

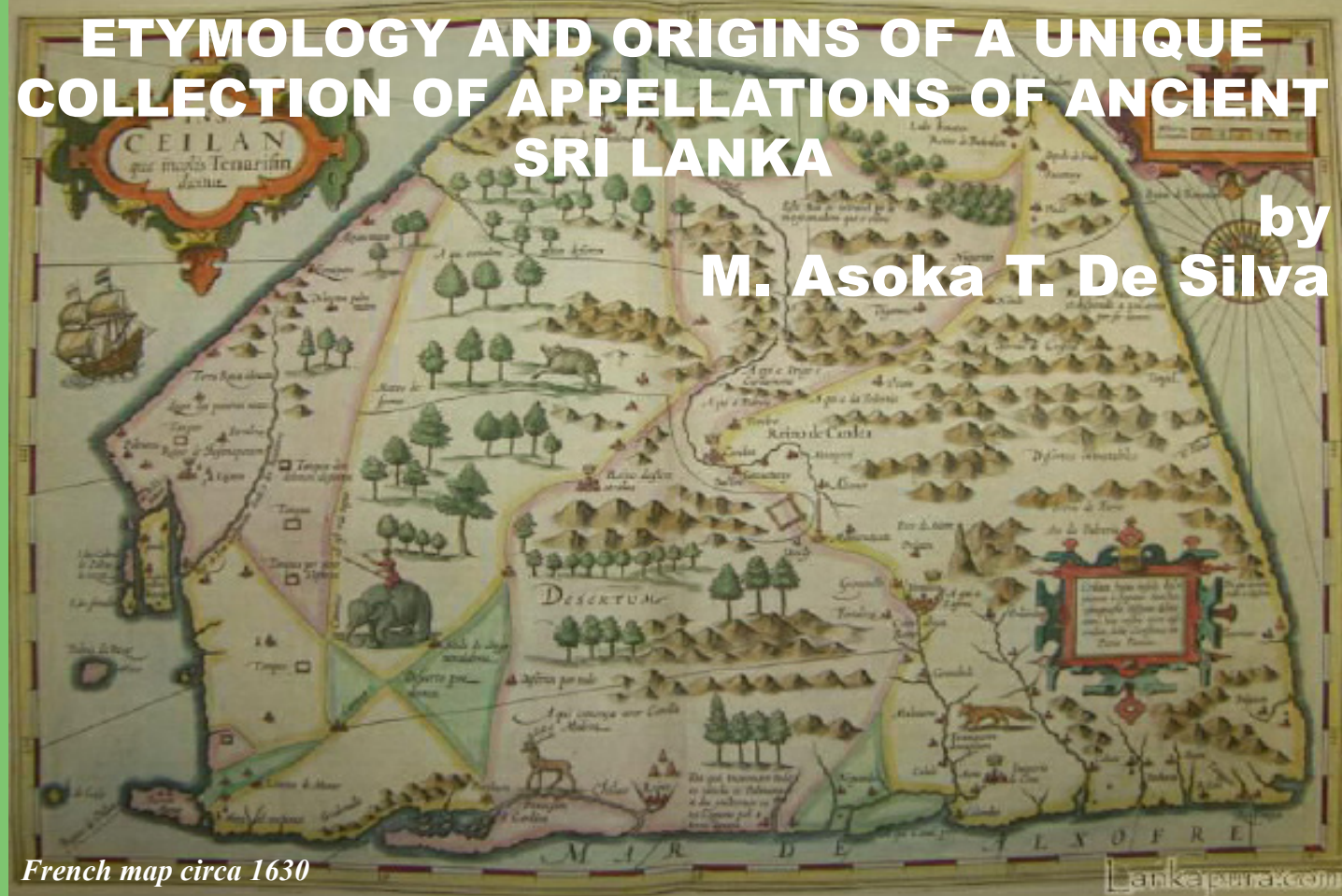
Dutch-map circa 1692



COVER STORY:

ETYMOLOGY AND ORIGINS OF A UNIQUE COLLECTION OF APPELLATIONS OF ANCIENT SRI LANKA

by
M. Asoka T. De Silva



French map circa 1630



The Ceylankam

The Journal of the Ceylon Society of Australia



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The Ceylankam

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From the Editor

Dear Readers

“What’s in a name?” you may ask.

M. Asoka T. de Silva, Local President and Treasurer of our Colombo Chapter, answers this question in his fascinating article “*The Etymology and Origins of a Unique Collection of Appellations of Ancient Sri Lanka*”, which is the cover story for this the 2nd issue of 2022 – the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA). Asoka has provided a comprehensive list of 124 different names for the island given by geographers, traders, cartographers, merchants, adventurers, colonisers and travellers for over three thousand years. The first mention of the island by a European was in the 4th Century BC by a naval commander of Alexander the Great. In keeping with the theme of the various appellations of “Sri Lanka” the front and back cover are adorned with some images of old maps with the different names for the island.

Making its debut in this issue is the “Colombo Column” compiled by Somasiri Devendra, Assistant Treasurer of the CSA’s Colombo Chapter, and is dedicated to David Goodrich, the first editor of this journal. According to Somasiri:

the Column will not only be about the metropolis, but about all parts of the country. In layout it would be similar to the early issues of *The Ceylankan* edited by David Goodrich. It will, also, not only be about the past (aka nostalgia) but also about the present - the vibrant and unpredictable present. But - of course - it will be about the history, people, events, happenings, gripes, grumbles of Sri Lanka. No controversies! there will be a leavening of light-heartedness, a hint at humour - without which one cannot carry on in Colombo now!

With this in mind our first “Colombo Column” indulges in a bit of nostalgia for the old bakery carts selling

buns, and various short eats. Tony Saldin contributed to the Column with an interesting piece on the origins of the Sinhala word “*Polima*”. The final piece is about an old ballad sung by the wandering minstrel (the “*kavi kola kaaraya*”) referring to a famous old British Royal divorce.

In keeping with the theme of “what’s in a name?” Hugh Karunanayake has written an interesting and amusing piece about a coffee planter in Ceylon called Fredrick Lacy Dick and his relationship to the Layards (by marriage). Layards Road in Colombo was named after the brothers of that surname who achieved notoriety in the Ceylon Civil Service.

In a very apposite piece to current travails in Sri Lanka Jayantha Somasundaram has written an article on the 1962 coup d’état. This year is the 60th anniversary of the attempted military coup by officers belonging to the westernised upper middle classes to overthrow the government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike. There is no judgment as to whether it was ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and Jayantha merely documents the events that led up to the coup and how it was quelled.

Further to her article in the November 2020 issue of *The Ceylankan* on the short story writer Alagu Subramaniam, Premila Thurairatnam discusses in more detail Alagu Subramaniam’s work and legacy in *Unfolding of a Ceylonese Author*. This article gives an overview of and valuable insights into the life and work of this relatively unknown Sri Lankan author. Premila also includes some images of 75-year-old radio transcripts of readings of Subramaniam’s stories from the BBC Archives. The article is followed by a book review by Hugh Karunanayake of Subramaniam’s book *Closing Time*.

In another piece on the railways of Ceylon Thiru Arumugam has written a most interesting article on the Indo-Ceylon Express train from Colombo to Madras in the 1940s. Thiru goes into detail of the routes taken from Colombo on its journey via Mannar

Ceylon Society of Australia

The Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA) is a not-for-profit organisation, incorporated in Australia and its main objectives are to study, foster and promote interest in the historical and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka.

It is non-political, non-partisan as well and endeavours to steer clear of controversial issues. The CSA is a gathering of like-minded people, open to receiving and imparting new ideas, who greatly enjoy getting together on a regular quarterly basis. While Sydney is home to the parent body, looking after the needs of the Society in all of NSW and the ACT, the Melbourne Chapter covers members in Victoria, the Colombo Chapter tends to the CSA members in Sri Lanka. Quarterly meetings are held in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo where members and guests interested in Sri Lankan culture and heritage are welcome to attend. Meetings are concluded with a brief question time and a social of short eats and tea/coffee.

The flagship of the CSA is the quarterly publication *The Ceylankan* which is much looked forward to by members and others of the Society and is distributed to members worldwide. The articles published are authored by members and other writers solicited from outside sources. All opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and do not reflect those of the Editor or the CSA. Articles may be reproduced in other publications but must be appropriately credited to this journal and carry suitable acknowledgment thereof.

The CSA, when meeting in Australia, acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land in which meetings are held and pays respects to First Nations Elders, past and present, as custodians of a rich cultural heritage.

and Talaimannar across the Palk Straits to Rameswar-
am and on to Madras. He gives technical details of the
engines and the steamships that transported passengers
from the various stations and ports. Special mention
is given to the two steamships that transported the rail
passengers from Talaimannar to Danushkodi - the “SS
Irwin” and the “SS Goschen”. There are beautiful pho-
tographs of the columns of the 12th century Ram tem-
ple in Rameswaram and a satellite image of the Palk
Straits (also known as Adam’s Bridge – no relation!)
reproduced in back cover of this issue showing the
tips of Talaimannar and Danushkodi, like two fingers
pointing at each other separated by a shallow ocean! A
symbol of the close links between the two countries.

In his piece titled “*Ghost of the Bounty*”
Somasiri Devendra narrates a fascinating story of ship
from Jaffna that sailed all the way to Tahiti via the
Suez Canal, Boston in the USA and the Panama Canal
in 1937. He mentions how the ship called *Annapoora-
nymal* changed its name to *Florence C. Robinson*. The
ship was built entirely in Jaffna by local shipbuilders
and crewed by a local crew from the Jaffna peninsula.
It was purchased by an American called William Rob-
inson who sailed it as a re-enactment of the voyage
of *The Bounty* in the 1780s (of “The Mutiny on The
Bounty” fame where the famous quarrel between Wil-
liam Bligh and Fletcher Christian were immortalised
in films and stories). Somasiri weaves a magical tale
full of adventures and eccentric characters!

In Part 6 of the series titled the *Fall of the
Kandyan Kingdom* Dr Leonard Pinto discusses the
Kandyan Convention and present new ideas in this
article, not found in history textbooks, such as French
involvement and the different responses to the Kandy-
an Convention by Malwatte and Asgiriya chief priests.
Dr Pinto also mentions how various Kandyan Chiefs
signed the Convention in either Sinhala or Tamil. He
also gives a list of the important clauses of the Con-
vention and who benefited from their implementation.

Duleep Danton reviews a book by Yasmin
Azad titled *Stay, Daughter* published in 2020 about
a Muslim girl growing up in Galle in the 1950s and
1960s. It deals with the different ethnic communities in
Galle at the time and their interactions and issues from
the perspective of this young woman growing up dur-
ing that period.

Happy reading!

ADAM RAFFEL

***The Editor gratefully acknowledges Lankapura.com.
as the source for the maps published in this issue.***

Our Readers write

Condolences - Tulsi Karunanayake

(With deep sympathies to Hugh Karunanayake and family)

It was with profound sadness and dismay that we learnt of
Tulsi’s passing away sometime last August. The source of
information is *The Ceylankan*, the Journal of the Ceylon
Society of Australia of which Tulsi was a life member. The
Journal itself was posted to me by Mr. Raymond Fonseka
of Wadduwa, on Hugh’s instructions. Until this unexpected
news reached us, we didn’t have an inkling what-so-ever
that Tulsi had been going through a life-threatening medical
condition for some time. We last saw her around six years
ago when they all came down to Colombo to celebrate, I
believe, Hugh’s 80th Birthday. On that occasion, I did not
have much of a close contact or conversation with Tulsi.
What I did notice however was a new hair style that she was
sporting, which I thought was not quite unusual for ladies.
Damayanthi’s experience however had been quite disturbing
when she told me that Tulsi couldn’t readily recognize her.
It was in this background that the sad news of Tulsi’s demise
reached us.

Hugh, you were really lucky to have selected Tulsi
as your life partner. She was exceptionally genial and non-
combative. She was ready to stand by you in good times as
well as during not so good ones. During difficult times she
would always put her shoulder to draw the family carriage.
No doubt these sterling qualities would have stood in good
stead for the family’s success, prosperity and stability over
the years.

It is with nostalgic memories that I recall Tulsi’s
culinary expertise which was incomparable. Her ability to
turn out delicious short eats of varying kinds is legendary.
No doubt that we were also often beneficiaries. I often felt
that on the food front you were a “*Maha Raja*” in your little
kingdom.

Tulsi had a very large heart when it comes to
entertaining friends. The few days that we spent with you
in Sydney during year 2000 is unforgettable. During good
old days when the communication systems were not well
developed, it was not uncommon for people to visit their
friends unannounced. Many were such occasions in our
case, when you were not at home, but Tulsi would go flat out
to entertain me and my family members, not forgetting a tot
of V.S.O.A. for me, for which I had a weakness.

When a person dies, it is the common practice
among Buddhists to wish that the person be reborn in an
elevated position in his or her quest towards achieving the
final objective of gaining Supreme Nibbana. I do not think
that Tulsi would require our blessings in this regard, for the
exemplary life she led without any malice to anybody, would
have a well-defined path for her to traverse on in this regard.
Be that as it may, my wife Damayanthi and children Manju-
la, Shayamani and Mangala join me in sending our heart-felt
condolences to you on Tulsi’s early departure making life
somewhat more difficult for you to handle during the rest
of your life. Our deepest sympathies to the three offspring –
Harsha, Sumal and Dillukshi.

Wimal Hettiarachchi
Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Colombo Column

Compiled for the Colombo Chapter by Somasiri Devendra and dedicated to David Goodrich, first editor of The Ceylankan



Gastronomic nostalgia: of Covid and “Choon-paan”

When the Burgher community left ‘CeyLanka’ for ‘OzLanka’, Nostalgia was born. One was “gastronomic nostalgia” for ‘Maalu-paan’: soft triangular buns stuffed with pepper-spicy curried ‘tin’ fish (aka “salmon”). It reached near cult status.

But *Maalu paan* may soon be passé. The day of ‘Choon-paan’ has dawned. The ‘bakery-on-three-wheels’, sounding its signature *choon* (“tune”) is bringing bread and pastries to your doorstep.

Motorists on every road had their favourite eatery (*Monis* on old Galle Road, *Salgados* on the Kandy Road) where they served what is pronounced (only!) as “*Show-Tits*”: a tray full of assorted eats, crunchily deep-fried or wrapped in *godamba roti* or log-sized “Chinese” rolls. It’s this variety that swamped out the monolithic *maalu paan*, and helped wayside eateries/ greasy spoons upgrade to “meals on wheels” status.

Passers-by hear the “trrrrr-ting” of the *Choon-paan*’s *Bajaj* 2-stroke engine like a siren-song and cluster around. The glass-enclosed show-case behind the driver opens, releasing scents of warm bread, a promise of crunchy pastries, sugared delicacies, *Paan*, *Roast paan*, *Bunnis*, *Seeni-bunnis*, *Seeni-sambol bunnis*, *Kimbula-bunnis*, Rolls, “Vegetarian sausage” rolls, *Patties*, *Nanakatha*. But no *maalu paan*, no *maalu*, it’s all pepper-hot vegetarian. Covid-curfew gave them a boost. Your loaf now came to you. Stuff you would not otherwise buy. They teased the small change out of the hands of small boys – their fans of the future who would remember them as an institution of their childhood. And the *choon paan* has now spread its wings: *string hoppers*, *vaddais*, and any other standing order.

Yes, *maalu paan* was good while it lasted, but *choon paan* will be the nostalgia by the next generation.

“POLIMA” is derived from the English language

This article is by no way derogatory or meant to ridicule the majority inhabitants of this island, but only written to express the words used by various tradesman in Sri Lanka who use words which were originally in English.

The root word for <Polima>, was thought to have been originally used by Englishmen, during colonial rule, on villagers and others when they used to crowd around in a disorderly manner to get paid. “Fall-in-line”, “Fall-in-line” were the words used by the Englishmen to the assorted crowd to form an orderly line. Since there was no equivalent in Sinhala for the letter “F”, the villagers heard it as (*Polin Line*) which eventually evolved into the word <Polima>. However, old-timers who are aware of the origins of this word do not use it, but instead use the word <Peliya>.

Here are a few other words used in bicycle, vehicle repairs and construction jargon having chatted with Mr. Vianie Meepe, a Garage owner and Mr. Suneth Perera Architect.

<poke atha> is used for the “Fork” of a bicycle.

<ply wheel> for “Flywheel”.

<heater plug> instead of “Temperature plug”.

<Evaporator> instead of “Cooler”.

<thrust racer> instead of “Side bearing.”

<socket sober> instead of “Shock Absorber”, used to absorb the shock in a motor vehicle.

<boundation> instead of “Foundation”

<syrup> instead of “Stirrup”. This is a thin steel wire rod bent in the shape of a stirrup to hold 4 thicker iron wire rods in place in the shape of a square, used with concrete to make pillars.

<awul pass> instead of “Holdfast”, which is a staple or clamp securing an object such as a door frame to a wall.

<poses socket> instead of “Fawcet”.

<cable biththiya> instead of “Gable” which is a triangular upper part of a wall at the end of a ridged roof.

<wall biththi> instead of wall

<column kanuwa> instead of column. E.g., “Me column kanuwa keling da?”

Some other words used in rural Sri Lanka are words such as “boy-kolla” for servant boy, “bag malla” for a bag woven out of reeds, “catch allanna” for catch and “wicket polla” for wicket used in the game of cricket, “form kole” for an application form etc.

(Contributed by Tony Saldin)

A Wandering Minstrel and a Royal Romance

In the 1940s, there were ayahs in every middle-class home.

They would relate traditional stories and sing songs to the children. Songs were not generally sung in village homes. The Wandering Minstrel, the *kavi-kola kaaraya* who plied the village by-ways with a bundle of ballads printed on newsprint, bringing the latest news (noise) worthy gossip to the village. This little bit, enshrined in memory was a rendering of the latest (1930s) public romance. Compared to today’s right royal transatlantic misadventures, this speaks of a not-uncommon rural reverence of royalty.

