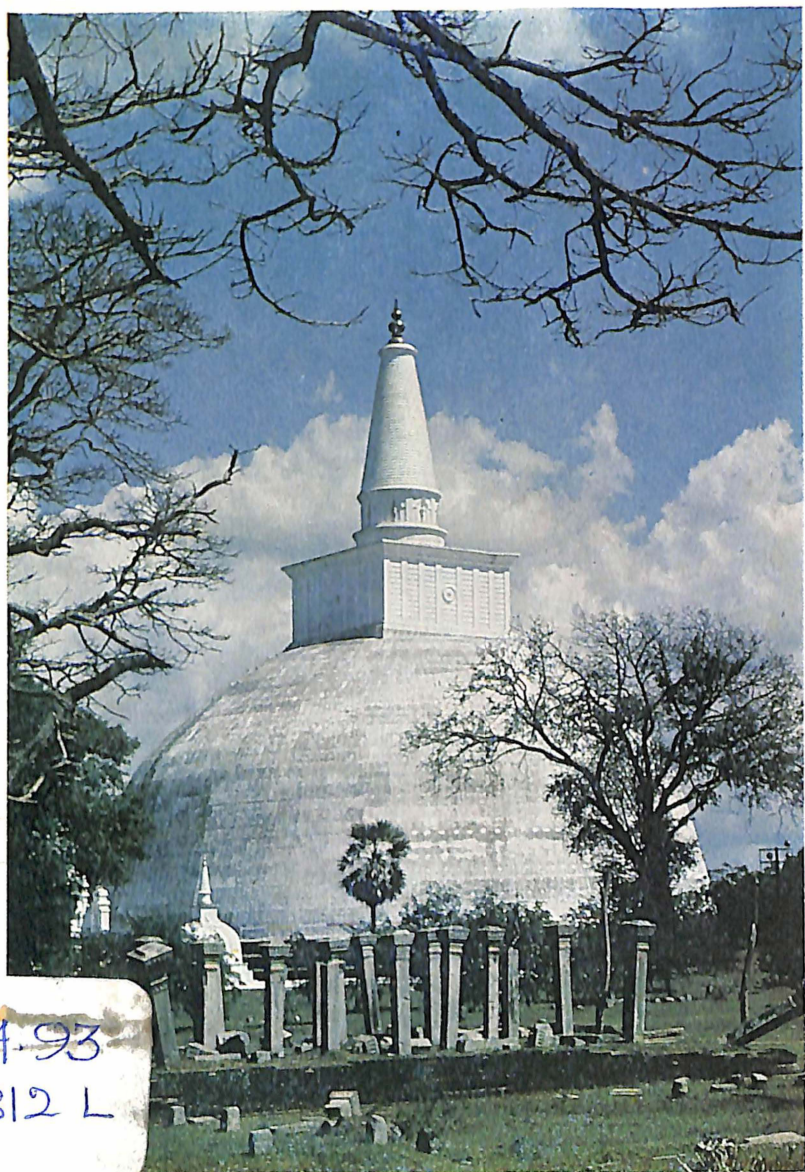


Lands and Peoples of the World

Sri Lanka

P.C. Roy Chaudhury



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SRI LANKA

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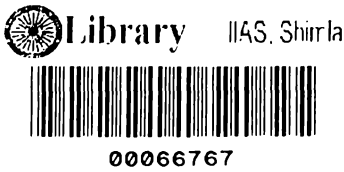
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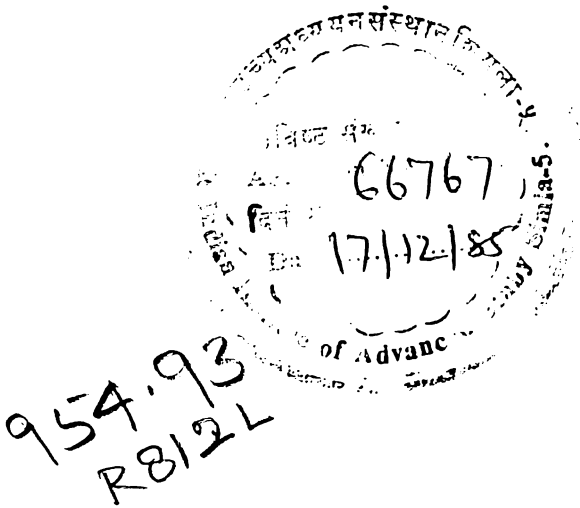


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Foreword

With this book on Sri Lanka Messrs Sterling Publishers sponsor the series "Lands and Peoples of the World". They had previously published a series of illustrated books on the folk-tales of India (21 volumes). The books were very well received by the press and the reading public both in India and abroad.

Everyone is interested in knowing about countries and their inhabitants of which they have heard from others. Curiosity for the history of other cultures remains forever. Visiting these lands is one way of being acquainted with them. But for those who may not be able to do so, reading interesting accounts provides a satisfying experience. It is with this in view that the present informative series has been planned.

The books in this series are to be much more than tourist's guide books. We want the tourists and the general readers, including students and scholars, to find in them information helpful in getting to know the particular country. Each book will briefly give information that one needs. There will be a chapter on 'Places of Interest'. The chapter on 'Land' will deal with the land-uses and the economy of the country dependent on the land. The chapter on the 'People' will give an objective treatment of the population from different angles. Political slants will be avoided as far as possible but there will be short discussions of vital problems. For example, the book on Sri Lanka discusses why Buddhism inducted from India could become the religion of the majority while Jainism, also coming from India, failed or whether Sri Lanka is at all the locale of the Ramayana and why we do not see more of flowers or horticulture in the country or where Sri Lanka's heart lies in the midst of rapid changes brought about in the last few decades.

P.C. Roy Chaudhury
General Editor

Preface

This book on Sri Lanka has been possible by a study-tour in 1981 in that beautiful country in the course of which I had the privilege of meeting and discussing with a number of knowledgeable persons who were very kind to me. Institutions like the Mahabodhi Society, Colombo Museum, Archaeological Office, Marga Institution were very helpful. I am particularly grateful to Hon'ble Gamini Jayasuriya, Minister, Tissa Devendra, Secretary, Family Planning, Sunil Roderigo, Bar-at-Law, K.T. Wimalasekare, the High Priest and the Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society, the Hon'ble T.B. Panabokke, former High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in India and Hon'ble B.P. Tilakaratna, the present High Commissioner for the kind help they have given. Mr S.P. Senadhira, Cultural Secretary, Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi was kind enough to read the manuscript. My son Dr R. Roy Chaudhury of WHO then based at Colombo, organised my tours, study, and meeting people of different cross-sections. His interest in the project was a great stimulant. I am grateful to all of them.

My friend, Mr O.P. Ghai, of Sterling Publishers has done me a privilege by publishing this book as the first volume in the series "Lands and Peoples of the World". The scope of the book has been indicated in the Foreword.

P.C. Roy Chaudhury

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1

Introducing the Country

SRI LANKA is a pear-shaped island in the Indian Ocean and is known for its natural beauty. It has an area of 65,610 square kilometres, including an area of large inland waters of 960 square kilometres. Anuradhapura (7,274 square kilometres) and Colombo (694 square kilometres) are respectively the largest and the smallest of its twenty-two districts. The capital of the country is at Colombo.

Of the principal rivers, Mahaweli Ganga (length 335 kilometres) is the largest and Gal Oya (length 108 kilometres) is the smallest. Some of the other rivers are Aruvi Aru, Kalu Ganga, Kelani Ganga, Yan Oya, Deduru Oya. The water resources in the country are tapped, and there is an efficient ancient drainage system from the rivers and the patches of inland waters, the remnants of which are still to be found. There are hill ranges in the central core of the island and the slopes have good forestry and plantations. There are a number of peaks, the highest Pidurutalagala (height 2,525 metres) being in Nuwara Eliya district. Kandy and Nuwara Eliya are the two main hill stations of the island.

The annual rainfall in millimetres on a calculation of thirty year average (1931-60) at some of the selected stations was Colombo (2395.5), Ratnapura (3887.7), Kandy (2021.8), Nuwara Eliya (2162.7), Anuradhapura (1447.3), Trincomalee (1726.7), and Jaffna (1329.4).

The even distribution of the rains and the equable temperature, the sunshine, ancient ruins, sea-fronts, forests, wild life and the warm and hospitable people attract tourists from the cold countries. Buddhist pilgrims in thousands visit the Dagobas.

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The maximum and minimum temperature of selected stations in 1980 is given below.

	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Min.</i>
1. Colombo	31.2°C	24.3°C
2. Jaffna	31.0	25.8
3. Trincomalee	32.3	25.0
4. Ratnapura	32.2	23.3
5. Anuradhapura	32.5	23.8
6. Kandy	29.4	20.3
7. Nuwara Eliya	19.8	11.5

The population of Sri Lanka according to the provisional mid-year estimate in 1980, was 14,78,000. Males predominate in number and literacy. The urban population constitutes about twenty-three per cent of the total population.

From 1871 to the provisional mid-year estimate in 1980 there has been a steady increase in both male and female population and also in density per square kilometre. The statistics for four selected years 1871, 1901, 1971 and 1980 are as follows:

Population (in thousands)				
<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>(number of persons per sq. kilometre)</i>
1871	2,400	1,1200	1,120	37
1901	3,566	1,896	1,670	55
1971	12,690	6,531	6,159	196
1980	14,738	7,578	7,160	228

It cannot be said that Sri Lanka is over-populated (the density per square kilometre being 228). A considerable section of the Indian Tamils have to go back to India due to political reasons.

The principal religions in the country are Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. The majority of the population are Buddhist. According to the 1971 census the percentage distribution of religious faiths is—Buddhism 67. 27; Hinduism 17.64; Islam 7.9; Christianity (Roman Catholics and other

Christians) 7.91.

Hinduism was inducted first and replaced the earlier primitive faiths of animism and was followed by Buddhism which quickly caught the imagination of the Sri Lankans. The Theravada school of Buddhism is eclectic and liberal and has allowed an uninterrupted existence of the other faiths. Roman Catholicism and other forms of Christianity got a foothold during the Portuguese, Dutch and later the British rule in the island. There are some beautiful Portuguese and Dutch churches in Sri Lanka. Islam came with the Arab traders who were first attracted by trade in spices. The small minority of the Muslims in Sri Lanka still stick to trade and commerce. There are a few attractive mosques. A large number of ancient Buddhist shrines and other relics form a major attraction for the pilgrims and tourists. There are a number of races, namely, Sinhalese, Tamils (Ceylon and Indian), Moors (Ceylon and Indian), Europeans, Burghers and Eurasians, Malays, Veddahs and a few others in Sri Lanka. According to the percentage distribution of the population by race, the Sinhalese predominate, then follow Ceylon Tamils, Indian Tamils, Ceylon Moors and Indian Moors. Europeans form a small minority along with Burghers and Eurasians, Malays, Veddahs and others. Veddahs, a primitive tribe, are rapidly disappearing. The divide between the Ceylon Tamils and the Indian Tamils has been discussed elsewhere. The Moors, Burghers and Eurasians represent the backwash of the Dutch, Portuguese and early Britishers who had intermarried with the Sinhalese.

Tourism, which is the most important industry in Sri Lanka, has added lustre to a number of old towns and developed new ones. This has been done in a balanced manner focusing on ancient ruins, religious places, sea resorts, places of natural beauty and hill stations. Colombo is a modern city boasting of a sea-front admirably developed, a sea-port, broad roads and facilities for accommodation and amusements. The six most populated cities are: Colombo, Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia, Jaffna, Moratuwa, Kotte and Kandy. Towns like Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kalutara and Chilaw noted for ancient ruins and temples are of importance to the tourists, pilgrims, historians and archaeologists. Ratnapura, the principal town of a district bearing the same name, is famous for gems. Sri Lankan gems have a good market. Other towns are located in areas growing tea, rubber, coffee and

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spices. It was Sri Lankan spices that had attracted the Arabs and other sea-faring people who opened up the country to the world.

The Sri Lankans are of average height and build. The average life expectancy in years as collected from the Department of Census and Statistics for the years 1946 to 1971 is as follows:

	1946	1953	1962	1967	1971
Males	43.9	58.8	61.9	64.8	64.2
Females	41.6	57.5	61.4	66.9	67.1

These figures indicate a remarkable progress in health services provided by the administration. The World Health Organization has a centre in Sri Lanka with headquarters in Colombo. Along with other objectives, the WHO is now concentrating its attention on family planning and a possible integration of the indigenous herbal medicines. Sri Lanka still has a number of Buddhist monks practising on orthodox lines and treat even orthopaedic and eye patients with herbal medicines. There are nearly 400 modern well-equipped hospitals besides about 400 central dispensaries in Sri Lanka.

The major industries in the island are agriculture (including hunting, forestry and fishing), mining and quarrying, manufacturing, electricity (including gas and water), construction, wholesale and retail sale and restaurants and hotels, transport, storage and communication, financing (including insurance, real estate and business), community, social and personal services.

While agriculture, including forestry and fishing, employs the largest chunk of population, wholesale and retail trade and restaurants and hotels come next. There has been a remarkable increase in the number of hotels and restaurants in the last decade and an increase in the number of employed therein. The saturation point has not yet been reached and the number of visitors, including casual tourists, is definitely on the increase although the neighbouring Maldives islands have started developing its tourist industry and offer more of a Robinson Crusoe type of living attraction.

The Sri Lanka tea industry is a money-spinner. It is remarkable that India with her facilities and being the mother of tea

industry in Sri Lanka is losing its popularity in the foreign markets. With the growth of labour consciousness, trade unions are multiplying and strikes in plantations are not an uncommon feature.

Besides oriental schools and higher institutions, there are a large number of educational centres with English, Sinhala and Tamil medium of instruction. The universities are at Colombo, Peradeniya, Moratuwa, Sri Jayawardenapura, Kelaniya, Jaffna and Ruhunu. Primary, junior secondary, senior secondary schools are distributed all over the country. There are institutions for technical subjects like engineering, medicine, veterinary science, agriculture, law, education, public finance and taxation, estate management and valuation, applied sciences, management studies and commerce. For higher and post-graduate training the scholars go to the United States and UK. India has also been attracting students of engineering, medicine and other technical subjects for the last few years. Sri Lanka has strong cultural, philosophical, and religious bonds with India since the hoary past.

Buddhism as introduced by the Saint Mahinda, son of the Emperor Ashoka of India, was the dominant religion of Sri Lanka from the second century onwards in its Hinayana form also known as Theravada. A living force in Sri Lanka even now, it was from here that Theravada Buddhism spread to other regions. Scholars have concluded that from the eighth and ninth centuries, there was some evidence of Mahayana school.

It is peculiar that while Buddhism became dormant in India or succumbed to other Hindu reactions and was almost obliterated by the Mohammadans in 1194 and Buddha Gaya, where Lord Buddha attained Enlightenment, became a Saiva shrine but it flourished in Sri Lanka. It was a peculiar irony that in the later part of the nineteenth century and in the first quarter of the twentieth century Buddhism was taken back to India by a Sri Lankan Buddhist Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933). In his youth Anagarika Dharmapala had visited Sarnath and then Buddha Gaya, the holiest of Buddhist shrines in January 1891. While touching the Vajrasana on which the great statue of Lord Buddha is seated, he felt a thrill and an inspiration to revive Buddhism in India. He dedicated his life to this mission and made India his second home. The spread of Buddhism gave rise to a distinct art form:

[Sri Lankan] sacred monuments and monasteries are distinguished from those in India by certain features which they have in common with those of Indo-China, but there are few entirely new types of buildings. Buddhist plastic art in Ceylon drew inspiration mainly from late Andhra art at Amaravati. This is clearly apparent from the earliest Buddha figures, which date from the second and third centuries A.D. This type re-occurs at many places in south-east Asia. It spread widely in this area, partly on account of the extensive commerce carried on there by traders from the Andhra Empire, and partly because this form was considered by Buddhists to be a convincing representation of the Buddha, and to have great artistic significance. The combination of refinement and humanity with sublime spirituality, of delicate modelling with austere monumentality, gave it a wide appeal. Some other works of [Sri Lankan] monumental sculpture have a primordial grandeur for example, the scene showing the passing away of the Buddha, carved in the rock of Polonnaruwa during the twelfth century. The recumbent figure of the Buddha entering the state of nirvana measures 14 metres in length; his disciple Ananda is depicted standing beside him in mourning, wearing an expression of dignified composure . . . this style may be explained as a development of the Amaravati style in the direction of monumentality and abstraction, while from a spiritual point of view it may be explained by the sober severity of Theravada Buddhism. A certain influence of Pallava sculpture, which contained Gupta elements, made itself felt in the art of the Polonnaruwa period from the seventh century onwards.

Of a very different nature are some of the small [Sri Lankan] bronze statues, dating from the eighth century or thereabouts, the iconography of which shows that they belong to the Mahayana school. The soft graceful style is akin to that found in late Gupta art. After the conquest of Polonnaruwa by the Tamils soon after 1290 no works of significance were produced. However, even up to the present day these have been reverently renovated—although not always in the best of taste. Some of them were built only a few centuries ago. In the monasteries, in contrast to the mainland, the monks still keep up their ancient traditions, which were never subjected

to the threat of Islam. But the impact of these Buddhist traditions did not reach the masses of the population to the same extent as it did in Burma, Thailand or [Kampuchea], although a certain revival has taken place in recent decades.¹

The nearest land-point in India from Sri Lanka is only forty kilometres away. The famous Setubandha-Rameshwaram is recorded in Ramayana in this connection.

In the recent decades Tamil labourers were freely invited to Sri Lanka to develop the wastelands and the plantations. Thousands of Indian Tamils from the south had gone to Sri Lanka to earn wages and many of them opted to settle in Sri Lanka. This has given rise to a political problem as a section of the Indian Tamils do not want to adopt Sri Lankan citizenship. Nevertheless, the induction of Tamil labourers from the south cemented the ties to some extent. There is also a close trade relationship between India and Sri Lanka.

¹Seckel, Dietrich, *The Art of Buddhisim*, London: Metheun, pp. 44-45. Also see D.T. Devendra's *The Buddha Image and Ceylon*, (Colombo, 1957) and *Classical Sinhalese Sculpture*, (London, 1958). The author boldly interprets Sri Lanka's exclusive contribution to Buddhist art.

2

Historical Background

THE KNOWN history of Sri Lanka as distinct from myth and legend dates from the sixth century B.C. when Vijaya from Bengal in India landed on the north coast and conquered the aboriginal inhabitants, the Nagas and Yakkhas. The earlier and also much of the post-Vijaya history is dimmed by legend and adulatory chronicles. According to legend, having conquered a part of Sri Lanka, Vijaya married an Yakkha girl, Kuweni. After consolidating his position he left Kuweni who was killed by the Yakkhas. The two children of Kuweni fled to the jungles between Kandy and Baticaloa. There are still some remnants of the Yakkhas who are now known as the Veddhas. Later, Vijaya again married a princess from India.

Vijaya can be described historically as the first king of Sri Lanka. He ruled for nearly forty years (543-505 B.C.) and is honoured as the founder-hero of the Sinhalese (Lion) race. The later kings who followed Vijaya frequently brought brides from eastern India to forge links with India.

Vijaya had settled in the northern plain where his descendants founded Anuradhapura. Devanam Piyatissa was the ruler of Anuradhapura in the middle of the third century B.C. As a result of an embassy from Sri Lanka with gifts to Emperor Ashoka in India, Ashoka's son Mahinda came to Sri Lanka to spread the gospel of Buddhism. From that time Buddhism made a strong foothold and not only became the State religion but spread farther, to other countries.

King Tissa's rule (247-207 B.C.) saw a spurt in the building of a large number of Buddhist temples in Anuradhapura and elsewhere. Historians conclude that during King Tissa's reign a

A large number of Hindu Brahmins came to Sri Lanka and the Sinhalese named them Bamilas from which the word 'Tamil' is derived. This colonisation followed later by imported labour for tea and rubber plantations brought in a well-knit Tamil element in Sri Lanka.

