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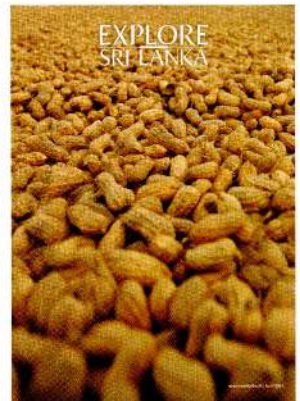
CONTENTS

April 2021 Volume 34 Number 6

8

The Sinhala and Hindu New Year

April heralds the Sinhala and Hindu New Year in Sri Lanka, an annual event of great festivities, whose origins are little known in the course of history.



Fresh and crunchy peanuts from the East Coast.

Photo: BT Images



12

Bhāvanā: Cultivating the Mind

Bhāvanā in Pali means the development of the mind or spiritual cultivation through meditation.



14

Peanut Farming in the East Coast

Acres of land are planted with peanuts on the Eastern Coast. The crunchy peanuts provide a favorite snack for all Sri Lankans.

18

Beeple's Opus

Mike Winkelmann is the digital artist Beeple. His visionary, and often irrelevant digital pictures have propelled him to the top of the digital art world.



22

Sri Lankan Castes during the Colonial Era

Sri Lanka had two distinctly different kinds of economic arrangements in the predominantly Sinhala areas, which resulted in two caste orders fundamentally different from one another along the coast and in the interior of the country, respectively.



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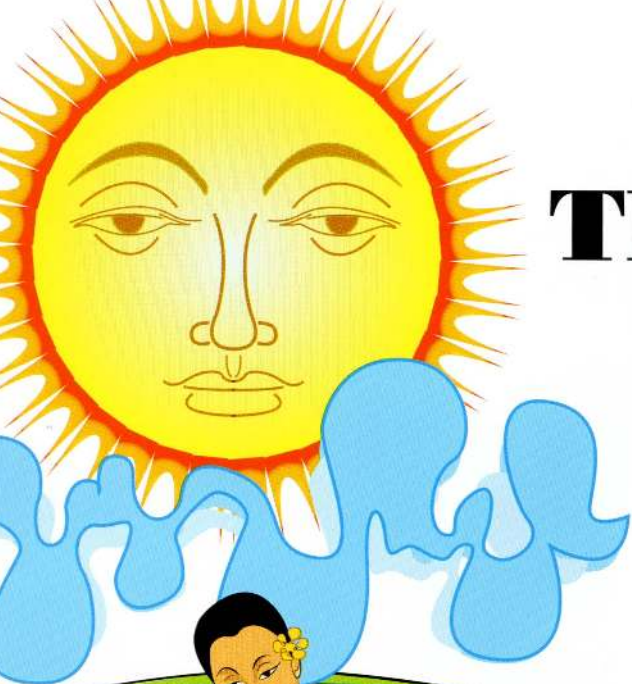
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THE SINHALA AND HINDU NEW YEAR



The Sinhala and Hindu New Year is a time of celebration and traditions.

April heralds the Sinhala and Hindu New Year in Sri Lanka, an annual event of great proportions, whose origins are obscured in the course of history.

Words Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane. **Illustrations** by Sujith Heenitigala.



The purna kalasha; the coconut represents prosperity and power, the water vessel reflects the life-giving ability of nature.

April in Sri Lanka is the month of festivities. It is a holiday season when Sri Lankans go to great lengths to celebrate the traditional New Year with unprecedented grandeur. Together with traditional rituals performed according to auspicious times, games, and festivities with tables laden with Sri Lankan delicacies and sweetmeats, the Sinhala and Hindu New Year is a time of strengthening family ties cultural significance.

The traditional new year is celebrated in April, and it signifies the motion of

the sun. The New Year celebrated by the Sinhala Buddhists, and Tamil Hindus are determined according to the sun's movement relative to the earth. The sun's complete cycle along the constellations was accepted as the beginning of a calendar year by farming societies like Sri Lanka. It marks the gathering of the harvest, celebrated with thanksgiving and homage to the sun.

In Sinhala, the April New Year is called the '*avurudda*', when separated, '*avur*', means the sun, and '*idda*' means



The sun begins its transit from Pisces (Meena Rashiya) and comes to reside at Aries (Mesha Rashiya) on April 14th each year.



summiting. The sun at its highest point is when it shines directly on the equator. Since Sri Lanka is situated close to the equator, it experiences this phenomenon strongly in March and April.

In fact, people believe that the sun enters Sri Lanka at Dondra Head in the South at the beginning of April, gradually peaking and moving towards Point Pedro in the North. It takes another 365 days to enter Dondra again, which is distinctive to Sri Lanka. According to astrologers, the sun begins its transit from Pisces (*Meena Rashiya*) and comes to reside at Aries (*Mesha Rashiya*) on April 14th each year.

As for the Hindus who follow the Tamil Calendar – the *Panchangam*,

which is based on the sun's cycles and the moon, the year begins on the first day of spring – 14th April. Hence, Tamil Hindus in other countries had celebrated the event initially as a spring festival.

Customs and rituals are followed with utmost devotion, that even today, what makes the New Year stand out is the narrative around the practices that are faithfully observed at 'auspicious' times.

The first reference to the celebration of the New Year as it's practiced today can be traced to the 18th century. State patronage and adherence to rituals are expected of the 'leader' by the citizenry, and 18th century Sri Lanka had been similar, where the king had spent the

inauspicious time '*Nonagathaya*' before the dawn of the New Year at the Temple of the Tooth. State patronage then had extended to the supply of herbs and utensils to prepare a special herbal mixture known as '*naanu*' to the temples of Asgiri and Malwathu. The royal astrologer determined the auspicious time for every activity associated with the New Year. Auspicious times for the festival are sanctioned by the State to this day.

The king, surrounded by his chiefs, heralded the New Year from his throne. In the 18th Century in the Kandyan Kingdom, some of the pre-new year celebrations of yore had been more elaborate, with lighted tapers and a silver dish with unhusked rice and



The first transaction for the New Year is conducted at an auspicious time.



