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CCIS

Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies
Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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The Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies (CCIS) in collaboration with the University of Calicut, Kerala, India and the National Institute of Language Education and Training (NILET), Ministry of Public Services, Local Government and Provincial Councils, Government of Sri Lanka organized an International Webinar on 'Literature, Culture and Globalization: With reference to Hindi and Sinhala literature' to mark the 10th Anniversary of the CCIS on 13th January 2022 from 10:00am-2:00pm.

The webinar inaugurated with the *Sarasvati Vandana* presented by Sangeet Nipun Pamalka Manjitha Karunanayake. Prof. Pramod Kovvaprath (Head, Dept. of Hindi, University of Calicut, Kerala, India) made the welcome speech. Especially, the proceedings (Edited by Prof. Upul Ranjith, Prof. Pramod Kovvaprath, Ms. Ridma Nishadinee Lansakara) of the webinar were launched at the webinar by the two Vice Chancellors of the University of Colombo and University of Calicut. The inaugural speeches were made by Senior Professor Chandrika N. Wijeyaratne (Vice Chancellor, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka), Prof. (Dr.) M. K. Jayaraj (Vice Chancellor, University of Calicut, Kerala, India) and Dr. Prasath Herath (Director General, NILET, Ministry of Public Services, Local Government and Provincial Councils, Government of Sri Lanka).

International Webinar on Literature, Culture and Globalization: With reference to Hindi and Sinhala literature



H E Shri Gopal Baglay

Senior Prof.
Chandrika N. Wijeyaratne

Prof. (Dr.)
M. K. Jayaraj

Senior Prof.
Nayani Melegoda

Prof.
Pramod Kovvaprath

Dr. Prasath Herath

Prof.
Sandagomi Coperahewa

Dr.
Rewant Vikram Singh

Senior Prof.
Upul Ranjith

Ridma Nishadinee
Lansakara

The Chief Guest of the event was His Excellency Shri Gopal Baglay (Indian High Commissioner, High Commission of India, Colombo) and on his behalf Chair Senior Professor Upul Ranjith (Director, CCIS) read his message. Professor Sandagomi Coperahewa (Founder Director, CCIS and Chair and Head, Department of Sinhala, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka) made the Inaugural Chair's speech. Dr. Rewant Vikram Singh, (Director, Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), High Commission of India, Colombo) also addressed the gathering as the Guest of Honour. Ms. Ridma Nishadinee Lansakara (Academic and Research Officer, NILET, Ministry of Public Services, Local Government and Provincial Councils, Government of Sri Lanka) delivered the Vote of Thanks.



RESOURCE
PERSONS

Prof. Satyakethu Sankrit
India

Prof. Sangeet Rathnayake
Sri Lanka

Prof. Ashish Tripathi
India

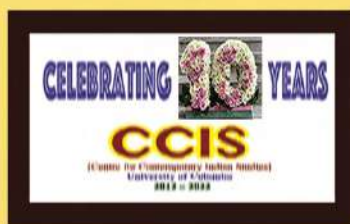
Prof. Nilanthi Rajapaksha
Sri Lanka

Prof. Devendra Chaubey
India

Prof. V. K. Subramanian
India

SESSION
CHAIR

VOTE
OF
THANKS



Prof. Satyakethu Sankrit (Dept. of Hindi, B. R. Ambedkar University, Delhi, India), Prof. Sangeet Rathnayake (Dept. of Languages, Sabaragamuwa University, Sri Lanka), Prof. Ashish Tripathi (Dept. of Hindi, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India) and Prof. Nilanthi Rajapaksha (Dept. of Languages, Cultural and Performing Arts Studies, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka) were the Resource Persons of the webinar. Prof. Devendra Chaubey (Centre of Indian Languages, Jawaharal Nehru University, New Delhi, India) acted as the Session Chair. Prof. V. K. Subramanian (Department of Hindi, University of Calicut, Kerala, India) delivered the Vote of Thanks.

Ms. Wathsala Samarakoon and Ms. Yodunika Seneviratne compered the inauguration and the closing ceremony of the webinar. More than 100 participants attended this webinar.