In the second century B.C. the kingship of Anuradhapura came into the hands of the Tamils till, after a long time, a young Sinhalese named Gamini from the south threw out the Tamil king. One Tamil king Elara tried his best to weld the two races, Tamils and the Sri Lankans, into one. Elara's Tamil kingdom extended to the south till it reached the kingdom of Gamini's father. The two kings co-existed peacefully. Gamini, who was later called Dupugemumu, proclaimed himself king and marched northwards routing the Tamil chieftains and ultimately King Elara. He ruled from Anuradhapura and turned deeply religious and built monasteries and temples at the capital and elsewhere.

By the fifth century A.D. the Tamils again sacked Anuradhapura. The capital was moved in the ninth century A.D. to Polonnaruwa where it remained for about 400 years. Further Tamil attacks saw another withdrawal of the Sinhalese kingdom to the hills and ultimately to Kandy. By that time the compact Sinhalese kingdom was broken up and a number of warring factions emerged.

The Sinhalese King Parakramabahu I (1153-56 A.D.) achieved temporary control of practically the entire island. Polonnaruwa saw the addition of Buddhist shrines and monuments during his time and also the construction of irrigation tanks and reservoirs, the work on which had started earlier under King Tissa. Unfortunately, these irrigation tanks, canals and water reservoirs, specimens of engineering skill, fell into disuse during the later years when peace was again in jeopardy. Parakramabahu VI was the last Sinhalese king who could be said to have ruled the whole of Sri Lanka (1412-67 A.D.). Disorder ensued after him and the country was split into several ruling factions, some Sinhalese, others Tamil. But the internal strifes between the Sinhalese and the Tamils did not affect the religious creeds which flourished side by side.

Parakramabahu VIII ruled the small kingdom of Kotte a few kilometres from Colombo when in November 1505 some Portuguese ships anchored at Colombo. Till the Portuguese advent

vandalism, so far as the religious shrines are concerned, was unknown in the island. The Hindu priests and the Buddhist monks were left alone and the Hindus and the Buddhists, the aboriginals, the Muslim practised their religious faiths unmolested whether at their homes or at their religious shrines.

In the fifteenth century the Portuguese became the most powerful naval power in the world. Their ambitions in extending trade in spices (pepper, cloves, nutmeg and cinnamon) led them to the ambition of extending their sway beyond Portugal and to strike their arch enemy, the Ottoman Empire rule in Turkey. The Portuguese played their cards adroitly and exploited the Sri Lankan King's ambition to become the ruler of the whole of Sri Lanka at the expense of the Tamils. The Portuguese were allowed to build a factory and a fort at Colombo ostensibly for collection and shipment of cinnamon bark. In 1540 the Sri Lankan King of Kotte, Bhuvanaikabahu VII, sent an embassy to Lisbon seeking the Portuguese King's help to confirm his grandson Dharmapala as a successor. The king agreed, but the local Portuguese were obviously greedy for wealth and power. In 1551 Bhuvanaikabahu VII died in an accident and his palace at Kotte was looted by the Portuguese. Dharmapala was removed to Colombo and baptised to Christianity. In 1580 the disheartened and humiliated Dharmapala "voluntarily" made over his throne to the Portuguese.

The flag followed the trade and the Portuguese extended their hold from Jaffna in the extreme north to Dondra in the south. The Sinhalese took refuge in the hills of Kandy. There was temporary truce with the Tamils for the common cause of driving out the Portuguese.

The Portuguese captured Kandy several times but could not retain their hold for long. The Sinhalese and the Tamil guerillas drove out the heavily clad Portuguese soldiers to whom the jungles and swamps were a hindrance. Sri Lanka was formally annexed by Portugal in 1597 on the death of Dharmapala, but they could never consolidate their rule. They made inroads into the religious faith of the inhabitants and the Portuguese missionaries spread Roman Catholicism in which they had a greater success with the Tamils of the north-west. The missionaries did try to protect their flocks. The Roman Catholics among the Sinhalese and the Tamils got a much better deal than the

Buddhists who were forced to send their new born to the church for a formal baptism and the children to the Christian schools. But the Buddhists, in private, never abjured their faith. Some beautiful churches were constructed by the Portuguese.

With the decline of Portugal's naval power the Dutch came up and tried to loosen Portugal's hold on the spice trade from Sri Lanka. In 1638 the Dutch were given certain trading rights in return for help rendered in driving out the Portuguese. When King Rajasingha II signed the treaty with the Portuguese, he did not realise that he was again putting the noose of another foreign power round Sri Lanka's neck. The Portuguese started a bitter warfare with the Dutch under the protection of the treaty but with the aim of grabbing the island.

Galle and Ngambo fell first, Colombo in 1656 and Jaffna, the last Portuguese stronghold, in 1658. The Dutch did not hand over the forts and the ruling rights to the Sri Lankan king. The Sinhalese king was powerless. The Sinhalese had invited the Europeans to Sri Lanka and the latter stayed there from 1505 to 1948.

Once the Dutch consolidated themselves their control was not as rigid as that of the Portuguese, and as long as the Dutch got what they wanted, the people could get along as best as they might. They were interested in commerce and prospered in their spice trade and planted coconuts and saw to the cultivation of rice. They understood the importance of the moribund canals and water reservoirs and improved them. They were vandals in their religious policy but not as zealous as the Portuguese.

As the wheel of fortune continued to turn, by the middle of the eighteenth century, Britain and France crippled Holland. In 1782, during the American War of Independence, the French captured Trincomalee. But in 1796 both Colombo and Trincomalee fell and the British signed a treaty in Madras with the envoy of the Tamil king of Kandy and all the trading rights and possessions of the Dutch were made over to the British. The last King Sri Wickrama Rajasingha surrendered formally on March 2, 1815. Thus began the British rule in Sri Lanka which lasted till 1948. Sri Lanka again chose a protector but this time there was no other option. The British had already consolidated themselves in India, the bigger neighbour.

During their regime the Dutch did not exercise rigid control

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on the religious beliefs of the people like their predecessors the Portuguese. While the Portuguese deliberately broke most of the temples and monasteries, whether of the Hindus or the Buddhists, the Dutch were not the fanatics to push Protestant Christianity down the throats of the Sri Lankans. The Dutch were great artisans and left some beautiful specimens of churches and forts. The Dutch carpentry was of superb character.

The first British Governor of Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon, was Fredrick North. He experienced his troubles first in Kandy and then at other places. But he was a good administrator with a vision and brought the former Dutch system of administration into line with that of British India. His scheme of higher education continued uninterrupted till the British left in 1948. North foresaw the need for a middle class of English educated people who would fill the posts of civil servants, lawyers, doctors and other disciplines and be a prop to the British administration. He inducted a well thought out scheme of English education at different tiers so that the Britishers could have an English-speaking middle class of white collars who would understand British methods and disciplines and transmit them to the Sinhalese and the Tamils.

Another great administrator, though firm, rough and ready, was Robert Browning. He managed to take the last king of Kandy, Wickrama Rajasingha, a prisoner in February 1815 and received the submission of the Kandian chief by an Act of Settlement promising a continuance of their titles and privileges and to all Buddhists freedom of worship according to their religion. But this was followed by a widespread rebellion which was sternly suppressed and the Kandian kingdom became part of the British Ceylon which had been declared a Crown colony in 1802.

The British improved the communications to keep the administration strong. More cash crops were grown. In 1824 coffee was introduced which soon became a major export industry in addition to tea, rubber, and gems. Between 1840 and 1860 about one million Tamils were brought to Sri Lanka to work on the coffee plantations. This was followed by occasional Tamil emigrants many of whom stayed back. The economy of Sri Lanka improved and with the spread of western education the people started yearning for a bigger share in the government. After the

general elections in 1936 the Sri Lankans were given control of local government.

In the Second World War Ceylon being a Crown colony was automatically drawn into the war. In 1942 when war was brought right to the Ceylonese shores, military control was imposed. Full independence was promised by the British Government after the danger receded subject to certain reservations on defence and foreign relations. On 4th February 1948 Ceylon became a self-governing member of the British Commonwealth.

The British, by and large, allowed people to follow their religious faith, though Buddhism should have had a better deal. There were aberrations no doubt when Christianity was patronised and new churches were constructed during the British rule. This was partly necessary to satisfy the Burghers, a name given to the Dutch descendants.

During the British rule Sri Lanka was given a better system of communications, roads, railways and waterways, schools and colleges, universities, hospitals and courts of justice. Sea-borne trade flourished. India and Sri Lanka came closer. Tea and rubber plantations promised a flourishing trade and the port of Colombo was modernised. Sri Lankans made a mark in foreign universities and returned with modern ideas of democracy. The peace that the British rule gave naturally improved the economy of the island giving an impetus to arts, science and literature. The temples were left unharmed and there was a peaceful co-existence of the different ethnic units. The British regime saw the spread of Buddhism from Sri Lanka as the stream had almost died in the mainland of India. It was left for a Sri Lankan Buddhist (not a monk then) to take back Buddhism to India the country that had given the creed to Sri Lanka in King Tissa's time.

Sri Lanka has made her mark in the comity of nations and is conscious of her importance, needs and priorities. A paradise on earth, Sri Lanka has a flourishing tourist industry. The economy has made great strides. Modernization has not been done at the cost of wiping out the Sri Lankan norms and milieu. The great religion of Buddhism which is followed by the majority of the population has made them charitable, affectionate, smiling and cheerful. They are proud of their heritage, their temples and legends, but they are not dogmatic in their religious concept.

3

The Land

THE SRI LANKA island is a mountainous region in the centre surrounded on all sides with large stretches of low-lying plains. The rivers flow from the central mountains to the sea. Of the total area of 65,610 square kilometres, about 1.78 million hectares constitutes the well-developed agricultural land growing crops like tea, rubber and coconut which account for most of the cultivated land. Paddy occupies about 0.66 million hectares. Forest, forest reserves, national parks, and intermit zones cover 2.38 million hectares. Scrub land, inland waters and unproductive land including built up area account for the rest.

So far as the geology is concerned, nearly nine-tenths of the island, the bedrock beneath the superficial deposits, is composed of Pre-cambrian crystalline rocks some of which are over 2000 million years old. Over the rest of the area which is mainly along the north-west coastical belt fossiliferous sedimentary rocks of Upper Gondwana (Jurassic) and Miocene age form the underlying bedrock.

Geological succession consists of—

(a) Recent and Pleistocene deposits which include the residual, colluvial and alluvial deposits formed by the weathering, transport and deposition of other rocks of which a major proportion were Pre-cambrian rocks. Formation of importance among these deposits are the red earths and gravels and laterite. The age of these deposits spans a time-interval of at least ten million years ranging from Post-Miocene times to the present. Laterite formation is considered active even at present.

(b) Miocene rocks: These rocks occur mostly in the north-western coastal belt of the island, extending from the Jaffna

peninsula in the north to the south of Puttalam on the west coast. The common rock type is a massive limestone of marine origin which is fossiliferous pale creamy to grey in colour. The thickness of the limestone is of the order of several thousand feet.

(c) Jurassic rocks which are shallow water, non-marine deposits of Upper Gondwana age and found in faulted basins in the Tabbowa Andigama and Pallama areas. The succession is composed of sandstones, grits, arkoses and brown and black carbonaceous shales. A considerable volume of plant and animal remains have been found in these rocks in addition to thin streaks of coal.

(d) Pre-cambrian rocks, most of which are generally between 500 to over 2000 million years old. These rocks are formed at high temperature and pressure in the depths of the earth's crust early in the island's geological history in the roots of eroded mountain chains long ago. These are visible at the surface due to erosion which has removed thousands of feet of rock that once covered them. Rocks of Pre-cambrian age are grouped into—

- (i) Vijayan series composed of granites, gneisses and schists and whose rocks include hornblende-biotite gneisses, pink gneisses and a variety of granitic gneisses and migmatites.
- (ii) Khondalite series comprising a succession of metamorphosed sediments whose dominant rock types are quartzites, crystalline limestones, garnet-graphite-sillimanite schists and associated rocks.

In association with rocks of both series are granites of metasomatic origin and others such as the zircon and allanite bearing pegmatites which are intrusive into the Pre-cambrian rocks post-dating their entire metamorphic history.

Several dolerite dykes intrusive into both the Vijayan and Khondalite series are found in the eastern province, Elahera, China Bay and Kantalai areas. Their age however remains unknown.¹

The important mineral resources of the island are graphite, gemstones, ilmenite, rutile, zircon, quartz sands, industrial clays,

¹*Sri Lanka Economic Atlas*, 1980, Department of Census and Statistics, Ministry of Plan Implementation.

limestones, felspar, massive quartz, iron-ores and peat. The island lacks coal and natural gas which is a serious handicap.

The most important mining industry is that of graphite and the mined graphite after being dressed and graded is exported. The gem-stones are found in large varieties in the layers of cold alluvium and river gravels in the valleys of Ratnapura district and some quantity in the Okampitiya and Elahera areas. Sapphire, ruby, topaz, garnet, zircon, moonstones are some of the gem-stones. The beach sands also yield minerals including monazite and silica.

There are fairly good reserves of limestone both of the sedimentary and crystalline type. The sedimentary limestones are used for making cement. The crystalline limestones are burnt for the manufacture of lime and used to make up the deficiency in soils. Felspar and quartz are found and used in the ceramic and glass industry. The limited iron-ore deposits are either superficial limonitic ores or banded magnite ores. They occur in the north of Colombo.

Sri Lanka has to depend on her soil resources and a careful soil management with utilization of chemical fertilizers and irrigation facilities. The need for irrigation facilities was realized by the early rulers who made the provision of extensive tanks and long channels and utilized the river waters well. There are some specified dry zones. Reddish-brown earths peculiar to Sri Lanka are considered the best and yield tropical cereals, pulses, oil seeds and fibre plants besides providing good pastures. Low humic dark grey soils in the low-lands occur in close association with the reddish-brown earths and give the maximum yields. Alluvial soils due to water deposits are good for paddy cultivation.

The climate of a country, particularly littoral and agricultural, has a very important bearing on land and its uses. Sri Lanka lies between latitude 6° and 10° North and has a mean temperature over low land ranging from 26° and 20°C. The width of the country is 240 kilometres and cool sea breezes naturally keep down the heat in the low lands. The central hilly region has a cooler climate. The minimum temperature at Nuwara Eliya is about 7°C in January and February but 16°C in April and May. In Colombo, the mean temperature in the coolest month is only 2°C lower than the mean temperature in the warmest month.

The highest temperatures are recorded in districts in the north or north-west of the hills and in the north-eastern and eastern low country, generally during March to June.

The relative humidity generally varies from about 70 per cent during the day to about 90-95 per cent at night in the south-west. Humidity comes down to about 60 per cent in the dry zone parts of the north-west and south-east.

The rainfall is of three types—Monsoonal, convectional and depressional. The south-west Monsoon comes in mid-May to September and some stations on the wind-ward slope of the hill country get monthly rainfall of over 25,00 mm (100 inches). Other stations receive an average rainfall of 50 to 60 inches.

The north-east Monsoon comes in December to February. Much of the rainfall is during December and January when the north-eastern slopes of the hills get about 1250 mm (50 inches) of rainfall.

The inter-monsoon period of March to mid-May is remarkable for convective showers and thunder-showers when depressions forming over the adjacent ocean areas cause occasional but widespread rains. The main cultivation seasons are *Yala* from April to August and *Maha* from September to March.

The rivers and reservoirs of Sri Lanka are important for land use.

The rivers of Sri Lanka flow in radial pattern from the central mountains to the sea. The mean annual yield of the 103 river basins in the island is estimated at 27 million acre feet, of which 11 million acre feet flow through the dry zone.

The Mahaweli Ganga is the longest and most important river in the island and rises in the Horton plains of the central mountains. Flowing towards the north and encircling Kandy . . . it flows in a west-east direction along the Dumbara Valley to turn northwards at Aluthnuwara. Eventually it flows north-east before emptying itself to the sea off Trincomalee on the east coast.

The construction of reservoirs and river diversion works and adoption of irrigation practices for rice cultivation in Sri Lanka dates back to more than three centuries B.C. The Indo-Aryans who came to Ceylon about this period had a basic knowledge which later developed into greater engineering

skills and enabled the ancient Sinhalese to build up progressively a complex of inter-related reservoirs and canal systems It was in this country that some of the largest tanks of the century such as the Minneriya Tank (present capacity 1,06,000 acre ft.) and the Kantalai Reservoir (present capacity 70,500 acre ft.) were built. The ancient irrigation systems were largely concentrated in the north-central dry zone of the island. The large reservoirs with a capacity of about 100,000 acre ft. of water were meant to irrigate vast extents of land, while the smaller reservoirs or village tanks were generally intended for the supply of local water to villages around, as well as for irrigation of small extents of paddy land.

The elevation of the outlet works was fixed to enclose the land most suitable for paddy. Spill water was not directly discharged into the streams below, but part of it was led through a canal to feed another tank, thus forming several chains of tanks each receiving supplies not only from its own catchment but also from the surplus water of the reservoir. An example of this system of irrigation is to be found north of Dambulla in the Dunumadalwa-Mankadawala tank system.

The Parakrama Samudra reservoir is an example of another irrigation system where water was diverted from a perennial stream, the Amban Ganga, into a storage reservoir. . . . Two major diversion canals were built across the Mahaweli Ganga at Manipe and Dastota.

Irrigation and food production were considered to be of the greatest importance and came under the personal supervision of members of the royal family. It was thus, that from very early times, from the Anuradhapura period right up to the reign of Parakramabahu the Great in the twelfth century A.D., the maintenance, restoration and construction of irrigation works continued to flourish. However, within a century of Parakramabahu's reign, Polonnaruwa had gone into decadence. The whole irrigation network was gradually abandoned.

Not much attention was focussed on the ancient irrigation work during successive foreign dominations. The Portuguese paid no attention to it whatsoever. The Dutch were interested in canals for navigation and drainage, and built canal systems

extending from Matara to Puttalam. The British initiated a system of irrigation chiefly for colonization purposes, but there was no significant achievement in this field up to about 1931, when the country was granted a certain measure of independence. From then onwards irrigation activity gathered momentum, and a policy of repairing and restoring ancient irrigation works was activated. Colonists were settled under the reservoirs of the dry zone and with it much attention was given to the reconstruction of the ancient irrigation network of Raja Rata and restoration of village irrigation works . . .

The next big project to be initiated was the Gal-Oya multi-purpose development project. The Gal-Oya Reservoir and nine small reservoirs in this region had an overall capacity of over 10,00,000 acre ft. of water. The Senanayake Samudra named after the first Prime Minister of independent Sri Lanka, Rt. Hon. the late D.S. Senanayake, irrigates 48,564 hectares of land apart from its hydro-electric potential.

Major flood problems are experienced in the basins of the Kelani Ganga, Kalu Ganga, Gin Ganga and Nilwala Ganga.²

Rice is the most important crop and various improved varieties have been introduced. Wheat, maize, green gram, groundnut are the other important crops. The cultivation of millet, potatoes or tomatoes have not received much attention. Horticulture has yet to gain popularity. Potatoes and especially onions have to be imported in large quantities from India and other countries. A Sri Lankan would rather grow five coconut trees next to his house than vegetables like cauliflowers, cabbages, beet, turnip, tomatoes, celery and beans which are very expensive. The cultivation of ginger, mint, coriander and other green condiment plants need more encouragement. A noteworthy fact is that the average Sri Lankan house with a little patch of land lacks seasonal flower plants. It is only in the houses of the rich people that flowers can be seen. Pot-plants are also not popular. Orchids, ferns, cacti and such exotics are to be seen only in the botanical gardens. There are no professional gardeners in the country but the Sri Lanka flowers on trees or shrubs are superb. Coconut economy appears to have been responsible for

²*Sri Lanka Economic Atlas*, op. cit.

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people's lack of interest in floriculture and horticulture.

The economy of Sri Lanka mainly depends on agriculture and the three principal crops—tea, rubber and coconut—account for about seventy-two per cent of the island's exports and about thirty per cent of the gross domestic product.

