



**NOTIFICATION:
Death of a President
Deshamanya
TISSA DEVENDRA
(1929 - 2023)**

Deshamanya Tissa Devendra passed away on 23rd June 2023 at the age of 94. Tissa joined the Colombo Chapter of the Ceylon Society of Australia (CSACC) on 7th March, 2008. He was elected President of the of the CSACC in 2013, and remained in this position till the year 2020. He was also a Senior Administrative Officer of the Government of Sri Lanka.

Tissa leaves behind his wife, Indrani, children, Jaliya and Rashmi, brother Somasiri, sisters Yasmin and Ransiri Menike.

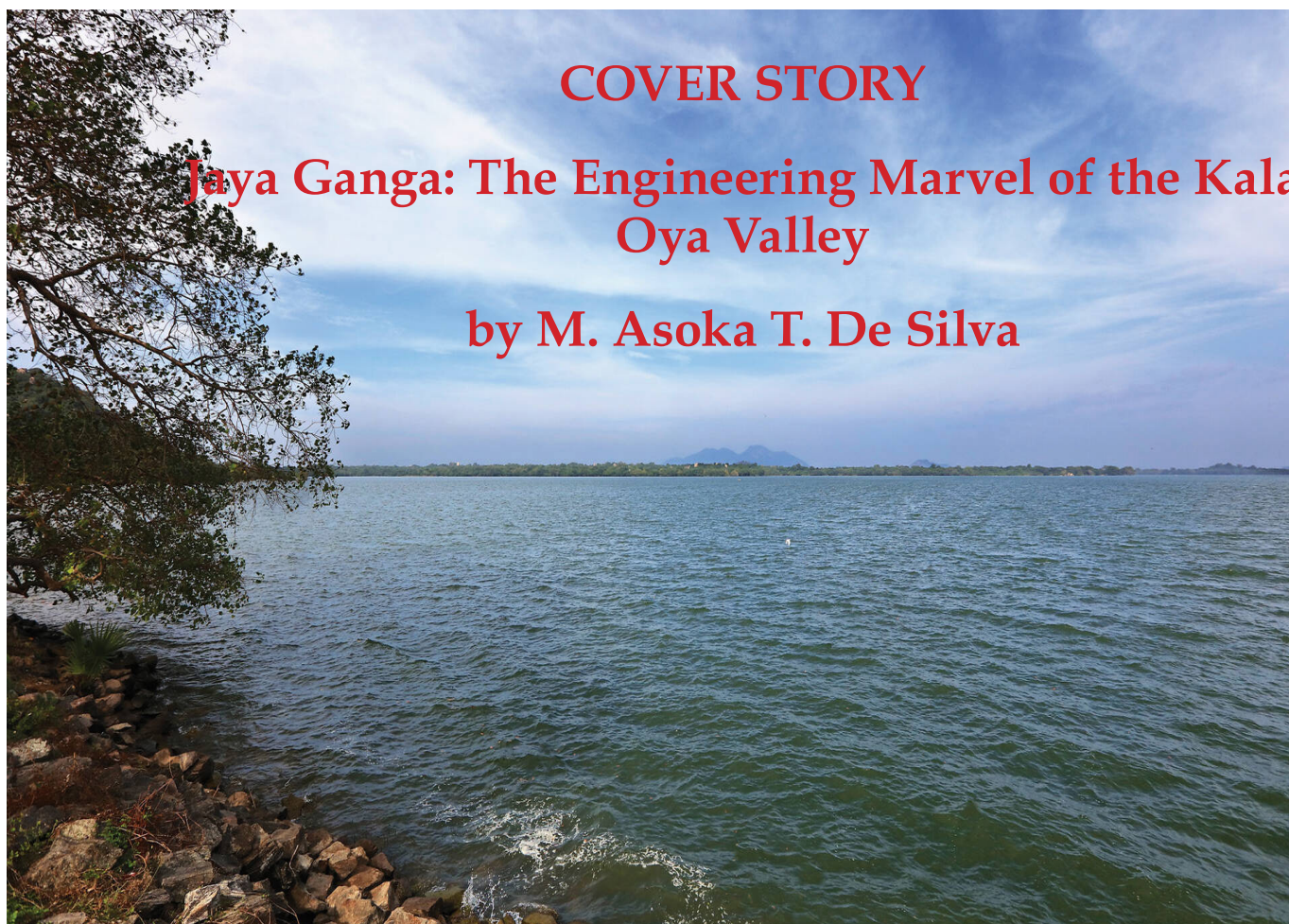
May he attain Nibbana.

M. Asoka T. de Silva, President, CSA
Colombo Chapter.

COVER STORY

Jaya Ganga: The Engineering Marvel of the Kala Oya Valley

by M. Asoka T. De Silva



The Ceylankam

The Journal of the Ceylon Society of Australia



The Ceylon Society of Australia

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The Ceylankam

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From the Editor

Dear Readers

This issue is dedicated to the memory of long time CSA member and Past President of the Colombo Chapter Deshamanya Tissa Devendra who passed away on 22 June 2023. A moving appreciation by Immediate Past President and Hony. Treasurer of the Colombo Chapter M.D. (Tony) Saldin appears on page 31. Also included in the appreciation is a poem written by Tissa Devendra about the journey of life. Mr Devendra was a highly respected civil servant, journalist and author who dedicated himself to the betterment of all Sri Lankans. May he attain Nibbana.

It is with a heavy heart I announce that the Colombo Column appearing in this issue is the final one for Somasiri Devendra. On behalf of CSA readers I would like to thank Somasiri for his entertaining short anecdotes that gave us a lot of enjoyment. Of course, on behalf of our readers I would like to pass on our condolences to Somasiri for the loss of his dear brother Tissa to whom we dedicate this issue. New compilers for the Column most welcome!

The cover story by M. Asoka T. de Silva, President of the Colombo Chapter, is on the stunning achievement of the Kala Oya irrigation network. Asoka's article shows the genius and vision of the ancient Sinhalese rulers and the highly sophisticated engineering skills of the ancient Sri Lankan engineers whose work still endures to this day. In keeping with the theme of ancient Sri Lanka Avishka Mario Senewiratne has penned a very interesting piece on the rediscovery and restoration of Sigiriya in the 19th century by the English civil servant and major in the British Army Jonathan Forbes.

In the article titled *Growth of a Tragic Princess*, Ernest Macintyre has shared with us his recollections of Peradeniya in the late 1950s and 1960s, where Ernest pays homage to the giant of Sinhala theatre, Ediriweera Sarachandra, whose play *Maname* formed such an influence on

Ernest's own theatrical journey and many others in Sri Lankan drama and culture ever since.

In Part 2 of his article Thiru Arumugam concludes his study of Francois Valentijn, the 17th century Dutch Calvinist minister and member of the Dutch East India Company, who wrote a *Description of Ceylon*, not having visited the island! Thiru shows how Valentijn relied on other 17th century Dutch sources to write his work. Nevertheless, it still is an important historical record of Sri Lanka's history.

There are reports of three book reviews and launches on page 20. These are: two books on Anton Chekhov translated into Sinhala by CSA member Dr Palitha Ganewatte, a review by Leander Kreltszheim of her father Malcolm Kreltszheim's essay on Christian attempts at healing with Buddhists in Sri Lanka after Independence and a report by Hugh Karunanayake of the book launch of *Fruits of Virtue: An Early History of St Joseph's College Colombo* at the Melbourne Chapter Meeting on 28 May 2023.

Hugh also has penned a very warm and appreciative toast to celebrate the 90th birthday of the CSA's first Social Convenor, Chandra Senaratne.

The full text of the speech given by Dr Raja Bandaranayake on Charles Dickens and Ceylon given at the CSA Meeting held in Sydney on the 28th of May 2023 appears on page 23.

In the next meeting to be held in Sydney on Sunday 27th of August 2023 the new Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Australia Mrs Chitranganee Wagswara will deliver a talk titled *Sri Lanka - Road to Recovery: Challenges and Opportunities*. It should be a fascinating evening that should inform attendees of the current situation in our motherland. The CSA Committee thanks CSA President Pauline Gunewardene for her tireless efforts in organising this function. I urge members to attend.

And there is more....Happy reading!

ADAM RAFFEL

Ceylon Society of Australia

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

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

The annual calendar year subscription covers receipt of the Society's journal, "*The Ceylankan*", published quarterly and distributed to members worldwide. The articles published are authored by members. All opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and do not reflect those of the Editor or the CSA. Articles may be reproduced in other publications, but must be credited to this journal and carry suitable acknowledgment thereof.

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

Our Readers write

St Joseph's College Colombo in the '50's and 60's

In response to a book review of *Fruits of Virtue: An Early History of St Joseph's College Colombo* that appeared in the last issue of *The Ceylankan* (Journal 102 May 2023 Vol 26(2) pp 19-20), I would like to add a few words on the subject. St Joseph's College, Colombo is one of the leading public schools in Sri Lanka. It is one of the oldest and largest schools. Having started in the late 19th century, it has been in the forefront of education in both studies and sports, especially in the early part of the 20th century. When I entered St Joseph's in 1950, we had a very high standard of education with good teachers and facilities. Fr Peter Pillai was the school principal. He was an outstanding scholar having done post graduate studies in both Arts & Science. He treated both staff and students with much respect. He was also one of those involved in setting up Aquinas University College for graduate studies, giving opportunity for students to do the London degree especially due to limited admissions to University of Ceylon at the time.

We had some very good teachers to maintain a high standard. There was Bernard Perera for Geography, Reginald Rajapakse for History, Kuruvilla for English and Eric Mendis for science. Mendis taught my father & uncle as well as my brothers. Principal of Primary school was Fr Noel Perera, who showed much interest in students. Martin De Kawe was a good teacher in Primary school.

Among the outstanding students were, H.N.G Fernando who became Chief Justice of Supreme Court and his son Mark was also on the Supreme Court bench. Mark set a record first class for the law degree, Lakshman Sinnadurai was Professor of Mathematics, University of London. Geoffrey Babapulle was Professor of Forensic Medicine Peradeniya University. Dr V. Jeyarajan was a world authority on Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) medicine.

St Joseph's had one of the highest standards of education in the first half of 20th century. All that changed with the introduction of teaching in local languages from the early '60s.

Among the outstanding sportsmen were Hugh Jayawardena, Christo Panambalana and Neville Puvimanasinghe in athletics. The latter set a record of 10.9 seconds for the 100 metres

in Peradeniya which was close to the national record.

In cricket there was Ken Serpanchy, Roy Perera, Yasa Ratnayake, Mahinda de Silva, Tony Buhar, Malcolm Berenger, Kirthi Caldera, Ranjit Malawana and Malcolm Franke. Franke was in the Queensland cricket team.

In tennis, Mahinda de Silva and Lloyd Fernando won the Public Schools doubles championship. Lakshman Malawana was runner up in Singles in the Public Schools championship.

The swimming team was the most outstanding in schools at the time led by Tony Williams.

Srikantha Nadarajah
Hornsby NSW

The Colombo Column

Compiled for the Colombo Chapter by Somasiri Devendra



The Admiral must always be right!

1944. Trincomalee.

“Nonsense...” said the Admiral “.... *Nonsense!*”

AFD 23, (Admiralty Floating Dock No 23) had recently been declared operational. She was designed to dry dock and repair capital ships. The first, cruiser *HMS VALIANT*, entered the dock. Pumping commenced... but the “floating” dock collapsed, nearly sinking her and successfully sinking herself.

(The following is based on a first-person account of the disaster by Commander Spooner RN, the Chief Engineering officer of RENOWN which was due to use the dock next. He had boarded the dock to familiarize himself with controls and procedures.)

On the night of August 8th 1944, by the general list of the Dock, it was apparent that all was not well. Upon boarding the dock with the Vice Admiral, Commander Spooner went straight to the control room only to find no one at the controls. He immediately realised that the sequence of pumping out the ballast tanks was inappropriate for *VALIANT*, being short weighted amidships but more importantly, being fully loaded with ordnance. Apparently, the operators did know that *VALIANT* carried most of her weight amidships but did not know that she had a full load of ordnance. They therefore began by pumping out the mid dock tanks first. Too much weight fore and aft and too much lift amidships caused the dock to break its back upwards. He reported to the Admiral:

‘If you want to leave with dignity, Sir, I think we should leave now’,

Said the Admiral: “*Nonsense, Spooner, nonsense*”

walking away from the waiting launch. Moments later, the dock began to list more heavily. The Admiral, changed course and made for the launch, bumping into Commander Spooner as they boarded the launch together. As he stepped on board, there was a loud crack and the dry dock broke its back.

The ship’s company of the *VALIANT* was able to save the vessel. The Dock it was that sank.

[In 1968, I was privileged to see the larger part of the wreck emerging from the deep and being towed to the breakers’ yard. The smaller part yet lies “quiet as sleep” at Orlando Cove.]

1964. Diyatalawa

“Jones,” he said “*JONES ...and Perry*”

I was a newly recruited Instructor Lieutenant in our own Navy. A bunch of us, ex-schoolteachers had been chosen to din some ‘larnin’ into the heads of young officer cadets before they could be unleashed on Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. My subject areas were English and History. Between us, we told the Cadets, we knew everything. But *everything*.

Word came round that a very senior Officer would be visiting us at work. He came: not an Admiral, yet, but with the oodles of confidence born of war service in the Royal Navy in a World War.

Inspection over, we were treated to a beer and tongues became a *leetle* loose. The VIP was in form: he was a believer in a “broad education” for officers, for open discussion unhampered by seniority. He was speaking on Navies and their impact on History.

“When Commodore Jones opened up Japan.....” he was saying

when, with supreme confidence, I decided to butt in:

“Not Jones, Sir, Perry.... Commodore Perry”

He did not seem to hear me. He made a brief foray into another matter – but came back with

“...where was I? Yes, the opening up of Japan. When Jones (and Perry) opened up Japan.....”

His eyes brushed past mine. I had been nudged back to Reality.

It mattered not whether I was Right or Wrong. But the Admiral must always *seem* to be right!!

[The next Colombo Column would be compiled by another. For me this has been a happy journey. Thank you]

COVER STORY

Jaya Ganga: The Engineering Marvel of the Kala Oya Valley

by M. Asoka T. De Silva

Introduction

The first ancient historical record of any type of irrigation work is accredited to an inscription left by King Eannadu of Shirpurla in Southern Babylonia, in the ancient Kingdom of Mesopotamia, who had ruled in 4000 BC, and who mentions his construction work of several canals, one of them being known as Lummadimshar, at the side of which he made a reservoir, the first ever on record.

Although the contribution of the migrant Aryans to the Indus Valley civilization has been considered negligible, it is conjectured that they did contribute considerably to the natural aspect of this cultural growth, as there seems to be valid reasons to believe that it was the Aryans who introduced the chariot, the horse and the plough, the last named of which may have considerably changed the cultural pattern of cultivation, as well as their flood irrigation method of cultivation. They have also apparently, had their bronze-smiths who produced tools and weapons that were much superior to those of the previous Harappan culture.

