite not having his release form. Anusha also did not mention his full name.

We also had to mosaic certain details in Anusha’s Identification card, like her Identification number and her home address. We only wanted to see Anusha’s gender in the card and also her photo in it, to contrast to how she looks at present.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUDING REMARK

We consider the completion of this documentary a huge accomplishment. From the very beginning, the odds were stacked against us. We did not know whether we would be able to find the counterparts of the hijras here in Singapore or where to find them. None of us knew the language and the religion. There were long periods where we could not contact our documentary subjects. We were constantly struggling to find translators. And, we were not able to get a film grant from the Singapore Film Commission.

There were a lot of times when we questioned ourselves, what is the point of our documentary? What are we trying to say? Our documentary is not investigative. It is not a documentary that calls for action. Throughout the editing process, after watching our film drafts over and over again, we’ve come to realize that our documentary is the kind of film that needs thought and contemplation.

The film does not have a blatant message to its viewers. It only has subtle points that stay with the viewer long after they have finished watching it. The narration and our documentary subjects only say much, but collectively, new meanings were formed. Some of our test audience remarked on how much effort the Thirunankais put in just to become a “woman” only to end up in the streets as prostitutes. Some were amazed at how the people who live in the small neighborhood accepted the thirunankais, despite knowing about their occupation. Some wondered whether prostitution is inherently wrong.

We are still amazed with how open the thirunankais have been to our group. Normally, we think of prostitutes as people we should never associate with. And perhaps because of that same rationale, when we approached them, they were pleasantly surprised and were willing to tell their stories. During the interview, there were times when they spoke continuously. We didn’t always
have to prod them for answers. They treated us like good friends, despite only seeing us for a few days.

It has been an amazing, long and fruitful journey. Everything worked out in the end. We are proud that we took this challenge of making a film that is totally outside our comfort zone: filming in a different country, plunging ourselves into a religion and a language that was foreign, and crossing the lines that most people in their lifetimes would never dare to- gaining the friendship of prostitutes, the Thirunankais in Klang.
REFERENCES


National Folklore Support Centre NFSC. ( ). Folklore of the Transgender Community in Tamil Nadu. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbCgMAxc2GY


APPENDICES

Appendix A: Production Budget

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</table>

| 2. 2nd Recce Trip (13 January – 14 January 2011) | 2.1 Transportation |      |      | 43.20 |
|                                               | Bus from JB to Klang | 14.40 | 3    | 43.20 |
|                                               | Taxi in Klang        |     |      | 10.55 |
|                                               | Bus from Klang to JB | 14.35 | 3    | 43.05 |
|                                               | Subtotal             |     |      | 96.80 |
| 2.2 Float                                     | Food and drinks      |     |      | 47.45 |
|                                               | Subtotal             |     |      | 47.45 |
| 2.3 Miscellaneous                             | Documents for contacts |     |      | 1.50  |
|                                               | Subtotal             |     |      | 1.50  |
|                                               | Total                |     |      | 145.75 |
### 3. 3rd Recce Trip (15 January – 16 January 2011)

#### 3.1 Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sony PMW-EX1 XDCAM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>130.00</td>
<td>130.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*with batteries, charger and tripod</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Gear</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*wireless mic, boom, mixer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*3 XLR cables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Waived</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.2 Transportation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus from JB to Klang</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.35</td>
<td>14.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus from Klang to JB</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.35</td>
<td>14.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi in Klang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>78.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.3 Accomodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room (2 crew)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37.15</td>
<td>37.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.4 Float

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food and drinks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>150.15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Principal Photography in Klang (20 January – 22 January 2011)

#### 4.1 Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sony PMW-EX1 XDCAM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>130.00</td>
<td>130.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*with batteries, charger and tripod</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Gear</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*wireless mic, boom, mixer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*3 XLR cables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Waived</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.2 Transportation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toll from JB to Klang</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Petrol</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll from Klang to JB</td>
<td></td>
<td>40.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>81.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3 Accomodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room (3 Crew)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41.35</td>
<td>41.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.4 Float

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food and drinks</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5. Pickup in Klang (16 March – 18 March 2011)

#### 5.1 Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sony PMW-EX1 XDCAM *with batteries, charger and tripod</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>390.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Gear *wireless mic, boom, mixer *3 XLR cables</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>0.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.2 Transportation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxi from school to home with equipment</td>
<td>7.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll from JB to Klang</td>
<td>18.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpark</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol</td>
<td>42.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll from Klang to JB</td>
<td>18.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>88.65</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.3 Accommodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family suite (3 Crew, 1 Translator)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>65.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>65.80</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.4 Float

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food and drinks</td>
<td>26.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and drinks (translator)</td>
<td>18.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>44.55</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>199.00</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

### 6. Post-production

#### 6.1 Transcription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translation of interviews</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>40.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 6.2 Editing Suite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storage Space</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8400</td>
<td>Waived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing Hours</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15000</td>
<td>Waived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 TB Hard Disk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>Waived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>0.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 6.3 Audio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music Composition</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Waived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>0.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 6.4 Deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Press Kit Materials</td>
<td>39.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDs for FYP Report</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters and DVD covers</td>
<td>42.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYP Report printing</td>
<td>22.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>107.75</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>147.75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRAND TOTAL** 934.15  
(As of 14 April 2011)
# Appendix B: Production Schedule

## Pre-Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| June-July 2010 | - Group formation  
- Brainstorm on topic  
- Secure FYP supervisor |
| August 2010   | - Research on possible topics  
- Finalise documentary topic  
- Background research on finalised topic |
| September 2010 | - Online registration of project groups  
- Confirmation of FYP supervisor  
- Interviews with potential subjects  
- Pre-production trips to Klang |
| October 2010  | - Work on budget, concept and treatment  
- Decide on group name  
- Start working on SFC proposal |
| November 2010 | - Confirmed interview subjects  
- Submit interim report to supervisor  
- Submit SFC proposal |

## Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| October 2010 | - Production shoot in Klang: Re-opening celebrations for the temple  
- Interview with founder and patrons of the temple |
| February 2011 | - Production shoot in Klang: Interview with transsexuals  
- Interview with neighbours of the temple |
| March 2011   | - Production shoot in Klang: Pick-up shots  
- Interview with expert on Hinduism |

## Post-Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 2010</td>
<td>- Log materials from first production shoot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| February 2011 | - Log materials from second production shoot  
- Confirm agreement with music composer  
- Start on written report  
- Rough cuts for video sequence |
| March 2011                | - Fine-tune written report  
|                          | - Fine-cut for video sequence  
|                          | - Colour-correct footages  
| April 2011               | - Finalise video sequence  
|                          | - Sound editing for video sequence  
|                          | - Finalise written report  
|                          | - Submit final product and written report  |
**Appendix C: Final Script**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIDEO</th>
<th>AUDIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>black screen</td>
<td>*music comes on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This film contains graphic scenes Viewer discretion is advised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>festival lights rack focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incense smoke drifting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priest blessing a representation of the god with fire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priest slowly offering flowers (*TEXT: Thousand Blooms Production presents)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a representation of the Bahuchara Mata goddess covered with flowers (*TEXT: Daughters of God)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- the statue of the Bahuchara Mata being blessed with fire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>montage of shots of thirunankais without showing their face</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- a thirunankai sitting with her hands clasped together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- thirunankai praying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- thirunankai shot from behind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU- flipping a page of a religious booklet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- stack of bangles from a thirunankai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU- a thirunankai’s earring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU- a thirunankai’s hair ornaments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- a thirunankai about to turn her head</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- a thirunankai adjusting her sari</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- a thirunankai tapping her feet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>music changes</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>music changes to a faster beat</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
dancing shots of thirunankais- with only the feet seen
CU- feet turning around
CU- two pairs of feet dancing together
MS- maroon sari moving back and forth
slow zoom- towards the belly of a dancing thirunankai
CU- two thirunankai’s hands moving past one another
CU- hands waving in the air

*FADE TO BLACK

*FADE IN
-CU a thirunankai turning her head towards the camera, then dabs her upper lip
-CU TILT up a thirunankai’s back, following her long braid
-CU thirunankai turning her head towards the camera, then a man passes by
-MS- 3 thirunankais standing, with incense smoke in the foreground

NARRATION
They were born male, but they are not men.
They appear to be female ,
but they are not women.
They are the thirunankais – (sitar music comes on)
the daughters of God.

-Thirunankais are Indian transsexuals.
They believe they were created and chosen by god
to live their lives, not as a man or as a woman,
but as a separate third gender.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WS- a curving highway in Klang, with cars and buses</strong></th>
<th><strong>NARRATION</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WS- road from the highway sloping downwards, full of cars, Klang lamp posts on either side</strong></td>
<td>About 40 kilometers from the Malaysian capital,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WS- an old style building in the background, with pigeons flying in the foreground</strong></td>
<td>lies one of the many districts,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MS- lamp post with the label “Klang Bandar Dlraja”</strong></td>
<td>where most Malaysian Indians live,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NARRATION</strong></td>
<td>the district of Klang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MCU- small mango fruits on a tree, with the light peeing in from the leaves</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MS- a hen scratching a hole in the soil</strong></td>
<td>In a village in Pandamaran,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WS- a rooster walks into the frame, small flowers in the background</strong></td>
<td>located south of Klang,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MS- a priest opens the doors of the temple</strong></td>
<td>a community of thirunankais have built a temple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NARRATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MS- priest fills up the oil in the lamp</strong></td>
<td>The temple is dedicated to a Hindu goddess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MCU- priest adjusting the wick to make the lick of flame bigger</strong></td>
<td>It is believed that the goddess once granted a thirunankai’s wish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MCU- the body part of the goddess, with her necklace and hands in frame</strong></td>
<td>A wish to conceive and give birth to a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MCU- the feet of the goddess</strong></td>
<td>However, being physically male, the thirunankai could not give birth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MCU- the rooster that the goddess is sitting on</strong></td>
<td>The goddess then took the form of a rooster, tearing his stomach, to give birth to the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MCU- the trident the goddess is holding</strong></td>
<td>From then on, the thirunankais believed that the goddess would always bless and protect them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WS- the entirety of the goddess is shown</strong></td>
<td>They made her their patroness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Annotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- pan from right to left, to reveal a closer look on the face of the goddess</td>
<td>The goddess known as Bahuchara Mata.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FADE TO BLACK</td>
<td>(MUSIC: Nadaswaram wind instrument plays the video fades)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO- priests huddles over a small statue of the goddess in the middle of a room</td>
<td>The temple started as a makeshift place of worship inside a house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO – inside the house where all the religious paraphernalia are kept</td>
<td>The walls were taken down to open up space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO- wall in the middle of the frame</td>
<td>The construction,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO- wall in the middle of the frame has been removed</td>
<td>the repainting of the pillars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU of the wall pillar painting</td>
<td>and the redecoration of the temple,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- painting of a rooster on the pillar</td>
<td>Altogether,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- one colourful sculpture found on the door where the gods are kept</td>
<td>took three generations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO- old photo of the side of the temple</td>
<td>of thirunankais to complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- current condition of the side of the temple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO- old photo of the centre of the temple during the construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- current state of the centre of the temple where all the gods are kept</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO- old photo of the side of the temple with the railings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS &amp; PAN from left to right- to show overall look of the inside of the temple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FADE IN</td>
<td>SOT PARAMESWARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use original interview</td>
<td>It has been 10 years since we have built the temple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO- Parameswary holding a piece of brick to be buried under the temple</td>
<td>We saved money and bought this land and built the temple,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO: Parameswary praying, with the fire in the foreground for blessing</td>
<td>it was our desire to do for the god(dess)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO: Many thirunankais standing behind Parameswary, each holding the same yellow bricks</td>
<td>It is the first time in Malaysia (that) we have built this temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO: the thirunankais each going down to lay the yellow bricks</td>
<td>and all thirunankai come together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td>From what I know, there are only two such temples in the world. There are only two in the world from what I know,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- slanted street post where the temple is located</td>
<td>one in Gujarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- temple from the outside</td>
<td>and one here in Malaysia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td>We thirunankai contribute money for running this administration of the temple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We do not ask anyone for donations for the temple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FADE TO BLACK</td>
<td>MUSIC priest chanting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FADE IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU- another tray of spices is laid down on top of two more trays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- a priest’s hand dips a lotus flower in a bowl of milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- a lotus flower falls on top of a heap being burned for the sacrificial fire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- a priest places the rope near the sacrificial fire</td>
<td>NARRATION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Today, marks the temple’s reopening after its second renovation.

Offerings and prayers are being offered in order to restore the power of the gods of the temple after being moved during the renovation.

Many thirunankais have come to help and witness the event.

It is one of the rare times when thirunankais from many parts of Malaysia and Singapore, gather in Klang to celebrate.

(MUSIC Nadaswaram wind instrument)

However, beyond the walls of this temple, the thirunankais live a different life.

(MUSIC from one of the shops starts)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene 1</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS- signboards of the shophouses in Little India Klang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- the shophouses in Little India, Klang at night</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- another shot of the shophouses, on the other side, a taxi passes by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Interview</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WS- moving shot, passing by the shops in Little India</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- &amp; ZOOM- thirunankai adjusting her wig</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- two thirunankais talking to each other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- A thirunankai patting the chest of another thirunankai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS &amp; ZOOM- low angle- Varsha’s back and then she turns her head to the side for the audiences to see</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOT TAXI DRIVER</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been driving this taxi for four months.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wherever they go, they call me. Go to KL, to Seremban, wherever. Even when they need drinks, sometimes I buy for them. They give me money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You know, their private life, they won’t tell.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But at times, when they sit in my car, I ask them “how do you make love?” How is that thing? Does it really function like a woman’s?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of them are born 50-50 half woman, half man.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And they all converted, they went to operate to change their sex...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are some of them who look exactly like girls.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOT VARSHA</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post operation, nobody was able to recognize me, even my own mother.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was happy about it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOT VARSHA</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original Interview</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- Varsha’s face in the crowd of sisters, passing through</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I went home, Nobody asked, “is that you They would only ask, “who is she?” so that was a good feeling. Nobody could recognize me The old face was different, the new face is different. (MUSIC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photos of Varsha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO- as a student PHOTO- black and white, high angle, showing her upper body PHOTO- clean looking Varsha smiling, with her hair tied up PHOTO- Varsha with makeup with her hair down</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECU- hands holding Diane 35 hormone tablets ECU- fingers picking up a tablet from palm of hand ECU- putting in the tablet into her mouth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surgery Photos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO- opening up the skin of the penis PHOTO- the skin from the penis stretched PHOTO- a cavity is made for the vagina PHOTO- suturing up the new vagina PHOTO- the new vagina covered up in bandages with a tube extending</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOT Anusha 3 months before the operation, I was taking the hormones. Only if the hormones are in the body can they operate. The operation takes about four or five hours. They will cut, and put silicone gel above. Below they will cut and make it like a girl’s. But it won’t look exactly like a girl’s, just more or less like it. After cutting, when I come back from there, they will put pampers, and a tube. For the wound to heal, it’ll take about 41 days. Just the external wound. But for the internal wound to heal, it will take at least a year. I have to bear the pain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PHOTO- doctors covering up the wound

original interview

The operation is a reincarnation. A blessing from God. You can’t just cut it off simply; it’s a living part of your body.

When you cut it, it’s like death and rebirth. You have to bear with the pain and suffering. It is horribly painful

MS- three thirunankais sitting and talking to each other

MS and TILT up- an elder thirunankai’s arms around the back of another thirunankai

CU- side profile of a thirunankai’s face

NARRATION

The thirunankais may be able to change their external appearance by dressing up, by adopting feminine gestures and going for surgery,

but there is one thing they cannot change.

MS- Anusha taking out her Identification card (IC) from her wallet

ECU- IC fills up most of the frame

original interview

SOT ANUSA

However much we operate, in the IC, I will still be in the male category, because the IC only has two categories: male and female.

We’re given the IC when we are teenagers, but we usually undergo the operation after that.

It’s hard to suddenly change the IC after wards.

In Malaysia, they already give you an ID number, so you can’t change your sex from male to female under the same ID number.

SOT VARSHA
**original interview**

We can change the name easily.

To change from a male to a female name is easy. It can be done anytime, any name can be used.

For example, my old name was Jeeva Ramesh and I changed it to Sharlithavarshini Ramesh is easy.

But I could not change the gender.

**WS**- a man keeping his store’s goods, detaching them from being hung

**WS**- a man pulling all the sari cloth hung outside his shop, one by one

**WS**- men closing up a shop

**WS**- a man pulling the metal blinds in his shop

**MS**- men waiting outside closed shops

**NARRATION**

Because of the issues surrounding their gender, building relationships is another problem.

**original interview**

One of the girls, I won’t mention the name. She likes me so much. But I don’t accept. I say, you all are my friends. I can talk to you all, but not share your bed. I’m not like that

For me, if you are really an original woman, I can accept you. But in body wise you are a guy. Maybe, heart wise you are a woman.

