PUPPETRY IN SRI LANKA

J. TILAKASIRI

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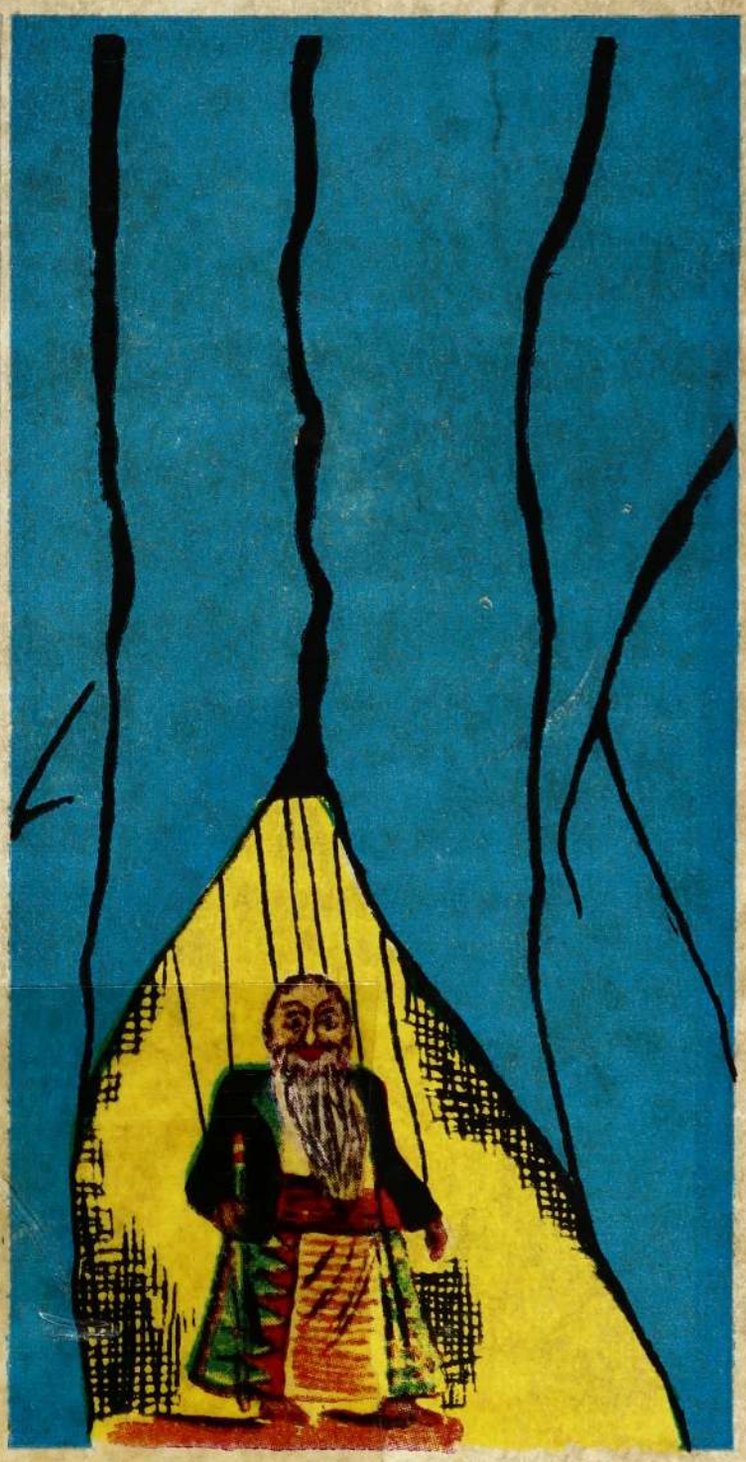

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PUPPETRY IN SRI LANKA

By

J. TILAKASIRI

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I – TRADITIONAL PUPPETRY

"Puppetry," say the historians, "is as old as civilisation itself," for there is considerable evidence to show that the instinctive delight in dolls and puppets among primitive people has survived through the ages, developing into a medium of art and entertainment in modern times. The name used for the puppet in the East and the West testifies to this origin of the art. The English word "puppet" is derived from the Italian "pupa' meaning 'doll'. Likewise Sanskrit literature, which is rich in allusions to puppets, often uses the terms "putraka", "putrika", "puttalika" for puppet with the primary meaning of 'doll', signifying the same Western notion of animating a lifeless figure of wood or clay to suggest human behaviour and action. Every country has a rich stock of stories and traditions tracing the origins of puppetry to remote times but nowhere is the evidence so fascinating as in Indian literature. Some claim that India contributed the art of the marionette (string puppet) just as much as she gave to the West the tale and the fable. Others claim that it was born in Europe in very early times and was introduced to neighbouring countries by travelling Italian showmen. Whatever the

validity of these claims, it is undeniable that puppetry originated as a folk art, a characteristic which it still retains in Eastern countries.

