

Keeping Our Heritage
CSA

The Ceylankam

The Journal of the Ceylon Society of Australia

COVER STORY

BRIDE by Justin Daraniyagala

From Dr Sirilal Fernando's talk on Justin Daraniyagala to Melbourne Chapter. Synopsis by Hugh Karunanayake.



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The Ceylankan

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From the Editor

The Editor returned some days ago after a magnificently relaxing holiday cruising round New Zealand. Well earned, even if he says so. Naturally, he was looking forward to simply adding the finishing touches to this issue, which had been almost completed before taking off. But that was not going to happen he soon discovered, An Editor's lot is never meant to be easy. A veil of uncertainty seemed to hover over our quarterly meeting taking place as scheduled.

Fortunately, however, our enterprising President Pauline Gunewardene decisively took up the matter and dispatched the spectre into the shadows.

Now, come end of the year, we sometimes see a few changes in the hierarchy of the Society and we take this opportunity to say grateful au revoirs to those relinquishing their well-served positions on the committee and, at the same time, call out a warm welcome to those taking their places.

We say 'goodbye' to two stalwart founder members of the CSA, Dr Robert Sourjah who retires from the committee he served for 51 years and Chandra Senaratne, who was Social Convenor since inception of the CSA. We welcome an amiable Amal Wahab who was elected to Chandra's position and wish him a long and successful tenure.

Changes are also happening at the Colombo Chapter with Deshamanya Tissa Devendra relinquishing office as Convenor/Local President after many years running the Chapter with distinction. Former Secretary of the Chapter Tony Saldin was elected to succeed him.

Also Harry de Sayrah has notched half a century as a member of the International Lions Clubs. Keep roaring Harry!

As you may recall from the previous issue, CSA Vice-President Dr Srilal Fernando, guest speaker at the Melbourne Chapter quarterly meeting in August last, chose the looked-forward to topic of artist Justin Daraniyagala. The good doctor illustrated his talk with images of Daraniyagala's finest paintings. With our intrepid Hugh Karunanayake writing the synopsis titled "Born to Blush Unseen", we used those images to make up our cover story. You will lap up our presentation with pleasure, no doubt.

Once again Thiru Arumugam delves into his trusty archives and comes up comparing two unlikely '19th Century rebels with a cause' - Saradial of Sri Lankan fame (or is it notriety?) and Jandamarra, an Aboriginal from Kimberley in Western Australia. Another classic piece of the Arumugam research making it a fascinating piece of history. Another erudite article is by Dr Palitha Kohona who examines objectively China's interest in Sri Lanka (an interest that goes back over two millania) pointing out that with Sri Lanka's '200 mile exclusive economic zone and, possibly, a vast area of sea bed to which we have lodged a claim since 2009' would make it a prosperous nation with careful management. A thought-provoking study; a must read.

While M. Asoka T. de Silva continues with Part VI of his series on Brief biographies of Classical writers and historians who wrote on Sri Lanka, Part III of Dr Leonard Pinto's piece of research on Natural History of Crabs of Negambo Lagoon is concluded with this issue.

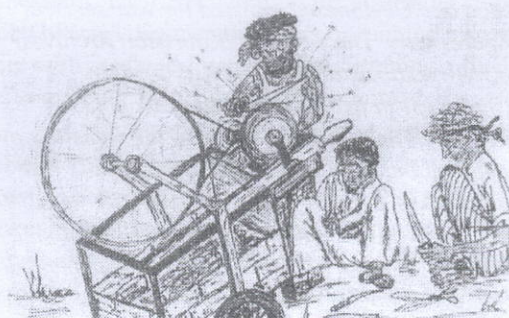
What can I say? Enjoy!



Those itinerant tradesmen!

'Itinerant tradesmen were part of our life' wrote CSA member the Late **Vama Vamadevan** in The Ceylankan of November 2006 (J36). This is an excerpt from Vama's article "What happened to the Itinerant Tradesman?"

In addition to foodstuff, there were also services brought to the doorstep. The knife sharpener with his home assembled contraption from various parts of a bicycle comes to mind. A discarded bicycle wheel, a make do pedal made from wood, a circular grinding stone completed his machine. He would pump the pedal to get the stone revolving at some speed, and he would be in business. His shouts "Chanai! Chanai!" (Tamil) in Wellawatte, Kotahena areas and "Kathurumuwath, Kathurumuwath" (Sinhala) in other areas would bring out the servants



"Kathurumuwath" karaya and awestruck kids.

with all the blunt instruments in the household. His activity always attracted kids in the vicinity who watched in awe this contraption and the reddish sparks which flew in all directions. Mind you, neither he nor his audience was ever protected from these flying sparks with safety goggles etc. That was another era.

Our Readers write

Joy to read

Reading the latest issue of *The Ceylankan* (J84) gave me great pleasure. I would like to congratulate you on your excellent work as the editor and convey my sincere thanks for the two articles on Ivor Denis [by Dr Tony Donaldson] and Thomas Shadrach James [by Thiru Arumugam], well-written and lavishly illustrated.

All of us, members of the CSA, owe you a great debt of thanks for the dedication and skill you bring to the task of continually producing issues that are a joy to read.

VALENTINE PERERA, Mosman, NSW 2088

What a wonderful story!

I read Thiru Arumugam's article on Thomas Shadrach James (J84) with a great deal of interest. What a wonderful story! I have read a lot about the interaction between "Ceylonese" and Australian Aborigines, but never came across this significant piece of history. Full marks for his research skills. A copy of this should be kept at the Sri Lanka High Commission in Canberra.

Thanks for sharing.

MAITHRI PANAGODA, St Ives, NSW 2075

Priceless pair

Just finished reading your latest issue (J84). Whatever shall we do without Hugh Karunanayake and Thiru Arumugam? They are priceless!

In his article about the Pioneering Planters of Maskeliya, Hugh makes a passing reference to the number of Ceylonese soldiers who served in WW1. I recently wrote a piece, which was published in the ISLAND newspaper of 10th November, where I commented on the same subject as follows: "Let me begin with Numbers. How many persons recorded as "Ceylonese" enlisted for war service? The figures vary. The website "Kabristan Archives" (<https://www.kabristan.org.uk/>) lists 2,351 (1,218+1,133) in its "Ceylon Roll of Honour", quoting the "Times of India". But in the website's own alphabetical index, of those who served in the War and are recorded as residents of Ceylon, totals 6,640. Sergei De Silva-Ranasinghe, Military Historian, quoted the "Times of Ceylon Christmas Number" of 1917 "Ceylon Roll of Honour" which lists 1250 who enlisted in Ceylon, 351 who signed up in England, 438 who enlisted on their own account and 156 volunteers funded by the "Times Fund": a total of 2195. Dr. C.G. Uragoda, I understand, quotes a much greater figure—from a 140-page book titled "Ceylon roll of honour. A record of service in the Great War, 1914—1918", also published by *Times of Ceylon* - which lists 25,200 Ceylonese who took part in the war; of

whom 103 were in the Roll of Honour and two won the Victoria's Cross. I have, I must admit, not seen the document. Since Ceylonese had fought under the Colony's flag and also under those of Britain, India, France, South Africa etc. the correct number may never be known."

All the best and may *The Ceylankan* prosper!

SOMASIRI DEVENDRA, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka.

Advertising helps!

I received today, the latest issue of *The Ceylankan* (J84) and I must say you have done yourself proud with the lovely photographs of Galle on the cover.

Yes, I too feel that the only way to keep this popular publication alive is by advertising – don't forget Google's success is due to advertising!

JEREMY DE LIMA, Vermont South, VIC. 3133

CORRECTION

In the article *The Tea Planter and his Cook* by Hugh Karunanayake (published in the November 2018 issue - J84) the last paragraph was inadvertently omitted. The error is very much regretted and our apologies to the author for any inconvenience this error may have caused. The missing paragraph is reproduced here for the benefit of our readers:

There are many aspects to this narrative which provide links to the evolution of Sri Lankan cuisine as it is known today. Western originated aspects of modern Sri Lankan cuisine like steaks, grills, soups, desserts, breads, as indeed are the customs and manners and etiquette at the table; all belong to influences from our former colonial overlords. The British planting community (of which Loudon Shand was a prominent example) which was politically and socially very powerful in Sri Lanka in the 19th and early 20th Centuries gave patronage to a culinary tradition which dominated the metropolitan scene in Ceylon. That culinary heritage is not only here to stay, but has amalgamated with indigenous culinary practices as well as influences from other countries of the orient, to produce what can be described as modern Sri Lankan cuisine. Santiago's story also throws some light on the manner in which labour that crossed the Palk Strait to serve in the plantation industries of Ceylon, also helped in the development of subsidiary professions such as those which provided service in the house, the garden, the kitchen, and at the table. Their little appreciated but significant role in the social development of Ceylon has gone unnoticed and deserves recognition. To quote the poet John Milton "they also serve who only stand and wait" !!

HAPPENINGS

Dr Robert Sourjah steps down from the CSA Committee



Dr Robert Sourjah with his lovely wife Inez..

Dr Robert Sourjah who has served the Society continuously as a Committee member for nearly 15 years, has decided to step down.

The highly regarded Dr Robert Sourjah has been a keen and enthusiastic member of CSA following almost in the footsteps of his son Rohan, who was our founding Honorary Secretary when the Society was formed 21 years ago in 1997.

Dr Sourjah needs no introduction to members of the Society, especially those residing in Sydney. He and his wife Inez have been the virtual pulse of the Society ever since they took up residence in Australia. The Sourjahs, known across Sydney for their legendary hospitality, are wonderful hosts and there is almost never a week end that passes without some event or other being celebrated in their lovely home.

As most readers would know Robert was the skipper of the first Trinity College Bradby Shield side that played against Royal College in the inaugural Bradby Shield rugby encounter in 1945. His counterpart from Royal, the late Dr CDL (Derrick) Fernando, also like Robert, joined Medical College and they both passed out as doctors, later to be Physicians.

During his medical school days, Robert continued to play Rugby for the Havelocks and holds the distinction of captaining the champion Clifford Cup winning Havelocks team of 1951. The only other member of that team left to reminisce over the joy of that victory is CSA member Hugh Aldons, also a nonagenarian living in Melbourne.

Robert also holds another unique record. He and both his sons Rohan and Lalin captained Trinity College at rugby, and all three have the unique distinction of being awarded the "lion" for their prowess in the game, a record not equalled by any other father/son combination. With all that connection

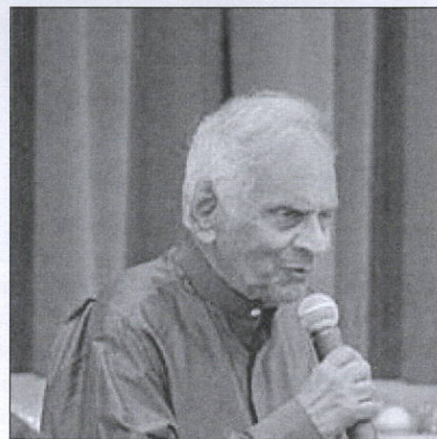
with Trinity College, it is no surprise to see the Sourjah home as the centre of any activity relating to the old school in Sydney.

Everyone refers to him as the "Grand Old man" of Trinity. He is undoubtedly grand in many ways, but certainly not old, either in spirit or attitude. As many would recall, when Robert reached that oft elusive milestone of 90 years in 2015, more than a hundred friends and well wishers gathered at a function centre in Sydney to join in celebrating that remarkable event.

With his retirement from the Committee, the Society will miss his wise counsel, but no doubt will often be consulted as we move along in the years to come.

May Robert and Inez be blessed with many more years of happy, enjoyable life.

– **Hugh Karunanayake**



Chandra Senaratne – a finger in every pot

Chandra Senaratne who was the CSA's Social Convenor from the inception of the Society in 1997, has tendered his resignation from the position due to ill health. The CSA will miss his disarming smile which he used to disguise the stress of running a social event with machine-like precision. Running a function was something "I loved doing" he claims.

Chandra was born in London and holds dual citizenship. His father OLF Senaratne was a well-known eye surgeon from Moratuwa, who played cricket both in Sri Lanka and MCC teams in England. He was also a reputed tennis player. While his mother Lorraine Senaratne was appointed by Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike as the first woman to be a Sri Lankan Ambassador and represented her country in Italy and Ghana. Chandra was married to Marlene who passed away some years ago and has a married daughter. His fiancée is Kanthi.

Chandra received his primary and secondary education at Royal Prep and later at Royal College where he excelled in Tennis and Cricket. He did his

tertiary studies at Cambridge University where he obtained BA and MA degrees in Economics and Law.

Chandra has been dubbed organiser “par excellence” not just in Sydney and Australia, but also in Sri Lanka, New Zealand and England.

From the inception, at any of the CSA functions here in Sydney, especially at the Annual Dinner and Christmas Party, he is one man at the forefront of activities, microphone in hand, surrounded with his coterie of Santa Claus replicas, some sedate while others slamming their noisy cymbals all evening. Never still, like Chandra is, throughout the evening. From selecting the menu and organising caterers, to working out the night’s programme, he is on his feet making sure the evening went off without a hitch.

Seemingly, it all started when Chandra entered St Catherine’s College in Cambridge University (founded in 1473 AD). There he discovered that the University’s Ceylon Society was dysfunctional due to factional rivalry. Chandra agreed to be its Secretary. Soon he arranged several general meetings, organised regular dinners and once invited Sir Ivor Jennings, who had returned to Cambridge from his duties in Ceylon, to be a guest speaker at a society’s function..

Another story goes that when Chandra was playing table tennis for the University’s third team, he was summoned by the Dean to his office. This happens only when an undergraduate commits some misdemeanour. He went to see the Dean with some trepidation. “Come in” the Dean invited, “take a seat. I have heard through the grapevine that you are a fantastic organiser. I want you to be the table tennis captain”. Taken aback, “Sir, I am playing in the third team.” “Never mind that,” the Dean replied. “There’s a lot of organising to be done with table tennis tournaments, meetings, discussions and decision making. You are the captain. You may leave.”

Among other numerous distinctions, he was a committee member of the Cambridge Society of NSW, Past President of the Carlingford Senior Citizens Club, and a Justice of the Peace in NSW. He was recently recognised by Worldwide Who’s Who in New York for achievement in paranormal research, he is a Worldwide Branding’s Contributory author, elected to Who’s Who of Professionals and Executives by Continental Broadcasting in the United States in recognition of his accomplishments in this area of research.

His considerable organisational skill came to the fore as he represented numerous social and other clubs and bodies in Sri Lanka, New Zealand and Australia, As a Supply Manager in a Sri Lankan company, one of his duties was to entertain overseas businessmen visiting the country. Soon realising that there was nobody in Sri Lanka to cover this aspect of management, he outlined the constitution and initiated

the formation of and registration of the Institute of Supply and Materials Management of Ceylon and had it registered as an Institute.

We wish Chandra good health, a fruitful retirement and to pursue his much loved interests as well as he can, health permitting.

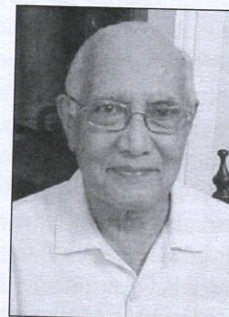
Amal Wahab – CSA’s new Social Convenor



Amal has been in the global banking/investment industry for over 35 years. During his professional career, he worked in Australia, Sri Lanka, USA, Malaysia, Kuwait and Oman. In his most recent job, he was the Deputy Chief Investment Officer and Head of Investments at the Oman Investment Fund, the Sovereign Wealth Fund of the Sultanate of Oman. Since retiring as a full time executive in mid-2016, Amal has joined the Board of Directors of a few unlisted businesses in Australia, as a non-Executive Director, Chairman of the Risk Committee and member of the Investment Committee.

He is also very active in his local Parish activities and the alumni associations of his school (St Peters College, Colombo 4), University of Ceylon, Colombo Campus and Harvard University Graduate School of Business.

Amal is married to Rosani and has two children: son Adel and daughter Amasha. Amal’s hobbies include Golf (a recent interest) and Gardening. He harbours passions for reading and travelling.



Deshamanya Tissa Devendra – outgoing President of the CSA Colombo Chapter

Tissa Devendra graduated in English and French from the University of Ceylon, and was

and was subsequently awarded a post Graduate Diploma by Cambridge University. He has a career of more than forty years in Sri Lanka's public service and UN Agencies. He has worked in most of the country's districts. His later assignments were as Chairman of the Public Service Commission and the National Salaries Commission. In 2017 he was awarded the highest (Civilian) national honour of Deshamanya for his distinguished services.