Tea has practically replaced coffee, the first plantation crop introduced in the second half of the nineteenth century. Sri Lanka is now the toughest competitor against India for the export of tea in the world market.

Tea is grown mainly in the hills. Tea plantations covered an area of 6,00,226 acres or 243,903 hectares in 1978 when the output of tea was 439 million kilograms. The main markets for Sri Lanka tea are USA, UK, Pakistan and the Middle East countries where its demand has been increasing. The tea grown on elevations of between 2,000 and 4,000 feet and above has excellent quality, but the low grown tea has also a ready market. There is no sizable internal market which is in contrast to the conditions in India.

About twenty per cent of the acreage is in small holdings of ten acres and a little over thirteen per cent of acreage is in holdings between ten acres to 100 acres, the rest being held by the larger estates. It is the produce from the larger estates that has won Sri Lanka's fame for export of tea.

Rubber plantation in its present form started at the turn of the present century, in the central wet zones. The number of small holdings of rubber estates is a remarkable but favourable feature. The Land Reform Law of 1972 made a change in the pattern of ownership and now the State sponsored corporations run the rubber plantations and the factories. The development of the motor industry throughout the world has given a great encouragement to rubber plantation and the processing of rubber before export. The principal markets for Sri Lanka rubber are China, the USSR, the USA, German Federal Republic, Italy and Poland. The main rivals are Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. Sri Lanka's share in the rubber market is still not very significant.

In 1978 the output was 343.2 million lbs and 202.8 million lbs were exported as sheet rubber and 130.6 million lbs as crepe. Unlike tea, rubber has a domestic consumption and in 1978 about 18 million lbs was consumed. The local market consumes rubber

for the manufacture and retreading of tyres, cycle tyres and tubes and manufacture of some rubber goods.

The total area under rubber in 1978 was 5,59,257 acres or 2,26,223 hectares. The acreage is expanding.

Coconut plantations claim about 11,15,610 acres or 4,51,472 hectares, three-fourths of acreage being in small holdings. Coconut trees are found all over the island but the main growing areas are along the south and west coasts. Half of the crop is consumed locally. Green coconut water is a delicacy.

The coconut acreage is rather static and the overall production is fluctuating. The Government are seized of the problem and are encouraging re-plantation and new plantations.

The export of coconut products is in the form of coconut oil, copra, desiccated coconut, copra-yarn, fibre and shell grit. A good quantity in the domestic market is used as a base for vinegar, toddy and arrack manufacture. Toddy and arrack consumption by the poorer people is common.

Coconut oil mainly goes to China, Canada, Italy, the UK and Bangladesh. The export has declined in recent years. Copra is consumed by Pakistan and the Middle-East countries. Here also, the exports are falling. Desiccated coconut is exported to UK, Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain and Belgium. There has been a decline in these exports also.

The other exports are coco, coffee, cinnamon, cardamom, pepper, nutmeg and cloves. The extent under cocoa is around 28,000 acres (11,332 hectares), coffee 8,000 acres (3,233 hectares), cinnamon is about 38,000 acres (15,378 hectares), cardamom 11,600 acres (4,694 hectares), pepper 5,000 acres (2,023 hectares) nutmeg and cloves estimated at 20,000 acres (8,094) hectares. These spices are famous all over the world.

The agro-based industries as well as the plantation and water-based industries have engaged the maximum attention of the government. The Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research has sponsored a number of research institutions and projects which cover tea, rubber and coconut. This Ministry runs the Ceylon Fertilizer Corporation, Sri Lanka Sugar Corporation and looks after the continuous improvement of paddy and the minor export crops. The major export crops and the State Rubber Manufacturing Corporation are under

the Ministry of Plantation Industries. There is a separate Ministry of Coconut Industry that looks after the problems of coconut and its cultivation, expansion and utilisation of the by-products. The Coconut Cultivation Board comes under this Ministry. Coconut, synthetic textiles and blended yarn are looked after by a separate Ministry of Textile Industries. Some Indian concerns are interesting themselves in Sri Lanka's textiles. The Ministry of Lands Development looks after the Irrigation Department and the Forest Department. The State Timber Corporation, Land Commissioner's Department, State Department and Construction Corporation along with the Low-lying Areas' Drainage and Reclamation Board come under this Ministry. There is a separate Ministry of Fisheries which looks after fish production. The Ceylon Fisheries Corporation is entrusted with this responsibility. It is felt that there could probably be an expansion and diversification in the utilization of the surplus fish. The production of fish manure, fish pickles and canning of various types of tasty fish for export have yet to be increased.

The Ministry of Trade and Shipping runs the Ceylon Shipping Corporation and controls the Sri Lanka Ports Authority. The land projects like the Mahaeweli programme, Urban Development, Integrated Rural Development and Transport are looked into by different authorities. The ancillary health problems, supply of milk, food and drink, cattle welfare, housing both for the rural and urban areas, water supply and drainage, proper communication links are distributed under different ministries. The feasibility of drug manufacture could be thoroughly examined and persons from other countries could be invited. Milk-products are few. Canning of fruits is an expanding industry.

The development programme of every district is in the charge of Members of Parliament of the locale. Law and order are in the charge of the district officer who coordinates the work of the Member of Parliament.

The Government welcomes the services of foreign experts. For example, the services of Chinese experts were obtained for the improvement of the cane industry. Indian engineers were drafted for implementing the Mahaeweli and other irrigation projects. Assistance from the Belgium government was obtained

for the establishment of a Jewellery Design and Crafts school at Maradana. The gem industry in Sri Lanka suffers from smuggling and it is understood that the precious stones are smuggled to Thailand and Hongkong. The jewellery development programme was expanded to include costume jewellery and projects based on international sub-contracting were commenced. The services of an adviser on the design and production of costume jewellery were obtained through the International Trade Centre, Geneva. For handloom textile foreign experts were invited. Sri Lanka officers are frequently sent out to other countries for training in specialized branches.

Sri Lanka welcomes foreign aid for developing projects. The peak year for the flow of foreign aid to Sri Lanka was 1981. In the years to come, fresh foreign aid sources would be on the decline. The British government grant of £ 100 million for the Victoria Project, aid from West Germany, Japan, Saudi Arabia has helped immensely the Mahaeweli Project and the Colombo Water Supply Project. An outright grant of about Rs. 765 million by Japan for the designing and construction of Sri Jayewardenepura General Hospital, about Rs. 577 million from the Canadian Government for potash fertilizer were received in 1981.

It is with such careful planning, utilization of internal and external sources of finance, and the maximum utilization of manpower that Sri Lanka has to tap the land resources particularly in the absence of coal, oil or natural gas. The country has to depend for fuel and power on imports of crude oil and the development of the hydro potential. An economic domestic source is fire-wood but this has its limitations. Gas production and consumption in Sri Lanka is of very little importance. A single plant produces gas for consumption in Colombo and its environs.

Land uses are also closely associated with transport and Sri Lanka's topography favours road transport. There is an extensive road network besides 264 locomotives, 2331 carriages and 5134 wagons belonging to the Sri Lanka Railways. The railway network has a total route length of 1,453 kilometres.

Three large ports, Colombo, Trincomalee and Galle can take

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in deep sea-vessels. While Trincomalee has a fine natural harbour, Colombo lies on the main shipping lines to the far east and Australia. The Ceylon Shipping Corporation Limited is sponsored by the Government holding fifty-one per cent of the share capital while the rest is issued to the general public.

4

The People

THE POPULATION of Sri Lanka (according to the 1980 census) is 1,47,38,000 distributed over the nine provinces and twenty-two districts. The density per square kilometre comes to 228 persons. There are four major population clusters in the country. Three of these, Colombo in the western province, Kandy in the central province, and Galle in the southern province, are located in the wet zone. Only one major cluster, Jaffna, the northern province, is located within the dry zone. Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Matara are some minor clusters in the country. The interior sections of the dry zone have a disperse pattern of population distribution. It is the Colombo-Kandy axis which has a population potential.

According to the physiography of the country and other human factors, the density varies from a low of twenty-two per square kilometre in Vavunia in the north to a high of 4,004 per square kilometre in Karawaku Pattu in Amparai in the east. The rural density is high in the south-west low land and wet zone island districts. The dry zone districts except Jaffna have a low rural density. The Jaffna peninsula, because of its water resources, has a relatively high density. Immigration is also another factor. Colombo district is very prominent because of its rapid growth of population. The central high land districts, the littoral districts to the south-west and Jaffna district show the lowest rate of increase apparently due to the high rate of out-migration. Besides Colombo, there are urban concentrations of population in Jaffna, Kandy, Kalutara and Galle districts. This is apparently due to the accelerated rate of development of the resources and tourism.

The census department and the Demographic Training and Research Unit based in the University of Colombo have found from the collected data that fertility is lower in the western districts and Jaffna, and higher in the eastern and southern districts. The variations in the number of infant deaths per thousand live-births in Sri Lanka are striking. "By and large, the high land districts and Batticaloa have the highest infant mortality rates while the south-north-central and northern regions illustrate the lowest mortality in infancy. In other words Nuwara Eliya, Ratnapura, Kandy, Batticaloa and Badulla exhibit very high infant mortality rates. Jaffna and Polonnaruwa have the lowest mortality in early life."¹ The life expectancy at birth (both sexes) is 65.3 years.

The literacy rate in the districts shows the expected trends as education spread from Jaffna area where the missionaries opened more schools and other institutions. Some of the districts in the eastern and central parts of the island have a low level of literacy while the rest of the country has a moderate level.

The data of the census department and the literature collected by the Demographic Training and Research Unit in the University of Colombo shows that:

The proportion of employed and unemployed males is higher than that for females. Mannar records the highest and the lowest proportion of employed males and females. The lowest proportion of employed males and the highest proportion of employed females are in Nuwara Eliya. The highest and the lowest proportion of unemployed males is in Colombo and Vavuniya respectively. A relatively high proportion of unemployed males are concentrated in the five wet zone districts of Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Kegalle and Matara. The highest and the lowest proportion of unemployed females is in Galle and Mannar respectively. A relatively high proportion of unemployed females are discernible at Colombo, Kalutara, Galle and Matara, whilst Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa have a relatively low proportion of unemployed females.²

¹*Demographic Atlas of Sri Lanka*, University of Colombo, 1980, p. 36.

²*ibid.*, p. 46.

Nuwara Eliya records the highest percentage in agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing and mining while the lowest percentage is shown in Colombo. So far as manufacture, electricity, gas and water are concerned, Puttalam records the highest percentage. While Nuwara Eliya records the lowest percentage, Colombo, the district where the capital is located has, for obvious reasons, the highest percentage in construction, whole-sale and retail trade,

**Population distribution (per cent) by
religion and by district, 1971**

<i>District</i>	<i>All Reli- gions</i>	<i>Bud- dhists</i>	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Mus- lims</i>	<i>Roman Cath- olics</i>	<i>Other Chris- tians</i>	<i>Others</i>
Colombo	100.0	69.4	5.4	7.0	15.9	2.1	0.2
Kalutara	100.0	83.9	5.5	6.8	3.4	0.4	0.0
Kandy	100.0	61.7	26.0	8.8	2.7	0.7	0.1
Matale	100.0	73.2	17.2	9.6	2.3	0.3	0.0
Nuwara Eliya	100.0	41.3	52.7	2.1	3.6	0.6	0.0
Galle	100.0	93.9	2.2	3.1	0.6	0.2	0.0
Matara	100.0	93.8	3.1	2.5	0.4	0.1	0.0
Hambantota	100.0	97.2	0.4	2.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Jaffna	100.0	2.6	83.1	2.2	11.0	1.1	0.0
Mannar	100.0	3.4	29.9	28.1	38.8	0.7	0.1
Vavuniya	100.0	14.8	65.4	7.3	11.9	0.6	0.0
Batticaloa	100.0	3.7	64.9	24.2	5.8	1.3	0.0
Amparai	100.0	30.0	21.0	46.2	2.2	0.6	0.0
Trincomalee	100.0	27.9	32.7	32.7	6.5	0.5	0.0
Kurungala	100.0	90.0	8.7	4.8	3.1	0.3	0.1
Puttalam	100.0	45.4	4.8	10.4	38.8	0.5	0.1
Anuradhapura	100.0	89.1	2.4	7.0	1.3	0.2	0.0
Polonnaruwa	100.0	88.7	2.8	7.1	1.3	0.1	0.0
Badulla	100.0	58.7	34.8	3.9	1.9	0.5	0.0
Moneragala	100.0	90.0	7.2	2.2	0.5	0.1	0.0
Ratnapura	100.0	79.5	17.0	1.5	1.6	0.4	0.0
Kegale	100.0	83.0	10.3	4.6	1.5	0.6	0.6
Sri Lanka	100.0	67.4	17.6	7.1	6.9	0.8	0.1

Source: Department of Census and Statistical Abstract, 1970-71 Table, 21, p. 38, (Colombo: Government Press).

transport, storage, financing and insurance, while Nuwara Eliya has the lowest percentage in these fields. As far as community and social services are concerned, Colombo shows the highest percentage as against Nuwara Eliya, which has the lowest percentage.

It will be interesting to find where the different religious faiths predominate. The table on p. 37 illustrates this.

In the social set-up of the country, particularly in the east, the evolution of the religious faiths followed by the people is revealing. The Sinhalese inherited a variegated and rich religious legacy spreading over centuries.

It is commonly held that the Sinhalese originally came from north India and settled in Sri Lanka about 500 years before the Christian era. They overran the primitives and a sort of popular Hinduism, a faith with a number of gods and goddesses, was inducted from there. The Vedic or the monotheism of the Upanishads and the philosophical base of the purer form of Hinduism does not appear to have been inducted. This loose faith was apt to change and assimilate the local gods, goddesses and fearsome spirits. It was then that Buddhism was introduced from India by Mahinda, son of the great Emperor Ashoka. Some time after the base of the Buddhist religion in Sri Lanka was strengthened by Mahinda's sister Sangha Mitra who brought the sapling of the holy Bo tree from Bodh Gaya and under which Lord Buddha had attained Enlightenment. Buddhism came and swept aside the existing unorganized medley of loose beliefs and faiths which had swelled by local accretions. Buddhism immediately became the religion of the majority and remained as such even under the Portuguese and later under the Dutch when these powers came to Sri Lanka and ruled over vast areas. The swamping by Buddhism does not appear to have been the result of state patronage only, but it was a popular religious movement accepted by the masses.

In the days of the Portuguese and the Dutch, the devout Buddhists had to pray to Lord Buddha and follow the Buddhist rituals in the privacy of their homes. The elite Buddhists who were held more tightly in the clutches of the ruling Christian power were forced to go to the churches. That is why even today there are surnames like Roderigo, D'Souza, Lionel, Dias, Solomon, etc., in Buddhist families. The newer generation is

reverting to the old and traditional Buddhist surnames.

In spite of all the vandalism, which included pulling down of Buddhist monasteries and statues and forcing the Buddhist students to study the Bible and pray in the churches, Buddhism could not be stamped out. The lamp burnt low but it burnt bright. Anagarika Dharmapala, the stormy petrel who revived Buddhism in India in the first part of the present century, was tortured in Christian schools because of his manifest regard for Buddhism. His writings paint a vivid picture of Buddhism under Christian rulers.

When the British colonised and ended the Dutch rule, Protestant Christianity succeeded Roman Catholicism patronised earlier. Many Protestant churches mushroomed throughout Sri Lanka. The British were more keen to exploit the resources and develop their trade and commerce with a greater zeal than the Christian missionaries. It is peculiar, however, that Protestantism did not make as much headway in Sri Lanka as Roman Catholicism. Today, there are more Roman Catholics than Protestants. It is also significant that the Roman Catholic priests had penetrated deliberately into the seats of Buddhist or the earlier Hindu religion. Keleniya, one of the sacred spots which Lord Buddha had visited, became a prominent seat of Roman Catholicism. There are still some beautiful specimens of Roman Catholic, Protestant and Anglican churches in different parts of the country. The Christians now have full freedom to follow their faiths and the coming of the Buddhists to their own has not affected Christianity in any way. But the swing of the pendulum has gone to Buddhism which has an overwhelming number of followers.

Another secret of the success of Buddhism in Sri Lanka was that the Buddhist missionaries established and spread Buddhism on the bed-rock of Hindu beliefs and allowed tacit co-existence. Moreover, Buddhism was the eclectic spirit of the Buddhist missionaries. For example, in a littoral country fish is a cheap, natural food of the people. Buddhism in Sri Lanka did not accept the vegetarianism of the Buddhists in India. Nor did the Buddhist missionaries actively encourage Buddhist nuns in the monasteries. The Buddhist missionaries do not appear to have played the part of a politician either. True, the Buddhist kings and satraps

consulted the Buddhist priests, but they did not allow that degree of authority which the Rajgurus in Nepal and some other countries had exercised. They did not make or unmake kings. They had their own work to do and remained more confined to that sphere. But the most important element for the success of the Buddhist religion was the existence of a form of Hinduism which may be described as a degenerate form recognising Yakshas, Yakshnis, Nagas, fearsome deities presiding over seas and mounforests, tains.

The Brahmanical places of worship had continued to exist in Sri Lanka even during the centuries of the great success of Buddhism, particularly at the sea-ports of Mahatittha (Mantai) and Gokanna (Trincomalee) where the population must have been largely Indian. A number of princes and princesses from Kalinga (Orissa in India) had come to Sri Lanka and there were marital alliances as well. The sacred Tooth relic was received through a Kalinga prince and princess in disguise and found shelter in the Devalaya. The Theravada form of Buddhism had suited the personal equation of the Sinhalese.

The introduction of Buddhism in the reign of Devanampiya Tissa had brought in soon after the monastic organization (Sangha) and some of the pre-Buddhist gods and spirits were slowly accommodated in Buddhism. Then came the Stupas or Chaitvas. The Sri Lanka Buddha images in limestone were more impressive in size than those of Amaravati or Nagar-junakonda in India.

Buddhism passed through many stages in Sri Lanka. The Gupta era in India had influenced the sculpture of Sri Lanka images as well. In the late Anuradhapura period of Sri Lanka's history, there was a keen rivalry between the three sects represented by the Maha Vihara Abhayagiri Vihara and Jetavanarama. The Hair relic was brought by Silakala (522-535 A.D.) from India. The annual festival of the Tooth relic associated with Abhayagiri Vihara continues to be the most important religious festival in Sri Lanka.

Coming to Hinduism of the day we find that the south India pattern of temples, deities and religious rituals predominate. The Saiva shrines at Mahatittha and Gokanna stand prominent and there are Tamilian endowments for Buddhism and vice-versa. Some of the Hindu deities are highly regarded and have been

converted to Buddhist ones. The shrine of Upulvan (Varuna) built in the seventh century at Devundra, the Vibhishna temple Kelaniya, originally Hindu, are now places of worship by the at Buddhists.

Buddhism reached its zenith during the Polonnaruva period under the kings Vijaya Bahu I, Parakram Bahu I and Nissankamalla. It is at this period that some of the ancient Indo-Aryan gods Varuna and Yama were Lankanised and the original Hindu religious centres at Devundra, Sabaragamuva and Alutnuvara were made Buddhist religious centres. There are a number of Shiva temples for Parvati, Kartikkiya, Ganesh, Kali and Laxmi. The relics at Polonnaruva and other places show the influence of Brahminical Hinduism. Some of the paintings also show Hindu gods and goddesses. The Hindus even now freely join the festivities when there are special expositions of the Tooth relic preserved first at Polonnaruva and housed in a magnificent shrine at Kotte.

Islam did not adopt any militant attitude and the Muslims were actively engaged and more interested in trade and commerce. There were no Muslim invasions into Sri Lanka. There are some beautiful old Muslim shrines and dargahs. Today, there is a happy coexistence of the religious faiths and communal outbursts are practically unknown in Sri Lanka. Hindu deities like Varuna, Yama have been converted into the national deities Upulvan and Saman together with Skanda and Vibhisana considered to be the protectors of the island. There cannot be greater examples of a happy co-existence of religious faiths. Saman is worshipped at Adam's Peak which is also sacred to the Christians and the Muslims. The cult of Pattini became popular towards the fifteenth century and shrines dedicated to the gods came to be known as the Devalayas. A striking feature is the dance performed by the nautch girls in the evenings which appears to have been an Indian reflex. Later Hinduism was strengthened by the induction of the Tamils in the Jaffna peninsula and in the regions of Mannar and Trincomalee.

