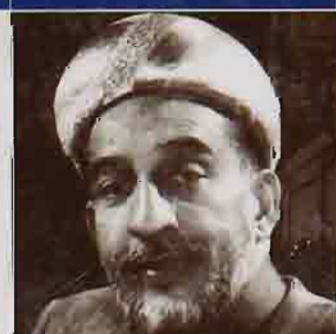


The Indo-Lankans

Their 200-year saga



S. MUTHIAH









SRI LANKA

(2002*)

- Province Boundary
- District Boundary
- Country Capital
- Other Towns

1. Talawakelle
2. Hunupitiya
3. Kandapola
4. Kattubedde
5. Darawella
6. Kadugannawa
7. Kolapatana



* With all towns mentioned in the text.

The Indo-Lankans

Their 200-year saga

*A pictorial record of
the people of Indian origin in Lanka from 1796*



S. Muthiah

Indian Heritage Foundation

Colombo
SRILANKA

2003

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Front end papers : *1. Rain forests like this once covered the entire central portion of Lanka.
2. Being felled in the 1870s, in the shadow of Adam's Peak, as here, or elsewhere in the highlands were the rain forests to create acreage for tea.*

Rear end papers : *1. By the 1950s, pluckers were kept busy in tea gardens that carpeted the hillsides in the shade of the Silver Oak and other trees, sustaining the country's growing economy.
2. In the 1990s, the carpet of green in the shadow of Adam's Peak was uninterrupted, with hardly a Silver Oak to mar its perfection.*

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Preface



Nirupam Sen, High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka, 2003.



भारतीय उच्चायुक्त, श्री लंका
High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka.

The Indian Heritage Foundation has brought out this amazing book which documents 200 years of contribution by persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. The book is outstanding in its content and will doubtless be considered a seminal contribution to literature in this field. The book illuminates one aspect of the close and friendly ties that have always existed between India and Sri Lanka by graphically depicting the significant role played by persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. I would, therefore, commend the Indian Heritage Foundation for this monumental work written in style and replete with substance.

I also wish to congratulate the author Mr. S. Muthiah for the tremendous dedication and devotion with which he has researched and compiled the information. The work has been both thorough and painstaking; Mr. S. Muthiah can legitimately be proud of his achievement.

This detailed study of the life and achievements of the community of Indian origin in Sri Lanka will remain authoritative in an area neglected so far. I wish the Indian Heritage Foundation success in its future endeavours as well.

(Nirupam Sen)
High Commissioner

Foreword



Gopalkrishna Gandhi in front of the now grown Ashoka tree in India House whose sapling President Rajendra Prasad had planted in 1951.

Archaeologists tell us that, until 7000 years ago, the sea around Adam's Bridge was 10 metres lower than it now is. In other words, the southeast coast of India and the northwest coast of Sri Lanka were umbilically linked by land. The people of the two landmasses moved for millennia with ease, doubtless in both directions, across what is now a chain of soft islets between Dhanushkodi and Talaimannar. In more recent centuries, after seawaters rose and engulfed the land link, Indians from both the east and west coasts of India arrived in the island by sea routes. Following wars, conquests, assimilation and inter-marriage, these Indian arrivees made Serendib their home.

A 'group' came in the mid-19th Century, not quite as voluntarily as the earlier migrations. Born in the paddy-cultivating districts of Tamil Nadu, these Indians, and their successors, became miners of wealth in the island through the berry, coffee, and the leaf, tea. Also, to a lesser extent, through the white sap, rubber. These plantation workers of Indian origin, together with other streams of migrants, became an inherent part of the plural mosaic of the island.

Few Sri Lankans are, therefore, without some Indian derivation, recent or remote.

So where does a book of this kind begin? On the premise that by 'Sri Lankans of Indian Origin' are meant those who crossed over in the 19th and 20th Centuries, it can credibly begin there. And so it does, unfolding the life of a hugely talented and gifted people whose cultural identities are now a distinct efflorescence on the tree of Sri Lanka's pluralism. But it gives the narration or backdrop in early history as well.

This story of Sri Lankans with a distinct Indian origin needed to be told, for it seemed to have been drowned like the original land link in the 'keep and throw' of selective memory-systems. More than being just told, it needed to be brought to life. Only a few scholarly books, like the dotted line of Adam's islets, reminded us of the link. Nothing could be more vivid than a pictorial biography coming up to present times.

A valuable work by Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie on Indian South Africans titled *From Cane Fields to Freedom* provided an example of such a pictorial work. The Sri Lanka-India and South Africa-India parallels were nowhere near being comparable and yet the two stories suggested convergences.

S. Muthiah, with assistance and encouragement from the brothers Mano Selvanathan and Hari Selvanathan and the Indian Heritage Foundation, Colombo, has done the rest. A heritage-writer *par excellence*, he is, besides, an adept of the English language, a stylist whose fidelity to fact comes before the art of letters. No one could have been better qualified to undertake this task than Muthiah, himself of Indian origin but who spent nearly four decades in Sri Lanka before becoming a resident of Chennai, where he is as much associated with Sri Lanka as with Chennai. There is a felicitous closing of the migratory cycle in his person, a maturation of the pearl of India-Sri Lankan ethnicity.

Metaphors crowd the mind when one thinks of the diversity of Sri Lanka. But metaphors should not become a substitute for a cogent narration illustrating the story. This book achieves that goal admirably. If the text is gripping, the photographs are a visual repast. Collecting the pictures from across the globe has certainly not been easy; collecting them with the speed Muthiah has shown has been nothing short of a miracle. Here they are, saying it all exactly as it happened, page after historical page.

This book vivifies to life the aspirations, the strivings and achievements of people who are a part of the success story of Sri Lanka. They also form a chapter in the history of South Asia.

There is another story of Sri Lanka which is not about success; rather, about suffering, trauma and anguish. This compilation, while not being about that side of Sri Lanka's truth, nonetheless gets related to it in our minds. If only the spirit of accommodation and assimilation which these pages portray had imbued relevant sections of political thought and action these last two decades!

Speaking to plantation workers in the Central highlands during his one and only visit in 1927, Mahatma Gandhi used an old Parsi formulation to say that the arrivees from India should be as sugar in milk. Indeed, they have been that, functioning as a nutriment to the country, unobtrusively. Sugar must retain its sucrose if it is to sweeten anything. Sri Lanka has helped Sri Lankans of Indian origin to retain their identities, their personas, their Indian "thingness", while becoming fully-fledged Sri Lankans, alongside and equal with the Sinhalese and Tamils. The Indian Tamils and Bharathas emerge from the book, as do the Gujaratis, Malayalees and Parsis. Individuals blossom in it, be it Queen Rengamma of Kandy or the late leader of plantation workers, S. Thondaman. And enterprises spring to life — roads, bridges, plantations, shops, railways, industries.

More than the story of a people, the story of an epoch is covered in this pictorial narration — an epoch wherein a nation has been helped to attain the fullness of a *padakkam* studded with gems, both indigenous and from the ancient land that lies across the Mannar shore.

This book celebrates that attainment. And I celebrate the book.

COLOMBO
August, 2002

Gopalkrishna Gandhi *
Former High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka

* Gopalkrishna Gandhi wrote this Foreword just before leaving the Island on completion of his term as High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka.

Author's Note

Having straddled the Palk Strait for over seventy years now, with a foot in each country and a heart in both, it was inevitable that I would not think twice when offered the chance to work on this book, a subject dear to me. Having spent my first forty years in the Ceylon that was emerging as Sri Lanka, nearly half of them as a journalist, and having lived since then in Madras, working as a printer, publisher and journalist and writing several books on the British period in the South, looking at the Indian contribution to Ceylon/Sri Lanka over the last two hundred years from the time the British sank their first roots in the Island in 1796 was just my cup of tea. I had, after all, made my own little contribution, knew well many who had made much more, and had, over the years, taken a great deal of interest in the trials, tribulations and successes of the Indian diaspora, particularly those in Ceylon whose contribution grew from bitter berry to green gold and, since independence, in the world of modern development. Much of my writing on the British in South India, and South India's links with countries ranging from South Africa to Indo-China, had also benefited considerably from all I had learnt, during my years in the Island, about Ceylon's links with South India and Britain and the 'I love you, I love you not' relationships the three shared. So, comfortable with the subject, I didn't hesitate to say 'yes' when the Indian Heritage Foundation, Colombo, invited me through an old friend, Gopalkrishna Gandhi, the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka at the time, to undertake the work.

In mid-2001, I caught up with Mano Selvanathan and M. Radhakrishnan of the Indian Heritage Foundation in Colombo. And out of those discussions emerged the concept of this book. It was to be strongly pictorial, covering as many aspects as possible of the Indian contribution from 1796 to date. Expected to be an album rich in pictures, it was felt it deserved a large-size format. And as the focus was to be emphatically visual, the text would be brief, to the point and factual. Comment, rather, analysis, it was felt, could await another book, a text-oriented follow-up that would be many times more detailed. While I work on that book, the Indian Heritage Foundation offers Sri Lanka and India this presentation of an ancient connection; I hope readers will find its wealth of facts, particularly the little known, as interesting as its rich pictorial content, much of it never seen before by a wider public, certainly not in recent generations.

The collection of this photographic wealth and the mining of much of the information I owe entirely to a dedicated team of researchers in Colombo, Madras and London. The book owes much to Lalini Gautamadasa, Ramiah Shadagopan, Murali Jayadeva, T. Thirulinganathan and E. Vijayalakshmi in Colombo as well as their numerous sources, too many in number to mention individually, who provided them leads, information and carefully preserved pictorial mementoes of the past, many of them from faded newspaper or magazine clippings, or copied from rare old books. Supplementing their efforts was Dominic Sansoni whose splendid pictures of the present have enriched the book. To all of them I say something more than a warm 'Thank You'; without them the book would not be the comprehensive and attention-attracting record it is of an important slice in the Island's history.

A truly, and appropriately, serendipitous meeting in Madras, where she was holidaying, led to Prema Koshy enthusiastically agreeing to scour half a dozen institutions in the U.K. where the rich treasure of imperial records is not only stored but also maintained with care. What she found

of pictures taken around 100 years ago in Ceylon would fill several books — and their outstanding black-and-white quality truly warrants such publications one day. For the nonce, she ensured that some of the best pictures from that selection found a place in this volume. They have been supplemented with pictures of the same vintage from the only storehouse of similar pictorial wealth in Sri Lanka, Platé's of Colombo, premier photographers of that age in the Island. And in Chennai, Shobha Menon, S. Anvar, and Rajind N. Christy all did their share of digging for pictorial nuggets, turning up many a contribution that might well bring back memories in Sri Lanka too.

Putting it all together, tightening the nuts and bolts, I hope I've succeeded in presenting a cohesive whole, starting from the 'The Early Settlers', where I briefly look at people of Indian origin making Lanka/Ceylon their home from the 2500-year-old times of Vijaya to the time the British arrived from India. With the British began that great in-migration from India of 'The Toilers', the great majority of them Tamils, and 'The Early Traders', belonging to different communities from several parts of the subcontinent. Then followed 'The Professionals', 'The Players' in the Arts and Sport, the traders who became 'The Entrepreneurs', particularly contributing to the commerce and industry of modern Sri Lanka, 'The Faithful', whose faiths became a nation's, and 'The Leaders' who have over the years led their fellows of Indian origin but who today play a significant role in forging the Sri Lanka of the present and the future. This overall arrangement might in many ways be sequential, but given the range of content in each chapter and the wide time span, there will inevitably be overlaps, even a little repetition, sometimes even quirky positioning, but that I'm sure readers will forgive.

All of them I call Indo-Lankans, though I also use the more official 'people of recent Indian origin' and the more common 'people of Indian origin' descriptions in my text. In calling them Indo-Lankans, I've preferred the traditional form 'Lanka,' because their arrival and domicile has been in Ceylon as well as in Sri Lanka. In fact, I call the island Ceylon when referring to happenings in the colonial period and until 1972, Sri Lanka when the references are post-1972, and Lanka when the pre-Colonial and post-Colonial island is referred to over the whole period or during the pre-Colonial period alone. Those whose stories I tell in the pages that follow belong to the age of Ceylon **and** Sri Lanka, except in the first chapter, "The Early Settlers", when it was indeed Lanka. In subsequent chapters I look at the settlers from India who arrived after 1796, for short, long or permanent residence.

'The Toilers' who helped open the country during the ages of coffee and tea, did so also with roads and railways and stayed on to work with lesser crops, build the harbour and participate in other forms of mundane employment. Focussing on each of the sectors of the economy they have toiled in, including one or two no longer in business, the chapter looks as much at their contribution to the prosperity of Lanka as the deep roots they have sunk in the Island.

'The Early Traders' are looked at communitywise, again following a time sequence of sorts. The families and individuals who made contributions to Ceylon long before the present, contributions in trade and commerce, social welfare and religion, are featured here. But many from these families who made their contribution in professions, big and small, formal and informal, in the arts and sport, in religion and leadership, are

found in other chapters as well, sections more closely focussed on individuals than on extended families who came for trade and stayed to offer their own extended communities, as well as wider society, many an amenity.

The communities identified for communitywise presentation have been looked at from the point of view of their being the largest contributors to trade and commerce. But midst them are the Gujaratis, many of whom came as 'writers' for the Borah and Memon business houses, before they themselves became businessmen, and the Malayalees, a distinct ethnic group in the Island during this period, whose considerable contribution warrants them a separate place amongst the communities featured; even though the majority of them were urban workers and professionals, many later went into business.

Also lacking in commercial heritage are many among the 'Others'. They are mainly from several Indian Tamil communities not specifically looked at, but who have in small numbers moved from humble beginnings in the plantations or service into trade and commerce, and plantation ownership, as well as a few from other communities from other parts of India. Many from these communities — like the few Punjabis — are to be found elsewhere in the book as well. To make their heritage clear, this has necessitated referring to them in the text by community and more should not be read into this than the mere statement of historical fact. It should also be emphasised that, like the Indian Tamils and South Indian Moors, as past Censuses classified them, all the other communities featured in the book are people of Indian origin who came to Ceylon from the undivided Indian subcontinent of British times; this is a book about contribution from 1796, from when the new settlers have been considered 'Indians', an ethnic entity distinct from earlier settlers from across the Palk Strait. Like the latter, they too might well, some time in the future, become an intrinsic part of the multicultural, multiethnic fabric of the Island, but for the present they have a distinct identity, as recorded by the Censuses over the years. It should be added that where community is uncertain and only Indian origin is, I've stuck to the latter form, rather than accept hearsay or oral tradition.

It should also be stated that two groups of early settlers, distinctly classified in the most recent Census as Bharathas and Sri Lankan Chetties, have been treated differently in the book. The Bharathas are included as an Indian community, not the Sri Lankan Chetties. The latter have always considered themselves people of Indian origin long pre-dating the British but have never figured in the Censuses as Indian Tamils. The Bharathas have, and their leaders have been amongst the most dedicated spokesmen for people of Indian origin in British times and later. Their links with the Coast of Xavier still remain. And, so, I have considered them a part of the book while the Sri Lankan Chetties are part of my introduction, 'The Early Settlers'.

The 'Professionals' and 'The Players' cut across almost every Indian community in Sri Lanka, but in the case of the former, a substantial contribution was made in the 20th Century by teachers and others who came to the Island and stayed for periods ranging from a few years to a couple of decades. In the case of the latter, teachers of the Arts, resident artistes and film technicians stayed for even fewer years than the other professionals, but the contribution of both groups of 'short-term' residents was immense to the growth of modern Sri Lanka. 'The Players' also looks at the contribution to Lankan sport by participants of Indian origin. Many have represented the country, others have contributed significantly to sports promotion.

Unlike the professionals, many of the 'Entrepreneurs' have been several generations in the Island, growing mainly from small beginnings into some of the biggest industrial houses and commercial organisations in the country. New investment from India there has also been in recent years, but the larger share of Indian entrepreneurship is from businessmen

whose families have been long-rooted in the Island and who may still maintain contact with the India they came from but whose attitudes are more Sri Lankan than Indian. The focus in this section is on their entrepreneurial contribution to the Sri Lanka of the post-Independence industrial age and their continued commitment to serving the Island's wider society today. Their contributions before Independence and those of their forefathers are the focus of 'The Early Traders'.

With those in the plantation country having their own shrines and all the long-settled communities having established through joint community efforts their own places of worship, I've grouped these temples and mosques and churches and other endowments with the facilities on estates and elsewhere for 'The Toilers' or in the pages on the respective communities. 'The Faithful' focusses on what might be considered 'national' religious occasions and places, where even boundaries of faith are often forgotten and people of all faiths and communities become the faithful. But here again, the lines of delineation get blurred and contributions more specific to a particular faith but beyond a specific group find space.

Concerned with all that's gone before, be it toil or entrepreneurship, factory or plantation, a place of work or an arena of entertainment, individual or community, professional or petty employee, has been a Ceylon Indian leadership that since the 1920s has played a major role not only among people of Indian origin but in the founding of the labour movement, the temperance movement, the women's movement, even the national movement in the Island. In more recent times, that leadership has been part and parcel of the coalitions in power or in the opposition. They have been 'The Leaders' who have contributed not only to the improvement of the lot of the people of Indian origin but also of the whole island.

This, then, is a record in picture and word of people from different parts of India who came to Ceylon from 1796 and contributed to the Island's progress and present prosperity in many ways. Over half of those who came put down roots in Ceylon and, today, their descendants, Sri Lankans all, number over a million. This is their story, a record of what they did and how they have contributed to making the Island a better and more prosperous place for all who call it home.

To all those who made the telling of this story possible, I say a heartfelt 'Thank You'. It is impossible to name them all individually, even those who went out of their way to so generously help with time, memory and long-forgotten photographs. I can only say, this book will be a permanent testimony to their commitment to making this a lasting work of record. The institutions which helped in Sri Lanka, the U.K. and India are acknowledged separately, but every picture is listed in an index, together with due acknowledgement of its source in almost every instance.

One final point. For all its 850 pictures and for all its 100,000 words, size and bulk, this record is still incomplete. Some sections are more weighted than others, some who contributed have little or no representation and many of the pictures are not of the best quality, and reflect it in reproduction. To anticipate comment on over- or under- or non-representation, I can only say the team that worked on the book did its best. Advertisements, group meetings, hundreds of telephone calls and letters, scores of visits to individuals — all on both sides of the Palk Strait over a year — did not bring as enthusiastic a response as we had hoped. I hope when they see the book those who failed to respond will say, 'We too had made a contribution to Lanka; it would have been nice to have had it recorded'. If the book is a success, and runs into a second edition, perhaps they'll respond and help make the book a more complete record.

Until then, may this book awaken the eyes and hearts of many to a long-forgotten contribution to the creation of the Sri Lanka of today. And may it bring about a greater understanding of the measureless contribution of the latter day settlers from India to the Resplendent Isle.

S. Muthiah

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S. Muthiah
and **The Indian Heritage Foundation**

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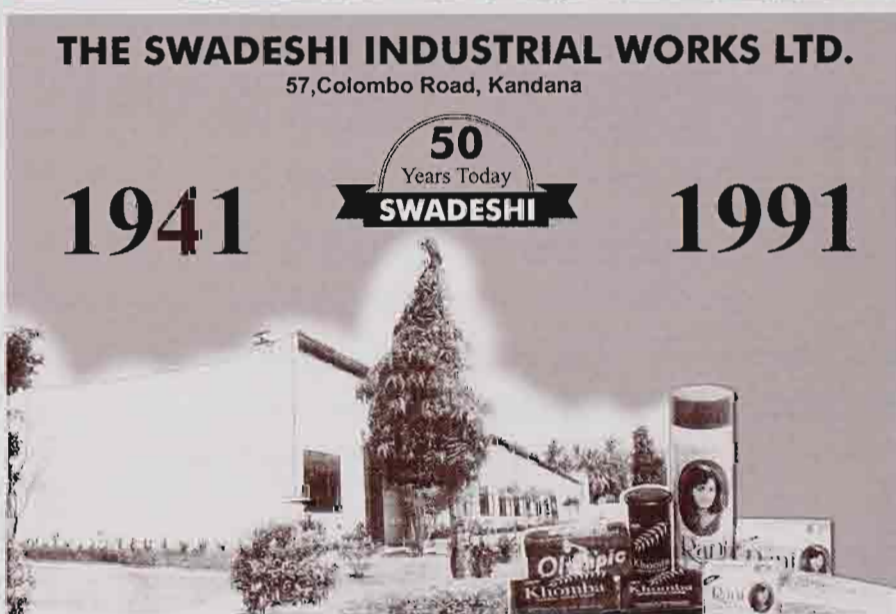
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BL – The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DW
FCO – Foreign & Commonwealth Office, FCO Services, King Charles Street, London SW1A 2AH
RCS – Royal Commonwealth Society Collection, University of Cambridge Library, West Road, Cambridge, Cambs, CB3 9DR
V & A – V & A Picture Library, V&A Enterprises Ltd., 160 Brompton Road, London SW3 1HW
WMML – Wijewardene Memorial Media Library, *Lake House*, D.R.Wijewardene Mawatha, Colombo-10

- Cover : Satellite view of Sri Lanka and South India (*Courtesy*: National Remote Sensing Agency Data Centre, Hyderabad)
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- 15 Pearl divers, 1925 (*Courtesy*: Platé's, Colombo)
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- 16 Going below (*From* 'The Graphic', 1887; *Courtesy*: R.K. de Silva)
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- 17 The Government kottoo (From *'The Graphic'*, 1874;
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- 18 Looking for a pearl, 1925 (Courtesy: Platé's, Colombo)
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Making Access Possible

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J.L. Carwallio (Courtesy: Gerard de Rose)
S.M.Sp. Sockalingam Chettiar (From 'Nattukottai Chettiar Merchant Bankers in Ceylon')
T.P. Kesavan (Courtesy: M.A. Nair)
S.T. Abdoolaly (From '20th Century Impressions of Ceylon')
T.A.J. Noorbhai (Courtesy: WMML)
H. Dinshaw (From '20th Century Impressions of Ceylon')
J. Rustomjee (From '20th Century Impressions of Ceylon')
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S.T. Soris (From '20th Century Impressions of Ceylon')
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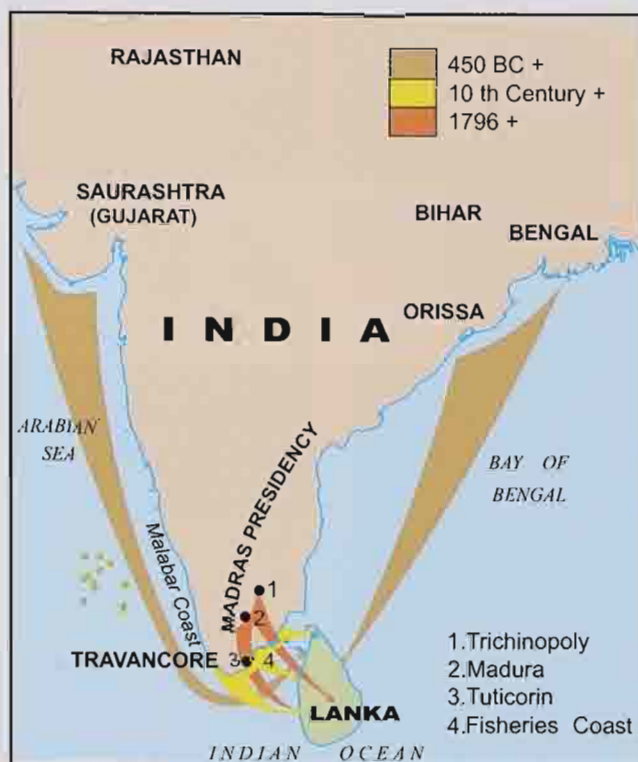
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The Early Settlers

Once there was Gondwana, a huge continental island where the Indian Ocean now is, stretching from Madagascar to the lands and islands of Southeast Asia and including Sri Lanka and peninsular India. And when the earth heaved, it crashed Gondwana into the North Asian landmass and pushed up the Himalaya, sank much of the rest of Gondwana and left, in the Indian Ocean that submerged it, the islands and peninsulas of today's Indian Ocean Rim. The theory of Gondwana - or was it Lemuria, as some have held - would have had the forefathers of the Indians and Lankans of today, aeons later, as indisputably one.

Gondwana, however, is too far back to look. More recent articles of faith have an exiled Prince Vijaya and his followers arriving in 483 B.C. in the island that was later to be called Lanka and fathering the Sinhalese people. Their mothers were the aborigines of the island, the Yakshas and Nagas and Rakshasas, as well as the princesses and their handmaidens who came from the earliest Pandyan kingdoms in South India. Vijaya himself, faith holds, came from the Orissa-Bihar-Bengal region from where a later migration followed, after the Kalinga wars. A more scholarly theory is that Vijaya came not to Lanka's northeast coast but to its northwest from the Gujarat area. This school holds that the lion (*sinha*) totem and name Singh are much more a tradition of Gujarat and its Rajasthani hinterland than of eastern India. But whichever theory is accepted, there is no gainsaying that the Sinhalese are as much immigrants to Lanka from India as any of the other settlers who call the island home.

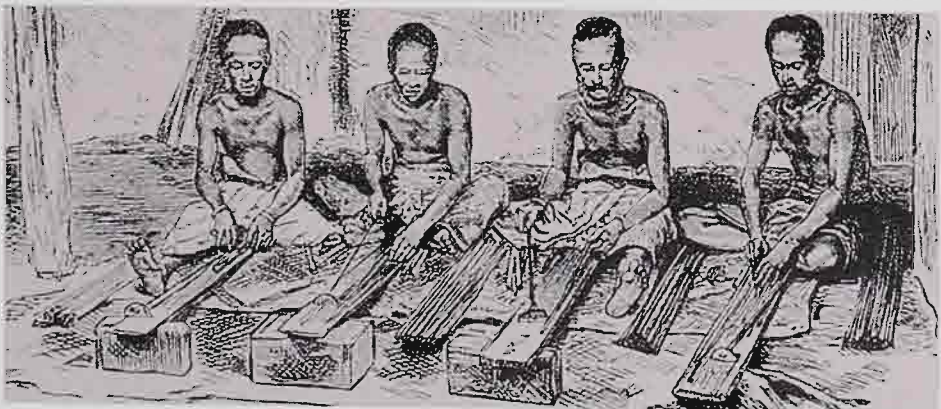


Both Gujarat and Kalinga had maritime traditions, but theirs were not ships that could bring enough settlers to populate an island as large as Lanka. With just 22 miles separating Tamilakam and Lanka and with the former also having a long maritime tradition, settlement by larger numbers from the southernmost coasts of Tamilakam must be reckoned more realistic. And though Tamilakam comprised the Chera, Pandya, Chola and, later, Pallava kingdoms, the earliest settlers would have been from Chera Nadu and Pandya Nadu, sailing from the ports of the south Malabar Coast of the west and the Fisheries Coast of the east. And these were the settlers who found new

The map shows the sea routes the earliest settlers would have followed to reach Lanka from different parts of India. Legend offers two theories of migration; one, from the Gujarat coast and its hinterland, where the *sinha* (lion) totem is strong and the name Singh common in all its variations, and the other, more favoured by Lankan tradition, from the Bengal-Orissa coast, followed by a second migration after the Kalinga (Orissa) wars. History also refers to early settlers from Tamilakam, from the Pandya, Chera, Chola and Pallava coasts. And then there have been settlers from the Malabar and Fisheries Coasts, the southernmost reaches of South India. Along these routes came the early settlers over a 2300-year period, from the 5th Century B.C. till the 18th Century A.D. and from them have descended the Sinhalese and the Lankan Tamils. It was in the 19th Century that the land route, supplemented by the sea routes from the southernmost coasts, brought those who are the focus of this book, those still considered in the Island as being people of Indian origin.

If migration from India to the Island was the earliest contribution the mainland made, its second major contribution to the nascent Lankan nation was the advent of Buddhism, depicted in the picture below of a fresco on the walls of the Indian High Commission in Colombo. It was painted by the well-known artist Upasena Gunawardene, who had studied at Shantiniketan in Bengal.





homes in the north and along the rich coast south of the ancient port of Mantai, near Mannar. In many of these parts of the island, the matrilineal traditions of the southernmost reaches of India still prevail.

Indeed, it is to these earliest settlers, of whom there is no record but the conjectures of history, that Gopalkrishna Gandhi, a High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka, referred in a memorable speech at the Gratiaen Awards function on the eve of my starting on this window into 200 years of the recent past. He said, "India's spirit no less than its seed, ethos no less than ethnicity have quickened life on this isle. Sri Lanka is, to wit, India miniaturised... Sri Lanka cannot forget India in her thoughts and writings because she cannot forget her derivations.... She cannot forsake India for she cannot forsake her destiny..." And then, perhaps in recognition of what the Gondwanan cataclysm wrought, he added, "Yet, within its subcontinental gestation, this *dvipa* has acquired a hue all its own, a glint that stands apart from its originations." Indeed, he stressed, "Sri Lanka derives from India but is not of it; she owes to India, but belongs only to herself."

From better recorded history, it is patent that the Island's greatest derivation from India is its people. Invasions by Kings Elalan (Manuneechi Cholan) and Karikalan of the Sangam Cholas in the 2nd Century B.C. left behind numerous soldiers and camp-followers from Tamilakam as far south as the Vanni. When King Gajabahu I (114-136 A.D.) went to Chera Nadu for the consecration of the temple to Kannagi built by King Chera Sengottuvan, he brought back to Lanka the cult of the Goddess Pattini, the most widely spread and vibrant of the folk cults of the Sinhalese. He also invited hundreds of farmers, perhaps the earliest Mukkuvar migrants, whose traditions of planting paddy in swamp lands still survive in the east and northwest of Lanka.

Successive invasions from Tamilakam as well as internal strife in the centuries that followed had Sinhalese kings from the earliest days, but particularly from the 10th Century, recruiting mercenaries from South India. There were numerous Kannadiyars or Kannatas of coastal Kanara who were recruited, but by far the largest number were from Kerala, many of them Kuruppus and Kannankarayar from the Chera *kalari*-s (gymnasia) left jobless after the Chola conquest and the fragmentation of Chera Nadu. This was particularly so of the army of Parakramabahu I (1153-1186) that campaigned to unite the country. The invasion of the Island by Magha of Kalinga thirty years after the death of Parakramabahu, which had left Lanka in turmoil, saw more Kerala mercenaries in the field, Magha having raised his army in India's south, but mainly of Kerala troops. Many of these soldiers from Tamilakam, who fought side by side with

Amongst the earliest of the later migrants were the Mukkuvar, from the southernmost coasts of India. Settling on the coasts of northwestern, northern and eastern Lanka, they continued their traditional occupations of farming and fishing, following in the Island the practices they brought with them from the mainland. In the picture on top left are a Mukkuvar bride and bridegroom of the northwest coast in all their wedding finery. On left is a typical fishing wadiya (camp) of migrant Mukkuvar fishermen who follow the fish from coast to coast and back. In the pictures below are cinnamon peelers, the Chaliyas who were later migrants from India's southern coasts and who, in time and with prosperity, became the Salagama caste of Lanka's west coast. The engravings show them peeling the bark and carefully scraping it to separate the outer and middle layers.





Sinhalese armies or against them, settled in different parts of the Island and were absorbed by it.

In a Lanka riven by dissensions in the years after Parakramabahu's death, new kingdoms were born, each warring against the other. Hope was born only in the 14th Century with the emergence of the Alakesvaras or the Alagakonar. A clan of traders from Travancore, they may have come to the Island in Parakramabahu's time, but through extraordinary financial and political acumen had risen to positions of power that enabled them to marry into the Gampola Royal family. When the divided Sinhalese kingdoms proved no match for King Aryachakravarthi of Jaffna, it was Nissanka Alagakonar who built the fortress of Jayawardhanapura (Kotte) and his heirs who planned the strategy for battle, raised the troops to implement it, and helped defeat the northern armies. It was the Alakesvaras who laid the foundations that enabled the last unification of the Island by the King of Kotte, Parakramabahu VI (1411-1466).

Once the first migration patterns from the South of India had been established, following the main migrant groups came the Ahikuntakaya, the Island's gypsies who once wandered through the jungles. Till a few decades ago, a nomadic lifestyle was what they enjoyed and to earn a living they became snake-catchers and snake-charmers (below). On right and above are scenes from an Ahikuntakaya wedding. Clockwise from above, left: the bride's mother adorning her daughter with silver bangles, strings of bead necklaces and ear, nose and throat ornaments; while the bride dresses, the Wise Old Grandmother of the kudi (clan) sings the songs of the ancients, many of them bawdy ones, to keep the guests entertained; and having been knotted together and proclaimed man and wife, the bridegroom, twirling his moustache, leads his smiling bride away.





Thus, for over 1500 years, Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas who came with the invading armies settled in the North, and Kerala and Kannada mercenaries, especially the former, settled in other parts of the Island, all of them absorbed by the Island and becoming an integral part of it wherever they settled, losing in the process their Indian identities.

It was during this millennium and a half that other great influences came to Lanka from across the Indian seas. When the Emperor Asoka sent Mahinda, his son/brother in the 3rd Century B.C. to preach the teachings of the Buddha, Buddhism took one of its firmest roots anywhere in the world, the Gondwanan-created isolation ensuring Buddhism did not fade as it did in its home. Perhaps the greatest contribution by India to Lanka, it was Gandhiji who urged its revivalism in the Island during his visit in 1927, repeating over and over again, "Buddha himself was an Indian, not only an Indian, but a Hindu among Hindus... He ventured to reform Hinduism... and I venture to say that Hinduism became broadened... And why should not the people of Lanka who have inherited the teachings of the great Master do better than the children of the Motherland?"

As much as religion, culture and language from India have had their influence on the Island from the earliest times. With Buddhism came the language Pali, that variation of Sanskrit. With Vijaya would have come an Indo-Aryan language. And with Elalan would have come an archaic Tamil. Together they contributed to the Sinhala and Tamil spoken in the Island. But it was the Pallava Grantha script that evolved in the 7th Century in Kanchipuram that the exiled Manavamma brought back with him when, with a Pallava army, he regained his kingdom (684-718). And under its influence the Sinhalese script of today – as much as Malayalam in later years – was born. Pallava influence is also seen in sculpture, Gupta and Ajanta influences in art.

Of this age, too, was the Arab influence that brought with it many from the shores of South India too. From the times of Solomon, the world's greatest trade route was created by the Arabs in an age long before Islam. Following



Colombo Chetty headgear in the 19th Century ranged from the turban (top left) to the special kind of head-dress with reversed flaps rising on both sides and reflecting the Mahratta influence in the Thanjavur kingdom (right), from dhotis and 'cummerbunds' reflecting their South Indian origin to more Western attire, such as scarfs and buttoned down coats. Women's wear, however, uniformly reflected Indian Tamil origins, though by the 20th Century, Western influence was to be seen in the long puffed sleeves (top and middle rows, right).

Perhaps the two most distinguished Colombo Chetties in the community's 400-year-old history in the Island were Dr. Peter Philip Juriaan Quint Ondaatchi (middle row, left top) and Simon Casie Chetty (middle row, left bottom). Ondaatchi, of Eurasian descent from Michael Jurie Ondaatchi, a Tamil physician from the Court of Thanjavur and the origin of whose surname remains a mystery, was a jurist of international renown who, serving in Napoleon's Imperial Council of Prizes (1811) and as a justice of the High Court of The Netherlands (1814), became the first Asian to prominently figure in European history. Casie Chetty, on the other hand, wore his Tamil heritage like a badge. Born in Kalpitiya, he was appointed in 1838 the second Tamil member of the Legislative Council, and in 1845 the first Ceylonese member of the Civil Service. But what he will always be remembered for is his scholarship, particularly his writings on Tamil caste, culture and literature, and his compilation of the Ceylon Gazetteer in 1833.



the monsoon winds they had sailed to the ports of Malabar, to Galle that is believed to have been Tarshish, and to the havens of the Fisheries Coast. Here they sought the riches of India and Lanka as well as those of China that were brought to these entrepôts before sailing back to Basra and Socotra and Berenice, from there to follow the land routes to the ports of the Mediterranean where the Greeks and Romans awaited them. In the coastal settlements of India and Lanka, the Arabs raised local families that when Arab became Muslim followed the faith too. And so the Arab settlements of coastal South India and western and southern Lanka became Muslim settlements from the 7th Century A.D., but with Tamil their *lingua franca* and international trade their *raison d'être*. In time, the Lankan Muslim became the Lankan Moor and part of the fabric of the country; the more recent Muslim settlers from the Malabar and Fisheries Coasts, who maintained links with both coasts, came to be called the South Indian or Coast Moors. Together they have played a major role in the Island's international trade from the earliest times, well up to the colonial period. Thereafter the Coast Moors played a significant role in the daily commerce of Ceylon.

By the time the Kingdom of Kotte came into being (1371) and the Aryachakravartthis had firmly established themselves in the North, the earliest settlers, who had over the previous 1800 years or so lost virtually all ties with whichever part of India they came from, had also established clear ethnic identities for themselves as Sinhalese or Lankan Tamils – regardless of whether their roots had been in eastern or western India, in Chera, Chola, Pandya or Pallava Nadus, or in today's Deccani States. And while Buddhism and a Pali-based script had absorbed one, the other remained Hindu with an archaic Tamil as its language.

It was from the first hundred years of the Kingdom of Kotte that there came to its littoral a second wave of immigration, both for military as well as economic reasons. Arriving in the Island as mercenaries, artisans or skilled workers, they in time evolved as successful traders and entrepreneurs. They also evolved as three new Sinhalese caste groups who made the western and southern littoral, from Puttalam to Hambantota, their home, before commerce took them inland. In a predominantly agricultural caste-base, these new castes, the Karava, the Salagama and the Durava, added a new dimension not to Sinhala society alone; in the case of the Karava and the Durava, it was to Tamil society as well, when some of them settled in the North.

The Karavas, from the southernmost coasts of present-day Tamil Nadu and Kerala, believe they are descended from the Kauravas of Kurukshetra, as do the Mukkuvar and the Paravar. Migrants to the southernmost coast of India, they served as warriors in the armies of the South and as Tamilakam's mariners. Parakramabahu VI recruited them for his army, and they like his Kerala soldiers put down roots in the Kotte Kingdom where, through marriage, they became absorbed into the mainstream.

Dating to the first years of the Kotte Kingdom are the Salagamas, whose ancestry goes back to the Chaliyas of Kerala, a weaving community who wove the finest calicoes and whose skills the Alakesvaras undoubtedly knew. With the eclipse of the Alakesvaras, the Chaliyas found their skills no longer sought and were forced to work in the cinnamon forests of the Kings of Kotte. In time, the Chaliyas became the Salagamas, and when their skills were better appreciated in later years by the colonial powers, who became dependent on them for increasing their wealth from cinnamon, the community prospered.



Father Joseph Vaz, the Konkani from Goa, who resurrected Roman Catholicism in the Island in the 17th Century after it had been suppressed by the Dutch, may one day be canonised and will then be undoubtedly known as the 'Saint of Lanka'. Among the many miracles he performed in Ceylon between his arrival in 1687 and his death in 1711 were two depicted in early 19th Century paintings done, ironically, by a Dutch Burgher artist, Bernard Redert, who was awarded the Papal Medal of Art for his Vaz portfolio titled 'Call it a Miracle'. The picture on top, right is of 'The Crossing of the Deduru Oya', a Moses-like feat, and the one middle right is of 'The Rain Miracle in Kandy' when Vaz's prayers brought reservoir-overflowing rain to drought-stricken Kandy, yet left dry the altar he had raised for his prayers in the middle of King Vimala Dharma Surya's capital. On this site was later built Kandy's Cathedral.

On right, *Queen Rengammal, the last Queen of Kandy, in a painting first displayed in the Colombo Museum in 1936 but said to have been painted by a European artist when she was imprisoned in Colombo after the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815. Rengammal, like King Sri Wikrama Rajasinghe, his royal ancestors and other royal wives from 1739, came from the Royal Court of the Nayaks of Madurai. They were all Telugus who also spoke Tamil as a Court language.*

Whereas the Salagamas acquired their skills with cinnamon through the work they had to turn to, the Durava came from a tradition of working with the all-purpose coconut tree on India's southernmost coasts. When Moorish traders saw in the coconut a commercial opportunity, the Chanars of southern Tamilakam were recruited and in time became the Durava. Ironically, in more recent times, the Karava prospered much more with coconut products than the Durava, but all three communities with South Indian heritages became prosperous when they demonstrated a greater willingness to enter the world of commerce than the traditional agriculturists who preferred government service and the status it brought with it.

With the decline of the Kingdom of Kotte in the late 15th and 16th Centuries, the Kandyan Kingdom, that Parakramabahu VI had absorbed into the last united kingdom of Lanka to be created, began its quest for independence again. After 20 years of Portuguese puppets, the Kandyan Kingdom rose in revolt under Vimala Dharma Surya who succeeded to the throne in 1591 and held its own against the colonial powers. The Telugu-speaking Vijayanagar Kingdom had subjugated all South India even as the Kingdom of Kotte was unifying Lanka in the 15th Century. Vijayanagar's ambitions led to the subjugation of Jaffna and an expansion southwards that Parakramabahu VI stemmed. But Vijayanagar's influence was long to remain in the Island, particularly in its art. Vijayanagar's waning power, however, coincided with Kandyan resurgence. And just as many Kings of Lanka had in the past sought South Indian brides, the Kings of Kandy in the 16th Century sought Nayak brides, princesses from the families of Vijayanagar's viceroys in Madurai and Thanjavur who were a law unto themselves in an empire with an impotent leadership. When King Narendrasinghe died in 1739 without his three Nayak wives bearing him an heir, the Queens, all sisters, ensured that their brother Sri Wijaya Rajasinghe was crowned. And so Kandy was ruled till the British conquest in 1815 by a dynasty of Telugu origin but speaking Tamil and practising Buddhism. The Kandyan Court between 1591 and 1815 also had large numbers of courtiers and members of the royal retinues, as well as soldiers, who were of Nayak or Tamil origin, coming with princesses from the Madurai and Thanjavur kingdoms to marry Kandyan royalty. Much of Kandyan social practice still reflects the Nayak influence.

Coeval with the rise of the Kandyan Kingdom was the beginning of the colonial era, with the Portuguese conquest of the Maritime Provinces but failure to subjugate Udarata, the Kandyan mountain-fastness. With the Portuguese came further settlement from India, with those who served the rulers arriving from the Coast of Xavier - the Fisheries Coast - and in fewer numbers from the Coromandel and Malabar Coasts. Apart from the topasses - troops of mestizo origin - and the Mukkuvar and Paravar, there also came the Coromandel Chetties to help with the book-keeping. The Dutch, when they ousted the Portuguese in the middle of the 17th Century, brought in still more Vaisya Chetties from their settlements like Nagapattinam on the Coromandel. And so the population swelled of those today called Colombo Chetties and who have sought, like the Paravar Bharathas, a separate identity.

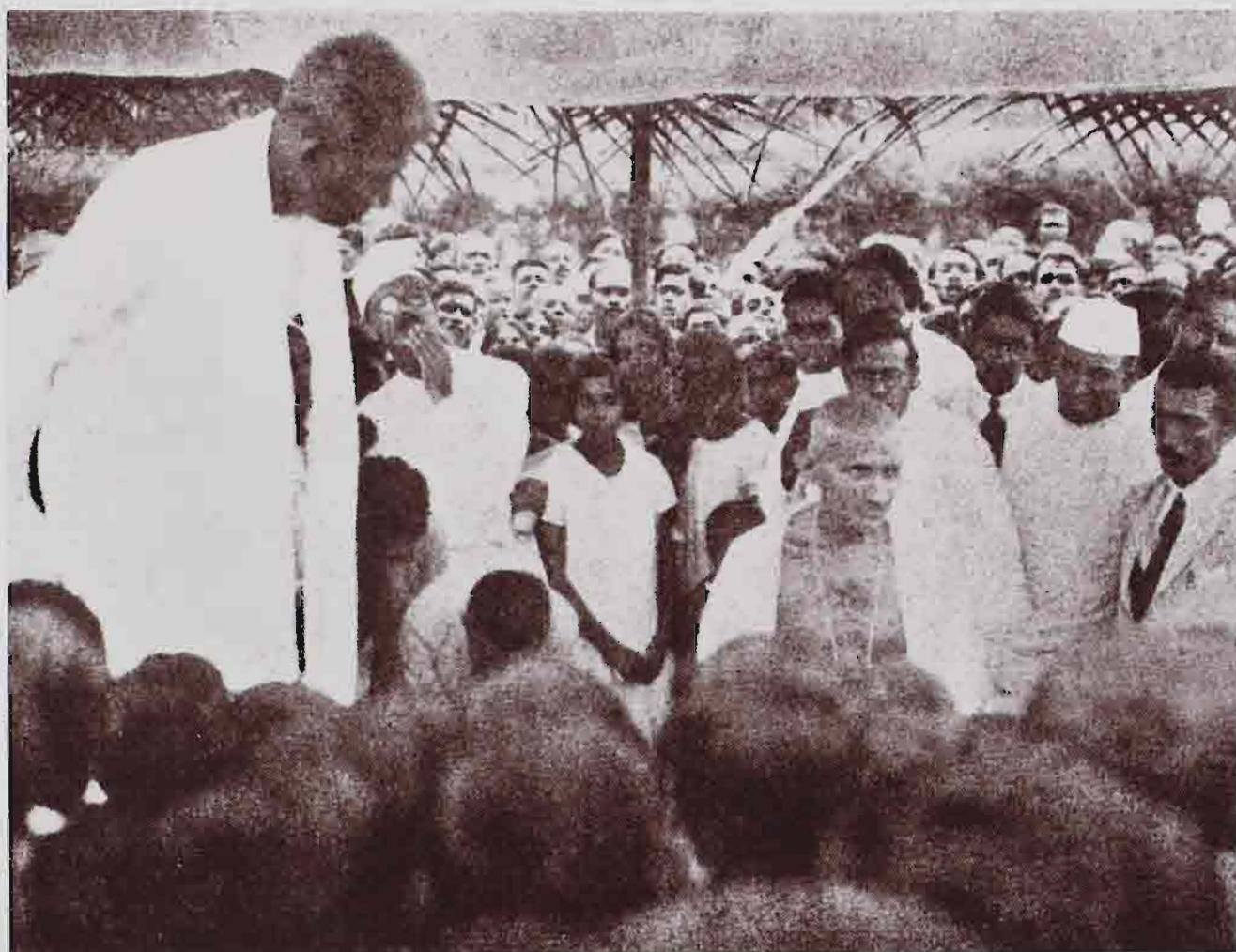
First settled in the Chetty streets just outside the Fort, the Chetties of the Tana Vaisya caste were traders, the first modern white collar professionals of Indian origin in the Island, working as book-keepers and government officials and, in time, becoming landowners. Their numbers increased throughout the 150-year Dutch period and they settled mostly along the coast from Kalpitiya to Galle. Originally Tamil-speaking Hindus, the demands of colonial service as well as marriage made most of them Sinhala-speaking and all of them Roman Catholic or Protestant. Among the benefits of proximity to successive administrations was fluency in the languages of the administrators and education in their manner. In time, apart from becoming landowners and government servants, the Colombo Chetties provided British Ceylon many of its leading professionals, from lawyers to doctors, bank shroffs to scholars. Today, the Colombo Chetties, listed in the Census as Sri Lankan Chetties, number about 9000, though many more may be listed in the major ethnic categories, for at one time the Chetties thought they numbered about 150,000.

The Chetties, like other Roman Catholics, suffered persecution at the hands of the Dutch till they became Protestants. Roman Catholicism, arriving with the Portuguese in 1500, and putting down roots for nearly 150 years, virtually died out in the Island. It was in 1687 that the Konkani Oratorian Joseph Vaz arrived in Jaffna and spent the next 25 years reviving Roman Catholicism in Lanka, establishing apostolates in Jaffna, Puttalam, the Seven Korales (today's Northwestern Province), and Kandy. If today Roman Catholicism is the dominant Christian denomination in the Island by far, it is almost entirely due to this Goan whom Sri Lankan Catholics consider the 'Apostle of



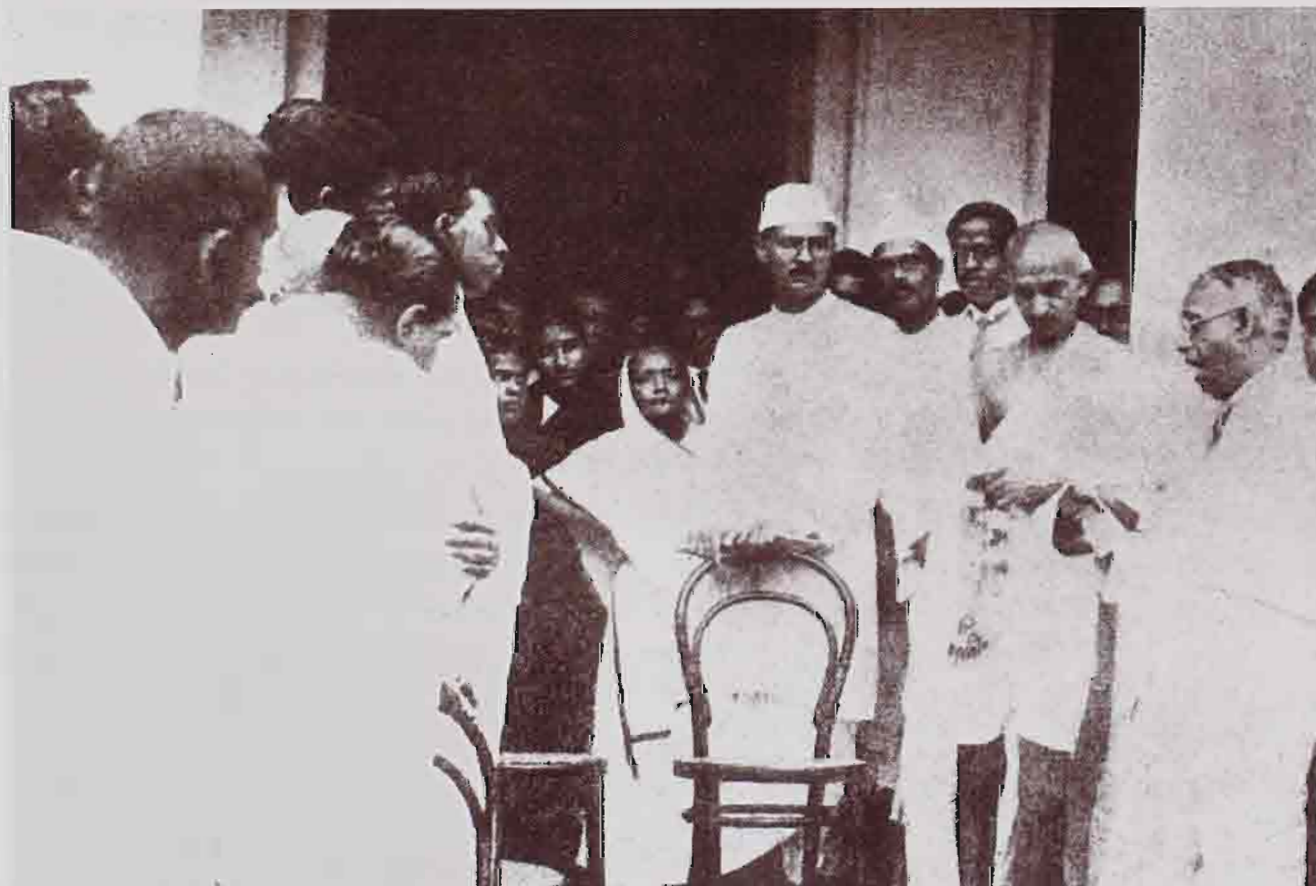
Lanka'. When news of his success reached Goa, three more Konkans from the Oratory of St. Philippo Neri, Joseph de Menezes, Joseph Carvalho and Pedro Ferraro (who later built the Madhu Church), were sent out to help him in his work and Joseph Vaz was appointed the Vicar General of Ceylon. Seven more Konkans were added to their number between 1699 and 1708: Pedro da Saldanha, Joseph de Jesus Maria, Emanuel de Miranda, Giacomo (James) Goncalves, Ignatius de Almeida, Brasili Baretto and Miguel de Mello. Led by Joseph Vaz, these secular priests of the Oratory brought back to the fold nearly 70,000 by the time Joseph Vaz died in 1711, almost a ten-fold increase from when he first arrived. It was a foundation on which the Church substantially built over the next 250 years and more and, therefore, seeks not without reason the canonisation of the Apostle of Lanka.

By the time the British arrived in 1796 and our story begins, virtually all the immigrants of the first two waves from the mainland had become either Sinhalese or



Gandhiji's "mercenary visit", as he called it, had a packed itinerary during November 1927. At meeting after meeting, he preached the message of Buddhism being Hinduism reformed and called for its revival, the need for Indians to be the sugar in the milk of kindness of Lanka, and the necessity for the people to commit themselves to the Temperance, Swadeshi and Swaraj movements.

In the pictures on these two pages, are: on top, facing page, Gandhiji addressing the students at Ananda College; below it, at a meeting at which his future biographer, Pyarelal, is seen to his left (with cap and book) and Jayaramdas Jayawardhane (in suit) on his right; on left, at Nalanda Vidyalyaya, with Mahadev Desai to his right, wearing a cap, and Jayaramdas Jayawardhane to his left, in suit and tie; below it, at the Maligakanda Temple in Colombo, where Kasturba Gandhi is in a white saree, Lakshmi Rajagopalachari behind her in a dark saree, and holding a chair, his secretary, Mahadev Desai, with cap; and below, a portrait done during the visit by Kamalam Krishnadasan, whose father C. Arunugam's houseguest he was.



Jayaramdas Jayawardhane, Gandhiji's interpreter during much of the visit, was an ardent disciple of the Indian leader. Born John Stephen Jayawardhane in a wealthy family in Wellampitiya, he became a journalist, a railway officer and in 1925 a disciple of Gandhiji. Visiting the Sabarmati Ashram, he was welcomed by Gandhiji, who named him Jayaramdas, his wife (Margaret) Mangala Devi and his eldest son (Hector) Haridas. On his return to Lanka, Jayaramdas Jayawardhane converted his house into a Gandhian ashram and named it Udyoga Mandira. He also bought a printing press and started a newspaper to propagate Gandhian philosophy; Gandhiji himself named the former the Navajeewana Press and the latter Navajeewanaya. Clad in khadi and working Gandhian fashion amongst the poor stricken during the great malaria epidemic of 1935, Jayaramdas Jayawardhane himself fell victim to the disease and died when he was only 49. Close supporters of the Gandhian movement he attempted to spread throughout the Island were Dr. E.W. Adikaram and the Ven. Walpola Rabula Thera.