If you are really a girl, I can make love with you. But you’re not originally woman. You changed your sex.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FADE IN</td>
<td>original interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSERT SHOT</td>
<td>man praying at the temple with his son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VARSHA:</td>
<td>People like me have dreams and hopes too. I would like to get married and have children. But for people like me, it’s difficult to have a man permanently in my life. It would be nice to have a husband, a family, but only God knows who that person is and if at all there will be a man for me or I’ll remain like this forever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use original interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOT ANUSHA</td>
<td>I cried a lot. I thought he was my world, my life. When he left me, and fought with me, on that day, Thaipusam day, I took some medicine, because I wanted to die. I trusted him. His name is Rajarathnam I cut my hands here because of him. When he came to fight, and I knew he was about to leave me, I cut myself, with a knife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSERT SHOT</td>
<td>Anusha holding Rajaratnam’s photo for the camera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZOOM</td>
<td>to show the cuts on her lower arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARRATION</td>
<td>For some of the thirunankais, home is on the third level of this shophouse. This has been their refuge away from their families. Because most of them have left their original families, they have to work in odd jobs to cover their rent and living expenses. Around four or six people live in this room which costs 200 RM per person a month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS</td>
<td>dog scratching herself on the sidewalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS</td>
<td>TILT down to the entrance of the shophouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>the house number plates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAN</td>
<td>of the hallway inside the shophouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS</td>
<td>shot of the electric fan in the foreground, with the bed in the background</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SOT VARSHA

After I changed my sex, I applied through jobstreet and openly mentioned that I was transgender (female).

I got a job with Maxis (Telecommunications) and was with them for 3 months. But the job was tough and so I left it.

Then I joined Celcom and was with them for 5 months. Because of some problems I discontinued. So I left it.

I wasn’t able to be at peace in any of the jobs.

### SOT ANUSHA

When I was working and I felt that he was moving away from me,

I also realized the money I was earning was insufficient. I wanted to be independent. I had no one.

I met an old Chinese lady, and told her my problems. She said, ‘Come here and work, I’ll provide the room’

(Interviewer)
Did you know what job it was?

Yes, I knew.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene Description</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B-rolls of the red light district</td>
<td>MUSIC composed for the scene comes on (break from the interview, transition into new scene)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- moving shot passing by a bar called “SPICEE GIRLS”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- Anusha speaking to a man, with her back to the camera</td>
<td>SOT ANUSHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- Anusha came from a car, picked up something from the ground, then rose up, legs in full view</td>
<td>To people like me, no one will give a job at shops or shopping complexes or companies. For people like me, maybe only jobs like this (prostitution) will be available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- Anusha walking along the street, and then talking to someone inside a car, signalling how much her services are</td>
<td>Yes I knew what job this was. At one point I thought very degradingly of this job. That there are such people, I’d be embarrassed. People shouldn’t work like this..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- another thirunankai talking to two guys riding a motorcycle</td>
<td>When boys flirt with us, we smile, we’ll touch them. If they touch us back, we’ll giggle. So people like us are very good at acting. If the boy is good-looking, we smile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- men coming out from a car, more guys in the background</td>
<td>So the boys will come looking for us. When we work here, mostly married men come to us, young boys don’t. They say they can’t be with women. “We can’t find pleasure with women. That’s why we come to you, because you satisfy our needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- car stopping at the side, at the same time a thirunankai goes to the window of the car</td>
<td>Girls are normal – they can give birth. So if you have sex, there’s a risk of pregnancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- Varsha sitting on the curb alone</td>
<td>Men come to us for lust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- Varsha walks towards the guy riding a motorcycle, they start talking, bargaining about her price</td>
<td>SOT VARSHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZOOM to Varsha, MS ZOOM to Varsha’s hand, gesturing her price</td>
<td>Earlier my salary was 2500 RM, that’s around 80 RM per day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- guy riding the motorcycle</td>
<td>Here I can easily make at least 200 RM/300 RM per day. Which is better?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We should think maturely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And I’m not stealing/murdering or cheating anyone. I’m using my body to make money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SO VARSHA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WS- shots of the other thirunankais in the street
one girl doing her makeup

MS- a thirunankai sitting along the street, putting
on her lipstick

WS- a thirunankai fixing her hair and then
gesturing to a car to offer a blowjob, walks to the
car

WS- Varsha walking towards the door of the
brothel, closely followed by her customer

WS- two dogs connected at opposite ends in the
dark

WS- more men in motorcycles along the street

People resort to prostitution only for lack of
money or family problems. Not because we like it,
for lust or because we enjoy ourselves

We don’t expect to enjoy ourselves. Money is what is
important for us. In today’s world money is
important. Money to buy things and to be happy

Each time we sleep with a man, we are only waiting
for the job to be done and for him to give us the
money and leave.

I do regret coming to this.

original interview

SOT VARSHA

The first time I came here and the first time a man
touched me I cried a lot. Nobody other than my boy-
friend had ever touched me before. I felt very bad.
But this is the only path I could see.

People told me this is not wrong. ‘You’re not
cheating, stealing or killing anyone. It’s your body,
your hard-work’.

I’m being honest. Who is honest nowadays? There
are men who steal and cheat. Don’t mind, but even
women are not clean.

Now-a-days girls indulge in sex even in schools. I
didn’t do anything of that sort. It’s only now, since I
have no choice, I’m in this sex profession.
WS- thirunankais on the other side of the street, with a Malay prostitute waving at the camera
MS- A thirunankai putting on her sari while another one goes in to the room
ECU- 2.99 Ringit eyeshadow makeup set
ECU- peacock necklace and earrings set

NARRATION
The morality of their actions aside, the thirunankais make up for it in other ways.
They regularly visit the temple on the days of prayers
And going to the temple is not a simple affair.

ECU- makeup sponge, putting on foundation to a thirunankai’s neck
CU- thirunankai surveying herself with a mirror while turning away from the camera
CU- Varsha’s neck comes into view while brushing her hair off from her shoulders
CU- Varsha’s lips- some hair on the skin above her lip
CU- Varsha applying black liquid eyeliner
TILT up Varsha applying mascara
ECU Varsha’s eyes as she applies mascara
MS- Varsha putting on her earrings

original interview

SOT VARSHA
Women themselves have come to us and told us that we are much beautiful than them
You wouldn’t have seen beautiful women like some.
You can’t even make out that they are transsexuals
“Oh my god”

Depending on the occasion we dress meticulously.
how to dress when we go to the temple,
what make-up to wear.
MS- Varsha folding her sari carefully  
MS- rolling the folded sari of another thirunankai  
WS- low angle- a thirunankai folding the cloth over Varsha’s shoulder  
WS- low angle- Anusha helping another thirunankai to tuck her skirt in  
MS- Varsha’s friend putting on her belt for her  
MS- Varsha’s friend folding the string of garland  
MS- Varsha’s friend puts up the garland on her hair  
MS- Varsha’s friend tries to pin the garland on her hair but she removes it  
CU to MS- Varsha’s friend is still trying to get her to put the garland on her hair  
CU- Finally pinning the garland  
CU- Varsha and her friend exits the room and locks the door  
original interview  
WS- Varsha walks down the stairs  
MS- Varsha emerges outside the shophouse  

SOT VARSHA  
We spend on adorning ourselves with jewelry, nice saris  

Varsha: Take off the plait.  
Varsha: Put in the middle like here, where else would they put it?  
Remove. Remove. I want to wear my hair normally.  
tie it here then.  

SOT ANUSHA:  
Everyone working here will go. And we make sure we’re clean on those days. We don’t do our work on the days of prayers.
MS- rows of bamboo poles, a hand extends towards the center

CU- a hand empties a sachet onto the pot, the foam rises inside the pot

MS- a hand stirs the pot

CU- the pot overflows with foam

MS- the thirunankais watching the pots, standing beside the bamboo poles

CU- Varsha and her friend dance around the pot

CU and TILT down from Varsha’s face to the hand fanning the pot then ZOOM OUT to show the bell and fire blessing

MUSIC comes on- drums during Ponggal

CU- heads of thirunankais in a row, overlapping onscreen

WS- the same thirunankais sitting beside each other, hands clasped in prayer

MS- a thirunankai receiving the trays of offerings

MS- thirunankais emerging from the back of the temple, carrying trays of offerings in their heads

MS- a thirunankai gives her tray to the priest

CU- another thirunankai follows suit

CU then ZOOM OUT- from the tray being given to show the thirunankai

CU- thirunankai bowing her head

CU- unravelling the folds of the sari onto the fire

CU- another sari catching fire

SOT VARSHA

Don’t mind, but I think we are more devout than normal women.

We don’t penny pinch even when offering to God.

We give in gold for our deity. We have the magnanimity.

That’s the difference between us and normal women.

That’s the difference between us and normal women.

(break from talking)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECU- the flames of the fire engulfs the sari, slowly it blackens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- the burnt threads of the sari flying in the air</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- a thirunankai putting her hands onto her face in a gesture of prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- Two thirunankais praying</td>
<td>SOT VARSHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- hands inserting money onto the offerings</td>
<td>The source of this money might be not very good,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- putting the money underneath the small silver container</td>
<td>because we are selling our bodies to get this money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- a thirunankai bows her head and closes her eyes as she prays</td>
<td>But if we give it to god, we will feel content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- Varsha in the temple praying</td>
<td>We will accumulate good karma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td>And we offer it to god with a pure heart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It's my sweat and blood. The blessing will surely come to us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIMELAPSE, WS- the temple as the morning sky brightens</td>
<td>NARRATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- Two women walking in the street</td>
<td>After years of being in the neighbourhood, the temple and its generous donors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- the women opening the doors of the temple</td>
<td>have gradually gained acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from the surrounding community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU- hand washing the bronze plate</td>
<td>SOT VIJAYALAKSHMI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- hand wringing a cloth dry</td>
<td>I am staying at the lorong behind the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td>We have been attending the temple for about three years now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- mopping the floor</td>
<td>the temple heads and the committee asked us to come and help out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- water with the reflection of the walls of the temple being mopped away</td>
<td>By coming to this temple, they (thirunankais) get to interact with everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td>I used to ask the same question and I too used to laugh at them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- a thirunankai clapping, PAN to another woman who attended the celebration, praying</td>
<td>But only when I got a chance to interact with them did I start to empathize with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td>SOT MALATHI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uneducated people question why I come to this temple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some people may not like it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some would say it is nothing and they will take it as normal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They are all God’s creation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Interview</td>
<td>SOT Vijayalakshmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whether or not they are doing those jobs, we wouldn’t know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once they step into the temple, for example, normal women like us, when we enter the temple, we wear Punjabi suits, but they are more cultured and traditional than us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilt up to show the sisters dressed in Saris</td>
<td>They come dressed in saris, with flowers in their hair and pottu on their foreheads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- A thirunankai guiding the children and the other attendees in the temple</td>
<td>When they mix with us, they are very affectionate and respectful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Interview</td>
<td>You see their job is outside the temple. When they come into the temple, they are not like that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Interview</td>
<td>SOT Malathi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We should realise that they were born out of the same womb as other children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They became like that because of god’s will.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We should disregard their fault and accept them. We should develop our understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>Right beside the temple is Mr. Rama’s house. He has been a neighbour ever since the temple started.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Interview</td>
<td>SOT Mr Rama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On the festival day only, the crowd will gather.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSERT SHOT, WS- many thirunankais and other attendees in the temple</td>
<td>They come and join, enjoy and get together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- only four people attending pooja in the temple on ordinary days</td>
<td>But after that I see, a very poor response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- the priest blesses each of the four attendees</td>
<td>Poor response from the public to come and join and make time to do the prayers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td>There a very big gap between the normal community and their community, the reason is prostitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- a thirunankai, at night talking to a motorcyclist</td>
<td>If they didn’t do that, I can bet with you, they will be accepted by the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td>You see in the world, there are so many ways to earn money. So many ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is that worst and the last. Prostitution is the last for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- the wall that separates Mr Rama’s house and the temple</td>
<td>I’m very close (to them), but at the same time, I draw a line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- a group of thirunankais posing for the camera</td>
<td>Their profession is the cause of their problem, not gender, not their sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td>So from my deep heart, I pity them. I always pray to god that there won’t be any like them in my family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tough life. Tough.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene Description</td>
<td>Narration</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS, low angle, two thirunankai swaying their hands and clapping</td>
<td>Whether or not society accepts them, the thirunankais have already made their choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- a group of thirunankais clapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- two thirunankais rolling their tongue to make a loud sound</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene Description</th>
<th>SOT Anusha</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td>Society has ostracised us, but we’ve never ostracised society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- Anusha in their prayer room, with many pictures of the gods in the background</td>
<td>My desire is to have been born female. People like us who are born male, then spend so much to undergo the surgery, have problems with our families, get a bad name and end up in the red light district. Even if it’s embarrassing to the family, where we’re concerned, we’re happy</td>
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<tr>
<td>original interview</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MS- Anusha dancing during the festival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- two effeminate young boys hitting their butts against each other</td>
<td>There are many like us who are born male, and think that in the future they will change sex. But please, don’t change, stay as males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- the two boys talking to a thirunankai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene Description</th>
<th>SOT Varsha</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECU- Varsha applying eyeshadow</td>
<td>This is my nature. This is what gives me happiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- Varsha’s face appears in the mirror as she applies the black liquid eyeliner</td>
<td>Many women say ‘this is the type of husband I want’, this is what I want to study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- Varsha dancing with her friend in the temple</td>
<td>Similarly, this is the kind of life I want to live.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Action/Comment</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>CU- hands clapping in the air</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- a thirunankai swaying and shaking to the music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU- hands holding on the handle of the palanquin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- the goddess being swayed back and forth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS- a thirunankai’s hand clapping in the air, PAN to the other temple attendees also clapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS- flowers strewn from the back of the palanquin, into the crowd</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WS- the crowd of thirunankais clapping and rejoicing, ecstatic with joy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FADE INTO BLACK</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CREDITS roll up</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A Thousand Blooms Production</td>
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## Appendix D - Interview Transcripts

### Interview with Varsha (Transsexual)

**DVD BATCH NUMBER** (Title of Video): 250_3265_01

<table>
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<th>Timecode</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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| 00:16 – 00:36 | *(I)* **Tell about yourself and your family.**  
I was born and brought up in Kerala. Studied in Kerala. We are a family of four, me, my mother, brother and father.                                                                                       |
| 00:40 – 1:03  | *(I)* **What are you doing now-a-days?**  
I have been studying foundation Computer Science in MSU (Management Science University). Then I had some financial problems and so had to start working.                                                                                     |
| 01:10 – 01:50 | *(I)* **Is it only financial problem or otherwise too?**  
- I have personal problems too. I have a husband. I came away from my family with him. Now, we had differences of opinion and it’s been just over two months since we have separated. We will get back together, but we are both saddened. We are still in contact. It would be nice if we get back together. I had no difficulties when I was with my husband. I was happy. We had money, a house, food, everything. |
| 01:52 – 02:05 | *(I)* **Didn’t you get married?**  
No. Actually his family knew that we were in love. But they did not know that I am an ‘Aravani’, ‘a lady-boy’.                                                                                                                             |
| 02:07 – 02:26 | *(I)* **You feel there’ll be trouble if they got to know?**  
Of course, there would be a problem, whichever family it is. Some families might accept, but mostly there would be a problem in the beginning. It would get o.k. over a period of time. I can’t put across anything. He must be brief (firm) in his explanation to his family, that “this is what I want, I want to marry her” and so on. |
| 02:27 – 02:37 | *(I)* **But did your husband know when you were in love that you are an Aravani?**  
Yes, we were in love when I was ‘normal’. In fact, he gave me money for my transformation operation. Took care of all the expenses. It’s because of him and his money that I transformed into a girl.                                                                 |
| 02:39 – 02:41 | *(I)* **How many years were you in love?**  
We have been in love for 3 years.                                                                                                                                  |
| 2:47 – 3:00  | *(I)* **Aren’t you angry that he’s left you?**  
No, I’m not. Fault is mine. It’s because of him that I changed into a girl. I couldn’t have otherwise.                                                                                                                     |
| 03:02 – 04:04 | *(I)* **Don’t mind my asking, but how much did it cost to make the transformation?**  
35000 Malacca. He spent 40000 in total, including my college fees of 1500 per month. He’s also studying in UM (‘University Uttaramesha’). Studying Bachelors degree in Business and Mathematics. So we don’t get to meet each other often. He comes home only once in two months and will stay for two weeks. Once the semester gets over he’d get leave for a couple of weeks and he’d come and stay with me only. |
### (I) How did you meet him?
I met him two years back at a festival and we kept in touch. We met often and would talk and I started liking him. I know it’s the same feeling for him too.

### (I) You hadn’t met him before that?
I had seen him and perhaps spoken a few times, but didn’t get to know him that well since I was with my family. My parents were strict about when I came back home and about my whereabouts. There were particular that I came back home by 10/12, etc. But now, I can meet and talk with him whenever I want.

### (I) When you were young, you must have felt that you were different. What was the reaction from your friends?
First of all, I would partially blame my condition on my mother too. My mother never let me mingle with the boys. She always kept me at home, say, until form 3- form 4. I never got to go out and play ball or badminton like the other boys. She was scared that I would pick up bad habits like smoking, drinking, etc. She had firm beliefs like ‘this is how you must behave, these are kind of people you must move with’ and so on. So I ended up watching my mother all the time. The way she speaks, her mannerisms, the way she wears her saree and I got totally involved in her. My brother was not there at that time. He was born only when I was in form 1 – form2. I’m 20 years old now and he is only 7 now. If he were there things would have been different. I would have had someone to play with.

Initially my mother took it very casually. She’d say that you appear a boy to me, though others say you are a girl. But you only have to change the way you walk. So I also took it that it was my nature. I did not know at that time that there was something there called ‘Aravani’, that such a thing was also natural. I didn’t know that I could also change. This is my nature. This is what gives me happiness. Many women say ‘this is the type of husband I want, this is the career I want’. Similarly, this is the kind of life I want to live.