The picture of religious freedom and peace gave latitude to the Sri Lankans to make their own contribution to art and architecture. Unfortunately, Indian scholars have been far too conscious of Indian influence on Sri Lanka's Buddhist art, architecture and culture. The Buddha images and Buddhist temples are the main

themes for Sri Lanka's art and architecture. A great Buddhist scholar, an antiquarian of repute, D.T. Devendra, has written two books on the evolution of the exclusive type of Buddha image in Sri Lanka.* This theory may be a little too ambitious but it has shown that some of the Buddhist images of Sri Lanka have an exclusive identity. Sri Lanka's temples are not vitiated by eroticism. Sri Lankans have retained their ethnic culture, language, literature and attitude to life in spite of the many past onslaughts and are naturally proud of them.

In this connection, the important contribution of Sri Anagarika Dharmapala in the recent decades is unique. He was born to affluent Buddhist parents of Colombo and studied in Christian schools. His mother's influence on him was very great. A born patriot and religious zealot, he visited Bodh Gaya in India in 1891 and was shocked to find the precincts of the Buddhist temple at Bodh Gaya an abode of pigs and full of filth. Earlier, he had witnessed a similar dismal sight at Sarnath. Buddhism had been trodden upon and despised. The great Bodh Gaya temple was under the control of a Hindu Saiva mahant who was one of the most oppressive landlords. He had turned the temple into a Hindu shrine. The Buddhists did not have even a free access to the temple. When this youngman paid his homage by touching the Vajrasan on which the great image of Buddha is seated, he felt inspired that he must set himself to revive Buddhism in India and free the Bodh Gaya temple from the clutches of the Hindu mahant and make it again a Buddhist centre. Anagarika Dharmapala carried on this mission for years till his death. He was persecuted, prosecuted and assaulted. But he did not flinch. He started the Maha Bodhi Society first in India and then in Sri Lanka with branches abroad. He visited many foreign countries and attended the Congress of Religions in the United States along with Swami Vivekananda and others. He sponsored Buddhist centres in London and a few other places abroad.

He was misunderstood for a long time in his own country, but his carefully maintained diaries at the Maha Bodhi Society Office in Colombo reveal a man who set to revive Buddhism in

*D T. Devendra's *The Buddha Image and Ceylon* (Colombo, 1957) and *Classical Sinhalese Sculpture* (London, 1958).

India. Though his mission in rescuing the Bodhi Gaya temple for the Buddhists was not completed before death snatched him away, he was partially successful. His dying wish was to be born again and resume the fight. His love for his country was so deep that in one day's diary he had noted the wish to die in Sri Lanka. He was a truthful fighter and not a strategist otherwise he would not have planted a Japanese Buddha image at Bodhi Gaya and alienated the British bureaucracy. He was given millions of rupees by his admirers which he endowed for the cause of Buddhism. Today, mainly for Sri Anagarika Dharmapala Sri Lanka leads the Buddhist countries. The great Sarnath Buddhist Vihar was Anagarika's gift to India. He died there a few weeks after the shrine was consecrated in 1933.*

The ancient Brahmanical places of worship mentioned already do not appear to have been violated by the Buddhists. The Tamils who were Hindus from south India had made a number of incursions into Sri Lanka. This trend continued and accelerated when the Cholas of south India and others occupied and ruled portions of Sri Lanka. It was only much later when the Portuguese came that there was some vandalism on the Hindu temples along with the Buddhist shrines which clearly show the influence of the Gupta age. It is likely that architects, masons and sculptors from India had worked on them.

It is significant that the later rivalry between the three schools of Sri Lanka Buddhism, on the setting up of the Hair Relic, the Tooth Relic or the large monthly Poya (full moon) festivities did not affect the existing Hindu temples. Rather the Hindu gods and goddesses were tacitly accepted and these temples often visited by the Buddhists.

Buddhism was at its zenith in the period of Polonnaruwa and we find the cults of Varuna and Yama, Hindu Gods transformed into Upulavan and Saman and even given the honour of being the Protectors of Sri Lanka. There are Hindu temples and Hindu deities at the Buddhist religious centres as well. In Jaffna area, particularly its neighbourhood, has shivalingams and images both in stone and bronze of Shiva, Parvati, Kartikeya,

*The author had the privilege of studying all the diaries of Anagarika Dharmapala at the Maha Bodhi Society at Colombo through the kindness of the High Priest of the Vihara and the Secretary who was very helpful.

Ganesh, Kali, Lakshmi and other deities at the famous ancient sites of Polonnaruwa and other places. Brahmin priests, as in Thailand, were in demand in Buddhist families for conducting rituals. The Buddhist royal household had a place for the Hindu priest. The paintings in the Relic Chamber at Mahiyangama show that the painters, probably Buddhists, painted the Hindu god and goddesses. But no image of any Hindu god was installed as a deity in any later Buddhist shrine to be worshipped as in Thailand, another citadel of Buddhism. The figure of Ganesa was sculptured on the temple walls and railings but the image of Ganesa was not installed in Buddhist temples to be worshipped.

Tamil artisans were employed to build some of the Buddhist shrines. A few Buddhist monasteries are clearly in Dravidian style of which two great examples are Alavatura in Kagalla district and the Gadaladenya shrine in Kandy district.

Special mention has to be made of Upulavan, the deity that protects Sri Lanka with a shivalingam, located at Devinuwara 170 kilometres from Colombo. It is said that a red sandal wood image of the deity was washed ashore and the temple was built. This temple suffered from Portuguese vandalism.

A peculiar ceremony known as the water-cutting ceremony is held before the annual perahera (procession). Two white bulls draw through Chillaw town a gaily decorated cart in which statues of the deities are placed. The images are immersed in the water. The chief Kapurala (priest) takes a dip and strikes the water with a sharp sword and before the cleft water meets, some of it is collected in a brass utensil and taken as sacred. The perahera comes back to the shrine along with the deities and the statues are set back to their original places.

According to the Mahavamsa, a sacred scripture, Upulavan is the protector of Sri Lanka being Lord Vishnu himself. The story is that at the behest of Buddha, the task of protecting Sri Lanka was delegated to Upulavan. King Dapulassen (766-800 A.D.) raised a magnificent temple and installed the image of Vishnu here.

It is said that Upulavan has many common traits with Varuna, the Lord of rain and water and therefore he is set up in the south Lanka. The worship of Vishnu has been supreme since the fifteenth century. Only fruits, flowers, sweetmeat, cloth

and ornaments are offered. Regular aratis are held. A peculiar act is to regularly wash the mouth, face and feet of the image and rub it with a towel. It is said that Lord Krishna, on return from the pastures, used to do so.

The Hindu temples have been allowed to co-exist in the complex of Buddhist shrines at some places. A good example is the Kalutra temple complex where the oldest Buddhist shrine of Devundara Devala is found. There is a temple of Lord Vishnu and people who worship at the Buddhist shrine also worship at the Vishnu Devala. The complex is so popular that ten cart-loads of khiribhat (sweetened milkrice) are distributed daily as prasad. The offerings lavished include cars, lorries, tractors, furniture, books, ornaments, gold, silver, sofa sets, elephants, tusks, pictures, etc.

It is strange that Rama, the legendary hero of Ramayana that extols Rama as the conqueror of Lanka, is no God to the Sri Lankans. There are no Hindu temples exclusively for Rama or Sita as deities. The Ramayan of Valmiki has described Ravana as the demon king of Lanka who stole Sita. The Sri Lankans have a great grievance about the Valmiki Ramayan. To them the Jaini Ramayan of Kambal, where Rama is a weakling and Ravana a hero with a spiritual base and who stole Sita but never touched her is more satisfactory. The Ramayan-culture has had no impact on Sri Lanka where people generally do not think that Sri Lanka was the scene of Ramayan. The total absence of any impact of Ramayan culture on Sri Lanka substantiates this theory strengthened by Prof. Sankalia's painstaking researches and books. Other scholars have also contributed to it. It appears that Valmiki had based his Ramayan on some earlier mythological tales and there have been any number of additions and subtractions to Valmiki's story. Later researches in India seem to indicate that the locale of the story of Ramayan was in parts of the present Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The stories now associated with the name of Rama with a few temples of Sri Lanka now need a historical probe.

Jainism in Sri Lanka

Ancient Jain literature in India mentions that the Jain monks had gone out to Sri Lanka from India. King Kharavela of Utkal (Orissa), an ardent Jain, had sent Jain missionaries to

different places in India and beyond just as King Ashoka had sent out Buddhist monks. The Theravada school of Buddhism not only survived but flourished and converted Sri Lanka into a Buddhist country. The Sri Lankans have preserved the pure form of Buddhism and the majority of the population are Buddhists.

The history of Sri Lanka shows that for some time Jainism did strike roots and there was a regular exchange of Jain monks through Sri Lanka. For example, some Jain monks had taken a Jain image in a boat to Sri Lanka from India and from there they had gone to Siam (Thailand). The Jains started their mission there. But now, Jainism has disappeared from Thailand as well. But there is a nude Jain image which is worshiped at Changmai as an image of Lord Buddha. The reasons why Jainism did not survive in Thailand appear to be somewhat the same as why it did not succeed in Sri Lanka.

Nude Jain munis propagating an austere creed which completely abjures killing of living animals for food or sport and a very strictly regulated life with discipline at every step did not appeal to the people of Sri Lanka or of Thailand. The Sri Lankans are essentially non-vegetarians and the sea is a source of cheap fish. The majority of the population eat fish, beef, mutton, pork and chicken. In a littoral country surrounded by sea, marshes, tanks and rivers, it would be cruel, uneconomic and irrational to be vegetarian. The position of Sri Lanka is such that there has always been a flourishing maritime trade bringing in foreigners with their own food-habits. At one time, there was little of rice grown as the fertile soil could grow an abundance of coconuts, areca nuts, rubber, tea, tobacco as cash crops. The people of Sri Lanka being simple and happy with their lot would hardly be inclined towards an austere life and vegetarian food. The Jain philosophy might attract the very intellectual Sri Lankans but not the masses to whom the Digambara school of the nude Jains was an anathema. The temples in Sri Lanka, Buddhist and Hindu, are wonderfully free from eroticism. Nudism must have been horrifying for the Sri Lankans.

There is another historic reason. The Jains in Sri Lanka had a flourishing monastery at Abhayagiri at Anuradhapura where a number of Jain monks used to live. The fact that the site of the

monastery was at Anuradhapura which was once the capital shows that Jainism had, at least, been accepted in Sri Lanka. The old records show that this monastery flourished during the rule of Khallatanega (109-103 B.C.). Unfortunately, the Jain monks appear to have dabbled in regional politics. The Tamils made incursions and met Visaray at Kolambahalaka where the Sinhalese army was defeated. King Valagamba fled from the battle-field and when the fugitives were passing by the Jain monastery, the head of the monastery Muni Giri taunted the fleeing soldiers. The king took the taunt to heart and vowed that if he ever returned to power, he would pull down the Jain monastery. This was done effectively some time when the same king came back after a short time and reoccupied the kingdom. He founded a new Buddhist monastery at the place. It was during his time that the books of the Tripitaka were reduced to writing.

King Vattagamini, known as Valagamba, ruled for twelve years (89-77 B.C.) and during his time, Jainism was driven out from Sri Lanka. When Moggallana remained in exile in India for eighteen years after being turned out by Kssapa-I, he was in secret contact with the Senapati Migara and also with the Jains, in Sri Lanka.

Moggallana returned in 495 A.D. but he did not seem to have favoured the Jains and busied himself with the celebration of the advent of the Hair Relic of Lord Buddha brought by Silakala. Silakala acquired possession of the Hair Relic and presented it to Moggallana when he became the king.

It is, however, strange that neither at Sigiria, Anuradhapura or elsewhere in Sri Lanka a single Jain image has been traced. The Jains have been well-known for erecting Jain temples with images of their 24 Tirthankaras or path-finders. The last of them was Mahavira who was born a few years before Lord Buddha in Bihar in India*.

Economy

The main occupation of people in Sri Lanka is in agriculture,

*The 24 Tirthankaras have some exclusive features (*Lacchanas*). The Archaeology Department of Sri Lanka was contacted by this author when he was at Sri Lanka. A vigorous research to find out if any of the *Lacchanas* exist on the existing Buddha images is indicated.

plantation and industries. Peasant agriculture is synonymous with the cultivation of food crops primarily for domestic consumption. Paddy cultivation on small holdings is the most important crop. As paddy requires an adequate water supply particularly in the growing stages, the important factor is good rainfall and efficient management of water. Therefore, fluctuations in yield are inevitable. Unfortunately, varieties with high yields do not grow well and there are more of the indigenous varieties.

The Paddy Lands Act (1958) assures security of tenure for paddy farmers. There were 1.3 million tenant cultivators in the island with a major concentration in the less than one acre group accounting for about 0.8 million. Authoritative sources indicate while sixty per cent of the cultivators were paddy land owners, the tenants were roughly in the region of thirty per cent.

With the emergence of State Industrial Corporation and the other State sponsored agencies, the State has a vital note in the manufacturing sector. There are corporations for cement, ceramic, fisheries, leather products, mineral sands, oil and fats, petroleum, plywood, jute, paper, salt, textiles, ayurvedic drugs, steel, sugar, tobacco, tyre, distilleries and timber. The manufacturing industries cover food beverages, tobacco, apparel, leather, chemicals, wood and mineral products, metal industries, paper and paper products.

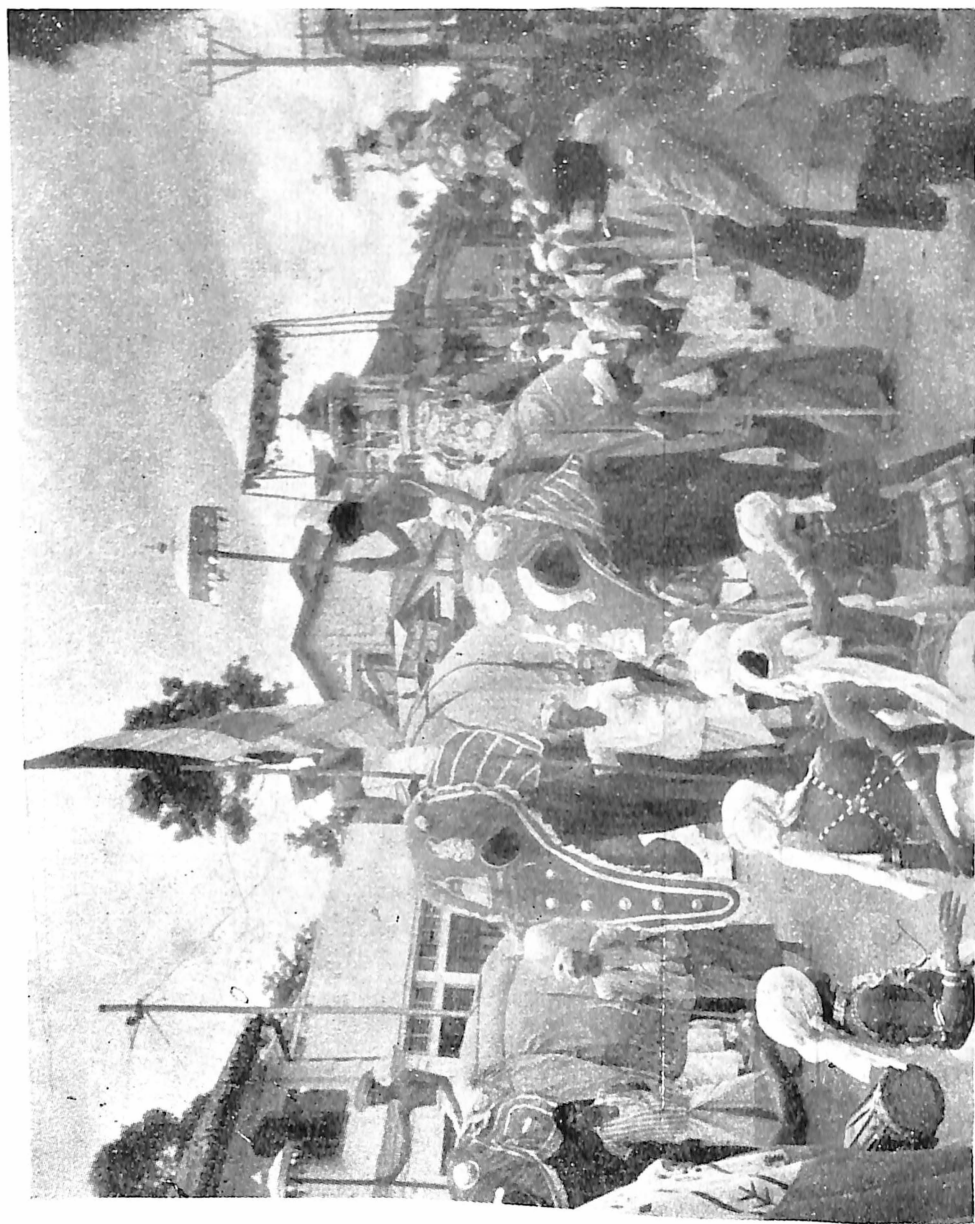
Fisheries are important for Sri Lanka's economy. There are over 500 species of edible fish in the fresh and brackish water fisheries. There are by-products as cowries and conchs. About 900 fishing villages and three harbours at Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee have facilities for anchorage. Beruwala has a freezing plant and thirty ice plants. The fishing industries provides direct employment to about 53,000 people and another additional 14,000 are involved indirectly.

