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*Journal of the*  
**SRI LANKA BRANCH**  
*of the*  
**ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY**

\*

*New Series, Volume XXIII*  
*Edited by the Honorary Secretary*

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*The purpose of the Society is to institute and promote inquiries  
into the History, Religions, Languages, Literature, Arts,  
Sciences and Social Conditions of the present and  
former inhabitants of the Island of  
Sri Lanka, and connected cultures.*

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## CONTENTS

	Page
1. Preface	- 1
2. CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS et al- Ananda K. Coomaraswamy	2-7
3. Prof. D. E. HETTIARATCHI - President of the Royal Asiatic Society (S. L. B.) - Address ... ..	8-10
4. Dr. N. D. WIJESEKERA, M. A. Ph. D.-Life and Work of Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy ... ..	11-20
5. Prof. EMERITUS K KULARATNAM, Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy ... ..	21-24
6. Gate Mudaliyar A. C. G. S. AMARASEKERA - Ananda K. Coomaraswamy Centenary 22. 8. 77. ... ..	25-27
7. Dr. (Mrs.) DHARMA THIRUNAVUKARASU - Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Sri Lanka, Colombo. Dr Ananda K. Coomaraswamy - An Inter - Preter of the Language of Art ... ..	28-35
8. E. J. DONOVAN - Secretary for Cultural Affairs, American Embassy, Colombo - Ananda K. Coomaraswamy	36-40
9 His Excellency - Mr. WILLIAM GOPALLAWA -- President of Sri Lanka - Speech ... ..	41-43
Office-Bearers for—1977 ... ..	i
Annual Report of the Sri Lanka Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society for 1976 ... ..	ii
Office Bearers of the Society for 1976 ... ..	iii
Honorary Treasurer's Report for 1976 ... ..	iv
Balance sheet and statements of accounts for the year Ending 31st December, 1976	v-x
Abstract of proceedings, Minutes of the 130th Annual General Meeting ... ..	xi-xii
Abstract of proceedings - Council Meeting ... ..	xiii-xv
Publications received in Exchange ... ..	xvi
Publications added to the Library Donations ... ..	xvii
Members admitted during the year 1977 and Notice to Contributors ... ..	xviii

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## ERRATA

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### Preface

This special issue of the Journal of the Sri Lanka Branch Royal Asiatic Society is intended to commemorate the Birth Centenary of a polymath savant from Sri Lanka, Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. It consists of a short biographical account of his life and work, a Selected Bibliography and some of the speeches made at the Public Meeting organised by the Royal Asiatic Society in Colombo to mark the Centenary on Monday 22nd August 1977.

Soon after his death an American Scholar, Langdon Warner, wrote: "our true debt to Ananda Coomaraswamy will not be appreciated during his lifetime. A century may elapse before art critics, historians of religions and philosophers will turn to his writings for source material". In recent years there has been a revival of interest abroad in his ideas. In 1977 Princeton University Press published a biography of Coomaraswamy by Roger Lipsey and two volumes of Selected Writings also edited by him. Incidentally, in a review of these three books in the "Times" of London Coomaraswamy was rightly described as "one of the great seminal minds of this century". At the end of 1979 an enlarged edition of "The Bugbear of Literacy" (1949), a selection of Coomaraswamy's essays, first published in 1947 under the title "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" was published by Perennial Books of London, containing a new essay "The Bugbear of Democracy, Freedom and Equality".

It is earnestly hoped that this commemorative issue of our Journal will stimulate a revival of interest in Coomaraswamy's ideas in the land of his birth.

## Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

3

Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy was born in Colombo on 22nd August 1877. His father, Sir Mutu Coomaraswamy, the first non-Christian from Asia to be called to the English Bar, was a prominent member of the Legislative Council and the author of translations of Pali Buddhist and Tamil Hindu texts. His mother, Lady Elizabeth Coomaraswamy, was English. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan and Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam were his first cousins.

Coomaraswamy's father died when he was almost two years old, and his mother brought him up in England, where he received his education at Wycliffe College in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire and later at University College, London. In 1903, at the age of 25, he was appointed Director of the Mineralogical Survey of Ceylon and three years later his "Contributions to the Geology of Ceylon" won him the degree of Doctor of Science of the University of London, of which he was later elected a Fellow.

Travelling throughout Ceylon in the course of his official duties, Coomaraswamy became acutely aware of the deplorable condition into which the traditional arts and crafts of the country had fallen after a century of British rule. In 1905 he founded the Ceylon Social Reform Society in order to stress the grave threat to native social and cultural traditions from the indiscriminate copying of Western models. In lectures and in articles in the "Ceylon National Review" (of which he was the first Editor) he urged the use of the national languages in education and the preservation of the indigenous arts and modes of living. He also supported actively the agitation, led by his cousin Arunachalam, for the establishment of a Ceylon University.

In 1907 he settled down in England, but thereafter he visited India and Ceylon from time to time. In 1908 he published his first major work "Mediaeval Sinhalese Art", and in 1910 he founded the India Society in London to promote a better appreciation of Greater India in the West.

In the following twenty years he produced numerous books and articles on Indian art and culture and in these writings he performed the dual function of revealing to the people of India and Ceylon the glory of their cultural heritage and of interpreting to the West Eastern artistic, religious and philosophical concepts. He travelled widely in India, where he enjoyed the friendship of the Tagores, and built up an impressive collection of Indian art. This collection was eventually purchased for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where in 1917, at a time when he was disappointed by the failure of Indians to show any real appreciation of his work he was appointed Keeper of Indian Art.

He worked at the Museum, first in this post and later as Research Fellow in Oriental Art, for the next thirty years. During this period he published a prodigious number of books, pamphlets, articles and book reviews, delivered many lectures and carried on an extensive correspondence with scholars all over the world on a wide variety of subjects. In the last fifteen years of his life, between 1932 and 1947, he produced what he himself regarded as his maturest and most important work, largely in the field of the traditional theory of art and of the relation of man to his work and to society and in the fields of comparative religion and metaphysics. In learned circles he was recognised to be one of the great seminal minds of this century and as the leading exponent in the English-speaking world of the Perennial Philosophy, in the light of which human cultures in all their apparent diversity are seen as merely dialects of the same language of the Spirit.

He had expressed his intention to leave the United States and go into retirement in India in 1948, but he died in Boston at the age of seventy on 9th September 1947.

"It was Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy's book "Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism" which brought me into the Buddhist movement when I first read it at the age of 17 in 1918, and I have read it many times since. I, therefore, have a particular regard for his memory. I regard this book as the finest single volume on Buddhism yet published"

**Christmas Humphreys.**

"To Ananda K Coomaraswamy the term 'genius' may be aptly and truly applied, His devotion to truth and the search for it was the guiding motive and master passion of his intense intellectual life. To this end he brought to bear immense and unrelenting energy, an exact and scrupulous scholarship, a trained and disciplined mind which could be either analytic or synthetic as occasion demanded, and perhaps above all, and in consequence of these factors, his knowledge, which was supremely well organised, grew to vast encyclopaedic proportions. So much so that there is no one person alive who could do justice to the many branches of his critical or constructive mental activity".

**I. B. Horner.**

"To sum up Ananda Coomaraswamy's qualities as an expounder of the traditional teaching under its many forms would require more than just a few pages. He was a master of analysis, and he could always be trusted to beat the moderns at their own game. He was a master of synthesis, and one who never lost sight of the wood for the trees. He had the gift of tongues in more senses than one ; literally, since his accurate knowledge of languages classical or spoken was prodigious, and metaphorically, in that he could make use of the language of all the traditions of the world, past or present, at will; resorting to this one for the purpose of illustrating that, so that at one moment it seemed to be a Christian voice that was speaking, at another a Platonic voice, then again a Hindu or Buddhist one, then it might be a voice belonging to a Sufi or a Redskin. The Scripture has said "all peoples and languages shall praise the Lord"; he was the living exponent of this doctrine".

**Marco Pallis.**

"There was one person ... to whose influence I am deeply grateful; I mean the philosopher and theologian, Ananda Coomaraswamy. Others have written the truth about life and religion and man's work. Others have written good clear English. Others have had the gift of witty exposition. Others have understood the metaphysics of Christianity and others have understood the metaphysics of Hinduism and Buddhism. Others have understood the true significance of erotic drawings and sculptures. Others have seen the relationships of the true and the good and the beautiful. Others have had apparently unlimited learning. Others have loved; others have been kind and generous. But I know of no one else in whom all these gifts and all these powers have been combined. I dare not confess myself his disciple; that would only embarrass him. I can only say that I believe that no other living writer has written the truth in matters of art and life and religion and piety with such wisdom and understanding".

**Eric Gill.**

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Address by:

9

**President of the Royal Asiatic Society,  
Sri Lanka Branch.**

Professor Dr. D. E. Hettiarachi.

Your Excellency, The President of the Republic of Sri Lanka, it is my pleasant duty as President of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, to extend to you, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Council and members of the Society, our most respectful and cordial welcome on this important and commemorative occasion. As Patron of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, you have never failed to extend your support to us with the greatest interest and goodwill, and it is with a due sense of the gratitude we owe you for the assistance you have rendered us at all times that we thank you for your courtesy in consenting to grace this occasion with your presence here today and preside at this public meeting.

Your Excellencies, the High Commissioners and Ambassadors and other distinguished guests present here this evening Ladies and Gentlemen, let me extend to you, too, a most warm and cordial welcome and thank you for your presence on this occasion.

It is, in my view, most apposite that our Society, the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, the second oldest Society in Asia, the first being the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, should meet today to mark the centenary of the birth of the late Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, for Dr. Coomaraswamy was not only, one of the most eminent, Asians of his time but he was, also, a son of Sri Lanka; further, the greater part of his life and work was spent in the colonial period, associated with the government of a considerable part of Asia, including Sri Lanka, by the British Raj, and, hence, it is meet and fitting that our Society, which was founded in 1846—131 years ago during the high tide of British rule, should assemble this evening to pay homage to the memory of this most

distinguished Asian savant, whom we in Sri Lanka have the privilege and rare good fortune of being able to claim as our own.

There is no doubt that Dr. Coomaraswamy was the most profound expert in the cultures of the great Asian continent and the most brilliant exponent of these cultures. Indeed, it may be truly claimed that no one has done more in the cultural sphere to interpret the East to the West, and to awaken in the minds of the public of all countries an appreciation of the spiritual significance of the arts of the Orient than Dr. Coomaraswamy.

His interests were amazingly wide and embraced the whole gamut of culture from archaeology to religion. His output was prolific and each of his publications was, appropriately, a work not only of the highest erudition and scholarship, but also of art, in the truest sense. It is impossible to be selective about his publications, so versatile and intellectually powerful as they are, but to us here in Sri Lanka three of them may be spot-lighted as being of specially topical significance i. e. Mediaeval Sinhalese Art, published in 1908, the Arts and Crafts of Ceylon, which followed in 1913 and the History of Indian and Indonesian Art. If we may identify the special characteristic of his approach to Art which invested his work with such depth and profundity, it was his penetrating spiritual insight into the underlying harmony in all great Art, whether Eastern or Western.

To Dr. Coomaraswamy more than to any other person we owe the revival, in our times, of the interest in our cultural and spiritual heritage which had ebbed and almost faded away during the colonial period. It was my happy experience recently to read his new approach to the Vedas and to realize, afresh, with a delightful sense of re-discovery how keen was his understanding and how sharp and incisive his knowledge of the Vedas.

