



(Figure 1) Life size statue from Ceylon in the British Museum. (Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum).



(Figure 7) 15cm Bronze Tara from Ceylon in the British Museum. (Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum).



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The Ceylankam

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From the Editor

*Y*et another year in the growth of the Society has been achieved and we must be immensely grateful to our indefatigable CSA Committee led by President Pauline Gunewardene for the success enjoyed by all. Success is not easily measured, but if the popularity of the AGM and Social is any yardstick, then 2019 was a tremendous year for CSA.

The Journal is certainly growing in popularity and that is because of the quality of reading matter contributed by our erudite authors who write on serious subjects in simple language understood by every type of reader. This issue is no different.

Firstly, we have a well-researched article by Thiru Arumugam who needs no introduction to readers of The Ceylankan. Thiru writes about the coveted bronze statue of 8th Century AD vintage from Ceylon that ended up in the British Museum. He examines the origins of the statue, probes into how it got to England and the Government of Ceylon's attempts to get it back.

Next we have another regular contributor Dr Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in the UK, writing engagingly about The Impact of Multilingualism on Sri Lanka Portuguese.

We welcome Jeremy de Lima writing on The Bharathas. He discerns that there is much documented history of the Sinhalese and Tamil races but little

public exposure to this smaller migrant race. Makes interesting reading.

Prolific writer Hugh Karunanayake (the co-founder of the CSA – see below) writes a personal piece on a school chum at Royal College whom he came to admire and respect greatly as the years went by. Readers will find Olcott and Me most inspiring.

Resplendent Lanka – 40 Leagues from Paradise is an in-depth tribute to the country of our birth by Pauline Gunawardene from an address she delivered at the Australian Mind Cafe Mental Health Conference at the Marriott Weligama, Sri Lanka,, 3 to 10 August 2019.

For the first time also we have placed a drawing by prolific cartoonist, new member Max Gerreyn from Perth. Max's story (alongside his cartoonist brother Mark) was featured in the Journal in J18 August 2015.

Several other brief articles are also included. There is an interesting piece on the well-known Sri Lankan diver Mike Wilson who co-produced Sinhala feature films with Arthur C. Clarke and also a snippet on the origins of Liptons Tea. Another instalment of An Octogenarian Remembers is also featured.

For the benefit of our readers worldwide we reproduce the President's Address delivered to guests at the AGM & Social, illustrated with a two-page portfolio of photographs to record the event.

Plenty to read; sit back and enjoy!

Meet our first Chairman

Hugh Karunanayake was elected Chairman of our Society at the public meeting held on 28th February 1998. It was Hugh together with his friend Chris Puttock who took the original initiative to form the Society. The foundation meeting held in the evening of 30th August 1997, was at his residence and it led to the eventual formation of the Society.

Hugh has had a long and abiding interest in antiquarian matters relating to Sri Lanka. His interest also covers a wide variety of subjects from art and architecture, natural history, and antiquities, to the study of the Portuguese, Dutch and British periods of occupation. He owns an unique and extensive library of antiquarian books on Sri Lanka including a substantial collection of maps, prints, and old postcards. For him the acquisition of knowledge or ephemera on Sri Lanka has never been from a purely acquisitive angle. He is ever ready to share his knowledge and the interests he has as a collector. As all of us know, Hugh has always been willing to give of his time, effort and knowledge, in discussing or researching any aspect of Sri Lanka. It is fitting therefore that the task of guiding our Society through its formative years, has been entrusted to him.

Hugh has a B.A. in Sociolology from Peradeniya University. He worked in both the public and private sectors in Sri Lanka, lastly as the Deputy Director, Save the Children (U.S.A.) in Sri Lanka. He presently works as Manager, Community Services, Hornsby Shire Council and lives in Wahroonga and lives with his wife Tulsi, sons Harsha and Sunimal and daughter Dilukshi.

(From The Ceylankan Vol.2 No.1 April 1998. Since December 2016, Hugh and Tulsi have moved to Melbourne, Victoria.)

Our Readers write

Of the Bridge of Boats I

Thank you for the two pictures of *the Bridge of Boats* in the November 2019 (J88) issue.

The two views are from either end of the bridge. The boats are placed with bows facing upstream; the left in the painting and the right in the sketch. Interestingly, all river traffic would have been interrupted by the bridge as they could not sail under it. The sketch shows several "Paru", ('Padda boats') on either side of the bridge and also a houseboat, a type common among river-borne traders. There seems to be the framework of a building in the river: probably an Ordination house for Buddhist monks. It is seen in both the painting and the sketch.

Do we have any more details of this bridge?

SOMASIRI DEVENDRA, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka.

Of the Bridge of Boats II

This note is with reference to the discussion about the "Bridge of Boats". I have made reference to the Bridge of Boats in my publication, "Glorious Historical Antecedents of a Cultured Civilisation: Sri Lanka", published by Vijitha Yapa Publishers in 2013. I have also given two pictures in colour of this bridge, which was reproduced from John Ferguson's publication titled "Ceylon in 1903". Ferguson (1903), gives a fairly comprehensive account of the City of Colombo at the turn of 19th Century, and its development in the years that followed.. According to him, the Bridge of Boats was referred to as the "Sir Edward Barnes Bridge of Boats".

Unfortunately I have only a digital copy of Ferguson's 1903 publication. In fact in my last presentation on "Antiquarian Books", at the CSA - CC Last Quarter Meeting, I displayed the opening page of this book on the screen.

M. ASOKA T. DE SILVA Dehiwela, Sri Lanka.

Of the Bridge of Boats III

I note that you have stated that unfortunately, you only have a digitized copy of Ferguson 1903. Is there anything more that you think a print copy could furnish? I have Ferguson 1893 in print form if there is any information I could provide therefrom.

ANANDALAL NANAYAKKARA, Allan Avenue, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka.

Lionel Wendt

The Lionel Wendt Memorial Fund (LWMF) established in 1946 is presently creating an archive of Lionel Wendt, his work and the Centre for Arts built in his memory. The Archive includes LWMF's collection of Lionel Wendt photographs, audio-visual materials, ephemera and publications related to his work.

The LWMF is dedicated to making the Archive a record of Lionel Wendt's work and is making a public appeal for any relevant material such as Lionel Wendt's photographic work, books, music, scores, press cuttings, articles, magazines and other publications with references to him as well as any memorabilia.

Anybody with relevant material may wish to contact the Lionel Wendt Art Centre by email to: info@lionelwendt.org or phone Ms Dilrukshi Rambukwella, Administrative Secretary at +9411 269 5794.

An article titled "Basil Wright and the film Song of Ceylon" published in the May 2014 issue of this Journal (No. 66) has been accepted by LWMF for inclusion in their website and Digital Archive of LWMF.

The film Song of Ceylon was commissioned by the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board and filmed entirely on location in Ceylon by Basil Wright of the GPO Film Unit, UK. Lionel Wendt was Basil Wright's link man in Ceylon and suggested filming sites and co-ordinated the shooting. Lionel Wendt was invited to accompany Basil Wright to London to provide the finishing touches to the film. Lionel Wendt also provided the voice over commentary in the film with text from Robert Knox's book "A Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon" which was first published in 1681.

The completed film "Song of Ceylon" was a major international success with rave reviews. At the International Film Festival in Brussels in 1935 it won the award for Best Film in all categories beating all the Hollywood favourites. There was no Academy Award for Best Documentary at that time.

Basil Wright acknowledged Lionel Wendt's contribution to the film with the words "... without Lionel Wendt there would have been no Song of Ceylon, and he was one of the greatest still photographers in the world at that time".

THIRU ARUMUGAM, Castle Hill, NSW 2154.

Your views are invaluable

Do you have a point of view to share with our readers? Can you shed some new light on a topic discussed in the Journal? Is there anything you like or dislike published here and have something constructive to say about it? You can air your views with us. Your opinion is most welcome in the Letters column. Please keep them brief, no more than 500 words, preferably. Letters may be edited because of length and/or content.

The 8th Century AD bronze statue of a Goddess from Ceylon in the British Museum (COVER STORY)

by THIRU ARUMUGAM



One of the prized possessions of the British Museum in London is a 1.43 m (4 ft 9 in) tall (excluding the plinth), almost life size, solid bronze gilded statue of a Goddess (see **Figure 1, Cover left**). This article describes the origin of the statue, how it came to the British Museum and attempts made by the Ceylon Government since then to retrieve the statue.

The statue came from Ceylon and has been in the British Museum since 1830. This was the prudish days of the early Victorian era and the statue was not put on public display for 30 years as it was considered too erotic, because it had no clothes above the waist. The British Museum has far more artefacts than it has space for public display. Therefore, they have a policy of rotating the items on public display. Although this statue was on public display in a prominent position at the entrance to the South Asian section a few years ago, it is not on public display at the time of writing.

The British Museum's description of the image includes the words: "Goddess. A standing figure of a female deity solid cast in bronze and gilded. The figure has a high tubular coiffure (jatamukuta) held in place by a medallion flanked by makaras (water creatures). The medallion was probably set with stones, as were the eyes. The earlobes are elongated and the lower body dressed in a tight-fitting cloth knotted at the hips. The upper body is uncovered.

The right hand is in varadamudra (gesture of giving), the left hand inkataka-hastamudra (the hand pose wherein the tips of the fingers are applied to the thumb so as to form a ring, as if to hold a flower)." The British Museum also says that "The image is one of the finest examples of figural bronze casting in Asia". High praise indeed.

Sir Robert Brownrigg

Robert Brownrigg (1759 – 1833) (**Figure 2 Back Cover**) was born in County Wicklow, Ireland. He joined the British Army and served in various countries. In 1812 he was appointed Governor of Ceylon. In 1815 he acquired the Kingdom of Kandy with the help of defecting Chiefs and annexed it to the British Crown. In 1817-1818 he put down the Kandyan Rebellion. During his tenure as Governor, the bronze image described above came

into the limelight. The official British description of the findspot of the image is described vaguely as "Batticaloa. Found at an unknown place located between Trincomalee and Batticaloa."

However, some historians believe that it belonged to the last King of Kandy and was looted from him. Subsequently we find that the statue became the personal property of Sir Robert Brownrigg. There was no museum in Ceylon at that time, the Colombo National Museum opened subsequently in 1877. It seems possible that Robert Brownrigg, the individual, purchased the statue for a nominal sum from the Government of Ceylon (Governor Sir Robert Brownrigg). Today the statue is valued at several million dollars.

In 1820 Brownrigg retired and returned to Monmouth in Wales. He took the statue with him. In 1830 he was in failing health and he donated the statue to the British Museum. He died in 1833.

British Museum Exhibit

The British Museum, after 30 years, finally realised the value of the statue and it was placed on public display around 1860. The British Museum Number of this statue is 1830,0612.4. It was described as the Goddess Pattini. This description was confirmed by the famous authority on South Asian Art, Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy in his book *Bronzes from Ceylon, chiefly in the Colombo Museum* as follows: "Pattini, with high head-dress from which a jewel is missing; right hand in vara mudra, left in vitarka mudra ... British Museum".¹ In a Journal article, Coomaraswamy comments on this statue as follows: "A large and beautiful bronze in the British Museum ... Not much can be said as to its date in the absence of further information, inscriptions, and attributes; but the workmanship is so fine, the whole effect so dignified and beautiful, one would be inclined to assign a comparatively early date to this bronze".²

Vincent A Smith was a member of the Indian Civil Service and later Curator of the Indian Institute in Oxford. He is the author of the Oxford History of India. He describes the statue as Pattini as follows:

"Perhaps the most notable of the Ceylon Bronzes is an image of the Goddess Pattini. It was found near the



PATTINI (Metal)
(British Museum)

• *Figure 3: Sketch of Statue in Blackfriars Magazine, 1922.*

north-eastern coast somewhere between Trincomalee and Batticaloa and presented to the British Museum in 1830".³

A British Museum publication in 1932 described the statue as follows: "... but the most notable medieval work was the 10th Century Pattini Devi in gilded bronze, which is one of the finest sculptures from Ceylon in existence".⁴

Another British Museum publication describes it as: "the greatest of all solid cast images from ancient South Asia".⁵ Blackfriars, the London magazine, thought it fit to reproduce a sketch of the statue in their April 1922 edition (see **Figure 3**).⁶

In the year 2010, BBC Radio 4 and the British Museum presented a 100 part radio series titled "A History of the World in 100 Objects". The series used objects of ancient art, industry, technology and arms, all from the British Museum, as an introduction to parts of human history. A 707 page book to accompany the series was also published. This statue was considered worthy of inclusion among the 100 Objects as Item No. 54 in this series.

The Goddess Pattini

Who is this Goddess Pattini? In Tamil she is called Kannaki and her story has been immortalised in the Tamil epic poem Silappathikaram written by the poet Ilanko Adigal nearly two thousand years ago. It is one of the five great epics of the Tamil literary tradition and consists of 5270 lines of poetry and gives great insight into what life was like at that time.

Kannaki was the daughter of a well to do family who lived in Poompuhar in present day Tamil Nadu and she married Kovalan the son of a wealthy merchant. They lived happily until Kovalan became infatuated with a dancer named Madhavi and showered her with expensive gifts and money. When Kovalan ran through all his money, Madhavi showed him the door. Kovalan returned to Kannaki who forgave him and accepted him back. The couple decided to move to the city of Madurai and start a new life. The only asset they had left was Kannaki's pair of hollow gold anklets which were filled with valuable gemstones.

When they reached Madurai, Kannaki removed one anklet and gave it to Kovalan and told him to sell it and use the money to start a business. Kovalan went to a jeweller and asked him to buy it. It so happened that this jeweller was the jeweller to the Pandyan King's household and he had recently stolen one of the Queen's anklets. The jeweller immediately went to the King and told him that Kovalan had stolen the Queen's anklet. The King flew into a rage and ordered the immediate execution of Kovalan. When Kannaki heard about Kovalan's death she went to the palace and produced the other anklet. The King realised the grave mistake that he had made and in his anguish he died. However, Kannaki was not mollified and in her rage she tore off part of her right breast and hurled it towards the city of Madurai and half the city was burned down to the ground. Kannaki died of inconsolable grief a few days later.

King Senguttuvan was a Chera King in the second century AD who ruled from the city of Vanci which is in present day Kerala. He decided to deify Kannaki (Pattini) as a Goddess and built a large temple. It is believed that the present day Kali temple in Kotunkolu is the site of the original Kannaki temple.

For the consecration ceremony of the temple he invited all the neighbouring rulers. King Gajabahu I who ruled in Lanka from 111 AD to 135

AD was among the invitees. He was given a replica of Kannaki's anklet. This is corroborated by the Rajavaliya (p. 231). On his return to Lanka he paraded with the anklet to several places where Pattini Devalas were subsequently built.

Pattini Devalas

There are several Pattini Devalas in Ceylon. Pattini is worshipped to cure diseases and bring blessings, fertility and plenty to the land. M B Ariyapala has said that: "... the worship of Pattini is almost universal throughout practically every village and hamlet in the country, not only among Sinhalese but also among the Tamils".⁷ In the Kandyan Kingdom, Pattini was considered one of the four guardian deities, the other three being Natha, Visnu and Skanda. All four have Devalas adjacent to the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy and they are called the 'Hatara Devalas'. The Pattini Devale, which is next to the Bo Tree, plays a significant role on one night of the Kandy Esala Perahera which is held about August each year.

Other Pattini Devalas are in Halpe in the Badulla District; in Kabulumulla on the Colombo-Hatton Road, about 15 km from Avissawella; in Lindamulla on the Demodara-Badulla Road; in Maduwa where an annual festival is held in July-August; and the Kande Vihara in Aluthgama. Perhaps the best known Pattini Devale is the one in Nawagamuwa, located on the 13th milepost of the old Colombo-Ratnapura Road (see **Figure 4 Back Cover**). Legend has it that King Gajabahu concluded his tour here and the replica Kannaki anklet that he brought from India was enshrined at this location. A life size marble statue of Pattini was unveiled here by the President of Sri Lanka on 19th August 2016 (**Figure 5**).

