

The Jaffna Organ.

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The Heritage of Lanka.

EARLY RECORDS OF THE LITERATURE OF CEYLON.

"Sinhalese, in spite of its great importance in the field of Indian philology, takes only a secondary position among the languages with which this country has had early relations," said Mr. Julius de Lanerolle at the Y. M. C. A. forum on Monday in a lecture on the Literature of Lanka. But in the realm of Ceylon's literature, it occupies one cannot but grant, the very first place. The Sinhalese literature, notwithstanding the ravages it suffered through long ages, still preserves an unbroken succession of texts spread over a period of over two thousand years—a tradition which very few spoken languages of today—decidedly not any of India—can boast of. The oldest of these texts now found are in lithic records dating as far back as the second century B. C. These are the only relics we have come to possess of the literature which belongs to the early Anuradhapura period. In them, we see the early stages in the development of the Sinhalese language from its Prskritic beginnings.

"What we now possess of the earliest records is, no doubt, of a scanty nature; but there seems to be ample evidence to presuppose the existence of a complete Sinhalese literature even during the remotest ages covered by Ceylon's history. For we hear of regular literary activities in the country from these early times. Vijaya, the reputed first Sinhalese king, for instance, is said to have sent a letter to his brother Senuita. Not long after, Pandula, a Brahman scholar, proficient in the Vedas, who apparently was the head of a centre of education, taught arts and sciences to prince Pandukabhaya, and Abhaya wrote to Pandukabhaya advising the latter not to cross the Mahaganga Utiya, some time later sends a love letter to the queen of his brother king. Dutthagamini exchanges letters with a Brahman, makes it a point to furnish every inhabited village with an astrologer, a medical practitioner and a preacher, and keeps in every preaching hall, besides a canopy and a pulpit, etc., a stand for books, book covers and a bana book. Most important of all, he keeps a register of his meritorious acts, which together with similar books—*pin pot*, as they were called kept by others, may some day be traced, as Dr. Wickramasinghe pertinently suggests, to be the real origin of early historical materials of Ceylon.

The Commentaries.

"Ever since Buddhism was introduced to Ceylon in the third century B.C., a comprehensive Buddhist literature did exist in Sinhalese—notably the Commentaries. It need not, however, be supposed that the writing of the Sinhalese Commentaries was done all of a sudden, viz., immediately after the advent of Mahinda, the first reputed Buddhist Apostle of Ceylon. The naturalization of the whole of the great Buddhist literature in the Island of Ceylon," says Oldenberg, "does not look as if it had been brought about by the sudden appearance of missionaries from the Magadha Kingdom, but as if it were the fruit of a period of long and continued intercourse between Ceylon and the adjacent parts of India." It does not seem quite unreasonable to suppose that there was Buddhism in Ceylon long before Mahinda's arrival. An important recension of the Sinhalese Commentaries then existing was made and written down in books at Aluvihara, during the reign of Vattagamani Abhaya, in the first century B. C.

"The text of this recension is lost now. One redeeming feature, however, is that these commentaries were rendered into Pali in later periods. When they altogether disappeared it is difficult to say from the materials now available, but there are traces of them being used by scholars during the Polonnaruva period. There is a tradition to say that a complete set of the Sinhalese Commentaries written at Aluvihara has been preserved in a rock either at Aluvihara itself or somewhere at Anuradhapura—a tradition which need not be discredited without investigation. But no search seems so far to have been made by any responsible body. Should some day or other, the deposit of these books be found, then it is bound to be the greatest literary treasure ever unearthed in any part of the world. It may be remarked that, although these writings are now seemingly lost to us, yet we are not altogether unaware of the form of language in which they were possibly couched, for we have now in our possession a fairly good number of contemporary rock inscriptions.

Continued up

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"Of the other literary works belonging to Anuradhapura early period we are given to know only a few indeed, even by their names. For one, Eka Daladavamsa is well known. It is mentioned in the Mahavamsa and is probably the source of the now existing Dethavamsa. The Mahavamsa also speaks of a Sinhalese translation of Pali Botissā by a learned Thera during the reign of Buddhadasa himself a great scholar, is reputed to have composed a medical work by the name of Sarartha-Sangraha. A book of that name existing today is generally ascribed to this scholar. But from its language I am inclined to believe that it is not his work.

Anuradhapura Later Period.

"This was a period of great literary activity in Ceylon, with notably the advent of Buddhaghosa the commentator, when Sinhalese literature rose to a very high level. Its early part marks the most important stage in the development of the Sinhalese language, namely, the transition period when the old Prskritic forms took a definite turn towards the modern into which it finally shaped itself. Of the Kings who belong to this period, Kula Moggallana is spoken of as a poet of uncommon attainments. But none of his works exists today. The reign of Aggabodhi I has seen the highest literary achievements of this period. During his time lived twelve celebrated scholars. They produced a vast poetic literature, among which may be included the well-known Asakha Kava and the Porana Mayura Sandesa now considered to be lost. This is the first mention we find of a Sinhalese Sandesa Kava, modelled in all probability on Kalidasa's Meghaduta.