He has a deep interest in the history, art and culture of Sri Lanka and has contributed numerous articles on these themes to *The Ceylankan* and to many other journals, newspapers, and written film scripts and books. Among his published works are *Tales from the Provinces, On Horseshoe Street, Quest for Shangri La, A Firey Finale, Memoirs of a Pen Pusher, a tale of Three Buddhas*. He has also retold Sinhala folk tales for children - *Princes, Peasants and Clever Beasts*. He has headed Judges Panels for the Gratiaen and Fairway Literary Awards. He was a friend of George Keyt, the great painter, has written to many journals on his life and work. He is a Trustee of the George Keyt Foundation.

Tissa Devendra was the first President of the Colombo University Alumni Association. He has just retired as President of the Colombo Chapter of the Ceylon Society of Australia.

Tissa lives in Colombo with his wife Indrani, reading, writing and enjoying the company of his three grandchildren.

New President of the Colombo Chapter



M.D.(Tony Saldin)

M. D. (Tony) Saldin, who was the Hony. Secretary of the Colombo Chapter from mid 2011, stepped down in January 2018, only to find himself being elected President of the CSA Colombo Chapter with effect from January 2019, on a proposal from the Chair.

Tony, in addition to his involvement with CSA Colombo Chapter, is a Past President and active EXCO member of the Sri Lanka - Indonesia Friendship Association (SLIFA), former Assistant Secretary General of the Sri Lanka-Malay Confederation (SLAMAC), Asst. Treasurer/ Website Coordinator of the Lanka Japan Friendship

Society and current President of the Mabile Malay Association (MMA).

He was the Country General Manager for Sri Lanka for the global Japanese Trading Company Nichimen Corporation/Sojitz Corporation where he was employed for 37 years.

After his retirement in March 2013, he established a family trading company - Saladin International Enterprises (Pvt) Ltd of which he is the MD/CEO. Of his 3 daughters, the eldest who is an Archeologist, is domiciled in Melbourne with her family.

Tony is a keen angler and avid reader during his free time.



A roaring 50 for Lion Harry!

Old Josephian Lion Harry de Sayrah OAM. JP - Melvin Jones Fellow, Life Member of the 101-year old Lions Clubs International, the largest service organisation in the world, has served the communities of Sri Lanka for 20 years and Australia for 30 years.

In 1969 Lion Harry was invited to join the then Lions Club of Colombo by Lion Commadore Malcolm de Costa, former ADC to a Governor-General of Sri Lanka.

Harry was the first elected President of the Lions Club of Kollupitiya, Colombo and the 39th President of the Lions Club of Bankstown in Sydney and held various responsible positions in the Club.

Harry has been a member of the CSA since 2001 and held several positions on the committee. He was President of the Society from 2011 to 2013.

About Churchill

[He] Winston Churchill mobilised the English language and sent it into battle to steady his fellow countrymen and hearten those Europeans upon whom the long dark night of tyranny had descended.

(Ed R. Morrow 1908-1965)

What comedy

The test of a real comedian is whether you laugh at him before he opens his mouth.

(Jean Nathan 1964)

Jandamarra and Saradiel: 19th Century rebels with a cause – in Australia and Ceylon

(Warning: readers are notified that this article contains names and images of deceased persons.)

by
Thiru Arumugam

This article compares the life histories of two rebels against European expansion in the 19th Century in two different countries – Australia and Ceylon. Jandamarra was an Aborigine who was born about 1873 in the Kimberley region, the northernmost part of Western Australia. For three years he led his small Bunuba tribe in resistance to European expansion into their ancestral homelands of thousands of years, only to die in a hail of bullets in 1896. He was only 23 years old.

Deekirikevage

Saradiel was born in the Kegalle District in 1832. He and his gang were bandits, and like Robin Hood, he distributed the proceeds among the poor. He was arrested and hanged in 1864. He was 32 years old. Many consider his actions as being against British rule and their supporters, rather than as mere banditry. Jandamarra and Saradiel had another thing in common – their

followers believed them to have supernatural powers which made them virtually invincible.

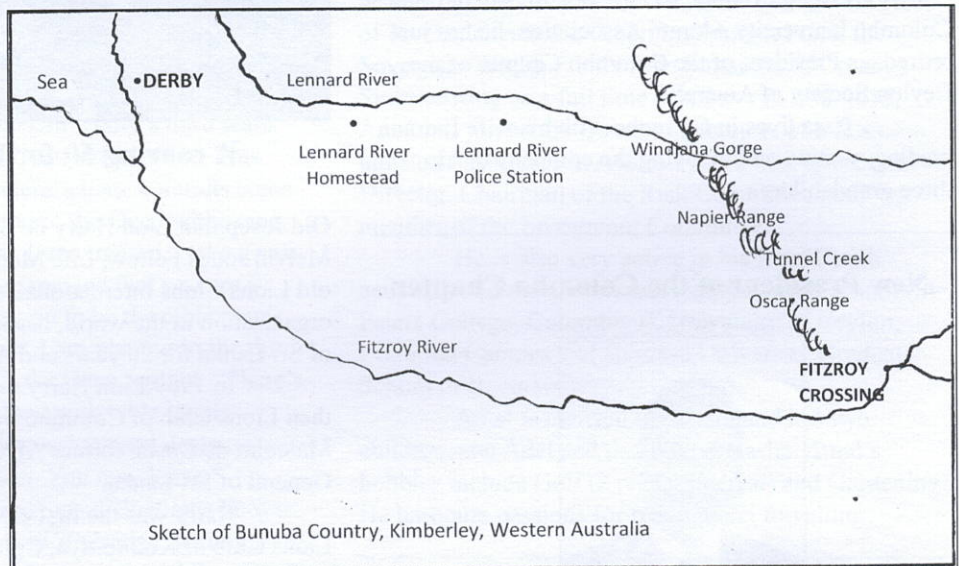
Western Australia

Western Australia occupies the western third of Australia and has an area of nearly a million square miles. It was established as the Swan River Colony, which includes present day Perth, on 02 May 1829. New South Wales had been established a few decades earlier and Britain was anxious to establish a foothold on the west before other interested European countries like Holland and France. Initially, population growth in Western Australia was slow and the interior was largely unexplored.

In order to be granted self-government and independence from control by London, the colony

of Western Australia had to demonstrate two things: that it was economically viable and did not require subsidies, and it had to demonstrate that the rule of law prevailed and that the Aborigines were not ill-treated. In order to raise revenue and become economically viable, a decision was made to set up sheep and cattle stations and suitable locations were sought for this purpose.

Alexander Forrest was nominated to lead a small expedition to explore the Kimberley region,



(Sketch above by the author.)

which is the northernmost part of Western Australia. He set out in 1879 and reached the coastal settlement of Derby, which is north of Broome, and is about 2500 km from Perth. Derby is where the Fitzroy River enters the sea. Forrest followed the river, going upstream for nearly 400 km until he reached impassable mountains. He found this region to be well watered, with fertile soil and grasslands suitable for establishing sheep and cattle stations. Returning to Perth, he told the authorities that the Fitzroy region had twenty million acres of well-watered country which was the best grazing land in Australia. The West Australian Government started making arrangements to lease out the land. In order to deter land speculators, it was a requirement that a minimum of twenty sheep

per thousand acres had to be stocked. This ruled out individual farmers as it was beyond their financial capability and the leases were granted to Companies formed for this purpose. By 1882, forty-four million acres had been granted to seventy-seven groups. Some of the leases were for extents greater than a million acres.

The Kimberley settlers were not bothered about the morality of occupying land in which Aboriginal tribes had been living for thousands of years. The Bunuba were one of about twenty Aboriginal groups who lived in the Fitzroy valley. The Bunuba numbered about two to three thousand persons and their country (see Fig. 1), which is a land of ranges, rivers and grassy plains, stretched from King Leopold Ranges in the north to Windjana Gorge in the Lennard River in the west, down to the Fitzroy River which forms its southern and eastern boundaries. Two of these settler stations in the Fitzroy region were on land where the Bunuba Aboriginal tribe lived. The first station was the million acre Lennard River station established in 1883 where the Station Manager was William Lukin. This station was on very fertile land, well watered by the Lennard River and extended up to the Napier Range of limestone mountains. The second station was the Lillimooloora Station, also a million acre station, established by the King Sound Pastoral Company with William Forrester as Station Manager. This station had land on both sides of the Napier Range of mountains. Incidentally, these settlers were correctly described as 'squatters'. The dictionary definition of an Australian usage of the word 'squatter' is "a person who occupies a tract of land, esp. pastoral land, as tenant of the Crown". So, squatters can be legal or illegal.

As few Europeans were prepared to work in these outback stations, the Station Managers needed Aborigines to work as stockmen and do other work in the stations. They worked in conditions of near slavery as they were not paid cash wages but only given food rations. The Station Managers considered the Aborigines as station property. The Aborigines Act created a permit system under which they could be employed and it was an offence to abscond from employment. The Aboriginal tribes who lived on the plains were soon brought under control, but Lukin and Forrester soon had problems with the Bunuba because they could retreat and hide in the many caves in the Napier Range. What caused most distress to the Bunuba was that the Station Managers showed no respect for the sacred sites of the Aborigines. For example, Forrester insisted on building a sheep stockyard right against a cliff face at Windjana Gorge adjacent to a pool which was then polluted by the sheep and the water made undrinkable by human beings, even though the Aborigines pointed out that the pool there was a sacred meeting place for them for centuries.

The leaders of the Bunuba were Ellemarra and Packer. One day Ellemarra walked off with a bag of flour from a station camp and there were clashes with the station staff. Forrester sent a message to the Police in Derby and three days later they came and arrested Ellemarra. He was marched off in chains to Derby which is about 120 km away to the west and sentenced to six months imprisonment. When there was only one month left in his period of imprisonment, Ellemarra staged a daring escape and made his way back to his people. He then started a campaign amongst his Bunuba people of open revolt to resist further expansion by settlers into their tribal lands.

Jandamarra's early years

The story of Jandamarra's life was brought into the limelight by the research carried out by Howard Pedersen when he was at Murdoch University and his subsequent book "*Jandamarra and the Bunuba Resistance*" (Magabala Books, 1995). When collecting information for the book, Pedersen was inspired by the oral testimony of Banjo Woorunmurra, who was the Bunuba custodian of the Jandamarra story and a repository of his people's history. Pedersen says in the Preface to his book "*Jandamarra was magic – a supernatural being who could not be destroyed by police or settler bullets. He could only be challenged by an Aboriginal man who also possessed these powers. Much of the Bunuba story is about the spiritual significance of land and the law which flows from it*".

Pedersen's book is a source of useful material for this article.

Jandamarra was born around 1873. When he was eleven years old, he moved with his mother to live in the Lennard River station. It did not take him long to become an expert shearer and horseman. Lukin, the Station Manager, would proudly say that Jandamarra was the best black stock-boy in



• (Figure 2) Barney, Jandamarra's brother. (Courtesy: State Library of Western Australia)

the district. He also learned to handle revolvers and guns and he turned out to be an expert marksman. When Jandamarra reached puberty, he returned to the Bunuba tribe to go through the complex process of initiation into tribal adulthood which included education on tribal laws and customs. A powerful influence was Ellemarra, who was a close blood relation. There are no photographs of Jandamarra but a photo of his brother Barney, who was later jailed, can be seen in Figure 2.

One day in 1889, the police who were hunting for the absconding Ellemarra found him and arrested him as well as Jandamarra. Lukin was annoyed that Jandamarra was absconding from the station and had made a false police report that Jandamarra had stolen some sheep. The two of them, along with some others were chained by the neck and forced to march 120 km to Derby. Ellemarra was sentenced to 13 months jail for his previous escape from jail and Jandamarra was sentenced to six months jail. Jandamarra was spared from being in prison when the police recognised his skill as a horseman and he was put in charge of the police stables where he looked after twenty horses. He was to continue in this position for two years before he decided in 1891 to return to Bunuba country.

However, Jandamarra soon found that the Bunuba elders considered that when he was taken away to jail, he had not fully completed the requirements for entry into Bunuba manhood, and they tended to ostracise him. It was also a time when sexual morality had collapsed among the Aboriginal women, there being no European women in the district. Jandamarra was sexually promiscuous and his activities broke Bunuba law because many of his girl friends had kinship ties which precluded him from having sex with them. The net result was that Jandamarra was banished from the tribe and he went to live in the Lillimooloora station. Here he met Bill Richardson, a white solitary loner, and the two formed a close bond of friendship.

Jandamarra and Richardson

In 1892, gold was discovered in Coolgardie. This was a tremendous boost to the economy of Western Australia and tens of thousands of prospectors poured into the state. They had to be fed and the demand for beef soared. The stations in the Kimberley which had hitherto been mainly stocking sheep now turned to stocking cattle also to meet the demand for beef. This was a new problem for the Bunuba because the cattle started polluting the waterholes and affecting the Bunuba's drinking water supply. They reacted by spearing cattle and sheep and driving them away, thus causing some of them to become feral. The station managers and settlers reacted by persuading the State Government to give them more powers. Many of them were appointed Justices of the Peace and were given the authority to issue arrest warrants on Aborigines

and sentence them to prison for up to three years and also order flogging up to fifty lashes.

Lukin also persuaded the authorities to establish a police outpost in Lillimooloora as Derby was so far away. Richardson was appointed to be in charge of this outpost after having been given some basic police training. Jandamarra joined his friend Richardson as an unofficial native trooper, now that he was an exile he had no obligation to aid his native



• (Figure 3) Chained Bunuba prisoners on the 120 km march to Derby jail (Courtesy: State Library of Western Australia)

Bunuba tribe. Jandamarra was a prized asset with his detailed knowledge of the region, and together the two formed the most effective police unit in West Kimberley.

Richardson and Jandamarra worked together and succeeded in arresting many Bunuba. The prisoners were chained and then marched all the way to the goal in Derby. In October 1894, they achieved their greatest success when they arrested the Bunuba leader, Ellemarra, together with sixteen other Bunuba. Richardson was paid a prisoner ration allowance for each day that he held each prisoner. To inflate his allowance, he held the seventeen Bunuba chained together in the Lillimooloora outpost for seven days instead of marching them off to Derby immediately (see Fig. 3). During this period the prisoners started working on the conscience of Jandamarra, who was their guard. They reminded him of his Bunuba origin and that Ellemarra was a blood relation. Ellemarra, as a tribal elder, had the power to revoke the expulsion of Jandamarra from the tribe and pardon him, and he did so. On the night of 31 October 1894, when Richardson was fast asleep after consuming a fair amount of whisky, Jandamarra crept up to him and shot him dead.

He then took Richardson's bunch of keys and unlocked the chains which held the prisoners together. He collected the firearms which were in this police outpost which included three rifles and two revolvers, together with all the ammunition. The freed prisoners were joined by the Bunuba who were camped at

Lillimooloora and all fifty of them, including women and children, trekked to the Windjana Gorge, where they were going to wait to ambush the drovers when they brought the cattle there for watering. Jandamarra was accepted as their battle commander as he had inside knowledge of police operations.

There were four stockmen driving the cattle, two Europeans, Burke and Gibbs together with two Aboriginal stockmen. The drovers reached the waterhole in the Windjana Gorge and were relaxing, when suddenly Jandamarra appeared from an overhanging rock and opened fire. Burke died instantly but Gibbs, who had a shoulder wound, was able to mount his horse and ride off. But his horse stumbled on the steep river bank and Gibbs fell. The Bunuba rushed towards him and he was speared to death. The Bunuba knew that a wagon would have been following the drovers and this too was attacked and looted. The spoils included two rifles, a shotgun, four revolvers, gun-powder and four thousand rounds of ammunition. The balance of power had now altered dramatically. Previously it was a case of Aboriginal foot soldiers with wooden spears versus police and settlers on horseback with guns, but now the Aborigines had guns as well as horses.

The Windjana Gorge standoff

When Drewry, the chief of police in Derby heard the news that three settlers had been killed, he immediately sprang into action. He telegraphed the Western Australia Premier and was given special powers to enlist as many settlers as he needed as special constables, purchase horses and buy up all the guns and ammunition available in the only gun shop in Derby. He was authorised to take such steps as he deemed necessary to deal with the natives. He assembled a total force of twenty-eight armed men, seventeen of whom were Aborigines. Knowing that Jandamarra and about hundred Bunuba, including women and children, were holed up in the caves above Windjana Gorge (see Fig. 4), he divided his men into three groups and two of three groups approached the Gorge from each end. Jandamarra, knowing police tactics, was prepared for this, but what he did not anticipate was that the third group would go round to



• (Figure 4) *Windjana Gorge, scene of the standoff between Jandamarra and the authorities.*
(Courtesy: State Library of Western Australia)

the back of the Napier mountain range climb up and descend into positions above the Bunuba hideouts.