It is not my intention to usurp the time of the several distinguished persons who have so kindly come here today to address this meeting on different aspects of Dr. Coomaraswamy's life and work. The Secretary, Mr. P. R. Sittampalam, will introduce these speakers to you before His Excellency calls upon each of them to address the gathering. After the addresses of the speakers, the film entitled, "The Dance of Shiva" an exposition of the life and work of Dr. Coomaraswamy, produced by the United States Embassy in New Delhi in collaboration with Sri Lanka and Indian Scholars, will be screened.

I thank you for your patience in listening to me this while, and, whilst expressing the hope that you will enjoy this evening's "feast of reason and flow of soul", do hereby conclude my introductory address. Thank you, once again. Thank you.

## Life and work of Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy

By Dr. N. D. Wijesekera Ph. D.

We are assembled here to celebrate the birth Centenary of the late Dr. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy. This is the first occasion that the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka has arranged to celebrate such an event. That does not mean that there were no other scholars of such eminence in Sri Lanka. There certainly were. But Dr. Coomaraswamy had achieved something special by gaining the highest recognition for ancient arts and crafts of Sri Lanka, India, Tean and further East, from the highest authorities of art in the whole world. That is indeed a unique achievement for which the people of Sri Lanka should be ever grateful to him. And they certainly are.

I am thankful to the council of the Royal Asiatic Society for selecting me to address this august gathering on this memorable occasion. I knew Dr. Coomaraswamy through his writings. I have communicated with him on occasions. But I never had the fortune to meet him in person. I knew very little about him and therefore I seek your forgiveness if I fail to do justice in attempting to speak about the life and work of Dr. Coomaraswamy within the short time allotted to me.

Although my tribute may not be adequate and my competence to convey it incommensurate with the greatness of the man I shall endeavour to fulfill this task even as a humble votary makes his offering in all sincerity, before the icon or symbol of his faith. In such a situation neither the quality and quantity of the offering nor the qualification of the votary ever comes into question. It is the thought of the votary that matters and not the colour and fragrance of the offering itself. I should like to believe that. I represent all those present and not present in paying this tribute to the revered memory of that great Ceylonese savant who saw the light of day in Sri Lanka 100 years ago.

Coomaraswamy belonged to an illustrious family whose ancestral home was Manipay in the Jaffna Peninsula, in Sri Lanka. His father was Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy who received his early education in England. He was the first East Indian Hindu to be called to the English Bar from Lincoln's Inn. That was in 1863. In England he married an English lady named Elizabeth Clay Beeby. Later, Coomaraswamy was knighted. They returned home in 1875. Sir Muttu was a reputed Oriental Scholar and was the first to translate a Buddhist Pali Text into English.

Sir Muttu and Lady Coomaraswamy were blessed with a son. He was born on 22nd August, 1877, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The boy was given the name Ananda which meant joy and Kentish which was intended to remember his mother's place of birth. Before the child's second birthday Sir Muttu arranged to visit England. Mother and son left in advance leaving him to follow later. On the very day he was to have embarked Sir Muttu died, leaving his widow in the land of her birth with an infant to care for.

The mother lived in Kent until her death in 1942. The son was brought up by her in her English home with loving care and devotion. Ananda was sent to Wycliffe College, at Stonehouse in Gloucestershire. The boy showed exceptional ability very early. At the age of 12 he proved his exceptional ability as a very clever student. He learnt Latin and Greek in addition to the usual subjects. Besides studies, sports and hobbies interested him. He was an excellent athlete. From his youth he felt the all pervading influence of John Ruskin and William Morris. At the earliest age allowed at that time Ananda passed the Matriculation Examination of the University of London. At the age of 18 he entered University College, London. At School he had won prizes and medals for science. Likewise he repeated this performance at the University. He graduated with 1st Class Honours in the B. Sc. Examination in Geology and Botany. Young Coomaraswamy showed a keen interest in writing as well. He contributed to the Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society a paper on "Ceylon Rocks and Graphite"

As a Fellow elected by the University College he commenced working for the Doctorate of Science. Having been appointed by the Government of Sri Lanka to survey the mineral resources of Sri Lanka Dr. Coomaraswamy returned to the Island in 1903, at the age of 26. Along with his scientific pursuits he continued the study of Latin, Greek, French, Italian and German as well. His grasp of the English Language was thorough and his writing was mathematically precise and lucid. During his research work in Sri Lanka several scientific papers were prepared by him about minerals of Sri Lanka. But as to when and how traditional arts and culture changed the course of his studies no one can say. One feels that during his sojourn in Sri Lanka and India the sight of ancient art objects, monuments and craftsmen at work would have fascinated him and lead him to the study of traditional culture, arts and crafts in real earnest. He began the study of Pali and Sanskrit as well as a means to further his studies.

Dr. Coomaraswamy pursued his main study of mineral resources in real earnest. His endeavours were soon rewarded. He discovered a thorium consisting of thorium oxide with the oxides of cerium metals and uranium. This won him high recognition. But he refused to give his own name to the discovery. This sense of modesty and the absence of egoism were already directing his mind towards his new philosophy of life. He wrote several papers. Among them were valuable contributions to the geology of Sri Lanka. And these were submitted as his thesis for the Doctorate of Science. As these contributed to new knowledge the Doctorate was awarded.

Coomaraswamy was tall, broad shouldered and athletic in his movements. He was fair and handsome, possessed with the dignity of an aristocrat and the humility of a scholar he was liked by all who came to know him. His favourite colours were tan and pale brown. He was always well dressed in suits of these colours. His dark hair and clean shaven face added to his handsome appearance. His arresting personality reflected the image of a fine Indian of commanding stature. In spite of such remarkable physical qualities the mind within him was in conflict with political, cultural and social movements of the time. The

study of arts and crafts, ancient ruins and archaeological finds provided comfort and consolation. The appreciation of beauty in traditional and classical Eastern art lead him in a new direction. These awakened him to the realization of the sad plight of native arts and crafts as a result of the sweeping influence of colonialism.

Was it the influence of the national independence movements or was it the natural reaction of an eastern mind trying to find its own freedom that induced him to champion a new cause. I do not know. But such dynamic impulses may have driven him to speak for the national cultures which were threatened with extinction by the proselytising fury of occidental civilization. Inspired by the new movements of the West and steeped in the knowledge of traditional art of India, Sri Lanka and Iran he began to develop within him a new philosophy of the existence of a perennial totality of spiritual values.

The nationalist movements in South Africa, India and Sri Lanka were demanding political freedom, social Justice and cultural resurgence. Few intellectuals in the West were supporting the aspirations of the colonial peoples. Freedom was beckoning all Indian and Sri Lankan youth and no one ignored the call. During his stay in Sri Lanka Coomaraswamy founded the Ceylon Reform Society in 1905. He edited the Ceylon National Review published by this Society. He joined his cousins and other leaders who were pioneering the Ceylon University Movement. He delivered lectures and participated in other cultural activities. As he was a brilliant speaker the audiences were greatly influenced by the views so lucidly expressed by him. He convinced many by his clear writing. The charming manner of speech and striking personality helped considerably in persuading others. He appealed for national regeneration through a clear understanding and appreciation of traditional culture. For he believed that in the traditional cultures and myths of the world are embodied perennial values of a universal heritage of all mankind.

On completion of his agreement with the Government of Ceylon Coomaraswamy left the Island on 28th December, 1906 to visit India. I am not in a position to say whether he would have

remained here if any bright prospects were held before him. But it may be said that the climate at the Colombo Museum was not too favourable for prospective scholars and he may have left in search of a better climate for scholarship elsewhere. His visits to India enabled him to gain a deeper insight into the religion and philosophy of her ancient sages. This was the time he was being further influenced by the writings of Rene Guenon. It was the time he learnt more about Vedic lore, Upanishads, Buddhism and Confucius' reflections. It was the time he studied Sanskrit and Indian languages. Perhaps the example of his learned father prompted him to pursue such a course and the vision of his mother urged him to fulfil her expectation. Thereafter Coomaraswamy returned to England to publish the material so far collected.

The continued interest took him to India on several occasions. During such visits he actively engaged himself in collecting drawings, paintings, manuscripts and minor art objects. At this time the centre of art studies in India was Calcutta and Allahabad, Coomaraswamy arranged an art exhibition at Allahabad. This collection of selected specimens was offered to the Allahabad Museum but the offer was not accepted by the Government of India. He moved to Calcutta and lectured on Moghul and Rajput art before the Indian Society of Oriental Art in Calcutta. On his return to England he presented his views on the "study of Indian art" before the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain in London. Thereby he introduced to the English speaking world the finest art expressions in India and Sri Lanka. In 1908 Coomaraswamy brought out his first book entitled 'Mediaeval Sinhalese Art' which has remained a masterpiece.

But nationalism had almost converted him to be an active participant in the Indian freedom struggle. He wrote a series of essays on national idealism. He spoke publicly against the imprisonment of Gandhi and the partition of Bengal. By this time the name of Coomaraswamy was known to circles of European scholars interested in Asian art and culture. His writings had attracted many of them to a closer study of Eastern Art, religion and philosophy. His reactionary character and deep sympathy for the artist and craftsman brought him into conflict with

industrialization and Western civilization. From now, love of India influenced him. Freedom from British rule and Indian independence absorbed his attention. He began to organise meetings and address them himself.

In 1910 Coomaraswamy came to Benares for six months. His interests extended to all kinds of fine arts. These included Moghul art, Rajput art, Kashmir shawls, and bronze objects. Traditional culture of Asia impressed him most. Through this medium he was feeling his way leading to ultimate realization of the oneness of traditional culture. In all his studies he was able to get at the sources through his knowledge of Sanskrit, Pali, Greek, Latin, German and French. Because of his linguistic ability Coomaraswamy was able to read the original writings of Plato, Dante, Saints of Europe of the Middle Ages, Meister Eickhardt, Rene Guenon, Vedic lore, Upanishads, Buddhism and Confucius. In 1912 his book on "The Dancing Siva" was published. This was followed by "Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon" in 1913. Then appeared the volume "Bronzes in the Colombo Museum" and "Visvakarma Examples of Indian Sculpture" in 1914.

He continued to give active support to Gandhi's freedom struggle and was appointed Honorary National President of the National Committee for Indian Freedom formed in Washington in 1914. His movements and activities were being closely watched by the British Government. The visits undertaken to India in search of knowledge began to be interpreted with suspicion. Of course the world War was imminent. The swadeshi movement was active. He was crusading for art and swadeshi and national education instead of the British system through English. He was a freedom fighter and a lover of art and peace. It is true that he was a conscientious objector and refused to serve in the British Army. Instead he thought of joining the Indian Ambulance Corps in 1914. At a meeting in Caxton Hall Coomaraswamy along with Jinna and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu paid a glowing tribute to Mahatma Gandhi's struggle in South Africa.

All this was too much for the British Government to bear and it had to do something to curb him. On his return from another visit to India he felt he had been followed by British

officials. His activities in India more than confirmed the suspicions. Coomaraswamy knew by now that he was under suspicion and feared that he would be questioned on his return from India. In fact it happened exactly as he expected. He had to answer questions by Scotland Yard Officers on several occasions. That was the time when he was about to leave on a concert tour of musical recitals to the United States. During the War years several Military Acts were in force. In spite of such legal restrictions he remained neutral throughout the war years. In the midst of severe hardships, strong suspicions, and fears he came to Benares again. This time his intention was to obtain a post as a Professor of Indian Art. But this was not possible. He returned somewhat disappointed but not discouraged. He published two more books in 1916.