Ingreesi apa-ge raja-thumaa Our Royal English King

Giyaa-ya Raja-ya haera-dhamaa Gave up his kingdom and walked away

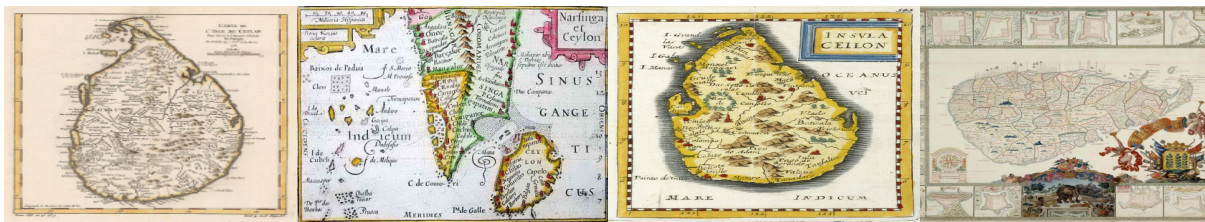
Deviya-ne hitha-ta boho dhu-kai Ye gods it brings great sorrow to mind

Aala-ye leela-ya may thamai This is how Love comes into bloom

Simpson Nona aadaree dhaeka-la Seeing Simpson nona, my beloved,

Sitha-ta preethi-vee My heart is filled with joy

.... Alas I cannot remember the rest!



COVER STORY

Etymology and Origins of a Unique Collection of Appellations of Ancient Sri Lanka

M. Asoka T. De Silva

Sir James Emmerson Tennent (1859) in the opening chapter of his celebrated treatise, *Ceylon: An Account of the Island* had remarked:

There is no island in the world, Great Briton itself not excepted, that has attracted the attention of authors in so many distant ages, and in so many different countries as Ceylon.

The veracity of this observation by an illustrious and outstanding civil administrator of colonial Ceylon, is reflected in the array of appellations by which classical and legendary geographers, historians, philosophers, mathematicians, astronomers and commentators have recognised and identified Sri Lanka since 300 BC.

Significantly, a compilation of 126 such appellations had appeared in the *Ceylon Daily News* printed on the 29th of November 1956. However, 48 years later this listing had been reproduced in the November 2004 issue of *The Ceylankan*.

The present writer, while acknowledging both the primary and secondary sources of information, re-visited and reproduced this listing in 2013, in a publication titled *Glorious Historical Antecedents of a Cultured Civilization: Sri Lanka* printed in Colombo by Vijitha Yapa Publications.

It is on record that Onesecritus, one of the Naval Commanders of Emperor Alexander the Great (336 – 323 BC), whose naval and military forces invaded the North – Western Provinces of India, is recognised to be the first European to have referred to Ceylon as *Taprobane*.

Twenty years after the death of Emperor Alexander, the then Roman Monarch Selencus Nicator (who founded the Selcuid Dynasty in Asia), accredited Megasthenes (an Ethnographer and Geographer), as Ambassador to the Mayurian Royal Court of Sandracottus (or Chandra-Gupta) in India. Megasthenes (ca. 350-290 BC) was known to have compiled in 4 volumes a treatise called “*Indica*”, which was well recognised as a true historical record of events of the time. Although Megasthenes was never known to have visited Ceylon, or for that matter even visited any area south of the River Ganges in India, was known to have collected many details of the interior of Ceylon. According to Megasthenes, *Taprobane* is separated from the mainland by a river (De Silva, 2013).

The present writer while reproducing the original list that appeared in the newspaper article of 29th November 1956, undertook a comprehensive retracing of their conceptual origins. In this process it was possible to discover an additional 43 names, (taking the new total to 169), while at the same time to identify the relevant references to the origins, as well as their etymology.

It was noted that some at least of these appellations were corrupt forms that may have occurred in the course of undertaking translations, transliterations, transcriptions, or in re-writing names referred to by earlier classical writers. Hence in the new listing such names have been grouped together, rather than denoting these as new appellations.

Taprobane, the name by which the island was first known to the Macedonians, is claimed to be derived from the Pali name *Tambapani*. It has likewise been linked with the Sanskrit word *Tamborapani*, which is said to mean “the great pond”, or the pond covered with the red lotus, and may probably be a reference to the gigantic tanks for which Ceylon was so remarkably recognised (Tennent, 1859).

It is believed that in later times, *Taprobane* had been exchanged for ‘*Simundu*’ *Palai-simundu*, and *Salike*, the last being the name by which the island was described by Ptolemy, and by Marcianus of Heraclaea. The name *Palai-simundu* has been claimed to be derived from the Sanskrit term *Pali-simanta* (the head of the sacred law), while *Salike* is said to be a seaman’s corruption of *Sinhala* or *Sihala*, the latter names considered to have been chosen by the Sinhalese people themselves, and signifying “the dwelling place of lions” (Tennent, 1859). *Sinhala* with the suffix *diva* or *dwipa* (Island) had apparently been converted into *Silan-dwipa*, and *Seren-diva*, whence the name *Serendib* of the Arabian navigators and their romances came to be recognised (Tennent 1859).

Incidentally this serene and musically oriented name of *Serendib* as we know, has also enriched the English language with a graceful word – *Serendipity* – explained in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “the facility of making happy and unexpected discoveries by accident”, while its adverb *serendipitously* had been coined by Horace Walpole (1754) after the fairy tale “*The Three Princes of Serendip*” (Sri Lanka).

(See *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*). It is said that the name *Serendib* in later times was condensed into *Zeilan*, by the Portuguese.

During the time of Ptolemy (140 AD), the island had been known by the term “Σαλική” (*Salice/salike*) and the inhabitants as “Σάλαι” (*Salae*). According to Cordiner (1807), a chaplain to the British armed forces, these terms seem to provide insights into the origin of the modern name *Seylan* or *Ceylon*. Cordiner (1807) was of the view that the Arabians had added to this name a termination signifying island, by which it had become *Seylan-Dive* or *Silendib*. Further, he was also of the view that the name *Palesimunda* used by Ptolemy had no satisfactory derivation but was probably a corruption of *Salice* (Σαλική).

Cordiner (1807), gives another interpretation to the name *Ceylon* or *Zeilan* (by which appellation the country is now known), to have been derived from “*Sinhal* the Lion”. While Knighton (1845), has claimed that authors of the West in Middle Ages, such as Arminanus Marcellinus and Cosmos, together with the greater number of Orientals, called the island *Serendib*, *Serenduil*, and Σελῶδιβα, and probably it is from the latter that the name *Zeilan* or *Ceylon* had been derived.

According to Bennett (1843), the Nubian philosopher El Edrisi in his work dedicated to King Roger of Sicily in the 12th century AD, had referred to the island as *Sarandib*, and Marco Polo the Venetian, who visited the island in the 13th Century AD had used the name *Seilan* or *Zeilam*, while Cosmos the Egyptian who made several voyages to India, had referred to the island as *Sielediba*. The island had also been known in early times by the “*Elu*” name of *Lakka*, and Sanskrit name *Lanka* (the world), later to which had been prefixed the Sanskrit adjective ‘*Teve* and *Deve*’, signifying famous and holy (Bennett, 1843).

Forbes (1840) refers to a number of names given in the *Sinhala* and Sanskrit writings. He says in a footnote to his publication titled ‘*Eleven Years in Ceylon*’, that several names given to Ceylon in Buddhist literature were in reference to the three Buddhas before Gautama Buddha. These included the following:

- During *Kakusanda* Buddha era, it was called *Ojadwipa*.
- During *Konagamma* Buddha era, it was called *Warad-wipa*.
- During *Kásyapa* Buddha era, it was called *Mahadwipa*.

Forbes (1840) also refers to *Laka*, *Lanka*, *Lankawa*, *Laka-diwa* and *Lanka dwipa*, as some of the names used by ancient writers. *Laka* he claims is the *Elu* (ancient Sinhalese) version, while *Lanka* the Sanskrit name is probably derived from *Laka* or *laksha* (one hundred thousand).

The other most common name of the island had been *Singhala* which is said to be variously written as *Sinhala*, *Sihalen*, *Singhalen*, *Ceylon* (all of which derived from *Singha* or *Siha* which means the race to which Vijaya and his followers belonged) (Forbes, 1840). Cordiner (1807), contends that everything that relates to the island had been described in

Marsdon’s *Elegant History*, wherein doubts have even been entertained as to whether *Taprobane* was a name given to any particular island, or any general title expressing the “ultimate limits of ancient discovery”. According to Cordiner (1807), the Sanskrit name of Ceylon, is *Taprobane*, a word implying the:

-----‘wilderness of prayer, the hallowed groves consecrated to devotion whither pious pilgrims, repaired from furthest corners of India to offer gifts and adoration to the unknown God’.

He further states that this island was also called ‘*Lanca*’ (or the holy land); which was the name that continues to be used in the Cingales and Malabar languages on the government paper currency.

Before the era of Alexander the Great, though the name *Taprobane* was not known to Europe, according to another interpretation *Taprobane* is known to have been referred to as *Tapo Rawan*, implying the “Island of *Rawana*, the Giant” of the mythical epic poem *Ramayana* (Cordiner, 1807).

Laccdives was yet another name given in 911 AD in an account titled the *Voyages of the Two Mahometans*, by an amateur geographer, Abou-Zeyd Hassan from the reports of mariners returning from China. This appellation is based on an extended and expanded version of the work of a merchant named Soleyman in 851 AD. As retraced by De Silva (2013), the links of Sri Lanka with China may have been from remote ages as exemplified by the statements of the Sri Lankan ambassadors who arrived in Rome in the reign of Emperor Claudius, mentioning that their ancestors had reached China travelling overland. The Chinese in their writings about Sri Lanka, apparently had given, a variety of names, some of which are believed to have been adopted from the terms used by the native inhabitants themselves, using Chinese characters that fitted closely with equivalents for the Sanskrit and Pali letters. Alternately they may be translations of the meaning, or the understanding implied by each designation (Tennent, 1859). Interestingly the popular appellation *Lanka* is known to have been retained in the Chinese nomenclature as observed in the Chinese names, *Lang-kea*, and *Lang-ya-seu*. According to Tennent (1859), in some descriptions there is a rendering of the term *Tambapanni*, while the name *Paou-choo* is claimed to be the translation of the Sanskrit name *Ratne-dwipa*, or the “Island of Gems”. They had also used modifications of the more recent European term *Ceylon* as *Tsìh-e-lan*, *Sein-lan* and *Se-lung*. It is said that Chinese writers, like many other classical writers of the West, repeated more or less the same mythical backdrop of the island’s prehistory, as evident from the reference of Fa Hien, who notes that *Sze-tseu-kwo*, (“Kingdom of Lions”), was inhabited originally not by men, but by demons and dragons (*Yakkhos* and *Nagas*).

There is one other obscure issue that needs consideration. This is the reference by many colonial historians (including Tennent, 1859), as well as by R. L. Brohier (1973), in more recent times, to a unique Hebrew reference in the Old Testament about the triennial voyages of King Solomon’s crafts to the Ports of Tarshish and Ophir for the shipping of gold, silver,

ivory, apes and peacocks. King Solomon is known to have ruled the Hebrew Kingdom of Israel from 970 – 935 BC. *Tarshish* had been identified to be an island, which historians and scholars of the colonial era assumed to be the island of Ceylon, but it may also be a reference to a particular port in the island. For whatever it is worth, the inclination of the present writer has been to include this appellation in the listing of names given below for posterity. It has to be noted that if this appellation is proven to be a reference to Sri Lanka, then this notice would be even more anterior to the reference in the *De Mundo*, which was said to have been written by Aristotle in the 4th Century BC. (De Silva, 2013).

List of Appellations

NAME	ORIGIN & REFERENCE
1. Ataprobana	Possibly a corrupt form of <i>Taprobane</i>
2. Cala / Cila	Another name used by Arabs according to Renaudot (Pridham, 1849)
3. Caphane	Not identified
4. Ceilam	Not identified
5. Ceilan	A variation of <i>Zeilan</i> said to have been used by the Portuguese
6. Ceilanum	Not identified
7. Ceilao	Used by the Portuguese and said to be a corruption of <i>Serendib</i>
8. Ceylon	Robert Knox used this name, when in Batavia, when referring to the King of Ceilon. He also used the name <i>Zelone</i> in this script.
9. Ceylam	Not identified
10. Ceylan	One of 3 different names used by Philip Baldaeus (1672) in the translated version of his book titled <i>A Description of the Great and Most Famous Isle of Ceylon</i> .
11. Ceylao	Not identified
12. Ceylaon	Not identified
13. Ceyllam	Not identified
14. Ceylon	The British anglicized version of the Dutch name <i>Zeilan</i> (Yogasunderam, 2006)

NAME	ORIGIN & REFERENCE
15. Chih-too	A descriptive adjective for <i>Ceylon</i> (epithet) by Chinese meaning the “Red Land” possibly a rendering of the Pali term <i>Tambapannin</i> (Copper palms) (Tennent, 1859)
16. Chinilao	Not identified
17. Cillam	Not identified
18. Cinlao	Not identified
19. Djezyret-Alyacout	Not identified
20. Elu	Ancient Sinhala – Major Forbes (1840) <i>Lakka</i> of the world (Pridham, 1849)
21. Hela	Not identified
22. Hibernaro	Not identified
23. Hibernard	Not identified
24. Hibernarum	Not identified
25. Hilenaro	Not identified
26. Ilam / Elankai	<i>Ilam</i> , a Sanskrit name (Pridham 1844) / <i>Elankai</i> : Name given by Tamils (Yogasunderam 2006)
27. Ila(n)-nadu	Not identified (possibly of South Indian origin)
28. Ilankai	Not identified (possibly of South Indian origin)
29. Ilanare	<i>Ceylon</i> in Sanskrit – said to denote ‘Plenty’ (Cordiner, 1807)
30. Ilerane	Possibly a corrupt version of <i>Ilanare</i> according to Pridham (1849)
31. Itterubenero	Not identified
32. Jazirat al Yakut	Not identified
33. Laccdives	A name given in 911 AD in an account by an amateur geographer Abou –Zeyd Hassan, from the reports of mariners returning from China. This being an extended and expanded version of the work of a merchant named Soleyman in 852 AD.

NAME	ORIGIN & REFERENCE
34. Lancab/ Laka, Laka-diva/ Lanka / Lanka-dwipa	<i>Laka</i> considered to be derived from <i>Elu</i> (Ancient Sinhala) (Forbes 1840); <i>Laka-diva</i> is a cluster of islands; <i>Lanka-dwipa</i> , (Sanskrit) and probably derived from <i>Laka</i> or <i>Laksha</i> . <i>Lanka-diva</i> is claimed to be one of the earliest names according to Knighton, (1845); According to Tennent (1859) Brahamins designated the island by the epithet <i>Lanka</i> (the resplendent).
35. Langka/ Lanca/ Langa	<i>Lanca</i> (The Holy Land). It is believed that this is the name of <i>Ceylon</i> which was used in the Sinhalese and Malabar languages (Cordiner, 1807)
36. Lang-kea/ Lang-ya-sew / Lanka / Lankawa / Lanca	Chinese equivalents to <i>Lanka</i> – (Tennent, 1859)
37. Lankawan / Lankauwa	Two of the 3 different names used by Philip Baldaeus (1672) in the translated version of his book titled <i>A Description of the Great and Most Famous Isle of Ceylon</i> .
38. Lankawa/ Lanka-Diva	Names listed by Charles Pridham (1849)
39. Lunkeh	Not identified
40. Mandadipa/ Malandwipa	Claimed by Forbes (1840) and by Pridham (1849); as the name given to Sri Lanka during the time of the <i>Kasyapa</i> Buddha
41. Naga-dwipa	“Island of Nagas” if not used for the whole island, is a name used by Buddhist writers for the western coast (Pridham, 1849). It is said have not been used after the conquest by Vijaya (543 BC)

NAME	ORIGIN & REFERENCE
42. Ojadipa	Claimed by Forbes (1840) as well as by Pridham (1849), as the name given to Sri Lanka during the time of <i>Kakusanda</i> Buddha.
43. Palaesimonda	Possibly a corrupt form of <i>Pallessimonda</i> .
44. Palisimundu	Claimed to be derived from the Sanskrit Pali- <i>Simenta</i> (Head of the Sacred Law). At one stage this name had replaced <i>Taprobane</i> (Tennent, 1859)
45. Palisimanta	Probably a corrupt form of <i>Palaesimonda</i> .
46. Pallessimonda/ Palesimundo	Given by Ptolemy, but is considered a corruption of <i>Salice</i> (Cordiner, 1807). <i>Palesimmdo</i> is believed to be a capital city. It is also claimed to have been derived from Sanskrit by <i>Pali-Simanta</i> (Head of the Sacred Law) (Tennent, 1859).
47. Paou-choo	Claimed to be the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit name <i>Ratna-dwipa</i> – “The Island of Gems”.
48. Pula Selam	Not identified
49. Rachius	This is believed to be a name borrowed from Pliny in <i>Cosmos Indico-pleustes</i> “ <i>Sanchoniathon</i> ” by Tennent in his <i>History of Phoenicians</i> published in 1837.
50. Rakshadvipa	Not identified (possibly of Indian origin)
51. Ratnadipa	Island of Gems – (Yogasunderam 2006)
52. Sailem/ Salabha-Dwipa	<i>Salabhan-Dipa</i> , in Sanskrit – The Island of real profit (Pridham, 1849).

NAME	ORIGIN & REFERENCE
53. <i>Salabhan</i>	A name given by the Tamils and Ibn Batuta (Tennent, 1859). According to Pridham (1849), it signifies <i>Sal</i> tree, gains etc, in Sanskrit.
54. <i>Salica/ Salice</i> (Σαλική)	These became <i>Selendiva</i> (<i>Selen+diva</i>)- Name given by Ptolemy according to Bennett (1845).
55. <i>Salike/Salika</i>	Believed to have been first used by Ptolemy, but is considered merely as a Seaman's corruption of <i>Sinhala</i> (as the dwelling place of lions). It had also at one time replaced <i>Taprobane</i> (Tennent, 1859).
56. <i>Sang-kia-la</i>	Considered to be of Chinese origin
57. <i>Sailatta</i>	The name used in Malabar (Pirdham 1849).
58. <i>Sarandib/ Saranda</i>	According to Pridham (1849), Edrisi the 8th Century Geographer had apparently made two islands out of <i>Ceylon</i> .
59. <i>Saylam</i>	Probably the same as <i>Seylan</i> .
60. <i>Serinduil/Σιρσίδιβα</i>	According to Knighton, (1845) some of the writers of the Middle Ages had used these names.
61. <i>Seilao</i>	Not identified
62. <i>Seilam/ Zeilam</i>	According to Bennett (1843), the Venetian traveller Marco Polo who visited Ceylon in the 13th century AD called it <i>Seilam</i> or <i>Zeilam</i> .
63. <i>Selendive</i>	Bennett (1843) claims that Ptolemy ignorant of Pliny's account of <i>Taprobane</i> , had derived <i>Selendive</i> from <i>Selen</i> and <i>dive</i> .