The litha or the almanac gives accurate auspicious timings for the rituals.



Sweet pongal rice is prepared by Hindus with newly harvested rice, jaggery, milk, green gram, mung dhal, raisins and cashew. The first portion is offered to the gods.



Milk rice and pongal rice are prepared at auspicious times and the table is laden with sweetmeats to be consumed by the family.

turmeric water, 'naanu' had been applied to the king's head and body. They invoked long life on the monarch. Similarly, today, New Year rituals commence with the application of 'naanu' prior to the ceremonial bath on the last day of the old year.

Food is all about identity and cultural symbolism; it's a big part of the celebration, fostering harmony by sharing around a table. The traditional New Year is a burst of gastronomic delights. The preparation of food described as 'ahara pisima', is initiated to this day at an auspicious time. The king led the way in the palace kitchen and was the first to consume the food prepared at the auspicious time,



Hindu homes are decorated with elaborate kolam or floor art to invite Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, to visit on New Year's Day.



described in Sinhala as 'ahara anubhavaya'. He was followed by his courtiers. This was more a ceremonial exercise followed by a royal feast in the evening, where the king and his courtiers dined communally. There had been two days of holidays for the festival when the people ceased all work and outings. In addition to the two days of holidays, today, people extend their time off work to frolic with family and friends in their villages.

But how did the New Year come to be known as the Sinhala and Hindu New Year? It's believed that the Nayakkar kings of the Kandy Kingdom, who were originally Hindus, shifted the festival to April from March to fall in line with the Tamil New Year called *Chiththirai*. Then in the 19th century, in response to demands for the day to be declared a public holiday, the British administrators introduced the National Holiday Bill. Still, in saying it a public holiday in 1885, the authorities named it the Sinhala and Hindu New Year.

It's rather the similarities and not the differences that have bound the two communities during this beautiful annual festival. For instance, the Tamil Calendar 'Panchangam' is based on Vedic astrology; the Sinhala people's calendar for the April New Year is also known as the 'Panchanga Litha'. Derived from Sanskrit, *Panchanga* means five limbs or five attributes of the day: *Vara*, *Thithi*, *Nakshatra*, *Yoga*, and *Karana*. The auspicious times for the April New Year celebrated by the Sinhala and Tamil-speaking Hindu people are chartered according to the same astrological principles.

Whatever its origins and links, the Sinhala and Hindu New Year was an ode to nature, astrology, and a self-sustained ecosystem; it was a celebration by those who followed the sun's movement and the moon the planets to arrange events in their day to day lives. To this day, the Sinhala and Hindu New Year traditions are celebrated with great festivity, and communities come together in peace and harmony. ☺



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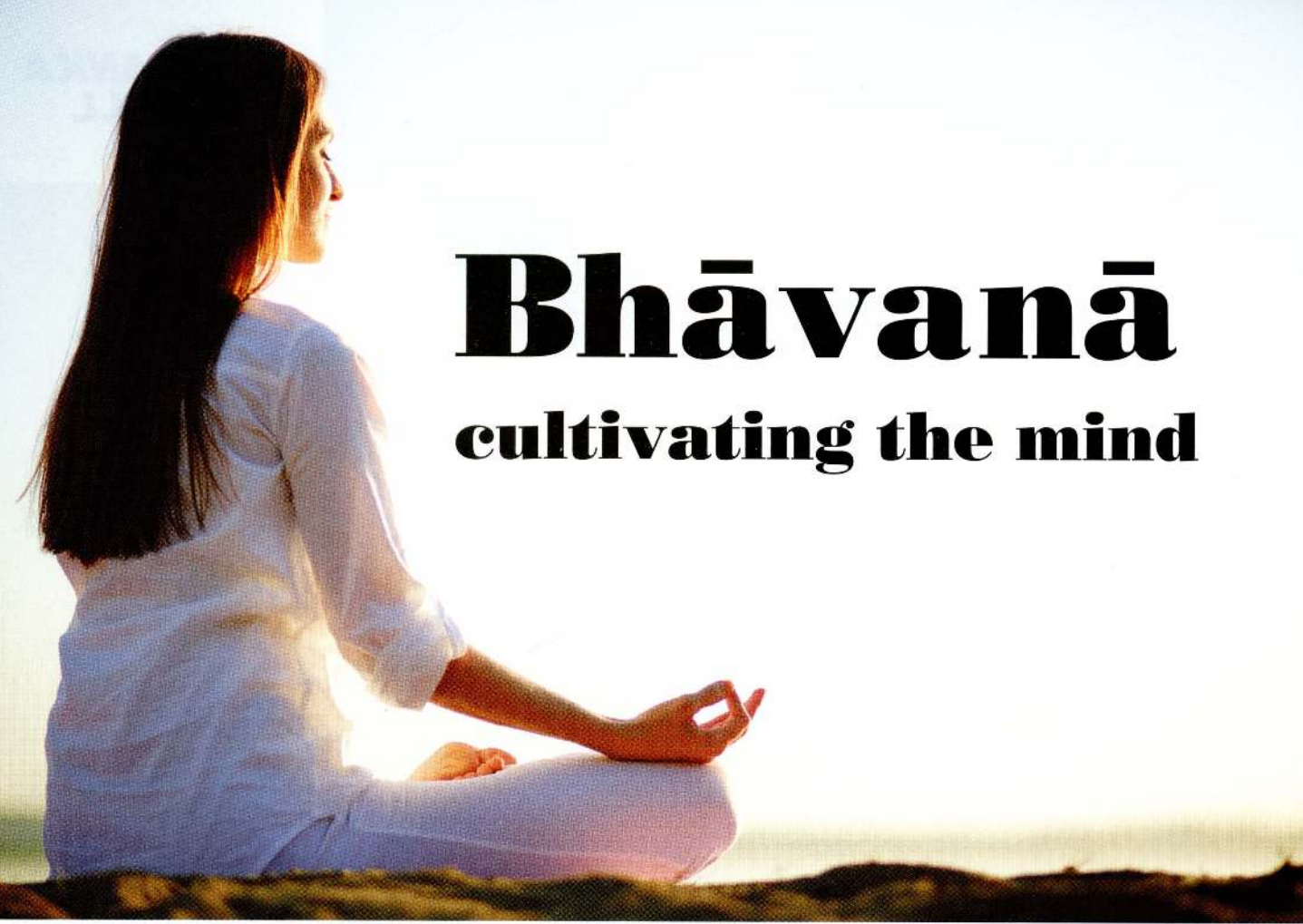
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Bhāvanā