An event that changed the entire life of Coomaraswamy was his acquaintance with Dr. Denman Waldo Ross who was one of the greatest connoisseurs of Oriental Art in America at the time. He was also a Trustee of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston from 1895. At the India Society of London (later Royal Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon) Coomaraswamy came to know him more and more, as Coomaraswamy was a Founder Member of the original Executive Council. That being so he appreciated the keen interest shown by Dr. Ross in Oriental Art. Coomaraswamy presented his Private collection of 100 Moghul and Rajput paintings, Indian manuscripts, sculpture, small bronzes and miniatures to the Boston Museum to form a nucleus of Indian Art. It is worth noting that this same collection had been previously offered to the Museum at Benares and was rejected, by the Government of India. This valuable collection enabled Dr. Ross to start a Department of Indian Art in addition to the Chinese and Japanese Art collections at the Boston Museum. There occurred an event that surprised everyone including him, which was to change his course and change his entire life. Dr. Ross invited Coomaraswamy to be the Keeper of the new Department in 1917. It was just the opening that he was looking for and it came not a bit too soon. As Coomaraswamy had private income the offer was accepted on a token salary. He was not after money or riches. He was in search of truth for he felt true art is nothing but truth. What he wanted was freedom.

to work in an atmosphere of freedom. When the opportunity came he seized it and worked for full 30 years to become the world's greatest authority on Eastern Art.

The new assignment satisfied Coomaraswamy both for its academic environment and spiritual atmosphere amidst art treasures. The new situation offered him hope and freedom to express his views on Indian and Asian art free from suspicion and questioning by Scotland Yard men. Although half English and half Sri Lanka, by birth he was an Indian nationalist by firm conviction. His attitude to British rule was never motivated by rancour or malice, hatred or enmity. It was not due to political or racial prejudice. He feared India would lose her traditional culture and national spirit and her very identity. Without the traditional values cherished by India it would be a mere copy of the West. The freedom movement had by then generated sufficient strength in the minds of the people of India, Sri Lanka and Burma to protest publicly, in writing and speaking, that British rule was not in the best interests of the people of those lands, their culture religion and way of life. Freedom was desired not for aping the industrial West but for regenerating and reviving the arts and crafts of the East. So in 1919, when after World War I several intellectuals like Romain Roland and others issued a "Declaration of Independence of the Mind" the only Eastern signatories were Rabindranath Tagore and Ananda Coomaraswamy.

He presented to the Boston Museum his works on Indian Art including copies of his own publications. His industry coupled with his generosity enabled him to build up the most extensive East Indian Art Collection in America. His clear explanations helped proper interpretation of Indian art objects. In 1922 he was appointed Keeper of Indian and Indonesian Art. In 1927 he published the History of Indians and Indonesian Art. In 1933 he was elevated to the superior office of Fellow for Research in Indian, Persian and Mohamedan Art. Dr. Coomaraswamy sponsored several archaeological expeditions to Iran, Syria India and Indus Valley.

There was an air of mysticism about his personality and even in his explanations of Indian religion and philosophy. He was able to understand German mysticism of mediaeval times. Naturally he felt a depth of wisdom in all mystics. He saw in the cultures of East and West a common heritage of sublime truth and eternal verities called 'sanatana dharma' by the Indians and philosophia perennis' by the Westerners. As a man liberated in America it can be said of him that when Colonel Olcott was a 'karmayogin' Coomaraswamy was a 'kala yogin.' His productivity in an abstruse field was phenomenal so much so that some were tempted to call him a phenomenon and a mystic. He had to his credit nearly 500 publications and another 500 remain to be published. The list is too numerous to review.

Coomaraswamy revealed his message to the world by interpreting Indian art, aesthetics religion and philosophy. He believed there is truth in all religions. He tried to explain that art is truth and truth is one and that is God. In his earlier writings the treatment of subjects was critical but later he dealt with theological matters. In his view art is the intention of the artist to express his idea in the image of his creation and the objects were made for utility and not for the sake of art.

A classical example of his wisdom in ancient traditional lore is the ingenious interpretation of Siva in classical Indian art. As all scholars know Siva is the god of benevolence, god of destruction and the great ascetic. Above all as Nataraja he is the supreme exponent of the cosmic dance of creation, and destruction. All Indian art tradition, philosophical teaching and wisdom are concentrated in this one symbol of the dance. Another great contribution to art study of India was the analysis of the Buddha image. By a close and careful study he established the thesis that the Buddha image was Indian in origin and not of Greek origin as accepted by most.

Coomaraswamy was born with a mind which sought no personal glory, wealth or name. This quality is rare among men. But it was the tradition of the Indian artists and authors not to give their names to the works of art. He followed this tradition for he believed himself to be a 'Kalayogin' a mere creature of the Creator. He believed that an artist is born with

a mission to create the image of the Maker i.e. Visvakarma through his works of art. Such a belief alone can explain his view that his works have no copyright. Man only reveals the secrets of the universe. Surely, wisdom is no one's prerogative, property or assignment. It is always there co-existent with the creation of the universe to be re-discovered by man. It was surprising to most that so much knowledge can be possessed by one individual and some were tempted to tell him that "the sum total of your knowledge is immense". His answer was "What I know is tiny compared to all the things that I should know".

Dr. Coomaraswamy had several hobbies. Some of them may have been due to his upbringing in an English family. He loved dogs and gardens. He used to visit dog shows. Later line drawing with pen, pencil and brush fascinated him. The interest in printing and production of books enabled him to see through his numerous publications. As a keen observer of Rajput paintings and miniature carvings he copied some of the finest specimens. The two volumes on Yakshas are filled with drawings from sculpture in India. Besides the art of calligraphy the modern art of photography gave him much pleasure. The result of his study of botany during early years made plants his life long hobby. Rock gardens and natural beauty of flowers and trees fascinated him. He cultivated a rock garden filled with an amazing variety of exotic and rare cactuses.

On the inauguration ceremony for independence for India Coomaraswamy had the distinct honour of unfurling the flags of India and Pakistan on 15th August 1947. Those present on that historic occasion felt how emotionally moved he was to see the fulfilment of his long cherished desire to see India a free nation and Indians free men. But nevertheless it was Coomaraswamy's avowed intention and dream to retire and return one day to India and live his remaining years as a recluse in Benares for Benares was the land of his dreams. Before this could be fulfilled he died suddenly on 9th September, 1947. The funeral rites were performed out of doors at his place in Needham, Massachusetts by a Greek orthodox priest. But alas! in the end only his ashes reached Benares but his name and fame live throughout the world, "Nama gottam na jeerati".

## Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

By Professor Emeritus K. Kularatnam.

The universally acclaimed greatest scientist and savant of Sri Lanka, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy was born on August 22, 1877 at Rheinland, Kollupitiya, Colombo, the only child of Sir Muthu Coomaraswamy (the first Asian barrister and Knight, friend of Disraeli and other Victorian leaders) and his English wife Beeby from Kent.

His father died when he was two. He was educated in England at Wycliffe College, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. There he became House Monitor, Curator of Field Club Prefect and Head of the School, in succession. He published a paper on the Geology of Dover Hill in the school magazine and that was the beginning of his geological career. Gloucestershire being a paradise for fossil collectors, his attention turned early to Botany and Geology. He proceeded from school to the University of London and obtained First Class Honours, followed it with a D. Sc. and Fellowship of the University.

Being aware of the contributions already made in his private capacity to our knowledge of Ceylon Geology and in order to get more precise information on the mineral resources of Sri Lanka, the Imperial Government decided to carry out a short-term reconnaissance survey of the mineral wealth of Ceylon, under the auspices of the Imperial Institute in London based on the Colombo Museum. Coomaraswamy was appointed Principal Mineral Surveyor and P. J. Parsons the Assistant Principal Mineral Surveyor. They arrived in the Island on 7th March, 1903. Coomaraswamy left Ceylon on 31st December, 1906 at the conclusion of his contract.

The output of his researches during this golden era of Sri Lanka Geology was prolific both in quality and bulk. There was no laboratory or equipment nor were there other colleagues to consult. Field work was very trying, camping

out in the jungles, the only luxury being at times the bullock cart, otherwise, traverses were done on foot in the company of trackers and porters. Food was meagre, living mainly on dry rations and impure water. One could better understand the hazards of geological survey then when one notes how Mr. Parsons who was seen at mid-day, on Oliphant Estate, Nuwara Eliya on 29th December 1907, was never seen again. Ticks and leeches by day, mosquitoes by night, and reptiles and wild beasts were companions all the while.

While roaming the jungles on foot in search of minerals and other geological information, Coomaraswamy came across the remains of ancient culture and civilisation in the form of ruins. Being possessed of a mind trained in systematic science and taxonomy, he inevitably became interested in archaeology and from there, to quote his son, "to the purpose of Craftsmanship and Art." This in turn led him to study the sacred writings of India and Sri Lanka, during the last twenty five years of his life, to become what might best be described as a metaphysician. He was despite his living in the West, extremely orthodox and indeed planned to return to India to take up "Sannyasa". His career reflected a natural sequence of development of intellectual orientation and activity. His life was a series of avatars: geologist, political reformer, art historian and metaphysician.

It was the accidental introduction, through field geology, to our archaeology and art, and therefore of our history that led him to initiate the movement for national education, the teaching of the local languages in all schools, and the revival of our culture and with these ends in view he became the President of the Ceylon Social Reform Society, which gave the inspiration for the independence movement.

He later extended his search from material nature into the search for the creative forces which work on the products of the mind". He interpreted the philosophia perennis in Art. Coomaraswamy's discoveries in geology and mineralogy during the short period of four years perhaps far outweigh the total output of all his successors.

Apart from his classic Administration Reports, Coomaraswamy published several authoritative Papers and academic articles dealing with his discoveries in the "Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society," the "Geological Magazine," the "Mineralogical Magazine," "British Association Reports," the "Spolia Zeylanica," "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society", etc.

Other contributions of no less importance are the Glossary of Sinhala Mining and Gemming Terms, the Bibliography of Ceylon Geology, Notes on Graphite, Scapolite, Wollastonite rocks, Balangoda group of rocks, alluvial gold deposits, rare earth minerals, monazite, ilmenite, thorite and thorianite, the gemstones, mica, iron, ore and steel making in ancient Sri Lanka, etc. Serendibite and thorianite were first made known to the world of science by him. He did not try to perpetuate his own name by giving them his name, but his successors gave the name Anandite to a mineral discovered for the first time in Sri Lanka (1967).

"Ananda Coomaraswamy was one of the supreme minds and thinkers of the modern world, a syncretist of inspired genius, gifted with a vast encyclopaedic and universal culture."

He became one of the greatest experts of Oriental Art, not only Indian, but Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Japanese as well as Indonesian. His researches were world-wide and all embracing, ranging from the Philology of at least a dozen languages to music and archaeology, from the ancient metaphysics of Greece and India to the most modern problems of politics and sociology.

It must be mentioned that "deeply affecting experiences of the blight cast upon Sinhala society by adverse European influence displaced his geological, activity, and more and more of his energy was brought to bear on implementing social change."

