

COVER STORY

**HYDROELECTRIC POWER STATIONS OF THE CEYLON
ELECTRICITY BOARD**

by THIRU ARUMUGAM

CEYLON SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (CSA)

1997 - 2022

25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS!

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The Ceylon Society of Australia

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The Ceylankam

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From the Editor

Dear Readers

Welcome to the third issue in this 25th year of existence of The Ceylon Society of Australia. As an appropriate celebration of this important milestone of our Silver Jubilee, we are selling tickets for a Cocktail Party on Sunday 28th August, replacing the usual General Meeting - see page 33 for flyer and details and also carried in eLanka.

The Committee would greatly welcome the attendance of our Sydney membership with their friends, for an evening of reminiscing on the CSA's past and socialising in an evening of convivial fellowship. Members and guests will have the chance to recall the early days of the CSA and of old Ceylon over tasty morsels of Sri Lankan short eats washed down by a glass or two of good wine, tea or coffee and soft drinks. A wonderful way to spend a winter evening!

This issue's Colombo Column deals with the theme of 'Lost Heritage'. There is a short mention of the Old Galle Face Guard House, now demolished, which even had a whipping post! In the same column Richard Simon remembers his boyhood exploring the Ratmalana Flying School in the late 1960s and the vintage biplanes and old propeller aircraft parked outside their hangars. Something that aeroplane buffs would find interesting.

It is apposite in these environmentally conscious times, with the world searching for alternative sources of clean energy, to have the cover story about hydroelectric power stations of the Ceylon Electricity Board. Thiru Arumugam has given us a comprehensive history of electricity generation in Ceylon, especially concentrating on the role of pioneer Sri Lankan engineer D.J. Wimalasurendra (1874-1953). In his article Thiru has given details

of the construction of power plants familiar to most Sri Lankans, like Laxapana, Randenigala, Kotmale and Udawalawe. It should be a source of pride that Sri Lanka has one-third of its power sourced from hydro-electricity, as it is clean, renewable and non-polluting. Thiru has given fitting tribute to the visionary work of Wimalasurendra in establishing the hydroelectric power network in Sri Lanka.

Hugh Karunanayake has written a fascinating article on the scholar and administrator George Turnour (1799-1843) famous for his English translation of the *Mahavamsa*, the great Pali chronicle of Sri Lanka's ancient history. Although he was part of the British colonial administration, George Turnour was one of those rare Englishmen who took a keen interest in Ceylon's past and took the trouble to learn Pali and translate the first 38 chapters of the Great Chronicle into English, thereby making Sri Lanka's rich ancient history available to the world. The Turnour Prize for exceptional scholarship, awarded to students at one of Colombo's oldest schools, Royal College, commenced in 1846 (three years after George Turnour's death) and is still awarded 176 years later making it the oldest continuing prize in Sri Lanka.

In an article dealing with a topic most relevant to readers of this journal, Earlson Forbes has penned an interesting piece on the history of Ceylonese / Sri Lankan migration to Australia. It commences in the sugar cane fields of northern Queensland in the 19th century and navigates the difficult years of the White Australia Policy and the dreaded Dictation Test. Earl concludes his article on an optimistic note by mentioning that immigrants from Sri Lanka have been one of the most successful communities contributing immensely to Australia's economic, professional, cultural, educational and gastronomic landscape.

Referring to the current economic and political turmoil in the island of our birth I thought it appropriate to include a keynote speech given by former Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Australia and business leader Mr S. Skandakumar to the Rotary Club

Ceylon Society of Australia

The Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA) is a not-for-profit organisation, incorporated in Australia, with the objectives of studying, fostering and promoting interest in the historical and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka.

It is non-political and non-partisan, steering clear of controversial issues. It is a worldwide society of like-minded people, open to receiving and imparting new ideas. While Sydney is home to the parent body and Committee, looking after the overall affairs of the Society, the Melbourne Chapter looks after the meetings in Victoria, with the Colombo Chapter tending to the membership in Sri Lanka. Quarterly free meetings for Members are held in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo, with guests welcome to attend. Meetings conclude with a Q&A session and a mini Social.

The annual calendar year subscription covers receipt of the Society's journal, "*The Ceylankan*", published quarterly and distributed to members worldwide. The articles published are authored by members. 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 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.

of Colombo Port City in July 2021 about what went wrong politically and economically in Sri Lanka and a possible way forward. Mr Skandakumar looks at the Island's post-Independence history and identifies problems that should be avoided in future. It is a passionate and heartfelt plea to Sri Lankans to follow the path of peace, justice and inclusion drawing inspiration from Buddha's teachings.

The next article by Dr Srilal Fernando relates the story about a painting drawn in 1772 by C.F. Reimers of the Dutch Governor, Willem Falck, hosting Kandyan Ambassadors in his Colombo Residence. Reimers was surgeon to Governor Falck. It is an interesting portrait of the Dutch period in Ceylon during the 18th century. The painting has a personal resonance to me because one of the Kandyan ambassadors is Meedeniya Ralahamy, who is the ancestor of one of the greatest stars of Sri Lanka's stage and screen and my mother's dear friend, Iranganie Serasinghe, nee Meedeniya! Srilal also provides a potted history of what happened to the painting, or copies of it, in later years adorning the collections of Leslie de Saram, Geoffrey Bawa and Dr R.K. Rajpal de Silva.

In Operation "*Goshen*" Somasiri Devendra has transcribed the story related to him by his friend Commander E.L. Matthysz who was in charge of the salvage operation of the Indian ferry "*Goshen*", which was severely damaged and beached as a result of a cyclone that hit Talaimannar and northern Sri Lanka including Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa on 23 December 1964. It is interesting to note that the ferry "*Goshen*" was mentioned in an article in the May 2022 issue of this journal by Thiru Arumugam on the India-Ceylon express train from Colombo to Madras where that ferry used to pick up passengers from Ceylon at Talaimannar Pier in the 1940s and 50s. Cmdr Matthysz began a series of stories about his experiences in the navy and this story was completed before Cmdr Matthysz's death and given to Somasiri. We are honoured to publish this account in *The Ceylankan*.

There are reviews of four fascinating books that cover indigenous knowledge and cultural practices in ancient Sri Lanka, memoirs of former Secretary General of Sri Lanka's Parliament Nihal Seneviratne and barrister Nimal Wickramanayake QC and a book written in Sinhala about the history of human food by Milton Fernando that won the 2022 State Literary Prize in Sri Lanka.

There are also reports of talks given by Roderick de Sylva on the Development of the Tea Industry in Sri Lanka and by Dr Leonard Pinto on the Evolution of Governance in Sri Lanka at the CSA General Meetings of February and May 2022.

Happy reading!

ADAM RAFFEL

Our Readers write

Origins of Sri Lankan people & problems in modern society

I refer to the recent presentation by Dr Leonard Pinto on the Evolution of Governance in Sri Lanka delivered at the Ceylon Society meeting on Sunday 29 May 2022 held in Sydney & wish to clarify the following:-

In terms of ancient history, a major problem until recent times was the lack of reliable sources, and excessive dependence on the Pali chronicles: *Mahavamsa*, *Culavamsa* and *Deepavamsa*. It has now been established by anthropologists and historians that there were considerable inaccuracies and distortions in these sources about the origins of the two major races, Sinhalese and Tamils.

Although the chronicles claim that the Sinhalese were of Indo Aryan origin from north India, recent studies by anthropologists and historians, foremost among them Dr Karthigesu Indrapala, whose work *Origins of Ethnic Identity* clearly traces the origin of bulk of our society to be from South India, most likely Sinhalese from Kerala and Tamils from Tamil Nadu to be of Dravidian ancestry. It is supported by other anthropologists, Sriyan Deraniyagala, Sudarshan Senaratne and Arjun Gunaratne. Sirima Kiribamune, Professor of History, University of Ceylon, says there is a high level of distortion and prejudice in the chronicles.

While there is no evidence to show any ethnic connection with North Indian society, it is evident that there were cultural links through language, especially Pali for Sinhalese as well as Buddhism, religion of majority of Sinhalese. However it is possible that a boat load of Bengalis of Dravidian ancestry arrived at the early stages of settlement in the country.

In respect of language, while Sinhalese and Tamil have been the major spoken languages, there was the influence of the European colonial powers, especially British, whose major contribution to our society in terms of education and culture was the introduction of English which contributed to modernising our country. However, English education was confined to a small section of population in provincial capitals through Missionary schools, which were adequate for functioning of the Civil Service under British rule. It was Governor Mackenzie who introduced the vernacular school system in the late 19th century. Sadly, after independence from British rule in 1948, and even earlier in the first half of the 20th century when the local politicians had access to power and influence, no action was taken to expand English education in rural and regional areas. Introduction of Swabasha education in local languages to replace English, resulted in the complete decline of English education. This in turn resulted in the creation of a large educated unemployed youth population leading to insurgencies and civil war. Any attempt to restore English education has been inhibited by a lack of trained English teachers. As a result Sri Lankan society was transformed from having one of the highest standards of English education in the British Commonwealth in the first half of the 20th century to one of the lowest in recent times.

Srikantha Nadarajah
Hornsby, NSW

The Colombo Column

Compiled for the Colombo Chapter by Somasiri Devendra



LOST HERITAGE

The Galle Face Guard House

David Goodrich wrote in *The Ceylankan Journal* No 2 in 1998 about a building we have now no collective memory of, though I remember it faintly.

It stood right opposite the steps of, what is now the Presidential Secretariat, in solitary splendour with the Indian Ocean as a backdrop. Built in the 18th century, it dated back to the Dutch occupation. Once a police station standing just outside the walls of the Fort, and later a guard room, by its side was the 'whipping post', which had been used for public flogging on sentence of Court, but this was removed in the 1920s. The guard room itself represented the classical lines of colonial Dutch architecture and had an outer verandah with roof high columns. It was, at one time, used as an office of the Boy Scout Association. Finally, in a state of disrepair, it was demolished in the 1960's to make way for the extension of the Marine Drive.

Summer of '69

by Richard Simon

In 1969, I was in the Upper Third at St Thomas's College and living down Attidiya Road in Ratmalana. In those days schoolboys weren't chauffeured everywhere by their parents; we went to school, and everywhere else, by bus, and when school was over, we roamed the streets on our push-bikes. Terrorists and suicide bombers hadn't been invented yet. There were other dangers, of course, much as there are today, but boys back then were expected to be boys, and take care of themselves.

I spent much of the school holidays that July and August roaming the lanes and back-roads of Attidiya on my bicycle. Most days I would be riding with half my attention directed at the sky, where the members of the Ratmalana Flying School (which was really a flying club) would be practising spin recoveries and aerobatics in their tiny, single-engine private planes. I was eleven years old and crazy about flying machines, and I probably fell off my bike a time or two, squinting up at some buzzing speck tumbling exuberantly through the air above me.

One day, my two-wheeled explorations led me to an open, grassy space adjacent to the northern boundary of Ratmalana Airport, where a public well served a few modest homes grouped round it. It was separated from the airfield itself by a simple chain-link fence, no more than five feet high. Easy enough for a tallish eleven-year-old to scale.

I had discovered the portal into a forbidden world. I went back every day. I would leave my bike, locked, by the well, climb the fence, scoot through the long grass – almost high enough to conceal me entirely – and dash across the airfield, keeping one eye out for incoming aircraft and the other peeled for a big pink Jeep Wagoneer that belonged to airport security.

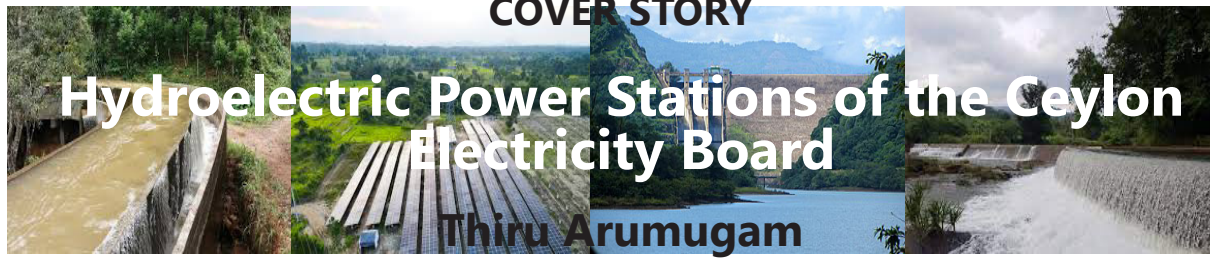
I would work my way round the far end of the runway and make for the apron, where there were always interesting things going on – an Air Ceylon Dakota or a HP Herald belonging to Indian Airlines being refuelled and loaded, Flying School members tinkering with their machines. I remember being fascinated by an ancient Dragon Rapide biplane they had, a relic of the 1920s, and a sleek twin-engine Czech aerobatic trainer, an Aero 45. The school also boasted a Tiger Moth (another pre-WW2 biplane), a Percival Prentice trainer and a collection of terrifying fabric-and-wire contraptions hand-built by Ray Wijewardena. I only got to know Ray – old Thomian, aero-engineer, founder of the Aeromodellers' Club at STC, inventor of the hand-tractor, Olympic athlete and all-round genius – many years later, but I was impressed, even at the time, at the guts it must have taken to fly one of those things.

The members of the Flying School adopted me without asking too many questions. None of them ever introduced themselves to me. Nor did they ever, as far as I can recall, ask me my name. But they were very friendly and generous with their time and were happy to let me sit in the cockpits of their aircraft while they explained to me how the controls worked and how to read the instruments. I was, of course, forever angling to be taken up on a flight, but for reasons now obvious to me it never happened.

A hangar on the other side of the pretty little Art Deco terminal building housed the serious aviators. Here lived a blue twin-engine Beechcraft belonging to the Survey Department, as well as the Dakotas and an Avro 748 that was later blown up by an LTTE bomb. Stricter rules prevailed here: there was no question of getting into the aircraft or anything like that, but I was allowed to hang around as long as I didn't touch anything. The staff were friendly, though a bit stricter about the rules than the men of the Flying School were. I was also a guest in the Ratmalana control tower many times, watching landings and take-offs and marvelling at the way the controllers could make out the pilots' voices on the radio amid furious gusts of static.

All went well for several weeks until the day I decided to share the experience with a classmate. We had a great time, but we made ourselves a bit too obvious. On the way back across the airfield the Wagoneer appeared. The men inside told us to get lost and never to come back again. A few months later I became an adolescent, and my childhood fascination with aviation was replaced by other, less innocent, interests. That Ratmalana idyll was the Indian summer of my childhood.

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Hydroelectric Power Stations of the Ceylon Electricity Board

Thiru Arumugam

The Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) was created in 1969 as the successor to the Department of Government Electrical Undertakings (DGEU) and celebrated its 50th anniversary a few years ago. The CEB is responsible for the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity supply in Ceylon, and it has more than six million account customers, of which 87 percent are domestic household customers.

The latest Annual Report of the CEB which is in the public domain is the *Ceylon Electricity Board 50th Anniversary (1969-2019) Annual Report 2019* and information from that Report is used in this article. The four basic types of power stations used by the CEB to generate electricity are:

- Several Hydroelectric power stations which use water pressure to drive water turbines which drive alternators;
- A coal fired power station where boilers are coal fired to raise steam to drive steam turbines which are coupled to alternators, the 900-Megawatt (MW) Lakvijaya Power Station near Kalpitiya;
- Several Oil fuelled power stations where a gas turbine or diesel engine drive alternators; and
- Non-conventional renewable energy (NCRE) power plant like wind powered generators, mini-hydroelectric power plant and generation of electricity from solar power where energy from the sun is directly converted to electricity without any moving parts.

Ceylon is blessed with hydro power potential because there are rivers which originate in the central highlands and flow downhill to the lowlands. The difference in elevation can be used to generate electricity. Hydroelectric power stations have a high construction cost because they require infrastructure like dams to store the rainy season water so that it lasts for the rest of the year, tunnels or channels to convey water to a point on a hill above the power station, and penstocks or pipelines to lead the water down to the turbines in a valley below. On the other hand, once they are built, they have very low running costs because they do not require fuel and they do not discharge gases into the atmosphere and are therefore environmentally friendly. Compared with this, thermal power stations which use coal or oil as the source of fuel are expensive to run and they require imported fuel which requires foreign exchange. Furthermore, their discharge gases pollute the atmosphere and thermal power stations are not environmentally friendly.

CEB Electricity Generation and Sales in 2020

The maximum electricity demand on CEB's grid system during any day occurs between 7 pm and 8pm in the evening when the domestic lighting load

is at its peak. The highest maximum demand for any evening of the year usually occurs on Vesak night due to the additional lighting load of the Vesak pandols and other Vesak lighting. According to the Ceylon Electricity Board Statistical Digest 2020 the highest maximum demand on any evening of 2020 was 2717 MW. The total units of electricity generated in 2020 was 15,714 Gigawatt hours (GWh). The CEB does not have the capacity to meet this electricity demand with its own plant and therefore has to purchase power for resale from private electricity generating firms called Independent Power Producers (IPPs). In 2020, CEB generated 11,138 GWh from its own plant (which was 70.9 percent of the total generated) and purchased the balance 4576 GWh (29.1 percent of the total) from IPPs.

The breakdown of electricity generated in 2020 by the CEB and IPPs according to type of powerplant and their percentage contribution to the total are as follows:

- Hydroelectric and mini-hydroelectric generators 4958 GWh (31.6 percent);
- Thermal (coal) generators 5754 GWh (36.6 percent);
- Thermal (oil) generators 4179 GWh (26.6 percent);
- Other Non-conventional renewable energy generators (Wind, Solar, Biomass) 823 GWh (5.2 percent of the total),

making up a grand total of 15,714 GWh for the year. As can be seen from the above figures, the proportion of CEB's electricity requirements generated by hydroelectric plant was nearly one-third in 2020. In 2020, coal cost the CEB Rs 43 billion, and oil cost the CEB Rs 30 billion, excluding oil used by the IPPs. Since then, there have been considerable increases in coal and oil prices. Compared with this, hydroelectric power was generated at zero fuel cost.