NAME	ORIGIN & REFERENCE
64. <i>Se-lung / Seloan</i>	Chinese modification of the modern name <i>Ceylon</i> , used by Fa Hien - After Tennent (1859).
65. <i>Seng-ka-la</i>	Possibly same as below?
66. <i>Seng-kia-lo/ Sze-tseu- Kwo</i>	A Chinese derivation from <i>Sinhala</i> by Hiouen-Thsang implying "Kingdom of Lion" - After Tennent, (1855).
67. <i>Serandid</i>	Not identified
68. <i>Serendib</i>	The name used by all nations which professed the religion of Mohammed especially Arabs (Cordiner (1807), (Philalethus (1807). According to Tennent (1859) this name had been derived from <i>Seren</i> and <i>diva</i> .
69. <i>Serendip</i>	Possibly mis-spelt for <i>Serendib</i> .
70. <i>Seylan/ Ceylon</i>	Considered to have been given by Ptolemy (140 AD), according to Cordiner (1807) and Bennett (1843).
71. <i>Seylan-dive</i>	"Dive" added by Arabs
72. <i>Shi-tyi-kuo</i>	Not identified
73. <i>Sieh-lan</i>	Chinese modern modification of the European word <i>Ceylon</i> (Tennent, 1859).
74. <i>Sielediba/ Sielendib/ Sielediva</i>	Derived from <i>Seylan-Diva</i> (Cordiner, 1807). Also reported by Cosmos Indicipleutes, the (7th Century writer), based on first hand information of Sopater a Greek traveller, and believed to have been derived from <i>Singal</i> or <i>Sinhal-Dwipa</i> . It had also been used by Indians according to Tennent (1859).
75. <i>Sielon</i>	Not identified
76. <i>Sihala/ Sinhaleen/ Singhalen</i>	All derived from <i>Singha</i> or <i>Siha</i> - (the lion race of Wijaya). (Forbes, 1840 and Cordiner, 1807).

NAME	ORIGIN & REFERENCE
77. <i>Sihaladipa</i>	Not identified
78. <i>Silan- dwipa/ Seren-diva</i>	Sinhala written with the suffix “ <i>diva</i> or <i>dwipa</i> (island) had been subsequently converted to <i>silon-dwipa</i> and to <i>Seren-diva</i> from which <i>Serendib</i> of Arabian and their romances (Tennent, 1859).
79. <i>Silha</i>	The name used by Sir John Mandeville in <i>Travels Palheim</i> , first published in 1499.
80. <i>Simonda/ Simondi</i>	According to Ptolemy this was SL’s ancient name (Bennet 1843).
81. <i>Simundu</i>	This name was said to have been used later instead of <i>Taprobane</i> (Tennent, 1859).
82. <i>Sinhala/ Singhala</i>	The most common name of this island as used by the Sinhalese themselves (Tennent, 1859).
83. <i>Sinhaladvipa</i>	Island of the Lion Race. (Yogasunderam, 2006).
84. <i>Sinhale</i>	Not identified, but probably an appellation used by ancient Sinhalese poets.
85. <i>Steloen</i>	Not identified
86. <i>Sri Lanka</i>	Modern adaptation. This name change became effective in 1972 with the constitutional changes for formalisation of the country as a Republic.
87. <i>Tambapani</i>	In Pali History is corrupted to <i>Taprobane</i> (Forbes, 1840).
88. <i>Tambrapani</i>	According to Forbes (1840), this name is derived from the Copper colour of the palms of the hands of Vijaya’s men, who relaxed on the coast on landing. It is also said to mean the “Great Pond” (Tennent, 1859).

NAME	ORIGIN & REFERENCE
89. <i>Tammana / Tammena / Tambapanni</i>	These are all said to be derived from the landing place of Vijaya.
90. <i>Tamraparna</i>	Possibly a corruption of <i>Tambapani</i> . (Forbes, 1840).
91. <i>Tamraparni</i>	Possibly a corruption of <i>Tambapani</i> . (Forbes, 1840).
92. <i>Tapoban/ Tapobanra</i>	Sanskrit name meaning the Wilderness (Cordiner, 1807).
93. <i>Tapoo Rowan</i>	This is said to have been derived from <i>Tabrobane</i> , implying the “Island of <i>Rawan</i> ” of the epic poem <i>Ramayana</i> (Cordiner, 1807).
94. <i>Taprobane/ Tabrobane</i>	A Greek version conjectured to be a corruption from <i>Tambapani / Tanbrapanni</i> . It was this name by which the island was known to the Macedonians. It is derivable from the Pali term <i>Tambra panni</i> (Tennent, 1859). According to Forbes, (1840) and Strabo, (1620), Pliny the Roman writer had described the island as <i>Taprobane</i> .
95. <i>Taprobana</i>	Said to be how Onesicritus, the Commander of the fleet of Alexander the Great described the island. Some authors are of the view that this name must have been derived from <i>Tambapani</i> . According to Pridham (1849), Bochart had believe it to be <i>Taph-Parvan</i> , while Barrows claim it to be <i>Tapo-bon</i> , the ‘Wilderness of Prayer’.
96. <i>Taprobanra</i>	Probably miss-spelt for <i>Taprobane</i> .
97. <i>Tarshish</i>	See pages 7 - 8 above for its origin.

NAME	ORIGIN & REFERENCE
98. Tenarezim	Not identified. Possibly miss-spelt for <i>Tenasserim</i> .
99. Tenarisim	Probably supposititious according to Pridham, (1849).
100. Tenasserim / Ternasseri	Like the name <i>Ilanare</i> this is also a Sanskrit term for <i>Ceylon</i> (Cordiner, 1807), denoting “Plenty”. But according to Tennent (1859), Odoardo Barbosa, a Portuguese Captain had claimed that the Indians called Sri Lanka by this name – “The Island of Delights” Philalethus (1817) quotes these 2 terms from the work of the Dutch writer Valentyn (1726), whose work had not been translated at that time.
101. Tragana	Not identified
102. Tranate	Probably supposititious according to Pridham, (1849).
103. Trante	Probably supposititious according to Pridham, (1849).
104. Tsih-e-lan	Chinese modification of the modern name <i>Ceylon</i> (Tennent, 1859).
105. Urjadvipa	Not identified
106. Varadipa/ Waradwipa	Claimed by Forbes, (1840) as the name given to Sri Lanka during the period of <i>Konagamma</i> Buddha.
107. Woo-Yew-Kwo	(Implies sorrowless Kingdom). Name given by the Chinese writer Suy-Shoo in his account on <i>Descriptions of Western Countries</i> (Ref. Tennent 1859).
108. Ylanarim	Not identified
109. Ylinarim	Not identified
110. Zailani	Possibly miss-spelt for <i>Zeilan</i> .

NAME	ORIGIN & REFERENCE
111. Zailon	Possibly miss-spelt for <i>Zeilan</i> .
112. Zallon	Not identified
113. Zaylon	Not identified
114. Zeilam	According to Bennett (1843), Nicolo di Conti the Venetian traveller described Ceylon as <i>Zeilam</i> . According to Tennent (1859), a Portuguese Captain called Odvardo Barbosa had described Sri Lanka as the most lovely island for which the Moors of Arabia, Persia and Syria called <i>Zeilam</i> .
115. Zeilan / Zeilon	It is considered to be derived from <i>Sinhal</i> , “the lion” (Cordiner, 1807), but according to Tennent (1859) it had been shortened from <i>Serendib</i> by the Portuguese, and according to Bennett (1845), Nicolo di Conti the Venetian had referred to Ceylon as <i>Zeilan</i> .
116. Zelom	Not identified
117. Zelon	Not identified
118. Zelone	The appellation of Robert Knox (1680).
119. Zelong	Possibly a corrupted form of <i>Zeilan</i> .
120. Zelony	Not identified
121. Zeylan	Possibly a corrupted form of <i>Zeilan</i> .
122. Zilon	Not identified
123. Zolon	Not identified
124. Zolore	Not identified

Note: Background information and references to all the writers referred to in this article, (Bennett (1845), Baldaeus (1872), Cordiner (1807), Forbes (1840), Knighton (1843), Philalethus (1807), Pridham (1849), Tennent (1859), Valentyn (1726), Yogasunderam (2006)) etc.. can be obtained from the present writer’s original publication:
M. Asoka T. de Silva, *Glorious Historical Antecedents of a Cultured Civilization : Sri Lanka*, (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publishers, 2013).

Travails of an Early Coffee Planter

Hugh Karunanayake

If one lived in Sri Lanka in the mid-1900s, a name such as F.L. Dick would have raised more than a few titters. The unfortunate man lived in Ceylon a century before such a possibility, in an age when neither “F.L.” nor Dick, meant anything other than a mere name. Frederick Lacy Dick was the elder son of Samuel Dick a wealthy landowner from the Isle of Wight, who invested heavily in opening up coffee plantations in Ceylon in the mid-1800s and which eventually succumbed to the ‘coffee crash’ of the time. Fred and his brother, who came out to Ceylon to manage their plantations lost their means to a livelihood as a result of the coffee crash. That was the time when the country was a Crown Colony and the British who were running the country were able to do as they pleased, and people in their early teens were appointed to the Ceylon Civil Service presumably in the belief that a 13-year-old lad from England had more intelligence than that of the thousands of adult “natives” he was expected to administer! Let me digress here briefly, to advert to the doings of Ceylon’s first Governor Frederick North who arrived in the island on 12 October 1798 accompanied by officials appointed to assist North in running the country. Also in this group were three boys, each thirteen years of age, Sylvester Gordon, Robert Barry and George Lusignan who were expected to “learn the languages of the country” and work under the first assistant to the Chief Secretary William Boyd until they were “fitted for promotion to responsible posts”. Barry and Gordon accompanied North on his tour round the island in 1800 when each of the boys would have been 15 years of age. Sadly, both Gordon and Barry were killed in the Watupuluwa massacre of 1803 at the age of 18 years as members of the failed expedition to capture Kandy and its King. Of the three boys only Lusignan survived, despite “some indiscretions”, to adulthood, and died at the age of 41.

The early years of the Ceylon Civil Service were characterised by appointments not necessarily based on merit, but rather, by a person’s connections with the establishment in a country where the new overlords were free to reign unchallenged, and to do as they pleased.

Frederick Lacy Dick and his brother were sons of wealthy Highland landowners Samuel and Mary Dick of the Isle of Wight. The Dicks had invested many thousands of pounds in opening up and planting Attaltenna Estate with coffee. (I have been trying to identify this estate by its current name, but cannot find the name in lists of estates currently under cultivation).

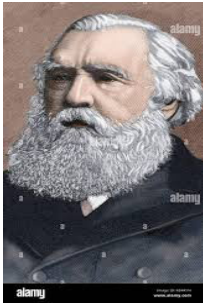
The coffee crash compelled the brothers to look for employment, and FL Dick at the age of 30 was appointed to the Ceylon Civil Service on 1 October 1845. His first appointment was as Police Magistrate, Negombo, a job to which he took earnestly. He was regarded as a man of integrity and an enthusiastic proponent of the principles of justice and the rule of law.

On Friday 29 August 1847 Dick had imposed fines of £5 each on four of the Court peons who had allowed one Daniel Appoo, a suspected robber, to escape from their custody. The peons did their own investigations and found that the thief was at a place called Welikanna, but that he had armed himself and had declared that he would not be taken alive. Dick on hearing this determined that he himself should apprehend the man who was in defiance of the law. Dick armed himself with pistols and together with a Mr Northmore who was then staying with him, proceeded in search of Daniel Appoo. Don Juan Appoo, a witness said that on the day (Friday 29 August 1847) he was sent for by the Magistrate’s interpreter Mr Pereira who asked him to go to a place called Pallanchena with Dick to assist in apprehending the robber, Daniel Appoo. He went with Dick who was also accompanied by Northmore, a Police Sergeant Oodoma Lebbe, and another constable Pedro. On arriving at Welikanna they surrounded one house and ordered the inmates to light their lamps. After searching the house, the occupants were allowed to go and rest. Dick then accompanied by Northmore, and Don Juan Appu went to the thief’s father’s house, where the man was asked to get a light from a nearby cottage. However, Dick thought that the man may escape, so asked Northmore to accompany the man – a distance of about 200 yards. While Northmore was away Dick decided to search the adjoining house and jumped over a fence and approached the house cautiously. On hearing some voices, he knocked at the door when a woman from inside shouted loudly “who’s there?”. The constable responded by saying that it was the Negombo Magistrate and not to be frightened. The woman responded with an obscene expression. There being no response to the door knocks, Dick went to an open side window and while looking into the house the woman said “what are you looking at? Take the gun and shoot him”. Juan called out “Don’t fire, it is the Magistrate of Negombo”. He had barely uttered the words when hearing the report of a gun he ran to the back of the house and found Dick lying on the ground bleeding excessively from a wound in his neck. He opened his eyes once, and then shut them immediately after, in death.

Some Genealogical Notes

Frederick Lacy Dick married Anne Elizabeth Layard just a year before he died, and she was pregnant with their son also named Frederick Lacy Dick at the time of his death. Born on 8 January 1848, the son died on 21 March the same year. A daughter Adeline, born the previous year, died six days after her birth.

Not many of the present generation of Sri Lankans would know of the Layard family who had such a dominant role in Ceylon mainly in the judicial and administrative spheres during the period of British rule in the 19th and 20th centuries. Layards Broadway, Layards Road, and even Layards Folly are names that remain to this day, commemorating the services of this unique family of pioneers in the development of the island.



The story of the Layards in Ceylon began with brothers Charles Edward and Henry Peter John Layard (H.P.J) who were the sons of the **Rev. Sir Charles Peter Layard (pictured left)**, the Dean of Bristol. It has been said that the Dean probably through the influence of Viscount Conningham succeeded in obtaining appointments in the Ceylon Civil Service for his two sons

who arrived in Ceylon in 1804 and 1803. "It was then believed that Ceylon was an El-dorado in which those who were fortunate enough to receive Government employment were sure to make a rapid fortune" wrote Sir Austen Henry Layard the son of H.P.J. Layard in his autobiography.



Barbara Bridgeteen Layard (nee Mooyart)
(Died 20 September 1845)



Barbara Layard of "Grimsthorpe", Nuwara Eliya
(Died 22 October 1914)

The latter married a Miss Austen the daughter of Mr. Nathaniel Austen, a banker and their son was the famous archaeologist, Sir Henry Austen Layard of Nineveh fame. Charles Edward married Barbara Bridgetina Mooyart (see portrait above left) daughter of Gaulterus Mooyart, the last Dutch Governor of Galle, and had 26 children by her!! He had a house in Kalutara where he was collector, called *Mount Layard*. His eldest son was Sir C.P Layard, G.A of the Western Province. Layards Broadway is named after him. His son was Sir Charles Peter Layard Attorney General, and later 18th Chief Justice of Ceylon. This distinguished family held many important posts in Ceylon and seem to have contributed much to the development of the island.

Barbara Layard (see photo above right), born 30 June 1834 and younger sister of Anne Elizabeth, lived a long and eventful life in Ceylon, which linked the final days of the Dutch occupation of the island to the glory days of British colonial rule in the 20th century. She lived in her stately home named "**Grimsthorpe**" which she built in 1896. The genealogy of her family, albeit relating only to a couple of generations before her, makes interesting reading as it was one of the few links that connected the erstwhile administration of the Dutch over Ceylon's maritime provinces with the administration of the new British colony of Ceylon.



"Grimsthorpe" Nuwara Eliya, built by Barbara Layard in 1896 and now called Westbury Palace, a hotel

Barbara Layard a highly respected resident of Nuwara Eliya was regarded as the best repository of information on Nuwara Eliya and its residents, including the time when Sir Samuel Baker opened his *Baker's Farm* at Mahagastotta, the story of which is all now in the public domain thanks to Baker's very popular memoirs *Eight Years in Ceylon* and *The Rifle and Hound in Ceylon*. Anne Elizabeth Layard (sister of Barbara) who married Frederick Lacy Dick was one of the twenty-six offspring of Elizabeth Bridgetina Layard (nee Mooyart) and the family resided in *Big Bagatelle* the stately home of the Layards which was part of a 145-acre cinnamon estate in Kollupitiya, later owned by the 19th century philanthropist Charles



Memorial to F. L. Dick at Holy Trinity Church, Colombo

Henry de Soysa and renamed *Alfred House*. After the untimely death of her husband Mrs Dick married a second time to Major Rolleston of the 84th Regiment where the Major served in India and saw service during the 1857 Mutiny. She died at Pembroke Dock on 24 October 1860. A tablet dedicated to the memory of Frederick Lacy Dick was at the Holy Trinity Church, San Sebastian, Pettah. The Church was consecrated in the 1950s and some of the memorial tablets transferred to St Lawrence Church, Wellawatte where it may be presently located.

Acknowledgements:

1. John Penny Lewis, *List of inscriptions on Tombstones and monuments in Ceylon* (Colombo 1913).
2. J.R. Toussaint, *Annals of the Ceylon Civil Service* (Colombo 1935).

The Sixty-Two Coup D'État

Jayantha Somasundaram

The sixtieth anniversary of the attempted military coup d'état in Sri Lanka fell on 27th January 2022. The conspiracy to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike arose amongst civil servants, military and police officers from the westernised middle class in Colombo, who felt threatened by the political changes that the Bandaranaike Regimes began implementing after 1956.

During British rule English was the medium of higher education as well as the language of government and commerce. Consequently, those who gained proficiency in English had employment and career advantages, and opportunities for economic and social mobility. Exclusive Christian public schools provided a high-quality English education and during colonial times, many Buddhists and Hindus converted to Christianity while attending or through the influence of such schools. The Sinhala-speaking Buddhist community in particular resented those who had abandoned their language, culture and in many cases religion, for those of the colonisers, and consequently reaped the resulting rewards.

With the end of direct British rule in 1948 a movement to replace English with Sinhala as the official language and to gain state patronage for Buddhism gathered momentum. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike led the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) to an election victory in 1956 by committing to such reform. But to the westernised Ceylonese establishment these reforms, which brought with them Sinhala-Buddhist militancy and a political role for Buddhist monks, undermined the stability of the world they knew and threatened their positions and privileges. With the election of Mrs. Bandaranaike as Prime Minister in July 1960 this process seemed to accelerate, and the westernised middle class feared the eclipse of a secular plural state and its replacement with a Buddhist theocracy.

Though politically weak and unable to turn back the gathering tide, the largely Christian middle class did have influence and support in one set of institutions, the state bureaucracy and the police and military. In the early 20th Century, it was the Christian public schools that adopted cadetting for their students. It is assumed that because of their aversion to taking life, Buddhist schools were late in introducing cadetting. So, when the Ceylon Army was established in 1949 the initial Officer Cadets sent to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst for training, were largely from the ethnic and religious minorities.