Pamalka Manjitha
Karunanayake

Director [CCIS] and Director [SVCC]

Ridma Nishadinee
Lansakara

Yodunika Seneviratne,
Wathsala Samarakoon

Iresha
Senarathne





'With Gandhi Ji in Ceylon' a book written by Mahadev Desai and published by S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras, India in 1928. 2nd (1998) and 3rd (2007) editions were printed by Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha Publishers, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka with the ISBN 955-599-122-7.

Readers of 'Contemporary' can read this book continuously March issue onwards.

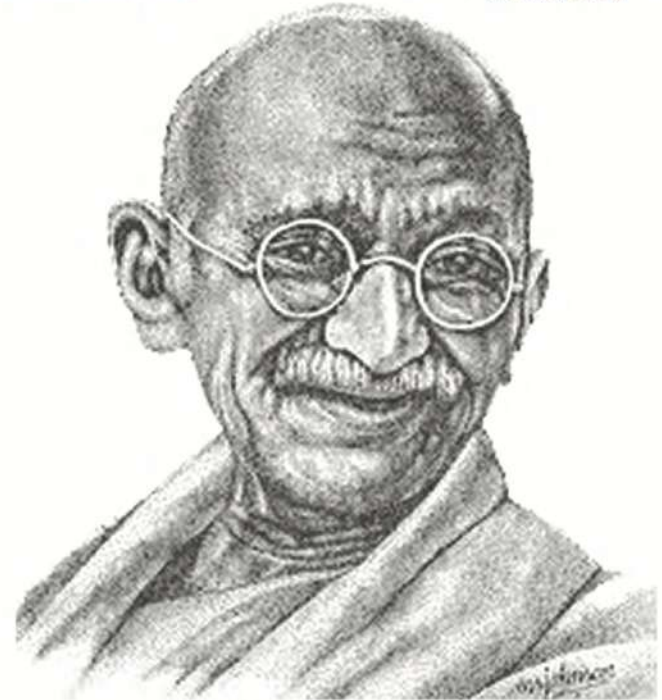


Gandhi Ji in Ceylon

(Contd.) from July-December Issue 2021

But let me not be unfair to the Sinhalese Buddhists. They have kept the word of the Master intact, preserved his teachings unsullied and unadulterated. They have a wealth of Buddhist literature in their colleges and viharas to which every student of Buddhism must turn. But they do not seem to have followed out to its logical conclusion the doctrine of ahimsa. They do not seem to realise that many of their present practices are inconsistent with their profession of ahimsa. Imagine for instance the Ahimsa Society of Kandy claiming in its address that the Ceylon Buddhists have practised and preserved the Ahimsa dharma for 2500 years. And the President of the Kandy public meeting welcomed Gandhiji as 'the most powerful propagandist, of the doctrine of ahimsa which our master preached for the benefit of mankind,' little realising what Gandhiji's ahimsa meant. Gandhiji had very little time at Kandy to refer in his speech to these claims, but his two speeches before the Buddhists in Colombo sum up his appeal to the Buddhists for a real Buddhist revival.

And what will one say of the Government which, though it has more than doubled its revenue during the last ten years, derives 11 millions of rupees from arrack, rum and toddy, out of a total revenue of 126 millions! So long ago as 1872 a conscientious Governor of the Island, Sir William Gregory, sounded this note of warning which is yet unheard: "English rule has given to Ceylon many blessings which the inhabitants are ever ready to acknowledge but we have at the same time extended a curse throughout the island which weighs heavily in the other scale, namely drunkenness. Some years ago a drunken Kandyan would have been disgraced in the eyes of his fellows. Now the occurrence is so common that the disgrace has passed away. I have had some remarkable petitions on the subject. They say, 'restrict the places of sale, and thus discourage intoxication and diminish the great moral and social evils that flow from it.' In these recommendations I warmly concurred. In restricting the sale of intoxicating liquor, some diminution of revenue was to be expected, but, in the words of the petitioners, any decrease under that head would be more than compensated by an improvement in the general well-being of the community and in the reduced cost of establishment for the suppression of crime." Here are words of wisdom by a Governor who knew his duty, which a Government claiming to have conscience should lay to heart.