cultivating the mind

Bhāvanā in Pali means the development of the mind or spiritual cultivation through meditation. Bhāvanā is an essential concept of Buddhism. However, regardless of religious affiliations, any person can engage in Bhāvanā to obtain peace and calmness in their minds. Ven Diypattugama Revatha Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Siriwardhanaramaya Temple, Colpetty, introduces Bhāvanā, where the cultivation of positive thoughts enables the growth of the mind.

By Udeshi Amarasinghe.

Ven Diypattugama Revatha Thero explains that in Bhāvanā, a person maintains concentration on one aim. Even if the mind wavers, it is refocused back to a single purpose. Through this process, a person can improve and enhance his mind. Meditation is an excellent daily practice because by thinking of positive thoughts, a person can dispel negative thoughts such as

hatred, anger, and jealousy. Therefore, while meditating, even for that particular time, the mind is concentrating on positive thoughts. Meditation is about thinking positive thoughts repeatedly and also focusing on the Dhamma.

Bhāvanā consists of two main segments; Samatha Bhāvanā, and Vidarshana Bhāvanā. In Samatha Bhāvanā, a person focuses the mind

on one positive thought or action. Examples of Samatha Bhāvanā are; Anapanasathi Bhāvanā that concentrates on breathing, Maithri Bhāvanā focuses on loving, kindness, and Sakman Bhāvanā focuses on a positive aim or thought where the meditation is done while walking. Vidarshana Bhāvanā is a more complex form of meditation that focuses on in-depth Buddhism.

Meditation has to be done gradually, and a person should first start with the various types of Samatha Bhāvanā, and after that progress to Vidarshana Bhāvanā. Even the meditating duration should be increased gradually. There are postures for meditation, such as seated posture and meditating while walking. The meditation posture will defer according to the situation and type of Bhāvanā a person engages in.

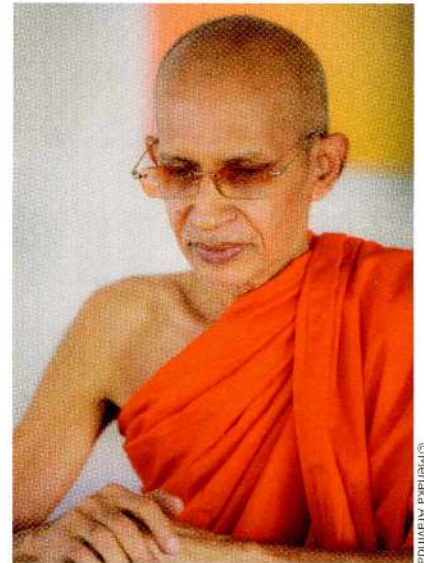
For example, in Anapanasathi Bhāvanā, where we focus on breathing in and out, for a layman or novice, they would not be able to concentrate on that aim for a long time, and other thoughts may come into the mind. At that moment, we need to bring our minds back to focusing on breathing. In Anapanasathi Bhāvanā, a person repeatedly concentrates and focuses on breathing. Thus, a person needs to practice meditation regularly.

Meditation should be done in a place that is quiet and tranquil, without any disturbances. Usually, it is said that meditation should be done in an aranya, forest, or an empty space. Therefore, you can meditate in any place and any time. The ideal time for meditation is early morning or in the evening.

Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero explains that there is no particular age for meditation. Though generally it is considered that a person should engage in meditation when they reach old age, it is not so. It has been scientifically proven that there are significant benefits to meditating from a young age because it develops the brain, benefitting in education and limiting stress and mental pressure. In certain countries, meditation is conducted for a few minutes before classes begin at school for the day. According to each age group, there are benefits, and it is generally the more mature people who engage in Vidarshana Bhāvanā.

Mindfulness and engaging in mind exercises are forms of meditation but are not precisely Bhāvanā. Mindfulness is being aware of the present moment and the activity that a person is involved in.

Meditation is an excellent daily practice because by thinking of positive thoughts, a person can dispel negative thoughts such as hatred, anger, and jealousy.



Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Siriwardhanaramaya Temple, Colpetty.



Bhāvanā soothes the mind and relieves stress.

By engaging in Bhāvanā calms your mind and reduces anxiety, stress, and mental pressure. The mind feels peace and tranquility. It is beneficial to engage in Bhāvanā daily as you focus on positive thoughts.

Thus, during this pandemic period, it is good to meditate to maintain a healthy mind where you are able to fulfill your daily activities successfully. ©

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PEANUT FARMING IN THE EAST COAST



Acres of land are planted with peanuts on the Eastern Coast. The crunchy peanuts provide a favorite snack for all Sri Lankans. Time-tested methods are used to nurture the plants so that a bountiful harvest is produced. Laid out to dry in the sun, the peanuts create a mesmerizing sight.

Words Udeshi Amarasinghe.

Photography and information provided by Sivabalan Sadasivam.

Peanut is a type of legume that is grown abundantly on the East Coast. Some farmers grow peanuts for an additional income in their gardens while also engaging in vegetable and paddy cultivations. Others grow peanuts on more extensive land as a business endeavor. The main factor that determines the growth of peanuts is water. Therefore, many farmers grow peanuts from November to January, when there is intermittent rain, which is ideal for the peanut plants to grow. If a farmer has his land closer to a water source such as a well or a lake, he can grow peanuts at least thrice a year. A duration of three months is required, from planting the seeds to the harvesting of peanuts.

