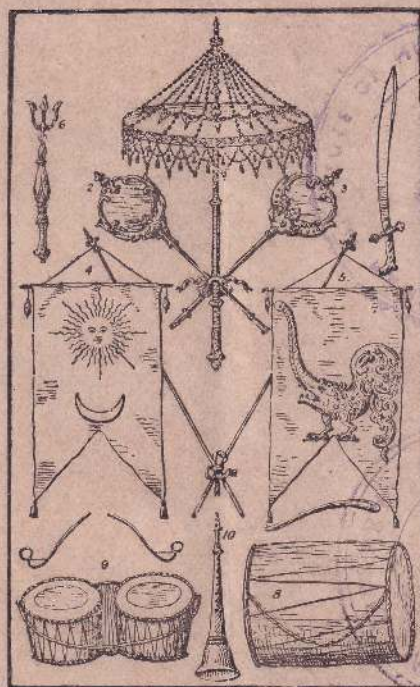


THE INSIGNIA OF  
**Kuruvanse or Kauravavanse.**



A REVIEW OF  
**Advocate Perera's Flag Book**

— by —

**WALTER De SOYSA,**

*A Kshtriyan of the Warusay-Wepulla-Sannadige Clan of the Kuruvanse.*

MORATUWA WALAUWA,  
12-4-21.







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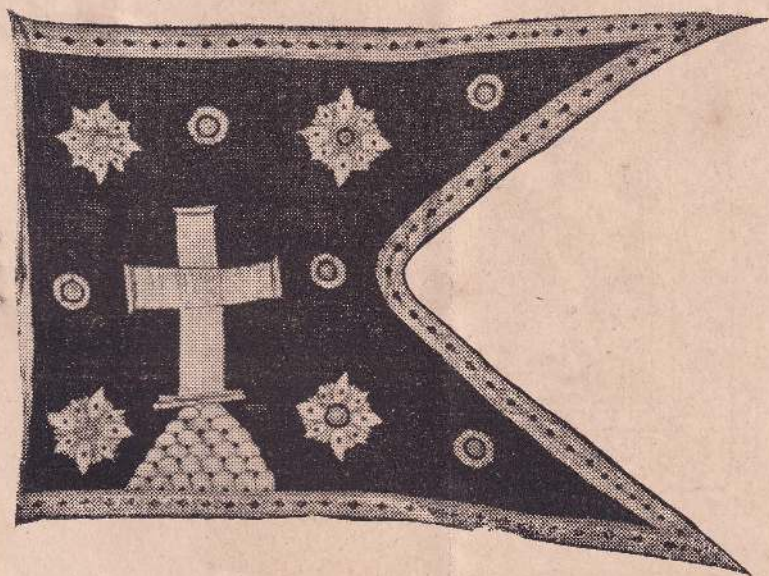
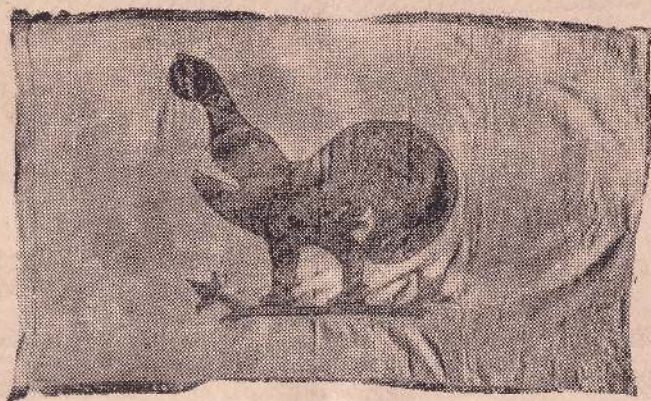
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EL KURUVANSE.

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## PREFACE

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A few words in explanation of the pages that follow. As I said in a letter in the *Ceylon Independent* last week, this booklet is the outcome of an attempt to follow up a series of letters I have been writing on the subject of Mr. Perera's Flags in the same journal. The letter grew into larger dimensions than I originally intended for it, and as it would have looked too troubled and clumsy in a daily paper, had the Editor been so lavish in his hospitality as to allow me the space it would have required, it now appears in this form. Tho' not to disarm criticism, the Reader will please note it is one of a series, and has to be read in that context, both in regard to its matter and its manner.