When dawn broke, Jandamarra found that he was surrounded on three sides, nevertheless intermittent firing by both sides continued through the day. By evening, Ellemarra had run out of ammunition and he went from his cave to Jandamarra's cave, but when he was crossing over he was hit in the back by a settler's bullet. Bleeding profusely, he managed to stagger into Jandamarra's cave, but bled to death shortly afterwards. The wailing of the Bunuba women confirmed to Drewry that Ellemarra, an important Bunuba elder, was dead.

Drewry decided to capitalise on this and ordered his men to storm the caves, but single handed firing by Jandamarra held them at bay, even though he had a shoulder bullet wound. Drewry then decided to sit it out expecting the Bunuba to come out and surrender but by the following morning there was no sign of activity. Drewry's scouts carefully approached the caves to find them deserted except for nine women and children who were promptly captured and chained together. They found a secret passage from the back of the cave complex. Jandamarra and the rest of the Bunuba had escaped through this tunnel.

A dejected Drewry returned to Derby only to find that Perth had decided to send Police Inspector Lawrence from Roebourne to take charge of all operations. Over the next few weeks Lawrence and his men took no prisoners and adopted a shoot to kill policy which resulted in an official death toll of 84 Aborigines. But this is a fraction of the true number of Aboriginal deaths. Police reports always deliberately understated the number of Aboriginal deaths. The reason for this was that Western Australia did not want to upset London who recognised Aborigines as British subjects and they were therefore entitled to the same protection under the law as settlers.

Jandamarra's change of tactics

For the next few months nothing was heard of Jandamarra – he was, in fact, recovering from his bullet wound. Drewry spread the story that Jandamarra was dead. When Jandamarra surfaced a few months later, the embarrassed Drewry resigned from his post of head of Derby police. Jandamarra was held in such regard by the settlers that the expansion of settlers into Bunuba country was at a standstill. No settler dared stock sheep or cattle in Bunuba country. Even Lukin, the Station Manager of the Lennard River Station where Jandamarra learned his horsemanship and marksmanship, found Bunuba resistance intolerable and gave up and migrated to America.

A few months later in 1895, Jandamarra did have a setback. He was relaxing by a pool in the Windjana Gorge with other Bunuba when he was taken by surprise by the sudden appearance of seven armed troopers. Jandamarra was able to reach the safety of the caves in the rock face even

though he was fired on at a distance of twenty yards. However, his right-hand man, Captain, surrendered and Jandamarra's wife and mother were captured. His mother was later released but he never saw his wife again as she was led away in chains as a prisoner.

Jandamarra realised that shooting a policeman or settler was evoking a response which involved the carnage of scores of Bunuba and other tribes as well, and it was not worth it. For the next two years he carried out a policy of no physical violence. However, he did harass the settlers and police by driving cattle and sheep off the ranges. On several occasions he entered the police posts at night and stole their food rations and ammunition. He had many narrow escapes when the police and Aboriginal trackers followed his footprints but he was able to escape and seek refuge in caves in the Napier Range. These escapes made the Bunuba believe that he had magical powers. They considered him a 'Jalnggangurru' a magic man, who could 'fly like a bird and disappear like a ghost' and that he could only be vanquished by an Aboriginal who had similar powers.

The final confrontation

In late 1896 the police force in Derby was strengthened by the recruitment of an Aboriginal tracker with the name of Micki who had a great reputation as a huntsman and tracker. In fact, the Aborigines believed that he had magical powers and was a 'Jalnggangurru' like Jandamarra. Since he was not a Bunuba, and was from the Pilbara District, he had no compunctions about fighting against the Bunuba.

In early 1897, a stockman by the name of Hooper drove a thousand head of cattle thirty miles along Fitzroy River to the Leopold Downs homestead, in the heart of Bunuba country. A breakthrough had been achieved into Bunuba country after two years of trying and the settlers awaited the Bunuba response. One night a settler by the name of Jasper was camped out alone by a tributary of the Fitzroy River. During the night, a single gunshot was heard and in the morning he was found dead. He was shot by a Bunuba, but not by Jandamarra. When the news of his killing reached Derby, the new head of police, Sub-Inspector Ord, decided to launch a full scale attack on Jandamarra and the Bunuba.

Without waiting for reinforcements to arrive, a trooper named Pilmer, accompanied by Aborigine trackers, decided to search for Jandamarra's tracks in the foothills of the Oscar Ranges. They found his tracks and as they approached the cliff face they suddenly saw Jandamarra up on the cliff face with his gun trained on Pilmer, who pleaded for mercy. Since Jandamarra only wanted to scare off Pilmer, he took careful aim and shot his hat off at a considerable range (shades of William Tell!). Pilmer promptly galloped off.

When Ord finally arrived with reinforcements, he divided his troops into three groups. One of the groups was led by trooper Blythe and included Micki, the expert Aboriginal tracker and huntsman. For three days this police party searched the area north of the Oscar Ranges and finally found Jandamarra's tracks on March 27th 1897 near the Napier Range cliff face. Jandamarra immediately started running towards the safety of the caves in the cliff face with Micki following him. What they found amazing was that Jandamarra was able to run barefoot outrunning horses on the mountains, even though there were jagged flintstones, whereas the soles of the troopers boots were torn to shreds by the flintstones. They exchanged fire and Jandamarra had several bullet wounds. Jandamarra fell face down bleeding profusely. Meanwhile trooper Blythe rode up to Jandamarra to fire the fatal shot.

Blythe aimed his revolver at Jandamarra, who suddenly rolled over and fired at Blythe who was hit on the hand, losing his thumb and a finger. Jandamarra got up and ran into the tall grass. As it was now dusk, the police patrol decided to sit out the night, confident that Jandamarra would bleed to death overnight. At dawn, Blythe decided to head for Derby to get treatment for his wounded hand. To their surprise, when they were saddling their horses there was a single shot and Wisego, an Aboriginal tracker was shot dead by Jandamarra, and the horses bolted.

Micki was entrusted with the task of tracking Jandamarra. For three days he followed the trail of blood stains. Jandamarra was heading for the sanctuary of the caves in Tunnel Creek in the Napier Range. On the morning of 01 April 1897, considerably weakened by the loss of blood, Jandamarra climbed up the cliff face of Tunnel Creek and looked down to find Micki down below, partially shielded by a boab tree. In Australia, this tree is found only in the Kimberley region. Jandamarra fired immediately but the bullet hit the tree. Micki fired back and the mortally wounded Jandamarra fell over hundred feet to his death. The prophecy that only a fellow Jalnggangurru with magical powers could vanquish Jandamarra came true.

The white troopers then rode up to the scene and as proof that they had killed Jandamarra, they cut off his head. Later what was said to be Jandamarra's head was displayed at the Perth Museum and large crowds queued up to see the head, but actually it was Wisego's head, whom Jandamarra had shot a few days earlier. Jandamarra's head was quietly sent off to England where it was a grisly display by the gun manufacturer Greeners of Birmingham, who were the largest sporting gun manufacturer in the Empire at that time. They claimed that Jandamarra was killed by the accuracy of their gun.

Jandamarra's headless body was wrapped in paperbark by his relations and carefully entombed in a cave in the Napier Range. He was only 23 years

old, yet he had virtually single handedly resisted the advance of settlers into Bunuba country for more than three years.

Postscript

With the death of Jandamarra, all Bunuba resistance to colonisation faded. Within a few years, fertile Bunuba country was converted to cattle ranches and farmland. The number of Bunuba people faded over the decades to about a tenth of the original people, decimated by newly introduced diseases to which they had no natural resistance.

Prime Minister Paul Keating had this to say in a major speech made in 1992 about the treatment of the Aborigines: *"It was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life; we brought the diseases, the alcohol; we committed the murders; we took the children from their mothers; we practiced the discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice, and our failure to imagine these*

things being done to us ... We failed to ask: How would we feel if this were done to me?"

The turning point was the 03 June 1992 verdict of the High Court in the case of *Mabo and Others v. the State of Queensland* in which the Judges ruled that a form of native title had always existed and the ideology maintained by the colonists of *Terra Nullius* (land belonged to no one) was dumped in the dustbin of history. This ideology propounded the theory that prior to European settlement in 1788, Australia was inhabited by people with no recognised social or political organisation and had no settled law governing the occupation and use of lands.

In 1992, nearly hundred years after Jandamarra's death, the Bunuba people acquired the Leopold Downs Station and this was followed by their acquisition of the Fairfield Station in 1995. The combined extent of these Stations is 400,000 hectares or a million acres. It was Bunuba country once again, after a lapse of nearly a hundred years.

(To be continued).



The CSA Team 2019

Prior to the much-lauded and highly successful social night that included a comic skit, live guitar music continuously by Roger Menezes, a sumptuous dinner, dulcet tones of an impromptu choir accompanied by Hyacinth Jones on the piano (with Roger on the guitar), a session of Ballroom dancing (a well-received innovation by President Pauline), followed by the eagerly awaited raffle draw that had numerous winners grinning away out of the door, while the not-so-lucky ones accepted their fate with the normal Sri Lankan attitude of "better luck next time!"

All in all a splendid evening to wind up a fruitful year of cultural activity.



• *New CSA Committee: (from left) Thiru Arumugam (immediate past President); Harry De Sayrah (Public Relations); Sunil de Silva (Publications); Sunimal Fernando (Secretary); Pauline Gunewardene (President); Deepak Pritamdass (Treasurer); Leslie Perera (Committee member); Amal Wahab (Social Convenor); Doug Jones (Editor/Librarian). S. Nadarajah (absent).* **Photo by: mahalsphotography**

COVER STORY **‘Born to Blush Unseen’ -
the life and work of Justin Daraniyagala:
a founder of the 43 Group**

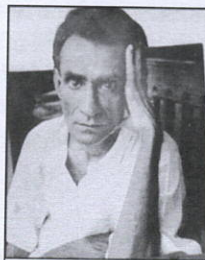
Synopsis of talk by Dr Srilal Fernando

*“Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom’d caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness in the desert air.”*

– Thomas Gray

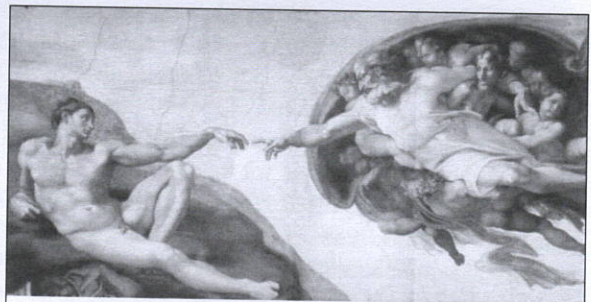
It was a pleasant Sunday afternoon at the Camberwell Bowling Club which was filled to capacity with many members of CSA, friends of the speaker, and art aficionados eager to listen to Dr Fernando’s presentation on the life of Justin Daraniyagala, one of Sri Lanka’s most talented artists. Daraniyagala, a founder of the renowned ‘43 Group was relatively less known than some of the other members of that talented group, and the exposition on his life and work made the presentation not only desirable, but turned out to be very informative as well and greatly appreciated by the audience.

The presentation was divided into the first half where the speaker outlined the evolution of Art in general and the development of Art in Sri Lanka. This provided the context for the second half of the presentation on the artist Justin Daraniyagala.



• **Justin Daraniyagala**

hunt and fish, places of danger etc. It was to depict a symbol than a full figure and this led to the evolution of the pictogram, hieroglyphics, and eventually writing. With time the pictures were used by religions to inform the mainly illiterate public. This then required the portrayal of emotion. Religious paintings were at its best during the renaissance. It showed the classical painting of the creation of Adam by Michaelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. Further before this time paintings were very flat but artists then contrived to produce a three dimensional effect on



• **Religious painting dominated Art during the Renaissance like the classical painting of the creation of Adam by Michaelangelo in the Sistine Chapel.**



• **Art from early times led to Pictography Hierroglyphics, Writing.**

In the first part of the presentation the speaker described how art in very early times consisted of drawings of animals, trees and humans etc. They were mainly instructional rather than ornamental and provided information about places to

a flat surface. Various techniques were used in this process.

Art then moved along where representation changed to one of interpretation either by the artist or by the viewer. He showed the example of the weeping woman by Picasso which conveyed anger, sorrow, and horror. Good art need not always be pretty as in Picasso’s Guernica which was painted following the bombing of the town by that name during the Spanish Civil War.

Dr Fernando then provided a sketch of Sri Lankan Art. What remains of early art are the sculptures and temple paintings.

The Buddha did not want to be venerated saying that he was not important, but to heed his teachings. For nearly a century after his death there were no images or sculptures of the Buddha. He was represented by the bodhi tree or the wheel, the Dharmachakra. It is after the invasion of Alexander the Great and the influence of Greek sculpture of the Greek Gods that sculpture of the Buddha became prominent. With time the Buddha image had to be within a strict formula of proportions. The skill of the

artisan was to provide an individuality though working to a prescribed formula.

Further constraints were that the Buddhist concept of Maya or illusion where all beauty was fleeting. He had to then provide an image to portray

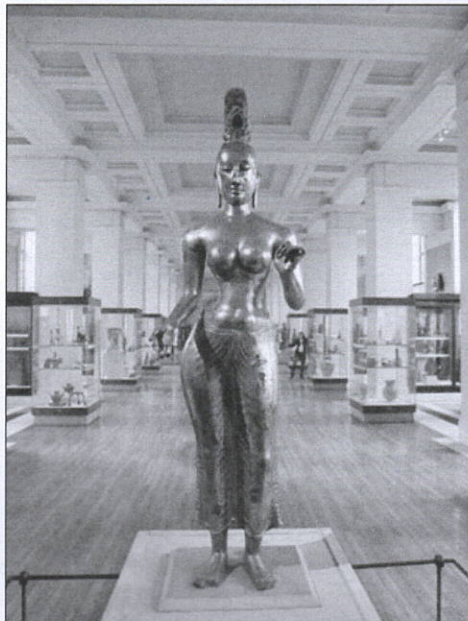


• *Seated Buddha - Gal Vihare, Polonnaruwa.*

inner beauty such as loving kindness, tranquility, and equanimity.

Thus in looking at the image the viewer should look at not only the skill of the sculptor in portraying the posture and folds of cloth but a more subtle aesthetic. He showed examples from the Gal Vihare, Polonnaruwa, the best example of the seated Buddha, and Aukana the standing Buddha.

The speaker then spoke briefly about the Sigiriya and the significance of the Sigiriya frescoes.



• *The statue Goddess Tara, the consort of Avalokaviteswara, is attributed to the Eighth Century and was discovered in Trincomalee.*

Fresco painting technique was that on fresh lime plaster, an outline of an image was made and colour applied rapidly before the plaster dried. This required rapid execution of the painting and the artist had to have a very skilled and rapid line. George Keyt was very much influenced by this type of painting.

There was another technique called 'Seco' where the painting was applied after the plaster was dry. However, this was not long lasting compared to the fresco painting. The Western technique of using thick wads of paint called 'impasto' was favoured by the impressionists. Daraniyagala was exposed to this in Europe and adapted this technique in many of his drawings.

The speaker showed an image of the Goddess Tara an imposing gilt bronze statue at the entrance to the Asia Section of the British Museum. For a time Mahayana Buddhism was rife in Anuradhapura and the statue of Tara, the consort of Avalokaviteswara, is attributed to the Eighth Century and was discovered in Trincomalee.

The speaker then outlined the changes with the advent of the Europeans. Colonisation was initially geographical, then political but it was mainly under the British that cultural intellectual and emotional colonisation occurred. The theme was, British was the best and Art followed the standard British tradition of landscapes and portraits. This prevailed till the 1940s when Justin Daraniyagala and the rest of the 43 Group broke down this tradition.

In the early 1880s a few art lovers led by Barbara Layard (daughter of Sir CP Layard) formed the Colombo Drawing Club. This was sometimes referred to as the "Portfolio Sketch Club". They met at the premises of L Sabonadiere. A wide circle of members from the British militia and planters joined. A committee was formed consisting of Lt Col Clarke, Lt Col Clive, Major St George, JLK Van Dort, H. Armitage, and Mrs Hawtrey Thwaites as the Honorary Secretary.