In 2020 CEB sold 14,286 GWh of electricity. The average cost of generating and selling this electricity (at selling point) was Rs 21.21 per kilowatt-hour (kwh). The average selling price was Rs 16.72 per kwh. The loss for the year on electricity sales was therefore Rs 64 billion. These are provisional figures. The audited CEB accounts for 2019 show a bottom-line overall loss of Rs 85 billion. The reason for these staggering losses, is that for political policy reasons, CEB has not been able to revise its electricity tariff charges since 2014. Since then, there have been substantial increases in the price of coal and oil and devaluation of the rupee. The newspaper the *Daily Mirror* had a news item in its issue of 13 May 2022 in which the Chairman of the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka, the government body which regu-

lates the activities of the CEB, says that he is studying a proposal by the CEB to revise the electricity tariffs. He says that if it is not implemented, CEB's losses for 2022 will be Rs 230 billion.

Hydroelectric Power Stations of the CEB

Power Plant	Installed capacity (MW)	Net Generation 2019 (GWh)
Mahaveli Complex	816.8	1,803.48
Victoria	210	463.23
Kotmale	201	376.46
Upper Kotmale	150	378.88
Randenigala	122.6	235.48
Rantembe	49.5	123.79
Ukuwela	40	161.34
Bowatenna	40	56.94
Nillambe	3.2	7.36
Samanalaweve Complex	212.25	652.34
Samanalaweve	120	309.34
Kukuleganga	75	321.62
Udawalawa	6	9.14
Inginigala	11.25	12.24
Laxapana Complex	369.8	1327.69
Old Laxapana Stage I	28.8	259.66
Old Laxapana Stage II	25	
New Laxapana	116	447.64
Samanala	90	374.86
Wimalasurendra	50	113.83
Canyon	60	131.70
Hydro Total	1398.8	3783.51

Figure 1 (above) is a list of Hydroelectric Power Stations owned by the CEB in 2019. The total installed capacity of the generators is 1399 MW. The total number of units generated per year depends on the rainfall.

In 2019 net generation by CEB's hydroelectric power plant was 3783 GWh. In addition, there are 206 privately owned mini-hydroelectric power plants with an installed capacity of 410 MW and the CEB purchased the electricity generated by these plants.

CEB's hydroelectric power stations can be divided into three groups. The first group to be developed was the Laxapana Complex. This now consists of five power stations with a total installed plant capacity of 370 MW, with a sixth 35 MW power station at Broadlands near Kitulgala nearing completion. The next group to be developed was the Mahaveli Complex. This consists of eight power stations with a total installed plant capacity of 817 MW. Finally, we have the Samanalaweve Complex of four power stations with a total installed plant capacity of 212 MW.

History of electricity generation in Ceylon and the role of D J Wimalasurendra

The city of Colombo has had electricity supply since the beginning of the 20th century. A private firm, the Colombo Electric Tramways and Lighting Company generated electricity to power their tram network in central Colombo. Surplus electricity was sold to a few offices and streetlights in the Fort area and later extended to Galle Face and Kollupitiya.

Government electrical undertakings were at that time under the purview of the Public Works Department (PWD) and in October 1916 the Director

of Public Works (DPW) was asked to investigate the great asset of Ceylon's waterfalls and the best way of converting this asset into electrical power. The DPW said that due to staff shortages during the war he could not do anything at present, but that one of his engineers by the name of Wimalasurendra was presently on study leave in England and was due to return to Ceylon in February 1917 and he would assign the task to him when he returned. Who was this Wimalasurendra, on whom the DPW had so much confidence at a time when the overwhelming majority of engineers in Ceylon were British?

Devapura Jayasena Wimalasurendra was born in 1874 in Galle. He studied at Ananda College in Colombo where he was the first student from this school to pass the University of London Matriculation Examination. He completed a Diploma in Civil Engineering at the Government Technical School in Maradana (later to be called the Ceylon Technical College) and joined the PWD as a Head Overseer in 1898 and was promoted to the grade of Inspector in 1902. He passed the Graduate Membership Examination of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London and was appointed District Engineer, Diyatalawa in 1904.

When he was at Diyatalawa, one of the assignments given to him was to prospect for gold in Maskeli Oya in the foothills of Adams Peak. At that time the British had a concentration camp in Diyatalawa where up to 5000 South African Boer prisoners from the Second Boer War (1899-1902) were held. From among them he selected as his assistant for this assignment Ian Van Geyzel who was also an engineer. When they came to the Kiriwan Eliya waterfall downstream of Maskeliya, Van Geyzel remarked that there may not be solid gold here but there is liquid gold in the potential energy of the waterfall. This started Wimalasurendra thinking about how this energy could be tapped and it became a life-long quest for him. He promptly re-named the waterfall Laxapana Falls,



a name which it retains to this day, (see **Figure 2** - above) because he calculated that it had the potential to light up 100,000 light bulbs (i.e., Laksa-pahana). With hindsight we now know that his assessment was approximately correct – which is amazing because he had limited access to hydrological data.

In 1915, although Wimalasurendra was already a Chartered Civil Engineer, he decided to qualify as an Electrical Engineer. He took long leave and proceeded to London where he enrolled in an electrical engineering course at Faraday House. He

passed the qualifying examinations and returned to Ceylon in 1917. He subsequently obtained the qualification of Chartered Electrical Engineer. This dual qualification of being a Chartered Civil Engineer as well as a Chartered Electrical Engineer is a very rare qualification. On his return to Ceylon, he was given the assignment of how best to convert the asset of Ceylon's waterfalls to electrical power.

In 1918, Wimalasurendra read his seminal paper titled *Economics of Power Utilisation in Ceylon* before an audience consisting mainly of British engineers at the Engineering Association of Ceylon, now known as The Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka. The paper turned out to be the launching pad for hydroelectric power development in Ceylon. He analysed the hydroelectric power potential of the upper reaches of the Mahaweli Ganga and Kelani Ganga. He said that if this was utilised, then Ceylon could start large scale industrialisation. Tea and rubber factories and coconut oil mills could be electrified. In the discussion that followed his reading of the paper, F B Rylands, PWD's Chief Electrical Engineer said that Wimalasurendra's estimates of the hydroelectric power potential was seven times too high. For example, Rylands said that the flow of water in the Kelani Ganga at Kitulgala was a mere trickle, yet today we have a 35 MW hydroelectric power station about to be commissioned here. Wimalasurendra estimated the total hydroelectric power potential of the Aberdeen/Laxapana valleys as up to 300 MW. He was not far out, because we now have 370 MW of hydroelectric power plant installed in these two valleys.

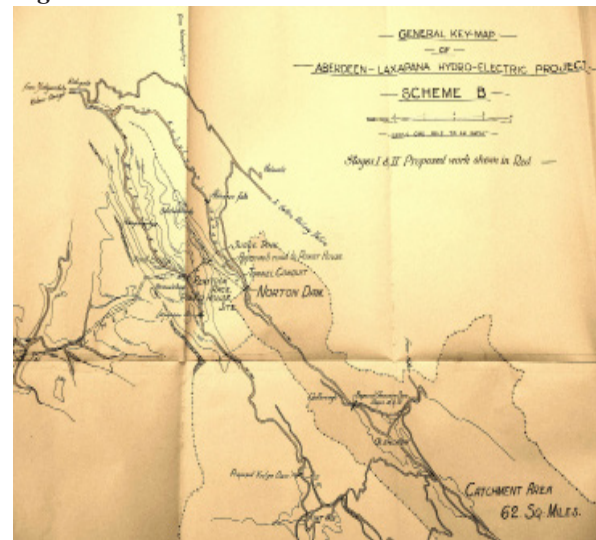
In his paper Wimalasurendra also advocated electrification of the railways and gave detailed calculations to show that it would be a worthwhile exercise. More than hundred years have passed since he read the paper, but Ceylon does not yet have a single kilometre of electrified railway track. The nearest that we have come to it was the proposed Western Region Megapolis Light Rail Transit System which was for an electric light rail system to serve Colombo and surrounding areas. The electrically powered train would obtain electricity from a 750 Volt Direct Current supply provided via a third rail. The project was to be in four stages. The first stage was a 16 km long line from Colombo Fort to Malabe. It was to be financed by a very soft loan (0.1 percent interest, 40-year repayment period) from the Japan International Co-operation Agency. The loan for Stage 1 was 285 million US dollars. A contract was signed on 23 November 2017 with a foreign consultant to carry out the design, with construction to start at the end of 2018 with completion in 2025. In November 2019, Sri Lanka had a new President and on 23 September 2020 a directive was issued from the President's Office to terminate the contract on the grounds that it is "very costly and not the appropriate cost-effective transport solution for the urban Colombo transportation infrastructure".

The Laxapana Complex of Hydroelectric Power Stations

In 1921, Wimalasurendra outlined a proposal to provide hydroelectricity to Colombo. The Kehelgamu Oya flows westwards from near Dickoya at an elevation of

about 4000 feet. In the next valley to the south, the Maskeli Oya flows westwards from the foothills of Adams Peak also at an elevation of about 4000 feet. Both rivers flow parallel for about 25 miles dropping in elevation to about 300 feet until their confluence just upstream of Kitulgala to form the Kelani Ganga. The proposed Laxapana hydroelectric scheme complex utilises the fall in elevation of these two Oyas by a cascade of power stations including a trans-basin diversion. The generated power is transmitted to Colombo by high voltage overhead lines, a distance of about 60 miles.

Figure 3



The Government considered the proposal to be too costly, so in 1923 Wimalasurendra submitted an alternative proposal which he called Scheme B, which is reproduced as **Figure 3** (above). The writer found this map in the Archives Reference Room in the Australian National Library, Canberra. The first stage of his scheme consists of a 90-foot-high dam at Norton Bridge across the Kehelgamu Oya, a 8100 foot long tunnel to convey the water under a mountain range to the next valley, a 60 inch diameter pipeline to cascade this water to the Laxapana Power House 1500 feet below on the banks of the Maskeli Oya where there would be three generators rated at 5.6 MW each. Wimalasurendra's Scheme B shows all this and in addition it shows Glencairn (Castlereagh) Dam and the location of Kintyre (Mousakelle) Dam which are later stages of the project.

In 1924, the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London approved Scheme B and in his letter of approval expressed his appreciation "in particular of the ability with which the detailed plans and estimates had been drawn up by Mr Wimalasurendra". High praise indeed.

Construction work started in 1924, but Wimalasurendra was surprised to find that although the project had been designed by him and he was the Chief Electrical Engineer in the PWD, he was to play no role in the project. He was asked to hand over all his designs and drawings to Hughes, a young British Engineer with no hydroelectric experience. Hughes was appointed Construction Engineer and asked to

report directly to the DPW, bypassing Wimalasurendra. Thoroughly disappointed at the turn of events, Wimalasurendra applied for commuted half-pay leave and left for England on a long holiday.

When he returned to Ceylon in 1925, he found that work on the scheme had been a complete mess. There had been over-expenditure on the budget and several structures were being incorrectly built. A new DPW had been appointed and when he was aware of the situation, he promptly stopped all work on the project. In 1927 the Legislative Council appointed a Select Committee which included D S Senanayake to report on the project. Referring to Wimalasurendra, the Committee Report said that the DPW had “failed to utilise to advantage the services of the only man available who had any firsthand or intimate knowledge of the works”.

The Great Depression then followed and export prices and demand for tea, rubber and coconut collapsed. All capital expenditure was reduced to an absolute minimum. In 1929, Wimalasurendra reached the age of 55 years and retired from Government service. In 1931, in the first State Council elections, he contested the Ratnapura seat and was duly elected. In the State Council he continued to promote the Laxapana hydroelectric scheme.

In 1939, John Kotelawala, as Minister for Communication and Works, was able to get the State Council to approve construction of the Laxapana project. Tenders were invited in 1939 and an Indian firm was awarded the civil engineering contract and started work but had to stop work in 1942 as the contractor was unable to get cement and steel during the war years. After the war, work commenced again. The Pelton water turbines were made by the English Electric Co. of Rugby, England and the three 8.33 MW generators were built by British Thomson Houston Co. also from Rugby. Just over a decade later the writer spent two years in the latter works as a Graduate Trainee.

When work on the 8100-foot-long trans-basin tunnel was nearing completion, 74-year-old Wimalasurendra rode through the tunnel on a trolley. When he emerged, he said:

“Although it was not my good fortune to execute the Scheme I had originated, I am happy that I have lived to see it brought to fruition by my countrymen, and that I should have in the evening of my life, been able to see the light, the dawn of which I beheld fifty years ago ...”.

The opening ceremony of the 25 MW Stage 1 of the Laxapana Hydroelectric Power station was on 30 October 1950 and Ceylon had hydroelectric power on the grid for the first time. Colombo and the surrounding areas had plenty of cheap, clean power and Wimalasurendra’s vision had finally begun to be fulfilled.

Subsequent stages in the cascade of hydroelectric power stations in the Laxapana complex followed as the demand for electric power increased. Two more generators of 12.5 MW each were installed in the Laxapana Power Station in 1958 and the five generators can be seen in **Figure 4**. Castlereagh Dam near Dickoya was completed at this time.

Figure 4



These were financed by Ceylon’s first World Bank loan. After about sixty years of faithful service the original 8.33 MW Stage 1 generators have been replaced by 9.6 MW generators.

A 50 MW hydroelectric power station was built at Norton Bridge in 1965 and was named Wimalasurendra Power Station. In 1969, this was followed by a 90 MW hydroelectric power

station at Polpitiya, downstream of Laxapana. This was named Samanala Power Station. The Mousakelle storage dam near Maskeliya was completed in 1972. The 116 MW New Laxapana Power Station, alongside the original Laxapana Power Station, was built in 1974. The latter is since referred to as Old Laxapana Power Station. The 60 MW Canyon Power Station at the head of the Laxapana Falls was completed in 1989. The sixth and last hydroelectric power station in the Laxapana complex is the 35 MW Broadlands Power Station, now under construction upstream of Kitulgala. It is due to be commissioned very shortly. Over the years the Kelani Ganga near Kitulgala has developed into a popular venue for white water rafting which attracts foreign and local tourists. When the Broadlands power station starts operating, the flow in the river at this point will be reduced to a trickle as the water will be diverted through the power station turbines. As a compromise, CEB has agreed to discharge some water in the daytime through the white-water rafting section of the river even though this decreases the power output of the generators.

A sketch of the disposition of the power stations in the two valleys is seen in **Figure 5** (next page), some of the power stations have been uprated from the values given in that sketch.

All this arose from the vision and foresight of one man who battled against all the odds. He was ridiculed by his peers who could not comprehend how Ceylon could ever utilise what they considered to be vast amounts of electrical power. When Wimalasurendra first came up with his proposals the total electrical load in megawatts of Colombo and its environs could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

The Mahaweli Complex of Hydroelectric Power Stations

The Mahaweli Ganga is Ceylon’s longest river which starts in the central highlands and flows into the sea near Trincomalee. It is the source of the largest amount of hydroelectric power to the CEB which has eight hydro power stations along this river and its tributaries with a total installed capacity of 817 MW.

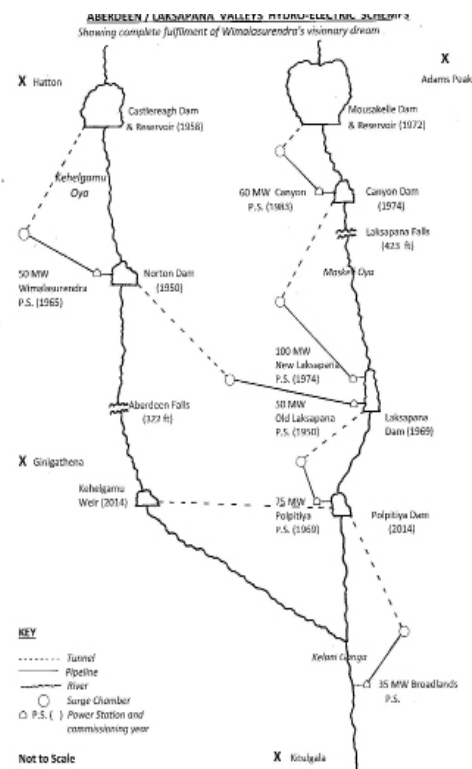


Figure 5

The power stations will be described starting from the headwaters of the river rather than the chronological order in which they were built.

Kotmale Oya is one of the headwaters of the Mahaweli Ganga. The Upper Kotmale Hydroelectric Project is located on this river. The Upper Kotmale Dam is located near Talawakele town. Due to the construction of the dam, flow over the picturesque St Clair's waterfall is reduced to a trickle. As a condition of environmental clearance for the project, the CEB releases some water down the river for ten hours in the daytime every day to maintain the beautiful sight of the water cascading over the St Clair's waterfall. The rest of the water is diverted through a 13 km long tunnel and penstock to an underground powerhouse with two nos. 75 MW generators. From the powerhouse the water is discharged back to Kotmale Oya. The scheme was completed in 2012.

A few miles downstream is the Kotmale Hydroelectric project. This consists of a 600-metre-long dam across the Kotmale Oya about 20 km upstream of Gampola. Water is diverted through a seven km long tunnel to an underground power station with three nos. 67 MW generators. From the generators the water is discharged back to Kotmale Oya. The power station was commissioned in 1985.

About 40 km downstream of the Kotmale power station is the Polgolla Barrage across the Mahaweli Ganga. It is near Katugastota. The Barrage is 144 m long. Water is diverted northwards through an eight km long tunnel to a power station at Ukuwela which is between Matale and Wattagama and it has

two nos. 20 MW generators. The discharged water from the power station flows along the Sudu Ganga to Bowatenna Reservoir. It is in effect a trans-basin diversion. The power station was completed in 1976. At Bowatenna there is another dam and reservoir, and the discharge is through the Bowatenna Hydroelectric Power Station which has a single 40 MW generator. This power station was completed in 1981. From Bowatenna, the Amban Ganga takes off and flows north and near Elahera there is the 65 m high Moragahakanda Dam. The reservoir impounded by this dam has four times the capacity of Parakrama Samudra. A 25 MW Hydroelectric Power Station was commissioned here in 2018. The Amban Ganga joins the Mahaweli Ganga near Polonnaruwa.