His first monumental book, published in 1908, was "Mediaeval Sinhalese Art," followed in 1918 by the "Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon." His books and other learned publications exceed a thousand in number. Among them, the best known are his Catalogue of the Indian Collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; "History of Indian and Indonesian Art"; Elements of Buddhist Iconography; Nature of Buddhist Art in the Wall Paintings of India, Central Asia and Ceylon; Dance of Siva; Gods of India; Transformation of Nature in Art; Mediaeval Aesthetics; Figures of speech or figures of Thought; Time and Eternity, etc.

## Ananda Coomaraswamy Centenary 22. 8. 77

By Gate Mudaliyar A. C. G. S. Amarasekera

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy was born 6 years before I was born. I had not the privilege of knowing him personally but by his monumental work "Medieval Art of the Sinhalese".

This bulky volume has been of the utmost importance to us as a book of reference. It was written when Coomaraswamy was a youth in his twenties. Before he left the land of his birth for pastures new he had done this great service to us which no other cultural crusader could have done.

This book of Archaeology was a by-product of his wanderings as a geologist in search of mineral resources. An English cynic had said "Avoid Archaeology, it is the abyss from which no artist returns, if he does return he will be covered with the dust of Ages and the Mildew of time he will be unrecognisable as an Artist".

But in this case our hero Coomaraswamy came out with a halo as the greatest Scholar and writer on Medieval Art—"Medieval art of the Sinhalese". In this book Coomaraswamy has gone straight to the original sources and given us first hand the Arts and Crafts of our Country. Of hundreds of his publications on this subject this was the first, and we are proud that it was in our Country he found inspirations and interest in this subject.

The greater Part of this book is devoted to our Arts and Crafts - applied or decorative arts. But there is sufficient information given within its pages to acquaint us Artists - painters, with the condition of pictorial art in those archaic past and the important part it played in the life of our people.

We learn from what Dr. Coomaraswamy has quoted from the chronicle the Mahawansaya how much pictorial art has contributed to the glory of our national religion - Buddhism. It says

Parakramabahu II longed to behold a perfect likeness of the Buddha; so he employed artists to paint a surpassing likeness of the Blessed one, as he appears on earth, to be life like.

Time at my disposal will not permit of my quoting many other examples but permit me to quote just one more. A vivid description of paintings in a Vihare restored by King Kirthisri "The King of Lanka caused a life-like picture of the Buddha to be painted, outside the walls also Devas and Brahmas as if they had come to worship elephants lions etc."..... and it goes on to say that "the people who came to worship enjoyed the pleasure of seeing the Supreme living Buddha himself preaching the doctrine"

We also learn from references in Coomaraswamy's book what a large part of the artistic played in the cultural and social life of the people. King Jettatissa not only practised but also taught art to his subjects which was shared by all classes of people. Jettatissa's work was considered so realistic that what he did looked like the thing itself.

From passages I have quoted there can be no doubt that in pictorial art that realism was what the artist, aimed at, the patron admired and the public applauded; so we learn that those paintings were considered as close to nature as man could make it with limited means obtainable then.

I have stressed this life-like technical character in painting having been the aim of the artist because it is of the utmost importance to our artists and art students who are building up portrait and landscape painting to add to our traditions.

Some critics guided by a mistaken sense of nationalism demand that we in the 20th century should paint in this manner of the Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya frescoes of the 5th century. Just imagine my trying to paint our lady politicians like the Sigiriya girls! Why none of them have that wasp-like waist of those ladies.

With the facility for communication and exchange of ideas we no longer have national schools of art but only world art movements. There cannot be any national art, no

more than National Mathematics or national science. Ceylonese paintings will be the united work of the various races that make up the united nation of Sri Lanka.

Dr. Coomaraswamy's book Medieval art of the Sinhalese revived our traditional decorative arts. That book was published in 1903. The first school of art in Sri Lanka, providing a great national need at the time, was also established in 1908. We, Dr. Coomaraswamy's and I, thus heralded the renaissance of Art in Sri Lanka with the dawn of the XXth century.

This was followed shortly after by the first Art Gallery to be built in Sri Lanka. We are glad to have hung in that Art Gallery a lifelike portrait of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy (presented by Mr. V. S. Thurairajah) and to have named the road to the Colombo Art Gallery as the "Ananda Coomaraswamy Mawatha" to perpetuate the Memory of this World Figure.

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## Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy - An Interpreter of the Language of Art

29

By Dr. (Mrs.) Dharma Thirunavukarasu.

(Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Sri Lanka, Colombo.)

At a time when Europe and Asia could not understand each other; at a time when Asia remained herself, outside the consciousness of the Western mind, at a time when European minds were unaware of the unity underlying the surface of things; and at a time it was thought possible that only development of modern science and mathematics alone contributed to the advancement of progress and civilization; the fourth phase of the series of avatars of Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy from the point of his "being" in the different phases of his life a different personality, represented the possibility of a renewed approachment between East and West through his interpretation of the language of art. Asiatic thought gradually penetrated into Western consciousness resulting in the recognition of the vital role of traditional culture of India, Ceylon and the Far East as the potential basis for understanding the spiritual language of art. He discovered the fundamental efficacy of art in the unitary principle underlying all art forms and thereby spread the gospel of a new meaning in the language of art latent in the Timeless Eternity of the Philosophia Perennis. In the language of art Dr. Coomaraswamy found new re-directions from the inner realities of life, being purely spiritual and then as revealing themselves as reflections of the ideals of human mind and life. Dr. Coomaraswamy can claim himself here as the discoverer of the spiritual language of art as the medium of displaying the significance, content and form of art as Wisdom, Reflection and Unity of a Single Reality. In interpreting art, Dr. Coomaraswamy has delved into the depths of man's thought which alone Dr. Coomaraswamy remarks is capable of transmitting man's invaluability through his faculty of imaginative construction to apprehend reality and communicate artistic truth. Here the greatest exponent of the perennial philosophy emerges as a greater interpreter of art - a contribution to the world of art and thought.

From an aesthetic standpoint Dr. Coomaraswamy accepts the senses as the vehicles through which objects around and beyond form the structure of artistic experience. Through audition and intuition or vision Dr. Coomaraswamy agrees that the artist creates and expresses artistic forms—their arrangements, composition lines, sound and pattern. But asks Dr. Coomaraswamy, "Is there no other meaning to art apart from its visual and auditory arrangements? What does the language of art convey? What is the significance of the many faced icons and symbols that decorate temple architecture? In the immediacy of the perception of artistic truth, Dr. Coomaraswamy reveals to us the metaphysical import underlying all art—being a single Principle veritably declared as "That" which cannot be "Seen" or "Known" by *pratyaksha* means of knowledge. What Dr. Coomaraswamy intends to convey is that the language of art externalised in the visual forms are the tangible means of understanding the deeper realities of life. To explain this point in a more logical fashion Dr. Coomaraswamy presupposes the formal element of art as representing a mental activity—(*Citta sanna*). Coomaraswamy naturally advocates the theory that an artist is born or trained in the disciplines involving the highly developed techniques of vision as prescribed in the canonical works which lay emphasis on *Sadhana, mantram and bhayana*. He remarks that traditional art of India, Ceylon and the East are the outcome of the *citta sanna* of the artists who have gone through rigorous mental and physical disciplines before expressly artistic works as idealisation of thought. As a lover of traditional culture Dr. Coomaraswamy has enlightened the non-traditional minds with his extra-ordinary profundity of thought of the traditional aesthetic significance through metaphysics and iconography. He has enhanced the traditional arts with the contrast he makes between Rajput and Moghul paintings. The latter he describes as "art of portraiture and chronicle" in contrast to the former which he evaluates as aristocratic and spiritual to appeal to all class", "Static and lyrical" (Vide: *History of Indian and Indonesian Art, Part IV*). It is obvious that Dr. Coomaraswamy's interpretation of art is basically confined to the ancient themes which have their sources in Indian and Buddhist Scriptures. The

'Ragmala Series' the Gita-Govinda, Hour of the Cow Dust, Ras-Lila paintings speak language of spirituality through the medium of art with the traditional aesthetic mood co-natural to them.

The Chapter on "The Theory of Art in Asia" (Transformation of Nature in Art) is a conscious effort of Dr. Coomaraswamy to explain to the world of art and thought that the artist's mind produces or draws the "form" as from a distance, as remote as he would say from the "Heaven" where "the types of art exist in formal operation; immediately revealed to the "immanent space in the heart" (antarhyadhaya - akassa) the common focus (samstava) or concord of "seer - seen" at which place the only possible experience of reality takes place". No doubt, this is an enlightenment which has removed the most dangerous fallacies associated with Indian and oriental art forms. No doubt Dr. Coomaraswamy has endeavoured to reveal to the Western mind especially, the intelligibility of Indian art forms interpreted to convey true-knowledge—the purity aspect (jnana sattva rupa) as a kind of a reflection of reality in akassa, conveyed in a flash to the mind of the artist as if in a vision of a dream (svapnavat). Dr. Coomaraswamy explains further that this vision of form the imager or the artist realises is an identification in a state of contemplation or in an act of non-differentiation from where the artist proceeds with the act of executing the object of art, whether in stone, pigment or any other material. Dr. Coomaraswamy is persuasive in his faith that what is conveyed through the medium of art is the artistic truth that, there is the involvement to a principle in objects of art which is both transcendent and significant. In his interpretation there is the emphatic affirmation of the fact that the language of art is not confined merely to empirical observation, nor is it a "reflex registration" Rather the language has to be grasped in relation to the inner principles of its syntactical import. He quotes the **Bihadaranyake Upanisad** (1. 4. 10) to confirm his view point: "who ever worships—a divinity as other than the self, thinking" "He is one, and I another, Knows not" One is reminded here of Meister Eckhart to whom "a skilled painter shows his art..... but it is not himself that reveals to us"; or in the words of Dante, "who paints a figure, if

he cannot be it, cannot draw it". The common focus in their interpretation of art is the invariable concomitance of an intuitive truth which is revealed to the artist and the aesthetically sensitive minds as the revelation of a divine origin in the representation of icons and other works of art. From a linguistic standpoint Dr. Coomaraswamy interprets images and symbols in architecture of our temples, as "Kailasabahavana"—a striking enunciation of a Single Principle mentioned in the **Aitarya Brahmana** (VI-27). Dr. Coomaraswamy's intention to trace the ideals of art to divine origin is to recognize perfection in art in the nearest likeness to its spiritual origin.

More significantly Dr. Coomaraswamy has interpreted art in terms of a language with a comparison he draws with conscience which is externalised in rules of conduct or with principles of thought in logic. The language of art becomes an "aesthetic pramana" or a means of understanding the principles of art as expressed in the "Laksanas of iconography and cultivated taste prescribed by authority and tradition. Dr. Coomaraswamy expounds his aesthetic theory based on the universal function of the inner reality of life, which presupposes the axiological promise that "man as man is invaluable" This is evident in the transcendental portrayal of life in the "Rajput paintings" and in his interpretation of Indian and Buddhist iconography. Dr. Coomaraswamy reassures in his major works, **The Dance of Shiva, History of Indonesian Art, Medieval Sinhalese Art, Elements of Buddhist Iconography** etc, the immanence of spiritual values in the language of art and their recognition as the effective answer to the solution of the "Contingent problems of organisation and Conduct" (East and West Essays.)