But whatever may be the failings of the Sinhalese, he has a big heart, and wherever we went we met with nothing but large-heartedness. During our tours in India we occasionally came across places, like those in Travancore for instance, where people, however wealthy, have yet to learn to give. But the Ceylonese seem to have learnt to give. The total collections at the end of the first week were in the neighbourhood of 60,000 rupees. This amount of Rs. 60,000 included purses from wayside places and from places like Kandy and Badulla, purses from students, and individual contributions. The mention of 'students reminds me of the students of the Dharmaraja College whose Parsi Principal collected a purse from his students for presentation to Gandhiji, and of the Zahira College – an institution for Mussalman boys. The speech of the Principal of this College, wherein he referred to Gandhiji's services to the Muslims in South Africa, - with a touching reference to Mir Alam's murderous attack on Gandhiji, - and to his services in the cause of Islam in India, was particularly felicitous and the purse of Rs. 400 quite handsome. The collections include those from the Tamil Union – gentlemen and ladies – in Colombo, as also from the Parsi community in the city. These latter had given their contributions to the general purse, but they felt that as a community they must invite Gandhiji in their midst and offer a special purse. The brief speech that Gandhiji addressed to them was one paean of praise of the sacrifice and large-heartedness of the Parsis and a warm acknowledgment of the debt he owed to them. The presence of the Parsis always makes Gandhiji feel completely at home, and when once he starts talking to them he finds it difficult to stop.

But I must come to the response which I prize much more than any other, and which leaves in the mind a feeling of regret that Gandhiji could not give more of his time to the humble labourers. I referred in the previous chapter to the mammoth gathering of the labourers in Colombo. During this week we saw many more such gatherings on the tea estates about Badulla, Nuwara Eliya and Hatton. What faith and yet what ignorance! I met groups of them as they were vainly trying to get a glimpse of Gandhiji above the vast sea of human heads surging before them. ... (Contd.)



'The Anagārika Dharmapāla [1864-1933] A Biographical Sketch' a book written by Bhikshu Sangharakshita and published by Dreams Line Ad, Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2011. Readers of 'Contemporary' can read this book continuously March issue onwards.

ANAGĀRIKA DHARMAPĀLA

(Contd.) from July-December Issue 2021

...On leaving the Sinhalese private school he was admitted to the lowest form of St. Benedict's Institute, where among his teachers were Brothers August, Daniel Joshua and Cassion, several of whom he knew personally during the two years which he spent at the school. Every half hour he had to repeat a short prayer in praise of the Virgin Mary, and on Thursdays the boy had to attend a special class conducted by a Brother as he was a Buddhist. On feast days he used to decorate the college chapel with sweet-smelling blossoms culled from the flowering trees of his father's garden, the family by this time having moved from Pettah to a new house in Kotahena, then a place of green paddy fields and graceful palms. It was only to be expected that one day a reverend father should ask the lad why he should not become a Catholic, and in later years Dharmapala himself commented that it was strange that, at a time when the power of Catholicism was so strong in Colombo, he did not become one. He moreover made the illuminating remark that the influence of his parents and grandparents was largely responsible for keeping him within the Buddhist fold. This contains a reference not only to his participation in the ritual of daily worship, his regular visits to the Kotahena Temple in the Company of his mother, or the Jataka stories which he read aloud in the cool of the evening, for there was another religious experience which engraved upon his mind an impression perhaps deeper than that left by any of these. In his ninth year he was initiated into the Brahmacharya vow by his father at the temple, and advised to be contented with whatever he got to

own lack of inclination for them, but to the circumstances of the times in which he lived, when the task of rousing the Buddhist world from its centuries-long slumber was the one which made the most imperative demand upon the resources of his genius. In May 1876 he was asked by the school authorities to leave St. Benedict's, and although we are not informed of the circumstances which led to this request, it is not difficult, in view of the subsequent events of his career, to make a fairly accurate guess at what they were. Even as cub the Lion of Lanka had sharp claws.