Between Polgolla and Pallekelle there is the small Nilambe Hydroelectric Power Station. There is a 70 m long dam across the Nilambe River. From the dam, water is taken through a 2.8 km long penstock to the Nilambe Power Station where there are two nos. 1.7 MW generators.

From Polgolla Barrage the Mahaweli Ganga flows in an easterly direction to the Victoria Reservoir and Dam which is about six km from Teldeniya (see **Figure 6 - below**). There is an arch dam here across the Mahaweli Ganga here with a crest length of 520 m and a height above the foundation of 122 m making it the tallest dam in Ceylon. From the base of



the dam a six-metre diameter tunnel conveys water for 5.6 km to the power station which has 3 nos. 70 MW generators, making it the biggest hydroelectric power station in Ceylon. Queen Elizabeth visited the site when it was under construction in 1981 and Margaret Thatcher, the UK Prime Minister, opened the project in 1985.

From Victoria, the Mahaweli Ganga continues flowing in an easterly direction for 26 km till it reaches the Randenigala Dam. This rockfill dam has a crest length of 485 m and a height of 94 m. The reservoir formed by this dam is the largest in the Accelerated Mahaweli Project. At the base of the dam there is a Hydroelectric Power Station with 2 nos. 61 MW generators. The power station was commissioned in 1986.

The last hydroelectric power station in the Mahaweli Ganga is at the Rantambe Dam which is about three km downstream of Randenigala. It is just after the confluence of Uma Oya and Mahaweli Ganga. The concrete gravity dam here has a length of 420 m and a height of 42 m. The hydroelectric power station at the base of the dam has two nos. 24.5 MW generators. It was commissioned in 1990.

The Samanalaweva Complex of Hydroelectric Power Stations

The Samanalaweva Complex of Hydroelectric Power Stations includes four power stations. The Samanala Dam is near Belihul Oya and is just after the confluence of Walawe Ganga and Belihul Oya. The rockfill dam is 110 m high and 530 m long. It is essentially a hydro power project and irrigation discharges are relatively minimal. When the dam was filled in 1992 it was found that there was a massive leak, which still exists, through permeable ground on the right bank. At present the leak provides two-thirds of the irrigation water requirements. There are two nos. generators in the Power Station below the dam and the total power output is 120 MW. The power station can be seen in **Figure 7** (below).

The Udawalawe Dam is a gravity dam with a very long earth embankment. It is across the Walawe



Ganga near Moneragala. At the foot of the dam there is a small hydroelectric power station with three nos. generators each of 2 MW. It was commissioned in 1969.

The Kukuleganga Hydroelectric Power Station is located near Kalawana. It consists of a gravity dam 110 m long and 20 m high across the Kukule Ganga which is a tributary of Kalu Ganga. From the dam a 5.7 km long tunnel conveys water to an underground power station which has two nos. generators with a total output of 75 MW. The scheme has been operational since 2003.

Also in this group is the Inginiyagalla Hydroelectric Power Station. This is part of the Gal Oya project which includes the Senanayake Samudra reservoir. It was the first large scale irrigation project after Ceylon became independent. At the foot of the Gal Oya Dam there is a small hydroelectric power station with four nos. generators with a combined output of 11.2 MW.

This concludes a brief survey of the existing hydroelectric power stations of the Ceylon Electricity Board, which together annually generate about one-third of the country's electricity. The electricity generated is clean, renewable, does not require expensive imported fuel requiring foreign exchange and the power stations do not spew out noxious gases polluting the atmosphere. All this was initiated by one man, D J Wimalasurendra (1874-1953), a brilliant civil and electrical engineer who spent his lifetime promoting hydroelectric power. His statue has been erected at Norton Bridge (**Figure 8**) where he gazes wistfully at the scene of original large scale hydroelectric power generation in Ceylon.

(The writer was Operations Engineer, Laxapana Hydroelectric Power Station in the 1960s)

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Photo citations

All photographs courtesy of the Ceylon Electricity Board.

Figure 8



Remembering George Turnour: Scholar/Administrator Extraordinaire

Hugh Karunanayake

Thirty-seven years ago, on 13 April 1985, the British Prime Minister of the day Mrs Margaret Thatcher during her visit to Sri Lanka to open the Victoria Dam, said in an address to the Parliament of Sri Lanka:

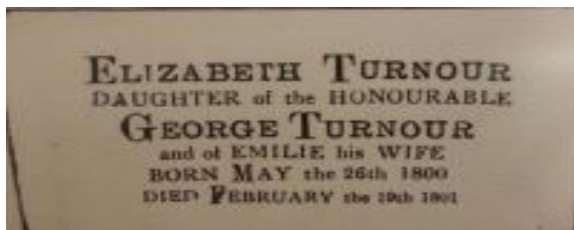
The remains of an ancient civilization are visible in many parts of your island. Two thousand years ago, your irrigation system far exceeded in scale and sophistication anything existing in Europe. That great chronicle the *Mahavansa*, has passed down to us the story of your island's development.

The *Mahavansa* and the history it contained would probably have been lost in the mists of antiquity if not for the indefatigable efforts of a Civil Servant by the name George Turnour.



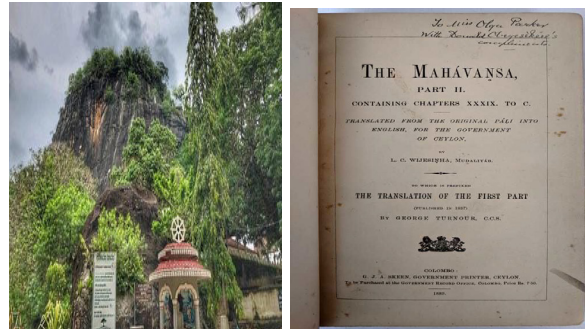
George Turnour (left) was born in Ceylon in 1799. His father (the fourth son of the Earl of Winterton) also with the same name George Turnour, came over to Ceylon in 1789 with the 73rd Regiment, and was appointed Fort Adjutant in Jaffna in 1795, after the capture of Jaffna from the Dutch. He died on 10 April 1813 aged 45 and was buried in the Dutch Church

of Jaffna (since destroyed during the civil war). The headstone to the grave of his infant daughter would have suffered the same fate. However we are indebted to Leopold Ludovici who preserved for posterity images of some of the tablets and headstones in the country, in his magnificent work *Lapidarium Zeylanicum* 1877 from which the image below was obtained.



The young George Turnour was sent to England for his education, and on his return as an 18 year old was appointed to the Ceylon Civil Service. When he was appointed as Government Agent at Ratnapura, he made the acquaintance of the High Priest of Sabaragamuwa through whom he obtained a transcript of the commentary to the *Mahawansa*, written in Pali and preserved at the Mulkirigala Vihare. Since there were no Pali dictionaries available then, Turnour studied the Pali language, and together with some Buddhist priests translated the text, and after many years of labour, produced an English version of the first 38 chapters of the *Mahawansa*. This was an epoch making event. The *Mahavansa* or “The Great Chronicle” is the documented history of the great dynasty of Sri Lankan kings in general and Sinhalese Buddhism in particular. This important work is believed to have been written

by Bhikkhu Mahanama in the Pali language and describes the life and times of the people who forged the Sri Lankan nation, from the coming of Vijaya in 543 BCE to the reign of King Mahasena (334 – 361 AD) (6th Century BCE to 4th Century AD).



Entrance to Mulkirigala Temple 1889 Edition of Mahavansa

Historiographical sources were rare in much of South Asia before the publication of the *Mahavansa*. As a result of the publication of the *Mahavansa*, more became known about the history of the island of Ceylon and neighbouring regions, than that of most of the subcontinent. Its contents have aided in the identification and corroboration of archaeological sites and inscriptions associated with early Buddhism, the empire of Asoka, and also the Tamil kingdoms of southern India. The publication of the first 38 chapters of the *Mahavansa* in 1837 by Turnour served as a trail blazer for ethnographic studies in South India and Ceylon. Major Jonathan Forbes of the 78th Highlanders who served in Ceylon for over a decade published his two-volume memoir *Eleven Years in Ceylon* in 1840. In it he stated, “I have the opportunity of stating my admiration of the judgment and accuracy with which Mr Turnour has arranged and abridged the Cingalese history”. Much of the ancient history of both India and Sri Lanka would not have been available were it not for the *Mahavansa*. Turnour however fell ill before he completed his task and retired from service. He left Ceylon in 1842 and died in Naples at the age of 44 on 10 April 1843. He was buried in the old Protestant Church in Naples.

When the news of Turnour's death reached Ceylon there was widespread grief in the island among colonial officialdom and local elites. It was decided to establish a suitable memorial to Turnour and subscriptions were collected for the purpose. The subscription list was headed by the Chief Justice Sir Anthony Oliphant with a donation of £2-2sh. This was matched by similar donations from the following:

Mr Justice Stark, Donald Davidson, Capt. Kelson, Dr Cameron, Joseph Read, Lt Col Fletcher, J Jumeaux, JG Firth, CR Buller, Francis Hudson, Lt Hawkins, Capt. Lil-lee, William Morris, F de Livera, TC Power, FB Norris, JH Rabinel, R Jefferson, H De Alwis Mudyr, David de Silva Mudyr, C Webster, S Northway, Don Hendrick Mudyr.

There were scores of others with lesser donations, making a total of £180.8sh. The last lot of subscriptions was published in the *Ceylon Herald and General Advertiser* of Friday 17 November 1849. The writer is in possession of an original copy of the paper, shown as an image below.



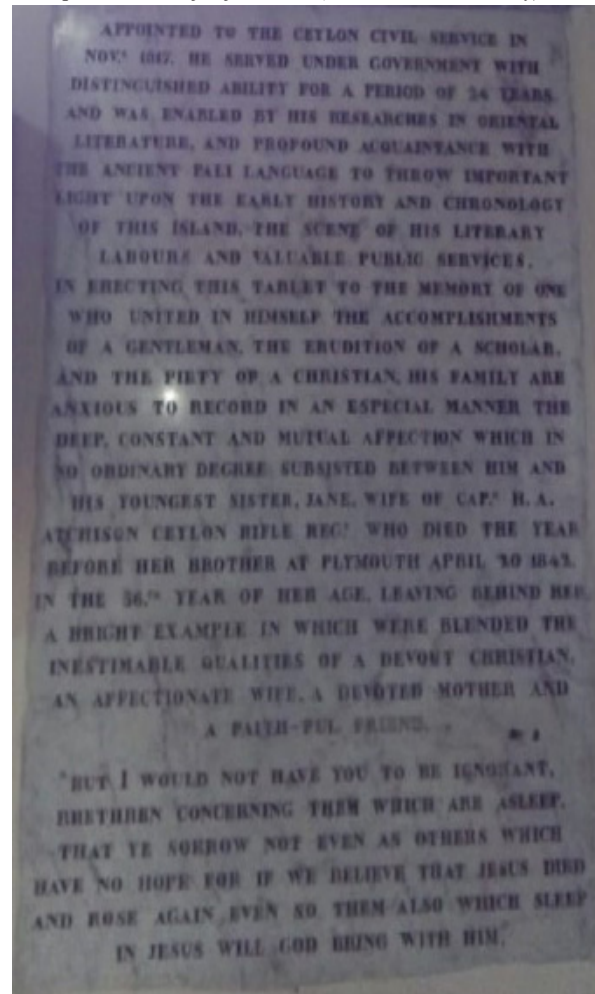
Since Kandy was going to be the epicentre of the emerging plantation economy, it was decided by the organisers of the Turnour Memorial Fund to make a substantial donation towards the construction of St Paul's Church, for which a plan was already in place for construction at a cost of £2371. A memorial to George Turnour was to occupy a prominent place in the Church. The Church was opened in August 1846, three years after the death of Turnour. An impressive large marble tablet was installed to the memory of George Turnour as the focal point of the Church. The marble tablet is the oldest in the Church (Please see accompanying photo). The writer acknowledges with grateful thanks the assistance provided by Mr Nihal Seneviratne of Colombo in procuring the images of the Turnour tablets from St Paul's Church, Kandy.

"Sacred to the memory of GEORGE TURNOUR Esq, the eldest son of the Honourable George Turnour and Emelie his wife. Born March 11th AD 1799 and died at Naples April 10th AD 1843, aged 43 years. Appointed to the Ceylon Civil Service in 1817 he served under government with distinguished ability for a period of 24 years and was enabled by his researches in Oriental literature and profound acquaintance with ancient history and chronology of this island, the scene of his literary and valuable public services.

In erecting this tablet to the memory of one who united in himself the accomplishments of a gentleman, the erudition of a scholar and the piety of a Christian, his family are anxious to record in an especial manner the deep constant and mutual affection which in no ordinary degree subsisted between him and younger sister Jane, wife of Capt

H.A. Atchinson, Ceylon Rifle Regiment, who died the year before her brother at Plymouth, April 20th 1842 in the 36th year of her age leaving behind her a bright example in which were blended the inestimable qualities of a devout Christian, an affectionate wife, a devoted mother, and a faithful friend."

Inscription on the Life of Turnour (St Pauls Church Kandy)



The Turnour Memorial (St Paul's Church Kandy)

The Turnour Prize at Royal College

The organisers of the testimonial to the memory of George Turnour, presumably in their belief that Turnour's gift to global scholarship should also be perpetuated by a live ongoing memorial to the scholar, could not have selected a better institution to serve their objective. Today's Royal College was in 1846 known as the Colombo Academy and was barely eleven years in existence when the organisers decided to donate the balance funds from the donors to create an annual endowment to the most distinguished student of the Colombo Academy. The first winners of the Turnour Prize were George F Nell and Charles Ambrose Lorenz. The Turnour Prize now in its 176th year is the oldest continuing Prize in the history of Sri Lanka. It is in fact older than most of the other prominent schools of today like St Thomas, Trinity, St Joseph's and is now a revered institution by itself. It has inspired scholarship of the highest order in the most prominent school in the country, and its pioneering nature has served as a shining example to other educational institutions in no small manner. Throughout its 175-year existence the Turnour Scholarship has identified, nurtured, and held aloft some of the best scholars, administrators and national leaders that have influenced the development of Sri Lanka. A list of some of the names of celebrities who kick started their journey into life via the Turnour Prize reads like a roll call of the nation's revered leadership. Names like CA Lorenz that foremost Burgher of all time, Sir James Peiris, Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy, Christopher Britto, Francis Beven, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, Sir Thomas de Sampayo, Sir Marcus Fernando, his brother CM Fernando, Dr CA Hewavitarne, HV Perera QC, VM Fernando, AE Keuneman, AE Christoffelz, BW Bawa, EW Jayewardene, and more recently of Gamini Iriyagolle, KS Gangadharan, and several others too numerous to mention, reflect the very high standard of scholarship inspired by the prize. Special mention must be made of one family whose members were Turnour scholars for four successive generations. Starting with Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam followed by his son Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva, then by the latter's son Balakumaran (Baku) Mahadeva, and then by his son Kumar Mahadeva. While Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam's uncle Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy the first barrister ever from Asia (father of Ananda Coomaraswamy, the savant) was an early Turnour Scholar, the equally brilliant brother of Arunachalam, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan one of the founders of modern Ceylon, could not make it to the Turnour Prize despite being a brilliant student of Royal College. Overall, however, the family's contribution to scholarship and national leadership remains unsurpassed. Mention must also be made of MJR Paul later known as PM Jeyarajan who together with AH Macan Markar were the joint winners of the Turnour Prize in 1928. PM Jeyarajan later a member of the Indian Civil Service, was for many years the Honorary Director of the Royal College Orchestra, underscoring a line from the school song "they have repaid the debt they owed; they kept thy fame inviolate". All the winners of the Turnour Prize have their names inscribed on a marble

panel displayed in the College Hall. An image of the panel is shown below, and through the kind courtesy of old Royalist Lam Seneviratne to whom I am thankful for making a special visit to his old school to take the photograph. Over 150 Turnour Scholars have left their alma mater Royal College, to carve out a career in the big wide world before them. Not only have their achievements done George Turnour proud but are remembered through posterity for their association with that great scholar whose contribution to history is indelibly inscribed into the nation's psyche.