Moreover, during British times, while the officers in the Army were mainly British, Burghers accounted for half the troops enlisted. And in the Police as late as 1957, twenty-nine percent of the gazetted police officers were Burghers and about sixty five percent were Christian.

Despite their social and economic influence and presence in the higher echelons of the civil and uniformed services, at one percent of the population the Protestant Christians were numerically small. By contrast, the Portuguese religious impact in the 16th and 17th Centuries had resulted in a Roman Catholic community that made up seven percent of Sri Lanka. And unlike the Protestants who were split between numerous denominations, the Roman Catholics were united in a single church and fiercely loyal to their faith.

This created a concern among the majority community and the Bandaranaike regimes that the Catholic community was insidiously endeavouring to spread their influence. Following the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Regime's removal of both local and foreign Catholic nursing nuns from state hospitals, a campaign gathered momentum to takeover Christian denominational schools which received government grants-in-aid.

N. Q. Dias (Permanent Secretary to the Minister of Defence and External Affairs) was well known for his strong stand against 'Catholic Action' as it was then called. His actions in regard to the defence establishment and police were also being watched by the upper echelons of the three forces which were then largely manned by non-Buddhist officers. (Weerakoon: 107)

On the motive for the Coup, one of the coup participants Sydney de Zoysa, former Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) said "the great issue then was the schools' take-over. N.Q. Dias was a Buddhist chauvinist and determined to take everything over into a Buddhist state." (de Silva & Wriggins: 118)

Because a Christian education for their children is imperative, the take-over of Catholic schools was bitterly opposed by the Church and the community. Parents occupied the schools and a tense standoff prevailed.

The Catholic population is concentrated along the coastal belt stretching from Chilaw to Kalutara. In November 1960 the Army was brought in for internal security duties relating to the schools takeover; the 1st Battalion the Ceylon Light Infantry (1 CLI) covered Alutgama, Ja-ela, Katunayake, Panadura and Kalutara. "There were demands in the Cabinet to...move forcefully against Christians protesting the takeover of the denominational schools." (Horowitz: 145)

To break the deadlock, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru requested Cardinal Valerian Gracias the Archbishop of Bombay, to go to Colombo as his emissary and mediate between the Church and the Government. Despite these efforts many Christian schools were ultimately taken into the state system. A few in the cities were allowed to remain the property of the churches but could neither levy fees nor receive government assistance.

The government meanwhile went ahead with its language policy and in January 1961 Sinhala became the country's official language.

Army officers who were Sinhala Christians retired under the language act because they thought their careers had no future. The police had been about three-fourths Christian. In 1962 police and military officers staged a coup attempt, led not by Tamils but by Sinhala Christians. (Peebles: 114)

In protest against the language policy the Tamil Federal Party launched a *Satyagraha*, a civil disobedience campaign, across the northern and eastern provinces, bringing government administration to a standstill. In response the Government sent the 3rd Field Artillery Regiment to Jaffna. When the troops were about to entrain their commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Willie Abrahams MBE and his second in command Major Ignatius Loyola who were Tamil Catholics, were debarred from accompanying their Regiment. Instead, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Udugama, an infantry officer who was a kinsman of Mrs. Bandaranaike was placed in command. The soldiers protested, refusing to leave without their commanders, until Colonel Abrahams prevailed upon them to do so.

Interpreters frequently note that 'all but a few of the accused were Christians, mostly Roman Catholics.' And they generally view the coup as a Christian reaction to the Buddhist resurgence and ascendancy of the several years preceding 1962. (Horowitz: 27)

The heavily westernised English-speaking urban elite felt itself under stress. So did the ethnic and religious minorities: Tamils, Burghers, and Sinhalese Christians. The urban elite and the minorities were well represented in the officer corps of all the armed services and among the conspirators as well. (Horowitz: 29)

This was the political situation and the historical context in which the recourse to a military coup d'état emerged.

In the Army the conspiracy originated in the artillery, with leadership provided by Colonel Maurice de Mel, Chief of Staff, Colonel F.C. 'Derek' de Saram, OBE ED Deputy Commandant of the Ceylon Volunteer Force and Lt Col Willie Abrahams. In the Police there were two chains of command. DIG C.C. 'Jungle' Dissanayake who directed metropolitan officers and former DIG Sidney de Zoysa who directed provincial officers.

The plan was that at ten pm on the night of Saturday 27th January 1962, 'Jungle' Dissanayake would order the Police to seal off the city of Colombo, secure its approaches and announce a curfew for midnight. Willie Abrahams would take over Temple Trees (the Prime Minister's residence) and arrest her. And at midnight Derek de Saram would go to Queen's House (the Governor-General's residence) and inform the Governor-General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke GCMG KCVO KBE KStJ, that the officers of the Army and Police had taken over the government.

However, unknown to the other conspirators, Superintendent of Police Colombo, Stanley Senanayake, one of 'Jungle' Dissanayake's key lieutenants, had got in touch with his father-in-law Patrick de S Kularatne MP a founder member of the SLFP and

informed him about the Coup. Kularatne immediately went to the Orient Club where the Inspector General of Police (IGP) was playing bridge and appraised him of the plot; he also informed Felix Dias, Parliamentary Secretary (Deputy) to the Minister of Defence and External Affairs.

Felix Dias promptly initiated counter measures to thwart the coup. At Temple Trees he briefed the Prime Minister and then summoned the IGP. Thereupon the IGP sent the following radio message to Police Stations island-wide:

To All OICC Divisions and Districts: From the IGP: Please don't carry out whatever instructions of a special nature that you have received from your DIG. Be in readiness to carry out orders only from the IGP.

Meanwhile Lt Col Sepala Attygalle MVO, commander Ceylon Armoured Corp called up armoured vehicles to guard Temple Trees. And at 1.30am 28th morning, 300 troops supported by Bren gun carriers surrounded 'Jungle' Dissanayake's Longdon Place residence and took him into custody.

The Coup was crushed.

Twenty-four defendants were put on trial before a special court under new legislation. Ten were found guilty of waging war against the Queen and sentenced to ten years in prison and the confiscation of all property. Later, on appeal to the Privy Council they were released on a point of law.

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Unfolding of a Ceylonese Author

Premila Thurairatnam

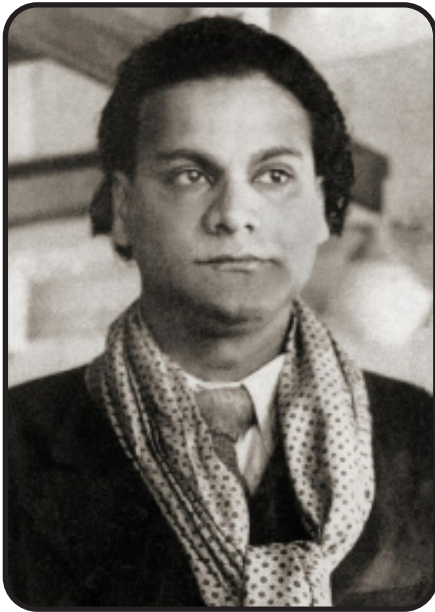


Figure 1: Author in 1947 aged 37 when he returned to Ceylon from England

Further to my article in the November 2020 issue titled *The Extraordinary Alagu Subramaniam*, I present the findings from my research into how this short story writer formulated some of his stories almost a century ago. He was commended in the *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures in English* as an exemplar of professionalism in the short story genre and that he wrote fiction of merit¹. So, I think my effort on his work is worthwhile.

Let's begin with what is considered his finest short story *Professional Mourners* where he points out the inhumanity of the caste system². The narrator is a child remembering the details of his Hindu grandmother's funeral and the importance attached to the presence of a group of lower caste women hired to wail there. Subramaniam demonstrates how the upper middle classes displayed their social significance at the expense of such women. The story was first published in the 1940 Spring edition of the *Indian Writing* magazine, when Subramaniam was living in London³. Two years before that, his younger brother had died in Ceylon aged 19. He had contracted tuberculosis at the boarding house whilst studying for a medical degree in Colombo University College. This sad incident may have inspired this story and since he couldn't travel back to Ceylon for the funeral, he wrote it at the age of 28. He even recalls the words used by the professional mourners:

Answer for the sake of your loved ones!
Open those eyes that are shaped like a fish!
Like those of Minakshi, famed goddess of Madura!
Your grandson has come, wake up, my beloved!
Your grandson has come, wake up my darling!

When the story came out in the *Indian Writing* magazine, it caused a stir in Bloomsbury and the commentary of the following issue claimed that the new issue did not smell quite so highly of mortality in response to an otherwise sympathetic critic who described them as 'Professional Mourners'³.

Subramaniam travelled to England in 1933, just 23 years old, to study law. Most of his stories were written in his twenties and thirties. His next great story *The Mathematician* appeared in the 1940 Summer edition of *Indian Writing*³. It achieved a distinction of being included in the German volume *Briefly Told: The Finest Stories in World Literature* and compared to a piece of humorous raillery by the great Russian author Anton Chekhov². There, male dominance in the Jaffna society is depicted, through the restriction imposed on the wife against walking abreast with her husband; she, being educated, walks half a step behind, unlike an uneducated wife ruled by one step. In this one and several other stories, he uses the names of his family members, for instance, Subhadra and Chandran are his niece and nephew, respectively. But, in the story Chandran became Chandram; perhaps, because he thought it was a better name for a professor.

Next, we will look at the story *This time the Fan* published in the magazine *Left Review*⁴, in London as early as 1937 when he was 27. When he included it in the book *The Big Girl* published in 1964, he had edited it in his early fifties and changed the title to *The Fan*. He had also changed the name of one of the main characters from Rajan to Kirupa, latter being his baby brother whom he was fond of and dedicated the book to. The evolution of his writing can be seen here. In London, he was continually writing for several media outlets including radio, literary magazines, while thinking, reading, talking about writing and literature. As a result, over a very long period, he honed a particular style, a 'quiet' one - meaning, that the details in his stories are very selective - hard to appreciate because you don't see all the material he could have used, only the material he chose to use. Likewise, there are many themes he could have selected, but the more knowledgeable and experienced he became, the more themes he rejected, since others have encompassed them. In this way he developed themes and ideas uniquely of interest to him and, in a distinctive way, he developed a distinctive voice. Eventually, his technique and voice became integrated with the thematic material, allowing its presentation in very subtle (and economic) ways, until each seems inseparable: the mark of the greatest and erudite writers.

The opening line in *This time the Fan* (version 1) "The whole school was mortally afraid of the Headmaster" has been omitted in *The Fan* (version 2). Many sentences in version 1 have been made succinct in version 2; "He then used his fan, and the cool breeze refreshed his limbs and also prevented him from sneezing too frequently" became "He then

worked his fan and the resulting breeze soothed him and arrested the recurrence of his sneeze". "He kept his students attentive with his fan" became "He canvassed the attention of his students with his fan". Similarly, the vocabulary became sophisticated; "Noise was re-echoed by the walls of adjoining classrooms" became "Noise reverberated in the adjoining classrooms". "He beat them sideways" became "He beat them on their flanks". 'Aesthetic joy' became 'Aesthetic delight'. "She was happy and full of excitement" became "She soared skyward on a rocket of surprise and delight". "He then joined his father in the field" became "He partnered his father in the open". "Bala had great admiration for Rajan" became "Mylan evinced great admiration for Kirupa". The deliciously funny "His fat wife stood by like a wine barrel without legs" is missing in version 1. The protagonist in version 1 is Bala but Mylan in version 2, probably because "Oh Myla! Oi Mylan! Ohe Myloo! sounds far more absorbing than "Oi Bala, Oh Bala, Ohe Bala".



Figure 2: Radio Times February 23rd, 1945 (from the BBC archives⁵)

4:15 STORIES OLD AND NEW

1. - 'The Customer's Always Right' written and read by Albert Saphier
2. - 'Conversation' an Indian story written by Subramaniam, and read by Coomi Kharus

Additionally, version 1 mentions the rich boy as the son of a successful lawyer, but version 2 mentions him as the son of a high court judge which is closer to biographical detail, their father being a district judge. Interestingly, version 1 says how Bala could not

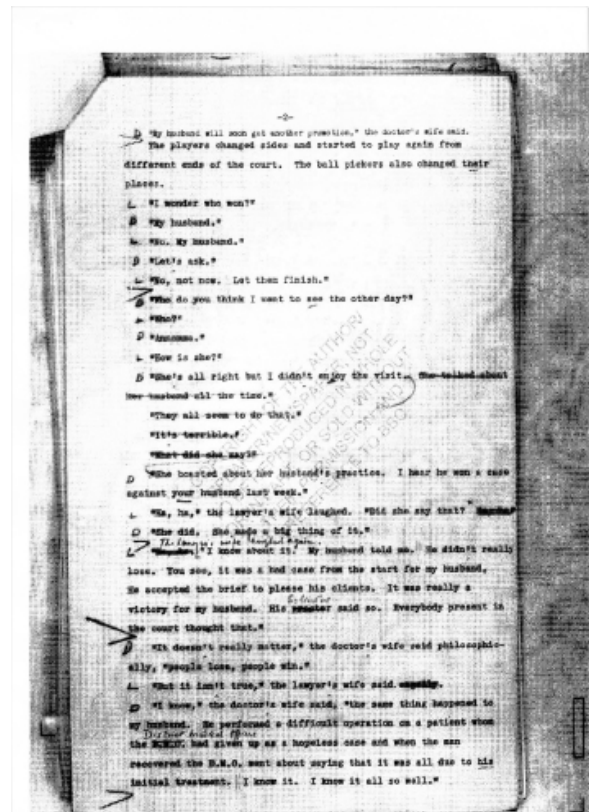


Figure 3: Script annotated for reading (from the BBC archives⁵)

Note: D refers to Doctor's wife & L to Lawyer's wife

bring a letter from his father for being late unlike his classmates, simply because his father couldn't write and the fact that a letter from him wouldn't have any effect, implying he was considered a low caste. This has been omitted in version 2. Was Subramaniam holding back from overtly exposing prejudices of society and avoiding trouble? Letters from professional parents will be accepted but those from a poor farmer, disregarded and his son was cruelly afflicted.

He certainly did that even with the story *Conversation* which later became *Tennis* where he decided to refrain from conspicuously writing about his sister and brother-in-law. The latter had been the youngest (aged 35) Ceylonese recipient of the O.B.E in 1943 for laying essential communication lines during WWII. *Conversation* was read on the home service of the BBC in 1945. Presumably, he wrote it in London soon after the great event. The story is about two wives at a tennis court boasting about their husbands, a lawyer and a doctor, and at the same time denouncing other women who talk about nothing else but their spouses. In the course of the conversation, one asks the other if she was going to Leela's garden party. Leela, the engineer's wife was hosting it because her husband had been awarded the O.B.E. When the story was included in *The Big Girl*, 20 years later in Ceylon, the title was changed to *Tennis* and there was no mention of the O.B.E, other than a promotion. What he didn't change was that when one wife enquires why he was awarded the O.B.E/promotion, the other cynically remarks, "For putting up some electrical installations or telephones, I don't know which," hinting that the

achievement was rather insignificant.

Remarkable that we can still find out what the radio program was for a given day, 76 years ago. It's doubtful that it will be possible with today's programming. This is a significant issue for social historians. Thanks to the BBC archives and Radio Times, the script of the story with its annotations and clarifications in order to be read on radio (Fig 3) are preserved. Corrections made in a radio (or story) script would now be made in digital format with the original version overwritten.

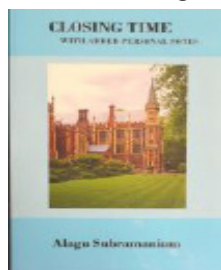
Thus, although Subramaniam was critical of his seminal society, he was sympathetic with it, when he matured and emerged as a professional, didactic and naturalistic writer. To quote one of Sri Lanka's eminent scholars Dr E.A. Gamini Fonseka, former Senior Professor in English at the Dept. of English & Linguistics, Ruhuna University, "Although Subramaniam was a Christian, he was rational and not bound by any institutionalised form of thinking and his unassuming nature is vivid in his intolerance of false pride at any level."

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3. British Library, *Indian Writing*, Shelfmark ST-1803
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5. Permission to include has been obtained from the BBC archives.

BOOK REVIEW

ALAGU SUBRAMANIAM, *CLOSING TIME: WITH ADDED PERSONAL NOTES* compiled and edited by Premila Thurairatnam (the author's grandniece). (Ohm Books Publishing 2nd ed, 2021)



Alagu Subramaniam was one of the handful of literary personalities from Ceylon who had been grounded in the literary traditions that evolved in post-World War II Britain. He was the author of two compilations of short stories viz *The Big Girl* and *Closing Time*. The publication under review *Closing Time*

(first published in 1971) consists of a series of essays written by Subramaniam based mainly on his experiences of life in England.

The present publication has the added benefit of a comprehensive Foreword from Professor E.A.

Gamini Fonseka, former Senior Professor in English, University of Ruhuna, who has provided the reader with a critical analysis of the literary merits of each of the thirteen essays which constitute the book. The reader is also provided with an Afterword by Rodney Hall whose contribution seems to supplement the biographical details of the author's life already provided in good measure in the Foreword and in Premila Thurairatnam's biographical note at the end of the publication.

The current revised issue of *Closing Time* is a well compiled dossier on the almost forgotten life of a prominent Ceylonese raised up in conservative Jaffna but having to seek his place in the legal profession for which he spent eight years as a law student in London.

His years in London appear however to have drawn the author closely to the other "bar" those watering holes in London which attract overseas students in search of an expression for their newfound independence, free from the disciplinary controls from family and relatives. It is in this background that we see Alagu Subramaniam in his element, holding forth among fellow law students and revelling in his exposure to the literary giants of the day, like the Bloomsbury group. A founding editor of *Indian Writing* magazine which drew in contributions from the brightest stars in the Indian literary firmament, the author soon found his niche as a brilliant short story writer. In *Closing Time*, his essays portray the lives of overseas students, often struggling to live on a meagre allowance from home and forced to scrimp often on bare essentials like food, heating, and room rents. Also emerging from the book is a social scene in mid twentieth century Ceylon when society was more stratified than in present times, and where one's connectivity to a time-honoured profession like the law carried greater emphasis in life outside the courts. Alagu Subramaniam's descriptions of aspects of student life in London have been realistically portrayed by him in this book. His writings are very expressive and characterised by its fluency, and an easy-going style of writing is a feature of his work.