Firstly, the land is cleared and prepared into rows. Peanuts require an excellent fertile muddy soil for their growth. Thus, if the land has sandy soil or is close to the beach, cow dung is added as fertilizer. However, if the soil is fertile with good minerals, then only water is required for peanuts. Pits of a depth of 1/2ft are dug, and the seeds are planted in the soil.

During the early days after planting the seeds, it is essential to take care of the peanut farm as peacocks and crows would nibble on the seeds from around 6.30 to 10.30 in the morning. At night, wild boar would come to the land and dig out the seeds. Therefore, during this stage, the peanut farmers are extra vigilant during day and night. The seeds will begin to sprout, and the leaves emerge from the soil. When the yellow blossoms start to bloom, after two months of planting the seeds, it is time to arrange the soil into mounds around the peanut plants. Once the plants are fully grown by 85-95 days, they are ready to be taken out of the soil.

The peanut plants are removed and, if the seeds are of a good variety, then each plant would have about 23-35 peanut pods. The women folk would cut the leaves and take the roots with the pods and sit together to pluck the peanuts while chatting to each other in the evenings. The peanut pods, once removed, are either dried in the

Farmers grow peanuts from November to January, when there is intermittent rain, which is ideal for the peanut plants to grow.



The yellow blossom of the peanut plant.



Large areas are used to cultivate peanuts and farmers stay in the makeshift huts to protect them.



A fully grown peanut plant.



Freshly harvested peanuts.



A bowl full of crunchy treat to enjoy.

sun or used raw. The dried peanut kernels are crunchy, while the raw kernels have a creamy taste.

Two types of peanut varieties are grown; one is where the kernels are red in color, and in the other variety, the kernels are white. The shell of both types remains a light brown. The peanuts are spread on mats and laid out in the sun to dry. This is a sight that could be seen in many homes on the East Coast.

Once the peanut pods are dry, you would feel the kernels move within by shaking them, which means that the peanuts have been dried for the right amount of time. Some also dry the peanuts by roasting them over a fire, but the majority of the farmers dry the peanuts in the sun. The dried peanut kernels are ready to be consumed as a snack and they can also be used to make peanut butter.

Interestingly on the East Coast, boiled peanuts are a favorite snack. The raw peanuts are boiled in saltwater, and families would enjoy this snack at any time of the day. Children would nibble on the boiled




Peanut pods are separated from the harvest.

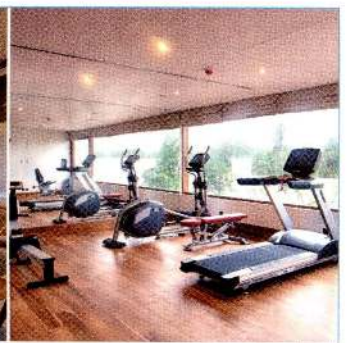


Sun dried peanuts make an ideal snack.

The peanuts are spread on mats and laid out in the sun to dry. This is a sight that could be seen in many homes on the East Coast.

peanuts while their mothers prepare lunch, which is also consumed during teatime. While peanuts are grown in Pottuvil and in surrounding areas, the best peanuts are grown in Komari, Kandiyadi, and Thambiluvil, where the conditions are ideal for growth.

During a trip to Arugambay or when driving along the East Coast roads, make sure to look out for peanut cultivations and enjoy the crunchy goodness of peanuts either dried, roasted, boiled, or raw. 




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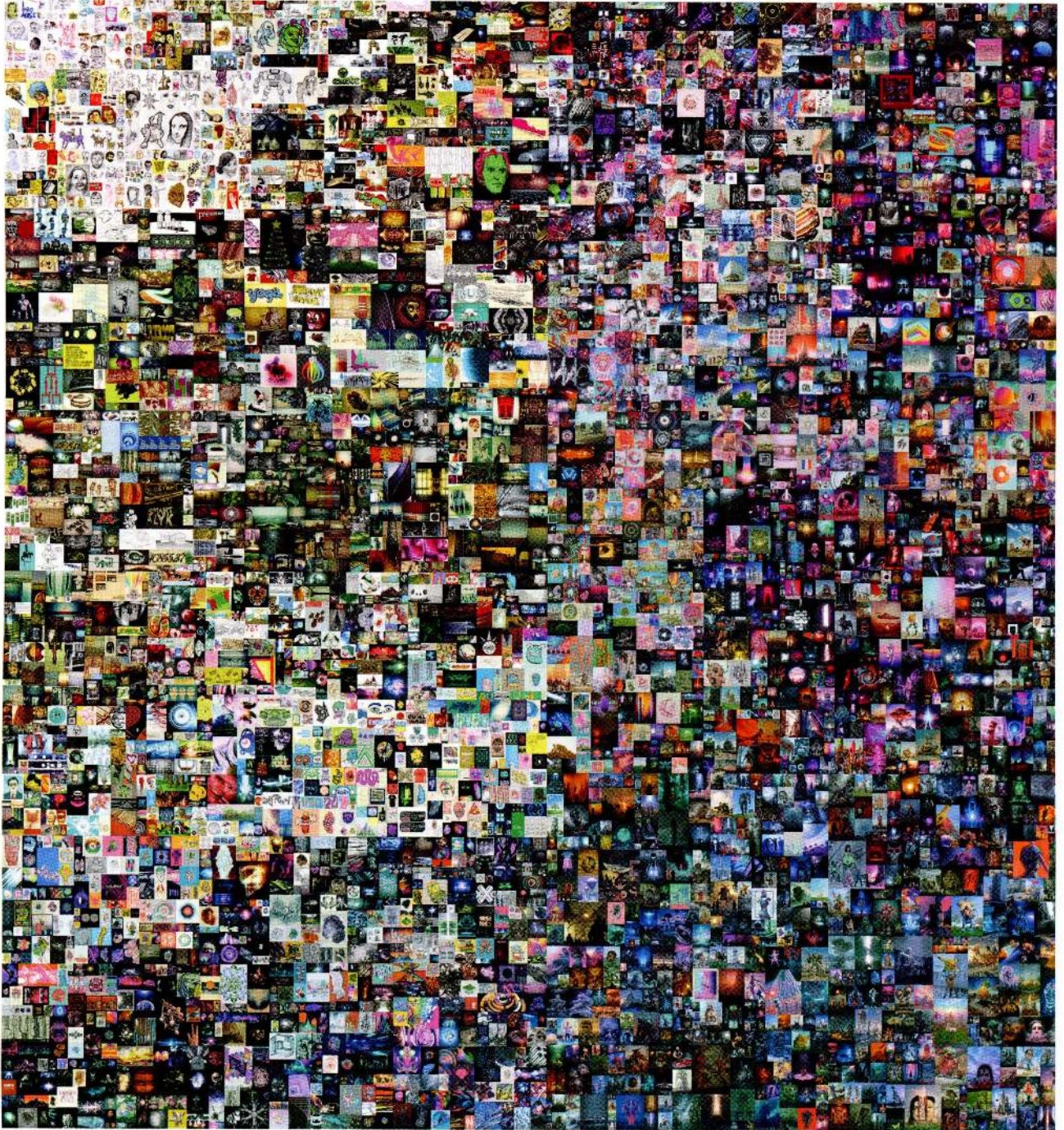
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BEEPLE'S OPUS