It is difficult to think of a country where the influence of puppetry as a medium of entertainment and amusement has not been recognised in some stage or other of its history. In the East, besides India and China—countries associated with the origin of the art according to various theories—Burma, Siam, Indo-China, Indonesia and Japan have had a flourishing tradition of puppetry in various stages of development. Many and varied are the references to puppets in Indian literature. Mention is made in these descriptions, as, for instance, in the *Kathasaritsagara* (a Sanskrit literary work containing stories) of clever craftsmen who make the puppets fly in the air, dance, speak and do anything that human beings are capable of. Another legend of Indian origin speaks of a puppet belonging to Parvati, the consort of God Siva, so ingeniously worked that she would not let her husband see it for fear of evil consequences. At last, when Siva succeeded in seeing the figure he was so taken up by its beauty that he gave it life. If we strip off the legendary and mythical associations of these stories we are clearly left with some important data bearing on the possible conclusion that carved figures may have been used to mimic human movements from ancient times. Whether these references enable us to infer that puppet

drama or even organised puppet shows were quite popular among the people of that time we cannot definitely say, but the ingenuity of the craftsmen and the sense of make-believe of the story-teller seems to have been admirably combined to make puppetry, in some form or other, an acceptable medium of entertainment in the lives of the ordinary men of those days.

Sri Lanka most probably inherited the art, like her other forms of art and amusement, from India, and preserves in certain parts of the country the same type of string puppetry as is prevalent in Rajasthan, the original home of Indian puppetry, and in South-India. The method of manipulating human and animal figures was known even in the days of her ancient kings, for references are made to dolls and motivated images in the ancient literary works of Sri Lanka. The *Culavamsa,* an old Pali-chronicle of Sri Lanka, describing a festival held by a king in connexion with a religious ceremony, refers to 'diverse-hued mechanical figures of the gods which moved to and fro, with hands folded before the brows, with rows of mechanical figures of horses which ran hither and thither. . . . and with elephants wearing ornaments, which were likewise mechanical figures. . . .' [1] There is also a reference made in the same work to 'people who played with leather

[1] 85.15-18.

dolls and the like."[1] It is significant that in these ancient accounts, also, as in the Indian descriptions, figures worked 'mechanically' or 'by mechanical contrivances' are described. It has also been suggested that the latter reference to 'leather dolls' or 'leather figures' is to be taken as evidence for the existence of the shadow play in Sri Lanka during the 12th century A. D. Some authorities on the puppet theatre of Asia refer to a Sinhalese shadow-play character said to have been found in Sri Lanka in the 19th century and known as *Rangin,* the local clown, corresponding to the *Vidushaka* of Indian drama. Wilhelm Geiger, who was an outstanding authority on the language and culture of Sri Lanka, has mentioned the *Kapiri Kumarayage Kathava* (The Story of Kaffir Prince), published in Sri Lanka in 1900, as a shadow-play composition.[2] There is still no surviving evidence supporting the existence of a shadow-play tradition as practised in Ceylon.[3]

It is not clear, however, from these references that actual puppets as we know them today, were made and manipulated, but one may

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[1] 66.133.

[2] Jacques Chesnais, *Histoire Generale des Marionttes,* p. 42.

George Jacob, *Geschichte des Schattentheaters,* p. 28.

[3] See "The Shadow-Play in Ceylon", *J. R. A. S.* (G. B. & Ireland), 1930. pt. III. p. 627.

infer that mechanically worked figures of animals and men—which have preceded the advent of puppets in many a country—were widely used as popular entertainment. [1]

The marionette, the string puppet, has continued to be used in the puppet shows of Sri Lanka from ancient times and several writers and historians of the theatre refer to the Sinhalese marionette, illustrating the type then in vogue. Of special interest are the 'Cingalese puppets' [2] which formed part of a collection received from the Ceylon Commission of the World Columbian Exposition, 1895, by the Smithsonian Institution, U.S. National Museum. The costumes of both males and female puppets in these illustrations are typically Kandyan, thus testifying to a significant development of the art in Kandyan areas, where it has almost disappeared today.

The term used for a puppet, in Sinhalese, is *rukada* (derived from Sanskrit *rupa* and *khanda*) meaning a 'miniature figure' or 'replica' or 'doll' It was probably used for any figure made of wood or any such material, originally, but is now used solely to signify a 'puppet'. The carving of animal figures or puppets was a skilled art confined to particular groups of craftsmen. Although there is ample evidence to show that they possessed this artistic skill we are not quite certain how, and at

[1] E. R. Saratchchandra. *The Sinhalese Folk Play and The Modern Stage*. p. 108.