I construe Mr. Perera's misrepresentations, as of concern to all classes and communities, and will by every means in my power, aided by those who are both able and willing to render service, remove a reproach as calumnious as it is unwarranted.

WALTER DE SOYSA.

Moratuwa Walauwa,  
April 12th, 1921.





# A Review on the Singhalese Standards and Banners.

By E. W. PERERA, Advocate,

1916.

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Boasting of a title which would naturally anticipate a fair and accurate analysis of an existing state of emblems or devices, this compiler, has published a book, to hoodwink the Britisher. It is incomprehensible to me as to how the State allowed the revenue to be wasted on a book compiled at the Museum, when the higher authorities in England anticipated a curtailment of expenditure during War, on any mad venture of this nature, by the Colonial authorities. From the Britisher, we anticipate impartial treatment of its subject races, and we feel aggrieved at this monumental folly to allow its State's press to publish a book of this nature, without diving deeper into the history of the Karawe caste, on whom alone the builders of the Portuguese Empire of the Orient, depended to uphold the dignity of Castilian prestige. Have we on any occasion given the Britisher any cause to suspect our loyalty to the Throne now occupied by the progeny of Infanta De Braganza, the daughter of our Catholic Sovereign, the acceptance of whose dowry, viz., the Colony of Bombay that gave the Britisher the first taste of Orient's colonization and trade opportunity? It is not in one of a well-balanced mental calibre, to give lessons in diplomacy to the officials in Ceylon; it is an unwise dictum to humiliate the community from whom they will derive their soldiers, if an occasion were to arise that befell the fall of the Portuguese dominion of the Orient. In a brief review of Perera's Standards, and whom it is meant to humiliate, the history of the caste or its origin would be quite out of place, but it would not be out of place to mention that the Sinhalese are after all the colonials of Indian origin and of Aryan blood.

The Goi or Kuruvanse, &c., are after all, begotten of the same original settlers, though on several occasions at later periods Kaurava mercenaries had been imported from Pandya, Kerala, Chola and Chera for the purpose of repelling a rebellion from within or an invasion by aliens as in the case of Puttalam by the Mukkuwas. It is amongst later mercenaries' descendants that you find the tamil language spoken, and not amongst the Kauravanse people who followed the original Prince Wijeyo of the Sinhalese, whose Queen Wijahi Madurapura was the daughter of the King of Pandya of Kuruvanse, and Wijeyo himself is of Kuruvanse being a descendant in the direct line of King Santhanu.

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SANTHANUSTHEWA BAWADRĀJANĀ KAWRAWA-  
NAN DURANDRAK.

vide *Maha Bhaaritha*

The Kauravanse community existed in the tribal federation, and their customs, manners, habits, banners, emblems had originally been subject to the Cortes of the elders as now existing amongst the Circassian tribes of the Urals. On their conversion to the faith of Buddha these customs, &c., seem to have lapsed into those prevalent amongst their neighbours of the other vanses. It is an accepted fact which could be proved from Sinhalese history, that these warrior caste-settlements along the coast were due not to the fact that the settlers were of mariner tribes, but because the lands had either been bestowed on them by sannas or because they were made to settle along the coast to repel attacks of Arab marauders prior to the advent of the Portuguese. If one were to read the *Rajawalliya* the following instructive passage would be found therein viz., that the building of Cotta as a city within a fortress was due to the fact, of Alakeswara's inability or dislike to being tributary to King Chakkravati of Jaffna, which led on to declaration of war by the Jaffnese monarch on its Sinhalese tributary; again on this occasion mercenaries seem to have been imported from a part of the mainland called Soli. Alakeswara's two main strongholds, Cotta (Jayawardanapura) and Gampola being attacked at the same period, he seems to have fled and taken refuge at Rayigama,



In *Rajawalliya* page 66 and 67 you would find that ultimately this fleeing Kaiser seems to have regained his lost kingdom by the attachment of the Kshatriyas who turned the tide of battle in favour of their Sovereign with whose devotion he seems to have entirely defeated the later mercenaries from Soli (a colony of Kuruvanse in South India descendants of the Northerners).