Created over 5,000 days by the groundbreaking artist, this monumental collage was the first purely digital artwork (NFT) ever offered at Christie's.

Text and photographs: [christies.com](https://www.christies.com)

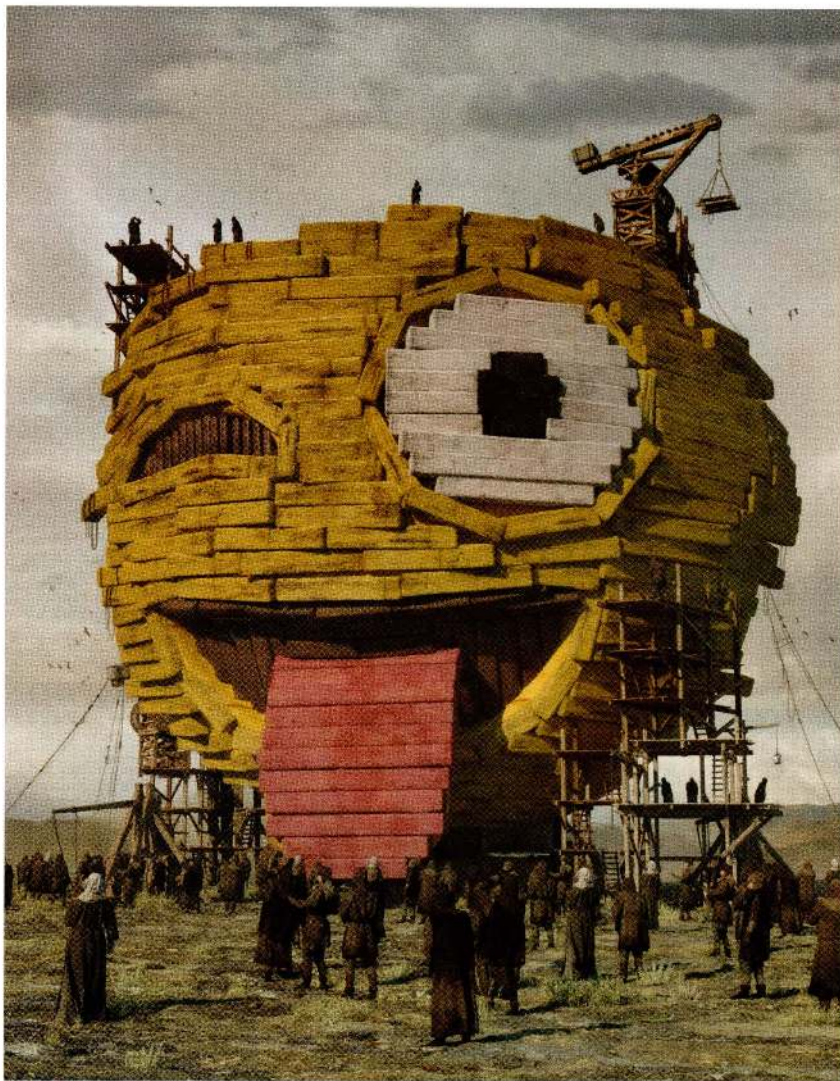


EVERYDAYS: THE FIRST 5000 DAYS sold online for USD 69,346,250.

On May 1, 2007, Mike Winkelmann, aka the digital artist Beeple, posted a new work of art online. He did the same thing the next day and the next, and the next one after that, creating and posting a brand-new digital picture, or 'everyday' as he called it, every single day for 13-and-a-half years. Now those individual pieces have been brought together in *EVERYDAYS: THE FIRST 5000 DAYS*, a unique work in the history of digital art.

Minted exclusively for Christie's, the monumental digital collage was offered as a single lot sale concurrently with First Open, and realized USD 69,346,250. Marking two industry firsts, Christie's is the first major auction house to offer a purely digital work with a unique NFT (Non-fungible token) — effectively a guarantee of its authenticity — and to accept cryptocurrency, in this case Ether, in addition to standard forms of payment for the singular lot.

'Christie's had never offered a new media artwork of this scale or importance before,' says Noah Davis, specialist in Post-War & Contemporary Art at Christie's in New York. 'Acquiring Beeple's work is a unique opportunity to own an entry in the blockchain itself created by one of the world's leading digital artists.'



Beeple posted a new work of art online everyday for 13 and a half years.



From simple drawings to life in 3D.



Mike Winkelmann, aka the digital artist Beeple.



These photographs: zooming in reveals pictures by turn abstract, fantastical, grotesque or absurd, deeply personal or representative of current events.