[2] See Illustration VI.

what stage, they were employed for dramatic purposes. One is able to surmise that at a later stage in the development of the art some of these craftsmen or their associates, realising the entertainment value of these figures formed themselves into a group and put up shows at street corners, junctions and under trees in the towns and villages. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the 'marionette' (French term for string puppet), which is supposed to have have originated among travelling French musicians in the West, was first used there as a diversion for the passers-by on the roadside. Like their counterparts in the West, these itinerant puppeteers in the villages were not slow in availing themselves of the opportunity of providing easily enjoyable amusement through puppet shows at fairs and religious festivals. They charged no gate and depended entirely on the small collections they made from the appreciative audience. They either introduced popular religious characters from the Buddhist Jatakas or dramatised some well-known episode from history. These were intended to evoke religious fervour among the masses or appeal to the national sentiments and patriotic feelings of the audiences. Puppets, were, therefore, used in Ceylon in much the same way as they have been employed in South India where the skilful manipulation of puppets depicting the familiar gods and goddesses of Hindu my-

thology has served as an ideal medium of religious propaganda.

Puppetry as a dramatic art is comparatively recent in its origin in Ceylon, and the stimulus to use puppets for the purpose of drama came from a variety of folk-drama locally known as *nadagama*[1] (which is now more or less extinct except for a very sporadic performance in a village), a kind of operetta, which has influenced the traditional puppet play in its form and style of presentation. Thus the puppeteers use *nadagam* texts, borrow the music and use the instruments (*seraphina* and the drums) of the *nadagama* and even reproduce the recitative and dialogue portions so slavishly that there seems to be hardly any originality in the presentation of it as a puppet play. From its very inception the traditional puppet play has been closely *connected* with the *nadagama* as the latter had become immensely popular as a form of dramatic entertainment during the last century. Not only were the text and the music of the nadagama used in the puppet play but the *nadagam* actors, themselves, played the roles of puppet manipulators and actors in the puppet play. Such artistes who were accomplished in both forms of acting were able to take to puppetry when the *nadagama* gra-

[1] The Tamil word corresponding to Sanskrit 'natakam' meaning *drama*, has been borrowed in Sinhalese to mean the same, thus testifying to the strong South Indian influence in this variety of folk drama.

dually declined and even today, the outstanding puppeteers of Ambalangoda have been either *nadagam* players or artistes nurtured in the *nadagam* tradition. The puppet play in its present form has somehow survived because it has been able to adapt itself, unlike the *nadagama,* to the changing circumstances and living conditions of the villages.

The puppeteers of Ceylon form a small group of performers, mainly confined to Ambalangoda, in the south of Ceylon. There are four separate troupes now practising the art and they are so closely related to each other that they seem to have inherited the common traditions and skills of the art from the same source, probably, an ancestral teacher. This is confirmed by the consensus of opinion prevalent among them that three puppeteers known as Suratan, Balaya and Podineris Gurunnanse jointly owned a collection of puppets, which was later owned by one of them, Podineris, and from him, by his pupils. While the puppets changed hands jeolousies and rivalries among the pupils introduced a competitive spirit. Consequently the more talented pupils began to make their own puppets, closely imitating the models of their former masters with the obvious intention of preserving the tradition. The four puppeteers, Lawneris, Jayaneris, Daniel and Jamis [1] who practise the art, today, are the surviving pupils of the original

[1] Lawneris and Daniel are still active while the other two are no longer on the scene, their places being taken by pupils.

stock. Of them the first two are expert carvers of puppets in wood, a skill which the traditional puppeteer must possess if he is to express 'character' in his wooden figures. Lawneris is not only a skilled carver but also a very versatile puppeteer who has gained proficiency in all aspects of the art-painting, costuming, and manipulation—besides being a singer and instrumentalist. Daniel and Jamis have a good sense of costume.

All four of them are leaders of puppet troupes consisting of about eight to ten people of whom about five are regulars who are trained in the difficult art of manipulating strings. The rest are singers, instrumentalists and stage hands in charge of the screens and stage arrangements. The two artistes who provide the accompanying music on the drum and the serephina often sing, simultaneously, when the story demands. Some of the puppet manipulators, themselves, recite the verse portions and speak the dialogue in shifts as the play proceeds. The singers and instrumentalists work on a contract basis, making themselves available to any of the troupes which demand their services. They are in an advantageous position because their knowledge of the entire reportoire of *nadagam* songs and music enables them to play for any troupe at short notice. The troupes of Lawneris and Daniel have been very well patronised and they have given shows in many parts of the island.

Although the art is now confined to Ambalangoda there is evidence to believe that it was fairly popular, several decades ago, along the coastal areas in many of the villages of the South. Troupes are said to have flourished even in the suburban areas of Colombo. In these parts one sometimes hears of an old box of puppets, or of the remnants of an old collection still existing in the house of a person who claims descent from a reputed puppeteer.