Gananath Obeyesekere is a product of the University of Peradeniya and was Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Princeton University, USA. He is an Emeritus Professor of the latter University. In 1984 he published a monumental 629 page book titled "The Cult of the Goddess Pattini". The book is an in-depth study of the Pattini cult. It is based on field studies and recordings made over 25 years of rituals at Pattini Devalas, mainly in the low-country and eastern parts of the country.

John C Holt has this to say in a review of the book: "The Cult of the Goddess Pattini is a complex, sometimes controversial, and brilliant book. Its correctives to previous scholarship are numerous, and it raises a great many questions ... The book's bold originality and the way it incorporates historical, psychological, and anthropological approaches to a wide variety of source materials makes it a monumental contribution to the study of Sri Lankan religious culture".⁸

Kannaki (Pattini) Temples

There are many Hindu Temples in the North and East dedicated to the worship of Kannaki (Pattini). Perhaps

the oldest one in the North is at Velamparai, Navatkuli. Others are at Illavalai, Pallai, Point Pedro, Tellipalai, Puloly and Karainagar. The ornate Pungudutivu Kannaki Temple can be seen in **Figure 6 Back Cover**.

The East coast is also littered with Kannaki Temples and almost every place of importance has one. The Vattapalai Temple near Mullaitivu attracts large crowds during the festival season. Other Kannaki Temples are at Kokkadicholai, Kalkudah, Akkaraipattu, Valachchenai, Kalmunai, Thambiluvil and Vantharamoolai. Most of these Temples have a major annual festival at which the story of Kannaki and Kovalan is recited by the priest. Some of them also have fire walking ceremonies.

British Museum describes statue as Tara

After describing the statue as that of Pattini for over hundred years, in the mid-twentieth century the British Museum changed the description of the statue to Tara, who is a female Bodhisatva in Mahayana Buddhism. She is known as the mother of liberation and also represents success in work and achievements. She is also considered to be the female aspect of the Bodhisatva Avalokitesvara.

In 1967 M Varadarajan wrote a book titled "Ilango Adigal", a biography of the author of Silappathikaram, the story of Kannaki. Douglas Barrett, who was Keeper of Oriental Antiquities in the British Museum wrote a letter to the Publisher of Varadarajan's book in which he said: "Perhaps I should say that we now call the figure – and the Sinhalese agree – the Bodhisatva Tara".⁹ The writer asked the British Museum how the change in description came about and their email reply quoted two references which said that: "The suggestion that images of the local goddess Pattini, for which this figure was long taken, might be Tara instead was made by Paranavitana in 1928", and "Apart from Bodhisatvas, the developed form of Buddhism also recognises female saviours, called Taras. The image in question was long known as Pattini Devi, a local goddess". The email concludes "From these references, it seems the sculpture was identified as Tara by 1981, but that the link with Pattini was well known".¹⁰

Other Tara exhibits from Ceylon in the British Museum

Hugh Neville (1847-1897) worked in the Ceylon Civil Service from 1869 to 1897. He was very interested in ancient Ceylon and edited a magazine called "The Taprobanian" which was a cultural affairs Journal. He collected statues, ola leaf manuscripts and other items relating to ancient Ceylon and it was called the Hugh Nevill Collection. His collection of 2227 prose and verse manuscripts are in the British Library. Other items in his collection were acquired by the British Museum in 1898 after he died and this includes three ancient small metal statues possibly of Tara. One of these was obtained by him when it was unearthed

during excavations at Muneeswaram Temple near Chilaw. Details of the three statues are as follows: (1) British Museum No. 1898,0702.142, 7th or 8th Century statue from Ceylon, 15 cm high. Ananda Coomaraswamy, however, dates it as 'about 10th Century'.¹ A female deity (Tara) cast in copper alloy and gilded. The goddess is shown seated in lalitasana, with high beehive-like hair and a band of cloth from shoulder to waist; the lower part of the body draped, gilding preserved on face, traces elsewhere. It is not on public display in the British Museum. Acquired 1898 from the Hugh Nevill collection. This statue can be seen in **Figure 7 Cover Right**.

(2) British Museum No. 1898,0702.139, 10th Century statue from Ceylon, 14.7 inches high. A bronze figure of a female deity, probably Tara, standing in slight tribhanga, right hand in kataka mudra. It is not on display in the British Museum. Acquired 1898 from the Hugh Nevill collection.

(3) British Museum No. 1898,0702.140, 10th Century statue from Ceylon, 16.9 cm. high. A bronze four-armed female figure (possibly Tara) with a cintamani in one hand and the other lower hand in varada mudra. It is not on display in the British Museum. Acquired 1898 from the Hugh Nevill collection.

Prof. Sharada Srinivasan's investigations

Padma Shri Sharada Srinivasan is a Professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. She is an Archaeologist specialising in the scientific study of art, archaeology and archaeometallurgy and has published many books and papers in learned Journals on these subjects. She has carried out scientific analysis of the metallurgy of medieval bronzes and made many deductions about the provenance of medieval South Indian bronze statues. She has analysed the metallurgical content of the British Museum statue in **Figure 1** and summarised her views in an article in a peer reviewed Journal. She says that the Tara statue has one percent lead, but "given the lack of lead deposits in Sri Lanka, however, the match of the lead isotope signatures of a well known Ceylonese Buddhist Tara in the British Museum with a Buddha image from Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu may underscore ties between the island nation and the southern Indian Tamil regions".¹¹

In other words, she suggests that the Tara statue in the British Museum may have been cast in the South Indian coastal town of Nagapattinam rather than Ceylon because lead does not occur naturally in Ceylon. Poompuhar, the birthplace of Kannaki (Pattini) is not far away from Nagapattinam. Buddhism was widely prevalent in Tamil Nadu during the early medieval period and Nagapattinam was a stronghold of Buddhism. The Chudamani Vihara was constructed there during the Chola period in 1006 AD and the Vihara survived for centuries until it collapsed about two centuries ago. Since 1856, about 350 Buddha bronzes have been found in Nagapattinam

dating from the 11th to the 16th Centuries.

Dr Srinivasan refers to a Buddha bronze from Nagapattinam now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and goes on to say: "Intriguingly, its lead isotope ratios fell in Group 5a along with the famed gilt Tara image in the British Museum. The late curator of the British Museum, Douglas Barrett, has opined that it [the Tara statue] is more likely of South Indian rather than from the Sri Lankan provenance (Nigel Seeley, personal communication.) as it was dredged off the sea coast of Batticaloa in north-eastern Sri Lanka. Indeed, its gentle flexion or bhanga recalls more to Tamil Chola goddesses than the comparatively erect Sinhalese Buddha and seated Tara depictions. The prospect of a South Indian connection remains at least in terms of metal source and artisanship, if not actual provenance such as Nagapattinam; its findspot off the coast could suggest an attempt to transport it by boat".¹¹

This is a very interesting suggestion. Douglas Barrett referred to was Keeper of Oriental Antiquities in the British Museum from 1969 to 1977 and he was a recognised authority on medieval Chola bronze statues. His exposure of the theft of the 10th Century bronze Sivapuram Nataraja has been described in detail in the article "Medieval Hindu Temples and Bronze Sculptures of Polonnaruwa" which appeared in the November 2007 edition of this Journal *The Ceylankan*. Barrett says that the Tara statue was "dredged off the sea coast of Batticaloa".

This tallies with what Governor Brownrigg wrote in a letter in June 1830 to Henry Ellis, the Principal Librarian of the British Museum, when he handed over the statue that it "was found in the North East part of Ceylon between Trincomalee and Batticaloa". A statue of this size would normally have been found in a large temple and there were many Kannaki (Pattini) temples along the east coast of Ceylon. Yet, Brownrigg's vague description of the findspot must mean that it was not found in a temple and the statement that it was dredged off the sea bed is probably correct. Therefore, the circumstantial evidence presented seems to suggest that about the 8th Century the statue was cast in Nagapattinam for a client in Ceylon, possibly one of the Kannaki (Pattini) temples on the east coast. It was then transported by ship from the port of Nagapattinam to the east coast of Ceylon and when transferring it from the ship to a barge or boat to take it to the shore it fell into the sea and was lost until it was dredged many centuries later. As a solid bronze statue, it must be quite heavy. Some historians have suggested that the statue was the property of the last King of Kandy. Both versions may be correct, it may have been dredged from the sea bed and passed on to the King of Kandy whose domain stretched to the East coast.

Ceylon Government attempts at restitution of the Statue.

When Governor Brownrigg took over the Kandyan Kingdom, he removed the royal throne, regalia, sceptre and orb and sent them off to UK. These were, however, returned to Ceylon before independence. The return of these items to Ceylon has been described in graphic detail by Tissa Devendra in a letter to the Editor of this Journal (November 2019).

In 1937 the Government of Ceylon made a formal request to the British Museum to return the Pattini statue but this was refused. As a consolation, the British Museum made a full-size plaster cast of the statue and this was displayed in the Colombo Museum until the 1970s when it was replaced by a locally made metal replica.

In August 1976 a conference of 81 non-aligned nations was held in Colombo. A resolution sponsored by Sri Lanka was passed calling for the return of treasures taken away from former colonies. In February 1980 Sri Lanka lodged with UNESCO a list of 100 items of value taken away by UK and other Western countries, asking for their return.

In June 1980 the Sri Lankan Government started talks with the UK Government regarding the return of 35 items of treasures taken away. Representatives of the major museums in UK also participated in the talks. For the first time, a Third World Government was making a formal request for the return of treasures.

In September 1981, UK formally declined the request to return the treasures. The consensus of the views of the museums was that as long as they were satisfied that the objects were legally acquired according to the laws applicable at that time, they were not under any obligation to return the items unless they were stolen or illegally appropriated. The British Museum took shelter under Section 3, Sub-Section 4 of the British Museum Act of 1963 which says that "Objects vested in the Trustees as part of the collections of the Museum shall not be disposed of by them ...". Presumably it would require an Act of Parliament to return an item.

The Sri Lankan Government said that they would persist with its claims and rejected the argument claiming legality of acquisition on the grounds that those acquiring had no title. As regards the Pattini/Tara statue they said that it has more than historical and artistic value, it has spiritual significance as an icon revered to this day by Sri Lanka Buddhists.

Pattini or Tara, whatever she may be, this year 2020 marks the 200th anniversary of her departure from the shores of Ceylon. She has had a long enough sojourn in the West and it is high time she returned home!

Postscript:

A *Daily Mail*, UK, report of 21 January 2020 says that the Arts Council UK "has asked experts to bid for a £42,000 contract that will see guidelines updated to assist museums in deciding which treasures should be returned".

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• *Rajamaha Vihara in Kelaniya.*

On the way to Kandy by road

Taking the A1 out of Colombo, you cross the Kelaniya River, pass through the crowded bazaars of Kelaniya town, site of the famous Buddhist temple the Rajamahavihara, into the countryside beyond...

...38 kilometres from Colombo, down the road to the right are the Buddhist cave temples of Varana Vihara, which date back to the third century BC. Some of the caves appear to have been carved out of huge boulders, some contain frescos, another a large reclining Buddha and one an extensive library. There is also a magnificent view from the top of the rocks.

Only a few kilometres away is the Attanagalu Vihara, at Attanagalla which has possibly the oldest *vatadage* (a circular pillared structure covering a dagoba) in the country as the site has been a place of worship since the third century AD. Even today there is a small dagoba beneath the octagonal roof, while there is a larger thirteenth-century one in the temple precincts.

About 40 kilometres from Colombo is the large Haragolla estate where you can see the simple tomb of S W R D Bandaranaike, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister who was assassinated in 1959. On a hillock on the other side of the road is the tomb of the former Prime Minister's father and owner of the estate, Sir Solomon Bandaranaike.

Impact of Multilingualism on Sri Lanka Portuguese

by DR SHIHAN DE SILVA JAYASURIYA

Against all odds, Sri Lanka Portuguese (SLP) has survived for over half a millennium, and is still the mother-tongue of a few Sri Lankans to whom the Portuguese legacy and heritage is of utmost importance. These ideals are under pressure due to socio-economic realities, the necessity to learn languages needed for employment and survival in a multilingual scenario. While Sri Lankans of Portuguese descent are scattered throughout the country, the largest communities are in the eastern province and in the districts of Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Amparai. Afro-Sri Lankans on the opposite coast of the island were also mother-tongue speakers of SLP, the once important lingua franca which connected Sri Lanka to Indian Ocean trade and East-West interactions in the Early Modern Period.

Sri Lanka Portuguese was known to 19th Century linguists as Indo-Portuguese of Ceylon (IPC), the topic of a 19th Century essay - *Zum Indoportugieschen von Ceylon* ('On the Indo-Portuguese of Ceylon') - written by the 'Father of Creole Languages', Professor Hugo Schuchardt (de Silva Jayasuriya, 1999a:pp. 52-69). Elite Sri Lankans were fluent in IPC, which they called Ceylon Portuguese, even in the late 19th Century and Advocate John Eaton, a member of the Legislative Council representing the Burghers (Sri Lankans of European descent), was a correspondent of Professor Schuchardt. Eaton, a mother-tongue speaker of English, could express himself equally well in Ceylon Portuguese. A memorial plaque in the Kandy Methodist Church commemorating John Eaton's contributions to the church reminds us of his important status in society.

As English became the new international lingua franca during British rule (1796-1948), IPC became marginalised. IPC was predicted to become extinct when the Goan, Sebastião Rodolfo Dalgado (1900), and Vicar-General of Sri Lanka, learnt IPC in a few months and also wrote a book on the language. IPC was a bridging tongue, not just between the Portuguese and Sri Lankans, but also between the Dutch and the English who followed the Portuguese to Sri Lanka. The British missionary, Robert Newstead (1826) printed seven editions of the New Testament in IPC to carry out his work in Sri Lanka.

Historical Backdrop to the Sirambiyadiya Afro-Sri Lankans

This article concerns the linguistic adaptation of an Afro-Sri Lankan community on the island who live in 22 houses in a village in the north western

province. The community have not maintained an African language and refer to "Portuguese" (Sri Lanka Portuguese) as "our language". Incoming Africans during the colonial era became speakers of the main prestige language of the day - IPC/SLP. Creole languages were understood only from the late 19th Century and Creole Portuguese was called 'low Portuguese', 'broken Portuguese', 'mongrel Portuguese' among other denigratory terms. Creole languages are even today not adequately acknowledged as efficient communicators and unambiguous languages. Their socio-history dominates and they are perceived as inferior to the European Standard Portuguese, as failed attempts by those aspiring to learn European Standard languages, and spoken as mother-tongues by the enslaved, or by those of mixed descent and colonial heritage or by Europeans born in the colonies. Africans are visible as mercenary soldiers in the colonial archives. Costs associated with maintaining Africans, their food (rice) and clothing were recorded by the Portuguese (de Silva 1972). Archival records are incomplete and oral histories are significant. The community proudly speak of their connections to the military.

When 66-year old Martin Marcus was interviewed by Professor Miguel Goonatilleke in 1974, he recalled his grandfather's narratives: their ancestors were "a battalion of Portuguese speaking East African soldiers sailing to Sri Lanka after their victory in the Boer War" (Goonatilleke 1983). On the other hand, M.J. Elias, a member of the Afro-Sri Lankan community in Sirambiyadiya stated that their ancestors came from an island called Kaffa, near South Africa, and therefore, they were called Kaffir. Recently, the community point to Mozambique as their motherland; genetic finger printing will reveal their ultimate African roots.