Thus, it can be conjectured that these Gangetic settlers in North India, may have had some acquaintance with this type of flood irrigation, before they arrived in Ceylon ca 500 BC. Nevertheless, there are no records to indicate that these Aryans brought with them a knowledge of the construction of reservoirs, which as believed by Henry Parker (1909), was neither required, nor made use of in the districts inhabited by their ancestors in India. Although it has been considered possible that the Sinhalese acquired a knowledge of the art of reservoir construction in Southern India, the credit of its further development and extension in the island was due to some of the earliest Sinhalese rulers and their anonymous advisers and engineers. In fact, the nature of flat plains around the sites of ancient cities of Southern India could not have facilitated the con-

struction of reservoirs with high embankments as observed in the hydraulic civilization of ancient Sri Lanka, and there is no evidence of any such works.

Discussing the ancient models of irrigation, Henry Parker (1909), the British engineer in Colonial Ceylon, states that two different systems were in vogue, depending on the specific circumstances in each case. In one method the water was impounded in reservoirs from which it was gradually passed out either directly into the fields where it was wanted, or discharged by means of excavated channels down which water flowed into the fields.

In the second method, part of the water flowing down the river was turned into large, excavated channels which conveyed the water to more distant lands or reservoirs by the construction of temporary dams, or permanent masonry dams across rivers below, in order to divert into them a large quantity of water that could otherwise be secured, when the flow of water to rivers begin to diminish.

According to Parker (1909), the first reservoir ever made with an embankment of importance, which required special acquaintance with the principles of reservoir construction, would have been either the Panda-wewa (*Pandi-vapi*), in the North-western Province or the Abhaya-wewa in the city of Anuradhapura.

The Strange Twins of the Kala Oya Basin

The valley of the Kala Oya had been the focus of an engineering marvel of ancient Sri Lanka. It is a matter of great interest that some of the early writers, scholars and even many colonial masters had taken such great delight and sobriety in peering into the misty past of the Island's hydraulic civilization through the knowledge of men with traditional wisdom.

Henry Parker (1909) as well as R. L. Brohier (1965), had not only shown the high-

est regard to ancient folklore and traditions, but also paid homage to the ingenuity and veracity of the system of indigenous wisdom and method of knowledge transfer, a unique South Asian tradition that made it possible not only to transliterate the great philosophy and teachings of Lord Buddha, but also chronicle and narrate the historical evolution of Sri Lanka. It is this tradition that facilitated and guided in many instances the investigations into the ancient hydraulic and engineering feats of the country.

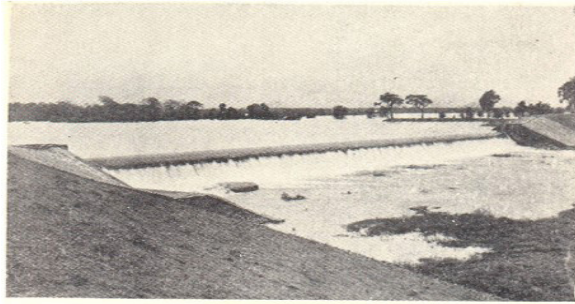


Fig 1- The Kalaweva Spill (From Arumugam, 1968)

Brohier (1965), describes the folklore that brought to light the origin and subsequent historical passage towards the creation of the “Kala Reservoir”. As in most other instances, the existence of ancient monuments and rock inscriptions in close proximity to such works, established the veracity of traditions. The two reservoirs that cast a spell on the panorama of the Kala Oya valley, were the Kalaweva and the Balaluwewa (the Strange Twins).

The description that follows is based on the narratives of R. L. Brohier (1965), and that of Architect Udula Bandara Awsadahami (2007), both of whom had taken a close look at this magnificent engineering marvel.

The Kala Oya drains the water from the northern most regions of the central hills and travels a distance of about 100 miles carrying a total annual run-off of 860,000-acre feet of water from a watershed of about 1000 square miles. Along its route, it is said to have served more than 300 small tanks of various sizes with an ingenious network of canals, one set of which served the two tanks, Kalaweva and Balaluwewa. The Kalaweva is located on the right side of the Kala Oya, while Balaluwewa is on the left side, the two tanks being separated by a corridor (land mass) of about half a mile in breadth.

Apparently, to ensure food security, King Dhatusena is said to have conceived the idea in the 5th Century AD of forming a massive reservoir by throwing back the waters of the Kala Oya with an embankment, the consequence of which

300 square miles of its watershed were submerged, thereby conjoining the two reservoirs. This embankment, which is said to have created in a stupendous spill, had been constructed with hammered granite, excellently dressed, and flattened at the crest, with an intervening depression between the Kalaweva and Balaluwewa, allowing for the exit of flood waters. The splendor of this ancient engineering marvel according to Brohier (1965), could be seen at its best at the time when the “surcharged lake spills in riotous abandonment”.



Fig 2 - The Jaya-Ganga (Yoda Ela) that Meanders Through a Natural Thick Forest Ecosystem at an Incredible Gradient of no more than 7 inches per mile in its First 17 Miles. (Reproduced from Awsadahami, 2007)

The King also ensured that the overflowing water from this large lake should ultimately be carried in a giant 40-foot-wide cross-basin canal, the Yoda Ela, a distance of 54 miles to Anuradhapura, to replenish and ensure adequacy of water in the city reservoirs.

Brohier (1965) states, that it verily baffles understanding of how a canal of this magnitude could have been planned and executed over such a difficult terrain nearly 1500 years ago. This canal, also known as Jaya-ganga, meanders over the first 17 miles at an unbelievable gradient of no more than 7 inches to a mile. Thereafter it is led in deep gorges across saddles between watersheds.

According to Awsadahami (2007), the Jaya-ganga which meanders along the upstream waters edge of the small reservoirs lying immediately below it, flowed gently along the surface of the terrain bordering the traditionally preserved thick jungle corridors, and in the process drawing, and draining the rain and flood waters of small streams.

Thus, apart from the technological ingenuity of this complex hydraulic system, it conforms and measures up to the best principles of ecology, whereby the canal, apart from conveying the surplus water from the reservoir system and the flood waters of the cross streams, scientifically taps and drains optimally the precious resource from the sub-soil springs of the surrounding micro-climatic ecosystem, while also ensuring least loss of water through surface evaporation. This traditional wisdom and knowledge system of our forebearers ensured the performance of such a multiplicity of service functions of reservoirs and cross-basin canal networks, that continues to baffle the present-day environmentalists, engineers, scientists, and development planners, many of whom were the participants in dismal reconstruction efforts of such hydraulic systems.

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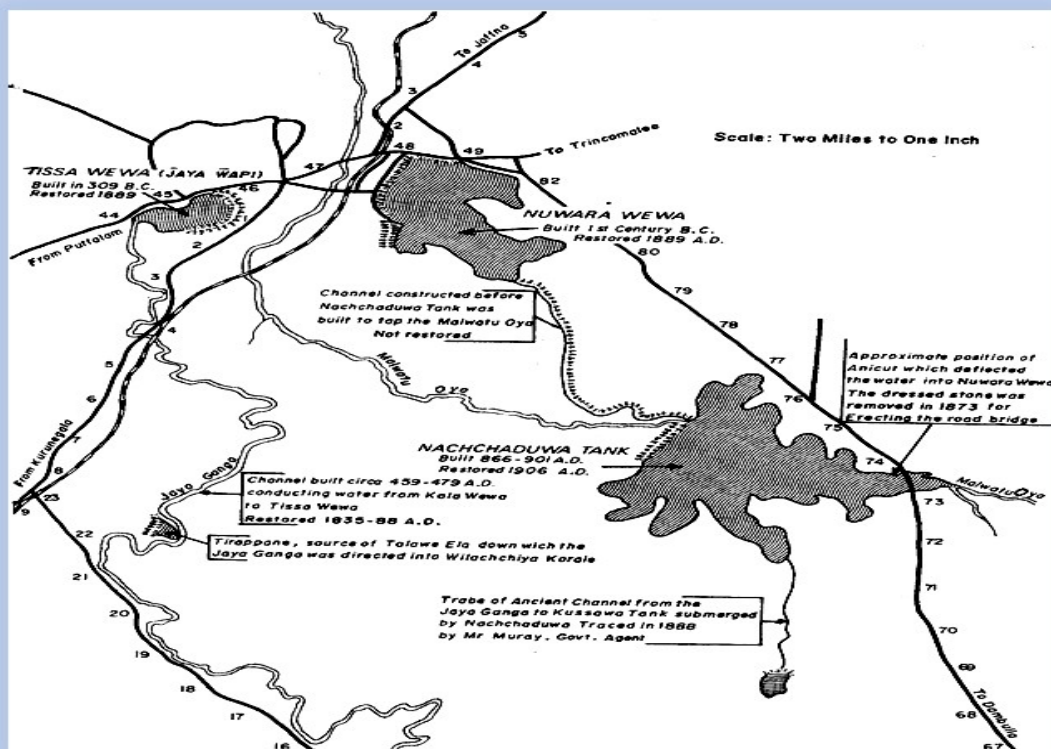
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BELOW

Nuwaraweve with the Ruvanvelisaya in the distance



Fig 3 (below) - the Entry Point of the Yoda Ela to the Nachchaduwa Tank at Anuradhapura, which had served to replenish the City tanks during dry weather.



The Growth of a Tragic Princess

by Ernest Macintyre

EDITOR'S NOTE: This short story is Chapter 3 of a 12-chapter memoir *A Bend in the Mahaweli* about Ernest Macintyre's time at the University of Ceylon – Peradeniya. It is important to note that each chapter in Ernest's book can be read as an episode in itself. Chapters 1 and 2 appeared in *The Ceylankan* J 101 Vol 26(1) February 2023. There is no need to remember what happened in previous chapters as there is no plot in the conventional sense, just a collection of short stories. The characters are drawn from Ernest's play *Rasanayagam's Last Riot*, written and performed in 1996.

Ernest Macintyre, *Rasanayagam's Last Riot*, (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa, 1996)

Rasa, Philip and Sita, the fictional characters in this story, are the same as the 1996 play. The characters Philip and Sita are loosely based on Ernest and Nalini Macintyre, both CSA members.



Hemamali Gunasinghe as Princess Maname in 1956

A look, sometimes desultory, at a passing social phenomenon in early Peradeniya that was the Japanese Noh theatre, a powerful and proximate influence on the creation of *Maname* and Ediriweera Sarachchandra's subsequent major plays. In essentials, Noh theatre shares a good deal with Sanskrit theatre, but the latter is extinct. The texts of the Sanskrit plays do exist, but these alone were insufficient to instruct and inspire meaningful theatrical innovation.

The latter needed an existing, breathing live model, which is what Sarachchandra found in Noh theatre. The influence of Noh is much clearer in his later plays, where the chorus not only narrates but comments on the happenings on the stage poetically and philosophically. *Maname* however pioneered the effective and systematic use of both the narrator and the chorus.

An even greater justification for labelling *Maname* as “made in Japan” comes from the story. It was Sarachchandra's experience of seeing Akira Kurosawa's film classic *Rashomon* that germinated in him the possibilities the *Culla Dhanuddhara Jatakaya* (the *Maname* story) offered for the exploration of the psychology of a woman in the grip of anxiety. Whereas the *Culla Dhanuddhara* takes a simplistic and conventional “infidelity, thy name is woman” view, *Rashomon* explores it with great subtlety, viewing the woman's “infidelity” from several different perspectives. It gave Sarachchandra a model for the content of the play just as Noh theatre gave him a model for

its form. The long, arduous, and often frustrating search for an indigenous theatre motivated by both artistic and political reasons found its consummation in a dramatic entity that blended the rusticity of the Sinhala Nadagama with the refinement of the Japanese Noh play.

Rasa, Sita and Philip had their first contact with Sarachchandra's *Maname* when at the end of four weeks the seniors arrived. Freshers in all halls showed nervousness. And in this condition Philip, Sita and Rasa, made contact with the making of *Maname*.

Philip knew a second-year undergrad, also at Jayatilleke Hall, Arthur Seneviratne. He lived next door to Philip's home in Marys Road, Bambalapitiya. Philip had seen a notice on the board at the Arts Faculty, announcing a major new theatre project at Peradeniya. It was led by Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra, well known as a scholar of the folk theatre of Lanka, apart from his scholarship in Sinhala, Pali, Sanskrit and Western Philosophy. Philip saw that the notice was signed by Arthur, who was called “President, Sinhala Drama Circle”. With the impending torment and pain of the ragging in mind, Philip had an idea that he and Rasa, could soften things for themselves, if he met Arthur and volunteered to join in this theatre project and do any work called for. This association with seniors, if it materialised, Philip imagined, would give some shielding from the worst of the ragging, through the intervention of Arthur.

The meeting was in the afternoon of the day after Philip had seen the notice. The lecture theatre was packed, and some had to stand. Philip, Sita and Rasa sat together. On the raised cement section at one end, sat Dr Sarachchandra, centre. Dr. Siri Gunasinghe spoke first, to introduce Dr. Ediriweera Sarachchandra. “I am Siri Gunasinghe of the Department of Sanskrit. Welcome to you all who have shown interest in helping to launch, this theatre project, for a play called *Maname*. I am helping Doctor Sarachchandra in this project in any way he wants me to, but specifically as art director. I

won't say more, because Doctor Sarachchandra has much to communicate to you". Indicating the centre chair, he announced, "Doctor Ediriweera Sarachchandra".

"Thanks Siri. Welcome to you all and thank you for showing this support", began Sarachchandra and delivered his speech as follows:

I am told by Arthur Seneviratne, the president of our Sinhala Drama Circle, that present here are a more than expected number of freshers. That is a gladdening sign for what better way to start your life at university than with an activity that hopefully will set your imagination in motion. What is this residential university at Peradeniya? Immediately, I can tell you, it is not only for passing exams. It is also for the passing of life at a time when it is surging, I remember a short verse, written by a friend:

*"Get up you swatter for Bachelor of Arts
Give rest to that cramming strife.
Come forth and bring your glorious hearts!
To sing, to dance, to act and be another life!"*

Exams have their important place, for you need to know what your five senses, especially seeing and hearing tell you about the world and have jobs when you leave. But that is only a part, not the whole, and the word "university" derives from the word "whole". You have come here, to use your imagination, which in many things is more important than your five senses, to relate to the whole. Theatre is only one such opportunity. If you do physics, as they do at Colombo campus then outside of lectures, looking at the stars at night and contemplating, the vastness beyond our tiny planet, could be another avenue for the creative imagination. I hope that one day the science faculties will also be moved to this campus, for creativity in the arts is only part of the human story of finding out who and what we are. That is also part of university.