Puppetry has been hardly known to exist in the hill country as it has been exclusively a low-country art. Nevertheless, there is an active troupe, practising a few miles away from Kandy, the hill capital, in a remote area. This troupe also use marionettes for their shows which closely resemble the Ambalangoda performances. Their style and method of presentation is also similar, being based on the *nadagam* tradition. These Kandyan puppeteers, who have inherited the art from their ancestors, claim low-country connexions for their art. It is conjectured that a master puppeteer from the South introduced the art to them, first, and later a family took to it as a profession. In recent times they have had the opportunity of taking their show to other parts of the country and to the cities and it is evident that this experience has enabled them to achieve a high standard in their performances.

The puppet play seems to have been popular in the North, too, from very ancient times. The puppets indigenous to Jaffna, the chief city of the North, are called *bhommalatam* (' puppet dancing) the term itself suggesting a South Indian origin of the art. It is performed in temples on festive occasions on improvised stages, but now the shows are rarely seen. The Tamil *nadagam* tradition influenced the puppet plays in the North, too, and the most popular *nadagama* used is *Ariccantra nadagama* which consists of a series of plays.

One of the oldest showmen is Mariampillai who possesses puppets 40-50 years old.

Although the method of making puppets and motivating them is basically the same in many countries, an account of the processes and techniques involved in the making of the Ceylon marionette may nevertheless be considered necessary before any assessment of the art and its future can be made. It is clear from what has been said already that puppetry is one of the folk arts where different groups of artistes pool their technical skills to produce a successful show. We first have the carvers and craftsmen who handle the raw material, wood. The puppets are carved in a variety of local wood which grows wild in the southern parts of Ceylon. The wood, known as *kaduru'* is noted for two special qualities lightness in weight and softness and pliancy facilitating car-

ving [1]. The wood is cut into small blocks, first, and when they are well dried and treated the master carver makes out the broad features of the face on which he concentrates so much to bring out a likeness or near-likeness to the face he has in mind. The highest technical skill is necessary here and that accounts for the fact that we have only one or two accomplished artistes in this art. The distinctive features of the face are carved with great care, the carver smoking the figure from time to time to facilitate carving. The limbs are carved separately and here, too, the master craftsman tries to suggest character in the shape of the fingers and hands. After the limbs are joined to the torso and the head fixed in the traditional style which is commonly adopted by all the puppeteers, the costuming of the puppets commences. It is in the hands of people who have a good knowledge of the story, the characters and the historical background of the period. From then on to the time of fixing the stage and arranging for the performance many more skilled performers lend a helping hand. As puppets are but dumb figures, animated to give the deception of realism, speech and movement are supplied by two sets of people, one making the puppets move their limbs by means of strings which they manipulate with bars (made of wood) held in their

[1] The same wood is treated and used for carving masks which is also an ancient folk art still practised in Ambalangoda.

hands, the other reciting the speech or uttering the dialogue appearing to issue from the mouths of puppets. The success of a puppet show depends entirely on the effective and harmonious co-ordination achieved by these two sets of performers.

The puppet stage is an improvised structure made by the troupe at the place where the performance takes place. The troupe normally brings with them a few screens and curtains and decorative panels (bearing the name of the troupe, &c.). The base of the puppet stage is set at a height of about two feet from the stage floor. The puppet stage is divided into three parts, the central portion behind the proscenium opening being used for the principle scenes of the play, while the sides—the wing spaces—are meant for the subsidiary and minor scenes following the former. The puppeteers manipulate the puppets standing on an operating bridge fixed above the stage floor (for puppets) and masked by black screens forming the background for puppet actors. The puppet manipulators lean against a (leaning) rail when they operate the strings.

The average height of the puppets appearing on the stage is four feet, but some of the principal heroes of a play are made in life-size proportions. The latter type depicting royalty or nobility like King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe and his Courtiers are often presented in seated postures with hardly any movement made. All the troupes use a com-

mon repertoire of plays based on *nadagam* texts and the collection of puppets in the possession of a troupe is as large as 200. The stock characters presented with every play are the *konangi* or *bahu bhutaya* (clown), *vidane* (a sort of village official who introduces items) ' *sellapillai* (Tamil word meaning ' boy-player ') and the dancing girl, all of which are considered traditional puppets. All the four figures except the *vidane* are dancing puppets. The *konangi* appear first, in a pair, performing an introductory dance. The ' dancing girl ', unlike the *konangi, sellapillai* and *vidane,* all of which are borrowed from the *nadagama,* is an item introduced in the typical theatrical style. The later looks highly artificial in appearance and presentation when compared wth the former indigenous characters. The traditional puppeteers, however, attach much importance to the item of the ' dancing girl ', introducing it as the *piece de resistance* of the show, and making her perform all the movements of an accomplished danseuse. The puppeteers pay special attention to details of costume in the presentation of figures depicting royalty. Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe and his chieftans always appear on the stage clad in bright and glittering royal attire but they are more static figures than movable puppets.