I found *Closing Time* a very enjoyable read, and whilst transporting readers to the days of post war Britain, it also gives a fascinating account of life as a student in England. The added bonus of course is the view one gets into the life of a relatively little-known literary genius from Sri Lanka. The author's grandniece Premila Thurairatnam is to be congratulated for doing more than her filial duty in keeping her grand uncle's memory alive.

Hugh Karunanayake

A Journey in the Indo-Ceylon Express Train from Colombo to Madras in the 1940s

Thiru Arumugam

Around 1864 the Indian Government completed a rail track from Madras (now known as Chennai) to the Port of Tuticorin (now known as Thoothukudi) in south-east India. Travellers from Madras to Ceylon travelled on this train to Tuticorin and then on a ferry steamer to Colombo. The 440-mile train journey took about 22 hours, and the 170-mile ship journey took up to 24 hours depending on weather and prevailing tides, making a total journey time of nearly two days. It was not a particularly comfortable journey, particularly during the south-west monsoon period when the seas could be quite rough.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries South Indian labour were recruited by Kanganies (Labour Contractors) to work on developing the Ceylonese upcountry coffee and tea estates. In the pre-railway days these labourers walked all the way, except for crossing Palk Straits by sailing boats. The average trek was about 300 miles. As they came with their families, casualties were significant, and thousands died along the way.

The Indian and Ceylonese Governments met and decided that a shorter and less arduous journey between Colombo and Madras was required and the Indo-Ceylon Express (ICE) train service was born on 24 February 1914. In India this service was sometimes called the “Boat Train”. This involved a journey in the Ceylon Government Railway (CGR) train from Colombo Fort Station to Talaimannar Pier, a ferry ship journey from Talaimannar Pier to Danushkodi Pier and a journey from Danushkodi Pier to Madras Egmore Station, by the South Indian Railway (SIR) train, and a similar return journey. The total journey time was reduced to about 36 hours.

Tickets could be purchased from any leading station in the CGR network to any station in the SIR network and vice versa. A typical through ticket from Idalgasihinna in Ceylon to Mandapam Camp in South India can be seen in **Figure 1** (below).

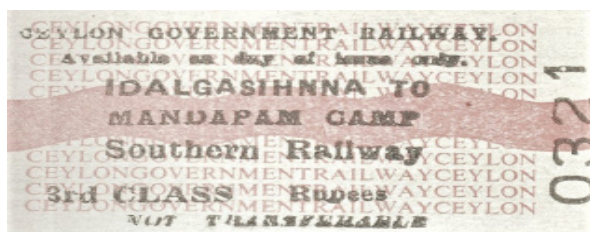


Figure 1

At that time CGR charged twelve cents per mile for first class tickets, eight cents per mile second class and four cents a mile third class. A first-class ticket from Colombo to Talaimannar cost about Rs 25 and a third-class ticket about Rs 8.40. The ferry crossing from Talaimannar to Danushkodi cost Rs 10 for first class passengers and Rs 2 for third class passengers. From Danushkodi to Madras, SIR charged about Rs 59 for first class passengers and about Rs 15 for third

class passengers. The total cost of a first-class ticket from Colombo to Madras was therefore about Rs 114 (including sleeping berths in CGR and SIR) and about Rs 25.40 for third class passengers. The writer undertook this journey from Colombo to Madras as a schoolboy in the 1940s with his siblings and parents and this kindled his interest in railways.

Colombo Fort Station

The Indo-Ceylon Express usually stood on Platform 9 or 10 in Colombo Fort Station. It consisted of first- and second-class carriages, first- and second-class sleeping cars with berths, third class carriages, and a restaurant car. As it was a mail train, it also included a carriage which was a Travelling Post Office (TPO) which even had a post-box into which letters could be posted that required a stamp surcharge. The engine hauling the ICE was a steam engine. The steam engine attached to the train was Engine No. 7 (see **Figure 2**).



Figure 2

Engine No. 7 was one of 15 similar engines ordered by CGR from North British Locomotive Company in 1911-1913. This Glasgow based locomotive manufacturing firm was the largest locomotive manufacturer in Europe and the British Empire. It had 8000 employees at that time. This ‘Mannar’ Class F2 engine was re-classified as Class F1b after a superheater was fitted in CGR’s Ratmalana Workshops in 1932. Engine No. 7 gave faithful service to CGR for 57 years until it was scrapped in 1969 after running 1,250,000 miles and was rendered obsolete by dieselisation.

CSA Member Victor Melder of Melbourne, whose collection of about 5000 Ceylon books is probably the largest in the Southern Hemisphere, is a former CGR Railwayman. In an article in the February 2006 issue of this Journal titled “*Oh! To be an Engine Driver*” he recounts the gruelling job of Fireman who had to break up the lumps of coal to fist size. The Fireman’s job is particularly difficult on the upcountry line:

“On the Upper Section, due to the frequency of the firing that took place, the fire-box tends to fill up quickly and half way up the incline, one would have to clean out the excess ashes from the fire-box, by rocking the fire-box grate to drop the ashes off. This was necessary to enable good ignition and maintain a bright fire, required for good steaming qualities. It was very strenuous and demanding work.”

At precisely 8 pm the Indo-Ceylon Express train gave a gentle toot of its engine whistle and steamed out of Colombo Fort Station. The route of the portion of the journey in Ceylon is shown dotted in **Figure 3** below.



Figure 3

Polgahawela Junction and Maho Junction

The first 45 miles of the journey was along the dual track Main Line to Polgahawela Junction. One imagines that railway tunnels are part of the up-country tracks but surprisingly there is a 581-foot-long tunnel near Mirigama, 32 miles from Colombo Fort. As this section of the railway is dual track, there are separate up line and down line tunnels. At Polgahawela Junction the ICE train left the Main Line and travels on the Northern Line. This line proceeds to Anuradhapura, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, Pallai, Kodikamam, Chavakachcheri, Jaffna, terminating at Kankesanturai, 256 miles from Colombo. This line was completed in 1905.

The Indo-Ceylon Express, from Polgahawela Junction follows the single-track Northern Line. After thirteen miles, the first major station is Kurunegala, the capital of the North-Western Province. The station is about five miles from the town centre. After travelling another 27 miles, the train arrives at Maho Junction.

At Maho Junction there is a branch line travelling eastwards called the Batticaloa Trincomalee Light Railway (BTLR). Gal Oya Junction is 55 miles along this line. From this Junction, a line proceeds 43 miles in a north-easterly direction to Trincomalee and another line proceeds 77 miles in an easterly direction to Batticaloa.

From Maho Junction the Indo-Ceylon Express continues for 41 miles till it reaches the major station of Anuradhapura, capital of the North-Central Province and for thousand years Ceylon's ancient capital. At Medawachchi Junction, 15 miles beyond Anuradhapura, the ICE leaves the Northern Line and continues on the Talaimannar Line.

The Talaimannar Line

The 66-mile long Talaimannar Line from Medawachchi Junction to Talaimannar Pier was completed in 1914. Twenty-seven miles from Medawachchi Junction is Madhu Road Station. This Station is about five miles from the Virgin Mary Shrine of Our Lady of Madhu, possibly the holiest Catholic Shrine in the country with a 400-year history.

About 21 miles from Madhu Road, the line leaves the mainland, passes over two bridges 300 and 200 feet long and enters eighteen-mile long Mannar Island arriving at Mannar Station not long after. Ten miles further on is Pesalai Station. On the return journey from Talaimannar to Colombo the train collects crates of iced fish from Pesalai and Mannar, bound for the fish markets of Colombo. Six miles from Pesalai is Talaimannar Station and Talaimannar Pier is just over a mile from here. It was past daybreak when the Indo-Ceylon Express gently manoeuvred into the thousand-foot long Talaimannar Pier.

The steamship "Irwin"

The steamship "*Irwin*", moored at the Talaimannar Pier with a thin wisp of smoke coming out of her solitary funnel, usually arrives the previous evening from Danushkodi Pier with a boatload of passengers bound for Ceylonese destinations. She was named after Lord Irwin (1881-1959) who was Viceroy of India from 1926 to 1931.

The "*SS Irwin*" (see **Figure 4** below) was built by the Scottish ship-builders D & W Henderson & Co in their Clyde shipyard and was launched

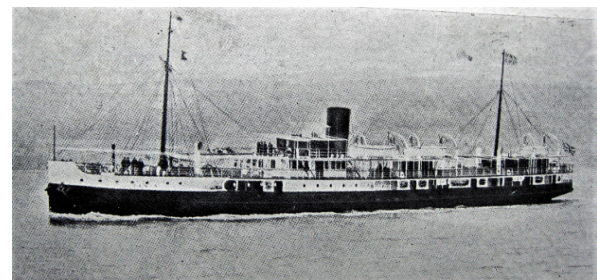


Figure 4

in 1929. Henderson was a subsidiary of Harland and Wolff, the Belfast based builders of the famous ship "*Titanic*". The "*Irwin*" had a gross tonnage of 970 tons, was 250 feet long, 38 feet wide and had a cruising speed of 10 knots that was sufficient for the very shallow waters of the Palk Straits. Her passenger carrying capacity was 1552. Her identical sister ship, built by the same shipbuilders at the same time, was the "*SS Goschen*", named after Viscount George Goschen (1866-1952) who was Governor of Madras Presidency from 1924 to 1929. The two ships (run by South Indian Railway (SIR)) shared the responsibility of ferrying passengers between Talaimannar and

Danushkodi. **Figure 5** (below) shows the sister ships moored at Danushkodi Pier, with “*Irwin*” on the right and “*Goschen*” on the left.



Figure 5

The Indo-Ceylon crossing

The passengers’ baggage gets transferred from the train to the ship along with mailbags and cargo. The ship’s crane was equipped to lift motorcars from the dock to the front deck of the ship. The ship also had pens in which live cattle and goats could be transported. In those pre-Independence days, Indians and Ceylonese were all British Subjects, therefore Customs and Immigration verification was quite nominal, and the train load of passengers was cleared in about half an hour. About two hours after the train arrived at Talaimannar Pier, the steamship “*Irwin*” was ready to set sail.

Figure 6 (see Google Earth map back cover) shows the Talaimannar Pier starting point and Danushkodi Pier destination of the “*Irwin*”. The ship had to avoid the shallow limestone formation of Adams Bridge which links these two places. The general belief is that it was possible to wade across the 22 miles between India and Ceylon on Adams Bridge at low tide until the 15th century when a severe storm scoured the limestone. Wading has not been possible since then. It was possible to see both the Indian and Ceylonese coastlines from the top deck at the same time. After three hours the “*Irwin*” docks at Danushkodi Pier, well before midday. Danushkodi is on Rameswaram Island off the coast of India.

The South Indian Railway (SIR) Indo-Ceylon Express (“Boat Train”) is already on Danushkodi Pier, having arrived the previous evening from Madras with a train load of passengers bound for Ceylon. The gauge of the SIR track from Danushkodi to Madras is one metre (3 ft. 3¾ inches) compared with CGR’s track gauge of 5 ft 6 inches. The SIR track was eventually converted to broad gauge in 2007! The train had four classes: first class, second class, intermediate class and third class. (When a journalist asked Mahatma Gandhi why he travelled third class, he replied that it was because there was no fourth class!)

Rameswaram Temple and Pamban Bridge

The route followed by the train from Danushkodi to Madras is highlighted in black in **Figure 7**. The train leaves Danushkodi at about 12 noon. Seventeen miles from Danushkodi is Pamban Station, where the pilgrims to Rameswaram Temple (six miles away) disembark. This is a very ancient temple of Siva, and Rama is believed to have prayed here on his way to Lanka to rescue Sita. As an Indian holy site, it is second only to Benares. The temple was expanded in

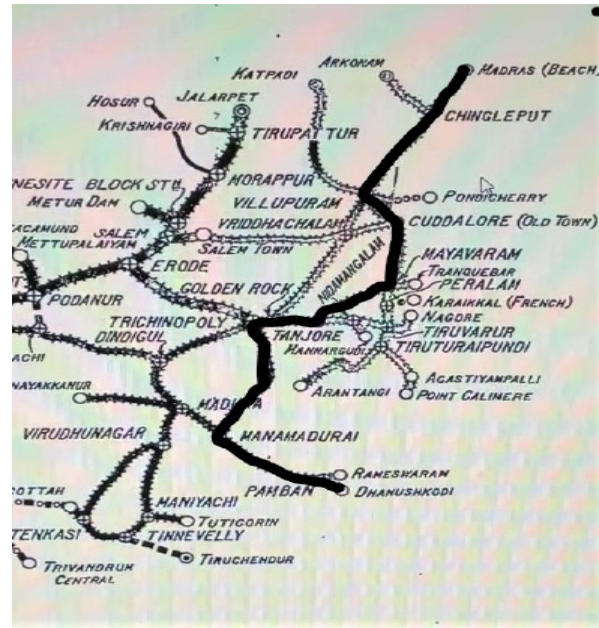


Figure 7

the 12th century and has had subsequent additions, it has the longest temple corridor among all temples in India. The North corridor is 640 feet long. It is 23 feet high and 17 to 21 feet wide. It is built of stone blocks (see **Figure 8** below).



Figure 8

Almost immediately after leaving Pamban Station the line enters Pamban Bridge and a 6776-foot-long viaduct with 144 spans that connects Rameswaram Island to mainland India. Pamban Bridge is a Scherzer rolling type lifting bascule leaf bridge that can be raised to allow ships to pass through. The bridge is opened manually by two teams of six labourers at each end manually cranking it open by levers. When opened it is 225 feet wide. About 10 to 15 ships pass through the bridge every month. It was completed in 1914 (see **Figure 9** below).



Figure 9

Mandapam Camp and beyond

When the train arrives at the end of the Pamban viaduct, almost immediately thereafter is Mandapam Camp quarantine station, where the passengers are checked for small-pox and cholera by Ceylonese staff from the Ceylon Department of Health Services. When the ICE train from Madras to Danushkodi comes to this station the third-class carriages are detached from the train and shunted off to a siding, while the upper-class passengers are nominally checked and moved on. Over the next 24 hours the quarantine staff carefully examine each third-class passenger and then transfer to the next ICE train. From Mandapam Camp the train travels for 59 miles, westward, until it reaches Manamadurai Junction, where the main line continues on a westerly track to the temple city of Madurai. However, the ICE does not follow this track and it takes a northerly short cut called the Chord Line, reducing the journey time to Madras by about two hours, bypassing Madurai. It proceeds 94 miles stopping at Sivaganga Station, Karaikudi Junction and Pudukkottai Station to reach the major city of Trichinopoly (now called Tiruchirappalli) which is the headquarters of SIR. It reaches Trichinopoly Station at 8.40 pm for a 40-minute stop which gives enough time for dinner in the station restaurant.

Spencer, Higginbotham and Railway Retiring Rooms

SIR's catering contract was held by the Madras based firm of Spencer and Co. Ltd. They ran restaurants in major stations called "refreshment rooms". There were separate non-vegetarian and vegetarian refreshment rooms. Spencers assured customers that in the vegetarian refreshment rooms "the food was prepared under strict Brahmin supervision". The morning meal was called "Chota Hazari" which means 'Little Breakfast'. It consisted of two fried eggs, toast, butter, jam and two serves of either tea or coffee. Rice and curry meals were provided for lunch and dinner, served on a metal plate called a 'thali' with divisions for the curries. Between mealtimes, light meals were available, and these were called 'tiffin', no doubt this name gave rise to the meal carrying device being called the 'tiffin carrier'.

Higginbothams Bookshop in Mount Road, Madras (named after Englishman Abel Joshua Higginbotham who arrived in Madras in the early 1840s converting a missionary book shop to a general bookshop) is still in business and is India's oldest existing bookshop with branches all over South India. In 1944 Higginbothams won the contract to run Railway Bookstalls on station platforms selling newspapers, magazines and books running more than fifty bookstalls in South Indian stations. They now have only have about twenty railway bookstalls because of falling sales due to instant news being available on mobile phones which affects newspaper sales and books being available for purchase online. Happy times were spent browsing Higginbothams Bookstalls when the train made long stops at stations.

A feature of Indian Stations, unavailable in Ceylon at that time, were the "Railway Retiring

Rooms". Larger station buildings had two floors and the upper floor consisted of bedrooms which could be occupied by train travellers for a nominal charge. Accommodation was basic but acceptable. The maximum period of stay was 48 hours, to enable as many passengers as possible to use this facility. It was very convenient for those who intended a short stay in that town. Since then, Retiring Rooms have been opened in eight Ceylonese railway stations at: Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kandy, Batticaloa, Galle, Mihintale, Jaffna and Trincomalee. Currently, typical daily rates in Ceylon for a two bedroom are Rs 1000 to 1500 for a non-airconditioned room and Rs 2250 to 3000 for an airconditioned room. Maximum period of stay is 48 hours.

Trichinopoly and Madras

At 9.30 pm the ICE train leaves Trichinopoly and starts its 249-mile overnight journey to Madras. The first stop is after 31 miles at Tanjore Junction, now known as Thanjavur. During medieval times this city was the headquarters of the Chola dynasty. It is the home of the great Brihadisvara Temple of Siva, built over one thousand years ago and still an active temple with daily temple services. The great temple tower is 190 feet high and was the tallest man-made structure in South India for many centuries until it was overtaken by the skyscrapers of the modern era. At the top of the 190-foot granite temple tower there is a single solid stone capstone cupola weighing 80 tons. The Chola engineers built a temporary five-mile-long inclined ramp made of earth reaching to the top of the tower and a team of elephants dragged the stone to the top.

The next stop after 24 miles is Kumbakonam, an important handloom weaving centre for producing natural silk sarees. Ramanujan, the famous Indian Mathematician, had his schooling in this town. Then follows a stop 20 miles later at Mayavaram Junction, now known as Mayiladuthurai. Next stop: the port town of Cuddalore 46 miles later and after 29 miles: Vilupuram Junction at 3.30 am. This is a major railway junction with no less than five different railway lines radiating out from this town. The penultimate stop after 64 miles is Chingleput Junction. This city is considered to be the gateway to Madras and it is today a major industrial area with many foreign firms locating their industrial factories here.

Finally at 7.20 am the Indo-Ceylon Express steams into Madras Egmore Station, and the passengers disembark after a tiring but exciting 36-hour journey of 653 miles (1050 km) from Colombo. Madras Egmore Station was the major metre gauge railway terminus station in Madras. It was built in 1908 and has a covered platform area greater than Charing Cross Station, which was at that time a major terminal for international travel from London. The exit from Madras Egmore station was on to Poonamallee High Road. In those pre-Independence days, Madras was the capital of Madras Presidency, which covered most of South India.