The Eelam Problem

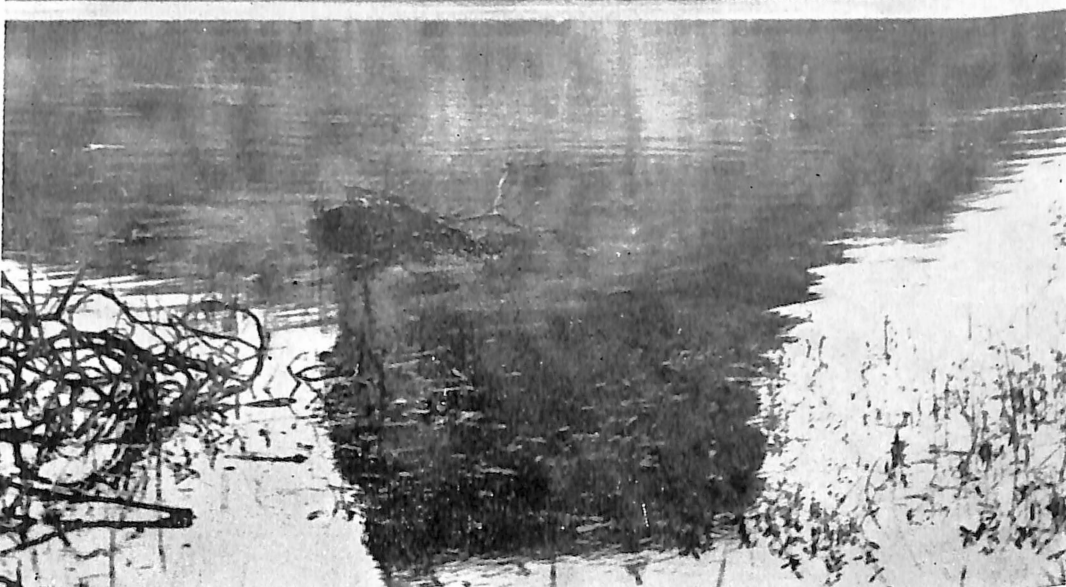
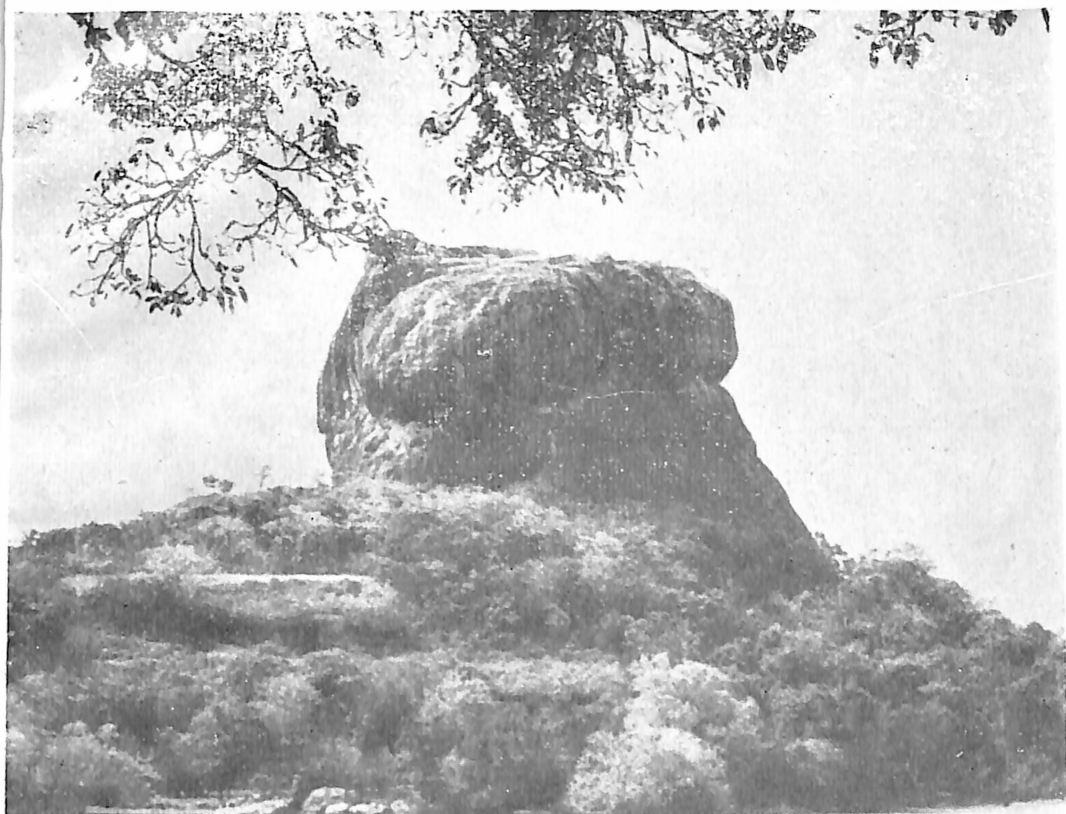
The Tamils in Sri Lanka are an integral part of the population mostly concentrated in Jaffna area which is close to the mainland of India. For a proper appreciation of their demands either within or outside the political system of Sri Lanka, we have to look into the country's history.



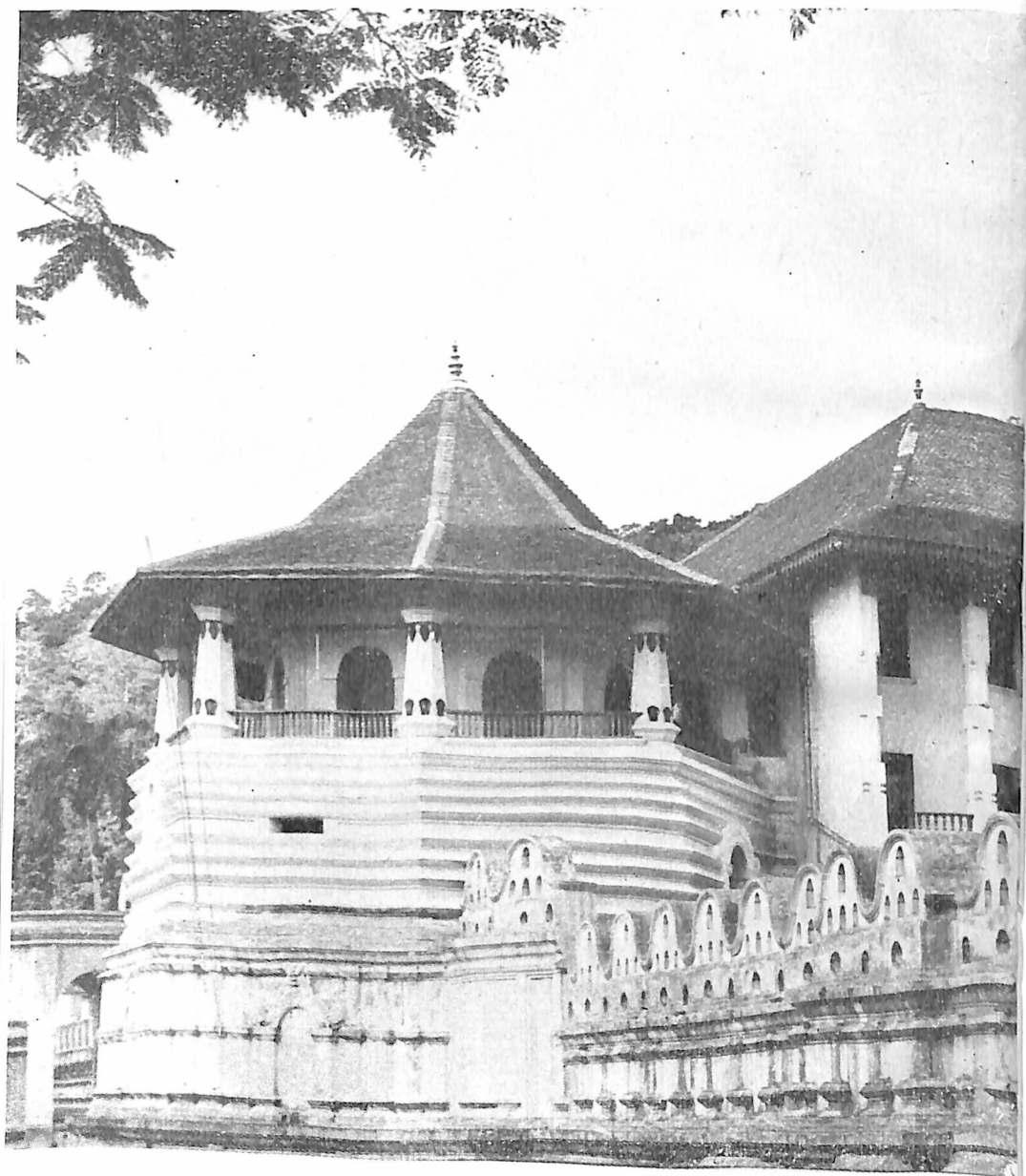
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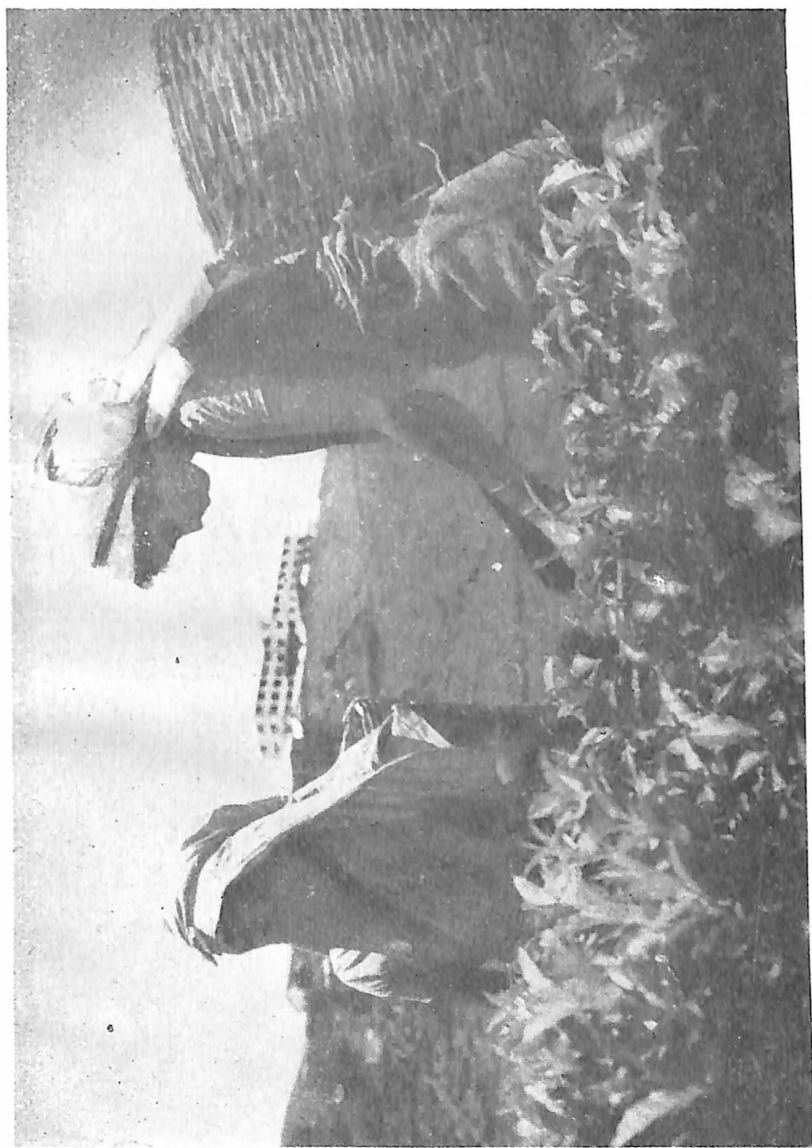
Kandy annual Esala Perahera



Sigiriya Rock—Sixth Century



Dalada Maligawa, Kandy



Tea picking in Sri Lanka



Wild elephants in Ruhuna Park



Kandyan 'Ves' dancer



Entrance to the Dutch fort, Jaffna—Eighteenth Century

RARE PLANTS AT PERADENIYA GARDEN

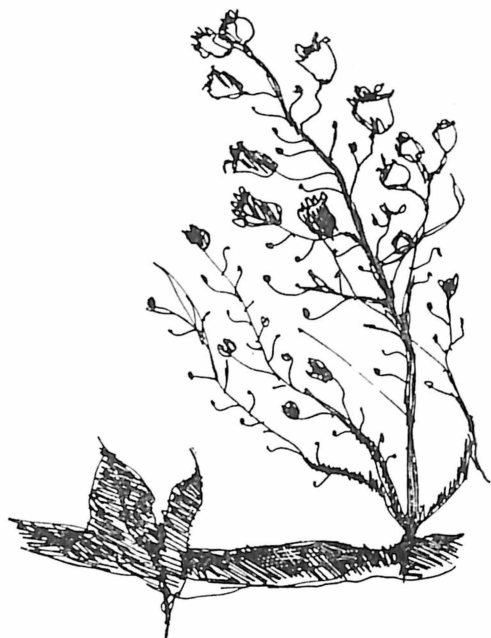


Golden flower



Nutmeg

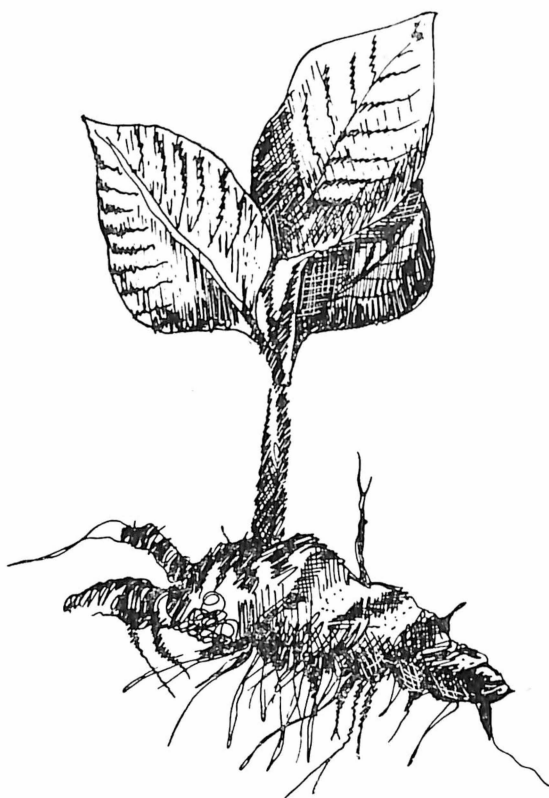
RARE PLANTS AT PERADENIYA GARDEN



Flame Tree of Queensland



Jippi-Jappa



Purple Arrowroot

The following 1981 census statistics are relevant:

Sinhalese	...	10,985,666 (74 per cent)
Sri Lanka Tamils	...	1,871,535 (12.6 per cent)
Indian Tamils	...	825,233 (5.6 per cent)
Sri Lanka Muslims	...	1,056,972 (7.1 per cent)

In the past, the Cholas of southern India had occupied parts of Sri Lanka as rulers. The Sinhalese had been able to drive them away, but Tamil incursions continued from time to time. In the later centuries, the Tamil labour was freely imported from India for developing the undeveloped areas. After the Tamil kingdom in Sri Lanka had ceased to exist, the Tamils continued to stay. The Sri Lanka Tamils are, by and large, the descendants of the original Tamils who came centuries ago. The section known as Indian Tamils was imported later.

A certain amount of nostalgia in both the Tamils and Sinhalese about the past history makes the Tamils aware that at one time they had ruled portions of the island. The Sinhalese have not forgotten that the Tamils had occupied parts of their country and had to be driven away. Another significant fact is that the Jaffna area near Tamilnadu in India has been the traditional home of a heavy Tamil population. There is a large number of Hindu temples in this area.

Decades back, the Christian missions came to Sri Lanka with a programme of opening schools and medicare institutions. The Buddhists of Sri Lanka, the majority of the population, looked askance at the Christian missions and did not encourage them to open schools and health institutions. They were more conservative and oriental in their outlook and wanted their oriental schools to be run by the Buddhist monks. But the Tamils in Jaffna were aware through contacts in Tamilnadu of the beneficial activities of the Christian missions. While the Buddhists in the mainland of Sri Lanka did not encourage the Christian missions, the Tamils in Jaffna welcomed them. As a result, the missionary institutions like schools, orphanages and hospitals in the mainland of Sri Lanka were few in number. Through them the Tamils in Jaffna received western education. The Buddhists in that area were not very keen to go to the Christian schools. When the British established their colonial rule and before them the

Portuguese and the Dutch, they naturally took in more of the English educated Tamils in clerical and other higher services. The Buddhists stuck to their oriental monks' schools and did not care for jobs under the government or in the rubber, tea, coffee plantations nor in the other light industries. But now the Sinhalese have come up in English education and have had training in technical subjects. They have been abroad and have received the best of western education and training. There are highly qualified Sri Lankan doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, bankers and barristers. They want that they should get the major share of employment in the public or in the private sector. This is the crux of the problem and political overtones have been added by the politicians particularly from the Tamil side. The Sri Lankan's desire is natural and legitimate.

Another significant fact is that of the 825,233 Indian Tamils, a large section are neither citizens of Sri Lanka nor of India. Under an agreement between them, a part of them could apply for and were to be granted Indian citizenship and moved to India. Unfortunately, the response has not been adequate. The Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement signed in 1964 expired in 1981.

It has to be borne in mind that Tamils are also distributed over other urban and rural parts of Sri Lanka. In the plantations and industries, in the trade markets, there are Tamils earning their livelihood without any hindrance and have lived peacefully along with the Sinhalese for generations. There are no Tamil ghettos. There have been happy inter-marriages between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. Whenever there is any outbreak of violence in Jaffna, there is tension in the areas where the population is mixed. In such a crisis many Tamils have been sheltered by the Sinhalese and vice-versa.

According to the Constitution promulgated in September 1978, any infringement of fundamental rights or a language right is justiciable before the Supreme Court which is required to make a decision within two months of the filing of a petition.

The Constitution lays down that, there should be no discrimination on grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex or political opinion. There is to be freedom of speech, religion, association, occupation, movement and residence. On the question of language, the Constitution provides that the official language is Sinhala but both Sinhala and Tamil are national languages. A member of

Parliament, or of a any Local Authority, can speak in any of the national languages. While Sinhala is a language of administration throughout Sri Lanka, Tamil is the language of administration in the northern and eastern provinces where Tamils are concentrated. All legislation is published in both the national languages. Tamil language;plaints and pleadings are permissible in any court.

Relatively fewer Tamils are now finding employment in the State services where the qualified Sinhalese are also competing for entry. In the foreign service supposed to be the most coveted Sri Lanka service, out of eleven career heads of missions, five are Tamils and five are Sinhalese (1982). In the private sector or in the self-employment one, there is absolutely no restriction. On the other hand, comparatively few Sinhalese are self-employed in the northern and eastern provinces claimed by the Tamils as their traditional homeland. It has been estimated that in the city of Colombo alone, there are only 5,500 business establishments owned by the Sinhalese, whereas 8,450 are owned by minority groups (Tamils—4,100 and others—259). In the Colombo district, excluding the Colombo Municipality, 6,879 business establishments are owned by the minorities (Tamils 3,439, Muslim 3,400 and others 40), whereas Sinhalese business establishments number 10,317. These figures, considered in the light of the fact that Tamils, both of Indian and Sri Lanka origin, number only 18.2 per cent of the total population, belies allegations of discrimination against the Tamil people or other minorities in the field of private employment.

The statistics in the State services published by the authority of the government show that the Tamils have really more placements now than they would have had, if selections for employment had been made on ethnic basis. In the university admissions, the previous system of standardization of marks for admission introduced in 1972 has been abolished following strong protests by the Tamil community. Students are now selected on the basis of aggregate marks secured in the examination papers irrespective of the medium in which they offer the papers. The government has been responsive to just grievances.

It is surprising that in Jaffna area the Sinhalese form only one per cent of the total population. In Kandy the Tamils form twenty-eight per cent while in Colombo they make up nine per cent. There

cannot be any Sinhala area and a Tamil area under such circumstances.

It is unfortunate that since 1972 a section of the Tamils have started the EELAM Movement which entered into a violent phase particularly from 1977. In 1981 several murders of policemen (including Tamil Police) took place. There were also political dacoities and looting of money. Witnesses to crimes have also been murdered and a sense of terrorism broke out. The Government had to pass the Prevention of Terrorism Act on July 20, 1979 which was to expire on July 20, 1982.

Physically, historically and culturally Jaffna is a part of Sri Lanka and a small minority can hardly lay claim to start a movement which is bound to affect the cordial relations of Sri Lanka and India. The idea of an independent state within a State is unworkable and the small country of Sri Lanka with her resources cannot have a number of provinces or states with Jaffna as one of them.

Buddhism has shaped the life of Sri Lankans. Even if Lord Buddha's three visits to Sri Lanka as mentioned in the Mahavamsa may not be historically established, there is no doubt that from the second half of the third century B.C. the orthodox school of Theravada, a sect of Hinayana Buddhism, had pervaded Sri Lanka from where it spread to lower Burma, Thailand, Kampuchea and Laos. Theravada had disappeared from India during Pala period and made its home in Sri Lanka. This form of Buddhism has contributed very largely to the ethos of the people. Their humane nature, helpfulness, charity and humility derives from their faith.

Sri Lanka has a written constitution guaranteeing freedom of worship. The Sri Lankans have strong family ties and though the nuclear family system is coming in, the old world bonds with the country cousin or the poorer relatives have not been snapped. The urban elite do not cut off ties with their rural home. The father's position is like that of what we see in India and the head of the family does count still in taking decisions for marriages and other domestic matters. Sanctity of marriage vows is recognised. There is a dowry system but essentially different from that in India. If the matrimonial columns of the papers could be relied upon, the dowry in the well-to-do parties is probably very high. But the difference lies in the fact that the

dowry goes to the bride exclusively and not to the bridegroom or his people. The bride continues to exercise her inherent claim to the dowry gifts.