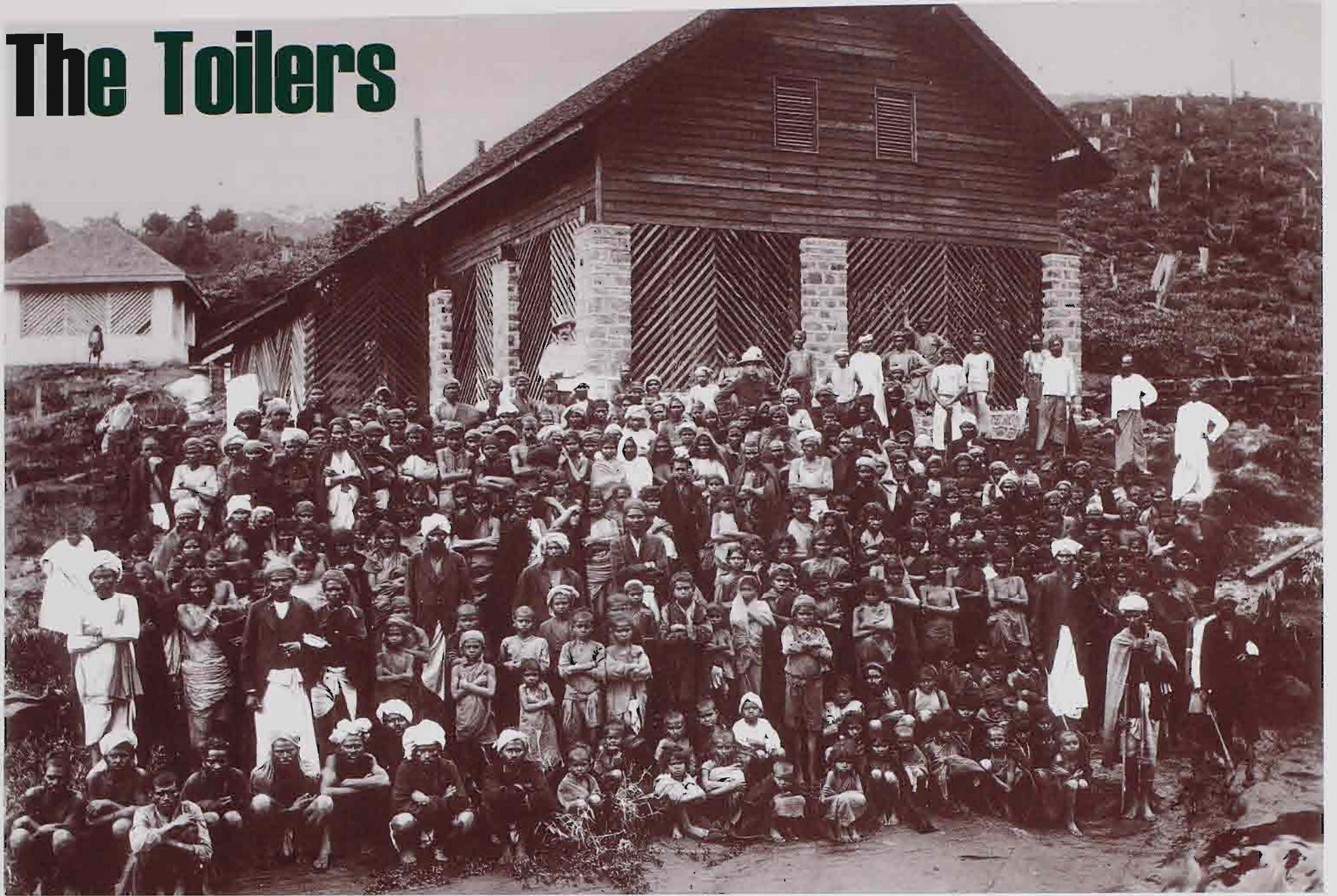
Lankan Tamils with the Moors alone maintaining their separate identity. With the British there came the third great wave of migration, much of its numbers 'imported' by the rulers to open up the country and work in the plantations they were establishing. They also encouraged the Indian trader and financier to establish themselves in Ceylon to serve this population. And, in time, as the trader and financier became suppliers to the whole island, the professionals, be they qualified or unqualified service providers, joined them. Most of them today, nearly a million strong, are counted as Indian Tamils. A few thousands more are listed as Bharathas or 'Others' and, till the 2001 Census, as Indian or Coast Moors. Theirs has been an immense contribution from the late 1790s, and that is what is recorded in word and picture in the pages that follow.

To the Indians in Ceylon who were part of this third wave, Mahatma Gandhi, who visited the Island in 1927, offered these words of advice. "We who come from another country must throw in our lot entirely with the people of the country of our adoption...Whether you are Hindus or Mussalmans or Parsis, no matter to which province you belong, I feel it to be your bounden duty to live amongst the people of the land where you go, not as thorns in their sides, but like sugar in milk...Even as a cup of milk, which is full up to the brim, does not overflow when sugar is added to it, but the sugar accommodates itself to the milk and enriches its taste, even so I would like you to live in this island, so as not to become interlopers, and so as to enrich the life of the people amongst whom you are living... You must be in the midst of such people as trustees of your own culture, and you should make common cause with those people alike in their joys as well as their sorrows."

Today, that third wave might still think of itself as 'People of Indian Origin', but like the other waves, this one too will be absorbed by the Lankan identity. By then this pictorial volume might be the only record of a heritage in transition, a record of once separate sugar slowly dissolving in the milk.



The Toilers



They've been called by many names over the last 200 years. 'Slaves of the British', 'coolies', 'lackeys of colonialism'... call them what you will, but their place in the development of modern Sri Lanka cannot be denied.

Modern Sri Lanka, fast industrialising and developing an important service sector, perhaps no longer depends wholly on a plantation economy as it did till the 1970s. But from the advent of the East India Company in 1796 and through the development of a model Crown Colony under the British that was the envy of those who lived in less comfortable parts of the British Empire, it was the plantation economy that for well nigh 175 years was the bedrock on which was founded a development and prosperity that was significantly superior to that found in most other parts of the Empire.

Making this possible were hundreds of thousands from across the Palk Strait who toiled in sun and rain, in jungles and on rocky slopes, living on a pittance in conditions few would survive not only in the Island but elsewhere. Regimented under an authoritarian system, denied civil rights for many years, treated as second class residents in later years, the wage workers from South India, who often saw little of the wages, cleared the jungles, built the roads and railways that opened up the interior of the Island, cleared more jungles to provide land for the plantations, first of coffee, then of cinchona and cocoa and citronella, later of tea and rubber, and then helped build and laboured in the harbour which itself was to contribute to the prosperity of Ceylon, situated as it was at the heart of the major sea routes of the Indian Ocean.

The bulk of this labour came from the parched, famine-afflicted districts of India's deep south, Ramnad and Tinnevely, Madura and Trichinopoly in the Madras Presidency and today's Tamil Nadu. Smaller numbers of Tamil toilers came from the more prosperous Salem, Tanjore and Arcot Districts, some Telugu workers came from the Chittoor and Nellore Districts of what is Andhra Pradesh, a few came from the coastal Canara districts of today's Karnataka, and a substantial number came from Malabar, Cochin and Travancore, now Kerala. The Malayalee migration was particularly to urban areas to work in such institutions as the Public Works Department, the railways, the harbour, the municipalities, and the one or two industrial institutions in the Island at the time as well as in fisheries and

coconut plantations, as both unskilled and semi-skilled labour. Another forgotten aspect of this labour is that it contributed much to the birth and growth of the labour movement in the Island.

No sooner the British established themselves in the Island than Governor Frederick North, who knew well from his Madras days the ability of its landless labour to toil hard in return for a pittance that barely kept them from starving in districts where starvation was virtually the norm, recruited a Pioneer Corps to work in Ceylon on road-building and serving the military baggage trains. By 1818, the Pioneer Road Corps was over 5000-strong and Governor Edward Barnes put it under the Island's greatest road-builder, Thomas Skinner, to lay much of the roads that still survive today, including the Colombo to Kandy, Galle and Trincomalee roads.

It was Barnes, who, in the 1820s, lent Pioneer Corps labour to George Bird to experiment with coffee-growing. By the 1830s, coffee had put down firm roots in the Island and the British planters had begun to recruit their requirements for labour for a seasonal crop from India. This was a labour force that travelled back and forth, depending on the requirements of the crop. It was a crop that, however, faced doom when the leaf blight made its appearance in the 1870s. By 1884, the coffee saga had come to an end, but tea, experimented with as early as 1866, began to take its place.

With tea began the third and biggest migration of labour from India, this time a workforce that was needed to settle in the estates, for tea had to be tended year-round by the men and plucked by the greater skills women brought to their work. The Malayaha (hill-country or estate) Tamils had arrived to stay. Unable to be replaced, particularly given their living and working conditions, unlike the urban Indian workforce, and with less and less contact with India after independence, the Malayaha Tamils have become the largest part of those of Indian origin who now call Sri Lanka home. Their numbers are reflected in the Census in the category captioned 'Indian Tamils', most of them settled in the central highlands. Their presence still enables tea to play a major role in the Island's economy, but little remembered are their forefathers who opened up the country and made its prosperity possible.

The Bitter Berry

It was from the Kaffa Province of Abyssinia that coffee was introduced by the Arabs to the world. It was these traders who introduced the plant to Ceylon and the west coast of India. The first experimental coffee garden in the Island was nurtured by George Bird in Gannoruwa, near Gampola, in 1824. When this government coffee plantation was sold in 1832, Bird moved on to 400 acres granted to him by Governor Edward Barnes. The coffee saga had begun.

Coffee-growing on commercial scale necessitated the jungle being felled and burnt, the coffee seedlings planted and tended, the plantation weeded, the ripe berry plucked during the August-November season, the berries dried and the flesh removed, and the seed dried and sorted. The maximum labour was needed at picking time, the lean agricultural season in India, and so there flocked the workers who could get back in time for the South Indian harvest and festival season in January.

By the 1870s, over 270,000 acres were under coffee and berry-picking needed between 120,000 and 175,000 pickers a season. By the 1870s, over a million men, women and children had trekked to Ceylon to work on the plantations and return. Over a third had died on the journey.

On the journey, workers in groups trekked through the arid, sun-scorched plains of South India and arrived exhausted, starving and dehydrated at the ports where they took catamaran or other country craft to cross the choppy Palk Strait and reach Mannar or Jaffna. The most popular route was the 210-mile trek from Mannar to Medawachchiya or Puttalam, then to Dambulla, Matale and Kandy. The ten-day trek would take them through tropical rain forest where snakes, leopards and elephants took their toll. With no places to rest except a forest floor covered with decomposed vegetation, with water available only from stagnant pools and marshes, and with their path marked by a trail of diarrhoeal residue, cholera, smallpox, malaria, pneumonia and dysentery took a heavy toll. Exhaustion, the heat and the rain killed more. And on the way back, bandits did not flinch from murdering those who refused to part with their meagre savings.

The Great North Road was truly a road of death till better shipping facilities and the railways came into operation. But, by then, a growing economy was tainted by the bitter toll picking the coffee berry had exacted.

Men, women and children like these, from South India, posing in front of the pulping house on Glentilt Estate in the Maskeliya Valley (on the facing page), but living in miserable conditions in the cold and the damp, laid the foundations for a plantation economy that made Ceylon a model Crown Colony and a prosperous nation for over 150 years.

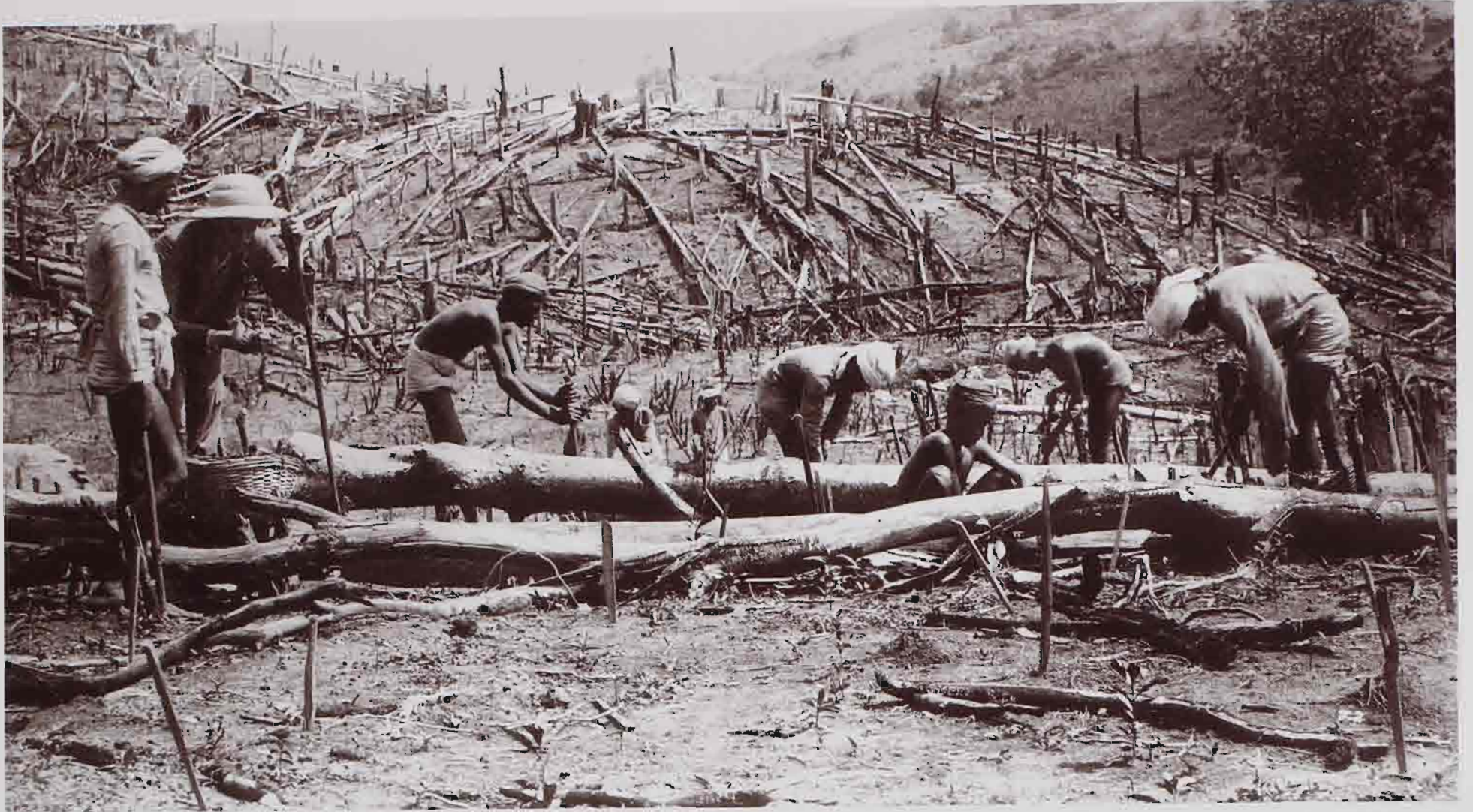
Their work in a new belt of virgin forest began by clearing the jungle and making the rich soil ready for the coffee seedlings. In those years of the second quarter of the 19th Century when coffee began to nourish the Island's economy, the planters lived in primitive conditions, as the drawing below illustrates. If their lords and masters lived like that, the conditions of the ill-clad toilers can well be imagined.

Of The New Clearing, Vercker M. Hamilton, sang, in 1881,

The ruthless flames have cleared his lands;
No trace remains of green;
When lost in thought our Planter stands,
And views the sterile scene.

In dreams he sees his coffee spring,
Fed by the welcome rain;
And berries many a dollar bring
To take him home again.





Once the forest is cleared, the planting of seedlings begins, man's work that is closely supervised, as seen at the top of the page. And as the seedlings flourish, prosperous coffee estates like those in the other pictures on the page develop.

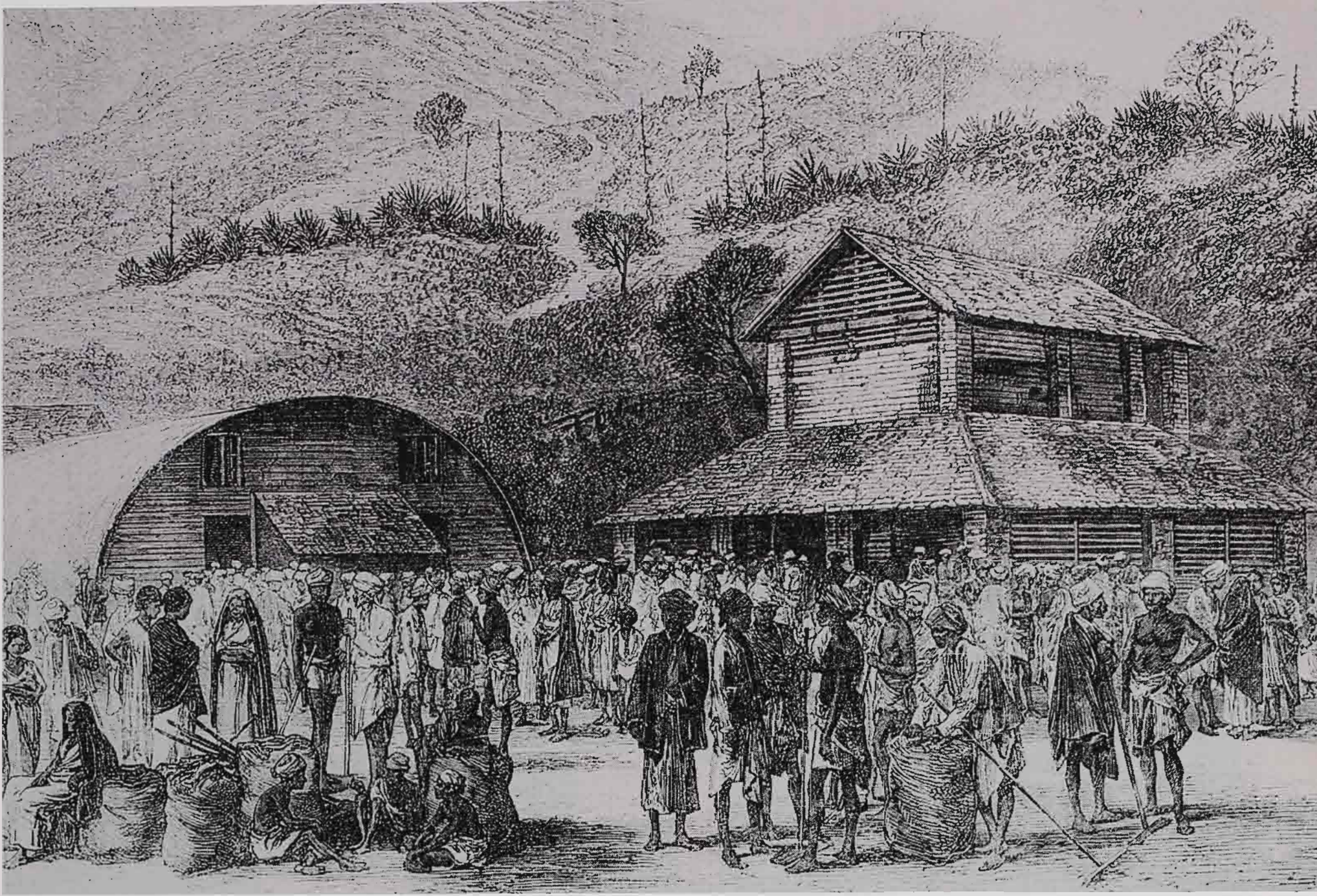
'Gampola George' Bird laid the foundations for the coffee-based economy when he developed Sinhapitiya Estate (on right) in the 1830s. By 1868, when the engraving alongside was first published, Sinhapitiya was a thriving estate with an established workforce that daily received its instructions at break of day.

Another well-established coffee estate near Gampola (in the distance) was Peacock Hill, seen in a C. O'Brien 1864 engraving above, with its store and drying floor on the left in the picture and the pulping house with waterwheel on the right.

And on the facing page, a 19th Century Indian coffee berry picker fills the bag at her waist with the ripe berries from a mature plant.

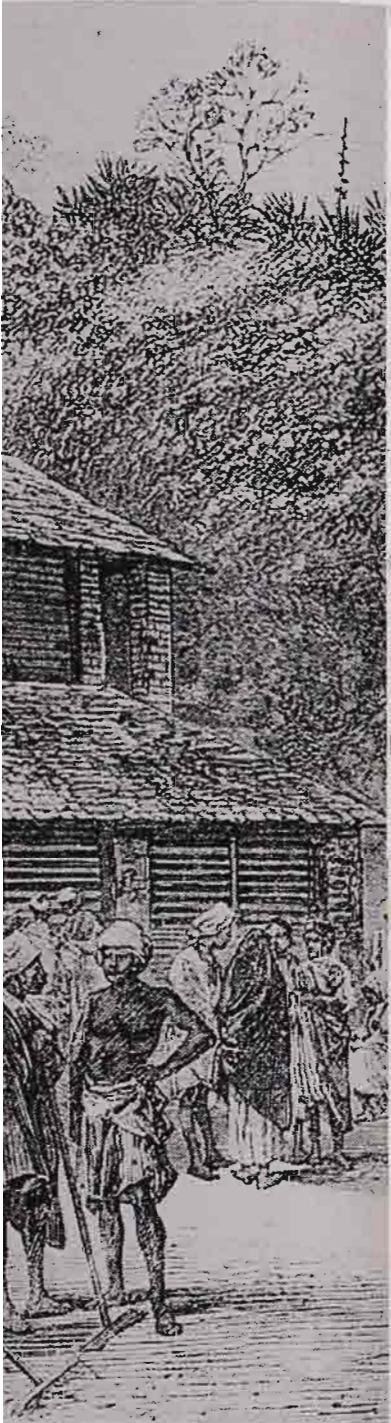






At day's end, the Indian coffee pickers, the supervisors and the men who weed the fields and tend the plants gather before the pulping house and the store in this 1872 engraving (above). The cherry-like berries are dried in the sun and their flesh removed in the pulping house. The dried seeds – the coffee beans – are then sorted (on facing page, top) and the inferior beans pounded (on right) with the traditional pestles to make coffee powder for the local bazaar. Both photographs are from well-established estates in the 19th Century.





The Long Dive

Amongst the great fisheries of the world were the pearl fisheries of the Gulf of Mannar, off the northwest coast of Lanka. From the times of Solomon the pearl banks of Lanka have been renowned. The South Indian kingdoms of the Sangam Age depended on them for a considerable part of their revenue. Marco Polo wrote enthusiastically of the fisheries Sundara Pandyar of Madurai conducted. In more recent times, the first pearl fishery was conducted by the Portuguese in 1524, with their divers the Paravar of South India's Fisheries Coast whom Francis Xavier had led into the Roman church. The Paravar, like the Muslim Marakkayar of Kilakkarai and Kayalpattinam on the same coast, were the divers who worked the Mannar pearl banks from times immemorial.

Little is known of the pearl fisheries the Portuguese conducted, but from 1666 till 1768, the Dutch organised 16 fisheries, the most successful one being in 1749 when the Government earned around £68,000. The British, from their first days in the Island, exploited these fisheries, getting off the mark in 1796 itself. From then, until 1925, the British conducted 46 fisheries, particularly successful ones being in 1798 when about £143,000 was earned, 1814 when one million rupees was first touched and 1905 when nearly Rs. 2.5 million was the gross proceeds. During that epic 1905 fishery, a record 82 million oysters were brought up, but thereafter few fisheries were held. The last one was in 1954.

Yielding this catch were the 50 or so *paar-s* (banks) that stretch as rocky outcrops rising from the seabed plateau that stretches from Mannar island down to between Chilaw and Negombo. Though Government ran the fisheries and made massive arrangements organising them, converting a small fishing village into a town at Silvattuthurai till 1889 and then at Marichchukkadai, where during the peak of a

February-April season there could be almost 50,000 people living, the success of the fisheries depended entirely on the South Indian boat-owners and crews, the divers mainly from the Fisheries Coast, and the buyers who in the early years were Nattukottai Chettiars and Kilakkarai and Kayalpattinam Muslims and, in later years, almost entirely the latter.

A report on the 1925 fishery provides a revealing glimpse of a rather modest fishery. An average of around 75 boats a day went out on the 37 days of fishing, the largest number being 125 with 1908 divers on a mid-March day. Sixteen million oysters were brought up during the fisheries, 825,000 the highest on one day. Government earned around Rs. 525,000 but spent about the same on the fishery. It had been decided to limit the divers to 2000. No more than a quarter of them were to be Afro-Arabs from the Gulf, a few were from the Malabar and Mannar-Jaffna coasts and nearly 1500 from the Fisheries Coast. This was the traditional licensing pattern, making the Fisheries Coast divers the key to the success of the fishery. Without the participation of those from the Fisheries Coast and its hinterland, the pearl banks would not have made the contributions they did.

Usually the fishing fleet was towed out, as below, or sailed to the pearl banks around midnight and anchored at sunrise around the place marked by the Government trawler, aboard which was the Marine Biologist who was responsible for selecting the paar-s to be fished.

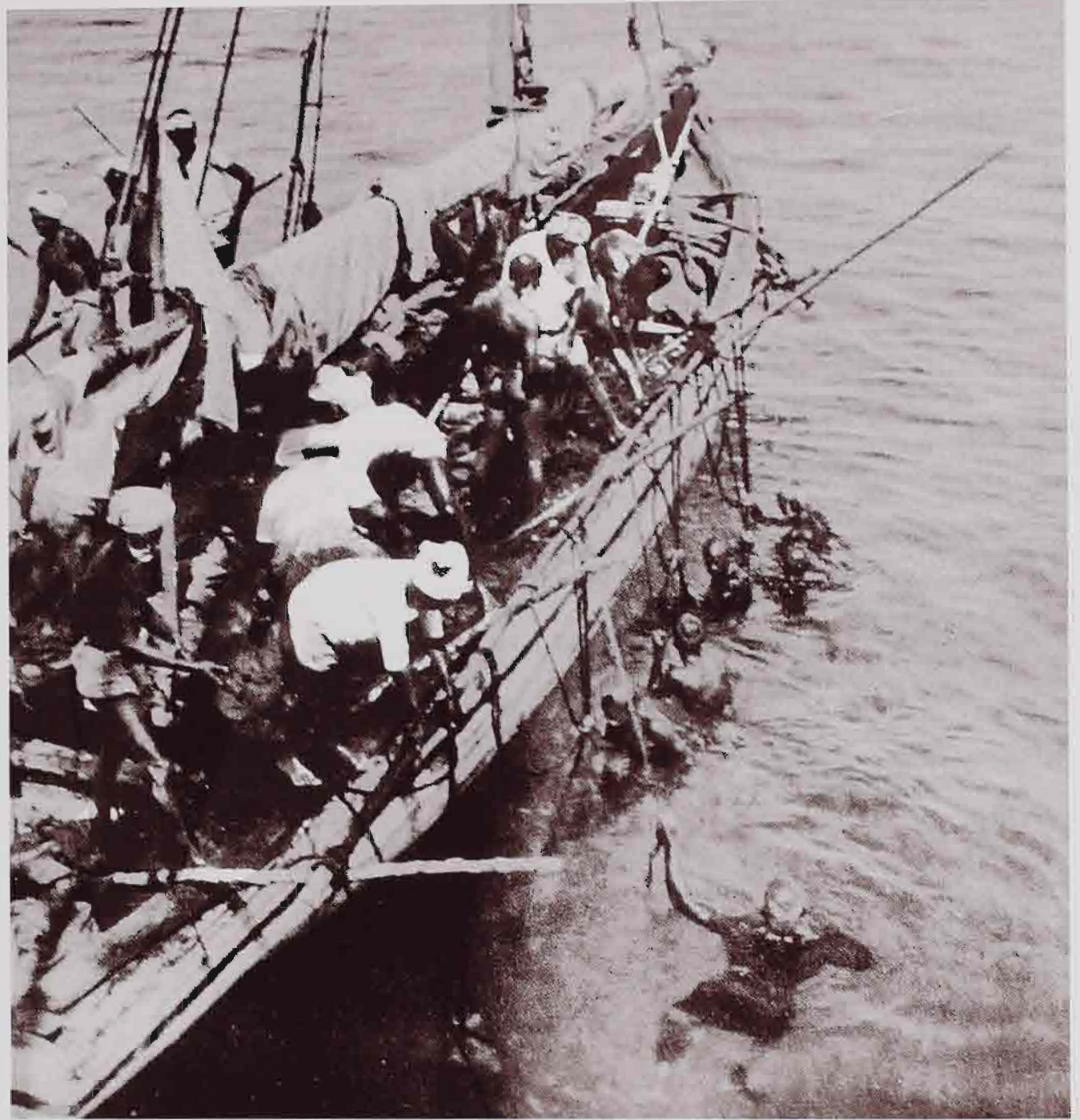
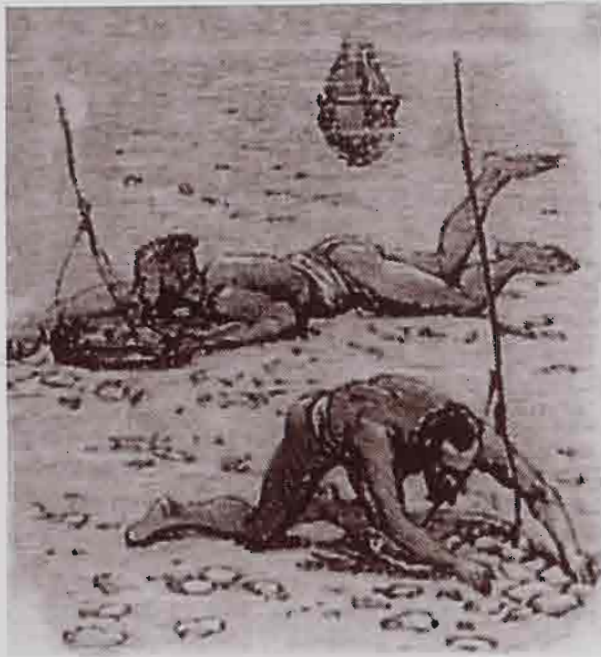
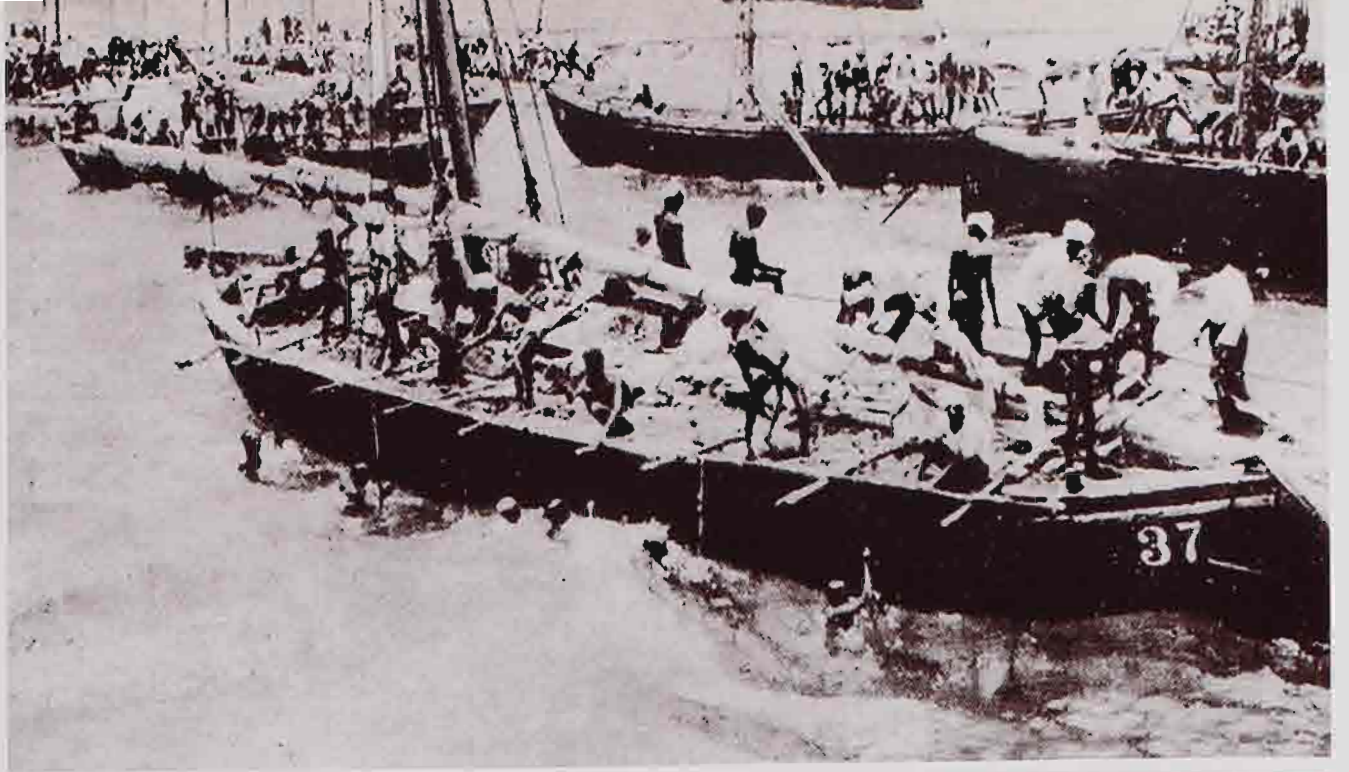


Boat-owners at the pearl fisheries and their financiers were almost always Paravar and Fisheries Coast Muslims. The latter usually hired the Afro-Arab quota from the Gulf. Except for the Malabar divers, who dived head-first into the waters, each of the others was lowered on a flat stone 30-50 pounds in weight that was attached to a rope tended by a manduk and a diving partner who would go down once his partner was ready for a break. The Afro-Arabs alone closed their noses with horn-clips, as in the picture on right.

The Malabar divers usually went down only about 7 fathoms (42 feet) and stayed there for no more than 40 seconds, the Coast divers (seen getting ready to dive, below) would go down to around 9 fathoms and work for around 50 seconds at those depths, and the Afro-Arabs would go down to depths of 15-20 fathoms but could stay down for around 80 seconds at the depths the other divers worked at.

The Afro-Arab divers seen on this page and the Fisheries Coast divers preparing to dive, below, were photographed during the 1925 fishery.

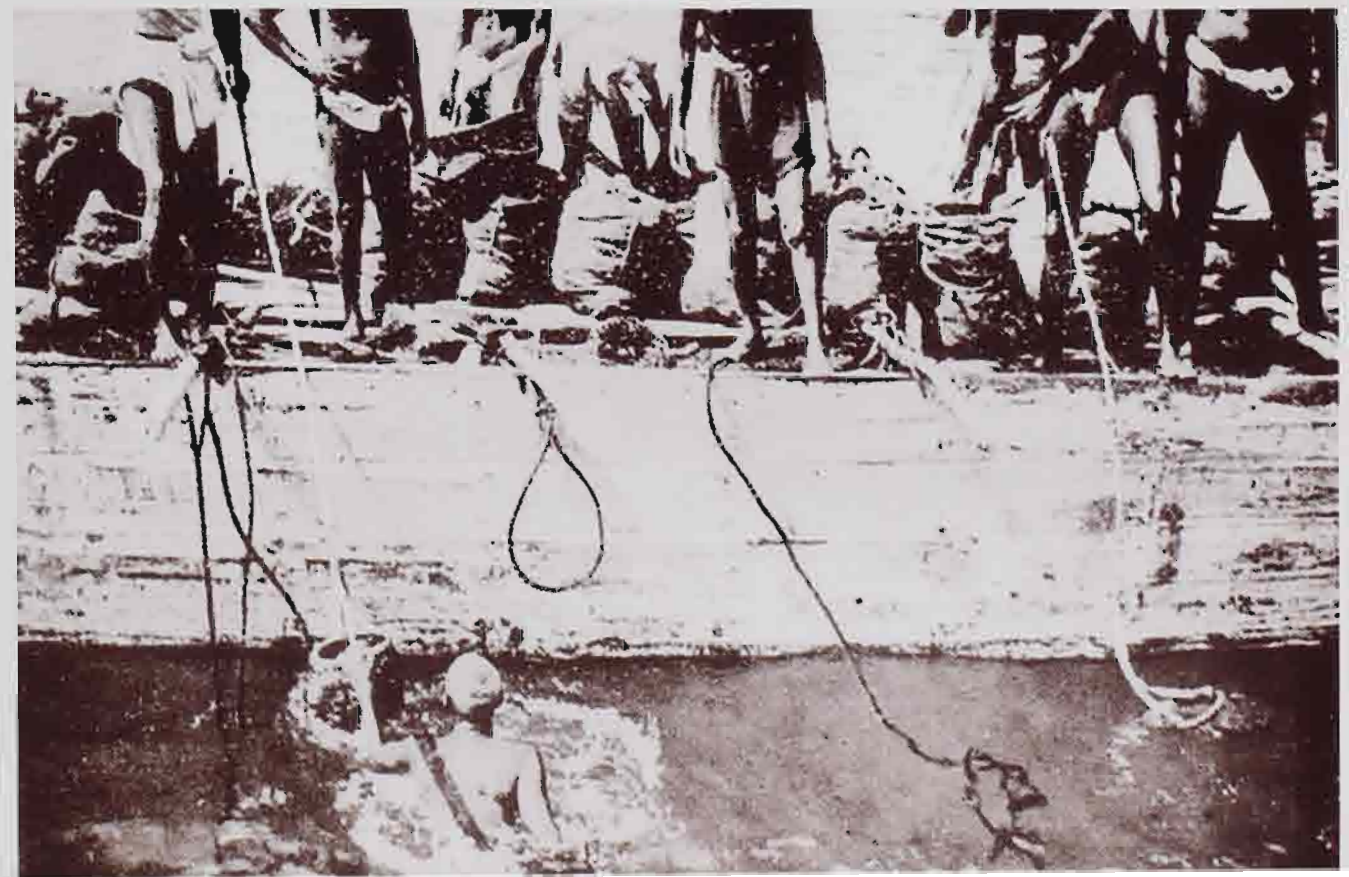




The engravings (above) from photographs of an 1887 fishery show the manner in which a scantily-clad Indian diver went down and how he collected the oysters from the rocky outcrops on the seabed. On right are photographs taken during the 1925 fishery, when nothing had changed, either by way of equipment or recovering the oysters.

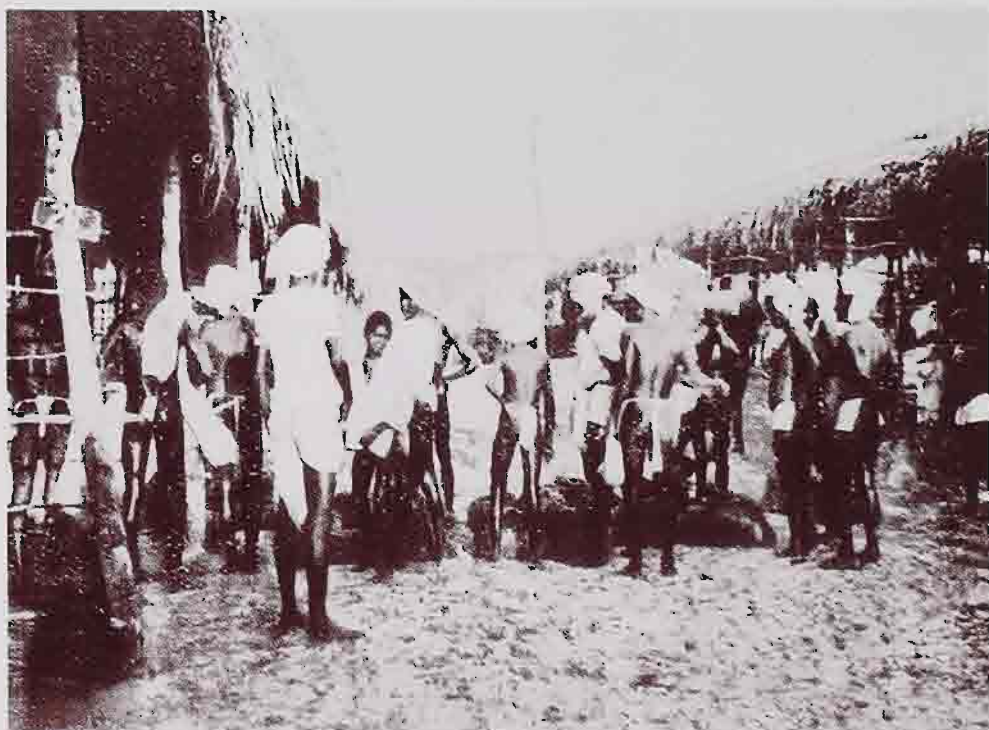
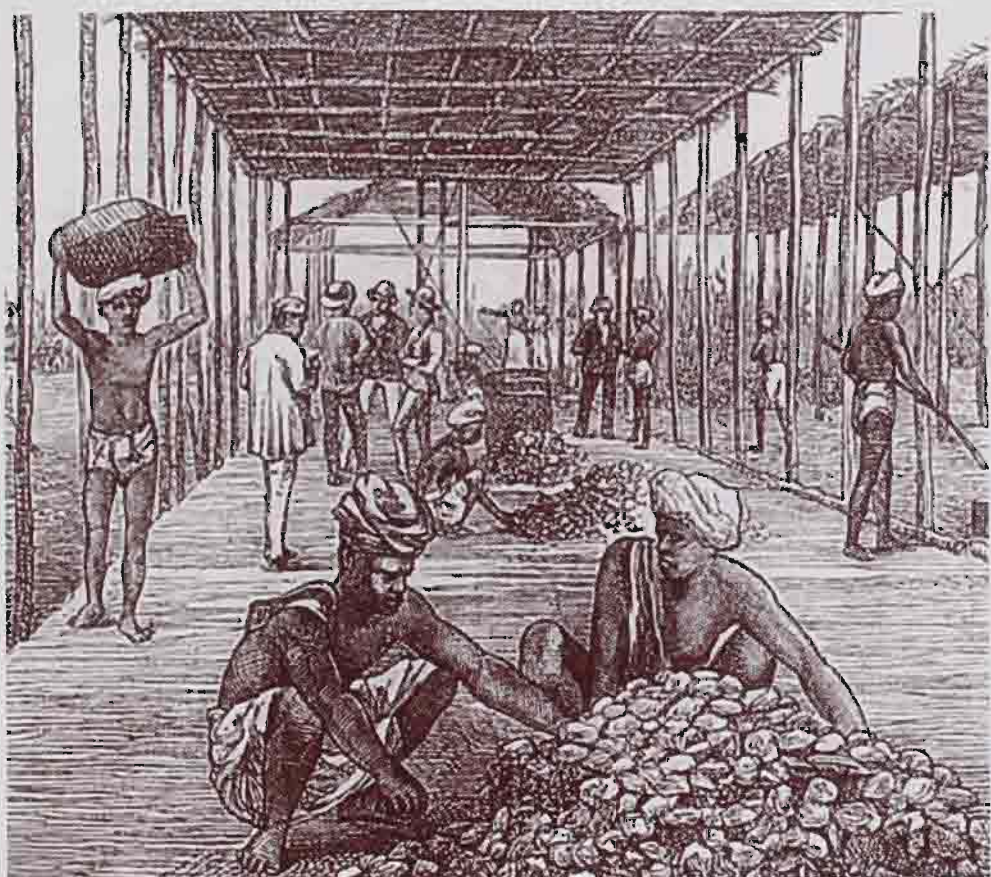
The pictures show a part of the fleet with its divers getting ready to dive, being hauled up and resting for a moment while the woven baskets with their catch are hauled overboard, emptied and returned to them. Divers worked in pairs, one making seven or eight dives and resting a minute or two between dives when he surfaced with his catch. After almost half an hour, the second diver would take his turn and give his partner a longer rest. In the minute or so in the sea depths, a diver would collect around 3000 oysters.

Each boat was manned by a tindal or skipper and a crew of ten, who also served as manduk-s, a pair of them lowering and hauling up each diver and his stone. Each boat also carried ten divers and a Government overseer, prominently belted, who would do an approximate count of the catch and, more importantly, keep watch over the catch, to ensure that none of it was secreted away or pried open and pearls removed and hidden.



Diving would stop around noon and the fleet would return by 3 p.m. when the divers took their individual catches, which had been kept separate on board, to the kottu-s (dumping enclosures, each a long, open shed with a thatched roof, like the one seen in the 1874 engraving) where they queued up to enter (below). Once inside, each diver divided his catch (below, left), into three roughly equal lots (it used to be four in the early years) and a Government overseer would choose the pile that was the diver's share.

At about six every evening, Government's share was auctioned, bidding being for every thousand oysters. The next day, after settling accounts, the buyers would take their purchases to their personal enclosures by the sea. In these well-guarded open stockades, the oysters were left to rot for 7-10 days in the sun. The near-empty shells were then washed in water-filled dugouts (bottom of page) by teams of toilers closely supervised by the buyers. After the rinsing of the opened bivalves, the discarding of the shells and the draining of the water, what was left was sand, shell residue and pearls, which were emptied on the sand, and left to dry before the pearls were picked out.





Sometimes, the washed bivalves were opened (top of page) by men – often relatives – trusted by the buyers, in this case Coast Muslims. Pearls found were drilled for stringing together (above). What the divers got as their share was sometimes opened up by them (left) and the finds sold, or the unopened shells themselves sold to petty buyers. The total proceeds of the divers' portion was shared among boatowner, crew and the divers, but much of it got spent in the taverns of the township (in 1925 there were six licensed ones!) before they returned home.

Making Access Possible

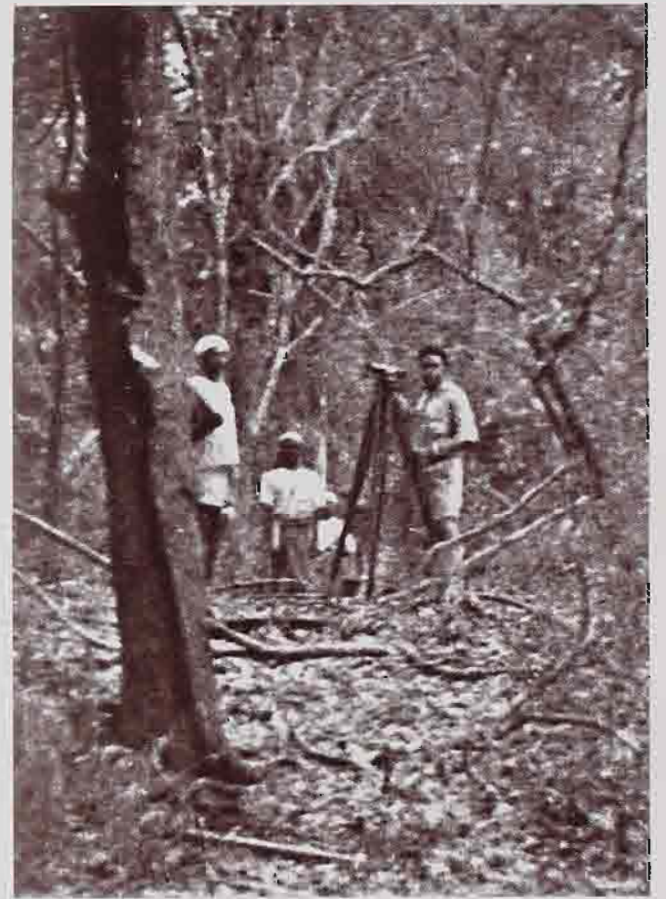
The Roads

When Major Thomas Skinner began his great road-building adventure with the Pioneer Corps, comprised of South Indians, it was to build the Colombo-Kandy Road. Built between 1820 and 1825 were the numerous other roads which were as much to provide easy access for the military to different parts of the Island as they were for coffee to reach, first, Galle Harbour and, later, after it was created from scratch, Colombo Harbour. But in helping to develop "the best roaded colony", Skinner and his men did more.

As G.A. Cruwell, a 19th Century planter, wrote, "Wherever new roads have sprung up..., towns spring up and commerce established itself... Who that saw Matale 20 or 25 years ago (could have imagined) it now with its long street of thriving bazaars and its 'Miranda' (not a bad name for its principal merchant and hotel keeper...). Ratotta was a paddy field with a few huts formerly, where now a street is teeming with trading and cateringwallahs and Moor-men, large

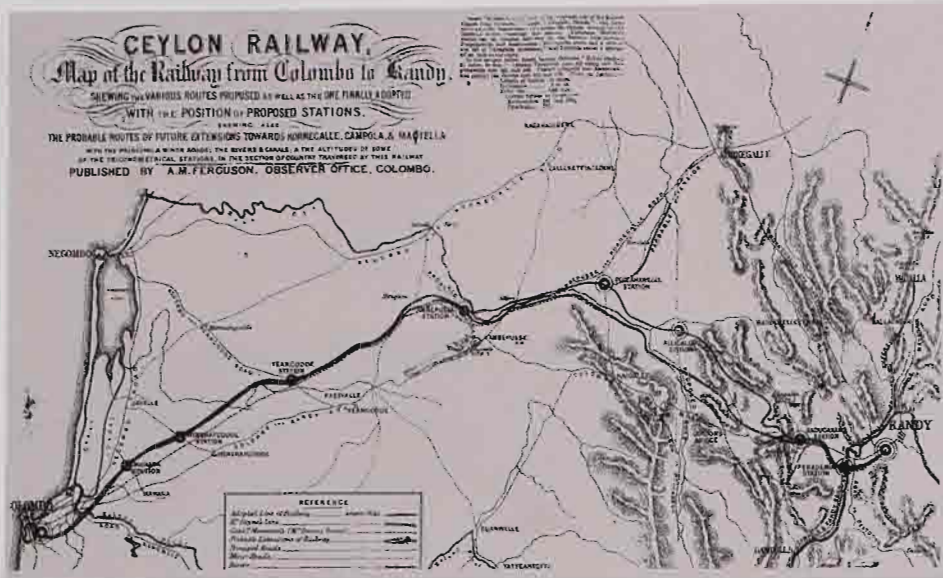
stores have risen... Madulkelle, Hoolooganga and Panwila all the same, and Teldeniya still better, then look at Gampola which will rival Kandy some day...". R. Ferguson added, "Gampola, Badulla and Matale, which each consisted of a resthouse and a few huts, and Nawalapitiya, which had no existence at all in 1857, are now populous towns while Panwila, Teldeniya, Madulkelle, Deltota, Haldumulla, Lunugulla, Passera, Wellimadde, Balangoda, Ratotte, Rakwana, Yatiyantotte & c. are more than villages."

Skinner's first road ran from Kandy to Colombo and then on to Galle, the road to which from Colombo had been built in 1814. All along it there developed ribbon settlements and the 70 halting stations for the carts grew into the towns of today. Indeed, the growth of wayside halts and villages into towns owed not a little to those road-builders from the southernmost reaches of India who with Skinner from 1816 built 3000 miles of roads where there were none.



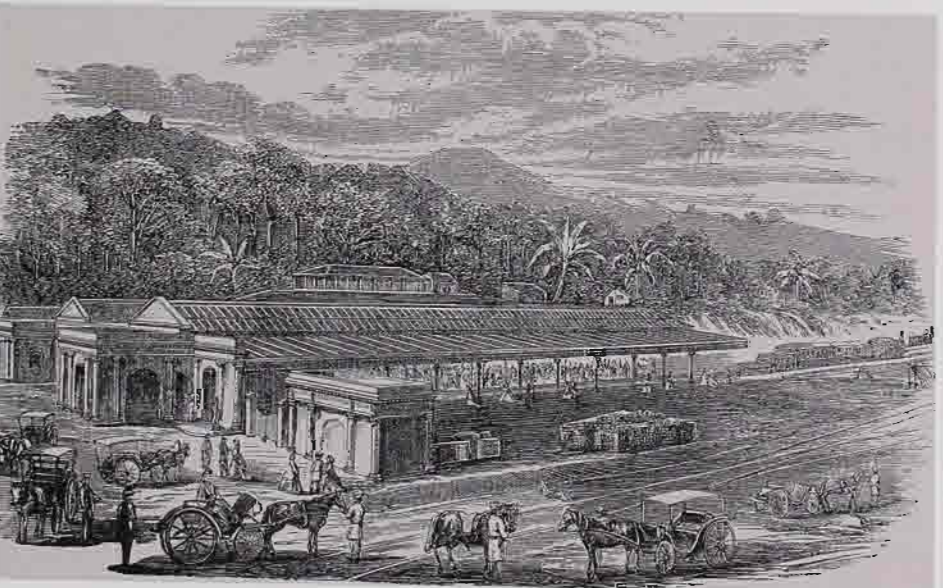
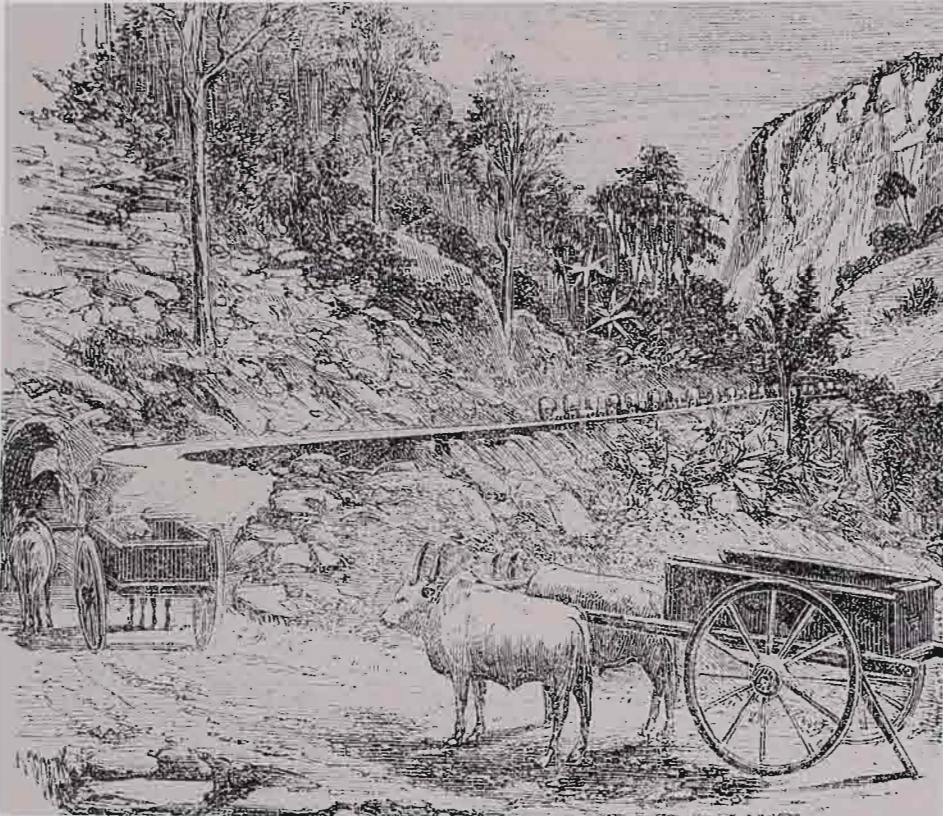
Many a surveyor who marked the lay for the roads throughout the Island was of Indian origin, like Subramania Iyer Sathasivam (see page 198). But none of them – or their white superiors – could have done what they did without those toiling South Indians who carried their measuring instruments (picture, top of page) over the toughest of terrains and in the most uncomfortable weather conditions.