I’m the one who suffers. Not my parents. So when my husband offered money for a sex-change, I thought a lot, what are the repercussions, what problems I could face? Would my parents and relatives accept? We must think about everything. Since my husband was with me, I went in for the operation. There is a small problem, so we are separate. My parents didn’t speak to me. It’s was two years since I spoke to them. Once I and my husband fought with each other, I didn’t know whom to talk to or share my worries with. So I called my mother and told her about the change. She called me back after two days saying I’ll accept you. I haven’t gone back home as yet since some more operations are to be done. Some more surgeries remain - the breast operation and some changes on the face.

My ‘mummy’ is there as a support for me. I speak to her. She is a Singaporean and works there. She takes care of me as would my real mother. If I had her photograph I would show it to you. She understands me much better than my real mother. My own mother has only of late started talking to me well and regularly. I send money to her for expenses and for my brother’s education. My Singapore mummy is in touch with my real mother and assures her that I’m with her and doing fine. How can I tell my mother that I’m into this kind of work? My father is problematic. He has a second wife and there’s no one for my mother. Once I get stability in life, I’ll take my mother and brother along. I hope I buy a
<table>
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<th>15:39- 29:36</th>
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<td><strong>(I) Did you have any problems because of this condition? Say, in college?</strong></td>
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I had no problems in college. I even got a job. After I changed my sex, I applied through jobstreet and openly mentioned that I was transgender. I got a job with Maxis and was with them for 3 months. But the job was tough and so I left it. Then I joined Sircom and was with them for 5 months. Because of some problems I discontinued. It was very strenuous. I had to come back late and then do household work. So I left it. I wasn’t able to be at peace in any of the jobs. So I left everything and came here.

For one and a half years I was ‘clean’. Nobody other than my boyfriend ever touched me. Had he continued to be with me, I would not have come to this job of prostitution. It’s only for money that people come for this job. Otherwise, nobody would. Though I got jobs earlier, there were practical difficulties. Even recently I got a job with Standard Chartered Bank. But it is so far away from here. How can I go? It’s not easy. I need to think of my situation. Earlier my salary was 2500 RM, that’s around 80 RM per day. Here I can easily make at least 200 RM/300 RM per day. Which is better? And I’m not stealing/murdering or cheating anyone. I’m using my body to make money. - I never thought when I was young that I would come to prostitution. I used to look at such people with disgust. Probably that’s why I’m now in their place. I do feel bad about it. There are women in prostitution. There are men also in prostitution, in places like Singapore. And transsexuals like me. We are not the only ones in prostitutions. Even men, in places like Thailand, Singapore and even here in Malaysia. People resort to prostitution only for lack of money or family problems.

I do regret coming to this. The first time I came here and the first time a man touched me I cried a lot. Nobody other than my boy-friend had ever touched me before. I felt very bad. But this is the only path I could see. People told me this is not wrong. ‘You’re not cheating, stealing or killing anyone. It’s your body, your hard-work’. I’m being honest. Who is honest...
now-a-days? There are men who steal and cheat. Don’t mind, but even women are not clean. Now-a-days girl indulge in sex even in schools. I didn’t do anything of that sort. It only now, since I have no choice I’m in this sex profession. While in school I didn’t know about sex. Only with my boyfriend, after my sex change did I get the feeling of virginity and sexual emotion. Then I came here, started living like this. This has been the first big blow in life to me. I have lots of wishes for my future. My future plans are to complete my studies. I want to complete my computer science course. For want of money my studies are stalled. I have paid 11000 RM, I need to pay 6000 RM more. I put my own money, didn’t take loan. MSU didn’t give loan since I was doing the foundation course. Till I make that money I need to work. Say, in 5 months I’ll get the money and complete my studies and then I plan to go to Singapore. I can leave this job only after I get a stable life-style. Until then I need the job.

I would like to marry and have children. But for people like me it’s difficult to have a man permanently in life. We can’t trust them. Normal women cannot trust. How can we? If one turns around and asks us if we can bear them a child, what answer can we give? We can’t really trust men. A new-comer might trust, but not me, who has experienced life with a man. Of course, now-a-days even normal women don’t have a permanent life-style, like my own mother has been deserted by my dad. Then that leaves us transsexuals nowhere. I would be nice to have a husband, a family, but only God knows who that person is and if at all there will be a man for me or I’ll remain like this forever. I can expect many things to happen. It doesn’t have to happen that way. But of late, one of my wishes is coming true. I’m getting engaged with my boyfriend on the 19th of the fifth month of this year. It is with the consent of his parents. It would be four years since we fell in love. But the wedding will be only after three years. But his parents want him engaged right now for fear of me becoming pregnant. They’ve gotten to know that we are in a physical relationship. But they do not know that I’m transsexual. I pray to my Goddess that everything will turn-out fine.

Don’t mind, but I think we are more devout than normal women. We spend on adorning ourselves with jewelry, nice sarees, we don’t penny pinch even when offering to God. We give in gold for our deity. We have the magnanimity. That’s the difference between us and normal women. Depending on the occasion we dress meticulously. How to dress when we go for a function, how to dress when we go to the temple, what make-up to wear, etc. - We have a very big and famous temple for Hijras in Mumbai-Gujarat. History was made there in India as far as hijras are concerned. Now-a-days, sex change and transsexuals has become very common and increasing in numbers. They say it is thus, the era of “Kali” and the world is going to come to an end. They say that there will be an avatar of a transsexual “Kalki”, by God Shri.Vishnu (on a white horse). It is then that the world will come to an end. Vishnu will come in the form of a woman. You can read the same in the Bhagavat Gita.

29:37- 42:10 That the world will come to an end at the hands of a transsexual is inevitable. One can’t say if it is good or bad, since it is destined to happen. It is happening slowly. You see everywhere now-a-days, there’s Tsunami and other calamities.

We have all sinned. Including me. I have changed the form that God gave me originally. But then why should such doctors exist? So it is natural. There are even women who undergo a change. It’s not us alone. I’m not able to tell if it is for the good or the bad. We
have a special connection with God. If we curse anyone it’s said that it will come true. But we are pure at heart. We might sleep with 10 men. But our heart will go only to that one man. Like even though I’m in this profession, my heart is only with one man, my boyfriend. People should know why we work like this. It’s only for money. OWe are devout. God is with us. If we take a vow and offer prayers, we know what we want will happen. I have befriended many transsexuals. All are good at heart. The kindness that women don’t have or the good thinking that men don’t have, we have. We help people who come to us, be it a beggar or a person in need of money or with family problems. People will of course accept our money. Even though people know that transsexuals, indulging in prostitution contribute to keep the temple running, they come to pray along with their family and children. I believe such people will accept our contribution to the temple, even though they know how we earned it. In today’s context it’s o.k. Even normal women, rich women come to us and are friends with us, ask us for contribution for one cause or the other, even for temple donation, to make jewelry for God. We help out if it is for God or for people with family problems.

Now-a-days people are more aware of us Aravanis. There are speeches given, dramas, t.v.shows, interviews by people like us. So people are more aware about us and our problems. People have begun to give us respect. People who don’t won’t live well. They are not educated. Can’t blame them. But we are more beautiful than normal women. Women themselves have come to us and told us that we are much beautiful than them. You wouldn’t have seen beautiful women like some. You can’t even make out they are transsexual. Of course, there are people who look down upon us, when we go to the temple, for e.g., they are uneducated. Tell me, will educated people do such a thing? It’s not that people won’t look down upon us for taking this as a profession. For e.g., my mother does not know that I do this. People don’t know that we are in this profession. It’s only men who come here. Some women might pick up a fight, but it’s shame on the men, because they are the ones coming in search of us. We don’t go looking for them. Women don’t come here, so people don’t know that we do this job. Men might know, but they can’t say anything. We are doing our job.

I only want to tell the world that people like us are educated, some are very intelligent, some are rich. They even have their own business, they are in good jobs. - We won’t be in this profession for life. We come to this job only for money to heighten our status. Once we better our life, we will probably do something else like set up our own business, like eatery, shopping centre, saloon, etc. So don’t think we will be in this profession for long. One might ask why we are in prostitution even though we are educated. It’s because of our situation in life. Even normal women take to prostitution. Ask them and they’ll tell you they are forced to for want of money and a better life or family problems. It’s the same with us. The money we get here is more that what we get in office. Which is a better choice? Even men make that decision. We want to earn money quickly and settle in life. We can get good clothes to wear, good food to eat, offer to God. We are doing this job and making money.

The source of this money might be not very good, but we offer it to God with a pure heart. God will accept it and purify what we offer. The blessing will surely come to us. It is my sweat and blood. God has done many good things to us. There is a Goddess. It’s enough if I just pray to her. All our wishes come true. People like her (Mallika Girish), as you say,
might look down upon prostitution, since she is settled in life, she has a nice job, a family, a husband, she has support, so there has been no need for her to come to this profession. If I had continued support, I too would not have come to prostitution. If I have money, I can get good clothes, good food, and look respectable. I have no support of a husband either. So I have to work things out for myself. She was lucky to have support and so she speaks with courage. We don’t and that’s why we are here.
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| 00:01-00:13| **Tell us about yourself.**  
My name is Anusha Sri, my mother’s name is Thamana Sri. My birth-mother’s name is Sukuma, and my father’s name is Arunachalam.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 00:13-00:32| I began feeling this way when I was four years old. I’ll speak like a girl, be like a girl. Whenever I go to school, boys would tease me, laugh at me. Even my relatives would talk about me derisively.                                                                                                 |
| 00:32-01:03| My parents started giving me problems. They’d hit me, scold me. After I went to secondary school, they started giving me torture at home – that I’m going out too much, talking to boys a lot, hanging out at parks. They had a bad opinion of me.                                                                                 |
| 01:03-01:20| After finishing secondary school in 2006, I started working – at the airport. I didn’t know then that there were others like me. When I was working at the airport, I met others like me, and got to know them. One such person was Manisha.                                                                                     |
| 01:20-01:49| She introduced me to others like me. She told me what kinds of work people like me were doing. So I started joining her, without my family’s knowledge. At that time, I wanted to be a dance master, and I’d do shows. My expressions and movement looked very feminine.                                                                 |
| 01:49-01:57| **Is it Bharathanatyam?**  
Yes, Bharathanatyam, and also modern dance.  
**Could you show us how to dance?**                                                                                                           |
| 02:01-02:32| I did all this without my family’s knowledge. I grew my hair a bit long. Then one day I went for my grandfather’s funeral, and my relatives saw me there and started bad-mouthing me. My parents came home and beat me, cut my hair, and repeatedly told me to be more masculine. I told them that although I look male, inside I feel female. |
| 02:32-03:08| I said I couldn’t stay at home anymore, so I fought with them. I wanted to leave home voluntarily. After I left Banting, I didn’t know where to stay, and that’s when I met someone else’s “mummy”, called Maya. Through her I got a room in Banting town, and I stayed here happily with my friend. After a while, during Hari Raya Haji, I had a friend called Keerthika, who brought another friend, a man.                     |
| 03:08-03:36| She introduced me to him, and I really liked him. He talked with a cool slang and was very stylish. A smooth and flattering guy. The way he talked to me prompted me to believe he liked me. I thought he would be with me forever. Because of him I stopped working, as he asked me to stay home with him. I felt that I had left my parents in order to be with him. He said he would support me, morally and emotionally. And so we were together. |
03:36-04:36 18th August I left home. And on the 19th of September, when I left the shop, I wanted to get a house of my own and wanted to buy a car for myself and show these to my parents. At the time, without my knowledge, Maya had been eyeing my man. He had said I looked like Manisha Koirala. I believed him, and in his faithfulness. While going out with him, I got to know about his going out with Maya, and staying at her house. I got really upset. That he’s doing all this, despite saying he loved me. I had really grown affectionate towards him by then.

04:36-04:53 What did he tell you? Had he broken up with you? Is she a woman?
No, she was also an “aravaani”. She is related to me like a ‘mother’, so that means he is like a ‘son-in-law’ to her. And still she went out with him.

04:53-05:29 I would go and fight with her, and fight with him. He came to me under the influence of alcohol and asked “What’s your problem? Did I ever distrust you?” He asked me to go out of the house. I thought he would always be there for me. I didn’t expect him to leave me. Even after he asked me to get out of the house, I still remained there.

05:29-05:45 While I was staying there, I wanted to work in a shop nearby. I said that I didn’t want to do prostitution; I want to do an honourable job.

05:45-06:20 This occupation – how did you end up doing this occupation?
I was working in the shop, but when he was moving away from me, I realized the money I was earning was insufficient. So as he kept moving away from me, I realized that I could depend on no one but myself. I wanted to be independent. I met an old Chinese lady, and told her my problems. She said, come here and work, I’ll provide the room. Did you know what job it was?
Yes, I knew.

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<td>00:01-00:13</td>
<td>Yes I knew what job this was. At one point I thought very degradingly of this job. That there are such people, I’d be embarrassed. People shouldn’t work like this. But finally it came to a point that it was necessary for me to take on this occupation. The reason was my husband.</td>
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<td>00:13-00:30</td>
<td>I trusted him. His name is Rajaratnam. But he told me his name was Nathan. I felt he was my life, and I got a room here. I couldn’t stand not seeing him, or not talking to him. I told him to come look for me. So he came.</td>
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<td>00:30-00:45</td>
<td>My friends scolded me for letting him come – “He never gives you money, so why do you let him come?” But I didn’t want his money, what I wanted was his love. I believed that he would stay with me. The things he said, and his promises made me believe this.</td>
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<td>00:45-01:06</td>
<td>His girl soon found out about me. Yes his girlfriend. My husband is 34 years old. I am 24 years old. His girlfriend is 18. Young age. He looked for her because she was female.</td>
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The girl’s family didn’t approve, and so there was a fight at her home. The girl and my husband wanted to live together away from her parents. His girlfriend wanted me to stay with them but I didn’t like it.

He and I got acquainted here. And everyone knew that there was tension between us. There’s no beating I did not get, no words he did not say. He has hit me and sent me out of the house. So I wanted revenge, so I got this room, and whatever he did to me, I did back to him and gave him torture.

**To whom?**
To my boy, that is, my husband.

Because he beat me and put me through so much torture, I wanted to do something back to him, so I brought him here. But then he would be very loving. I went beyond my means to provide for him. I lost a lot of money to him. I fed him for two and a half months. And he never gave me even 5 cents in return.

How did you earn?
I worked here and earned. Last time, I worked in a shop.

What does he think about you working here?
He said, go ahead and work here, earn money.

So doesn’t it seem to you that he was making use of you?
He has been making use of me.

Please say it more clearly.

He has his family in JB and Penang, and because he left them all and came here, he needed a place to stay, someone to look after him; and so he made use of me. He used my money and stayed with me. For him to move about, he needs money, and I would give it to him. What he expected from me was my money, and a place to sleep.

And without knowing this, I thought he loved me, and...

How many years did this go on?
Recently, for about two and a half months.

He made use of you for two and a half months.
Yes, now it’s been two and a half months.

So he’d go on like this, and we argued a lot. So the old lady downstairs started scolding me, and asked me to move out. If I had my parents’ house, I’d have gone there.

About your parents, you haven’t said anything. Are you estranged from them?
Yes, I left my parents and came here alone.

Why? What is the reason?
Because I have changed like this. I told my parents, and my family didn’t accept it.

Where are your parents?
They’re here, in Banting.

Oh, they live in Klang too.
Near Klang, in Banting.
I have an older sister and an older brother. If they had been supportive of me, I would not have come to this place. I would have stayed at home and somehow survived.

Thinking that men are important, that he is important, I came here and really had a hard time. Not only did I lose my money, I also lost my peace: the people working here would disturb me a lot, giving my phone number to boys and talking to them. Without my knowledge, they’d take my phone to call boys, and then tease me. It created a lot of problems and arguments.

He would be with me for a long time. In between, I think he and his girlfriend fought, and the girl found out that he was seeing me, and when they were about to break up, he told me, “The girl does not know that I am with you now, you also don’t reveal it.”

But I believed him, that the girl does not know that he was having a relationship with me. But it turned out that she did know. I only found this out yesterday because he came yesterday and had a fight with me, and I chased him away, saying that I did not want him, “Go away.” But he started speaking very vulgarly.

He knows what is my occupation, how I work, how much hardship I went through to care for him and give him money. Yet he started speaking badly of that very occupation.

“Your’re working in this kind of job. I mixed with you, only for your money and to sleep with. Don’t think I slept with you because I liked you. What I need is my girlfriend, I don’t need you, you go your way, and I’ll go mine.”

Tell us about your feelings. How did this hurt you?
I cried a lot. I thought he was my world, my life. When he left me, and fought with me, on that day, Thaipusam day, I took some medicine, because I wanted to die. I went to cut my hands; I broke all the things in my room, including the mirror, on that Thaipusam day.

How did you hurt yourself? Do you have any wounds?
I cut my hands here because of him. When he came to fight, and I knew he was about to leave me, I cut myself. You cut yourself.
With a knife.

These bruises here are because he hit me yesterday. Last night, early morning, at 3 am he came.

Last night, early in the morning, he came and beat me. Did no one hear?
Everyone heard. He said that no one should interfere, or he would beat all of them up. He had come drunk to fight with me.

You’re earning, and are financially independent. How did you allow yourself to become emotionally dependent to this extent?
I don’t know the reason, I guess love. I don’t have parents.
Don’t show love to this kind of guys, I tell you truthfully.

Because I had left my parents, and he said he would be there for me, support me, and promised to be with me to the very last, I ended up loving him very much.

So anyone in my situation would have been as loving as I had been. I don’t think even a girl could have been as loving as I had been to him. I still love him deeply. Everyone told me from the beginning, that it was a bad idea to be with him. But I said he is important to me, and got angry with all of them – with my fellow transsexuals.