"During the same period, it is said that another Sinhalese translation of the Suttas was made by a priestly scholar. Dappula III is known to have got law reports compiled. This work too is now missing. Of the Sinhalese works which belong to the last part of this period mostly the 10th century a few survive today. The earliest of them is the first known poem on rhetoric in Sinhalese, the well known Sivabalaakara. It is a translation of Dandin's Kavyadarasa by Sēpo Sillamegga who came to the throne in the 9th Century. The next is the Dhampiya Atuva Gacchapada, a glossary to Buddhaghosa's Dhammapadatikkatha, composed by Kassapa V. This book often refers to the old Sinhalese Commentaries. Apparently these commentaries, were not generally understood in the tenth century, though they were then in existence. Possibly the old Sinhalese language in which they were written was at that time considered archaic, and therefore, not popularly studied.

"For religious learning, Pali seems to have engaged popular attention, and that is, perhaps, why this king decided to write a glossary to the Pali Commentary. His work is the first known glossary in the Sinhalese language. Sikka Valanda, Sikkhavalanda Vinasa, Herana Sikha and Heranaikha Vinasa are the names of some of the other books belonging to the Anuradhapura later period and surviving today. The rock inscriptions belonging to this period are many and of varying importance. Those that belong to its early part are more important from a linguistic point of view than otherwise. They preserve a large number of intermediate forms of Sinhalese words which are nowhere else found. Not more than one or two of them are so far edited, and that, too, quite recently. The other inscriptions of the Anuradhapura later period, more numerous than the former, are also of no means interest both linguistically and historically. One of the largest of this latter kind of inscriptions is found in the two tablets on Mihintale hill so frequently visited by pilgrims. It is ascribed to Mahinda IV.

Polonnaruva Period.

"This may be regarded as the Augustan period not only of Sinhalese literature, but of Pali as well. Ever since the break down of Polonnaruva kingdom Ceylon's literature declined and never afterwards rose to such a great height of brilliancy. By this time the Sinhalese language had developed to its fullest extent. This period opens with the reign of Vijayabahu I, who himself was a great poet. He rendered great support to the scholars of Ceylon as well as those who had come here from abroad. He also made a Sinhalese translation of Dhammasanghi, which however, is not to be found today. The Jataka Atuva Gaccha-

(Continued on page 4.)

Acknowledgment.

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We beg to thank our numerous friends and relations who were kind enough to send congratulatory messages on the occasion of the marriage of Mr. K. Navaratnam, Assistant Sheriff, Kachcheri, Kurnegala with Miss Thangammah sister of Mr. K. Namasiyayam, Assistant Master, Jaffna Hindu College.

K. THIRUCHITTAMPALAM
and
K. NAMASIYAYAM.

(Mis 421 3rd)

The Hindu Organ.



JAFFNA, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1931.

ECONOMICS OF PADDY CULTIVATION.

:O:

NO COUNTRY CAN ACHIEVE ECONOMIC independence unless it becomes self-supporting in the matter of the supply of its necessities of life, viz food and cloth. In the past, Ceylon produced its own food and manufactured its own cloth. In the case of paddy which has been its staple food product, it is recorded, that considerable quantity of its surplus production was exported to other countries. During the last one hundred years things had changed so completely that Ceylon has to depend on foreign countries for its food and cloth. Unless earnest and serious efforts are made, the present economic dependence will prove disastrous to the interests of the country.

The seriousness of the present situation is realized by everybody. The Government has appointed a Commission to go into the question. The Ceylon National Congress has made it a subject of its resolution in its forthcoming sessions. The Congress advocates the adoption of a five years plan for the increase of food production. The present production of paddy is barely sufficient for one-third of its population. For the balance imports have to be obtained from Burma and India.

Various causes have been assigned for the decline of the paddy cultivation. One of which is the competition from the imported paddy and rice. The production of paddy in Burma and India is so cheap that it is able to undersell the Ceylon variety. There is a duty of one rupee per cwt on imported rice. Notwithstanding this import duty the imported paddy and rice are being sold cheaper than the Ceylon product. This competition cannot be met by prohibition of import as suggested by some publicists or by the imposition of a high tariff as suggested by others. Such a step will be a burden on the poor people who live on the imported paddy or rice. The only way to meet the competition is to reduce the cost of production and to produce it cheaply as it is done in other countries.