Africans were called *cafres* by the Portuguese who borrowed the term from the Arabs. The term from *qafir*, Arabic meaning 'non-believer', reflected the religious status of Africans who were non-Muslims. Kaffir became an ethnonym for Africans in colonial Sri Lanka and the term has been adopted by Sinhala (*kāpīri*) and Tamil (*kāpili*) and retained in post-independent times with no negative connotations attached to the term. The ethnonym and exonym for Africans in Sri Lanka is Kaffir. Early Africans (Abyssinians/Habshi/Ethiopians) traded in Mantai during the 5th Century, though there are no known communities or descendants from ancient times. The slave trade drove African movement in the Indian

Ocean although the demands were varied. The other European powers that followed the Portuguese to Indian Ocean trade made use of the slave trade. This history lives in popular memory through place names such as Slave Island in Colombo, the capital of the island, which was called Kaffirs Veldt (Kaffirs field) by the Dutch who colonised coastal areas of the island from 1656 to 1796, having driven out the Portuguese after a long drawn out battle of 20 years. While trading and proselytising were on the initial agenda of the Portuguese



• Marie Jacinta of the Sirambiyadiya Afro-Sri Lankan community. (Photo by the author).

explorers in the 16th Century, when drawn into the island's politics, their goals changed but their aspirations of staying on Sri Lanka were not fulfilled. The British who took over the island from the Dutch in 1796, engaged freed slaves as soldiers in the 3rd and 4th Ceylon regiments (*de Silva Jayasuriya 2011*). Afro-Sri Lankans have linguistic and religious links with the Portuguese and are devout followers of the Roman Catholic faith, introduced to the island by the Portuguese. Colloquial SLP has now become moribund but vestiges are maintained in Afro-Sri Lankan songs called *manha*.

Shift from Portuguese

Ana Miseliya, 58-year old wife of Martin Marcus, was one of Professor Goonatilleke's interviewees in 1974. A few Afro-Sri Lankans spoke Tamil; most spoke Sinhala and the interview was conducted in Sinhala. Children were studying in Sinhala medium schools. Free government-subsidised education is available to all Sri Lankans at no cost apparent to themselves. The language of instruction depends on the linguistic groups in the area and the language policies of those administering the schools. Sinhala, Tamil and English are now official languages but only a few older members can speak English. Vignecia (now deceased), was in her 70s when she moved back from Mannar to Sirambiyadiya to live with her niece; she was widowed and had no children.

The predominant language is Tamil in Mannar and Vignecia was more fluent in SLP than her peers – B M Cristina and M J Emiliana – and they could converse among each other in SLP. Now Miseliya's daughter Emiliana, in her 80s, is the main speaker of SLP. Intergenerational transfer of the

language has been low in the last three generations no doubt reinforced by changes in education and language policies introducing Sinhala and Tamil as media of education. Also the emphasis on education as a passport to success has emphasised the need for literacy and a formal education which is unavailable in SLP. SLP is now moribund but plays an important role in group identity consolidated through song performances, in both private and public spaces. Emiliana's grandchildren are Sinhala mother-tongue speakers but are keen to learn 'Portuguese'; their linguistic repertoire includes SLP words. While European Portuguese speakers have recently introduced a Standard Portuguese variety to the Eastern Province Burghers recently, there have not been any attempts to teach Standard Portuguese in Sirambiyadiya. The Sirambiyadiya Afro-Sri Lankans have not had contact with the Portuguese Burghers in the Eastern Province either and a comparison of the dialects in the two provinces would be a fruitful avenue for further research.

Conclusion

The Sirambiyadiya community has now shifted to Sinhala, the language spoken by the others in the village and the language through which a formal education is available in the junior school in the village. Language policies and socio-economic pressures impact on the maintenance or loss of mother tongues of speech communities. Influence of the substratum languages post-creolisation is accelerated due to the availability of a free education in Sinhala or Tamil.

Languages are mainly tools of communication but they are also expressions of identity. A revived interest in 'Portuguese' prevails among the Afro-Sri Lankan children and their knowledge now depends on intergenerational transfer. Women are important, in this process of knowledge transfer, not only because they spend more time with the children but also because they now out-number men in this community.

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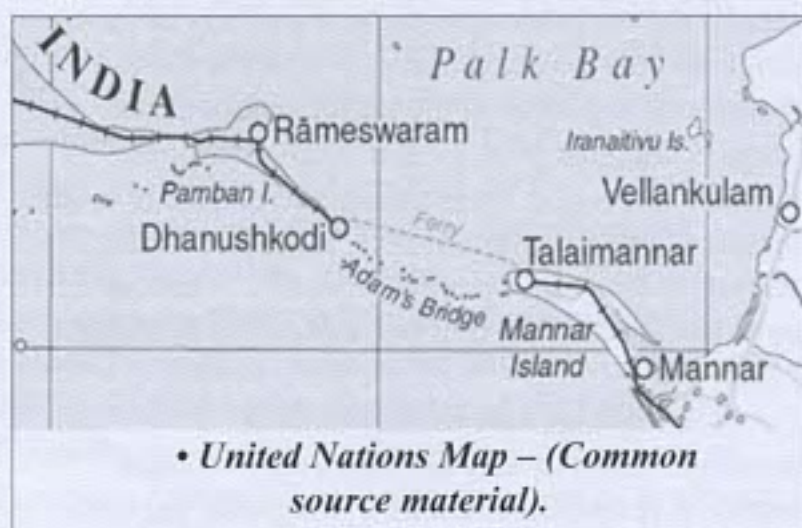


The Bhārathas

by JEREMY DE LIMA



India and Sri Lanka are geographically very near, but yet so far in culture, civilisation and genetic diversity. As depicted in the map below, the sub-oceanic existence of the hitherto mystical “Adams Bridge” between Dhanushkodi in India and Talaimannar in Sri Lanka has now been conclusively shown to exist through aerial mapping. It is thus reasonable to conclude that natural movement would have occurred between India and Sri Lanka over the aeons. While there is much documented history about Sinhalese and Tamils, there appears to be a relative dearth of public knowledge of a smaller migrant race called the Bhārathas. The writer hopes this compilation will improve the knowledge of this now vanishing group who have unobtrusively and yet so selflessly contributed so much to the history of this Island nation.



First documented in Indian literature of Sangam anthology¹ Bhārathas originated from Paravars or Parathars who are an ancient aristocratic seafaring warrior caste of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Delving further into history, Edgar Thurston² referring to Church records (*Latin Historica Ecclesiastica*) states that the Paravars and the Paravaims referred to in the Bible are the same. The Paravars derive their origins from the Indus Valley, a Bronze Age civilisation recorded together with Egypt and Mesopotamia dating from 3300 BCE.³ Moving to the south coast of India the Paravars acquired their title from the classic Tamil denotation of PARAVAN – Man of the Sea. In 712 AD, there began the Arab Muslim invasion of the Indus Valley, locally called the Sindhus valley which lies in the north of India, at the base of the Himalayan mountain ranges. This invasion which lasted till the 1300s prompted the movement of the Paravars to the Coromandel Coast on the South-east of the India where they began to utilise their knowledge by combining mathematics and astronomy in plotting sea voyages. Boat building flourished and the first

recorded catamaran with two hulls was made by Paravars⁴. Gaining experience of the sea as fisherman, they widened their purview of the ocean by mapping areas where oyster beds flourished. Bhāratha folklore has it that Pearl divers were always anchored by a rope to their brothers-in-law because if the diver drowned,



• Paravar Pearl Divers in Mannar.
(Wikipedia Common source material).

the survivor would be beholden to care for the sister of the perished one! Pearl diving is where the connection of the Paravars (now the Bhārathas) to our Island begins. Legend has it that in the 1400s, Arab Horse Traders, ensconced in Puttalam, were monopolising the very valuable Pearl trade. Incensed by an encroachment on what they considered to be their domain, the Paravars, using their sea-faring skills, sailed across the Indian Ocean to make regular forays into this monopoly. Over time, they completely displaced the Arabs, and as a reward, the King of Sri Lanka at that time, King Parakrama Bahu VI of Kotte welcomed them as his subjects. Integrating very well with the natives, they initially settled down on the coast at Mannar where many of the descendants of the original families still remain

In the late 1490s and 1500s began the Portuguese occupation of India and Sri Lanka with natural proselytising of the natives to Catholicism. A notable arrival at this time was Saint Francis Xavier who converted almost all Paravars from Hinduism to Christianity - the first entire Indian community to change. In October 1542 he initially baptised over 10,000 and the total swelled to over 30,000. Their Hindu link is still retained in today's Bhāratha tradition, where the Thali or Thirumangalyam, the southern Indian symbol of marriage, tied around the bride's neck, features the Catholic image of the Holy Ghost.

The most popular Bhāratha name, Fernando, comes from the Portuguese race. Others, too numerous to list completely, but still retaining the Portuguese

heritage are names like Almeida, Britto, Carwallio, Coonghe, Corera, Costa, Croos, Dabrera, De Rose, De Silva, Feldano, Figurado, Fernandez, Gomez, Lobo, Mascarenhas, Mirando, Moraes, Paldano, Paiva, Peeris, Pereira, Pinghe, Prasagna, Rayan, Rayer, Rodrigo, Roche, Rubeiro, Soris, Soza, Victoria and Vaaz⁴.

Bhārathas soon moved away from their traditional sea-faring roots into commerce. The first prominent Colombo trader was S. Miguel Fernando, a Milliner & Draper "Specialist in Gents Outfitting" and was located at 106 Main Street, Colombo, (Pettah). This was soon followed by what became iconic merchant icons like M.P Gomez, J.L.Carwallio and F.X Pereira's – the first departmental store in Ceylon.

Many stories abound of Christmas shopping not being complete without a visit to buy crackers, cake ingredients and, of course, liquor! In their heyday they imported everything from drapery to hardware and became agents for Insurance and Shipping. The Bhārathas also left a legacy which became historical in Sri Lanka – the kerosene bullock cart. Starting from importing onions from India, they acquired the agency to distribute petroleum products and even exported kerosene to India. There were over 50 "Rising Sun" petrol and oil depots throughout the island, all of them run by Bhārathas.

A traditional must in most Sri Lankan meals, Dry Fish was also handled by the Bhārathas. This trading success encouraged the Bhārathas to undertake other commercial ventures and soon they were into Coconut farming, Land ownership and Arrack licencing moving on the coast from Mannar to Panadura and inland into Kandy and Kurunegala. Establishing himself with the then burgeoning planting industry was another Bhāratha S.T Soris. Using his father's business success, he pioneered Bhāratha land ownership⁵. This was soon followed by the de Croos family who became one of the biggest Bhāratha's philanthropists, gifting land for Maris Stella College, Negombo. It is appropriate to mention here the origin of this title. Maris Stella in Latin means "STAR OF THE SEA" which displays the reverence the Bhārathas have for Mother Mary who carried them safely across the seas. Displaying their forward thinking, the de Croos also donated land to the government to commence building the Negombo Colombo railway line⁶.

Their progeny have continued their dedication to Negombo and made this town, which is now a city, the stronghold of Bhārathas. In the pioneering spirit, they began the Negombo Bhāratha's Association which has a recorded history of over 75 years and is still remaining, albeit not as active as in the past. In its heyday, it had its own newsletter called the *Bhāratha Herald* and even its own website which is sadly now defunct. A fair concentration of Bhārathas also exists in and around Kotahena, mainly

businessmen who have organised themselves as the All Ceylon Bhāratha Association. In the villages of Ettukal in Negombo and Vankali in Mannar, 99 per cent of the residents are Catholic Bharathas with exclusive places of worship and burial grounds.

The 2001 Census showed that there were a total of only 1,688 but this was thought to be due to discrepancies, with the majority of Bhārathas registering themselves as Sinhalese, Tamils and even Burghers! They proved their success by integrating so well and yet retaining their own unique identity and culture as law-abiding and peaceful citizens of Sri Lanka.

Philanthropy has always been their second nature with even the Chapel at St Bridget's Convent being donated by a Bhāratha, not to mention "Lin Hathara" public baths in Kochchikade. The Bhāratha community estimates that there are over 10,000 across the island. The younger generation are very fluent in Sinhala with many Doctors, Engineers, Finance professionals and sportspeople flying their flag. Their biggest contribution is to religious orders and the present Bishop of Mannar, His Lordship Emmanuel Fernando is a Bhāratha, together with Chairman/Directors of leading companies like Forbes & Walker and Finlays. The present chairman of the Pership/Asha group of companies, Mr Manik Pereira is the grandson of Chevalier I X Pereira, a past chairman of F X Pereira. It is a fervent wish that Bhārathas continue to flourish and contribute to the development of that paradise isle to which we are so fondly endeared.

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NOTE: *Not a Bhāratha himself, the writer was enthralled by their history when he was made aware of them by a Bhāratha schoolmate, Mr Dhammita Soza. All information is from the sources above with special editing gratitude to Mr Chervon de Croos, present President of the Negombo Bhāratha Association.*
(The writer takes full responsibility for all errors and omissions.)

Some Sri Lankan proverbs

- If the cow gives milk as a healthy food, why ask whether she is black or white ?
- Faith in medicine makes it effective.
- Don't believe everything you hear, and don't tell everything you believe.

Olcott and me by HUGH KARUNANAYAKE

After nearly four years reading for the Diploma in Commerce at the Ceylon Technical College (Tech), I felt the need to find employment and although the work was outside the field of Economics for which I read at the Tech, I was appointed a Probation Officer in October 1959. Political and personal influence in government service appointments were emerging at that time but I can state with utmost candour that I never canvassed for the job and never asked that "a word be put in". I had two strong written recommendations for the position, however, one from Sir Ukwatte Jayasundera QC, who was a family friend, and the other from Mr M Tiruchelvam who was Solicitor General at the time and my lecturer in law at the Tech. I was years later, privileged to work as a colleague and friend with his son Neelan, a man of great promise so cruelly and meaninglessly taken away. I enjoyed the work in the Department, especially the opportunity to assist in rehabilitation of offenders and also the freedom associated with the job. I am delighted to state that I still keep in contact with some lovely friends who I came to know professionally, and in whose lives I can with confidence claim I had some influence in bringing them 'back to the fold'.

Three years later, I was elected Secretary of the over-100 strong Probation Officers Association of Ceylon. I was still very much a junior officer; there being many officers who had joined as early as 1944 in the first intake of Probation Officers under the Department of Prisons. I was very interested in research and contributed a couple of articles to the bi-annual journal of the Department edited by Dr GPS Fernando, one of the two Psychiatrists employed by the Department. In fact, my interest in social studies led me to enrolling as an external student at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, from which I was able to obtain an Honours Degree in Sociology as an external student, without attending a single lecture!

The Department of Probation and Child Care Services was established as a separate Department under the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1956. It was previously part of the Department of Prisons and Probation Services and subsumed under the general government service functional category of "corrective services". The change was the result of a recognition of the need to separate penal from rehabilitative services. The newly formed Department had as its first Commissioner a Civil Servant by the name M Sivanathan, a former Royal College cricketer. He was succeeded in 1962 by another old Royalist DMPB Dassanayake, also from the elite Civil Service.

During Mr Dassanayake's tenure there was a clamour from within the Department to have the post of Commissioner removed from the Civil Service as there was a belief that the Head of the Department should be someone who was specialised and familiar with the subject and with experience in the field of reform and rehabilitation, a subject that had expanded considerably during the time. The Senior staff of the Department felt that the Commissioner should be a person with specialised knowledge of the subject rather than an administrator from the Civil Service. The Civil Service lobby was strong, powerful and influential, however, and resisted any moves to take away any of its key positions from its fold. The Civil Service finally prevailed and it was in those circumstances that I heard that the young Civil Servant Olcott Gunasekera was appointed the new Commissioner, replacing the departing DMPB Dassanayake who had been transferred to another strategic position.

I was naturally delighted when I heard that Olcott was the new Commissioner as he had been a classmate of mine from school for many years ever since we joined Royal College together in the First Form in 1946. For a long time, he was known as RGGO, but I soon found out that his last two initials represented the names Goshaka Olcott. A more studious, and highly principled person was almost impossible to find. RGGO used to cycle to school from his home down Timbirigasyaya Road and I have cycled beside him on my way home further along Havelock Road to Pamankade. One thing I distinctly recall was that he had a luggage carrier at the back of his bike on which he placed his books wrapped around and kept in place by a green coloured canvas tape. One day I cycled with him to his home where he dismounted from his bike and walked up to his mother standing in their verandah waiting for her only son to arrive. RGGO went down on his knees and worshipped his mother whom he addressed as *maniyo*. His father was addressed as *Piya*. Very unusual, and to this day I have not come across anyone addressing parents in those classical Sinhala terms and was touched by the sight of his filial devotion and respect for his mother, something that I was not familiar with, the irreverential me!