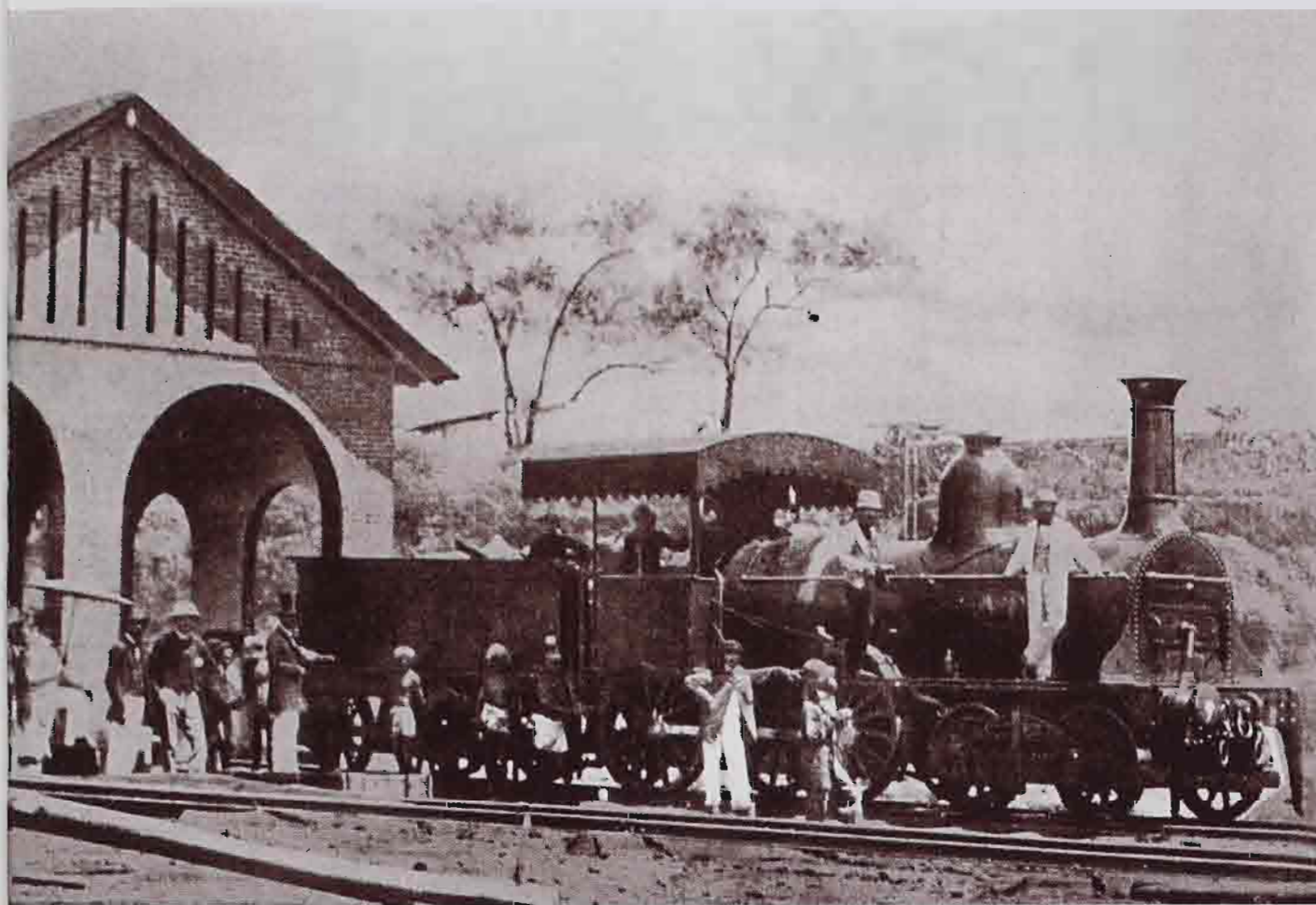
Apart from the road-builders of the Pioneer Corps, thousands were recruited from South India by the Public Works Department to work on the roads. No wonder, P.W.D. was rather nastily thought of as standing for 'Paara Wadakorana Dhemalaya' (the Tamils who worked on the roads) well into the 1950s. Either they had with their rammers created or repaired the old roads (as seen in the 19th Century sketch above) or patched them with hot tar they made (left) as they patrolled macadamised stretches in more recent times.



The Railways

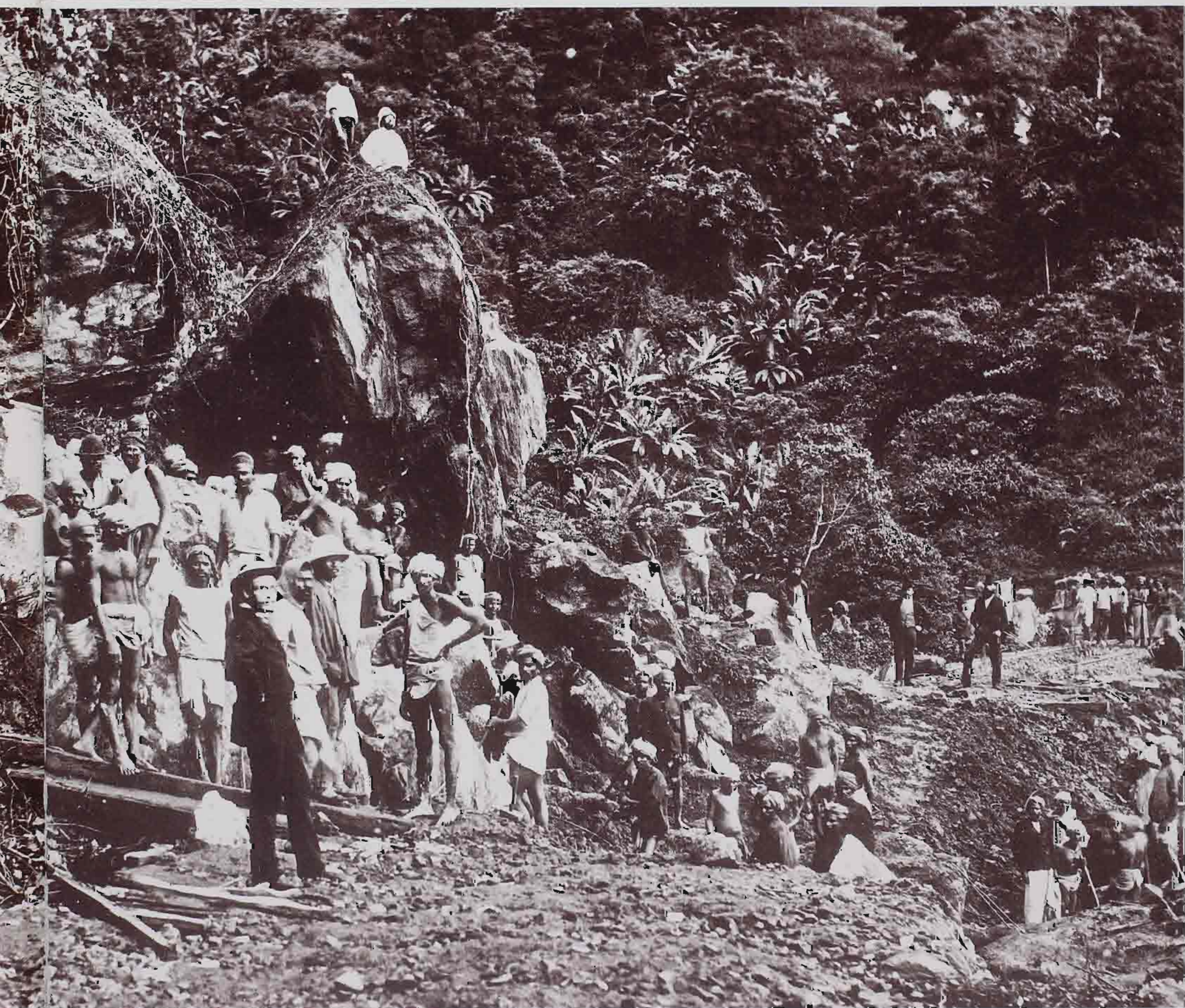
Nearly 80,000 carts a year travelled from Kandy to Colombo and then to Galle during the years of the coffee boom in the 1840s. The iron-rimmed wheels of the heavily loaded carts took a huge toll of the roads. The produce itself was often six weeks on the road; in fact, it cost as much in time and money to transport the goods from the estates to Colombo as it took to ship them from Colombo to London round the Cape. No wonder the planters were prepared to contribute £450,000, a quarter of the cost, to build the Island's first Railway line, from Colombo to Kandy. W.F. Faviel, with Indian experience, was the contractor who pushed through the line against all odds, using a workforce that included about 6000 with experience in building Indian railways. From Kandy the line moved forward to Nawalapitiya (1874), Matale (1880), Nanu Oya (1885) and Bandarawela (1894). Matara in the South was linked with Colombo in 1895, Jaffna in the North in 1905. One of the most significant extensions was the branch from the North Line which reached Talaimannar in 1914 and linked Ceylon with South India through the Talaimannar-Dhanushkodi ferry service. This Indo-Ceylon railway connection enabled the plantations to recruit larger numbers from India and transport them not only more quickly but with no mortality rate. It was to make a big difference to tea and rubber and the economy of Ceylon.

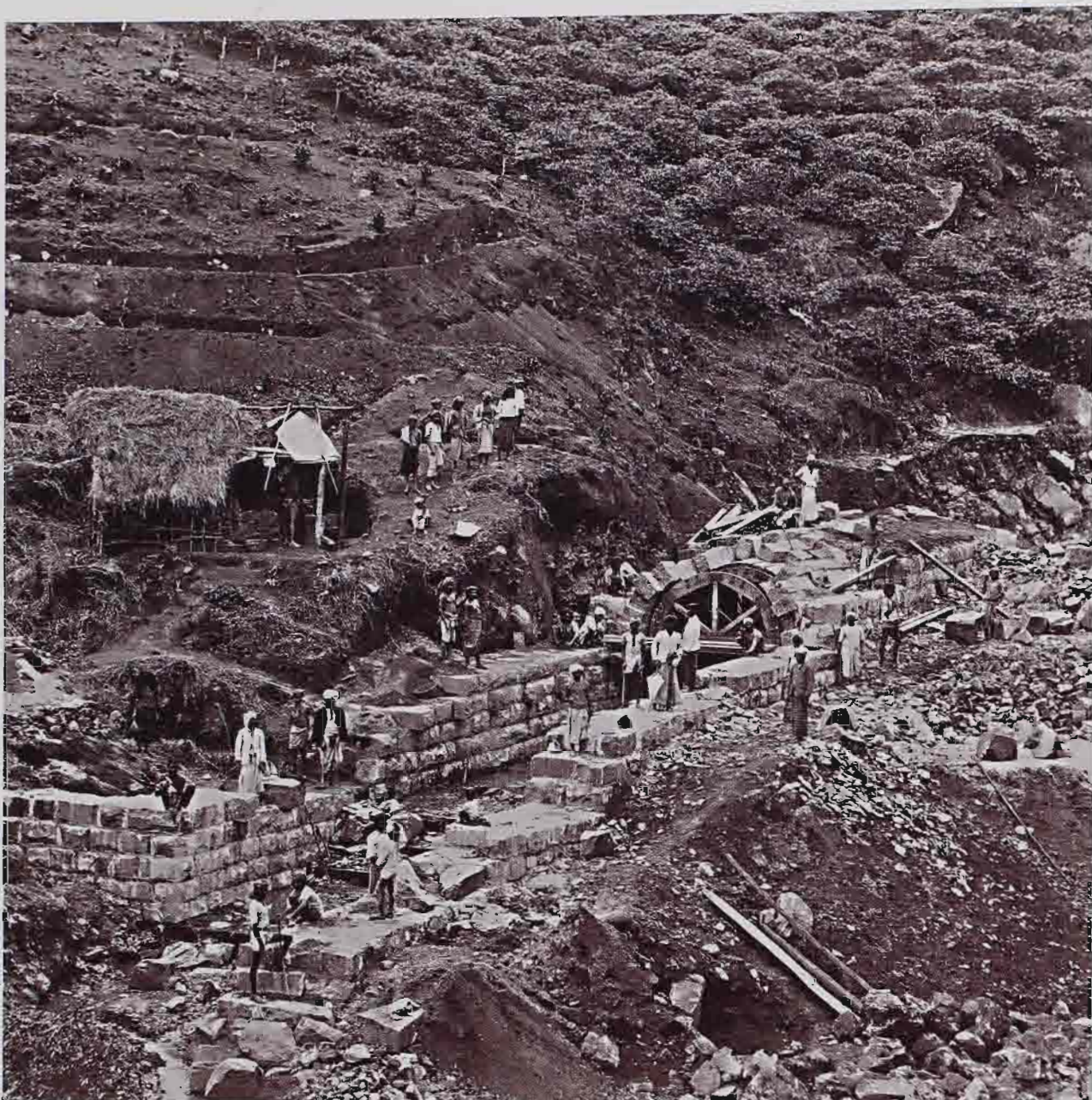




Extreme left, from top to bottom, on facing page is the story of the earliest railway-building in the Island, the labour provided by South Indians both in the Pioneer Corps or recruited directly by the Railways. Seen are: The lay of the Colombo-Kandy railway line completed in 1867, Governor Henry Ward having got the work underway in 1858; an engraving published in 1868, showing a train of bullock carts – with bullocks from India – taking up supplies for work on the toughest part of the Island's first railway track, the Kadugannawa incline; another engraving of the 1860s montages scenery and railway construction operations on the Kadugannawa Pass; and, journey's end, the Kandy terminus.

On left, the Kadugannawa Engine Shed with several Indian railway workers posing before Engine No. 1, the Railway's first. These workers often found Nature making their life even more difficult than it usually was. One look at the landslide near a viaduct on the Colombo-Kandy line in 1875 (picture below) and you can imagine what restoring the line must have been like, in an age when the crowbar, pickaxe and a pair of gnarled hands were about the only tools used.





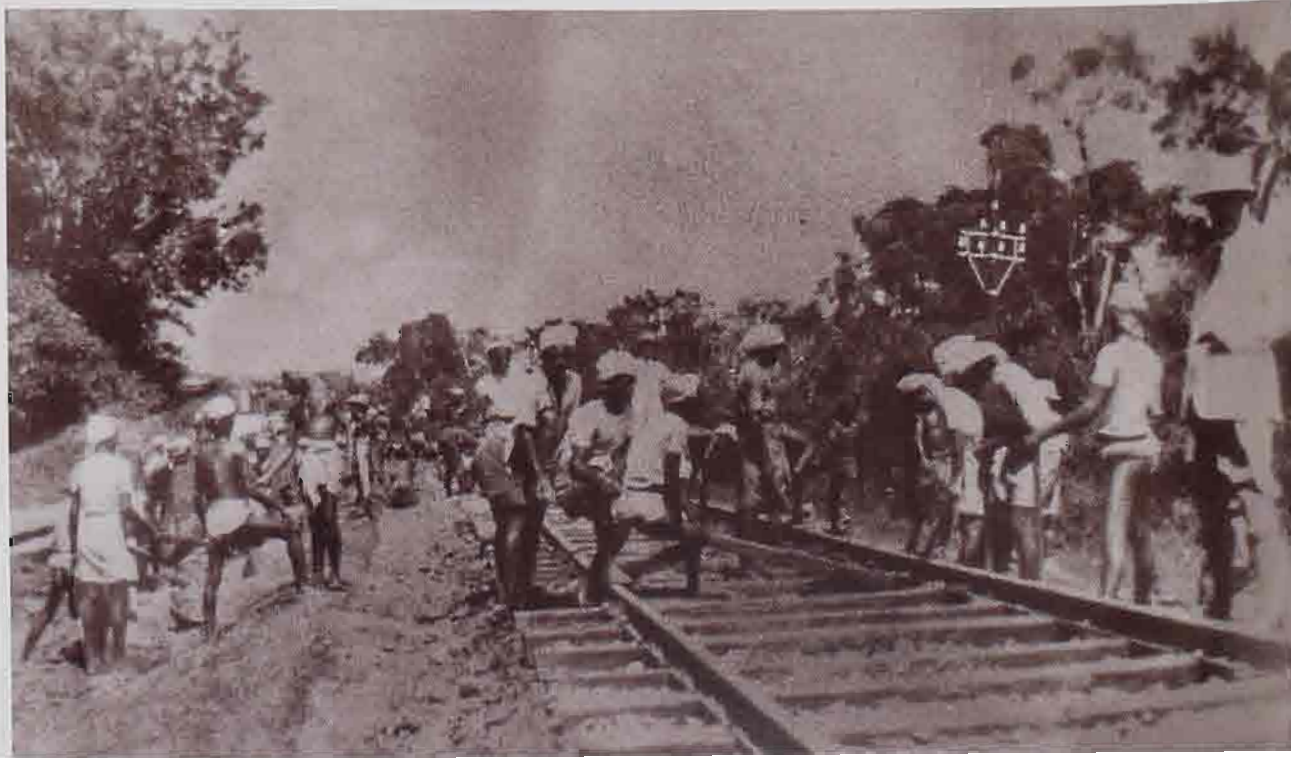
The pictures on these two pages strikingly tell a story of toil and travail during the late 19th Century-early 20th Century railway-building. Below, building the temporary railway bridge, Haputale, and on left, a railway culvert, Bandarawela. On facing page, top, Indian workers at the Deltota station site. Note the several Indians who were not from the South; for special technical work, several Indian skilled workers from Belgaum and other parts of the Bombay Presidency were brought down. On facing page, bottom, mustering before the day's work began on the Ratnapura Extension are both Indian and local workers, the latter's contribution considered community service.







Another striking picture (above) of what railway building in the Kandyan Highlands was like – a nightmare. This landslip was near Nanu Oya, the highest point accessed by the Railways in the Island. Life for the Indian railway workers, mainly Tamils and Malayalees, became a little easier in the 20th Century, as in the 1925 picture on right, where they are seen laying sleepers.



The Harbour

It was in 'Kalah' that the Arab dhows met the Chinese junks. So too the Romans and the Greeks sailing from Egyptian Berenice on the Red Sea. Indeed, Galle, or 'Kalah', is believed to have been the ancient entrepot of Tarshish from whence went spices and precious stones, ivory and peacocks and apes to the lands of the West. In fact, the natural harbour of Galle remained the main port on the Britain-Australia sea route till 1882. But it added over a hundred miles to the transport of coffee and tea from the central massif and necessitated the development of an artificial harbour in the capital, which was less than 100 miles from the estates.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 had the commercial interests pushing harder for the conversion of the open roadstead in Colombo into a safe harbour. Work began on the southwest breakwater in the mid-1870s and it was completed in 1885. Work on the northeast and northwest breakwaters began in 1893 and went on till 1912, by when an area of 643 acres was enclosed providing an anchorage for 23 vessels of the American Fleet in 1908 without in any way inconveniencing the regular mercantile traffic! From almost nothing in 1871, the harbour in 1937 was handling nearly 13 million tons of shipping, excluding sailing vessels. By then it was one of the ten great ports of the world and among the first five in the British Empire. Work has continued on making the harbour an even better facility ever since.

To build the harbour and provide Dockland with labour and skilled artisans, workers were sought from India, and they arrived particularly from the Malabar Coast. What they created was not only an important economic asset for the Island, looked at today as the port modernises as "the main hub port for the South Asian region, a major shipping centre for South Asia",

but also a development which drove the growth of Colombo and made it a major city.

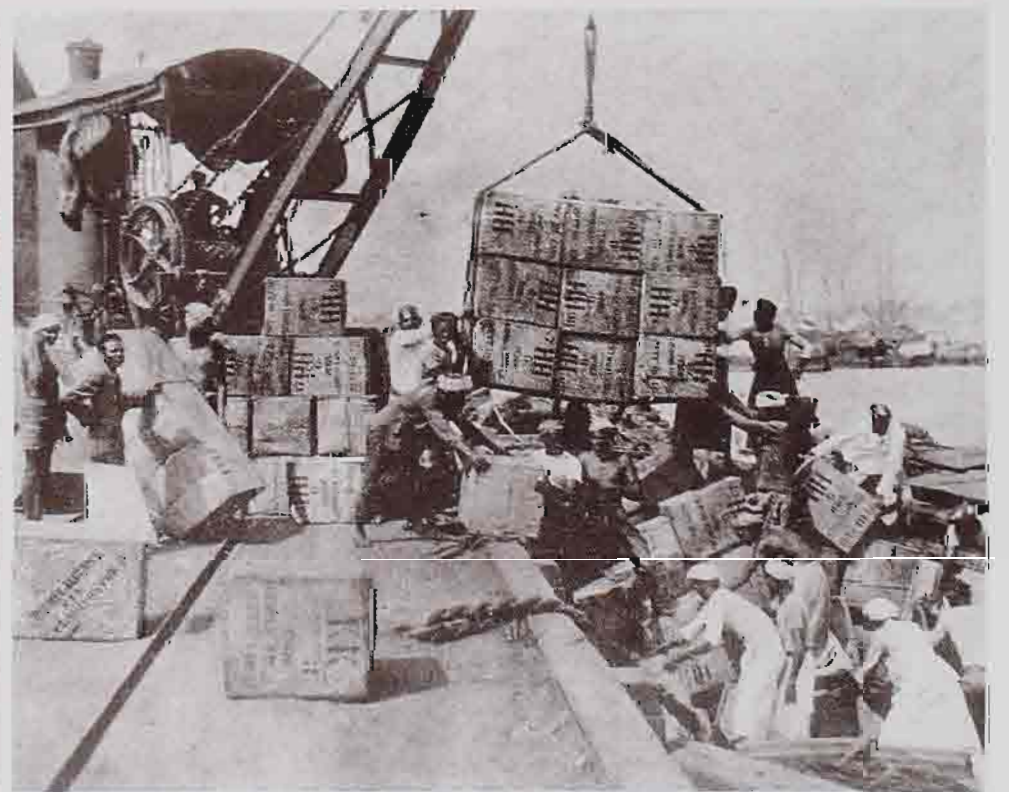
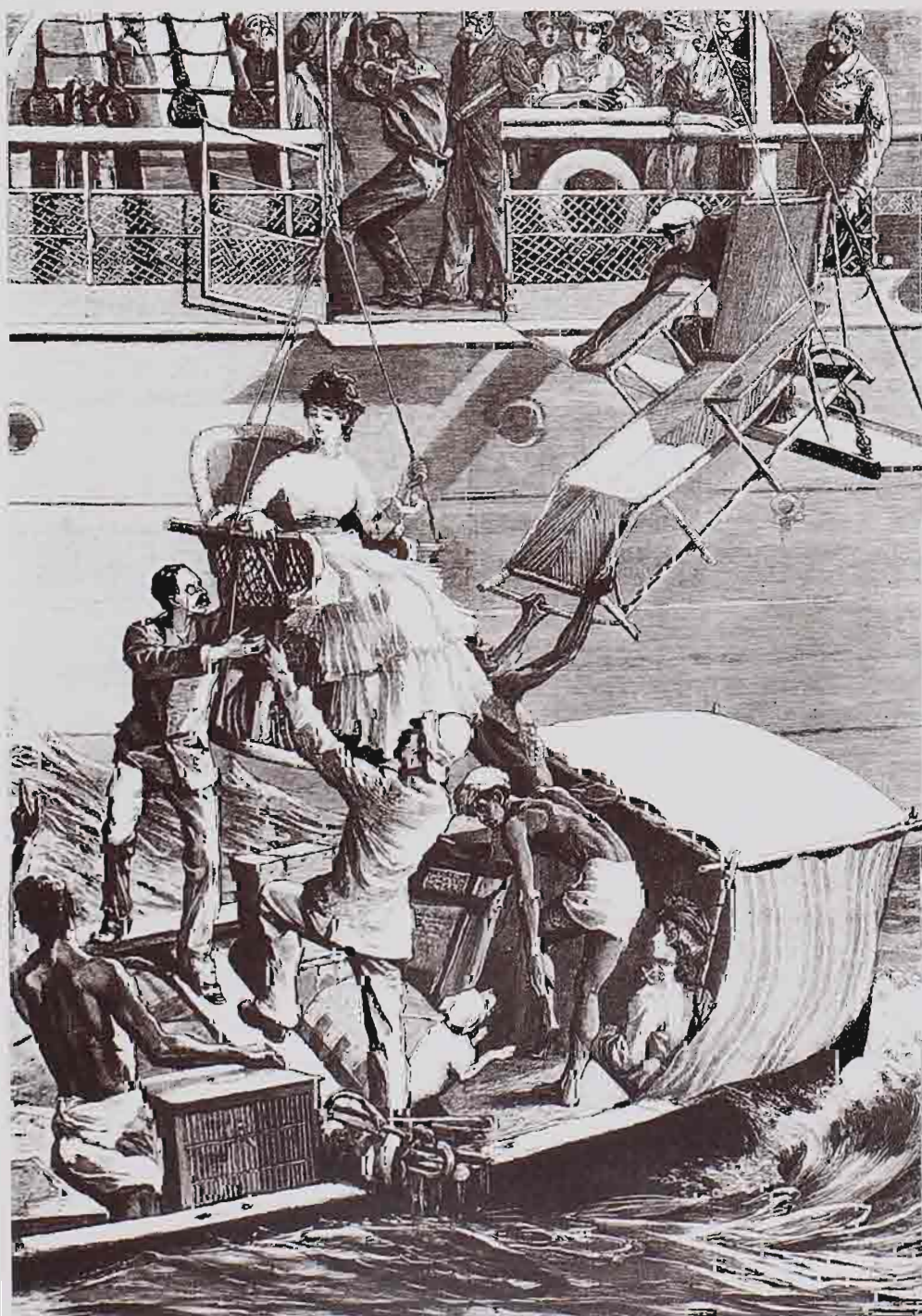
Bunkering, ship chandlery, harbour dues, exports and imports, the graving dock and an important tourist business, all a consequence of the harbour, powered the growth of Colombo. The burgeoning of Pettah, the comparable growth of the neighbouring wards of St. Sebastian's, St. Paul's and Kotahena, Dockland and the tourists' Fort were fuelled by those who worked in the harbour, those who provided the services, and the businesses and hotels established to meet the transit

visitors' needs. And much of this population was Indian. In 1931, for instance, the Dockland population of 40,000 was 55% Indian, mainly men, while the rest of the city's population was 200,000, about a quarter Indian, mainly males. Whether it be labour or skilled artisanship, service or trade — both to meet the everyday needs of the city's population as well as those of the transiting tourists — the Indians of Dockland and its vicinity, Pettah and Fort, played a significant role in the Island's economy well into the first decade of Independence.

Galle Harbour, seen below in the 1860s, was from earliest times the gateway to Lanka, till the Colombo Harbour was built in the 19th Century. Before Colombo got its harbour, landings were in the open roadstead as seen in the 1864 painting (bottom).







On facing page and on top, construction of breakwaters and other harbour facilities underway with a largely Malayalee (Kochi labour) workforce – who gave their name to the area called Kochikadde today. The southwest breakwater, 4212 feet long and 50 feet wide tapering to 40 feet, protected the most exposed side of the anchorage. Subsequent additions were the northeast breakwater 1100 feet long, the northwest 2670 feet and a sheltering arm 1800 feet, projecting from about the three-quarter mark of the southwest breakwater.

Extensive quays and piers facilitated loading and unloading by World War I. Well into the first years of Independence, much of the manual labour used in this work, seen (above) loading tea-chests in the 1930s, was Indian, as had been large numbers who, in the days of the open roadstead, ferried passengers and goods to and from ship, the 1883 engraving (on left) showing how they carried out this work, many a passenger being “tumbled in over all kinds of luggage” from steamer into “tossing” boat.

Finding a Substitute

The coffee crash during the Depression of the 1840s had the planters fleeing the country, selling their estates for a pittance. Coffee boomed again in the 1850s. When *Hemileia vastatrix* rusted the coffee leaf and blighted the crop in the late 1870s, a tougher breed of planter stayed back to make a fight of it by looking for alternative crops. Governor William Gregory, who arrived in 1872, spurred their search for new plantation products. The Peradeniya Botanical Gardens recommended cinchona (from whose bark quinine to fight malaria was obtained) and cacao. The cultivation of both in the last years of the 19th Century eased the transition from coffee to tea. And the same transient South Indian labour force, that by the 1870s had begun going back in fewer numbers, adapted easily to the new crops.

By the mid-1880s, the area under cinchona was 60,000 acres and exports during that period averaged about 14 million lb., compared to less than 10,000 lb. 15 years earlier. Before long it was found that exports from Ceylon were depressing world prices and, by the 1890s, planters relegated cinchona to the position of a minor crop.

Cacao was introduced in the Dumbara Valley by R.B. Tytler in the late 1870s and in the next decade there were "fine cacao 'walks' in the Matale, Kurunegala and Uva Districts". Ceylon cocoa in the 1880s realised the highest prices in London,

but with the crop requiring good soil to a great depth, a medium elevation and shelter from wind, the area for its development was restricted in the Island. Nevertheless, about five million pounds of cocoa beans were being exported by the 1890s.

Cardamom, "the grains of paradise", too began to be looked at with greater favour by erstwhile coffee planters in the 1880s, when around 250,000 to 500,000 lb. a year were exported. Indeed, during this all-too-short interim decade, Ceylon cinchona and cardamom ruled the world markets. But neither they nor citronella nor cocoa quite did for the plantation economy what coffee had done. It was tea with a growing permanent Indian workforce tending it perennially that was to revive that economy and make the first half of the 20th Century a period of prosperity in an island considered a model in the colonial world.

Three of the substitute crops with which coffee-blighted planters tried to revive their fortunes in the 1880s are featured on these two pages. Seen below is bark-shaving of cinchona by Indian workers, on an estate where the medicinal crop was interplanted with coffee under threat. On facing page, top, citronella grass is unloaded at an oil-processing unit. And below it, a cacao 'walk'. Cacao groves were protected from light and wind by other plants, while still other plants provided the nutrients for sensitive cacao trees.









❶	❸
❷	❹

A striking feature of cacao estates was the variety in form, size and colour of the fruit in its various stages of maturity. The ripe fruit was picked from the tall trees by men wielding long, hook-attached poles (facing page) and the women carried basketloads of the ripe pods to the collection areas (as on left).

Overleaf:

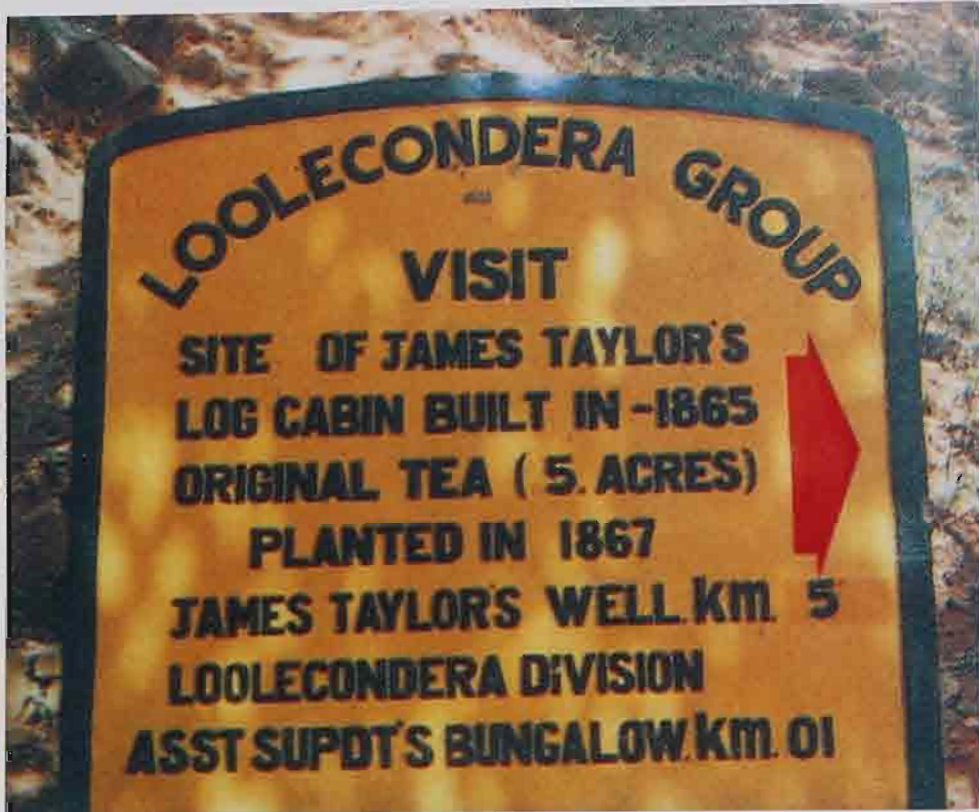
1. The pods being cut open by women in the collecting areas and the beans scooped out to fill the baskets.
2. Men washing the beans of all pulp in the flowing waters of a nearby stream.
3. Spreading the washed beans out to dry.
4. Once dried, women remove the deformed or damaged beans before the good beans are packed in gunny bags for transport to the markets.

These late 19th Century pictures were taken on a model cacao plantation in Matale.





Green Gold



Tea in the form of two tender leaves and a bud plucked by nimble fingers is the green gold – though it's black when it goes on the market – that was the lynchpin of the Ceylon economy till the 1970s and is still an important component of the Island's economy. Whatever the environmentalists may say about the denuding of highland forests and the recarpeting of them with the tea bush, the economic reality as it exists is that the development of Ceylon from 1885, when tea acreage for the first time crossed the 100,000 mark, tripling in just two years and growing 400 times in 15 years, has been almost entirely due to tea. At Independence, a time of prosperity and comfort, tea contributed almost 70 per cent to the country's income. That's a contribution that has reduced since the 1970s, but it is still a substantial one with the Island growing about a tenth of the world's production and a much higher percentage of the quality teas.

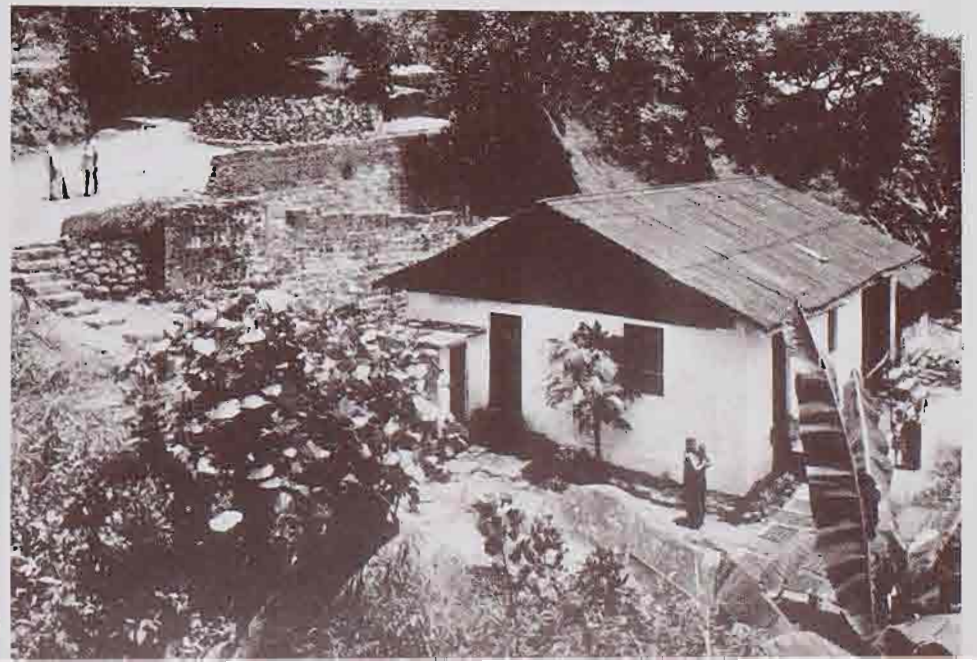
Today, tea covers 450,000 acres and the Rs. 60 billion it earns from exports makes it the second biggest export item. Whether the Island would have been better off by keeping the central highlands forested is a matter of speculation; the fact is we have to live with the events that have taken place and the contributions they have made to present comfort, and on that count both tea and those who nurtured it, and still do, have given the Island much.

Governor Henry Ward may have in the late 1860s urged the Peradeniya Gardens to examine what tea held for Ceylon, but it was James Taylor in the Hewaheta Hills of Kandy who began experimenting with Peradeniya seedlings at Loolecondera Estate and, on the 19 acres of the now-legendary Field No.7, began plucking in 1872, the first leaf that had flourished under the shade of cinchona trees. A century later, Ceylon was producing 500 million pounds of tea worth over Rs. 1200 million. Contributing to that, from having felled the forest, tended the nurseries, planted the seedlings, weeded the fields, dug the drains, pruned the bushes, protected them from disease, plucked the leaves, made the tea, transported it to the auctions and played a role in its shipment, have been the people of South Indian origin, mainly Tamils. Today, nearly a million strong, they seek an identity as the Malaiyaha Tamils, the Highland

Loolecondera is where the saga of Ceylon tea began and Loolecondera is where those beginnings are remembered in the course of a heritage walk. James Taylor's famous Field No.7 is still there and some of the tea he planted in 1867 survived for well over a hundred years, seen on left after rigorous pruning. Below is the dhoby's house at Loolecondera, believed to have been Taylor's first 'tea-house' where he and his workers manufactured tea entirely by hand, till a waterwheel was installed, fuelled by water from the stream that flowed through the opening seen on left in the picture. Above the culvert is the path that led to Taylor's log-cabin. What he began in 1865, today carpets 450,000 acres of the central highlands green (see map on facing page), with every 50 acres a field that is home to about 200,000 bushes.

The tea bush, left to Nature, will grow to a height of 20 feet and a rather similar circumference. But regular pruning keeps it down to a height of three feet. Occasionally, however, you get a showpiece circumference as seen in the picture on the facing page. The largest tea bush in Ceylon, this picture of it was taken in 1960 in the Gonapitiya Division of the Gonapitiya Group, Kandapola.

From James Taylor's time, as in the days of coffee, cinchona and cacao, the estates in the highlands were virtually isolated settlements where the planter, European till the 1950s and, then, increasingly Sri Lankan, and his workforce, virtually all of recent Indian origin, lived cut off from the mainstream of life in the Island.



Tamils, who are a veritable part of the Island's ethnic mosaic. As things evolved over 100 years, it is patent that without them this story would not be told; the European pioneers for all their determination to create plantations of prosperity had in the first days itself felt the need for the Indian worker, the tea-plucker, the *kangany* and the supervisory staff, and no matter how badly the planters treated them in the early years, they could not do without them.

Ceylon tea also owes more to Indian tea than to Chinese tea. Tea was discovered growing wild in the Assam jungles in 1830 and, ten years later, Assam seed was being experimented with in the Peradeniya Gardens. But little interest was shown in the bush till the coffee crash and Taylor's success, drawing on help from Assam. In the years that followed, Assam, Darjeeling and the High Ranges of South India all contributed to the successful growth of tea in the Island.

Tea is an evergreen whose perennial crop makes a permanent workforce necessary. The seasonal recruitment of labour from South India that had supported the coffee industry was no longer feasible. About a quarter of the coffee workers had settled in the estates, but tea needed a bigger workforce and one with some skills too. And so there began in the 1880s a new migration of labour from India's South and a training process on the estates that, by trial and error, developed the skills necessary for the best teas. Weeding and trench-digging by men did not require the acquisition of any skills, but crucial 'pruning' operations did need discovering what was best for a bush to keep yielding; so did manuring. Perhaps the greatest of the manual skills needed on an estate was the ability to fine pluck the legendary two leaves and a bud. And generations of women born and brought up on the estates have acquired skills unmatched elsewhere. Today, mechanical plucking is slowly entering the estate scene as labour becomes in short supply, but the shears will never yield the quality nimble fingers have done for decades. And in the factory, tea-making, involving withering, rolling, fermenting, firing and sorting, and even packing, needs acquired skills to give the customer tea that's just right.

Today, the descendants of those who had walked the death trail, from Mannar or Puttalam to the Highlands, are to an extent better off than their ancestors who were half-clothed, ill-fed, medically uncared for and lorded over with word and fist by *kangany*-s, supervisors who virtually owned the labour gangs they had recruited, and White estate superintendents and owners. But they are still a long way away from the lifestyles and standards prevailing in the rest of the country. They have at the same time, for several generations, lost touch with the country of their origin. In search of a better future and a permanent place in the Lankan sun, they seek a new identity today. And so the Malayaha Tamils seek more than mere token recognition that they are an integral part of the ethnic fabric of the Island. A few generations later, like every other person in the Island whose roots go back centuries into Indian soil, the Malayaha Tamils too may not have need of a separate identity.



The world view of tea is that it is a women-dominated industry. The face the industry shows the world is the colourfully clad woman who deftly plucks with a smile, two leaves and a bud. In fact, though the male workforce may be smaller, a considerable amount of backbreaking work has to be put in by the men, if quality tea is to be produced.

It was they who cleared the forest, first for coffee and then for the explosive growth of tea. And as they cleared thick animal- and reptile-infested jungle, watched over by armed men and tom-tom beaters, the balladeer of the plantations, C.V. Velupillai, sang

<i>Naloday nala</i>	All day long
<i>Kodali satham</i>	Their axes echoed
<i>Kumuruthangay</i>	In the deep woods
<i>Kattukulay</i>	The jackal's howl
<i>Urunamathu kerta</i>	The leopard's snarl
<i>Urumum puli satham</i>	Heard at noon
<i>Nari oolai ellam</i>	Died in the light
<i>Kattoday alinjathadi</i>	As the forest fell

Once the jungle was cleared into manageable-sized fields, it was the men again who tended the nurseries, carefully watering the seedlings, as in the turn of the 19th Century picture below.



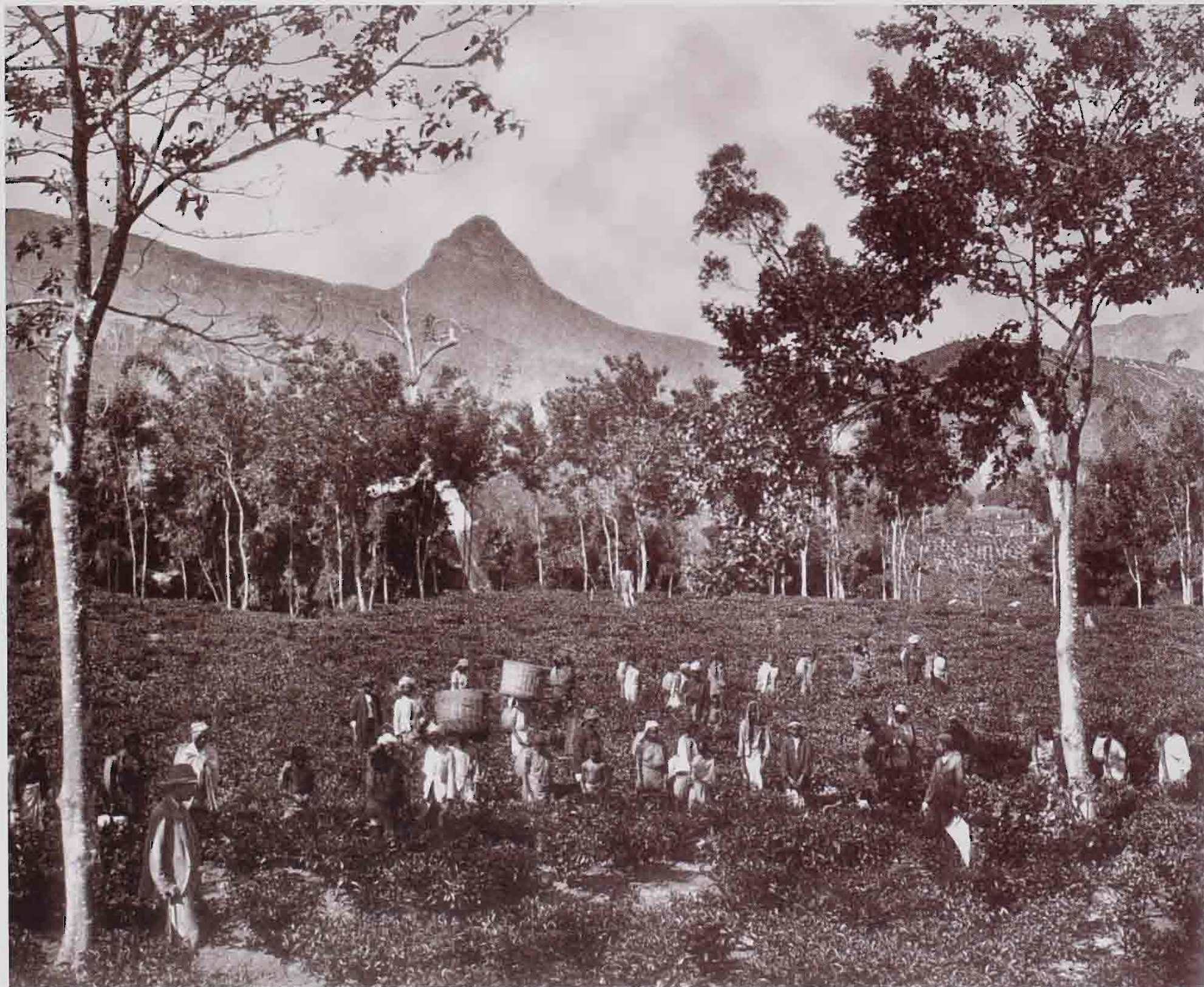


Weeding, cutting and clearing drains, and pruning are all male work. Pruning every few years involves almost "unmerciful dismemberment" of bushes, as in the picture top left, to help the bushes regenerate. After years of this, a tough gnarled old bush whose day is done has to be pulled out – and that's when even elephants have to be called in (above). Lifting heavy loads, like machinery, up steep inclines is also elephant's – and man's – work, top right. The 20th Century brought greater science into planting, and, today, weedicide and insecticide sprayers (right) are an important part of the workforce.





In these pictures from the early days of tea, on the facing page and right, the development on estates may be seen. Facing page, top, a kangany (overseer) shading himself with an umbrella watches his gang of pluckers at work on new growth, the tea bushes yet to spread themselves to fill the 12 square feet or so of surface area allotted to each bush planted as part of a neat row. In a couple of years the bushes begin to mature and fill up space, leaving little of the soil visible. A large number of pluckers then become necessary, as in the picture on facing page, bottom. On right, and below, even more mature crop in sylvan surroundings. In the picture below, taken on Kintyre Estate, Maskeliya, the mountain is Adam's Peak, sacred to all in Lanka. It is a picture which bridges the gap between the front and rear endpapers and spreads of this book, when estates were opened up in the shadow of the Peak and are seen as they flourish today. At Kintyre, as in many other estates, tea was planted under coffee plants beginning to show signs of disease and as the tea flourished the coffee was uprooted, and tea took over.



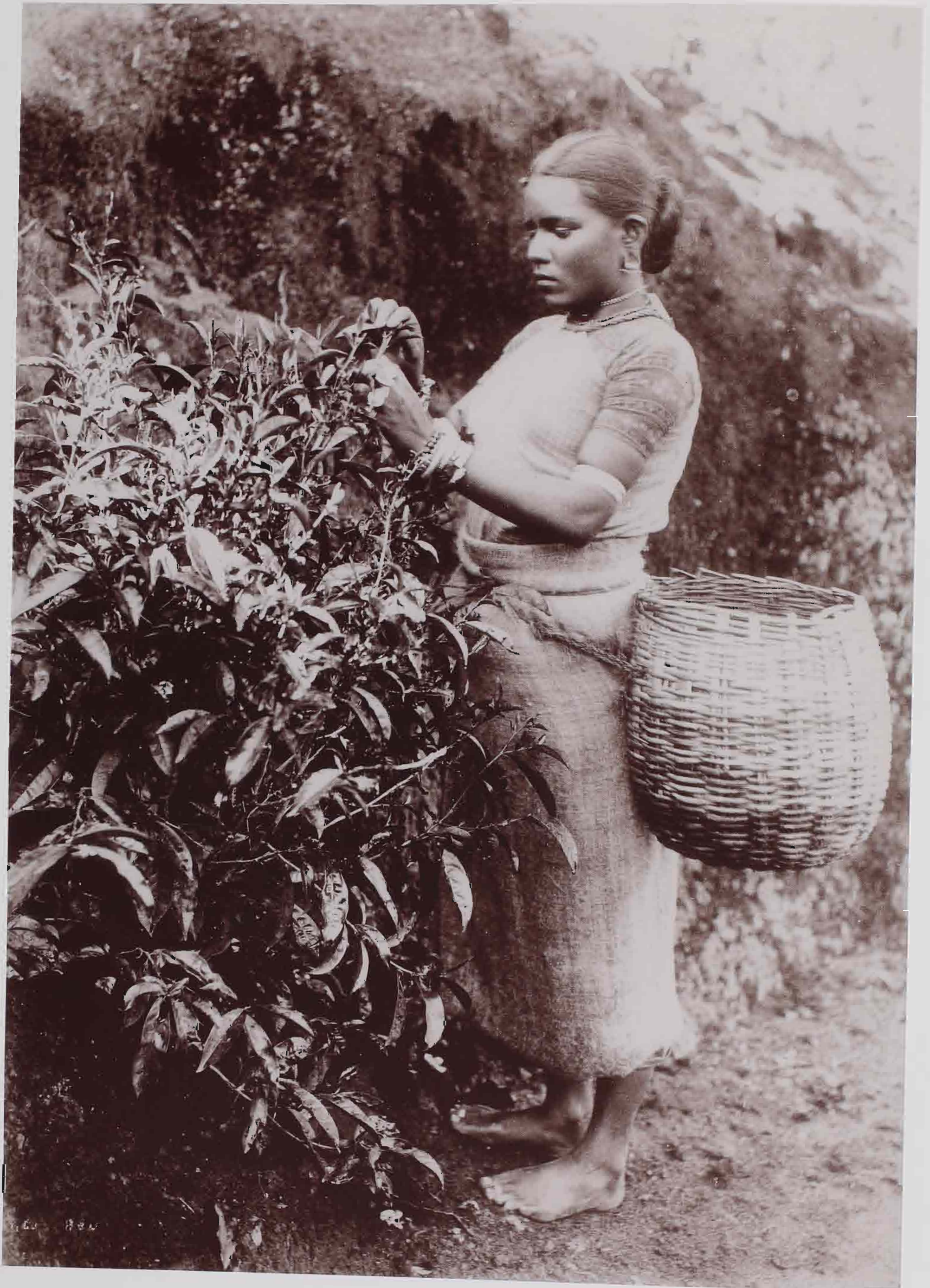




Plucking is the most important part of the tea business. Two young leaves and a bud, in fact the two extreme leaves of a shoot, are what must be plucked for the finest quality of tea. Sometimes, plucking four leaves from the top would be permitted, increasing the yield but watering down the quality. Shearing today further reduces the quality; fortunately it is nowhere near prevalent in Sri Lanka as in other countries. Fine plucking is what has ensured the quality of Ceylon teas — and that fine plucking is far more due to the skills and commitment of the Indian Tamil pluckers than the careful watch of the supervisors. Of their plucking skills it has been said, "To such an extent does practice accelerate the action of eye, brain and the march of their nimble fingers, that it is difficult for the uninitiated to believe how carefully chosen is each leaf or shoot."

The pictures on these pages, taken in an age when a saree worn in the traditional South Indian manner as a single wraparound was the only clothing a plucker wore despite the wind and the cold and the damp, show pluckers with baskets hung from their heads or their waists (also overleaf, taken in a later age when the blouse had become acceptable). When full, these baskets contained about 14 pounds of leaf.







Apart from the care and judgement needed in fine plucking, the bud must remain with the leaves, undamaged at that. Sometimes particular leaves have to be plucked to ensure a special quality of tea. None of this slows down a plucker — nor her gossip with her neighbour. Indeed, nothing has changed over the last 100 years or more — except the fashions. On top left are the pluckers of the early years. On left and below left are the pluckers of today, better clad, heads protected, but as Granny on left displays, the chunky jewellery of the ages has still not gone out of fashion. Nor has 4 o'clock — when it is time to head for the 'counting house' (below).

As day began, the Madurai Meenakshis sang, in C.V.Velupillai's words,

<i>Katta-thorai-pattieylay</i>	At Katta-dorai-patti
<i>Karutha kutti renduperu</i>	Two dark eyed wenches
<i>Kittakitta niray puduchu</i>	They took their rows
<i>Sittupol parakkuralay</i>	As the sparrows do

and then, as they plucked the best,

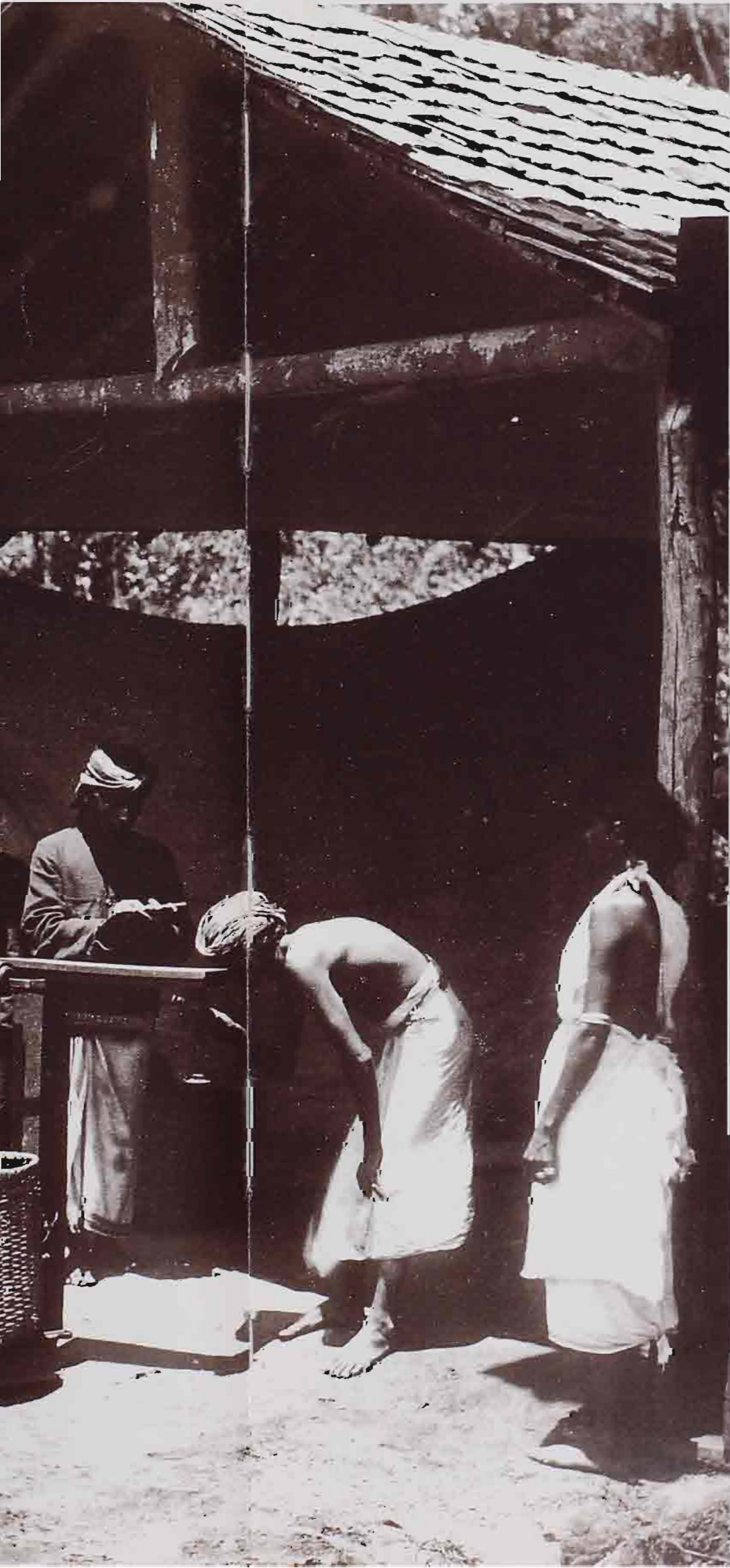
<i>Sediay sedikkolunthay</i>	O bush, O tender leaf
<i>Sinnathorai tee kolunthay</i>	Our Sinna Dorai's tea leaf
<i>Varnasedikkolunthay</i>	Gold tipped tea leaf
<i>Vanthittaray namma thorai</i>	Our Sinna Dorai is come

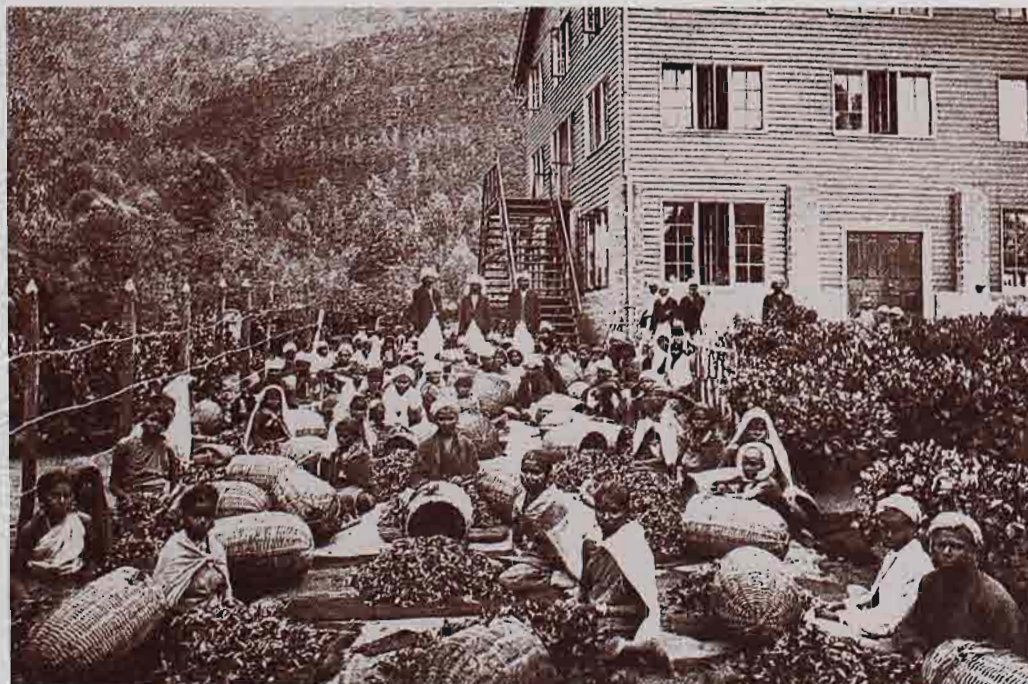
When day was done, Vereker Hamilton wrote,
 'Tis four o'clock! A breeze comes down
 From where the busky ridges frown.
 The laden bee hums slowly by;
 The jungle wakes with eerie cry.
 'Tis four o'clock! Dark shadows creep
 Along Kal'pahna's ledges steep.
 Old Carpen, standing near the store,
 Declares he's sure it's long past four!
 'Tis four o'clock! The horn at last!
 Full loud and long its ringing blast.
 With joyful shout and sack on head,
 Their homeward path the coolies tread.