In borrowing the style of the *nadagama* the puppeteers have been compelled to lengthen the puppet play which normally lasts about three hours when presented in the traditional style. It is now customary to show short and important scenes from the well-known *nadagamas*, throwing in comic scenes and interludes to keep the audiences in good humour. In recent times the puppet show has managed to be popular mainly on account of these secondary scenes portraying typical rustic characters and satirizing various human types.

II – RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Puppetry could not, of course, gain any permanent footing as a theatrical art on account of its obvious limitations and, as in India and in other neighbouring Eastern countries, it has survived among the poorer classes, receiving their patronage and catering to their need for inexpensive entertainment. In Burma, Siam, Malaya and India traditional puppetry, both string and shadow, so popular and even patronised by royalty for centuries, is now fast vanishing. Indonesia, on the contrary, has kept the traditions of shadow puppetry alive and fostered and developed it into real theatre. Being an art practised by the poor and patronised by the poor, puppetry has not developed in Sri Lanka, as in other Asian countries, to the

extent it has developed in European countries. The reason for this has been the pursuit of this art on traditional lines by a few families. Lacking in a general education in artistic matters and, especially, in dramatic and theatrical training, these puppeteers have been blindly carrying on a tradition for the sake of preserving it. So orthodox and fanatical are they with regard to these traditions that they are reluctant to teach the art to anybody outside their family circle lest a skilled and discerning pupil would deprive them of their means of livelihood. It looks as if the traditional art, poor though it is in its present standard, is destined to vanish in a gradual process of falling standards and mediocre efforts of the puppeteers themselves. It is all the more regrettable that they generally resent any attempts on the part of those, who are interested and knowledgeable, trying to help them to improve their theatrical sense and methods of presentation. There is a general tendency to view any such attempts with suspicion, motivated by a feeling that 'outsiders' (those outside the circle of traditional puppeteers) are trying to wrest the secrets of the art from them.

Owing to these circumstances and the deplorable conditions under which the art has been transmitted several attempts had been made during the last decade to bring the puppeteers, who are envious of each other, together, and organise activities in a society or induce them to start

small schools where they could train and instruct a few pupils of their choice. The Government had also promised them assistance if they could organise constructive work on the above lines for the rehabilitation of the art. But, unfortunately the puppeteers felt diffident about venturing on their own in separate schools for teaching the young even on a small scale. Two puppeteers, however, were willing to serve as instructors in a school which was begun about two years ago as part of an already existing School of Dancing and Music in Ambalangoda.

As a result of continuous agitation on the part of quite a few interested in developing puppetry in Ceylon, the Cultural Department, which had up to that time (1958) not given assistance to puppetry, agreed to give a substantial grant to the Panel of Low Country Dancing and Music of the Arts Council to run a small puppetry school and produce a new puppet play based on a popular and witty folk story known to everyone. Lawneris and Daniel, the two puppeteers referred to earlier, were appointed as instructors in the school where boys from Ambalangoda and the neighbouring areas were to be selected for training in the art. Lawneris, the skilled carver, was commissioned to carve the puppets for '*Mahadenamutta and his Pupils*', the story

selected. The supervision of the work and the production of the puppet play was entrusted to the author. It was intended to dramatise a few episodes from the well-known folk story using a simple dialogue in which the puppet characters acted as realistically as possible.

This was in many respects a definite breaking-away from a prevalent tradition in the country which had used *nadagam* plays only for puppet shows and developed methods and techniques many of which had become utterly unsuitable for puppet drama. In our new production, an emphasis was laid on the 'dramatisation' aspect of puppetry which had been neglected by our puppeteers. A portable puppet stage, easily dismantled and carried anywhere, and suitable for the type of puppet used, was constructed for the purpose. The puppets were made in a size ranging from 2′ to 3′ lending themselves to convenient manipulation even by children. Careful attention was paid to detail in characterising them so that in form, dress and appearance, they would suggest the type of persons intended in the folk story. Thus '*Mahadenamutta*' was cast as the traditional 'Know All' and his pupils as simple villagers of different types, who had such implicit faith in their master that they would do anything—even to the extent of embarassing him—in following his

advice blindly. Easy dialogue was introduced and the elements of satire and sarcasm of the original story were retained in the episodes dramatised. A few simple stage sets were used in order to suggest the setting and help in the creation of the proper atmosphere.

An European type of vertical control was tried as an experiment for manipulating all the puppets. This innovation was also considered necessary because our puppeteers use a simple horizontal control of two crossed sticks carrying strings for the hands and legs only and capable of a few restricted movements. As our puppeteers have hardly attempted to make the puppets walk or imitate other human movements puppet acting has been confined to a mere raising of hands. The new control used by us permitted of ample movement of head, back, hands and the body in acting addition to the walking movements, considered essential for a puppet.