The Sri Lankans, by and large, have simple habits and dress. Rice and vegetables with a little fish or meat is the common diet. Lintels are not much favoured. Condiments are appreciated. Fruits, particularly bananas and coconut, are taken. A lot of jaggery is used. The upper income group take a lot of meat, fish and eggs. Milk and milk-products are not much in demand. Sweets made of milk are a rarity. The common drink is tea or coffee and coconut water. There is unfortunately a craze for consumption of arrack, a cheap alcoholic drink, among the low income group. Due to the littoral position of the country smuggling is common. The duty-free shops are being exploited. It is common to find people coming to Sri Lanka to buy duty-free articles and rush back to sell them. The free trade zone brings in a good income to the unscrupulous people.

Inter-marriages between Sri Lankans and other races or a Buddhist marrying a non-Buddhist are accepted. There have been a large number of inter-marriages between Tamils and Sinhalese although the Tamil of Jaffna area would not willingly sell property to a Sinhalese. The villages still retain their peaceful tenor, but there is more of furniture, attractive dresses and sophistication in the hamlets. Boutiques have come up even in rural areas. Selling of coconut milk is common on the roadsides. Girls are free to move about and co-education is widespread.

The urban areas have good roads and shops. Japanese cars and bicycles have flooded the market. There are chains of consumer shops in practically all the towns. But the common man's amusement is still gossip, drinking of arrack, rural sports, rustic music and seeing theatricals and pictures. The Sri Lankans have a glorious past, a chequered present and a promising future.

5

Places of Interest

SRI LANKA has a strategic position in the Indian Ocean. With numerous well-developed and organized tourist centres, a large number of tourists come here throughout the year. In 1980 there were 321,780 tourists and the average length of stay was eleven days. The number of excursionists arriving in Sri Lanka by air and ship with a duration of stay less than twenty-four hours was 8,636 in 1980.

Tourism is a well-developed industry and a money-spinner. It is remarkable that within its small area Sri Lanka has ancient cities more than two thousand years old, long stretches of sea and sunny beaches which offer safe sea bathing and other aquatic attractions, scenic splendour of mountains and lush tropical lowlands. There are tea, rubber and coffee plantations which are also of interest. Coconut trees laden with fruit abound throughout the country which is a novel attraction to many foreign tourists. There are a large number of hotels, motels, rest houses and staging bungalows which offer excellent hospitality. The glory and grandeur of age-old pageants, traditional crafts, dances and music mingle with the warm and friendly disposition of the people of Sri Lanka which is called the Emerald Island.

The main places of interest for the tourists, historians, naturalists of different dispositions, are the undulant paddy fields, the shores where fishermen cast their nets and bring in the shining silvery fish, the ancient cities with silently eloquent stone monuments recalling a rich past, the serenity of the temples with their flowers and incense, the forests sheltering fast declining animals and birds, the sloping lands with tall coconut trees, the absolutely modernised institutions, hotels and places of amusement and sport.

Peradeniya is Sri Lanka's Garden of Eden. The people are smiling and simple, the type of dress is immaterial, food and drink are both cheap and expensive to suit cross-sections of the visitors. The trains are still pulled and pushed by the puffing steam engines. The buses are well-appointed and plenty. Air and sea travel are very popular. It is said that the Colombo capital can be reached by air from any country in the world within twenty-four hours. The cheerful air-hostesses are all smiles. The crew, the customs and the railway or marine folks are helpful. Sri Lanka is changing fast, thanks to tourism.

Serendip is the old name of the country given by the Muslims. The Greeks and the Romans called the island Taprobane. The official designation of Sri Lanka to the indigenous Lanka came in 1972. The word 'serendipity' was first used by the essayist Horace Walpole in 1754 and it has stuck. Sri Lanka offers serendipity—unique old-world charm of joy, laziness, relaxation in the midst of a glorious past and effortlessly discovering an exciting present. Here one can either laze or be tremendously energetic absorbing the exotic charm and variegated life that the island offers.

Ambalangoda

Eighty-seven kilometres from Colombo, a safe bathing spot with a resthouse famed for sea-food delicacies. Centre of the colourful wooden mask industry in Sri Lanka, and the ritualistic mask dancing, folk drama and the art of puppetry. A folklorist should not miss it.

Amparai

The valley that developed with the construction of the giant reservoir, Senanayake Samudra. Earlier, the Gal-Oya valley was a primeval wilderness and the habitat of the aboriginal Veddahs. The area has charming natural landscapes which provide delight and profit to the naturalist, painter and the anthropologist.

A veritable paradise for bird watchers, the herds of elephant are its main attraction. Both fauna and avifauna attract a large number of tourists and wild-life lovers.

Accommodation is available at Safari Inn, Inginiyagala, the resthouse at Amparai, or at the wild-life conservation department's bungalow Ekgal-Oya.

Anuradhapura

Sri Lanka's ancient capital, foremost among Buddhism's sacred cities in the island, Anuradhapura 206 kilometres from Colombo in the north-central plains, dating back 2,500 years revives a glorious past of a great culture and heritage. It is held sacred by the Buddhists all over the world. Some of the features are:

- Ruwanveliseya —Second century B.C., now restored.
- Thuparama —Third century B.C. enshrining sacred relics of Lord Buddha; the Colombo museum has very good specimens of Anuradhapura period.
- Sri Maha Bodhi—Here is the sacred Bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa*), the sapling of which was planted by Sanghamitra Thero, the daughter of Emperor Ashoka of India. The sapling was brought from the sacred Bodhi tree in Buddha Gaya in Bihar (India) under which Gautam Buddha meditated and attained Enlightenment.
- Isurumuniya —Famous for the carving of the "Lovers". A number of other ancient ruins and monuments scattered over the vast park-land are both of archaeological and scenic interest.

Anuradhapura is served by ancient reservoirs. The Nuwara Wewa, Tisa Wewa, Basawakkulama and Balankulama continue as sources of water supply. Great engineering skill is evidenced in the construction and lay-out of the ancient reservoirs.

To suit the convenience of travellers, two comfortable rest houses flanked with the Nuwara Wewa and Tisa Wewa are available. Rajarata Hotel, Mirdiya Hotel, Samara Hotel and Monara Hotel offer guest accommodation. Both western and local food is available.

Train travellers to Anuradhapura can avail themselves of rest rooms at the railway station. Four express trains serve Anuradhapura daily and special services operate during the main pilgrimage in June, which coincides with the Poson festival at

Mihintala commemorating the introduction of Buddhism to the island.

Bandarawela

Leeward of the montane zone of Sri Lanka is this health resort amid tea-covered hills and a gradual undulating landscape. The Diyaluma Falls in its vicinity are amongst the highest in the world. Accommodation is available in a number of hotels. Though best reached by train, the road to Bandarawela presents a panoramic view with a beautiful landscape.

Bentota

Sixty-four kilometres from Colombo, on the south coast is this popular holiday resort with its picturesque tourist complex of hotels, shops, handicraft centres and other facilities. Situated at the estuary of the Bentota River, the lovely beach has facilities for aquatic sports on the sea and the river. Accommodation is available in a number of hotels.

Beruwala

Eleventh century Muslim settlement famous for the Kechimale Mosque, the beautiful lighthouse on the Barberyn Island. The coral reef provides year-round safe, sea bathing.

Batticaloa

Batticaloa district has a number of famous Hindu shrines. In Batticaloa town (Puliyantivu) there are a number of temples in commemoration of Draupathai Amman. The deity of Draupathai Amman is mentioned in the *Mahabharata Puranam*. At Pandiruppu village is the shrine for this deity said to have been erected by one Thathan migrating from north India. A festival lasting eighteen days in the month of August is held when the story of the Panch Pandava is recited culminating in a fire-walking ceremony on the last day. Persons dressed as Panch Pandava and Draupathai walk slowly over red hot cinders. The performance commemorates the purification ceremonies described in the original *Mahabharata*. After the devotees bathe in the sea many other devotees seek holy ash from them as they are now blessed.

About eighty kilometres south of Batticaloa is the settlement of Thirukovil and the ancient Hindu temple with identifiable Pandyan

architecture of the thirteenth century.

It is said that Emperor Ravana on his way to worship at Koneswaram used to halt at Trincomalee. Ravana, a great worshipper of Lord Shiva, carried with him a golden emblem of the Shiva *lingam* and used to worship at this place. A sacred temple (kovil) of Shiva was founded here. This area was once occupied by the Veddahs, the earliest settlers in Sri Lanka.

The Veddahs, a disappearing tribe, are essentially hunters and survive by the use of the spear, bow and arrow. It is natural that they should worship the spear which came to be represented by a "Vel". Batticaloa has a number of Veddah places of worship. One of the famous Veddah temple is at Thirukovil.

The Batticaloa Manimiam narrates an interesting legend. When God Skanda defeated the Asuras, he was confronted by the Vahura hill, which He split into two. Three splinter rays which originated thence from the ocean were sheltered, one on the Okanda Hill top, one on a white Naval tree at Thirukovil, and the third on a Thillai tree at Mandur. Subsequently, all these places were reverentially considered as holy places by the Veddahs. Worship commenced there with simple shrines put up with sticks and poles and ola leaves.

It is said that during the days of Walagambha (103 B.C.) the seven Chola chiefs who led the second Tamil invasion had this simple primitive shrine constructed as a proper structure, erecting it to face the east instead of facing the north as done by the Veddahs.

The location was a kind of a port in the ancient days, and was known as Nagar Munai Thurai. How a proper statutory agamic Hindu temple came to be built there and how it earned its name of Thirukovil, is described in the Manimiam. It is said that when one Prasanna Sithu was the local chief, there came a Kalinga prince by the name of Bhuvaneswar Gaja Bahu. He was on a pilgrimage to Rameshwaram, Koneswaram, Thirukethiswaram with his family. The local chief received them well. They were highly pleased at the reception given to them that the prince, who was a Chola, expressed a desire to build a grand temple there. This was soon accomplished with the aid of sthaphathy artists and craftsmen from his home (Chola) country. This was the first grand temple erected at the site and perhaps in the whole

region. It was, therefore, given (and earned) the name of the Thiru (sacred) Kovil (temple). Today, not only the temple, but even the settlement, is known as Thirukovil.

The temple, like most other Hindu shrines, was destroyed by the Portuguese General Azavedo. Paul E. Peiris writes in *Ceylon and Portuguese Era* that even the settlement was abandoned by its inhabitants upon the destruction of the temple and the murder of the temple staff.

Sometime in the later Dutch or early British period, when there was a general resuscitation of Hinduism in the island, merchantmen, who were trading with India, erected at the site a temple, dedicating it to Skanda or Kadirai-Andavan, at Kandapananturai, or the port of Kandan's arrow.

Today, regular pujas and other rituals are performed here. The annual festivals are held for ten days, terminating with the new moon in July-August. Besides, which there is a special festival in April. The place is one of the landmarks on the east coast where pilgrims who go on foot along the coast-line to Kadirgamam halt and rest.

Besides the Hindu temples scattered about Batticaloa, at the quiet sea-side town halfway down are two special attractions. One is the Dutch edifice typical of a small fort in the circumstances of those days. The second is the picturesque lagoon sheltering, what is supposed to be, singing fish. The singing fish, however, appears to be a myth. Though it is said that they can be heard any night, but especially when the moon is bright. Those who claim to have heard them say that the sound they make is like the ringing notes produced when a wet finger is drawn around the edge of a wineglass. They never sing after it has been raining and the waters of the lagoon become muddy.

Interestingly, the phenomenon has never been investigated by scientists or biologists, so the identity of the strange choristers remains a secret. Many local people claim that the sound is produced by a certain variety of molluses peculiar to the lagoon and found clinging to the rocks near the shore. No, say others. The sound comes most loudly from the centre of the lagoon where there are no rocks. Another theory advanced is that the songs are made by Puffer fish found in the lagoon. However, captive Puffer fish have never been persuaded to sing a single note or indeed to perform in any other way satisfactory to the singing

fish investigators. The mystery remains and the melody lingers on, especially on moonlit nights in the centre of the lagoon.

Chilaw

It is peculiar that though most of the Hindus particularly in northern India identify the Lanka of Valmiki Ramayana as Sri Lanka of the present day, there is hardly any prominent impact of the *Ramayana* on the people of Sri Lanka nor are there any ancient temples associated with stories of Sri Lanka. The popular culture of Sri Lanka has practically no reference to the culture in the *Ramayana*. This is in great contrast to what one finds in Thailand or Indonesia. Though the people of Thailand and Indonesia are mostly Buddhists or Muslims, they are imbued with the Ramayana culture. Thai or Indonesian art, architecture, culture, paintings, dances and music are mostly associated with the *Ramayana*. But in Sri Lanka there is absolutely no such impact. There are, however, a few temples in Sri Lanka which are associated with the Ramayana episode but these temples are not ancient. One such temple is Muneeswaram temple at Chilaw.

It is said Sri Rama on his return journey home after the Ramayana episode had a heavy conscience thinking of the many killed in battles. While passing Chilaw he halted and performed pujas. At this place came up the Muneeswaram temple due to the munificent King Parakramabahu VI (1412-1467). The annual festival at this temple lasts twenty-seven days terminating in the water-cutting ceremony on the full-moon in the month of Avany (August-September).

A special feature at Muneeswaram is the nine-day Navarathri festival which occurs in October. Elaborate ceremonies are observed during these nine days, more profound and impressive than at any other temple in Sri Lanka. Among the items included are the daily Chanka Abishekam with 108 chankas, khumba puja, special yaga, chanting from the Vedas and other ceremonies that last a full day. On the Vijayashtami day, Vadivambikai Ambal is taken in procession for the Manampu festival.

Colombo

It is the sea-port and capital of Sri Lanka and a great commercial and administrative centre. There is an excellent marine

drive with hotels and other large buildings, institutions and shops. Vestiges of colonial occupation are numerous. The city abounds with places of interest—old structures, churches, temples, mosques, kovils, theatres, hotels, swimming pools, clubs, museums, libraries, research-centres and art galleries. The museum contains, amongst other things, inscriptions of Sri Lanka's past. It is small but well-arranged and has a well-stocked but little used library. The Dehiwala Zoo, one of the finest in the east, is a popular tourist attraction. There are a number of hospitals and dispensaries. Banks are in plenty and offer good services. Another tourist attraction is the elephant's performance each evening. The Zoo with the aquarium is open daily. Some of the new buildings and complexes are very modern and attractive.

Shopping in Colombo is rewarding. The bazaar area of the city is Pettah with most of the department stores, jewellery and curio shops in the Fort area. Sri Lanka made cotton-wear, batiks, curios are available in plenty. The vegetable markets are too crowded and very oriental. The main roads are wide, well-lit and crowded but the back lanes are littered with garbage and mounds of coconut-shells. The churches and the Buddhist temples are attractive. The Mahabodhi Society complex founded by Anagarika Dharmapala is an excellent academic centre where monks study and are housed. Accommodation is available in a number of hotels including the Galle Face Hotel, Hotel Brighton, Hotel Taprobane, Havelock Tourism, Ceylinco Hotel, Pegasus Reef Hotel, Hotel Sapphire, Ceylon Inns, Holiday Inn, Hotel Ceylon Inter Continental, Sea View Hotel, Hotel Renuka, Silver Bird Hotel, Hotel Lanka Oberoi, Hotel Janaki, Hotel Duro, and Hotel Rammuthu.

There are some good avenues and parks but one misses house-gardens. Snakes and poisonous insects are common. Gecko lizards, iguanas and monitor lizards are numerous. Some of the common birds are attractive. The tropical fish around are plentiful. Aquariums in private houses are common.

There are a large number of embassies and consulates. The UNO, WHO and some of the other world bodies have their centres in Colombo. One misses however, the yellow-robed Buddhist priests one is apt to see on the roads in Bangkok though Colombo has hundreds of them. A large number of air lines serve Colombo airport. The airport is about thirty kilometres from

Colombo at Katanayake. The sea-port clears a large number of cargo and passenger ships. Colombo is the seat of a well-equipped and organised university, schools and colleges.

The closest Colombo beaches are the Kinross Swimming Club and the Mount Lavinia Beach where changing rooms are available. There is a planetarium. The Bandaranaike Memorial International Hall is a great institution. There are many clubs and amusement centres and a large number of churches (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist) besides numerous Buddhist shrines and a few mosques.

Cave temples

The Buddhist religion had been firmly implanted in Sri Lanka about five centuries before the birth of Christ. Emperor Ashoka's son came to Sri Lanka with other Buddhist monks and introduced Buddhism. Later, his sister took a sapling of the sacred Bodhi tree from Bodhi Gaya and it was received and implanted at Anuradhapura with great reverence, pomp and rituals. Slowly, Buddhism spread far and wide in Sri Lanka and hundreds of Buddhist centres came into existence. The monks resided there. Some of the Buddhist monks used to move about throughout the year except in the rainy season when they would retire to the monasteries and be immersed in study, preaching and daily observance of rituals. Some of the elder monks used to be static and engaged themselves in teaching the young novices.

It was usual for the monasteries to have several small cells for the residence and prayers of the monks. Usually, the monasteries used to be in solitary places away from human habitation. The hills and forests were the favourite habitat for the setting up of the monasteries. The natural caves in them were used as the residence of the monks. This was the beginning of the cave temples of which Sri Lanka has many in attractive sylvan environs.

Arugambay

The cave temples of Arugambay in Ampara district are important and popular cave temples. Arugambay has now become a big tourist draw for the golden beach and the ruins of an ancient kingdom. A number of rest houses, guest houses and hotels have come up and they are well patronised. A visitor to

Sri Lanka should not miss visiting this place.

Arugambay is 360 kilometres from Colombo by the shortest route. It is four kilometres off Pottuvil Bazar on the Monoragala-Akkaraipattu road. The other attractions in the neighbourhood are the Uhana National Park and ancient tanks which were part of an excellent irrigation system.

There are other attractions as well. The Magul Mahavihara at Lahugala with massive buildings, hundreds of stone pillars, some erect, some leaning and some on the ground are attractive. The ruins of a small dagoba or temple where some Buddhist monks still reside give an idea of how the monks in ancient times lived. On the other side of Arugambay is the Kumara sanctuary.

It is on the thickly forested pathway to Kumana where wild life abounds and on the west of the famous bird sanctuary lies a massive rock with the ancient dagoba known as Kadumbigala Vihare.

The dagoba was built during the time of King Devavanam Piyattissa in the Anuradha period. That the dagoba and the surroundings were the hermitage of hundreds of Buddhist arhats (monks) is clearly shown by the hundreds of caves with clear marks of old inhabitation. The entire area is full of rock caves and ponds and smaller shrines. Some of the cave temples are named after the three commanders of the King Duttugemanu's army, Gotimbara, Nandimithra and Velusumana. The rock caves and temples are like those found in the Dumbula rock temple area.

Panama

Panama, about fifteen kilometres from the jungle hermitage, was a harbour in the ancient days. There is a Hindu temple near Okanda Vihare. An image of Buddha presented by a former Chief Justice in December, 1981 has been installed in one of the caves and under the auspices of the High Priest of the Kudumbigala Vihare. The area was at the height of its glory during the period of King Parakrambahu the Great and even now the Tamils, Muslims, Sinhalese of the Potuvil electorate live peacefully and study Pali and Buddhism in the Sunday School. The Sinhala priests speak fluent Tamil.

Dambulla

South of Sigiriya on the summit of a massive rock is a temple with five caves, dating from first century B.C. Hewn out of the rock is a thousand four hundred and thirty-two centimetre recumbent image of the Buddha. These caves house superb murals depicting the life and teaching of the Enlightened One. At the foot of the rock is a resthouse. Dambulla is a great attraction for the antiquarians. Bus services are available to Dambulla from Kandy, Sigiriya and Polonnaruwa.

Diyatalawa

In close proximity to Bandarwela is another health resort amidst vast stretches of grassy patanas. Nicknamed "the Happy Valley", Diyatalawa is easily accessible by road (ninety kilometres from Colombo) and rail. Regular bus and train services to Diyatalawa are available. Accommodation is available in a number of hotels including St. Ives Guest House.