A talented artist E Hamlin came as Manager of the Oriental Bank Estates Company. The idea was conceived of holding an Amateur Art Exhibition This occurred over four days in race week August 1887, at the "Coffee Tavern" in Prince Street. Exhibits in oils, water colours, crayons, models in clay, wood carvings, and metal and lace work. This was the first large exhibition in Ceylon and worthy of record.

This also led to the founding of the Ceylon Society of Arts in 1891. This continued the earlier tradition and was supported by successive British Governors.

During this time there were enlightened individuals who were interested in the local traditions in art.

At the turn of the century two important books, Mediaeval Sinhalese Art by Ananda Coomaraswamy and another lesser known but

important work by Lionel de Fonseka on Occidental and Oriental Art roused interest in the local artistic tradition.

In the 1920s an Englishman CF Winzer was appointed Inspector of Arts in the Department of Education. He was exposed to trends in European



• From around 1929 Daraniyagala's paintings continuously drew inspiration from the big names in Art in Europe.

Art. He was well aware of the impressionists, the post impressionists and the work of Pablo Picasso. He was an inspiration to the then young artist to look much broader than Art from Britain. In Europe, Paris, Vienna and Venice were in the forefront of art.

This was the context in which the speaker introduced Justin Daraniyagala, talking about his family tree with connections to the Bandaranaikes and Obeysekeras. He briefly outlined his schooling at St Thomas College and Art education at the Atelier, the school of ACGS Amarasekera. He joined Trinity College, Cambridge to study law. At University he was known for his boxing skills. After completing his law degree he joined the Slade School of Art in London in 1926. This was facilitated by Augustus John, the foremost portrait painter in his day. John had painted a portrait of Justin's parents.

In London at the same time were Lionel Wendt and Harry Pieris. They were both key members in the formation of the 43 Group. In 1928-1929 he was at the Academie Julian in Paris. The speaker outlined some of the alumni of these two institutions.

In 1929 he returned to Ceylon. He had been painting continuously during this time drawing inspiration from the big names in Art in Europe such as Picasso and Matisse.

In 1943 his father was appointed the Trade Commissioner in London. Justin returned to London

and worked with reputed anthropologist Professor Malinowski at the British Museum.

The knowledge and interest in Sri Lankan antiquities resulted in an article on Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe's gun which was published in the high brow magazine "The Connoisseur" a copy of which was available for display by the speaker.

Justin also had a large collection of antique masks and was an expert on the subject. His style of painting now is well formed. It is neither Oriental or European and could not be easily measured by any dimension. He is beginning to form a way of painting which was difficult to describe but impossible to forget once viewed.

In describing his painting at a later date he would start the painting depicting objective reality and move on to his own imagined reality. He would continue this process changing the painting many times as he thought fit. There was no final product, as like Beethoven with his symphonies, he continued to paint over and change, sometimes resulting in many levels of paint. As Neville Weeraratne put it later, his paintings were always suspended somewhere between the beginning and the end.

Justin also was not confined to the figurative and abstract dimension. He could start off with a blob of paint and work his way through wherever his eye and hands would go. The direction would be governed by forces deep inside his psyche.



• An interest in Sri Lankan antiquities resulted in his article on Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe's gun published in *The Connoisseur*.

In 1937 and 1938 he displayed three paintings at the Leicester Gallery, London alongside that of Picasso, Manet, and Toulouse-Lautrec.

Justin never dated his paintings, nor did he give them a title. Hence it is difficult to track his changes in style over the years. The titles often given

by others to help identify the paintings when they were on loan to the galleries. The speaker showed a number of paintings.

In 1938 he returned to Ceylon. A few years later the first signs of his illness appears. He moved to the solitude of his parents estate in Nugegoda. His parents occupied the main house which was in a large coconut plantation and had a long driveway of Na trees.

Justin's studio called the *Sudu Bungalawa* was away from the main house. He would be at the studio daily returning to the main house for meals, leisure time with his parents and to sleep.

Around this time very important developments were occurring in the Art World in Ceylon. There was a group who like Justin, had exposure to happenings in Europe. Foremost was Lionel Wendt and Harry Pieris. Further, Harry had spent time in India studying Eastern Art. There was a growing restlessness to find a new idiom and a tension with the traditional Ceylon Society of Arts. The result was the 43 Group which initially met at Lionel Wendt's house.

The speaker briefly described Lionel Wendt's talent as a pianist and photographer. He showed the



• *Aubrey Collette's caricature of the 43 Group at their initial meeting.*

well known caricature of the 43 Group by Aubrey Collette. At the initial meeting were were Lionel Wendt, Harry Pieris, Justin Daraniyagala, George Keyt, Geoff Beling, Ivan Peries, Richard Gabriel, and George Claessen, Aubrey Collette and Manjusri Thero. He spoke briefly about the Group and also the work of Martin Russell and Ranjit Fernando in promoting the Group in Europe in the 1940s and 1950s.

In 1952 Justin exhibited with the Group in London, and in 1953 in Paris. This was followed by an exhibition in London in 1954 at Beaux Gallery. In 1955 at the Pittsburgh Carnegie International

Exhibition, Justin won a prize for the painting composition with dark nude. This painting is on the cover of the book on Justin. The speaker with the help of Richard Gabriel had analysed the story depicted in the painting and described it in detail. The significance of the story from the Hebrew bible has not been known before even when the book was published.

In 1956 the 43 Group exhibited at the Venice Biennale. Justin's painting won the UNESCO prize. Titled *Fish, Mother & Child* it was reproduced by the New York Graphic Society. In 1957 and 1960 the 43 Group exhibited at the Sao Paulo Biennale.

The speaker described his late life when he was ill, making his last trip to Colombo to view the exhibition of Richard Gabriel. He died in 1967. There was a major retrospective of his work in 1968. In 1969, the Smithsonian Institute in Washington acquired 15 oils and 27 drawings. In 1992, the Retrospective Exhibition in Colombo was sponsored by the Deutsche Bank.

Justin's paintings were not pretty pictures. It had power all of its own, which is difficult to translate into words. After his death there was a move to establish a dedicated gallery where his paintings could be given the exposure it deserves. However this was not to be and the paintings are held in the family. Only a few of the important paintings are in private hands. The Anton Wickremesinghe collection had several which was bought over by the Maharajah Collection. The Sapumal Foundation at Barnes Place has a few. One called the *Blue Nude* is in the collection of Sir Christopher Ondaatje.

The speaker discussed this painting in some detail. He thought there is insufficient evidence to conclude that this was a painting of Anais Nin who was well known in Paris and was the muse for the American playwright Arthur Miller. This painting was in a bad state when Ondaatje acquired it. It was repaired and the lower part painted by Richard Gabriel to match the other part. Richard had mentioned to the speaker that the bottom one third of the painting was done by him including the signature. There was one person in the audience who had visited Richard Gabriel while it was done.

Dr Fernando concluded by thanking the audience, the Daraniyagala family members who had allowed him access to view the paintings, and allowing him to show the images.

He thanked his own family from whom he had to take precious time to research the paintings, including two trips to Sri Lanka. He thanked his nine-year old grandson Gabriel King who helped him with the power point presentation.

– HUGH KARUNANAYAKE



China and Sri Lanka: A History that stretches back into the mists of time – of Trade, Religion and Diplomacy

by Dr Palitha Kohona



Former Ambassador and member of the Australian and Sri Lankan Foreign Services, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN, Foreign Secretary of Sri Lanka and Head of the UN Treaty Section..

(From a talk to the CSA in Sydney on 26 August 2018)

Sitting in the middle of the Indian Ocean at the southern tip of India and the meeting point of the monsoon winds, and swirling ocean currents, Sri Lanka occupies an enviable strategic geographical position. A blessing that, with careful and judicious handling and long term vision, can be leveraged to its advantage and, mismanaged, a curse that has and will attract the unwelcome attentions of global and regional powers seeking to use the island's incomparable location to dominate the Indian Ocean. Throughout history, Sri Lanka has captivated the interest of a multitude of sailors, traders, holy men, adventurers, empire builders and invaders. The Chinese were well represented among them through the centuries and from early days used Sri Lanka as a lucrative central link in their trading ventures along the southern Silk Route. At times, we elegantly parried and benefited hugely from the attention that our location gave us, especially in trade. At other times we faltered. Responding to and prudently managing these advances and ensuring that the national interest is safeguarded, including its territorial integrity and sovereignty, should remain a priority. While we protect our interests, our geographical location confers on us a solemn responsibility to ensure that the interests of the other users of the sea routes are also safeguarded.

Today an additional factor must impact on our deliberations. We possess a 200-mile exclusive economic zone and, possibly, a vast area of sea bed to which we have lodged a claim with the United Nations since 2009. The wealth of this area, both in the water column and trapped in the sea bed, could make Sri Lanka a prosperous nation with careful management. This could also be another attraction to Sri Lanka's suitors.

Challenges Confronting Sri Lanka and the Region

The Indian Ocean region is experiencing a much-anticipated luxury. Almost every one of the economies of the region is expanding at a rate that generates hope in the countries on the Indian Ocean rim, especially to its poor and marginalised. The promise of prosperity, so enthusiastically proclaimed at independence from colonial rule many decades ago, maybe at last

becoming a reality. India is powering ahead with a rapidly expanding economy and now leads China.

But the region continues to be confronted by an inexcusably massive burden of poverty, literacy and technology deficits, malnutrition, disease and deprivation. South Asia has the dubious distinction of being home to the largest concentration of the poor in the world. Inadequate policy frameworks, corruption, military rivalries and internal conflicts, among others, drain resources which could be devoted to economic advancement.

The countries of South Asia have been taking faltering steps to collaborate with each other on economic matters, but ever so tentatively and in fits and starts, having slowly recognised that there is much to be gained through cooperation than through rivalry. There is still considerable progress that could be achieved through cooperative efforts. However, good intentions and idealistic talk have not been matched by adequate constructive action.

The South Asia region is still to secure international acceptability as a unity. Its leaders need to be more imaginative and ambitious in their desire to develop together. A common desire to advance with each other is still sadly lacking, despite a long history of shared cultures, religions and people movements.

Belt and Road Initiative

Against this background, the Chinese President Xi Jinping's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, also known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), unveiled in 2013, has provided the countries of the wider region with a new challenge as well as a unique opportunity to fast track their economies along the path to development. An investment bonanza is being made available under the BRI, especially for the countries along the ancient Maritime Silk Road.

Coupled with the investment driven BRI, China has also subtly begun to emphasise its cultural and religious links in the wider region. A soft power caress of the region! According to Ian Johnson, author of "The Souls of China," President Xi Jinping has embraced religious faith as part of his "Chinese Dream" and the "Belt and Road Initiative". The nominally atheist Chinese Communist Party has

now recognised that religion in Chinese history was a powerful tool in domestic governance and international diplomacy. For Xi's "rejuvenation" of the Chinese nation and national culture after the "Century of Humiliation", this mix of faith and politics constitutes a "re-imagining of the political-religious state that once ruled China". When Xi Jinping's father, Xi Zhongxun, was head of the party's religious work beginning in 1980, China's Central Committee issued the famous Document 19 warning party members against banning religious pursuits because it would isolate the Chinese people. Ever since, China has been restoring places of worship destroyed in the Cultural Revolution.

Thus, the opportunity provided by the BRI and the softened global outreach of China, provides an opportunity that can be exploited by those seeking to benefit from it. Judiciously managed and sensitively implemented, the BRI could revive the glory days of the ancient Silk Route.

Sri Lanka, sitting at the hub of the ancient Silk Route, has embraced this concept at the highest levels. From the President and the Prime Minister downwards, and numerous ministers, the BRI has been enthusiastically welcomed by the Sri Lankan leadership. Hardly a week passes without a Sri Lankan delegation visiting China.

It has been said that China's BRI investment ambitions, focused on cooperative infrastructure and connectivity enhancement, has the potential to make a greater impact than the post-World War US Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan provided financial assistance to the war devastated economic giants of Europe and was a major factor in their quick recovery. But the funds available under the BRI make the Marshall Plan pale into insignificance. The Marshall Plan provided over US\$140 billion, at 2017 Dollar values, to assist Western European economies recover. The BRI intends to make available a stunning US\$ 4-8 trillion. While the Marshall Plan achieved much, the BRI funds are expected to achieve substantially much more by creating a vast region of shared prosperity stretching from Africa to East Asia, the clear beneficiaries being a large number of developing countries.

Adding strength to the BRI, the Chinese Yuan has been recognised as a reserve currency by the IMF and China appears to be increasingly moving towards international payments in Yuan. The IMF elevated the Yuan, also known as the renminbi, or "people's money", on the same day that the Communist Party celebrated the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The Yuan joins the U.S. Dollar, the Euro, the Yen and British Pound in the IMF's special drawing rights (SDR) basket, which determines currencies that countries can receive as part of IMF loans.

It is not only the vast accumulation of foreign reserves in China that makes the Chinese outreach tempting. China is also gradually becoming a force to reckon with in Information Technology which, coupled with its massive financial clout, makes it a formidable proposition as the world moves further into the 21st Century. IT is likely to form the basis of the next industrial revolution. Live streaming which has caught on rapidly in China, now has an audience which is about the entire US population. China has 700 million internet users and web development has become a cottage industry. It has become the biggest e-commerce market in the world. Over half of the most valuable companies in the world are now Chinese.

China started the electronic bike exchange and has rapidly progressed with electronic payments. Other countries are simply playing catch up. Baidu is the largest search engine and China's Alibaba is bigger than Amazon and eBay combined. Tempted by the huge Chinese market, Google is hankering to return to China. Much has been written about the massive progress made by China in the transport industry with over 18,000 miles of highspeed trains already in use delivering over 1.7 billion passengers in 2017. China is the biggest global market for motor cars and its production reached 23.7 million units in 2017 which exceeds that of the US and Japan combined. China's construction industry has also climbed dizzying peaks with some city sky lines looking as if they were plucked out of science fiction movies.

The outward looking Belt and Road initiative, with China's advances in IT, could have a massively transformative impact on the economies of the vast Asian and African regions encompassing 68 countries, home to over 65 per cent of the world's population. The BRI, is backed by China's substantial economic clout and massive reserves, including through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) which claims 61 state members at present, possesses the potential to create significant opportunities for the entire region. Australia is a member of the AIIB.

The BRI will be a closely related factor as Sri Lanka seeks to realise its own Vision 2025. Vision 2025 (or is it Vision 2030) provides the development blueprint for the country for the next seven years and infrastructure development and IT will play a central role in it.

It is against this background that the successful SEIC 2017 was organized in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in November last year. The objective was to highlight Sri Lanka as a trading centre and an investment destination.

A significant number of the participants at SEIC 2017 came from overseas, especially from China. Others came from Wall Street, London, Geneva, Dubai, India, Hong Kong, Singapore and

Amsterdam. The follow-up conclave will be held in Beijing in September 2018.

Historical, Religious and Trading Relations

A peek into history would be appropriate at this point. Historically, traders, holy men and casual visitors recognised Sri Lanka's potential, both as a desirable destination to visit, a spiritual magnet and a trading hub. The country attracted waves of traders, businesses and holy monks seeking the sublime teachings of the Buddha over the centuries, from far afield as ancient Rome on the one side and Khan Balik on the other, not to mention rapacious invaders. Ibn Battuta, the Moor from Tangiers, who visited the island in the 14th Century, was not wrong by much when he observed that this was the most beautiful island on earth and was only 40 leagues from paradise. That paradise, must be preserved despite the race to modernise, and achieve a higher level of sustainable prosperity for the people of the country as they seek to climb up the development ladder.

Sri Lanka, like other countries of South Asia, had developed important relations, religious, trading and social, with the Middle Kingdom from early days, and the writings of scholars, soldiers, monks, travellers and traders suggest a strong Chinese interest in Lanka from time immemorial. The earliest records indicate that the interchanges along the Silk Road, especially along the sea route, had begun to flourish from the time of the Han Dynasty, from 207 BC, and continued for centuries afterwards. It was not only trade that boomed along the Silk Road, but also cultural and religious exchanges bringing lasting changes to countries and societies. Technologies, food habits, agricultural practices and even diseases, like the plague, crossed borders along the Road.

Dozens of wrecks of Chinese sailing vessels lie off the coasts of Sri Lanka suggesting a thriving sea-borne trade. If dozens sank in bad weather, hundreds of Chinese vessels, if not thousands, are likely to have called at our ports. It was then the natural point for sailing vessels wafting before the North Eastern Monsoon winds to stop for rest, food, water and trade.