Why did he come and hit you yesterday? For money?
No, not for money. Saying that I had touched the bouquet his girlfriend had given him, and that I had taken it to give to someone else, he came to beat me.

So I told him, these many months I had taken you in and looked after you - give me 1500 ringgit in return, and give me back my phone that you had broken. After that, you and I can have nothing to do with each other: You can go your way, and I’ll mind my own business.

Immediately he says to me, “Give me back my old life. After I have settled everything with you, give me back my old life.”

“What is your old life?” I asked him.

“Before I met you, how I had earned and been well-off! Give me back that life. You were the one who hired me.”

So I told him, “Use your brains. Then you should have worked and earned money! But you just lived off me!”

So maybe because men know that people like me have a lot of money, they flirt and make us fall for them. Not everyone will fall for their charms. But because I had nobody of my own, and thinking he’d be there for me, I fell for him.

So much has happened, so what is your opinion of men now?
After all this, what I ask of God is that I don’t want men in my life anymore. Because I have changed into a woman, I’ll just live as a woman, and I wish to adopt a child and raise it. After this I don’t want any more men – neither for emotional support nor for pleasure. I’ll just continue working on my own. If I adopt a child I can be contented.

To people like me, no one will give a job at shops or shopping complexes or companies. For people like me, maybe only jobs like this (prostitution) will be available.

People like me work here to look after our stomachs, but even then, men come to try to ruin our livelihood.

There’s not a word they’ve not said, not a flattery they’ve not tried. Whenever they ask for money, our resolve weakens, and we give them money. There are so many instances of
06:43-06:57 He also told me that he didn’t want me. But he left saying that he won’t leave me alive. “I’ll come and torture you. I’ll get the old lady to chase you out of the house.” We had such a big fight yesterday.

06:57-07:07 He left me last night saying that he’ll come again today. So for the next two days I won’t go downstairs to work, I’ll just stay upstairs. Even if anybody comes asking for me, I’ve told them to tell them that I’m not around.

07:07-07:34 **OK. So after the sisters joined together, you came here and stayed. From them you’ve gotten a support-system. The feeling that “there’s no one else like me”… -Whatever it is, girls or guys, they’re not like you; but these people are, they’re the ones who’ll understand what you’ve gone through. After joining them, how do you think your life has changed?**

07:34-07:44 You mean the transsexuals? Yes. At first it was very difficult for me – there was no one to look after me, because I had come out on my own. It was comforting to know that there were other people like me.

07:44-07:55 When I first came, I had no ‘mummy’. I wasn’t a ‘daughter’ to anyone. There was someone working here, Thamana was her name, who had just undergone operation. I wanted to be her ‘daughter’, and she wanted me as a ‘daughter’, so she took me in.

07:55-08:05 The first one who spoke to you is my ‘small-mother’, and the other one you met is my ‘big mother’. There are many like them; and there are others like me, who are ‘children’ to them. They’re all very affectionate and loving towards me, and I too love all of them.

08:05-08:17 They have told me many times, “Your husband is not a good person, don’t keep him.” But I was stubborn that I wanted him. Finally I ended up heart-broken.

08:17-08:26 **How do you see your future life? You’ve said you want a child. Do you think you will remain at this job, or would you do something else?**

08:26-08:50 If I stay at this job, and my child grows up, he shouldn’t ask me “Mom, this is your job?”… – I don’t want that. I want to earn and save as much money as I can, adopt a child, and work by myself somewhere else, with a house to myself. Or if my parents accept me, I’d like to stay at home with my mother. If not I’ll fend for myself and struggle for the sake of my child.

08:50-09:35 **Now talk about yourself. Or about this sari - you look nice in it. You seem to like to wear jewellery, bangles and saris. Tell us about that, about something that makes you happy.** I don’t like wearing Punjabi suits, modern dress, or half-saris at all. What I like are saris, this kind of choker sets, light make-up, not heavy make-up, but simple make-up. If we put on too much make-up, boys can spot us or find us out from afar. But if we put on simple make-up, they’ll wonder and not be sure whether we’re male or female.
So what I really like is tying saris. My ‘mummy’ gave this sari for my age-attainment ceremony (usually celebrated when girls hit puberty, but in this case, probably a ceremony to celebrate her sex-change). It costs 3000 ringgit. They bought it for 1500 ringgit, it’s a wedding sari. I have many saris, so if I go out anywhere, for any function, even to a pub, I’ll only wear a sari. I really like saris.

You were saying that if you wear heavy make-up, people find out that you’re transsexual. If they find out, will they tease or cause any trouble for you? Definitely. They will tease, and touch me here and there. There’s nothing they’ve not said.

Any bad experiences?
Last time when I worked, I didn’t have long hair, so I’d be very shy. If I go to any function, boys would touch me, or pull my hair, and I’d feel very ‘malu’ (embarrassed). They’ll pull my sari, rub against me, touch me, and I’d be humiliated.

So after I grew my hair, and had transplanted some hair in Singapore – it only came up to 350 dollars– After that I had no problems. If any boys caused trouble, I would confidently rebut them, and not hesitate to hit them. I don’t like living in fear, I must be equal to them, whether male or female. I only respect people like me, I won’t respect men or women.

There are guys and girls. How do you see yourself? How do you fit in? I don’t understand.
Tell us about yourself. There are many names for you in society. They call you “transgender”, or “ombothu” (nine in tamil, but a demeaning slang-term for transsexual people). But how would you describe yourself? What are you proud to call yourself?
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| 00:51- 01:06 | **There was something I wanted to ask. I’ve lost my train of thought. Ok. So at what age did you do the operation? Why did you have to do it? Some go without doing it.**  
The reason I operated is that, let’s say, I suddenly have an accident, and if I die, doctors will definitely ask in the post-mortem whether this is a male or a female. So my body will look like a female, but my organs would be male. So let’s say something happens unexpectedly, it will be a bad name for me. My family will find out, and it’ll be a bad name for them. |
| 01:06- 01:34 | So as much as I can, I will work and save money.  
**Please repeat what you said.**  
I started saving money, because I was passionate about getting the operation done. Let’s say I die tomorrow, the doctors would ask in the post-mortem, if I’m male or female. It’ll be a bad name for me. They’ll say, “Look at him, he looks and dresses like a woman, but he didn’t cut it below, so then he’s actually male isn’t he?” |
| 01:34- 02:14 | The reason I operated is that, let’s say, I suddenly have an accident, and if I die, doctors will definitely ask in the post-mortem whether this is a male or a female. So my body will look like a female, but my organs would be male. So let’s say something happens unexpectedly, it will be a bad name for me. My family will find out, and it’ll be a bad name for them.  
So as much as I can, I will work and save money.  
**Please repeat what you said.**  
I started saving money, because I was passionate about getting the operation done. Let’s say I die tomorrow, the doctors would ask in the post-mortem, if I’m male or female. It’ll be a bad name for me. They’ll say, “Look at him, he looks and dresses like a woman, but he didn’t cut it below, so then he’s actually male isn’t he?” |
| 02:14- 02:31 | So as much as I can, I will work and save money.  
**Please repeat what you said.**  
I started saving money, because I was passionate about getting the operation done. Let’s say I die tomorrow, the doctors would ask in the post-mortem, if I’m male or female. It’ll be a bad name for me. They’ll say, “Look at him, he looks and dresses like a woman, but he didn’t cut it below, so then he’s actually male isn’t he?”  
And that would give me a bad reputation. People will laugh at me, after I’ve died, saying that this is actually a male. So because I didn’t want such dishonour, I was spurred to start saving money. I had some of my mother’s (unclear if she is referring to her actual mother, or her ‘mummy’) money. So altogether I had 15000 ringgit to do the operation. |
| 02:31- 02:44 | 15 000 ringgit  
Yes, so I had the operation in Bangkok.  
**Bangkok. Did anyone bring you there?**  
Yes  
**Because you were very young, right? How old would you have been?**  
Now I am 24 years old.  
**No no, when you did the operation.**  
When I did the operation, I was 22 years old. |
| 02:44 – 02:55 | At that time, my family didn’t know. It’s only because they found out that I had had the operation, that problems arose at home, and they planned to send me out of the house. That’s why I voluntarily left. |
| 02:55- 03:08 | At home I have my mother and father, and they thought it was a bad name for them, that they had a son like me. But as far as I am concerned, I think I only brought them a good name, not a bad name. |
| 03:08-03:31 | **Are you in touch with your parents and siblings?**  
Yes, I speak to my sister and my mother. But however many times my mom calls me to the house, I won’t go there.  
**Why?**  
Because of the things she had said to me.  
**What did she say?**  
She told me that she didn’t want me home, and that if I left home, I’ll end up on the streets. “You’ll eventually come back, let’s see if you come back or not.” |
Out of self-respect, even though penniless, I didn’t return. I didn’t eat anything for two days. I have thought about going back home, but I won’t go because I have friends, I have my husband. I managed on my own, saying all this. You’re very brave.

Tell us about the operation. Emotionally it must have been a terribly painful process. Taking hormones, the cutting, the wounds...
At first we have to take the hormones,

Before undergoing the operation, at first you have to take female hormones. The name of the hormone pills are “Malen” (I’m not sure if I spelt the name of the pill correctly in English!). “Malen” and “Diane” – there are these two medicines. Taking “Malen” allows for the development of breasts, and reduces the size of the male organs. “Diane” breaks the body and shoulders- breaks the bones- and so gives the face beauty. (this is literally what she said in Tamil. I’ve no idea how you’d say this in proper medical terms!) You have to take these two medicines for a maximum of three months.

What you’re saying cannot be heard.
Do you want water?
No. Sister, where’s the photo? Look around if you’ve left it anywhere.
Where did you leave it? Ask Aish to bring it? Hold on.

What is it?
I want to show you my husband’s photo – the guy who cheated me.

You’re the one who asked to bring something?
Ok ok.

While waiting for the photo, shall we talk? Tell us about the operation.
Three months before the operation, I was taking the hormones. Only if the hormones are in the body can they operate. They won’t operate without the hormones being in the body. You’ve to make payment and a booking of a date.

So before that I went to the “Maatha Temple”, the temple of the goddess we pray to. I poured water, made offerings and broke a coconut. Only after doing that can we go for the operation. It is like a small pooja (priest-conducted prayers), and everyone will come to send me off.

So before I go there, I have to pray. The operation takes about four or five hours. They will cut, and put silicone gel above. Below they will cut and make it like a girl’s. But it won’t look exactly like a girl’s, just more or less like it.

After cutting, when I come back from there, they will put pampers, and a tube. For the wound to heal, it’ll take about 41 days. Just the external wound. But for the internal wound to heal, it’ll take at least a year.
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<td>08:24-08:47</td>
<td><strong>The pain?</strong>&lt;br&gt;I have to bear with the pain.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Tell us a little bit about the pain.</strong>&lt;br&gt;They say it’s like a new incarnation. The operation is a reincarnation. A blessing from God. You can’t just cut it off simply; it’s a living part of your body. When you cut it, it’s like death and rebirth. You have to bear with the pain and suffering. It is horribly painful.</td>
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<td>08:47-09:01</td>
<td>For the pain to subside it took at least two weeks. For two weeks at least it’ll be very painful – I could not walk, go anywhere or speak to anyone, just stayed in bed. And you have to wash with warm water and dettol. I suffered a lot.</td>
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<td>09:01-09:18</td>
<td><strong>So at that time, you only had these people.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Yes, I only had these people for emotional support. My friend Angelina Jolie, she was the one who was very supportive of me.&lt;br&gt;So after that because my parents found out, I moved out of their house. If I hadn’t operated, I wouldn’t have had to suffer so much.</td>
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<td>09:18-09:36</td>
<td><strong>Do you regret having done this operation?</strong>&lt;br&gt;I don’t understand.&lt;br&gt;‘Regret’ means... how do I say this... Have you ever felt like you made a mistake doing this operation?&lt;br&gt;No. I don’t think it was a mistake. I had this feeling, this passion to do it. Having been male.</td>
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<td>09:36-09:57</td>
<td><strong>Explain the feeling. Was it like you felt you were in the wrong body or that you couldn’t have sex or..</strong>&lt;br&gt;I’m not so interested in sex. I don’t even have any interest in this job. However many customers call me, I try to avoid them. I just need money for food. For now, that is all I need.</td>
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<td>09:57-10:03</td>
<td><strong>You would have had that at home itself, if you hadn’t done the operation, you’d definitely have gotten food at home.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Are you asking me why I did the operation?</td>
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<td>10:03-10:24</td>
<td>That is what I was saying. Let’s say I suddenly died, my family should know that I have been changing into a female. Also people like me would ask me, “Have you done the operation?” If I say, “Yes,” they’d say, “OK,” and leave it at that. But if I said, “No,” they will laugh at me mockingly; boys will look at me scornfully. And if I did some other job, boys will look at me disrespectfully.</td>
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<td>10:24-10:41</td>
<td>“He looks like a girl, is beautiful. But if we go upstairs and take off the clothes, it’ll be different because there’ll be a male organ.” I don’t want them to speak ill of me. So to shut up those boys, people like me undergo the operation.</td>
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<td>10:41-11:01</td>
<td><strong>Do you succeed in shutting them up after the operation?</strong>&lt;br&gt;Yes. They can’t say anything.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Tell us about the temple. You all (the transsexuals) got together to establish the Matha temple yourself. Was there any need to build this temple? Did other temples say anything about you all?</strong></td>
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No. Maatha is God. They built this temple for her, so that transsexuals like me can pray to God in this form. She is Goddess Durga on a Rooster – everyone can pray to her. Where is the picture of the Goddess?

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<td>00:01-00:11</td>
<td>Goddess Amman will usually sit on a lion. The reason she is sitting on a cock is because it is the male counterpart of the chicken. So the Goddess here is female, but she is sitting on a male vehicle.</td>
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<td>00:11-00:30</td>
<td>The people at the bottom here are all transsexuals – like us. She is a goddess for us. Amman is sitting on the rooster here. So people like us are like this female goddess on a male vehicle.</td>
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<td>00:30-00:39</td>
<td>Even if I don’t believe in Lord Sivan, Goddess Parvathy, or any other god, I have faith in this Maatha. She gives me comfort.</td>
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<td>00:39-00:53</td>
<td><em>Is this Maatha Temple the only one in Malaysia, or are there others anywhere else?</em> Yes, it is the only temple in Malaysia. There are a few in Seremban and all but they have it at houses, or at small public altars, not in big temples.</td>
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<td>00:53-1:23</td>
<td><strong>What kind of activities do you do at the temple?</strong> At the Full Moon and New Moon prayers, we will all join in for the festivities. For the 48 days of the Full Moon prayers we’ll be there. For any Tamil function, like Ponggal, they will do a <em>pooja</em> at this temple. And we will all go. Everyone working here will go. And we make sure we’re clean on those days. We don’t do our work on the days of prayers.</td>
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| 00:01-00:13| *Can you see?*  
*Did you go to the hospital?*  
He tried to punch me and kill me.|
| 00:30-00:47| **You said you wanted to say something right – a message?**  
We want to tell the boys who make fun of us. Don’t make fun of us. They’ll say we’re abnormal. |
| 00:47-01:07| Our inside and our organs don’t match. Even though our inner feelings are feminine, our appearance is male. There’s nothing wrong with you teasing us – that depends on your talking talent – but don’t fall victim to our curses. |
| 01:07-01:21| I have hit many of the boys that bullied me, even using my slippers to beat them. I won’t get scared. You bring however many men you want, I’m not scared. I’ll stand my ground. |
| 01:21-01:39| Before you speak, ask yourself if you’re in the right. Ask in your family, ask your parents, what they say. After that come and tease us. If you tease us, the same speech that you give us, will come affect someone in your lineage. Someone like us will be born in your
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<td>01:39-01:59</td>
<td><strong>You said someone in their lineage will be born like that.</strong> Yes, that is really true. It’s because they make fun of us that we were forced to separate from our families. If they tease us, someone like us will be born in their family. Then they will understand the pain and the sorrow.</td>
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<td>01:58-02:21</td>
<td><strong>If you had been given a chance to be born completely as either a male or a female, would you have taken that chance?</strong> If such a chance is given, I want to be born female. People like me will now look like men, but inside they feel female.</td>
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<td>02:38-03:16</td>
<td><strong>When you are at the temple, do you pray for anything specific from God?</strong> Of course. What we want is a good life. Nothing else. If we’re kept happy, God will also be happy. If we are sad, how could we have the heart to pray to God? So God is our only emotional support, we have no parents. Even though the “mummy” is like a mother to us, it won’t last; she won’t be there forever. She could leave us and go to another place. Therefore the only one who will be there for us is God.</td>
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<td>03:16-03:46</td>
<td><strong>Could you elaborate on the previous question: would you have chosen to be born female?</strong> My desire is to have been born female. People like us who are born male, then spend so much to undergo the surgery, have problems with our families, get a bad name and end up in the red light district. Even if it’s embarrassing to the family, where we’re concerned, we’re happy. But that happiness is only now. Before this, to come to where we are, we had to suffer a lot, emotionally and physically.</td>
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<td>03:46-04:10</td>
<td>There are many like us who are born male, and think that in the future they will change sex. But please, don’t change, stay as males. There are enough like us in our lineage – enough transsexuals in Malaysia. There’s no need for more transsexuals to form. If your organ looks female, just continue life like that. Don’t do the operation and change sex like us.</td>
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<td>04:10-05:06</td>
<td><strong>Why?</strong> Let that pain and suffering end with us. If they change sex, they’ll get a bad name at home. So if everyone like us, whom are called “gays”, change into transsexuals, where will they go for support in Malaysia? In a 100%, at least 40% of Malaysian men are gays. They shouldn’t change, they should just continue life the way they are. Even if they don’t get married, it’s okay. They shouldn’t operate and become transsexuals like us. They should live happily. They shouldn’t suffer and end up on the streets, or in the red light district. If they look male, they can continue living with their families. With their parents, their family, their relatives, how happy they would be. Because I’ve ended up in the red light area, I’m alone– other than this job I’ve no one, only God and this job for survival.</td>
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<td>05:06-05:18</td>
<td><strong>What do you think society can do for you? The reason for your situation is society – it’s because society didn’t accept you that you’re without a normal job. What do you think can be done?</strong></td>
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Whether society accepts us or doesn’t, we’re not really concerned with that. There’s life in our bodies. As long as we’re alive, we’ll live in Malaysia. Society never gave us anything. We don’t owe society anything. Everyone gives donations to God, no one has ever given any donation to us transsexuals. Society has ostracized us, but we’ve never ostracized society.