This production was well received both in the home-town and outside, particularly among the young. A second playlet, *Kekille Rajjuruvo* (King Kekille), also based on a popular folk-story, was produced by the same school, the Ruhunu Kelum Rukada Kalayatanaya of Ambalangoda, which had succeeded in creating an interest in the art among the school-going children of the area. Although the school

is still functioning it has not maintained quicker progress on account of the problems it has had to face such as lack of leadership and guidance.

The Arts Council of Ceylon attempted to introduce the art to other areas in the south and near Colombo, by organising pupptry classes attached to already existing handicraft schools, but these attempts have all failed because it was not easy to find anyone proficient in the various aspects of puppetry to guide them.

All these schools and institutes have had the benefit of the services of two female puppetry instructors from Czechoslovakia, who came to Ceylon at the invitation of the Ceylon Government and conducted classes in various centres of the island in 1961. Mrs. Jana Havlikova introduced her country's methods and techniques of hand-puppet construction and stage-designing while Dr. Eva Vodickova of the Prague Academy of Fine Arts, tained the students in puppet manipulation and dramatisation. The visits of these experts has not been entirely fruitless because at least one group, the University of Ceylon Puppetry Society, Peradeniya, has made steady progress during the last few years. Avoiding experimenting with the traditional marionettes because students have very little time to attain proficiency in making and manipulating marionettes, they have devoted their energies to hand and rod puppets. They have

can puppeteer, Mrs. Marjorie McPharlin, who benefitted immensely from the classes of the Czech experts and produced several playlets using various types of hand puppets. The famous Ameri- visited Ceylon on a USEF grant, in 1964, also held classes in various schools and training colleges, giving instruction in her new methods of puppet construction with a special emphasis on creative drama. The University Puppetry Society had the benefit of her training also and the most recent productions have attempted to incorporate some of her ideas. These playlets which have been produced annually with the help of the university students were well received and shown to appreciative audiences, both adult and student, in Kandy and Peradeniya. The Society's aim is to popularise the art among the school children and solicit the support of training colleges which can do immense service if puppetry is included in their curriculum.

Traditional puppetry, as practised by the professional artistes, faces a very bleak future in Ceylon, and will doubtless go the same way as the traditional art of other countries in Asia. It cannot be developed because the old artistes do not wish for a change or reform of their traditional styles and because the younger generation finds

it hardly attractive or remunerative to make a living. The appreciation of the traditional art even in its decadent form will depend on an under standing of the value of puppetry both for entertainment and for education. It is here that educational puppetry and puppetry as creative drama have important roles to play. It is imperative, therefore, that puppetry and puppet drama should be introduced to schools and training given to the younger generation so that a nucleus of young puppeteers will emerge and help in the creation of new traditions and standards the puppet theatre so direly needs.

Two events of significance for the still slumbering art of puppetry in Sri Lanka marked the end of 1975 and the dawn of 1976.

For the first time in its history a Festival of Puppet Plays in the form of a competition was organised by the Department of Cultural Affairs and held with a certain measure of success in 1975. The decision to organise it was made in response to the repeated demands made by puppeteers and artistes for several years to extend financial support and grant some sort of recognition to the puppet troupes which were eking out an existence from the proceeds of occasional shows.

The competition was open to all puppeteers, both amateur and professional, and was divided into two sections, viz., traditional and modern. All the well-known traditional troupes from Ambalangoda and other areas as well as amateur troupes from Colombo and Kandy participated. The preliminary rounds of shows were held in their own local setting which were arranged in the open air or in a school hall.

A great deal of interest was evinced in the staging of performances everywhere as it also afforded an opportunity to many to see a show almost free. Only those who reached a sufficiently high standard were selected for the second and final round staged in Colombo. The difficulty of combining the presentation of marionette plays and glove/rod puppet plays on the same stage during the same evening proved a very complex one and could not be completely overcome. In fact some performers were at a disadvantage when they had to present a glove puppet show following on a marionette show, acting on too high a stage and being unable to make the necessary adjustments. As usual a competition also engenders a spirit of unhealthy rivalry especially among traditional puppeteers who tend to resent if they do not win the highest award. Barring such instances the competition went off smoothly and brought to

light a wealth of hidden puppeteering talent which should be harnessed and developed for the future of the art.

The competition was also intended to train the traditional artistes in adapting themselves to the need to tailor their productions to suit the taste and aptitude of today's audiences which are not prepared to spend a whole evening or even a good part of it seeing a puppet show. The time schedule of one hour for a performance made it necessary to cut down the show to size eliminating all the stock items repeated by every traditional showman. The traditional troupes who submitted themselves to such time-schedules seem to have benefited from the experiment. Among the new puppeteers using glove and hand puppets together with rod puppets the English Training College in Peradeniya and the University students of the Peradeniya Campus reached a fairly good standard considering the limitations they have with regard to time and the lack of proper theatrical facilities.