And university is not a closed habitation. We should be very conscious that thousands, millions, of people, out in the country outside, do not have this university opportunity. So, let us, maybe feel a little better, if any discomfort accompanies being elite and fortunate, by trying to tell them that it is their culture and lives, as well, that give us inlets and sustenance for our growth. That is the case with the project I am about to introduce to you, *Maname*. On my right is Charles Silva Gunasinghe Gurunanse. He is a master of Sinhala Nadagama and works and teaches in Balapitiya. His village actors in Balapitiya are mostly cinnamon peelers, by day. Without



Charles Silva Gunasinghe Gurunanse

him this *Maname* project will not be realised. Charles was with me at every stage of the writing of '*Maname*'. He provided the music, he advised on dance movement and song and participated in discussions about the content of the play. Charles demonstrated the traditional Nadagama style but was agreeable to changes. He is a good teacher!

Now, to divert a little, I have chosen to speak in English. To explain why will take too long. But each of you has a faithful translation, on paper, of what I say. So, you may follow as I speak or read later at your leisure.

From Balapitiya to the city of Athens in Greece, seems a long way out. While I have studied the folk theatre of Ceylon and the *Natyashastra* of India, and seen it come alive in the Noh and Kabuki of Japan, I have also gone out, through reading, in the calling of university, to find the whole. I studied Aristotle's theory of Tragedy.

I have taken the story of *Maname*, from the Sinhala folk tradition, and I am hoping to transform it into a contemporary play for anywhere. The essence of Aristotle's theory of Tragedy is that misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty [*hamartia*]. I have adapted this to mean an inner nature, not necessarily an error of frailty. According to **Aristotle** (see image), tragedy has six main elements: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle (scenic effect), and song (music), of which the first two are primary. In the structure of Greek tragedy plot or circumstance is crucial; for inner nature will not come into play if circumstances or plot do



not give it occasion. For tragedy is an imitation not of men but of an action and of life. Characters in Tragedy are victims of circumstance, events in life over which they have no control, and “why did it happen” as is the concluding thought in *Maname*, is a recurrent complex phenomenon.

I’m not a sociologist, but I like to think we were all, long ago, in the status of folk. So, when we say we are changing the content of the old folk tale, we are changing what we all thought and lived earlier. We are not changing what another social stratum believed. We were that stratum earlier.

The princess of the old folk performance was despised and condemned as evil for assisting in the killing of her husband by the tribal leader. The woman in our *Maname* is very differently treated. When their marriage is arranged by her father, to Prince Maname, we know nothing about what their respective *hamartias* were, that is, what their inner natures were, as given them by simply being specific humans. So, the marriage is arranged, and prince and princess get to love each other, though not knowing each other’s natures. Then, when going through a forest, on the way to the prince’s kingdom, they meet a tribal leader, who desires the princess. The differences in the natures of the prince and princess emerge when the prince who has the tribal leader firmly in his grip after combat, asks the princess, who is holding the prince’s sword, to give it to him, to kill the tribal leader. The apparent nature of the princess emerges when she pleads with her husband not to kill the tribal leader, who was generous enough not have the prince killed by the large number of tribal warriors but agreed to single combat instead. The nature of the prince also becomes evident, when he is astounded by her attitude. His grip loosens, the tribal leader apparently snatches the sword from the princess and kills the prince. Circumstance or plot had to make them cross this forest and that led to the further circumstance of the combat between prince and tribal leader, which in turn led to the death of the prince. Finally, these circumstances placing her helpless in the tribal leader’s forest, determines her actions thereafter. Circumstances seemed to have forced her to say to the tribal chief that she always wanted to give the sword to him. The implication being that she facilitated the sword coming into the tribal leader’s possession. We don’t know. His reaction was that he snatched the sword, and if she had intentions of giving the sword to him, she is despicable. He abandons her. All circumstances. This woman as complex as

men or women can be, dies of a broken heart. So different from the original folk tale woman who was simply despicable.

But I need to explain that the despicable princess of the ancient folk tale has not been discarded and replaced by our modern very complex princess, victim of circumstance. There is continuity. This is a little difficult but let me try. She has grown into our new complex princess, as a companion to our own growth into middle classes from the time we, like her, were simple uncomplicated folk. And in her body movements, the way she can sing, chant, and dance she is the same. This continuity is why Charles Silva Gunasinghe Gurunanse is living in my home and teaching me. He grew up with the same princess of old, to what she is now, and has come to know how she has changed, internally, in content.

That does not alter his affectionate presentation of his princess, in the form he knew her when he first came to know her. And now, I am sharing with you the most exciting experience I have had since I began making this play. Aiyapali Manamperi entered Peradeniya with the new batch that has just come in. She entered from Balapitiya Vidyalaya. Charles Silva Gunasinghe Gurunanse knows her because she has been acting the evil princess in the *Jataka* folk tale from about four years ago in his presentation of the *Maname* story in the villages of Balapitiya.

When Gurunanse gave me this information I asked him to bring her along so that I could meet her.

The first question I asked Aiyapali was whether she was happy to act the evil princess, in the folk story. Instead of answering me she wanted to know why I asked that question. I knew I was meeting a quick-thinking woman. I told her that to give the impression that women are evil, is not a comfortable thing to act over and over again. She then told me that the princess being evil did not mean that women are evil, that the princess is an individual and does not represent women. She only represents herself, as an evil individual woman. After the show I used to talk to the village people about the play, because they wanted to talk about it. I told them that everybody in the world is a separate individual, but in the world today people have been made to think that individuals are what they are, not because they are separate individuals, but because of their race or religion or whether they are women or men.

She spoke in beautiful Sinhalese to express her original understandings.

She concluded: "I was very comfortable acting that part in the *Jataka* story, because an individual woman can be evil, or not evil as in your *Maname*, which I read a few days ago."

Aiyapali conveyed what an individual is, better than most academics do. I brought this along to read to you:

An individual is that which exists as a distinct entity. Individuality (or selfhood) is the state or quality of being an individual; particularly (in the case of humans) of being a person unique from other people.

At that stage I did not want to tell her that the princess in our *Maname* is difficult to pin down as being good or not, that she is made complex by circumstances. By that time, I had decided to give her the part. I tested her dance movements and her singing, and found she had a very good grounding from our Gurunanse here.

So, Aiyapali Manamperi will be Peradeniya's Princess Maname. She knew about this meeting, and I told her that I will be saying some words about selecting her as the princess. She said she would rather not be at this meeting, and I respected her feelings.

To conclude, I must address a matter that seems to concern some theatre practitioners who use modern Sinhala prose in naturalistic movement. The form or convention in which *Maname* is performed. All of humanity does not communicate content in the same form. I cannot imagine the content of *Maname* being communicated in naturalistic acting in Sinhala prose dialogue, because we then lose the progeny of the folk tale princess, who I identified as having grown up, in her inner life, in our Peradeniya development. Her inner life has grown up within her outer appearance, which is one of song, chant, dance and music is a vital form that is integral to her growth into our times. Changing content does not have to be accompanied by changing form. Let me say this in another way. When I refer to the language of theatre, I don't mean the spoken languages such as Sinhala or Tamil or English or German. I mean, the way theatre communicates with an audience, quite apart from spoken language. Theatre has languages all of its own, independent of words that come out of mouths. The form or medium used to communicate the experience of the play is Nadagama.

Yesterday I was talking to a member of the Catholic Newman Society of Peradeniya. He was very interested in the new *Maname* we are trying to make and asked me why I did not think of doing it in modern prose drama,

which is the trend in our culture now. The old chanting, dancing and singing in theatre was the old folk culture, he said.

Almost like an accident it came to my mind, and I told him that I have heard a story that some years ago, some Christian church hierarchy in Ceylon thought they would replace the bread and wine of the Christian Mass with betel leaves, chunam and areca nut, to align Christian ritual with our culture. It was a failure. It failed because the ritual of the Christian Mass is one of the great dramas of Western civilization. It is drama, in the sense that the audience, the participants, are offered the possibility of transformation, as a result of participation, with the offering, "Take, Eat, This Is My Body". Words said over two thousand years ago, at the original "performance" at Christ's Last Supper, according to the Christian Bible.

I believe that bread and wine was customarily offered at supper, soon after God was thanked for the meal, long before Christ's Last Supper, and its infusion with the dramatic new content of transformation into the flesh and blood of Christ, at this fundamental supper of Christianity, was a crucial continuity of form, with a new content.

Now, when some people in Lanka became Christians, they accepted, they absorbed, this dramatic ritual in the cultural form in which it came into the world, because they believe that their God first manifested as Christ in that part of the world's cultures.

The spoken words of the Christian Mass can be in Sinhala and Tamil languages, as it now is and in ordinary spoken language, not in the form it is spoken in the mass. But the way the words are poetically delivered goes with the bread and wine "language" of its theatre, the bread and the wine, its form, is inseparable from its content, its transformation of the bread and wine to the flesh and blood of Christ, in the belief of participants.

You will have noticed that European individuals who have chosen to follow the path of the Buddha, becoming monks, wear the saffron robes of Asian culture. They also perform meditation with the form of body posture of ancient and modern Asian monks. That is comparable to the use of the bread and wine by Asian Christians.

Why our new princess Maname, tells her new story, in the same form of action and speech, as when she was in olden times, is a natural continuity of growth, of the same "person".

I think I'll stop there because the President of the Sinhala Drama Circle, has a lot of work to do taking down the names of students who volunteer to help and other administration. I have been told that ten minutes can be used for any comments or questions.

Philip was not surprised when Rasa got up and raised his hand. He had noticed that Rasa gradually forgetting that they had come to this meeting to cultivate Arthur as a buffer against the impending ragging, looked deeply involved in what Sarachchandra was saying. So were Sita and Philip.

"Sir, Doctor Sarachchandra, I do not know Sinhalese literature, I am from Jaffna Hindu College, Vannarponnai. But what you said, makes me feel that this Sinhala play is universal. Thank you, sir. I volunteer to help in any way I can."

"Thank you for your offer. And I would like to say that I am happy that a Tamil student has volunteered. In 1952 when my *The Folk Drama of Ceylon* was published, I wrote, about "... the close connection that seems to have existed even from early times, between the Sinhalese folk culture and the folk culture of the Tamils. In fact there was a Christian song, composed by Fr. Jacome Gonsalvez who wrote Tamil songs, used in Christian Nadagama long time back, and one of them is similar to *Premayen mana ranjithawe nandithewe*.. the duet song in the happy times early in the play."

And then Ibra, the Joker got up and raised his hand. All the seniors knew high fun was coming. The word "Joker", had become a well-established item in the vocabulary specific to Peradeniya in the 1950's. What it conveyed was the identification of an undergraduate, who appeared to treat everything as a joke, and as a consequence was himself considered a joke. A joker of Peradeniya was laughed at by others, but his antics or utterances enjoyed, nevertheless. Ibrahim, called Ibra for short, was one such. When he got up, most seniors remembered Ibra's performance a year back, when he was first branded as a joker. At a meeting to discuss the national flag he suggested that the two stripes representing the minorities be moved from the threatened position in front of the lion to the lion's backside for safety.

Up he arose as soon as Rasa sat down. "Doctor Sir" he said aloud:
People of Arab descent should also be noted in connection with theatre. Sir, you referred to Aristotle and his influence on your work. So, I would like to recite a short verse which explains itself.

*"I'm Mohamed Ibrahim Marrikar
We're not so advanced they say,
But we transmitted Aristotle,
So, you Yakkos can now have a play".*

The laughter in the room, mixed with other reactions, was so huge, that Sarachchandra's response could not, at first, be heard. Some seniors led by Arthur, managed to restore normalcy, and Sarachchandra spoke again. "Thank you for that timely reminder of a fact that many may not have known. Yes, it was Arab scholars who translated Aristotle and conveyed his work to Europe, from where we 'Yakkos' got it!" Laughter, again, as Sarachchandra sat down.

Soon after, the area around Secretary Arthur's desk was crowded with volunteers for the *Maname* project, giving their names. After the *Maname* meeting the three friends strolled along the Old Galaha Road. Philip laughed, "I planned the *Maname* involvement to get Arthur to protect us when the ragging starts. Now we are deeply immersed in *Maname* itself".

Sita joined, "Yes, the *Maname* meeting was an experience. I can't wait to see it develop."

"I got a lot out of it." Rasa added, "I felt a lot and learnt a lot, listening to Sarachchandra. I suppose this is what Sarachchandra meant when he said at the beginning that passing exams is only a part of university".

Sita, who was hoping to do English Honours said, "The plot, the arrangement of the events and incidents, is how tragedy works on the stage".

"Not only on the stage" laughed Philip, adding, "And not only in tragedy. If I had not sat in the same compartment as you, in the train to Peradeniya I would not have met you."

"Maybe, all three of us coming to Peradeniya at the same time may be the circumstance that becomes a plot, which we don't know about", volunteered Rasa. They laughed.

François Valentijn wrote a 462 page 'Description of Ceylon' 300 years ago

Part 2

by Thiru Arumugam

Part 1 appeared in *The Ceylankan* J 102 Vol 26(2) May 2023, pp 24-25.

First and Second Chapters [Geography]

For his sources of information about the geography and history of Ceylon up to the Portuguese period, Valentijn relies on the Portuguese writer Diogo do Couto's *Ceylon* section of his books *Decadas da Asia* (Decades of Asia)⁵. Couto was Chief Keeper of the Records in Goa from 1595 to 1616. Goa was the Asian headquarters of the Portuguese. Valentijn also took information from the Dutch writer Father Philippus Baldeus⁶, who lived in Jaffna from about 1656 to 1665. For the description of the interior of Ceylon he relies on Robert Knox⁷, as the Portuguese and Dutch had limited access to these areas. There was a pirated Dutch translation of Knox's book by S de Vries published in Utrecht in 1692 and Valentijn would have used this translation. Valentijn plagiarised freely, sometimes copying entire sections from these books. In those halcyon pre-copyright days, the printed word was considered public property!

As regards the ancient name of the country *Taprobana*, although he quotes writers who place this name for the island of Sumatra, he agrees with Ptolemy who places it opposite *Cape Comori* (Cape Comorin, the southern tip of India) and it must therefore refer to Ceylon. The inhabitants call the country *Langkauwn* [Lankava] "which some say means the world, others that it means Paradise"⁸. (For 124 alternative names for Ceylon see M Asoka T De Silva's comprehensive article in the May 2022 issue of this Journal).

The island is divided into six kingdoms and the names of these are: *Candi* [Kandy], *Cotta* [Kotte], *Sitavaca* [Sitawaka], *Dambadan* [Dambadeniya], *Amorayapoere* [Anuradhapura], and *Jaffanapattam* [Jaffna]. The land in the interior is divided into 34 *Corles* [Korales] or Districts which are named. Besides these large Districts there are 33 smaller districts. The names of important cities are also given.