(Below: Image of the TURNOUR PRIZE panel in the ROYAL COLLEGE Hall. *Photo courtesy of Lam Seneviratne*)

TURNOUR PRIZE	
1846 NELL G.T.	1847 LORENZ C.A.
1848 { SIERRE J. DE LIVERA A. VANDORT W.	1848 { PERIS JAMES DE SOTTA ADRIAN
1852 DE SARMA W.H.F.	1853 COOMARASWAMY M.
1859 VAN DORT W.G.	1854 GOONETILLEKA W.
1861 DE ALWIS T.J.	1860 BRITTO C.
1863 KEITH W.E.	1861 BEVEN F.E.
1867 KRANAYAKA A.D.S.	1864 BEVEN F.
1869 ANTHONISZ E.R.	1868 ARUNACHALAM P.
1872 BLAZE T.J.	1870 ALLEGARCON S.
1874 MACK E.J.	1873 NICHOLAS C.B.
1876 LABROOF J.	1875 JOSEPH A.
1878 PERIS JERONIS	1877 DE SAMPAJA T.E.
1880 MORGAN T.A.	1879 ANTHONISZ J.O.
1882 FERNANDO H.M.	1881 VANDERWALL C.
1884 FERNANDO C.M.	1883 BAWA B.W.
1886 DE SILVA C.W.	1885 VANGEYEL C.T.
1888 DE VOS C.E.	1887 STORK E.S.
1890 JAYATILLEKE J.R.	1889 DE SILVA W.C.
1892 COCKBURN E.D.	1891 JAYAWARDENA E.W.
1894 HEWAVITARANE C.A.	1893 LOFTUS T.R.E.
1896 PEREIRA W.H.	1895 DAVIDSON E.E.
1898 SAVANDRANAYAGAM A.P.	1897 DAVIDSON E.E.
1900 FERNANDO V.M.	1899 AKKAR M.T.
1902 WEERASOORIA D.E.	1901 MACK E.G.
1904 KEUNEMEN A.E.	1903 MAHADEVA A.
1906 JANSZ P.L.	1905 MUESINGHE M.L.
1908 PERERA H.V.	1907 HERAT P.B.
1910 CHRISTOFFELSZ A.E.	1909 PERIS A.W.
1912 JAYASURIYA C.A.	1911 BLAZE J.R.
1915 FONSEKA J.M.	1913 COOMARASWAMY P.
1917 RAMALINGAM P.	1916 SITTAMPALAM C.
1920 RUTNAM D.R.	1918 JAYASURIYA T.D.
1922 DE MEL H.R.	1921 PALIUSZ J.H.D.
1924 WICKRAMASINGHE R.H.	1923 WILLE G.E.N.
1926 SVAPRAGASAM T.	1925 { OBEYESEKERE D.G. THURAISAMY PILLAI V.
1927 WICKRAMASINGHE P.H.	1928 { MACAN MARKAR A.H. PAUL M.J.R.
1929 ROBERTS C.F.	1931 SITTAMPALAM S.
1930 NIMAIASURIYA A.	1933 { PRITCHETT C.D. SAMARATUNGA K. AMERASEKERA D.V.A.
1932 { EBELL A.C. COOKE R.S.	1936 COORAY C.A.
1934 JAYAWARDANE P.A.	1938 DE BRUIN R.S.T.E.
1935 JAYARATNE S.N.	1940 JAYARATNE O.W.
1937 MAHADEVA B.	1942 GANGADHARAN K.S.
1939 KANAKARATNE N.T.D.	1944 SALGADO M.R.P.
1941 PRASAD M.	1946 DIAS F.R.
1943 GOONWARDENE R.W.	1948 PATHMANATHAN R.
1945 SENEVIRATNE N.B.	1951 DISSANAYAKE N.K.B.
1947 AMERASINGHE C.F.	1953 VASEEHARAN C.
1950 IRIYAGOLLE I.M.G.A.	1955 ARUMUGADASAN N.S.
1952 MENDIS L.P.	1957 SCHARENGUIVEL J.H.
1954 DEVANDRAN T.	1959 DE ALWIS S.P.
1956 JAVASINGHE D.A.	1961 MUNASINGHE P.C.M.
1958 SIVASEGARAM S.	1963 RAJESWARAN V.A.
1960 SITTAMPALAM A.S.	1965 GUNAWARDANA K.A.
1962 GUNASEKERA D.C.	1967 PELIMUHENDIRAM P.
1964 SRIDHARAN S.	1969 COOMARASWAMY M.A.
1966 SAMARASINGHE D.S.	1971 SELVADURAI J.N.
1968 ABYRATNE R.C.	1973 ARJAVALINGHAM G.
1970 ANANDALINGAM G.	1975 SASHIDHARAN R.
1972 GUNASENA C.I.	1977 JAYAWARDENA P.R.W.
1974 NIMAL NAGITHA V.G.	1979 PALLEWATTA A.S.
1976 RANASINGHE D.N.	1981 PERERA L.M.G.R.
1978 RAJAKARUNANAYAKA W.M.Y.N.	1983 ABYSSINGHE P.M.
1980 GALAPATHITHY G.K.S.	1985 PERERA W.A.C.
1982 SATHISCHANDRA D.H.H.I.	1987 WARAKAULLA D.R.
1984 DE SILVA R.S.	1989 SAJJITHA H.U.G.S.
1986 RANASINGHE P.M.	1991 KIRTHISINGHE D.
1988 ABHAYARATNE G.C.K.	1993 ABYENAYAKE S.D.
1990 HEWAWASAM G.R.C.	1995 GUNATHILAKE W.A.
1992 LANKESHWARA D.	1997 SENARATNE R.L.A.
1994 PRASADA D.V.P.	1999 -
1996 GUNATHILAKE N.J.	2001 EPA D.S.
1998 KODITUWAKKU S.V.W.	2003
2000 -	2005 NIANGA A.D.
2002 PERERA T.A.D.S.	2007 WIJEKON W.M.V.
2004 MENDIS T.C.Y.	2009 GAJANAYAKE S.P.
2006	
2008 GUNARATHNA M.J.C.	

Ceylon/Sri Lanka to Australia: Arrivals and Survival

Earlson Forbes

Ceylonese/Sri Lankans have entered Australia for a variety of reasons during the past one and a half centuries. The far greater number of these arrivals occurred in the second half of the 20th century and first two decades of the 21st century. Early arrivals go as far back as the last two decades of the 19th century.

Early arrivals

Before Australian Federation on 1 January 1901, there is evidence of arrivals from Ceylon, mainly to Queensland and a very small number to Victoria and Western Australia. In 1882, a sizable number of Ceylonese arrived in Queensland, as indentured labour. With the expansion of sugar cane planting in Queensland at that time, there was an ever-present need for labour to work the plantations. In November 1882 nearly 500 Ceylonese arrived by sea in Mackay, Queensland. Some 300 disembarked in Mackay and the rest were taken to Bundaberg. The 500 Ceylonese had been brought to Queensland under a private arrangement between business agents in Ceylon and Queensland plantation owners. Government agencies were not involved in this enterprise, in either Ceylon or Queensland. The deal included paid passage to Queensland, with the requirement that the worker was contracted to serve for five years. At the end of the five-year contract, the worker was to be repatriated to Ceylon with the return passage paid. Workers were entitled to rations and an annual wage during the tenure of the contract. Some were even given a plot of land for a home garden. In some instances, the terms of the contract could have been varied to meet particular circumstances. There are no detailed figures as to how many of these workers returned to Ceylon at the end of their contract and the number that stayed behind. Many went back and some stayed on to build a life in Australia, not so much on the plantations but as cooks, waiters, artisans and domestics. [1]

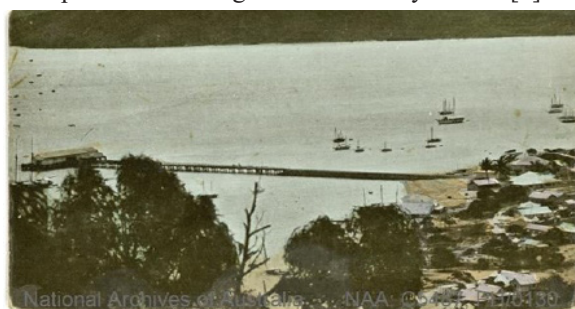


The 500 who arrived in Queensland in 1882 were not the first to get to Queensland from Ceylon. In the 1870s there

Queensland sugar plantation workers

was a rush to the Torres Strait Islands where rich pearl fishing resources were discovered. Not only were the natural pearls here of great value, but the Torres Strait Island seas had also comparatively large deposits of good quality pearl shells. Pearl shells were used to make the product, 'Mother of Pearl.' Mother of Pearl was sought after for making high quality buttons, buckles, handles for exclusive cutlery and similar high-priced products. In an era where diving gear had not yet begun to be used, experienced workers (both bare skin divers and boatmen) were highly sought after. In Ceylon pearl fishing in the Gulf of Mannar had gone on from time immemorial. In fact, so well was pearling known, that in the 1860s the famous compos-

er Bizet, wrote the opera, *'The Pearl Fishers'*, using pearl fishing in ancient Ceylon as its backdrop. It was only logical that the North Queensland pearl fishery operators would look to Ceylon to source cheap labour for the growing industry. In the Torres Strait area, Thursday Island became the base from which the larger and more prominent pearling operations were conducted. According to records, as early as 1879, four Ceylonese, (called Cingalese at the time) were employed as boatmen. It was not long before enterprising businessmen in Australia were able to arrange for recruitment of a larger group of workers from Ceylon. In 1882 some 25 Cingalese were recruited to work on Thursday Island. Entry of Ceylonese workers to Thursday Island after 1882, continued on a less formal basis. Although numbers were small, as the population on Thursday Island was comparatively sparse, the additions were significant. Also, there was more occupational variety in the arrivals from Ceylon. In addition to divers and boatmen there came shell cleaners, cooks, domestics and small traders. The requirement that the worker had to return to the country from which he had been recruited, does not seem to have been strictly enforced in all contracts. This facilitated the continued stay on Thursday Island of those among the Ceylonese arrivals who wished to stay on. In the years following, right up to the 1940s, the Ceylonese on Thursday Island left a lasting impression on the Island's township. At the height of their influence there was a Cingalese quarter, a place for Buddhist worship, and even an area where their preferred groceries were sold. [2] Another account refers to a Ceylonese, who having studied dentistry by correspondence, set himself up as a dental surgeon on Thursday Island. [3]



Thursday Island (early days)

An extract from Stanley Sparkes and Anna Shnukal's work *Sri Lankan Settlers of Thursday Island*, states:

'While their exact numbers are unknown, the Sri Lankans remained a salient group until the outbreak of World War II, distinctive enough to be singled out by contemporary observers. Some of the early immigrants became commercial fisherman and owners of boats for hire; others took out hawkers' licences to sell jewellery and other curios made from tortoise shell, pearl shell and pearls to tourists and visitors. For more than six decades, the Sri Lankan Community made significant contributions to the economic, religious, social and cultural life of Thursday Island. All of them have left, the Mendis and Saranealis

families being the last to end their association. Little physical trace of their presence remains, but the prominent business families are still remembered. Not only did they provide goods and services not available elsewhere, but, through their acts of generosity and willingness to share their heritage with the entire community, they formed enduring relationships with their fellow residents, regardless of ethnic origin or religious affiliation.' [2]

Arrivals from Ceylon to the other Australian Colonies at this time appear to be much less than to Queensland. Before pearl industry resources were discovered in the Torres Strait, they were found to exist in the northwest of Western Australia, around the township of Broome. This was as early as the 1860s. The demand for workers in the industry attracted labour from several Asian countries. Because of their expertise, persons from Ceylon appear to have been recruited to work in the Western Australian pearling industry as well. Their numbers and identity are somewhat obscure because they were often grouped with others and referred to as, 'Malays'. Asian (or foreign) workers in the industry were stated to have come from Japan, China, Philippines, Ceylon, Malaysia and some Pacific Islands.

In the 19th century arrivals from Ceylon to the Colony of Victoria, came about broadly for reasons similar to those which attracted arrivals to Queensland and Western Australia. In 1851, gold was discovered in Ballarat, Victoria. This event followed by discovery of gold in some of the other colonies led to an influx of a large number of persons, from all parts of the world to Australia (The Gold Rush). Victorian Government sources on the subject of immigration history comment as follows:

'Sri Lankans (formerly referred to as Ceylonese) have been settling in Victoria since the 19th century. They were first counted in the 1871 census, when 58 people were recorded. Like Sri Lankan settlers elsewhere in Australia they probably immigrated as labourers or gold prospectors.' [4]

The other 'industry' which used predominantly Asian labour in the 19th century was camel transportation in central and northern Australia. Cameleers and camel transport operators did not come directly from Ceylon. Most of the labour and animals came from Afghanistan, with lesser arrivals from India and the Middle East. However, there is an indirect connection with Ceylon. It appears some Afghans used Ceylon as a launch pad to Australia. There is mention that a camel transportation operator, Gool Mohamet, although born in Afghanistan, worked in Colombo for a few years before arriving in Australia in the late 19th century. Gool Mohamet was a successful camel transport operator but his notoriety rests more on the fact that he married a French woman at the Kalgoorlie Mosque in 1907. French woman, Desiree Ernestine Adrienne Lesire, converted to Islam and changed her name to Mariam Bebe, at the time of her marriage to Mohamet. [5]

The White Australia Years (1st half of the 20th century)

On 1 January 1901, the 6 Australian Colonies came together to form the independent Nation of Australia.

Regarding immigration and population, one of the first actions undertaken by the Commonwealth Parliament was to pass legislation strictly limiting entry to Australia. The Immigration Restriction Act 1901 established the base for future migrant entry to Australia. This Act set up a harsh and effective tool, (the Dictation Test) for turning away any non-European from Australia. The Act stated that the following persons could be prohibited from entering Australia:

'Any person who when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out at dictation and sign in the presence of the officer a passage of fifty words in length in an European language directed by the officer'.

Whilst new arrivals from Asia were almost completely shut out, persons who had formerly been domiciled in the Australian Colonies were not subject to the Dictation Test. However, if a person who was not a citizen left Australia, he would be subject to the Dictation Test on re-entry, unless he had an Exemption Certificate. Non-citizens who had built up enough wealth to be able to travel outside Australia and return, could apply for an Exemption Certificate. Image below is an Exemption Certificate issued to Mr. William Perera, permitting him to travel outside Australia and re-enter without having to sit a Dictation Test on re-entry.

Restrictive legislation coupled with a view among many in society at the time that the white race was superior to coloured, led to arrivals from Asia (including Ceylon) coming to a stop or at best a trickle. As mentioned above arrivals from Ceylon to Victoria at the time of the gold rush (1871 census) was recorded as being 58. Sixty years later (in 1933) the number of those born in Ceylon residing in Victoria was 130; an increase of 72 over sixty years. [5] In 1901, the Australian Immigration Department put the number of persons in Australia, born in Ceylon, at 609. Thirty-two years later the number was stated to be 638; an increase of 29 over three decades. [6]

A fair go for all (2nd half of the 20th Century to recent times)

The years following the end of the 2nd World War saw the World changed significantly, particularly in South and Southeast Asia. India, Pakistan and Ceylon gained independence after centuries of British rule; Indonesians threw out the Dutch rulers of their country, and in China the Communist Party seized power. In the context of all these momentous changes, one would have expected Australia to fall in step and change restrictive policies, such as permitting immigration only from Europe. However, the White Australia Policy was alive and well even after the end of the 2nd World War. In 1947 Immigration Minister Arthur Callwell stated:

‘We have 25 years at most to populate the country before the yellow races are upon us.’

Arthur Callwell was correct in that there was an urgent and great need to bring in more migrants to Australia for the further development of the country. However, his view was a short term one in that he looked only to Europe to satisfy the demand.

At about this time the Burghers of Ceylon were being disadvantaged due to political, economic and social changes in their homeland. This gave rise to Ceylonese Burghers looking to other countries, such as Australia, as a viable permanent home for themselves and their families. In the late 1940s the Burghers began their push to enter Australia, citing the fact that they were of European ancestry and ‘British Subjects’, as well. For the first decade after Ceylon gained independence, arrivals to Australia were, in the main, Burghers. The years after the 2nd World War, up to about 1960, saw an increase in the number of arrivals, but not great enough to be of significance. In 1954 the number of Ceylonese born, in the Australian population, was 1,961. Seven years later it was 3,433. [7] In the next 2 decades arrival numbers start to pick up sharply compared with the 1950s and 1960s.

The increase in the number of arrivals from Sri Lanka and arrivals from other Asian countries, was a consequence of a slow but progressive dismantling of the White Australia Policy. The first concession was made in 1957 when, ‘non-Europeans with fifteen years residence, were permitted to apply for Australian citizenship. The next year legislation pertaining to immigration was revised after more than a fifty-year lapse. The Migration Act 1958, abolished the harsh and archaic Dictation Test and set up a more liberal Visa system for entry to Australia. Not long after the legislation was revised, Immigration Minister Alexander Downer, (father of present-day politician Alexander Downer Jnr.) declared that ‘distinguished and highly qualified Asians,’ would be considered as suitable migrants to Australia. In 1966 the entry door was opened further to:

‘well qualified people on the basis of their suitability as settlers, their ability to integrate readily and their possession of qualifications positively useful to Australia’.

Finally in 1973 the Whitlam Government, as a matter of Australian Immigration Policy decided to ‘totally disregard race as a factor in the selection

of migrants’. Immigration Minister at the time, Al Grassby, added, ‘The White Australia Policy is dead; give me a shovel and I will bury it’!

Australia’s more liberal immigration policy had a very positive effect on the number of arrivals from Sri Lanka. Australian Department of Immigration figures for Sri Lankan born persons in the population show the dramatic increase:

1961	3400
1971	9100
1981	16,900

By 1981 arrivals from Sri Lanka were not drawn as before, mainly from the Burgher community, but also from the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 1976 Census (unpublished) data puts the ethnic composition of Sri Lankan born in the population at, Burghers 8,546; Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims at 5,759 and others at 561, making a total of 14,866. [8]

In the years immediately following the 2nd World War, Australia had accepted as migrants from Europe, large numbers of both skilled and unskilled labour. In the late 1960s and thereafter this changed. Australia was now looking more precisely for skilled and semi-skilled workers as well as settlers under a broader ‘family’ category. In 1977 Immigration Minister Michael Mackellar laid the foundation for recognition of the third future stream of migrants to Australia, viz. humanitarian intake.

In Sri Lanka those seeking to migrate were predominantly from the middle and upper middle classes, living in the cities, and mostly educated in English. The Sri Lankan supply of skilled and family stream potential migrants was in line with demand in Australia. Sri Lanka was able to supply skilled technicians, process workers, clerical and administrative staff and allied health workers. Some of the tertiary qualified arrivals encountered problems. Although restrictions to entry had been lifted for admission to Australia, prejudice prevailed regarding the acceptance of Sri Lankan higher education qualifications. Many had to return to study in their field of expertise before being able to work at professional level in Australia. Those professionally qualified in Sri Lanka who chose not to re-qualify under Australian educational standards, often worked at sub-professional level or ventured into allied new careers, (in most instances very successfully).

In the final two decades of the 20th century the ‘family’ stream was most popular for the flow of migrants to Australia. For approximately 11 years, (from 1985 to 1996), the number of migrant arrivals to Australia from all countries under the family stream exceeded the number of arrivals under the skilled migration program. It could reasonably be concluded that arrivals from Sri Lanka followed this pattern, (i.e., family stream arrivals exceeding skilled stream). Regarding arrivals under the humanitarian intake scheme, Museums Victoria states, ‘Ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka in 1983 resulted in a significant intake of migrants under the Special Humanitarian Program’.