In the late 1940s the Indo-Ceylon Express was facing new competitors. Air Ceylon and Indian Airlines started regular flights from Ratmalana Air-

port to South Indian destinations. The airfares were, however, about double the first-class train fare. As far as third-class passengers were concerned there was no competition, the train ticket was a fraction of the cost of an air ticket. Another advantage of train travel was that the free baggage allowance for a first-class passenger was 112 lbs (50 kg). Compared with this the free baggage allowance on the airlines was 20 kg. For a family travelling together, the net difference in free baggage allowance would be considerable.

Tragedy

The Indo-Ceylon Express continued to run for about another two decades without major incidents until 21 December 1964 when ICE Train No. 653 left Madras bound for Danushkodi. At about noon the following day the train reached Pamban on Rameswaram Island. There were radio warnings of a cyclonic storm heading towards South India after sweeping across North Ceylon. In the absence of instructions to the contrary, the engine driver of Train No. 653 decided to proceed cautiously on the last lap of the 17 miles to Danushkodi Pier where he found the outer signal was not down and stopped the train.

He waited for a while, but the signal did not fall so he gave a long toot on his whistle and decided to go very slowly to the Danushkodi inner signal. The six-coach train had barely started moving when the cyclone hit Danushkodi with the wind velocity reaching a staggering 170 mph (280 kmph). Immediately thereafter a huge tidal wave with a height of 23 feet (7 m) hit the train and carried it entirely off the tracks and also uprooted long sections of the tracks. The train was carrying five railway staff including 110 ticketed passengers and an estimated 50 ticketless passengers. There were no survivors. The Danushkodi Pier was completely smashed and Danushkodi was flattened. The total death toll was 1800 persons. Danushkodi was never rebuilt and became a ghost town.

In Talaimannar also there was damage to the Pier. K.A.D. Nandasena and Vinodh Wickremaratne in their book *Ceylon Railway Heritage* describe what happened to the ferry steamer that was berthed there when the cyclone struck (pp 97-8):

As a result of a tidal wave which erupted after the cyclone which affected South India and Ceylon in 1964, a thousand ton steamship drifted ashore about 300 yards from the jetty. This was put back to sea by railway employees by cutting a large trench with coffer dams and diverting sea water to the trench while pulling the ship with winches that were attached to piles planted in the sea at the end of the jetty.

Within a few months the damage to the Talaimannar Pier and the Pamban Bridge was repaired and the Indo-Ceylon Express service resumed with the ferry ship destination in India being Rameswaram Pier. Danushkodi Pier and the railway line from Pamban to Danushkodi Pier were abandoned. The ICE service continued to run until 1983 when the civil disturbances in northern Ceylon started and rails and sleepers on sections of the Talaimannar Line were removed. In India, the train service still continues to run from Madras to Rameswaram. For old times' sake, it is still nostalgically called the "Boat Train".

Present situation

For some time now, the Indian Government has been toying with the idea of rebuilding the 17 km railway line from Rameswaram to Danushkodi Pier, which has been abandoned since the 1964 cyclone. The original line was only one metre above sea level. The new line will be raised on a continuous embankment about six to seven metres above ground level so that it will not be affected by tidal waves or tsunamis. The estimated cost of the line is seven billion Indian rupees. The Indian Prime Minister Modi laid the foundation stone for the project in 2019, but physical work has not yet started.

With the restoration of peace in Ceylon, rebuilding, renovating and upgrading commenced on the Talaimannar Line to make it capable of handling trains travelling at up to 120 kmph. A contract was awarded to IRCON International of India in 2010 to renovate and upgrade the 44 km of line between Medawachchiya Junction and Madhu Road. The total cost was 81 million US dollars, and it was funded by a line of credit from the Indian Government and was completed by May 2013. A second contract was then awarded to the same firm to renovate and upgrade the remaining 65 km of line from Madhu Road to Talaimannar Pier costing 149 million US dollars and was completed in early 2015. On 14 March 2015 the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, in the presence of the President of Sri Lanka, inaugurated the first train from Talaimannar Pier on the renovated track. Two trains a day at present run in each direction between Colombo Fort and Talaimannar.

At present the railway line ends on the beach at Talaimannar. The abandoned railway Pier (Figure 10) here has not been rebuilt.

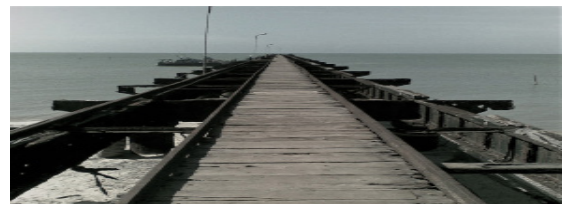


Figure 10 - Talaimannar Pier

Perhaps one day the Pier will be rebuilt, and the Indo-Ceylon Express Train will run again in the way it used to do in its days of glory.

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2. K.A.D. Nandasena and Vinodh Wickremaratne, *Ceylon Railway Heritage* (The National Trust Sri Lanka, 2017).
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- Figs. 1, 3 (adapted) and Figure 5 – K.A.D. Nandasena and Vinodh Wickremaratne
 Figure 2 – Bournemouth Railway Club, UK
 Figure 6 – Google Earth
 Figures 8 and 9 – Wikimedia Commons
 Figure 10 – L Manju

The “Ghost of the Bounty”: From Valvettithurai to Tahiti: the “Annapooranymal – Florence C. Robinson”

Somasiri Devendra

This is the story of a ship, from Jaffna, which sailed Westward ho! all the way from Valvettithurai (VVT) to Tahiti. This she did in two back-to-back voyages: one, with a Jaffna crew, from VVT to Boston and the other, with an all-American crew, from Boston to Tahiti. I related the story of the first voyage in *The Ceylankan* ⁽¹⁾ in 2011. I had no information of the second voyage then, but I have now; and this is the story of that second voyage. And, to make things even more topsy-turvy, I am putting the Epilogue up front before the beginning.

EPILOGUE

The “Ghost of the Bounty” comes home to Tahiti

Tahiti seems to have exercised a magnetic pull on the *Bounty* (of “*The Mutiny on the Bounty*” fame), and people connected to her.

The original “*Bounty*”, a collier commissioned by the Royal Navy, had been sailed to Tahiti to collect breadfruit saplings that could provide cheap food for slaves. Under Capt. Bligh, who had sailed the Pacific with Capt. Cook, she reached Tahiti on October 25, 1788, after ten months at sea. Bligh and his crew spent five months in Tahiti collecting breadfruit plants. The crew lived ashore and adopted the customs and culture of the Tahitians. Many led promiscuous lives while others took regular partners. Master’s Mate and Acting Lieutenant Fletcher Christian married Maimiti, a Tahitian woman. Though Bligh remained chaste himself he was tolerant of his men’s activities but expected them to do their duty efficiently. He was disappointed at the neglect and slackness of his officers, and he exercised heavy punishment for the slightest transgressions.

When the ship eventually had to sail, the crew hated to leave the island Paradise. They mutinied under the leadership of Fletcher Christian, cast Capt. Bligh adrift in his longboat and threw all the plants into the sea. Then they returned to Tahiti, picked up willing locals and sailed away, into oblivion.

More than 140 years later, in 1932, Charles Nordhoff and James Norton Hall wrote a best-selling novel, the “*Mutiny on the Bounty*” which, in 1935, MGM made into an Oscar-winning film. It was at the height of that enthusiasm that the ship from Jaffna – the last ship to cross the Atlantic under canvas alone – made port in Gloucester and earned the name of the “*Ghost of the Bounty*”.

All major players in this story had heard the siren call of Tahiti. William A. Robinson, who had bought the ship, had settled down there with his third wife. Sterling Hayden, skipper on the second voyage, a romantic and no stranger to Pacific waters, was later to defy a court order and sail to Tahiti with all four children. Nordhoff and Hall, authors of “*Mutiny on the Bounty*”, lived on the other side of the island.

Only the “*Bounty*” herself was missing and, when the “*Florence C. Robinson*”, the “*Ghost of the Bounty*”, felt Tahiti’s magnetic pull and came “home” at last, the circle was complete.

The story begins...

In 1937 an adventurous ‘Connecticut Yankee’ called William A. Robinson sailed a small yacht round the world – the smallest to do so, at that time – stopping awhile in Ceylon. He returned, in search of a shipwright (*Sundara mestriyar*) and a Jaffna-built ship whose elegant lines had caught his eye. He found her, bought her,



Annapooranymal under refit

changed her name from *Annapooranymal* to *Florence C. Robinson*, refitted her in Colombo and sailed, with his first wife, for Boston with an all-Jaffna crew, on his honeymoon cruise. Boston was as overwhelmed by the vision of this ‘ghost’ of the legendary *Bounty*, the elegance of her lines, the audacity of her voyage and by its dusky crew. She was a seven-day wonder but, a couple of months later, she was sailed again, this time with an all-American delivery crew, to Tahiti. And then, like the *Bounty*, she disappears from the record.

Strangely, after I had written about her first voyage I stumbled upon her second voyage, from Boston to Tahiti ⁽²⁾. Reading the reports of her voyages I was impressed by the larger-than-life persons who had sailed her: William A. Robinson, Kanagaratnam Thampipillai, Capt. Duncan A. McCuish, and Sterling Hayden. So, I decided to complete the story of this ship, and them ⁽³⁾, and this is part of the story.

End of the first voyage

Arriving in Boston was, in many ways, an end. Things had changed for Robinson which made him shelve the plans he had for the ship. As Don Holm says, “(the) beautiful full-rigged ship (he) had brought to Gloucester as a model (was) for designing and restoring classic old vessels.” In his small yard, which he founded, he rounded up old-time New England craftsmen and they began turning out beautiful vessels. *Florence C.* was part of that dream but, even as she entered port, Robinson had had to face the bitter truth that, with war clouds looming, the dream was at an end. The brigantine would have to “stay for a while” while being repainted and overhauled. He was not certain just when he will make a cruise in her, he said.

Then came World War II. And, as he would have known, his Yard itself was taken over and expanded for Navy vessels. Robinson had to put all his idealistic plans in cold storage. He says of the ship itself:

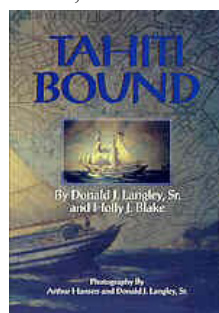
I would have made the final break then and sailed back to Tahiti in *Florence C.* But personal reasons made that impossible. So my wonderful crew went back to Kaits, and Valvettiturai, and the brigantine was sent to the Pacific where she became a successful Papeete trading vessel.

A new beginning... a new Captain

She had reached port on 1st August 1938. The Ceylonese crew were still on board as she awaited her fate docked at the Rocky Neck Railway dock at Gloucester, Massachusetts. Four months later, on 22nd November she sailed out on her second voyage: this time for Tahiti. A new Captain was chosen to deliver her to Tahiti, 22-year-old Sterling Hayden, and he set about engaging a crew. Hayden felt the Ceylonese crew “did not meet his standards and were quickly dismissed.” (Langley & Blake).

.... and a new crew

The captain and the crew were young and all-American, full of high spirits and adventure. The story of that voyage has been meticulously documented in *Tahiti Bound*, in the words of Langley who was on the crew. It



is full of youth and adventure and is in total contrast to the captains and crew on the last voyage. Perhaps it was the new skipper who set the tone: a 22-year-old who had circumnavigated the world and who was to become a famous figure after this trip. Hayden was a seasoned sailor having worked as mate on a schooner and served as mate on a world cruise of the schooner *Yankee* (1937). After

sailing around the world several times, he was awarded his first command at age 22, skippering the *Florence C.* from Gloucester, Massachusetts, to Tahiti.

Hayden became a famous name not long after. “Standing at 6 feet 5 inches, with a distinctive ‘rapid-fire’ baritone, he had a commanding screen presence.” He was signed on by Paramount Pictures but after two films he left Hollywood to fight in World War II. Back in Hollywood, a highly decorated hero, he is credited with



Sterling Hayden

59 films. In November 1960 he said he was a “sailor or writer” rather than an actor. He wrote two acclaimed books: an autobiography, *Wanderer* and a novel, *Voyage*. Hayden was married three times, appeared in a documentary of his life, *Pharos of Chaos* (1983) and died of prostate cancer in 1986, aged 70.

With such a man at the helm, anything could have happened. He set about signing on a crew of eleven, including himself. Ages ranged from 22 to 30, a mix of experienced sailors, friends and part time sailors in search of adventure. Larry O’Toole, Donald J. Langley (Cook), Art Hansen (First Mate), Dick Hemingway, Emil Huddy, Bill Butler, Bill Shepard, Eddie Ruggles, Ned Watson and Ken Butler. They had varying degrees of sailing experience, but only the captain knew how to navigate!

Unlike the first this voyage is well-documented – by the ship’s cook! – and one can not only trace the

ship from port to port but also pick up a lot of information about the ship itself.

Log of the second voyage of *Florence C*

On 22nd November 1938, nearly four months after her arrival in port, she left Gloucester under tow and hoisted sail. She rounded Cape Maisi (Cuba) on 8th December making port at Jamaica. She then sailed for Christobal, in Limon Bay, to transit the Panama Canal. Entering the canal, she completed her crossing reaching Balboa, on the Pacific end of the canal (on her first voyage she had transited the Suez Canal). Departing Balboa for the loneliest ocean in the world, she “Crossed the Line”, welcoming “King Neptune” aboard in traditional style and reached Floreana, in the Galapagos Islands. She touched at Napuko, in the Tuamotu group, leaving the same day, and reaching Papeete, Tahiti and the end of the voyage on 15th February. She had sailed 8196 miles from Gloucester in 86 days: a longer voyage than her first.

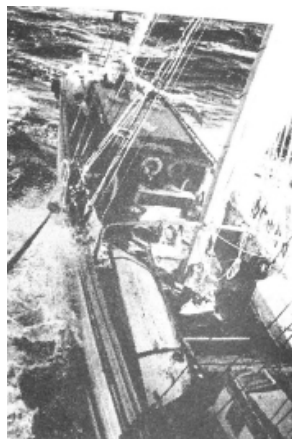
The first leg: the sea shows no mercy

The ship was ready to sail. This time the auxiliary engine was in working order. There are references to it being temperamental – the compressor needing to be filled with air before being started, the engine plug having to be heated with a gasoline blow torch – but as the Port authorities would not allow the ship to sail with an engine without a licensed engineer! So, the engine was ‘disabled’ by removing the propeller from the shaft. *Florence C.* was, again a sailing craft and had to be towed from her berth to the harbour mouth before she could hoist sail.

The crew soon found their sea-legs and the skipper laid down his ‘standing orders’: only the outboard ‘facility’ was to be used and the one inboard was nailed shut and the ship would show no running lights to keep the lookouts’ eyes peeled. As on the first voyage, there were no electronic navigational aids: there were only the sextant, compass, chronometers, navigational tables and charts. There was no radio for communication. And only the captain could navigate!

The sea showed its teeth very soon, as they ran into a severe storm. Forty-foot waves broke over the bulwarks and she started taking in water. The port bilge pump packed up and the discharge pipe of the other was broken off, so that the water deep in the hold could not be pumped out. Bailing-out had to be done by hand, buckets being passed along from hand to hand. Winds of over 100 mph were experienced: this was, in fact the second great hurricane of 1938. Sails were furled, despite which the topsail unraveled and torn to shreds and the foresail also unfurled and shredded nearly killing the skipper and another. This was not the end of their troubles. The heavy seas led to the loss of both chronometers without which longitude could not be ascertained and that meant the position of the ship could not be determined. Only latitude could be determined and the first attempt to do so showed that the ship had been blown 500 miles away from the intended course. More problems followed: a fire in the galley and the supply of drinking water was contaminated with oil. Technically, the ship was “a vessel in distress” and the decision was to put into port at Jamaica. But the storm was followed

by windless days. Then, they had a broken tiller. Finally, after 19 days at sea and 2156 miles from Gloucester they reached Jamaica on December 10th.



Hurricane

A 'Vessel in Distress' makes port

Kingston, Jamaica, a British colony where would-be slaves rescued from 'Blackbirder' (aka 'slave trader') ships by the Royal Navy were settled as free citizens, was a welcome break after the battering at sea. The few days were full of work on board: "the boat was crowded by sail-makers, tailors, laundresses, ship-chandler, spar maker and fruit sellers". A new stove, new sails, a new bilge pump and fire extinguishers were installed while the crew had the luxury of walking about and relaxing at the Myrtle Banks Hotel, one of the three 'Grand' Hotels in Kingston.

Sailing for Panama

After five days in port, *Florence C.* – or "*Flossie*" as the crew fondly called her – resumed her voyage. The next scheduled stop was Christobal, in Limon Bay, where ships transiting the Panama Canal gathered. They enjoyed fair winds along the way but also heavy showers, which were not unwelcome. Ten days later they dropped anchor in port and picked up mail; something all sailors look forward to.

Most importantly, Hayden got approval to put the propeller back in place so that the auxiliary engine could be used again. The operation was conducted with limited resources and facilities that were old-fashioned even then. However, it helped the ship to sail through the canal under her own power. Getting the engine started led to other problems till they were all finally solved.

The Canal

On 27th December the Pilot came on board at 0600 to guide the ship through the locks. For several reasons – one being the great difference in mean sea levels of either side of the Isthmus of Panama – a large lake was created, higher than the sea levels at either end. Gatun Lake was the largest human-made lake in the world. *Florence C.* proceeded under power, now that the engine was operational, and was piloted through a series of locks that raised her from the level at the Atlantic end to Gatun Lake, through which she sailed till the locks at the other end which lowered her to the level of the Pacific Ocean. The journey of about 50 miles took

eleven hours and the ship secured in Balboa at 1900 hours. There they picked up coal (for the new stove) and awaited the arrival of a letter bearing their return passage home after delivering the ship at Tahiti. They also picked up a cauldron and gristmill to be dropped off at Post Office Bay, Galapagos Islands for the "Wittmers". There were no regular ships calling at the smaller Pacific islands and items were routed, through an intermediary, aboard any vessel available.

Into the Pacific

She set sail, under sail, from Balboa on 30th December: next stop, the Galapagos Islands. The Pacific, covering over a third of the earth's surface and averaging 14,000 ft in depth is noted for its contrary and quick changes in winds it is not pacific in nature. *Florence C.*, after leaving Balboa, chugged along under power at a modest 3 knots. On 10th January she "Crossed the Line", the Equator and, as anticipated, "King Neptune" came on board. A very western tradition was enacted with the "King" subjecting all who had not crossed the line earlier in their lives to mild bullying, paddling etc. in a very 'male bonding' fashion and all were duly declared proper "Shellbacks" after the initiation.