Valentijn then proceeds on a geographical tour of the island starting from Galle which he describes as a neat city with beautiful houses and gardens and is half the size of Batavia, the Dutch regional capital. There are underwater rocks in the sea approach to the harbour (Fig. 4) and all ships have to use a local pilot. From Galle he proceeds north along the coast passing Gintota,

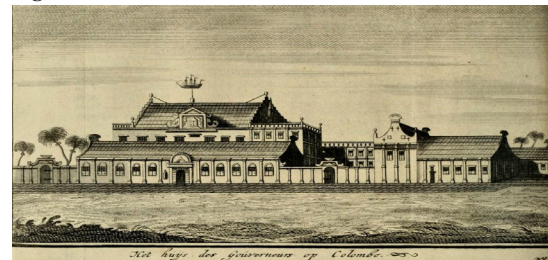
Bentota and then Kalutara which has a fort with earth walls. Proceeding further north one comes to *Galkissa* [Mount Lavinia] and then to Colombo.

Figure 4 - *Punto de Galle* (Harbour)



This beautiful city is situated near the mouth of a river which originates near Adams Peak. At the heart of the city is a large fort which has a fine arsenal. There are many beautiful buildings in the city but the finest is the Governor's house, which is the best in the Indies. The Dutch Governor's residence in Colombo can be seen in Fig. 5. Colombo also has a fine hospital, church and orphanage. The harbour is exposed and has no protection from the monsoons.

Figure 5 - *Dutch Governor's Residence Colombo*



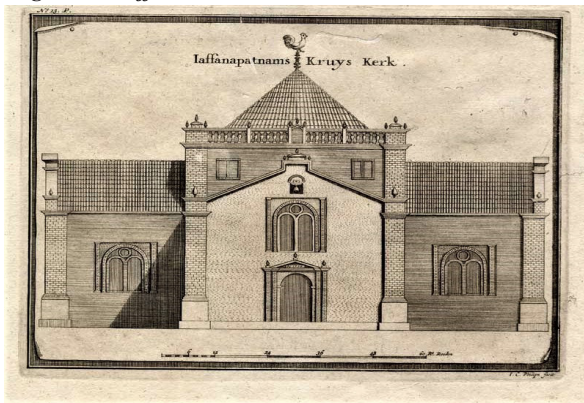
North of Colombo is *Mutuwaal* [Mutwal] and proceeding further for six hours by land is *Nigombo* [Negombo]. Here there is a beautiful fort with four bulwarks. Further north is *Chilauw* [Chilaw] and beyond that there is an island called *Calpenty* [Kalpitiya] about five miles long and a mile broad. North of that is the village of Aripo with a small fort. The task of the troops here is to prevent unauthorised pearl fishing in the pearl banks which stretch up to Mannar.

Mannar has a fort, beautiful houses and a church. It is on an island and to the west there are shoals which lead to *Ramanncoil* [Rameswaram] in India where there is a famous temple. The pearl banks of Mannar were fished by the Portuguese

and abandoned but the Dutch recommenced pearl fishing in 1666 with great success. Proceeding north from Mannar we pass Mantotte and finally reach *Jaffnapatam* [Jaffna].

In *Jaffnapattam* we find a great fort with four strong bulwarks and two round towers. It is much larger than the castle in Batavia and has a garrison. The city is very large and neatly built and has fine streets and beautiful buildings, a church (Fig. 6), a hospital and large residences with gardens. Offshore there are several islands such as *Cays* [Kayts], *Delft* [Nedunthivu], *Middleburg* [Punguduthivu], *Donna Clara* [Analaithivu] and *Hoorn* [Iranathivu].

Figure 6 - Jaffna Church



From Jaffna moving south to the mainland is the land of the *Bedas* [Veddahs] and following the coast is *Trinquenemale* [Trincomalee] which has a fort with a large garrison which serves to keep others out of this place. It has one of the most beautiful large bays in the whole of Ceylon. In this bay is the town of *Cotjaar* [Kottiyar]. Valentijn's map of a part of the east coast can be seen in Fig. 7.

Figure 7 - Trinco and Batticaloa map



Proceeding further south is the town of *Batticaloa* [Batticaloa] where a river flows into the sea. There is a large fort here with stone walls and 100 soldiers. Going south there are several villages and then the *Kumboken Oye* [Kumbukkan Oya] which is a day's journey from Batticaloa and three days journey from there to *Mature* [Matara] which has a fort, having passed *Tangale*

[Tangalle] which is a base for elephant hunts. When proceeding further we are back to Galle, having roamed around all the coastal places belonging to the Company [VOC], all under the authority of the Dutch Governor of Ceylon.

Valentijn then proceeds to describe the interior of the island, but not in great detail because of limited sources of information as Dutch travellers to the interior were liable to become prisoners of the King of Kandy. He does rely on Robert Knox⁷ for information and describes places like *Candi* [Kandy], *Mavilganga* [Mahaweli Ganga], *Alauw* [Alawwa], *Anaragiepoer* [Anuradhapura], Adams Peak, *Denuaca* [Denuwaka], *Nilobe* [Nilambe] and the difficult of access royal city of *Dietlicke* [Diyatilaka] where the Kandyan King Raja Sinha II held court after the abortive rebellion of 1664.

Third Chapter [Society and Nature]

This Chapter is about the inhabitants of Ceylon who are *Cingalese* [Sinhalese], *Weddas* [Veddahs], *Moors*, *Malabars* [Tamils], Portuguese and Dutch.

Valentijn gives a detailed description of the cinnamon tree and the manner in which the bark is harvested. It has a double bark, the outer bark is peeled off and discarded and the inner bark, which is the real cinnamon, is peeled and dried in the sun until it dries and curls up. The real cinnamon is found nowhere else but in Ceylon and is a major source of revenue to the Dutch VOC.

The customs of the people are described and the manner of their dress. The men have long hair and wear a piece of cloth made into a jacket, or a loose coat or a cloth which they wrap around their middle, pull through under the legs and let it hang down to their feet. The women wear white skirts stitched with red or blue flowers which hangs down to their knees or lower according to their status.

Also described are the types of trees, shrubs, plants, herbs and flowers. The types of animals and birds in the island are also listed as well as the precious stones such as pearls, rubies, sapphires, topazes, garnets, emeralds, cat's eyes and many others. The most important goods found in the country are listed as cinnamon, pepper, cardamom, elephants and their tusks, ebony wood and precious stones.

They are ruled by a King who holds court in *Dietlicki* [Diyatilaka]. His revenue is very large because three times a year his subjects must bring him tribute. Next to him there are two *Adigars* [Chief Judges]. Each District in the kingdom is administered by a *Dessave* [Dissawa]. They are nobles who also have to collect the King's income.

Fourth to Seventh Chapters [History of Ceylon to 16th century]

The fourth chapter details with the early history of Ceylon from the time of *Vigea Raja* [Vijaya] up to the reign of Gaja Bahu I in the second century AD. It is not clear what was the source of information for Valentijn's early history of Ceylon but it is possible that it was the *Rajavaliya*. Arasaratnam says that manuscript copies of this work were available in temple libraries and both the Portuguese and the Dutch had access to it and had it translated⁹. Information also appears to have been taken from Diogo do Couto's book⁵. This fourth chapter covers the history of Ceylon up to the second century AD.

The fifth chapter commences with the reign of Gaja Bahu I in the second century AD and continues to the seventh century and the reign of *Kuda Akbo* (Aggabodhi II) but at this point there is a gap of seven centuries in the narrative because it jumps suddenly to the fourteenth century¹⁰ and the reign of *Ariacsi Chaccaravarti* [Ariya Chakkaravarti] in Jaffna. The fifth chapter ends with the arrival in 1505 of Laurens D'Almeida, being the first Portuguese to arrive in Ceylon.

The sixth chapter describes the conflict between the kingdoms of Kandy and Kotte in the 15th and 16th centuries and the progressive interference by the Portuguese. In this chapter a list of 93 kings of Ceylon starting with Vijaya is given, ending with *Wira Praccaram Narendra Singa* [Viraparakkama Narindasiha] whose reign commenced in 1707 and was still ruling when Valentijn's book was published. There are errors and omissions in the list. For comparison, over the same period the *Culavamsa* lists 182 kings, but this includes kings whose reign lasted only for a few days.

The seventh chapter describes the arrival of the Portuguese in Ceylon. In 1505 the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa sent his son, Don Laurens D'Almeida with nine ships on an expedition to the Maldive Islands. They were, however, caught in a storm and landed in Galle. He went and met the King in Kotte and signed a treaty with him in which the King had to pay an annual tribute of 250,000 pounds of cinnamon and in return the Portuguese would give protection against enemies.

In 1518 Lopes Suaar Alvarenga the Governor of Portuguese India, arrived with 19 ships and proceeded to build a fort in Colombo. The Portuguese extended their control of the maritime areas and were interested in control of the pearl fisheries of Mannar which was achieved in 1536. In 1560 they made their first attempt to

seize control of Jaffna. Their repeated attempts to seize the Kandyan kingdom were unsuccessful. Their greatest defeat was at Gannoruwa where the Portuguese soldiers were routed.

Arasaratnam considers that Valentijn's description of the history of Ceylon from 1453 to 1658 is more factual than any that preceded him and many that succeeded him until well into the nineteenth century and that British writers on Ceylon such as Pridham and Emerson Tennent used him as a primary and sometimes only, source of information¹¹.

Eighth to Tenth Chapters [Arrival of the Dutch]

The eighth chapter starts with the arrival of the Dutch in Ceylon. This chapter is based on the Journal of Admiral Joris van Spilbergen who arrived in two ships in Batticaloa on 29 May 1602. He proceeded to Kandy and met King Vimala Dharma Surya. He said that he had come to purchase cinnamon and pepper and he assured the King of full Dutch support in the wars with the Portuguese. This pleased the King who gave the Dutch permission to build a fort anywhere in the country.

The ninth chapter states that in 1612 the Dutch signed a treaty with the King of Kandy in which they agreed to help each other against enemies particularly the Portuguese. The treaty permitted the Dutch to build a fort in Kottiyar, near Trincomalee. The treaty also limited the King to sell cinnamon only to the Dutch.

The tenth chapter is based on information mainly from Baldeus⁶. In 1623 the Portuguese built a fort in Trincomalee on a promontory. They also built a fort in Batticaloa. They now had seven forts in Ceylon and thereby cut off all trade by the King of Kandy with other countries.

In 1638 the Dutchman Westerwold commanded a fleet of five ships and attacked the Portuguese fort in Batticaloa. Within a few hours the Portuguese surrendered and fled. Based on this success Westerwold signed a treaty on behalf of the Dutch with the King of Kandy. This treaty permitted the Dutch to trade anywhere in the country without paying duty and no other Europeans could trade with island. The King of Kandy was to send annually to the Dutch one or two shiploads of cinnamon, pepper, cardamon and indigo. In 1640 the Dutchman William Jacobszoon Coster with a fleet of three ships attacked the Portuguese fort in Galle which they overran in a few hours.

In 1642 Portugal broke away from the King of Spain. The new King of Portugal entered into a ten year peace treaty with the Netherlands and all hostilities between the two countries ceased worldwide, including in Ceylon.

Eleventh and Twelfth Chapters [Portuguese – Dutch wars]

The eleventh chapter states that Francois Caron, who was the head of Dutch forces, in 1644 attacked and captured the Portuguese fort in Negombo but the fort in Colombo was still held by the Portuguese. In 1646 the Dutch Commander Adrian van der Stel was surrounded by King Raja Sinha II's forces and put to death and 688 Netherlanders taken prisoner. To resolve matters, Maatsuyker, the Dutch Governor of Ceylon wrote to Raja Sinha that the Dutch had no desire to take possession of land but all that is required is for the King to honour the treaty signed in 1638. The Dutch were prepared to hand over Negombo fort to the King provided their expenses of the war against the Portuguese were paid. The Dutch prisoners were finally released in 1649.

The twelfth chapter describes the final days of Portuguese occupation. In 1652 the ten year truce between Portugal and the Dutch expired and hostilities resumed. Gerard Hulft (Hulftsdorp means Hulft's village) came to Ceylon in 1655 as Commander of the forces with additional ships from Batavia. On 9 November 1655 the Portuguese fort in Colombo was first attacked. The Dutch Governor van der Meyden resumed the attack on Colombo and on 12th May 1656 he seized the city after a siege of the fort of six months.

On 10 January 1658 Rijckloff van Goens arrived with reinforcements of 450 soldiers and twelve ships and on 20 February Mannar fort with 600 Portuguese soldiers was surrounded and captured. On 01 March a siege of Jaffna fort commenced. The fort in Kayts fell on 27 April and on 22 June 1658 Jaffna fort was captured. Thus ended about 150 years of Portuguese occupation of Ceylon.

Arasaratnam's translation of Valentijn's book ends at this point.

Thirteenth to Seventeenth Chapters

None of these chapters has been translated by Arasaratnam. The reason given is that chapters thirteen to fifteen (211 folio pages) consist largely of reproduction of Dutch reports, memoirs and instructions (190 folio pages) and are omitted because they are available elsewhere. Many of these memoirs have been previously translated and published, e.g. Selections from the *Dutch Records of the Ceylon Government*, translated by E Reimers, 1927-46. The fifteenth chapter concludes with a list of Dutch Governors and Commanders in Colombo, Galle and Jaffna up to 1723.

Chapter sixteen (43 folio pages) describes the traditional religions in Ceylon: Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Valentijn's source of information about Buddhism appears to be

Sinhalese versions of Pali Buddhist literature. Places of worship are described including Adams Peak. There appears to be some confusion between Adams Peak and Mulgirigala in the Southern Province because the sketch of Adams Peak shows two distinct peaks. Buddhist vihares and devales are described and distinction made between bhikkus, kapuralas and kattadiyas. Peraheras are described as well as the Sacred Bo Tree in Anuradhapura¹².

The section about Hinduism includes a list of 65 ancient major Tamil literary works spread out over fifteen centuries, with brief notes about each of them. Hinduism is described in detail in the section of the book about Coromandel on the south-east coast of India. Islam is also dealt with in detail in other volumes of the book.

The seventeenth chapter (54 folio pages) is about Christianity in Ceylon, both Roman Catholicism and Protestant Christianity and it includes a list of Dutch pastors in Ceylon up to 1725 in Galle, Negombo, Matara, Jaffna and Colombo. Colonel Mackenzie has translated the description of indigenous religions¹³.

This brings us to the end of Valentijn's 462 page '*Description of Ceylon*'. He ends with the sentence quoted below, which loosely translated means 'With which we have completed the description of Ceylon in its entirety, and now proceed to the description of Malabar' [which is the south-west coast of India].

"Waar mede wy de Befchryving van Ceylon in 't geheel befluyten, om nu tot de Belchryving van Malabar over te gaan".

References (numbering continued from Part 1)

5. English translation by Donald Ferguson is in '*Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*', Vol XX, No. 60, 1908.
6. Baldeus, Philippus, '*Description of the East Indian Countries of Malabar, Coromandel, Ceylon etc.*' 1671.
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8. Arasaratnam, Sinnappah. '*Francois Valentijn's Description of Ceylon*', The Hakluyt Society, London, 1978, p 101.
9. Ibid, p 34.
10. Ibid, p 221.
11. Ibid, p 37.
12. Ibid, p 53.
13. Ibid, p 47.

Picture credits: All pictures are from Valentijn's book "*Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*", Vol. 5, Dordrecht, 1724-26.