While foreign ships came to our shores by the hundreds, Lankan sailors also appear to have sailed to foreign ports and left an imprint. A Chinese mandarin, Li Chao, reported that among the many foreign ships that arrived at An-nan and Kuang-chou, "the ships from the Lion Kingdom were the largest with stairways for loading and unloading, which are several tens of feet in height".

A plaque in the Hong Kong Maritime Museum asserts that the language of Macao, a Chinese port frequented by foreign sailors for centuries, has Sinhala influences.

The regular presence of Chinese in the Indian Ocean for trade is borne out by historical accounts left by many, including the Chinese monk Fa Xian

(5th Century), Marco Polo, (13th Century) Ibn Battuta (14th Century), ending with the adventures of Admiral Zheng He, in the early 15th Century.

Those visitors who came, especially from China, not only left detailed observations which have been used to corroborate our own historical records but also bits and pieces of their own cultures, enriching ours. The Chinese traders and Shaolin monks probably introduced Chinese martial arts. A term in Sinhala for the indigenous martial arts is Cheena – Adi. This is too much of a linguistic coincidence.

The main focus of the Chinese also appears to be the shared religion – Buddhism. In addition to the traditional Confucianism and Taoism, the Chinese had begun to consider Buddhism to be part of their national religious tradition and emperors, commoners and monks sought closer relations with countries to the West to enrich their spirituality. Sri Lanka had the reputation, even then, for safeguarding the pristine doctrine, especially after Buddhism fell into decline in India.

Lanka was the first country to commit the Buddhist canon to writing. It happened in Alu Viharaya in 29 BC. Previously, the canon had been preserved as an oral tradition.

Chinese writings of the period suggest considerable knowledge of the island, including its politics and the religion, among Chinese scholars.

Four embassies were sent from Lanka to the Chinese imperial court in the fifth century. Chinese records indicate that these embassies were sent during the reigns of King Buddhadasa, the builder of public hospitals in the early 4th century, Upatissa 1, his son and Mahanama (412 - 434 AD). The Lankan King, probably Mahanama, sent an embassy with a valuable Buddha statue and a replica of the Temple of the Tooth Relic to the court of Emperor Xiaowu. The Chinese account "The Biography of Bhikkunis" written in the 6th Century details a visit by Sinhala nuns to Nanjing to inaugurate the order of nuns in China.

The copious writings of the 5th Century scholar monk Fa Xian from China who spent a number of years at the Abhayagiriya Monastery, in the ancient capital, Anuradhapura, after a long sojourn in northern India, tell a tale of bygone prosperity and complex international diplomatic and trading relations. Fa Xian details the splendid pageant in honour of the Tooth Relic of the Buddha, which takes place to this day, but now in our last royal capital, Kandy. Fa Xian carried a ship-load of religious texts from Sri Lanka to China. This also suggests that Sri Lanka, at the time, possessed a significant literature. The ship was big enough to accommodate 200 passengers. Ships that big were not constructed in the West almost until the 20th Century.

Chinese records indicate that in 456, five eminent Sinhala monks called on the Emperor and

one of them was an eminent sculptor. Undoubtedly, art and architectural exchanges followed interchanges involving the common religion. Two Buddhist texts, Karanamudra Sutta and Vimukthimagga were translated from Sinhala to Chinese in 489 and 505. In the 8th Century, another monk, Amogha Vajra, a pupil of Vajrabodhi, travelled to Lanka and translated Karanda mudra Sutta to Chinese. King Aggabodhi sent him as an envoy to the court of the Emperor in 746.

The Arab geographer Edrisi details the extent of Lanka's international trade during the time of Parakramabahu the Great who also sent a royal princess to the court of the Emperor. The trade between China and Lanka flourished during this period and Chinese vessels brought silk, porcelain, aloes, sandalwood, etc. to our ports. Traders from the western lands exchanged their products for the Chinese goods in Sri Lankan ports.

Lankan exports included gems, spices, filigreed gold, pearls, ivory, spices, textiles, etc. and are likely to have been carried in vessels built in the country.

The great Kublai Khan dispatched an envoy in 1282 to Lanka requesting the alms bowl of the Buddha venerated by the Sinhala people but the Lankan king refused this request. The lions at Yapahuwa are very much Chinese influenced. There is no doubt that Chinese sculptors and architects plied their trade in Lanka. The troves of Chinese coins and porcelain being recovered from various parts of the country suggest a thriving trade. Admiral Zheng He's repeated visits and his involvement in the replacement of the Lankan king with Parakramabahu VI who was later ousted by Parakramabahu VII, in the early part of the 15th Century, are well recorded. Descendants of the Sinhala prince taken to China have been traced in Quanzhou. Mrs Xushi claims to be a 19th generation descendent of the prince. Parakramabahu VII sent six missions to the Ming court. Cheng He left a pillar inscription marking his second visit in the port of Galle in 1409. Today it could be seen in the Galle museum. Chinese writings do not agree on the purpose of Cheng He's interventions in Sri Lanka. He was a Muslim eunuch. Some writings suggest that he sought to ensure the adherence by the King to the correct teachings of the Buddha while other writings suggest that he sought to take back the Tooth Relic to China. Cheng He on a subsequent visit made an offering at the shrine of God Upulvan in Dondra. This magnificent shrine was later destroyed by the Portuguese.

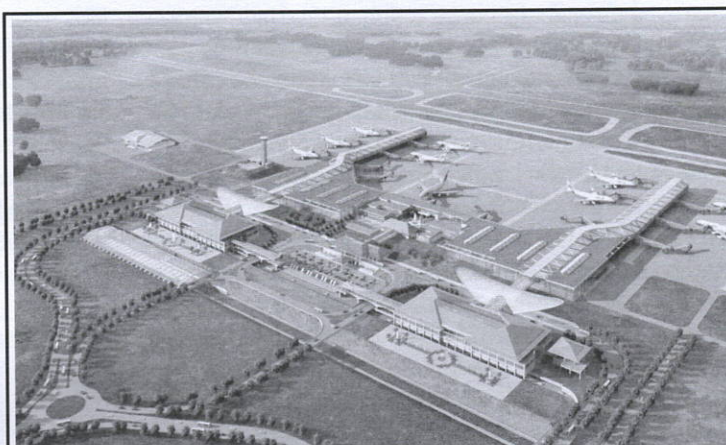
More Recent Interactions

More recently, particularly during the time of the domination of Asia by Western powers, and during

China's "Century of Humiliation", many Chinese migrated to other countries in search of a better life. Some came to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and settled down to become the Sri Lankan Chinese community.

Many Chinese intermingled with the local community and for most purposes they identify themselves as Sri Lankans. Some continue to speak their native dialect. The well-known Darwin restaurant, Hanuman, owned by Jimmy Shu, a Sri Lankan of Chinese origin, recently received the award for the best restaurant in the Northern Territory.

In 1950, independent Ceylon became the 13th country to recognise the People's Republic of China and, since then, has unconditionally endorsed



• *Artist's impression of Mattala International Airport.*

(Photo courtesy Yahoo).

the One China Policy. Subsequently, in 1952, with post Korean War rubber prices crashing, Ceylon breached a Western embargo and concluded the Rubber-Rice Pact with China to swap rubber (which was listed as a strategic material) for rice. China agreed to import 50,000 tons of rubber in exchange for 270,000 tons of rice. The Chinese have never forgotten Sri Lanka's risky diplomatic and commercial gesture.

Prime Minister Zhou En Lai visited Sri Lanka in 1957 and established the framework for a lasting solid relationship which flourished particularly during the stewardship of Prime Minister Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike who visited China in 1972. The Bandaranaike Memorial Conference Centre stands proudly as a symbol of the bonds developed during this period. It is still the largest conference facility in Colombo.

It is said that Chairman Deng Xiaoping sent a delegation to Sri Lanka to study the Greater Colombo Economic Commission before setting up the spectacularly successful Shenzhen Special Economic Zone.

BRI and Sri Lanka's Dream of Prosperity

While traders from distant lands sought

mutual prosperity, invaders sought and succeeded in grabbing Sri Lanka's wealth and stunting the development of the people. The BRI initiative can be compared to the multitude of traders who visited us in the past and gave us the opportunity to prosper.

In Sri Lanka, funds provided by China have had a distinct impact on the development process. The sums provided have been estimated at US\$ 8 billion. About 10 per cent of Sri Lanka's debt is owed to China.

The Kandy/Kurunegala Highway, the Northern Expressway and the extension of the Southern Highway from Matara to Kataragama are examples. In addition, external connectivity has been improved through the construction of the Hambantota Port, which The Economist suggested would become the leading port in South Asia, the Colombo South Harbour and the Mattala International Airport.

The rapidly, emerging Colombo Port City is being built mainly with Chinese investments and others have been invited to join. The Colombo Port City has the potential to become another Dubai. The Norochcholai power plant, built by the Chinese, is now a major contributor to the national power grid. The Lotus Tower in Colombo is the tallest telecom tower in South Asia, is expected to be declared open soon, and will be a significant boost to our communication capabilities. The 350-metre-high Lotus Tower, draws inspiration from the Buddhist Lotus Sutra, and provides encouragement for China to formulate a sustainable and peaceful "soft power" strategy that would appeal globally.

The BRIs Regional Impact

The countries of the region, especially in Africa, are reaping substantial benefits from China's BRI investments.

Economists, including at the World Bank, agree that the recent rapid upward movement of the economies of a number of African countries has been the result of significant Chinese investments.

Many African economies are prospering for the first time in years and analysts ascribe this development to Chinese investments in infrastructure in Africa. By 2014, that had risen more than 20-fold to \$220 billion according to the China Africa Research Initiative at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington. It is likely that this trend will accelerate as China also learns from experience, irons out irritations and responds more to the aspirations of the people of the region.

Since 2000, Ethiopia has been the second-biggest recipient of Chinese loans to Africa, with financing for dams, roads, rail and manufacturing plants worth more than \$12.3bn, more than twice

the amount loaned to oil-rich Sudan and mineral-rich Congo.

Further East, Australia received AUD 15.4 billion in Chinese investments involving 103 transactions.

Australia has been a major destination for Chinese investments after the US and Europe and investors have acquired hotel assets, real estate, agri businesses, vineyards, health care, infrastructure, etc. The port of Melbourne is now controlled by a Hong Kong-Chinese concern. Darwin port is also now controlled by a Chinese company.

The major share of Chinese overseas investments has gone to Europe and the US. The EU, whose second largest trading partner is China, received EUR 35 billion in Chinese investments in 2016 alone. Iconic facilities like the Toulouse airport where the Airbus 380 is assembled (sold to the Shandong Hi-Speed Group and a Hong Kong investment firm while Emanuel Macron was the Finance Minister), and the Piraeus harbour (controlled 70 per cent by COSCO) are now owned by Chinese companies not to mention a number of



• *Artist's impression of the Bandaranaike Memorial Conference Centre.*

(Photo courtesy Lakpura LLC).

historic vineyards and buildings. A Chinese billionaire now owns Volvo, controls Lotus and London Black Taxis. Another, the AC Milan football club. The German robot manufacturer Kuka is now owned by a Chinese company.

Chinese companies are building the rail link between the Piraeus harbour and Serbia and Hungary. Chinese trains now travel to European capitals, including London, on the new overland Silk Route and also link up with Teheran, bringing East Asian products to European markets bypassing the bottlenecks of the Malacca Straits and the Suez Canal. Natural gas from Central Asia now flows along four pipelines to China.

Pakistan has been promised US\$ 62 billion in investments for infrastructure projects. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the flagship project under this initiative. The Bangladesh-India- China-Myanmar corridor links China with the Bay of Bengal.

The Asian Railways Network sponsored by ESCAP provides South Asia also the opportunity to link up with the European network through Central Asia. Tremendous trade opportunities could open up with a high speed railway linking South Asia with Europe.

The US itself has received USD 90 billion in Chinese investments since 2007. The New York's revered Waldorf Astoria is now owned by a Chinese concern.

However, China has also tightened overseas investments, especially in real estate, hotels, film and entertainment and sports clubs, to reduce excessive capital outflows and foreign exchange risks.

The US and China in Asia

The expansion of China's economic and political reach has caused more than a few adverse reactions in certain international circles, especially among powers which had been used to dominating the world stage and find China's emergence difficult to accommodate. Given that China and the US are closely intertwined in a complex economic embrace, the use of such terminology is curious.

The US is China's major trading partner. The bilateral trade in 2016 was worth USD 579 billion while the US trade deficit was over USD 379 billion.

China is the main lender to the US and also holds over 1.7 trillion Dollars in US securities.

China is the biggest market for US agricultural products and millions of Chinese tourists visit the US annually, not to mention the thousands of students who study there. A further escalation of the trade conflict between the two countries, with both countries imposing prohibitive import duties, would do irreparable damage to both, not to mention the rest of the world.

The two countries have a unique opportunity in history to get away from historical power based competition to cooperate for the common good. Cooperation may not be managed in a hurry but the opportunity is there. Many aspects of East Asian culture, including food, eating habits, traditional health care, yoga, Zen meditation and mindfulness, martial arts, dress, philosophy have been seeping in to Western and American life over the years. The US has been an inspiration in liberal ideas, democracy, transparency, legal propriety, management style, sports, music, film, etc. These ideas will not be adopted by the East overnight. Nor will the Eastern style of living, religion or doing business be adopted lock stock and barrel by the West any time soon.

It will take time. There are clear opportunities for teaching the two to each other. Instead of breast thumping and posturing, it will serve humanity's interests better in the long run if the giants of the world, both Eastern and Western, could cooperate for mutual betterment.

Aerial view of Nuwara Eliya Post Office



Built in 1894, this red brick Tudor-style, two storied mansion was built by the British and includes a clock tower and spires. The building is located at the centre of Nuwara Eliya town and is one of the oldest buildings in Sri Lanka. It was constructed for the sole purpose of dealing with the mail of the British Colonials at the time – the century-old post office is also one of the oldest in the country, while also being one of the oldest buildings in Nuwara Eliya. The city of Nuwara Eliya; the so-called 'Little England' of Sri Lanka; lies among the steep hills and valleys of the Central Highlands. What was once an idyllic little town made completely of Colonial era structures has changed.

(Source: Nuwara Eliya Info.)

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF CLASSICAL WRITERS AND HISTORIANS WHO WROTE ON SRI LANKA - V11

By M. Asoka T. De Silva

Ovid, Publius (43 BC – 18 AD)

Publius Ovidius Naso, known as **Ovid** in the English-speaking world, was a Roman poet who was best known as the author of the three major collections of poetry, the *Heroides*, *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria*, and of the *Metamorphoses*, a mythological hexameter poem. He was also well known for the *Fasti*, about the Roman calendar, and the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, two collections of poems written in exile on the Black Sea. Ovid was also the author of several smaller pieces, the *Remedia Amoris*, the *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*, and the long curse-poem *Ibis*. He also wrote a lost tragedy, *Medea*. He was considered a master of the elegiac couplet, and was traditionally ranked alongside Virgil and Horace as one of the three canonic poets of Latin literature. The scholar Quintilian considered him the last of the canonical Latin love elegists. His poetry, much imitated during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, greatly influenced European art and literature and remains as one of the most important sources of classical mythology. He was educated in Rome in rhetoric under the teachers Arellius Fuscus and Porcius Latro with his brother who excelled at oratory. His father wished him to study rhetoric toward the practice of law. Ovid tended to be emotional, not the argumentative pole of rhetoric. After the death of his brother at 20 years of age, Ovid renounced law and began travelling to Athens, Asia Minor, and Sicily. In exile, Ovid wrote two poetry collections titled *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, illustrating his sadness and desolation. Being far from Rome, he had no access to libraries, and thus might have been forced to abandon the *Fasti* poem about the Roman calendar, of which only the first six books exist. The *Ibis*, an elegiac curse poem attacking an adversary at home may also be dated to this period.

Ovid was very popular at the time of his early works, but was later exiled by Augustus in AD 8. He married three times and divorced twice by the time he was thirty years old.

By 8 AD, he had completed his most ambitious work, the *Metamorphoses*, a hexameter epic poem in 15 books which encyclopedically catalogues



• Ovid's statue in Tomis /Constanța, created in 1887 by the Italian sculptor Ettore Ferrari.

transformations in Greek and Roman mythology from the emergence of the cosmos to the deification of Julius Caesar.

Ovid saw Taprobane as another part of the world, beyond the reach of the limits of human intercourse and hence he thought that there is no meaningful credit to be gained. This also seemed to imply that the Romans of that day possessed an accurate knowledge of the insular form of Taprobane, and would almost seem to warrant us in further inferring that Sumatra must have been their ideal commencement of the new and unexplored Austral continent.