The cumulative result of arrivals from Sri Lanka under the various visa categories pushed up the number of Sri Lankan born in the population to:

1981	16,900
1992	43,200
2002	61,400

In the last year of the 20th century and the first two years of the 21st century a new class of arrival, (for the first time in significant numbers), from Sri Lanka, is added to the arrivals list. These were asylum seekers who arrived by boat. Sri Lankans and others, mostly from South Asia, comprised the second wave of asylum seeker arrivals to Australia by boat; (the first wave was from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in the late 1970s and the 1980s). Because the Howard Government had introduced 'the Pacific Solution' after the 'Tampa Affair' in 2001, the later of these arrivals ended up in third countries or having to go back. Accordingly, these Sri Lankan arrivals do not feature in a material way in ABS population numbers. Ironically, asylum seeker boat arrivals from Sri Lanka to Australia peaked in 2012 and 2013; a few years after the end of the 26-year-old civil war, in 2009. In 2012 Sri Lanka was the largest source country for boat arrivals (direct) to Australia. But only a small percentage (11%) were accepted to enter Australia and subsequently to be included in ABS population numbers. The somewhat open migration policy of the Gillard/Rudd governments was shut down partly in the final months before the 2013 election and more comprehensively under the new Abbott government. In the eight years 2009 to 2016, (financial years), net migration numbers from Sri Lanka to Australia year to year are as follows:

Year	Number
2009	6,500
2010	4,600
2011	3,500
2012	4,500
2013	5,100
2014	3,700
2015	4,100
2016	4,200

Overview

Although small in number when compared to arrivals from the top two countries England and New Zealand, Sri Lanka has been for many years an important resource for Australia's migrant intake. In 2011, the number of Sri Lankan born in the Australian population was put at 100,000 (0.4%). By 2016 the number had gone up to 124,000. In 2021 there were 146,000 Sri Lankan born and the percentage had gone up to 0.6 of total population. Sri Lanka also currently holds the 10th position in the Table of overseas born, in the Australian population, (2020 figures).

Based on data obtained from the 2016 Census, an interesting overview can be gleaned as to where Sri Lankans choose to live in Australia and their lifestyles. Of the 2016 total of 124,000, nearly 75%

chose to live in Victoria and New South Wales, (Victoria 63,000 and NSW 33,500). In the other four States and two Territories the distribution was; Queensland 11,000; Western Australia 9,000; South Australia 4,000; Australian Capital Territory 3,000; Northern Territory 1000 and Tasmania 500.

In regard to lifestyle, Sri Lankans are more prone to getting married and staying in the relationship. Among Sri Lankan born 71.2% are described as 'married'. The Australian born 'married' group make up only 43.6%. The Sri Lankan born, divorced/separated figure was at 5.6%, whilst the Australian born divorced/separated rate is much higher at 11.8%.

Like a majority of migrant communities, Sri Lankan born rank high on the tertiary educated table. 41.6% of Sri Lankan born held a bachelor's degree or higher qualification. This compares extremely favourably with the Australian born score of 19.6%.

Finally, house-proud Sri Lankans once again lead the way when it came to the size of dwellings. 40.5% of those born in Sri Lanka lived in residential dwellings with four or more bedrooms. The percentage of Australian born occupying dwellings of the same size was 34.7%.

*'At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue:
Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new'.*

Milton

References / Footnotes

- [1] W. S. Weerasooriya, '*Links between Sri Lanka and Australia*' (1988).
- [2] Stanley Sparkes and Anna Shnukal, '*The Sri Lankan Settlers of Thursday Island*' (2017).
- [3] W. S. Weerasooriya, see above, note [1].
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- [7] Australian Bureau of Statistics, (ABS), reports. Multiple references - ABS Year Book 2004 released 2004; ABS Year Book 2005 released 2005; ABS Census 2016 Quick Stats; ABS Migration, Australia released 2021.
- [8] S K Pinnawala, *Sri Lankans in Melbourne* (1984).

Photos courtesy National Archives of Australia.



Skandakumar speaks his heart out for SL, where we went wrong and way forward

S. Skandakumar

Former High Commissioner to Australia and business leader S. Skandakumar delivered the keynote at the General Meeting of the Rotary Club of Colombo Port City. Following are excerpts published in the Daily Financial Times (Daily FT) dated Tuesday, 13 July 2021:



President and members of Rotary Club, Colombo Port City, and guests, Ayubowan! Vanakkam! Assalam Aleykum! Good Evening! It's a pleasure to be with all of you today, and more importantly, a link to Colombo Port City that carries no controversy.

Given the ready access to information made possible by technology, I wondered what I could address you on that you were already not aware of. So I asked if I may share my personal views of the country and touch briefly on my tenure in Australia. Thankfully it was agreed.

Mr. President, let me congratulate you and all members on the inauguration of Rotary Club of Colombo Port City and wish you every success in your noble endeavours.

Why I love my country

I was born barely two weeks before Independence and like some of you listening in, lived through it all in my land of birth. What has transpired over those 73 years is common knowledge, so let me share why I love my country as I do.

At a very young age in a geography class I looked at the world map to see where our country was positioned. I marvelled at the sheer beauty of its outline and location, unmatched by any other country or continent on that map. I reflected on its priceless resources as tea, rubber, coconut, and cinnamon, graphite and gems, and our climate, scenery, and arable fertile land with ready access to water, spread over a mere 65,000 kms and said to myself that it had to be a gift from above.

I listened to our National Anthem and in particular the line “*eka mawa kuge daru*” that we were indeed children of one common mother. I studied our National Flag, and reminded myself that the four bo leaves representing *Karuna*, *Meththa*, *Muditha* and *Upekha*, meant love and compassion for our fellow beings.

I took pride in our rich civilisation, made possible by the teachings of Lord Buddha, who ended his profound sermons with the words “May all beings

be happy.” Yes the Lord pointed out even then that no one could build his happiness on another's unhappiness.

The Lord's description of human ego fascinated me as he referred to it as man's biggest enemy. Our ego is a film over our eyes that blurs our vision, and it is only when it is removed will we see our way forward clearly, the Lord preached. What more did I need to feel blessed to be born in such an awesome country?

Post-independence journey

Came our Independence and the potential was huge! Regarded then as the ‘Granary of the East,’ we had a beautiful horizon ahead of us and a highway leading to it, and all we needed was to traverse that highway and follow the rules. Tragically many in the driving seats had their ego as their companion and turned to exits that were unnecessary and completely lost their way with devastating consequences.

The line “I stopped crying for a new pair of shoes when I met a man who had no feet” told me that this world we live in was only intended to be divided between the fortunate and the less fortunate. This biblical line was meant to remind those of us in the fortunate category, to make a meaningful contribution to the lives of our fellow beings on the other side of the divide and help evolve an order of love and compassion to make the world a better place.

However, despite these meaningful religious teachings blinded by sheer selfishness and insecurity, we began to divide ourselves on ethnic and religious lines with disastrous consequences. In Sri Lanka we let it happen only because we failed to place our loyalty to country ahead of loyalty to the individual, and have paid a horribly destructive price for it.

Marginalisation led to radicalisation, while discrimination led to extremism and Sri Lankans throughout the island known for their gentle and caring nature were in some segments being transformed by a feeling of rejection. Sadly there was neither the wisdom nor the will to recognise and arrest this ominous transformation in its infancy.

Here I would like to quote a line from Lee Kwan Yew's address to the people of Singapore to celebrate their independence in 1965. He said: “Today we have the right of self-rule. You are free to speak in Mandarin, Malay, English or Tamil: but never forget that you are first a Singaporean.”

I do not think I need to comment further on the profound nature of that statement or its impact on the wellbeing of that country and all its people.

The real illiterates of the world are not those who cannot read or write. It's the educated who are unwilling to learn the lessons of history!

My life has taught me many lessons. The most significant of them has been that when honourable intentions are matched by sincere action, blessings from above are assured. Let me share my personal experiences.

Appointment as High Commissioner

My appointment as High Commissioner to Australia in 2015, was totally unexpected. Seven years into retirement and lost in the hills, a Foreign Minister whom I never had the opportunity to meet thought it fit to place his faith in me. That appointment gave me enormous pride to represent overseas my country sincerely committed to national unity and equality. This was appreciated by our fellow citizens domiciled in Australia who came together as one during the tenure of my like-minded colleagues and me.

An invitation by the Australian Government to our then Prime Minister for an official visit in February 2017, the first in 65 years, was followed by one similar to our President just three months later. That visit was the first-ever official visit of a President of our country

To Australia, the fact that it followed just three months after the one by our Prime Minister was unprecedented in Australia's diplomatic relations and demonstrated the esteem in which Australia held us for our commitment to national unity and the friendship built over the decades based on mutual respect and trust.

That year was further blessed by reciprocal, visits by the Prime Minister and Foreign Ministers of Australia, a celebration of our 150th anniversary of the tea industry at Parliament House when both houses were in attendance, a blood donation programme by over 100 Sri Lankans domiciled in Canberra, to commemorate 70 years of diplomatic ties, and finally after two years of lobbying by the High Commission, the return of Sri Lankan Airlines to Melbourne. Yes a diplomat's dream year made possible by blessings from above.

Australia's journey

Australia, a country 100 times the size of Sri Lanka, with nearly the same population as ours, was indeed a revelation. The rigid application of the rule of law and mutual respect among the many diverse nationalities, ethnicities and religious faiths has made it one of the most sought after countries to live in.

This for a country that was openly racist until 1973, when the White Australia policy was abolished. That decision demonstrated a nation's humility to accept its faults and the courage to make the change. The ensuing benefits have been amazing.

Another landmark event in Australian history was the apology, tendered to the indigenous people in 2008, for the discrimination and cruelty inflicted upon them for over a century. One has only to read the text of that apology which is engraved and prominently displayed in the foyer of the Foreign Office in Canberra, to understand the extent of the remorse that was felt.

Yes my friends, birth is not a choice but a chance. To put it in the words of Warren Buffet, the American billionaire, 'an ovarian lottery'. It is therefore unacceptable that any human life should be discriminated against on account of an event over which he or she had no choice. So if ever we feel inclined to look down on a fellow being, let it be that we did so only to raise him up.

Alleviating suffering

I was privileged in my education both at Royal College and the University of Colombo. An education that took me not only to the top of the private sector but quite unexpectedly also the country's diplomatic service.

I never forgot what I owed my country for that education and so after serving the oldest business house in Sri Lanka, George Steuarts, for 35 years, a company that historically valued its integrity above everything else, I walked away from commercial life on retirement at age 60, in 2008, to devote the rest of my life to provide opportunities for the less privileged in whatever modest way I could.

Thankfully, helped by generous like-minded friends both here and overseas we have been able to support in a meaningful way, education, nutrition, food for the destitute elderly, farming, access to water through wells, among other needs for those in that category.

The pandemic posed its own huge challenges particularly to those daily wage earners. When you realise that the daily wage just about meets their daily needs, you can well imagine the impact of prolonged lockdowns on the lives of their families. We were happy to alleviate that suffering to an extent.

With Government hospitals converting to treat COVID patients, two groups I am privileged to be associated with came together to respond to appeals from these hospital authorities, to raise funds and to purchase urgently needed equipment for both the Jaffna and Bandarawela Hospitals. The generous response from like-minded people was gratifying!

So, to the emerging generations in particular, whose entire life is ahead of them, let me remind them that ours is still a country gifted by God. All we need to do to invoke the blessings is to act honourably, with integrity and sincerity. Remember the line from Abraham Lincoln's letter to his son's teacher: "Teach him that it is far more honourable to fail than to cheat."

Our loyalty to our country must always supersede our loyalty to any individual! Servile individual loyalties are an insult to both your intellect and education. Also remember that humility is the true hallmark of greatness. Do not be misled by anything else.

Lord Buddha preached moderation and stressed the impermanence of life. Each of us will reach a phase when our physical and mental faculties decline as we prepare to exit our time on earth. At that stage our only companion will be our conscience. The more at peace we are with it, the more serene will be that departure, and no amount of material things will ever buy that peace.

Show your own appreciation of life by bringing in an additional language for communication, the language of 'compassion,' which in Mark Twain's words is one that helps the blind to see and the deaf to hear. Then the blessings will be yours. May God bless our beautiful country, all her people and each and every one of you.

The Story of a Painting: Governor Falck's Audience to the Kandyan Ambassadors in 1772 drawn and painted from life by C. F. Reimer, Surgeon

Dr Srilal Fernando



A group photograph is part of a visual record of a modern-day conference. What did they do in 1772, long before the advent of photography? A skilled artist was commissioned to paint the scene as it happened. The occasion was the visit of three Kandyan ambassadors to attend a meeting with the then Dutch Governor, Iman Willem Falck in Colombo.

The Artist

The artist was Carl Frederick Reimer. Just like Shakespeare, in his time Reimer spelt his name in several similar sounding ways. He arrived in Ceylon in the service of the VOC in 1768. He served in the medical service as a third surgeon. In 1777, he was transferred to the Surveys branch and functioned as an Engineer and Land Surveyor. He was posted to Batavia in 1783 and died in 1796 after rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of Engineers. It was clear that he was a multi-talented person with skills as a painter and had great powers of observation. The painting shows a facial likeness of each of the individuals depicted.

The Context

Kīrti Śrī Rājasingha was the King in Kandy. The Dutch Wars with Kandy were concluded. The Dutch controlled the coastline, with the King not having direct access to the sea routes. However, there were frequent skirmishes in the border areas. There were issues of trade of cinnamon that grew wild in some areas belonging to the Kandyan Kingdom. The annual visits of the Ambassadors from Kandy had been established, where some of these issues, and exchange of presents took place. This painting allows for the first time to visualise the Chieftains of Kandy. Though there were descriptions, there was no proper way to see what they looked like. A later painting by Jan Brandes in 1785 is available for comparison, when a similar event occurred in the same hall, but drawn from a different angle during the time of Governor de Graaff.

People in the Painting

The main participants are as follows. The Dutch Governor Falck sits at the head of the table on an elaborate chair. He was known by the nickname “The Crow” due to his dark appearance most likely from his mother who was from Semarang. He was born in Matara where his father was Dissave and educated in Ceylon and in Holland. Rising rapidly in the service of the VOC, he was considered one of the more enlightened Governors.

The three Kandyan Ambassadors are painted ‘Face On’ and the first towards the Governor was Mahā Mohottiyar Dodanwela Rālahāmy. In the middle is Mohandiram Iriyagama, and one furthest away is Mīdeniya Rālahāmy. The attendants of the Kandyan Ambassadors are seen standing at the opposite end of the room holding what looks like elephant tusks, but on comparing with the Brandes painting, are most likely ceremonial swords.

On the Governor’s left, between the Governor and the Ambassadors is the Mahā Mudaliyar who is the chief Government interpreter and most likely Don Juan Illangakoon. At the back of the Governor are his three Dutch Attendants, and behind them, stand two low country Mudaliyars yet to be identified. On the right of the Governor are the members of the Dutch Council. In order they are Bartholomeus Jacobus Raket (the Hoofd Administrateur), Godfried Leonhard de Coste (the Dissave of Colombo), Jan Jacob Cocquaart (the Major commanding the Forces), Jan Hendrik Borwater (the Fiscal), Gerrit Engel Holst (the Paymaster), Cornelis de Cock (the Chief Warehouse keeper), Jacobus de Bordes (the Trade Commissioner), and Martinus Merken (the Political Secretary).

On the other side of the table and partly obscured are the three members of the commission specially appointed to arrange the reception, and to wait

on the Ambassadors during their stay. A more detailed description of the participants is given in *The Dutch Burger Union Journal*, Vol. II, no. 4, 1909. Some of the descendants settled in Ceylon, and names like Mooyart, Holst, Van Sendan, Van der Spar, Rosemale Cocq, and Toussaint are mentioned in this article. The picture also shows the elegant figure of a bearer of refreshments, probably of mixed Javanese and Indian descent.

The Dress

The costumes of the participants are depicted in bright colours and is a topic that would warrant further detailed analysis in the future. The Dutch Governor wears a black three-cornered hat and is the only figure wearing one. The Dutch Council members wear Blue, Black or Red coats, with Gold Braid, White stockings and Shoes. The native Mudaliyar facing the picture is seen wearing a coat, a ceremonial Kastane sword and sash, a ceremonial hat in his left hand and bare feet. The hair is kept in place with a horseshoe shaped comb. (*Nāmi Panāwa*)

The Kandyan ambassadors are seen wearing a red hat embroidered in gold and crowned with a tassel (*Boralē*) in gold. The jackets are in white except the one away from the Governor. They wear elaborate gold necklaces and pendants (*Mala Padakkam*). The sleeves extend halfway down the arms. A white muslin Mante (*Tippet*) protects the jacket from being soiled by the oiled hair. The feet are not shown but probably went unshod.

The Place

The scene takes place at the large audience hall of the Dutch Government House. This now forms part of St. Peter's church. The building then included the Oriental Hotel on one side and the General Treasury on the other. The walls have three large mirrors in ornate frames and a number of small mirrors which would have amplified the light from the magnificent chandelier and the three hanging lanterns. On the walls are two pictures with oriental scenes and another over the door depicting a Dutch village. The table is covered with a white cloth with frills along the sides and a red cloth with elaborate white corners. On the tabletop are small spittoons and a large silvered one in the foreground near the Governor. This suggests that chewing betel was common at the time. The rug on the ground is designed in red, blue and white with a border, laid on a red carpet.

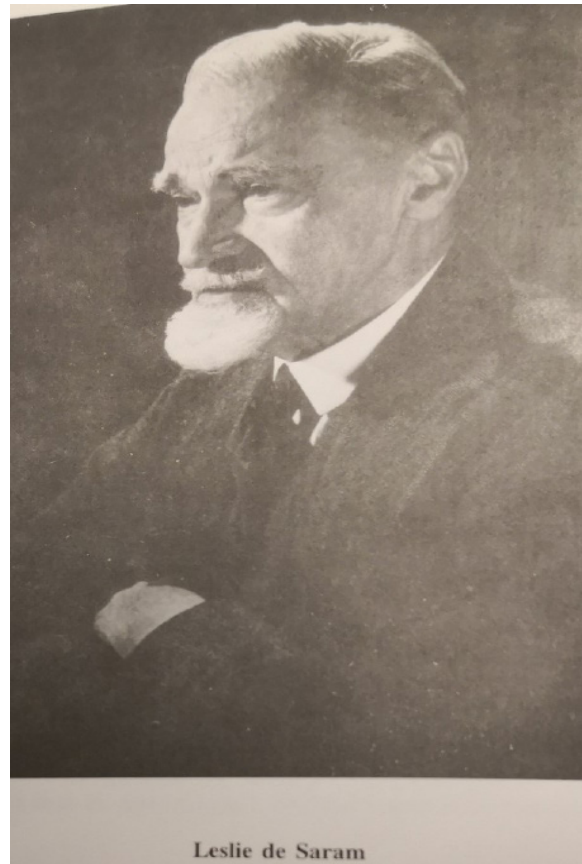
The logistics

The three Kandyan chiefs were accompanied by a retinue of 552 people including 42 Modliars, 4 Kōrales, 46 Āratjes, 28 vidanēs, 74 appuhāmys, 15 appō's and 6 clerks. In addition, there were three Vedarālas, sundry staff like messengers, laundrymen, and service providers. It appears that everyone was on the bandwagon and pales into insignificance the entourage that accompanies the present-day politicians on jaunts abroad. Louis Coerea was the caterer and purveyor to the embassy. 266 Bushels of rice, maldive fish, karawadu, tobacco, and betel with total bill amounting to 273 Rix Dollars. Business and political privilege going hand in hand is not new.