Concludes

Jonathan Forbes and the Discovery of Sigiriya

by Avishka Mario Senewiratne

'Sigiri is the only example in Ceylon of those solitary activities, which form so remarkable a feature in the table-land of the dakka...'

- Sir James Emerson Tennent

Surrounded by the glorious forestry, guarded by majestic ramparts, nourished by enchanting tanks and ponds, and illuminated by those picturesque frescoes, the Lion Rock: Sigiriya is certainly a grand delight in this palm-fringed isle. Its histories and mysteries are vast. For nearly 700 years this one-time Capital of ancient Ceylon, which housed the fortress of the infamous King Kasyapa I, was lost and forgotten by those in this country. What lingered of Sigiriya were tales from the ancient chronicle *Cūlavamsa* (sequel of the *Mahāvamsa*) and other contemporary documents. It is most likely that Kings from Nissankamalla to Sri Wickrema Rājasinghe never saw or knew little of this important part of heritage. The older occupants of Ceylon's maritime region: the Portuguese and Dutch also had no idea of Sigiriya. However, things began to change with the British occupation of the whole of Ceylon in 1815. One such was the translation of the ancient chronicles of Ceylon by George Turnour of the Ceylon Civil Service. The famous story surrounding Kasyapa the patricide, losing the favour of his people in Anuradhapura and locating a new fortress in Sigiriya has been well recorded in the annals of this country. However, when it was first recorded in English, the very mention of Sigiriya aroused the curiosity of the new rulers of this ancient country. Many pursued the idea of finding the long-lost Sigiriya.

Before we dip into its discovery, it is essential to know some historic records of Sigiriya as recorded in the sources of the days of yore. According to P.E.P. Deraniyagala, *Spolia Zeylanica*, Volume 26, part 1, in 266 B.C. King Devānampiya Tissa visited the rock and named it 'Sihigiri'. In 41 B.C., King Kuda Tissa built a rampart, a Maha Vihara and a meditation house in Sigiriya. His son, King Bhathikabaya erected a large alms-house for priests in 19 B.C. Thereafter, King Mahadathika Mahanaga, brother of the former, built a dagaba (Ambuva) and decked the rock with flowers. This was in 9 A.D. After this record, Sigiriya is not mentioned for the next 450 years until the time of King Kasyapa, whose story is well known. Some scholars such as Paranavitana have contested these records claiming they are enigmatic. Thus, it is hard to say which is accurate. After Kasyapa, Sigiriya was ordered to be a monastery by King Moggallana I. The next

mention of Sigiriya is with the infamous beheading of King Sanghatissa and his son on Sigiriya. This of course is clearly mentioned in the old chronicles. The last record of Sigiriya was when King Parākramabāhu the Great restored Sigiriya in the 12th century. This too has been controversial and some have said such an occurrence never happened.

However, it is clear that no such reference was made to Sigiriya until the British occupation of Ceylon. One soldier who came to Ceylon, Major Jonathan Forbes of the 78th Highlanders befriended George Turnour and learnt a great deal of the country's history. Forbes arrived in Ceylon in 1826. Apart from his military work, he was a civil servant, serving in the capacities of Assistant Agent and District Judge of Matale in the Kandyan Province. Forbes was well-versed in English literature and had a knack for writing. His book, *Eleven Years in Ceylon: comprising sketches of the Field sports and Natural history of that Colony and an account of its History and Antiquities* published in 1840 in two volumes, is one of the best books on Ceylon. Upon learning of Sigiriya and its significance and the fact that no one knew where it was located, Forbes executed a quest to find it. None of the older writers of Ceylon such as Knox, Capt. Percival, Rev. Cordiner, Marshall or Dr. Davy had mentioned Sigiriya. Knowing this gap, Forbes was more determined to find it.

Four years after his coming to Ceylon in 1831 the most endearing day of his life dawned. Forbes and two of his friends along with a group of friends were returning from Polonnaruwa via Minneriya and Paecolom and decided that they must search for the Lion Rock. After riding 4 miles from Paecolom, Forbes observed what he wished. When the morning mist cleared away, he observed a piece of water reflecting the brushwood-covered summit of Sigiriya from its unruffled surface. In his book, Forbes states the following:

"From the spot where we halted, I could distinguish massive stone walls appearing through the trees near the base of the rock, and now felt convinced that this was the very place I was anxious to discover." (Forbes, 1840, Vol. II, p. 2)

Though Forbes does not mention the full

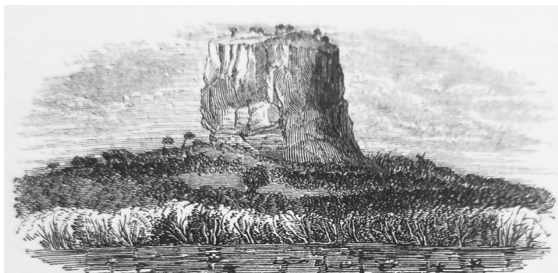
names of those with him, he simply states them as 'Capt. H and Mr B'. His first observation of the rock was the lower parts of it. He states that many separated rocks had been joined by massive walls of stone. This supported the platform of various sizes and unequal heights. Overcoming the ramparts, Forbes arrived at the foot of the prominent cliff. From here Forbes saw the gallery (mirror wall) clinging to the wall. These were accessible through two elevated terraces. Here is how he described them:

"These remains were very different from anything I had expected to discover; not merely from their remarkable position and construction, but as being the only extensive fragments of the ancient capitals of Ceylon which are neither shrouded by vegetation nor overshadowed by the forest." (Vol II, p. 9)

Scrambling with the shrubs across the partial footsteps, they arrived at the gallery and saw that it had been grooved into rocks where it was not perpendicular, serving as a foundation of a parapet wall. Forbes noticed that the mirror wall ran across about 100 yards and was perfectly preserved due to the heat. He noticed water trickling down the overhanging rock, confirming that tanks existed up the summit of the fortress as stated in the ancient chronicles. Forbes could not go to the lower level of the gallery as he felt giddy from the heat. However, his friends were able to scroll through the broken rocks and remains of buildings. Within a few moments, they returned back safely knowing that proceeding beyond that point was impossible. Jonathan Forbes had found Sigiriya by chance and did not expect it to happen like what was stated above. Thus, he had limited supplies and servants to fully investigate. This prompted him to abandon the quest reluctantly.



Sketch of Sigiriya by Andrew Nicholl, 1848 (above) and the engraving he used for Tennent's Ceylon, 1859 (below)



However he returned for the 2nd time in 1833 with enough material. On this occasion, he toured the area beyond the rock and traced a stone wall and wet ditch, with which it was surrounded. Though he attempted to reach the summit of Sigiriya he failed to do so knowing the dilapidated state of the steps to the top. Furthermore, the villagers discouraged Forbes to do the same as they were terrified of various demons they perceived to be on top of the rock! Touring the south of Sigiriya he discovered the Sigiriya tank and other ramparts. The villagers also believed that leopards and other wild animals roamed around the rock.

Forbes had befriended the incumbent priest of the Pindurangala rock, which was less than a mile away from Sigiriya. The priest had furnished him with various copies of inscriptions related to Sigiriya. He discovered the fragments of the foundation of the original dagaba. Though, Forbes did not reach the summit, nor see the frescoes or even the lion's paw entrance, his discovery of the long-lost Sigiriya is historically significant. Later in 1848, the Colonial Secretary, Sir Emerson Tennent along with one of his sketch draftsmen, Andrew Nicholl visited and illustrated an interesting account of the rock in the book *Ceylon* published later in 1859. It was only in 1853 that two young members of the Ceylon Civil Service, A.Y. Adams and J. Bailey reached the summit for the first time. They had taken a different route, not taken by Forbes with the help of some brave locals and rope ladders. Later scholars such as T.W. Rhys Davids, the popular Pali expert and T.H. Blakesley of the Public Works Department made important headway on Sigiriya in 1875/76 and published them in the *Royal Asiatic Journal of Great Britain*. The proper archaeological excavation of Sigiriya occurred with H.C.P. Bell in the 1890s.

Jonathan Forbes left Ceylon after a happy 11 years in 1837. It is said that he retired from the Army after 34 years with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland on February 21, 1798, Jonathan Forbes-Leslie was the 7th and youngest child of John Forbes and Anne Gregory. Little is known of his childhood. He married Margaret Urquhart in 1825. They were blessed with two daughters. The Forbes family lived in Ceylon for the majority of his 11 years. They were the only European settlers in the Matale district and the first to attempt the coffee plantation in Matale. Forbes visited and lived in India for a short time in 1842. In his later writings he claims that "I have ceased, since 1841, to have any interest in Ceylon, except in the welfare of its people, and in the general prosperity of the colony." (Forbes, 1850). In 1850, he wrote a pamphlet of 58 pages titled *Recent Distur-*

bances and Military Distributions. This was an analysis of the 1848 Rebellion in Ceylon where he criticised the regime of Viscount Torrington. Forbes lived a long life and died on December 23, 1877, at the age of 79. His legacy has been preserved with his brilliant two-volume book on Ceylon which runs to xii+423 and vii+356 pages along with frontispieces and eleven textual illustrations. When it came out in 1840, the book was reviewed by many leading journals and broadsheets. Its extremely positive reviews made it a best seller and the book was out of print by the end of the year, prompting the publisher R. Bentley to print a 2nd edition in 1841. Commenting on the 1st edition, Rhys Davids says that it is a “very rare book” in 1875. In 2023, having this edition is certainly a rare feat for not only a collector but also for libraries.

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BOOK REVIEWS & LAUNCHES

Dr Palitha Ganewatta, a CSA member and the former SBS Radio Sinhalese program producer has launched his latest two books in Russian Cultural Centre, Colombo on 28 June 2023. The books were two translations of the great Russian writer Anton Chekhov. The books titled ‘*Anton Chekhov’s Letters*’ and ‘*Anton Chekhov: On the Memories of his Contemporaries*’ were translated from original Russian into Sinhalese by Palitha. The function attended by a large gathering, were presided over by Dr Gunadasa Amarasekara and Dr W A Abeyasinghe. The keynote speakers were Mr Karunaratne Amerasinghe and Mr. Kamal Perera.

Prof Sunanda Mahendra, Prof Sarath Wijesuriya, Dr Ranjith Dharmakerthi and Dr Gunadasa Amarasekara have enlightened the audience highlighting the services rendered by Dr Ganewatta, who is enriching the Sinhalese literary sphere, by translating the original Russian classics. A short documentary depicting the life and times of Anton Chekhov was also played during this Chekhov evening.



Book chapter review: ‘Some Christian Attempts at Healing with Buddhists in Sri Lanka. Post-Independence’ by **Malcolm Kreltszheim** in *Encountering God: Practical Theology and the Mission to Heal* (Coventry Press, 2023) RRP \$34.95 plus postage.

Reviewed by Leander Kreltszheim

Over the past 4 years I’ve watched my father tirelessly work his way towards an academic feat – completing his PhD thesis in the area of theological studies at the University of Divinity in Melbourne. I’ve enjoyed our conversations about his developing work, which explores British Protestant colonial interactions with the majority Ceylonese Buddhist populations between the years of 1802 and 1948. As both the daughter of Sri Lankan parents and a trained historian myself, I’ve watched with curiosity as he has delved into the records from across this period, knowing of course that historical ‘fact’ and ‘truth’ are largely subjective and that the ‘gold’ will come from my father’s ability to make sense of the past based on its documentary remnants. The chapter I am reviewing here is the first nugget of such gold he’s presented to the outside world.

As the fifth chapter in an edited anthology, *Encountering God*, my father’s work was originally developed as a conference presentation in 2021. It brings to light newly translated public debates that took place in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) from 1865-1873 between the colonising British Protestant leaders and the majority Buddhist population. These debates reflect the conflicting attitudes that existed between these two groups up until Ceylon’s independence in 1948 and which, as my father writes, “continues to reverberate to this day”. But the debates are not the only events that are highlighted in

this chapter, as its author provides a compelling narrative of events to show how this complex relationship evolved over time, and not always in a forwards direction. While the chapter relates the attempts at healing that have occurred between ‘coloniser’ and ‘colonised’ since the debates, it also highlights that this healing exists alongside a more complex history of alternating oppression, rapprochement, hunger for power and terrorism that traces its roots back to Portuguese colonisation.

A key significance of this research is its contribution to a larger body of academic scholarship that seeks to understand the impact European colonisation has made across the globe. As my father writes, these colonial attitudes towards the Buddhists were often “contemptuous”, founded upon the prevailing Christian ideology that saw empire not only as a project around trade and land acquisition, but also about the spreading of Christianity. Their mission was often the literal salvation of souls of those who had not yet found Christ. A local missionary report cited in the chapter demonstrates the religious underpinnings of the colonial enterprise: “My friend! Two religions are before you - a true and a false religion. It is your duty to examine both; and if you find that you are ignorant, as you certainly are, you should pray [to] God, to enlighten your understanding, and to lead you into the right way.” Through this work we are able to view the current conflict in Sri Lanka through the lens of global colonisation and expansion, adding to this collection the actions and events made in Ceylon in the name of modernity, enlightenment, and so-called progress.

Not everything is so bleak, however. My father reminds us in this chapter of our individual and collective ability to not only inflict harm, but also to heal. As a commentary on not just Sri Lankan but global colonisation more broadly, this chapter is a reminder of the many efforts to repair the damage caused to First Nations people globally in the name of European Christianity. This option is perhaps most relevant to us in Australia in 2023 as citizens contemplate their own power to support healing across our nation in the ‘Voice to Parliament’ referendum later this year. As in Sri Lanka, we in Australia have the chance to reflect on the impact of colonial settlement and white superiority, and decide whether we want to continue the harm and trauma inflicted on First Nations peoples, or move that one step closer to healing as a nation. As my father notes, memories, especially bad ones, are difficult to erase – but not impossible if we choose the latter.

We must remember that this chapter is not only a work of history but of theology. It’s

a narrative about individual believers, grouped by common religious ideologies that reach far beyond national boundaries. For me, this is the underlying irony: that these individual ideologies – whether Christian or Buddhist – originated from the teachings and practices of two men who espoused peace, empathy, compassion and, above all, love. And that is my final take-away from this chapter: that in our historical need to dominate, oppress, expand and control, we have perhaps forgotten that the very ideas we are fighting for are the ones we should be leading with. Such ideals did not lead us into these conflicts – power, aggression and an urge for domination did this – but perhaps such values can show us a way out.

This review doesn’t seek to summarise my father’s chapter (please do reach out to him for a copy of this publication). As his daughter, it would be both trite to praise his research here and potentially hazardous for our relationship if I were to critique it too strongly! Rather, I wish to share a few reflections on his chapter and the ideas it unearths and invite you to do the same.

Leander is the younger daughter of Malcolm Kreltzheim. She is a qualified historian, currently consulting as a designer of social services and systems and lecturing in design mindsets and capabilities at Monash University. In her spare time, she’s researching her own PhD thesis around the role of relationships in designing future health systems.