Parker, Henry W. (1904)

Henry Parker was a British engineer in colonial Ceylon during the Victorian era. During his work as engineer he developed an admiration for the skills displayed by the ancient Sinhalese at the time of the construction of their reservoirs.

Parker is renowned for having studied and compiled the folklore of Sri Lanka, becoming an authority on the subject. He was the author of two books: (a) *Ancient Ceylon*, London-Luzac & Co., First Published by the India Office (1909), is an account of the aboriginal and early civilization of Sri Lanka, and (b) *Village Folk-Tales of Ceylon*, a voluminous compilation of folk tales collected and translated by the author.

Parker could be considered the last of the major (old school) British contributors to the history and engineering marvels of the ancient irrigation works of Sri Lanka at the close of the 19th Century. Attached initially to the Public Works Department and later to the Irrigation Department from the middle of 1873 to the end of 1904, Parker had undertaken comprehensive studies on many facets of the Island's hydraulic civilization, of which the design aspects of ancient irrigation works was one.

Parker was also known to have been regarded as the most valuable officer during his time, and his reports on Sri Lanka's ancient irrigation schemes had been considered works of authority. He had been fluent in Sinhalese and Tamil and had been a Pali scholar.

Percival, Robert, (1797)

Robert Percival was a British military officer attached to the "19th Regiment on Foot", who had arrived in Ceylon in the year 1797, and resided in the Island for three years. During this period he had visited almost every part of the coastal belt of the country. He had been among those officers detailed to accompany an embassy that had been sent to wait upon the native King of the Island, and by this means he had an opportunity of observing the interior of the country.

His account of the Island includes a journal of this embassy to the Royal Court of Kandy.

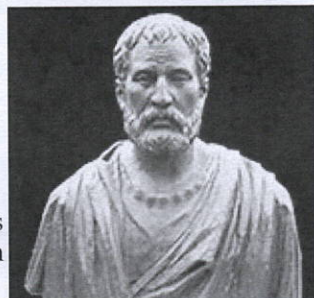
Philalethes (1817)

One of the earliest accounts of the history of Ceylon during British occupation was that of Philalethes, which came shortly after the annexation of the Kandyan Kingdom, but before the Rebellion of 1817-1818. The author of this book titled "*History of Ceylon from the Earliest Period to the year 1815*", is believed to be Rev. Robert Fellows, who assumed the pseudonym Philalethes. However, Tennent (1859) was of the view that this author was Rev. G. Bisset.

A distinct feature of this work was that it incorporated the text of the 17th Century description of the Island by British National, Robert Knox, a prisoner in the Kandyan Kingdom. Hence it has been claimed that the inclusion of Knox's work did little to enhance the value of Philalethes's own book as a study of the history of the Island.

Pomponius Mela (1st Century AD)

Nothing is known of Pomponius Mela except what he says and what may be inferred from his only surviving book, *De chorographia* (also known as *De situ terrarum orbis* (43 or 44 AD). He boasts of his native region and his hometown Tingentera in the Roman province of Baetica, Spain.



• Pomponius Mela
- pinterest.co.uk

Pomponius treats the coastal region of the known world without regard to the continental interiors. The book is cast as a coasting voyage, beginning and ending on the North African side of the Pillars of Hercules, skirting the Mediterranean coasts of Africa, Asia, and Europe, and then the outer coasts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Pomponius's work provides a view of the Roman world during his time. Scholars disagree about whether Pomponius meant the book to stand alone or be followed by a more comprehensive work; recent opinion inclines to the first view.

Pomponius Mela could not decide whether *Taprobane* (a name not known to Europe before the time of Alexander the Great) was the beginning of a new world or an island, because until that time no one had ever sailed round it. But he was himself inclined to the former opinion.

Pridham, Charles (1849)

Charles Pridham was an English writer about whom not much is known, and who according to Sir James Emerson Tennent (1859), may not have visited Ceylon before writing his account titled "*An Historical, Political and Statistical Account of Ceylon*", which is said to be a laborious condensation of the principal English work on Ceylon. Tennent also makes the point that the value of his book would have been greatly

increased if Pridham accompanied his excerpts by reference to the respective authorities.

On the other hand Pridham himself claims that he began collecting information about Ceylon in late 1846, and continued till 1848, and this included the notes of George Turnour, the first translator of *Mahawamsa* and that of Major Jonathan Forbes. Pridham also claims that in carrying out his work, with an exception of some areas in natural history, he had relied entirely upon himself for authenticity, and wherever, he felt of any deficiency, he had studied by delight, application to remedy such deficiencies. He then states – "*I shall continue to be personally responsible for the contents of every volume I issue, for I feel sure that accuracy, the great desideration in a work of this description can be guaranteed in no other manner.*"

Referring to the criticism and his belief that his historical notes of Ceylon are mythical in nature, Pridham says that – "*They are little, if at all, more enveloped in fiction than the earlier myth of Greece, and the history of Gautama (Buddha) is the truth itself in comparison with that of the Gods of His Hellenic peninsula.*"

The Burgher Railwaymen

Sonnaboy was one of the many drivers selected for diesel training. In the south of Sri Lanka, a race track at Boosa was the venue of some of the biggest racehorse meets in the country. The diesels were ideal vehicles to take punters to the Boosa races. The trains were called the 'Boosa Specials' and were jammed to suffocation. The only consolation was that the Silver Spray would run non-stop from Colombo to Boosa. It would leave Colombo Fort with a thousand panting, hopeful souls. It would return with a thousand panting, doleful souls. Horses as are known, always check the tote, mull over the odds and then run backwards. But this bit of wisdom did not stop the punters who swarmed the platform and fought like tigers to board the Boosa Special.

The south coast track took in some interesting places. There was Wadduwa where the finest coconut toddy could be drunk. "Fresh, men," Sonnaboy would enthuse, 'like bloody lemonade. Even the dead bees are floating in the pot.' At Balapitiya drivers had a crony who always brought them good, home-brewed pot arrack which was guaranteed to make a man perform cartwheels after the second dram. At Dodanduwa an old woman with breasts that sagged to her knees supplied another speciality—her own brand of arrack brewed from sugar cane, old torch batteries, potato peelings and candied coconut. At Gintota there was illicit arrack to cheer drivers on their last leg to Galle while those who drove on to Matara were able to savour another illicit brew at Ahangama which was called seeni karinjan and blew holes in the intestines.

(Extract from Carl Muller's novel *Yakada Yaka*)

In this final part of the Natural History of Crabs of Negombo Lagoon, we will investigate the crabs on mudflats, among mangrove roots, among oysters, the ecology and seasonality of swimming and burrowing crabs, crab fishing methods, crab myths and hints on cooking.

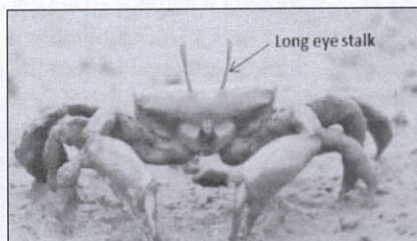
Natural history of crabs of Negombo lagoon Part III by Dr Leonard Pinto

In this final part of the Natural History of Crabs of Negombo Lagoon, we will investigate the crabs on mudflats, among mangrove roots, among oysters, the ecology and seasonality of swimming and burrowing crabs, crab fishing methods, crab myths, crab cooking and crab restaurants in Sri Lanka.

Crabs submerged on mudflats

Mudflats (nalella) in Negombo Lagoon are the elevated areas in the lagoon, produced by sediment accretion, submerged during high tide and exposed during low tide. We were able to conclude that they are the precursors of mangrove islets in the lagoon from their elevation, soil properties and vegetation (Pinto 1982). Unlike the sandy shores that form the habitat of fiddler crabs, mudflat habitat is rich in silt, grey in colour and are frequently submerged. As sediment accretion continues the mudflat rises, and is initially colonized by the thorny holly *Acanthus ilicifolius* (mulli), as exemplified by Kadol nallela Islet. As accretion continues a mix vegetation of *Rhizophora mucronata* (kadol), *Bruguiera gymnorhiza* (mal-kadol) and *Ceriops tagal* (rathu-gas) colonize, as in Kakaduwa Islet. These shrubs cause further accretion and the elevation increases, making the ground suitable for *Avicennia marina* (manda) trees, as in Mandagas alamba Islet. The islets provide habitat for the burrowing crabs.

Mudflat habitat in the Indo-Pacific, including the Negombo Lagoon has been successfully colonized



• *Figure 1: Macrophthalmus depressus Mudflat crabs*

by the crab family Macrophthalmidae, commonly known as sentinel crab. In the Negombo Lagoon, we came across *Macrophthalmus depressus* and *Macrophthalmus sulcatus*. Their shells are rectangular

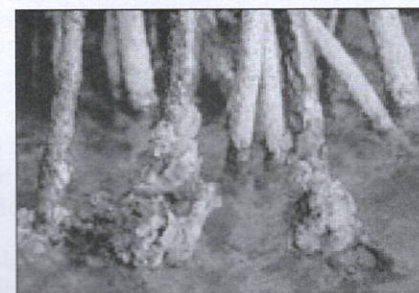
in shape, much wider than in other crabs and with prominent long eye stalks, for which they receive the name, sentinel crab. During the low tide, when the mudflat is exposed, they are in their shallow borrows. At intermediate tides their long eye stalks appear above the water level, functioning as periscopes on the watch out for danger while feeding (Figure 1).

Crabs on mangrove roots

Most grapsid crabs of Negombo Lagoon are able to cling on to mangrove roots for short periods, but *Metopograpsus messor* was found only among mangrove roots. It has a shell width up to about 3 cm, and its legs are mottled with brownish green colour, while the claws are brownish red. A unique feature is the spiny hairs on the legs, which facilitates clinging to mangrove roots (Figure 2). A semi-circular marking extends between the eyes on the flat shell, which helps in identifying the species. *Metopograpsus maculatus*



• *Figure 2: Metopograpsus messor, Climbing crabs*



• *Figure 3: Oysters on mangrove roots.*

was also identified from the fringes of mangrove islets of Negombo, but since then its name has been changed to *Metopograpsus latifrons*. In Singapore, the species of *Metopograpsus* that climb rocks on the

shore are known as 'Purple climbers', and the species of *Episesarma* that climb mangroves are known as 'Tree climbing crabs'. Unlike *Metopograsmus messor* that was found among mangrove roots in Negombo Lagoon, the 'Tree climbing crabs' of Singapore climb high and feed on flowers and seeds. It has become a pest of mangrove plants in Singapore.

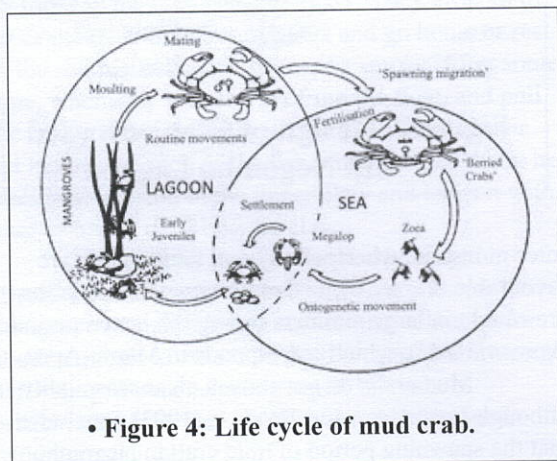
Crabs associated with oysters on mangrove roots

In the Negombo lagoon there are oysters (kawati) attached to mangrove roots of *Rhizophora mucronate* (kadol) at depths 45 + 15 cm (Figure 3). It was then known as *Crassostrea cucullata*, but now the name has changed to *Saccostrea cucullata*, an Indo-Pacific species, closely related to Sydney rock oyster, *Saccostrea glomerata*. Although the potential is there for oyster farming in Negombo Lagoon, culturally Sri Lankans are not attuned to eating oysters and therefore there is no market for them, except in hotels for tourists. We found 24 species of animals living in association with oysters on mangrove roots and two of them are crab species. They are tiny *Baruna socialis* and *Pyseidognathus deianira* about 1cm in shell width and slow moving (Pinto and Wignarajah 1980). They were not living inside the oysters, but in spaces between oysters, roots and dead shells. The tiny Oyster crab (*Zaops* sp.) reported in oysters from the Atlantic, or Pea crab (*Pinnotheres* sp.) that is often found in New Zealand green mussels from the fish markets in Australia were not seen in the oysters from mangrove roots of Negombo.

The three parts of this article described aspects of natural history of the common crabs of Negombo Lagoon. The species list is not complete, as every part of the lagoon was not sampled and the spider crabs from seagrasses and a few others could not be identified, which provides opportunities for future research.

Ecology of crabs in Negombo Lagoon

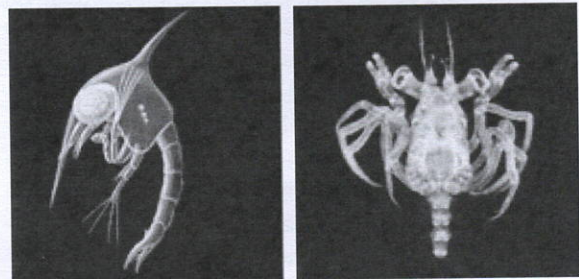
In all crab species, as in all living things, reproduction is a key stage in the life-cycle, before they leave the 'stage of life' to their offspring. New life begins with the union of the sperm with the egg in fertilization, but they must be in mature stage, for fertilization to



• Figure 4: Life cycle of mud crab.

be successful. As the maturity of sperm in the male and egg in the female do not synchronize in crabs, there is a process of obtaining mature sperms from the male crab at copulation by the female and storing them in a structure called spermatheca or seminal receptacle, till female eggs mature. To make matters worse, copulation is not possible as long as the crab is covered by the shell that protects its soft body. So, copulation takes place immediately after moulting, when they get 'undressed' and both are 'soft shell crabs'. In the mud crab this takes place in the lagoon as shown in Figure 4.

There are a few tricks that wise nature does to bring the males and females together. The female ejects a chemical into water (pheromone) that the males sense and are attracted to a ready female in the vicinity. When he finds her, he climbs on her, grabs her and moves around for a few days till she moults. When both have moulted, they face each other and copulate. The male crab stays in the lagoon, but the female crab with sperms stored in her spermatheca, swims to the deep sea. In the blue swimmers or sea crabs (sinakkali), as they live in coastal waters, male and female migrate to the deep waters in the sea to



• Zoea larva of crab • Megalopa larva of crab

• Figure 5: Common larvae of crab

copulate. The purpose of this migration is to satisfy the requirement of larvae to high salinity when they emerge from the eggs. When the adult females, with sperms in their spermathecae are in the sea, ovaries release eggs, and as they come down the oviduct they are fertilized by the sperms released from the spermathecae. Fertilized eggs are kept under the abdominal flap of the female, when they are known as 'berried crabs,' till the larvae are released. They produce 1-2 million eggs, but only a few survive to reproduce and complete the life cycle. Fertilized eggs develop in to microscopic Zoa larvae and are released in the sea, and they drift with the tide back into lagoons and estuaries (Figure 5). Zoa larvae moult several times during their passage to lagoons, and most of them are eaten by plankton feeders. They turn into Megalopa larvae in the lagoons and estuaries and finally into juvenile crabs (Figure 5). This is in the case of swimming mud crab and blue swimmer (sea crab) that we find in our fish markets in Sri Lanka and in Sydney. In the Negombo Lagoon, mudcrab

juveniles were found mainly among mangroves, and sea crabs among sea grasses. The average shell width of juvenile mud crabs in the lagoon was 2 cm and that of sea crabs 3.5 cm. The size range of both species was from 1 to 9 cm, indicating that mangroves and seagrasses in the lagoon are the favoured habitat of these juvenile and pre-adult crabs.

In the evolution of reproductive strategies in animals, two approaches can be seen. (1) Produce a large number of eggs so that at least a few could survive, as in the case of mud crab and sea crab. (2)

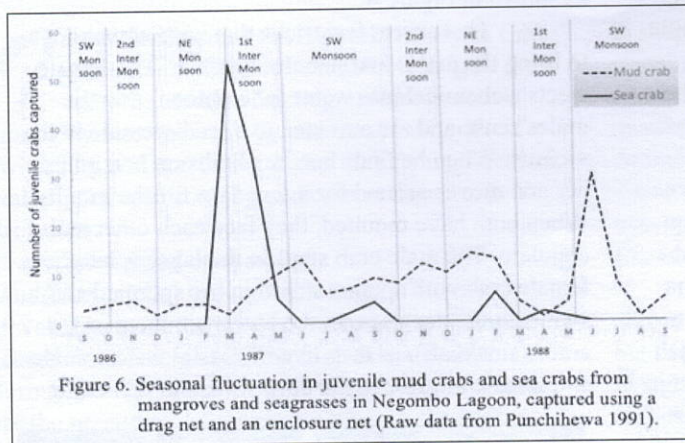


Figure 6. Seasonal fluctuation in juvenile mud crabs and sea crabs from mangroves and seagrasses in Negombo Lagoon, captured using a drag net and an enclosure net (Raw data from Punchedhewa 1991).