The finale of this war seems to have taken place at Gorakhana in the ancient Peruwa of Moratuwa.

Their ships were attacked whilst at anchor at Panna Teerai, Panadura, and the enemies were either killed or taken prisoner.

On the advent of the Portuguese trading corsairs the earlier settlers were subjected to continuous annoyance, and the best of Kshatriyan warrior families were stationed along the coast. This would be about the reign of Buweneka Bahu VII and Don Juan Dharmapala. The marauding moors attempted to regain the import and export trade (by exchange in kind) which they had carried on prior to the advent of the Portuguese. The Portuguese power being on the ascendant the ruling monarch offered an alliance which was readily accepted. But at the instance of the Arab Chief Zamorin of Calicut, the Ceylonese Monarch Mayadunne broke faith with the Castillians and laid siege to Cotta which territory had been leased to the Sovereign of Portugal. The timely arrival of the Portuguese troops from other parts of the island raised the siege. Again in 1538 the King of Ceylon seems to have declared this binding compact as a scrap of paper, at the instigation of Chief Paicha Marcar of Cochin whose troops never landed in Ceylon as the fleet bringing them was intercepted by the Portuguese fleet and destroyed *en route*.

The Monarch of Ceylon seems to have been a mere puppet in those days, and the war was only a commercial war for the ex-territorial rights in trade between the Portuguese and the Moors.

If you were to refer to *Mahavanse* Chapter 39 you would read of the achievements of Moggallena, who is said to have built a fleet in India and landed here intending to wage a war against his brother. Moggallena seems to have been successful as he is

said to have appointed his relative and friend the flag bearer (or is it as the flag designer?) Silakala. The warriors that followed old Moggallena in this venture were gifted with lands along the coast, and the fleet was used in conjunction with the then existing vessels to totally destroy the Arab corsairs, whereby the island was freed from invasion. There is sufficient evidence in the ancient literature of India that the warriors who answered the call of old Moggallena were of Kuruvanse (Kauravanse). Colombo as a seaport was mentioned in the 5th century. Moggallena on his way to Manthotan landed in Colombo (*Hela Divu Rajaniya, Ceylon history*). Silakala we find as Admiral later, who declared Panadura (a name of Tamil origin) and several other ports as treaty ports for trade along the South Western seaboard. From Moggallena to Arya Chakkravati for over 900 years there was a fleet of fighting vessels. And the sovereign became the master in his own house. During the reign of Sri Parakrama of Cotta, the King desirous of introducing an import and export trade between Ceylon and the mainland, despatched a ship laden with the products of this island, which was seized at anchor by the orders of Virarama of Yapapatuna and the goods were confiscated. Over a hundred vessels were despatched by this Ceylonese King to avenge this humiliation, the Soli country was laid waste, tribute extracted and four towns in the district of Maku-dam Kotta of Soli country were made tributary colonies to the Sinhalese King (see *Rajavaliya*, page 69). The reign of this illustrious sovereign is also mentioned in 91st Chapter of *Mahavamsa*, after which the fleet was continuously used for guarding the pearl banks against illicit pearling by Arab divers and we are told by the ancient literature now existing that the pearl banks extended from Arippuwa to Chilaw. The Admiral and the Head Staff Officers of this large fleet had their settlements and arable lands in or about the Chilaw area.

Their families lived in them. During the reign of Moggallena and later in that of Chakkravati, also in the reign of Alake-sevara of Cotta and Rayigama there were officers appointed to collect taxes and there had been a fishing Industry.