When day is done in the plucking fields, the pluckers in their hundreds and their supervising kangany-s gather at the 'counting house' when "the sum of each plucker's efforts" is weighed and "passes before the eye of the superintendent". In the early days, these weighing stations on coffee estates that had become tea plantations were usually at coffee stores or pulping houses, below and right. In later times, as in the 1920s at right centre and in the 1990s at right bottom, when the number of pluckers and their pluck had increased many times, wayside weighing stations became more common. Here weighing would be done two or three times a day – unlike in earlier times – and each plucker's collection noted before the leaf collected was taken to the factory.



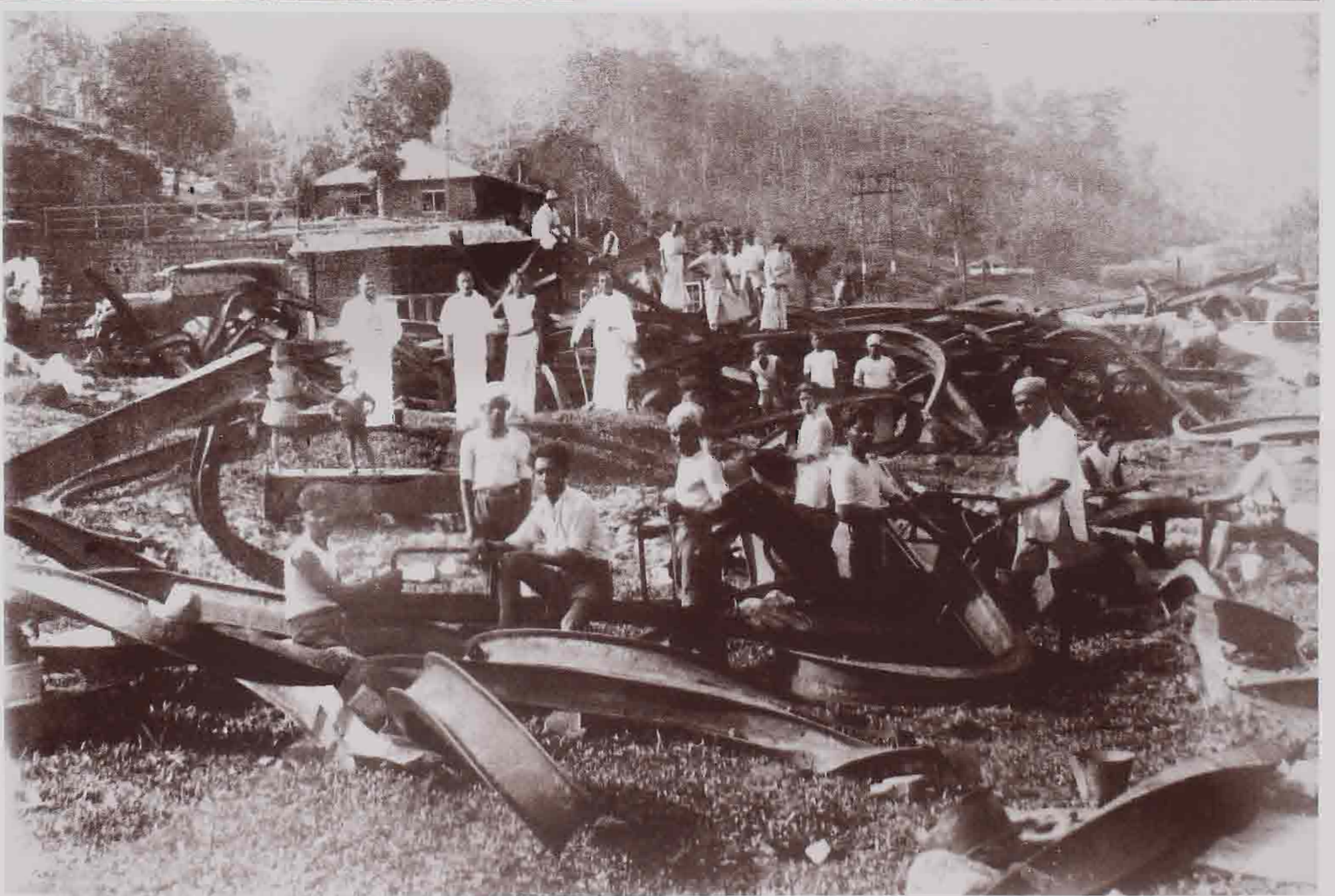
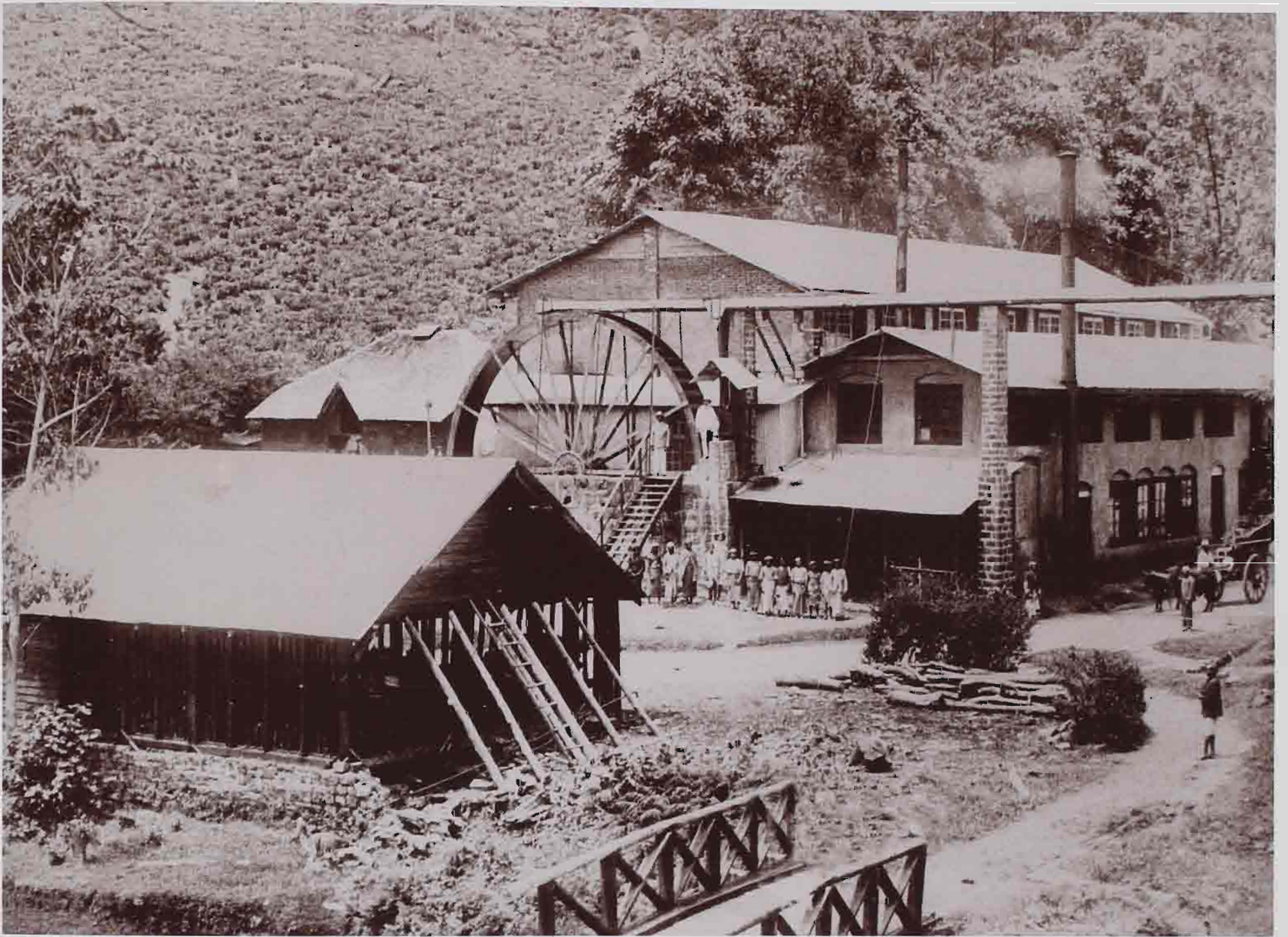


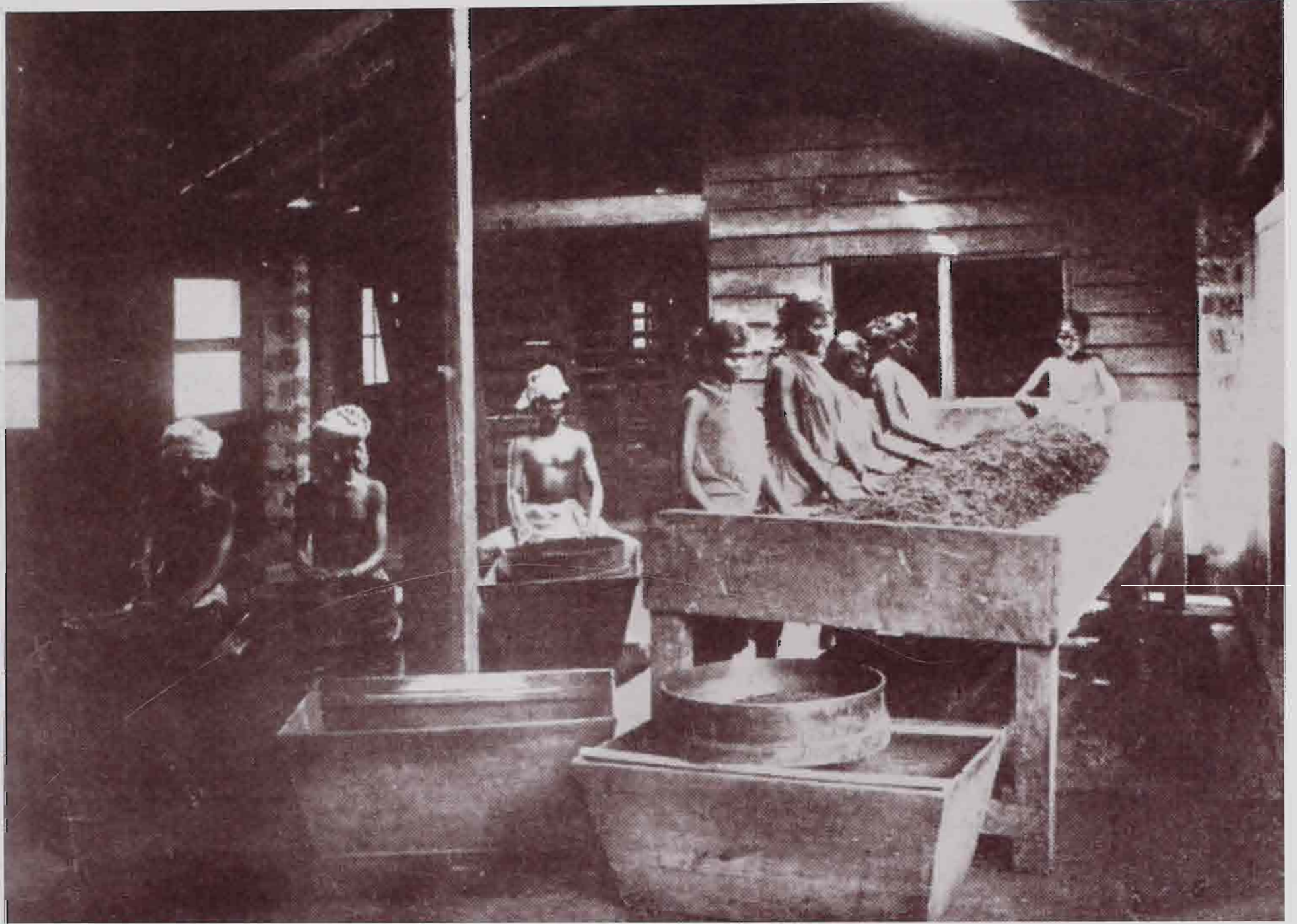
Nothing has changed over the years as the pictures on this page, taken at different times during the late 19th and first half of the 20th Centuries, show. Day is not done for the pluckers or their kangany-s, supervisors and sinna dorai-s (junior superintendents), all seen in the picture above, even after the day's gathering is weighed. The pluckers have to spend time on final pick-over, sorting the spread on mats on the ground. Every coarse leaf accidentally plucked has to be spotted and thrown out. A long day can end only when the pluck has been satisfactorily sorted.

The leaf then moves into the factory, almost entirely a male domain – though nowhere near the numbers in the field are required here. In the first days of tea, old coffee stores were used for storage as well as manufacture. Manual work and primitive facilities were the order of the day. But gradually, as machinery for mechanised manufacture was invented, old pulping houses were converted or large new factories built, equipped in the early days with waterwheels, as in the 1900 picture on facing page, top.

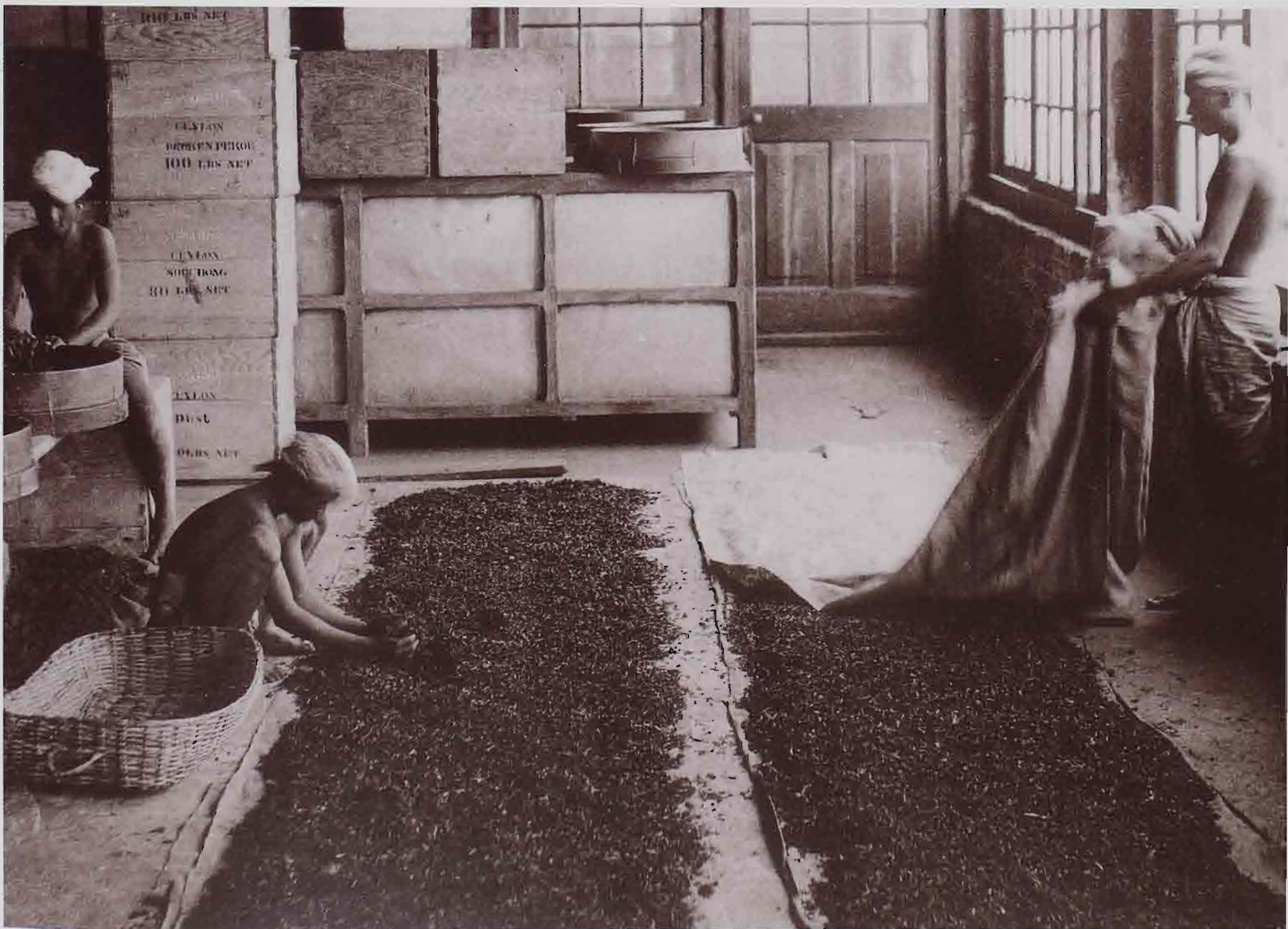
But factories old or new face the same kinds of problems if care is not taken. A reflection of that care is the fact that there have been so few accidents that have caused damage as bad as that suffered by Craighead. An old factory rebuilt in 1914, it was expanded in 1923, 1927 and 1931, by which time it was one of the biggest factories in the Island. Fire swept it soon after the last extension and left it twisted metal (facing page, bottom). The factory that stands today was built in 1932.

In the factories, the workers are for the most part Indians, many having 'graduated' from field work. The tea-makers and their subordinate staff were in the past usually Indians, often educated Christians from the Tinnevely and Nagercoil Districts of the Madras Presidency, but today many a field worker's son has gone a step up the estate hierarchy and there is more recruitment of those who are not of Indian origin.





Green leaf is converted into black tea in five steps, withering, rolling, fermenting, firing and sifting. On these two pages are scenes of early tea manufacture. Above, the manufacture takes place in an old coffee store c.1885. Those were the days when the rolling of the leaf was done by hand and firing was done by placing trays of rolled leaf over pits of glowing charcoal. On left, a day's fired leaf is examined by the men. On facing page, top, the beginnings of mechanisation, but still in an old coffee store. The two women sort the fired leaf laid out on the floor. On facing page, bottom, fired leaf is spread by one man, gathered by another and sieved by the third. And on page 50, more sifting, using a sieve as well as the traditional South Indian winnows.



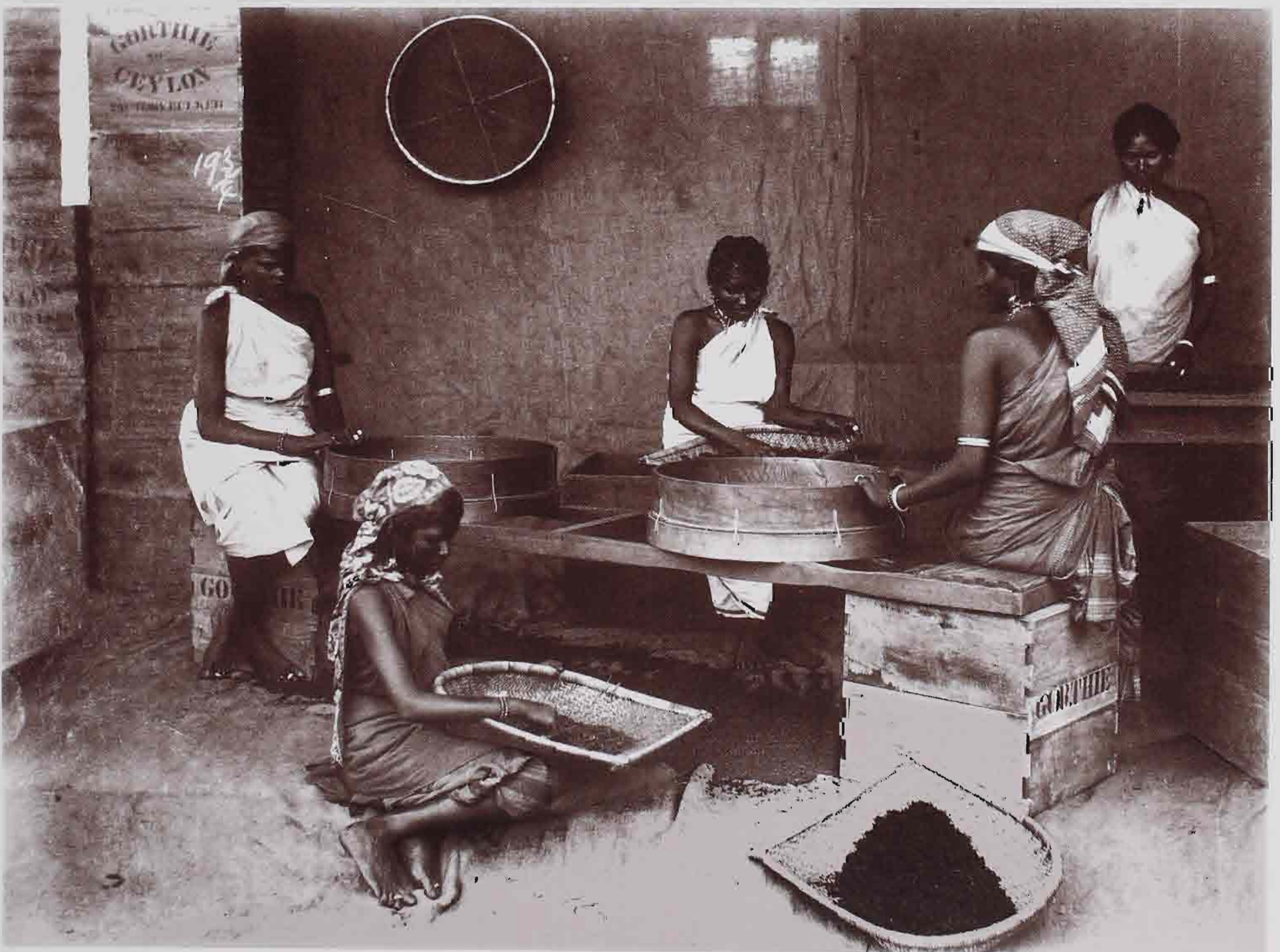
Men like John Walker and John Brown, in firms like Colombo Commercial Company, which Brown established in 1894, and Walker & Greig, began to take much of the labour out of the manufacture of tea. By the time the 20th Century dawned, large tea factories were being built, the upper floors for withering of green leaf and the ground floor for rolling, using mechanical crushers, fermentation, firing and sifting. On the facing page are pictures 1-5, showing the tea-making of this revolutionary period.

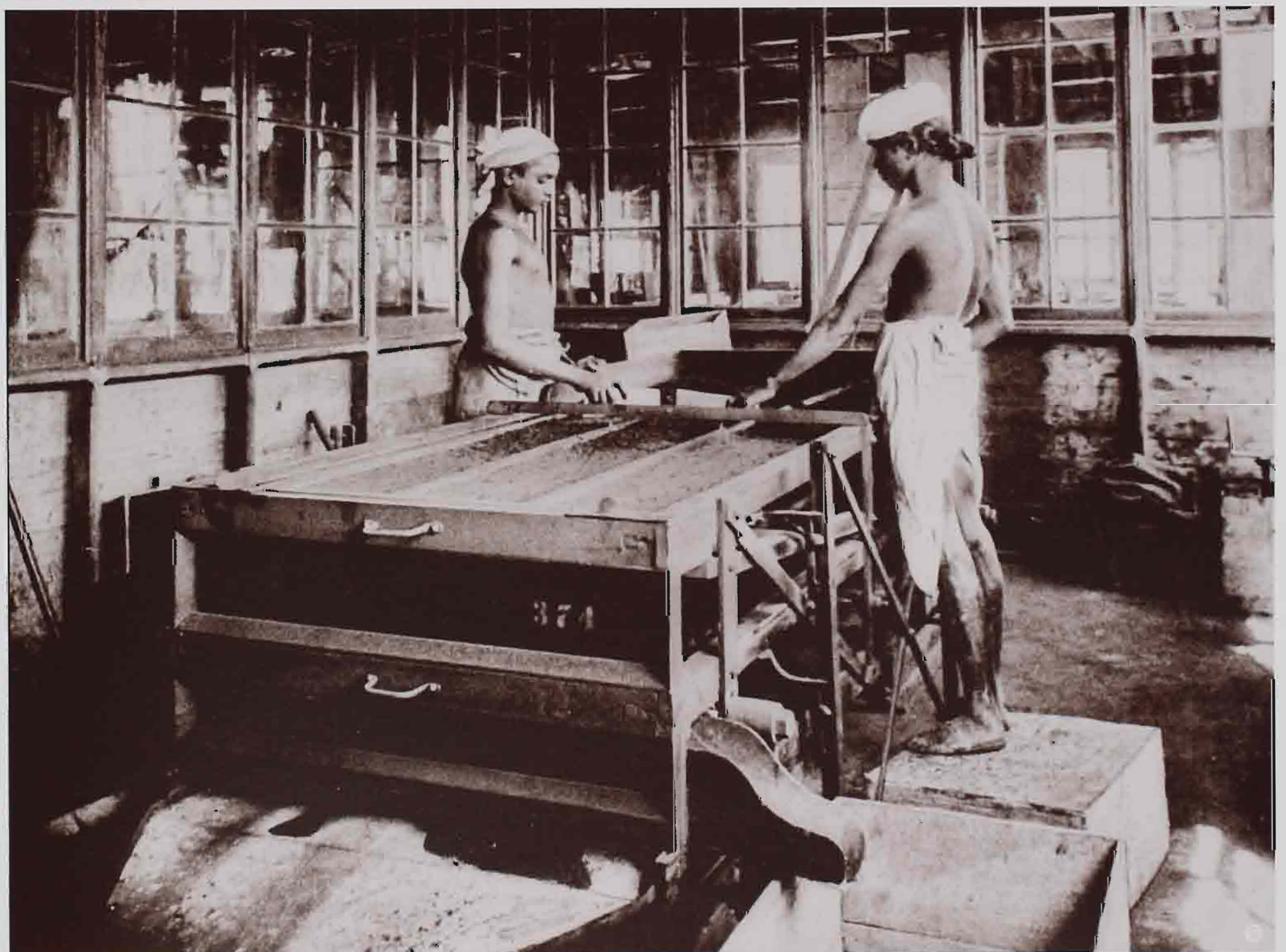
- 1) Green leaf is spread loosely and thinly on row upon row of airy jute bessian tats no sooner the leaves are brought to the factory and accepted by the tea-maker, on whose experience, more than anything else, factory superintendents/managers depend. Withering requires good light, warm temperatures and a dry atmosphere. If necessary, dry, warm air is blown over the tats by means of large fans located centrally and/or at either ends of the lofts, the upper floors where the tats are. If the tea-maker gets the climatic conditions right, his leaf will dry in 12-18 hours, the moisture taken out of it and its flaccid state just right for easy twisting by the rollers. With temperatures in the hills so variable and dampness a part of life, getting the right conditions for drying, and judging when the leaf is ready for rolling, depends heavily on the experience of the tea-maker and his team, mostly of South Indian origin.
- 2) The withered leaf is rolled between the two rotating plates of the roller whose lower plate has crescent-shaped battens to facilitate twisting. Twist is an important feature of the finished product. Once leftover moisture is removed, the roller delivers twisted leaf in lumps.
- 3) The lumps are broken up by the roll-breaker, which also sifts the fine leaf into containers placed beneath it.

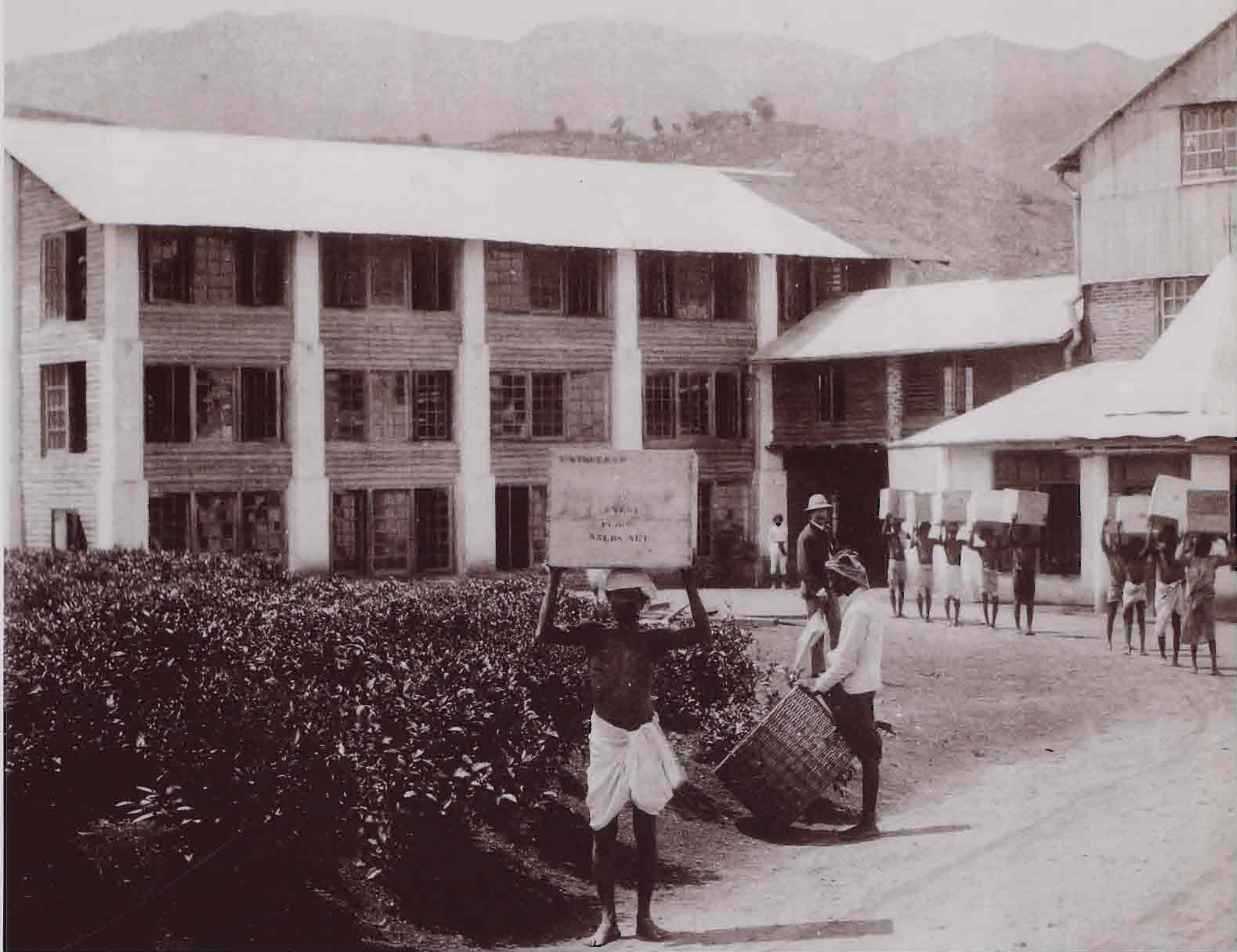
- 4) The tea-maker's experience is called for again to judge when the leaf, spread on wooden frames and covered with wet cloth, has fermented right – and that is when it attains a bright copper tint. Judging right the tint and aroma is what makes a good tea-maker. Wooden tables and cloth covers are no longer used. The fermenting tables today have smooth, cemented or tiled surfaces. The fermented leaves are next spread thinly on wire trays and pushed into the desiccator and hot air passed over them. What comes out is dry, brittle, black leaf, about a quarter in weight to what had gone in as green leaf.
- 5) Sifting, in machines that usually have five oscillating sieves that have openings in decreasing sizes the lower you progress, is the next step. This operation provides tea ranging from the finest Broken Orange Pekoe to various grades of dust.

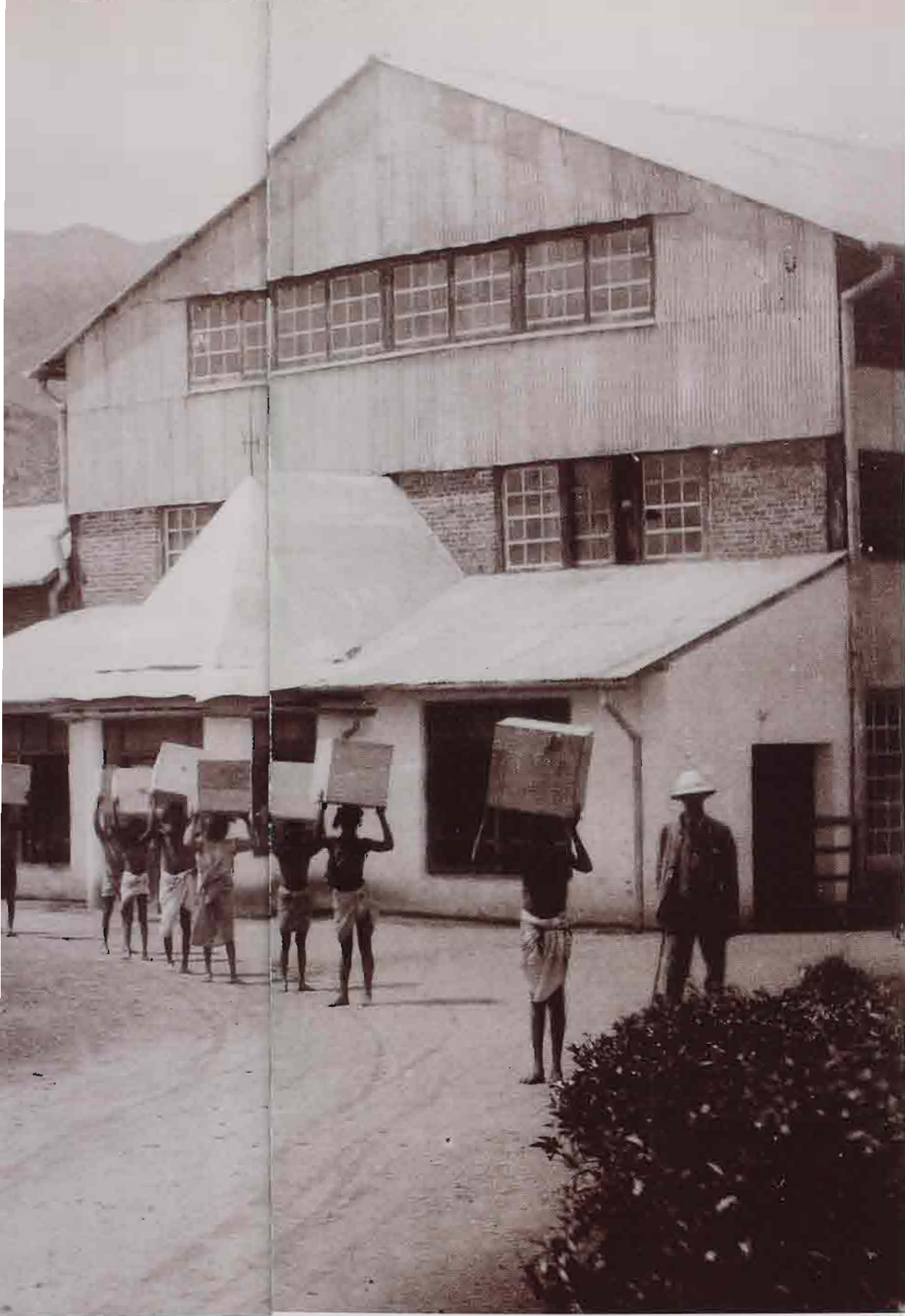
Each of the five grades of tea is stored separately every day and when sufficient quantity piles up for packing in lead-lined chests, bulking takes place, the different stocks of each grade being well mixed together to get a uniform quality of a particular grade.

Tea manufactured today is made much in the same manner, but machinery in many a factory is more sophisticated and greater quantities of what are not the best grades, made by almost totally mechanised processes, are sought by the owners to meet the demands of a vast and growing mass market. It has gradually brought down the number of factory staff and field workers seeking upward mobility. They, in turn, have begun to look beyond the estates.



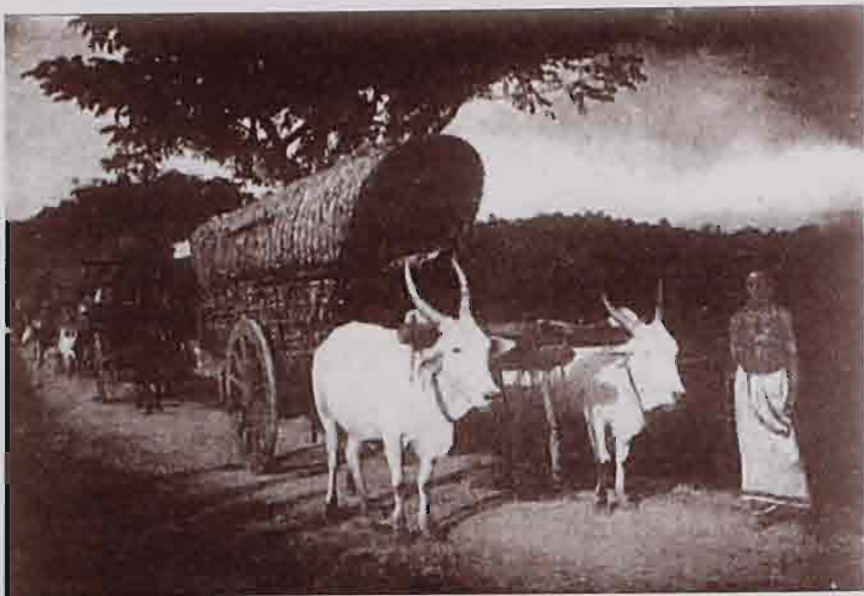






In the days before forklifts, tractor-trailers and lorries, it was headloads to the roads and bullock carts to the railway station – and even to Colombo and Galle, in the days before the railways. It was for physically exhausting labour like this that a large part of the male population on estates was essential. Equally essential were the bullock bandi-s (Tamil: vandi =cart), most of them pulled by big and sturdy Mysore and Coimbatore bulls from South India, yet another Indian contribution to the Island's prosperity.



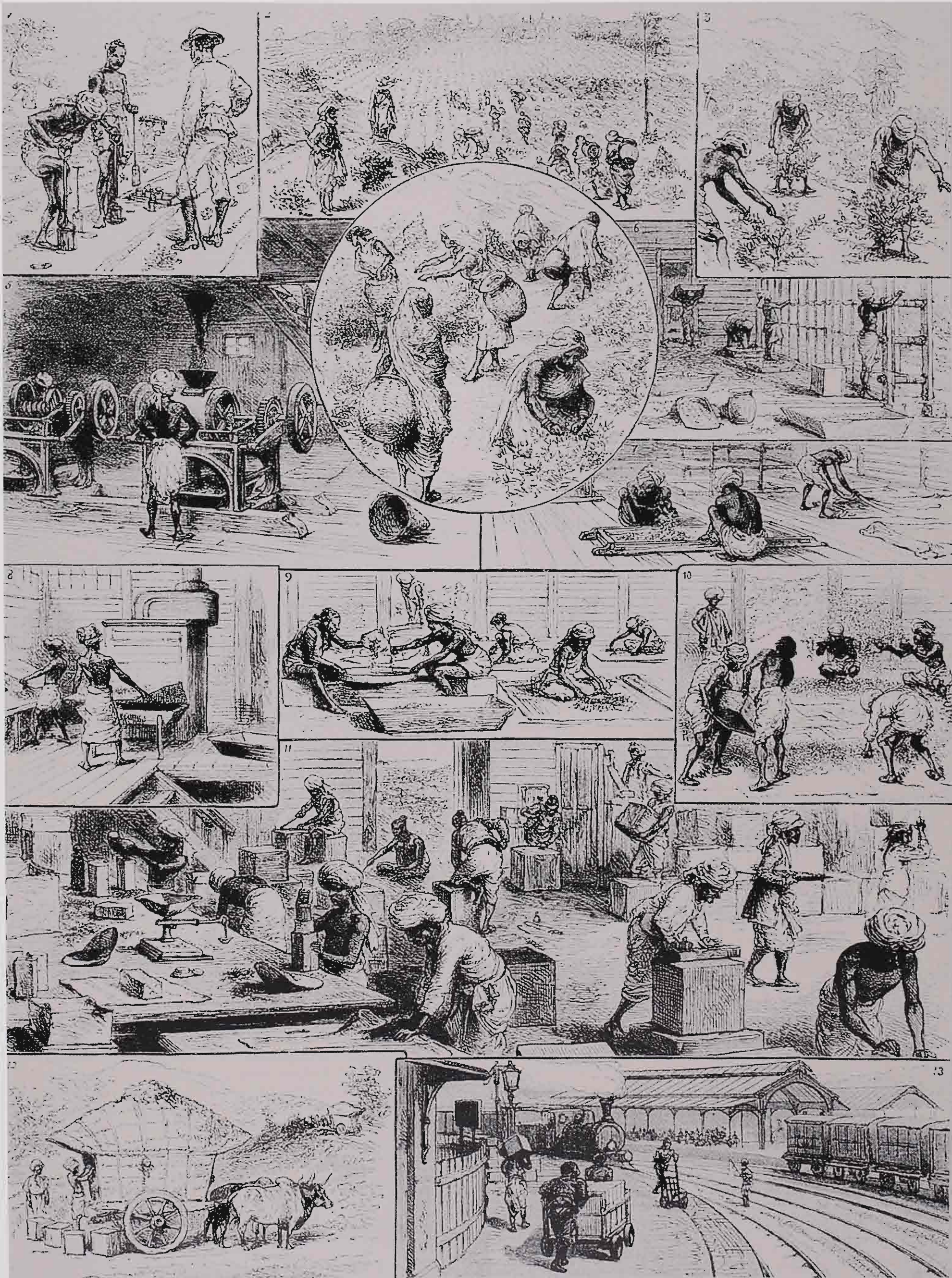


In the days of coffee and well into the days of tea – and sometimes even today – the bullock played an essential role on the estates, carrying chests of tea, once, to Galle via Colombo, later to the harbour in Colombo, and still later as far as the railway stations midst the hills. Tall, well-built, big-humped and long-horned bullocks from Mysore and Coimbatore were what made this traffic possible. A pair of these bulls, their humps pushing against the crossbar-yoke, could draw a large cart with over a ton of tea in it up the steepest of inclines without too much difficulty; in the days of coffee it was 120 bushels and the food they needed for the journey to Colombo, done at about 20 miles a day. But rest they were regularly given and throughout the hill-country and all along the roads to the harbours, there were resting stations, with sheds and fodder and water. By and large, the Indian carters looked after their cattle well – although owners like Naavana Rena (the Tamil letters equivalent to N.R. branded on the fine specimen, third from top, on left), often kangany-s or local traders or moneylenders, could be difficult.

As times changed, many a cart-owner became a lorry-owner – and it was convoys of lorries that brought the tea-chests down to the harbour, where it was loaded on ships by who else but Indian labour (below).

For almost a hundred years, from clearing the forest to putting chests of tea on board ships, it was people of recent Indian origin who dominated the industry and kept its wheels smoothly turning. Outside the European periya and sinna dorai-s – the big and small masters – and a few on the manufacturing and supervisory sides, those in the plantation country were entirely Indian, almost all of them Tamils. When tea truly dominated the Ceylon economy on either side of Independence, there were over a million Indian Tamils in the hill-country, linked to the plantations. Today, the number is not very different, with Census figures not taking into account those long awaiting repatriation to India – and soon to be made Sri Lankan citizens. Indeed, the tea industry in Sri Lanka is totally dependent on the Malaiyaba Tamils as many among them, seeking a new identity away from India, prefer to call themselves. The 1888 strip illustration on facing page summarises the story of the photographic review seen in the previous few pages. In the pages that follow, we will look at the hierarchy of the estates, but away from the fields of green gold.







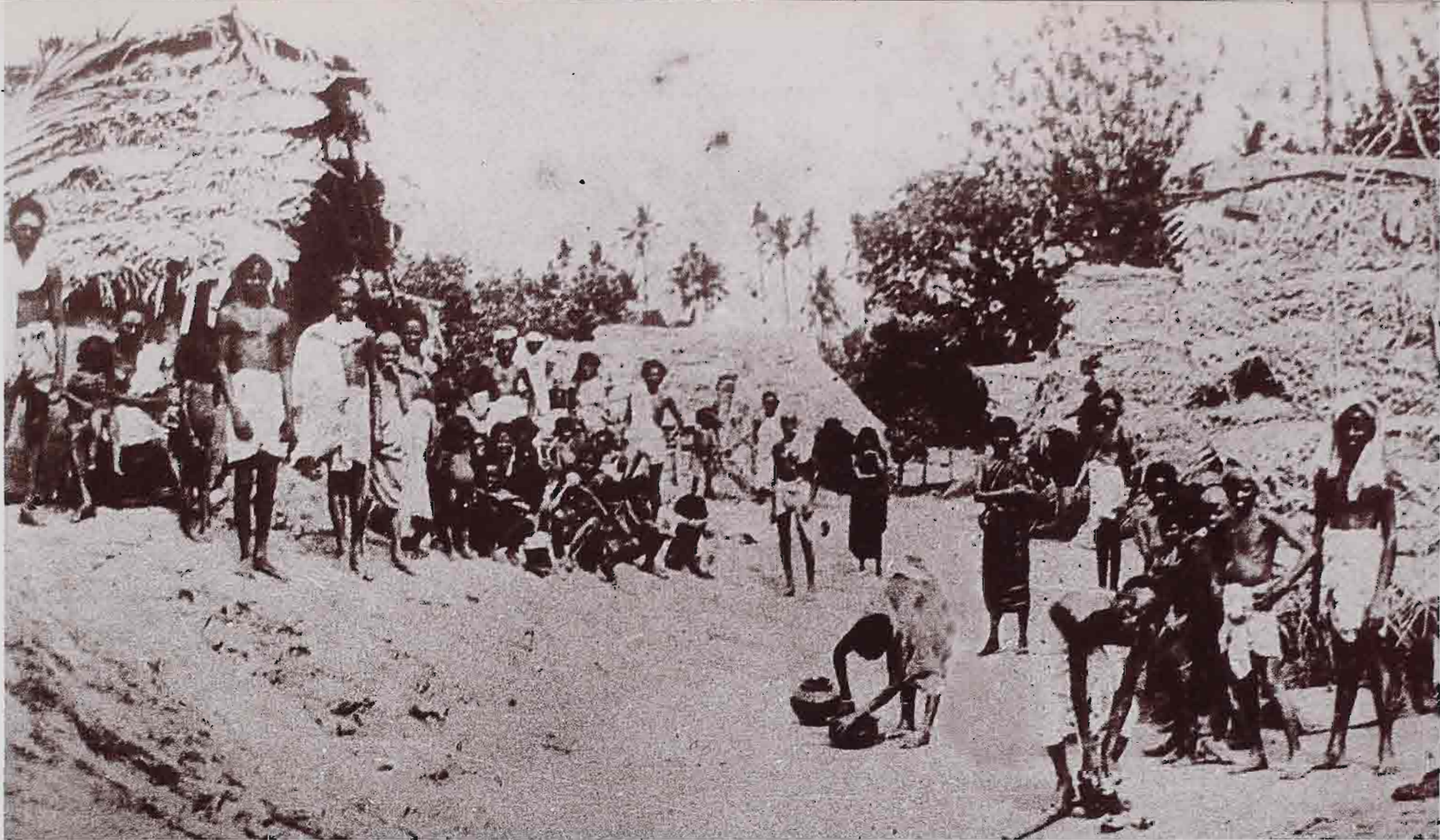
In the hierarchy of an estate, the Periya Dorai (Big Master) is the man-on-the-spot totally in charge of all operations. He is assisted by several sinna dorai-s (small masters). In the early days of planting, when all periya dorai-s and sinna dorai-s were European, as any white from Britain is called east of Suez, they were tough and often cruel taskmasters. But occasionally there would be a 'Saami Dorai', like James Taylor, a 'Lord and Master' in the best sense of the term. But Sainthly Lord or Simon Legree, the dorai-s in the early days lived in conditions that were primitive by the standards they were accustomed to and the thatched log cabins they built for themselves (top) were not much better than the shanties of their labour. Life, however, was made easier by a retinue of servants, recruited, like the 'butler' on the right in the picture, from the labour pool that's been almost 100 per cent South Indian Tamil from the first days of planting.

This workforce was recruited by perhaps the most important person on most estates, the Head Kangany, or the division kangany-s, from their

villages in South India with grand promises, such as these sung by an anonymous poet:

They heard of Kandi Seemai
The workers of The Coast;
Of tea plantation dorai
They heard recruiters boast.

'Seemai' was wondrous England and the promise was that the potential recruits would be going to a Kandy that was as prosperous as the ruling power's land. The promises were empty ones and, if they did not die on the trail, the recruits found themselves serving as bonded labour, at the mercy of the kangany who was the only person the dorai-s would deal with on money matters. Before the rail-cum-ferry service linked the Island with India in 1914, the recruits would walk in groups to the coast, to small harbours like Thondi and Thattaparai, and board ill-maintained sailing vessels that had no facilities at all and which were crowded far beyond capacity. Suffocation, stench, and the beginnings of disease were their fate. This and other woodcuts in this chapter are by A. Balaiah, a descendant of those who did not find Seemai in Kandy.



MANDAPAM CAMP P. O. *4.6.50*

D. 141A. No. *187932 Nallan*
 and labourers registered at *Parambath* and now in
 quarantine will leave for Estate at midday on *9.6.50*

2. Any alteration in despatch arrangements will be advised.

3. Please keep under observation for 6 days after arrival on
 the Estate.

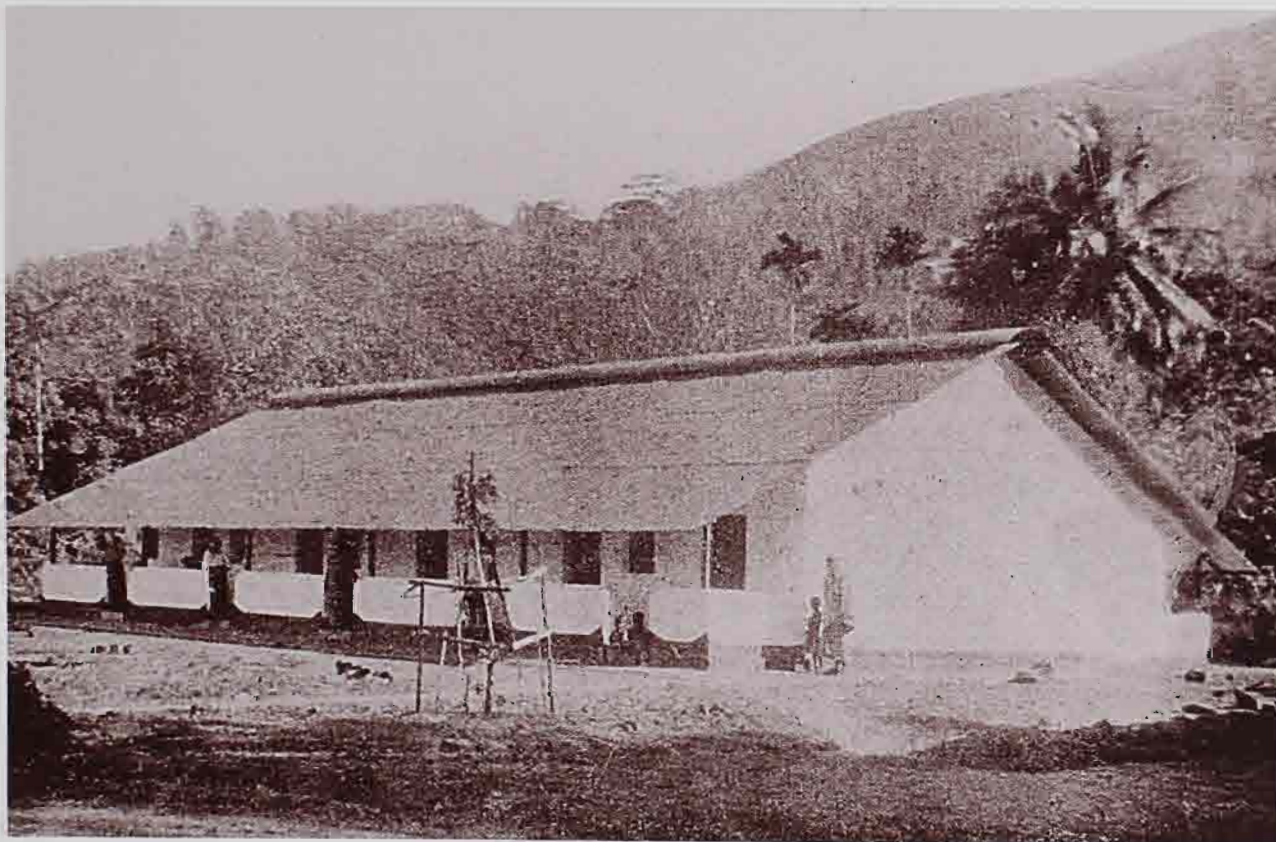
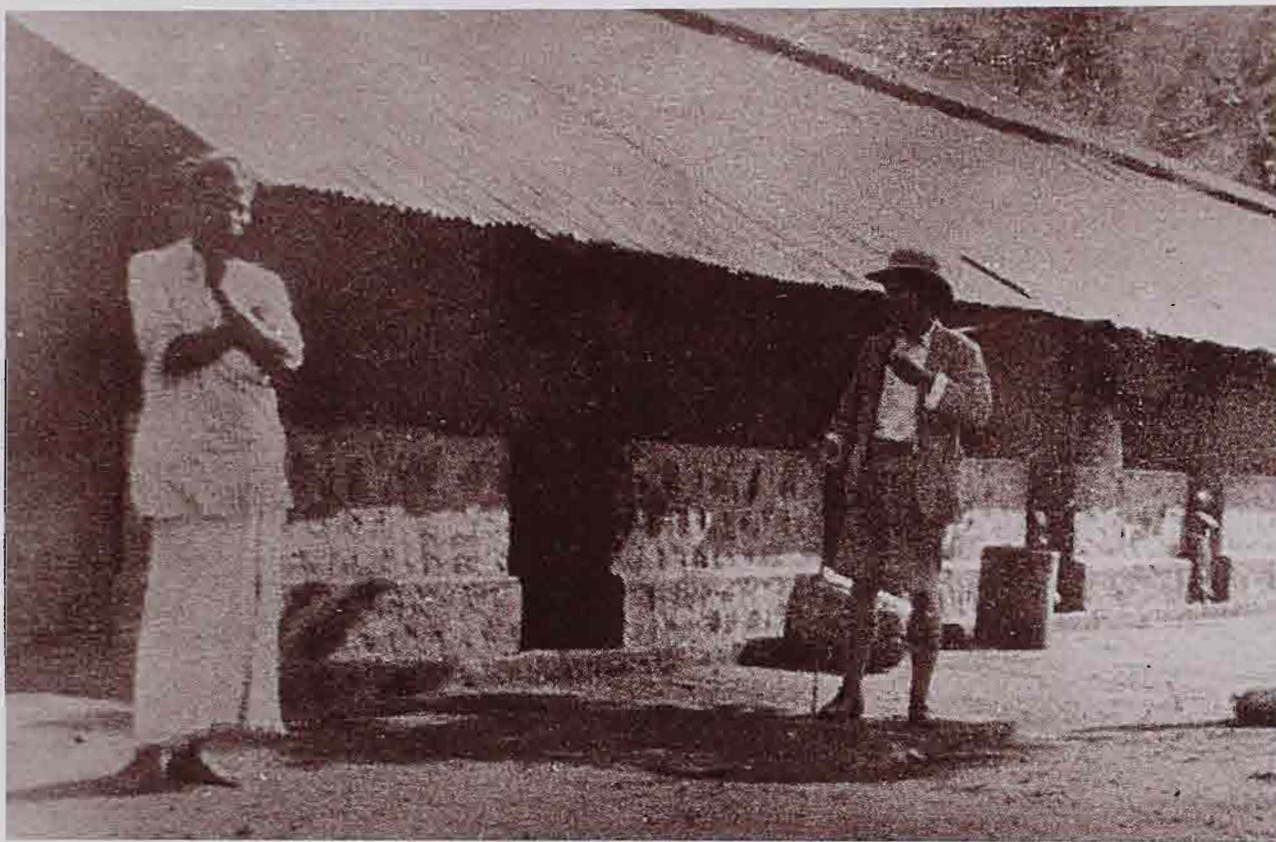
A. V. LINDON,
Ceylon Emigration Commissioner.