From simple drawings to life in 3D

Consumers of internet culture will already be familiar with the South Carolina-based graphic designer and motion artist known as Beeple. His visionary and often irreverent digital pictures have propelled him to the top of the digital art world, winning him 1.8 million followers on Instagram and high-profile collaborations with global brands ranging from Louis Vuitton to Nike, as well as performing artists from Katy Perry to Childish Gambino.

In *EVERYDAYS: THE FIRST 5000 DAYS*, the artist has stitched together recurring themes and color schemes into an aesthetic whole. The individual pieces are organized in loose chronological order: zooming in reveals pictures by turn abstract, fantastical, grotesque or absurd, deeply

personal or representative of current events. Recurring themes include society's obsession with and fear of technology; the desire for and resentment of wealth; and America's recent political turbulence.

The notable differences between the early and later pictures reveal Beeple's enormous evolution as an artist. At the project's inception, 'everydays' were basic drawings. When Beeple started working in 3D, however, they took on abstract themes, color, form and repetition. Over the past five years, they have become increasingly timely, reacting to current events.

'I almost look at it now as though I'm a political cartoonist,' Beeple explains. 'Except instead of doing sketches, I'm using the most advanced 3D tools to make comments on current events, almost in real time.'

Beeple's evolution: the First 5000 Days in five key pictures

05.01.07

'This was my very first everyday. It's a picture of my Uncle Jim, who I nicknamed Uber Jay. I probably would have spent more time on this, had I known it would eventually be part of a piece auctioned by Christie's!'

09.18.13

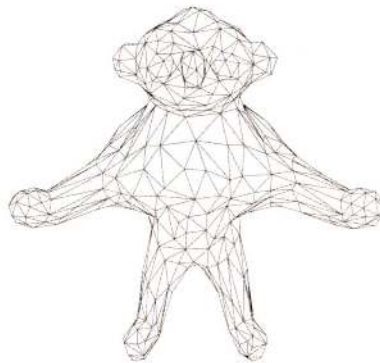
'I did this image very quickly, in about three minutes at 5am, right before driving my wife to the hospital to have our first child.'

11.27.14

'This is a picture from when I had horrible food poisoning. It obviously didn't take more than a few minutes to create, but this project is about more than any one single day.'



Beeple's evolution: 05.01.07



Beeple's evolution: 09.18.13



Beeple's evolution: 11.27.14

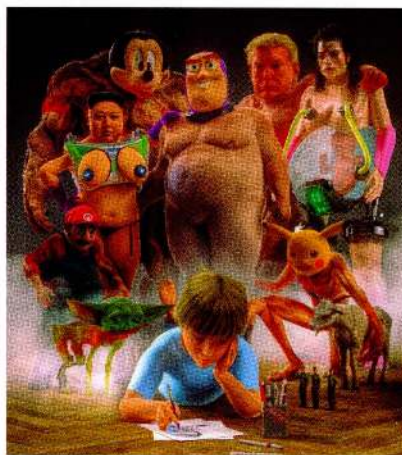
Minted exclusively for Christie's, the monumental digital collage was offered as a single lot sale concurrently with First Open, and realized USD 69,346,250. Marking two industry firsts, Christie's is the first major auction house to offer a purely digital work with a unique NFT...and to accept cryptocurrency, in this case Ether.

10.07.20

'This was done in about an hour immediately after the 2020 vice-presidential debate, when then US Vice President Mike Pence had a fly unexpectedly land on his head. I think this picture clearly shows there was a bit more to the story.'



Beeple's evolution: 10.07.20



Beeple's evolution: 01.07.21

01.07.21

'I made this on the 5,000th day. It incorporates a lot of the characters and themes I've touched on over the past few years, depicted as muses around a child drawing — as a reference back to my first everyday drawing. It honestly is still truly mind-

boggling to me what this project has become.'

A milestone for digital art collecting

Digital art has an established history dating back to the 1960s. But the ease of duplication traditionally made it near-impossible to assign provenance and value to the medium.

The recent introduction of Non-fungible token: (NFTs) and blockchain technology has enabled collectors and artists alike to verify the rightful owner and authenticity of digital artworks. EVERYDAYS: THE FIRST 5000 DAYS will be delivered directly from Beeple to the buyer, accompanied by a unique NFT encrypted with the artist's unforgeable signature and uniquely identified on the blockchain. MakersPlace, a digital marketplace, has issued the NFT for the piece.

Christie's first foray into this innovative technology was in November 2018, when it registered the entire 42-lot Barney A Ebsworth Collection of 20th-century American Art on the Artory blockchain. The collection totalled more than USD 322 million and marked the first time an art auction at this price level had been digitally recorded.

More recently, Christie's offered Robert Alice's Block 21 as part of its Post War & Contemporary Art Day Sale in October 2020. The first work of art with an embedded NFT to be offered at a traditional auction house, the lot attracted non-traditional bidders and crypto enthusiasts alike — and sold for almost 11 times its low estimate.

Until now, Beeple's works have dropped solely on blockchain-backed marketplaces — where they typically set records. In December 2020, Beeple's work The Complete MF Collection, consisting of 20 pieces, realized USD 3.5 million in a single weekend.

Figures like this made putting an estimate on the sale of Beeple's first work at Christie's well-nigh impossible. 'We replaced our typical Estimate on Request with Estimate Unknown,' says Davis. ¹⁸

SRI LANKAN CASTES DURING THE COLONIAL ERA

Senior Researcher, and Anthropologist, Sunimal Fernando, explains that Sri Lanka had two distinctly different kinds of economic arrangements in the predominantly Sinhala areas, which resulted in two caste orders fundamentally different from one another along the coast and in the interior of the country, respectively.



Kandyan Chieftain and his family from interior of the country (Photo credit: Sri Lankan Govigama Caste Marriage Introductions & Information).



A Mudiyyar from the coastal region of Sri Lanka (Photo credit: Old Ceylon).