There are proofs of taxes on the fishing industry; this is doubtless the origin of the present-day tribute paid by the Roman Catholics at the end of their day's fishing. These tax collectors were called *Patabendi* vide *Dutch Records* p. 17 and *R. A. Journal* 1856. The taxation of the fishing industry exists to the present day, having from the Castillian and Dutch period been paid to the State, and now-a-days to the R.C. Church to which the owner of the boat or net belonged. This tribute is not only purely voluntary—but is due by an allegiance to the doctrine of the Catholic Faith as unbending that only death could part them from their adherence to the Faith of S. Peter. Such a voluntary gift could in no way be termed an exaction of the Church in the form of taxation. It often happened that there were other co-settlements of Kshatriyans forming Madura wanse and Salagam wanse, who also were stationed in their present settlements as soldiers and not as followers of a fishing or canning occupation. If any student of history were to study the *gé* names of any of these descendants of old soldiers they would find most conclusively that they were not the fishers by trade in perpetuity as Perera tries to insinuate by the insertion of a fish in a banner alleged to be of the Karawas', and in Ch. VI. of his book as fish being the emblem of their trade. Traditionally we have no doubt that the tribe of *Warsa Wepulla*—or *Warusay*—came from Point Dondra ("the point I give you sir" in Castillian, is the Dewundera of the present day). The ancestor of the present day de Soysa family, was of historic descent and of the finest Kshatriyan blue blood of the *Kurus*—'tho a son of the de Soysas has to say it.

This founder of the de Soysa family who was the generalissimo of the Sinhalese armies was mainly instrumental in the destruction of the Fleet of Chakkravati whilst lying off Panna-teerai (Panadure) as the Commander-in-Chief of Alakeswara's armies. In recognition of these meritorious services the said Warusay was made the Minister of Revenue by Alakeswara of Cotta. The influence of Warusay seems to have been predominant and undisputed even by His Sovereign during this period. He was the favourite minister of the Sovereign who gifted him with the Sannas of the lands where Nalluruwa stands. The

place was named by him Nalluruwa, which means happy village. Latterly we find Warusay was given the over-lordship of Panadure, Gorakana and Nalluruwa. He looked after the welfare of the people over whom he was placed as a chief. He helped them with new ideas of an industry to which the natives of that area had been accustomed to. And he was in time called by his subjects *Warsa wepella-sannadi*, because of his *Sannas* rights to that heritage and of his being of warrior-birth. And the taxes on fishing, became his perquisite and the land was vested in free-hold, the copy right of same being on the Tenants. If we were to quote Hon. Jas. de Alwis note on page 6 you would find this coast had continually been subjected to incursions by Portuguese marauders whose policy seems to have been to combine trade with religion. We have sufficient proof to show that Warusay was the direct ancestor of the present de Soysa Family. And it was on their conversion to the Faith of St. Peter that they adopted the name of De Soysa from the Generalissimo of the Portuguese Indies Condè\* João de Soysa, the son of Duque† de Soysa of de Sousas, on the Tumela between Cheves and Monterey on the Portuguese Spanish frontier—facing the Province of Tras—os Montes—(vide *Historia Espana—Portugal*). The Duque Jaime de Soysa was of Grandee Castillian Blood of Spain—hence the home of his Barony situated within the Portuguese Division of Castille is spelt *de Sousas*—with a *u* instead of *y*.

To further convince you that certain *gé* names indicate a trade the founder of that particular family or sect followed, let us take the name of Muttutanthrigé. This *gé* name is to be found in Goi and Karawevanse, and it is emblematic of a trade the founder followed—namely watcher or sentinel of the pearl bank. Take the case of Héttiarachi people. They are to be found in Goi and Karawevanse. It is preposterous to imagine as Perera supposes that they would have flown a span cloth from their mast-head and called themselves pearl fishers in perpetuity or draped their boat with a span cloth with an oyster shell stuck in it as a device emblematic of the trade of that particular family. Then take the

\* Baron or Count.

† Duke.



case of Wasala-tantrigé, or Wahalathantrigé, which means gate sentinels or sentinels on battlements : or would Perera call them roof thatchers following the modern colloquialism? Does Perera say that these formed a different caste by themselves called the watcher caste and the weaver caste? I wonder whether Perera had thoroughly studied his own genealogy before throwing stones at Kara, Salagama, Madura, or Wanse Purna Wanse? Does he deny that in the neighbourhood of Cotta that Wahalathantrigé people are to be found and that he has close relations amongst those people?