RGGO had two sisters Sujatha and Sudharma who were attending Visakha Vidyalaya, both brilliant students who carried away most of the prizes for scholarship at the school, year after year. RGGO topped our class every year as the Number One student, so was an almost automatic entry into

Peradeniya University from where he passed out with First Class Honours in History. Admission to the Ceylon Civil Service through the open competitive examination was a foregone conclusion.

When I heard that Olcott was appointed, I was so pleased, as notwithstanding my friendship with him in school, he was a honourable and straight shooting and decent person, and I felt that the service would be in excellent hands. It would have been improper for me and insulting for him if I saw him privately to welcome him to his new position and I did not contact him either by phone or by a visit after he took office. Within a few days of his appointment I was surprised to receive a notification appointing me as Probation Officer, Headquarters, a position usually reserved for Senior Officers prior to promotion. I reported for duty as required and worked in an office adjacent to his in the Head Office at Bagatelle Road. Here again, old friendships aside, never did I ask him for favours, nor did he suggest in any way that he

parents expected of him, viz study diligently. As an administrator, however, he was determined, brooking no nonsense from anyone, and forthright apart from being very humane, and extremely honest. I have not had the pleasure of having many discussions with him on personal philosophy, and family matters etc. but I knew that he was a strict vegetarian from school days, a non-smoker and teetotaler. I was, of course, quite the opposite, a man who to this day enjoys the nectar that comes from Scotland, and who has no qualms about digging into the remains of any eatable fauna!

One of the major items in the Department's calendar was the planning and running of Childrens Week including observation of Universal Childrens Day sponsored by UNICEF and for which the Probation Department was the Governmental agency responsible. That was the show window for the Department to display its wares and to impress upon the government the significance of its work, especially in the field of Child Care. Childrens Week

in 1966 was conducted in October, and a committee was appointed to plan and implement a suitable programme. Olcott was the Chairman, with Dr Lloyd Abeyratne as Vice Chairman and I was the Secretary. One of the key items planned was a public talk to be delivered by Justice TS Fernando with the Governor-General William Gopallawa in the Chair. The topic was related to the rights of the child and Mr Fernando delivered a well prepared talk to a near empty Royal College Hall! Everything was planned to the tee, including newspaper advertisements, but somehow the topic did not stir the imagination of the public, and although the talk was excellent, the event was an embarrassment for the speaker and the Governor General. We had to recover quickly from that.

The next major if not the principal event during the week was the running of a three day carnival in the Colombo Racecourse with the usual children's entertainment and participation by all the leading Colombo schools in a march past at which the Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake had to take the salute. That turned out to be tremendous success, and I gathered that Dudley was very impressed and had congratulated the Permanent Secretary HC Goonewardene on the success of the event. It was not long after that Olcott was appointed Commisioner of Cooperative Development where he shone once again as an administrator and was subsequently drawn into the international arena. He retired at the young age of 38 and became a consultant with FAO and other International agencies and based in Bangkok. In later



• *Olcott at the 60 Anniverssary of the Royal College 1946 Group Dinner 2006, with partly shown Nalin Mendis on right and the late Norman CasieChetty on left. All three old Royalists and batch-mates at Peradeniya University.*

was going to help me. I felt, however, that nothing but good can come out of the situation both for the department and for me. Olcott's appointment was his first as Head of a Department, having served about ten years in various senior capacities, the last being Government Agent of Amparai. The very eager Olcott just barely 30 years of age took to brushing away some of the cobwebs hanging around the place, and his efforts did bring some mild resistance from the old guard. I was surprised to see the young administrator bringing a no-nonsense approach to the work ethic in the workplace which kept the whole Department on its toes. Surprised, because the Olcott I knew in school was a gentle, non aggressive soul who offended no one, who was not interested in sports, and did what his

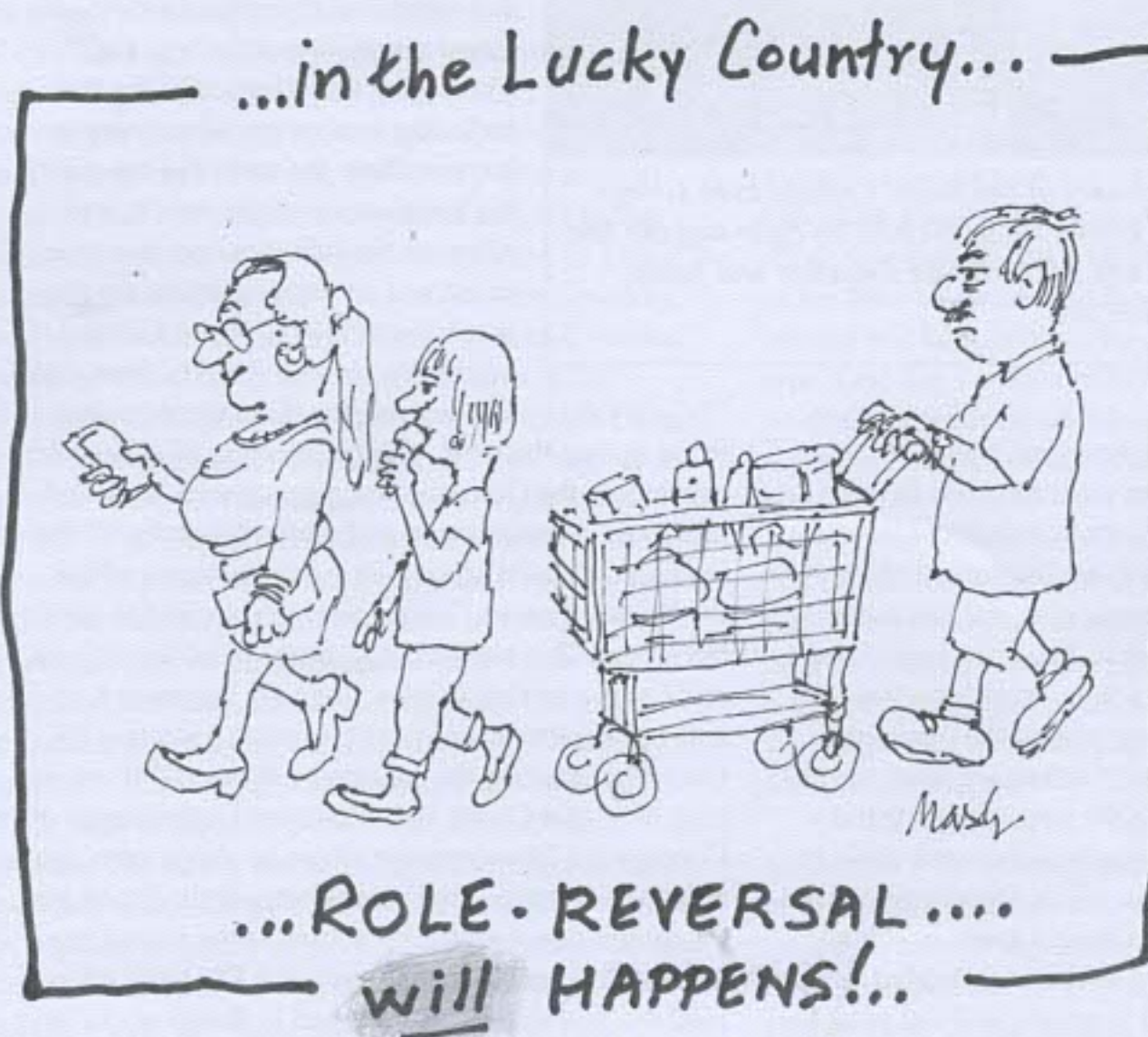
years he achieved great recognition for founding the Dharma Wijaya Foundation for which he was bestowed the high national honour of the title of Deshabandhu.

One thing I must mention here adverting to Olcott's personality and innate kindness. As Probation Officers we had a lot of laxity in ingress and egress to work and I and many of our colleagues were wont to have those legendary long lunches, especially as my office was in Chatham Street on the first floor of the Pagoda building, and with so many pubs around. On one such occasion a colleague from Bandarawela arrived in Colombo for his father's birthday and instead of spending time with the old man came over to see me on a working day and together with a couple of friends we went to the pub in Chatham Street two doors next to my office, to celebrate the father's birthday, and later lunched at the Pagoda Restaurant located on the ground floor of our office. It was not uncommon in those days for anonymous letters to be sent by people having some axe to grind. One such letter was sent to Olcott describing the "binge" we indulged in and Olcott without showing me the letter asked me whether the incident took place and I responded admitting that we overstayed a luncheon break and the reason for the celebration. He just smiled and told me "don't worry" and that was it. After he left the Department, I found a couple of other anonymous petitions sent to him by senior officers eager to discredit me, the contents of which he had not even bothered to ask me about.

What a great friend, loyal, and sincere, a quality extremely rare in public life.

About three years after Olcott left the Department, I joined the private sector, and after about 15 years of work I migrated to Australia. The batch of 10 year olds who joined Royal in 1946 met 60 years later at the Colombo Hilton in 2006 to celebrate 60 years of continued friendship. Many from Australia, the UK, and USA travelled to Colombo for the event at which Olcott and I were able to reconnect and talk of old times. Of the 41 members of the group living overseas at the time, 18 travelled over for the celebration, many with their wives. It was a great reunion which included many other sharing of meals with the group during that visit.

Olcott at the 60 Anniversary of the Royal College 1946 Group Dinner 2006, with partly shown Nalin Mendis on right and the late Norman Casie Chetty on left are to be seen in the photo. All three old Royalists and batchmates at Peradeniya University. In an interview with the press, a few years ago Olcott, revealed that as a child he had a wish to enter the Sangha some day, and felt that his parents would have been very pleased if he had done so. Five years ago he turned 80 and decided to take to robes and enter the sasana. The Maha Sangha could not have been enriched by a nobler man of high principles. He now resides at the Vajirarama Temple Bambalapitiya as Ven Nanasiha a man very much in peace with himself, and whose friendship I was privileged to share in our respective journeys to wherever our karma took us.



This is an introductory cartoon by well-known Sri Lankan-born cartoonist MAX GERREYN. He will satirically portray the life and times of us Sri Lankans who have made Australia their home. He will try to depict the fun and foibles migrants who have so expertly adapted to the multicultural that Australia provides for all to share.

Max lives in Mirrabooka in Perth (WA) with his wife Shereen.

Resplendent Lanka – forty leagues from Paradise

(From an address at the Australian Mind Cafe Mental Health Conference at the Marriott Weligama Sri Lanka,, 3 to 10 August 2019.)

by PAULINE GUNewardene

Welcome delegates to the ancient land of Lanka, known in ages past as the Resplendent Isle, the Pearl of the Indian Ocean - some of the many names given to it by travellers who came under its spell. Lanka is its original name and means island while Sri means resplendent and also used as an honorific.

The origins of human habitation in this island go back 35,000 years and the documentation of settlements dates to the 3rd Century BC. The indigenous inhabitants, of whom very few now remain, are called the Veddahs and are a nomadic race of hunters and gatherers living in little enclaves in the forests even to this day. Of special interest to you would be that they are the closest ethnically to the Aborigines of Australia. This, of course, because Gondwanaland was a major land mass encompassing what is now Australia and Sri Lanka until sections broke away.

The next part of the island's history is part legend and part historical. The story goes that a North Indian prince from the area of what would now be Bengal, whose scion as grandfather was a lion, was cast away by ship with his 700 followers by his father the king, whose people had tired of his excesses of behaviour. In the storm that ensued, the Prince Vijaya made landfall in Lanka. Magic was, of course, not far away and Vijaya and his followers were bewitched by the Princess Kuveni of the indigenous people, who helped him to win control of the land over her own people. He set up his kingdom with her as consort and had a son and daughter by her, but had to give her and the children up at the urging of his ministers since she was not of their royal blood. He married a princess sent for from India, but died childless, and his nephew came over to take on the throne.

And this is the origin of the Sinhalese race, so called because they are the descendants of a lion - or Sinhaya in the native language of Sihala or Sinhala. It is the reason why the lion stands proud on the national flag. The Sinhalese have no other homeland. There is no other Sinhala speaking nation in the world. The Sinhalese have a recorded history of over two thousand five hundred years. They are the majority race in Sri Lanka and are 75% of the population.

To go back to history, civilisation of a high order flourished through the centuries, with palaces, temples, hospitals, multi storey buildings, running water, sanitation, gravity fed fountains, beautiful art and pottery, the making of jewellery and ornaments.

Meanwhile, Prince Gautama, born in 623 BC in Lumbini in Nepal, had left his palace and dominions and sought answers to the frailties and ills of the human condition, wandering the forests of the kingdom in solitary meditation. He found what he was seeking in enlightenment under a Bo tree (figus species) and founded the philosophy of Buddhism in the late 6th Century BC.

In the 3rd Century BC, the connection of Lanka with India was re-established when King Ashoka sent his son Arahata Mahinda and daughter Princess Sanghamitta to bring Buddhism to the island. The Sinhalese king welcomed the teachings of the Sublime One, orders of monks and nuns were established, and the people began the practice of Buddhism. From Lanka the teachings spread in different forms all over the East, to China and Japan, Burma and Thailand, and many smaller countries. Lanka became known as the cradle of Buddhism, and it is practised as a religion by 70% of the island's population in the form closest to its origins.

Successive kings constructed the famous dome shaped massive structures called dagabas in the capital cities of first Anuradhapura and then Polonnaruwa, in veneration of the Buddhist teachings. They are perfect in symmetry and form, using



• *Dalada Maligawa (Temple of The Tooth).*

mathematical knowledge like that of the Egyptian pyramids, which were the only buildings taller than the dagabas in ancient times. A sacred Bo tree off a sapling from the original tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment, brought to Lanka by the Princess Sanghamitta, was grown with a golden fence surrounding it in Anuradhapura. Amazing larger than life statues of the Buddha were carved out of the natural rock of the landscapes - standing, sitting, lying down - in teaching positions or in

peaceful contemplation. Many elaborate temples with beautiful murals painted on the walls, depicting the life and times of the Buddha, were constructed in commemoration and worship.

In the Kandyan Kingdom in the central highlands, the King there constructed the premier Buddhist site of worship, the Temple of the Tooth, which has the relic of a tooth from the Buddha. The legend is that whoever is in possession of the sacred Tooth will be the ruler of the land. It is taken out once a year in the world famous pageant of the Kandy Perahera or Procession, parading the relic through the streets on the back of a richly caparisoned royal elephant. The Kandyan chieftains ride caparisoned elephants too, some walk under silk umbrellas, long lines of dancers perform the traditional folk rituals of Sri Lanka, with participants in fire walking and fire eating as well as pilgrims performing vows such as body piercing. Around 100 elephants take part in the Perahera. It is most spectacular and takes place on the first full moon day in August. I'm actually going to Kandy for it myself on the 14th of August!

One of the examples of ancient architectural wonder would be Sigiriya, estimated by many as perhaps the eighth Wonder of the World. King



• *The Sigiriya Frescoes – celestial maidens or court ladies – painted in detailed splendour.*

Kasayapa built his palace upon the summit of this rock, being afraid of the return of his brother Mugalan to avenge the death of their father whom he had killed to take the throne. Guarding the staircase to the top were massive lions sculptured in stone with only the enormous paws remaining to show us the size they would once have been. All the carving out of the rock made use of amazing technology for that time, with chemical compounds made from native plants - audience halls with flat carved seats, a huge bath pool hollowed out of the rock, lookout points with boulders finely balanced at the ready to roll down on invaders, are some of the sights that await the rather arduous climb. But, of course, the piece de resistance would be the celestial maidens or court ladies - no one is quite certain - painted in detailed splendour on one side of the rock surface. Not many remain of these visions

of beauty, but the record is that they once covered the entire side of the rock sheer from the plain, so that from below and the winter palace on the ground, the maidens appeared to be rising in clouds to the sky. Close beside the rock art is the Mirror Wall, reddish plaster so highly polished that it actually reflects. Near it are examples of some of the first graffiti at that time - poems of love and longing. Sigiriya is indeed a wonder and worth a visit.