We always talk to people nicely. If they like us, they can talk to us, if not they can just ignore us and mind their own business. If they go beyond that and make fun of us, and fall victim to our curses, they will also undergo our suffering, by begetting people like us. Such people should not fall victim to our speech. Our curses are like God’s words.

How do I say this properly... Men flirt with you and go to you. Why do you think they go to you? There are females, but yet, why do they go to you? Oh to us? Heh, How do I say this...

Girls are normal – they can give birth. So if you have sex, there’s a risk of impregnation. Men come to us for lust. When boys flirt with us, we smile, we’ll touch them. If they touch us back, we’ll giggle. So people like us are very good at acting. If the boy is good-looking, we smile. So the boys will come looking for us. When we work here, mostly married men come to us, young boys don’t. They say they can’t be with women. “We can’t find pleasure with women. That’s why we come to you, because you satisfy our needs.”

We have finished our interview. If there’s anything you want to say, you can say. What should I say? Any message you want to convey?

What I would like to say to society is this. If you see people like us, try to respect us. As much as you can, even if you don’t tease us, don’t pretend you don’t see us. If you’d like to, speak to us. If you speak to a girl, she might be artificial, but we are not like that. We are genuine and true-hearted. If any man or woman comes up to speak to us, we speak to them very normally. We don’t get angry with anyone. We’re just like God. If anyone wants to speak to us, they can. Don’t ostracize us. We’d like to have some support. We want to go places, to visit people. We can’t live in isolation. So what I’d like to say to society is – don’t tease us.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Timecode</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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| 00:01-00:18| **They say we can speak.**  
 **Do you have any problems because of the IC?**  
 Do I speak with the mike, or just like this?  
 **You can speak just like this.**                                                                 |
| 00:18-01:11| However much we operate, in the IC, I will still be in the male category – because the IC only has two categories: male and female. We’re given the IC when we are teenagers, but we usually undergo the operation after that. It’s hard to suddenly change the IC afterwards. In Malaysia, they already give you an ID number, so you can’t change your sex from male to female under the same ID number. I heard they are going to declare a new law for |
transsexuals this year, so that they can change their IC. They are going to build special toilets for transsexuals. I'm hoping for this law to materialize.

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<tr>
<th>Timecode</th>
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<tr>
<td>00:01-00:23</td>
<td>Only Indian transsexuals get respect. Malays who are transsexuals like us don’t get respect. Because Malays cannot operate. Indians can do the operation, but Malays are not allowed to. If they see any Malay transsexuals, they'll catch them, whereas for me, at any function I go to, the police will respect me.</td>
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</table>
| 00:23-00:45    | **Why is this so?**  
Because they can understand our feelings – how much we’ve spent emotionally and financially to operate. Whereas Malays have not done the operation and still show their bodies to earn. In their custom, it is sinful. In our custom it is sinful too, but whatever it is, God made us this way. |
### Interview with Ms. Pameshwari (Founder of Temple)

**DVD BATCH NUMBER: 250_3388_01**

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<tr>
<th>Time code</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
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<tr>
<td>Full Clip</td>
<td>We are the third generation, 1st are “aasama”, 2nd are “guruma”, now it is us. It has been about 20 years since we took hold of administration. Thaiyamma taught us about the Goddess and seek permission from the Goddess for us to take administration. Administration is about taking rebirth and we go to doctor to get certification that if we lose our life during the ritual, no one take responsibility. (The ritual or administration basically means going for the operation to become woman) During then, it is belief that for 40 days the goddess will be with us, on the 40th day we will fast vegetarian and after that we perform other rituals like milk pooja. Thaiyamma is still alive and lead us through this rituals. We went to Mumbai, Gujarat and Rajasthan to bring all the traditions and rituals as it originates from there. Putting our lives on the line and safeguarding our lives for the goddess, we have built this temple as a form of thanksgiving. We perform the pooja during the aadi month because the goddess has given us all the thiru nankai another birth of life.</td>
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**DVD BATCH NUMBER: 250_3389_01**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time code</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
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<tr>
<td>Full Clip</td>
<td>We don't have a separate temple and because our traditions are different. We need to put the saree above head, wear green saree and its separate from the rest, we can’t do this because the traditions are different in each temple. In our temple, we wear green saree, sing and dance (called “kummi”) and likewise in Gurjarat too, we believe that Goddess will be happy by doing this. In all house and temple do call us now but it is important to observe the tradition. It is the first time in Malaysia we have built this temple and all thirunankai come together, there are only two in the world from what I know one in Gujarat and one here. We (all thiru nankais also the interviewee, Parameswari 48 years old) wanted to built the temple, it has been 10 years since built. We saved money and bought this land and built the temple, it was our desire to do for the god. In Gujarat and Rajasthan, all people pray. Actually thiru nankais pray to all God also because she took a special form for the king we adore that and worship her. We thiru nankai contribute money for running this administration of the temple. The public also come to the temple because it is not a special temple</td>
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</table>
for us, the goddess is actually durgai, it is just the form that she showed to the king.

There were not objections for building this temple. Once a year we do this festival, it brings all the thiru nankai from all over the world.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time code</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32:45-32:48</td>
<td>Mr Ravi, could you tell us something about yourself. What do you do at the Hindu Centre?</td>
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<tr>
<td>32:48-33:03</td>
<td>I’m a volunteer with the Hindu Centre. I’ve been here for about 4 years now. My job on the outside is a chemical engineer, with a defense science and technology agency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33:03-33:13</td>
<td>So how did you get yourself so involved in the Hindu Centre?</td>
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<td>33:13-33:56</td>
<td>I came to know about the Hindu Centre five years back. I found that it was one of the few organizations in Singapore that actually concentrated on Hinduism teaching. There are many temples in Singapore, but the emphasis on learning of Hinduism and dissemination of Hinduism knowledge is not so prevalent. The Hindu Centre is focused largely on this area, and because of my interest in Hindu learning and Hindu knowledge, I started to attend classes in Hindu Centre, and eventually I became a volunteer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33:56-34:03</td>
<td>Do you have a formal title? Your colleague just now called you a religious…</td>
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<tr>
<td>34:03-34:34</td>
<td>Consultant. Religious consultant, but that is an unofficial title. Teacher… I volunteer as a teacher, because there are many areas in which you can volunteer-teaching, doing service, helping to sell books and stuff like that. My area of volunteerism is teaching, so I conduct classes for the public, for children and for adults, on Hinduism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>03:34:34:00-</td>
<td>So let’s say you have students who ask about Hinduism. How do you verify between what is true or what is proper? Because your colleague was telling us just now that the Hindu Centre also conducts… something like a tutorial where the teacher teaches people how to do prayers properly, the right way… how do you know what is the right way?</td>
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<tr>
<td>03:35:02:00</td>
<td>The reference or authority for Hinduism, or Hindu knowledge, is the Hindu scripture- what we call Shastras. Shastras, or Hindu scriptures, is basically a body of knowledge, whose origin can be traced back to what we call the Vedas, which is about 200 B.C. Dated about 2000 B.C. So this ancient body of knowledge which we call Hindu Shastras is the reference or authority for what we call… what is deemed “right” in Hinduism. So whatever teachings that we teach in Hindu Centre, whatever rituals, whatever practices that we advocate in Hindu Centre, is all based in the Hindu Shastras or Hindu scriptures, this body of knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>35:02-36:23</td>
<td>We have a library here, where these scriptures are, not all of them, a good number of them are available. For us to study, to research, and we also encourage our teachers to delve deep into them, such that they can get the</td>
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</table>
knowledge, increase their knowledge. And subsequently this knowledge is shared with people.

That, in a nutshell, is our reference- our basis for all the teachings in Hindu Centre.

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<tr>
<th>36:23- 36:35</th>
<th><strong>If there are people who are none Hindus, they are new to the religion, how would you explain it to them in a nutshell? Like, what is the religion about?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36:38- 37:51</td>
<td>Of course, if a person wants to know about Hinduism with a considerable degree of depth, I would ask him to sign up for our course, which is called “Hinduism Today in Theory and Practice”, which we run frequently throughout the year. It’s a 12-week course, we cover all aspects of Hinduism. But if you ask me what does Hinduism teach, if you ask me to relate it in a nutshell, it’s actually very simple. Hinduism just teaches you how to live your life happily. That’s the goal and purpose of Hinduism. Your face showed surprise at the answer, but that is the truth of it, Sometimes these things are so simply, but we think of it so complicated. The whole idea of the Hindu Shastras is to teach you how to be happy in life, and live life happily.</td>
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<tr>
<td>37:51- 38:17</td>
<td><strong>Could we perhaps re-answer that question? Because it was connected to the... when we do the documentary, we would like a complete part, cleanly from the beginning to the end. So can I re-ask the question again?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>38:17- 38:22</td>
<td>But you’ve got to phrase it because it really depends to what extent you want me to cover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38:22- 38:38</td>
<td><strong>I like what you just said, so... for non-Hindus, what is Hinduism really all about? Where does it border down to?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38:38- 38:45</td>
<td>Ok, where shall I start?</td>
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<tr>
<td>38:45- 38:48</td>
<td><strong>As in, the same answer that you just said, you can actually...</strong></td>
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| 38:48- 43:11 | Ok, but let us take a step back to ask the question, the more fundamental question about the role of religion. Because if I can answer the question on is there a need for religion, then you probably can see why... you probably can see what is the role of Hinduism is a person’s life.

The fundamental tenet is that in our daily lives, we do all sorts of activities, right? All sorts of actions are always geared towards a particular goal that you want to accomplish, right? From the time we get up from bed, to the time we go to sleep, our lives revolve around actions, what we call Karma. And these actions are always towards a particular outcome. In Hinduism, what is taught is that... the goal, what is achieved from a particular result is dependent on your input. The activities that you carry out, the quality of that action, that will determine the output.
But we all know, not all outcomes are totally dependent on the input. There are hosts of other factors that determine the outcome of a particular action, right? Let’s say, since you are students, you may study very hard, correct? Put in all the effort... does that guarantee you an A? It’s again a problem of probabilities. If you study very hard and study properly, there’s a high probability, but again that’s a probability, there’s no absolute assurance. There’s this host of dimensions that is beyond your control. For example, you may meet with some tragedy on the way to the exam hall. You may blank out at the exam. The question that you spotted never came out. A lot of other factors. You may fall sick on the day of the paper, right? And not have a clear mind to write the paper. Host of other factors. What determines these factors? Are they all left to chance? Is it a random component that determines all the outcomes?

Hinduism says no. It says that all the things that you perceive as not being within your control, as things that are outside your control, is actually determined by this unknown element, which is God. And what is the basis for these things to influence you in a favorable or unfavorable way, again, is not God’s choice. Because then, that will make God bias. It’s what we call the law of Karma, alright? Where a good action that you do can eventually come back to you as a favorable situation at some other point in time, and likewise, a particular bad action can come back to you as an unfavorable event at some other point in time. So basically, whatever happens to me is a consequence of what I have done earlier.

So how does it link to religion? What prayers and worship? What it means to... as a Hindu, if I worship and lead a righteous life, a life deemed by the Hindu scriptures, I’m going to gradually produce lots and lots of good... what we call, good Karma. Which is going to come back to me as good events, favorable situations. And I am going to less and less... there’s lesser likelihood of me running into unfavorable situations and unfavorable events.

So how does this whole jigsaw fit in then? So while I can do my action today, without Hindu without religions, this domain that is outside my control is entirely left to chance. Whereas with religion, with Hinduism, I’m able to influence even this aspect of it. Which is normally something considered outside my domain, or something left to chance. So it becomes holistic. So I can determine the type of life I desire. If I want a happy life, a life that is without any unforeseen, unfavorable things happening to me, I live a life as a Hindu, following what is written on the scriptures. Then the chances of unfavorable things happening to me, and likewise leads to unhappiness naturally, is minimized, you see.

That will probably explain what I meant earlier on when I said that the whole idea of Hinduism is to be happy. Because all of us want to be happy actually, right?
You mentioned something about input. It made me think of what the sisters in Klang... I know you won’t be commenting on this... but it just made me think of what they are doing. You mentioned that it’s not only the input that matters, that leads to the output, but there’s also host of other factors. So if for example, I mentioned before that there are sisters in Klang who goes to the temple. Although the money that they take from... the money that they give to the temple... other people may think it’s very dirty... so how does this...

Ok, let me give you a simple example. If I’m a robber, the Hindu scripture says that I should not rob people. Robbing is a bad karma. It’s going to being onto me bad consequences in some point in time. Unfavorable things are going to happen to me because of me carrying out a bad activity, alright?

So if I’m a robber, and I robbed and got the money... let’s say I want to behave like Robin Hood. I’m robbed and gave it to the poor. Hinduism also says that the money that you give to people for charity selflessly is going to bring your good, correct? So on one hand, in this case of the Robin Hood robber, on one hand he is ripping bad fruits, bad karma from stealing from innocent people. On the other hand, he is producing some form of good by not keeping it all to himself, by distributing to people. So that is really... really it depends on how much is the magnitude. How much of robbery does he do, and how much of distribution of wealth does he do? It really depends.

So I can’t say is there going to be a net gain, or a net loss. The point is, good actions will ripe good outcomes. Bad actions will ripe bad outcomes. So what is good and bad is what is mentioned in the Hindu scriptures. That should be the basis for a Hindu to live his life. So actions that are prescribed, that are advocated by the Hindu scriptures, are actions that will bring you good outcomes in the future.

And so back to my earlier point, it’s less likely, a person who lives a life that is in line with the Hindu scriptures, will consequently have less and less unforeseeable... sorry, unfavorable things happening to him because he lived a life that is in live with the scriptures. And such a person will naturally be happy. Because he is always getting favorable things happening to him, right?

So in simple terms, if in Christianity... or Catholics... they teach people that if you do something, you can do penance, you can regret about it and then you’ll get salvation. So in Hinduism, is there a form of this?

Yes, there is. It’s called Praichita Karma. It means that if I had unknowingly transgressed what is written in the Hindu scriptures. I mean, I did a bad act, something that is not advocated in the scriptures, I can do... it’s like a penance. It’s another activity that you can do to atone for this misgiving, over this wrongdoing. It can take the form of a prayer, a worship, a directed prayer to God, asking for forgiveness. It can be something as simple as that, or something more elaborate. I can even go to a temple, do a particular very
elaborate ritual, and pray and deliver a heartfelt prayer, asking for forgiveness. And then the consequence of that evil... that wrong deed, will be... eventually when it hits me, it will probably be mitigated or diluted altogether.

To draw the analogy about what you said about Christianity, yes it’s similar, and we call it Praichita Karma.

Let’s go back to Hinduism, because actually at the start of the documentary, we aim to give sort of like a simple way for people to understand... sort of like the whole happiness thing was a bit too much...

When we came to Klang, we stopped at a temple where there was one statue that one body and many heads.

That could just be a manifestation. But before I talk about gods, let me share with you what Hindu scriptures say about God and the universe. It is very important that you see that the particular scripture called the Mundaka Upanishad.

It gives the analogy of a spider producing a spider web. Unlike a bird that produces a bird’s nest, where it uses materials that are foreign, that is external to the bird, a spider doesn’t do that. A spider produces a web with materials that come entirely from within. So the web actually when it’s first produced, before the spider disconnects, that is, when the web is first produced, it’s just a naturally extension from the web. You can’t say that the web is different from the spider. So the Hindu scriptures use this analogy to explain God and its relation to the universe.

The universe is a manifestation of God. In other words, God did not use materials external to himself to produce the universe. The universe is a manifestation of God, just as the web is a manifestation of the spider. So God and the universe in that sense is not separate. They are not two entities.

So if you ask the question, are there many gods in Hinduism, of course the answer is no. Then if you were then to ask me, is there then one God in Hinduism, the answer is also no. The answer should be “There’s only God in Hinduism.”

So how does that explain all the different deities? These are all symbols. Remember deities, as I mentioned in our earlier interviews, deities, forms, images- they are all symbols. God, as I said, the entire universe is God. So God is someone, something that is all pervasive. For man, with his limited mind, to relate to this all pervasive abstract of God, is something very difficult. That is where symbols came into the picture. For men, to help men relate to God.

A simple example. When we play the National Anthem, we all stand up. We can’t trample on a flag right? It’s an offense. Burning the flag is a no-no. why so much of respect and adoration for that piece of cloth that is scarlet red and
white. Why? It’s actually an offense if you’re to do something to that piece of cloth that is painted red and white. Why? Because that piece of cloth that probably costs $5 or lesser, and painted red and white with crescent moon and five stars, it represent 4.5 million people. It represents all the values that you stand for, correct? It’s a representation of Singapore, that’s why it’s worthy of respect.