Pretending to be a thorough bred Goiwanse man, why should he designate a trade to the Salagamawanse, as weavers of cloths kadjans or mats when his own blood claims the Wahalathantrigé origin? With the rise of Castillian influence at the Court of Cotta in the 16th Century many Castillian customs, habits, titles and address were adopted in the Sinhalese Court. The body-guard formed by the Castillian advisers in the Military science were called *guardie a del rey*, and only men of noble Sinhalese birth were given admission to its Corps, same as the Princes' Corps in India the Viceroy's Bodyguard for state occasions. I would give you a few more instances such as Bodiabadugé, Busabadugé. It would be interesting to recall that the *gé* names were very prominent during the Castillian period in Ceylon. The caste question was gradually having a natural extinction during this time. The Conquerors freely intermarried with the better class Sinhalese families. The habits, customs, diet, &c., rapidly changed with the adoption of the Roman Faith, and in time the home language of the better class was Portuguese, the same as with English in the present day. Most of the *gé* names of the present Sinhalese denote nothing save the village where he or she came from, or they are one of the innumerable adoptions on buying a Vidanearatchiship, Mudaliyarship or Velvidaneship which in time blossoms into Hohenzollernism, or Braganzaism. Numerous instances of this nature could be given of nincompoops who shine in official eyes as the elite of Sinhalese blood, whereas a slight analysis would reveal some low blood and accounts for the migration to hide certain defects in their genealogy and their restarting with village names. Perera seems to spring from a brood that is bent in throwing mud at the other wanses. His father is

the author of *Neethi-Nigundura* in collaboration with Mr. Panebokke, and his brother figures in the *Indian Antiquary*. But he may take it from me, that the publication of his own precious *Life* would reveal certain incidents of more than normal interest to his friends, relations and countrymen.

Wherever we find the same *ge* name in Goi and Karawavanse—now Perera tell me how you say that their origin is of diverse Stocks—and one of which was Goi or tribal, and the other Karawa whose alleged flag gifted by you and your Hindoo shewed a device emblematical of a trade—both may have sprung from the same original ancestor. Authorities can be quoted by the shovelful to disprove your theory that the hereditary craft of the Karawe is fishing. Even the present day officials whom you and your Hindoo attempt to hoodwink with the gift of a flag and a fish in it to prove a theory formulated by you (vide Ch. VI) have not evidently been convinced, as we find the respected Fisher Mudaliyar is of a caste other than mine or yours. Are you unaware that S. James' Church, Mutwal is solely supported by the caste to whom you have gifted a non-existing flag of a man in the nude doing obeisance to a Dutch Governor with a bale of cinnamon by his side and whom you term as weavers of mats kadjans or cloths? Is not this preposterous nonsense? *Vid ethe Isle of Ceylon* by Rev. Phillip Baldeus, Vol. III, London 1672 in which is a picture which you call a flag. In the adjoining page you would find two Hollander ministers kow-towing and kissing the feet of the Sinhalese Sovereign. Would you include that as a flag of the Hollanders? If you were to walk along Marriakade boutiques you would find decorated handkerchiefs which could be used as flags with devices in them emblematic of all the trades including that of the Hindoo fishers.

In the North and South of Pammunugama and Beruwala the majority of the fishing people are of Goiwanse or of Moorish blood. Why not present them with the Baddegama flag with a Mermaid stuck in it to perpetuate an incident rather regretful and fly it over Talpe hill warning others against similar catastrophes and call it a device emblematic of the trade of this new set of Goi-Moor-Karawas to support your theory as formulated in Chapter VI.?



In the *Memoirs and Desultory Writings* of the Hon'ble Mr. Jas. de Alwis, M.R.A.S., page 9, the following interesting passage appears. Herein he claims ownership over fishing nets and boats as belonging to his family and Walauwa.