Just a strait away - the Palk Straits to be exact - lies the coastline of southern India. It was possible in bygone times to walk across on the stones of the causeway of what was called Adam's Bridge or Rama's Bridge. Certainly, there was no shortage of invaders or migrants to the island from South India - the traffic was one way as no Sinhalese went across to live in India. The successive waves of the Dravidian race of Tamils or Cholas from South India made the peninsula and northern part of the island their home and established the Kingdom of Jaffna. It was an inhospitable and arid part of the island, but the Tamils were hard working and assiduously cultivated and cared for the land.

As was natural, they sought to move further south to the more beneficent areas climate wise. And here they encountered resistance from the Sinhalese who lived there and had established their kingdom's first capital of Anuradhapura. So battles ended up being waged, with first one side and then the other gaining control. The Sinhalese moved their capital further south to Polonnaruwa, but were still not safe from the invaders.

Eventually the Tamils succeeded in seizing control of the North Central section of the island, forcing the Sinhalese to flee to the extreme south to set up the Kingdom of Ruhuna - and where we now are in Weligama was part of that southern Kingdom. Finally, a Sinhalese Prince Dutugemunu was born who had had enough of being displaced from their former capital and kingdom, and marched his armies into battle against the Chola or Tamil King Elara. Dutugemunu was victorious, honoured his slain foe as a worthy and great king, and took back the lands of his forefathers.

The Sinhalese people cultivated the land with the help of the many river systems fanning out from the central hills to the seas, two monsoonal rains feeding each side of the island at two different seasons, as well as building massive lakes, called tanks locally, for storing the water for their crops. It was a highly successful agrarian economy which had developed very sophisticated irrigation systems, and Lanka became known as the Granary of the East with its enormous extents of land under rice cultivation and other crops.

In addition, it was a bountiful land blessed with many resources. The much sought after richness of spices like cinnamon and pepper growing

abundantly, elephants used for riding into battle by Alexander's Greek armies, precious gems like sapphires and rubies - the biggest sapphire in the English crown is from this land - pearls and a harvest of fish in the surrounding oceans. In the forests, as you will see in Yala in the last three days of the Conference, leopard, black bear and elephant roam free, along with sambhur, deer, wild buffalo, peacocks, and a diversity of wild life unsurpassed in such a small area of 25,332 square miles. Off the coasts, schools of dolphins frolic, humpbacks and blue whales ride the waves, and the dugongs, who inspire the legendary mermaid tales, sing their songs.

Lanka sat at the crossroads of East and West and tales of its riches attracted traders from many parts of the world, bringing goods like silks, porcelain, sandalwood, and taking away items such as textiles, spices, ivory, pearls, gems, that the island produced. Famous travellers, like the Chinese Fa Hsien and the Arab geographer Edrisi, visited here and took back stories to their countries.

It was the rich spice trade that brought the first colonial empire, Portugal, in 1505 to conquer and annex most of the coastal belt kingdoms in the name of their King, and Lanka was given the name of Ceilao by them. In the process, religious proselytism was at the forefront and people were converted to Catholicism.

The next wave of conquest was in 1602, when the Dutch conquered the Portuguese empire and acquired their colonies. So Lanka became Ceylaan and along came another religious conversion, to Protestantism this time, which was encouraged if one wished to get somewhere with the colonial masters. Baptisms were done en masse, with the preacher standing on a rise of land and addressing the people gathered below to change their religion. The lowland Lankans took this on board too and accepted their new ruler.

The Portuguese and Dutch, however, never managed to conquer the central highland Kingdom of Kandy, which resisted all attempts to breach its natural defences of rocky escarpments. But come the greatest Empire of that time, the British, and the Kingdom of Kandy was taken by clever strategy of infiltration and subversion, with resistance by its subjects proving useless in the battles that were fought and the rebellions that followed against a powerful and well-resourced opponent. Lanka was then, with the signing of the Kandyan Convention in 1815, brought under the rule of the monarch of the British Empire and the country's name changed yet again, this time to Ceylon.

The British decided, as their three main money spinners for exports, to grow coffee in the mid to high lands, rubber in the low country and propagate further the local growing of coconut. Coffee was hit by a blight, however, and the British then decided to

convert those lands to tea estates, which became a highly successful export. And so we ended up with vast extents of forest and agricultural land being carpeted with *camellia sinensis*, to give the tea bush its botanical name. As an interesting aside, White Tea cultivation has also been introduced from China in modern times in a few exclusive plantations. It is the world's most expensive tea, necessitating plucking before sunrise, with the entire process being done by hand with silk gloves from start to finish. The country's entire small production is bought by the Emperor of Japan.

For the purpose of plucking the "two leaves and a bud" required for good tea production, the British had to bring in indentured labour from South India, where there was endemic poverty, because the local Sinhalese refused to undertake this work, having been used to farming their own lands. The consequence was the introduction of a racial category for this indentured tea estate labour called Indian Tamils, who lived and worked in the hill country tea plantations only. They now represent 4% of the population.

To look at the various races of Sri Lanka, after the majority Sinhalese of 75%, come the 11% Ceylon Tamils, of ethnic origin to the South Indians, who still traditionally call the North and North East their homelands. However, most of them live and work among the Sinhalese in the capital Colombo and wherever in the rest of the island their business or needs require. There are no restrictions or distinctions whatsoever and the two races live amicably together, with some of the most lucrative businesses being owned by Tamils.

The other significant race in Sri Lanka are the 9% Muslims comprising Moors and Malays of different ethnic origins. The Moors have Arab mainly trading ancestry and the Malays are mainly the descendants of the soldiers brought into the country to serve the Dutch from their Indonesian colony, and subsequently also used by the British extensively in their battles with the Kandyans. They are very much involved in the business arena of modern Sri Lanka and own companies of worth as well as having professionals in every sphere of influence and have been for the most part involved in the governments of the day.

Another small component of around 1% of the island's population mix are the Burghers, given this nomenclature by the British to pull together all the descendants of the western settlers in the country - so their forebears would mainly be Portuguese, Dutch and British.

1947 saw India finally gaining independence from the British, and partly as a result of their resistance and partly because of our own freedom fighters, who had to flee or were imprisoned by the British, Ceylon was granted independence on the

4th of February 1948 and finally came out from the shadow of colonial rule. We had a Legislative Assembly first, then Parliament based on the Westminster form of government, graduating to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in 1972 - taking back the original name of the country - and then in 1978 moving to an Executive Presidential plus Parliamentary form of government, based on the French system largely.

The results of the 'divide and rule' policy of the British left behind dissension and resentment among the different races, particularly by the Sinhalese about the Tamils, who were favoured by



• *Opening of first Parliament in Sri Lanka after gaining Independence in 1948.*

the colonial rulers over the Sinhalese. As a result of this, to capitalise on the sentiment in the country, the then Government introduced the politically motivated Sinhala Only language policy in 1956, which led to violent riots. This was to become unfortunately a regular feature, erupting from time to time.

It is pertinent to say here that now, in redressing the past, Sinhala is the Official Language and National Language of Sri Lanka, with Tamil also an Official and National Language, with English as the Link Language. In schools, both Sinhala and Tamil are taught at primary stage with secondary stage being in Sinhala or Tamil as chosen. Everyone now recognises the importance of English and it is learned with great enthusiasm and spoken widely in modern day Sri Lanka.

1971-1989 - Successive incidents of uprisings took place by Communist inspired disaffected youth who were educated, but jobless. Thanks to free education, Sri Lanka has a literacy rate of 93%, but employment opportunities have not

kept pace. Mitigating against this also is the fact that technical colleges have not been adequately developed and the system keeps churning out white collar workers for jobs which do not exist. There needs to be more colleges set up for further education of skill sets in carpentry, joinery, plumbing, etc. And to take up these changes in the education curriculum, there needs to be a change of attitude to give dignity and parity to all types of work - instead of value only being placed on professionals or office worker categories.

Another calamity that had to be dealt with by the islanders was the devastating Boxing Day Tsunami on the 26th of December 2004, which tore through

the coastal areas, destroying life and property on a massive scale. Hundreds were killed, houses, hotels and businesses were brought to nothing, with crops and land being rendered useless due to sea water inundation.

To return to the politics of the country, the resentment of the Tamils against the discrimination of the language policy came to a head in 1983, when the terrorist organisation, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or the LTTE, began the deadly war which dragged on for 26 years and which decimated the country in all aspects and for all communities.

The last and fourth phase of the war began in 2006, when the LTTE deliberately as an act of provocation cut the Mavil Aru annicut in the Eastern Province, depriving the 3,000 villagers

of their basic and essential right to water. The Government was left with no alternative but to take action to resolve the issue and went into battle yet again. The further consideration was the responsibility the Government finally realised they had of protection for the 20 million population of the country, instead of focusing only on hopeful peace talks and ceasefires while leaving the rest of the people year after year at the mercy of what was ranked internationally as the world's most ruthless terrorist organisation, and proscribed in many countries. People tried to keep living a normal life, but were constantly in fear of bomb attacks including suicide bombers, which the LTTE pioneered, which struck suddenly from nowhere - places of worship, bus stops, railways, the airport, the Central Bank, nothing was spared. The fear psychosis in the country was palpable, as I experienced for myself on our yearly visits and travelling around.

In the course of the deadly war years from 1983-2009, the tragic loss of life ran into thousands

of ordinary civilians in the many attacks by the LTTE on the population as well as thousands of Sri Lankan Services and Police personnel, Indian soldiers sent to help Sri Lanka and the terrorist fighters themselves in the battles waged by them on the security forces on land and sea, in their objective of a separate State carved out of two-thirds of the country's coastline in the North and East. The country lost so many Sinhalese and Tamil leaders and India lost its Prime Minister through assassinations by the LTTE. Several thousand security forces personnel were injured or maimed and became dependent on Government disability pensions. The economy was shot to pieces with no foreign direct investment. Lucrative tourism inevitably dropped to abysmal levels, people lived in insecurity and those who could, left for stable greener pastures overseas, with a significant brain drain as a consequence.

At long last, strong leadership by the Government of the day, coupled with coordinated intelligence information gathering, planning, strategy, and the upliftment of the tri services' morale, resulted in the defeat of the dreaded LTTE in May 2009 in what was regarded globally as the unwinnable victory.

The 10 years of peace in 2009-2019 saw Sri Lanka bloom and begin to develop her true potential. Immediately peace was returned, the Government began the urgent and much needed push to reconstruct, rehabilitate and reorganise the entire country from north to south, from east to west. Roads, bridges, railways, public buildings, housing for displaced people, derelict irrigation tanks, hotels, airports, ports - they had all been either destroyed in the conflict or badly run down due to lack of finances.

There was no money left, however, since all the country's resources had been drained with the enormous cost of funding the war effort over the 26 weary years and still keeping everything ticking over while maintaining the bare minimum of running the country. So the Government went first to the Western countries for financial assistance, but this was declined because fighting the LTTE to the bitter end had not been their preferred option. There was a resistance overseas to recognition that the many ceasefires and peace treaties had all been broken by the LTTE themselves when they regrouped and returned to the attack, and the Government had gone for the final solution only because they had been taken to the peace table so many times and so many times it had been futile.

So cap in hand, to China went the Government, and the Asian Development Bank also came to the rescue. Loans were negotiated at favourable terms and the long road back began, to redevelop the country and put it again at the forefront of tourism - which had been the premier source of foreign income in 1982 before the conflagration of

1983 took it all away. Every phase of development was fast tracked, and all projects ran concurrently - in a hurry!

In addition to the restoration of existing infrastructure, a long talked about Expressway to the south was built, a second airport and port were constructed in the south eastern Hambantota region, and a Port City on reclaimed land began rising in the sea off Colombo harbour, emulating the examples of Singapore and Hong Kong, as a means of attracting investment capital, international high level businesses and state of the art entertainment centres.

The 300,000 strong security forces,



As a current update, for 2019 the World Bank classification has Sri Lanka inched into the Upper-Middle Income category with US\$4,060 per capita income. Also for 2019, the World Bank has predicted Sri Lanka's economic growth at 3.5 per cent.

necessitated for the war effort, were now co-opted into the peace effort and began working day and night on the restoration of beautiful heritage public buildings and the creation of public parks and walks in the capital of Colombo. The city was cleaned and beautified in an overnight transformation. The canal system in Colombo, which had been originated by the Dutch as a method of transporting goods, was dredged and cleaned up with the idea of eventually using it as a means of transportation and easing some of the congestion on the roads.

By the end of 2014, five years after the war ended, the country was back in business and was voted by tourism agencies internationally as the top tourist destination for 2015. Even more impressive, Sri Lanka - which had been lagging behind as a developing third world country for so many years - achieved classification as one of the Emerging Economies of the world, a Lower-Middle Income country and no longer entitled to traditional "aid" from global financial institutions. As a current update, for 2019 the World Bank classification has Sri Lanka inched into the Upper-Middle Income category with US\$4,060 per capita income. Also for 2019, the World Bank has predicted Sri Lanka's economic growth at 3.5 percent.

Some statistics may be helpful to an understanding of the makeup of this multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-faith, complex country:
Ethnic groups Sinhalese 74.9%, Sri Lankan Tamil

11.2%, Sri Lankan Muslims 9.2%, Indian Tamil 4.2%, other 0.5%; **Religions:** Buddhist (official religion) 70.2%, Hindu 12.6%, Muslim 9.7%, Roman Catholic 6.1%, Other Christian 1.3%, Other 0.05%; **Languages:** Sinhala (official and national language) 74%, Tamil (official and national language) 18%, Other 8%; **GDP:** Agriculture accounts for approximately 21% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs 38% of the workforce. **Exports** \$15 billion (2018 est.); **Export goods:** Textiles and apparel; tea and spices; rubber manufactures; precious stones; coconut products; fish. **Main export partners:** United States 24.6%; United Kingdom 9%; India 5.8%; Singapore 4.5%; Germany 4.3%; Italy 4.3% (2017).

All of this surge in development as a result of the 10 years of peace came to an abrupt end, however, earlier this year, when one of the offshoots of the terrorist organisation ISIS launched bombings on Easter Sunday, the 21st of April, on churches and three luxury city hotels. There are still no definitive answers to the question, why was Sri Lanka chosen? The country, and indeed the Christians, have never had a problem with the Muslims and, in fact, there has not been much of a connection with Syria other than a few youth going off to join ISIS. There have also been a number of well to do youth, educated overseas in England and Australia, being radicalised and returning to Sri Lanka to convert more to their cause. As well, we have, of course, a long service connection of sending domestic staff to the Middle East on contracts of employment, and perhaps the fundamentalist ideology of the Muslims of that region was an influence instead of the brand of more tolerant Asian Islam which had traditionally been practised in Sri Lanka.

Be that as it may, thanks to the police and armed forces moving rapidly into action, there have been islandwide arrests and seizures of personnel, arms and ammunition, to stop any further attacks, halt the spread of this destructive fanaticism, and bring back security to the country. Most foreign countries have withdrawn Travel Advisories in recognition and hundreds of former appreciative visitors to the island have rushed in their support for the various forms of tourism which they had enjoyed in the past.

And indeed, there are many attractions. What would you like to do? - we have it all, crammed into this small island about the same size as Tasmania! Golden tropical beaches, surfing, white water rafting, camping and glamping, wildlife safaris in two game parks, undeveloped small islands sitting in the turquoise blue ocean off the northern peninsular extremity of the country, hiking and walking the trails in the beautiful misty cooler climes of the hill country - like England in spring - climbing Adams Peak in the night and experiencing the magic of the sunrise casting the shadow of the peak across the

central highlands - the subject of a story by Arthur Clarke who made this country his home - the central highlands themselves with waterfalls cascading in veils of foam into pools far below, the terraced green as green extents of rice fields, colourfully dressed women plucking tea on the rolling hill slopes, ancient citadels of archaeological significance as you explore the UNESCO classified Golden Triangle in the North Central Province, or the down south old Dutch fortified city of Galle also holding UNESCO classification, taking a boat ride to enjoy the dolphins leaping beside the boat and being lucky enough to see the magnificent blue whale as it breaches - the largest animal ever known to have lived on our planet. We are so fortunate to have our own stay-at-home pod living off this very section of the coast, instead of engaging in the normal pattern of migration and return, because of the rich krill food source washing out of the many river systems into the sea.