Likewise, all the symbols and the forms of deities that you see in Hinduism, are all representations of that one God. So why did it take these shapes and in so many forms is basically to help men to relate to God, just as we use the flag to relate to the nation. To relate our patriotism to the nation. Likewise, for man to relate to God and to show his devotion to God, these symbols and forms came about.

Why are they in such varied forms? Why can’t they be in singular form? That will probably be your question. Again, religion is something so personal. Our temperaments are different. Our tastes are different. You can relate to something in some particular way. I don’t relate the same way. Your favorite dish could be meat, mine could be fish. Or vegetables are whatever. We all relate differently. We all have different tastes. So likewise, spiritual being a very personal thing, we need to offer a menu for people to select the type or form that they can relate to. So that is why we have very quiet forms, for people of a very calm nature. We also have ferocious forms of God, for people of such a temperament to relate to God. There is no one glove fits all solution. So this is how the varied forms and symbols of deities came about in Hinduism. But all of them pointing to that one particular God, who’s also a manifestation of the entire universe.

The key point is that God and universe is not different, because if I say that there is only one God, then there is one God and a universe. Which means the universe is not God. That is why I said that the answer to your question is that there would not be only one God, the answer is there is only God.

Could you explain to us, you mentioned to us before in our meetings, that there may be different gods, and they may be portrayed as different genders, but actually there’s no such thing as gender in Hinduism. How do you explain transcending genders in Hinduism?

Because what you see as gods there are only actually only symbols, the common rules that you apply for humans don’t really apply there. Which is why it’s easy to explain a simple form of Lord Shiva, with half his body dedicated to the masculine aspect and the other half dedicated to the feminine aspect, because you must understand the symbols there are there for a purpose. To communicate a message to man on one hand, and also for man to relate in turn to God using that particular form.
So if you have this particular form which I just described, which is called Ardhanarishvara, is just to show that God comprises of both the masculine and the feminine aspects of all things, and that man and woman are just part of the entire universe. That both genders are equally important. So many such messages are communicated via that form.

The key point to remember in this whole transgender issue is that the deities you see there are to communicate a particular message to the devotee, and likewise for the devotee to relate to that particular form. And to understand the real message of what they are trying to communicate is very important also... that the devotee goes back to the Hindu scriptures, to go back to them and find out the origins of these symbols and forms. Most of these forms, how they originated, they are traceable to various part of scriptures.

For example, say a particular form of... say Lord Ganesha, the elephant. You can trace back to a particular Purana where the form is explained, how this form came about is explained. So it’s very important that we go back to the source of these symbols and deities such that we can get the real meaning that they are trying to communicate, rather than to superimpose our own ideas of it. I can look at a particular form, and superimpose or read any meaning into it. It’s very easily done. It just requires a bit of imagination, a bit of intelligence. It can be done very easily.

So does that make it right? No, not at all. Like I said, Hindu knowledge and Hindu practices are all based on Hindu scriptures. So likewise, Hindu symbols, forms and deities... the information pertaining them is also likewise traceable to the Hindu scriptures. And it’s very important that we go back to these Hindu scriptures to find out the source, to find out the rationale that they are trying to communicate. This part is very important.

You mentioned earlier that these forms, these manifestations are there so that people can relate to them. So for example, going back to Lord Shiva being half men half female, where does the third gender fit in?

I do not recall, personally based on what I have studied, I do not recall... for example, that form of Shiva being related to third gender. I do not recall that.

But having said that, there are, as I mentioned to you in some of our earlier interviews, there examples of people of third gender appearing in some of the stories, as characters in the stories. This is common. Which also to show that such people did live in ancient Indian society. They did live alongside other people. For example, the Muhabara which talks about this character called Sigranbi, whose actually a warrior, and that person was actually a transgender.

So people relating to... Vishnu transforming into the most beautiful woman in the world when he... have you heard of this?

Yes, but transformation is something that is very common because lots of
these stories are mythological stories. Again, as I said, the rules that you apply on earth doesn’t really apply, because some of these stories are mythologies. So really, transformation is something that is very common, and having man transforming into a woman and vice-versa, is something to be expected. It’s just like flying. You can have them flying around from place to place, or even teleporting and stuff like that. So, as I said, does it mean that we can take that as a sanction for a particular type of behavior? Or worse still, read meanings into these things? I’m not too sure about it.

That’s why, my earlier point again, if we’re going to read things into it based on my own preference, based on my own personal likes and dislikes, then I am not doing, then I am not being fair to... how do I put it... if I were to read my own meanings into symbols, it means that I am being guided by my own likes and dislikes, and that’s not the right thing. Because the symbols are there based on authority, and that authority is the Hindu scriptures. So if I want to more about a particular form and what it is trying to tell me, I should go back to the scriptures, and produce the evidence from there.

So for example I try to interpret to say that, say a particular transformation of Vishnu into woman as you said, is because the form is trying to communicate something in the form of transgender issues. If somebody were to make such an assertion, my first question is, “Did you go back to the scriptures and check? Can you show me where in the scripture does it say this?” And if it does, I’m prepared to study the scriptures more in-depth. It’s probably more acceptable that way.

But today, based on what I’ve seen so far, I’ve not seen it relate back to the scriptures. The thing that should not be done is to impose our likes and dislikes and our own preferences on what we see around us. That would not be doing justice to the religion, and I don’t think that is the right thing to do. And worse still, to say that this is what Hinduism is trying to say. That’s a distortion in my view.

06:25- 06:35  All those books, those sociology books, when they say... I did forward an attachment, did you manage to read it?

06:35- 07:01  I don’t want to dismiss them immediately, because to be fair to them, I have to go and look at it. I have not really had the time to look at it. And I can’t say that I know all the scriptures fully. I have not studied all the Hindu scriptures. My only wish is that if someone wants to make such an assertion, please take out the Hindu scripture. Please show me where in the scriptures does it say these things, and I will gladly go along with it.

07:01- 07:06  So if a transgender comes into the Hindu Centre, how would you...

07:06- 07:18  A transgender is a human being, just like anyone of us. He’s to be respected just like anyone else.

07:18- 07:26  Could you explain to us what’s Hinduism’s stand on prostitution?
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07:26-07:56</td>
<td>Prostitution is not something that is advocated in Hindu scriptures. Hinduism as it is practiced today does not advocate prostitution, in today's society.</td>
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<td>07:56-07:59</td>
<td>Are there any specific parts in the Hindu scriptures where it explicitly says so?</td>
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<td>07:59-09:55</td>
<td>Later day scriptures, yes it does. There are some scriptures that do say. Because the other very important thing about Hinduism you must understand. About what makes Hinduism a dynamic religion. There are two types of Dharma. What we call common Dharma, which doesn’t change. This applies to fundamentals like robbing, lying, stealing... these righteous Dharma does not change with time. It’s something that is constant. Even a hundred years from now, nobody is going to say it is ok to lie. Nobody is going to say it is ok to hurt the person sitting across the table. A hundred years ago too, I guess it applied. I’m sure it applied. These things don’t change. But there’s another aspect called Vishishu Dharma, which changes, which evolves with time. For example, the way we dress. With this attire, I can walk into a Hindu temple today. Even as late as say... maybe about 60 or 70 years ago, with a T-shirt, I don’t think I’ll be allowed inside the temple. I’ll be frowned upon, they’ll throw me out. So this is an aspect of Hinduism which changes, which adapts. Society as a whole sets social norms for Hindus to follow. Hindu leaders sometimes spell out some of these behavioral norms, some of these quotes of conduct for Hindus to follow, which is called the Vishishu Dharma. So there are two parts: the unchanging part and the changing part. So this question which you’re asking, about prostitution pertains to the second part, which changes. And in today’s context, in today’s Hindu society, prostitution is something that is not allowed. It’s something that is frowned upon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:55-09:59</td>
<td>It belongs to the second one, which means before it was allowed?</td>
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| 09:59-11:11 | If I were to go back to the Hindu scriptures, there were times like the... the days of the kings. If you go back to the times when kings were allowed to have harems, and men were allowed to have many wives. It was something similar to that. I wouldn’t call it prostitution, but it was a case of what we called “common woman”. There were such things, and there were people who lived in societies like that. How much society accepted it, I’m not too sure. I’m not an expert on it, I’m not an expert on ancient Hindu laws, but I have come across some references to it. But again I’m not talking about the near past, I am talking about the distant past. So that is why I am saying that, this aspect of prostitution, whether it is acceptable in Hindu society, in today’s Hindu society, the answer is no. Because it pertains to a changing society. The changing aspect of Hindu Dharma. In today’s Hindu Dharma, prostitution is something that is not
allowed. Absolutely not.

**11:11- 11:50**

Going back to that issue, to us it’s pretty obvious. We’re not Hindus. We’re of different religions, and it’s obvious that no religion will tolerate prostitution. But in Hinduism itself, what does it violate actually? Is there like simple things that non-Hindus can understand, to explain the fact that why Hinduism does not tolerate prostitution?

Like I do understand when you explain there are two kinds of Dharma, but again, if we go back to how we would edit it...

**11:50- 12:37**

Ok, to go back to the question, I can’t make a statement about the scriptures, but I can make an inference. But again, this is a personal... my own personal inference. I want to make the distinction between what I say about the scriptures, and what I say as a personal comment that I make. It’s an inference that I make purely from my personal perspective.

It’s probably pertaining to sex. It’s how Hinduism views sex. Sex is something that should be done in the context of marriage. Sex is something that man and woman should enjoy in the framework of marriage. That is how Hinduism sees sex. Which is why pre-marital sex is also not condoned. So if you draw that extrapolation, you’ll see why Hinduism doesn’t fit in.

**12:49-13:06**

Is there anything other... you mentioned just now that if you do something good, even if you do something bad, if you’re doing it for the sake of others, it sorts of balances it out. But if you do it repeatedly...

**01:06- 13:45**

No no, I think you may have not understood me, or maybe I wasn’t clear enough. What I was trying to say is that... going back to the example of robbery people and giving it away, whatever good that is accrued from... look at it another way, whatever good that was accrued from giving away the money and charity and the poor, is lost. The good that’s accrued is lost. The money that came, was money that came via robbing, robbing innocent people. So that’s what I was trying to say. So you offset it.

**13:45- 14:08**

‘Cos actually, what I understood from you previous answer was... taking account into the input and output... then there will be a net... we won’t know the net loss or net gain... but the way you phrased your second answer was, whatever good that actually came from something bag, it’s negated because it came from something bad.

**14:08- 14:57**

No no, it’s not that way. Each is on its own. The good brings you good consequences, the bad brings you bad consequences. So what I was trying to say about the net is that, of course if I am doing exceptionally lots and lots of good Karma, and I’ve got a bit of bad, I’m going have a net good right? As oppose to the bad. This was the point I was trying to make.

So the intelligent way to live is to minimize bad Karma, which means that
includes robbery, stealing, violence, whatever, telling lies... basically really living a life that is in line with the Hindu scriptures. That is the life that is going to bring you good. And minimize the things that the scriptures condemn. So that’s what going to give you the net gain and the net happiness.

14:57- 15:10  This is going to sound totally off, to digress for a while... can anybody just build a temple? If I want to build a temple, what do I have to do?

15:10- 16:41  Can anybody build temples? Yea, why not, sure. In fact, they have this saying that every village, every city, every dwelling... village, should have a temple. You should not live in a village that does not have a temple.

There are no rules about building temples. There are no rules about who can build temples. But there are rules about how you should build a temple. You can’t just build it any way you like. There are scriptures that dictate how the Ophram should be built, what are the dimensions, there are some ratios... very very detailed rules. How the statues should be. I can’t just put any sculpture, I can’t just put a statue of me there in the temple, no you can’t do that.

The sculptures, there’s this Hindu scripture called Shilpa Stasha, which dictates how Hindu deities should be sculpted. Likewise, there are scriptures about what is the typical length-breadth, ratio should be. Very very detailed scriptures, all of which are available. And to today, the Hindu temples that you see in Singapore, almost all of them are actually built to those demanding rules. I can safely say that.

16:41- 16:58  How does a village, with presumably not very wealthy people, ascribe to such strict rules? Like the temple we see in Klang, doesn’t have a Gopram.

16:58- 17:55  Not all temples need to have a Gopram. Gopram is not mandatory, but the rules inside about length to breadth ratio, the deity, some of the critical dimensions, I really can’t remember all the details, you’ll have to follow.

But again, there’s nothing to stop... you do sometimes find.... I’m not too sure in Singapore, in the past in Singapore there used to be what’s roadside temples. People just come together, they will just put a deity there, and worship. These are temples that don’t follow rules. So there used to be some in the past, but overtime in Singapore, it became that when you want to have temples, you must have it registered as a society, submit accounts and stuff like that. You needed more management and organization of temples. So once there was proper organization and management and all that, naturally people supported it and funds flowed in and once you have funds you can construct the temple the way you want it.

17:55- 18:04  Regarding funds, there are no specifications in the Hindu scriptures? As in, where should the funds come from?

18:04- 18:44  Righteous means, of course. Because it’s counterintuitive to go build a temple,
to pray to god, to request to God to help me stay on the right path, and at the same time, then go a path that is contrary to Hindu scriptures, contrary to god’s way of life. You know, like rob people, get the money and build... it doesn’t makes sense right?

So you don’t even need a scripture to tell you that. It’s implicit.

**18:44- 19:13**

*When we spoke the previous time we met, that money from prostitution can just be any other money. It’s just money in the end. But then again, if the Hindu scriptures say it has to come from righteous means...*

**19:13- 21:34**

So let’s give an example, let’s say you’re building a temple now. I’m a robber. My wealth is earned through robbery. You want to build a temple, you’re requesting me for funds.

I’m going to dispense a certain portion of my wealth, I’m going to earn good Karma, because I’ve helped to construct a temple. The good Karma comes to me. You’re not going to know how I’ve amassed my wealth. You’re going to get good Karma because you went on soliciting funds. You’re going to get the good Karma from building the temple. I’m going to get good Karma for contributing to the temple. Both of us are going to get good karma.

But, I’m going to get bad Karma because I’ve robbed someone. The money is not important actually, the Karma is more important- the act. So I’ve so-called negated the good act with the bad act. You did not.

Both of us did good acts, if all else being equal, your net gain is going to be that good act, whereas I’m not going to have a net gain because I’ve negated it with a bad act.

So it’s actually not from the temple’s perspective, you look at it from the individual’s perspective. As an individual, everyone should aspire to have net good deeds, as a net outcome in his life. So we should minimize our bad deeds, and maximize our good deeds. I may be an engineer working in a profession. The money I earn is of righteous means. Does it mean that everything I do Is from Hindu scriptures?

Probably not. There may be things we’re doing that is in line with Hindu scriptures. So I will accrued that karma, which will come back to me as perhaps, consequences. Likewise I’m doing good things as well, which will come back to us in future circumstances.
### Interview With Mr. Rama

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<tr>
<th>Time code</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17:25-21:13</td>
<td>My family.</td>
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<td>21:13-21:43</td>
<td>To me, I’m Hindu. They have the Hindu temple.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21:43-22:23</td>
<td>Very happy. I’m very very very happy. First thing, I want to tell you something. Are you Christian, Are you Buddhist? Doesn’t matter. You go for prayers once a week or not? Ok. Why do you go to church? To pray to God isn’t it? Now God is beside me only. You are going somewhere, I don’t know how far you need to travel, you need to travel to see the god. I’m gifted to have a temple beside me</td>
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<td>22:23-22:58</td>
<td>I’m gifted to have a temple beside me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22:58-23:46</td>
<td>As a Hindu, Hindu (referring to the temple), everyday, prayers are going on, what I feel is that the vibration is with my house also. Whatever they have, the prayers, anything, the vibration is in our house also. So I’m very happy.</td>
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<td>23:46-24:29</td>
<td>The temple is very small, first of all the temple is very small. Actually it’s not a temple. It’s a house. They are doing their prayers in some sort like a house. Temple is very small. The crowd gathering, if I’m not mistaken 15 to 20 thousand people. So they need some cooking. They don’t have the space. They don’t have a place to do the cooking. So my wife and the lady is very close. Just ask, akai, can cook here or not, Then straight away, I say no problem, whatever you want to use, use. How many days you want to use, use. Doesn’t matter. I’m very happy. Simple as that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:29-25:31</td>
<td>Cause you see ah, we are doing this for the god only. Am I correct or not? To me, we need to help each other, especially for humans lah. And the second lah, god created us, so it’s a help to god. And they are doing charity, the food, it’s not for themselves. The food they cook, they give to the public, when people come for the (celebration), see it’s some sort of charity. So I’m just a helping hand to them, that’s all. Through my wife, not me. I won’t do anything. My wife will do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25:31-26:04</td>
<td>First of all, you must understand, they like it or not? They don’t like it, to be ah.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26:04-26:33</td>
<td>They also human. They themselves, don’t like to be like them. Like ah.. god created them like that. What do you call, hormone problem. Am I correct or not, it’s a hormone problem. You see, it has happened to my family member, it’s created by god. If you ask why, how? There’s no answer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26:33-26:53</td>
<td>Don’t know how to say, but what I feel, like for example, in my family, if there’s one family member, almost something like that, ah, we should, what do you call, we shouldn’t leave them to mix with these type of people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26:53-27:04</td>
<td>What I mean is we should get together with him, don’t insult him, give more love to him, before she, before he become a her (laughs)</td>
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Transcription:

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- **21:43-22:23**: Very happy. I’m very very very happy. First thing, I want to tell you something. Are you Christian, Are you Buddhist? Doesn’t matter. You go for prayers once a week or not? Ok. Why do you go to church? To pray to God isn’t it? Now God is beside me only. You are going somewhere, I don’t know how far you need to travel, you need to travel to see the god. I’m gifted to have a temple beside me.
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- **22:58-23:46**: As a Hindu, Hindu (referring to the temple), everyday, prayers are going on, what I feel is that the vibration is with my house also. Whatever they have, the prayers, anything, the vibration is in our house also. So I’m very happy.
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- **25:31-26:04**: First of all, you must understand, they like it or not? They don’t like it, to be ah.
- **26:04-26:33**: They also human. They themselves, don’t like to be like them. Like ah.. god created them like that. What do you call, hormone problem. Am I correct or not, it’s a hormone problem. You see, it has happened to my family member, it’s created by god. If you ask why, how? There’s no answer.
- **26:33-26:53**: Don’t know how to say, but what I feel, like for example, in my family, if there’s one family member, almost something like that, ah, we should, what do you call, we shouldn’t leave them to mix with these type of people.
- **26:53-27:04**: What I mean is we should get together with him, don’t insult him, give more love to him, before she, before he become a her (laughs).
It's created by God, I don't know. If you ask that question, I don't know how to answer. But I feel very pity on them.