It is relevant to speak about Dr. Coomaraswamy's Rajput paintings as reflecting the essence of **Upanisadic** philosophy. In his judgement Rajput paintings surpass conceptions of things in content, depth of passion, self-restraint, purity, nationalism, beauty and refinement—all complexities of life harmonised in one single thought that "life is an eternal sacrament". (Art and Swadeshi; p. 82) In interpreting the

Pahani-paintings of the Kangra valley for instance, in terms of a language of art, Dr. Coomaraswamy attempts to convey to the visionary aesthetics, the exquisite perfecting of thought in art in the form of an extraction of a deliberate message of the burden of love and lyrical humanistic symbolism. This is portrayed in "Rama's wondering in the forest with Sita" and in sets of the "Asta-nayaka, subjects and in the love themes taken from the epics. Vibrant with lyricism, the objective facts evoke appropriate and inevitable emotional reactions essentially communicative of poignant truths in which there are recognizable at once a force and a sense of beauty—"worthy of a classic age". Dr. Coomaraswamy has with special interest revealed with intelligible observation the Sattvic predominant sculptural form of the Buddha in the nearest likeness to Iswara revealing the intentionality of the sculptor to communicate not merely the repose and beauty of image but also to narrate the feeling of redemption from the miseries of birth and death in the compassion executed with artistic skill which springs from an idealisation of the eternality of love essentially linked with the divine. Dr. Coomaraswamy assures us here that the image is not merely a "face". What the sculptor intends to carve out is the Soul itself.

Those of us who are familiar with Dr. Coomaraswamy's major works will be convinced that his interpretation of art is one of symbolic and significant representation; a representation of things that cannot be seen except by intellect or the intuitive faculty of the mind. The Rajput paintings for instance are to be understood as "mystical lyrical continuing phenomena".

With greater significance Dr. Coomaraswamy reveals to us through a recognition of beauty in art the "essence" of art con-similar to the "supreme Taste" of Brahman Experience mentioned in the **Taittiriyaopanisad**; as **Raso vai sab**. In his attempt to interpret artistic language it becomes necessary to rise above the **pratyaksha** or perceptual level of knowledge to the **paroksha** or intuitive level. In the **Medieval Sinhalese Art**, Dr. Coomaraswamy remarks in the Chapter on "Elements of Sinhalese Design and Ornament" that the significance of the

content and form of art has metaphysical import as in the case of divine symbols like the Sun and the Moon being symbols of Cosmic Energy or the Great Beings—Sources of love and adoration controlling the physical world. And in the importance given to the bird hamsa in Hindu and Buddhist art he brings out the significance of its use not merely as objects of grace, beauty and auspiciousness but for its sanctity associated with the concept of **viveka** or discriminative power of the bird to drink only the milk from a vessel of milk mixed with water.

Dr. Coomaraswamy's interpretation of art is at the same time an exposition of a theory of beauty entailing the deeper reality meant to be felt and understood as an experience of the peace and balance harmonised to reveal the essential quality—the "essence" or **rasanubhava**. He explains this more tangibly with reference to the paintings of the schools of Rajaputana particularly the "Todi Rajini" expressing the intonation of the gentle rhythm of the **raga** endowed with the purity of the soul. The object of art more deeply conveys a transcendental truth beyond the visual dimensions of the sense-organs and in the deeper intensification of the significant quality. In the language of art is made manifest the consciousness that beauty surpasses our conceptions of things in content, depth of passion, felt restraint, purity and communication synonymous with the ideal and even with the soul. In the language of art Dr. Coomaraswamy has made intelligible to our aesthetic sensibility the existence of a "higher pleasure" emanating from the soul of existence and beauty in the form of concentrated joy a **paranirvrtti**—a reminiscent of what the rishi-poets revealed in the scriptures; "O soul, enjoy pleasure, drive forward, manifest thy self; Hero, Controller of the Horse like organs enjoy happiness thou greatest".

(Same Veda., Chap. 1. 111. xxii)

Jacques Marquette has aptly remarked that Dr. Coomaraswamy has, "brought to light the ancient wisdom" which is of profound spiritual nature. Beauty expounded as a state of consummation of "thoughts and feelings" through a temporary "**Daivam Mithunam**" of man's lower and higher natures... a "stage" Dr. Coomaraswamy contends in the process of attaining Release

or **Moksha**. Undoubtedly Dr. Coomaraswamy's interpretation of beauty is a link with India's past culture and philosophy. In aesthetic language beauty in art is the "flavour" that is tasted (*asvadyate*) as "sweet juice" in a state of joy—"anandanisyanda".

Further in his interpretation of the language of art Dr. Coomaraswamy recognizes a universal element in art. In the enlightenment of the Buddha for instance, countless ages ago, there is the identical continuous condition manifested in the image "still accessible and will so remain". This is similarly portrayed in the "Dance of Shiva" as having taken place not merely in the **Taraka** forest, nor even in Chidambaram but in the heart of the worshippers; the "Krsna Lila" is not merely an historical event, but a "play played eternally before all creatures".

In his attempt to interpret the world of art and thought Dr. Coomaraswamy has contributed much to enlighten the minds of man. As a scientist, philosopher, theologian and above all as the greatest interpreter of the language of art, he has enriched the world on the true significance of the art, and culture of India, Ceylon and the East. An opponent of the kind of artist who strives to duplicate reality or to copy it with slavish fidelity, Dr. Coomaraswamy recognizes the need for interpreting art in terms of human life and of man's spiritual environment. His works on **Indian and Indonesian Art, the Dance of Shiva Medieval Sinhalese Art, Art and Swadeshi, etc.** reveal artistic truth as an apprehension of reality in terms of individuality and value and not in terms of abstract concepts for their own sake. Rather their interpretations are affirmation of man as "a normative and purposive agent" Dr. Coomaraswamy remarks: "to remove this would revert to a type of atomistic psychology". In short his interpretation of art recognizes human consciousness not as mere unrelated aggregate of mental states; rather he affirms that consciousness is a function of a more "enduring self". Selfhood is manifested in art to transcend psychological atomicity. Thus artistic works are the communicative language through which both the artist and the aesthete grasp the primordial truth. The "Dance of Shiva" typifies the harmony, balance,

power and energy beneath the tangible and the audible — an expression in art of all forces of life harmonised in a synthesis in the "Master" of the "Dance" where, "everything has its place, everything has its function and all take part in the Concert." Romain Rolland in his preface in the **Dance of Shiva** aptly quotes from Tagore in the "deathless lines":

"I shall find hidden Thy Infinite joy  
In every splendour of smell and vision and sound ;  
Even while a thousand fetters still bind me to the wheel  
I shall taste thy infinite liberty".

—a spiritual hypothesis to interpret languages of art. Dr. Coomaraswamy's interpretation of the language of art has undoubtedly enriched the thoughts of men. His remarkable contribution is the revival of the timeless eternity of the perennial philosophy vibrant in Shiva's dance and so magnificently portrayed in his interpretation of the "Dancer". Itself representing the five activities, **pancakrityas**—a recognition of a universal philosophy of art compressed in a single abstraction—the magnificent figure of Nataraja living through timelessness and commanding the adoration of so many generations past. Dr. Coomaraswamy's interpretation of the language of art can be summarised most aptly in Theodore M. Green's words on "Art as an Expressive Vehicle"; that it is "a distinctive expression, in a distinctive medium, and by means of a distinctive type of formal organisation of a distinctive type of interpretation of man's experience and of the real world this experience is oriented".

# "ANANDA COOMARASWAMY"

By

E. J. DONOVAN,

(Secretary for Cultural Affairs, American Embassy, Colombo)

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I accepted your kind invitation to speak today on the 100th Birth Centenary of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy as well as to screen the film "The Dance of Siva" which we have produced in honor of this great scholar. I have been doing some reading, which has included comments that my colleague, Dr Richard T. Arndt. made at the Ananda Coomaraswamy Anniversary Meeting on August 25, 1964, when he spoke about "Coomaraswamy and America". This reading has led to amazement, and almost, awe, on my part, as I have begun to learn about the amazing range of this outstanding scholar and the tremendous value that his work has had in the past, has for all of us now and will have for those in future generations.

Coomaraswamy was surely personification of the renaissance ideal of the "Whole" man—concerned with the totality of life and not only parts of it. Trained as a geologist, the larger proportion of his published works deals with Indian and Asian Art and philosophy. I repeat the figure that you all know, over 500 publications to his credit, because the figure is staggering when one considers that they included monumental works such as "Medieval Sinhalese Art" and "A History of Indian and Indonesian Art". These are very far from being small pamphlets or papers. Many of these publications appeared during Coomaraswamy's 30 years at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and I am proud that my country recognized the genius of the man and provided him not only with a home for his priceless art collection, but the atmosphere in which to research and write without financial worries. The result of this understanding and appreciation of the man has been scholarly gems which have enabled many people, all around the world, to share in his appreciation and knowledge of Art and Science as well as his Philosophy of Life.

In his Philosophical outlook we find that Coomaraswamy is indeed modern, i. e., contemporary to the outlook of many young people today. His social philosophy was one that increasing numbers of people, young and old, are turning to as they find that technology does not necessarily provide full life, or that, essential as science is to our lives without the influence of the humanities it can beget a sterile existence. I myself have been a seaman and so have developed, I think, a degree of rapport with nature and the elements that many people cannot, or are unwilling to reach today and I think, which is much to be Regretted.

We can call Coomaraswamy one of the earliest environmentalists, a man who developed his social philosophy, not as many of us have now because we begin to fear shortages of raw materials which threaten standards of artificial affluence but out of conviction about, and I quote: "...exaggerated standards of living and depreciated standards of life.....".

A friend of mine, who is a citizen of Sri Lanka, now living quietly in Colombo, was privileged to hear Coomaraswamy speak at the University of Chicago in the 1930's. These are his memories: "I first got to know Coomaraswamy when he came to Chicago to give two lectures, one at the Chicago Art Institute and the other at Mandel Hall, University of Chicago, on "Indian Mogul Art". Both were beautifully illustrated with slides and on both occasions he had a full hall and an appreciative audience.

"He was a handsome, impressive figure and, as far as I remember, of medium height. His stage mannerisms were pleasant and natural. His diction was very Oxford English which both pleased and surprised his audience because they were able to follow every word he spoke, unlike so many foreign lectures who had difficult accents to follow. This superb language ability helped to establish an immediate rapport with his audiences. They listened to him with rapt attention and, after the lecture, asked him some frank, general questions about India, to which he replied with equal candor. This exchange carried him far away from the field of art into politics, economics and social subjects.

“Coomaraswamy had a puckish humour. The Indian background, a living Museum of prehistoric and early primitive ways coexisting side by side with the most modern, as found in large cities and University Communities; Rajahs' and Governors' palaces and the Viceregal Palace; health resorts in Poona, Simla and Kashmir; all provided a great deal of humorous material culled from comments made by shocked, puzzled, foreign visitors who also viewed the very descriptive images of man and nature which covered aesthetic and emotional love, pity, hate, envy, jealousy, compassion and so on. Coomaraswamy delighted in shocking his audience with illustrations of the more earthy pursuits of man.

During his lectures, Coomaraswamy took every opportunity to state what he felt about the new world of America, which he rightly thought was becoming the storehouse of some of the greatest art of the world and the home of some of the greatest contemporary artists. Coomaraswamy felt that this great democracy would continue to draw men and women of talent to it, like a magnet, and it would inspire them to give of their best in return for the opportunities the country offered them. He frankly stated that he was grateful to the United States for providing a more appreciative and larger audience for his work on the beauty and meaning of Hindu and Mogul Art than he would have had in Ceylon, India or even in the United Kingdom. He never missed an opportunity to show his indebtedness to America and what it had done for him. At the same time he spoke out clearly about things he disapproved of.