A comparative study of figures for the production of paddy per acre of different countries shows that the yield per acre in Ceylon is the lowest in the world. In Spain 101 bushels of paddy is produced per acre; in Japan it is 77 per acre; Egypt, 73 bushels; Italy 63; British Guiana 54; Java 40, India 30 to 40; Ceylon 15 to 20 bushels. When production is so low per acre, it is natural that the cost of production will be great and it is difficult for the Ceylon cultivator to place his produce at the market on the same basis as that of India. As pointed out above, the present production, is sufficient for one-third of the population. 830000 acres are under cultivation. If steps could be taken to double the rate of production per acre, paddy cultivation will become a paying proposition and a considerable sum of money that now goes out can be retained in the country. What is necessary is not the opening of new acres but concentration on those acres that are already under

cultivation and to use improved methods in the production of paddy.

Manuring, weeding, transplanting and seed selection are necessary to increase the yield per acre. The Government and the cultivators should explore possibilities in this direction.

The next question is one of transport. Paddy is produced in almost inaccessible areas. Opening of roads and other means of communication are necessary if the cultivators are to realise full value for their industry. In our opinion the remedy is in the hands of the people and the Government. The cultivators should realise that they can earn their profit by adopting the same improved methods as in other countries where paddy cultivation is a profitable industry.

Railway Return Tickets.

:O:

ABOLITION NEXT YEAR.

The railway return tickets, which, according to the original plans of the Railway authorities were to be abolished this month, will enjoy a further lease of life for about a month says the "Ceylon Observer."

It was learned on inquiries at Railway Headquarters, says the paper, that the introduction of the new passenger fares, along with the abolition of the return ticket, will not now take place early this month as originally contemplated. January 1, next year is mentioned as the likely date on which the charges will be introduced.

The Key to Swaraj.

Help to educate Hindu Children on Hindu lines. Assist the Hindu Board, the only organised Body doing this work on a large scale. Rs. 100,000/- wanted immediately to save it from ruin.

Cost of Education in Ceylon

TWO SCHOOLS FAVOUR LOWER FEES OUT OF 52

TEXT BOOK CHANGES

A meeting of the Executive Committee for Education was held on Tuesday morning to consider the proposal for the reduction of school fees and for the prevention of the frequent change of text books in schools.

It is learnt that the Committee had before it information on the subject which was received as a result of a circulation from 52 schools, only two of which were of opinion that a reduction was feasible. The Committee is therefore powerless to act in these circumstances, as managers could not think of reducing the school fees unless Government was able to increase the grants to schools, or until a scheme for the reduction of salaries of teachers could be evolved. A suggestion that Managers and Principals of schools should confer with the Minister of Education on the subject was deferred until the Board of Education went into it fully.

It was announced that the Committee had already taken steps to prevent the frequent change of text books and had circulated Principals of Schools in that direction, suggesting a minimum of three years before a text book is changed.

State Council out of Colombo.

:O:

"OUT OF THE QUESTION"

Mr G E de Silva gave notice of a question that the Leader of the State Council be pleased to inform the House whether he has any intention of holding sessions of the State Council at Kandy and Jaffna in accordance with the recommendation of the Donoughmore Commission. Government has replied that in the present financial situation the Board of Ministers considers this proposal entirely out of the question.

The Jaffna Hindu College.

MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

The 27th Annual General meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jaffna Hindu College was held on Saturday the 28th November 1931.

Present: A. Naganatha Modir (in the chair) Messrs. W. Daralawamy, S. R. Rajaratnam, R. Sivagurunathar, V. R. Venkataraman, A. Ambalawanan, V. Ramalingam, V. Ponnampalam M. S. Rajaratnam, E. R. Nallalah K. S. Veeravagoo, S. T. M. P. Sribamparanatha Chettyar S. M. Visvalinom S. Kanagasabal, E. Kathiraveloo P. Rajagopal, M. Somasundaram R. Kandiah, V. S. S. Cumaraswamy, P. K. Somasundaram, S. Thambipillai and Modirs. M. S. Ramalingam and G. Subramaniam.

The Secretary's Report was read and confirmed. The Treasurer's Balance sheet was adopted. The Auditors' Report was read. The Budgets for the year 1931-32 were passed.

Office bearers.

The following office bearers were elected:— President: A. Naganatha Modir J.F., J.P.M. Vice-President: Mr. V. Casipillai, Proctor S. O. J. P.

Manager: Mr. W. Daralawamy, Advocate. Secretary: Mr. A. Ampalawanan Proctor. Asst. Secretary Mr. V. Ramalingam—do— Treasurer: Mr. V. Ponnampalam. Auditor: Shroff Modir S. M. Visvalingam. Committee:—Messrs. R. Sivagurunathar, R. R. Nallalah and P. K. Somasundaram

Secretary's Report for 1930-31.

The Secretary submitted the following report on the affairs of the Board for the year ending 30th June 1931:—

Meeting of the Standing Committee.

During the year under report there were 9 meetings of the Standing Committee.