Produce few eggs and ensure that they survive, as in freshwater crabs. The former is a wasteful strategy to the species, but useful to others as food. The latter is more efficient, and seems to be the evolutionary trend, as animals moved from the sea to land. Crabs provide a snapshot of evolution from the sea to land. While the marine/lagoon crabs migrate to the sea and spawn there, producing millions of larvae, the freshwater crabs stay in creeks, produce few hundreds of eggs and cut short the larval stages to produce juveniles from 'berried crabs'. Once I was collecting freshwater crabs (family Potamonidae) from a creek near Adisham Bungalow in Haputale in Sri Lanka, and I found a 'berried' crab of *Paratelpusa* sp. that

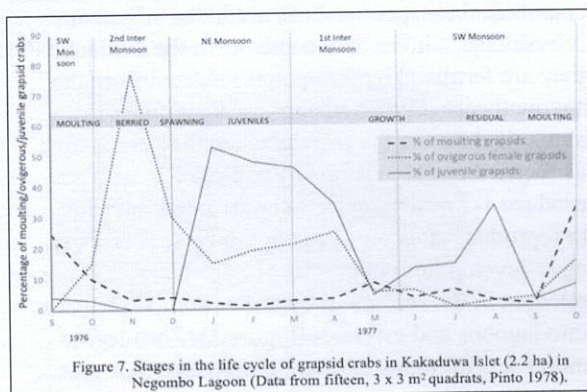


Figure 7. Stages in the life cycle of grapsid crabs in Kakaduwa Islet (2.2 ha) in Negombo Lagoon (Data from fifteen, 3 x 3 m² quadrats, Pinto 1978).

I collected had released all juvenile crabs within few hours in the preservative 70% alcohol with little aldehyde, cutting short the larval stages.

There are a few exceptions among freshwater crabs, such as the Red crab (*Gecarcoidea natalis*) in

Christmas Island, Australia, making mass migration to Ethel Beach from inland freshwater creeks and Cuban Red crab (*Gecarcinus ruricola*) migrating in large numbers to Bay of Pigs from inland in search of sea water for spawning. The migration of the Christmas Island Red crab seems to be triggered by rain and phase of the moon.

Some studies indicate that fiddler crabs release their larvae to lagoons and estuaries (Lopez-Duarte 2011) and grapsid crabs also release them to shores (Dittel and Epifanio 1990) to be carried to the sea by ebb of the current, assisted by vertical swimming to the surface. But, the evidence is not conclusive. As for the terrestrial crabs that live in the mangrove islets of Negombo Lagoon we do not know whether they are spawning in water puddles and pools in the islets, where the salinity can be high as high as 37 parts per thousand or migrate to the sea in search of appropriate salinity (35 parts per thousand) suitable for larvae or other requirements. This could be a topic for a research paper in a journal on evolutionary biology, developmental biology or crustacean ecology.

Seasonality in crab populations

Figure 6 shows the seasonal fluctuation of swimming mud crabs and sea crabs collected from seagrass and mangrove habitats of Negombo Lagoon from 1986-1988 (Punchedhewa 1991). There is a clear seasonality in the recruitment of sea crabs, as evident from the large number of juvenile crabs in the Negombo Lagoon at the beginning of the 1st

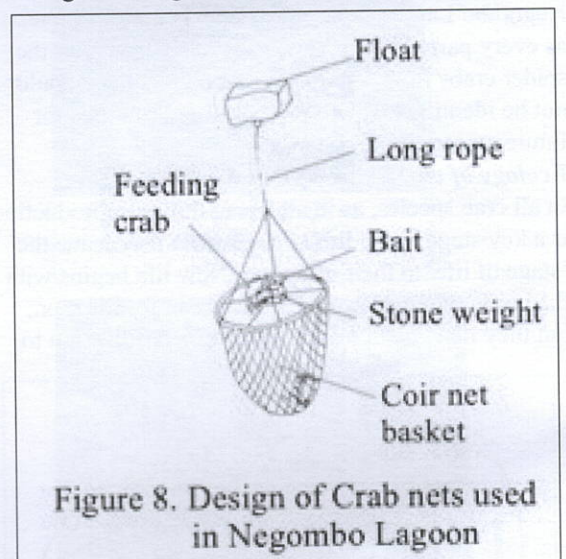


Figure 8. Design of Crab nets used in Negombo Lagoon

Inter-monsoon, when salinity and temperature are favourable (Figure 6). Fisherman say that sea crabs are caught in large numbers during the lenten period (korosmé kalé), which corresponds to March-April.

Mud crabs do not show a clear seasonality, although Jayamanna and Jinadasa (1993) concluded that the spawning period of mud crab in Negombo

Lagoon to be in April and August, and Punchihewa (1991) found a peak in June 1988 (Figure 6). The discrepancy due to in these results may be different methods of data collection, one capturing adults and the other the post-juveniles. There were more males in both mud crab and sea crab populations, but in the latter, there was a spectacular male to female ratio of 52:1 (Punchihewa 1991). Such increased male populations of sea crabs have been recorded in Indian lagoons and estuaries, though not in such high proportions as in the Negombo Lagoon (Rajinder et al., 1976). This disproportionate sex ratio may be real in early development, subject to sex reversal or mere segregation of males in seagrasses and mangrove, where the sampling was conducted.

Figure 7 shows the life-cycle of terrestrial grapsid crabs in Kakaduwa Islet in Negombo Lagoon. Crabs captured from quadrats at the receding spring tide were collected each month, identified, sexed, measured and the condition with respect to moulting and berried eggs noted. Crabs with less than 3.5 mm orbital width (distance between eyes) were considered juveniles. Crabs with soft shells to the touch were considered moulting crabs. According to this figure, moulting is common during the South West Monsoon, when rainfall is low, and salinity and water temperatures are high. The percentage of female grapsid crabs with eggs (berried) was highest in the 2nd Inter-monsoon, when the rainfall was high and salinity low. Juveniles were abundant during the North East Monsoon, when rainfall was low and salinity high. Therefore, spawning must be occurring between the 2nd Inter-Monsoon and North East Monsoon. The end of 1st Inter-Monsoon is a period of growth, though some residual juveniles can occur.

Crab fishing, crab myths and crab cooking

The annual mud crab catch from Negombo Lagoon has been estimated to be 41,500 kg (Joseph 2011). Mud crabs are caught in the lagoon by fishermen using crab nets, although they are also caught by cast nets and enclosure nets in brush-piles. The crab fishermen tie smelling entrails of chicken, pig, cattle or fish as bait on the stones in the middle of the rim supported by ropes in the crab net (Figure 8). They drop 10 to 30 of them from their outriggers and go home or rest in the shade for a beetle chew or a smoke. After some time, when they pick the net from the float, and pull the rope, crabs feeding on the bait fall into the coir net basket. As soon as the fisherman catches them, he makes an incision in the upper claw and locks it with a plug or ties it, disabling the claw.

Mud crabs are also frequently caught in 'Brush pile' fish nets. 'Brush piles' are piles of mangrove branches, fixed and left in the lagoon for about a month to attract fish and crustaceans. During harvesting, a net encloses the pile and as the branches are removed, the fish and crabs trapped within are caught.

Sea crabs are usually caught in gill nets, dragnets and cast nets in coastal waters, as they tend to swim, rather than crawl as the mud crab.

Late Uncle Peter, who lived in Adams Avenue near Colombo University, once challenged me with two questions on mud crabs. (1) Why is it that fishermen do not catch many crabs on full moon days? (2) Why are the crabs caught on full moon days without flesh? As I failed to answer, he explained that (1) on full moon days, the crabs are engaged in handa pané love-making, and as such, the smelly baits do not attract them as their partners are more attractive, (2) and in the case of the few unfortunate crabs caught, all their energy and flesh have been used up during love-making. As in many myths, his observations are correct, but the explanation is not quite right. Scientists and fishermen in USA have evidence to show that there is a correlation between the moulting of crabs and the phase of the moon, though water temperature, salinity and other factors also may be affecting moulting. They state that a few days before the full moon, 'peeling' begins and a few days after the full moon they become 'soft shell crabs'. So, the observation seems to be related to moulting, which leads to mating. Probably they are hiding from predators during this vulnerable period with soft shells (Figure 4). 'Berried' mud crabs are not caught in the lagoon, as berried condition of the female mud crab occurs in the sea, and the 'berried' mud crabs tend to crawl on the bottom of the sea. What Sri Lankans call crab eggs in the mud crab is either gonads (ovary or testes) or hepatopancreas. However, 'berried' sea crabs are caught in fishermen's gill nets as they tend to swim rather than crawl. In Sri Lankan fish markets 'berried' sea crabs (sinakkali) are occasionally seen, but never a 'berried' mud crab. In Australia, any 'berried' crab that is caught must be released back to the sea.

An article on crabs in a popular journal is incomplete without some tips on crab cooking and eating. Dead mud crabs should never be bought for cooking, as it is forbidden to sell dead mud crabs in NSW (SFM 2013). Their flesh deteriorates very rapidly. In all crabs, their taste depends mostly on their freshness. Their freshness can be checked by pressing the top corners and the space between the legs and abdomen for firmness, odour and external appearance. Mud crabs should not have repugnant odour, no froth near the mouth, limbs intact and with sensitive eyes that withdraw into a groove rapidly. Sea crabs (blue swimmers) are sold in the market either cooked or frozen, not alive. Frozen crabs are better for cooking curries than the cooked crabs. They could also be checked for firmness and odour. The flesh of mud crab and sea crab deteriorate rapidly under stressful conditions after the capture, resulting in mushiness or the loss of flesh. Mushiness is caused by the breakdown of flesh by the proteolytic enzymes produced from hepatopancreas. Frozen crabs may

appear to be firm to the touch, but may have ice inside. Before cooking, remove shell, abdominal flap, gills and mouth parts, trim the leg tips, slightly crack the claw and cut the crabs in to two or more, if large. Crab curry mixture from a Sri Lankan shop, or your own ingredients can be used to prepare a delicious crab curry. Crabs can also be steamed or fried. Some fish shops sell cleaned crab pieces and 'soft shell crabs' in boxes. Battered 'soft shell crabs' can be fried and eaten directly. If you are in Sri Lanka, you can enjoy one fresh mud crab curry lunch for two, at King Coconut Family Restaurant, near former Browns Beach Negombo, or in restaurants elsewhere in the north, south or east for AUS \$ 30 -50, or if it is sea crab (sinakkali) at a much less price. Sometimes, even fresh mud crabs have less meat, but the claws are generally full. Ministry of Crab is another popular restaurant located in the Old Dutch Hospital Complex Fort, Colombo. It is run by the Sri Lankan cricket legends, Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara with Munidasa Dharshan. Crabs ranging from 500 g to 2 kg are available at the restaurant for AUS \$48 – 275.

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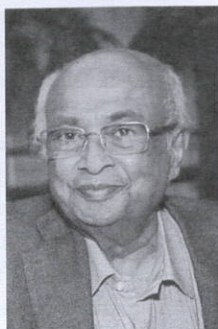
Appreciations

Tilak Wijewardana (04-11- 1937 – 15-12-2018)

The death occurred recently in Melbourne of Tilak Wijewardana, a member of the Ceylon Society of Australia almost from its inception.

When Hemal

Gurusinge and I visited Tilak in Palliative Care a few days before he passed away, we found a man at peace with himself and the world. He was surrounded by his family and close friends. He was too weak to speak but his mind was active and followed our conversation and interjected from time to time.



Tilak was born in Galle on the 4th November 1937. He was the eldest in a family of four boys and four girls. He was educated at Dharmaraja College Kandy. He maintained a life time loyalty to his alma mater.

He was a man who was naturally curious as shown by the varied interests that he had. This was accompanied by a great sense of compassion and a spirit of service. In 1960 he left for London to study Civil Engineering. However, his great love was travel and visited places both near and far taking photographs, another great interest of his.

In 1970 he met and married Pushpa at the London Tea Centre. He settled into family life and was blessed with a son Nirosha and daughter Hemanthi. They migrated to Australia in 1983 and settled in Melbourne. He worked at Vic Roads and specialised in bridges.

He had a great interest in public communications and combined with his knowledge

of matters and men, became a pioneer in radio broadcasting to the Sri Lankan Community. Along with the late Dr Olga Mendis he was instrumental in setting up the Channel 31 TV Program in Sinhala. He was the first Secretary of the Radio 3 ZZZ Sinhala Committee and helped produce many programs through the years.

He continued his learning through reading. He completed a course in Equal Opportunity at Swinburne University and the Monash University course in Counselling.

His loyalty to school was evident and he was a founding member of the Old Boys Association of Dharmaraja College. He was the support and inspiration for several generation of Rajans.

He attended the Ceylon Society meetings regularly and would without fail bring a plate of savouries made by himself. He enjoyed cooking and was a connoisseur of gastronomic delights. His ready smile and girth were evidence of this.

Tilak had a special interest in Sigiriya and made several trips to study the new discoveries of the architecture and the landscape surrounding Sigiriya and presented a talk at a Ceylon Society meeting.

He used his engineering skills to help restore an ancient Tank or Weva in the Anuradhapura District. During and after the war in the North he helped set up an orphanage and help for Soldiers who had lost limbs in the fighting.

However, it was after the Tsunami that he really was moved by the plight of those who had lost their homes. He was an active participant in the Non-Government Sector in building homes for the displaced.

In later years with restrictions on travel due to health he developed an interest in Hydroponics. He converted his backyard into a garden of vegetable delights and had a small band of enthusiasts who met regularly to discuss and improve their methods.

He continued to raise funds for hospital beds in Rural Sri Lanka. The first to be born on a bed donated from Australia was aptly named "Bradman Banda"

Thus, ended the innings of Tilak who like Bradman did not quite make 100 but lived a full life.

– by DR SRILAL FERNANDO

Braebourne Ralph Edema (02.10.1939 - 29.12.2018)

Braebourne Ralph Edema, our father, was born on October 2nd 1937 in Colombo. He was the first born of ten children to Ralph and Theresa Edema. Next came Ralston, who is no longer with us, Russell, Pierre, Crystal, Marietta, Leon, Sandra, Lavander (who died as a child) and Turid. Twenty-one years between eldest and youngest meant that Brae took his place as "captain" quite early on. Brae attended St

Joseph's College, Anuradhapura, where he was very connected with the priests who taught there. He was a talented student who loved science, especially zoology and botany. He was also an athlete, captaining the Cricket Eleven and taking great pride in the special blazer that came with this role. He also competed in the long jump and pole vault. Marietta and Russell recall Braebourne and Ralston building



a long jump pit and a pole vault sandpit in their backyard where they practiced diligently, resulting in Ralston representing the province in an athletics competition.

Later on, Braebourne became a boarder at St Patrick's College, Jaffna. Here he cultivated many friendships, with some of whom he continued to correspond with until these last weeks. At 18, Brae's parents could no longer afford to fund his education, so he was sent to Colombo to start work, which meant he had to leave home and live with his Aunt Margaret and Uncle Wilton.

In 1957 there were major floods in the family home town of Anuradhapura. Brae travelled back from Colombo to bring supplies of bread, water and corned beef to the family who were living in the upstairs rooms of the house until the floods subsided. With his father away driving trains on the railways, Brae was often called upon to be the man of the house. He was very upset when his baby sister Lavander fell ill and died, as his father was also in hospital at the time, and his mother was still recovering after giving birth to her ninth child. He always visited Lavander's grave when he returned to Sri Lanka on holidays. Braebourne was working as a maintenance mechanic with Powers Samas Punch card Machines employed by Office Equipment Limited Colombo, when he first met Evette. She was working as a punch card operator working first at Cargill's Limited and then the Central Bank, Colombo. Carlisle Edwards, Alex Fernando, Ana Kanagasaby and Upali Jayasakera were great friends from their days working as technicians at Office Equipment. They kept in close contact until the passing of Alex, Upali and Ana. Dad was sent to India by the company for training for a few months. Recently he recalled to me that he had boarded the plane to India with very little cash. As fate had it, he was seated next to a Catholic priest who offered to share a taxi with him when they arrived and helped him find his way, something that Dad was always grateful for. Once a month, Dad took our mother for a date to the movies, as this was when he got paid and they finally married six years later at All Saint's Church, Borella. They lived with Evette's mum Evelyn, and sister Claudette, at their home in Nawala until they migrated to Australia in 1967.