“It was difficult to get to know Coomaraswamy well because he was a very shy and an introvert, partly as a result of his mixed parentage. Attitudes then were not as they are now. His father, a robust, brown jaffna Tamil and his mother, a blonde, English Lady, provided him with a distinction that, in that era, had racial significance not only in Asia, but in Europe and America, which had undoubtedly affected his personality. But none of this showed in ordinary conversation, because he was so buoyant and content at the Boston Museum.

“After Dr. Coomaraswamy's lecture at the University of Chicago, at which the University President, Robert Hutchins, took the Chair, the famous Mayor Thompson of Chicago, proposed a vote of thanks. He said that the thunderous applause that Coomaraswamy had received made such a vote of thanks unnecessary and that, in the United Kingdom, the best English is spoken in Inverness and Dublin, but that he must confess that he had heard the most beautiful English spoken that day that he was ever likely to hear. He continued, “we are all grateful to you, Mr. Coomaraswamy, for your wonderful work in helping to enrich America's cultural heritage through your own outstanding scholarship”.

“As I said earlier, I know less of Coomaraswamy than most of you, but I would like to speak now of the philosophy of my country and the pride it takes in men and women, like Coomaraswamy who become its children, and in turn, teach it also a great deal. This still happens. To many of us, in today's cynical world, the words written on the statue of liberty do not have the significance they did at the time that the monument was presented to the United States by the French Republic. Nevertheless, it is true that many people, great and small, who came to the United States—and my grandfather was among them—did so because, as the words on the statue partly said;

“Not like the barren giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of exiles. From her beacon—hand  
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air bridged harbor that twin cities frame.....”.

Ananda Coomaraswamy was neither poor, tired nor wretched, like so many of the people to whom the sight of the statue of liberty meant a new life, but he was rich in a way that few men or women are privileged to be rich; rich in spirit, rich in

knowledge, rich in a desire to share his gifts. As D. B. Dhanapala said in "Among Those Present", "Coomaraswamy was without a peer as a scholar among orientalisists". But even though so rich, Coomaraswamy too was looking for a place where he could settle down in a congenial atmosphere, and do the research and writing that were his life. And this center, as I said earlier, my country gave him. He was grateful and we continue to be grateful because out of this Association grew the intellectual treasures that we so much esteem and wonder at, today. Treasures which are the enduring proof of Coomaraswamy, the whole man.

Coomaraswamy was the man who lived worked towards the goal of world understanding that Rabindranath Tagore spoke of so often in his prose and as his publications grew until they extended beyond the 500 mark, the knowledge, understanding and interpretation they contained contributed greatly towards an understanding between East and West and an appreciation of each other's cultural values and mores.

Rudyard Kipling's "Ballad of East and West" is generally quoted out of context, but I would like to remind you that the full stanza is :

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the  
Twain shall meet,

'Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great  
judgement seat,

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed,  
nor Birth.

When two strong men stand face to face, though they  
come from the ends of the earth !"

The two strong men stood face to face in Ananda Coomaraswamy, son of a Ceylonese father and an English mother, in the Scientist and Philosopher and the world is a better place for his life.

## Speech by his Excellency Mr. William Gopallawa

*President of the Republic.*

Mr. President, Members of the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, Your Excellencies the High Commissioners and Ambassadors present this evening, Members of the Society, Ladies and Gentlemen, I consider it both a privilege as well as a pleasure to be invited as President of Sri Lanka and the Patron of the Society to participate and preside in this evenings' proceedings, and I thank you most graciously.

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, whose birth centenary we have assembled here this evening to commemorate was the epitome of the complete man. Rarely has it been accorded to one man to fulfil so many roles at one time and to accomplish each of them to so high a degree of perfection.

Dr. Coomaraswamy is chiefly remembered for his contributions as an art critic, as a philosophic commentator, and as a humanist ! In each of these fields, he not only added compendiously to the existing store of knowledge, but he brought a new focus to bear on the subjects of his study by his novel approach which was prompted by a spiritual dynamic which placed his work in a separate category from that of others, and invested it with a rare esoteric quality of its own.

His work spanned the entire field of culture. He was trained, as an engineer and a scientist, and in fact, his first appointment at the age of 26 years was as Director of the Mineralogical Survey of Ceylon. But it was to questions of art and religion that his mind turned increasingly. To us in Sri Lanka it is relevant that he initiated the movement for national education, the teaching of the national languages in all schools, and the revival of the island's cultures, and with these objects in view, he became President of the Ceylon Social Reform Society.

His first monumental work published in 1908 was Mediaeval Sinhalese Art which proved a revelation to Sri Lankans and foreigners alike of the richness and beauty of the cultures that flourished in our country in the period immediately prior to the British occupation. This was followed in 1913 by the Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon, which has been called "The standard work of reference in this subject". But more than the facts which by his amazing industry and indefatigable scholarship he brought to light about the cultural heritage of these countries was the philosophic attitude to which he gave expression in his treatment of the subject and which may be summarized in one of his favourite sayings, "Art, not for Arts" sake, but for love's sake. "Just as in his political and social outlook, so also in his artistic outlook, he was a reformer attempting to change men's attitudes towards that one subject which he held dearer than life, namely, Art.

Dr. Coomaraswamy was not a cultural dilettante, nor was he an aesthete, pure and simple. He was a prodigiously hard working man and it is no secret that his death was provoked by his exertions in straining to complete his work in the amazingly diverse fields in which his interests lay. Archaeology, anthropology, sociology, philology, sculpture, architecture, painting, history, dancing, music, metaphysics and religion—all these were grist to his intellectual mill, and in everyone of these fields he had a noteworthy contribution to make and a relevant point of view to express.

But more than the striking erudition he displayed was the sensitiveness and general culture which permeated all his works, and which raised him above the general run of scholars. His judgement of art was faultless so that today, many years after his time, we need add nothing new to the conclusions reached by him, even with the benefit of the much more specified information available to us now. This may be regarded as an expression of his sensitiveness, which lent a quality of intuition to his findings.

There are many speakers gathered here today who have no doubt, enlightened us as to the various aspects of Dr. Coomaraswamy's genius as a Museum Curator, a Scholar, an Art Critic and a philosopher. There were those among them who spoke to the vision of Dr. Coomaraswamy as a seer and a saint. For, in the last analysis he was a man who strove for perfection and for holiness. In his heart of hearts he was a saint, a rishi. His life, through its many meanderings in the fields of science, first, and later, art, was a search for truth. In fact, he had just given up his post as keeper of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, which he had filled for 30 years, with the intention of leading what he called "an approximately vanaprastha life", somewhere in the Himalayas, when he died on 9th September, 1947, leaving a record and a reputation in their several ways unique and timeless.

I am very happy to have had the opportunity of sharing in today's proceedings, and I thank you all for your patience in attending to these few remarks of mine, and trust you, have enjoyed the evening as much as I have done. Thank you. I declare the celebrations closed.

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## Office-Bearers for 1977

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### *Patron*

His Excellency Mr. J. R. Jayewardena, President of Sri Lanka.

### *President*

Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi, B. A., Ph. D. (Lond)., M. A., Ph. D. (Cal).

### *Past Presidents*

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Edmund Peiris, O. M. I., D. D.

Dr. R. L. Brohier, O. B. E., F. R. I. G. S., D. Litt.

Dr. N. D. Wijesekera, B. A. (Hons). (Lond)., B. A. Tripos., M. A (Cantab),  
Ph. D. (Cal).

Dr. H. W. Tambiah, B. Sc., LL.D., Ph. D., Q. C.

### *Vice Presidents*

Professor M. B. Ariyapala, B. A., Ph. D. (Lond).,

Mr. M. St. S. Casie Chetty, J.P. U. P. M.

Professor K. W. Goonewardene, B. A. (Cey)., Ph D, (Lond).

### *Members of the Council*

Mr. Th. W. Hoffmann, M. Sc., Agri. (Zurich).

Professor T. Nadaraja, Ph. D. (Cantab).

Mr. G. P. S. H. de Silva, B. A. (Ceylon).

Professor K. Kularatnam, Ph. D. (Lond)., M. A. (Lond).

Mr. Roland Silva, A. R. I. B. A., F. C. I. A.

Professor T. B. H. Abeyasinghe

Mr. Somapala Jayawardhana

Dr. V. Vitharana

Dr. C. G. Uragoda

Mr. J. T. Rutnam

Mr. D. J. Moldrich

Dr. (Mrs.) Swarna Jayaweera

### *Honorary Jt. Secretaries*

Mr. P. R. Sittampalam

Mr. K. M. W. Kuruppu

### *Honorary Treasurer*

Al Haj. A. H. M. Ismail

## Annual Report for 1976

**Meetings:** One Council Meeting was held during the year 1976. The 130th Annual General Meeting for the year 1976 was held on 28th January 1977. The presidential Address on "Early Phase of Sinhalese in Comparison with Modern Indo-Aryan" was delivered by Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi, the Acting President.

**Lectures:** Two more Lectures were delivered under the auspices of the Society during the year 1976. The first Lecture was by Mr. A. D. T. E. Perera on "Re-Discovery of Shrines of Pre-Buddhist Religious worship in Sri Lanka" on 13th February 1976. The Second was by Mr. P. M. Jayarajan on "The Influence of the Grantha Script in the Evolution of the Modern Sinhala Alphabet" on 18th June 1976.

**Membership:** 5 new Members were admitted during the year 1976. The Society had at the end of 1976 on its roll 404 members. Of these 4 were Honorary Members, 198 Life Members (Resident and Non-Resident) 171 Ordinary Resident Members, 26 Ordinary Non-Resident Members. There were 105 members who are in arrears of membership subscriptions for over one year. Repeated reminders calling for arrears of subscriptions have brought no response. A sum of Rs. 5146/38 is due to the Society as arrears of membership subscription up to 31st December 1976 and this has placed the Society in a difficult financial position.

It is with sorrow that the Society records the deaths during 1976 of the following members: Sir Richard Aluvihare; Most Rev. Lakdasa de Mel; Mr. P. de S. Kularatne; Dr. G. C. Mendis and Sir Lalith Rajapakse,

In response to the President's appeal addressed to the 208 Life Members for financial aid to the Society, only 25 Life Members responded by making a total donation of Rs. 2170/-.

We sincerely thank the above donors, and it is with regret that we note that the Society has received no response from the remaining Life Members though reminded.

## Office Bearers for 1976

**Patron:** His Excellency Mr. William Gopallawa, M. B. E. President of Sri Lanka.

**President:** Dr. H. W. Tambiah

**Past Presidents:** His Lordship Rt. Rev Dr. Edmund Peiris, O.M.I., Dr. R. L. Brohier; Dr. G. C. Mendis; Dr. C. E. Godakumbura and Dr. N. D. Wijesekera,

**Vice-Presidents:** Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi; Professor M. B. Ariyapala and Mr. M. St. S. Casie Chetty.

**Members of the Council:** Mr. Th. W. Hoffmann, Professor N. Mudiyanse, Professor T. Nadaraja, Mr. G. P. S. H. de Silva, Professor K. Kularatnam, Mr. Roland Silva, Mr. S. D. Saparamadu, Professor T. B. H. Abeyasinghe, Mr. Somapala Jayawardhana, Professor K. W. Goonewardene, Dr. C. G. Urugoda and Dr. Vince Vitharana.