Affairs of the College.

The following figures give the strength and average attendance of the pupils as at the month of June 1931:—Total No. on the Rolls, 600 Average attendance 474.

Examination Results: The Matric results were as usual above the mark; the Senior results, however, did not show much improvement while the Junior results showed a sudden and marked deterioration. But, even in these examinations, our results were above the average for the whole island. The following table gives a comparison of the figures for 1929-30:—

1930-31	No. Presented.	No. Passed.	No. Passed with Hon.
Junior	43	18	2
Senior	46	14	1
Matric	17	8	—
1929-30			
Junior	40	22	1
Senior	37	18	6
Matric	16	7	—

Equipment:—Some additions have been made to the furniture of the College. The laboratory has profited by the supply of a gas plant at a cost of Rs. 2543 63 but the question of water supply still awaits solution.

Annual Inspection: The Annual Inspection of the college took place in Nov. 30 and was rather thorough. Following the remarks in the Triennial Inspection Report for 1929 and proceeding on certain observations recorded by themselves, the Inspectors of 1930 recommended that, in the interests of discipline and general efficiency, certain changes should be made in the personnel of the teaching staff. We gave the subject our careful consideration and re-adjusted the staff in the light of their recommendations. The following changes in the teaching staff occurred in the course of the year:—

Mr. A. K. Ellithamby passed away in December 1930.

Mr. M. Mallavanam—transferred from the Vaddukottai Hindu English School.

Mr. T. Mutiucumar—discontinued as from 1st June 1931.

Mr. V. M. Vayaganam—discontinued as from 1st June 1931.

The College Societies.

Students of all classes have been evincing great interest in the proceedings of these societies. The societies of the upper classes such as the Lyceum and Y. M. H. A. have been devoting their time more and more to self-education and self-culture and growing less and less dependent on the help of outside agencies. An increasing sense of responsibility seems to be manifesting itself in their activities.

Sports and Games.

A greater activity has been shown this year than during previous years. The want of a suitable playground has been our greatest handicap in this matter. We are attempting to get over it making a provision of Rs. 2000/ in the Budget for 1931 to 1932.

Continued on page 8.

News & Notes.

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It is reported that nearly seven lakhs of rupees have been reduced by the State Council by revising the Estimates.

The Jaffna Urban District Council Electric Lighting Scheme came to a success, when the town was supplied with electric light from last night.

Dr. R. Kandiah has been appointed Medical Officer of Health, Tangalle and Dr. S. Ramanathan as House Officer, General Hospital, Colombo.

Mr. R. L. Perera, K. C. who has been appointed as Commissioner of Assizes, took his oath before the Chief Justice and other Judges of the Supreme Court on Monday the 30th ultimo.

The Negombo Urban District Council has passed a resolution to give free service connections for the first 300 applicants in view of the further extensions of Electric Lighting Scheme.

Mr. A. Goonesinghe gave notice of a motion to appoint a Committee of the State Council to inquire and report on the scant attention paid by officials to petition presented by Members of the State Council.

The Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Garvin agreeing, allowed the appeal of Mr. R. Forsyth, an Engineer of Messrs Walker & Clark Spence, Ltd., for the recovery of a sum of Rs. 6111 and costs as damages sustained by him for discontinuing his services without due notice.

The special Committee of the Municipal Council, Colombo which was appointed to go into the working of the Charity Commissioner's Department has resolved that an invitation be issued to members of the public who desired to give evidence on the works of the Charity Commissioner.

The Auditor General, who is also the Municipal Auditor has raised a question as to why private Hospital or nursing homes should be exempt from water rate, and how the revenue of the Colombo Municipal Council be made good, which it had lost for so many years.

At a meeting of the Board of Education held on Saturday last, a proposal that the salaries of teachers in Vernacular schools should be paid direct by the Department was discussed, and the whole question of what steps should be taken to ensure the regular payment of such salaries was deferred for a special meeting of the Board to be held on December 12, 1931.

The Nattukottai Chettiyar's Association passed a resolution protesting against the introduction of Income Tax, and passing a vote of confidence on the present members of the State Council, and that in the event of the State Council having to be dissolved on account of any momentous questions including Income Tax, to return those Councillors again with their unanimous support.

Mr. Lloyd George is due to arrive in Colombo on Sunday evening. He is expected to reside at Mackinnon House, Cambridge Place, during his stay. H. E. the Governor had offered to place Kings' "Pavilion", Kandy, at the disposal of Mr. Lloyd George and his party. But it is understood that Lord Inchausti had made other arrangements early for the distinguished visitors, who will be the P. & O. Chairman's guests while in Colombo.

The State Council.

THIRD READING OF BUDGET PASSED.

The Third Reading of the Budget for 1931-32 was passed late in the evening on Tuesday the 1st December, 1931.