Not long after encountering the cold Humboldt Current the Galapagos Islands were sighted: these islands offered protected anchorages, a good supply of water and fresh meat in the form of giant tortoises. They were frequented by pirates in earlier days and by whalers later, the latter picking up the tortoises for meat. *Florence C.* made for Floreana, one of the most southern islands in the group where a 'mail drop' had been established in the 18th century. She dropped anchor at Black Beach and the skipper - who appeared to know every island – led the way uphill to the farm of the Wittmers for whom they had brought along a cauldron and gristmill.

Langley, in *Tahiti Bound* gives a riveting account of the strange people who had made Floreana their home. Apart from the Wittmers, who were a normal family, there had been a French Dental Surgeon and a female companion who both removed their teeth as they believed that teeth were the root of all illnesses: the Doctor, who had had his teeth removed in Germany, wore stainless steel dentures on special occasions. His companion's teeth were removed by him on the island, without the benefit of painkillers, and she had no dentures. They sought to establish a nudist colony of their own. Then there was the "Baroness" who had arrived with three men to build a hotel. What relationship was there between them all or with other men co-opted is not known but, clad in only pink silk panties and armed with a pearl handled revolver, she proclaimed herself the "The Empress of Floreana". The Doctor, who was a vegetarian, died of food poisoning after eating spoilt tinned meat. The full story is too good to be spoilt by re-telling and therefore, not be re-told here.

Anchor was weighed on January 15th. This was done by "walking the capstan": an operation to raise the anchor by turning the capstan manually. The capstan was a large, vertically mounted spindle located on deck with slots to take in wooden bars. To raise anchor the bars were slotted in, and the crew took up positions behind the bars and started pushing them so that

the spindle turned and took up the anchor rope. It took several turns to complete the exercise and was not a popular pastime!



Walking the capstan

Floreana to Tahiti

The voyage continued with no major problems. The ship encountered less problems in the Pacific than in the Atlantic Ocean. A major incident, though, was a “Man Overboard!” scare. The ship’s parrot had fallen into the sea and a crew member had dived overboard to rescue her. It takes time for a sailing vessel to change course to pick up survivors and *Florence C.* took half an hour to do so in a calm sea. The crewman was rescued but the parrot did not survive and was accorded a formal burial at sea.

The calm seas led to a spring cleaning of the ship, scraping, painting and holystoning the deck till the ship looks as good as new. On 27th January they were 11 days out of Floreana and at the loneliest point one can be at sea: 1500 miles away from even a scrap of land in any direction. Changes of wind and sudden squalls were the only things encountered. During a squall the crew plugged up the scuppers so that rainwater remained on deck, and all did their laundry and enjoyed a freshwater bath. The motion of the ship, moving the water from side to side, acted like a washing machine.

On February 5th, the tiny island of Naupaka, in the Tuamotu group was sighted but, though it was an inhabited island there was no safe anchorage, so the ship stood offshore, and the crew visited the island in groups by longboat. A very poor and deprived island with nothing to offer and the ship got underway in a few hours. Fair weather was experienced, except for numerous squalls from all directions. On February 14th, they sighted Tahiti, at the end of their voyage.

Journey’s end

With the arrival in Papeete, Tahiti, *Florence C.*’s journey across the three major oceans came to an end. The crew had much to be happy about: Tahiti was a laid-back place where they could relax now that “the long trick” was over. New friends were made, as were new plans and the crew split up. Only Hayden and his cousin, Ken Butler, remained to attend to the details of

transferring the ship to the new owner: probably Robinson’s business partner Henri Grand.

This, then, is the place to end the story. We know that Robinson later said of the ship that “she became a successful Papeete trading vessel” but we do not know anything more of her life in Tahiti. Perhaps, some day, someone will learn about that chapter in her life. But in the course of her life that we know of she achieved many “firsts”.

She was the first Sri Lankan-built ship to sail with a Sri Lankan crew from Sri Lanka to the U.S.A. No one could have ever done it before. She would also have been the first Sri Lankan-built ship to sail in the South Pacific. She encountered hurricanes and doldrums, a fire in the galley, shredded sails, broken bilge pumps, non-functioning auxiliary engines and “Man overboard” scares. But no captain or crew ever found her wanting in build or structure. Structurally she remained inviolate to the end and never gave her crew any cause to complain: a very good ‘brand ambassador’ for the shipbuilders of Sri Lanka’s northern nautical tradition.

Cap’n Dan mouthed what could well serve as her epitaph:

“She’s a tidy little vessel, built of honest workmanship and good hard-wood”.

Sundara mestriyar would have been pleased.

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Annapooranymal Florence C

Events that led to the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom - Part 6: French Connection & The Kandyan Convention

Dr Leonard Pinto

British expansion in Asia was less dramatic than in the Atlantic. To satisfy their conscience, British had three legal methods of acquiring foreign lands in a 'just manner'. (1) Instigate foreign rulers to declare war, and acquire their land as a tribute, when they win. e.g., Hong Kong after the Opium war. (2) Sign a convention or a treaty. e.g., Kandyan Convention or (3) Declare the land to be uninhabited. e.g., Australian Aborigines. In the *Uluru Statement* in 2017 the Aboriginal leaders demanded that a treaty be signed, as they occupied the land then.

Initially, British evaluated Ceylon for its natural resources in the context of Indian subcontinent and concluded it to be low in importance. They were not attracted by the spices, tusks or gems. The initial British strategy of conquest of Ceylon by Governor Frederick North (1798-1805) was by war. The British were badly beaten by the inexperienced Sri Wickrama Rajasingha (1798-1815) in 1803 and 1804. England needed resources to fight wars in Europe and discouraged conquest by wars. However, the colonial rulers in the subcontinent developed a new strategy to conquer by 'infiltration and intervention.' Infiltration is the process of gradually extending political and diplomatic influence without being noticed (Somasundaram, 2008). British used this strategy effectively in India (Marshall 1996), and Governor Robert Brownrigg (1812-1820) used it to conquer Ceylon without a war.

Why did the British become interested in Ceylon, 34 years after King Kirthi Sri Rajasingha invited George Pigot, the governor in Madras to replace the Dutch in Ceylon? Surely, the British were not moved by the natural resources in Ceylon or the allegiance of Kirthi Sri Rajasingha. The reasons for the British interests on Ceylon were the events that were occurring in the European theatre, an aspect often overlooked in Sri Lankan history text books, as the inspiration for Sri Lankan history is *Mahavamsa*, which was written from a local and a temple perspective.

In the European theatre, after the French Revolution (1789-1799), France under Napoleon Bonaparte, was becoming a force to reckon. Napoleonic wars (1799-1815) were sweeping Europe and taking the lands of British allies. Kings, emperors and princes were fleeing. Pope Pius VI (1775-1799) was captured by Napoleon's forces and died in France. It was part of the French strategy to expand their territories in South Africa, South Asia and Indochina and be over the British. A key reason for the British interest in Ceylon was the fall of Netherlands to the revolutionary forces of France and the confused state of the Dutch in overseas colonies, whether to align with France, England or remain neutral. British evaluated Ceylon in the context of regional security of their colonies in India (Figure 1).

Trincomalee has been a strategic harbour for western maritime transport. In 1623 Portuguese

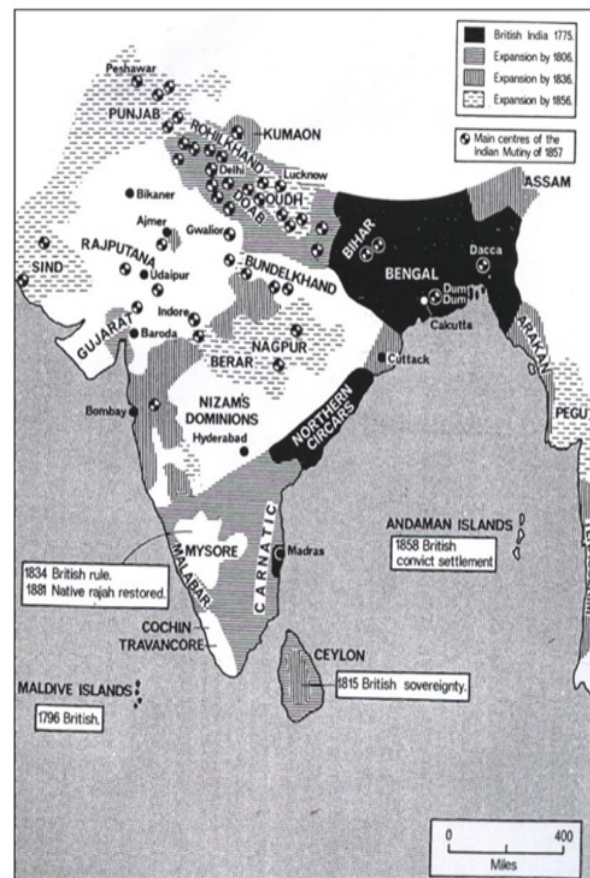


Figure 1. British conquest of Indian subcontinent from 1775 to 1858 by war and 'Policy of Infiltration' (Source: Somasundaram, 2008)

built *Fort Trincomalee*, but in 1639 Dutch captured it with the help of Rajasingha II. Dutch gave it to the King, who ordered it to be demolished and opened the harbour to all, including British and Danish ships for trade. Dutch retook Trincomalee in 1665 and built *Fort Fredrick* and *Fort Ostenburg*, with the support from the King. French came to Trincomalee in March 1672 and took it from the Dutch. The French signed a treaty with Rajasingha II in May 1672, which ceded bays of Trincomalee and Kottiyar to them. However, by July the French handed over Trincomalee to the Dutch, as they faced health problems and a shortage of food.

In December 1780, Britain declared war on the Netherlands, and the news reached the Dutch in Ceylon in June 1781. In January 1782 the British captured Trincomalee, the first city in Ceylon to be colonised, but they surrendered in August 1782, as the Dutch from Jaffna by land and French allies from sea jointly attacked the British. French remained in Trincomalee, and on 3 September 1782 fought the famous brutal battle, "Battle of Trincomalee" off the coast, between the French fleet of Pierre de Suffren and the British fleet of Edward Hughes. Casualties were over 300 on each side and all ships were damaged, 12 British ships returned to Madras and 14 French ships

returned to Trincomalee. British realised the regional importance of Trincomalee harbour after the battle (Figure 1). French ceded Trincomalee to the Dutch in 1783 in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles and it remained in Dutch hands till the British arrived in Trincomalee for the second time in 1795.

In January 1795 Netherlands was defeated by the French revolutionary forces. Prince William of Orange, of Netherlands fled to Britain. From his palace in Kew Gardens, he wrote the 'Kew Letters,' instructing Dutch overseas colonial governors to hand over their colonies to the British 'for safe keeping,' granting his uncle King George III of England the overseas Dutch possessions. Accordingly, Robert Hobart the governor in Madras was instructed to take over Ceylon. On 1 August 1795 British arrived in Trincomalee with a letter signed by the Dutch governor Van Angelbeek in Colombo, requesting to hand over *Fort Ostenburg* to the British. The Dutch commander refused and fought, but subsequently surrendered. The Swiss mercenaries in the Dutch army, under Pierre-Frederic de Meuron also deserted, after the British had bribed the mercenary company in Switzerland. Helpless Van



Figure 2. Conference in the Hall of Audience of the King of Kandy, 10 March 1815. D'Oyly and 3 Dissaves discuss the convention.

Angelbeek handed over the Dutch territory of Ceylon to the British on 15 February 1796.

Once in possession of the coastal areas of Ceylon, the conflict between the Vaduga Indian king of Kandy and his Dissaves of noble Kandyan Sinhalese families provided a golden opportunity for the British colonisers to capture the entire country by the policy of 'infiltration and intervention' after their failed attempts to conquer by war. The key British player of this drama was John D'Oyly, a Cambridge graduate and son of Matthias D'Oyly, the Archdeacon of Sussex. He started his career in Ceylon as the Agent of Revenue and Commerce (Collector) at Matara in 1804. He learnt Sinhala from Ven. Karatota Sri Dhammarama and became the 'Chief Translator' to Governor Thomas Maitland in 1805, and held that position till 1816, when he was appointed 'Resident of the Kandy Region'. In his capacity as Chief Translator and Collector of the Colombo District, he was responsible for all diplomatic relations with the Kandyan Kingdom, which involved negotiations and communications with the Kandyan Court and its Dissaves. He liked Sinhala culture and visited Gajaman Nona

the poet (statue at Nonagama Junction, Ambalantota), but was never married. His English friends called him 'Sinhalese hermit,' Obeysekera (2017) called him 'Master spy,' and I called him Sri Lanka's 'Lawrence of Arabia' for the first time (Pinto 2015). He died on 24 May 1824 at the age of 49 and was buried in the Garrison Cemetery, Malabar Street, Kandy. A commemorative plaque erected in his memory by his brothers is found in St Peters Church, Church St, Fort Colombo.

Ven Wariyapola Sri Sumangala thero (1795-1825) at the Convention

Hailing from Wariyapola off Kurunegala, Ven Wariyapola Sri Sumangala thero was the Anunayake of



Figure 3. Ven Sri Sumangala thero, bringing down the Union Jack

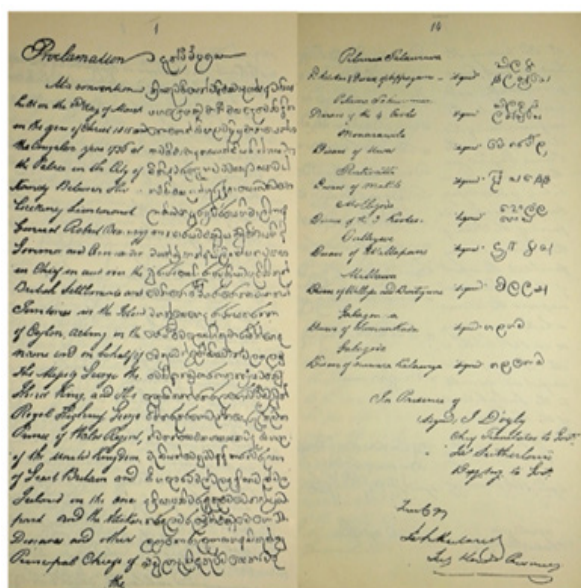
Asgiriya Chapter at that time. In 1753 the monks from Thailand established the high ordination (*Upasampadava*) under *Siam Nikaya*, exclusively for *govigama* and Kandyan castes, comprising Asgiriya and Malwatte Chapters, the former being the custodians of the sacred Tooth Relic. Malwatte seems to have been amenable to Kandyan Convention, whereas Asgiriya has been hostile.

On 2 March 1815, Governor Brownrigg arrived at the Royal Audience Hall (*Magul Maduwa*) in the morning and held discussions with Molligoda, the 1st Adigar and others and then met Mahanayake of Malwatte Chapter, Ven. Kobbekaduwa Unanse, who spoke highly of the British. Then the Governor returned to the Audience Hall for further discussions and proclamation of the Kandyan Convention, which took place around 7.30 pm. A British soldier at the ceremony hoisted the Union Jack before the proclamation and Ven Sri Sumangala, who was at the ceremony brought down the Union Jack and hoisted the Sinhala Flag, insisting that the convention has not yet being proclaimed. Although the soldiers manhandled him, D'Oyly intervened and freed him. After the ceremony Ven. Kobbekaduwa was taken back to the temple ceremoniously, with the British band playing.

Although the official signing of the convention is 2 March 1815 signing continued till 18 March, and the *Ceylon Government Gazette* stated it as on 6 March. During this period, D'Oyly is said to have carried the convention in his pocket, collecting signatures from the Dissaves.

Kandyan Convention

Having completed the infiltration and intervention, the Kandyan Convention was a strategy of 'informal influence for mutual benefit,' but with preconditions meant for political, economic and religious control of the colony, forged in the local crucible within the prevailing Kandyan feudal system (Godden and Casinader 2013).



It has the attributes of an international convention, that takes into account the concerns of the afflicted party, suffering under a cruel king and the aspirations of the majority Buddhists. The text was in Sinhala and English, probably drafted by D'Oyly. Page 1 and 14 of the convention are shown in Figure 4. The full text of the convention is as follows:

At a Convention held on the 2nd day of March, in the year of Christ 1815, and the Cingalese year 1736 at the Palace in the city of Kandy, between Excellency Lieut. General Robert Brownrigg Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the British settlements and territories in the Island Ceylon, acting in the name and on behalf of His Majesty George III, King, and His Royal Highness George, Prince of Wales, Regent of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland on the one part, and the Adigars, Dessaves and other principal chiefs of the Kandy and provinces on behalf of the inhabitants, and in presence of the Mohottales, Koralas, Vidanes, and other subordinate headmen from the several provinces, and of the people then and there assembled on the other part, it is agreed and established as follows:

1. That the cruelties and oppressions of the Malabar ruler, in the arbitrary and unjust infliction of bodily tortures and the pains of death without trial, and sometimes without an accusation or the possibility of a crime, and in the general contempt and contravention of all civil rights, have become flagrant, enormous and intolerable, the acts and maxims of his government being equally and entirely devoid of that justice, which should secure the safety of his subjects and of that good faith, which might obtain a beneficial intercourse with the neighbouring settlements.

2. That the rajah, Sri Wikrema Rajasingha, by the habitual violation of the chief and most sacred duties of a sovereign, has forfeited all claims to that title or the powers annexed to the same, and is declared fallen and deposed from the office of king, his family and relatives, whether in the ascending, descending, or collateral line, and whether by affinity or blood, are forever excluded from the throne, and all claims and title of the Malabar race to the dominion of the Kandyen provinces is abolished and extinguished.

3. That all male persons being or pretending to be relations of the late rajah Sri Wickrama Rajasingha, either by affinity or blood, and whether in the ascending, descending, or collateral line, are hereby declared enemies to the government of the Kandyan provinces, and excluded and prohibited from entering those provinces on any pretence whatever.

without a written permission for that purpose by the authority of the British Government, under the pains and penalties of martial law, which is hereby declared to be in force for that purpose, and all male persons of the Malabar caste now expelled from the said provinces are, under the same penalties, prohibited from returning, except with the permission before mentioned.

4. The dominion of the Kandyan provinces is vested in the Sovereign of the British Empire and to be exercised through the Governors or Lieutenant-Governors of Ceylon for the time being, and their accredited Agents, saving to the Adigars, Dissaves, Mohottalles, Koralas, Vidanes, and all other chief and subordinate native headmen, lawfully appointed by authority of the British Government, the rights, privileges, and powers of their respective offices, and to all classes of the people the safety of their persons and property, with their civil rights and immunities, according to the laws, institutions, and customs established and in force amongst them.