But the Indian people are very scared of them. They believe, half of their body is man. Half of their body is woman. You are woman, I'm a man, but they are both. They are more powerful. From their tongue, whatever they say, people believe. Whatever they say, it will happen. So don't go and involve yourselves with their curse. It can happen, it can become true.

I'm a man, you're a woman, they are both you know. They already start their life when they are men, and at the middle, they start their life as a woman. In the community, right now, there are people who have been accepted already. Even their IC also, the name can be changed you know? No more man name. Woman name. I got to view few people's IC. Their name all changed already. That means the government accept them as one of the community members. But I don't know they put under what category lah.

They used to complain. For us, not toilet lah (laughs), no place. When to sit, when cannot. Woman also not accept, what to do?

Beside their house, how many festival I've been, I've gone through. For example, this temple they build for public. These people built the temple, not for them but for the public. On the festival day only, the crowd will gather. Normal days, one or two people come in for the prayers. I don't know if you ask me why, I'll say I don't know.

If you ask, personal view, during the festival only, they come and join, enjoy and get together. But after that I see, a very poor response. Poor response from the public to come and join and make time to do the prayers. Very poor response. You ask why, I don't know why. Because I didn't join with them. I'm a neighbour, I feel there's no difference, so we feel like they are one of our family. One of our members lah. Their friends. But outside people, very less coming to this temple.

I'm very close to them. I'm a neighbour. I've stayed here for forty years. Their family from the beginning, I know them very well. So how to get away from them? Let's say they have prayers, how to say, Aka, I'm very sorry, I'm going overseas. At this sort of time, its very irritating and try to avoid their arrangement of the function?

But if you ask about the community, get together with these people, it's very poor. You can see, maybe here they open their mouth and say something. If you see outside, sometimes they, what do you call, disturb them, some sort like that. It's still happening.

In fact when I was still schooling, I used to disturb them (laugh) If you ask me how I disturb them, you're asking me to open my mouth and say vulgar words ah? (laughs)

When I'm seventeen, eighteen years old, you know lah that time is enjoying time. When we get together, and see these type of people, we disturb them. (says some phrases). They also will curse us you know? They open their mouths, they will have a
See, when I drink beer, in front of my daughter and family, drinking beer is not a dirty thing, if you want you can join me. So if there’s a festival, how to go and join them?

PHd on vulgar words. But don’t disturb them.

While their festival is going on, the youth and youngsters do not join with them. They come and see the girls, tease them, hey hi, who something like that. For them, wah, pondan ah, very nice, beautiful, something like that. They came here, not to join the festival, as its happening in other temples.

Minimum, people coming for this festival to enjoy and see the girls, you know how hey dress, they also come and tease with the boys… very difficult to say lah please.

Some boys came here just to disturb them and some of my friends, sometimes, they used to call me and ask, hey, when they have the pondan festival? Pondan festival, when ah, when? See? That means in their mind, it’s already set that it’s a pondan festival. It’s naturally very difficult to change themselves. You see I change because I’m staying here, as a neighbour to them. If I’m staying away from them, and I see them, wherever I see them, maybe I’ll also disturb them.

I’m here for 40 years. Beside my house is this temple.

If you ask me now, Now I’m aged already, I’m married already. In the bachelor life, it’s different. Married life is different. When you marry, you will think about them, pity the, they also human lah. They also are part of our family. If it happened to one of our family members, how would we feel? So in such a way we think, we have set our minds, we should accept them as our family members, we pity them. Sometimes I explain to the boys, pity them, why you come to disturb them?

They have to change themselves, their mind have to change. What I personally think is, (that they are) not accepted by the community hundred percent.

What they should do, they shouldn’t do the negative job. Mainly what they are doing, prostitution. If they didn’t do that, I can bet with you, they will be accepted by the wider community.

Why you choose like that? You see in the world, there are so many ways to earn money you know? So many ways. It should be the worst, the last. Prostitution is the last for me. If you ask me, better you commit suicide lah. They choose the last. And some of the bapos choose working in the clinic, working in a legal firm, I heard lah.

See? Try to change your profession, it can change your lifestyle of your people and you can mix with the communities.

If it’s my daughter, sixteen to seventeen years old, I definitely won’t allow my daughter to talk to them. Reason, she’s a prostitute. She’s a prostitute. Maybe she came here and she did prayers, perfect, great. I’m very scared. I’m not saying they will convince my daughter, no. Don’t give curiosity to my daughter’s head, why are they doing this? She will think that it means there is nothing wrong doing prostitution.

See, when I drink beer, in front of my daughter and family, drinking beer is not a dirty thing, if you want you can join me. So if there’s a festival, how to go and join them?
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<tr>
<td>42:58-43:23</td>
<td>I’m very ashamed to inform my brother and my uncle, hey, come we have a festival, come and join. Very ashamed. Once they come here and see these people, Aiyoh, what type of people lah, I know all of them doing prostitution in Klang town, how will I feel?</td>
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<td>43:23-43:47</td>
<td>They have to change their profession, it can change the whole lifestyle of their community. As long as you never change your profession, they also encourage new members to do the same thing, prostitution.</td>
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<td>43:47-45:25</td>
<td>See, everybody doesn’t like. Your neighbour is the prostitute people, definitely you’ll never let your family members to mix with them. Shame and scared. Even though you respect them, what to do, their source of income is like that, but it’s true. If you ask me one question, why is there a very big gap between the normal community and their community, the reason is prostitution. If you want to see them, you go to Klang town. Sexy sexy (another phrase) They wear Sari. Sexy. 2 piece cloth, one piece cloth, see ah, everybody knows. As a neighbour, if I stay, 5 or 6 kilometers away, definitely, I won’t come to this temple. Not to say that I hate this people, It’s hard to explain. It’s natural lah. When you feel that something is wrong, you won’t mix with these people, and try to avoid them.</td>
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<td>45:25-45:44</td>
<td>Their profession is the cause of their problem, not gender, not their sex.</td>
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<td>45:44-46:36</td>
<td>They call new members, to do the same thing. They have the meeting here.</td>
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<td>46:36-48:46</td>
<td>Adopt son, adopt daughter, one two three four five, until twelve, you don’t know anything about it, thirteen fourteen ,little bit she knows. What is our mother doing ah? 16 17, how to inform their friends, she’s my mother. When my mother is a prostitute? She will be away from her parents. I always tell my wife, I pity them. Why do they go and simply adopt children? When they grow, seventeen, 18 years old, definitely they won’t introduce their parents to their lovers. They are very shy. If possible they will run away and get a new lifestyle. Because they know their parents are doing that.</td>
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<tr>
<td>48:46-49:33</td>
<td>I respect them, because they are all created by god. Not that they like to, if not all</td>
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women would want to join them, every man would also want to become man
woman. It’s naturally a hormone problem. They have an excess of woman hormone in
their body or something like that. So from my deep heart, I pity them. I always pray to
god that there won’t be any like them in my family members. Tough life. Tough.

49:33-50:16 Unless, it happened, let’s say my son, don’t let them join these people. We shouldn’t
courage them. These people will like pick you know? They will pick. Ah, you are like
our group member, they say the way they walk, this and that, they will convince
you, they will get to know you, come and join, they will convince you. We don’t need
to encourage our children. Automatically, their bodies are encouraging them to come
with them.

50:16-50:47 The members they say they like you know. I can see, most of the boys, on the festival
day, they wear sari, they do makeup. Actually they haven’t changed themselves. Real
men, real men, but hormone problem. But when the festival is on, they (do) makeup
and come. They do the makeup, sexy sexy, then after three days can see them in the
market, jeans and t-shirt (laughs).

already like them, at the same time, like their profession also. It’s so sad, I pity them.

51:28-52:06 But all of them, all of them got a lot of money. All of them. I become a pimp you
know, ten members, ten rooms, something like they are doing business. The lady one
is a pimp you know? The chief one, pimp. Under them is ten to fifteen rooms. They
hire a building, make like a ten rooms, then ten people go on a...

52:06-52:25 That means you already spoil ten people’s life already. I hire ten girls for the ten
rooms. So for each of them I don’t know how much they collect lah. But they have the
collection. Very good money.

52:25-53:11 That’s why, some community people don’t like them (running a temple and running a
brothel) They are doing prostitution, and coming here like a.. wear sari everything,
like a (phrase), how to ... (laugh), morning they have the prayers, evening they have
the prayers, (verb that they do).. one piece cloth then (cannot hear properly) (laugh)

53:11-53:49 Why they choose? But in the public, everybody insult them. Pondan ah, keep poindan
you spoil morning, my staff lah, please, the mind already- everybody corrupted
already...

53:49-57:26 When I go for drinks and I chit chat, people will say, hey, my wife, that office got one
pondan you know, everyday giving free service. See? Group mind you know? It
happens, that’s why people come and start talking. Why do that? Very difficult. Quite
pity them.

Now festival going on, I’m here, so I join with them. And one more brother, we join.
Others won’t come. Come lah. Hah. Hih. Pondan festival you ask me to join ah. In their
mind, these people are already (cannot hear properly) very difficult. That’s why I said I
pity them.
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<tr>
<td>57:26-59:29</td>
<td>I’m very close, but at the same time, I draw a line. Festival time, I open lah. Cause festival everyone want to go to come and do the.. Other than festival, I always tell my wife, I don’t like these people to come to my house. If there is a function going on, it doesn’t matter. When there’s something special going on, doesn’t matter. Personally, even though I’m very close with them, at the same time, my mind is also set. Don’t mix with them all the time. It’s dangerous.</td>
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<td>59:29-59:39</td>
<td>They respect the god, they believe in god, everything I agree. God is for the public. They built the temple for the public. They want everybody to come and have their prayers, they want everybody to come. But during the festival only they come in.</td>
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### Interview With Ms. Vijaya

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<tr>
<td>54:24- 56:55</td>
<td>My name is Vijaya Lakshmi. I’m staying at the lorong just behind the temple. We help with the cooking and cleaning. We cook, especially for important occasions like the full moon. We come and help out, and we take part in the prayers too.</td>
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<tr>
<td>57:00- 57:32</td>
<td>We’ve been attending this temple for about three years now, the temple heads and the committee asked us to come and help out</td>
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<tr>
<td>57:35- 57:39</td>
<td>When it comes to God we go to all the temples, so this temple is right next door, so we decided to help.</td>
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<td>59:03- 59:31</td>
<td>(Whether or not they are doing such jobs, we wouldn’t know. Once they step into the temple – for example, normal women like us, when we enter the temple, we just wear Punjabi suits – but they are more cultured and traditional than us. They come in dressed in saris, with flowers in their hair, and pottu on their foreheads When they mix with us, they are very affectionate and respectful. You see, their job is outside the temple. When they come into the temple, they’re not like that. We are all one soul. Once they enter the temple grounds, they are very devotional – they only have God on their mind.</td>
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</table>
| 01:35- 02:29 | **Are people changing their opinions about the transsexuals because of this temple? Is the temple helping to change people’s mindsets?**  
Yes. By coming to this temple, they get to interact with everyone. Actually your questions remind me of myself last time. I too used to laugh at them. But only when I got a chance to talk and interact with them, did I start to empathize with them. They too are souls – people who love. We shouldn’t think badly of them. When the festival goes on, we all interact, and we experience their love for us and each other. |
| 02:29- 03:13 | Their occupations – that is their personal choice. But when it comes to the temple, they are doing so much. Every one of them. This Jegamada Goddess is for everyone. You see, God does not belong to any specific group of people – He belongs to all of us.  
That is true love – unselfish love.  
Their occupation is their own business. But when it comes to the temple, they’re doing so much. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 05:11-05:40 | If you see the way they dance and sing to the devotional songs, the way they perform our culture, we also will be taken aback. We are natural women you see, so we don’t have the desire to dress and wear flowers the way they do. It’s because it’s only halfway that they got a chance to become female that they are so into performing their femininity – wearing flowers, pottu and sari. When you see that, you’ll feel as if the Goddess herself has come down.  

People ask why do they have to dress so exuberantly, with so much make-up etc. It’s because they have to make up for their having been born as men, so they go the extra mile to perform their femininity – so, Excess make-up is literally “making up” for masculine appearance with excessive femininity. |
Appendix E: Location and Appearance Releases

Location Permission Form

Anna Karenina, JacQuinn Chai, Lai Ka Hei and Ng Yiling
BLK 237 Serangoon AVE 3 #05-116
Singapore 550237

I ________________________, being the owner of/lessee of/duly authorized person in relation to the site (circle one) grant permission to Anna Karenina, JacQuinn Chai, Lai Ka Hei and Ng Yiling to record audio and video on dates to be agreed upon between us at ________ (name of location) for following programmes: "We are not 9s" (working title) as part of their final year project in the School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University.

Claims arising from accident and/or damage will be settled and negotiated between the authorized person at this facility and the producers named above.

I acknowledge that I have no title or interest in the sound recording at this location. I further agree that you may use and license others to use the program in which this location appears, in all media and in the promotion of the Program an unlimited number of times.

Name:  

Signature

Position – if signing on behalf of company, organization or government department

NRIC:

Address

Tel/HP:

Date

Witnessed by:

Signature

NRIC:

Address

Tel/HP:

Date
Location Permission Form

Anna Karenina, JacQuinn Chai, Lai Ka Hei and Ng Yiling
BLK 237 Serangoon AVE 3 #05-116
Singapore 350237

I, N. Muthu, being the owner or lessee of/duly authorized person in relation to the site (circle one) grant permission to Anna Karenina, JacQuinn Chai, Lai Ka Hei and Ng Yiling to record audio and video on dates to be agreed upon between us at Sri Bo-Futhrachhi Aliqom Temple (name of location) for following programme: “We are not 9s” (working title) as part of their final year project in the School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University.

Claims arising from accident and/or damage will be settled and negotiated between the authorized person at this facility and the producers named above.

I acknowledge that I have no title or interest in the sound recording at this location. I further agree that you may use and license others to use the program in which this location appears, in all media and in the promotion of the Program an unlimited number of times.

Name: N. Muthu

Position – if signing on behalf of company, organization or government department

NRIC:

Address

Tel/HP: 

Date

Witnessed by:

NRIC:

Address

Tel/HP:

Signature

Date
Appearance Release Form

Anna Karenina, JaeQuinn Chai, Lai Ka Hei and Ng Yiling
BLK 237 Serangoon AVE 3 #05-116
Singapore 550237

I authorize Anna Karenina, JaeQuinn Chai, Lai Ka Hei and Ng Yiling to make use of my appearance for the following programme: “We are not 9s” (working title) as part of their final year project in the School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University.

I agree that you may record my image, voice, conversations and sounds, including any performance of any musical composition(s) in connection with my appearance. I understand that you shall be the exclusive owner of the final audio programme throughout the world.

I further agree that you may use and license others to use my name, voice and any biographical material concerning me which I may provide, in any and all media promotion, advertising, publicizing and sale of the Programme and/or otherwise throughout the world, in all media, an unlimited number of times in perpetuity.

I further represent that any statements made by me during my appearance are true, to the best of my knowledge, and that neither they nor my appearance will violate or infringe upon the rights of any third party.

I hereby waive any right of inspection or approval of my appearance or the uses to which such appearance may be put. I acknowledge that you will rely on this permission potentially, at substantial cost to you and hereby agree not to assert any claim of any nature whatsoever against anyone relating to the exercise of the permissions granted hereunder.

Name: [Signature]
NRIC: 620522-10-5449
Address: 504 - S. Jalan Kedon, 1610311
Tel/HP: 019- 2-207184

I am a parent (guardian) of the minor who has signed this release and consent and I hereby agree that I and the said minor will be bound by all the provisions contained herein.

Name: ______________
NRIC: ______________
Signature: ______________
Date: ______________
Appearance Release Form

Anna Karenina, JacQuinn Chai, Lai Ka Hei and Ng Yiling
BLK 237 Serangoon AVE 3 #05-116
Singapore 550237

I authorize Anna Karenina, JacQuinn Chai, Lai Ka Hei and Ng Yiling to make use of my appearance for the following programme: "We are not 90" (working title) as part of their final year project in the School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University.