Other similar Paintings

Sir Paul E. Pieris presented a large oil painting to the Colombo Museum depicting the same scene. This was a painting that Sir Alexander Johnston, former Chief Justice of Ceylon, had taken with him to England and presented to the Royal Asiatic Society in April 1828. It is thought to be a copy of the original in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The Johnston painting has a citation which incorrectly dates it as 1766. Later research has shown that the 1766 embassy consisted of five Kandyan Chieftains and not three. Further Reimer arrived only in 1768, two years after. The Johnston painting is in the Dutch Museum in Colombo. Another 19th century copy, a water colour by an unknown artist is in the Sri Lanka Archives, but varies in detail from the original, in the Rijksmuseum.

The Owners of the Replica



It may be the lack of an exact copy that prompted **Leslie de Saram** to commission a Dutch Artist, Ina Schoh, to visit the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in 1938, and provide an exact copy of the original. At the back of the painting is inscribed, "*Copie Door INA SCHOH 1938*". It is not out of place to digress and provide a profile of Leslie William Fredrik de Saram. He was an important figure at the time well known as a lawyer, collector and philanthropist.

He was the senior partner of the oldest law firm in Ceylon founded by his grandfather F. J. de Saram Sr. in 1841. His parents were F. J. de Saram Jr. and Maud Nell. He was born in 1877 and died in Canberra in 1961. His Colombo residence was called

“Brentham”. This was purchased by the Australian Government and housed the Australian High Commission for many years. It is now the property of a business tycoon in Sri Lanka. The historic Tudor style mansion is no more. Leslie was a connoisseur of art, books, furniture and coins.

In 1942 during World War II, Dr R. L. Hayman founded St Thomas’ College, Gurutalawa on land and building donated by Mr. and Mrs. Leslie de Saram. The property called ‘Orange Farm’ consisted of 45 acres and several buildings. When a plaque was set up, the de Sarams did not want their name on it, choosing to be known as well-wishers.

He was also a generous donor to the University of Ceylon (now called the University of Peradeniya). The donation amounting to 1384 items, including Dutch period furniture and his collection of books; was the largest donation at the time. The books were catalogued by M. A. Gunapala of the Peradeniya library. He donated his collection of coins including rare Greek gold coins to the University Library in Colombo. The provenance or the line of ownership of a painting adds value and provide another dimension to any work of art.

When Leslie de Saram decided to leave Ceylon the well-known architect **Geoffrey Bawa** purchased this painting. He would have long admired it as it appears to be the only painting that he purchased from Leslie de Saram. Geoffrey Bawa is a household name in Sri Lanka and does need any further description.

The next in the chain was **Dr. R. K. Rajpal de Silva** the expert on Dutch and British Period paintings of Sri Lanka. The older generation of members of the Ceylon Society may remember him for his presentations to the Society on his visits to Sydney and Melbourne.

He was preparing his book the *Illustrations and Views of Dutch Ceylon 1602-1796*. This was the best out of a number of books that he produced. They were outstanding examples of scholarship, brilliantly presented. He chose this painting as the one to go on the cover of his book.

While admiring this painting in his house in London, some years ago he remarked that he had to part with “an arm and a leg”, to purchase it from Geoffrey Bawa. Like most works of art, owners are only temporary custodians.

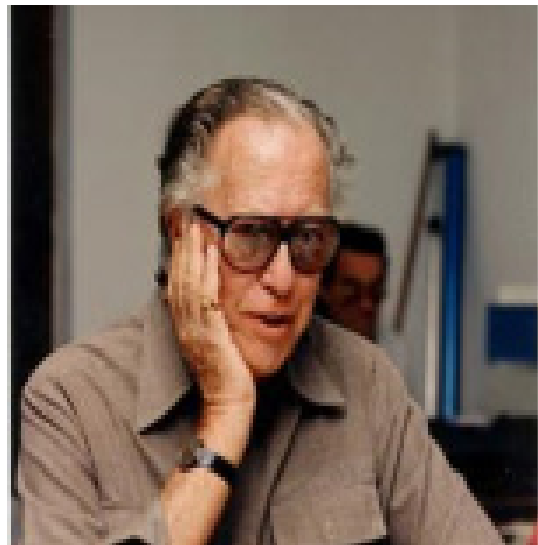
While the original painted in 1772 lies deep in the stores of the Rijksmuseum, away from view, it is heartening to note that an exact copy by a professional artist is available to view and admire.

Further reading

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Geoffrey Bawa



Dr. R. K. Rajpal de Silva

Operation “Goshen” by Commander (E) E.L Matthysz, (dec’d)

reported by Somasiri Devendra

The cyclone hit Trincomalee on 23rd December 1964 creating vast destruction in the Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Jaffna areas. Commodore Kadirgamar had decided that we should undertake the salvage operation of the Indian Ferry “Goshen” which had been left high and dry at the time of the cyclone, beached well and truly on the Talaimannar beach within 100 to 150 yards from the Talaimannar Pier. The vessel was understood to be parallel to the beach. I returned to Trincomalee as directed and formulated what was necessary for this salvage operation. My team consisted of Lt. Marty Somasundaram, Inst.Lt. H.D.L.M. Palmon and Lt. K.K. Fernando, Steward Kandasamy and civilian dockyard workers mainly from the Fire Brigade.

So, we took off (in a convoy with cooking utensils, bedding, a small generator, our communication sets and the necessary essentials to strike camp) from Trincomalee for Vavuniya, Mannar and came to Talaimannar Pier around 3rd or 4th March. A damaged Customs building, with a few renovations, was repaired sufficiently for us to occupy; it was within 100 yards of our site. We lost no time getting down to business and, of course, established a source from which we could get our good “old stuff” – from Talaimannar and sometimes all the way from Mannar. Conversation that whole evening was how this operation was to be conducted and the next morning we got down to business. With the assistance of the Railway, we used some of their material with the idea of putting these rails under the “Goshen” and quietly moving her towards the water. After a few days, we abandoned it because we found the “Goshen” too heavy, and every time we put a railway line under it, it disappeared under the sand.

The next thing was, with the assistance of the Railway Department, we obtained a bulldozer (that took us a few days). When it came, we built a complete basin out of sea sand round the “Goshen”. Calculations were made to accommodate depth and the volume of water needed. The edges of the basin had to be built sufficiently high to accommodate the vessel when she floated slightly.

While this was going on, there was very little we could do except watch the procedure of the basin being built. It gave us a few days to look around Talaimannar.

The basin created by the bulldozer was being filled with water for nearly 1-1/2 days and while this was being done, we had a certain amount of doubt wondering how the sand basin could withstand the weight of the water in this big basin. We made allowances for seepage and as it gradually filled and came to about 5 inches to the brim, we tried pulling the “Goshen” but it would not budge. Something had gone wrong with our calculation, but Lt. Palmon assured us that it has to come up with about 1 or 2 inches more. We were reluctant to put pressure on the banks of the basin even with the help of others and our own crew. So the filling went on and finally, amid great joy and excitement, it began to move with just 2 inches from the brim of the basin. We then continued

to pump a little more, taking a risk and the “Goshen” moved in the basin and we walked her to a position parallel to the Talaimannar pier.

We had to be careful not to let the bows of the vessel touch the sand basin. Having positioned her into place, Lt. Somasundaram and his team of divers prepared stacks of dynamite in preparation for the breaching of the basin, so that with the outflow of water there would be some momentum in the vessel forcing its way out.

The next day was a day of further excitement, and this preparation was more or less ready. We were joined by a Railway official from the Indian Railways Mr. Ragunathan, because the bulldozer was an Indian Railway bulldozer. He was most helpful as he was also a mechanical engineer. The time and tide were taken into consideration and the sand basin was breached. The vessel surged forward with the help of a number of people pulling on ropes that were fitted to the vessel. Nothing tangible took place except that the vessel came halfway past our breached sand bar and got stuck. The end result was that the divers had further work to high pressure hose the bottom to relieve the vessel from sitting on the sand. By this time, I had got amoebiasis (by drinking toddy) and I had to enter the Military Hospital on the directions of the Commander of the Navy. So, I took the train on the same night seeing the vessel stuck half way and left the balance work to Lts. Somasundaram and Palmon.

I got admitted at the Military Hospital the next morning and I received news that evening that the “Goshen” was finally salvaged. I was only sorry I could not wait for the final salvage operation.

Lts. Somasundaram and Palmon left Talaimannar and returned to base (Trincomalee) triumphantly having completed a task that had never been undertaken, using the method we had adopted, never before in Sri Lanka.

(NOTE: The writer began a series of stories about his experiences in the Navy at my request. However, he was able to complete this one and he gave it to me a few days before his death. May the turf lie lightly over him. SD)



The SS Goshen (left) and the SS Irwin (right) moored on Talaimannar Pier waiting for the Indo-Ceylon Express train to pick up passengers to India from Ceylon and to drop off passengers from India to Ceylon. (circa 1930)

(The image above appeared in an article by Thru Arumugam on the Indo-Ceylon Express Train in the May 2022 issue of this journal)

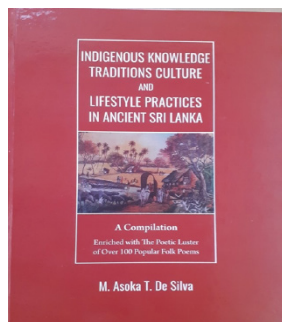
BOOK REVIEWS

Title: *Indigenous Knowledge, Traditions, Culture and Lifestyle Practices in Ancient Sri Lanka*

Author: Asoka De Silva

Publisher: National Science Foundation, Vijitha Yapa Publications. 332 pages, price: Rs. 3500

Reviewed by Asiff Hussein



This valuable compilation is yet another notable contribution by Scientist Asoka De Silva. This work which builds on his earlier work, *Technological Innovations in Ancient Sri Lanka*, explores the origins and evolution of traditional knowledge from a scientific point of view. However, it is not at all complex or

complicated as one might think which is perhaps why the author gave it such a long title elaborating on its cultural aspect. The work is rather light reading meant for the general reader and even enriched with over 100 popular folk songs.

The most important aspect of this work is its premise of “Live and Let Live” which traditional Sri Lankans have followed throughout the centuries and grounded in the view that sustainability has been at the heart of indigenous knowledge so unlike the now dying Western view of Man subjugating Nature for his own ends, a view that until recently defined industrial and agricultural development the world over, albeit with disastrous consequences.

In contrast local knowledge passed down through generations emphasized on a very positive symbiotic relationship between man and his environment including among other things reliance on the concept of *ahimsa* or non-injury to other living beings, so much so that even birds who would have otherwise taken their pickings of grain crops from the fields were allotted a special section for their needs known as “*Kurulu Paluwa*”. Although it leaves much room for the imagination how this was achieved, one may surmise that the birds were not scared away by scarecrows or that ingenious device known as “*Diya-holmana*” that operated in other parts of the field. In fact, birds like *Demalichas* or the *Seven Sisters* were made good use of in the crucial stages of young paddy to rid them of harmful pests like the *Godavella* worm.

The author has convincingly shown how the time-tested and rich body of traditional wisdom and knowledge that had evolved through a long process of observation, enrichment and refinement by our ancients had implications for medicine, agricultural practices and skillful management of water resources to conservation of forest cover and germplasm from which future generations would benefit immensely. Also interesting are the accounts of the traditional

ways of pest and weed control of which there were many and the illustrations of different types of paddy field channels by which water was conveyed to the fields like the Umbrella, Arrow and Rising Sun.

The biodiversity thus nurtured led to the preservation of a variety of rice types which were esteemed for their different qualities. For example, there were short-term rice varieties like *haeta-da-vee* which helped tide over periodic water crises during times of draught and long-term varieties like “*Ma-vee*”, which were very nutritious and offered to fasting persons like Buddhist monks who did not indulge in night meals. The high carbohydrate *Kanni Murunga* imparted more energy when consumed and thus served the needs of men toiling in the fields while *Heenati* which generated more milk with high sugar content was fed to lactating mothers. As important are the traditional methods of food preservation given here which could hold their own even today.

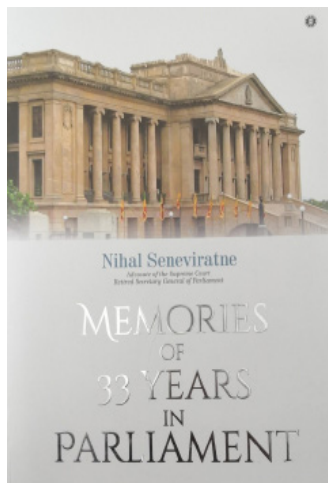
Very importantly the work also adds to our traditional medicinal lore approached from a scientific basis pioneered by Dr.C.G.Uragoda and builds on it. The traditional treatment of preventing tetanus by a draught of *Venivel*, Inactivating the high histamine content of certain foods by the addition of *goraka* (gamboge) and *murunga* (drumstick) leaves, administering the ash of the bark of the *Kumbuk* tree to pregnant women to meet their calcium requirement, treatment of chicken pox with a bed or cushion of *Kohomba* or Margosa leaves, disinfecting floors where home deliveries took place with turmeric, the feeding of a paste of *Rupaha* marble for stomach pains or flatulence which seems to act as an antacid and the use of traditional toothbrushes known as “*dahatu*” improvised from twigs or roots of certain plants like *Bombu*, *Karanda* and *Pilamul* all have a scientific basis. The work also deals with traditional livelihood practices including livestock management and treatment of diseased animals as well as inland fishing techniques, watercraft and even the social organisation of fishing communities all of which helped in sustaining the fisheries, not to mention the folk songs and “*paaru kavi*” sung by boatmen in barges.

Also dealt with, but somewhat out of the scope of this work are long forgotten indoor games like *Gal-keliya* (Stone Game), *Pol-kooru-Keliya* (Coconut-Pin Game) and *Hat-Diviyan-Keliya* (Seven Leopards Game) as well as combative sports like *Mal-lava Pora* (Westling), *Maguru Pora* (Mace Combat) and *Jala-Pora* (Water fights).

A must read for all those interested in the true traditions of a once great nation whose future could take inspiration from its past.

Title: *Memories of 33 Years in Parliament*
Author: Nihal Seneviratne (Advocate of the Supreme Court, Retired Secretary General of the Parliament of Sri Lanka)
Publisher: Sarasavi Publishers, Colombo

Reviewed by Hugh Karunanayake



Nihal Seneviratne, the former Secretary General of Sri Lanka's Parliament which he served with distinction and diligence for 33 years, has published his autobiographical memoir entitled "*Memories of 33 years in Parliament*". Written in a very readable, chatty style of prose, it is indeed a compendium of the highlights of the nation's legislative workings over the past

three decades. If anyone dares to call the nation's Parliament a "circus", then surely the Secretary General, together with the Speaker must be the "ringmasters" of the circus! It is most definitely a vantage point from which a person appointed under the Constitution of the country, as Secretary General of Parliament, could view the inner dynamics of the workings of an institution entrusted by the people to guide the destinies of this fair island of ours. Any unbiased reader of this book will conclude that the author was eminently suitable for the role, given his honesty, impartiality, tact, and above all the intellectual capacity to handle the "unexpected". A read through the book will reveal how "the unexpected" manifested itself many a time, and how the amiable Secretary General rose to the occasion in dealing with the issues which may have taken a toll on a person with lesser make up.

The author Nihal Seneviratne, now in his 88th year, is blessed both with a remarkably retentive memory and the capacity to analyse and review major legislative events in the country over the past three decades; a task he has performed so eminently in this publication. The author was educated at the Royal Primary School and Royal College, Colombo from where he joined the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya as a student in the then newly established Law faculty. Arming himself with a Bachelor of Laws degree three years later, he was on the cusp to enroll in one of the Ivy League universities in the USA for which he had obtained a Smith Mundt scholarship, when a serendipitous turn of events saw him employed in his first job as Second Clerk Assistant in the Parliament of Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon) in 1961. He was interviewed for the position by Dudley Senanayake, then leader of the House of Representatives, and the Speaker RS Pelpola. Dudley read out Nihal's Royal College background and curriculum vitae and quipped "Young man you have done very well in your school. The only thing is that you went to the wrong school"

to which the young Nihal may have been prompted to say "Sir, I went to the right school, you went to the wrong school!" However, discretion as they say is the better part of valour, so young Nihal held back, showing remarkable tact and maturity, qualities that shone throughout his career as the most senior official in Sri Lanka's Parliament for years to come.

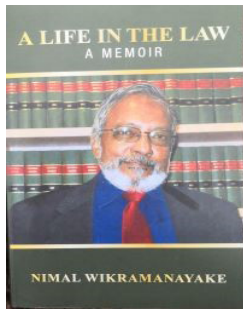
The author during his 33 years as a parliamentary official of which 13 years were spent as Secretary General of Parliament, the nation's foremost institution and source of its legislative enactments, and governance, was privileged to have a 'ringside' view of the major events that occurred during the last three decades. Some of them since mired by partial unsubstantiated accounts, and others simply forgotten through the mists of the dim distant past, are now presented in this book with the stamp of authority of the former Secretary General himself. These include such momentous events like the hand grenade attack in Parliament which took the life of one MP and almost that of the Minister for Security Lalith Athulathmudali; the events surrounding the loss of civic rights of Mrs Bandaranaike, "a stranger in the chamber" and the unique exercise of authoritarian power by conducting a trial of two journalists by Parliament for doing their duty, and other episodes now almost rubbed out of the nation's psyche with more startling contemporaneous issues.