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BOOK LAUNCH

CSA MELBOURNE CHAPTER

**Sunday 28 May 2023, 5.00 pm at Ashwood
Hall**

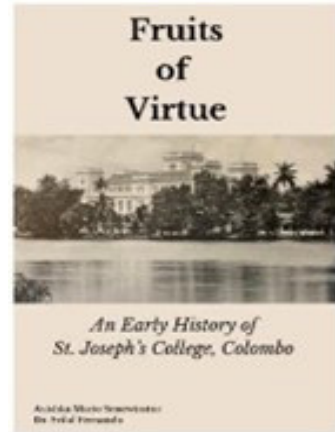
21a Electra Avenue Ashwood

**TITLE: *FRUITS OF VIRTUE: An early history
of St Joseph's College, Colombo.***

**Joint Authors: Dr Srilal Fernando and Avishka
Mario Senewiratne.**

**Printed and published by: Aitken Spence Print-
ing and Packaging (Pvt Ltd). Dec 2022.**

Limited Edition of 400 copies.



A cold wintry afternoon did not deter the many members of The Ceylon Society of Australia, old boys of St Joseph's College, Colombo, and other aficionados of educational history of Sri Lanka from attending a very interesting presentation by the joint authors. While Dr Srilal Fernando was there in person to provide the audience with some interesting aspects of the early history of the school, Avishka unable to be present, made ample amends by participating through a zoom projection of his comments from Colombo.

Dr Srilal Fernando dealt with some detail the motivation and the creative links of the original "*Principal Benefactors of the College*" some 34 persons of eminence, who, inspired by a foreseen potential for an educational institution for students of the Catholic Faith, dug deep into their pockets to create an institution which has since withstood the tests of time. The names of the principal benefactors including those in the Church hierarchy who contributed towards the gigantic effort that created St Joseph's College are now etched forever in the educational history of the country, both literally and metaphorically, there being a marble tablet permanently affixed to the walls of the school with a listing of the names of the main benefactors. Dr Fernando, a man whose interests in family history and genealogy are well known, was able to provide some very interesting insights into the lives and times of the principal benefactors who created the foundation to the institution that later became one of the leading educational institutions in Sri Lanka. Among others, special mention was made of the contributions to the establishment and continuing advancement of the school by the Lindamullage de Silva family headed by patriarch David de Silva, the NDP Silva family, the Abeyesundere family from Galle, and that of Gate Mudaliyar SR de Fonseka.

Joint author Avishka Senewiratne at 25 years of age, is gradually becoming the rising star in Sri Lanka's historical studies firmament. Already with three publications under his belt, Avishka's enthusiasm for local history and matters antiquarian, seem to know no bounds. Through the zoom presentation at the launch, Avishka was able to clearly narrate the background to the land acquisitions, and the many intriguing "behind the scenes" developments that occurred prior to finalising arrangements to set up the school. Many reviews of *Fruits of Virtue* have been written, and the launch of the book now places the book in the public domain and provides us a well-researched history of the early years of this hoary institution known for generations as St Joseph's College. The creative partnership between the two authors seem to serve clearly as an example of the "fruits of virtue" produced by the school.

Fruits of Virtue is a quality production, assembled with great care for detail. Not merely a book about a school and its foundation, it serves as an excellent memoir on the life and times of the wealthier sections of Ceylon's Catholic community. To supplement its commentary is an assembly of vintage photographs printed in sepia tone and reproduced with unwavering fidelity to the original. The collection of over 100 portrait photos of former teachers, and prominent past students of St Joseph's College add a certain lustre which will be hard to surpass. With the production of this book, the joint authors Dr Srilal Fernando and Avishka Senewiratne have certainly repaid their debt to the old school for the education that they received.

Hugh Karunanayake

CSA Meeting Sydney

28 May 2023

Charles Dickens on Ceylon: A Talk by Dr Raja C. Bandaranayake MBBS, PhD, MSED, FRACS



Raja graduated in medicine from the University of Ceylon, obtained his PhD from the University of London Guy's Hospital Medical School and a Master's in education from the University of Southern California. He is a highly respected surgeon and medical educator who has advised the United Nations, WHO and World Bank. Raja also is an avid collector of books on Ceylon covering the British colonial period. The attendees were treated to a fascinating talk on whether or not Charles Dickens visited Ceylon. Here is the text of his talk:

Introduction

An anthology by Charles Dickens entitled *Sunshine on Daily Paths (or the Revelation of Beauty and Wonder in Common Things)*¹, picked up in an antiquarian bookshop in the UK, included six of its forty-five chapters on different aspects of life in Ceylon, all written in the first person. I asked myself the question: Did Dickens really visit Ceylon? If he did, why is there no record of the visit of such a famous person in our 19th century history? Could he have visited Ceylon incognito? If he did not visit, how did he write so accurately, and in such detail, about the places visited? I decided to investigate these questions.

Life of Dickens

Charles John Huffam Dickens (popularly known as Boz) has been acclaimed as one of the most prolific English writers, and often described as the William Shakespeare of the 19th century. Dickens started his writing career contributing to periodicals. Having first served as editor of a weekly magazine, *Bentley's Miscellany*, he established his own weekly periodicals, *Household Words* (from 1850 to 1859), *All the Year Round* (from 1859 to 1870) - popular outlets for some 390 writers over nine years. Dickens was a prodigious contributor himself on a wide variety of topics, serializing most of his books before publishing them as books.

Dickens life is a real "rags to riches" story. He was born in Portsmouth on 7 February 1812 to John and Elizabeth as one of ten siblings. Having lived in Chatham in Kent, the family moved to London in 1822 and settled in Camden Town. After John was imprisoned for debt, the impoverished family took Charles out of school and sent him to work at a factory in Charing Cross, where his job was to paste labels on bottles of shoe polish. Many of the characters associated with his earlier life, such as his school-teacher, his landlady and the other children he worked with, feature in his novels. It also created in him an empathy for the down-trodden of society. Although his father subsequently came into an inheritance and was released from prison on paying his debt, Charles continued to work in the factory until he had a disagreement with its owner. He was then sent to Wellington House Academy in North London, where he had an education from 1825 to 1827. When the family was evicted from their home in North London in 1827, Charles at 15 gained employment as a solicitor's clerk at Ellis & Blackmore, Gray's Inn. During his brief time with the law firm, he learnt shorthand rather than law, and from 1828 to 1829 worked first as a freelance reporter and then as a parliamentary reporter.

In 1833, Dickens published his first story, *A Dinner at Poplar Walk*, in *The Monthly Magazine*. A year later, while working as a correspondent for *The Morning Chronicle*, he met Catherine Hogarth, a fellow-worker, whom he married two years later. In 1836 he resigned from *The Morning Chronicle*, and started editorship of a magazine, *Bentley's Miscellany*.

In 1837 the first of his ten children was born. That same year Dickens moved to 48 Doughty Street, London, now the Dickens Museum. In 1839, in search of more space, the family moved to Devonshire Terrace near Regents Park, where they lived until 1851. After two tours to the Continent, the family moved again to a section of Tavistock House in Bloomsbury, London, at the site now occupied by the British Medical Association. Dickens lived there until 1861, when he bought a house named *Gads Hill Place* in Rochester, Kent. By now, he was an elite member of London's high society.

In 1858 he separated from his wife, Catherine. Opinion is divided as to the reason for this separation. Dickens alleged she was mentally deranged and was unable to care for the family. Some attribute the separation to Charles' infatuation with a young actress named Ellen Ternan, which he vehemently denied in a statement (now known as the *Violated Letter*) given to his manager, Arthur Smith, and unwittingly published first in the *New York Tribune* and later throughout England. Charles' explanation of the separation is similar to the storyline in one of his novels, *Dombey and Son*, which was written during a trip to the Continent. Charles was now living in *Gads Hill Place* with the rest of his family except his eldest son, who lived with his mother. He liked living there and was quite productive, completing *A Tale of Two Cities* and writing *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend*, the first volume of which was dedicated to his friend, Sir James Emerson Tennent, Colonial Secretary of the Ceylon Government from 1845 to 1850.

On his return from a brief visit to Paris in 1865, Dickens was involved in a train accident at Staplehurst on the boat-train. He helped in the rescue work following the accident and retrieved his manuscript of *Dombey and Son*. While only slightly affected physically, the incident affected him psychologically, and he developed a fear and hate for train travel. It is thought that his travelling companions were Ellen Ternan and her mother, though this is not documented by Forster in Dickens' biography. In the postscript to *Our Mutual Friend*, Charles gives a brief reference to the incident, but does not mention the names of his companions, even though he refers by name to four other passengers whom he helped. Dickens' rescue work was surprisingly not referred to in the lay press given that he was such a famous person by then. Subsequent researchers surmise that he deliberately suppressed the details of the incident to conceal his infidelity.

Writings on Ceylon

The writings which refer to Ceylon, under his name, fall into two categories - in his novels and in journal articles.

Dickens makes reference to Ceylon in two of his novels. The first was in *Great Expectations* published in 1861. In this book, which is only one of the two books he wrote in the first person (the other being *David Copperfield*), Dickens puts these words into the mouth of the budding entrepreneur. Henry Pocket:

"I think I shall trade, also," said he, putting his thumbs in his waist-coat pockets, "to the West Indies, for sugar, tobacco, and rum. Also to Ceylon, especially for elephants' tusks."

The other novel in which Dickens mentions Ceylon is *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the last book he wrote before his death in 1870. Here he puts the following words into the mouth of Neville Landless, the orphan twin:

"To be my guardian? I'll tell you, sir. I suppose you know that we come (my sister and I) from Ceylon?"

The writings on Ceylon in journals are all published in either *Household Words* or *All the Year Round*. I was able to track down seventeen articles in the former and eleven in the latter:

In *Household Words*:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>A Cinnamon Garden</i> | 2. <i>The Cocoa-Nut Palm</i> |
| 3. <i>Peep at the Perahara</i> | 4. <i>The Art of Catching Elephants</i> |
| 5. <i>My Pearl Fishing Expedition</i> | 6. <i>Coffee Planting in Ceylon</i> |
| 7. <i>Shots in the Jungle</i> | 8. <i>Garden of Nutmeg Trees</i> |
| 9. <i>A Dutch Family Picture</i> | 10. <i>An Ascent of Adam's Peak</i> |
| 11. <i>An Indian Wedding</i> | 12. <i>The Buried City of Ceylon</i> |
| 13. <i>Law in the East</i> | 14. <i>The Garden of Flowers</i> |
| 15. <i>A Pull at the Pagoda Tree</i> | 16. <i>Number Forty-Two</i> |
| 17. <i>Rice</i> | |

In *All The Year Round*:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>Full of Life</i> | 2. <i>Trifles from Ceylon</i> |
| 3. <i>Three Simple Men of the East</i> | 4. <i>More Trifles from Ceylon</i> (5 of the same title) |
| 5. <i>Shots at Elephants</i> | 6. <i>Going to Law in Ceylon</i> |
| 7. <i>Openings in Ceylon</i> | |

Evidence of Visit to Ceylon

The first mention of Ceylon in his novels was twenty-three years after his first book, *The Pickwick Papers*, was published. Dickens' biography written by his close friend, John Forster, shortly after Dickens' death, shows no evidence of a visit to Ceylon before 1860. He was too busy pub-

lishing books and a journal, moving from house to house and travelling to Europe. There is no evidence of a visit between 1860 and 1870, when he visited Paris and North America. In 1861 he considered travelling to Australia with his daughter, but never did. Even though his second son, Walter, died in 1864 while serving in the British Army in Calcutta, there is no evidence of his attending the funeral in India. In fact, Dickens never visited the East. There is some evidence from his writings that he did not have a good opinion of Indians, probably stemming from the Indian Mutiny which had just been suppressed in 1859.

Both journals in which the articles on Ceylon were published were weekly journals which carried the phrase "Conducted by Charles Dickens" on the title page and each pair of double pages within. Though articles on Ceylon in both journals were written in the first person, it is apparent that they were not written by Dickens. However, no acknowledgement is given by Dickens to their authors anywhere in the journal. This then raises the intriguing possibility that Dickens was guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is defined as letting someone else write a paper for you, paying someone else to write a paper for you, or submitting as your own someone else's unpublished work, either with or without permission. Thus, according to current laws, Dickens was committing plagiarism, as names of all authors (except of a few famous writers whose names appear only in the Index) do not appear anywhere in the journals. Interestingly, Dickens in a statement at the end of one journal article, absolves himself from any opinions expressed in the article. Lai² states: "Anonymity was to be a distinguishing feature of Dickens's journals from their inception, and ... a common enough feature of Victorian print culture at this time".

Yet Dickens waged a relentless war against plagiarism of his work in America.

Actual Authors

Who, then, were the actual authors of the articles on Ceylon in the two journals?

The *Office Book* was a record kept by the sub-editor of *Household Words*. Wills Lohrli³ identified authors for all articles but one on Ceylon in *Household Words* from the *Office Book*. It became clear from her studies that "*Sunshine on Daily Paths*" was an anthology of articles from *Household Words* published in 1854 by Peck & Bliss, Philadelphia, without identifying authors, a common practice among American publishers at the time.

Three authors identified for seventeen articles in *Household Words* were John Capper,

Augustus Frederick Gore and William Knighton, all of whom held positions in Ceylon during this period.

Of the eleven articles on Ceylon in *All The Year Round*, only one author, Francis Jeffrey Dickens, has been identified, while one anonymous article, *Shots at Elephants*, is mostly from the writings of James Emerson Tennent. An Office Set for this journal was apparently sighted at the turn of the 19th century but its whereabouts are unknown⁴.

John Capper

John Capper was the author of the following articles in *Household Words* between 1851 and 1855:

1. *A Cinnamon Garden*, 1851
2. *The Cocoa-Nut Palm*, 1851
3. *My Pearl Fishing Expedition*, 1851
4. *Coffee Planting in Ceylon*, 1851
5. *Peep at the "Peraharra"*, 1851.
6. *Garden of Nutmeg Trees* 1851
7. *The Art of Catching Elephants*, 1851
8. *A Dutch Family Picture*, 1852
9. *An Indian Wedding*, 1852
10. *Law in the East*, 1852
11. *The Garden of Flowers*, 1852
12. *A Pull at the Pagoda Tree*, 1853
(with W H Wills)
13. *Number Forty-Two*, 1853
14. *Rice*, 1855

Capper, born in Lambeth, Surrey, in 1814, was a writer and orientalist. He first worked as a journalist, becoming sub-editor of *The Mining and Steam Navigation Gazette*. He was then employed by Acland and Boyd, a coffee wholesale company in England, and was sent to Ceylon in 1837 to oversee the clearing of native vegetation for new coffee plantations. He married Anna Amelia Acland, daughter of the founder of Acland and Boyd, in St Paul's Church, Kandy in 1839, from whom he had four children. Anna died and was buried in the Galle Face Cemetery; two of their daughters were also buried there. Part of the famous Green was the first British burial grounds from 1803, until the tombstones were translocated to the General Cemetery, Kanatta in 1877. Capper then married Sarah Anne Richards in 1859 in Shoreditch, Middlesex, from whom he had two children.