R. 40

Labour recruited by the kangany-s, mainly from the drought-prone districts of South India, was also manpower from an area that was disease-prone, smallpox, typhoid, cholera all part of the life of the villages they came from. From the earliest days, the Ceylon Government ran quarantine camps on the Indian coast with the acquiescence of the Indian authorities to prevent the arrival of disease in the Island. Early camps on the Coast (seen on top) were little more than a group of thatched huts no better than the homes the workers came from and with as few facilities. By 1897, when the Tuticorin-Colombo boat service became a better and less dangerous method of travel, camps were established in Thattaparai on the Coast and in Ragama near Colombo. When the Indo-Ceylon train-cum-ferry link was inaugurated on February 24, 1914, the labour traffic increased as expected and the Ceylon Government acquired 246 acres in Mandapam, near Dhanushkodi, and set up a well-built camp with modest facilities and basic meals supplied by railway caterers, Spencer's. Fifteen sheds in the camp accommodated 2200 workers and eight sheds 1000 other passengers. Every passenger without proper inoculation papers spent ten days in the camp before the necessary quarantine pass (above, right) was issued.

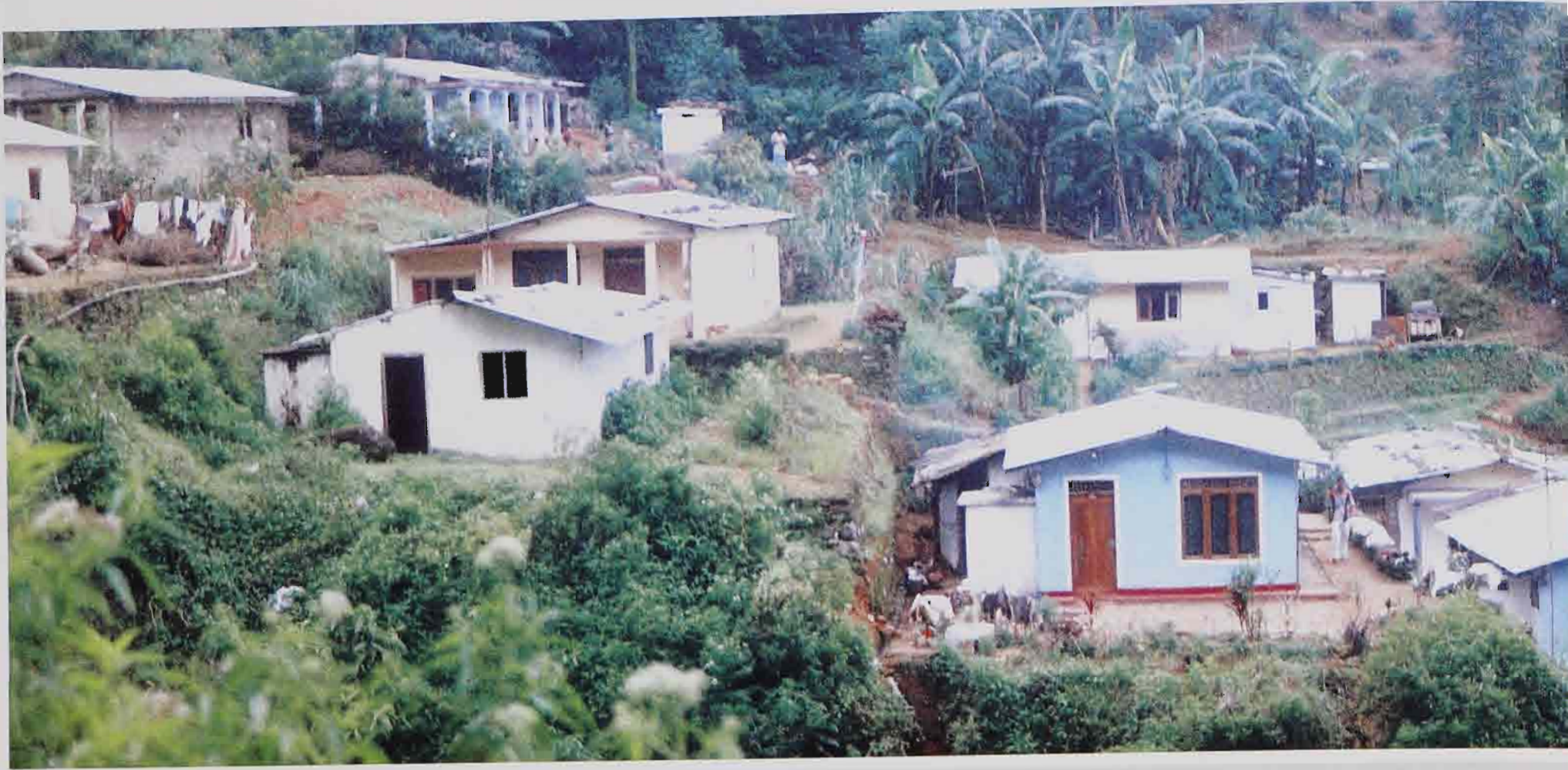
When they arrived at the estates they were recruited for; the living quarters provided them were not very different from what they had at home — and, in fact, worse, because they now had to contend with a cold, damp climate. Above and on right are typical workers' hovels on late 19th Century estates — wattle and daub huts with thatched roofs they used to build themselves.





By the time the 20th Century dawned and tea was prospering, estates had begun to build new style homes for the workers – the infamous ‘estate lines’. These were a long line of rooms in a single-storey brick building with a tin roof. Each room of 10 x 12 feet, with a verandah in front of it 5 or 6 feet wide, was meant for no more than four persons. Given the number of lines on an estate in the 1900s, ten persons or more to a room was not uncommon. Ill-lit, badly ventilated and with damp walls, they were homes where illness was always present. Nevertheless, as generation often succeeded generation in the same line room, a sense of home and attachment to it grew. And often a line colony became an extended family, ties with it even closer than to the estate itself. The pictures on these two pages show the not very significant improvement in ‘estate lines’ during the first half of the 20th century. On left top, ‘lines’ built in the last years of the 19th Century. Left, centre, ‘lines’ of the 1920s, this block almost conforming to government specifications, which have been followed in the 1920s’ lines seen in the picture on left. On the facing page are the front and rear view of ‘lines’ built in the 1930s and still in use. Chimneys are about the only visible improvement. Less visible is the greater roomspace for each family.





It was in the 1970s that a programme to improve housing on the estates and provide cottage-type accommodation began. Exposés in the media played their role and in a world becoming more conscious of the conditions under which goods are made for consumer consumption, the Government too stepped in to play a role. The Plantation Ministry decreed that three cents from the profit of each pound of tea should be spent on improving workers' housing. And so began the building of cottage-type housing and the establishment of new 'communities' as in the pictures on top and above. On left, the close-up of a new cottage shows asbestos replacing the old tin roofs.

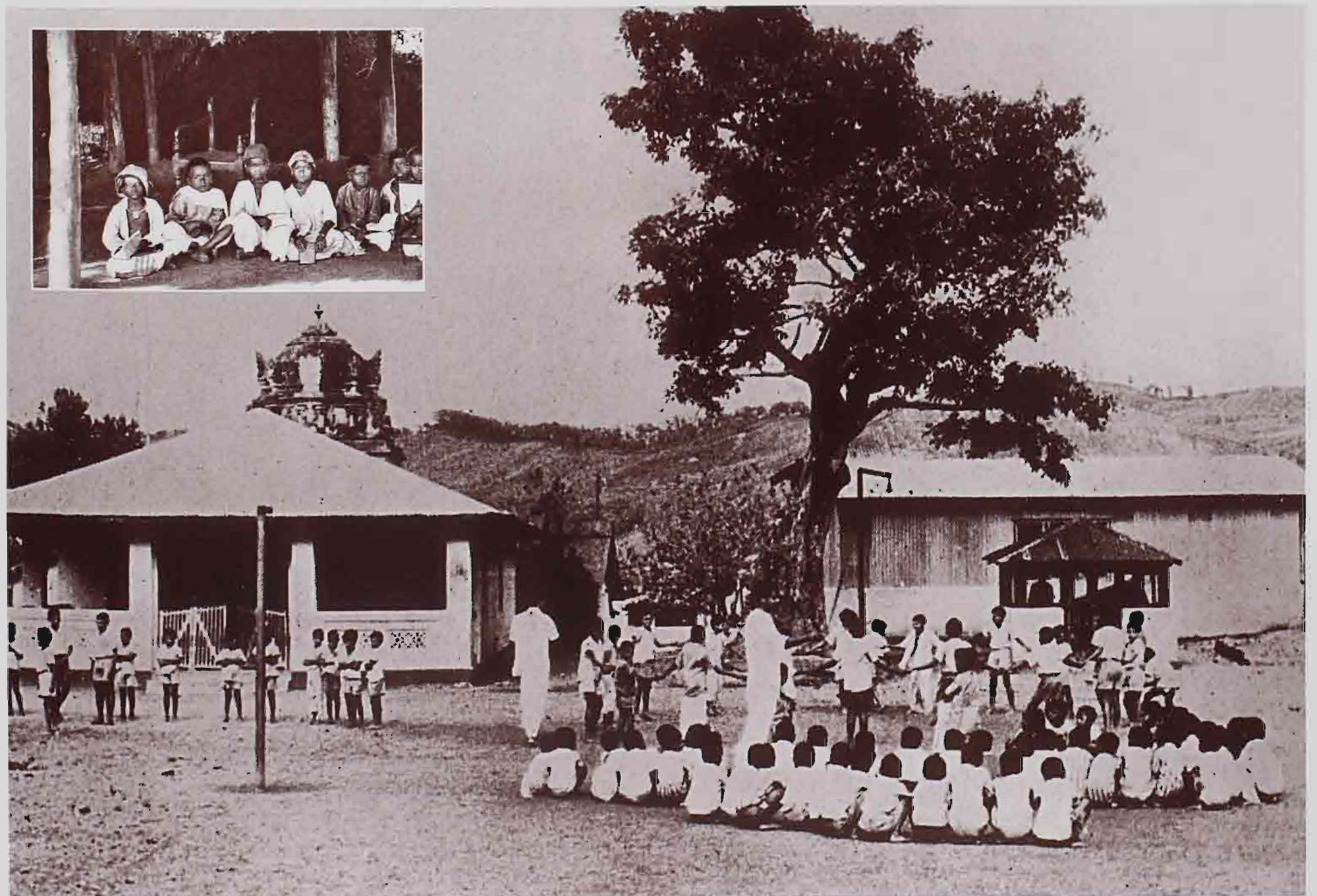






In the early days of a permanent settlement of labour on the estates, children proliferated but facilities for even giving birth to them were virtually non-existent. Almost every estate – in fact almost every line community – had its granny who served as a midwife. It was in 1872 that the first Medical Ordinance insisted on rudimentary medicare in estates. Few estates introduced what was expected of them. It was the 1912 Medical Wants Ordinance that provided more facilities, but even then maternity requirements were minimal and as crowded as seen on facing page, top. Children were virtually brought up midst the tea bushes, carried to the workspots by their mothers, or left in the care of girls of seven and eight, as seen on facing page, first column. Girls a couple of years older, like those on left, would in a few years smile less, burdened by marriage in their early teens, followed by childbearing and work in the fields.

Education, first in a primitive environment, as in the inset below, and later in minimal facilities, including on the playground, was entirely male-focussed. It would be years before this changed. Despite all this, children in the plantations grew up to provide its backbone in the next generation as their children would in succeeding generations. Without them there would have been no green gold.





The earliest schools on the estates were the 'line schools' run by the kangany-s. These were of two types, one for the workers' children who were taught to read and learn that treatise of Tamil morality, the Thirukkural, by rote. The other was for the children of the kangany-s and the supervisory and clerical staff of the estates, who were taught the three Rs. The Tamil Cooly Mission, later called the Tamil Church Mission, a Protestant effort with its roots in the Tinnevely District of South India, from 1854 established, in a period of 100 years, '400 estate schools', replacing the kangany-s' schools and offering the workers' children the three Rs, while upgrading the syllabus for the children of the subordinate staff. The children of the staff cadre benefitted even further, when the Mission from 1867 began establishing schools of its own with classes upto the school final and other missions followed suit.

With two kinds of schools, social divisions were perpetuated. Education ordinances in 1907, 1920, 1939 and 1947 have done little to improve the educational lot of the estate worker's child. The girl children are among the most illiterate in the country and amongst the boy children of manual workers hardly any enter university. Children of estate staff who can pay fees or win scholarships offered by the trade unions or a Trust in which the Indian High Commission participates constitute almost the entire 300 or so children from the estates who have earned university degrees.

Bleak though this picture is, there has been tremendous improvement in recent years, compared to the pre-Independence years. On facing page, top, hundreds of school-children gather on the playground in the shadow of a giant tea factory. Scouting was introduced in estate schools by Commissioner T.P. Jayatileke, seated second from left in the picture on facing page, bottom, taken at Imbulapitiya Estate.

And on this page are today's estate schools, considerably upgraded and looking more children-friendly. Will they now allow children to grow up and make a greater contribution to Sri Lanka than what their forefathers contributed when they helped lay the foundations of the country's economy?







Today, the tea estates offer a host of facilities for those settled on them. Bigger and better facilities are needed, but in the last thirty years progress has been appreciable compared to the previous 150 years.

On the facing page, top, is the maternity ward of an estate hospital, airy, bright and colourful and quite a contrast to the ward featured a few pages previously. The picture below it focuses on a tree-shaded estate dispensary.

Apart from better medical facilities, the estate managements are today adding a host of other facilities to ensure that the contribution of nearly two centuries continues uninterrupted.

Above, right, is an estate child development centre and on right is a new community centre on a Tata Tea estate. Tata Tea was the first of the Indian tea companies to come into the Sri Lankan highlands when the Government in a liberalisation drive in the 1980s invited Indian firms to participate in the running of tea estates in the Island. Today, Tata Tea is a major player in the Island's tea industry.





From the first days of the plantations, the estate shrine is what provided generations of workers the faith necessary to survive in the harshest of conditions. In today's more comfortable surroundings, faith still plays a major role in the plantations and Hindu kovil-s, big and small, reflecting a variety of styles, are ubiquitous on the peaks and in the valleys of the tea country.

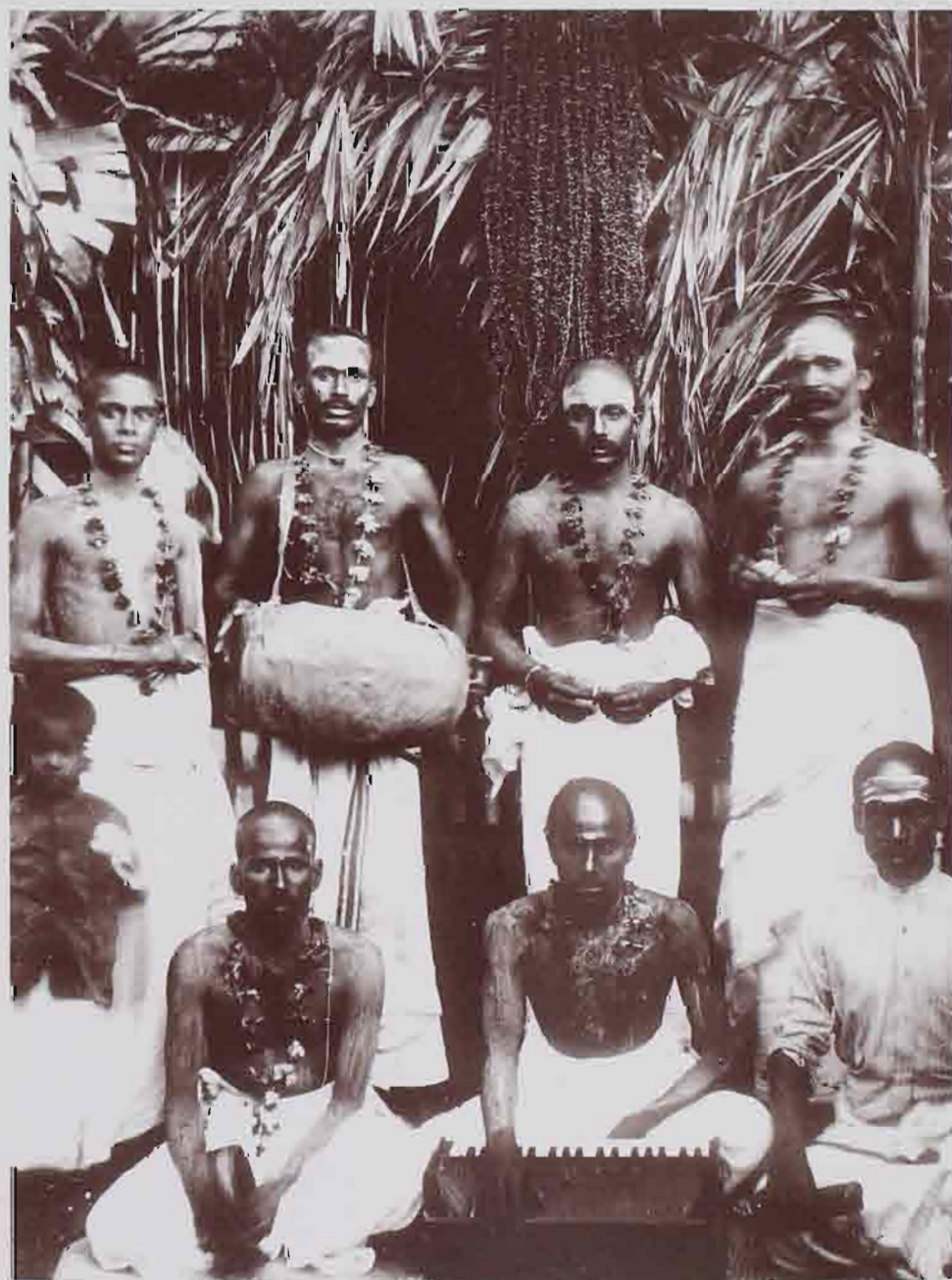
Clockwise, from above, a temple on an estate near Kandapola, reflecting traditional Tamil architecture found in similar temples; a kovil in Kerala style on St. Leonard Estate; a beautifully sited temple near Kolapatana built in a modern style with domes instead of gopuram-s (towers); the Sri Shannuganathar Temple built in the 1950s on a hilltop in Rasawatha Estate, near Dolosbage; Lord Murugan, Lord Siva's boon to the Goddess Parvathi, is the most worshipped God among the Indian Tamils and in the shrine near Dolosbage are installed Lord Murugan in his manifestation as Lord Shannuganathar (top) and his vel (spear); and with a gopuram in yet another style is this Hanuman Temple in Darawella. These estate temples draw their congregations from all corners of the estate, though on many an estate there may even be a temple in each division near an 'estate line'. Festivals in these temples, however, draw a crowd from neighbouring estates, villages and towns as well.



Many a religious tradition no longer practised in Tamil Nadu, except in remote villages or truly rural areas, is practised as a matter of course in the estates of Sri Lanka. It is almost as though, in their isolation, time has stopped for the descendants of the early migrant labour. The worship of Madurai Veeran, top row, left, is one such tradition. Another, on left, second row, is the worship, particularly by women, of Naga Poosani Amman, in a roadside shrine on an estate. The three processions, recorded on three estates, are a religious procession taken out just before Pongal and called Saami Sapparam Ula or Sapparam Thookuthal; each estate temple has a miniature 'chariot' in which the god-icon is placed and taken in procession through the estate. Pongal, the festival of thanksgiving for the harvest, is the major festival on the estates and for a week it is festivity time.

On the facing page are Pongal decorations, the kolam drawn on the ground with flour far more decorative than what is generally seen in Tamil Nadu; Pongal offerings, a tradition in this form that has all but vanished in Tamil Nadu; 'Hanuman', accompanied by a rather Western-looking band, dancing his way through the 'lines'; and other processions held during the festivity, with the children playing an important role in them, ensuring the continuity of the traditions.





Religion played a major role in the lives of the estate Tamils from the time they first arrived in the Island. Often it was their only solace and singing or chanting religious songs became a part of their lives. In more recent times, where life is not quite the struggle it was, religious singing, chanting and story-telling have become more formalised and 'choirs' go around the estate, particularly during festival seasons or the month of Margali (December-January), singing or telling the religious stories of the ages.

Reflecting these activities are the pictures here. On top left, a bhajan (religious song) group leader; on top right, a bhajan group; above, a group of youths from three estates on their way to the Nammannatha Siththar Temple on Queensberry Estate to serve as volunteers during a festival there; and, on right, a Katha Kalatchebam group that sings and chants religious stories to large audiences night-long.



Several who came to work on the estates came from the Tinnevelly District of the Madras Presidency. The Lutherans of Halle, who had been invited by the King of Denmark in 1705 to establish the first Protestant mission in Danish Tranquebar, near Tanjore, moved into the Tinnevelly District in the first years of the 19th Century when they began to expand their activities. Not long afterwards, the Anglican mission also began to establish itself here and in the more southern Nagercoil District. These two districts, in the first years of the estates, sent out a substantial Christian workforce. In later years, the missions having provided them a modicum of education in English, many went from these districts to serve in the estates as what for the times might be described as locally commissioned officers, as subordinate staff conveying the Superintendents' orders to the kangany-s. These subordinate staff were almost entirely Christian. Several of them later returned to India and became planters in the years around Independence and took over many of the British-owned South Indian estates in time.

To minister to them, the planters in Ceylon sought help from Tinnevelly. And in 1854 the Tamil Cooly Mission, later to become the Tamil Church Mission, was established. Its first catechists to arrive in the Kandyan highlands to preach the Gospel were Anantham in Cabaragala, Joseph in Kinrara, Gnanamuthu in Pitiakande, Arumainayagam in Hoolaukane, Vethanayagam in Elkaduwa and Gnanapragasam in Rajawela. These six were as much pioneers of Protestantism in the Island as the English missionaries who had preceded them just by a year or two.

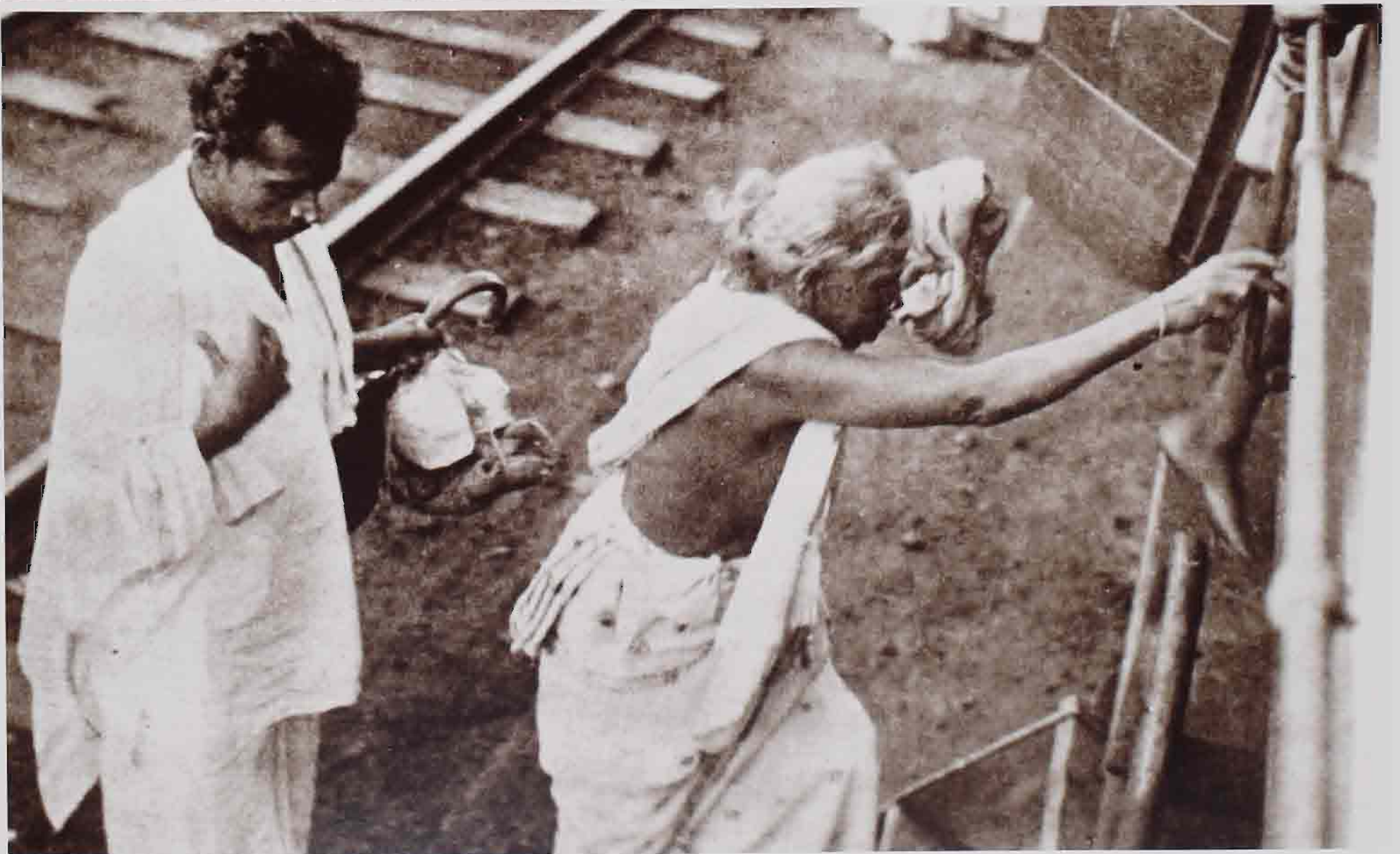
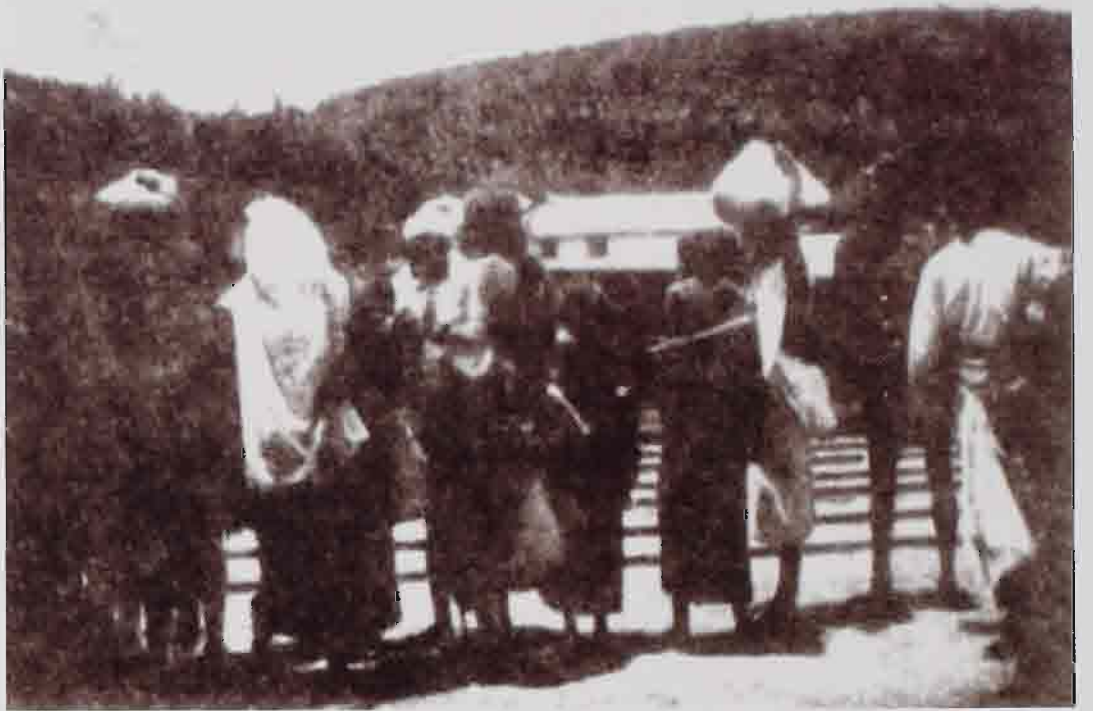
Typical of the early Christians who contributed to the Island are those seen in the top row. P.P. Joseph, seen in the first two pictures, was a Nagercoil convert, who arrived in Ceylon in the 1850s, rose up the ladder to become a successful supervisor and returned to India wealthy enough to become a planter in Travancore and an important personality in Nagercoil. Joseph's daughter married the youngest son of the Rev. J. Joshua, the son of a Tinnevelly catechist. Rev. Joshua was a Pastor of the Nagercoil Home Church for 22 years, and Joseph was one of his flock. Several members of the Joshua family served in Ceylon from the 1880s and many settled there. Fourth from left is Laura Pooranam Daniel, the eldest daughter of the eldest son of the Rev. Joshua. She married Yesuprakasam Daniel (third from left), the son of a conductor on a tea estate in Ceylon. Daniel fils became a catechist. And at the end of the row is Grace Annie Bai David, the granddaughter of Grace Asirwatham, another daughter of the Rev. Joshua. Grace married the Rev. S. P. C. David (to her right), son of the Presbyterian of All Saints, Pettah, and he in turn entered the ministry and served in several churches; he was vicar of St. Mark's, Badulla, when he died.

Roman Catholicism did not establish itself in the estates to the extent that Protestantism did – and that was not to a great extent either – but it did in pockets where there were workers who came from the Fisheries Coast where Francis Xavier had walked. One such congregation was at Salankanda Estate, Dickoya, where St. James' Church (above) was established. On left is St. James' altar, with the original wooden icons of St. James and St. Francis Xavier brought from India. Both are remembered here during annual festivals dedicated to them.



With the Tamil Church Mission no longer what it was, estate churches have seen a decline in congregations as well as interest shown in them. Many estate churches have thus begun to serve an inter-denominational congregation, like the century-old of St. Andrew's in Nawalapitiya, above, and, to its left, the Solankanda Lourdu Matha Church near Nawalapitiya, raised in the 1940s. On left is an estate church in Haputale and at top, St. Anthony's, near Dimbulla.

During the coffee years, the story of the Indians on the estates would end for most of them with their return to India, in the same miserable conditions as they arrived, immediately the picking season was over. But with tea there came more permanent settlement, though, with the Indo-Ceylon Boat Mail becoming a daily carrier, a trip back to the 'native village' every three or four years was not uncommon. With the citizenship laws of the 1950s, the Indo-Ceylon rail link being broken in the 1960s and the shipping link too being broken in time, the estate Tamils lost all touch with India. Scenes like these, clockwise, from below, the long trek down the incline to a railway station, waiting patiently for the train to Colombo, rushing to catch the Indo-Ceylon Boat Mail and even grannies making the trek, are all vignettes few remember today.





Nurseryman Nallatamby



Plucker Periyanyaki



Kangany Kandiah



Conductor Charles



Clerk Christy



Teamaker Thomas



Driver David



Syce Suppan



Woodsman Wijendran



Milkman Marimuthu



Meatseller Mendis



Meatbox Maran



Ayah Alamelu



Schoolboy Selvan



Schoolmaster Sundaram



Principal Peter



Pettyshopkeeper Periyasamy



Moneylender Mohammedbhai



Pawnbroker Palaniappan



Stavesman Shanmugam



Checkroll Chinniah



Jilla Jagan



Kanakapulle Kandasamy



Runner Raman



Message-beater Munusamy



Sweeper Sadaiyan



Midwife Meenakshiammal



Butler Benedict



Firstaid box Fernandes



Dhobi Damodaran



'Saloon' Sinnathamby



Tailor Thangavelu



Balladeer Baskaran



Bajankarar Baliah



Pandaram Paramasivam



Watchman Weerasiri

An estate in the past did not thrive on the labours of its pluckers, kangany-s, subordinate staff and superintendents alone. They were essential. But as essential were those who served them in one way or another. From the midwife from the lines to the barber who served the workers, from the syce who tended the superintendent's horse to his butler, from teachers to entertainers to moneylending Pashans and Chettians, all of them made life throb on an estate.

This series of caricatures from Thottathu Kathanayagargal by K. Govindaraj only emphasises how the contribution to an estate's prosperity was over 90 per cent from people of Indian origin in the past. It is not very much less now.



Life on estates used to be miserable for the workers. Today, conditions are much improved, but few from the plains and other parts of rural Sri Lanka will exchange places with those working in conditions on estates that can still only be described as 'tough'. But no matter what the conditions, there are still smiles all around – and that's a signal contribution.





It was not only smiles that eased the pressure of life on estates. Any occasion was a time for celebration. And to celebrate, they'd gather at the temple ground or in the space before the Head Kangany's quarters and as the older women sang, the younger ones would dance the kummi to the beat of the drum and the claps of their hands or the kolattam to the click of the sticks. As C.V.Velupillai sang,

*Than-nan-nay endrumay sollungkadi
Onga navukku sakkarai nan tharren
Vala Sarasvathi ammalay namma
Vaikkulay vachu kumbuduvom.*

Sing out, you maidens, the tune of kummi
I'll give you powdered jaggery for your tongue
Saraswathi, our Mother, bless my song
And dwell on my tongue as I sing.



The Central Province Ceylon Tea Company Limited
 INCORPORATED 20TH JANUARY 1897



Standing L. to R.

U. Punchiappu (Fd. Watcher)	P. Sengole (Fac. Watcher)	M. I. Cassim (Jnr. Asst. Clerk)	S. Daniel (2nd Driver)	P. T. S. Balraj (2nd Asst. T.M.)	P. G. Sangadasa (1st Asst. T.M.)	A. C. Mave (S'kpr Clerk)
R. W. Mave (Asst. Conductor)	B. G. Pieris (Snr. Driver)	K. S. P. Sinniah (Pl. KP. LD)	M. Suppiab (Pl. KP. UD)	S. Narayanaswamy (Wdg. KP. UD)		

Seated L. to R.

W. Samarasinghe (Dispenser)	O. L. Mave (Hd. Conductor)	J. Scott (Asst. Supdt.)	W. H. N. Gascoyne (Supdt. & Wopsie)	A. M. Cassim (Hd. Clerk)	A. M. J. Deen (Hd. T.M.)	K. Sathasivam (Hd Asst. Clerk)
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Just as there's a hierarchy in place in the tea fields, there's a managerial hierarchy outside them. And the cartoon and group picture illustrate these hierarchies clearly. In the fields, the time-old tradition is for the periya dorai to bark out instructions to a sinna dorai, often a callow 'creeper' - a novice - almost straight out of home. Sinna dorai passes on the instructions to the Conductor, often a Christian Tamil, who in turn relays them to the kangany. And when the kangany passes on the message, the buck stops with the worker in the field, a sequence well conveyed in the cartoon.

In this group picture taken in 1947, the seating and standing arrangement marks clearly the hierarchy outside the fields. There's the Superintendent (Periya Dorai) and the Assistant Superintendent (Sinna Dorai), there are the Head Clerk and Head Tea-maker (TM), the Dispenser and the Head Assistant Clerks, Kanakapulles, the Assistant Conductors, Clerks and Tea-makers, and Drivers and Watchers. This staff is an ethnic salad-bowl, but a large part of it is Indian and Eurasian. LD stands for Lower Division and UD for Upper Division.



In the days when tea dominated the economy, most estates were company owned and looked after by managing agents.

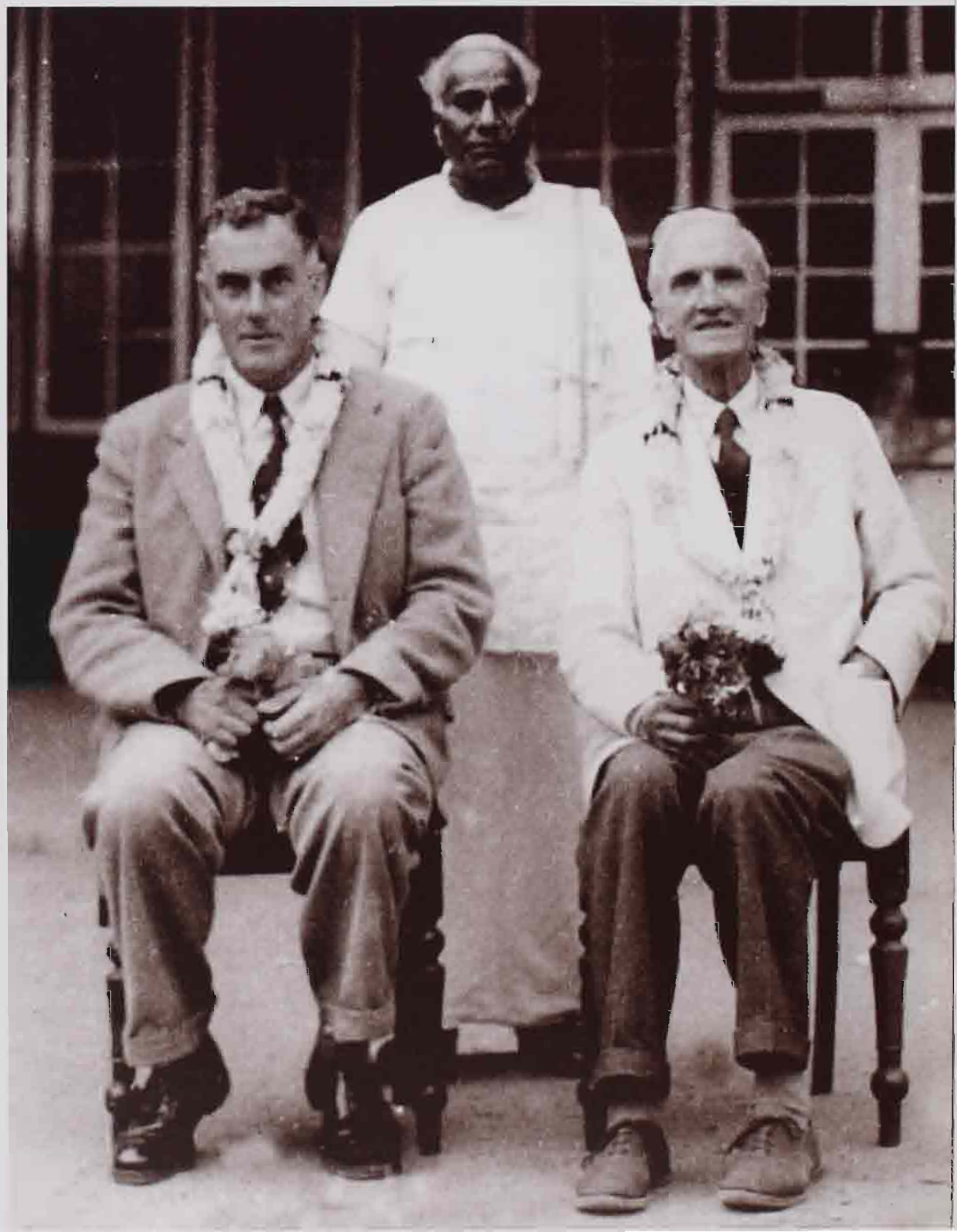
There nevertheless were several estates that were owned by individuals or families in Britain and every few years the proprietor would visit the property to see for himself how the managing agents and their men-on-the-spot, the periya and sinna dorai-s, were looking after his fields of tea. On right, the proprietor of Queensberry Estate (in light coat) is seen with the Superintendent and Head Kangany Govindaraj. On another visit, the Queensberry Estate staff, including all the kangany-s, get together for a picture above with a proprietorial visitor from 'Home'.

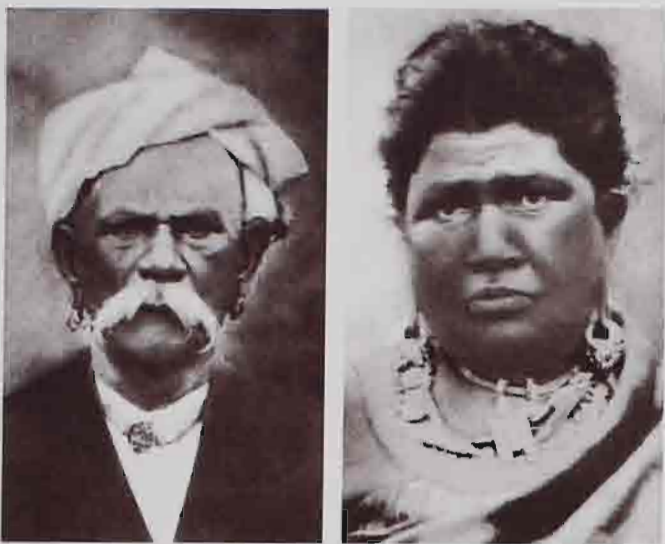
Kangany-s played a key role in the success of the estates from the very beginning of the planting era. In the beginning, they were recruiters, sent out by the planters to recruit labour from the famine-stricken districts of India's deep south. They promised much – usually to clansmen or those from villages around their homes – but delivered little in 'Kandy Secmai', much of the money earned by the workers going into the pockets of their other role, on-the-spot financiers. Despite their exploitation of the worker, despite their harshness on many an occasion, they were looked on as the protectors of the workers and the village headmen (thalaivar) of their isolated communes on each property.

Labour regulations from 1841 onwards began to ease the lot of the worker and recruitment procedures improved when the Planters' Association helped establish the Ceylon Labour Commission in Trichinopoly in 1904. This recruiting agency, in theory, ensured direct recruitment.

Nevertheless, estates sent out Head Kangany-s, who by virtue of their positions in Ceylon, were recognised as VIPs in their native villages, to use their influence to ensure there would be no labour shortages. The kangany-s in turn would 'appeal' to poorer members of their families or village and, more often than not, to the lower, depressed castes. Without the kangany-s, labour would not have come in to Ceylon in the numbers needed to meet the demand.

Equally, without the kangany-s, the planters would not have got the work done and targets met. Nor would they have been able to establish what in effect were new 'villages' in another land.

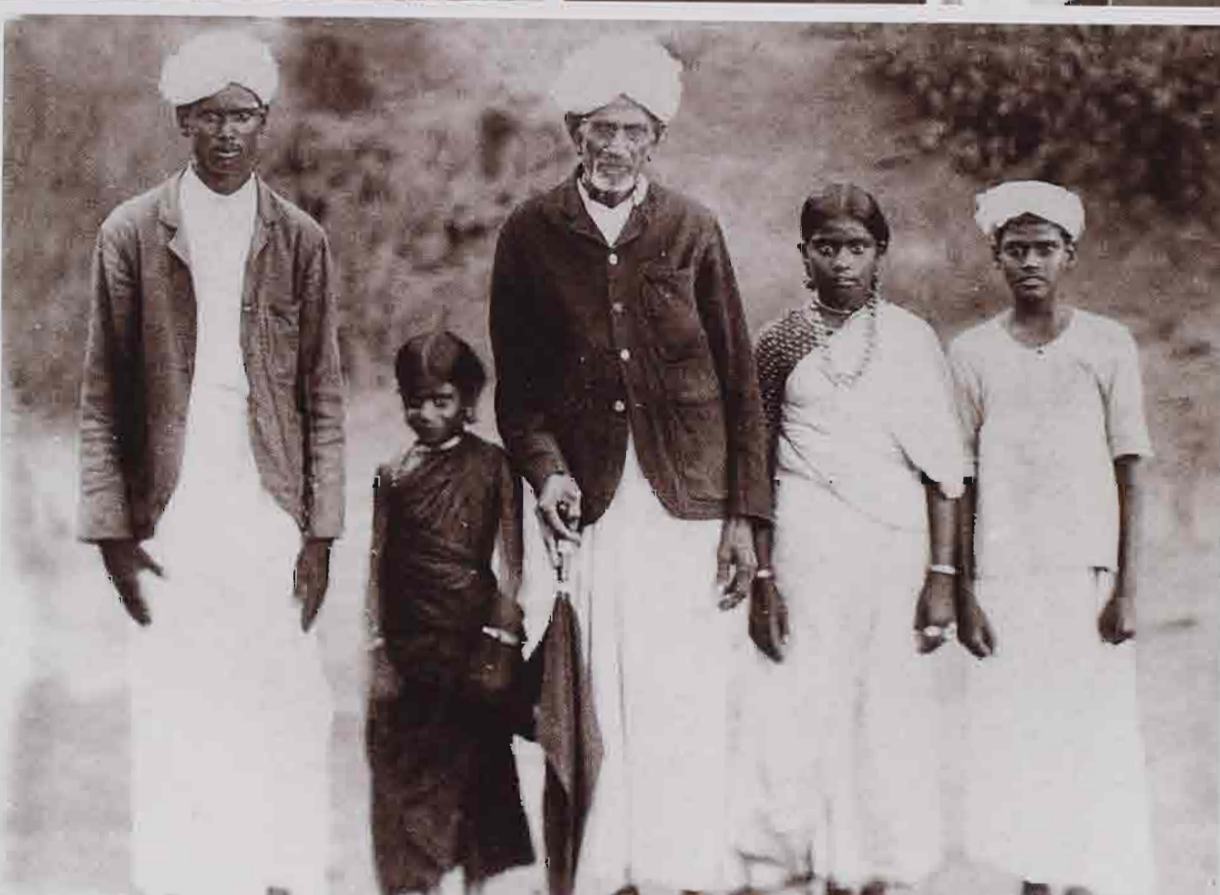
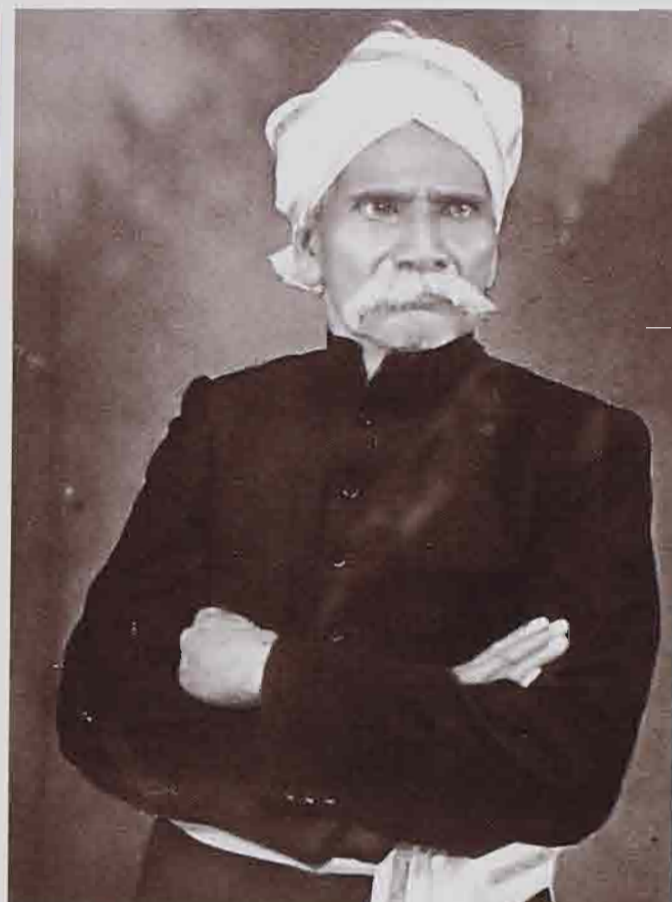




Kangany-s all, the famous and the not-so-famous. Many of the famous went on to become estate owners when the British, especially the individual owners, started leaving after Independence. Today, many a kangany's son – and their sons were the best educated in the plantations – has moved into every field of activity in the Island, from business to politics, from academia to the professions.

On left are, Kumaravel Kangany, better known as Karuppiyah Pillai Kangany and his wife Sitthammayar. In the context of the political history of the Island from the 1930s, they deserve perhaps to be described as the best-known kangany family, for their son (Mathavan) Savumiamoorthy (Thondaman) not only became the legendary leader of the Indian Tamils in the Island but also a major figure in the politics of Sri Lanka.

The 13-year-old Karuppiyah Pillai arrived in Ceylon from India around 1870, and graduated from domestic service to wage labour on a coffee estate to pedlar before joining Wavendon Estate, Ramboda, as a kangany. By 1910, he was its owner, an unprecedented achievement during the days of the Raj. Successful ownership of the vast property and its huge mansion – now a museum – led him into successful ancillary businesses such as transport, estate supplies and financing. But he never really lost touch with the lines and that was a popularity his son was to benefit from.



Not all kangany-s could emulate Karuppiyah Pillai, but as these pictures show, they prospered in varying degrees. Second row from the top: A prosperous early 20th Century kangany and his bejewelled wife; and Kalimuthu Kangany, whose son, K. Rajalingam, became one of the political leaders of the Indian Tamils.

Third row: Late 19th, early 20th Century kangany-s, who still had to make it to the top, with their families.

On right: Kangany-s from several estates in their workaday attire as they congregate on a Hatton street to exchange notes.



A unique phenomenon on the estates was Nagan Perumalammal (right), Head Kangany of Queensbury Estate from 1896 till her death in 1936. She is seen with her daughter-in-law and grandchildren, below.

Perumalammal succeeded her husband Head Kangany Nagan who came to the Island from near Karigali, Trichy. In an age when women were meant not even to be seen, Perumalammal's appointment as Periya Kangany by the management and her acceptance by the other kangany-s was extraordinary. Fluent in English and Tamil, a powerful recruiter and an able manager of labour, she was also known far and wide for her piety. She built the Namanather Siththar Temple on Queensberry and its annual festivals, especially the one at Pongal, still draw large crowds.

Every level of subordinate staff on estates had its associations. And the Head Kangany-s – not to be confused with sillarai (junior or sub-) kangany-s! – were no exception. The picture at bottom is of the members of the Nawalapitiya District Head Kanganyics' Association with the periya dorai-s after their 1923 AGM.



