



Kathakali ceremonial lamp

This lamp is placed down stage centre at the front of the stage on a silver tray for catching any drips. It is filled with Pure Coconut oil (aprox 200ml) which is solid form oil but when heated it forms in to a liquid oil.

The lamp is prepped with two cotton wicks (one up stage and one down stage) already soaked in the oil and is held in place by a couple of stones. The oil is heated up then pored in to the bowl of the lamp with the wicks.

When the kathakali performance starts (which is after the film) our Sage hand comes on stage and lights the lamp in front of the audience. This guy is the only person that touches the lamp and know exactly on how to light it. He has done this many many times.

He uses a match stick to light a long wick of which again is soaked in the coconut oil off stage. When the match stick has been finished with it gets put in to a cup of cold water then gets thrown in to the bin. Then when it's time he goes over to lamp and lights it from his wick to the lamps wicks. He then goes back stage and the same again extinguish it using the cup of cold water then in to the bin. All this is happening when the Musicians are playing.

The actors are very aware of the lantern as they are always performing with the lamp lit. All costumes are sprayed with fire checked and re-sprayed after washing.

The oil of the lamp doesn't get hot as at the end of a performance I can dip my fingers in with no worries of how hot it gets. We use the stones to hold the wicks in place and to extinguish the flames at the end. Then the wicks go in to cold water then in to the bin. It's basically a candle so when we put it out we get a little smoke at the end.

At the end the top gets taken off from the lamp and the oil is pored back in to the jar then it gets wiped out with a paper towel and then in to the bin.

We carry a Fire Blanket and some paper roll and a sack. So if it did spill for any reason then we have a spillage kit. If any of the costumes or actors caught alight then we have the fire blanket to smother them in or the fire extinguish to put them out.

Vj Who is one of the actors & director knows what to do if one of the actors catch light. He will help and guide with the stage hand person on what to do. He and the stage hand person know that all the equipment lives on Stage left if any think happens. If we need to use the fire extinguisher then he will grab

the nearest one to the stage. Vj will have a good look round during our time at the venue to find where they all are.