**Honorary Joint Secretaries:** Messrs. P. R. Sittampalam and K. M. W. Kuruppu.

**Honorary Treasurer:** Al Haj. A. H. M. Ismail.

**Auditors:** Messrs Pope & Co., Chartered Accountants were re-elected Auditors as they had agreed to continue to audit the accounts of the Society for a fee of Rs. 300/-.

**Library:** 35 Miscellaneous Journals and Periodicals were received as donations from local and foreign Institutions and individuals, and 151 Journals and Periodicals in exchange for the Society's Journal. A list of all such donations and exchanges is published annually in the Society's Journal.

**Publications:** Journal Volume XIX for 1975 has been printed and distributed to members.

**Library Books:** Several members who borrow books from the Society's Library do not all return the books within the time specified in Rules 43 to 48. This has caused considerable inconvenience to other members and visitors. Members are kindly requested to abide by the Rules.

We thank the University authorities for allowing the Society the use of the New Arts Theatre, the Biology Lecture Hall free of charge, for our lectures and meetings.

**P. R. Sittampalam**

**K. M. W. Kuruppu**

*Joint Honorary Secretaries*

## Honorary Treasurer's Report for 1976

The Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st December 1976 discloses an excess of income over expenditure of a sum of Rs. 6,875.59,

### The Bank Balances were:

1. State Bank of India	Rs. 13,138.94
2. Ceylon Savings Bank	5,827.56
3. Chalmers Oriental Text Fund	5,708.95
4. Society's Medal Fund	3,817.30
5. Chinese Records Translation Fund	8,174.88

Receipts by way of Annual Subscription amountd to	Rs. 3,600.00
Arrears of Subscription amounted to	665.00
Entrance fees	90.00
Life Membership Fees	750.00
Sale of Journals	956.81

A sum of Rs. 60.00 was expended on purchase of books.  
A sum of Rs. 5,146.38 is due as arrears of subscription for 1976 and earlier.

Attention must be invited to the remissness of a large number of members in payment of their subscription, Action has been taken by writing to the defaulting members on several occasions requesting payment of the arrears, but no response has been received.

Efforts to recover the arrears of subscriptions are being continued. Defaulting members are not allowed the use of the Library, and the Journals of the Society are also not made available to them until they have paid their membership subscriptions.

Members are reminded that from 1967 the annual subscription of the Society has been increased from Rs. 15/- to Rs.20/- for Resident Members and from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 20/- for Non-Resident Members with effect from 1976, because of the increased postal charges and the difficult financial position of the Society.

The Society would be greatly obliged if members would pay their annual subscriptions regularly and promptly, and thus avoid the need for unnecessary expenditure on postage and reminders.

(Sgd.) A. H. M. Ismail  
Honorary Treasurer.

Colombo, 3rd November 1976.

### ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY — Sri Lanka Branch

#### Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31st December, 1976

Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1976			
Accumulated Fund	Rs. cts.	Fixed Assets	Rs. cts.
As per last Balance Sheet	8,415.72	As per last Balance Sheet	3,501.69
Add Excess of Income over		Less Depreciation	177.71
Expenditure	6,875.59	Current Assets	3,323.98
<b>Specific Funds</b>	15,291.31	As per Schedule B3	24,310.40
Chalmers' Oriental Text Fund	5,708.95	Less Provision and	
Chinese Records Translation		Current Liabilities	
Fund	8,174.88	As per Schedule B4	12,318.47
Society's Medal Fund	3,841.90	Assets Representing Specific Funds	11,991.93
	17,725.73	As per Schedule B5	17,701.13
	<u>33,017.04</u>		<u>33,017.04</u>

#### REPORT OF AUDITORS

We have examined the above Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1976. We have obtained all the information and explanations we have required. In our opinion, the above Balance Sheet correctly exhibits the position as at 31st December 1976 according to the information and explanations given to us and as shown by the books of accounts. Please see our report for Certificate under Section 82 A (2) of the Inland Revenue Act.

Pope & Co.  
Chartered Accountants.

Colombo 9th September, 1977.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY - Sri Lanka Branch

Current Assets as at 31st December, 1976

	Schedule B 3	
Arrears of Subscription		5,146.38
Loans to Staff		110.00
<b>Cash &amp; Bank Balances</b>		
State Bank of India	13,138.94	
Ceylon Savings Bank	5,827.56	
Petty Cash	79.92	
Stamps in hand	7.60	19,054.02
	Rs.	<u>24,310.40</u>

Current Liabilities & Provisions as at 31st December, 1976

	Schedule B 4	
<b>Provisions</b>		
Audit Fees—Pope & Co.		350.00
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Sale of Journal—Vol. VI		1,517.15
Dept. of Cultural Affairs		10,000.00
Educational publications Dept.		371.32
Subscriptions Received in Advance		80.00
	Rs.	<u>12,318.47</u>

Assets Representing Specific Funds as at 31st December, 1976

	Schedule B 5	
<b>Ceylon Savings Bank Account No. 133495</b>		
Chalmers' Oriental Text Fund		5,708.95
<b>Ceylon Savings Bank Account No. 141850</b>		
Chinese Records Translation Fund		8,174.88
<b>Ceylon Savings Bank Account No. 226282</b>		
Society Medal Fund		3,817.30
	Rs.	<u>17,701.13</u>

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY - Sri Lanka Branch

Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31st December, 1976

General Expenses	Rs. cts.	Subscriptions & Fees	Rs. cts.
As per Schedule B1	7,644.01	Annual Subscription	3,600.00
<b>Other Expenses</b>		Entrance Fees	90.00
Depreciation	177.71	Life Membership Fees	750.00
Excess of Income over Expenditure	6,875.59	<b>Other Income</b>	4,440.00
		Sale of Journals	956.81
		Interest - Ceylon Savings Bank	390.96
		Fees	143.29
		Donations	220.00
		Govt. Account - Schedule B2	8,496.75
		Royalty	49.50
			<u>10,257.31</u>
			<u>14,697.31</u>

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY - Sri Lanka Branch

GENERAL EXPENSES

	Schedule B 1
Salaries	5,520 00
Cycle Allowance	60.00
Printing & Stationery	246.87
Lectures & Meetings	960.69
Postage	230.00
Bank Charges	6.55
Debit Tax	7.28
Bonus	25.00
Commission on Sale of journals	159.17
Travelling	11.20
Miscellaneous Expenses	67.23
Audit Fees	350.00
	<u>Rs. 7644.01</u>

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNT

	Schedule B 2
Purchase of Books 60.00	Grant Received 12,000.00
Printing of journals 3,444.25	
Excess of Income over Expenditure 8,495.75	
Rs. <u>12,000.00</u>	Rs. <u>12,000.00</u>

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

Receipts & payments Accounts for the

	Rs. Cts.	Rs. Cts.
<b>Cash &amp; Bank Balances on 1.1.1976</b>		
State Bank of India	7,574.40	
Ceylon Savings Bank	5,436.60	
Cash in hand	39.42	
Stamps in Hand	7.80	13,058.22
		<u>13,058.22</u>
<b>General Account</b>		
Government Grant	12,000.00	
Subscriptions from Life		
Members	750 00	
Arrears of Subscriptions	665.00	
Current Subscriptions	1,390.00	
Entrance Fees	90.00	
Sale of Journals	956.81	
Sale of Journal - Vol. VI	42.50	
Interest from Ceylon Savings Bank	390.96	
Subscriptions Received in Advance	80.00	
Royalty	49.50	
Donations	220.00	
Fees	143.29	16,778.06
		<u>16,778.06</u>
		<u>29,836.28</u>

## Sri Lanka Branch

Year Ended 31st December, 1976

	Rs. cts.	Rs. cts.
<b>General Account</b>		
Staff Loans	800.00	
Salaries	4,355.00	
Cycle Allowance	60.00	
Printing & Stationery	246.87	
Lectures & Meetings	960.69	
Postage	230.00	
Bank Charges	6.55	
Debit Tax	7.28	
Bonus	25.00	
Commission on Sale of Journals	159.17	
Audit Fees	350.00	
Printing of Journals	3,443.25	
Travelling	11.20	
Purchase of Books	60.00	
Miscellaneous Expenses	67.25	
	<hr/>	10,782.26
<b>Cash &amp; Bank Balance on 31.12.1976</b>		
State Bank of India	13,138.94	
Ceylon Savings Bank	5,827.56	
Cash in Hand	79.92	
Stamps in Hand	7.60	
	<hr/>	19,054.02
		<hr/> <hr/>
		29,836.28

## Abstract of Proceedings

**Minutes of the 130th Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society held at 5 p. m. on Friday 28th January 1977 at the Biology Lecture Hall, University of Sri Lanka, Colombo Campus,**

**Present**—Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi, Acting President of the Society, presided. A large gathering of members and visitors were present.

**Vote of Condolence**—The Chairman proposed a vote of condolence on the death of the following members of the Society during the year 1976:—Dr. G. C. Mendis (Former President of the Society, Sir Richard Aluvihare; Most. Rev. Lakdasa de Mel; Mr. P. de S. Kularatne; Sir Lalitha Rajapakse (Life Members) and Mr. Emmanuel Muttucumaru (Ordinary Non-Resident Member). The vote of condolence was passed in the usual manner.

### BUSINESS

1. **Minutes**—The Chairman called upon Mr. P. R. Sittampalam, Honorary Secretary, to read the Minutes of the 129th Annual General Meeting held on 23rd April 1976. After the Minutes were read, Professor M. B. Ariyapala proposed the adoption of the Minutes, which was seconded by Dr. C. G. Urugoda.

2. The Chairman mentioned that as the Annual Report of the Society for 1975 and the audited statement of accounts of the Society for 1975, accepted by the Council, which had already been printed and circulated among the members, there will be no need to read the report and audited statement of accounts. Professor M. B. Ariyapala proposed the adoption of the Report and the audited statement of accounts, which were seconded by Mr. D. D. Ranasinghe.

3. **Donations**—The Honorary Secretary announced the names of the Donors from whom donations of books had been received during the year under review.

4. The Honorary Secretary announced the names of the 5 new members namely Mr. Michael Allen Betcher; Dr. K. D. Jackson; Professor S. L. Kekulawala; Dr. K. F. Nanayakkara; Mr. R. F. Ross, who had been admitted during the year 1976.

5. The Chairman announced that the Council unanimously recommended and proposed that the following members be elected to the Council in place of the members who retired under section 24 of the Constitution and Rules of the Society:— Mr. Th. W. Hoffmann; Professor K. W. Goonewardene; Dr. C. G. Urugoda and Dr. Vince Vitharana.

The Council also unanimously recommended and proposed that Mr. P. R. Sittampalam and Mr. K. M. W. Kuruppu be re-elected Joint Honorary Secretaries; Al Haj A. H. M. Ismail be re-elected Honorary Treasurer and Messrs. Pope & Co., Chartered Accountants, be re-elected Auditors. The recommendations of the Council were seconded by Mr. Walter Wimalachandra and accepted. At the Council Meeting held on 22nd December 1976 it was decided that inquiry should be made from Dr. H. W. Tambiah, who was away in Canada, whether he expected to return to Sri Lanka in the near future, and if he did not, it should be suggested to him that he should resign from the Presidentship of the Society so that the Acting President Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi, who was also the senior Vice-President, be elected in his place. Dr. Tambiah's reply had not been received and therefore the election of Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi as President, was deferred. It was only on 2nd February 1977 that Dr. Tambiah's reply was received tendering his resignation and proposing that Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi be elected in his place. Therefore at a public meeting of the Society held on 7th February 1977, Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi was duly elected President of the Society with retrospective effect from 28th January 1977.