The caste order of a country or a region within a country reflects the control and distribution of its economic resources at a given point in time. The socio-economic structures of Sri Lanka as they functioned in the Portuguese, Dutch and British periods are reasonably well documented in original Portuguese, Dutch and British sources to which we have access.

A Senior Researcher, and Anthropologist, Sunimal Fernando, has conducted extensive research on

this topic. He explains, interestingly, Sri Lanka by and large had two distinctly different kinds of economic arrangements in the predominantly Sinhala areas, which resulted in two caste orders fundamentally different from one another along the coast and in the interior of the country, respectively. The caste systems that prevailed in the country before the Europeans' arrival have neither been documented nor researched.

In the interior of the island, the economic resource base was land. On

the other hand, the coastal economy's resource base was much more diverse and hence more complex. The ownership of land was by no means unimportant; additional resources and economic opportunities based on them rendered the coastal economy complex and multi-faceted.

Fisheries provided another resource base for the people. The sea provided trading opportunities with countries across the ocean, which gave rise to boat construction, including trading ships (Yaatra Oru) and the profession



A Southern Karava wedding as seen by a western artist in 1885. Note white canopy and foot cloth of royalty (Photo credit: Old Ceylon).

of carpentry. Using these other skills not related to agriculture, there arose, side by side with agriculture, several new industries and new modes of production and exchange. Construction, transport and trade, and the cultivation and harvesting of cash crops such as cinnamon, which was traded across the seas, had soon become essential to the coast's economy. So had the production of processed fish (Jaadi) both for export and local consumption, and the distilling of liquor (Arrack) on a semi-industrial scale rendered the coastal economy even more diverse and complex.

Therefore, in terms of the coastal economy, the Karava, Salagama, Goyigama (also known as Govigama), and Durava castes enjoyed a more or less equal status at the head of the caste hierarchy, similar for all practical purposes but competing at the same time with each other for greater recognition and acclaim. Depending on the local economic context in different parts of the coast, one caste rather than another enjoyed at the ground level a slightly higher rank in terms of status and honor. At the same time, the overall hierarchical picture remained complex and confused. The dynamic and essentially entrepreneurial Karava



Nekati caste, also known as the Berava caste, were astrologers, drummers, and ritual dancers (Photo credit: Wikipedia).



An 18th-century illustration of a Goyigama officer of the kandyen king supervising a man extorting a fine (Photo credit: Wikipedia).

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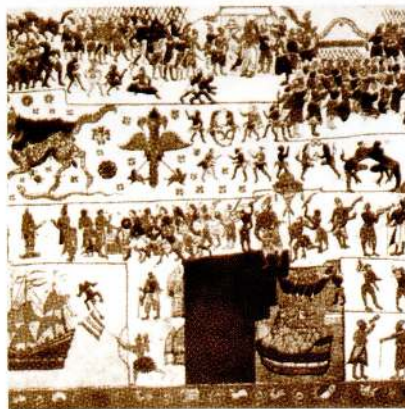
caste dominated most parts of the coastal seaboard, which today comprise, the North-Western, Western and Southern Provinces of the island. In contrast, the Salagama caste dominated the economic, social, and cultural lives of those parts of the coast where cinnamon was traditionally grown and traded. The Goyigama caste of agricultural landowners and cultivators dominated those other parts of the coast where subsistence farming of traditional food crops, such as rice, was the rule. The Durava caste had their pockets of economic power and influence and status in the North-Western and Southern provinces' coastal areas. Dutch colonial records



Artisans such as brass workers were of the Achari or Navandanna caste (Photo credit: Old Ceylon).

show, for instance, that the Rajaka or Rada caste (traditionally washermen) were settled apart from other parts of the country in a series of adjacent villages of rich rice-producing lands in the lower parts of the Walawe basin in the Ambalantota region of the Hambantota district. Here, they were an economically, politically, and socially dominant community, even presenting a challenge to Dutch power in that area.

On the other hand, in the country's interior, the land was the village economy's dominant economic resource. Unlike the coast, the country's interior had not been too exposed to influences – economic, cultural, and social – coming from outside. It, therefore, presented a socio-economic reality very different from that of the coastal seaboard. The so-called 'progressive' castes of the coast – Karava, Salagama, and Durava – were not present in the interior, which remained 'Goyigama dominated' in its castes' hierarchical ordering.



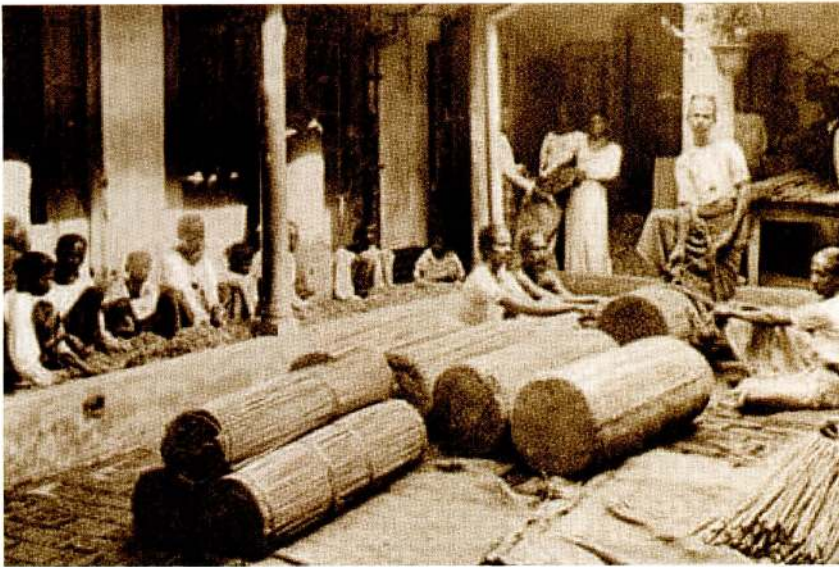
The Salagama Nambudiri flag (Photo credit: Old Ceylon).