This book also throws some light on the mores of our leaders in dealing with Parliamentary staff. The author is universally and affectionately known by his nickname "Galba" acquired in school at Royal College, a name that has withstood the tests of time. The genesis of that acquisition is dealt with in an amusing aside to his story. It is interesting to note that leaders like Mrs Bandaranaike, Premadasa, always addressed him as Nihal, while Felix Dias Bandaranaike a contemporary of the author called him by his nickname "Galba". The redoubtable Colvin R de Silva who is generally more egalitarian in other spheres of his life, was however wont to address him by the more formal and hierarchical "Seneviratne".

The book is replete with photographs on his travels overseas and his encounters with world leaders he was privileged to meet, notes on his parents and family including references to his late elder brother Nissanka known as "Bull" in Royal College. Nissanka after qualifying as a physician worked as the Professor of Physiology together with Professor ACE Koch in the University prompting students to refer to the department as the "Cock and Bull story"! Also included in the book are some glimpses and vignettes about little known aspects of some prominent politicians. There is much more for any reader disconnected with political life, all of which makes this publication a very enjoyable and interesting read. Anyone who wishes to refer to the legislative history of Sri Lanka during the past half century should lose no time in acquiring this lucidly written and well compiled book.

Title: *A Life in the Law: A Memoir*
Author: Nimal Wikramanayake
Publisher: Hybrid Publishers, Melbourne.

Reviewed by Hugh Karunanayake



Nimal Wikramanayake QC's autobiographical memoir "*A Life in the Law*" has all the ingredients necessary for it to join the ranks of the best sellers. I say this despite the fact that his book concerns a specialised subject (law), and specialty areas are generally not for the general reader. This book however is different.

It is a "no holds barred" story of the inner workings of the almost highly cloistered workings of the legal profession in Victoria. Written in an easy-to-read style laced with humour and scores of personal anecdotes to illustrate the essence of his message, it's revelations are bound to send more than a message to the inner echelons of the highly regarded and respected legal profession which in many ways guide the destiny of the people of this country. To add lustre to the appeal of the book is its preface written by none other than that well respected and eminent former judge of the High Court, Michael Kirby. Judge Kirby's preface summarises the overall merits of the book highlighting its appeal and providing the reader with a well balanced critique.

Nimal's story amplifies the flaws within the inner workings of this noble profession in Victoria. It highlights the 'closed shop' mentality of the profession as a whole as practised in Australia, the difficulties encountered by a new entrant to the bar, the entrenched prejudices and archaic traditions immersed in this bastion of conservatism which seems to flourish, despite many advances in social reformation that have occurred in recent years in the very society to which it belongs. Nimal's story reveals not only that this influential professional institution has been immune to reform in racial, and gender equality, but also that it offers scant solace for people affected by personal inadequacy and economic misfortune who look to the courts of law for redress and equanimity..

The author Nimal Wikramanayake may be considered as 'born into law'. He comes from a Sri Lankan family of legal practitioners including his father and his father's brother who were granted silk in mid twentieth century Ceylon, as it was known then. Nimal passed out as a barrister from Cambridge University, and In addition to spending most of his adult life practising the profession both in Sri Lanka and in Australia, he has come under the benign influence and tutelage of his father, a leading Kings Counsel himself. His father the late E.G. Wikramanayake a King's Counsel in Sri Lanka remembered for his brilliance as a cross examiner and for his commanding legal practice. Nimal himself was awarded silk in 2002 in Australia and is the only father and son King's / Queen's Counsel in two different countries in the world. That is a world record which will take some beating. I also

believe that he is the only Queen's Counsel of non Anglo Saxon origin in Australia!

The story of Nimal's success in his profession in Australia in a rigid environment straddled with an exclusivity for the chosen few, and hopelessness for those having the temerity to attempt to enter, is not for the faint hearted. It is a story often of despair and hopelessness and in his case because of his ethnicity and dusky visage, a tale of overcoming insult and ridicule from those who should know better. No amount of plaudits would suffice for his tremendous success in reaching the very top of his profession. Nimal's story is studded with anecdotes which he relates in a lucid style of writing replete with names of the dramatis personae. His sense of humour evokes more than a hoot! Here is an example. In a case of a young girl who gave evidence and stated "We got into the back of his ute and when he started tickling my boobs I got randy and asked him to fuck me" The humour is in the judge's intervention "Wait a minute, I want to hear more of this"!

The author's career hit a major high mark very early in his career in Australia, after a chance meeting with Louis Voumard the last word on property law in Australia and author of the book "*Voumard's Sale of Land*". The book had been published many years before and was called "the Bible" on the subject. When Voumard died, the re-writing of the book fell into the lap of Nimal who was not only overwhelmed by the honour, but incredibly fortunate to receive a boost to his career which by that time however was really not on overdrive! He read *Voumard* over forty times before venturing to edit the subsequent version, and soon our hero was on the upward march.

As observed by Justice Kirby in his preface, Nimal's story is strung together with an element of bitterness for the barbs he received on the way to the top. I believe that that aspect is one which should be told to the world, leaving it to the reader to judge whether the writer was over sensitive to inadequacies in his social environment, or whether such aspects should be brought to the fore as part of his own social conscience.

Nimal's career at the bar in Australia had its high points and a few not so high, but overall seemed a rollercoaster ride. Everything however has its use by date, and eventually his career in law came to an end with his retirement. The die was cast and he had to feel the emptiness in his life following his retirement, and it is with some poignancy that he recalls the self imposed cut off from active work. He was however blessed with the love and companionship of his beloved wife Anna Maria who had been a source of immense strength and support to him through his career.

I enjoyed reading this book as much as I enjoyed reviewing it. It is a story which should be compulsory reading to all prospective entrants to the legal profession, and indeed for those practising the law, and also for those wise men who sit in judgment over their fellow men. This book contains an unusually rare mix of insights, anecdotes, humour, and history and is highly recommended not only for the *cognoscenti*.

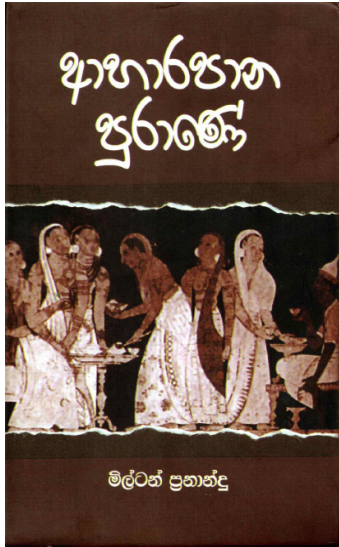
Title: *Ahaarapaana Purane (History of Food)*

Author: Milton Fernando

Publisher: .C. S. Godage & Sons, Colombo.

Reviewed by Dr Palitha Ganewatta

An outstanding treatise on Human Food



We are proud to note that our own Milton Fernando's recent book was awarded the 2022 Sri Lanka State Literary Prize in the Best Research category. The book titled '*Ahaarapaana Purane*', which I would like to translate as '*History of Food*', as this work deals with the origin and evolution of food production and food consumption of the world from pre-historic times to contemporary society.

Milton Fernando, who resides in sunny Queensland, Australia, is not a stranger to the Sri Lankan literary community. Milton has published a few literary creations before, among them two volumes of translations of twentieth century Nobel Prize-winning short stories stand out (*Sammama Sangdama* Vols 1 & 2). Milton has also produced a lucid translation of an Egyptian feminist writer, Nawal El Saadawi's acclaimed novel '*Woman at Point Zero*' into Sinhalese (*Viragi Vilasini*). In 2011 he published his first translated collection of 12 short stories originally written in 12 different Indian languages titled, '*Sathkulu Pavva Mathin*'.

Milton's latest work is a mammoth creation ranging 1120 pages. It starts with the preamble taken from the earliest available Sinhalese cookbook - *The Cookbook of the Kandyan Palace (Mahamuwa Raja Gedera Super Shasthra Potha)*. Milton's book is the result of a comprehensive research spanning 30 years. As the Author himself has indicated, it took him 30 long years to research and compile evidence and information relating to food, the basic and the foremost human requirement, perusing the history of 40 thousand years of three continents. The author draws interesting facts from worldwide literature written in oriental and English languages. Below are two interesting findings, which the author offers as evidence of food availability in pre-historic Ceylon.

1. Archaeologists have found Ceylonese Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*) on both sides of the nostrils of mummies inside the Tomb of Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun, around 4000 years ago.
2. Pollen of Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), a major cereal grain grown in temperate climates, was found in the Ceylonese hill country village, *Mahaeli-yathanna* 13,000 years ago.

This exhaustive work deals not only with human food, but also with the social and cultural aspects connected to the evolution of food production and consumption by mankind. It highlights the significant role played by food consumption in the cultural and social development of primitive, medieval and contemporary societies. It is this feature that places this unparalleled work amongst the most valuable reference collections of the history of food in the world. I believe this book is the first of its nature to be published in Sri Lanka and the Sinhalese reader is fortunate to access this remarkable treatise.

Milton Fernando is to be commended for producing this unique compendium for the benefit of the Sinhalese reader.





The Development of the Tea Industry in Sri Lanka

A presentation by Roderick de Sylva on 27 February 2022

Tea is the second most consumed beverage in the world next to water.

The most popular legend of the beginnings of tea, is that the leaves of a nearby *Camellia Sinensis* tree fell into the pot of water being boiled by an ancient Chinese Emperor and he liked it.

When the English name of the country changed to Sri Lanka in 1972, it was decided to refer to the tea as Ceylon Tea on account of the name being synonymous with high quality tea - a reputation that had been established, much like Champagne. The tea plant botanical name is *Camellia Sinensis*, and is a species of the *Camellia* plant that in its natural form can grow to about 15m, but is pruned down to about 1.2m to allow for ease of hand plucking the tender top two leaves and the bud which maximises quality.

In 1824, the British brought a tea plant from China and planted it in the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens, as an experiment. More experimental planting was carried out from plants from India thereafter. Tea was commercially introduced into Sri Lanka by a Scotsman, James Taylor who arrived in Sri Lanka in 1852 and settled down at Loolecondra near Kandy. He was only 17 at the time and sadly died in 1892 at 57 years, from dysentery. The young hard working Scots who came to Sri Lanka at that time were not attracted by a life of luxury but by a spirit of adventure. They had to clear the forests teeming with wild animals with the help of the local Sinhalese and Tamils and often lived in huts until they established their houses and lines for the workers. There was of course plenty of hunting. Many of the early pioneers were distraught when their coffee plantations were devastated by the fungal blight known as coffee rust. They went back home, but others stayed and persevered, re-planting the coffee estates and opening new estates with tea. Taylor visited India to learn tea planting and in 1867, established a small 19 acre tea estate in Loolecondra. Soon neighbouring lands were converted into tea plantations. In 1872, Taylor built a tea factory in Loolecondra and in 1875 the first shipment of Ceylon tea was sent to the London Tea Auctions. Sir Thomas Lipton was amongst the earlier pioneers who made tea more affordable and popular.

As the tea industry grew in Sri Lanka, the need for a local auction centre became apparent. The first public tea auction in Sri Lanka was held on 30

July 1883 by Sommerville & Co. The Colombo Tea Auction is the oldest and biggest tea auction centre in the world. Most of the tea sold in Sri Lanka is sold at the Colombo Tea auctions, with private sales accounting for a small portion.

In 1925 the Tea Research Institute was established with the aim of conducting research into maximising yields and methods of production. In 1955 the first commercial vegetative propagation of tea plants commenced from clonal varieties. (Hitherto tea was planted from seedlings). In the 1960s, total tea production and exports exceeded 200m kgs. In 1965 Sri Lanka became the world's largest exporter of tea. This position is now challenged by Kenya. (Although India is the largest producer of black tea, much of it is consumed domestically).

In the 1970s the government nationalised the tea estates. Three bodies were set up to manage the tea estates – the JEDB, SLSPC and TSHDA. In the early 1990s, many of the tea estates were again privatised. By 2013 tea production was in excess of 340m kgs. (2021 –app 300m kgs) Ceylon tea has a unique flavour and is sought after. Tea exports were around 320m kgs in 2013 with an export value of around US\$1.5 billion. (2021-US\$1.3b from 288m kgs exported -approximately).

Sri Lanka mostly employs the Orthodox method of manufacturing tea, where the withered tea leaves are crushed and rolled simulating the ancient hand rolling process, rather than the more recent method of CTC (Cut Tear and Curl) which is a harsher method yielding a quicker brewing tea that became popular with the advent of tea bags – convenience being the factor. It was considered that CTC manufacture had a detrimental effect on quality and Sri Lanka resisted efforts to convert to this manufacture on account of this. However in 1983, CTC manufactured teas were introduced to cater to the growing demand for this, but mostly with the poorer quality estates. Tea in Sri Lanka is grown in six principal regions: Dimbula, Nuwara Eliya, Kandy, Uda Pussellawa, Uva and the Southern Province. It is categorised by elevation as High, Medium and Low Grown depending on the elevation at which the tea is grown; High Grown being above 4000ft, Medium Grown 2000 – 4000ft and Low Grown below 2000ft. Each district and elevation imparts its own distinct characteristics, in conjunction with geological, soil, climate, wind and rain patterns and manufacturing processes.

From leaf to cup

Picking: the tender top 2 leaves and the bud are carefully hand picked, as this yields the highest quality.

This is why it is a labour intensive industry and is not produced in the high labour cost countries. In Australia there are a few tea estates in the Atherton Tablelands, North Queensland where the tea is mechanically harvested. Although not getting the best quality, the tea is relatively fresh with a low moisture content and is therefore of reasonable if not good quality, but not sufficiently grown.

Withering: The picked leaves are spread on large troughs with mesh at the bottom through which air is circulated, to evaporate the moisture in the leaf.

Rolling/Crushing: This is the next stage, where the withered leaf is either crushed and rolled by machine simulating the hand rolling process of ancient times (Orthodox manufacture) or Cut Torn and Curled (CTC Manufacture) – a more modern method yielding a quicker brewing tea in the end.

Fermentation: The crushed or torn leaves are laid on tables to ferment. This is really an oxidation process, not fermentation in the true sense. The Oxygen in the air reacts with the enzymes in the crushed tea leaves, making them a coppery colour, very similar to the process that occurs when you cut an apple and it goes brown. The duration time for fermentation depends on what you want to accomplish in the end product - less time if you want more flavour and more time if you want more colour. The tea maker carefully monitors this process. Depending on the season, during the drier quality months December, January for the Dimbula district (western side of the mountain range) and August/September for the Uva District, (eastern side of the mountain range) the tea maker may allow for shorter fermentation, carefully balancing this against the tea being too 'green/raw' in character. During the monsoon months, May/June for the Western (Dimbula) regions and November for the Eastern side of the mountains (Uva district), the tea maker will allow for a longer fermentation as high quality is not achievable but colour and strength are more important and vast quantities are harvested and produced because of the rain. The fermentation or oxidation process is the difference between green tea and black tea - that is historically grown in Sri Lanka. In green tea manufacture, this oxidation process is not allowed to happen (or to a much lesser extent) before the next stage of drying/firing is conducted to stop the oxidation. Consequently the flavonoids in Green tea are different to those in Black Tea.

Drying/Firing: The fermented (oxidised leaf) is transferred to large ovens, where the leaf is dried and results in its blackish appearance. Any leaks in the furnaces/pipes supplying the heat to the ovens can result in the tea having a smoky taste, which is a manufacturing fault. (Except for China black tea which has an inherent smoky character, sometimes desired). Some brands use a percentage of this, which is why their English Breakfast blends have a smoky character.

Sorting: The final stage of manufacture is sorting the mixed particle sizes and offgrades (bits of stem). The dried leaf is sifted over a series of different mesh sizes. The particles or grades that do not pass through the largest holes in the mesh, is termed Orange Pekoe (OP) The next sizes down are Pekoe, Broken Or-

ange Pekoe (BOP), Broken Orange Pekoe Fannings/ Pekoe Fannings (BOPF/PF) and Dust. Although some marketing people try to confuse the names of these grades with quality, the names have nothing to do with quality per-se. The off-grades which are remnants of the stems, mixed with some leaf are also separated at this stage through sifting and electrostatic means. Off grades which can be of any size, could initially be of reasonable quality but have a higher moisture content and therefore deteriorate quicker. This is where the perception of tea bags being of poor quality comes from. Not necessarily so, as you can tea-bag a high quality tea or a poor quality grade, the tea bag paper hiding the poor quality. You can visually verify this by tearing open your tea bag and seeing if it has a lot of brown pieces or is mostly black. The larger grades (OP, BOP) will give you a lighter brew, while the smaller BOPF/PF and dust grades will give you a quicker brewing strong tea as a result of a greater surface area being exposed to the boiling water. This is why these smaller grades are favoured for tea bags. With the demand for tea bags, tea estates try to produce more of these grades. (The Dust grade too can be a primary grade or secondary off-grade, based on the above, The misnomer that all dust is sweepings is false.

Once the tea is packed, in the old days into plywood tea chests, but now into paper sacks, it is sampled to the tea brokers who in turn distribute small samples to prospective buyers in Colombo, who then taste and grade them and mark their comments/standards in the accompanying catalogues.

Every week in Colombo there is a Tea Auction at which the teas are mostly sold, except for a few sold by private treaty. The buyers in Colombo, have about 2 weeks to taste and evaluate the thousands of teas coming up for auction, sometimes express mailing the samples to overseas buyers. Orders are then placed by overseas buyers for different standards/ blends that have been established. The local buyers then buy the teas at the Tea Auctions generally held over 2 days. There can be around 5000 – 10000 lots of tea up for auction each week, so you can imagine the amount of tasting and evaluation that the tea tasters have to get through before the auction. During the quality drier months, the quantity on auction is obviously smaller compared to the rush cropping monsoonal months. The auctions progress at an average speed of about 5 lots per minute, so you have to be on your highest alert in case you miss a lot that an overseas buyer particularly wants, and you get reprimanded by 'the boss' back at the office! (recently the auctions have moved to being electronic, so you can bid from your desk!)