Capper founded the *Ceylon Magazine* in 1840, with contributions from scholarly individuals, who formed the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1845. Capper was its first Treasurer and Librarian, while James Emerson Tennent was one of the three Vice Patrons. With the coffee market collapse in 1847, he returned to London and wrote his articles for *Household Words*. He seemed to have had a liking for Ceylon as he returned in 1858 and purchased the

twice weekly *The Ceylon Times*, which he edited until 1874, when he sold it and left the island for the second time. He promoted Ceylon tea at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, and in Calcutta in 1853.

In 1865, Capper was instrumental in the creation of the Ceylon League, which agitated against the government over the stringent disbursement of its revenue. He and John Ferguson, of the *Ceylon Observer* and compiler of the *Ceylon Directory*, were great rivals.

Capper authored several books on India and Ceylon, amongst which were:

- *Pictures from the East*, (with illustrations by van Dort), 1854
- *The Three Presidencies of India: A History of the Rise and Progress of the British Indian Possessions*, 1855
- *The Duke of Edinburgh in Ceylon; A Book of Elephant and Elk Sport*, 1871
- *A Full Account of the Buddhist Controversy, Held at Pantura [Panadura]*, 1873
- *Old Ceylon, Sketches of Ceylon Life in the Olden Time*, 1878

Capper returned to the island a third time in 1882, and with two of his sons revived the moribund *The Ceylon Times* as an evening daily, *The Times of Ceylon*, which became the island's leading English newspaper. He wrote a chapter entitled *The Dagobas of Anuradhapura* in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, documenting the work done by his late son, George, who was an official government surveyor during Gregory's governorship.

Capper seemed to have mastered the Dickensian style of writing, which may have been the reason that so many of his articles (sixty in all over a seven-year period) were received for publication in *Household Words*.

Afflicted by paralysis, Capper died at 83 years in Fulham, London in 1898, until which time he was an active member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Ceylon.

Augustus Frederick Gore

The author of one article on Ceylon in *Household Words* entitled *Shots in the Jungle* (1851) was Augustus Frederick Gore.

Gore was born in 1826 in Galway, Ireland. He served as acting private secretary to Sir Anthony Oliphant, Chief Justice of Ceylon, who was appointed to the position in 1838 and lived in a property called *Alcove* in Colpetty, later known as *Maha Nuge Gardens*. It was sold to Sir Harry Dias Bandaranaike, the first Sinhalese judge of the Supreme Court and a forebear of Felix Dias Bandaranaike. Gore probably continued to serve Christopher Temple in 1850, when Oliphant left

Ceylon. Gore was in Ceylon for only 2 years, from 1850 to 1851. After that he was appointed to the West Indies, where he rose to the rank of Lt-Governor.

His article, *Shots in the Jungle*, was about a hunting expedition in the north of Ceylon. He commits an error in the opening sentence:

"It was late in the month of June, 1840 that myself and a friend (who had hunted elk on the Newara plains, and shot snipe at Ratnapoora) finding ourselves at its capital, Jaffna, resolved to have a shot at the spotted deer of the Northern Province of Ceylon."

The problem was that Gore was not in Ceylon in 1840; he was just fourteen years old at the time. On reading the manuscript, Dickens wrote to Gore on July 4, 1851:

"I am happy to retain your sporting adventure for insertion in *Household Words*. It is very graphic and agreeable and I have read it with pleasure".

One wonders at the care with which articles were edited for the periodical. Gore died on 21 September, 1887 in Ireland at the age of 61 years.

William Knighton

Born in Dublin in 1823 as the youngest son of Richard Knighton, William Knighton wrote two articles in *Household Words*:

- *An Ascent of Adam's Peak*, 1852
- *The Buried City of Ceylon* (with Henry Morley), 1852

Knighton graduated from the University of Glasgow and went to Ceylon in 1843, when nineteen years old, as Master of the Normal Seminary in Colombo, a training school for vernacular teachers. Not long after, he was appointed manager of a coffee estate in the Kandy district. Obviously not liking the work he was assigned, he was soon back in Colombo as editor of a newspaper, the *Ceylon Herald*, amongst whose contributors was James De Alwis, who wrote the *Sidath Sangarawa*. He seems to have found plenty of time in his new position, as he writes:

"Fortunately, the paper was published but twice a week, so that I had ample time to write leaders and correct the proof sheets, to write letters to myself and answer them in the editorial columns, to note down answers to correspondents in my liveliest vein, and to go through all the other business".

The newspaper's printing press was later bought over by *The Ceylon Times* in 1846.

Knighton stayed in Ceylon for only 4 years, but travelled extensively, even climbing Adam's Peak. He was the first Secretary of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society; hence he would have known John Capper.

Knighton went to Calcutta in 1847 as lecturer in History and Logic at the Hindu College. While there he compared the systems of education in Bengal and Ceylon at the time:

"I expected to find a similar system, producing similar results, to the one which I had just left in Ceylon. I was lamentably disappointed. ... In Ceylon, the religious authorities are keenly alive to the interests of education, and allow nothing to escape their observation and attention..."

In 1847 Knighton had married Louisa Agnes Duhan, distinguished as a poetess and essayist, and had four children, three sons and a daughter. Knighton spent his time in London writing and lecturing in the mid-1850s, while living with his family in Chelsea. Here he developed an acquaintance with Thomas Carlyle, and talked with Mrs Carlyle about the second of his articles, *The Buried City of Ceylon*.

In 1858, he travelled again to India as Assistant Commissioner in Oudh (Awadh).

The family returned to London in 1868, living in *Eastgate House*, a boarding school for girls, in Rochester, not far from where Charles Dickens lived.

After his first wife died in 1882, Knighton married Charlotte Augusta Drake, a widow with a major share in *Glengallen*, a merino wool sheep station in Queensland.

The books authored by Knighton were:

- *The History of Ceylon*, 1845
- *The Private Life of an Eastern King*, 1855;
- *Tropical Sketches, or Reminiscences of an Indian Journalist* (2 Volumes), 1855
- *Edgar Bardoni: An Autobiographical Novel*, 1856;
- *Elihu Jan's Story*, 1865;
- *Struggles for Life*, 1886.

In 1887 Knighton was elected to the Royal Society of Literature in London and was a member of the London Society of Arts and Vice President of the International Literary and Artistic Association of Paris. He visited Paris with his wife in 1888 and had a bronze statue of Shakespeare erected in front of his window. He donated the statue to the city, but it was not received well by the public. In 1941 the statue was removed and the bronze melted down and used for the war industry.

In 1889 Knighton bought a house called *Tileworth* at St Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex. He was an active and popular member in the community. He died in *Tileworth Lodge* on 1st April 1900 at the age of sixty-six and was buried in Woking Cemetery.

Francis Jeffrey Dickens

One article in *All The Year Round*, entitled *Trifles from Ceylon* (1863), was written, according to records in the *Office Book*, by Francis Dickens, the fifth child of Dickens. Written in the first person, it comprises a collection of episodes about harmful animals in Ceylon.

If Charles Dickens did not visit Ceylon, did one of his children?

Francis Dickens, born in 1844, was nineteen years old when this article was written. He left for India in 1863 to serve in the Bengal Police until 1871, returning to England only after his father's death. He may well have visited Ceylon while he was in India, but the article was written in the same year he left for India. It is most unlikely that he was given leave to visit Ceylon either on the way to, or in his first year of, military service. He may have visited Ceylon before then, but the text indicates that the writer had been in Ceylon for some time and was married:

"I have been a good many years in Ceylon, and yet I have only once been bitten by a centipede."

"My wife one day opened a drawer, and was going to put in her hand ...".

There is no evidence that Francis was ever married or had children. The article was obviously not written by him, but for some reason attributed to him. It is known that he held a minor editorial position in the office of *All The Year Round* before he left for India in 1863. It is possible that he was paid for his editorial help in publishing this article, and his name was misleadingly inserted in the "Author" column of the *Office Book*.

The writer of this article, *Trifles from Ceylon*, remains anonymous, as do the writers of the remaining five articles in the series *More Trifles from Ceylon* which followed. It is most likely that all six articles were written by the same person, who had lived in Ceylon for a considerable period of time. This is evident from a statement made in the first article of the series:

"I purpose (propose) jotting down from time to time such incidents as I have come across during a lengthened sojourn in Ceylon."

All articles in the series, dated 1864, concern animal life in Ceylon:

1. *More Trifles from Ceylon* (alligators)
2. *More Trifles from Ceylon* (many animals)
3. *More Trifles from Ceylon* (elephants)
4. *More Trifles from Ceylon* (snakes)
5. *More Trifles from Ceylon* (fish and crocodiles).

Thus the authors of all eleven articles on Ceylon in *All The Year Round* will have to remain anonymous for the present.

Death and Burial

In April 1870, Dickens began serializing his last book, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. He was able to complete only six of the planned twelve instalments as he died of a stroke on 9th June.

He had spent the day alone writing in the Chalet, which was a gift to him in 1864 and erected across Rochester Road from his *Gads*

Hill Place residence. He had a tunnel constructed under the road for easy access, avoiding the danger of crossing Rochester Road. This tunnel still exists. The Chalet, however, was subsequently reassembled in *Eastgate House*.

Returning to the house late in the afternoon of 9th June, he wrote a few letters before dinner. Georgina had noticed a pained expression on his face. He uttered a few incoherent sentences, stood up unsteadily and was prevented from falling by her and led to a sofa. A local doctor was summoned to attend to him. As he showed no signs of improvement, a telegram was sent to summon John Reynolds, an esteemed London neurologist. In spite of all these efforts, he expired just after 6.00 p.m. His last words were: "On the ground".

Dickens did not get to complete even the last sentence he ever wrote in his last book, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*:

"'Or', pursued Poker, in a kind of despondent rapture, 'or if I was to deny that I came to this town to see and hear you, sir, what would it avail me? Or if I was to deny -'".

Many attempts have been made by others over the years to complete the novel. There have been at least six publications, four plays and a musical.

Two of the characters in the novel, Neville and Helena Landless, were born and raised in Ceylon by a cruel stepfather after their mother died. They were rescued from their miserable situation and sent to England.

Why did Dickens choose Ceylon and not India, as their country of origin?

A BBC portrayal for Dickens' 200th birthday, made them Indian not Ceylonese. Hughes, a crime writer, decided for no reason that the twins were from a British father and Tamil mother. It was not unusual at the time for the British in tea plantations to have illicit affairs with South Indian women working on the plantations. Michael Roberts⁵ wrote:

"Such liaisons were not uncommon, especially on lonely hill country estates. Because they were taboo and frowned upon by other Europeans, they were carried on surreptitiously, and the women and the resulting children were not always acknowledged."

Lillian Nayder⁶ believes that Dickens' used Ceylon, not India, as:

"Ceylon was a colony in which the harsh treatment of natives had long been accepted as a necessary feature of the British administration, since the Kandyans were represented as an unusually troublesome race, in a continual state of insurrection".

Tennent⁷, a friend of Dickens, referring to the Kandyan wars wrote:

"Ceylon was a land where the need for martial law, and the desire for "vengeance" and "retribution" on

the part of the British appeared self-evident", According to Forster⁸, Dickens' preferred place of burial was:

"in the small graveyard under Rochester Castle wall, or in the little churches of Cobham or Shorne, ..."

Though Forster states that these graveyards were "found to be closed", a recent study of the church records at Cobham and Shore showed that this was not so. A grave was even dug in St Mary's Chapel at Rochester Cathedral, but Forster and the Dean of Westminster, encouraged by the Press, were keen on burying Charles in the Abbey, while Georgina and the neighbours preferred otherwise.

He was buried in Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey on Tuesday 14 June 1870. Among the mourners was Ellen Ternan. The grave was left open to the public for three days.

Forster writes:

"Facing the grave, and on its left and right, are the monuments of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dryden, the three immortals who did most to create and settle the language to which Charles Dickens has given another undying name."

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Chandra Senaratne - A Celebration of 90 Years by Hugh Karunanayake



Chandra, Kanthi, Sharmini, and dear friends of Chandra. I crave your indulgence, as I am unable to be present here on this momentous occasion, due to a combination of reasons which I have conveyed to Chandra. This is indeed an occasion which I would not let pass without my marking my attendance. Chandra is a dear friend with whom I have been able to associate closely over the past 30 years. He is only two years older than I, and it would surprise Chandra to know that I remember him as a student in Royal College in Colombo, where we both attended, he a couple of forms senior to me. As you all know, a two-year seniority in school brings with it a certain aura of respect, and adulation. In Chandra's case he was if I remember right, the tennis captain of the school, and that brought another layer of adulation. His younger brother Nihal, better known by a nickname derived from a rather fancied plant from the vegetable kingdom, who I believe is here today, was closer to us in the sense that he was only a form senior to me.

As most of you would be aware, the Senaratnes have descended from a prominent family in Sri Lanka. Chandra's father was Dr O.L.F. Senaratne, a prominent eye surgeon in Colombo, famed for his medical as well as sporting skills. He represented the Sinhalese Sports Club in cricket and tennis, and also was a prominent member of the island's cricket team, then known as the Ceylon Cricket Association eleven. His

mother Lorraine (later Loranee) was a distinguished social worker long associated with the Lanka Mahila Samithiya, a progressive institution that sought to provide women with a dignified position in Society through various social and economic programmes throughout the island. She acquired international fame by being Sri Lanka's first female Diplomat serving as the High Commissioner representing Sri Lanka in Italy. Chandra's late wife Marlene was the daughter of Charlie de Soysa, who was the only son of AJR de Soysa, the owner of the that imposing building in Thurstan Road Colombo, known as *Lakshmigiri*. Chandra and Marlene were both direct descendants from Charles Henry de Soysa, the famed 19th Century philanthropist of Ceylon. Having dealt with some aspects of Chandra's genealogical make up, I would briefly avert to a certain aspect of the wedding of Chandra and Marlene. The normal custom is for the groom to arrive at the bride's home in a limousine. In Chandra's case he did it one better, he arrived on an elephant!!

Let me now refer to some aspects of Chandra's career. On leaving Royal College, the then somewhat portly Chandra, entered Cambridge University from where he obtained his Master's degree in Arts. On returning to Colombo, he worked as a Senior Executive in two of the island's foremost commercial establishments, viz the Ceylon Tobacco Company, and Ceylon Cold Stores Ltd. He migrated to Australia almost 50 years ago and settled down to a busy social life. Always a community minded person, Chandra was a key organiser in the Probus Club of Baulkham Hills and the Cambridge Society of Australia. When the Ceylon Society of Australia was formed 25 years ago, Chandra was its first Social Convenor, organising the Annual Dinner of the Society in great style for many years. Chandra's skills brought in a sense of elegance and dignity to the proceedings. It has been my privilege as Founder President of the Society, to share the friendship of this sincere and most humble human being not only in the work of the Society, but as a friend. Ladies and gentlemen, I ask that you rise from your seats and drink a toast to the health and well being of this extraordinary person Chandra Senaratne.