The next two years of young Hewavitarne's life were passed in the aggressively missionary atmosphere of the Christian Boarding School, an Anglican (C.M.S) institution situated at Kotte, a place six or seven miles from Colombo. Here he was daily forced to attend service at 6.30 am in the Church, where the Rev. R. T. Dowbiggin would recite the prayers and read a text from the Bible. Religious instruction by no means ended here, however. In class he had to recite some verses from Genesis or Matthew, and lurid light is shed on the intensive missionary methods of the day by the fact that he had hardly entered his 'teens when he knew by heart Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, all four gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. The boarding master of the school was fond of liquor, and used to take delight in shooting the small birds which alighted on the trees. These revolting practices were against the teaching of mindfulness and compassion which he had learned in his own home and the boy, already beginning to think independently, could not reconcile himself with such barbarous behavior. An incident which occurred at this period must have made his sensitive mind more keenly aware than ever of the gulf which lay between Christian missionary fanaticism on the one hand and Buddhist wisdom and tolerance on the other, and surety added fresh fuel to the already smouldering fires of revolt. One Sunday he was quietly reading a pamphlet on the Four Noble Truths when the same master came up to him and, true to missionary tradition, demanded the offending work from him and had it flung out of the room. Another incident which happened at this time gives us a valuable glimpse of a trait strikingly characteristic of Dharmapala during his whole life. A class-mate died, and the teacher invited the students to gather round the dead body and join in the prayers which were to be offered. As David Hewavitarne looked first at the uneasy faces about him, and came to him, and then at the corpse which lay so still on the bed, there came to him in a blinding flash of illumination the thought that prayer is born of fear, and at once his whole being revolted against the idea of being afraid of anything. In this dramatic manner he achieved that complete freedom from fear which was ever one of his most striking qualities, and entered into possession of that dauntless courage which is one of the surest signs of spiritual mastery. ... (Contd.)



eat, and to sleep but little. The impression left by this experience was permanent, and in later years the Anagarika or 'homeless one', as he then called himself, was accustomed to satisfy his hunger with whatever food he received, and to sleep only two or three hours at night. It behoves us to remember, in this connection, that in spite of his devastatingly energetic career of practical activities and achievements, Dharmapala's temperament had a pronouncedly ascetic side which was no less characteristic of the man as a whole. He loved solitude, meditation and study, and if these do not occupy a more prominent position in his biography the fact is due not to his

Monthly Lecture 1

The event was commenced with *Saraswathi Vandana* by Sangeet Nipun Pamalka Manjitha Karunanayake and held under the distinguished patronage of Senior Prof. Chandrika N. Wijeyaratne [Vice Chancellor, University of Colombo] and Dr. Rewant Vikram Singh [Director, Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, High Commission of India]. Dr. Jagath Bandara Pathirage [Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Sociology, University of Colombo] made the introductory remarks of the concept and introduced the keynote speaker. A limited interested audience was invited onsite while many literary connoisseurs participated via Zoom and CCIS Facebook and YouTube channel. The event was organized to strengthen the academic ties between India and Sri Lanka under the guidance of Chair Senior Prof. Upul Ranjith Hewawitanagamage [Director, CCIS].



Highlights



Senior Prof. Rathnasiri Arangala [Dept. of Sinhala and Mass Communication, Sri Jayawardenepura University] was the Session Chair. Dr. Jagath Bandara Pathirage [Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Sociology, University of Colombo] introduced the keynote speaker Mr. Karunarathna Amarasinghe. Around 30 participants including academics from Universities participated in the event onsite and many more participated via Zoom, CCIS Facebook and YouTube channel as well. This scholarly lecture series is organized by the CCIS under the guidance of Chair Senior Prof. Upul Ranjith Hewawitanagamage (Director, CCIS).



Highlights

Highlights



The collage consists of seven photographs. The top row has four individual portraits of speakers at a podium: a man in a purple patterned shirt, a man in a grey shirt, a woman in a black patterned top, and a woman in a purple top. The bottom row is a single wide photograph showing a group of people seated in a meeting. Several individuals are wearing face masks, and one man in a light blue shirt is gesturing with his hand while speaking.