And so much more, like the ornate temples, the colourful folk dances, and festival celebrations of the three major religions of the world - Christianity, Buddhism and Islam - living in symbiosis together for millennia.

And that still does not encompass the magnificent cuisine of the country, owing its variety to the influences of visitors and traders from East and West who ended up staying, and conquerors who brought their ways of eating and living to an accommodating people. Food is a very important part of the culture of Sri Lanka, and you would never be allowed to visit the home of even a stranger without being offered at the very least a cup of tea, however poor your host may be, and it would be construed as impolite to refuse. One is constantly being assailed by commands to "eat, eat", in true Sri Lankan repetitive style.

And the last component, of course, is the average Sri Lankan - easygoing, happy go lucky, always ready to welcome the stranger and make him feel at home because of endless contact with people from other lands. Hospitality is bred into our bones and hospitality is what Sri Lanka is renowned for.

So here we are today! Still enthralling visitors with our beautiful landscapes and wondrous places of interest, still at the crossroads of East and West, still being wooed this time for our inestimable location in the geopolitics of the modern day and age, and still striving to retain our heritage and independence with our traditional policy of non-alignment - a friend to all and a foe to none!

I wish you all a wonderful stay in Sri Lanka. May you have 'serendipitous' or 'happy discoveries' - which comes from the word Serendib, an ancient Persian name for Sri Lanka. And may you enjoy your experience of a land, reckoned to be in the words of that 14th Century much travelled Moor, Ibn Battuta, "only forty leagues from Paradise".

Of manners, mores and maiden Aunts – Kotahena in the 1950s



Have you ever heard the expression ‘the curtain has been caught in the almirah door’? (The old almirahs had a retractable curtain draped over the full-length external mirror). Or was it a coded message that just only passed between my Aunts; which they had devised in order to alert each other to an embarrassing predicament – especially when young and inquisitive nephews were present? It took me (then not quite into my teens yet) a lot of patience and close observation to decipher when and why the expression was used. I found that it was usually accompanied by a furtive tugging at the dress, by the aunt at whom the ‘message’ was directed and a quick look around the room to see if the indiscretion was observed by others – especially by inquisitive nephews. The message was in fact an alert to the ‘victim’ that her frock had been caught up in the cleft of the buttocks! Usually happened when rising from a sitting position.

Looking back now, I see a ‘niceness’ and sensitivity in this process – an effort to save someone some embarrassment by making an oblique reference to draw attention to a (then) embarrassing area of the anatomy – a reflection of the Kotahenians who inhabited that time and place. I wonder what the intention and choice of language used would be to convey the same alert, today. Unfortunately, almirahs now only exist in the guise of Built-in-robos and ladies garments seem to be no longer designed to place them in such a dilemma. And, of course, there is much less reluctance today in their displaying any of the body’s contours.

My Aunt Anne would often visit our home in Wasala Road. She would set out on the short walk by leaving from the rear gate of the Convent and up the street in the direction of Kotahena Street junction, where our house was located. She, however, never set out on any of her walks without stringing a leather handbag over one arm at the elbow, and carrying a heavy hardcover book in the other. This would not be regarded as anything unusual and worth remarking on,

unless you knew my Aunt Anne. She suffered from what must have been a congenital sight impediment and has not read anything in print for many years. This apparent conflict and confusion of facts niggled me for a long time, till one day I was embolden enough to ask. I was promptly and forcefully enlightened on the situation – “Do you think I would allow myself to be mistaken for a loose woman, walking down the streets of Kotahena, swinging her arms freely?”

Dear Aunt Anne never had the remotest possibility of being mistaken for a ‘loose woman’, but would never take the risk of being mistaken for one! Seen any ‘loose women’ (*a la 1950s*) on the streets of Kotahena recently?

Of an evening, occasionally, Aunts Consy and Rosie would ride their bicycles over to the Convent for a game of tennis. The bikes were ‘ladies’ Raleigh bikes as I recall, with their tennis rackets protruding from the woven rattan baskets strapped with leather fasteners to the handle bars. They had a problem though, as the long wide dresses they wore for bike-riding were apt to catch the wind and rise to show a large part of their legs – which could send a lot of tongues wagging in Kotahena, with sensational inferences. Their solution to the problem was simple. They, at that time, lived in a spacious flat at the Gonsal residence in Wall Street, in the shadow of both the Cathedral and Convent. In these premises Miss Elva Gonsal ran an arts supplies store and a small printing press. My aunts helped themselves to lead letter sets which they sewed into the hems of their bike riding gear and so weighed the skirts down securely against even the severest wind storm that blew through Kotahena. Thus by such a simple stratagem were the good folk of Kotahena deprived of even a glimpse of the two spinster teachers’ legs at any point above the mid-calf, as they bicycled confidently to their tennis. Foiled – game, set and match!!!

More Sri Lankan proverbs

- For he who has the time, even the jungle is a paradise.
- He who has studied himself is his own master.
- An enemy’s punishment is his envy.
- A good husband might have a bad wife and a bad wife might have a good husband.
- Wisdom can be found travelling.
- One should try to fix a problem by finding its

actual cause.

- As close to each other as the bark is to the tree trunk.
- Like the one who shows his/her hospitality at someone else’s wedding.
- Like saying the underside is better when the boat capsizes.
- Like losing both the branch he held on to and that on which his feet rested.

In his report to websites *OzLanka* and *eLanka*, **SUNIL DE SILVA** described the CSA's AGM and Social as "an exceptional event" and went on to say that "the Pennant Hills Community Centre, a hall converted beyond recognition, the handiwork of Pauline Gunewardene, the President of the CSA, with the assistance of several members of the Committee. Pauline was her usual efficient self, smoothly conducting the AGM with her President's Report and the Financial Report for the preceding year. The AGM re-elected the Committee for another year. Her address is reproduced here for the benefit of all our members worldwide.

CSA's AGM & Social - 'an exceptional event'



• **President Pauline Gunewardene** addressing the meeting.

The CSA is now 22-years old and that is indeed an achievement of significance. It is a tribute to the Committees who have gone before and to you Members without whose interest, of course, there would be no Society. I look forward to your continuing attendance and active participation in our Meetings. Over the past year, we have had three

very successful General Meetings with excellent attendances, thanks to the drawcard of our well-known and erudite speakers and the topics of their talks.

24 February 2019

The extremely popular Mr. Somasundaram Skandakumar, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Australia, was scheduled to talk to us on "The Development of the Plantation Industry in Sri Lanka", based on his many years of experience in this industry prior to his diplomatic service, but sadly he was unable to do so due to ill health. Our former President, Thiru Arumugam, gamely stepped in at the last minute and was able to captivate the attendees with a talk on the exciting life of Sardiel, the Robin Hood of Sri Lanka.

26 May 2019

Ananda Amaranath, the popular lawyer, calling on his years in Sri Lanka as a Senior Prosecuting Counsel, talked on "Murder at the Vicarage", with his knowledge of the interesting background and details of the sensational Matthew Peiris murder case.

26 August 2019

Arun Abey, well known in financial circles and one of the success stories of the Sri Lankan community in Australia, gave us an illuminating talk on "The Migrant Experience" with particular reference to the ties between Australia and Sri Lanka, and the road from childhood to integration and full acceptance as a valued member of the adopted community.

The AGM and Social was on 24th November last year and the 140 members and guests enjoyed a great evening together.

I would like to thank all the Committee Members for the efforts they have put in to keep CSA going well over the past year. Thiru Arumugam, as before, has been invaluable with his long-time knowledge and experience of CSA as well as being a regular contributor to the journal. Harry de Sayrah puts in a great deal of hard work to get the journal posted out on time. Our Secretary Sunimal Fernando and Treasurer Deepak Pritamdas are still in the workforce and time poor, so their contribution is much appreciated. Amal Wahab joined us last year and has been very helpful in his role as Social Convenor. Sunil de Silva and Les Perera keep a watching brief on our workings.

As always, for our iconic journal we have to thank the indefatigable Doug Jones, whose hard work nonstop throughout the year keeps it coming out on schedule, with a great cross-section of articles to maintain interest, attracting compliments and congratulations from the worldwide readership. There are actually members who are unable to attend meetings, but are still with us just to be able to receive the journal! Doug is not able to be with us tonight, but I would like to express our thanks to him for maintaining such a high standard for *The Ceylankan*.

Special thanks are due tonight to Srikantha Nadarajah, who gave in his resignation as a Committee Member in August due to health issues and the need to focus on his plans for retirement. Nada has been a long standing member of CSA since 1992 and served as Treasurer from 1996 for four years. He has also been a regular contributor to the journal as well as giving presentations on Sri Lanka's culture and history. We have valued your contribution Nada and thank you very much for your work on the Committee. Our best wishes to you for the future.

Our financial membership now stands at 307 in total, with 239 in Australia, 33 in Sri Lanka, 30 in other overseas countries and five gift subscriptions. The Melbourne and Colombo Chapters continue to run actively with interesting meetings. Our Sydney General Meetings take place on the last Sunday evenings of February, May and August, with the AGM and Social on the last Saturday in November, and I look forward to your attendance.



• *CSA Committee (from left); Amal Wahab (Social Convenor); Thiru Arumugam, Harry de Sayrah (Public Relations); Pauline Gunewardene (President); Sunil de Silva (Publications); Leslie Perera; Sunimal Fernando (Secretary). Absent: Deepak Pritamdas (Treasurer) and Doug Jones (Editor).*

Photography by Mahes Selvadurai.

Our membership drive over the past year has brought us in 20 new members. Could I take this opportunity to ask you all to actively pursue new Memberships within your circle of friends and colleagues, and since our membership is an older age group up to now, I would like to encourage you to introduce younger blood to our ranks. This would ensure the Ceylon Society of Australia continues to flourish and evokes more interest in the wonderful heritage of Sri Lanka.

The Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2019 have been audited by Rienzie Fonseka. Rienzie too is unable to be with us this evening, but our thanks go to him for helping us with this over the last four years.

Copies of the audited Accounts have been emailed to Members for information. We are showing a small deficit of \$187, although I would have preferred, of course, to break even at the very least. As you will notice, the cost of postage for sending out the journal has increased, and there are now further postal increases to be factored in - from 1 October 2019 for Australia and from 1 January 2020 for overseas countries.

Since we have a responsibility to maintain a financially viable organisation, to meet these increases, the Committee has had to take the hard decision to raise Subscriptions for 2020 – for Australia by \$5.00 to \$35 and for Overseas Members, other than for Sri Lanka, by \$5 to \$45 per year. We will be leaving Sri Lankan subscriptions unchanged for the moment.

For the information of Members, I should mention that we have a project in hand of indexing *The Ceylankan* journal issues 1-86. Members may request Treasurer Deepak for a PDF format copy of the Index to be emailed to them for reference and ordering articles of interest. If a printed copy of an article is required, it will be mailed to Members for a fee of \$5.00.

Lastly, I would like to thank you all for being here tonight to attend the AGM and the Social which we have had pleasure in arranging for you. We hope you will enjoy the Entertainer and the traditional Singalong – which will move into dancing as well as singing at halfway point, as we did last year. Catering this year is by the well known Dish Catering.

It is very gratifying this year to see a record number of attendees at 168, and we have been unable to accommodate further requests for tickets. This evening has attracted a far higher than anticipated number and harder to fit into this our customary venue, so we would appreciate your understanding and forbearance. Perhaps we should move to a larger location for this function if you promise us your attendance next year as well! For now, I hope you have a wonderful evening, socialising and having fun! Life is for living, so enjoy and make the most of every moment tonight!

Pauline Gunewardene

President, Ceylon Society of Australia
Saturday, 30 November 2019

*A selection of
photographs of the
enchanted night*

by MAHES SELVADURAI
of Mahes Photography



• Dr Malini
Arumugam



• Special Guest Sri Lanka Consul-General Nimal Bandara with Pauline Gunawardene.



• Shirani Rodrigo tickling ivories ...



• Also maestro Roger Menezes served up music all night.



... accompanying the choir in festive mood (back from left) Aubrey Joachim, Kevin Ruberu; (front from left) Devika de Fonseka, Lucien Wijetunge, Virasmi Perera and Roshani Wahab.



• Organiser of donations for raffle draw prizes Harry de Sayrah along side his wife Imelda.



From left to right – Devika de Fonseka, Nirmali Silva, Srikanthi Wijetunge, Les Perera, Priyanga de Fonseka, Upali Dharmakirti and Lucien Wijetunge.



• Nirupa and Avinder Paul.



• Felix Stephen, Anton & Nelun Karunaratne.



• *Senanie and Sunil de Silva*



• *Aubrey & Nelum Joachim*



• *Pauline Gunewardene with Harry and Rohini Solomons.*



• *Kantha Abeysinghe, Dilrukshi Perera and Amira Cooke working on answers to the traditional Arumugam trivia quiz.*



• *Armed with his mike, Thiru Arumugam poses questions in his traditional trivia quiz, at which he always had the contenders at an edge...*



• *... Not this time, however, because Prof. Raja Bandaranayake beat him with an "all correct" answer sheet from questions posed from articles from the last four issues of The Ceylankan for the year.*



• *Amal & Roshani Wahab.*



• *Bernie Bolger & Arun Abey.*

Mike Wilson (1934-1995) *from diver to Sadhu* *by SBS*

Mike Wilson (see Figure 1) was an Englishman born in 1934. After initial National Service in the Armed Forces, including a spell as a Frogman, he came to Ceylon in 1956 with Arthur C Clarke. They had previously been diving together in the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland. They had no clear idea what they wanted to do in Ceylon, apart from diving

off the shores of Ceylon. They teamed up with the well-known Ceylonese diver, Rodney Jonklaas and carried out underwater safaris for tourists. Together they explored over 40 undersea wrecks and discovered treasures off the Great Bases.

In 1962 they decided to have a go at producing the first Sinhala colour feature film. It was titled "Ran Muthu Duwa" (Island of Treasures). The Producers were Shesha Palihakkara and Arthur Clarke and the Director and writer of the story line was Mike Wilson. The film catapulted into stardom Gamini Fonseka, Joe Abeywickrema and Jeevarani Kurukulasooriya. The film was a great success and was seen by an audience of one million, one-tenth of the population of Ceylon at that time.

For the first time in a Sinhala film, underwater scenes were included. These were filmed by Clarke and Wilson in the sea off Swami Rock in Trincomalee. Swami Rock is in Fort Frederick, in a promontory in the Trincomalee Harbour. It is the site of the legendary Koneswaram Sivan Temple, one of the five pre-historic Sivan Temples of Ceylon. In 1624 the Portuguese under the direction of Constantine de Saa looted the temple and then trained their ship's cannons on to the temple and blasted it off. The remains of the temple fell into the sea, four hundred feet below.

Swami Rock is also the site of Lover's Leap. Francisca van Reed was a young Dutch lady who was engaged to a Dutch Officer who broke off the engagement and sailed for Holland on 24 April 1687. She watched the ship sail away from Trincomalee Harbour and then jumped to her death from Swami Rock, into the sea four hundred feet below. Since then lovelorn couples have been jumping together from here and a fence has now been erected to deter future suicides.



• *Figure 1, Mike Wilson; courtesy of Richard Boyle.*

Before Wilson and Clarke had started diving at Swami Rock for scenes in the film *Ran Muthu Duwa*, the Priest in the Koneswara Temple told them to look out for the cylindrical stone Lingam, the representation of Siva, in the sea bed. During a break in the filming, Wilson dived down to the bed of the sea. At a depth of about hundred feet, he saw numerous rectangular stone blocks which had been part of the temple walls. Suddenly among them he spotted a cylindrical stone. The ancient Lingam of the historic temple had been found!

The Lingam was hauled up to the sea shore (see Figure 2) and handed over to the temple authorities. Because the ancient stone image had been slightly chipped in its fall into the sea, it could not be installed as the major object of veneration in the main temple. It was therefore installed in a subsidiary shrine.

Back in Colombo, Wilson went to the Colombo Museum Library to find out more about this particular Lingam. He discovered that it was a Swayambhuwa Lingam. Swayambhu is a Sanskrit word which means 'self-manifested'. This means that the Lingam is one that occurred naturally and was not carved by man. In ancient times in the Indian Sub-Continent there were 69 such Lingams, but very few of them are still in existence, and this is one of them.