"Shortly before Sir Thomas Maitland left Ceylon he was often in the habit of visiting the old Rest House of Bentota not only for the sake of the good fish which he found abundant in that district, but for the fresh oysters which its river has ever been famous. One day whilst the Governor was enjoying his *otium cum dignitate* on his invalid arm chair on the outer-verandah of the old Rest House, and it was at no great distance from that building which serves that purpose now, he happened to see two Sinhalese young men walking by the river side. Apparently much pleased with their deportment he beckoned to them. On their hastening to the spot where the Governor sat, with all the respect due to his exalted position they were asked if they knew English and had been to school? The elder replied in the affirmative and during some little conversation which ensued His Excellency learned that they were enjoying their vacation at their country residence and that they were being educated at Governor North's Seminary at Wolfendhal. Observing too that they were by no means deficient in their knowledge of English which they spoke with tolerable accuracy and clearness—the Governor asked them if they could get him some fish "Any amount of them Your Excellency," said the elder of the youths. The Governor was quite pleased with the readiness with which the response was made, and it delighted him still more to observe the alacrity with which the elder went to work, the amount of influence which he possessed, and the respect he commanded in the district. For scarcely a few minutes had elapsed from this time, before the contents of three fishing canoes which had just landed were placed on the compound of the rest house. The Governor examined the different kinds of fish and desired his servant to select what he liked best, offering the young man payment for what he had been so good as to procure. Young Abraham de Alwis, for such was his name, respectfully thanked His Excellency for the offer but added that he considered it undignified and unbefitting his position to accept

any payment himself, to permit the Governor of the Island to recompense the men who were bound to give the speaker any amount of fish he desired. "Bound," exclaimed the Governor with his European notions of independence which were unknown, in Ceylon those days. "Yes" replied the youth firmly but respectfully, 'the boats and the nets belong to our Wallauwa, and besides, it is customary for us to take as much fish as we want.'"—

I leave it at that.

Perera in his reference to the Makara Kodiya quotes Valentyn, a Hollander. Why should he have failed to quote a greater authority such as the author of *Ithihasa*, Weligama Sri Suman-gala Thero, and cite the Stanza appearing therein :

Gajendra husthung krathapada singhung  
Harala dunthung hunnumantha nettrung  
Waraha karnung kandamathsiya sehung  
Wiehitthra pattarung makkarasya roopang.

[The figure of the Monster Makaraya is made of the proboscis or the trunk of the elephant, of the feet of the lion, the teeth of the alligator, the eye of the monkey, the ears of the boar the body of a fish, and of a tail similar to that of the Monster Kindura. (This in itself is a fable biped resting on feet resembling those of a cock possessing a human face and body with a tail whose beauty cannot be justly described)]. This failure alone shows Perera's prejudice against a community to which he does not belong.

Valentyn an author not versed in oriental classics could not have referred to Makara in any other term than that of a particular fish. A mythical monster living either on land or water could only be a footed animal or a fish.

And it is excusable in a foreigner to describe it as such as no European language either Spanish, Portuguese, French German, English, Italian, or Dutch contains a term which sufficiently describes the monster in one word. So to hide himself under the "skirts" of Valentyn's or Mr. Pearson's Appoo is what we could have expected only from a pseudo Historian such as Mr. Perera. If Perera had taken the trouble to inspect certain