The Chairman explained his inability, due to his eye sight, to read his Presidential Address, and called upon Mr. P. R. Sittampalam, Honorary Secretary of the Society, to read the Presidential Address on Early Phase of Sinhalese in comparison with Modern Indo-Aryan'.

Vote of thanks - Professor M. B. Ariyapala proposed the vote of thanks. The Chairman in winding up the proceedings thanked the members and guests for their presence.

The Meeting was then declared closed.

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of the Sri Lanka Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society held at 5 p. m. on Thursday the 3rd November 1977, at the Biology Lecture Hall, Colombo Campus.**

**Present:**—Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi, President in the Chair, and the following members: Professor M. B. Ariyapala, Professor N. Mudiyanse; Mr. G. P. S. H. de Silva; Professor K. Kularatnam; Professor T. B. H. Abeyasinghe; Mr. Somapala Jayawardhane; Dr. Vinee Vitharana; Al-Haj A. H. M. Ismail (Hony. Treasurer) Messrs P. R. Sittampalam and K. M. W. Kuruppu (Jt. Hony. Secretaries).

**Absent:**—Mr. M. St. S. Casie Chetty informed the Hony. Secretary that he was ill and therefore unable to attend the meeting.

**1. Minutes:**—The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13.5.77, which had been previously circulated among the members, were tabled and confirmed. Proposed by Dr. Vinee Vitharana and seconded by Mr. Somapala Jayawardhane.

**2. Business arising out of the Minutes:**—With regard to the item 6 of the minutes relating to the Council Meeting of 13th May, 1977, Mr. P. R. Sittampalam, the Honorary Secretary, informed the Council that the appointment of Professor D. E. Hettiaratchi as President of the Society takes effect from 28. 1. 77, and this was accepted by the Council.

**3. Election of New Members:**—The following members were duly elected Mr. H. H. Hellin; Mrs. Anna Margaret Hellin, Miss L. W. March.

**4. The following donations were tabled:**—History of the Sinhalese Dictionary by Mr. Somapala Jayawardhane; The Achievements of Prester John By Professor C. F. Beckingham; Some aspects of the History of Archaeology in Sri Lanka by Mr. J. T. Rutnam; and Antiquities and Paintings from Sankhapala Vihare by Professor N. Mudiyanse. The Council directed the Hony. Secretary to thank the above donors.

**5. Purchases:**—It was reported to the Council that the Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, Vol. 3 No. 2; Vol. 4 Nos. 1 & 2; Vol. 5 Nos. 1 & 2 and Vol. 6 No. 1 were purchased and added to the Library.

**6. Nomination of Office-Bearers for the ensuing year:**—Vice-President Professor K. W. Goonewardene was nominated for election as Vice-President of the Society. Proposed by Prof. N. Mudiyanse and seconded by Mr. G. P. S. H. de Silva.

**Members to the Council:**—Mr. Th. W. Hoffmann and Prof. K. Kularatnam were nominated for re-election,

Dr. (Mrs.) Swarna Jayaweera was nominated for election to the Council, in place of prof. K. W. Goonewardene. Proposed by Prof. M. B. Ariyapala

and seconded by Mr. Somapala Jayawardhane. Messrs J. T. Rutnam and D. J. Moldrich were nominated for election to the Council in place of Prof. N. Mudiyanse and Mr. S. D. Saparamadu, who retired under Rule 21. Proposed by Prof. K. Kularatnam and seconded by Prof. M. B. Ariyapala.

**Jt. Hony. Secretaries:**—Messrs. P. R. Sittampalam and K. M. W. Kuruppu, who retired under Rule 20 were nominated for re-election. Proposed by Prof. K. Kularatnam and seconded by Dr. Vinee Vitharana.

**Hony. Treasurer:**—Al-Haj A. H. M. Ismail, who retired under Rule 20, was nominated for re-election. Proposed by Prof. M. B. Ariyapala and seconded by Mr. Somapala Jayawardhane.

**Auditors:**—Messrs Pope & Co., Chartered Accountants, were nominated as auditors of the Society for the ensuing year. Proposed by Prof. M. B. Ariyapala and seconded by Mr. Somapala Jayawardhane.

**7. The Audited Statement of Accounts:**—The Hony. Treasurer's report and Hony. Secretaries' annual report for the year 1976, were tabled and accepted for submission at the Annual General Meeting. Proposed by Prof. M. B. Ariyapala and seconded by Mr. G. P. S. H. de Silva.

8. Council was informed that a sum of Rs. 350/- was paid to Messrs Pope & Co., being fees for auditing the 1976 accounts of the Society.

9. The Council was informed that Messrs Roland Silva and R. D. E. Jayasekera, having paid their balance subscriptions, have become Life Members of the Society.

10. Permission was granted by the Council to transfer the following 4 members to the list of Life Members of the Society as they have paid their annual subscriptions for 25 years, under Rule 36 of the Constitution and Rules of the Society: Messrs. A. C. Dep; M. H. P. Silva; Devar Surya Sena and Dr. K. T. W. Sumanasuriya.

11. Mr. W. Malzer's letter dated 29. 9. 77, regarding the Society's Library was tabled and read out by the Hony. Secretary.

12. Mr. S. Ratnanather's letter of resignation was tabled. The Hony Secretary mentioned that the resignation should be accepted after recovering the current year's subscription of Rs. 20/-.

13. The letter of appeal from the penon of the Society was tabled and the Council granted an increment of Rs. 10/- with effect from 1st of November 1977.

14. The letter of resignation from the Librarian was tabled and the Council requested him to continue till April 1978. In the meantime members of the Council were requested to find a suitable person to be appointed as the Librarian of the Society.

15. Tabled Dr. C. G. Uragoda's letter informing the Council that he will be away from Sri Lanka for a few months.

16. The Council resolved that the Annual General Meeting should be held on 22nd December 1977 at 5 p.m.

17. Tabled Dr. Risiman Amerasinghe's paper on "Sela Lihini Asun Karu" (in Sinhala). The Council requested that Dr. Vinee Vitharana to go through the article and report whether it is suitable for publication in the Society's Journal.

18. (1) With regard to the translation into Sinhala of the Historical Topography of Ancient and Medieval Ceylon (R. A. S. Journal Vol. VI Special Number) by Mr. Somapala Jayawardhane. The letter to be forwarded to the Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Ministry, requesting a grant of Rs. 10,000/- for its publication, was read out and approved by the Council.

(2) A committee consisting of the President, Hony. Secretary, Mr. G. P. S. H. de Silva, Dr. N. D. Wijesekera and Prof. M. B. Ariyapala was requested to meet the Director of Museums in order to find a suitable place for the Society's Library.

**P. R. Sittampalam.**  
**K. M. W. Kuruppu.**  
*Jt. Honorary Secretaries.*

President.

**PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED IN EXCHANGE**  
**PERIOD 1. 10.76 TO 31.12.77**

- America**  
 John Hopkins University ... American Journal of Philology Volume 97  
 Nos. 2, 3 & 4.  
 Smithsonian Institute ... Smithsonian Contribution to Anthropology  
 Nos. 20 and 22.
- Australia**  
 Royal Society of New South  
 Wales ... Journal & Proceedings Vol. 100 Parts 3 & 4.
- England**  
 Institute of Historical Research Bulletin 49 Nos. 119 & 120  
 Special Supplement No. 11  
 55th Annual Report  
 List No. 37 & 38 Theses completed  
 Bulletin 50 No. 121.  
 Royal Asiatic Society  
 (Great Britain & Ireland) ... Journal 1275 No. 2.  
 School of Oriental & African  
 Studies ... Bulletin Vol. 39 No. 2.  
 Royal Commonwealth Society ... Journal 1976 (August/September).  
 John Rylands Library ... Bulletin Vol. 58 No. 2, Vol 59 No. 2.  
 Royal Geographical Society ... Research Reports 1968 Projects.
- France**  
 Journal Asiatique ... Tome CCLXIV (Nos. 1 & 2) 1977.
- Holland**  
 Koninklijke Voor, Taal-Land-En  
 Volkenkunde ... Bijdragen Deel 132 - 4 e.  
 Koninklijke Nederlandse Akade-  
 mie Van Wetenschappen Afd  
 letter-kunde Kern Institute ... Meddedelingen, Del 39 Nos. 2 to 6.
- India**  
 Adyar Library and Research ... Bulletin No. 40 (1976)  
 Centre  
 Indian Council for Cultural ... Cultural News Vol. 17 No. 3  
 Relations ... Indian Horizons Vol. 25 (3 & 4).  
 Mysore Economic Review ... Vol. 61 Nos. 9 to 11  
 Vol. 62 Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6 & 7.  
 The Maha Bodhi ... Vol. 84 Nos. 10 to 12.
- Italy**  
 Historical Institute of the  
 Society of Jesus ... Archivum Historicum Anno 44 Fasc. 89.
- Sarawak**  
 Museum Journal ... Volume 23 No. 44.
- Sri Lanka**  
 Conservator of Forests ... The Ceylon Forester Vol. 12 Nos. 1 & 2.  
 Director, National Museum ... Periodical Index Vol. No. 8 & 10 (1977).
- Vietnam**  
 L' Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-  
 Orient ... Bulletin Tome LXIII.

**PUBLICATIONS ADDED TO THE LIBRARY**  
**DONATIONS 1. 10. 76 TO 31. 12. 77**

- Beckingham C. F. Professor ... The Achievements of Prester John  
 De Alwis C. M. ... Antiquities of the Kingdom of Kotte,  
 De Silva, Anslern ... Venomous Snakes of Sri Lanka.  
 The Pattern-of Snake Bite in Sri Lanka.
- Hobbom, M. A. H. (Dr.) ... Classical Readings from German Liter-  
 ature (Tamil).  
 German Indology (Tamil).  
 Selected Modern German short stories.  
 South Asia Institute of Heidelberg  
 University.  
 F. Max Mueller- What He Can Teach Us.  
 Federal Republic of Germany.  
 South Asia Institute Bulletin.  
 Essays in Political Geography  
 Year Book of the South East Asia  
 Institute.  
 Buddhism & Buddhist Stories in Germany.  
 Style (Panhinda) Sinhalese.  
 William Geiger (Sinhalese).  
 Hermann Hesse's Sidhartha (Sinhalese).
- Hoffmann, Th. W. ... Checklist of the Birds of Ceylon.  
 Collected papers in Avian Paleontology.
- Jayawardhana, Somapala ... Alahantha Kathawa (Sinhalese).  
 History of the Sinhalese Dictionary.
- Mudiyanse, N. (Professor) ... Alahantha Kathawa (Sinhalese) Poems  
 Antiquities & Paintings Sankhapala  
 Vihare.
- National Museum, Director ... Colombo Museum 100 years.  
 Ruebens Hans ... Sariputra & Ala Alakhyalak-sana.  
 United States Information ... Images of Sri Lanka through American  
 Service Eyes.

**PURCHASED**

- The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies Vol. 5 Nos. 1 & 2.  
 Volume 6 Nos. 1 & 2.

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### Ordinary Non-Resident Members

Mr. M. A. Betcher, Professor R. D. Jackson, Mr. W. Malzer.

### Ordinary Resident Members

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