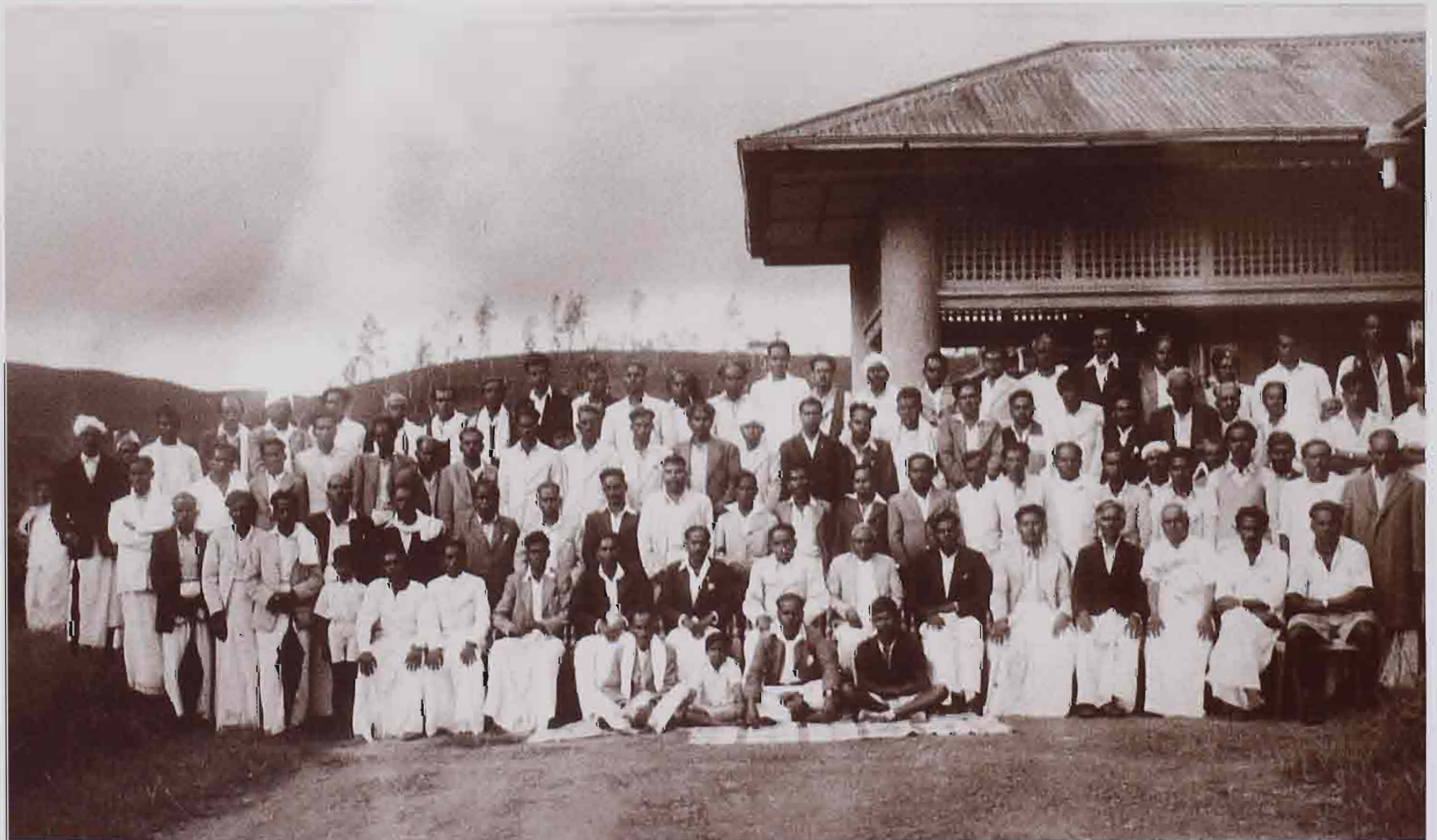
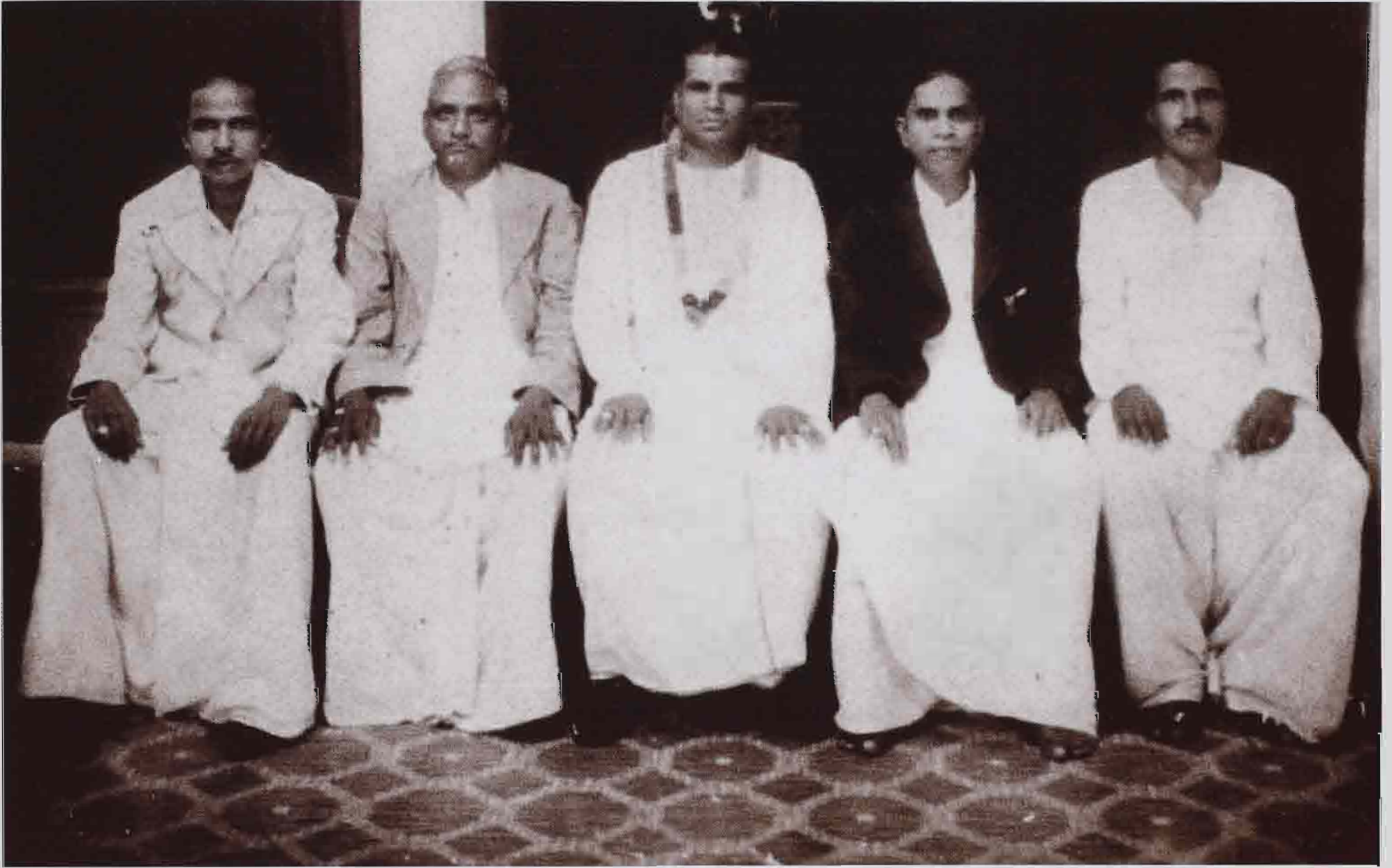


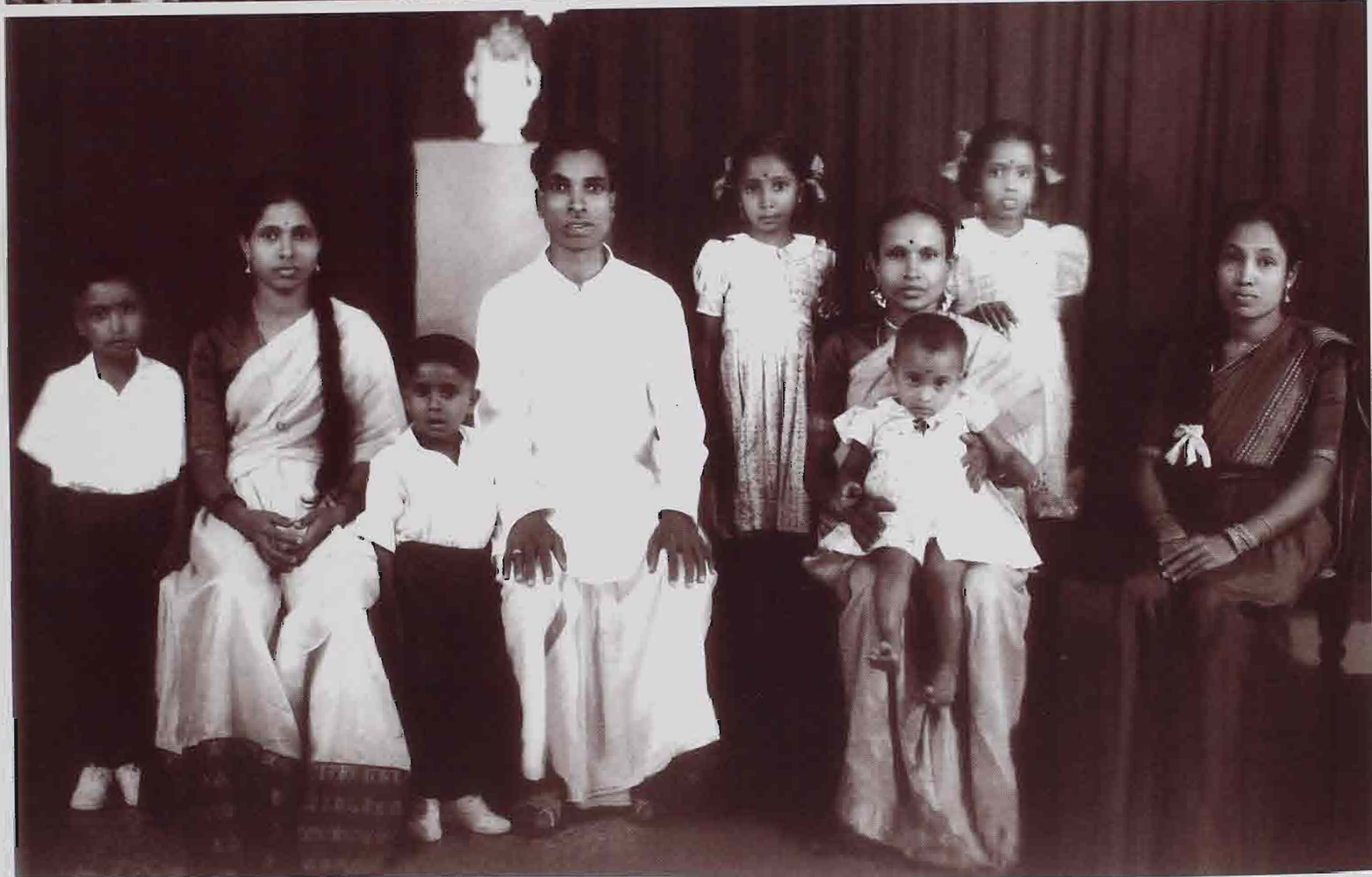
Many are the tombs in the estates, memorials to those who gave their lives to an alien land they had helped develop. Some are maintained in good condition, others are endangered, and still others are neglected. Most of them are of owners or kangany-s; a few are of workers who deserve to be remembered.

From top to bottom, left:

- The tombs of S.P. Suppiah Nadar and his wife on the estate they owned, Binnoya in Rosella.
- The tombs of Head Kangany S.K. Raman and his grandson K. Rajalingam, a former M.P. and founder of Saraswathy Maha Vidyalayam, Pussellawa. This plot is, at the time of publication, threatened by road-widening.
- Little tended and almost forgotten is the tomb of Govinda, who was killed in police firing in the Sama Samajist-led Mulloya Estate strike on January 23, 1940. The unionisation of labour began to grow at an increased pace after this incident.

Kanakapulle-s, tally-accountants, popularly known as KPs, are the field clerks, taking muster at 6 in the morning, tallying the checkrolls, recording the pluck and performing a host of other field-counts to ensure correct piece-rate is paid. Like every other stratum in the hierarchy, they too have their association/union. The first KPs' union was formed in 1948, with Nawalapitiya as its headquarters and 16 branch offices. The picture below shows the first committee of management, with R.S. Velu as President and M. Suppiab as Vice President. It was nine years later that the Union held its first conference. The gathering, seen at the bottom of the page, was at Sri Pada College, Hatton.





'Kandak-aiyya-s', the Conductors, are often the dandies of the estates, as for instance the one on right, in the top row. But that's when they are off-duty. On-duty, they are the supervisors on a division ensuring the pluck is as it should be, closely watching every worker performing his or her duties. This field officer's day begins at 6 a.m. when his 'troops' muster for the day's head-count and receive their assignments; it ends when the pluck has been weighed. But in between, it's the pluck as well as every other field activity that he monitors, ensuring it is to the satisfaction of the dorai-s in charge. The picture on left, top row, demonstrates the range of the conductor's work; here he, on left, supervises a tea nursery where experimental growth is underway.

The picture above is a symbol of how the estates to which the pioneering workforce contributed also gave many the opportunity to make a greater contribution to Lanka. Ramiah, the paterfamilias seen here, is descended from workers who came from the Madurai area to work in the plantations in the 1870s. Ramiah in due course became a kangany, a KP, a factory officer and, eventually, estate cooperative manager. His children today include a doctor; a lawyer/journalist and two qualified teachers. Despite all the pain of the early years and the fact that there is still a long way to go, the estates, where hundreds of thousands contributed to the Lankan economy with their blood, sweat and tears, also produced many who are now contributing to the Island in different ways.

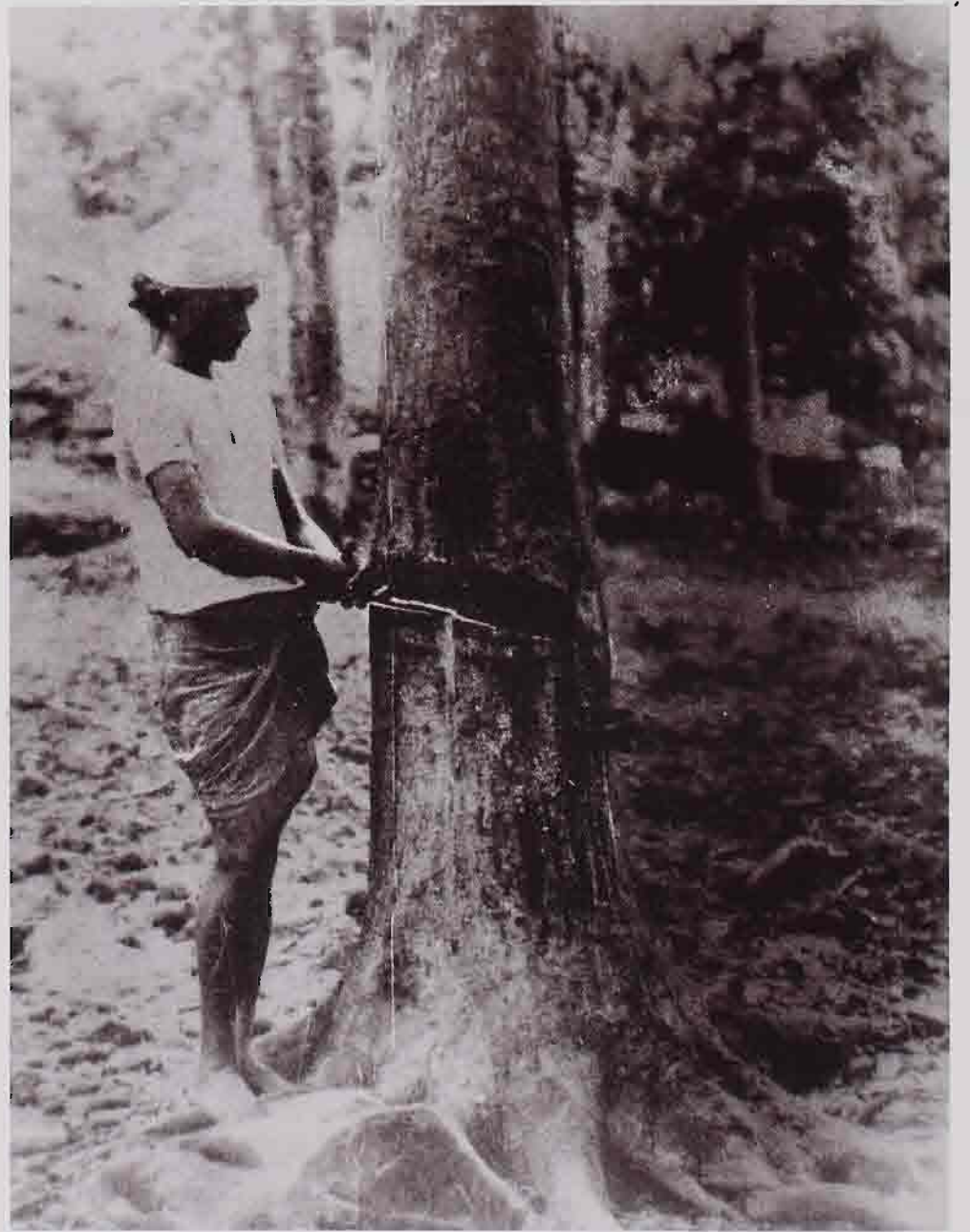
Other Plantation Crops

When Henry Wickham succeeded in bringing out of the Amazon forests the seeds of rubber and when the Kew Gardens some months later sent out to Ceylon 1919 plants, some of which were later sent to Malaya, the role rubber was to play in Ceylon's economy had its beginnings. It was, however, some years before it was found that

Hevea brasiliensis was more suited to Ceylon than Wickham's *Hevea ceara*. With that discovery, and the discovery of how to tap the tree to get a good yield of milk, there began in the early 20th Century the rubber boom in the lower western and southwestern slopes of the highlands, right down almost to the coast. By 1912, 225,000 acres were under rubber. Today the extent is 400,000 acres, but the crop is no longer seen as a money-spinner and replacement is being thought of.

The spectacular growth of rubber in the early years needed labour, not as much as tea, but a permanent workforce nevertheless and one which had to acquire the skills of successfully 'tapping' a tree to yield milk without endangering it. With tapping necessary year-round, and simultaneous manufacture into biscuits, sheets and crêpe, it again became necessary to look for labour across the Palk Strait, labour that would stay full-time on the plantations and not prefer to work seasonally. And so it was that Indian labour helped build rubber's contribution to the Lankan economy, second only to tea throughout the first half of the 20th Century, a particularly significant one during the War years and only now beginning to prove unattractive though it remains a major commercial crop.

Unlike tea, both men and women – as seen in these pictures – 'tap' rubber, scraping the bark to yield the milk into coconut shell cups tied below the cut. Generally, however, the women proved more skilled working on the tall trees planted in rows with parade ground precision (right) and so the men mainly worked at the manufacturing end.



Cardamom is yet another crop grown on the plantations, but nowhere on plantation scale though production was well over 500,000 pounds a year, once. This too, in those years, was another crop that depended on Indian labour for harvesting (on right). But a more significant contributor to the Island's economy has been coconut, the third of the three legs on which Ceylon's prosperity depended till the 1970s.

Growing along the coast right round the Island and being native to it, it was about the only commercial crop almost entirely cultivated by the people of the Island. A substantial part of the cultivation is virtually in home gardens, but the large plantations too (like the one below) were mainly Ceylonese owned. With coconut needing little labour – and not year-round labour at that – to maintain the tree, immigrant labour was not sought. But year-round plucking of the nuts and tapping the flower to yield sap that made arrack needed a workforce and once again India met the need.

The nut itself is a major requirement for local kitchens, but more significantly its yield, as fibre, oil, copra (the dried kernel), desiccated coconut and poonac (cattle fodder), provided a major export earner sought after by the world. Today, a million acres are under coconut and exports still earn over Rs. 7 billion.





The largest number of tappers and coconut pluckers came from the Malabar coast, like those above.

But Tamils from the hinterland of the Fisheries Coast (like those on right and on facing page) were also numerous, in their case many staying in the plantations unlike the wandering Malayalees.

Arrack made from the sap they tapped brought significant fortunes to many a local family, particularly the 'renters', who contracted with owners to have their trees tapped. At one point in time, there were thousands of Malayalee tappers and they formed one of the earliest trade unions in the country, the Toddy Tappers' Union. Contributing to the fortunes of the renting families were not only the rural arrack drinkers but the biggest toddy tipplers in the Island – the Indian labourers, including the tappers themselves (right).



The Early Traders



When the British in 1796 succeeded the Dutch who themselves had ousted the Portuguese, the pattern of trade in the Island underwent a change. No longer were exports and imports a government monopoly. So long as the government and British merchants handled the major exports from the Island and the imports from Britain and the Far East, they were content to let traders from the region handle the everyday necessities of the people obtained from neighbouring countries. Except for a few families from the Moratuwa coastal area, few Lankans were interested in trade and commerce during the 19th and early 20th Century. Brought up to value land and earn from what the land produced, the Lankans who prospered under the British through arrack-renting and government service preferred to invest in coconut estates and, on a smaller scale, even in coffee, cacao, tea and rubber. Cinnamon and arecanut remained commercial crops as in the past, and plumbago and gem-mining were other land-based activities Lankans invested in. In the North, tobacco farming was the preferred investment.

With the Lankans, thus, spurning trade till well into Independence, regional commerce was left to Indians willing to establish themselves in Ceylon. And from the first years, the Bharathas of the Fisheries Coast, whose links with Ceylon were established in Portuguese times, the Nattukkottai Chettiars who had played a major role in the trade of the South Indian kingdoms, particularly with the fiefdoms of Ramnad from which territories had come the greater share of the labour migrants, and the Coast Moors who for centuries had through the pearl trade established a presence in the Island, became the major importers and shopkeepers. Later, in the more settled conditions of the second half of the 19th Century, these early traders — among whom there was also a sprinkling from other South Indian communities — were joined by businessmen from the major trading communities of the Bombay Presidency, the Borahs, the Memons and the Parsis, all with roots in Gujarat. Apart from these, there were traders from other communities from other parts of India who arrived in small numbers but who also made significant contributions to Ceylon in business and who, in time, like the first traders put down permanent roots in the Island. There were also many from other South Indian communities who came to the Island as toilers but who grew into trade and, in time, owned a variety of businesses, particularly plantations.

Rice, foodstuffs like dhal, onions, potatoes and dry fish, and textiles were the major imports these traders handled in the early days, much of it brought in the *dhony*-s owned by the Tuticorin merchants or the Coast Moors. They exported from the Island, chiefly to the mainland, arrack and coconut produce, spices, tobacco, arecanut, timber, gems and chanks. From importing to meet the needs of a largely Indian labour force and the demands of new towns developing in the plantation



On left, a montage of the bills of the 1940s and 1950s issued by retailers from a variety of South Indian communities who had set up shop in the Island and met the needs of not only the Indian labour but also of the local population. Shops like these were set up as far back as the mid-19th Century and continue to this day, many of them being passed down through successive generations in a family. The bills featured here are from, top to bottom, Adam Bhai & Sons, wholesale and retail piece goods merchants, Kandy; K.R. S. P. Karuppiyah Pillai & Co., wholesale and retail piece goods merchants, Kandy; S. M. Kandasamy & Bros., general hardware merchants and estate suppliers, Galaha; M. S. M. A. Abamado Pillai, general cloth and piece goods merchants, Colombo; Haji Adam Haji Moosa & Sons, wholesale and retail piece goods merchants, Kandy; and N. Ramaswamy Aiyer, A. I. S. A.-certified khaddhar store, Kandy. Above, merchants from a spectrum of communities who dominated business with the local population in Colombo in the 19th Century. They came from all parts of India, belonged to different faiths and many of them put down deep roots. The dozen seen here are: 1 & 2: S. Miguel Fernando and J. L. Carwallio, both Bharathas; 3: S. M. Sp. Sockalingam Chettiar, a Nattukottai Chettiar; 4: T. P. Kesavan, a Malayalee; 5 & 6: S. T. Abdoolaly and T. A. J. Noorbhai, Borahs; 7 & 8: H. Dinshaw and J. Rustomjee, Parsis; 9: Haji Omar Haji Usman, a Memon; 10: Maganlal Nathalal, a Gujarati; and 11 & 12: K. Motoomull Kripaldas and M. Pesumal, Sindhis.



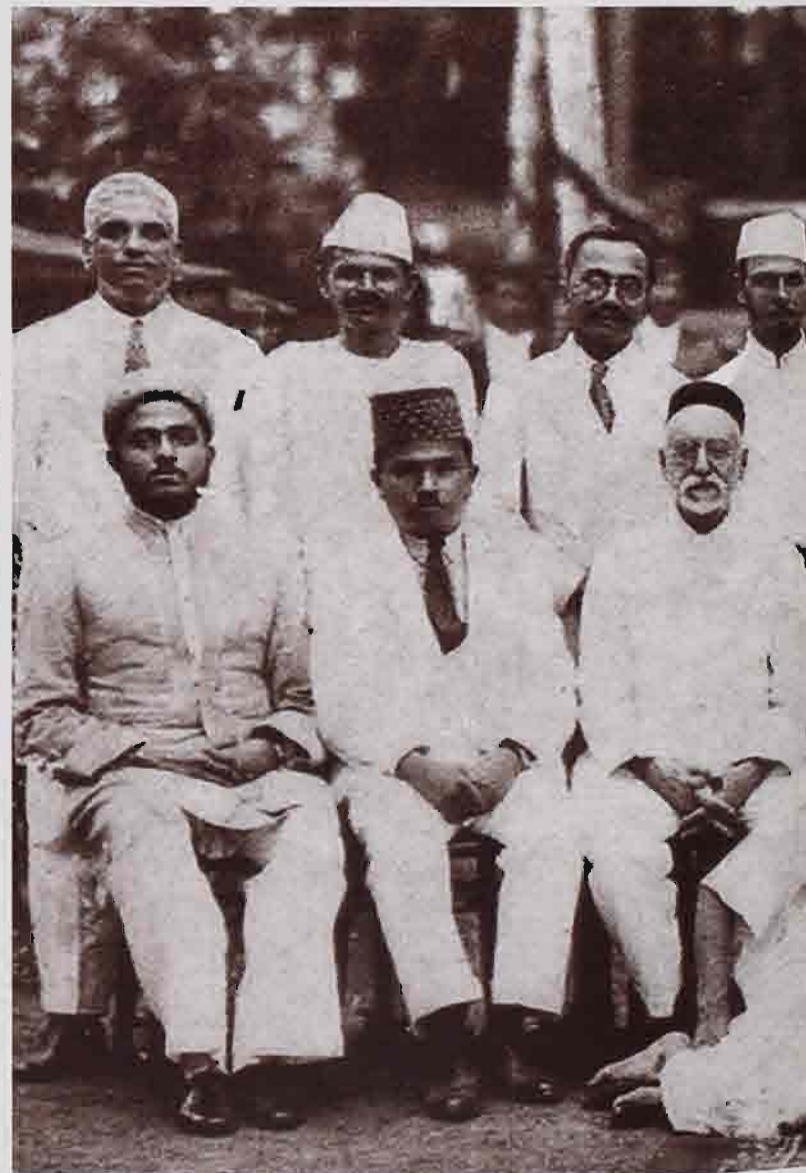
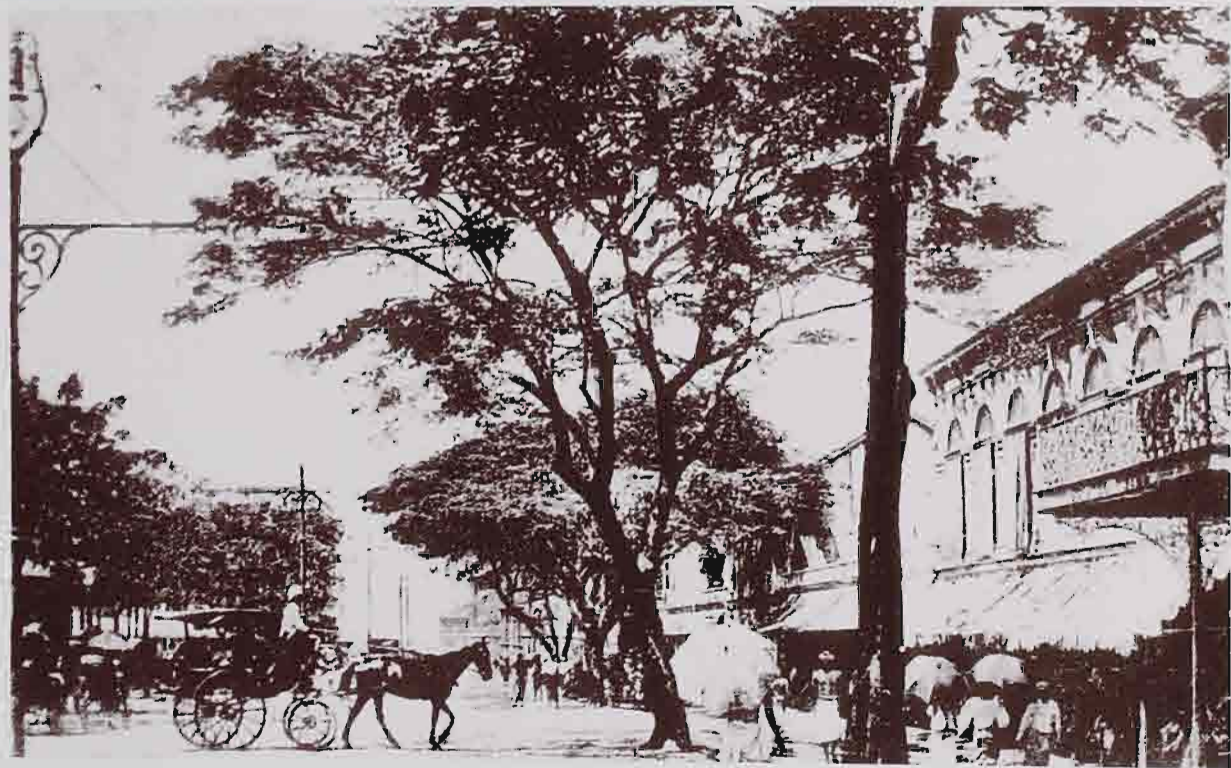
Pettah was where the largest number of Indian merchants, wholesalers and shopkeepers, lived in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, displacing the Dutch residents of the 18th Century. The pictures show the variety of activity on Pettah streets c.1900 above, and on Wolfendhal Street in the 1920s, on right. The dominance of people of Indian origin is clearly apparent in both pictures.



country as well as all along the plantation produce trails, it was but a short step to sinking roots in these areas as petty shopkeepers dealing in these imported essentials. And as retailers, in the largest part to weekly or monthly wage-earners, it was only another step to becoming purveyors of credit and, in time, moneylenders. Retailing to the local household became almost a monopoly of the Coast Moors, though several Bharathas and others from such South Indian communities as the Nadars, Reddiars and the Malayalees also set up petty businesses. The Coast Moors also became the early transporters of these stocks, running caravans of pack bulls, called *thavalams*. The Chettiars alone stuck to wholesale trade and bulk supplying to the estates, to which their discounting of bills for the planters gave them easy access. From here to moneylending was not too far a jump. The Bombay communities stuck by and large to the export and wholesale import business, with the port of Galle in the early days and the capital in later years as their main bases.

This virtual monopoly over the import trade of commodities essential to the local population at large and the credit/moneylending systems that followed was not the best way to win friends and influence people. But who can deny that what these early traders did was not a major contribution to the Island, particularly by providing supplies to the Indian toilers who ensured the prosperity of the Island through its plantation economy for over 150 years? If they had not established shops, who would, in a country wedded to land-ownership and its yield more than to commerce and petty trade?

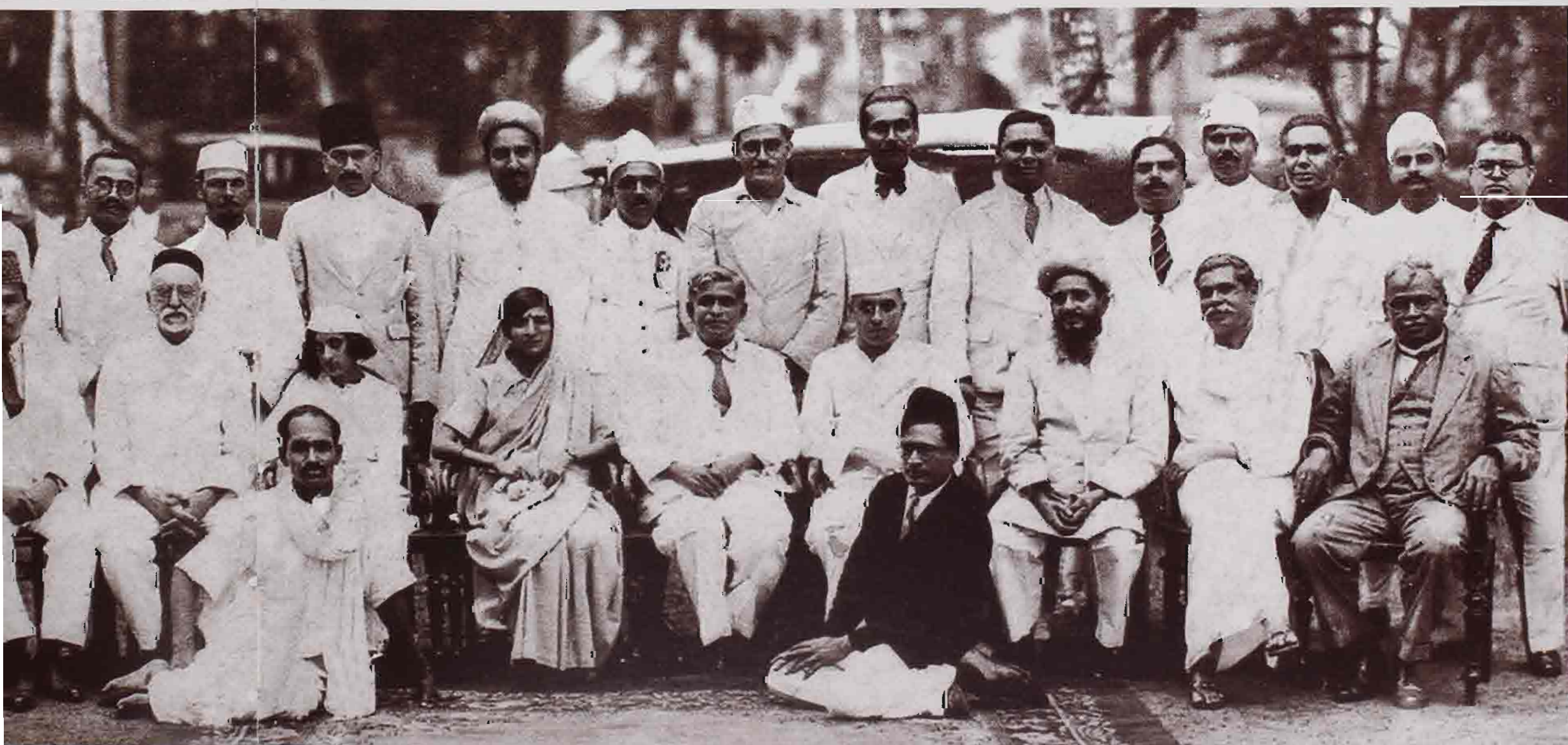
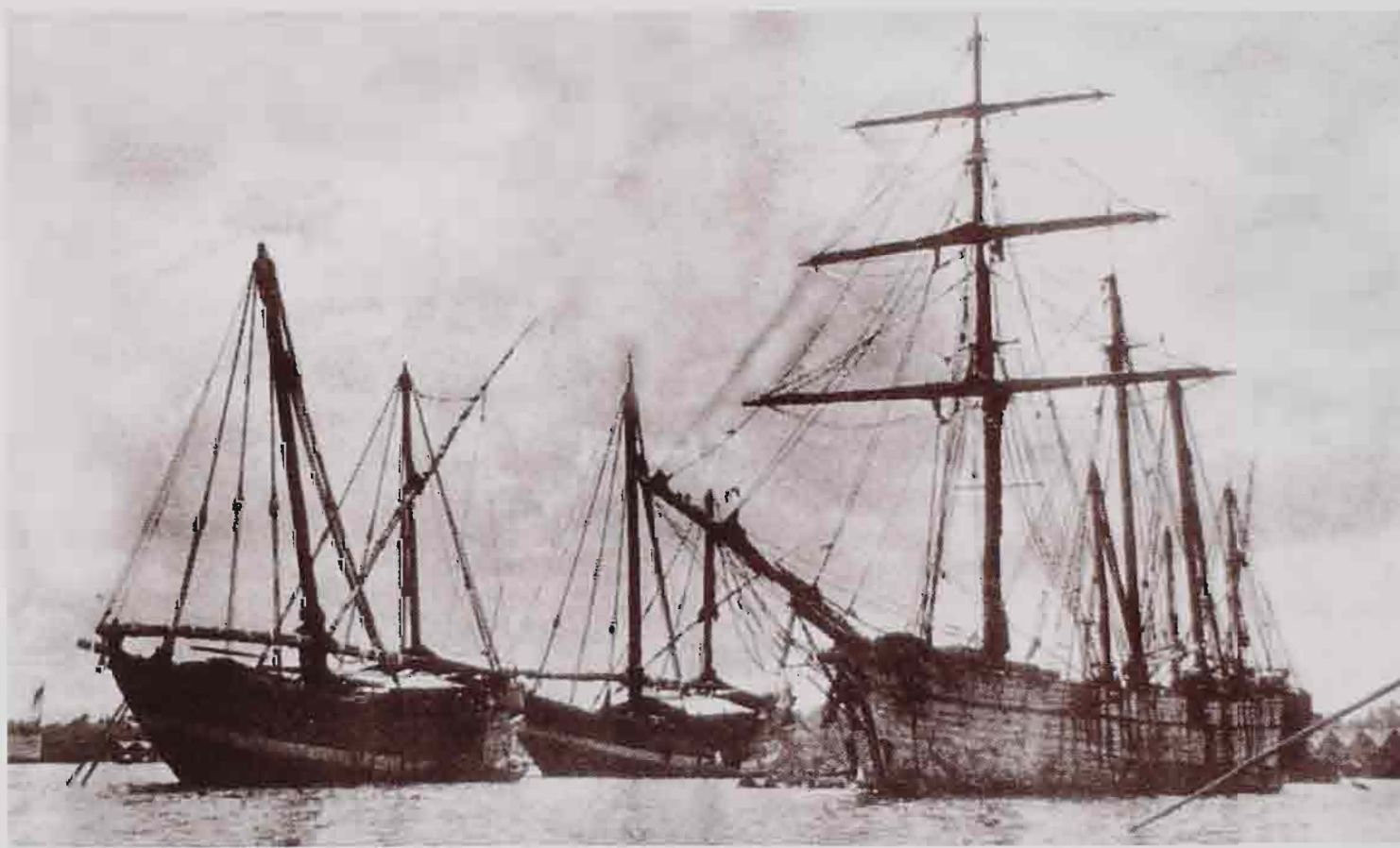
Author's Note : Since in this chapter the major traders are being looked at communitywise, I have also included here, by community, some who did not go into trade but contributed in other fields.





Simultaneous to an 'Indian' commercial settlement establishing itself in the Pettah, shopkeepers and traders from India set up shop in the ribbon settlements along the road from Colombo to Kandy, and into the plantation country, where, unlike others, they dared the climate. They also established themselves, though to a lesser extent, along the Colombo-Galle road. A typical 'Main Street' bazaar on these roads is the 1881 drawing on left, showing the ethnic variety that filled the commercial landscape.

It was the late 19th Century, early 20th Century before there was an alternative to the Pettah for the more affluent shoppers and the tourist. This shopping centre developed just south of the harbour in what was known as the Fort. And here, in streets near the clock tower, like Chatham Street and York Street, the Bombay merchants and the Moorish jewellers established themselves. In many ways, they were the ones who served Ceylon's early 'tourist trade' and made Colombo an attractive stopover on the London-Australia shipping route. The picture on facing page, bottom, is of York Street c.1900. Another feature of the business of both the Bharathas and the South Indian Moors was the dhony (schooner) fleets (below) several of them owned. These vessels sailed between Colombo and Tuticorin and Colombo and the Maldives regularly, but some went as far as the Strait Settlements (Malaya) and up the west coast of India, taking exports from the Island and bringing back much-needed imports. The heirs to the business these early traders founded were members of the Indian business community Jawaharlal Nehru is seen with (bottom of the page) during his visit to the Island in 1931. The picture — with its variety of clothing and headgear — shows just how diverse the Indian merchants in Ceylon were.



Bharathas



From the 12th Century to the early 15th Century, the seafaring Paravar of the Fisheries Coast of South India were recruited by the Sinhalese kings to strengthen their armies. Many of them settled on the coast north of Colombo, became absorbed into the local population and are today called the Negombo Bharathas. Later, in Portuguese times, more Paravar, now the children of Francis Xavier, joined their brethren on this coast and, today, none maintains links with India.

In British times, however, there was another migration from the Fisheries Coast. These Paravar, who in recent times have sought a separate identity as Bharathas and received it in 2001, have since the 19th Century maintained continuing links with the Tuticorin hinterland. While the *dhony*-s have over the recent centuries plied between Tuticorin and Colombo and kept a Bharatha shipping business alive on both sides of the Palk Strait, the more recent migration was a consequence of the cotton boom in the 1850s and 1860s in the Tinnevely District. When the British decided that Tuticorin would be the centre from which cotton would be exported, many a minor port saw an exodus of manpower to Tuticorin, only to find the jobs already taken. Particularly affected were six of the Parava Elu Oor — the seven minor ports of Alanthalai, Manapad, Punniyakayal, Tuticorin, Vembar, Vepar and Veerapandiapatnam. Those in trade here or with some level of literacy found themselves with no opportunities and had to seek pastures new. Many



A traditional rice plate of the Bharathas of the 19th and early 20th Century (at top of page) derives from Dutch chinaware design but features symbols significant to the community, such as a Roman Catholic church and coconut trees. Above, traditional jewellery of the Bharathas always featured religious motifs, like the Holy Ghost seen in the thali (the pendant that's the symbol of marriage) chain, on left. Despite being staunch Roman Catholics, the Bharathas still follow several of the ancient Hindu traditions, adapting them to their present rituals.

TELEPHONE N^o 6.

TELEGRAMS: "FERMIG"

DR TO

S. Miguel Fernando,

SPECIALIST FOR GENT'S OUTFITTING.

MILLINER & DRAPER.

106 Main Street.

COLOMBO. 191

ACCOUNTS NOT PAID WITHIN 3 MONTHS WILL BE CHARGED WITH INTEREST AT THE RATE OF 12% PER ANNUM.

sought them in the cities of the Presidency, but several also felt the opportunities for trade and business in Ceylon, which the traditional *dhony* trade had made them familiar with, were more attractive. Particularly as the relics of the Portuguese connection would make them more comfortable.

And so there migrated the Pereiras and the de Mels, the Victorias and the Roches, the Mirandas and the Paivas and a host of others. This was a migration that till long after Independence did not lose touch with the home villages, enabling many of the first settlers to return to India, leaving their children to establish new roots in Ceylon. These links were forged not only through marriage but also through charities and the building of some of the most magnificent churches on any coast in India. At the same time, their contribution to Ceylon was immense, particularly through the retail stores they established in small towns throughout the Island to provide the middle class and the wealthy imported household goods, from food and drink to furnishing and clothing. What the British-owned shops offered in Colombo, the Bharatha shops offered in other towns in Ceylon.

Significantly, two of the leaders of the community who made considerable contributions to Ceylon never really lost touch with their Indianness. I.X. Pereira did it by making his presence felt in the politics of pre-Independent Ceylon as the representative of Indians living and working in the Island and founding, as a consequence, the Ceylon Indian Association. The other was Santiago Aiyya Tamby de Mel of Vembar — 'Saana Aana' to all — whose picture I have, unfortunately, been unable to trace.

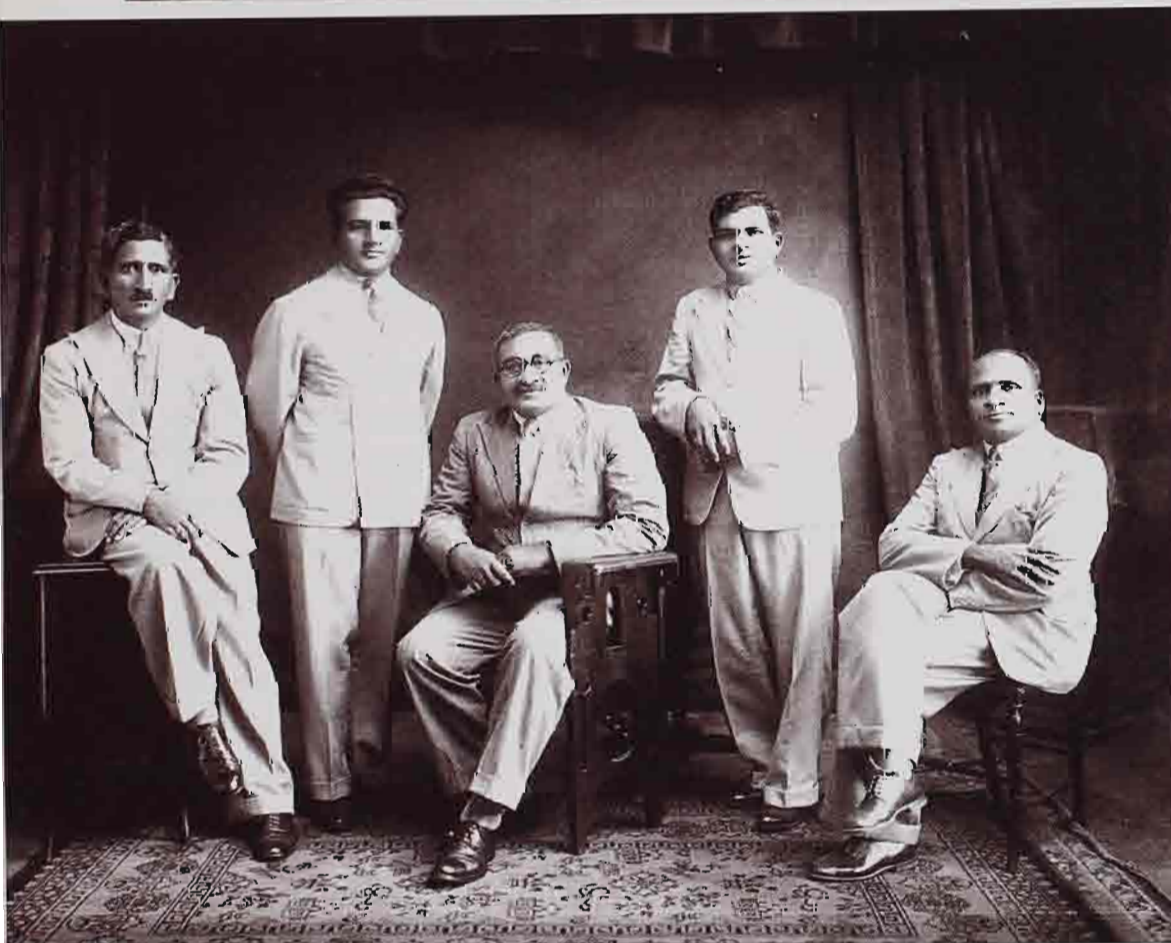
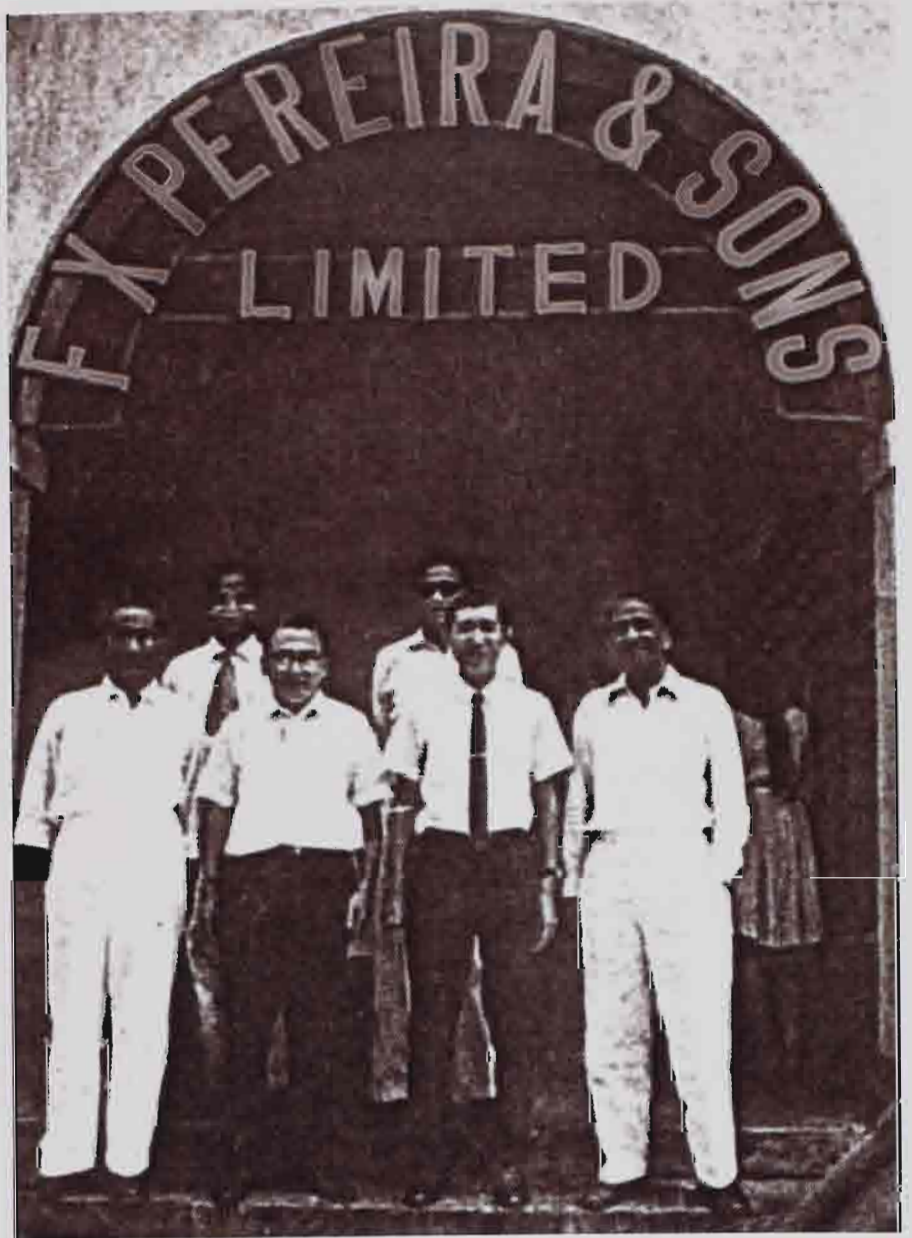
Working for a Nagarathar Chettiar in the 1880s and then for a Marakkayar, a Coast Moor, de Mel had



The Bharathas, with their long trading links with Ceylon, were among the first to establish themselves in business in the Pettah. Imported textiles to clothe the well-to-do and the middle class of urban Ceylon was one of the businesses many a Bharatha went into, with many of them establishing themselves on the main shopping thoroughfare in the Pettah, Main Street, and in its cross streets. S. Miguel Fernando, whose letterhead is featured above, was one of the earliest of the Bharatha shopkeepers, going into business in the mid-19th Century. Another shop established only a little later, in 1892 on Main Street, was J. L. Carwallio's, also in the textile business. First started by J. L. Carwallio's maternal grandfather, the shop still does business on the site, but with a renovated frontage.

fortune smile on him; Abdulally on his retirement left his business to de Mel and Saana Aana made it thrive even more, particularly by importing onions he got grown near Tuticorin. When in 1895 he got the agency to distribute oil and petroleum products, he not only ensured their greater use throughout the Island, but he also exported kerosene to India. More importantly, he introduced the system of distributing kerosene and oil products by bullock cart, taking the product to the customer and, in the process, making 'Rising Sun' kerosene a household name. To make this operation a success he established over 50 depots throughout the Island — and almost all of them were manned by Bharathas, as the Paravar in commerce came to be called, from Vembar.

De Mel pioneered what was to become the path of the new Paravar. They not only began to move into new occupations, but they began to pursue these in places far from home, particularly those where the British were building new plantation-based economies that also needed strong commercial support systems. And in every one of these places, the new Paravar found *annachi-s* (elder brothers or godfathers) like Santiago de Mel who gave them a helping hand, and virtually made them wards if they came from the same *oor* (village). The Victorias of Manapad, the Lobos of Punniyakayal, the Moraeses of Veerapandiapatnam and the Fernandos of Alanthalai and many others helped establish the Bharathas in Ceylon as a prosperous community of retailers, employees in the service sector and arrack renters. Today, the descendants of these traders, who now enjoy a separate identity in the Island but number less than 2000, have moved into modern businesses and the professions.



Apart from textiles for all purposes, as well as tailoring services to go with it, many a Bharatha shop attempted to be a department store as well, but the one which best succeeded was F. X. Pereira & Sons, which was started by Francis Xavier Pereira (on left) in 1889 as a small shop on Main Street but moved into handsome premises on First Cross Street in 1905 (top row, signage changes over the years seen in the two pictures) when it was appointed drapers to Governor Sir West and Lady Ridgeway. Household requisites, fancy goods, toys, imitation jewellery and stationery all made F. X. Pereira's an Alladin's wonderland to wander into in its heyday; sadly, the department store which dressed much of Colombo closed in 1977, but the name survives in a variety of other businesses.



F. X. Pereira was succeeded in the business by his eldest son I. X. Pereira, in group above, seated in the centre, who played an important role in Ceylon politics, representing the people of Indian origin in the Island and pressing their cause. In this family group, he is seen with his brothers R. S., J. E. A., J. A. and J. R. J., the last two of whom worked with I. X. Pereira in making F. X. Pereira the success it was till import curbs in the 1970s ended its day.

It was I. X. Pereira who introduced the Woolworth's concept, of inexpensive goods for the home, when he opened the Rupee Store on Main Street, and branches elsewhere. Inaugurating the store in 1937 was Mrs. L. W. A. Soysa (centre, in the picture above right). Sadly, the shops were a concept before their time and closed in the 1960s.



I. X. Pereira himself, by now a Dewan Bahadur and a leader of the Indians in Sri Lanka, opened the Madras Palayakat Co.'s Silk Paradise in Colombo in 1934 (top of page). Madras Palayakat, a Mudaliyar owned company, with this shop moved out of its traditional business of importing Madras Checks, bandanna squares for headgear and sarongs that were some of the most popular attire among the local population. Another major import business the Bharathas did, was ensuring Ceylon its supply of dry fish, almost mandatory with almost every Sinhala meal. The dry fish shops, mainly run by the Bharathas, used to be located on Old Butcher Street, seen in the picture (above) in the 1950s. Today, the trade, still in Bharatha hands, remains on the street (left) — which in 1991 was named after the community's best known leader, I. X. Pereira. His grand-daughter, journalist Therese Motha, is the woman in the picture.



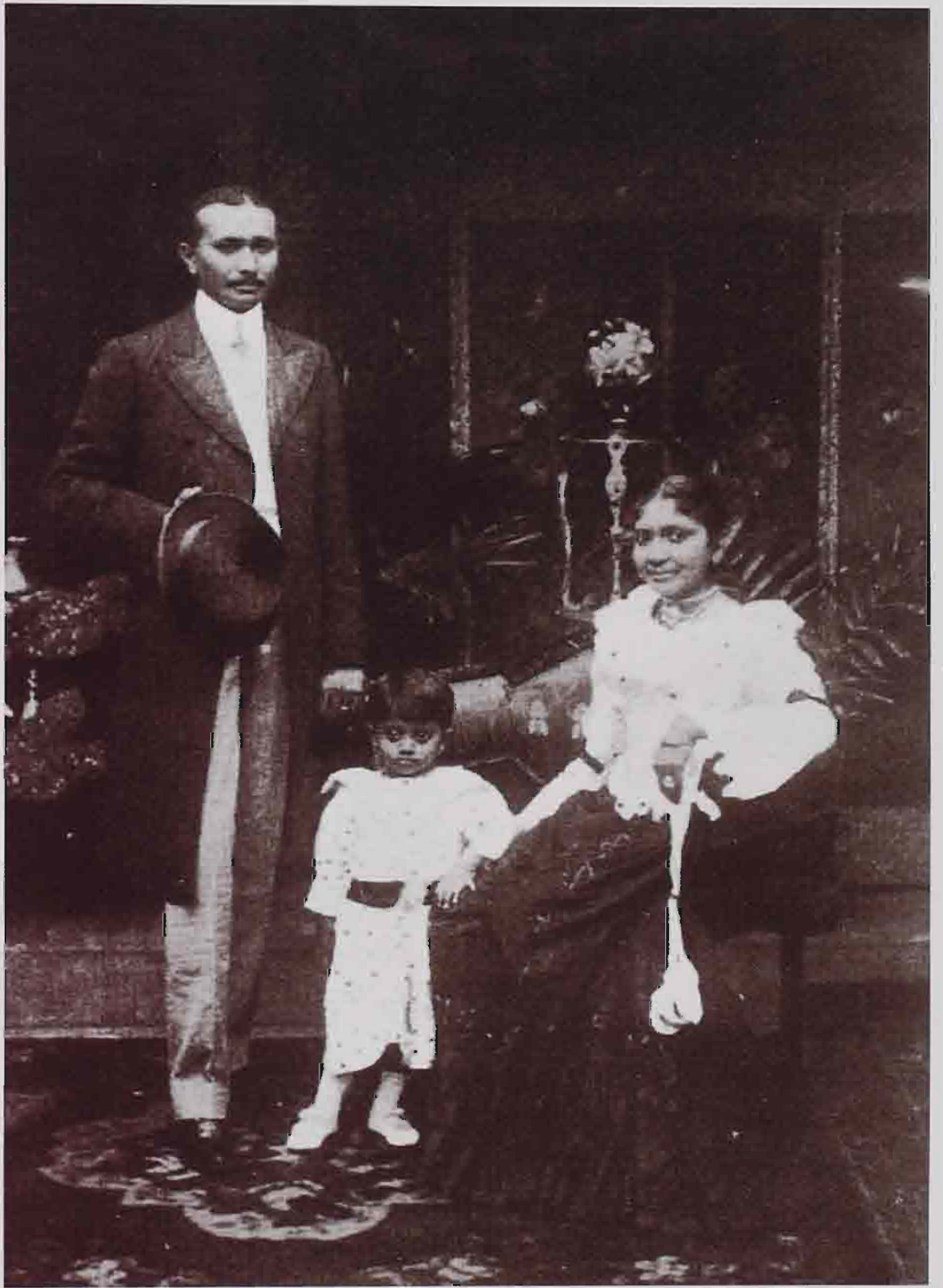
Serving milady's table with the best of imported food items at prices less than the Fort department stores' – and particularly serving the provincial towns – were numerous Bharatha shops. Wines and spirits, an array of food items and cooking supplements, baked products, and kitchenware, crockery and cutlery were what shops like M. P. Gomez & Co., one of the best known till the 1970s, offered. Michael Peter Gomez, seen right above, with his wife Maria Soosai Gomez (right), started his shop in Ratnapura (on left) in 1889. Soon there were branches in Negombo, Chilaw, Balangoda, Avisawella and even Colombo. His son-in-law strengthened these branches by opening up petrol stations near them.