The highlight of the competition was, of course, the presentation of several items by Maxwell Crusz and his troupe with marionettes, made and manipulated in the typical Western style. The troupe has been performing for parties and at cabaret shows for a long time quite successfully

and it was evident that they had reached a standard comparable with the best productions of the West. The dedication and skill which Crusz has shown will undoubtedly serve as an inspiration to the young who wish to take to this fascinating art.

The visit or rather the return of the Marionette Theatre of Australia with their celebrated-latest-production of the *Tintookies* (directed by Peter Scriven) to Sri Lanka, in January 1976, was the other memorable event in the annals of puppetry On this, their second tour of Asia after 10 years. they presented a new version of the *Tintookies* heavily interlaced with items of magic and make-believe in a style that kept packed audiences everywhere-Colombo, Kandy, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Galle—completely enraptured and spell-bound.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Glove Puppets

Not in the List—Hand Puppets

King and Queen—Rod Puppets

The Cowherd who became King — Rod Puppets

Vidura Jataka — Marionettes

CINGALESE PUPPETS

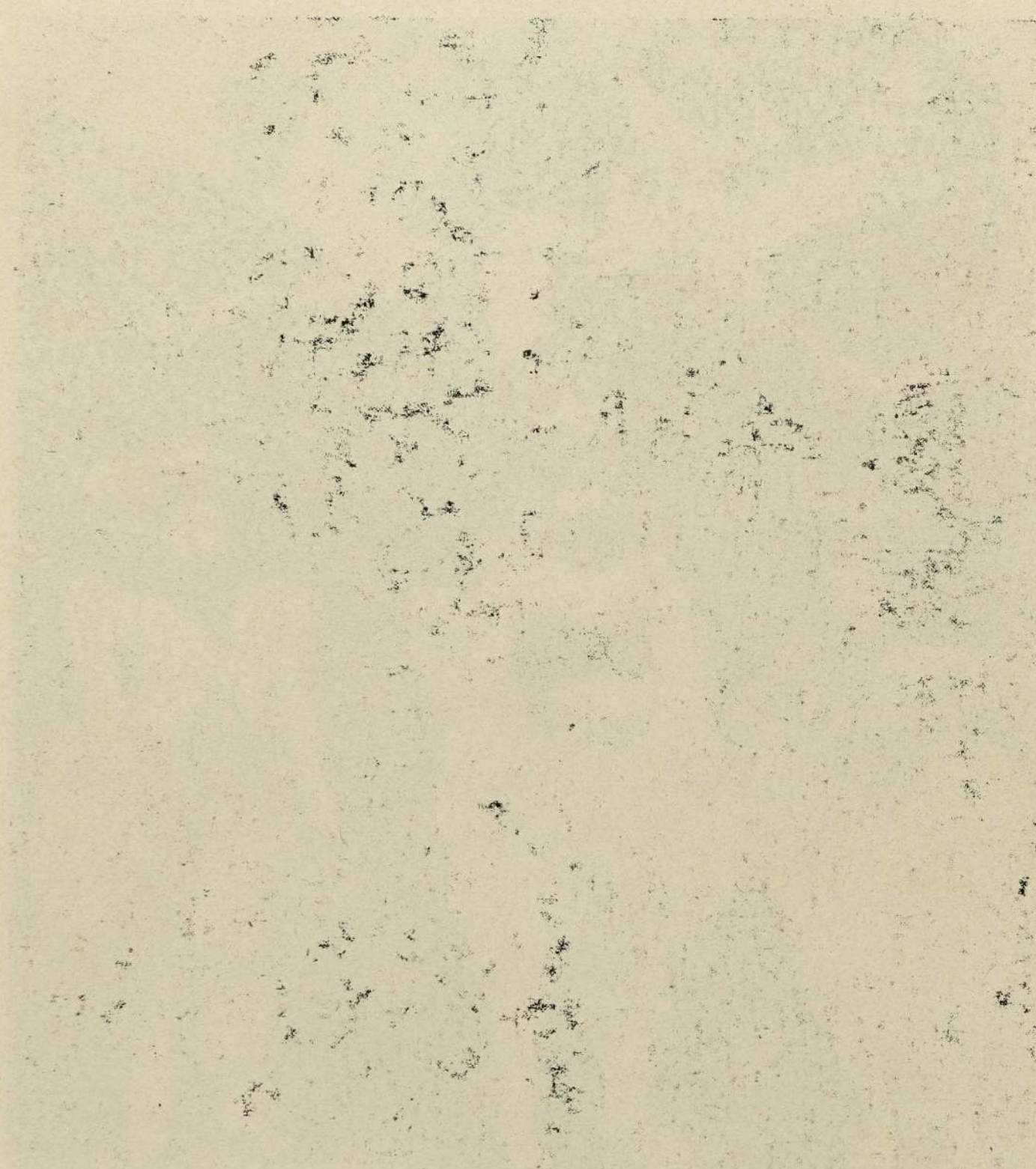
(Courtesy Smithsonion Institution, U.S. National Museum)