The higher quality teas are held on the tea estates where humidity is lower (Ex-estate teas), until the buyer buys them and requests delivery to Colombo where it is quickly shipped before too much moisture absorbed can deteriorate the tea. The other teas are held in warehouses in Colombo pending sale. The teas bought are either blended to established standards/brands in Colombo or shipped as 'Originals' and blended and packed at packing plants overseas.

Photos from Roderick's Talk



Roderick demonstrating the varieties of tea



Dambatenne Estate



Tea tasting in Colombo

The Evolution of Governance in Sri Lanka

A presentation by Dr Leonard Pinto on 29 May 2022

Governance is a complex issue with roots in history, social science, anthropology, economics, financial management, and above all politics, which requires a multi-disciplinary approach to understand it.

The pre-history of our governance goes back to about 38,000 years ago, during the period of Balangoda man (*Homo sapiens balangodensis*) when they lived in small communities under a leader, recognised according to their traditional laws. This simple governing system would have given rise to the governance in the Vedda community, as they seem to be the descendants of the earliest inhabitants of the country. Indo-Aryan and Dravidians arrived much later.

The recorded history of the governance in Sri Lanka begins in the 6th century BCE with the arrival of Vijaya. Since then, 184 major kings had ruled the country. The history of the governance of Sri Lanka can be divided into three main periods. (1) Pre-colonial–6th century BCE to 1505 CE, (2) Colonial–1505 to 1948, (3) Post-colonial period–1948 to present.

The Pre-Colonial kings of Sri Lanka were mainly Sinhalese, although there were Indian kings (Chola, Pandyan and Tamil) who ruled the country by conquest or through marriage. The kings were autocratic, but benevolent. The king owned the land and distributed it to his subjects to work through *raja-kariya* service. Although division of labour for *raja-kariya* was by castes, it did not carry a hierarchy till the 10th century when the Indian influence changed the social status of castes. The king provided temporal benefits to the subjects and the Buddhist monks, the spiritual benefits. *Wewai-Dagabai* was a popular engagement of the king. Buddhist monks also advised the king, and the king provided their necessities.

The king defended the country from invaders, provided food, improved irrigation and infrastructure and maintained law and order. Rule of Law was by proclamation and agreement, rather than policing, and Buddhist ethics supported voluntary work, not wealth accumulation. Then the country was divided into three

provinces, Ruhunu, Pihiti and Maya. The capital of the Sinhalese kingdom moved southward from Anuradhapura (3rd century BCE–10 century CE), Polonnaruwa (11–13cCE), Dambadeniya & Yapahuwa (13cCE), Kurunegala & Gampola (14cCE), Kotte (15–16cCE) with Sitawaka and Kandy (15–19cCE). From about the 10th Century Sri Lankan kings adopted the Indian ruling style, based on *Arthashastra* text, whereby castes were classified according to a hierarchy, dress according to caste and disproportionate punishment that could execute a clan for an offence of a member as the norm.

It appears that the Portuguese, Dutch and the British were initially invited by the Sinhalese kings to solve a local problem or to replace one by another. The coastal areas of Sri Lanka were governed by the Portuguese for 153 years (1505-1658), Dutch for 138 years (1658-1796) and the British for 19 years (1796-1815) and then the whole island for another 133 years (1815-1948). Besides these colonisers, King Senarath ceded Trincomalee to Denmark for 3 years by treaty (1619-1621) and Rajasinghe II to French for 12 years also by treaty (1672-1783).

During the Portuguese, Dutch and early British periods, there were two governing systems in the country, one by the coloniser under a European king and the other by a Sri Lankan king. While the *raja-kariya* system of service was retained in the Kandyan kingdom, the focus of the coloniser was on trade, tax and defence. In the civil governance, colonisers retained the local structure of governance with *dissawas*, *korales*, *athukorales* and *kariyakaravanna/vidane/grama arachchi* governing provinces, divisions, sub divisions and villages (Figure 1). In addition, the colonisers also maintained a *mudliyar* and *arachchi* system to recruit *lascarins* (local soldiers).

When the British gained control of the entire country in 1815 through the skilful manipulations of John D'Oyly and Governor Robert Brownrigg, the Kandyan Convention was signed between the British and the *dissawas*. Clause 4 of the Kandyan Convention stated that for the time being, governors will govern with *dissawas* and *korales* etc. with all the rights and privileges. Clause 8 stated that Kandyan provinces will be governed by ordinary authority subject to redress and reform when necessary. Although the British appeared to be benevolent, after the Uva-Welassa rebellion (1817-1818), they did not care about the Convention as the above clauses allowed them to change it when necessary.

During the time of Governor Edward Barnes, William Colebrook and Charles Cameron were sent on a commission (1829-1832) to investigate and report why (1) in spite of the high income of the colony (£350,000/year) the colony was requesting funds from England (2) all powers were vested in the governor and an advisory committee appointed by him and (3) forced labour was used for road construction. The Colebrook Constitution of 1833 created the (1) Legislative Council, (2) made the judiciary independent, (3) abolished compulsory labour, (4) provided opportunities in education and civil service for locals and (5) all were to be treated equally. Barnes was unhappy over these proposals and resigned. His successor, Torrington reintroduced taxes, which led to the Matale Rebellion (1848) and Torrington was recalled to England.

When Hugh Clifford was the Governor, Earl Donoughmore was sent on commission to enhance the participatory democracy of the country. The

Donoughmore Constitution of 1931 effectively (1) replaced communal electorates by territorial constituencies to avoid segregation (2) franchised voting rights to all adults (3) structured the Legislative Council (State Council) to have 7 elected members and 3 British officers who managed public service, defence, foreign affairs and justice and (4) created 7 Executive Committees led by an elected local member. The committee was well-mixed to avoid pork barreling. This was the most advanced feature in a constitution in a British colony at that time. Although the governor had veto power, it was to be exercised with discretion.

The Soulbury Commission was established (1944-1946) during the administration of Henry Moore to review the draft constitution prepared by local ministers and prepare the constitution for independent Ceylon. Soulbury Constitution of 1947 (1) retained the universal adult suffrage in voting, and territorial representation rather than communal representation, (2) minorities were given the opportunity to adjust the electoral boundaries, (3) all religions were given equal status, (4) Parliament replaced the Legislative Council and possessed power in domestic affairs, while defence and external affairs were delegated to the British Governor General, (5) PM and cabinet ministers were responsible to the parliament, and (6) a senate was to be created with elected and nominated members.

Scholars, from Cicero to Rousseau and Locke through Thomas Aquinas have recognised three powers in State governance, which when operating independently of each other is known as *Trias Politica*. The three governing powers are (1) Legislative Power, the power to make laws in the parliament, (2) Executive Power, to carry out and enforce laws and execute policies by the Prime Minister and his cabinet of ministers, responsible to the parliament or in the Executive President, the president being responsible for executing the laws and policies of the parliament and (3) Judicial Power, to interpret and apply laws, usually carried out by the Supreme Court, Attorney General and courts. In a democratic governing system, these three powers are independent to a great extent. When there are conflicts, they are resolved professionally and with discretion, above self-interests and party politics, by debate or consensus, and above all in the short-term and long-term interest of the nation. The Executive Power is distributed down to Permanent Secretaries, Departments and the civil service, which are professional bodies.

After independence, the Senate was abolished in 1971 and the constitution of 1972 changed the name of Ceylon to 'Republic of Sri Lanka,' abolished the Governor General and Buddhism was given the foremost place and the duty of State to foster it. The constitution of 1978 created the Executive President, and the name of the country was changed again to 'Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.' Executive President took over the legislative powers on top of his executive powers. The president could appoint the PM, and the parliament became a rubber stamp of the president. As the president came from a political party, the legislative, executive and judiciary powers became politicised, overlooking the *Trias Politica* of governance in Sri Lankan democracy. It reached the peak in removing checks and balances that the British commissions attempted to establish, and opened the door to nepotism, corruption and financial mismanagement. Amendments 3 (1982), 18 (2010) and 20 (2020) attempted to prolong the period of the president, while

Amendments 19 (2015) and 21 (2022 in progress), attempt to restrict or abolish the Executive President.

After independence, Lanka changed the focus of governance to the disadvantaged majority. The landslide victory of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's SLFP in 1956 under the tutelage of *Sanga-Veda-Guru* to serve the farmers and workers, and later from 1960 under Mrs Bandaranaike's coalition with the left led to a socialist policy framework in governance. That policy was expressed in the Sinhala Only Act 1956, nationalization of private enterprise (bus, tea estates, schools, foreign companies), land reforms, removal of British/Australian military bases, relationships with communist countries and leading the non-aligned movement.

The austere measures of the socialist policies of previous governments led to the landslide victory of J.R. Jayawardene's UNP in 1977. The open market, pro-capitalist policies and shift in the traditional mentor from India to Singapore created political disturbance within the country (JVP) and with India. While Sri Lanka wished to imitate Singapore superficially, it failed to adopt the spirit of its policies, which were focused on the economy and financial management, zero tolerance on corruption, ethics and strict discipline, recruitment of foreign skills, technology and business, English as the working language, a secular state and exploring opportunities to unite and progress for the future.

It appears that after independence, the Sri Lankan leadership had slacked in the development and application of sound policies that unify the nation and set strategies for the growth of the national economy, development of industries and the use of good practices in financial management. Freedom has been used to undermine the *Trias Politica* in governance, perhaps considering law and discipline in governance to be a remnant of colonialism or with a desire for a pre-colonial monarchy style governance, or simply to look for short cuts in governance.

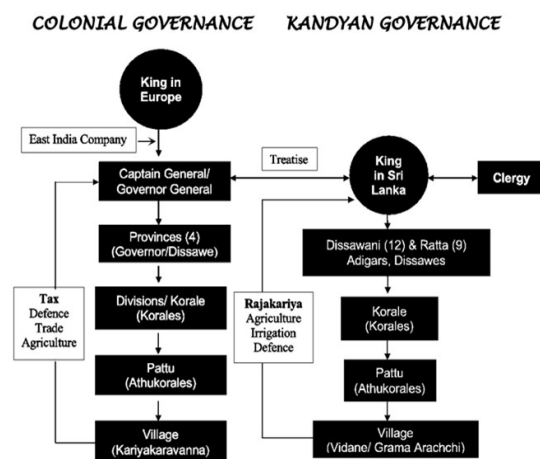


Figure 1. Systems of governance in Sri Lanka during the colonial period



CSA Meetings for 2022

Meetings (Sydney)

- **Sunday 28 August 5.30 - 9pm** Cocktail Party/Social celebrating CSA's 25th Anniversary at \$20 per person.

AGM & Social (Sydney)

- **Saturday 19 November 6.00 pm to midnight**

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.

Ceylon Society of Australia 1997-2022

Cocktail Party Celebrating our 25th Anniversary! on

Sunday 28th August 2022

5.30 - 9.00 PM

at

**Pennant Hills Community Centre Main Hall Level 1
Ramsay Road, Pennant Hills NSW 2120**

**Short-eats,
Wine & Soft Drinks,
Tea/Coffee & Birthday Cake
- and a good time!**

Dress: Smart Casual

\$20 pp

Tickets from:

Deepak Pritamdas - 0434 860 188

Amal Wahab - 0411 888 182

Pauline Gunewardene - 0419 447 665

MELBOURNE CHAPTER
General Meeting
of

Sunday, 24th July 2022

presentation by

Wayne Crothers

*“In the Steps of the Buddha:
A focus on Buddhist Art in the NGV Collection”*



Buddhism originated in India in the sixth century BC and was gradually transmitted to the rest of Asia. Early stylistic developments of Buddhism took place on its journey out of India and trans migration into China, Japan and Sri Lanka. For the first 500-700 years Buddhist iconography was nonfigurative; wheel of law, bodhi tree, footprints or pagodas as reliquaries holding relics of the Buddha or an important

monk. It was only in the first or second century AD that the initial figurative sculptures appeared in two different styles produced at two different locations - Gandhara (Afghanistan) and Mathura (India).

Buddhism was introduced from India to Sri Lanka in the third century BC by Mahinda Thera, son of King Ashoka, and via Central Asian trade routes to China as early as the first century and then to Korea and Japan in the sixth century. No later than the seventh century, Buddhism was introduced to Tibet from Nepal and China, where Tantric Buddhism became the dominant religion. In his talk, Wayne discussed the transmission of Buddhism and showed examples of Buddhist art from the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV).

Wayne Crothers

is Senior Curator, Asian Art at the National Gallery of Victoria. He spent eighteen years living in Japan and researching historical sites throughout Asia. He has engaged in two years of research at Kyoto Seika University, completed a Master of Fine Art Degree at Tama Art University in Tokyo, has lectured for six years at Musashino Art University in Tokyo, and held guest lecturing residencies at the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, China, Australian National University, Canberra and the Joan Miro Foundation, Spain. He has published widely on Asian works in the NGV collection and overseen several NGV exhibitions.

Hemal Gurusinghe

**Obituary notices published
in *The Ceylankan***

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

COLOMBO CHAPTER
General Meeting
of

Friday, 27th May 2022

presentation by

Nihal Seneviratne

“Memories of 33 years in Parliament”

The first post-Covid era lecture-meeting for the current year was held on May 27th with the President, Asoka de Silva in the chair. It was to be a test whether we could resume our activities. Unfortunately, while Covid had become a waning threat, the prevailing fuel shortage prevented most persons from attending. The turnout therefore, was much smaller than expected.

The speaker for the day was Nihal Seneviratne, former Director General of Parliament, who spoke on “Memories of 33 years in Parliament”, covering the highlights of his recent book by the same name. Among other matters he highlighted the Bomb in Parliament, The Fall of a Government by one vote, Deprivation of Civic Rights of a former Prime Minister, the shift from Galle Face to Diyawannawa, etc. Since the book is reviewed elsewhere in this Journal, a summary is not included here. Nihal’s smooth delivery and his ability to reach out to the audience were the highlights. He converted “Question Time” into an interactive session drawing every one into a “Round Table” discussion.

Earlier in the day a call was made for new members. There was a positive response from two members in the audience, one of whom signed up immediately. The membership drive was proving successful and the consensus was that new members should get to know the older members. Thus the meeting, though small in numbers, proved very productive and bore promise of a better future.

Somasiri Devendra

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:
Account Name: Ceylon Society of Australia
Bank Name: Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Bank BSB: 062 308
Account No: 10038725
Swift Code for overseas remittances: CTBAU2S
Reference: Payee Name

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

Congratulations and a warm welcome to our New Members

- Mr Ariyadasa ANANDAGODA, Maharagama, SRI LANKA
- Ms Yasmin AZAD, Waltham, Mass. USA (*Gift by Duleep Danton*)
- Mr John BENNETT, Westmead, NSW 2145
- Mr Yasalal Nandana JAYARATNE, Kelaniya, SRI LANKA
- Dr S KRISHNAMOORTHY, Boynedale, QLD 4680 (*Gift by Amal Wahab*)
- Mr Noel NADESAN, Bentleigh, VIC 3204
- Mr Sumith OLAGAMA, Hampton Park, VIC 3976
- Mr Leitan Nilantha PERERA, Berwick, VIC 3806
- Mr M.C.A. RAHUMAN, Colombo 5, SRI LANKA (*Gift by Ray Samaratunge*)
- Mr Avishka Mario SENEWIRATNE, Kelaniya, SRI LANKA
- Ms Elaine TISSERA, Castle Hill, NSW 2514
- Ms Ramani WIJEWARDENE, Turramurra, NSW 2074

Notice to Members - Contact Details

Could we please request all members to advise Treasurer Deepak Pritamdas - deepakpsl1@yahoo.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

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- 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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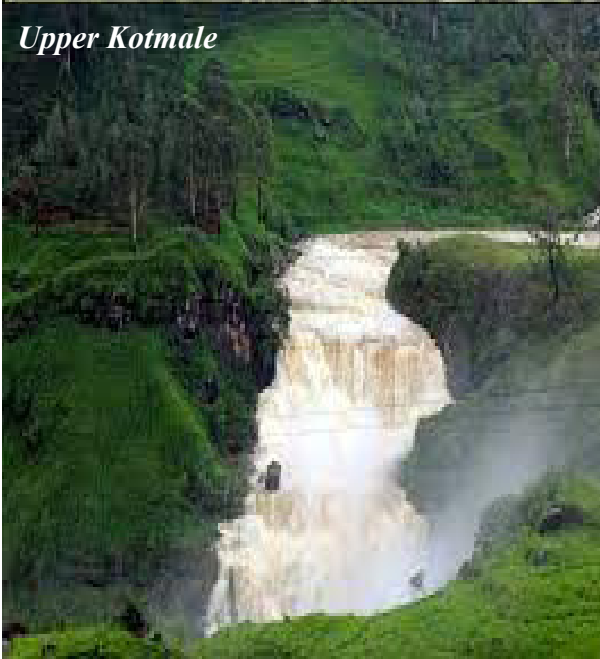
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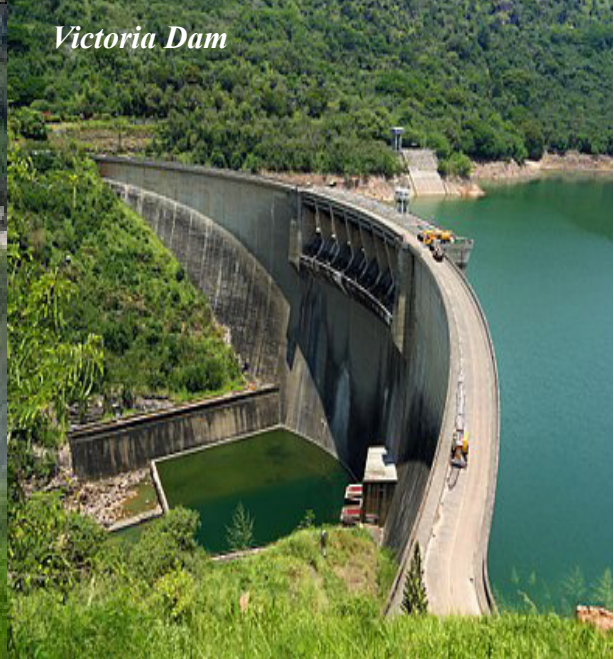
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