One of the few Bharathas to enter not only a different business but also one which was virtually the monopoly of the Sinhalese was Pius Miranda (left, below) who in 1899 started by buying plumbago for export to supplement the bone manure import he was doing from Madras. Supported by his brother Dr. Lazarus Miranda (left, bottom), Pius Miranda bought mining rights and they became the only two Indians in plumbago mining. Pius Miranda was also instrumental in forming the Plumbago Merchants' Union.

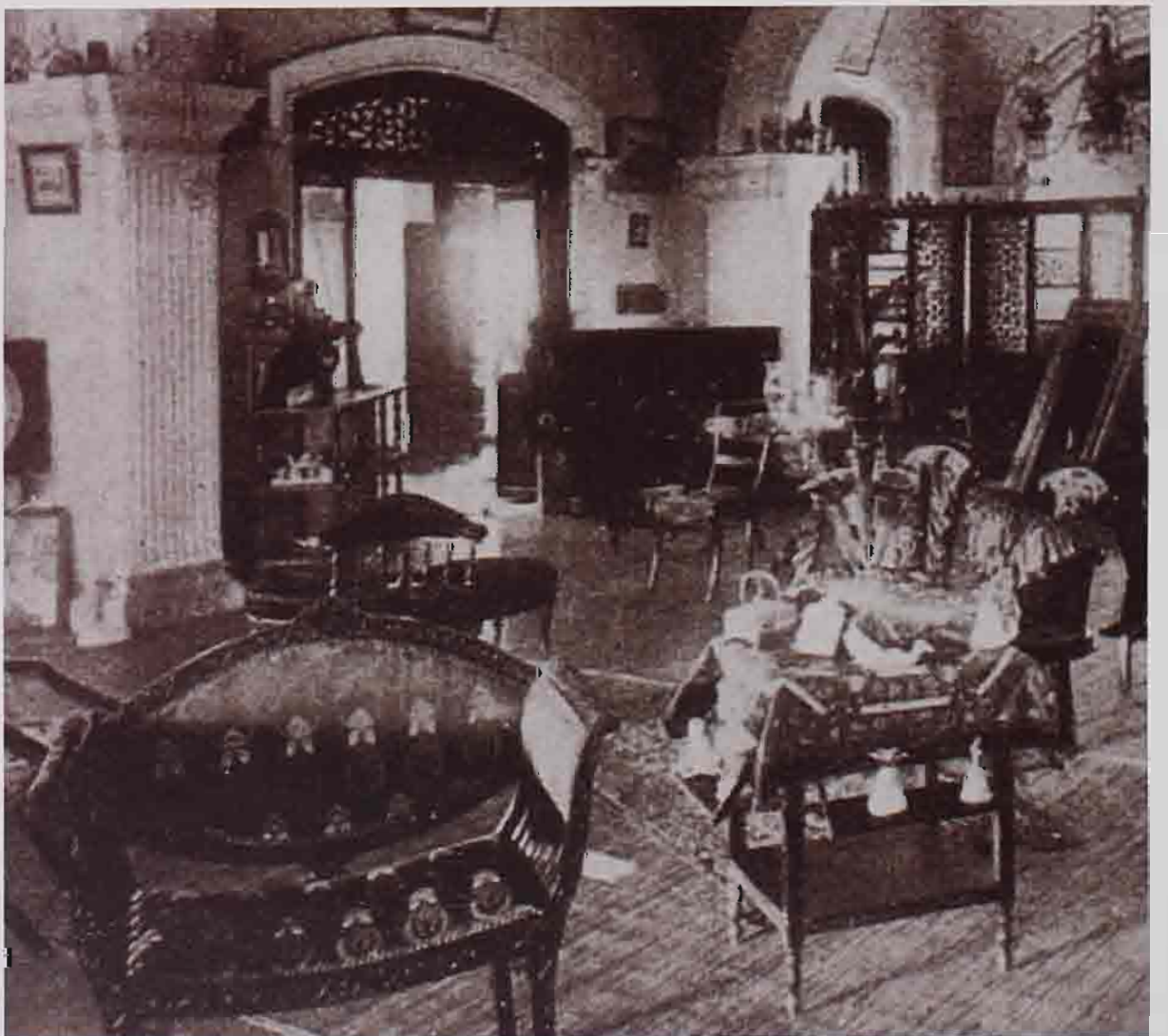
In the early 20th Century picture below, the women are seen trimming and preparing the plumbago for export at the Mirandas' plumbago yard. The plumbago would go from here to the Mirandas' own wharf on the Colombo Canal, where it would be packed for shipment.





Top left is Mrs. John Croos of Negombo and on top right are her only son Nicholas Emmanuel de Croos, his wife and their child. The de Crooses, whose roots were in mid-18th Century Tuticorin, were one of the richest families in the Western Province, parlaying their earnings from arrack-renting into real estate, coconut and cinnamon plantations and palatial homes. The drawing room of one, Barbeton, which was considered one of the finest homes in the Western Province, is seen on right. The de Croos family gave generously to the Church, gifted land to Maris Stella College, Negombo, and other institutions and donated much land for the Negombo-Colombo railway line. Several de Croos families were among the leading Bharatha families in the Negombo-Chilaw area in the 19th and early 20th Century.

Second from the top, left, is another Bharatha who contributed much to another district centre. S.T. Soris, taking over his father Paul Soris's provision and liquor store in Negombo, enhanced it by developing one of the first 'English' vegetable farms in the country, a view of its ten acres seen above. He also established the Pedro View Hotel, in Nuwara Eliya, third from top, left. All three businesses made the planting community considerably dependent on him.

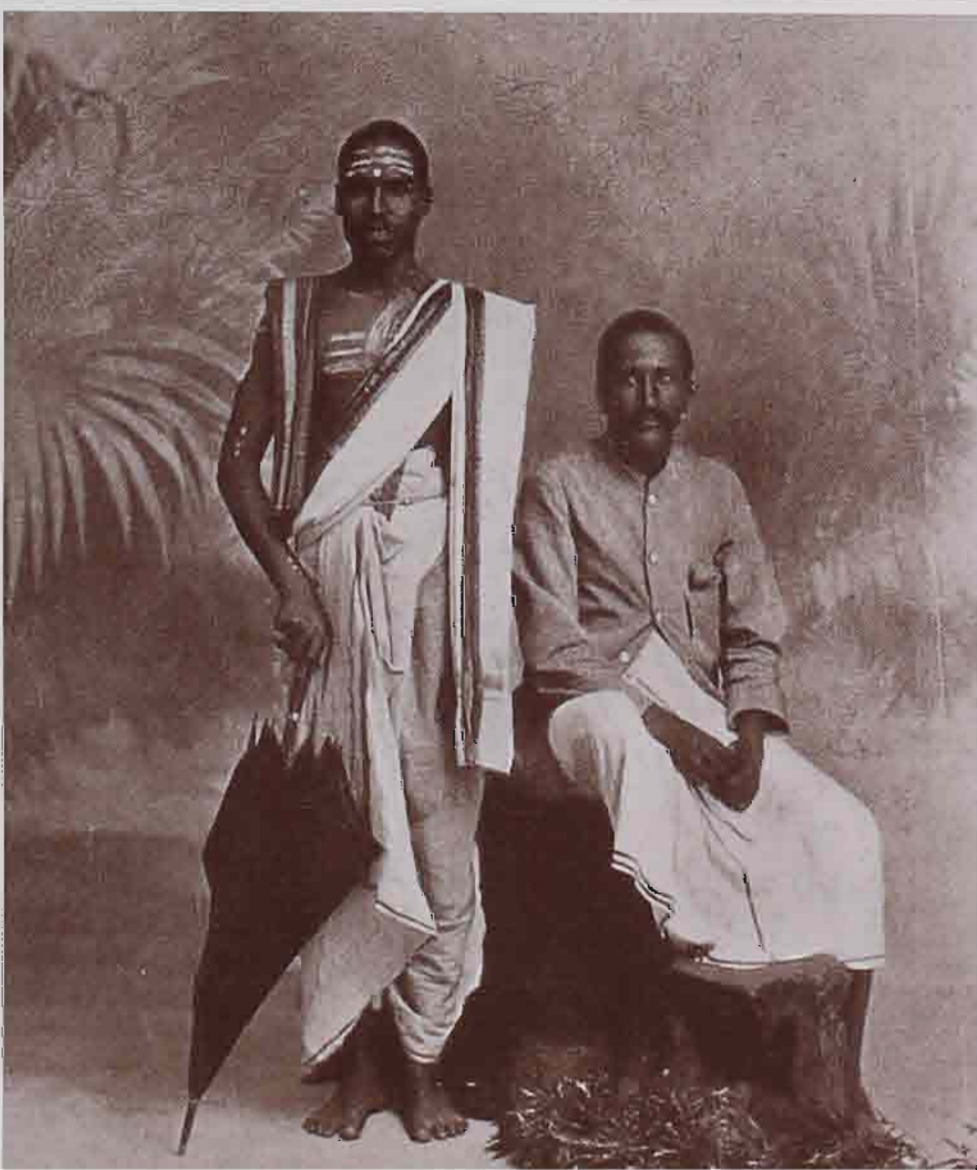


Nattukottai Chettiars

They may be called Seth or Sait or Shetty, Chetty or Chettiar or even Hetty in Sri Lanka, but they all go back to Vaisya roots, communities more familiar with business and monetary transactions, their community description derived from the Sanskrit *shresthi* meaning those belonging to an honourable guild of merchants. The best known amongst them in South and Southeast Asia since the dawn of the 19th Century were a small group today known as the Nattukottai Chettiars.

Now numbering no more than 125,000 and living in 75 villages that are part of an area called Chettinad not far from Madurai in India's deep south, they were less than half that number when they travelled overseas to trade as the British Empire spread. Legend has it that, as ships' chandlers, exporters and importers, traders in gems and salt, they became the leading businessmen of the 10th and 11th Century Chola Empire and were honoured by being allowed to crown the Chola kings. When the 13th Century Pandyas conquered the coastal Cholas, the Chettiars were granted temples and villages in Pandya Nadu in the interior, further south. And it is there that they became a traders of a different kind. Following the pack bull trails, they sold rice and salt and textiles from fertile Chola Nadu to parched Pandya Nadu as well as gems and other produce ships brought to the coast of Coromandel. Credit to the needy, loans to the cultivator and even money to the numerous latter day princes of Pandya Nadu followed the success they made of trade.

On left, a Nattukottai Chettiar of the 1880s, and on left, bottom, Chettiars of the early 20th Century. Till the latter period, the Chettiars went about barebodied, wearing proudly the marks of blessings from Lords Shiva and his son Muruga. Vershti-s (dhotis) worn in the panchakachcham style, like trousers, were also the vogue. And with only an umbrella to protect them they ventured from their business premises (called kadai-s or kitangi-s), like the one on facing page, top, to the right of one of the first Chettiar temples in the Island, to meet their clients big or small. Lightly clad and without any encumbering retinue, they were equally at home in urban areas or travelling on little-beaten tracks to sell wholesale the basic necessities or to extend credit or collect their dues in isolated villages or estate lines. The main bankers of the Island for nearly one hundred years, they were at their best when the country's biggest bank, the Oriental, crashed. The 1884 cartoon below was rather unfair in making a hysterically distressed Chettiar (with an unusual sacred thread) its focus in front of the Bank's Colombo branch during the run, for, in fact, the Chettiars as a community agreed "to support the Government and accept the notes of the defunct bank in payment of debts and produce".



Chettiar

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A reputation for conservativeness, piety, integrity and magnanimity did them no harm when the British, moving out of the Carnatic, the Madras hinterland, where the Empire was born, wanted traders who could provide the support services needed — for labour that was opening up for the new sovereign power land for commercial cultivation, and building the infrastructure needed for it. And meeting a need in countries that sought an Indian workforce to provide both, to tend them thereafter and serve the new towns of mixed populations that were created through such development, came the Nattukottai Chettiars who dared where others would not, both in urban areas as well as in lonely jungle-girt outposts. It was a need the Chettiars met in Calcutta and Ceylon, Burma and the Straits Settlements, Singapore and Sumatra, the lands of Indo-China and even in Mauritius and South Africa.

Recommended by the Rajahs of Tamil principalities in the Madras Presidency to the East India Company then establishing itself in Ceylon, the Chettiars arrived in the Island virtually with the new ruling power. And as the plantation economy and infrastructural development grew, so did the number of Chettiars. It was a growth based on moving on from dominating the rice and textile trade, but never quite giving it up, to banking, providing financial services to plantation worker and petty shopkeeper as well as to estate managements by discounting their bills and enabling them quicker realisation of their dues.

Till the 1840s, when British banking of a sort was established in the Island, the Chettiars were the only bankers in the Island. Once the British banks arrived, the Chettiars found themselves in a new role — but it was 1925 before they completely shed their old role as bankers and became moneylenders while continuing with traditional trading operations. With the banks refusing to lend to the local population, mainly because adequate collateral security could not be provided, the Chettiars became the middlemen. Lent money by the banks on the reputation of their word being their bond, the Chettiars re-lent the money to the local borrower demanding hardly any security. It was moneylending that not only helped the small borrower, but it also helped open up much of the coconut estates, some of the rubber, and financed a substantial part of the arrack-renting, all of which helped create a new rich in 19th Century Ceylon. Many an eminent family in the Island today owes its position to Chettiar financing when it was first making its way.

In 1934, there were as many as 556 Chettiar firms in the Island, mainly in Colombo but with a substantial number in and around Negombo and Kandy and a few firms in each of several other towns throughout the Island. The all-male Chettiar population was well over 5000 at the time, a tenth of the community! The numbers are indicative of their success in business, but more significantly to the willingness of the local population to turn to them when in need.

Moneylending is not designed to win popularity, even if the lender's rate was generally only 3 per cent more than what he was borrowing at from the banks. Witness after witness demonstrated this before the Ceylon Banking Commission of 1934, but others as

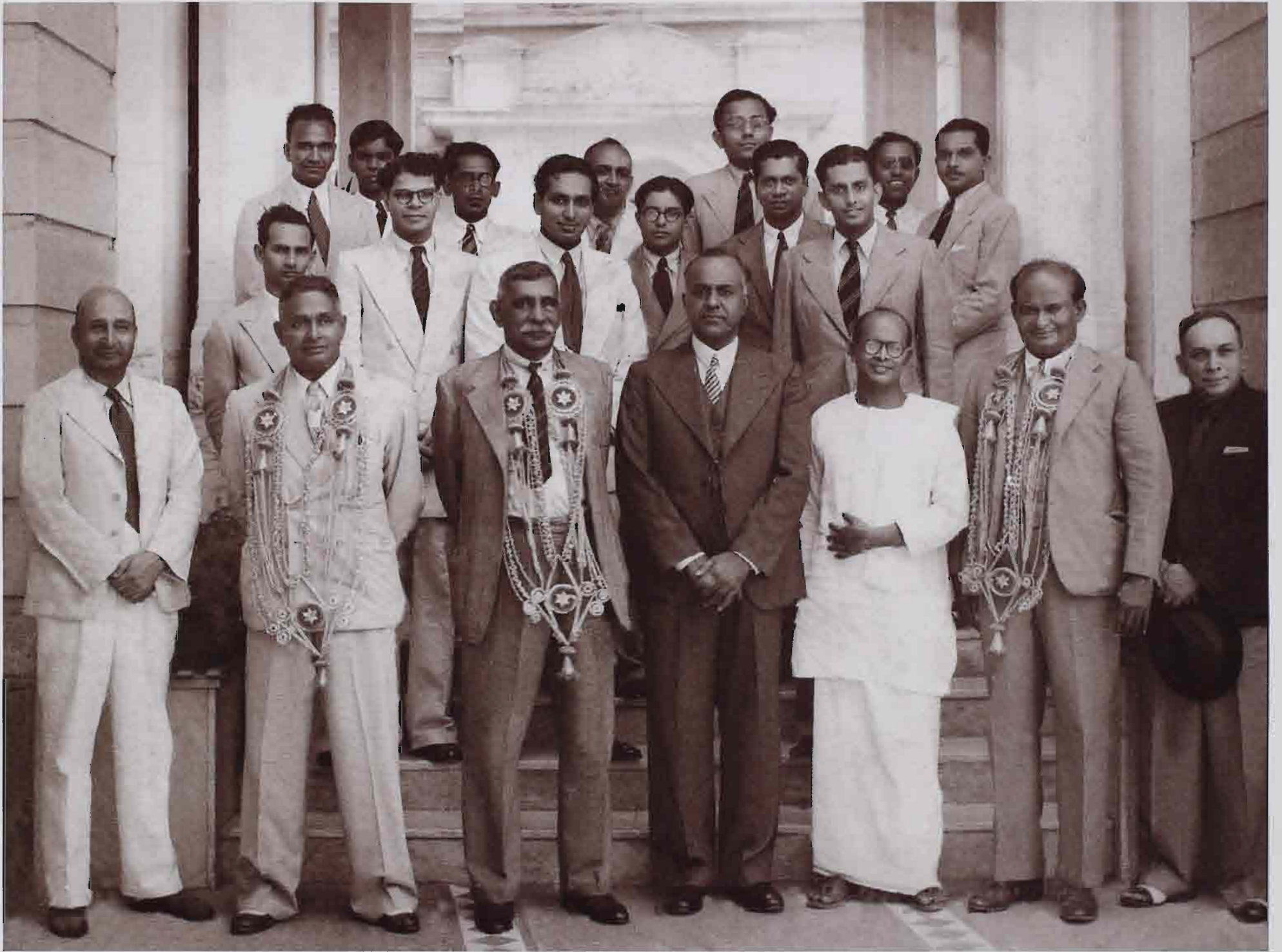


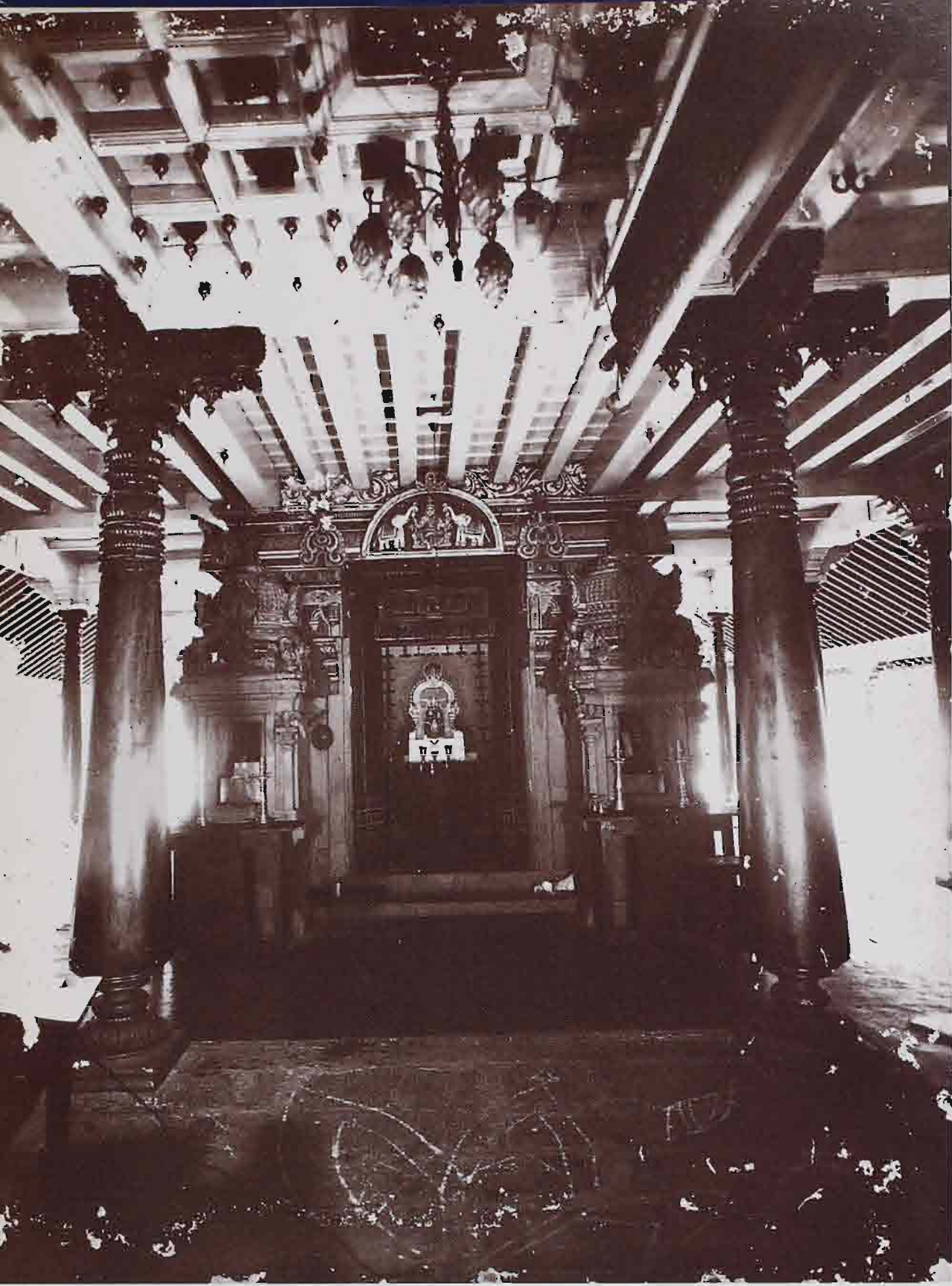
Top, is the delegation representing the Ceylon Nattukottai Chettiars Association before the Ceylon Banking Commission in 1934. And the Commission focussed considerably on the Chettiars' banking business — though eventually agreeing with the Chettiar representation that a local state bank was essential to help the citizens of the country. It is perhaps because of the Commission's focus that the Chettiars are today better, but not too kindly, remembered, no matter how much their financing helped develop the country. Few also remember them as pioneering importers and exporters and for establishing successful business houses in several spheres. That contribution is represented in the other pictures on these two pages. Above, a major Chettiar firm, V.Rm.Va. of Colombo, welcoming wholesale rice exporters from Burma in the late 1930s. On facing page, top, the owners of the largest Chettiar Group in the Island, whose flagships were the Bank of Chettinad and the Chettinad Corporation, hosted at a 1948 lunch in Chettinad House in Madras leading members of the Government of Ceylon. Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake and Rajah Sir Muthiah Chettiar, the head of the Group, are flanked by Sir John Kotelawala, Minister of Transport and Works (garlanded, left) and C. Sittampalam, Minister for Posts and Telecommunications (garlanded, right). The Rajah's brothers, M. Rm. Ramanathan and M. A. Chidambaram are seen second and fifth from the right at the rear. Chettinad Corporation, leading building contractors in the Island, built much of the Peradeniya campus of the University of Ceylon, the Batticaloa Town Hall etc. And facing page, bottom, is the gathering on the occasion of the opening of the M. P.M. Narayanan Chettiar Tannery in Kelaniya in 1943, a pioneering venture.

well as the Commission recognised their role. The Commission eventually reported, "The Chettiar community formed a distinct link between the banks and the public, freeing the former in a considerable measure from the risk in direct lending...it must be said to the (Chettiars') credit...they have contributed in no small measure to the economic development of the Island." They did this not only by lending, but also during the coffee crisis of the 1840s, the Oriental Bank crash of 1884, the depression of the 1930s, coming to the rescue of thousands by honouring the Bank's promise and by taking over estates and then selling them back in better times. They may have made profits, yet the fact is they were there, when no others were, to rescue the distressed. Indeed, just as much as money lent to local families helped them grow, bills

discounted and providing the requirements of the workforce helped the planters to prosper and the plantation economy to boom.

Altogether, till they left in the 1950s, leaving behind less than fifty of them and almost as many temples built by them, the Chettiar contribution to the Island was significant. Apart from their contribution to the economy of the Island, the rise of numerous local families, and their vital role in providing food and clothing to the masses, the Chettiar contribution to law in Lanka has also been recognised by many. Not only has judicial and statutory recognition been given to numerous trading practices of the Chettiars, but out of a welter of litigation they were involved in from the 1920s, much commercial law has developed in the country.

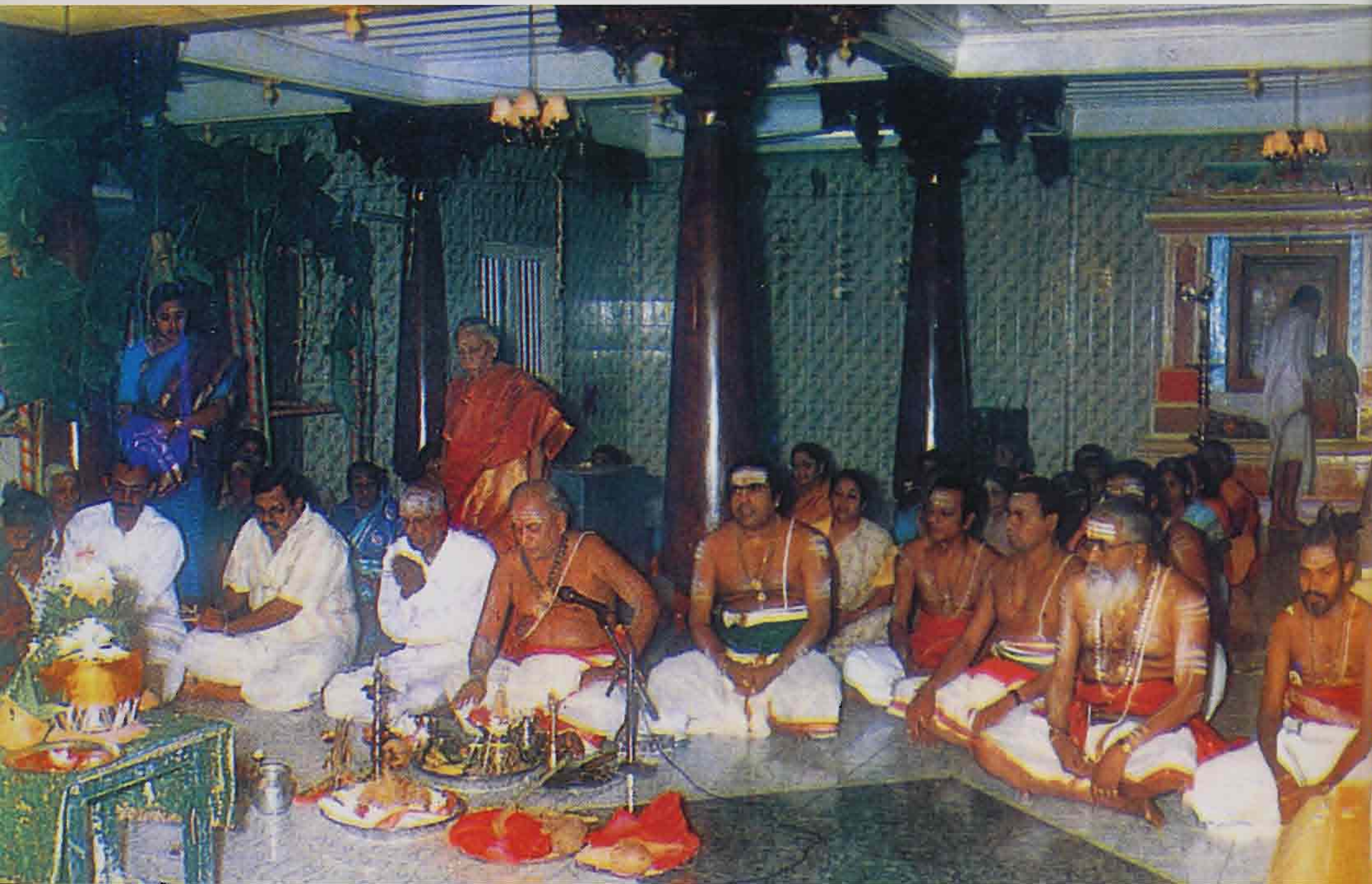


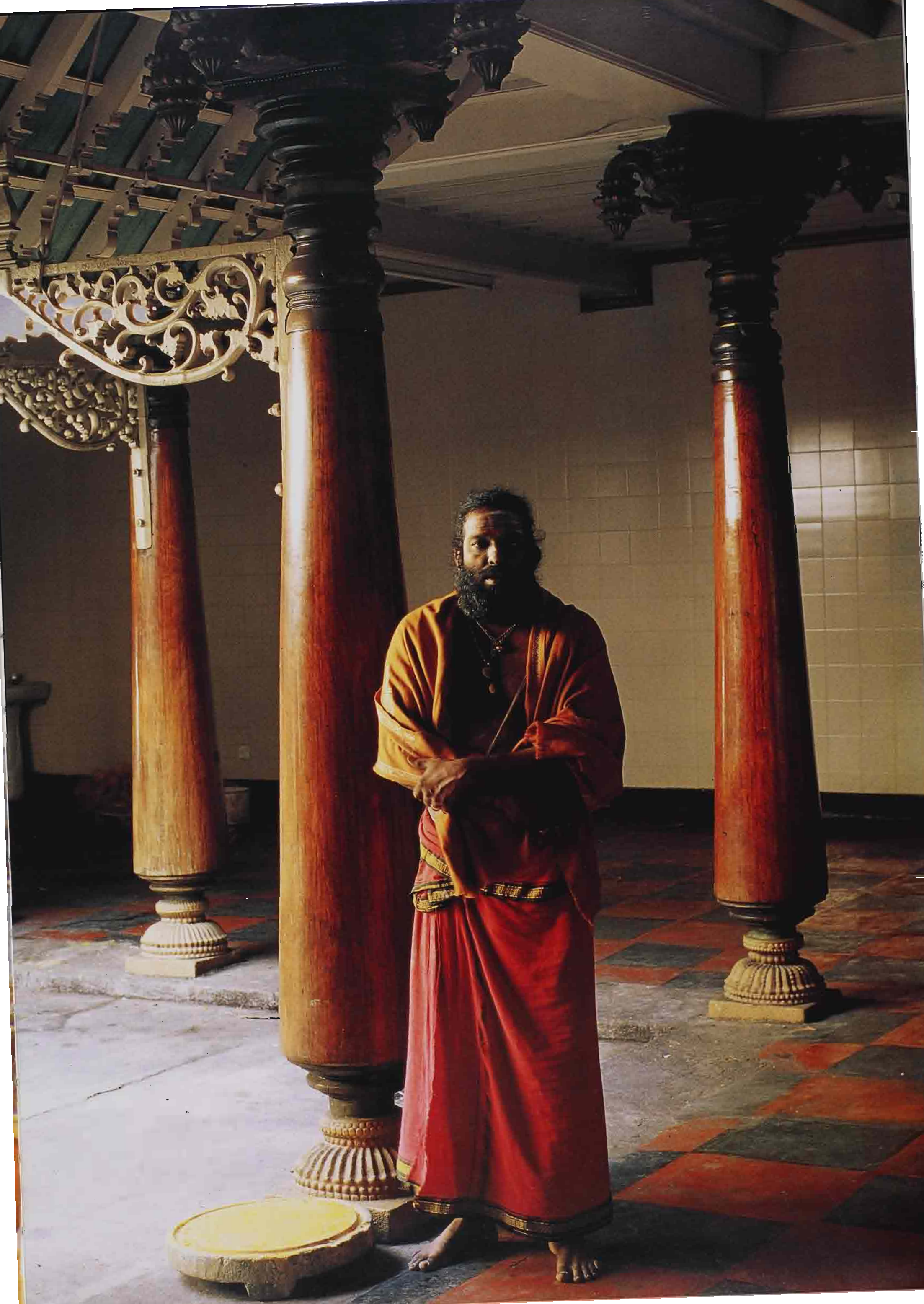


Whatever else may have been said about the Chettiars in Lanka, their piety and God-fearing ways were universally recognised and respected. Every Chettiar firm, as a matter of sacred tradition, committed a fixed percentage of its profits every year for charity. And the Chettiars' greatest charitable contributions were towards the building of temples wherever they did business and providing for both the conduct of worship as well as festivals in them. The Nattukottai Chettiars have contributed 22 temples, four choultries (ambalama-s) and two halls to Sri Lanka – and every one of them is still in use, though of Chettiars there are just a couple worshipping in any of them today.

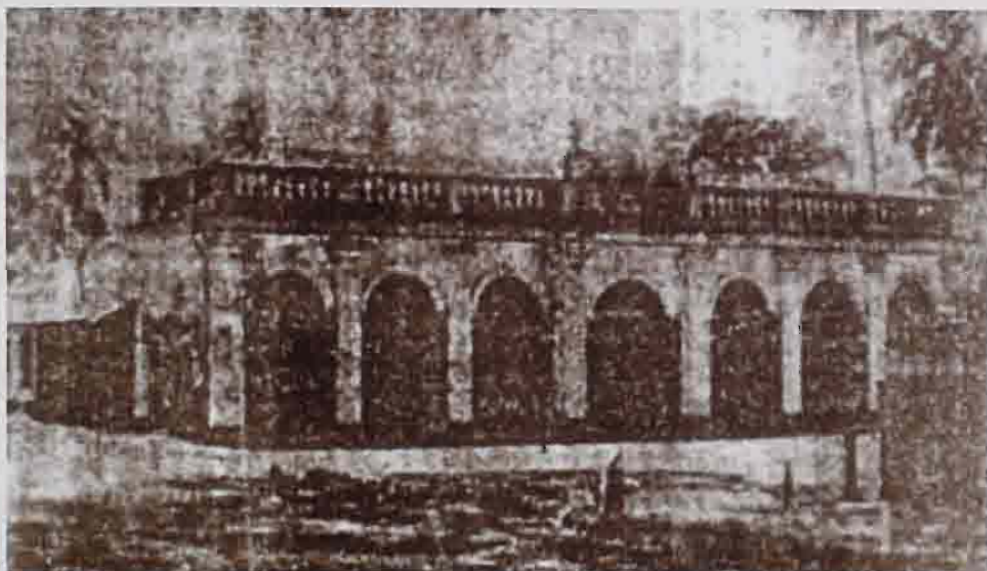
The temples the Chettiars built overseas all reflected the traditional Tamil temple architecture. But in Ceylon, and in other countries, they forsook traditional granite for the pillars and embellished the interiors with teak pillars (as seen on these two pages) in the manner they did with their mansions at home.

On left is the Gampola Temple, built in 1930. Below, three Chettiars and their wives participate in the 1999 re-consecration of the New Kathiresan Temple, the second built in Sea Street, as the priests chant the prayers. Third from left in the front row is Rm. Palaniappa Chettiar, chief trustee of the Colombo Chettiar temples at the time, who led the restoration, and next to him is Siva Shri Swami Viswanathan Gurukkal who conducted the kumbabhishekham. And on facing page is the chief priest of the New Kathiresan Temple in Sea Street, better known as Chetty Street, once a street lined with Chettiar firms. In all three pictures, note the traditional teak pillars.







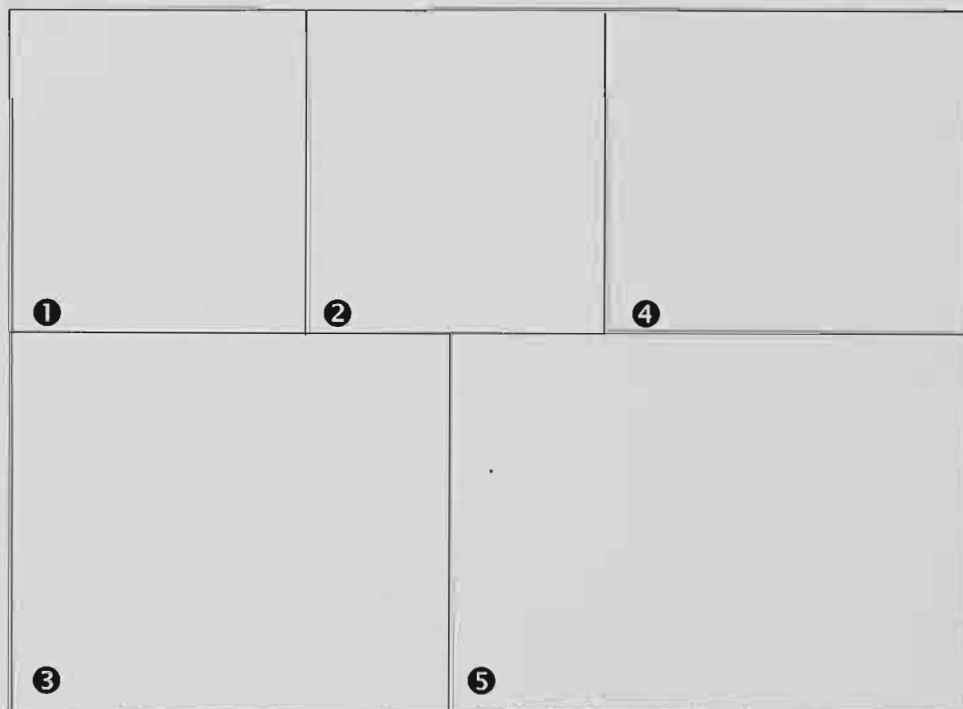


The chief temples – and among the earliest (the oldest is the Galle temple) – the Chettiars built were in Colombo, on Sea (Chetty) Street and Galle Road, Bambalapitiya. On facing page are the first two temples the Chettiars built in Colombo, the old Kathirvelayuthaswami (Kathiresan) temples. The first one, on the left, was built at 239 Chetty Street in 1809 by the Colombo Chettiars. The second temple with the same name, but with the prefix ‘New’, was built in 1839 (the gopuram was raised in 1932) by a group of seven headed by Pl. A. Vellaiyan Chettiar, a kitangi-widh to its north, at 251 Sea Street. Later, other Kathirvelayuthaswami Temples were built on Galle Road, Bambalapitiya.

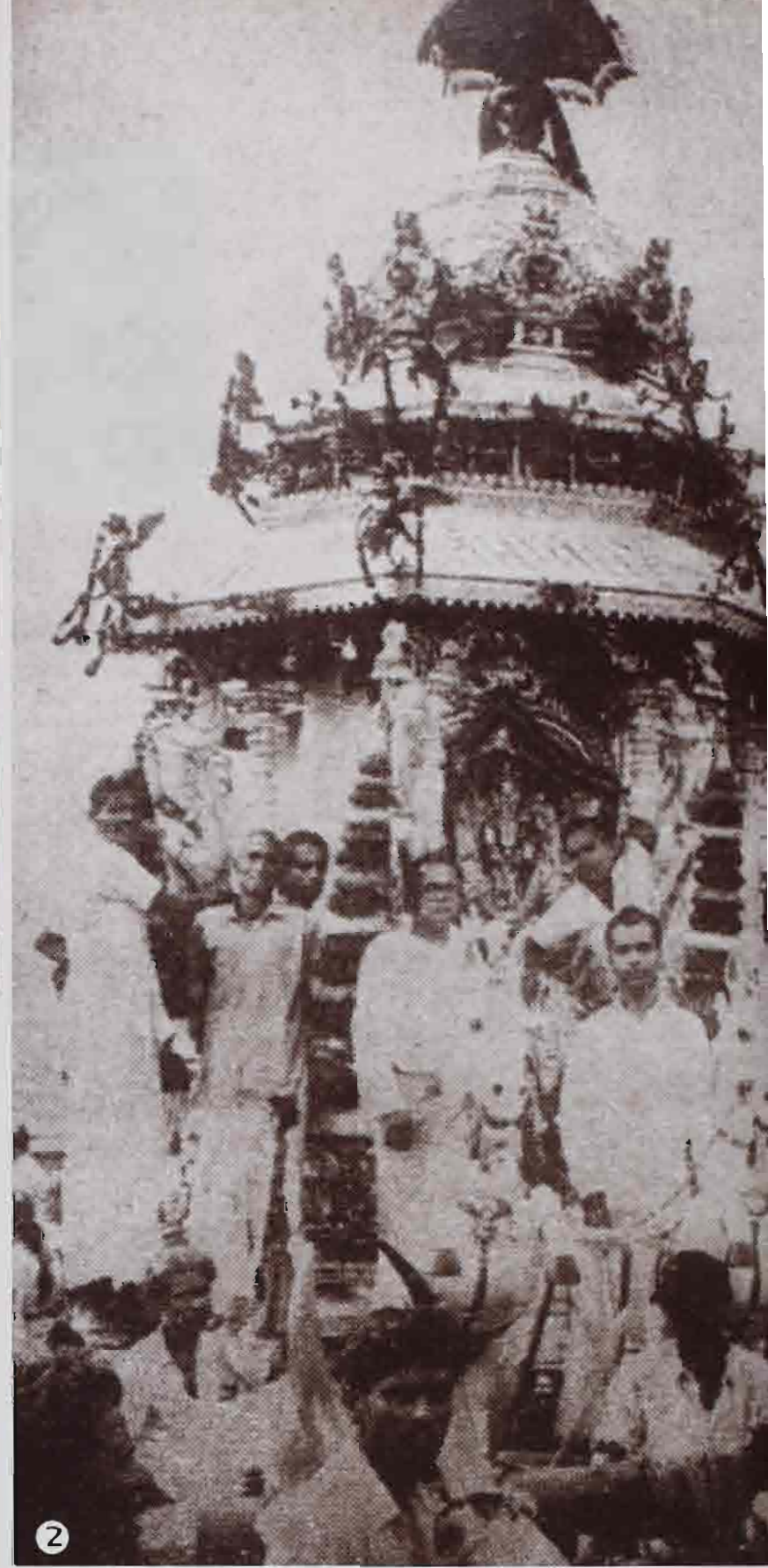
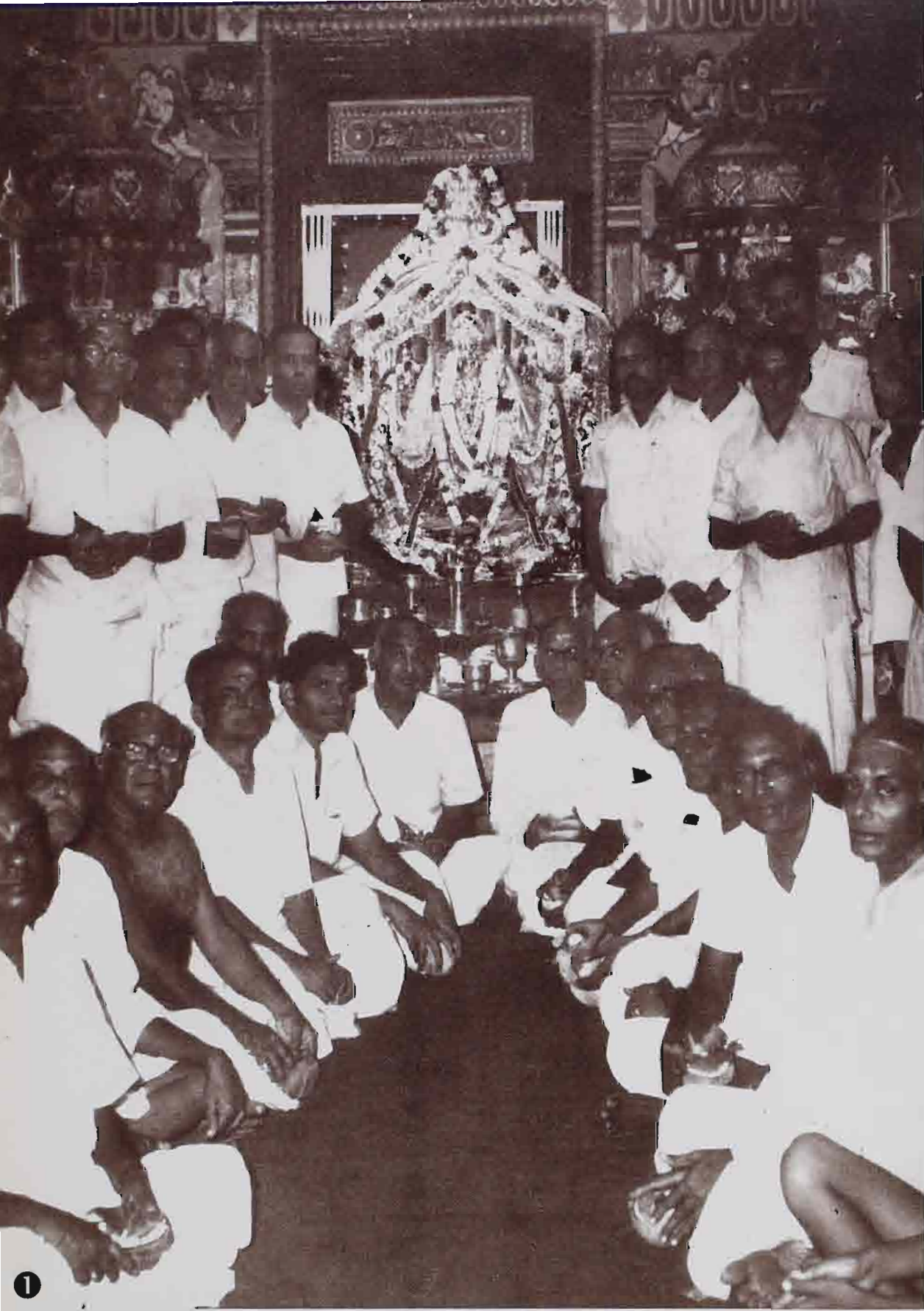
The pictures on this page show the development of the two Bambalapitiya Kathiresan Temples, whose links with the respective Sea Street temples are umbilical. Top row: The old Kathiresan Temple at 123 Galle Road as it was, when built in the latter half of the 19th Century, and as it is today. Above: The newer Kathiresan Temple at 339 Galle Road, Bambalapitiya, almost edging Wellawatte, as it was when built in 1874 and as it is today after renovation. As part of the redevelopment of this temple, a 1000-seat hall with stage – much used for weddings – was built in 1972 (right) and adjacent to it was raised in 1992 another hall, for marriage feasts, both ensuring the maintenance of the temple in the condition renovation has blessed it with.

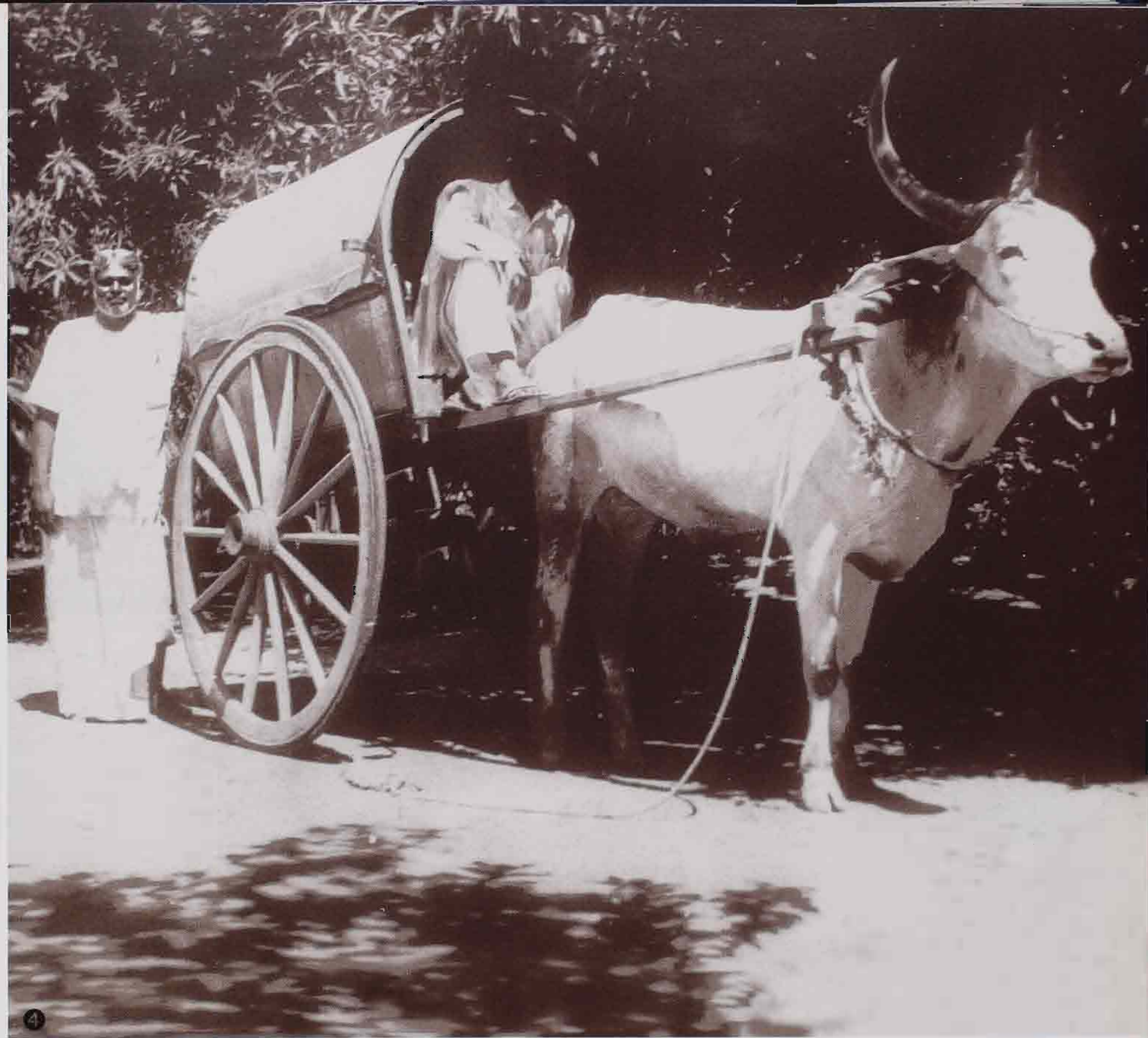
The Sea Street and Bambalapitiya temples are also linked by the annual Aadi Vél festival in July/August which was once a highlight of the year in Colombo but which now continues in lower key. During the festival, the deity from each of the Sea Street temples is taken in turn in alternative years to the counterpart temple in Bambalapitiya. Overleaf, 1. The Chettiars gather in 1974 before the deity is borne out to either the silver or golden chariot of the temples that is used for the procession to Bambalapitiya and which returns after a week. 2. The chariot during a procession in an earlier age when the Chettiar presence on it was a very visible one. 3. From the 1970s till well into the 1990s, the two temples were dedicatedly tended by Rm. Palaniappa Chettiar of the Bank of Chettinad.

Here he is seen talking with President J.R. Jayawardene at the gates of President’s House where the chariot would make a traditional halt for successive Heads of State to receive the blessings of the God. With them are V. Nachiappa Chettiar and Rm. Kasiviswanathan Chettiar, among the few Chettiars left in the Island in the 1980s. 4. Business and worship may have been the first priorities of the Chettiars, not necessarily in that order, but their hospitality was legendary, their contribution to education and culture considerable – and there were occasions they could relax too. Chokkalingam Chettiar of Koslanda Estate has here just succeeded in getting a neighbouring estate owner, R. A. Nadesan, to try his hand at driving a traditional Chettinad bullock cart favoured for family transport in the age before the car. 5. When the age of the car dawned, there were probably more cars in Chettinad than anywhere else in the Madras Presidency except the major cities. And these cars were imported from wherever



the Chettiars had their firms, but their contribution to Ceylon’s car importers was probably the greatest considering the proximity of the two countries and the Boat Mail link. Here, several Chettiars with Ceylon backgrounds join together for a holiday ‘tour’, very likely in Ceylon, it was stated.







The itinerant trader of the 19th Century was the South Indian Moor whose goodie-laden boxes, head-loads for hardy Tamil carriers, were taken from town to town, village to village and even to isolated plantation bungalows, as above. Without the Muslim peddlars from South India, many a housewife would have been starved of textiles, crockery and household requirements.

For all their commitment to trade that met the requirements of home-makers, it was in the world of gems that the Moors became acknowledged experts.

The South Indian Moors were particularly renowned in the pearl trade, with which they were associated for centuries, as skippers of boats – their being called *Marakkayar* had everything to do with the Tamil word, *marakkalam* (wooden boats), indicative of marine skills – divers and merchants who could assess the quality of a pearl by the look of it (as in the early 20th Century picture on the facing page, top). Their expertise with pearls was extended to the other gemstones of Lanka and there was a time when the leading gem merchants in the Island were from among the Moors of Galle and Beruwela, the former with heritages going back to the early Arab settlements and the latter settlers from the Fisheries Coast in the 11th-14th Centuries. In the picture on the facing page, bottom, a Muslim gem trader wearing the typical attire of the prosperous Moors of the time – ‘beehive’ cap, coat and checked ‘Palayakat’ (Pulicat, just north of Madras) sarong, and curved slippers recalling an Arab heritage – examines gems offered by a team of Sinhalese dealers. The gem trade, today a significant foreign exchange earner, still has a dominant Muslim presence.

South Indian Moors

Once, the Ceylon Censuses listed separately the Ceylon Moors and the South Indian, or Coast, Moors, at last count 235,000 and 35,000 respectively. The 2001 Census no longer makes the distinction; they are all Moors. Maybe, in time, they will be known as the Arvi Muslims – as many scholars on both sides of the Palk Strait have begun to refer to them – the Muslims who speak and write Arabic-Tamil. It’s a term which respects two heritages that are virtually one, the difference being only their migration to Lanka: Sri Lankan Moors, if they date to before the British era; Coast Moors if they began to arrive in the Island after 1796.