KONANGI or BAHUBHUTAYA Performing Introductory Dance

Scene from 'The Carter's Episode'

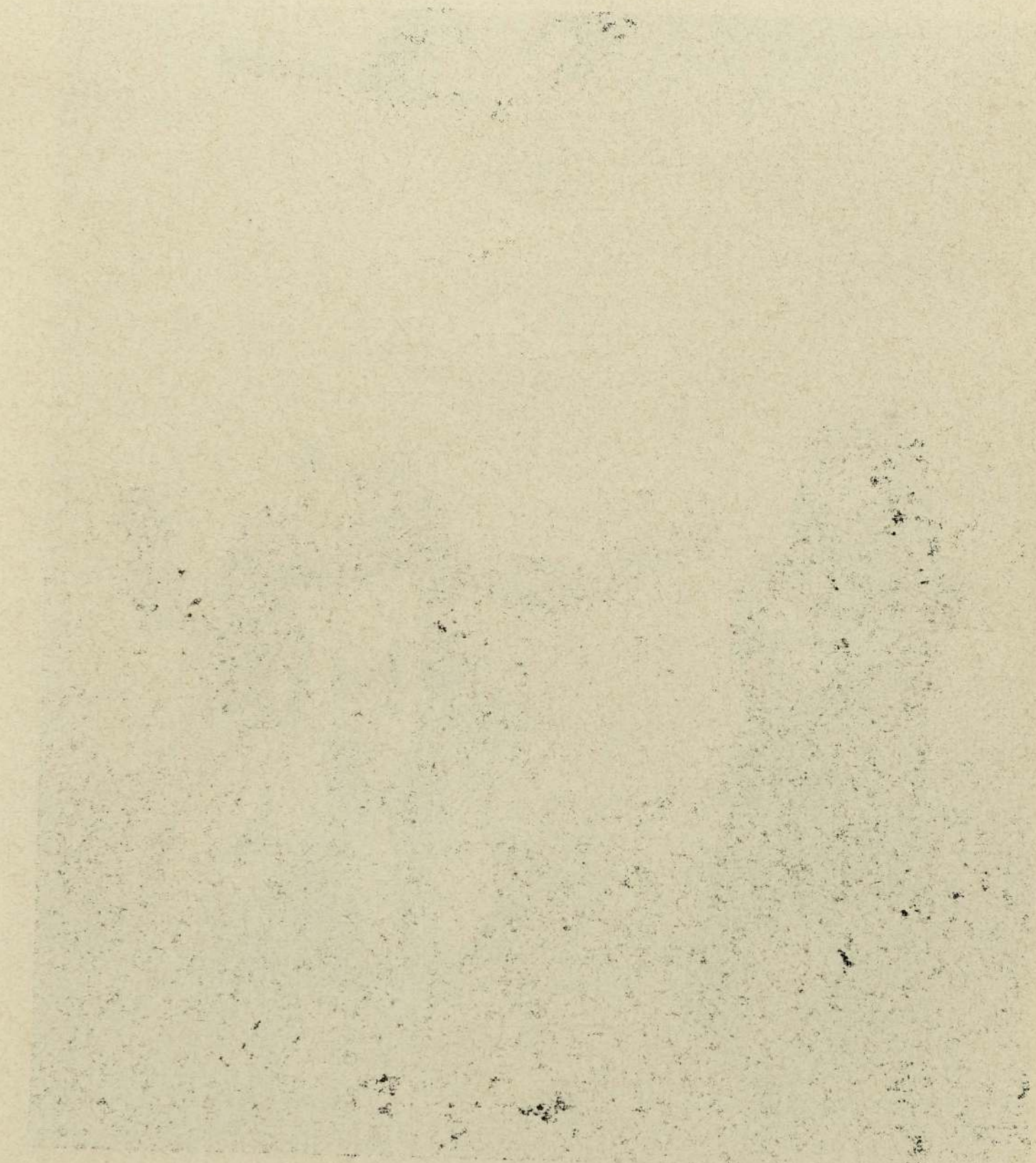
The Dancing Girl

King Sri Wickrama Rajasingha and his Courtiers



Scene from 'The Ehelepola Tragedy'

Scene from 'The Vidura Jataka'



Scene from 'The Kalagola Story'

The Beggar "Jujaka"

Stock Characters "Vidane and Gaba"

Puppeteer Lawneris with his Puppets

Puppeteer at work

Puppets Backstage

THE CULTURE OF SRI LANKA

No.

1. Ancient Paintings and Sculpture in Sri Lanka —Nandadeva Wijesekera

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