5. The religion of Boodho (Buddhism), professed by the chiefs and inhabitants of these provinces, is declared inviolable, and its rites, ministers, and places of worship are to be maintained and protected.

6. Every species of bodily torture, and all mutilation of limb, member or organ, are prohibited and abolished.

7. No Sentence of Death can be carried into execution against any inhabitant, except by the written warrant of the British Governor or Lieut. Governor for the time being, founded on a report of the case made to him through the accredited Agent or Agents of the Government resident in the interior, in whose presence all trials for capital offences are to take place.

8. Subject to these conditions, the administration of Civil and Criminal Justice and Police over the Kandyan inhabitants of the said provinces is to be exercised according to established forms, and by the ordinary authorities, saving always the inherent right of Government to redress grievances and reform abuses, in all instances whatever, whether particular or general, where such interposition shall become necessary.

9. Over all other person civil or military, residing in or resorting to these provinces, not being Kandyans, civil and criminal justice together with policy shall, until the pleasure of His Majesty's Government in England may be otherwise declared, be administered in manner following:

All persons not being commissioned, or non-commissioned military officers, soldiers or followers of the army usually held liable to military discipline shall be subject to the magistracy of the accredited agent or agents of the British Government, in all cases except charge of murder, which shall be tried by Special Commissions, to be issued from time to time by the Governor for that purpose. Provided always as to such charges of murder, wherein any British subject may be defendant, who might be tried for the same by the laws of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in force for the trial of offences committed by British subjects in foreign parts, no such British subject shall be tried on any charge of murder alleged to have been perpetrated in the Kandyan Provinces, otherwise than by virtue of such laws of the United Kingdom.

Commissioned or non-commissioned military officers, soldiers or followers of the army usually held amenable to military discipline shall, in all civil and criminal cases wherein they may be defendants, be liable to the laws, regulations and customs of war-reserving to the Governor and Commander in Chief, in all cases failing under this 9th article, an unlimited right of review over every proceeding civil or military had by virtue thereof, and such particular provisions, conformably to the general spirit of the said article, as may be found necessary to carry its principle into full effect.

10. Provided always that the operation of the preceding clauses shall not be contravened by provisions of any temporary or partial proclamations, published during the advance of the army provisions, in so far as incompatible with the preceding articles, are hereby repealed.

11. The royal dues and revenues of the Kandyan provinces are to be managed and collected for His Majesty's use and the support of the provincial establishments, according to lawful custom, and the direction and superintendence of the accredited Agent or Agents of the British Government.

12. His Excellency the Governor will adopt signally and recommend to the confirmation of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, in the name on behalf of His Majesty, such dispositions in favour the trade of these provinces as may facilitate export of their products and improve the returns, whether in money or in salt, cloths or other commodities useful and desirable to the inhabitants of the Kandyan country.

Table 1. Summary of the clauses in the Kandyan Convention and beneficiaries

Cl.	Summary of Clauses	Beneficiary
1	Civil rights restored. King's cruelty and injustice removed.	People, Chiefs & British
2	Sri Wikrema Rajasingha and his relatives had forfeited throne.	British & Chiefs
3	The king and his relatives cannot enter Kandy without permission.	British & Chiefs
4	Land owned by British and governed with local chiefs according to law.	British, Chiefs & People
5	Buddhism inviolable and protected.	People, Chiefs & British
6	All forms of bodily harm and torture abolished.	People, Chiefs & British
7	Death sentence only by British Governor, preceded by trial of GA.	British, People & Chiefs
8	Local law prevails. Grievances to the British government.	British, People & Chiefs
9	Non-Kandyans, (soldiers and British citizens) tried by UK laws.	British
10	During military operations, military laws override above clauses.	British
11	Tax according to local custom, under GA for local British Admin. & UK	British & People
12	Governor manages trade & export for British king & local inhabitants	British & People

The Kandyan Convention is summarised in Table 1, with the beneficiaries of each clause. All the clauses benefited British including the cl.5, as it created a good public relations image. British had their interpretation of cls. 4, 5 and 8. For the British the minimum of cl. 5 meant that the Buddhist will not be persecuted as the Dutch did to Catholics. They implemented clause 5 differently from the expectations, as the revolutions in the west had separated State from

Table 2. Signatories of the Kandyan Convention

No	Name	Dissawe/Adigar/Governor	Signature
1	Ehelepola	Former 1 st Adigar and Dissawe of Sabaragamuwa	Tamil
2	Molligoda	1 st Adigar & Dissawe of Seven Korales	Sinhala
3	Pilimathalawe	2 nd Adigar & Dissawe of Sabaragamuwa	Tamil
4	Pilimathalawe	Dissawe of Four Korales	Tamil
5	Monorawila	Dissawe of Uva	Sinhala
6	Ratwatte	Dissawe of Matale	Tamil
7	Molligoda	Dissawe of Three Korales	Sinhala/Tamil
8	Dullewe	Dissawe of Walpane	Sinhala/Tamil
9	Millewe	Dissawe of Wellesse and Bintenne	Sinhala/Tamil
10	Galagama	Dissawe of Tamankaduwa	Sinhala
11	Galagoda	Dissawe of Nuwara-Kalawiya	Sinhala
12	R. Brownrigg	British Governor	English

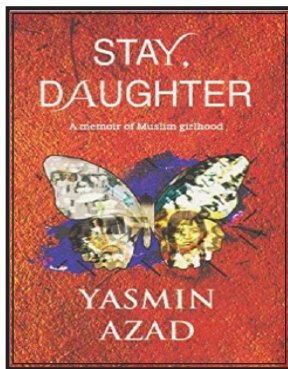
Church, and the intellectuals of the Age of the Enlightenment had distanced myths in religions from reason. There were 12 signatories in the Kandyan Convention, 4 signed in Sinhala, 4 in Tamil, 3 in Tamil and Sinhalese and 1 in English (Table 2). The signatures of Robert Brownrigg, Ehelepola and Molligoda are on page 13 and not shown on page 14 of Figure 4. J. D'Oyly and J.A.S. Sutherland, the Deputy Secretary to the Government witnessed. Ehelepola usually signs in Sinhala, but here he signed in Tamil, either to discredit the Convention or not to be blamed for betrayal. Some letters taken from signatures is shown in Table 2.

Some of them resemble Sinhala or Tamil, but others resemble neither. They may have been a unique style of the signatory. Even before the signing the Kandyan Convention, Ehelepola realised that he would not get the sub-king position, but an equivalent of the Government Agent. After the Convention, the governing system in Sri Lanka changed from autocratic monarchy to a democracy based on policies, administrative and judicial systems. Bond-labour (rajakariya) changed to free-labour (Schrikker 2007), and the doors opened for western education. The Dissawes realised that the British objectives and their relationships with them were different. Dissawes had made a mistake, and it was too late now! Sri Lankans in general and nationalists in particular expressed the same sentiments after the Kandyan Convention till independence. Post-independence economy was a failure, and the current financial crisis is a disaster. Since independence in 1948, the Kandyan Convention has been repealed and Buddhism restored in the Sri Lankan Constitution. But after 75 years of independence, ethics in governance had degraded and the much-desired freedom has turned the country into a nightmare.

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BOOK REVIEW



Stay, Daughter: A Memoir of Muslim Girlhood

Published by Perera-
Hussein Publishing
House, Colombo,
2020. (249 pages)

'*Stay, Daughter*' dazzles in its honest narration. It is a memoir of the childhood of a Muslim girl growing up in the picturesque Dutch Fort in Galle in the 1950's and '60s when Sri Lanka was still called 'Ceylon', and its official language in the year of her birth was still English. The Muslim community was a major ethnic group in the Galle Fort. Social infrastructure in the Fort included public administration offices, courts of justice, a mosque, Buddhist temple, churches, banks, mercantile establishments, public schools, the Galle Gymkhana Club and the Post Office. The Fort has two entrances, massive arches, about half a kilometre apart.

Yasmin's ventures outside the Fort were limited to the cloistered campus of her all-girl Catholic school, located a few kilometres outside the Fort; and occasional visits by car to relatives in the outskirts of Galle Town. The most significant opening to the non-Muslim world for her was through friendship with a girl of her own age from a Protestant family in their well-to-do neighbourhood.

It is a privilege for the reader to share the matter-of-fact unfolding of her everyday experiences through the eyes and perceptions of a child, and later a teenager. Her direct voicing of events and feelings indicate a circumstance in which she was trying to make sense of the loving but stifling environment of the close-knit Muslim community that her parents valued. At the same time, the innate intelligence with which she observed those outside her nuclear family made her aware of the rapidly transforming Sri Lankan society which she would need to navigate in her approaching adulthood.

The book is both engaging and enjoyable; and the compassionate way in which the story is told provides valuable insights into the complex nature of multicultural societies without judging the people through whom these densities play out.

Information for book orders is available at www.staydaughter.com

Duleep Danton

Obituary notices published in *The Ceylankan*

All Obituary notices and Appreciations of Life recorded on these pages are restricted only to deceased CSA members who have made a significant contribution to the society. In keeping with that policy all notices are accompanied with a note indicating such membership status.



CSA General Meetings for 2022 - Sydney

- **Sunday 29 May 6.30 pm**
- **Sunday 28 August 6.30 pm** (Meeting with cocktail party to celebrate the 25th anniversary of CSA. Details will follow).
- **Saturday 19 November 6.00 pm to midnight** (AGM and Social)

Venue: Pennant Hills Community Centre Main Hall, Level 1 Ramsay Road, Pennant Hills (cnr Yarrara Rd, enter via Ramsay Rd for parking).

Please note: All meetings are subject to Covid 19 restrictions / lockdowns. Events that go ahead will be held strictly in compliance with safety regulations as required..

The **Second General Meeting for 2022** will take place on **Sunday 29 May at 6.30 pm** at the venue specified above. The Social following the talk will have some short eats and refreshments provided. Admission is free for members and guests. Donations to defray expenses would be greatly appreciated.

The guest speaker on the evening will be Dr Leonard Pinto on The Evolution of Governance in Sri Lanka.

The history of Sri Lanka can be divided into 3 phases - Pre-Colonial, Colonial and Post-Colonial periods, based on the systems of governance by either a Sri Lankan-Indian monarchy, a Colonial Governor under a Western monarchy or a parliamentary democracy elected by Sri Lankans.

The Pre-Colonial period runs from the 3rd century BCE to the 19th century, comprising the various Kingdoms in the different parts of the country - Anuradhapura Period, Polonnaruwa Period, Dambadeniya and Yapahuwa Period, Kurunegala and Gampola Period, Kotte Period and Kandy Period. Some historians consider the number of kings who ruled the Pre-Colonial Sri Lanka to be 184, but others go up to 295.

The Colonial period goes from 1505 to 1948 - Portuguese for 153 years, Dutch for 138 and the British for 152. The Portuguese were mainly interested in spiritual and temporal conquest, the Dutch in business and the British in expanding their empire. The Portuguese and Dutch ruled only the coastal areas of the country with the Kandyan Kingdom able to resist all attempts at conquest. After losing battles with the Kandyans, the British were able to exploit the rift between the Kandyan king and his chieftains and finally took over Kandy without a fight. With the signing of the Kandyan Convention in 1815, the entire island



came under British rule. The Colebrooke Commission in 1831 attempted to streamline and unify administrative and judicial systems in different provinces and the Donoughmore Commission created the Donoughmore Constitution which made provision for training and inclusion of Sri Lankans in the governance of the country from 1931 to 1947.

The Post-Colonial period began with independence in 1948, and from 1956 to 1977 a gradual socialist policy framework attempted to eliminate the prevailing class differences through free education, nationalisation, recognition of the language and religion of the majority population, change of foreign policy direction away from capitalist countries and subsequently to non-alignment status. In 1972 the Governor General position under the earlier Soulbury Constitution gave way to the post of titular President with power vested in Parliament and retained by the Prime Minister, and Ceylon became a Republic within the Commonwealth and changed its name to the original Sri Lanka. In 1978 the Constitution changed again with the introduction of the Executive President as head of state and head of government with the power to choose the Prime Minister from the majority party in Parliament, and Sri Lanka became the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.



Dr Leonard Pinto is an ecologist by qualification and a historical anthropologist by interest. He is a graduate of Peradeniya (B.Sc.), Colombo (M.Phil.), and the University of Philippines (PhD). He was a lecturer at De La Salle University, Manila, and the Director of its Batangas Marine Research Station from 1980-85. From 1985

to 1991 he was a Senior Lecturer and from 1988 the Head of the Zoology Department of the Open University of Sri Lanka. He was involved with the activities of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS) and was President of *Section D: Life and Earth Sciences* in 1988. He was the President of the Open University Teachers Association (OUTA) for two years.

His research area includes mangrove ecosystems, wetlands and their biota. His publications include the books, *Mangroves of Sri Lanka* (NARE-SA, SL 1986), parts of *A Directory of Asian Wetlands* (IUCN, UK 1989) and *Being a Christian in Sri Lanka: Historical, Political, Social and Religious Considerations* (Balboa Press, USA 2015), with over 30 scientific

papers in local and international journals and conference papers presented in Australia, UK, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Kenya and Sri Lanka.

He worked as an ecologist at Sydney Water for 20 years, and in 2003 he shared the NSW Premier's Silver Award for the Environment for *Protecting and Restoring the Botany Wetlands - A Historical Asset in Sydney*. He taught ecology, biology and scientific methods at WSU, UTS and UNSW for a couple of years. Currently he is a Senior Environment Consultant to Blacktown City Council for the development of North West Growth Centre.

CSA – Colombo Chapter

The first Colombo Chapter Lecture Meeting will be held on **27 May 2022** at the **Auditorium of the Organization of Professional Associations (OPA), Stanley Tillakaratne Mawatha, Colombo, at 5.30 PM**

We will be making this an opportunity to “re launch” the Chapter after its long Covid-related slumber, to present ourselves as an organization worth joining. Non-members will be invited to attend.

The main speaker for the evening will be

Mr. Nihal Seneviratne, former Secretary-General of Parliament.

He will address us on

“Memories of 33 years in the Parliament of Sri Lanka”

Nihal studied at Royal College, Colombo and joined the Law Faculty of the University of Peradeniya graduated as a Barrister at law (LLB). He then joined the Law College, passing out as an Advocate of the Supreme Court. After practicing as an Advocate for one-and-a-half years he joined the Parliament of Sri Lanka as a 2nd Clerk Assistant to the Clerk of the House of Representatives. Subsequently he was promoted as Clerk Assistant and, finally, as Secretary-General of Parliament.

After retirement he worked as an Advisor to Hon. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka for a period of 2 years, after which served as Advisor to Hon. Anura Dias Bandaranaike, Speaker of Parliament for a period of 3 years.

The Colombo Chapter looks forward to a fresh lease of life after a long hibernation.

WANTED...YOUR LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

The Ceylankan is published quarterly and the Editor is on the look-out for your literary contributions. Be assured that your work will be given careful consideration with a view to publication at all times.

Original, previously unpublished, articles relating to the history, culture and heritage of Sri Lanka are sought, while any material of an anecdotal nature will also be considered provided they conform to the CSA's ideals of being non-racial, non-political, non-religious and non-controversial.

While every effort is made to print material that is relevant and correct, we do not take the responsibility for errors. The Editor would appreciate any inaccuracies being brought to his notice without delay.

To facilitate the design/layout of the publication, we request that your word processing / typing be unformatted. Where applicable, contributors are also requested to annotate bibliographical references for copyright reasons and to help further research and study by interested members.

MEMBERSHIP RATES

- **General Subscriptions for Australia:** \$35 per calendar year;
- **Pensioners' subscriptions:** \$25 per calendar year;
- **Sri Lanka:** Rs.3000 per calendar year;
- **Overseas members from USA/UK/Canada/Israel/Thailand and other countries:** \$50 per calendar year. If payment is not possible in Aust Dollars, please pay by Bank Draft or Bank Transfer in US Dollars or Pounds Sterling and add Aust \$10 to the Aust \$50 for bank charges due here for converting a foreign currency payment to Aust Dollars.

Payment Methods

1. Pay by cheque in favour of the Ceylon Society of Australia and post to Deepak Pritamdas, Treasurer, PO Box 489, Blacktown, NSW 2148, Australia.

2. Pay by Bank Transfer to:

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Note: Please email all payment details in confirmation to deepakpsl1@gmail.com

Congratulations and a warm welcome to our New Members

JOHNNIE DE SILVA, Berwick, VIC 3806 (Gift by Srilal Fernando);

SIRI DE SILVA, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania, USA (Gift by Eulali Herat).

Notice to Members - Contact Details

Could we please request all members to advise Treasurer Deepak Pritamdas - deepakpsl1@gmail.com - and Secretary Sunimal Fernando - smfernando@tpg.com.au - of any changes to contact details for phone, email address and home address. We need to make certain our records are correct for mailing *The Ceylankan* as well as for getting in touch with members, and would appreciate your assistance. Thank you.

WE NEED SPEAKERS

The CSA welcomes professionals and others interested in speaking at our General Meetings. Meetings are held in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo, quarterly in February, May, August and November.

If you know of anyone, please contact as relevant:

- CSA President Pauline Gunewardene

Mobile: +61 419 447 665

Email: paulineg@ozemail.com.au

- Melbourne Chapter Convenor Hemal Gurusinghe

Mobile: +61 427 725 740

Email: hemguru@hotmail.com

- Colombo Chapter Secretary Anandalal Nanayakkara

Mobile: +94 77 327 2989

Email: anandalal10@gmail.com

ADVERTISING IN *The Ceylankan*

For some time, CSA members and others have indicated an interest in advertising to promote their goods and services in the Journal. However, we have been maintaining the ideal of the founders of the CSA, that the Journal must not be made a means for commercial profit, but only as a vehicle for research, study and promotion of the rich heritage and culture of Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

Now, with the constant rise in costs of delivery of the Journal to members worldwide, we need to look at additional sources of revenue. Accordingly, the Committee has decided to accommodate advertising and promotional matter in the form of loose-leaf flyers, but not as part of the body content of the Journal.

Suitable material, in keeping with the non-political, non-partisan aims and ideals of the CSA, will be considered. All such copy is to be submitted to the Editor for consideration.

Once accepted, the advertiser will need to supply the printed flyers in sufficient numbers for inclusion in that particular issue of the Journal.

The cost of inserting such flyers is \$500 per issue of the Journal, paid in advance.

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on 0434 860 188



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Sebastian Munster's map of Taprobana drawn in 1580 based on Ptolemy's map of Taprobane 2nd Century AD