Haputale

Nestling in the hills at an elevation of 1,456 metres and 179 kilometres from Colombo is Haputale popular among tourists as St. Moritz of Sri Lanka. This region is famed for its exquisite views extending far across towards the south. The Haputale Gap is seen best from the Monamaya Guest House. Regular train and road services to Haputale are available.

Galle

Away from the bustle of the metropolis, 115 kilometres along the coast from Colombo, is Galle which is visited by most of the tourists. Once an outpost of the Portuguese invaders and later of the Dutch, it still retains the original fortifications in a perfect state of preservation. Massive old structures denote an atmosphere of the past Portuguese and Dutch era when the Sri Lankans in some parts were held in bondage. A butterfly bridge spans the canal constructed during the Dutch period. This bridge shows keen engineering skill. In the fort of Galle is the New Orient Hotel. Other accommodation includes Cloesenberg Hotel and Harbour Inn, Orchard Holiday Home, Koggala Beach Hotel and Koggala Hotel Horizon. Galle is reached by five express trains daily.

Horton Plains

A paradise for nature lovers covering an area of fifty-four square kilometres where there are many things to enjoy—hiking, riding, trout fishing or just a leisurely ramble. Horton Plains offer ideal opportunities for the botanists and those interested in local flora. World's End with its precipitous drop presents an incredible view.

Hikkaduwa

Famed for its wealth of coral and marine life, Hikkaduwa is a paradise for the under-sea enthusiast. The blue waters are ideal for swimming, skin diving and spear fishing. Nearby is the Totagamuwa Temple, home of Totagamuwe Sri Rahula, famed Sinhala poet. The Portuguese Island Hermitage founded by the Ven. Gnanatilaka and several other temples are worth visiting. About 100 kilometres south of Colombo, Hikkaduwa is well served by rail and road. Accommodation is available in a number of hotels including Coral Sands Hotel, Coral Reef Beach Hotel, Coral Gardens Hotel, Poseden Guest House, Hotel Lanka Super Coral and Blue Corals Hotel.

Jaffna

At the northern extremity of Sri Lanka is the Jaffna peninsula (396 kilometres from Colombo). This traditional home of the Tamils, descendants of South Indian settlers, differs from the rest of Sri Lanka in climate.

A large cluster of isles and lagoons lend enchantment to the peninsula. Off Kayts is the tiny island of Hammenheil with its Dutch fort. Reminiscent of the Dutch era in the city is the Jaffna fort, perhaps the best preserved in Asia. Of the many islets, Nagadipa is famed as an island the Buddha is said to have visited. The island of Delft is known for its wild ponies. At Kantarodia is an unusual site of pre-Christian Buddhist shrines. The sunny beaches and vast stretches of golden sand dotted with casuarina, palmyrah palms, and boobab trees, lend a fascinating view.

Visitors to Jaffna have a choice of accommodation to select: Palm Court, Subbas Tourist Hotel, Yarl Inns, railway retiring rooms and a rest house in the city itself. Four trains operate daily between Colombo and Jaffna.

Hindu temples of Jaffna

Kailaya Natha Pillaiyar Temple, Nallur

The *Kailaya Malai* has presented a record of how this temple came to be erected by Kulangai or Singai Aryan, founder of the Greater Hindu Kingdom of Jaffna, as the first Arya Chakravarti. He ruled from about 1215 to 1236 A.D. Arriving from Madurai in south India, he made Nallur the capital of his new Saivite kingdom of Jaffna. At the behest of Kailaya Natha (Lord Shiva and Parvathy Ambal) in a dream, he set about building a beautiful edifice for the Lord. Special priests performed the Kumba-abishekam ceremonies.*

The beautiful structure that Singai Maha Raja built was destroyed about 400 years later on 2 February 1620 when the kingdom of Jaffna fell to the Portuguese. It is said that when the temple was about to be destroyed, the chief priest fled to his native village of Madduvil, taking with him the Moorthy Vighramkal which he dropped into the temple pond there. Years later the "Lingam" was recovered and housed in the Madduvil Sivan Temple.

A few years later, the Dutch, who were in Jaffna from 1658 to 1796, while salvaging the stones from the once great Kailaya Natha Temple for building their sea fort Hammenheil (now in ruins) off Kayas, the villagers found the statue of a Pillaiyar in the debris and placed it under a Vilva tree for worship. Arumuga Navalar erected a shed over the Vinayaga statue in 1850, making it a permanent masonry building and the structure became known as Kailaya Pillaiyar Kovil, with Vinayaga Moorthy presiding in it. With the installation of a Shiva lingam and Ambal and other Prahara moorthies, the Kailaya Pillaiyar Temple was

**Kailaya Malai* is an ancient work written by Muthurasan, son of Sandiappan of Chola. The historian A. Mootoothamby Pillai has presented extracts from it in the Ceylon National Review of January 1907, which had been quoted in the "Hindu Organ" of 31.5.1968. *Yalpana Vaipaya Malai* is the chronicle of Jaffna history. Maiylvagana Pulavar, descendant of the hereditary bards of the kings of Jaffna, wrote this in 1736 at the behest of Maccra, the Dutch Governor of Ceylon. He obtained his material from the *Kailaya Malai*, *Rasa Murai* and other chronicles now extinct. A new edition was published by Kula Sabanathan in 1953.

named Kailaya Natha Pillaiyar Kovil. Ammaiyar had the satisfaction of seeing her task completed within her life-time before her death in 1962. Regular daily pujas are performed at the temple. Annual festivals are held in April for the Pillaiyar and in June for Kailaiya Natha.

Pararajasekara Pillaiyar Temple, Inuvil

Kanagasuriyam was a celebrated king who ruled the kingdom of Jaffna from Nallur as Parajasekaram during the years 1478 to 1519. These forty-one years were the golden age of the Jaffna kingdom. Parajasekaram was one of the most successful kings of Jaffna and during his reign art, learning and culture flourished. The king's brother Sagarajasekaram, an eminent scholar, invited poets and learned people from India and held discourses. Arasakesari, a nephew of the king was an eminent Sanskrit scholar who translated Kalidasa's Sanskrit classic entitled *Raguwansam* into Tamil. He is said to have done this, sitting on the banks of the Nayan Mar Kaddu Kulam in Nallur. There was yet another Arasakesari who ruled as regent from 1615 to 1617 but met with an untimely death. He paid homage at all the temples in his little kingdom, had the celebrated four temples of Nallur renovated, and built new temples for his subjects.

One of the temples of his period is the Pararajasekara Pillaiyar Temple at Inuvil. Built by royal command, it must have been a grand structure and would have enjoyed the patronage of the royal household and the civic population of the kingdom. Unfortunately, like all Hindu temples of the period, tragedy befell it, when it suffered destruction at the hands of the foreign invaders in the sixteenth century. However, with the renaissance of Hinduism in the nineteenth century it was restored by leading personages and elders of the place.

The annual festivals are celebrated in the month of May. The Ratham festival is one of the special occurrences when three Rathams are taken out in procession, and the large number of worshippers are blessed by tharisanam of Vinayaker and Subramaniya Moorthies.

Karunakara Pillaiyar Temple, Urumpirai

The Karunakara Pillaiyar temple at Urumpirai is an ancient temple. It is popularly associated with a Karanakara Thondai-

man, who is said to have been a distinguished general under King Kulatunga Cholan I. The general had been sent from India for the development and procurement of salt in the Karanavai tracts in the Jaffna peninsula. While living at Inuvil, a neighbouring village, he is said to have been a keen devotee of this temple. He probably founded it. We find mention of this in *Ancient Jaffna* by Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam. The Yalppana Vaipava Malai records the event of Thondaiman excavating the Thondaiman aru, a sea outlet, for marine transport from the interior.

This temple has a unique feature. Of all the temples in the Jaffna peninsula this is the only temple where a stone inscription relating to it has so far been found. The only other temple where there is a stone inscription is the Nagapushany Ambal Kovil at Nainativu. But there the inscription relates to a feature not connected with the temple.

This temple is also associated, by local tradition, with Kulangai Singai Rayan (1215-1240), the first of the Ariya Chakravarti Kings of Jaffna, and a reputed temple builder, who went about paying homage at every temple in his little kingdom, and founding more where needed.

Enjoying the reputation of having been sponsored earlier by distinguished personages and backed with royal support, the temple would have had its glorious period during the days of the kings of Jaffna prior to the arrival of the foreign powers. The dark years of the seventeenth century saw the demolition of several Hindu temples in Jaffna and this temple was no exception. Local folks claim even today that the demolition party, having broken the temple structure, were unable to carry away the blessed Vinayaka Thiru Vadivam as He willed it otherwise. One Karunakara Iyar reinstituted Vinayakar worship at the site in the Navalar era.

Arasakesari Pillaiyar Temple, Neervely

This temple is situated about two kilometres to the west of the sixth milestone on the Jaffna—Pt. Pedro road. It bears the name of a distinguished person of the court of Parajasekaram, King of Jaffna.

A publication by A.S. Cumaraswamy, copy of which is available with the chief priest Sri Samba Sathasiva Kurukal of the temple, relates how this temple was founded. During the era

mentioned above, when the Nallurneervely region enjoyed its golden age, it was revealed in a dream that there was a spring situated on the Rasa Veethy the waters of which were a very sacred theertham. The king had the Rasa Veethy, a roadway running from Nallur northwards, examined and the sacred spring located. A theertham was built and by the side, of course, a Vinayaka temple was founded. But the celebrated Arasekesari Pillaiyar Kovil of that era which enjoyed royal patronage has all been lost due to demolition by foreign invaders in the seventeenth century.

However, subsequently in 1800, it is said that one Kadirgamar Iyampillai took the initiative to build a shrine of some sort which later in 1873, Sri Cumaraswamy Kurukal, grandfather of the present Kurukal made into a proper agamic Vinayakar Kovil. A board of trustees took charge of the temple in 1949 and have made several improvements and additions. An elaborate ornamental Gopura Vasal, found at the entrance, was constructed in 1959. The temple is often referred to as just Sempaddu Pillaiyar Kovil.

Apart from the Moolasthan Vinayaka Moorthy, there are shrines of the sacred Siva lingam and Ambal, Subramaniyar, Navagrahams and also of course of Vairavar.

The temple is well administered today and regular pujas and other observances are made and monthly Sathurthi festivals held. The annual festival commences with the avany sathurthy in August and continues for twelve days.

Maruthady Pillaiyar Temple, Manipay

The Maruthady Pillaiyar temple is located on the main road from Jaffna to Chankanai, opposite the Green Memorial Hospital at Manipay. Its unique feature is that it has entrances both in the east and the west, and its moolasthanam faces the west.

Like all places of public worship the exact date of its origin is not known. The temple story Aalaya Manmiam (1925) has some references to the pulling down of a temple which stood at the site by the Portuguese. Local tradition holds the belief that the place became holy and reverential as an eminent savant who came from India lived there and spent his last days at the site.

Whatever that may have been, it is fairly well established that Vinayakar worship commenced here with a venerable

Thiyagarajah Saiva Kurukal. The Kurukal, it is said, first settled down at Navaly but finding repugnant practices such as animal sacrifice at the Vairava shrine, moved on to this more congenial site, bringing with him the Vinayaker statue. This site was most becoming for worship, prayer and meditations as it was in a maruthamara grove by the banks of a Thirukulam. Many people gathered there for tharisanam of Vinayaga Moorthy, squatting at the foot of the Maruthatree and soon the shrine became popular for religious worship at Manipay.

With the increasing number of worshippers of Pillaiyar and the activities of other religionists in the vicinity, the need for a permanent temple structure soon became evident and release of suitable land was secured in 1856 from the Government for the purpose. In this activity the name of Swaminatha Mudaliyar gains prominence. A permanent structure was soon erected. Sometime at this juncture, the Pillaiyar was also installed facing away from the road to avoid any awkward situation in view of a church across the road.

The temple thus continues to function from that time onwards with the unique feature of having entrances both in the east and the west and drawing large crowds during the annual festival terminating with the ratham festival on Hindu new year day.

Paralai Iswara Vinayager Temple, Chulipuram

In the north-west region of the Jaffna peninsula, close to the coastal area, are two villages of ancient lore called Tholpuram and Chulipuram. Tholpuram means the settlement where ancient traditions prevail and Chulipuram is said to have been derived from Cholipuram or the settlement of the Cholas. Tholpuram's proud possession is its Ponnalyam Vishnu Temple and Chulipuram has its ancient Paralai Vinayagar Kovil.

Built during the era of the kings of Jaffna, the small Vinayagar temple had been existing before the Portuguese period. Tradition has it that when the Portuguese demolition party (several Hindu temples were pulled down at that time) approached the temple, they were attacked by a flock of crows resulting in their leader losing his eyesight. This divine intervention won for the deity of the temple, the name of Kannai Kothy.

Kakkai Pillaiyar (the pillaiyar who caused the crows to peck the eye), by which name He is referred to even today.

This temple too suffered at the hands of the invaders. Later, at the time of resuscitation of Hinduism in Jaffna, it is known to have been rebuilt by one Nanithamby Murugesu. It would have been added on and renovated subsequently. Today we see it with the large mandapams and the many limestone masonry walls.

In the neighbourhood are several places of interest. The ancient sea-port Sambuthurai in the vicinity has many historical associations. There is said to have been a Sivan temple named Sambeswaran Kovil built by the Tamil King Thissai Maluwan.

The region boasts of other places of historical interest too. There is the celebrated theertha sthanam of Thiru-adi-nilayam, or the place where Maha Vishnu's sacred foot trod. Today it is the location for some ceremonies of the deities from temples in the vicinity. The ocean has become a frequent place for auspicious bathing and immersion of ashes.*

Kandy

Kandy, 115 kilometres from Colombo, is the hill capital of Sri Lanka and is famed for the temple of the sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha. The grandeur of an age-old pageant is the Esala Perhera held every year during the lunar month of Esala—(July-August). Scores of gaily caparisoned elephants, local chieftains in ceremonial attire headed by dancers and drummers participate in the colourful spectacle famous in the world over.

Religious fervour of the hill capital is manifestly expressed by the presence of a number of temples around Kandy with varying attractions—exquisite wood carvings at Embekke, attractive roof and murals at Degaldoruwa and the eight hundred and twenty-three centimetre Buddha statue at Gangarama. On the approach routes to Kandy are the Peradeniya Botanic Gardens which possess some of Asia's finest collections of orchids and other tropical varieties of flora. The Peradeniya Campus of the Sri Lanka University overlooking the gardens is indeed picturesque. Accommodation is available in a number of hotels including Chalet Hotel, Hotel Suisse, Humas Falls

*From *Ancient Temples of Sri Lanka*: Colombo.

Hotel Elkaduwa, Lady Hill Tourist Hotel, Peak View, Queen's Hotel, Hotel Dehigama, Hotel Topaz, Hotel Hantana, Hotel Cassamara and Mahawell Reach Hotel. There are in addition a number of comfortable guest houses and paying guest accommodation. Regular bus and train services operate between Colombo and Kandy.

Kelaniya

The *Ramayana* and the Buddhist scriptures *Mahavansa* and *Dipavansa* mention Kelaniya. Many legends and stories, ancient and recent, are associated with Kelaniya. There is a massive complex and a Buddhist temple with Ganesha sculptured on the wall among other figures on a spot which is believed to have been visited by Lord Buddha. The place where Buddha preached his sermon is also shown.

There is a temple of Vibhisana, brother of Ravana, who had sided with Rama according to legend, in the complex of the Buddhist temple. Vibhisana has not been defied nor there is any temple of Vibhisana in India where Valmiki composed his *Ramayana* based on a mythological story.

Legends of Nagas, Rakshasas and Yakshas mention Kelaniya. It is believed to have been the ancient capital of Sri Lanka though the historical base has not been fathomed. Nevertheless, there is abundant evidence making Kelaniya an ancient place. The Portuguese and the Dutch rule in this part of Sri Lanka had dimmed the Buddhist temples and they had established churches and 'Xian monasteries some of which still exist.

Kelaniya celebrates the Poya festival on every full moon and thousands of Buddhist and non-Buddhists rush to the temple complex. The perahera (elephant procession) of Kelaniya is a great festive occasion. Sri Lankan boys and girls are always ready to visit Kelaniya, the place which never loses its interest for them as well as for the elders.

Kelaniya is said to have been Ravana's capital. Rama crowned Vibhisana at Kelaniya as the king of Lanka after annihilating Ravana, the Rakshasa king and the abductor of Sita. The Devale at Kelaniya dedicated to Vibhisana is treated as the patron deity of Sri Lanka. The place was also known as Kelyani. It may be mentioned here that the Sakyas in which was born Lord Buddha were originally Saiva worshippers and

it is no wonder that Kelaniya continues to hold the Hindus also among the devotees.

According to the Buddhists Lord Buddha visited Kelaniya on the full moon of the eighth year after his Enlightenment on the invitation of King Manlakkhika of Kelaniya. A Chaitya was erected by the King in Buddha's commemoration.

A later King Uttiya renovated the Chaitya. Kelaniya was also the birth place of Vihara Maha Devi, the mother of Dutugemunu, one of the great kings of Sri Lanka. The Kelaniya Vihara was improved upon by successive kings for centuries. *Nikaya Sangraha* gives a picture of the city of Kelaniya, its houses, Bo trees, promenades, pavillions and shrines and mentions that the buildings were in ranges, of one storey, two storeys and five storeys.

Later, when Kotte, modern Jayawardenapura, became the capital of Lanka the golden days of Kelaniya declined. Yet Kotte was the political capital while Kelaniya continued to be the spiritual capital and many kings and monks used to retire from Kotte to Kelaniya for retreat, rest and rejuvenation. The Portuguese destroyed much of Kelaniya and set up some churches. But Kelaniya revived. In 1476 A.D. when during the reign of King Buvanakabahu VI as many as forty-four Burmese monks came to Kelaniya to receive their higher ordination.

Matara

Matara is situated on the extreme south coast of Sri Lanka at the estuary of the Nilwala Ganga, 160 kilometres from Colombo. Interesting evidence of the Dutch occupation in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are seen in the two forts. One of these has an impressive gateway dating 1698 with the coat-of-arms of the Dutch East India Company. There is also a Dutch-built church. The Buddhist temple at Weherahena is popular among tourists. Matara is accessible by road and rail. Accommodation is available at the rest house and Polhena Reef Gardens Hotel.

Mihintale

Thirteen kilometres from Anuradhapura is a mountain shrine venerated by the Buddhists. Known as the cradle of Buddhism, it was here that the Arhat Mahinda preached his first sermon to King Dewanampiya Tissa in 247 B.C. There are 1,840

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steps which lead to the summit of the shrine. Ancient structures still to be seen are the Mahaseya, Ambastale Chaitiya and Kanthaka Chaitiya. It is an important place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists.

Mount Lavinia

Eleven kilometres from Colombo fort is Mt. Lavinia, one of the most popular beaches in Sri Lanka. The sea here is ideal for swimming, surfing and skin diving. It is a fishing centre where many fishermen living along the coast still use the age-old catamaran and outrigger canoe.

Perched on a promontory is an old building which was used as the residence of a British governor. It now forms part of the Mt. Lavinia Hotel. Accommodation includes Palm Beach Hotel, Saltair Beach Hotel, Tilly's Beach Hotel, and Cabanas. Paying guest houses are also available.

National Parks for Wild-Life Conservation

Ruhuna

Ruhuna has a well-known and the most popular national park (1,259 square kilometres) about 305 kilometres from Colombo. There are a number of rest houses, safari cottages and holiday homes where accommodation is available. In the rest house of the Ceylon Tourist Board dormitory accommodation is cheap.

Wilapattu

Wilapattu National Park (1,1908 square kilometres) has to be visited with an excursion to the Lalugula elephant sanctuary forty-two kilometres away. There are seven bungalows available for stay at Wilapattu.