Ladies and Gentlemen to Chandra!

From Colonial to Modern Banking

by Srikantha Nadarajah

I started my career in 1964 at National & Grindlays Bank and then Grindlays Bank, which was originally the National Bank of India, until it was absorbed into the Standard Chartered Group. It was one of the largest international banks in the world as well as the largest Corporate Bank in Sri Lanka until long after Independence, having control of the cream of corporate business acquired from colonial times. It was a typical British colonial bank, and we were made to believe that the sun had never set on the Empire.

There was a high concentration of power and responsibility in the General Manager (GM), with very little delegation. The only path to success was to impress the big man by being well dressed and looking smart and to get his blessings in whatever we did. Banking at that time did not require specialization in any sector and we were expected to acquire knowledge and experience in all departments. The only criteria for success in work was to comply with manual of operating instructions. Emphasis on personalities rather than work, gave opportunity for a few locals to fast track their careers by what is known as the 'back door mentality' by keeping company with the GM and his associates in social life. There were some amazing success stories as well as disasters in the long term.

There was much emphasis on social activities which involved associating with members of senior management and getting involved in sport clubs and playing games like golf. I was recruited as a management trainee and had to complete a long period of work, including working in the Head office in London. All that was needed was an acceptable level in speed and accuracy of clerical work. Part of the training program included attending a course called *Living in Britain* which was to live and behave like an Englishman.

Fortunately for the staff as well as prospects for the bank, all that changed a few years after I started my career when the ownership and management of the bank was taken over by the Americans under Citibank. There was a radical change under the new management both in terms of structure of divisions and allocation of work, which modernised the Bank and improved the quality of banking. The office was demarcated into separate divisions, namely Operations or Management of Work for servicing clients and credit in respect of assessment and granting of loans and overdrafts and related facilities. There was a delegation of functions to staff away from the previous concentration of authority in the General Manager. All staff were given intensive

training to maintain a high quality of work and were rewarded on performance rather than 'the old boy network'. All this improved our prospects to work locally and overseas in other organisations.

When I came to Australia, I was initially employed by the State Bank of New South Wales which was originally the Rural Bank of New South Wales. Although the work was allocated into various divisions, the standard of credit assessment for commercial and corporate clients was below what I had experienced under Citibank management, which is understandable in view of its background as a regional bank. There was an emphasis on increasing volume rather than quality of business.

There was also a complete disregard for compliance with rules for lending specified by the Reserve Bank of Australia and credit facilities to major clients were well in excess of such restrictions. As a result, the bank sustained large losses due to bad loans which was also experienced by the banking sector at that time and was a major contributor to the recession in the late 1980s.

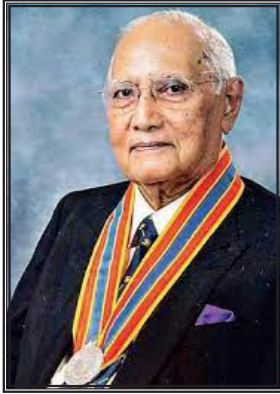
The most amazing experience in the Bank was when the Managing Director (MD) Nick Whitlam decided to retire, the person to succeed him was expected to be the General Manager who had considerable experience. Much to everyone's surprise, Jon O'Neil who had been legal clerk to the MD with no banking experience, was appointed as then new MD. Secret of his success was that he was closely associated with the Bank's Board of Directors and the Cabinet of the NSW government. This was a good example of the saying it is who you know rather than what you know that matters. However, it had some adverse consequences for the Bank in the long term.

The banking sector declined rapidly a few years after I started work, in no small measure due to bad loans given to clients and I was able to transfer my skills to other non-bank sectors I did not face any serious discrimination in my career in Australia. However, it is sad that many Sri Lankans who had successful careers in Ceylonese banks were not accepted for employment in the banking sector.

It is also interesting to note that there has been a high level of specialization which extends to several sectors in recent times which includes businesses outside banking. For example, when I worked in HSBC Sydney, it was evident that there was a notable variation between Corporate, Treasury Credit and Treasury had several divisions unknown to me.

APPRECIATION

DESHAMANYA TISSA DEVENDRA (1929-2023)



We are deeply saddened to announce the passing away of Tissa Devendra, our beloved and highly esteemed former President and Convenor of the Colombo Chapter of the Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA CC) on June 22, 2023, following a brief illness.

Deshamanya

Tissa Devendra was a well-known and respected civil servant, an accomplished author, and a writer who dedicated over 40 years of his life to the public service and UN Agencies. He graduated from the University of Ceylon, where he studied English and French, and also earned a postgraduate degree from the University of Cambridge. He held the distinction of being the first President of the Colombo University Alumni Association. Throughout his career, he served in various significant roles, including Chairman of the Public Service Commission and the Salaries Commission in the year 2000, as well as Chairman of the National Council for Administration. He contributed his expertise as a National Expert for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and was also a founding member of the George Keyt Foundation.

Tissa commenced his public service journey in 1953 as a District Land Officer (DLO) and spent the majority of his life working in kachcheries in different parts of the island. In 1968, he was awarded a scholarship to pursue studies at Cambridge University, and upon his return, he was appointed as the General Manager of the River Valleys Development Board (RVDB) in Walawe.

Subsequently, he served as the Government Agent (GA) of Matara, followed by a tenure as GA Trincomalee, which lasted for six years. During the 1971 JVP insurgency, when the Kantale Police station was attacked, he was appointed as the Competent Authority for the Trincomalee District. Throughout this period, the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Police reported to him as he chaired the Security Council for the district,

possessing an unprecedented level of civilian authority over them. Additionally, he undertook the responsibilities of the GA Jaffna, frequently traveling by air between Trincomalee and Jaffna three times a week, earning him the nickname "the flying GA." In total, he dedicated 40 years of his life to serving the public and working with the UN, with 22 of those years spent in the provinces.

Tissa was a passionate advocate for fostering closer bonds between the Sinhalese and Tamils, which unfortunately resulted in him receiving death threats. He was called upon by Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike's government to handle the funeral arrangements when Jaffna Mayor Alfred Duraipappah, was tragically gunned-down by budding Tamil terrorists in mid-July 1975. The assassin was Prabahakaran, whose father, Velupillai, had previously worked under Tissa as the head clerk of the Land division in the Puttalam kachcheri—an ironic connection.

Similar to his late father, archaeologist DT Devendra, brother Lt. Commander Somasiri Devendra, and sister Ransiri Menike Silva, Tissa possessed a remarkable talent for writing articles and books. He authored six books, including "*Sri Lanka – the Emerald Island*" (1994) and "*Tales from the Provinces*" (1998), which was shortlisted for the Gratian prize. His other notable works include "*On Horseshoe Street*" (2005), "*Memoirs of a pen-pusher, Kachcheris and Commissions*" (2010), and "*Quest for Shangri-La: Stories and Diversions*" (2011). His book, "*Princes, Peasants and Clever Beasts*" (2002) won an award from the National Book Development Council.

In his later years, Tissa devoted much of his time to his passion for writing and cherishing moments with his beloved grandchildren. He was a loving husband to Indrani (nee Mivanapalana), a caring father to Jaliya and daughter Rashmi, and a cherished father-in-law to Himali Devendra and Sanath Ukwatte (Chairman of the Mt Lavinia Hotel). He brought immense joy as a doting grandfather to Saakya, Sahitra, Swyrie, and Elisha. Tissa was also a supportive brother to Yasmin Perera, retired Lieutenant Commander Somasiri Devendra, and Ransiri Menike Silva and as a brother-in-law to Dayadari Devendra.

May his soul find the ultimate peace and tranquility of Nibbana.

**M.D. (Tony) Saldin, Immediate Past President/
Hony. Treasurer, CSA CC**

AHEAD....

(By Tissa, on Tissa)

*Ahead of me, I see and hear
(but do not fear)
Time's steam roller rumbling near.*

*Looking back of a life well spent
As husband, father, grandparent*

*I did achieve some modest fame
And did the State some service.*

*Of family and friends, fond memories,
I keep
As one limps along to dreamless sleep.*

*That fantasy of heavenly bliss
Long ago, I gave a miss.*

*One day soon, all this will end ...
The roller is just around the bend!*

Tissa



VICTORIAN BAR HONOURS SRI LANKAN LAWYER

The Victorian Bar Association honoured Kings Counsel Nimal Wikremanayake with the unveiling of his portrait in the Owen Dixon Chambers the home of the Association.

Nimal a member of CSA is the only King's Counsel of Asian origin in the history of the Victorian Bar. He is also the only Asian to be honoured by the Victorian Bar with a portrait officially hung in it's gallery. A more detailed account of the proceedings held on Monday 16 July 2023, will appear in the next issue of *The Ceylankan*.

Hugh Karunanayake

Obituary notices published in *The Ceylankan*

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



CSA Sydney General Meeting Sunday 27 August 2023 at 3.00 pm - 6.00 pm

at Pennant Hills Community Centre Main Hall, Level 1 Ramsay Road, Pennant Hills (cnr Yarrara Rd) NSW 2120.

CSA Members, their guests and Community Associations are invited.

Cost: \$15 per person

Dress: Smart Casual

Bookings Cut off date: Friday 18 August

Bookings & Payment at Booking by bank transfer to Secretary's nominated Account.

Presenji Jayawickrema, CSA Secretary - Mobile: 0421 560 282

Email: presenji@tpg.com.au

**We are honoured to be hosting the new
High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in
Australia, Her Excellency
Mrs Chitranganee Wagiswara, at our
meeting.**



The subject of the talk to be given by the High Commissioner (HC) is -

Sri Lanka - Road to Recovery: Challenges and Opportunities

The program and details for the meeting are:

3.00 pm Start

3.15 pm HC arrives

3.30 pm HC begins Talk

4.30 pm Social - High Tea (short-eats, tea/coffee, soft drinks)

6.00 pm Function ends

The meeting time has been changed to 3.00 pm to enable the High Commissioner to return to Canberra that same evening.

We are very privileged to be able to hear from the HC on this important topic as we are all in the community interested in developments in our motherland of Sri Lanka post the economic crisis of 2022.

Academic Qualifications

Chitranganee Wagiswara (nee Amaratunga) had her Primary and Secondary education at Holy Family Convent, Colombo 4. She read for a Degree in Bachelor of Commerce (Special) in 1979 from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Her further qualifications are a Post Graduate Diploma in International Studies from the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies in Colombo in 1986, and a Diploma in International Relations from the Graduate Institute for International Studies in Geneva in 1986/1987.

Career Highlights

Mrs Wagiswara joined the Sri Lanka Foreign Service in March 1981 and has had an illustrious and long career, reaching the pinnacle when she was appointed to the position of Foreign Secretary from January 2015 to July 2016.

She has held the position of Head of Mission in the following countries:

- High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Singapore December 1999 to January 2003.
- Ambassador for Sri Lanka in France and

Permanent Delegate to UNESCO May 2005 to September 2008.

- High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Canada December 2009 to March 2014.
- High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India September 2016 to October 2018.

She has also served as Third Secretary in Rome, as First Secretary/Counsellor in Ottawa, and as Minister/Deputy High Commissioner in London.

In between her overseas assignments, Mrs Wagiswara has held positions as Assistant Director – Administration and Publicity Divisions, Assistant Director - Hon. Foreign Ministers Bureau, Deputy Director - South Asia and SAARC Division, Director - West Division, Director General - Economic Affairs, and subsequently Director General - South Asia and SAARC, Additional Secretary - Policy Planning and Middle East and Africa, Additional Secretary - Economic Affairs, East Asia and the Pacific, and Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Work Experience and Responsibilities

Work in the Sri Lanka Foreign Missions involved maintaining and promoting bilateral and multilateral relations with the respective host countries and international organisations, networking with political authorities and officials, business leaders, media personnel and other relevant parties, in addition to the other general responsibilities of the head of Mission.

At the Foreign Ministry and when serving in Missions abroad, she has been included in delegations representing Sri Lanka at bilateral and multilateral meetings, and at UNESCO, FAO, UN, SAARC, ARF and CHOGM.

Mrs Wagiswara has been a Board member of the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations 2019-2020 and a Commissioner in the Salaries and Cadre Commission 2019-2020. She is also a Member in the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Geopolitical Cartographer Think Tank. In August 2022, Mrs Wagiswara was appointed as a member of the Council of the University of Colombo.

CSA COLOMBO CHAPTER

Quarterly Meeting

To be held on Friday 1st Sept 2023, 5.30pm at the Organization of Professional Associations (OPA),

Professor Stanley Wijesundara Mawatha, off Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7.

Speaker: Professor Anura Manatunga, of the University of Kelaniya and former Director General of Archaeology.

Topic: “The Kandyan Uprising Of 1818 And Its Aftermath”.

For Details Contact Asoka: +94 775097517, Avishka: 0766122345 or Tony: 0777 363366.

Anura Manatunga is a Senior Professor in Archaeology at the University of Kelaniya. He served as the Director General of Archaeology for about two and half years starting in 2021. Previously he was the Director of the Centre for Heritage Studies, University of Kelaniya, He is a Fellow of the Sri Lanka Council of Archaeologists and was the Vice President and a Joint Secretary of the Council for some time. He once represented the Cultural Property Board of Sri Lanka. He was the Director of the Polonnaruwa World Heritage Site of the Central Cultural Fund of Sri Lanka for over a decade. He is the founder secretary of the International Association for Asian Heritage [IAAH] and was the head of the Department of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya. He graduated from the University of Kelaniya in 1984 and obtained his Postgraduate degrees from University of Poona, India and Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology of the University of Kelaniya. Professor Manatunga is an old Anandian and a poet. He was a Visiting Research Fellow of the University College London (2001) and University of Cambridge (2005).

MEMBERSHIP RATES

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

Payment Methods

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

2. Pay by Bank Transfer to:

Account Name: Ceylon Society of Australia

Bank Name: Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Bank BSB: 062 308

Account No: 10038725

Swift Code for overseas remittances: CTBAU2S

Reference: Payee Name

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

(Please Note: In Deepak's email address:- it is lower case L followed by the number 1)

WANTED...YOUR LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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

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

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

Notice to Members - Contact Details

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

WE NEED SPEAKERS

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

If you know of anyone, please contact as relevant:

- CSA President Pauline Gunewardene

Mobile: +61 419 447 665

Email: paulineg@ozemail.com.au

- Melbourne Chapter Convenor Hemal Gurusinghe

Mobile: +61 427 725 740

Email: hemguru@hotmail.com

- Colombo Chapter Secretary Avishka Mario Senewiratne

Mobile: +94 7661 22345

Email: avishkamario@gmail.com

ADVERTISING IN *The Ceylankan*

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

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

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

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

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

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Treasurer, Deepak Pritamdas
on 0434 860 188

Kalaweva at dusk



Kalaweva at midday