I agree that you may record my image, voice, conversations and sounds, including any performance of musical composition(s) in connection with my appearance. I understand that you shall be the exclusive owner of the final audio programme throughout the world.

I further agree that you may use and license others to use my name, voice and any biographical material concerning me which I may provide, in any and all media promotion, advertising, publicizing and sale of the Programme and/or otherwise throughout the world, in all media, an unlimited number of times in perpetuity.

I further represent that any statements made by me during my appearance are true, to the best of my knowledge, and that neither they nor my appearance will violate or infringe upon the rights of any third party.

I hereby waive any right of inspection or approval of my appearance or the uses to which such appearance may be put. I acknowledge that you will rely on this permission potentially, at substantial cost to you and hereby agree not to assert any claim of any nature whatsoever against anyone relating to the exercise of the permissions granted hereunder.

Name: SHELLITA VAADSHAWY
NRIC: 4006615146381
Address: 
Tel/HP: 666446630891

Signature

Date: 21/11

I am a parent (guardian) of the minor who has signed this release and consent and I hereby agree that I and the said minor will be bound by all the provisions contained herein.

Name: 
NRIC: 
Signature: 
Date: 

116
நல்ல நல்லத

நல்ல நல்லத, Anna Karenina, JacQuinn Chai, Lai Ka Hei and Ng Yiling-ங்கு “We are not 9s”
(working title) ரோட்டோ டெக்டுலோ யாக் கொள்ள செலுத்துகிறார் School of Communication and Information at
Nanyang Technological University-தோட்டோ யாக் கொள்ள செலுத்துகிறார் காற்றமலோ கலாச்சார கவலோ காற்றியலோ.

சுருக்குமலோ பிள்ளை, எராமலோ, தனை பாதிக்கவும், என்ற முறையிலே விளையாட்டு
சுருக்குமலோ யாராக அமர்க்கின்றன போளோயானோ, என்று போன்றோ பிள்ளை பாதிக்கின்ற
பிள்ளை அனைத்தும் அனிச்சாத்தும். போன்றோ யாராக உள்ளூரோ பிள்ளை பாதிக்கின்ற
சுருக்குமலோ தனை பாதிக்கவும் விளையாட்டு அனிச்சாத்தும் யாராக பிள்ளை பாதிக்கின்ற

பிள்ளை, முடிக்குமலோ கைப்பற்றோ, விளையாட்டு, அச்சிராணாணானாநோ மிகுதிக் கோயில்
ஏற்றுமலோ அனிச்சாத்து சுருக்குமலோ போலோ, கூம்பு புகழ் அனைத்தும் அனிச்சாத்து பிள்ளை
சுருக்குமலோ முடிக்குமலோ விளையாட்டு அனிச்சாத்தும் யாராக பிள்ளை பாதிக்கின்ற

பிள்ளைத் தில்லிகளை விளையாட்டு அனிச்சாத்து முடிக்குமலோ ஏற்றுமலோ அனிச்சாத்தும், கூம்பு புகழ்
முடிக்குமலோ விளையாட்டு அனிச்சாத்தும் சுருக்குமலோ விளையாட்டு அனிச்சாத்தும் யாராக

சுருக்குமலோ விளையாட்டு அனிச்சாத்து முடிக்குமலோ விளையாட்டு அனிச்சாத்தும் பிள்ளை
சுருக்குமலோ விளையாட்டு அனிச்சாத்தும் பிள்ளை சுருக்குமலோ விளையாட்டு அனிச்சாத்தும் பிள்ளை
பொருள்: ஹார்லின்

எண்ணிக்கை: 016-2 314824

கொஞ்ச, ஒவ்வொரு வண்ணம்/போர்னவர்/பார்னாவர், ஒவ்வொரு கான்விதா அளிக்கு மின்னான்றாளும் பதிப்புகளையும் அளிக்கும் வருகையும் அளிக்கிறோம்.

பொருள்: 

எண்ணிக்கை: 

கருவை: 

எண்ணிக்கை: 

தெரியவும் காய்ச்சலம் வரும் +031688885

பொருள்: 

எண்ணிக்கை: 7385508 

எண்ணிக்கை: 21-1-2011

தெரியவும் 

எண்ணிக்கை: 504 I Lorong Kelapa

பொருள்: 

எண்ணிக்கை: 

தெரியவும் 

எண்ணிக்கை: 

பொருள்: 

எண்ணிக்கை: 

தெரியவும் 

எண்ணிக்கை:
M. Parameswary

மொழி: யூனூஸுரோமின் காலம் பெறியுள்ளார்.

ஏப்ரல் 31, 2018 - 03/18

சூரி: 21/01/2011

பேருடைய குறிப்பிட்டு வெளியானது 631238

தொடர்பு குற்றுநோய் கோரின் 0121325432

பேருடைய, மேல் வருணிப்பட்டு சேர்க்கப்பட்டு, இவ்வுறுத்தல் அநேகத் தற்போது ஆண்டுரையில் புரிந்துகொள்ளாது ஆற்றலுடன் செய்யப்படும் அரசியல்விளக்காக.

மொழி: 

சூரி: 

ஏப்ரல் 31, 2018 - 03/18

விஜயலக்கிரம்

மொழி: தென்றுசேர்ந்து

சூரி: 

ஏப்ரல் 31, 2018 - 03/18

பேருடைய, மேல் வருணிப்பட்டு சேர்க்கப்பட்டு, இவ்வுறுத்தல் அநேகத் தற்போது ஆண்டுரையில் புரிந்துகொள்ளாது ஆற்றலுடன் செய்யப்படும் அரசியல்விளக்காக.

மொழி: 

சூரி: 

ஏப்ரல் 31, 2018 - 03/18
Appendix F - Copyright Clearance for Non-Original Materials

Copyright for Use of Music

From: Rupak (slike@rocketmail.com)
Sent: 16 April 2011 09:31AM
To: AnnaKarenina Tolentino (clandestinexistence@gmail.com)
Cc: Kahei Lai (lovef4lovef4lovef4@hotmail.com)

Yes you have my exclusive permission to use the 2 tracks composed for the film nine.

Please let me know if there is anything else needed from my side.

--- On Sat, 16/4/11, AnnaKarenina Tolentino <clandestinexistence@gmail.com> wrote:

From: AnnaKarenina Tolentino <clandestinexistence@gmail.com>
Subject: copyright
To: "Rupak" <slike@rocketmail.com>
Cc: "Kahei Lai" <lovef4lovef4lovef4@hotmail.com>
Date: Saturday, 16 April, 2011, 9:22 AM

Hi Rupak,

Would you be able to send us an email regarding you giving us the permission to use your composed music for the video? for the two tracks?

just to clear the copyright..

Please send it to Kahei, ccd above
Help for sex reassignment video

Ng Yiling reallyamused@gmail.com 25 March 2011 23:36
To: pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk

Hi Veronique,
Thanks for your really prompt reply! This is a brief synopsis of my group's graduation project, a 20 minute documentary:

Hijras, otherwise known as Indian transgenders, are seen as neither men nor women. As men, they have undergone many difficulties before they transform into women. But even after this transformation, they are still not considered women and are rejected by society. This documentary tells their story as they build a temple, a community of their own and seek solace in this new family and their god, Bahuchara Mata.

We have interviewed two hijras based in Malaysia for our documentary and shared their stories on becoming a woman. They spoke about their sex reassignment surgery (SRS) in great detail in the interviews for our documentary. As the documentary cannot consist of just our interviewees talking to the camera, we have a lack of visuals to support the information they provided on the operation. We found your video on sex reassignment surgery in Youtube and the photographs were what we need in the film. We would like to seek your permission in using some of your photographs in our documentary. Just for your information, the documentary will be screened at my school's graduation showcase and we do plan to enter the film in film festivals in future.

As we have received no funding for our documentary, we are on a tight budget. We may be unable to provide payment for the photographs used but we are more than happy to credit you in our documentary.

Do feel free to contact me if you need more information about our project. We could give you an idea of what they shared with us in the interview and how we will use the image.
Thanks again and hope to hear from you soon!

Best,
Yiling

Pantau <pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk> 26 March 2011 00:38
To: Ng Yiling reallyamused@gmail.com

Thanks for your explanation. I did hear about transsexual girls from Indian origin living in Singapore. I wish you a lot of success with your project and please let me know if I can be of assistance.
On Fri, 25/3/11, Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com> wrote:
From: Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Help for sex reassignment video
To: "Pantau" <pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk>
Date: Friday, 25 March, 2011, 21:57

[Quoted text hidden]

---

Ng Yiling reallyamused@gmail.com 27 March 2011 10:38
To: Pantau <pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk>

Hi Pantau,
Thanks for your kind attention in this. My apologies if I’m being too direct, my group mates and I were hoping that you could grant us permission to use your sex reassignment surgery images in our documentary. I could send you a copy of the interview transcript if you like to see how we would use the images in the segment. The images are to give them a better idea of what goes on during the surgery. We will definitely credit you in the documentary so that the audience would not have a false impression that the pictures are taken by us. Thank you again for your help.

Best,
Yiling
[Quoted text hidden]

---

Pantau pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk 29 March 2011 19:12
To: Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com>

Sure you can use this video. I wish you good luck!

With kind regards / Sawasdee kaa / Tashi delek / Met vriendelijke groeten Pantau (a.k.a .Veronique F.C. Renard)
Please visit my website at www.pantau.org

--- On Sun, 27/3/11, Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com> wrote:

From: Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Help for sex reassignment video
To: "Pantau" <pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk>
Date: Sunday, 27 March, 2011, 8:08

[Quoted text hidden]

---

Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com> 29 March 2011 19:52

---
To: Pantau <pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk>  

Hi Pantau,  
Thank you for allowing us to use the video! We just like to check with you that all the images in the video are yours because we don't want to use them without the owner's permission and run into copyright issues.  
Another big favour to ask is if we are able to get a high resolution copy of the images. Our documentary is shot in high definition (HD) so we hope to get the best quality images possible.  

We will establish that the images are from you and we will credit you at the end of the documentary. We would need the photographs soon like by early next week because of our project's deadline.  

Sorry to trouble you with this. Thank you so much for your help. We really are grateful to you for allowing us to use the video.  

Best,  
Yiling  

---  

Pantau pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk  29 March 2011 23:07  
To: Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com>  

You can use my video. All photos and videos are mine. You need to get it from Youtube as I won't be able to send anything else to you.  

Good luck.  
With kind regards / Sawasdee kaa / Tashi delek / Met vriendelijke groeten  
Pantau (a.k.a .Veronique F.C. Renard) Please visit my website at www.pantau.org  

--- On Tue, 29/3/11, Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com> wrote:  
From: Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com>  
Subject: Re: Help for sex reassignment video  
To: "Pantau" <pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk>  
Date: Tuesday, 29 March, 2011, 17:22  
[Quoted text hidden]  

Ng Yiling reallyamused@gmail.com  7 April 2011 09:48  
To: Pantau <pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk>  

Hi Pantau,  
Thank you for allowing us to use your images from the YouTube video. We managed to get screenshots from our computer to put in our documentary.  

We would like to credit you in our documentary. So could you give us your full name or preferred name to appear in the credits?
Thank you again for your help!

Best,
Yiling

[Quoted text hidden]

---

Pantau pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk 7 April 2011 18:18
To: Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com>
Hi,

Good to hear that the doc is working out. You can use Pantau or Veronique Renard, I don't mind.

Good luck!
With kind regards / Sawasdee kaa / Tashi delek / Met vriendelijke groeten
Pantau (a.k.a. Veronique F.C. Renard) Please visit my website at www.pantau.org

--- On Thu, 7/4/11, Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com> wrote:
From: Ng Yiling <reallyamused@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Help for sex reassignment video
To: "Pantau" <pantauplan@yahoo.co.uk>
Date: Thursday, 7 April, 2011, 7:18
[Quoted text hidden]
Appendix G- Production Credits

Director
Anna Karenina Tolentino Valencia

Producers
Lai Ka Hei
Ng Yiling
Chai Jac-Quinn

Director Of Photography
Anna Karenina Tolentino Valencia

Line Producer
Santhiya Kulasakeran

Project Supervisor
Ms Lau Joon-Nie

Audio Recordist
Ng Yiling

Sound Design
Lai Kahei

Music
Rupak

Production Stills
Chai Jac-Quinn

Art Design
Chai Jac-Quinn

Logo Motif
~Falln~Brushes

Surgery Photos
Veronique F.C. Renard

Temple Photos
V. Ramakrishnan

Interviewees
Vijayalakshmi
M. Parameswary
R. Malathi
V. Ramakrishnan
Tamil Selvi
Sherila Vaarshany
Hanusha
Chandran
S. Ramesh

Translators
Santhiya Kulasakeran
Sangeeta Madasamy
Sharmila Thiruchelvam
Sivanessan
Serena Jebamani Caldwell

Technical Support
Vincent Teo
Tan Boon Huat
Tan Kia Fern
Yip Tok Foon
Muhammad Danial

Special Thanks:
Sri Powthiraachi Matha Alayam temple & priests
Anita & family
V. Ramakrishnan & family
Hindu Centre Singapore
S Ravendran
Audrey Kam
Derrick Goh
Chai Chin Hwa & Helen Goh
Chloe Christabella Tang
Appendix H- Press Kit Materials

Project Background Sheet

Inspiration for Project
This began as a topic on eunuchs in America, men who voluntarily cut off their sexual organs to prevent their sexual urges from controlling their lives. We wondered if such eunuchs were present in Singapore, and our research led us to the Hijras (Indian transsexuals). We were intrigued by the cultural and religious impact these Hijras have over the Hindu community - the irony that while they are categorized as “the untouchables”, they are at the same time seen as wielders of great power, able bestow blessings or curses at marriages or childbirths.

Challenges Faced
The main challenge was that given we were a group of four non-Indian girls, Hinduism proved to be a very foreign culture for us. We had to research on everything from scratch, and had difficulties evaluating the credibility of our resources. In addition, all our interviewees were Indian, and many of them could not speak English. As such, we had to be accompanied by a translator at all times, be it on our pre-production trips or during the actual interviews.

The Future
We intend to send this documentary for international film festivals. This includes the “Women Make Waves Film Festival 2011” held in Taiwan. One of the main subjects encouraged by the festival was “Queer Flame”, which celebrates gender beyond the binary of male and female. Our documentary falls well within this category.

Quotes from Project Members
“Many people think we are trying to make film about gender, prostitution or religion. But in the end, I think the film is about making a choice to be true to who you are.”
– Anna Karenina, Director

“Seeing how the Hijras have sacrificed so much to become a woman, I feel like I have taken being a woman for granted.”- Ng Yiling, Co-Producer

"It's amazing that we can find so many deeply religious Hindu transsexual living in Malaysia, a country populated by mainly Muslims.” – Chai Jac-Quinn, Co-Producer

“The Hijras were very friendly and were always ready to assist us in every way possible. I sincerely thank them for making this documentary possible.” – Lai Ka Hei, Co-Producer

This work was produced as final-year project in the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.
Video Fact Sheet

**Title of Project:**
Daughters of God

**Total Running Time:**
Approx 25:30 min

**Completion Date:**
April 14, 2011

**Logline:**
Hijras, or Indian transgenders, have often been looked down upon because of their gender “abnormality” and for their involvement in the sex trade. Even in their own Hindu caste system, they are classified as the “untouchables”. In this documentary, we seek to hear their side of the story- their deep devotion to religion, and their never-ending search for love and belonging.

**Synopsis:**
Situated in Klang, Malaysia, the Sri Powtheraachi Matha Alayam temple is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Bahuchara Mata, and is built and fully funded by the Hijra community after the statue of the goddess was rejected by other Hindu temples.

The temple is important to the Hijra community in many ways. At the basic level, it is a place of worship where the Hijras can reconcile with their religious sides. This is crucial for them as part of the Hindu community, where religion is a key essence of life.

On a deeper level, the temple serves as a connection point between the Hijras and the outside society. Since the building of the temple, non-Hijras have been attending processions at the temple as well. The documentary interviews patrons of the temple, as well as residents living near the temple, to hear their views as they reflect how the temple has affected their perception of the Hijras.

**Principle Crew Members:**
Director: Anna Karenina
Co-Producers: Ng Yiling
Chai Jac-Quinn
Lai Ka Hei

**Contact Information:**
Thousand Blooms Production
thousandblooms@gmail.com

*This work was produced as final-year project in the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.*
Sharlithavaarshany is a university degree holder. She is also a sex worker in the red-light district of Klang, Malaysia.

The priest of the Sri Powtheraachi Matha Alayam temple, performing a daily rite.

The founder of the temple M. Parameshwary (far right) with other transsexual patrons.
Transsexuals in the sex trade soliciting along the streets at night.

The Sri Powtheraachi Matha Alayam temple was formerly a residential house.

A night ritual held outside the temple.
The temple now houses the statue of Mata Bahuchara, the Hindu goddess worshipped by transsexuals.

Anusha, a transsexual, was physically abused by her ex-boyfriend.

The temple is largely funded by transsexuals who patronize the temple.
Appendix I- Producer’s Warranty

PRODUCER WARRANTY

I/We officially guarantee that:

i) The Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, NTU has the right to submit the following video project to festivals and competitions on my/our behalf;

ii) I/We, as producer[s] own or control all of the material contained in the video.

iii) Material submitted does not infringe upon or violate any copyright held by a third person or corporation.

Title of Project:

Daughters of God

Name of FYP Supervisor:

Lau Joon-Nie

Names and Signatures of Producer[s]:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lai Kahei</td>
<td></td>
<td>18/4/2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chai Jac-Quinn</td>
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<td>Ng Yiling</td>
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