In the country's interior, the dominant economic resource, namely land, was owned principally by members of the Goyigama (Govigama) caste and by temples following large-scale land grants made to them by earlier kings. Labor for the cultivation of land was provided by the Goyigama caste itself, by the numerically strong Devavansika/Wahumpura caste, and by the Bathgama caste of agricultural Digitized by Noolaham Foundation. noolaham.org | aayanaham.org

laborers. The Wahumpura caste, mainly located in the Sabaragamuwa Province and neighboring parts of the Southern and Western Province, is also known to provide the service of producing Jaggery/Hakuru (unrefined sugar) for the community. In stark contrast to the coastal seaboard, the country's interior displayed a socio-economic and ideological order in which the Goyigama caste dominated. The 'service castes' who are economically dependent on them arrange themselves in positions of relatively lower status along a uniform caste hierarchy to which they all subscribe.

In the interior and coastal seaboard, specific services were attached to particular service castes. The Rajaka caste, also known as the Rada/Hena caste, provided laundry services to the community and delivered special ritual services to a family at childbirth, puberty, marriage, and death. The Nekati caste, also known as the Berava caste, were astrologers, drummers, and ritual dancers. In contrast, providing services as goldsmiths, silversmiths, jewelers, brass workers, coppersmiths, and ironsmiths (which includes the forging of agricultural tools and implements) was the function of different categories of persons within the Achari or Navandanna caste. The Kumbal or Badal/Badahala caste provided potters' service while the Hunu caste provided lime for the community. The caste society of the country's interior based as it was on a rule of Goyigama caste economic and ideological hegemony left little or no room for its challenge or defiance within the framework of democratic governance in the circumstances of traditional society. The coastal caste order, on the other hand, with no single locus of power or authority but with four dominant castes (Karava, Goyigama, Salagama, and Durava) contending in the open for status, power and control provided a supremely healthy environment for the growth of democratic governance within a caste-based society.

The coastal and the interior variants of Sri Lankan caste society are



Salagama caste dominated the economic, social, and cultural lives of those parts of the coast where cinnamon was traditionally grown and traded (Photo credit: Old Ceylon).



The Durava caste engaged in toddy tapping (Photo credit: BT Images).

Sri Lankan in spirit and content. They have to be analyzed and understood on their own terms and not compared with the caste societies of village India based on premises drawn largely from Hindu religious belief and practice, which are primarily foreign to Sinhala social reality. Most scholars of the Sinhala caste system have made the fundamental error of adopting a model of a Hindu caste order from village India as their point of departure and by imposing this model on a very different empirical reality ending up with a largely falsified analysis of what caste is all about in rural Sri Lanka. The British started this practice by projecting a theory that there 'has to be one caste order' for the whole of Sinhala society. Their officials and scholars' responsibility was to identify its contours, while the ground reality remained entirely different. Soon, they found this effort to falsify the actual contours of the caste reality of rural Sri Lanka to be rewarding. Because in trying to fit the Sinhala castes along a single, consistent hierarchy and basing many of their governance practices on such a glaring falsity, they created conflict where earlier, there was none. It is much easier for them to govern the colony by resorting to their well-known practice of 'divide and rule.'



The Kumbal or Badal/Badahala caste provided potters' service (Photo credit: Old Ceylon).

Nurturing of caste conflict by distorting the analysis of Sri Lankan society's fundamental social institution, namely caste, and by then using that distortion as a basic tool of governance (or 'misgovernance') helped the British colonizer to get our people to fight each other rather than to live in peace and amity. While doing so the colonizer skillfully drew our resources away from us to their own country. In their study of caste, Sri Lankan scholars have continued to use the same premises and follow Colonial British Anthropology traditions. ®

Sunimal Fernando completed his secondary education at Royal College, Colombo after which he proceeded to the UK to complete his higher education at the Universities of Cambridge and London where he received two Masters degrees. In the 1970s he was appointed as the Coordinating Secretary to the then Prime Minister Madam Sirimavo Bandaranaike before joining the University of Peradeniya as a lecturer in Sociology. He later became the Head of the Sociology Department.

From thereon he worked in different international organizations and for nearly ten years was the Asian Regional Director of the Geneva based IRED – Development Initiatives and Networks. Subsequently he became the Deputy Secretary General of the same organization working in the field of development.

Sunimal Fernando was in charge of two national initiatives, both in the field of Language Planning; namely, the National Initiative for 'English as a Life Skill' and, the National Initiative for 'Taking the Country Towards a Trilingual Sri Lanka'. He was also an Advisor to President Mahinda Rajapaksa. He held these positions till 2015.

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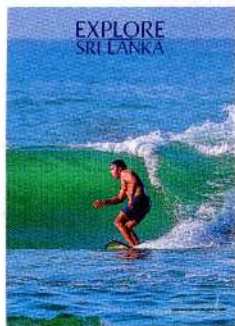


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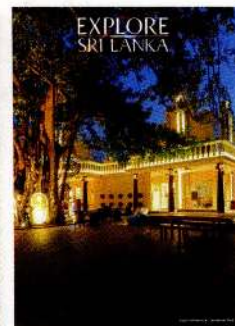
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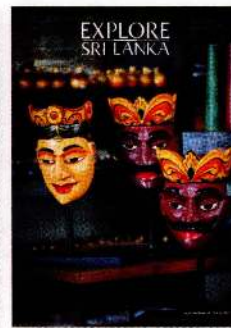
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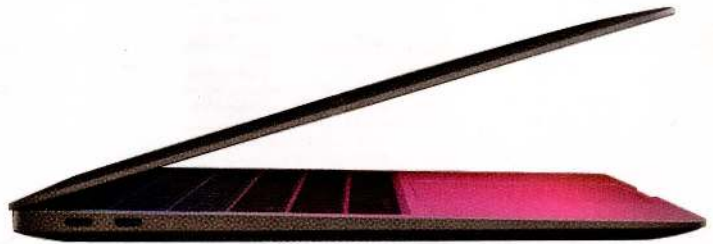
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