Wilson went back to Trincomalee several times and would sit and meditate for hours in front of the Lingam. The Sunday Times of 09 March 1997 states that he said: "One is aware of its enormous antiquity. And one's mind is able to soar back to the distant past and 'see' all those who have sat there before".

In 1975, at the age of 40 years, Mike Wilson decided to renounce household life and adopted the name of Swami Siva Kalki. He decided to live in a hut in Kataragama. He explained the reason for his choice of abode in an article in the Sunday Times of 18 November 1990 "It changed me completely. It was 'diksha' and 'darshan' all in one. I understood something, how I had spent many lives here in Sri Lanka already, how this was not my first. I was prompted to go to Kataragama. One needs a place to sit and ponder; that place for me was Kataragama".

He continued to live in Kataragama for ten years until 1985. Due to continued bouts of malaria he moved to Colombo. He lived the life of a Swami for twenty years and passed away on 26 February 1995, twenty-five years ago.



• *Figure 2, Lingam discovery. Courtesy Richard Boyle.*

My thoughts on 'Global Warming' by VICTOR MELDER

Up to about some twenty odd years ago I believed 'global warming' was an agenda by some sections of society to push their message of gloom and doom and scare those who were lukewarm to it. The more I read about it, the more I believed that it was a 'non-issue'.

One sleepless night whilst in bed, I mused upon it and after much thought, came to the conclusion that 'global warming' was happening and mankind was the main contributor to it. These are the reasons that made me come to my conclusion:

My father, was stationed as engine driver, CGR, at Nawalapitiya on two occasions, 1945 – 1951 and again 1956 – 1960. Nawalapitiya was an important railway town in the upcountry region, it is 87 miles 32 chains from Colombo and 589 mt or 1,932 ft above mean sea level. As such one could call it a cool, temperate climate.

When Dad moved there in 1945, I was 10 years old and recall many days of thick fog, which lasted until about 10.00am, then cleared to a haze and set in again by 4.00pm. I remember questioning my Father about the fog as the trains were worked.

He told me that on many an occasion they had to run at reduced speed due to poor visibility and when they came to where the semaphore signal was, they could see nothing looking, and he had to send the fireman up the ladder to feel the semaphore arm and see if it was on "off" position or "on" position.

This foggy weather continued for a few years, but getting less and less severe, so much so that when Dad left Nawalapitiya at the end of 1951, foggy days were few and far between.

Travelling by train from Colombo to Nawalapitiya, the Coconut Tree/Coconut Palm (*Cocos Nucifera*) was a common sight all the way from Colombo to Gampola (78 miles 29 chains from Colombo, and 567 mt or 1,870 ft above mean sea level).

As one left the environs of Gampola travelling to Nawalapitiya the Coconut Palm disappeared from sight and was not seen again until Badulla. The climate at Nawalapitiya was too cool for the palm to grow and many who tried growing it failed.

When my Father was stationed at Nawalapitiya for the second time (1956 – 1960), there were no more foggy days, whilst the noon day sun blazed down more fiercely.

Today the Coconut Palm grows freely in the Nawalapitiya town environs and have been thriving there for some thirty or forty years. Which means the

climate was warmer than before and now conducive to the coconut palm.

When we migrated to Melbourne from Sri Lanka 1968, we lived for a while in East Thornbury, prior to moving to Broadmeadows. I took a bus from the front door of our home to the Fairfield railway station and then took train to the City. We used to have dense fog in Melbourne then, at one time we had dense fog which NEVER lifted for ten days.

During the past 50 years here we have never again seen such fog, and rarely do we get fog anymore.

All that I have narrated points to the fact that 'global warming' is real and happening whether we like it or not.



•Palms growing in Nawalapitiya.
(Source: Google)

PATTINI -the dispassionate wife

"Chip! it will certainly rain", says Hitihamy our tracker picking his teeth with a wild thorn and looking up at the fishing hawk that hovered above us, calling his shrill note of Ko-as-kok, "we have no shelter and we shall be well soaked," he grumbles. Rains traditionally expected at Sinhalese New Year seemed imminent.

Hitihamy is a jungle villager from distant Panama. He walks with his right shoulder hung low. His teeth are betel-stained and decayed; his eyes are beady like those of a koel. He treads the jungle game trails with the cunning of a stalking leopard and as silently as a hunting loris.

In an open faced rock cave, nine miles away from the camp, near Rodipokuna, we stayed until the rains abated, listening to Hitihamy's quaint tales of Pattini Amma, in whom he had great faith, as all jungle folk are prone to do.

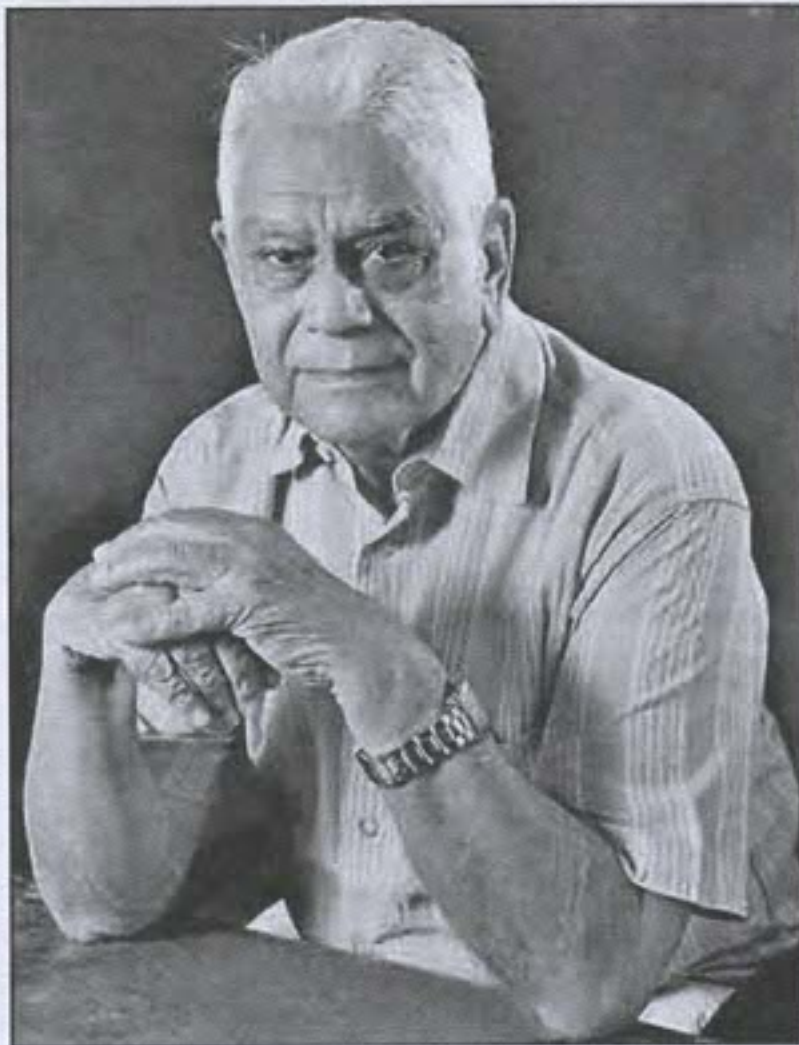
Pattini or Kannahi Amma is one of the few popularly venerated female deities of Sinhalese mythology. She is often propitiated upon the occurrence of epidemics, particularly smallpox. Pattini is reputed to spread disease among communities that offend her. Though a permanent resident of this country now she is said to originate from the South Indian coast of Coromandel.

Silappathikaram, a Tamil epic of the 2nd Century A.D. gives the life story and miraculous deeds of Kannahi, who was posthumously worshipped as Pattini – the name by which we know her today.

(From *Ceylon Vagabond* by Lala Adithiya)

APPRECIATIONS

Gerard Edward Scott Dirckze (1929-2019)



Gerard Edward Scott Dirckze known as "Scott" to all his friends and acquaintances, passed away in October last year after a brief illness. He had turned 90 years of age earlier that year, and was a man of wide interests, and great achievements in life.

Born in 1929, he belonged to a family which originated with the 18th Century marriage in Galle, of its progenitor in Ceylon, Roelof Dirckze from Stockholm, Sweden. The only child of his parents Dr Herbert and Mollie Dirckze, Scott was educated at Royal College, after which he completed a Classics Degree in Cambridge University, to return to Ceylon (as the country was then known) and landing his first job as Latin master and Class Teacher at his old school. It was at Royal in 1951, that I first met him, he as a teacher, and I as a student in Latin. Having taught at Royal for about a year, he joined the Bank of Ceylon as an Executive also for about a year. He then joined Mackwoods Ltd as an Executive during which he acquired an interest in Accountancy and qualified as an Accountant. When our Past President the late Tony Peries was a Director of George Stuart and Co, he was instrumental in recruiting Scott as a Senior Accounts Executive in 1962. Two years later, Scott was appointed a Director. Tony in his memoirs made the following observation: "Fortunately he was outstandingly intelligent and resourceful, and very soon looked on as a valuable addition to the

board.". Scott was appointed Managing Director of George Steuarts in the mid 1970s, and steered the Company through tumultuous political and economic changes which the country faced during those years. His capabilities were recognised by successive governments serving as one of the first Directors of the Janatha Estates Development Board (JEDB), and also served as a Director of the Peoples Bank for some years. Over the years he held a large portfolio of shares in the Company amounting to about one fifth of the Company's shares.

Scott joined the Ceylon Society of Australia in around the year 2008 having being introduced by his friend Tony Peries, and continued as a member until his death. He had been a regular attendee at the Colombo Chapter meetings of the Society. I cannot claim to be a friend of Scott although I had his regular acquaintance when I worked at Walker Sons and Co as Manager of Market Research. Walkers were then managed by George Steuarts under an agreement with the Walker family and three of its Directors worked virtually full time at Walkers, managing the Company most efficiently. Scott together with Trevor Moy and Trevor Rosmale-Cocq were the Directors from GS that managed Walkers. That arrangement was terminated after about five years at the request of George Steuarts and Co, not long after the international conglomerate Anglo Indonesian Corporation, a part of Sime Darby Holdings, acquired a controlling interest in Walkers.

When the late Tony Peries fell ill in early 2016, Scott was very solicitous about his health and on a few occasions called me on the phone to inquire after Tony's health. He was reluctant to speak directly to Tony as he was not sure of the state of his health, but on one occasion asked me to convey a message to him viz. that if he desired to come to Sri Lanka, that he would look after him and have him treated at the best hospital there. I conveyed the message to Tony, who smiled upon hearing about that magnanimous gesture from his old friend and colleague. Scott was a very wealthy man by any standard. He inherited house and property including a 50 acre coconut property, houses in Mount Lavinia and Park Road, plus his home in Battaramulla, to which he added more acquisitions by judicious investments. A bachelor right through his life, he was generous to a fault. I will relate a little story to illustrate his generosity. Most of his adult life he lived with his father Herbert in the family home in Park Road, Havelock Town. One of the domestic aides there by the name Sunil Jayatissa became his personal friend right through life, and after the latter's death he took upon himself to help in the education of Sunil's son and daughter. The son was sent to England to study accountancy, and was financed to purchase a property in London. He also helped the daughter by purchasing a house and property in Colombo for her to reside in. That was Scott at his generous best. Knowing the nature of Scott

I am sure that there may be other acts of generosity of which I am not aware, as he was not a person given to bragging.

The term "renaissance man" has been used rather loosely to describe people of lesser calibre, but it certainly fits the persona of Scott Dirckze, a man of very wide interests including art, archaeology, classical music, wild life, etc the list goes on and on. His fascination with the Citroen motor car commenced with his acquisition of a new 1960s Citroen Sedan which he used for many years. The light blue car was something he was so impressed with that he thought out a scheme for the manufacture of the Citroen 2CV which he described as "a basic, but highly ingenious small car immensely popular with the less affluent in France." Sometime in 1971 he mooted the idea with his former classmate at Royal College, Anil Moonesinghe, then Minister for Transport, who was supportive of the idea. Everything was set up for the project where Anil had already fabricated 2 CV chassis at the CTB workshops in Werahera which impressed the Citroen representative Jaques Eyraud. Going through the bureaucratic quagmire however frustrated the French who having waited long for a government response was told to produce a feasibility report, which evoked the response "our company is in the business of manufacturing automobiles, not paper".! Sadly the project did not proceed any further.

As a major shareholder of George Steuart and Co, even after he retired, he was concerned about the company and its business, and also its reputation. Sometime in about 2002 the Company decided to allow a person declared a bankrupt in the UK, to purchase some 600, 000 odd shares which gave that person controlling interest. Scott was vehemently opposed to this transaction and having failed to convince the directors of his concerns, he chose to file action in Court. His case was primarily handled by Corporate activist/lawyer the late Nihal Ameresekera and it took several years of litigation for finality, the court holding that "I am of the view that the petitioner cannot take strong ground that the transfer of 625,000 shares is illegal and not valid in law." I had the opportunity of reading through the brief prepared by Nihal Ameresekera which ran into 600 odd pages, and was not surprised that the case was dismissed as the arguments were disjointed, laboured, and unimpressive. I returned the brief long after the case was heard, through his nephew Chris. Scott felt so morally denied that he even sought the intervention of the President, to no avail. As the law stood at that time anyone bankrupted in a Court in Sri Lanka cannot hold shares/directorships in Companies registered in Sri Lanka but did not recognise bankruptcy that may have occurred in another country. This case caused him much stress despite friends advising him to off load his shareholding and re investing elsewhere.

However some years later a new investor acquired all of Scotts shares plus that of most other major shareholders, and that must have been a great relief to him.

Scott Dirckze will be remembered as an honourable man, a man who could be depended on in any circumstances. He was humorous, witty and great company. Being a bachelor, he did not leave any procreated family, but his domestic staff including his faithful driver, cook and two houseboys looked after him like their own, and I have no doubt Scott would have amply rewarded them. An extraordinarily talented man blessed with a remarkable personality has gone to his eternal rest.

R.I. P Scott Dirckze

— HUGH KARUNANAYAKE

And a tribute from a nephew...

Humanitarian. Corporate leader. Entrepreneur. Agriculturist. Raconteur. Citroen aficionado. Historian. Classical musicophile. Art collector. Consummate host. Explorer. Gentleman. Friend. These are a few of the words that are synonymous with the name Scott Dirckze to many even though he will first always be Uncle Scott to me.

My first memory of Uncle Scott was when I was a very young tyke, probably around early 1970. We had gone on a family vacation and visited him and his father Dr. Herbert Dirckze at their farm in Anuradhapura. Since that early memory, Uncle Scott was a constant in my life over the next five decades. He was a dear, dear friend to my parents (he was the best man at their wedding in April 1963) and I cannot think of a time when he was not an integral part of our lives.

My brother and I used to love accompanying our parents when they regularly visited Uncle Scott and Uncle Herbert at Park Road and at the various George Stuart bungalows they lived in. After my parents passed and he retired from George Steuarts, my exchanges with him only intensified not only because he represented a living connection to my parents but also because it was such an education. In all the decades that I knew Uncle Scott, I always came away from a conversation with him having learned something new or fascinating.

When I thought about writing about Uncle Scott, I realised that such an endeavor could reach Tolstoyian proportions very quickly. So, I decided to focus briefly on just three aspects of his personality that I respected tremendously and found most endearing. First, his role as a humanitarian, following faithfully, the Scriptures as outlined in Matthew: assisting those in need without drawing any attention to himself.

From a very young age, I realised that despite all the material and professional success Uncle Scott

enjoyed, he had a strong sense of social justice and the fact that it was imperative that those in his position look out for those in need, not in a paternalistic or condescending manner but with a sincere desire to offer an outstretched hand to boost someone up the economic and social ladder. Compassion and kindness were paramount in Uncle Scott's personality.

Second, his prowess as a raconteur, a humorist, in fact, a Sri Lankan Mark Twain to me. How many of us came away from a conversation with him doubled up in laughter? Ever since I remember being around Uncle Scott, I absolutely loved his sense of humor and his ability to relate hilarious stories.