prominent inscriptions in the temples, he would have seen what is known as the *Makara Thorane*. Surely, he must be totally devoid of intelligence if he accuses the Karawa community with the acceptance of his theory that this device is also emblematical of the craft of the caste (Chapter VI)—and the Karawas to be *Thoran* builders—as an occupation for any of the unnatural alliances to which Cotta seems to have set the fashion. Was Perera ignorant of the existence of 278 Sanskrit, Pali, Sinhalese and Tamil books on Kuruwanse? If so how came he to pose as an authority on the castes and its crafts? See *Ithihasa* page 68 wherein you will find Mr. Cassiechitty D. J., C.C.S. in his Official Gazetteer acknowledged the right of the Kuruwanse to the privileged use of the Makara Kodiya. So why should he have searched for it in nooks and corners of disused temples or in the *Illauwas* of insignificant Dravidian families, when he could have asked us, the De Mels, De Silvas, Pereras, Weerasuriyas, Fernandos, Wijesekeres, Abyesakeres, Fonsekas, for the loan of it for inspection? Prior to the diving into the history of other districts and castes he should have learnt the history of his own hamlet of Cotta, where he could have learnt how a citadel of old had decayed into its present position, and how morally deficient the Baddegama residents became when they were brought into contact with Cotta men! Otherwise he could not have been ignorant of the *Ithihasa* (vide page 68) reference to Sri Prarakrama of Cotta confirming the original right to the use of the Sun and Moon Banner, Pearl Umbrella, two Davul Pandams, and two Alla wattams to the Kuruwanse, for regaining the district of Puttalam from the Mukkuwas. These emblems have been and are used by the Kuruwanse families up to the present day at their funerals. If he had seen the *Ithihasa* he would have known that these insignia are never used except by the Kuruwanse. The said emblems were the tokens of recognition of a grateful King of the Kshatriyas who rescued the richer portion of his kingdom from alienation. It is rather peculiar that Perera should have betaken himself to the interior of Taman-kaduwa in N.-C. Province to search for the Karawa Kodiya or flags. One does not search for the elite of British culture or birth in Lime House Causeway, Blackwall Tunnel or Petticoat Lane in the East end of London. If he wanted to

find anything historic in the Kuruwanse connection with Ceylon he should have searched for it in the Paris of Karawe culture—Moratuwa, wherein dwell Kurus of historic birth and the blue blood of the Kurus. This interesting Hindoo gentleman he quotes seems to have been an exceptionally brave warrior, or a skirt-hearted martyr like himself; he seems to have bolted to Tamankaduwa with his bundle of flags in the guise of a Hindoo, there to await Perera the flag designer! He is said to be a descendant of a chief of the Karawa caste. He must be of the Hohenzollern descent to have bolted leaving his following behind, there to await his designer in neutral ground like his European counterpart, on the safe sanctuary of the Hague.

If Perera wanted Roman Catholic flags, or the photographs of the same he had only to come to any Catholic Church on a fiesta day with a couple of hundred films which could have helped him to fill a volume that would be a keep-sake valuable as a *Recuerdos* (souvenir) to any Nursery or Kindergarten.

An apology is due from me to my readers for this lengthy review; and I trust my language is innocent enough; but it is regrettable that the State unwittingly should have been a party to the publication of a document which is now only second in importance to the back numbers of the "Punch" bound in book form.





## ADDENDA

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Some of The Historic Sannadi (Warrior) families of the Kuruvanse of blue blood.

### GÉ FAMILIES

Maha-mala, Muttu-mala, Addappavnnuhala, Manamuhan-diranla, Kurana, Colomba, Meegomu, Weerakutti, Kurugama, Kiri Jayakodi, Tel, Maha-tel, Kudah-tel, Thanapati, etc.

### SOORIYA FAMILIES

Kurukula, Warnakula, Arsakula, Mihindukula, Weera, Sarna, Jaya, Amara, Hewa-Fonseca, Dharma, Warsa, Nimala, Wimala, Arditiya.

### MEISTRI FAMILIES.

Sampatha, Balapu, Wannaka, Wadu-Mitti Maha, Hun-Wedi, Hun-Nedi, Widanáyela.

### TANTRIGE FAMILIES.

Warsa, Warsala, Whala, Merengela, Bodi-Badu, Busa-Badu, Srimaha, etc.

### PUTTAN-KUTTI (PATA BENDI)

Ran-Pata-Bendi, Ran-Path, Ran-Pata-Bendi-Nannayakkara, Sampatha-Wadu, Mahalackamalage and Tumboru.

I could give him the names of 100 more families prior to these, would Mr. Perera prove that any of them are of fisher origin, and carried a fish-device emblematical of their alleged trade.

WALTER DE SOYSA.







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