The Elephant sanctuaries in Sri Lanka have a special significance. Elephants are absolutely protected in this country and by this measure the number of wild elephants has increased a lot. There is already a clamour that the Government should start a vigorous elephant catching operation as there are not enough elephants for ceremonial occasions. The elephant processions (perehara) which mark most of the religious festivals are said to

be diminishing in grandeur for this reason. The matter is receiving active consideration at the highest government level.

Galoya

Galoya national park (512 square kilometres) is 314 kilometres from Colombo. This is another reputed elephant sanctuary. Wildlife could best be seen in its natural habitat in the core of the area where the fast disappearing Veddah tribe lives.

Negombo

About thirty-five kilometres from Colombo and nine kilometres from the Colombo International Airport at Katunayake, Negombo is picturesquely situated at the 'neck' of a lagoon. During the Dutch era of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, its hinterland grew the best cinnamon in the world. Negombo is an important fishing centre (especially well-known for crab, lobster and prawn). The seventeenth century Dutch church and a Dutch built canal linking it with Colombo are traces of the Dutch administration. Good swimming, fine beaches, sailing, rod and line fishing in the lagoon add variety. Accommodation is available in a number of hotels including Blue Lagoon Beach Hotel, Catamaran Beach Hotel, Sea Shells Hotel, Blue Oceanic Beach Hotel, Dons Beach Hotel, Brown's Beach Hotel, Orient Pearl Hotel, Goldi Sands Hotel, Golden Beach Hotel, Sunflower Hotel, and Ranveli Resort Hotel. Many guest houses and two rest houses are also available.

Nuwara Eliya

This picturesque town has a salubrious climate as it is encircled by high mountains of central Sri Lanka. It has an ideal spring climate (temperature 15.5°C) and is 180 kilometres from the metropolis. Long pleasant walks along the mountain paths, boating, golf and trout fishing are among a host of attractions for visitors. Nuwara Eliya is easily reached by road and by rail (bus connection from Nam Oya).

Many private homes in Nuwara Eliya take in paying guests and accommodation is also available at the St. Andrews Hotel, Grand Hotel, Inn, Lake View Guest House, the Municipal Tourist Rest House and Ceylon Tourist Board Resort.

Polonnaruwa

About 215 kilometres from Colombo is Polonnaruwa founded and developed between ninth and twelfth centuries. Famed among many of the ancient ruins is the Gal Vihara where four beautiful stone figures of the Buddha have weathered the ravages of time. These were carved during the reign of Parakramabahu the Great, who also endowed the ancient city with the handsome Audience Hall and the magnificent Lankatilake. Of a later date are the Sathmahal Prasadaya and the Lata Mandapaya built by King Nissanka Malla.

The Parakrama Samudra or the Sea of Parakrama, centre of the ancient irrigation system, constitutes a unique feat in engineering technology. There are regular bus and train services. Accommodation is available in a number of hotels including: Araliya Hotel, Hotel Seruwa, Amalian Nivas, Polonnaruwa Rest House, Giritale Hotel, Hotel Hemalee and the Royal Lotus, Giritale, all eleven kilometres from Polonnaruwa.

Peradeniya*

It was the British who really capitalized on Sri Lanka's great potential and produced the magnificent Peradeniya Botanical Garden near Kandy, the ancient capital of Sri Lanka.

The idea of establishing a garden was first put forward by Sir Joseph Banks, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, soon after the British took over the island in the early nineteenth century. The early efforts were made near Colombo, but in 1821 a recently arrived Superintendent named Alexander Moon was told to find a new location, preferably around the royal capital of Kandy. Soon, he was also able to report that he had found what he wanted.

This was the beginning of the great Peradeniya Garden, which eventually came to cover 145 acres on a picturesque loop in the Mahaweli River, within convenient distance of Kandy. The garden was formally inaugurated the following year, and from the start it was supposed to be a paying proposition.

That Peradeniya turned out to be what one later visitor called "a Garden of Paradise" was due largely to several of Moon's

¹ *Abridged from "Peradeniya, Sri Lanka's Garden of Eden" by William Warren, *Serendil*, Vol. 1 No. 1, January 1982.

successors, who were not only scientists but also men of exceptional aesthetic sensibility. One was the aptly-named George Gardener, appointed Superintendent in 1844. He died after serving only five years, but before that he laid out a number of beautiful walks. Henry George Kendrick Thwaites, who followed Moon, has been bestowed the title "Peradeniya's Great Man." During his long stay he conducted bold botanical experiments that were to make the island one of the empire's most prosperous colonies.

A notable example is that of *Amherstia nobilis*, brought from its native Burma in 1860 and often described as the most beautiful tree in the world. A row of these grow near the entrance to the garden, and no visitor is likely to forget the spectacle of their cascading, coral-coloured blossoms glowing against the dark leaves.

Two other remarkable plants introduced by Thwaites were *Dendrocalamus giganteus*, also from Burma, and the curious Double Coconut, from the Seychelles. The former is the largest of all the bamboos, attaining a height of more than 100 feet with stems ten inches or more in diameter. Young shoots grow at a rate of a foot a day, and the mature stems can be used for building, plant pots, and water spouts.

The Double Coconut is one of the strangest of all plants. Since viable seeds were found floating in the Indian Ocean centuries before the palm itself was identified, it was thought by some to be a bizarre sea plant, and the reality turned out to be almost as odd. The tree takes thirty years to flower and then produces huge nuts that weigh up to twenty-five kilograms (making them the largest known seeds) and take ten years to ripen.

The subsequent superintendents and curators completed the job of making Peradeniya the marvel of beauty and serenity it is today. Years of trial and error produced the right grasses for vast lawns, the largest of which covers seven meticulously-kept acres, and an ancient Sinhalese irrigation tank became a tranquil lake filled with aquatic plants.

A fernery, an arboretum, a palmetum and an orchid house ablaze with blooms joined the list of botanical sights to see. And several stately palm avenues gradually materialized; the earliest, planted with Palmyra palms was started in 1905, while the most recent, lined with lofty Royal palms, was installed in 1950.

By the 1920's Peradeniya had assumed the spacious proportions one sees today and had become one of the major tourist attractions of the island.

Thwaites was busily developing other possibilities as well. Some of these, like camphor, cloves, cocoa, and vanilla, had been brought in by his predecessors; nutmeg, too, had been successfully reintroduced after the original Dutch trees succumbed to disease, and by 1843 Peradeniya was able to supply young plants.

Two other newcomers, though, turned out to be decisive in the island's economic future. Chinese tea, tried at Peradeniya in 1828 was successful only at the highest altitudes. However, ten years later, Assam tea was found to be far more adaptable, and seedlings by the thousands were soon being dispatched to estates around Nuwara Eliya. Exports rose sharply making Sri Lanka the largest exporter in the world. Today tea still forms sixty per cent of the export trade and is the biggest foreign exchange earner.

Thwaites' second triumph came with *Hevea brasiliensis* better known as Brazilian para-rubber. Thwaites received a consignment from Kew in 1876. By 1880, he was sending cuttings to planters in south India and Burma as well as Sri Lanka, and the first seeds were gathered from his trees a year later. Large-scale distribution was under way within three years; in 1906, Peradeniya's prominent role in the new industry was confirmed by its selection as the site for the first World Rubber Exhibition. Over half a million acres on the island were being planted with rubber by 1930, and it ranks today as Sri Lanka's second largest export produce.

But for the average present-day visitor to Peradeniya, all these economic wonders are likely to be obscured by the splendours of its scenery. The most vivid impressions come from those smooth lawns amid the jungle luxuriance, the blazing beds of cannas and coleus, and the amazing botanical oddities that constantly cause one to stop and stare in wonder.

For example, there is the celebrated Weeping Fig (*Ficus Benjamina*) in the centre of the Great Lawn, a mammoth specimen covering an area of some 1,600 square metres like a vast living umbrella. In the Orchid House, usually an explosion of colour, one may come across a blooming *Grammatophyllum*, the largest orchid in the world, throwing out flower spikes up to

three metres long.

Another walkway is lined with the exotic *Couroupita guianensis*, popularly called the Cannonball Tree, a native of South America brought to the garden in 1881. Its large, pink-and-white flowers appear from the trunk and turn into enormous round fruits.

Around the central lawn, a collection of memorial trees has historical as well as horticultural interest. Just about every important visitor to Sri Lanka over the past century has come to see Peradeniya, and many of them have planted a carefully labelled tree to commemorate the occasion.

In all, Peradeniya today contains more than 4,000 different plant species, one of the largest collections to be found anywhere in Asia. It is also still busily engaged in botanical research; two ongoing projects are study of Sri Lanka's 150 native orchids and another of the island's 750 medicinally useful plants.

Ratnapura

Ratnapura, as its name implies, is the city of gems. This town is situated ninety kilometres south-east of Colombo. Mining activity using traditional methods of tunneling and dredging in river beds has continued well nigh for centuries. Rubies, sapphires, aquamarines, topaz, alexandrites, garnets, amethysts moonstones and many other precious and semi-precious stones are obtained from these 'mines'. The temple of God Saman, Guardian Deity of Sri Pade, hallowed to Buddhists and Hindus is a centre of worship.

Ratnapura is reached by road. Ratnaloka Tours Inn and the rest house are picturesquely situated high over the city, commanding a magnificent view.

Sigiriya

This massive rock, 169 kilometres from Colombo was the fifth century fortress of King Kasyapa. High on this plateau-like rock, King Kasyapa built himself a palace of extraordinary design. In a sheltered pocket on a side of the rock are found the world famous frescoes. Flanking the steps leading to the pocket is the mirror wall with panegyric descriptions. The ascent to the summit had led through the mouth of a crouching lion, the paws of which still remain.

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Sigiriya is easily accessible by road and also by rail up to Habarana with connecting road link. Accommodation is available in a number of hotels including: Hotel Sigiriya, Sigiriya Rest House, Habarana Walk Inn and Habarana Rest House.

Trincomalee

Trincomalee, one of the finest natural harbours in the world, lies on the north-east coast of Sri Lanka, 257 kilometres from Colombo. While sandy beaches and numerous little creeks make ideal sports opportunities for excellent swimming, there is plenty of scope for skin-diving and rod and line fishing.

A sight worth seeing is the Swami Rock, a towering 122 metre headland, where an ancient Hindu temple of 1,000 columns once stood. The temple was destroyed in 1622 and its remains now lie scattered over the sea bed. Fort Frederick, Dutch Point, Ostenberg Point and Wellington House are other interesting spots.

Accommodation is available at the Seven Island Hotel, Trincomalee Rest House, 'The Nightjar' Guest House, Hotel Club Oceanic, The Villa at Trincomalee, Blue Lagoon Hotel, Nilaveli Beach Hotel and Moonlight Beach Lodge at Nilaveli (nineteen kilometres from Trincomalee) and Ceylon Sea Angler Club at China Bay.

6

Epilogue

SITTING of evening on the glamorous and softly lit terrace of Mount Lavinia Hotel rising from the bed of the sea with the gentle waves lapping its steps, the blue sky and the sea in front with steamers at a distance, the terrace full of gay people from many parts of the world enjoying themselves with drinks, it struck me if the heart of Sri Lanka lies in all these bewitching modern environs or is to be found elsewhere?

Where lies the cradle of Sinhala culture? Some have seen it in the civilization of the Persians. The Dipavamsa and the Mahavamsa give some idea of the anthropology for the study of the theme with reference to the three supposed visits of Lord Buddha to this island. How far are they authentic? The kinship of the Sinhala language with Tamil and the problems of Buddhist historiography in Sri Lanka have been looked into by scholars. The over-emphasised myths and the early Indian historical traditions and their bearing on Sri Lanka still beat us. The more we probe into the pre-historic period, the more bewildered we feel.

The earliest inscription in Sri Lanka has been attributed to the third century B.C. and unfortunately there are not many inscriptions in the island. According to tradition, Vijaya, the legendary founder of the Sinhalese race, came with his 700 followers from India about the middle of the sixth century B.C. But there is a lack of historical records. The original inhabitants of the island still remain unidentified. Folklore in Sri Lanka has had no impact of the *Ramayana*. This partially controverts the theory that Sri Lanka was the Lanka of Ramayana. But it cannot be denied that Sri Lanka from the ancient past has had close contacts with outer world particularly India, Thailand and the Arab countries, for the sea-faring and adventurous Sri Lankans used

to go to distant lands. Even Satyanarain Panchali of Bengal and the earlier Kalika Purana have reference to voyages from India to Sri Lanka.

We are on surer grounds since the advent of Buddhism in the third century B.C. The religious invasion brought about a cultural and social revolution in Sri Lanka and filled a void and caused a marked change in the social organisation and institutions releasing them partially from the earlier social institutions.

Before the invasions of the European powers there were some great and a few very great and human Sri Lankan chiefs ruling over portions of the island. There were also Tamil incursions and induction of Tamil influence with an attempt to revive Hinduism. The Arabs had been coming frequently for trade in spices and gems. The European powers came mainly for trade and commerce. The wonderful canals and water routes dug out earlier by the benevolent and prudent Sri Lankan kings for irrigation were more utilized to ply their commercial barges. They also inducted Tamil labour from southern India to develop lands for yielding coffee, tea and rubber.

It will not be correct to say that the European powers, namely the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British were only engines of oppression and exploitation. They did some good also in changing partially the food habits, introduction of consolidated cultivation, better implements, more roads, improvements of the crops they were interested in and the introduction of some modern techniques. They have left some beautiful churches and the Dutch utilized the soft and hard timber of Sri Lanka for making superb furniture, specimens of which are still found in some of the old families. They took interest in the gem industry as well. Some of the data of the prevailing social conditions are found in the chronicles of the Europeans.

The British gave Sri Lanka the pattern of a stable administration and sense of justice. It is peculiar that the oppressions perpetrated by them indirectly helped the consciousness of oneness among the Sri Lankans. The more the Portuguese and the Dutch tried to throttle Buddhism and its rituals, the stronger the faith in Buddhism became. The advent of western education and medicare institutions by the British brought in another cultural and social change. Those who went for further study abroad imbibed ideas of freedom and justice and indirectly became

dissatisfied with the conditions at home under a foreign power.

What was the impact of the waves of all these political and social changes? Did the Sri Lankans lose faith in themselves, faith in their culture, faith in their time-honoured and traditional institutions? Did they despise the Buddhist monks in the wilds and remote corners administering medicine along with spreading the message of Lord Buddha? Did they anglicise themselves beyond redemption? They did not. The very fact that Christianity did not make much headway in spite of the rewards in prized posts and official patronage shows that the Sri Lankans, by and large, remained true to their personal equation, their tradition and faith. The *Zeitgeist* under the foreign powers did not sweep them away. The heart of Sri Lanka remained where it was in the snug hamlets on the hill slopes or in the midst of lush environs where the breeze wafted through coconut trees or in the fishing villages where poverty ruled. It throbbed with the undulating paddy or in the catch of a basket of shining fish or in attending the Buddhist temples on poya (full moon) days and hearing the sermons of the Buddhist monks. The literature and arts prospered in the midst of penury and adverse circumstances. An Anagarika Dharmapala with the spirit of dedication could only come out of adverse environs.

What is the secret that has helped the Sri Lankans transmute the impact of the foreign domination of ideas, inhibitions and culture and not to allow the impact to be a superfluous and grotesque accretion? The Arabs, Indians, Portuguese, Dutch and the British have had very close contacts over long or short periods and the impact of their religion, language, food habits, superstitions on the Sri Lankans has been noticeable. The Sri Lankans have been able to transmute the impact into their culture and today we find a smooth adjustment of ideas barring a little fluidity in political aspirations of the Tamils. The secret is Buddhism followed by the majority of the people.

The spirit of Karuna (compassion), Maitri (friendship) and Sangha (comradeship or community living) that Buddhism has taught have brought about this harmonious blending. Even in his short stay at Sri Lanka the writer has seen ample evidence of their spirit of fellowship. In the Maha Bodhi Society in Colombo while he was studying diaries of Sri Anagarika Dharmapala many visitors to the Society who knew Anagarika Dharmapala

dropped in and had discussions and gave him reminiscences, old literature and paper-clippings. They exuded friendship and glowed with pride for their country.

Another fact which has kept the Sri Lankans tied to their old moorings is the faith in their legacy which has been great and is amply shown by the relics of their engineering skill in the old irrigational projects, ideas of sanitation and community living. A retentive memory is another great asset in the Sri Lankans which has helped them in many fields in the past and that tradition still continues.

The indigenous irrigation system of the country was one of its great achievements. It was controlled not by great embankments resulting in newer problems or by constructions to be endangered by the lapse of time but in the conception of the idea and in the thoughts enshrined in delicate devices. As D.T. Devendra puts it in his remarkable book *Tanks and Rice* (Colombo 1965):

While many an engineer has been full of admiration and still others thought that the great embankments, for instance, were misapplied energy, almost the only capable man who endeavoured to examine the system on the proper lines was a British antiquary who acted as the chief of the Irrigation Department. He did not hesitate to say that the storage tank system as developed in the country deserved the greatest credit even if the original idea was transmitted by the earliest settlers. He stated that the principle of the valve-pit of the tanks which regulated water at low and high levels had been mastered in the country centuries ago, whereas it was known in Europe only in this century.

These views are not those of a mere enthusiast. How does the modern engineer set about his task? He would need statistics of average rainfall over a period of years, an overall idea of the configuration of the land, knowledge of the water strength of the particular river he means to tap, its frequency cycle and a norm of dependability and, in the case of a reservoir for storing rain-water, the likely loss by evaporation, the contour of the region to be irrigated; besides the mere constructional job he has to do he will need an army of specialists, surveyors, levellers, veritable host, without whom and without the aid of tested and delicate instruments he will

hesitate to tackle a job. And quite properly so, according to his own discipline.

The requirements were the same centuries ago as they are now. The difference is that we have gadgets where, as cynics would have it, the ancients had mumbo-jumbo! Nevertheless the achievement was there and into that, whether today or a thousand years ago, went the same broad principles. So ancient man achieved his purpose, but we have not the tangible remains of the instruments he used. It is thus all the more necessary to place the result in relation to the methods we now use and then ask whether or not science—however one may define the word—went into purpose and is recognised by the result.

Thinking these thoughts one should not seek so much for the causes which led to decay of some channels, as for the intelligence with which it was made to run along the faintest of gradients, to the greatest possible distance which cannot be ever improved on by the latest instrument of our own times. So it has actually been recorded on Jaya Ganga in one of its ramifications. Its course had been "lost" and modern people plotted the course for several miles, only to discover in the end that the ancients had done likewise, and the two had run almost continuously! Seriously speaking, which of the two experts of the different centuries deserves the greater credit—the man whose means of calculation are lost, having probably been in his head, and the other who had not to think because his instrument did the job for him?

Authentic stories which recall it can be cited from local experience. A temple chief engaged on an imposing new structure in which tall monoliths had to be set up, had consultations with the leading firm of modern engineers as to how to have the job done. They took their time and presented an estimate of the cost. It staggered the old man, for he was doing the work with public subscriptions largely made up of the widow's mite. Ever ingenious, he called up his own work-leaders and took their opinion. The monoliths were set up and there they are standing proudly supporting the lowest floor of the high building—thanks to elephants, stout rope, rollers of country timber and such other "primitive" tackle. Much the same horse-sense was employed by a mere

contractor of works on the massive square box atop colossal Ruwanveli Dagaba.

The excavations at Anuradhapura, and other places show that the ancient residences were wonderful product with lavatories and water closets planned on sound sanitary and hygiene principle. So were the dormitories and places of rest with stone couches intact. The giant earthen embankments of Tissa Tank, Anuradhapura, has retiring rooms, swimming pools and arrangements for Turkish bath. Anuradhapura is so astonishingly modern being divided into areas restricted to particular functions. Even before the third century B.C. there were masons making stone collars at the joints. What were the instruments and gadgets used? Village corporations were known in the first century A.D. as a cave inscription indicates. Sri Lanka is grateful to those men under the British rule who did the first digging and re-discovered the island. Today the Sri Lankans are very proud of all that legacy and that is why their heart remains where it was. The Sinhalese have remained Sinhalese at the end but responsive to new impulses and equipped to meet the new challenges.

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