Even in one of his darkest periods, earlier on this year at Nawaloka Hospital, when I asked him how he was doing, he replied: "Well, given that I was recently subjected to medieval torture techniques, pretty good." He had just completed a therapy session with his physiotherapist. Regardless of the health issues he was enduring, he still approached life with a twinkle in his eye, a mischievous smile and that inimitable sense of humor.

Third, his extensive knowledge of a vast array of topics and subjects, buttressed by his remarkable memory of people, events and places going back decades. When going on trips out of Colombo with Uncle Scott, I used to be constantly amazed at his exceptional memory of how to get from place to place in the most expeditious manner. It was almost like he had a Google Maps system in his brain long before Google was even invented!

I do know not many other individuals with the unquenchable thirst for knowledge that Uncle Scott had; he was constantly seeking new information and trying to educate himself on emerging topics. For instance, how many octogenarians out there learn how to use a computer, pick up the intricacies of an internet search system and then go on YouTube to learn interesting recipes? Or how many octogenarians out there retain an instructor to learn a new language (Tamil)? Not many.

At the outset, I enumerated the attributes that came to my mind when I thought of Uncle Scott. The range of those qualities clearly exemplify that he was a man of wide interests and many areas of expertise, a polymath, a Renaissance man.

But above all those qualities, what was really appealing about Uncle Scott was his humanity, his empathy and considerateness for those he encountered on life's journey. He made us all smarter, kinder and more tender-hearted; thank you, Uncle Scott for your friendship and the inspiring way you lived your life. A wise man once said "Try and leave this world a little better than you found it." Uncle Scott did that and more.

"Well done, good and faithful servant."

Sujit C.

(From Daily FT of 06.12.2019)

Lakshmi De Silva (11 March 1943 – 16 December 2019)

I was deeply saddened to receive a call from my dear friend Lakshman in Sydney to tell me that his dear wife Lakshmi passed away that day. Although I was aware that she was undergoing treatment for ovarian cancer, I sincerely believed that she would pull through. She deserved to come through



• Lakshmi De Silva
unscathed. She was such a lovely person who meant no offence to anyone, always ready to help and to make the lives of others as happy and comfortable as possible.

Lakshmi known to all as "Lucky" was a remarkable woman, very endearing in her ways and always ready to be of assistance. I recall with gratitude how she importuned my wife to have mammogram scans done on a regular basis as a precautionary measure to detect early signs of breast cancer. It was extremely unfortunate and a cruel stroke of fate that someone so concerned about the welfare of a friend had to succumb to the dreaded illness herself. Up until she was hospitalised with her final illness, she used to phone my wife Tulsi unfailingly, every week, inquiring about her health and offering words of comfort.

When we migrated to Australia in 1984, within a week of our arrival, we were invited to dinner by Lakshman and Lucky. Lakshman was my classmate ever since we joined Royal College together in 1946, he from Ladies College (!) and I from Royal Prep School and we have been close friends ever since. Lakshman qualified in medicine and specialised in Virology and served in the UK, and in Sydney from where he retired. They raised two lovely children Keshani and Suresh both of whom also qualified as doctors and worked in the specialised fields of Pathology, and Radiology respectively.

Born in March 1943, to her parents Dr and Mrs MH Saddhasena, her father was Member of Parliament for Ambalangoda for many years, Lucky had her education at Visakha Vidyalaya, Bambalapitiya, Colombo, as a hosteller. At the age of 21 the vivacious Lucky married Lakshman de Silva, and the two of them were a great partnership celebrating their Golden Anniversary in 2014. Lucky and Lakshman made their home in Wollstonecraft where their apartment was the venue for many a lunch and dinner hosted by them. In the early years Lakshman had no qualms about knocking down a beer or a G and T, but in later years he became a teetotaler and a vegetarian as well, but Lucky always ensured

that their guests like me who liked a shot or two were kept happy.

Lucky was always the gracious hostess. In later years when they moved to a self serviced apartment in Chatswood, they hosted guests either at the Malabar Restaurant in Crow's Nest or the Peking Restaurant in Chatswood.

Lakshman and Lucky joined the Ceylon Society of Australia almost at the very inception over 20 years ago. Lucky together with other close friends like Lena Wijeratne, Nalini Kappagoda, Inez Sourjah, Malini Thirumugam, Srin Peries, Imelda de Sayrah, and my wife Tulsi were an informal group who helped in ensuring that the social aspects following each quarterly meeting went without remiss. It was a wonderful example of selfless service which is continued to this day.

Lucky lived a happy and comfortable life, raising two loving children and being a loving and affectionate grandmother to her five grandkids. Two of her grandsons are medical students and have entered the family profession of medicine, representing the fourth consecutive generation in the profession. She is survived by husband Dr Lakshman, daughter Dr Keshani and son-in-law Dr John Moore, son Dr

Suresh de Silva and daughter-in-law Katja and five grandchildren Oliver, Nick, Mathew, Issabella and Anna.

May she attain the Supreme Bliss of Nirvana

– Hugh Karunanayake

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. Occasionally, we may inadvertently fail to indicate this important fact, as in the case of the Late Dr R.K.(Rajpal) de Silva (see page 30 of J88 - November 2019) who was a Member since 2002. We trust readers will accept our apologies for these omissions.



PRINCE STREET COLOMBO, IN ABOUT 1870

A rare early photograph of Prince Street, Colombo taken around 1860. On the left is a Dutch cottage which gave way to building the offices which later housed the Senate. The adjoining two storied building was the original office of Thomas Cook, the travel company. On the right, facing Queen Street is part of a façade of another Dutch cottage. The two storied building adjoining the Dutch cottage on the right is most likely the offices of JM Robertson and Co founded in 1849. Robertson's was acquired by George Steuart and Co. about a 100 years later. In the distance on the left is probably the building of Colombo Apothecaries Co. The single storied building adjoining it was demolished in 1906 to make way for the new building of Whiteaway Laidlaw and Co. which were till then housed in Amen's Corner beside the Chatham Street Clock Tower.



NEW MEMBERSHIP RATES effective 1st JANUARY 2020

CSA Annual membership fees have now **increased as follows:**

- **General Subscriptions for Australia:** Increase from \$30 to \$35 per year;
- **Pensioners' subscriptions:** Unchanged at \$25 per year (to be reviewed in 2020)
- **Overseas members from USA/UK/Canada/Israel/Thailand:** Increase from \$40 to \$45 per year.
- **Sri Lanka:** Unchanged at Rs.3000 per year.

Please arrange payment of Membership subscriptions for 2020 (which are now due) and 2019 if still due, together with any arrears where applicable. Payments could be made by an Australian dollar cheque in favour of "Ceylon Society of Australia" posted to Deepak Pritamdas, Treasurer CSA, P O Box 489, Blacktown, NSW 2148, Australia. Alternatively, a direct bank transfer could be made to the CSA Bank Account in Commonwealth Bank: BSB 062308,

Account No. 1003 8725. Please do not fail to include your name as payee, otherwise we will have no way of identifying the payee. We have had payments recently without the payee's name and we are unable to identify who the senders were.

For payments from overseas, if you have difficulty in sending the payment in Australian dollars, you could please send a bank draft or bank transfer in US dollars or Pounds Sterling. We regret that personal cheques in foreign currencies are not acceptable. Since our Bank charges us \$10 Australian dollars for converting a foreign currency payment to Australian dollars, please add \$10 Australian dollars to the amount due and convert to US dollars by multiplying by 0.80, or if sending in Pounds Sterling, multiply by 0.60. These multipliers reflect approximately the current rates of exchange used by our Bank. For overseas bank transfers our Commonwealth Bank Swift Code is: CTBAAU2S

If you need any clarification please contact our Treasurer, Deepak Pritamdas, by email to: deepakpsl@yahoo.com. Also please send him an email when you send direct bank transfers.



A Warm Welcome to our New Members

MAHINDA WIJESINGHE, Battaramulla
Sri Lanka.



CSA General Meetings for 2020

General Meetings:

- Sunday 31 May 6.30 PM to 11.00 PM;
- Sunday 30 August 6.30 PM to 11.00 PM.

AGM, Dinner & Social

- Saturday 28 November 6.00 PM AGM (for members only).
6.30 PM Dinner, Sing-along & Dancing.

WE NEED SPEAKERS

The CSA welcomes professionals and others interested in speaking at our public meetings on a subject of their choice. Meetings are held in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo and take place quarterly in February, May, August and November of each year.

If you have anyone in mind, please contact CSA President Pauline Gunewardene on (Mob) +61 419 447 665 (email: paulineg@ozemail.com.au or Melbourne Chapter Convenor Hemal Gurusinghe (Mob) + 61 427 725 740 (email: hemguru@hotmail.com) or Colombo Chapter Secretary Anandalal Nanayakkara 077 327 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.

Biography should be written by an acute enemy.

— Earl of Balfour; Observer 1927.

Public Meeting SYDNEY

Sunday 23 February 2020

The first General meeting for 2020 of the Ceylon Society of Australia will be on Sunday 23 February 2020 commencing at 6.30 PM at the Pennant Hills Community Centre Hall, corner Ramsay Road (off Yarrara Road). Parking is available at the rear of the Pennant hills Public Library. Entry is free and members and their guests are welcome.

The guest speaker on the evening is



DR RAJA C. Bandaranayake

MBBS, PhD, MEd, FRACS

who will speak on

The History and Development of Medical Education in Sri Lanka

The talk will focus on the establishment and development of three systems of health care and education, with particular emphasis on allopathic medicine.

The origins of education for allopathic medicine in Sri Lanka and its historical developments over the last century and a half will be examined, together with the forces which led to the rapid increase in the number of medical schools over the last fifty years, as well as the privatization of medical education.

The practice of traditional medicine in Sri Lanka is over three thousand years old, and has a strong history and culture. It has its origins in three ancient systems of alternative medicine, with traditions passed on from generation to generation, or sometimes lost through secrecy. The development of systemization through education has been a relatively recent 20th century endeavour.

While the practice of acupuncture and formalised education for its practice are apparently of recent origin, one theory has it that the practice really originated in Sri Lanka and not in China. Educational institutes for training in acupuncture have now been set up. Unlike in some other countries, training in acupuncture has not been integrated with training in allopathic medicine.

The continuing development of medical education in Sri Lanka will be looked at in the context of the explosion of knowledge and skills now required for the current and future practice of medicine.

Bio-data

Raja graduated in Medicine from the University of Ceylon, obtained his PhD from the University of London Guy's Hospital Medical School, and Masters in Education from the University of Southern California. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in recognition of his services to the College as Chairman of the Anatomy and Examinations Committees and Deputy Chairman of the Board of Examiners. He was Technical Advisor to the Australian Medical Council Examinations Committee for foreign medical graduates.

Raja was Associate Professor and Academic Director in the School of Medical Education at the University of New South Wales. After retirement, he took up the position of Professor of Anatomy in the College of Medicine of the Arabian Gulf University in Bahrain. He retired from full-time academic duties in 2003, but continued to undertake international consultancies in Medical Education until 2019.

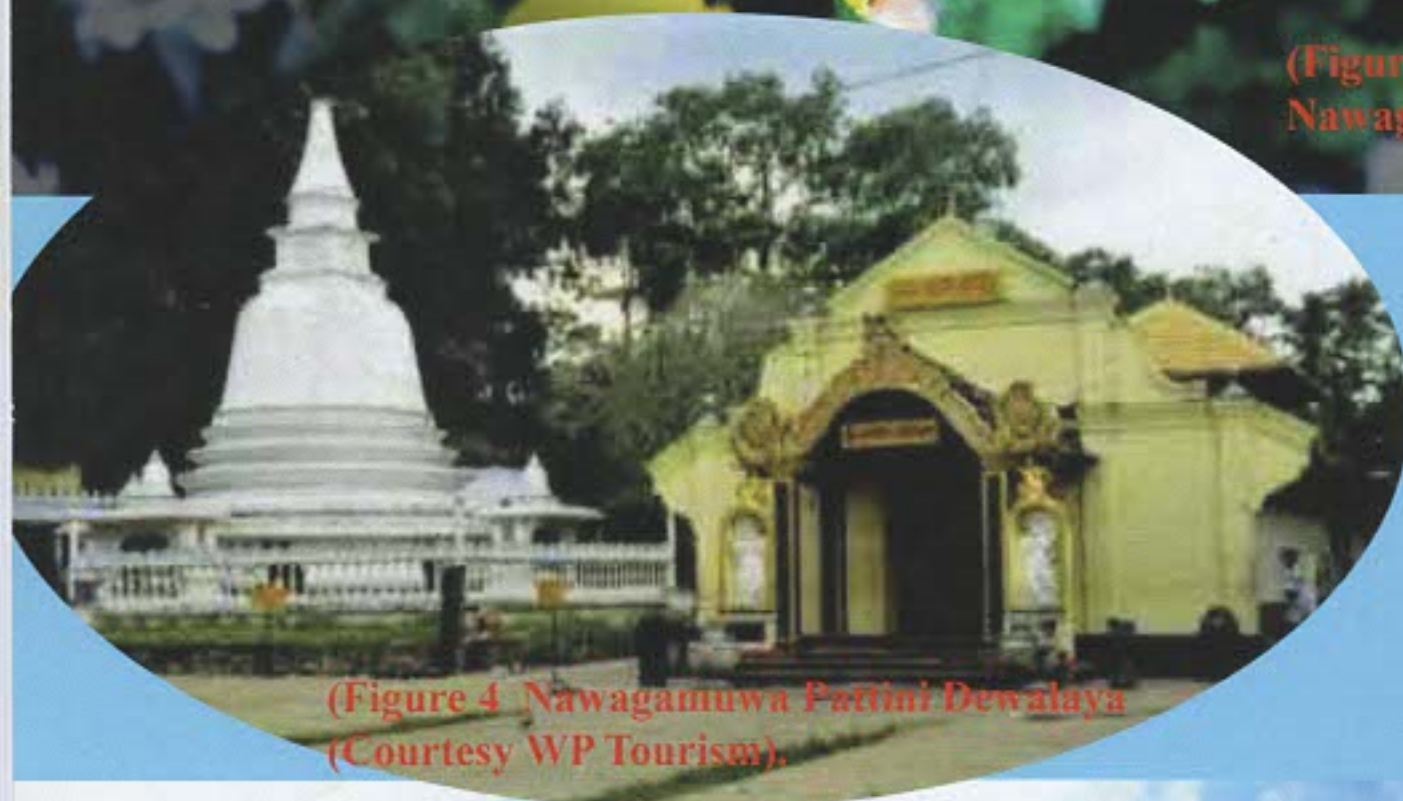
Raja is a consultant of international repute, having undertaken many assignments in 29 countries for international bodies such as the World Health Organisation, World Bank and World Federation for Medical Education, and on the invitation of health and educational institutions in those countries. He has served on many expert committees and working parties at international and national levels in the field of Medical Education. He was a member of the Task Force of the World Federation for Medical Education to determine international standards in medical education, and on the Core Committee of the Institute for International Medical Education (China Medical Board of New York) to identify global minimal essential requirements. In recognition of his services to medical education in developing countries, he was awarded the Fred Katz Memorial Medal by the Australasian and New Zealand Association for Medical Education in 1991, where he served as President.

SOCIAL: After a brief question time, a special Social will follow, to farewell His Excellency Mr Skandakumar. Those able are requested to kindly bring non-sweet savoury finger food. Please avoid cakes with icing as the general preferences are for plain cakes, sandwiches and savoury pastries. To avoid duplication of food items please contact our Social Convenor Amal Wahab on (02) 9402 7735. As an alternative, a donation to the CSA to help defray costs could be made at the meeting.

I paint objects as I think them, not as I see them.
Pablo Picasso – On Cubism 1959



(Figure 5) Life size marble Pattini statue
Nawagamuwa (Courtesy Pradeep Danba)



(Figure 4 Nawagamuwa Pattini Dewalaya
(Courtesy WP Tourism)).



(Figure 2) Robert Brownrigg
Governor of Ceylon
- Courtesy Wikipedia.



(Figure 6, left) Pungudutivu
Kannaki Temple,
(Courtesy Wikipedia).