Brae had purchased his brother, Ralston's red Gilera motorcycle when Ralston left for England. This was his and mum's mode of transport until they left Ceylon even while she was pregnant. The neighbourhood dogs of Nawala took particular offence to the noisy bike and often gave full chase - this resulted in mum and dad falling off a few times. Their first daughter Tamaris was born in September 1966, and three months later they sailed to Australia on board the P&O liner *Himalaya* where Brae happily entertained all the elderly English migrants on deck with his breadfruit chips. Landing in Sydney two weeks later, they did their first shopping at Burwood for warm clothes and baby formula as the supplies they had brought with them had been confiscated. They took up residence in Burwood for six months until purchasing their own Californian-style bungalow at 46 George St, North Strathfield where they still reside. Brae's first Australian job was with the postal department in Redfern. He then sat for the public service examination and procured a job in the Corrective Services Head office at the McKell Building in the city. He worked for the department making many more lifelong friendships and progressing through the ranks, until his early retirement due to ill health. In 1975, Vanessa was born, nine years after Tammy when life in Sydney had settled down. We grew up with our many cousins always around, enjoying the sharing of birthdays and Christmas'. Our house was always full and the tiny kitchen was the epicentre of the chaos. In the 1990s Dad sought to make a big change in his life by giving up alcohol. He realised that his drinking was slowly killing him and he was ever grateful to his friend Phil Empson for helping him to make the change. A testament to his strength of conviction, once he had stopped drinking he did not ever drink again in the next 25 odd years.

While working for the department he became a Justice of the Peace. Dad always welcomed neighbours and friends who needed documents authorised and took particular pride in using his own personal JP stamp. Since retirement he enjoyed working in his garden and started playing bowls at Homebush Bowling Club. When Homebush closed, Dad moved to Concord Bowling Club. At both clubs, Dad played competition bowls and was elected to executive roles which he took on gladly Through Inner West Volunteers, Brae was introduced to Fred Gunsberger, a vision impaired, retired scientist who had fled Austria during the Holocaust. Dad's volunteer role was to help Fred read and respond to his mail once a week. Dad kept up his weekly visits to Fred for more than 10 years until Fred's death. By then, they had become firm friends and shared many stories about their completely different lives. Dad has always loved animals and we always had a dog at home, and sometimes a cat or two as well. He loved minding

our dogs when we went on holidays. When Matt, my husband was new to the family, he was asked what his favourite animal was. Matt answered that he was particularly fond of cats. Dad's quick response was "Cat's are useless animals". The garden at George St has always been a source of enjoyment. Dad took to propagating orchids and tending to an ever enlarging crop of karapincha leaves. I'm sure there are many here today who have received a curry leaf plant from this closely guarded crop. Our cousin Adam had the good financial sense to make some money from the leaves and Dad was somehow talked into allowing him to cut and sell them - no one else was usually allowed to take more than a few sprigs. He once entered the large gum tree that towers over the house at George St into the Council Backyard Tree of the Year competition. Much to his delight, it won! Dad sent a copy of the award to the next door neighbour who was constantly complaining about the tree's falling leaves reminding him that it was a protected local species now.

Brae followed both Australian and Sri Lankan politics with great interest. He was a card carrying Labor party member campaigning for the party at every election. Our cousin Travis noted that on the day dad passed the Sydney Morning Herald headline was "I've had my time: Bob Hawke reveals 'terrible' health. Former PM Bob Hawke is reportedly confident that Labor will win the upcoming federal election but doesn't think he'll be around to see it happen. Dad would have loved the parallel to his most favourite ex P.M.

Dad was keen for us to play sport. He used to drive me to netball, wish me luck for the game and then walk over to the football oval to watch the rugby. Cricket was Dad's favourite sport to watch and enjoyed many test match outings with work friends and his brother-in-law, George.

After migrating to Australia Dad switched his allegiances whole heartedly to the Australian team. One of his most prized possessions was a signed letter received from the great Don Bradman. During his last few days in hospital he listened to the Boxing Day test and was greatly disappointed by Australia's form. Dad always wanted us to do well at school. He himself had not had the opportunity to continue his studies, so he was very keen for us to finish school well and go on to university, so as to avoid the fate of becoming a street sweeper.

He was also incredibly proud of his grandchildren, nieces and nephews and their academic achievements. The three doctors in the family were always particularly cherished and he happily called them his personal physicians and called upon them to review any formal diagnosis. He was so proud of the achievements of all his extended family. He recently took it upon himself to update the family genealogy with everyone's tertiary qualifications, marriages

and the next generation of children. The Volkswagen Beetle "Clementine" was Dad's prized possession. He purchased the car in 1971, and I had my Kindergarten Starting School photo in front of the car. In fact, any time he wanted to take a special photo, he would ask us to pose in front of the car, for the next 30 years. We travelled everywhere in the VW, with the kids often sitting in the doggie box in the back. When Ron and I got engaged, Dad was so excited that he gave the VW to Ron and so began years of us breaking down on the side of the road and home repairs that took Ron and Michael Maguire the greater part of every weekend. Dad loved this car, so when we finally bought a car of our own it was passed on to Vanessa. It never left home without 30c in the glove box for an emergency NRMA callout. Eventually when Vanessa left for London, Dad reclaimed the Bug and continued to drive locally - never really getting above third gear. Many people recognised Dad's little Bug around the area with its BE 354 number plate. Many people contributed to the endurance of the VW. Big thanks must also go to Shane and Cecil Masefield and his brothers Ralston and Russell. Dad was never particularly handy with the mechanicals himself but always managed to convince someone else to give him a hand.

Dad loved to buy gifts. He particularly enjoyed choosing jewellery often bringing us home pieces when he travelled. Over the years he gifted Mum, Vanessa and I and the grandchildren many beautiful trinkets that now hold special memories. After retirement, Dad started choosing gifts from his favourite shop St Vincent De Paul. He loved to search among the wares until he found precious items, silver trays, china dishes, crystal glassware, and port demijohns were particularly valued. While cleaning out the VW we found a receipt for crockery purchased in 2014 which may have been one of the last times he drove himself to Burwood.

Food was very important to Dad. He could be a harsh critic (particularly of Mum's cooking!) and in recent times, he had lost the taste for some of his most favourite foods. This was the one thing that he complained about during his illness. Nothing made Dad happier than Sunday lunch with as many people as possible squashed around the dining table perched on all sorts of chairs and stools. If someone arrived at lunchtime, we would all shuffle over and the meal would be shared. Dad loved to cook, particularly prawn and crab curries, which he claimed were better than anyone else's. It was slightly frightening to watch him dismember live mud crabs sourced from Flemington Market to ready them for the pot. He liked to eat a variety of foods, from pork balls on a stick to extremely well-done BBQ steak with loads of pepper, chips and Coke, MILO on ice cream or a good feed of Malaysian Kwah Doo noodles. So many dishes will remind us of him.

When we thought about how to summarise someone with such a huge personality there seemed to be a few recurring themes: Family' Loyalty, Friendship + Faith . One of Dad's closest friends, Carlyle Edwards, a friend since the 1950s, upon hearing Dad had passed away, sent us this note: "There is a Mexican saying that a man dies three times. The first is when his soul leaves his body and is now considered clinically dead. The next death is when his body is buried or cremated and now out of sight. The third death is when his friends forget him. In the case of Braebourne he will not meet with that third death as he was always a friend to those in need. Ever ready to give his advice and assistance in many ways. We will miss you and all your advice and assistance"

Dad. You will never be forgotten.

— *A tribute by his daughter VANESSA*

NOTE TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

The Ceylankan is a quarterly magazine published in Australia and circulated worldwide. The Editor is on the lookout for literary contributions from our members and others.

While original, previously unpublished articles are preferred, submissions relating to the culture, history and heritage of Ceylon/Sri Lanka in keeping with the ideals of the CSA and are of a non-racial, non-political, non-religious and non-controversial nature are always welcome.

New writers will equally receive our careful attention. Colonial, post-Colonial to modern. Your fascinating story waiting to be written may be the very story that our worldwide readership is waiting to enjoy.

Submit your articles with little or no formatting – no indents at the start of paragraphs and no double spacing between lines; no space after full stops. Always use percent or per cent but never %. Where applicable, contributors are also asked to annotate bibliographical references, both for copyright purposes and to assist with further research by other members. Photographs to accompany your article, in colour or monotone, are welcome. They must be of a high resolution and in JPEG format.

While every effort will be made to print material that is relevant and correct we cannot take responsibility for errors. The Editor would appreciate if any such inaccuracies be brought to his attention as early as possible.



General Meetings

Sydney

Sunday 24 February 2019

The first General meeting for 2019 of the Ceylon Society of Australia will be on Sunday 24 February 2019 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 for the evening is



His Excellency

Mr. Somasundaram Skandakumar

(High Commissioner for Sri Lanka to Australia)

His Excellency will speak on

“The once mainstay of the Sri Lankan Economy, viz the Plantation Industry, has over more than 150 years seen many changes.”

The High Commissioner will share his own knowledge of that transition, giving his personal views on the merits of those changes.

Mr Skandakumar received his early education at Royal Primary School from 1953-1958 and was School Prefect in 1958. He received his senior schooling at Royal College Colombo from 1959-1966, becoming School Prefect in 1966 and was the Winner of the Best Performance Award at the Royal -Thomian Cricket Match in 1966.

He attended the University of Ceylon, Colombo in 1967, obtaining the Bachelor of Science Degree in 1970 with Double Mathematics and Chemistry).

He was Winner of the Award for the “Most Outstanding Sportsman” of the University in 1970. On graduation, he joined Whittalls Estates and Agencies as an Executive 1971. In 1974 he became an Executive at George Steuarts & Co Ltd. and was promoted Director of the company in 1984 .

He became Managing Director in 1997, a position he held to 2000 when he was appointed Group Chairman – George Steuarts Group until 2008. He retired in 2008 overseeing eight years, in the role of Group Chairman, described as “one of the most successful in the history of the Company and the Group”.

During this time His Excellency was Hony. Assistant Secretary, Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) from 1982 to 1988., Hony. Secretary, BCCSL 1989 - 1992; Vice Chairman, Hony. Secretary FIRST Interim Committee of BCCSL 1999-2000. The Chairman of that Committee, banker Rienzie Wijetilleke had this to say: “Skandakumar in his significant role as Ambassador of Goodwill was able to establish a great deal in restoring the credibility and image of the BCCSL in the eyes of the ICC at the Executive Board Meeting held at Lords in London on 23rd June 1999.”

He was President of the Tamil Union Cricket and Athletic Club from 1998- 2000 (Centenary year); initiated the re-development of the “Oval” and P Sara Stadium; captained the Club at Cricket 1982 - 1985, and also represented the club at Tennis and was a Radio and TV commentator on Cricket;

He chaired a Commission of Inquiry into the alarming deterioration of the Nation’s cricketing standards in 1994. The report titled “Skandakumar Report” is filed with Sri Lanka Cricket. The impact of that report is reflected in the fact that two years later Sri Lanka emerged Champions in the ICC Cricket World Cup in March 1996.

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.



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Important notice regarding CSA subscriptions for 2019

The annual CSA membership fees have not been changed for over ten years. However, during this period there have been sharp increases in postage charges, printing costs, hall hires, insurance etc. and it is no longer possible to make ends meet. The CSA Committee at its last meeting reluctantly decided to **increase the annual membership fees for overseas members from A\$ 30 to A\$ 40, and for Australian Pensioners from A\$ 20 to A\$ 25.** The annual membership fees for other members resident in Australia will remain unchanged at A\$ 30, and the rates for Colombo Chapter members will also remain unchanged.

Membership subscriptions for 2019 are now due and please arrange payment, 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 with the transfer your name as

payee, otherwise we will have no way of identifying the payee. We have had two payments recently without the payee's name and we are unable to identify who has sent these payments.

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 Sterling pounds. 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 sterling pounds, 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 a direct bank transfer.

Advertising in The Ceylankan

For some time, CSA members and others have indicated an interest in using the Journal to promote their goods and services. 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 a vehicle for research, study and broadcast 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 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.



Congratulations and a Warm Welcome to our New Members

Gerard Shamil Niranjana & Roshani Peiris, Kandy Sri Lanka.
Aubrey & Nelun Joachim, Acacia Gardens, NSW 2796.



WE NEED SPEAKERS

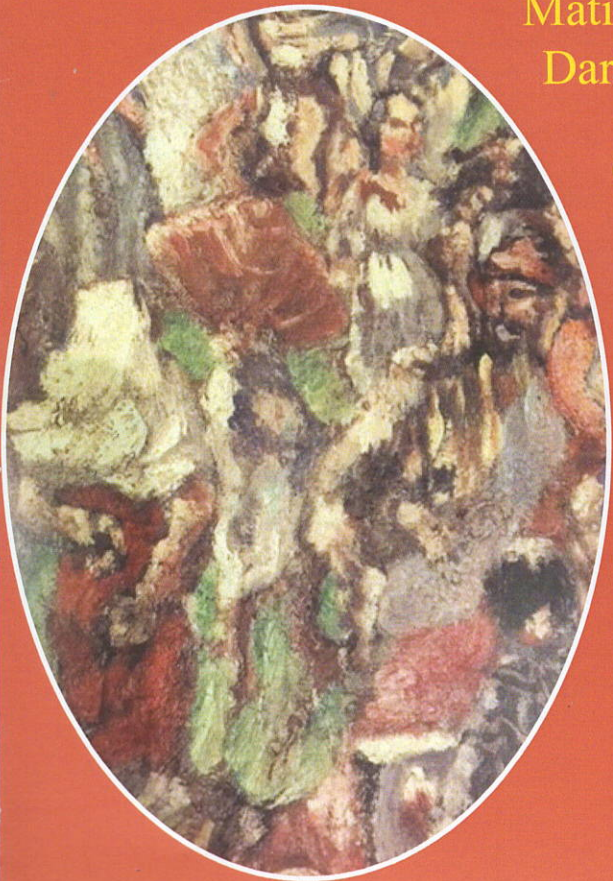
The CSA welcomes professionals and others interested in speaking at our public meetings on a subject of their choice. Meetings are held in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo and take place quarterly in February, May, August and November of each year.

If you have anyone in mind, please contact CSA President Pauline Gunawardane 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.)

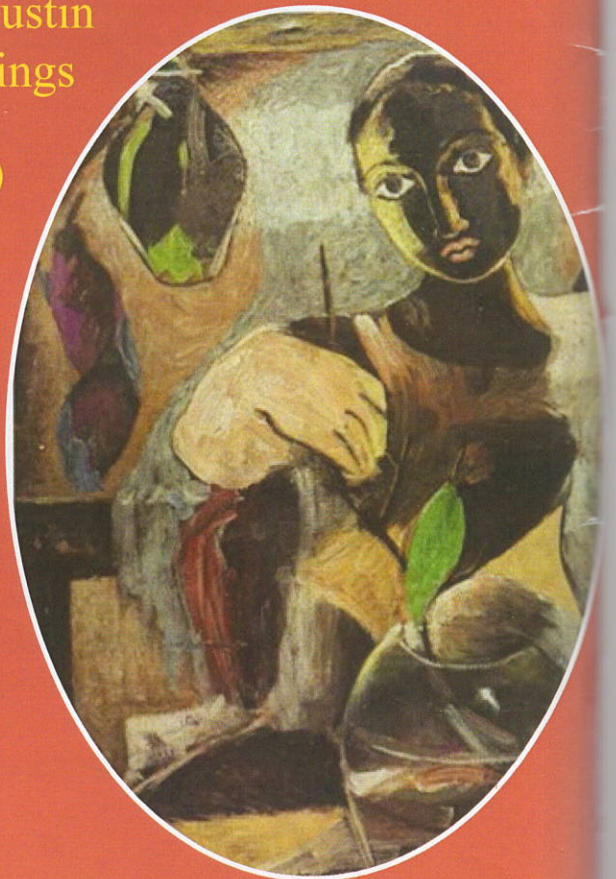


Fire

Influence of Picasso and Matisse seen here in Justin Daraniyagala's paintings



Crucifixion (left)



Girl with goldfish