Their common heritage is an Arab-Malabar one, dating to that pre-Islamic age, when the Arabs who were masters of the monsoon winds traded with the ancient ports of western and southern Lanka and the entrepôts of the Malabar and Fisheries Coasts of South India whose hinterland was long referred to as Malabar, with Tamil its tongue. The early Arab traders, seeking spices and coconut produce, ivory and chanks, timber and gems, and having to stay for long stretches in the South Asian ports they came to, married local women. Those who married on the Malabar Coast became the Mappilas, those on the Fisheries Coast the *Marakkayar*, those in its hinterland the *Lebbes* and the *Rowthers*, and those who came to Lanka became the Ceylon Moors who married into the *Mukkuvar*, themselves longtime settlers from the Fisheries and southern Malabar Coasts. And in time, many of the former married into the latter as well. Inevitably, ancient Tamil combined with the Arabic of their home ports and became the *lingua franca* of the Arab settlers on both sides of the Palk Strait. When Islam changed the religious character of West Asia, Arab traders still with roots in their home ports became Muslim and their families in South India and Lanka followed suit. And as the centuries passed, they were joined in trade and wedlock by new generations of settlers from Egypt and Abyssinia, Yemen and the ports of the Arabian/Persian Gulf. The descendants of this blending are those the Portuguese named the Moors, on both sides of the Palk Strait. But in Lanka, those whose settlement predated the British have traditionally seen themselves as different from the itinerant traders who arrived after the British; both, however, are mainly Sunni Muslims of the Shafi’i school, both have traditionally been Tamil-speaking with a common literary tradition, both have primarily been traders, and both have much in common in the practice of their faith. They have in common their devotion to the Sufi saints of South India. Sheikh Mohideen Abdul Qadir Jilani, Persian-born but South Indian-settled in the 12th Century and known in Tamil as Mohideen *Andavar*, is remembered in the cave-mosque of Daftar Jilani near Balangoda, while Saint Shahul Hamid of Nagore on the Coromandel Coast, Meeran Sahib in Sri Lanka, is remembered in the ‘Beach Mosque’ near Kalmunai. The former’s associations were more with the Lakshadweep Islands and Kerala, from where still come those carrying the word, while the latter’s are with the coast of Tamil Nadu where the saint of Nagore is revered by those of all faiths.

Symbolic representation of original tombs is very much an Indian Muslim tradition.

The age of settlement, however, has made all the difference. With the British opening up infrastructure that linked the two shores of the Palk Strait, the later Moors were able, with the means of easier travel available to them, particularly after 1914, to maintain close links with their homes in Kilakkarai and Kayalpattinam, on the Fisheries Coast, and Tenkasi, Kadayanallur and Dindigul in its hinterland. The Fisheries Coast ports were not far from the ancient entrepot of Kayal the Arabs had anchored in, and which Marco Polo wrote of.

One other group of Muslims from South India that settled in Ceylon was the Bhatkal Muslims from the Kanara or Konkan Coast. Small in number, they have nevertheless maintained their identity by marriage within the community. Like other South Indian Muslim groups, they too are part of the business mosaic of the Island.

The Coast Moors, apart from participating in the wholesale rice and textiles trade of the Fisheries and Coromandel Coasts, established themselves as itinerant traders from the earliest British times. Silks and muslins, jewellery and knick-knacks for milady, and household requirements for the locals were the stock-in-trade of these early pedlars whose wares were initially carried as headloads by out-of-work Tamil migrants and, later, by *thavalam* or pack bull caravans. From peddling to setting up petty provision stores and tea-shops in isolated parts of the Island and, later, in urban areas to which had flocked a rural population in search of the security of government service, particularly in the field of infrastructural development, was but a short step. And from establishing small all-purpose shops to becoming the generous credit-giver and moneylender was an even shorter step. None of these activities were guaranteed to win friends, but they certainly were an influence in getting a substantial workforce to worry less about where the next necessity was to come from — even if it was on a local version of the 'never never'.

Today, the South Indian Moors who still remain in the Island are less into petty retailing for the domestic consumer than into a variety of other trading activities, including, as always, gems and jewellery. The needs they meet today are not as vital to the wellbeing of the local population as they were from the 1880s till the 1950s, but then they too have changed with the times in an island where everyday needs are no longer a struggle. But when they were, the South Indian Moor was there to contribute — even if it was in a way not exactly welcomed by their clientele.



To all whom it may concern

Whereas Abdul Cauder Sahaid Markar, Merchant, of Keelakery who is about to proceed to the Coast of Arabia on a pilgrimage to the Tomb of Mahomet at Mecca, has applied to us the Lieutenant Governor of the Island of Ceylon for a Certificate of our knowledge of his Character and respectability for the greater security of himself, his Wife and his retinue during his said pilgrimage. We have granted this our assent and we do hereby also certify that Abdul Cauder Sahaid Markar is a Merchant, whose fair and honest dealings, in all the extensive concerns he has had with his Majesty's Government of Ceylon render him deserving of its Countenance and protection, requiring and requesting of all, or any, Subjects, Friends or Allies to His Majesty George the Fourth, by the grace of God, of the united Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland King, defender of the faith, that may meet the said Abdul Cauder Sahaid Markar not to give the least harassment or molestation, during his intended pilgrimage.

Given at Colombo this day of February 1821

(H. G. G. G.)
 Robert Taylor

The encouragement the British gave the South Indian Moors to establish themselves in Ceylon and put down roots as traders is reflected in the documents featured on this page. To the ruling power, middlemen as traders and financiers were essential to enable them to keep their distance from the indigenous population of a subject nation. And in the early days, the Chettiars in certain fields and the Muslims in others were just what the sovereign power needed. Both made an impressive contribution to the Island, but won no Brownie points from the locals, though what they contributed, by fulfilling roles no one wanted, enabled the modern Lanka to develop.

On left, an 1821 document certifying the "fair and honest dealings" of Abdul Cauder Sahaid Markar of Keelakaray, in support of his applications "to proceed (from Ceylon) to the coast of Arabia on a pilgrimage to the Tomb of Mahomet at Mecca".

Below, left, the Town Major's 1809 permit to "Abbu Mahomed Marecaire to pass through the Gates of the Fort of Colombo in a palanquin".

And below, an 1821 permit to "the Followers of Seygo (?) Sadekkethulla Marickar of Kilcarai" to travel around Ceylon with "four muskets, four swords, four daggers, four Palankeen boys each a pike, and his peons wearing Belts with Silver Badges".

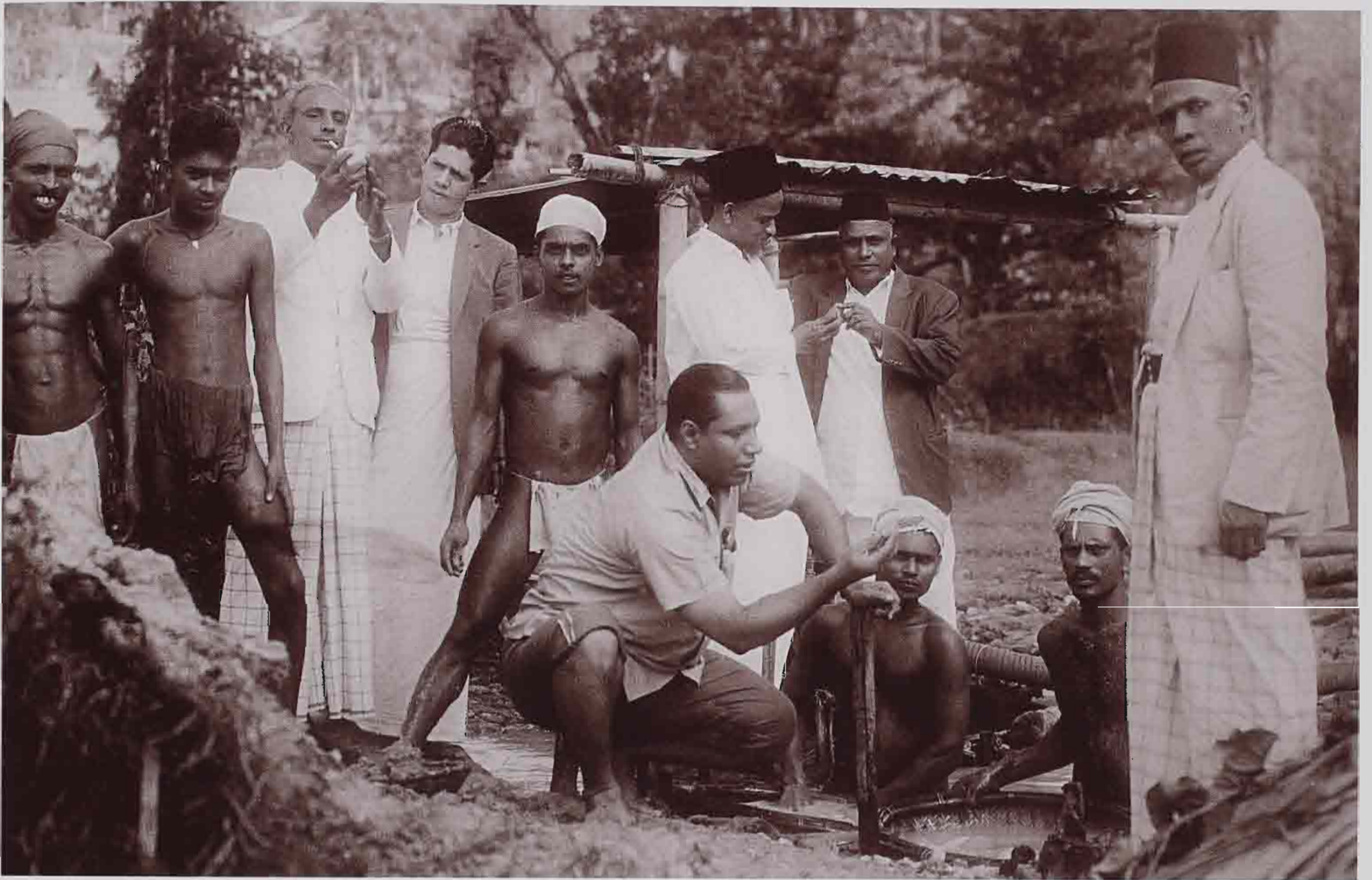
Colombo Jan 22 1809

Permit Abbu Mahomed Marecaire to pass thro' the Gates of the Fort of Colombo in a Palanquin

To the Officer in Charge
 Comd of the Garrison, Town Major
 N. South Gate Guard.

This is to certify that the Followers of Seygo Sadekkethulla Marickar of Kilcarai have been permitted to travel in Ceylon armed as follows Four Muskets Four Swords, Four Daggers, Four Palankeen Boys each a Pike, and his Peons wearing Belts with Silver Badges

By His Excellency's Order
 30th December 1821
 Robert Taylor



Descended from the family of the renowned Seethakathi Marikkar of Kilakkarai, who was considered the leader of the Muslims of the Fisheries Coast and revered as a philanthropist, is B.S. Abdul Rahman who went on to build a commercial empire that spans Asia from Hong Kong to Dubai. 'Sena Aana', as he is known, was born to a father who was renowned for his ability to 'read' a pearl and put that ability to good use in the pearl fisheries of Ceylon. The son, rather than live in the shadow of his father, decided to strike out on his own in Ceylon and, in a teaboy to international entrepreneur story, took his first steps to success by becoming a successful gem trader. His ability to 'read' a precious stone is seen in the picture at top where he examines a stone just brought up from a mine in the Ceylon of the early 1960s. It was this ability that led to the family developing Buhary Building (above), in the Pettah, where Buhary & Co remains a name to reckon with in the gem and jewellery business. And on left is another descendant of the Seethakathi family, Abamado Lebbe, descended from merchants who migrated to the kingdom of Narendrasinghe (1707-1739) and who became a well-known figure in Kandy in the early 20th Century. From gems to business to serving the Government, especially in the Police Force, was a noteworthy contribution Ahmado Lebbe and his family made to Lanka.



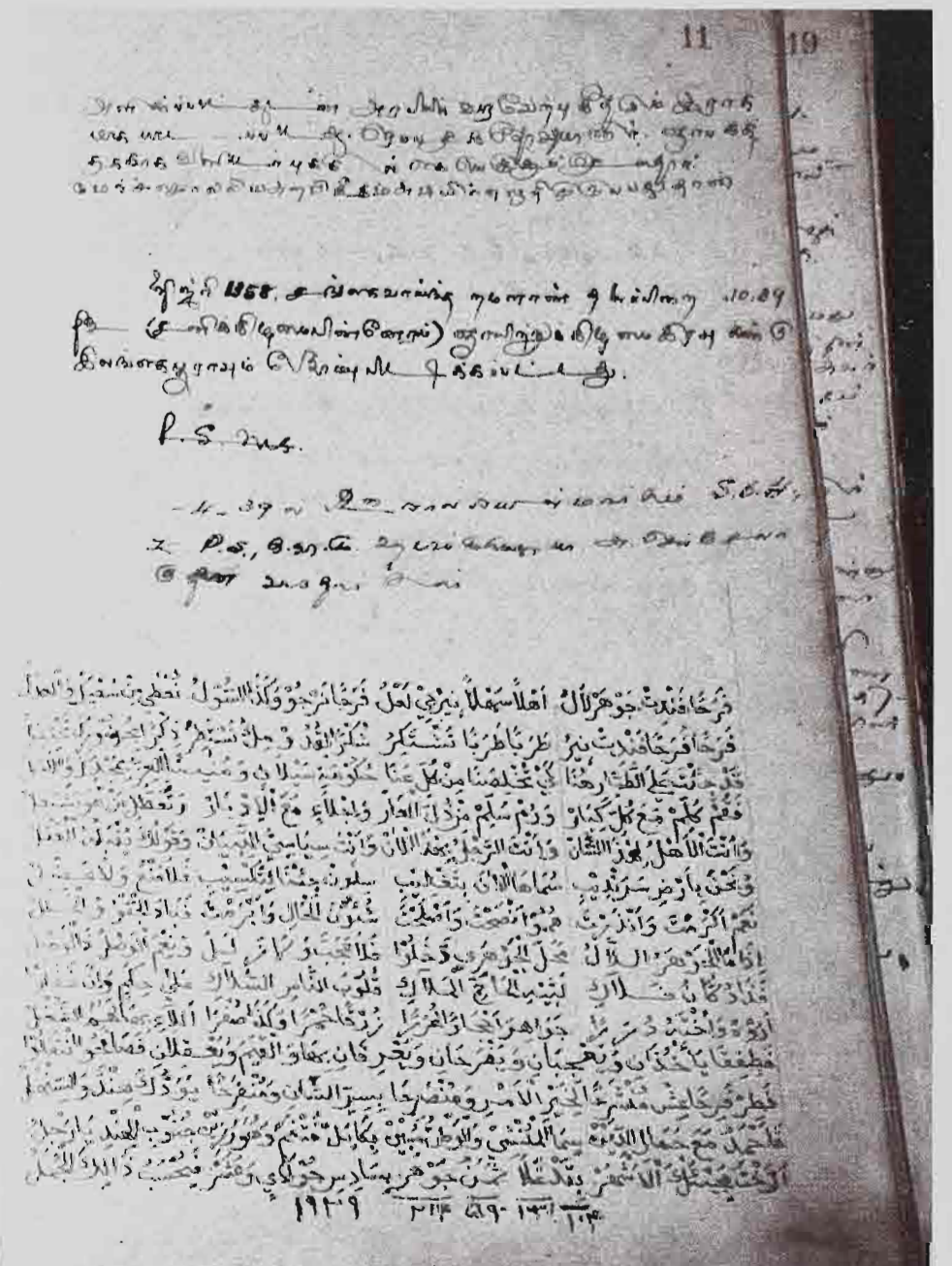
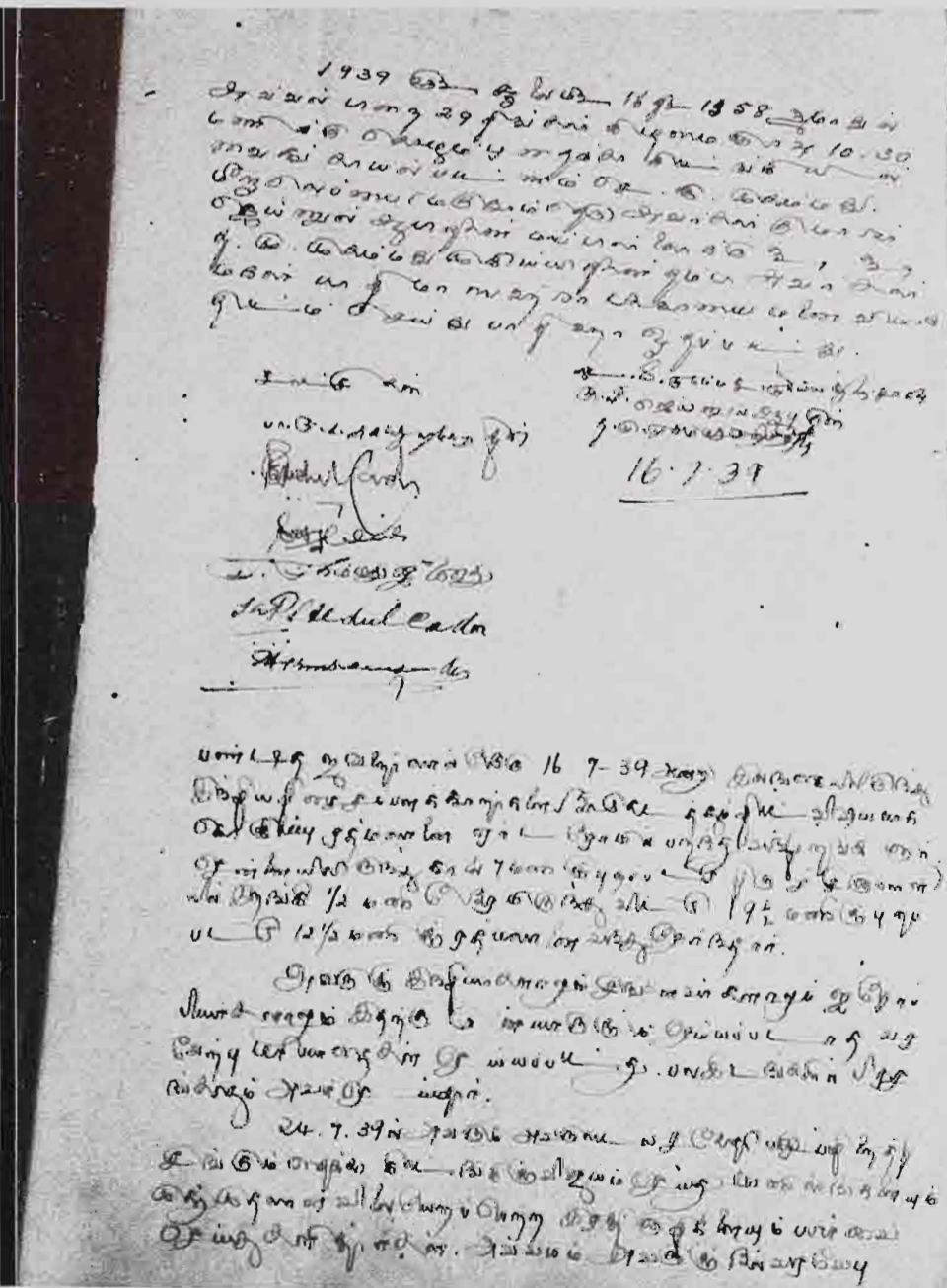
Few identifiable shops of the South Indian Moors from the Kilakkarai-Kayalpattinam coast exist in Sri Lanka today. One that has been a name known for over a hundred years is Pallak Lebbe's in 2nd Cross Street. The company is also one of the rare ones whose registers are still in existence. P. S. K. V. Pallak Lebbe, Gem Merchants and Jewellers, was started in 1897, according to the registers, by P. S. Sathakku Abdul Cader Pallak Lebbe Alim of Kayalpattinam. His sons, P. S. M. Sulaiman Lebbe Haji and P. S. Abdul Kadir Naina Haji, and two kinsmen run the business seen on left.

The minutes of the company also record the visit of Jawaharlal Nehru to the shop in 1939 and his words of commendation spoken on the occasion (below).

On the facing page, more Kilakkarai-Kayalpattinam shops. One of the best known Kilakkarai-Kayalpattinam shops in the 70s and 80s was Al Haj K. S. A. Salih's Star Enterprises also known as GEMEX (top, left) in Keyzer Street, Pettah. Most Kilakkarai shops in the 20th Century were started in Kurunegala, which was considered the gateway to Ceylon of the Kilakkarai people. Abdul Salih, who spent his first ten years in Ceylon there, was one of the first Kilakkarai merchants to set up shop in Colombo.

Many a shop owned by South Indian Moors is now owned by Sri Lankans, but retain the old names for goodwill. Syed Mohamed & Co. (above, right), specialising in jewellery tools, is one such firm.

At bottom, Ameer & Sons' partners with their van in front of Victoria Park (now Vihara Mahadevi Park) in the 1950s. Agarbatthis, attars and other oriental perfumes were the speciality of the firm founded in 1944 by A. M. Ahmed Mohideen, Abdul Cader and Mohammed Mohideen, Muslims from the old Tinnevely-Madura area of South India. Those from this area were the second group of Tamil-speaking South Indian Muslims to establish themselves in trade in Lanka.





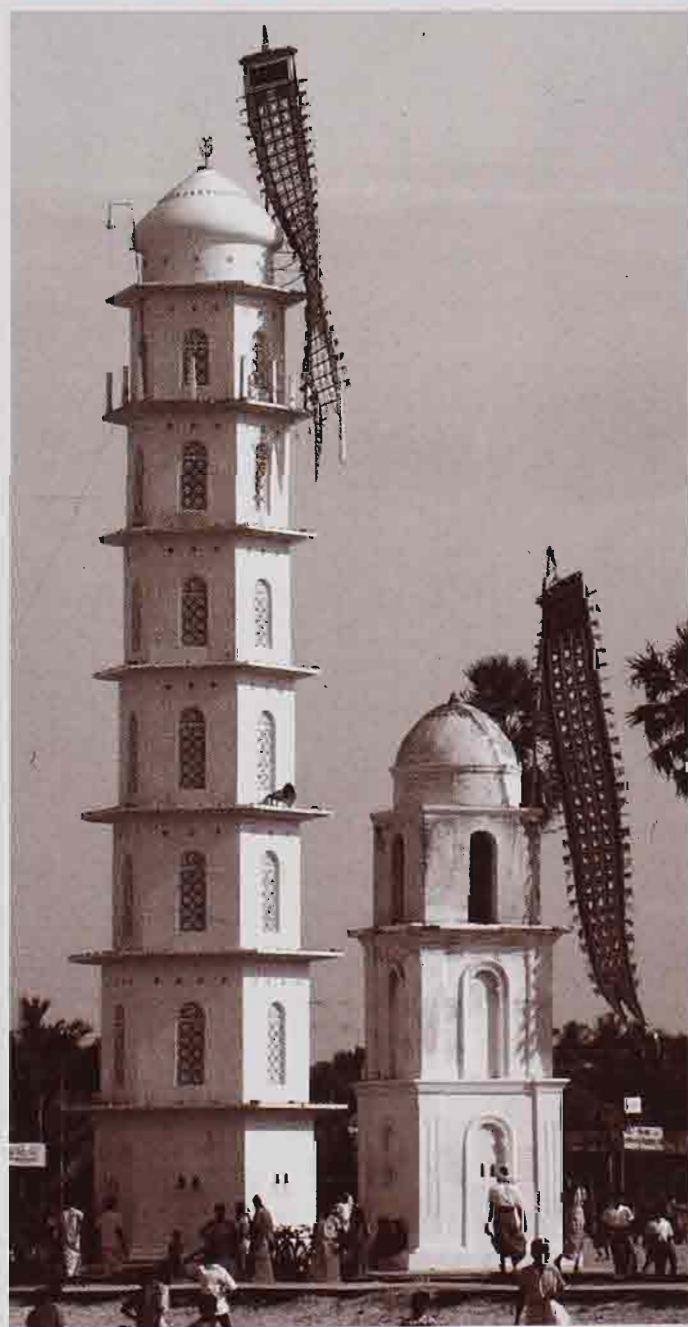




The main mosque of the Kilakkarai-Kayalpattinam Muslims in Sri Lanka is the magnificent Jumma Mosque on 2nd Cross Street, Pettah, seen in the three pictures on left. Two of them are views of the mosque today after renovation to which many families from Kilakkarai and Kayalpattinam contributed. The third, from an old postcard, is of the mosque as seen early in the 20th Century.

On right is the great Maradana Mosque, work on which was completed in 1256 A.H.(c.1849). With the Muslims of Lanka regularly flocking for religious education to the institutions run by the Thayka Sahibs of Kilakkarai and Kayalpattinam – at one time in the 19th Century, there were as many as 200 students from Lanka in Kilakkarai and Kayalpattinam – and with the Thayka Sahibs of both towns regularly visiting Ceylon, the Coast Moors invited the Thayka Sahib of Kilakkarai to visit the Island to lay the foundation stone for the mosque. As the Saint was unable to accept the invitation, he sent his Khalifa, Imamul Arus (Mappillai Lebbe Alim) to lay the foundation of what was to be the biggest mosque in Ceylon. Imamul Arus, a young businessman at the time, became interested in missionary work in Ceylon after laying the foundation stone, then spending nearly 60 years in the Island working for the revival of Islam and encouraging the building of mosques. Over 300 mosques were built in the Island by those from Kilakkarai and Kayalpattinam.

Extreme right is the Bukhary Thayka in Forbes Lane, Colombo, one of the many shrines built by the Kilakkarai-Kayalpattinam Muslims. On right is the Kadakkaraipalli (Beach Mosque) in Kalmunaikudy near Kalmunai in the Eastern Province. It was built around 1815 in honour of the Nagore Saint, Shahul Hamid, who had appeared in a dream and cured Mohamed Tambi Lebbe. The annual festival held here coincides with the great Nagore festival in Tamil Nadu. The shrine is built on sands which are still believed to have miraculous curative powers, and is regularly visited by the sick and the injured. The smaller of the two minaret towers was built in 1929, and the taller in 1963. There are smaller Nagore shrines in Galle, Colombo and Pesalai (Mannar).

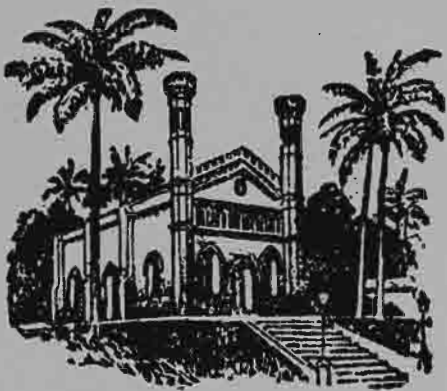




பின்பில்லாணிற் ற. ஹமாணிற் றஹீம்
சன்மார்க்கச் சங்கீத மாலே.

கீழ்க்கரை

ச. த. மு. சதக்கு தம்பி சாஹிபு பாடியது.



மதுரை

தமிழர் சங்க விதவா கிரேண்டாணி

கீழ்க்கரை

அல்ஹாஜ் ஹாபீஸ்

சே. மு. சேய்யரிது முஹம்மது ஆலிம் புகவர் அவர்கள்

பார்வைக்கு அரங்கேற்றப்பட்டது.

காபிசொடர் 2000

கொழும்பு, ராபர்ட் பிரான் அச்சியந்திரசாலையில் பதிப்பிக்கப்பட்டது.



Alhaj Syed Alavi Maulana, M.P. (centre, in the picture on top) presided over the centenary celebrations in Colombo, in 1998, of Kutbusman Mappillai Lebbe Alim (Wali) and the 50th anniversary celebrations of the South India-inspired Nagore Rathif Jalaliya. A. M. S. Thayka Lebbe of the Rathif Jalaliya organised the function.

Another from South India to come to Ceylon for trade was Alhaj S.T.M. Sathakku Thambi Saibu of Kilakkarai who settled in Matale. In time, however, Sathakku Thambi was more successful as a poet and a composer of songs than as a businessman, and became renowned in the Island for his literary contributions in Tamil. His genius for verse and songs led to the people of Kilakkarai gifting him a house in Matale to live in and compose.

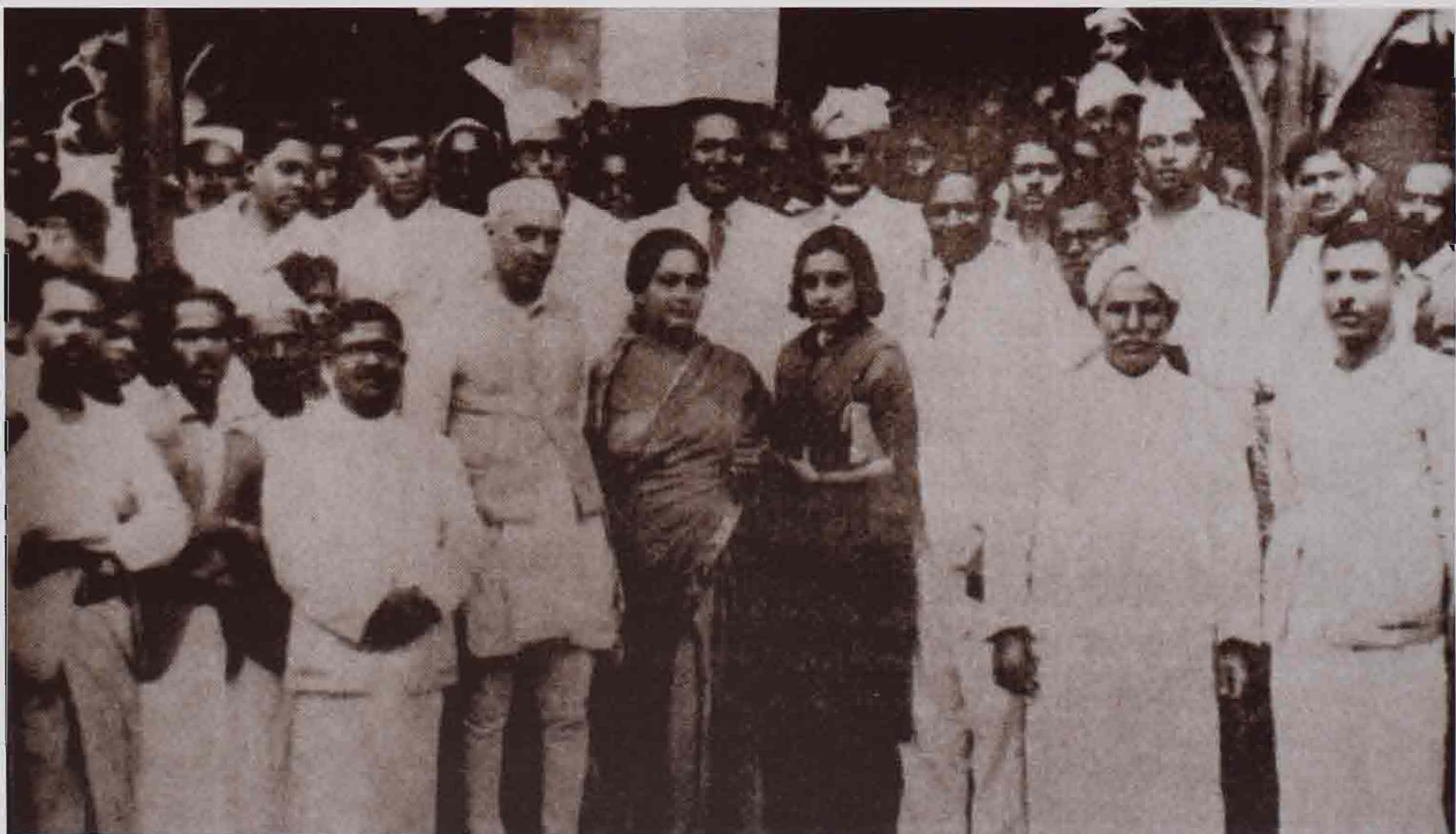
One of the best known anthologies of his work was Sanmarka Sangeetha Malai which was released by Alhaj S. M. Sayed Mohamed Alim, of the Madurai Tamil Sangam. The announcement of the function is featured alongside.

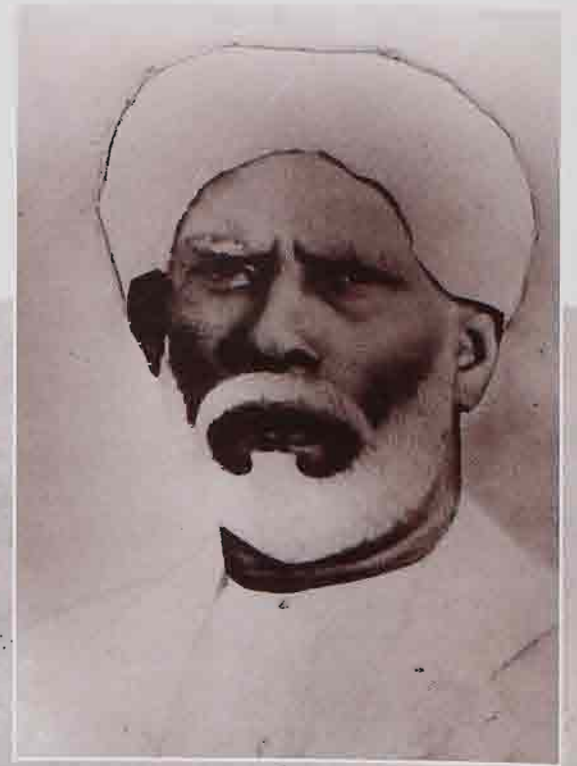
Sufi leaders from South India regularly visited the Island over the years to meet their Sufi brethren. Sufi leader Vellai Khalifa from Nellapalayam in the Tirunelveli District visited Akkaraipattu and Colombo in 1982 (above). Leading his branch of Sufism in Sri Lanka as this publication goes to press is Dr. P. C. Pakeer Jaufer. In the 1930s, Jaufer's father, Seyyith Catharullahshah Sar Khaleeja, became the Chief Priest.

While the Kilakkarai and Kayalpattinam Muslims constitute the largest number of South Indian Moors in Lanka, there were Muslims from several other parts of India who made Ceylon their home from the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. They included the Tinnevelly and Madurai Muslims and those from British Malabar, such as the Mapillas. Some of the best known South Indian Muslim families in Ceylon before Independence came from these parts of South India. Two of the best-known names for their godamba (wheat) rotis and chicken dishes were Buhari's, once run by Tinnevelly Muslims but now Government-owned (below), and Pilawoo's, run by the Palandy family from Kerala. Buhari's Chicken 65 and Pilawoo's Chicken Palandy over the years became, and remain, Lankan favourites.

Palandy, whose two daughters represented Ceylon in rowing, is seen in the early picture on right, with his wife and his first daughter:

In the picture at the bottom, Pandit Nehru and his daughter Indira Gandhi are seen during their visit to Ceylon in 1931 when they were hosted at his tea estate by T. P. Cunjimoosa, from Kerala, who was one of the first Indians to own a tea plantation and factory.







On left is P.B. Umbichy Place, off Wolfendhal Street in the Pettah, named after one of the best known Kerala Muslims to settle in Ceylon. Calicut-born Umbichy (inset on facing page) arrived in Colombo as a teenager in the 1860s with just Rs. 2 on him, and began work as a casual labourer in the dry fish market. P. R. Arunachalam Chettiar, who daily financed local fishermen, lent him Rs. 100 and he was on his way in the dry fish trade. It was a business to reach its peak when P. B. Umbichy's of St. John's Road (on facing page) was named Trade Agents of the Maldivian Government. It was a firm which was to grow with the fertiliser business and as shipping agents.

A philanthropist who generously gave to Muslim and non-Muslim causes, one of his major donations was of land on which Colombo's first airport was developed, in Ratmalana. Another major contribution was several blocks of classrooms (above) for Zabira College, Colombo, the premier Muslim educational institution in Colombo. Umbichy also contributed in millions to the building of mosques, community halls and schools in the Island through the Umbichy Trust. The founder President of the Ceylon Malabar Muslim Association (1925) passed away in 1936 and was buried in a mosque he had helped build in Colombo.

Like others from the Calicut region, football was a passion and his contribution to Ceylon football was immense. Umbichy Place, not far from his St. John's Road office, is across the way from Saunders Place, whose name his favourite football team took – and certainly not in vain, to judge by the championship record he helped it achieve. No contribution of his, however, was greater than the ties he had established with the Maldives and which have remained to this day.

Parsis

From the early years of the 19th Century, the so-called 'Bombay Merchants', mainly from the Bombay and Gujarat region, began arriving in Ceylon in search of trading opportunities. They included Parsis, Borahs, Gujaratis, Memons, Sindhis and Khojas, the Parsis with their close connections with the British trading establishment in Bombay being the first of them.

The Parsis, originally from Fars in Persia, sought refuge in India, near Surat in Gujarat, in the late 7th Century to preserve their religion, Zoroastrianism, from Islamisation by invaders. In 721 A.D., the first Parsi fire temple in India was built and they became Gujarati-speaking Indians. As trade with Europe grew from the port of Surat, their business acumen as much as their minority status made them the most sought after middlemen in the area. With Bombay growing as a major British trading centre in the late 18th Century, the Parsi middlemen began migrating to the city where they were in time to establish themselves as a major link between the British and the local trading communities. Adopting the social skills and education of the British despite a dedicated loyalty to their religion, they became comfortable in both worlds and trusted by both. That trust was to make them wealthy in a proportion far in excess of their numbers, which never grew over 125,000.

The first of the Parsis to migrate to Ceylon from the Bombay-Gujarat coast was Hormusjee Aspandiarjee Khambata who arrived in Ceylon in 1803 and established himself in business, his three ships regularly bringing in Indian goods from Bombay and taking back Ceylon produce. The only two non-British members of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, when it first met in 1839, were Khambata and another Parsi, Shapurjee Hirjee. The Dady Hirjee firm was perhaps the only Indian retailer with a shop in the Fort at the time. The firm also provided a palanquin service and other transport facilities, apart from arranging for the famed Parsi shipbuilders in Bombay to craft the coastal vessels used by many in the Indo-Ceylon-Maldivian coastal trade.

Other distinguished heads of early Parsi trading companies were Cowasjee Eduljee, who took the name of Colombowallah, had coffee estates and much property in Kotahena, the brothers Framjee Bhikajee Khan and Dinshawjee Bhikhajee Khan who dominated business in Grandpass and whose first firm, Framjee Bhikhajee & Co., became the largest Parsi business house in Ceylon, and Dadabhoy Nusserwanjee, who was active in the early days of the trade union movement and became chairman of the Compositors' and Printers' Union.

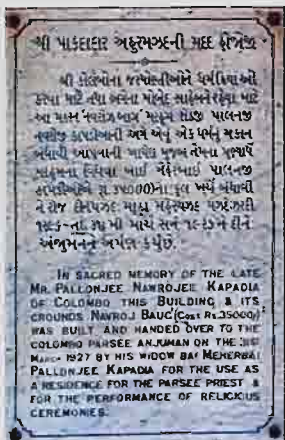
The Parsis, however, moved out of trade faster than any of the other Indian communities and took to the professions in which their contributions to Lanka have been immense. Amongst the earliest of recent Indian origin to become professionals were the Parsis, who were the second, third and fourth Indians in the Ceylon Civil Service. Thereafter, the list of professionals in various fields is long. But emigration has reduced their numbers to around a hundred today, down from several hundreds in their heyday in the Island. Among them, however, are several leading businessmen, like the Rustomjees, Pestonjees, Captains and Choksys.

The members of the Bombay Union Club gather for a group picture (below) that represents a membership that included the Borahs, Gujaratis, Khojas, Memons, Parsis and Sindhis. The short-lived Club, founded in 1905, had a clubhouse in Prince Street, Pettah, that had every facility for the club culture introduced by the British. Ensuring this was the substantial assistance provided by the Parsis and Borahs, led by Framjee Bhikhajee Khan, J. Rustomjee, Carimjee Jafferjee, E.G. Adamaly and T.A.J. Noorbhai, among others.



Two of the early Parsi families in Colombo in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries were the Kapadias and the Khans. Nawrojee Pallonjee Kapadia (below, left) took over the business of Cowasjee Eduljee Colombowallah, when the latter retired in 1880. Cowasjee Eduljee's was at the time the leading Parsi business house in Ceylon, situated on Fourth Cross Street.

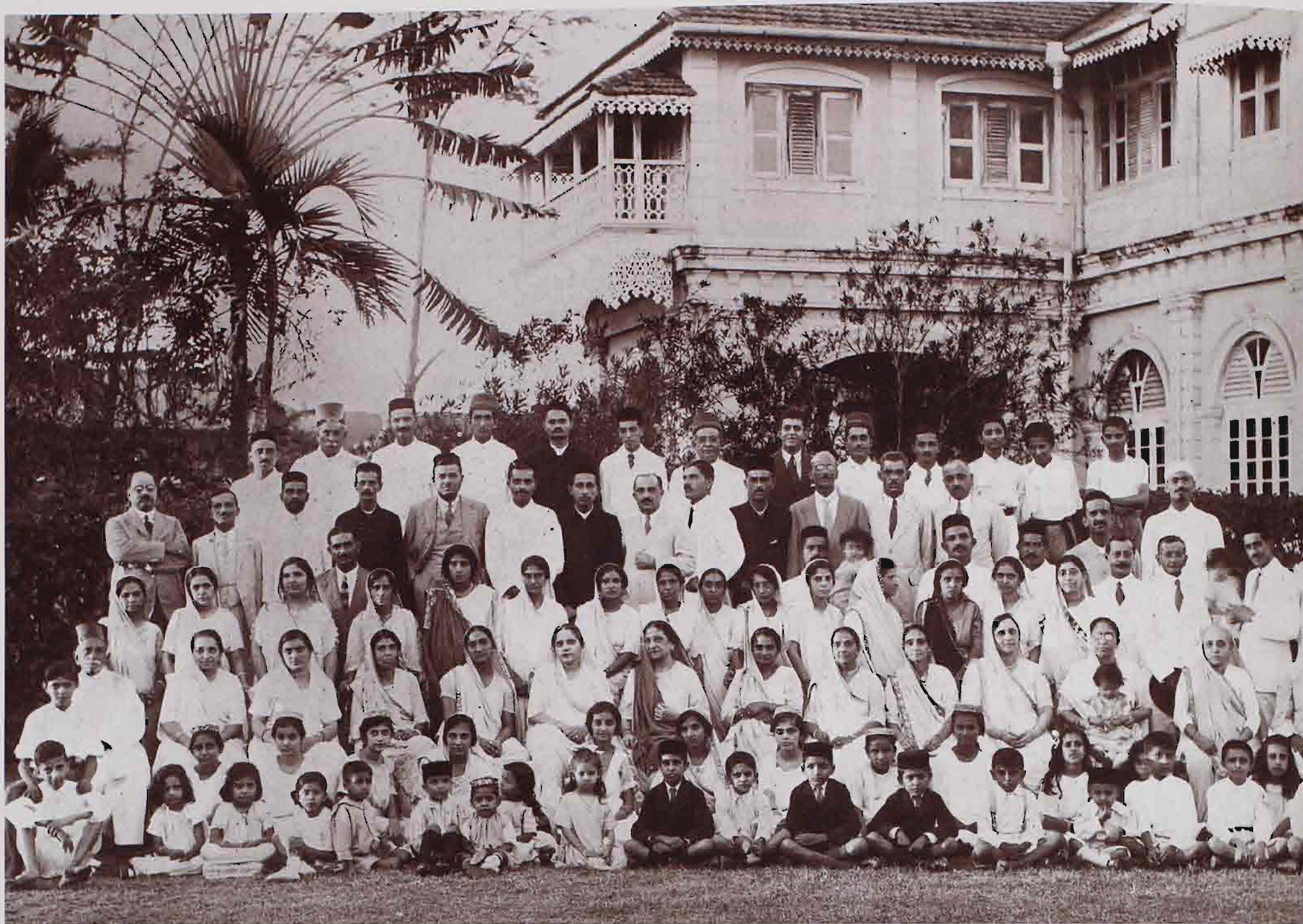
Pallonjee Kapadia was known for his community service and in 1912 brought down a Parsi priest to serve the community. He planned to construct a prayer hall for the Parsis in Colombo, but passed away in 1923 before he could fulfil his dream. His widow, Meherbai (below, right), donated a piece of land in 5th Lane, Kollupitiya, and there she built in her husband's memory the large prayer hall, Navroj Baugh, that still serves the community. The plaque commemorating the donation is seen alongside.



Jal, their son, donated a pavilion to the Notts Cricket and Athletic Club in 1939. On its site now stands the home of the Government Archives.

In the 1840s, the brothers Framjee Bhikhajee Khan and Dinshawjee Bhikhajee Khan were well-known in business circles. Their sons set up the Colombo Oil Mills in Grandpass and became one of the largest exporters of coconut oil from Ceylon. In 1911, the mill was taken over by Framjee Bhikhajee & Company, who generously contributed to various civic causes in Colombo. The family built the Khan Clock Tower (on right) in the heart of Colombo and it still remains a landmark, marking the entrance to Pettah. They also contributed the Khan Memorial hospital for children with severe orthopaedic problems. The hospital (bottom) is situated close to the National Eye Hospital in Ward Place, which, for many years, till the 1960s, had Dr. Jamshed Dadabhoj, another Parsi, the youngest son of Dadabhoj Nusserwanjee, in charge.







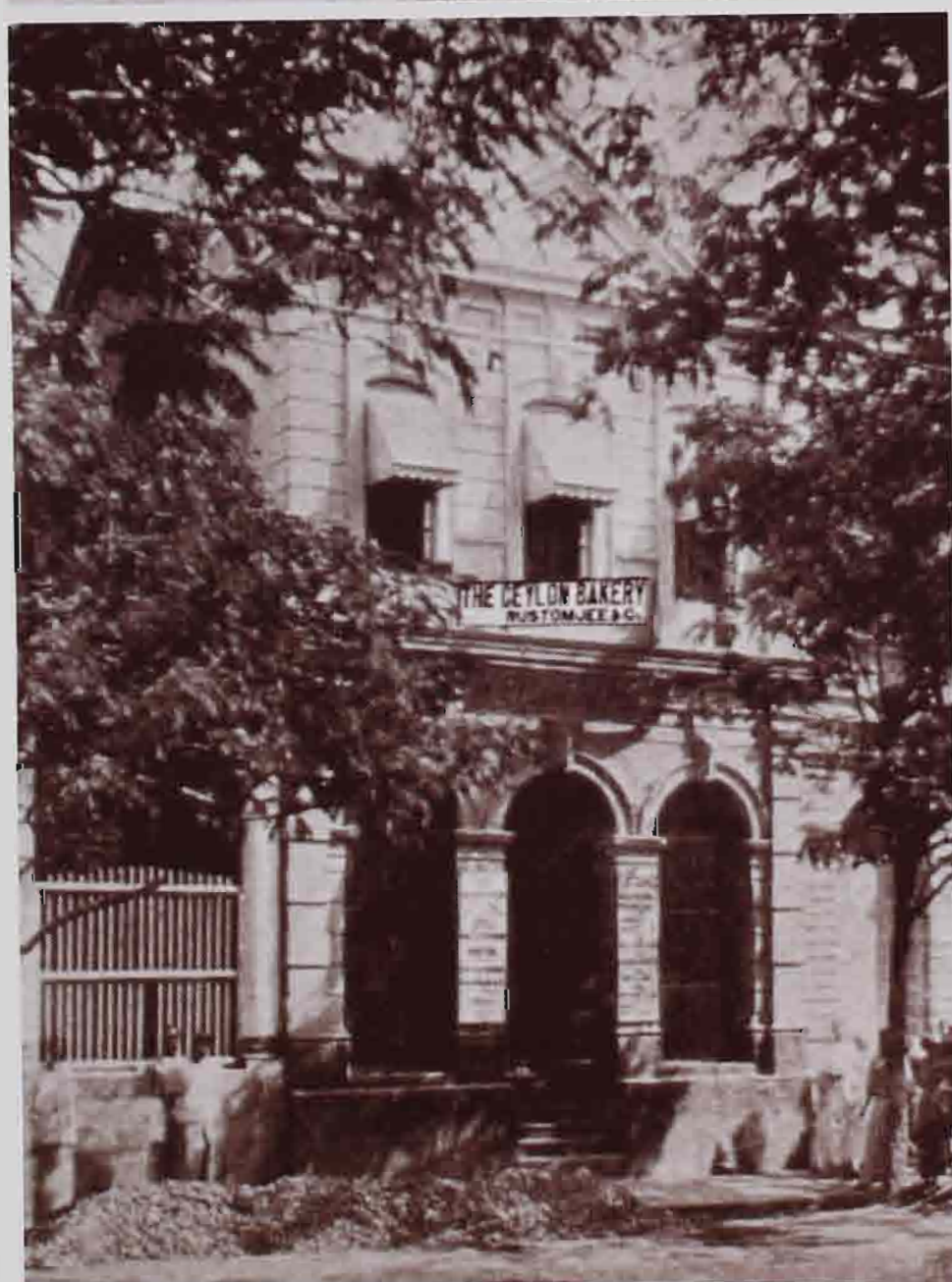
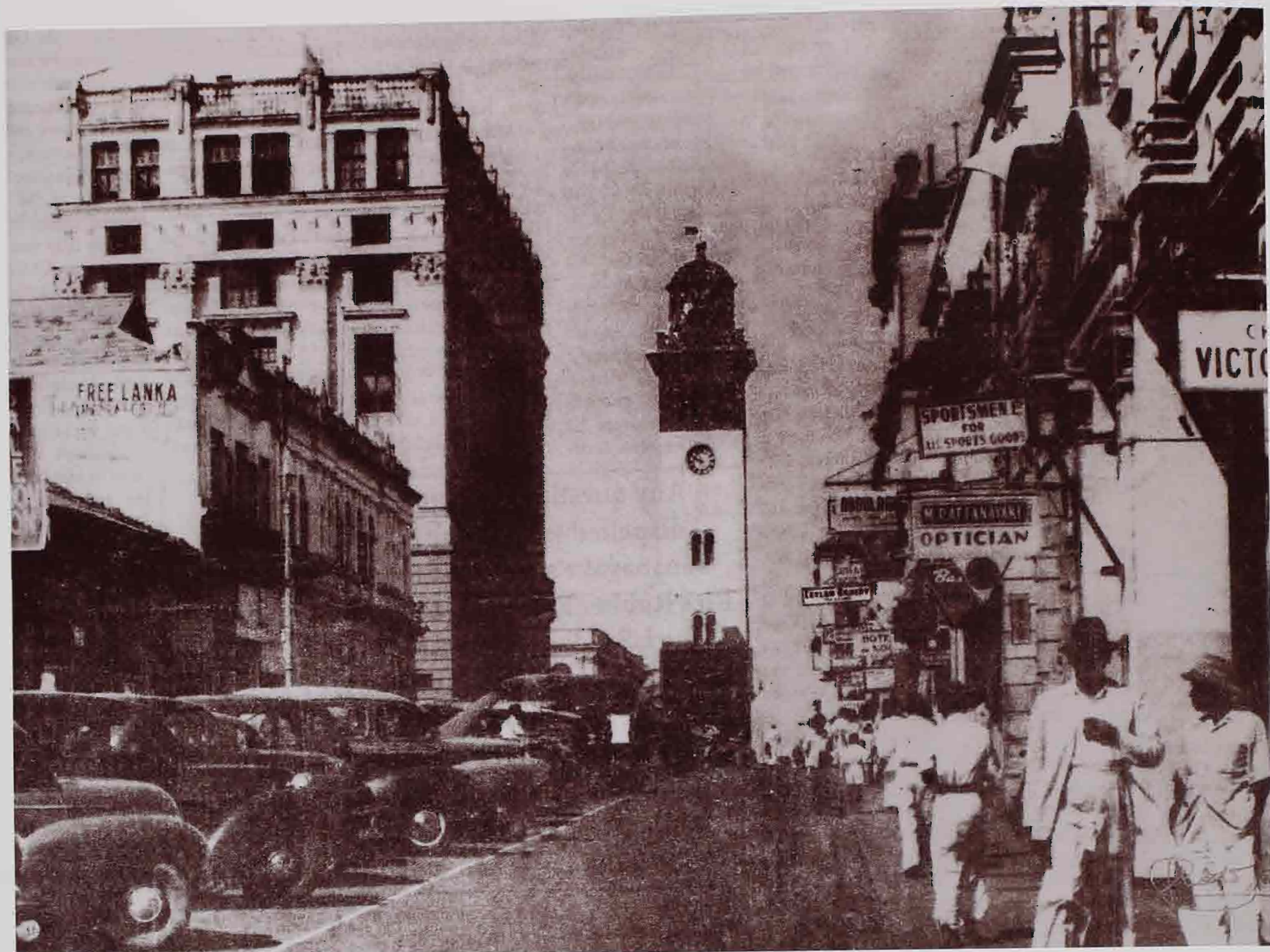
The Khan brothers and their children lived in a magnificent bungalow, Framjee House, at the junction of Station Road and Galle Road, Kollupitiya. During the lifetime of the family, Framjee House was open house to the Parsis of Colombo every Sunday and on all festive occasions. The picture on far left was taken on one such occasion, with Framjee House in the background.

When the Framjee House era ended in the 1940s, Framroz Rustomjee (second left) contributed ground in Clifford Road, Kollupitiya, and Ruttonshah Rustomjee (left) raised the Parasmani Hall on it, the Ceylon Parsi Social Centre, in memory of his parents. The plaques commemorating the gifts of both are seen below their pictures. The few remaining Parsis in Colombo still meet here from time-to-time. But their numbers are much fewer than those seen in the 1931 picture below, taken in front of the old Tamil Union Sports Club pavilion in Campbell Place, which the Parsi Sports Club used before Parasmani Hall was built. Framroz Rustomjee's father, Rustomjee Muncherjee (see overleaf) arrived in Ceylon in 1860. It was in Parasmani Hall that the Parsis honed their skills in table tennis to provide many a Ceylon champion in the 1950s and 1960s.

THESE GROUNDS IN EXTENT
1 ROOD AND 9 PERCHES ON WHICH
PARASMANI HALL STANDS
WERE DONATED BY
MR. FRAMRDZ RUSTOMJEE, J.P.,U.M.
IN MEMORY OF HIS DEPARTED SON
JAMSHED AND OTHER RELATIVES.

"PARASMANI HALL."
THIS BUILDING HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED
BY
RUTTONSHAH RUSTOMJEE
OF BILIMORA, TO PERPETUATE
THE MEMORY OF HIS DECEASED PARENTS
RUSTOMJEE PESTONJEE BHOORY
AND
MANECKBAI RUSTOMJEE BHOORY
TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS, PHILOSOPHICAL, SCIENTIFIC,
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES BENEFICIAL
TO THE PARSEES AND THE PUBLIC OF CEYLON.
COST OF THE BUILDING RS. 31,000/- THIRTY ONE THOUSAND
10TH NOVEMBER 1947.





Chatham Street in the early 20th Century (at the top of the page), with the Ceylon Bakery sign seen on the right. Chands, the pioneering sports goods firm, was next to the Bakery. The Bakery (on left), which offered table service too (above), was started by Rustomjee Muncherjee in 1875 as Rustomjee & Co. It became the Ceylon Bakery when it was taken over by L.P. Billimoria in 1884. Subsequently, Cowasjee Merwanjee Nilgiriya, who came to Ceylon in 1896, joined the bakery and before long became its Managing Director. His involvement with the Ceylon Bakery was so great that it became more associated with him than anyone else. His son Jamshed became a leading architect.

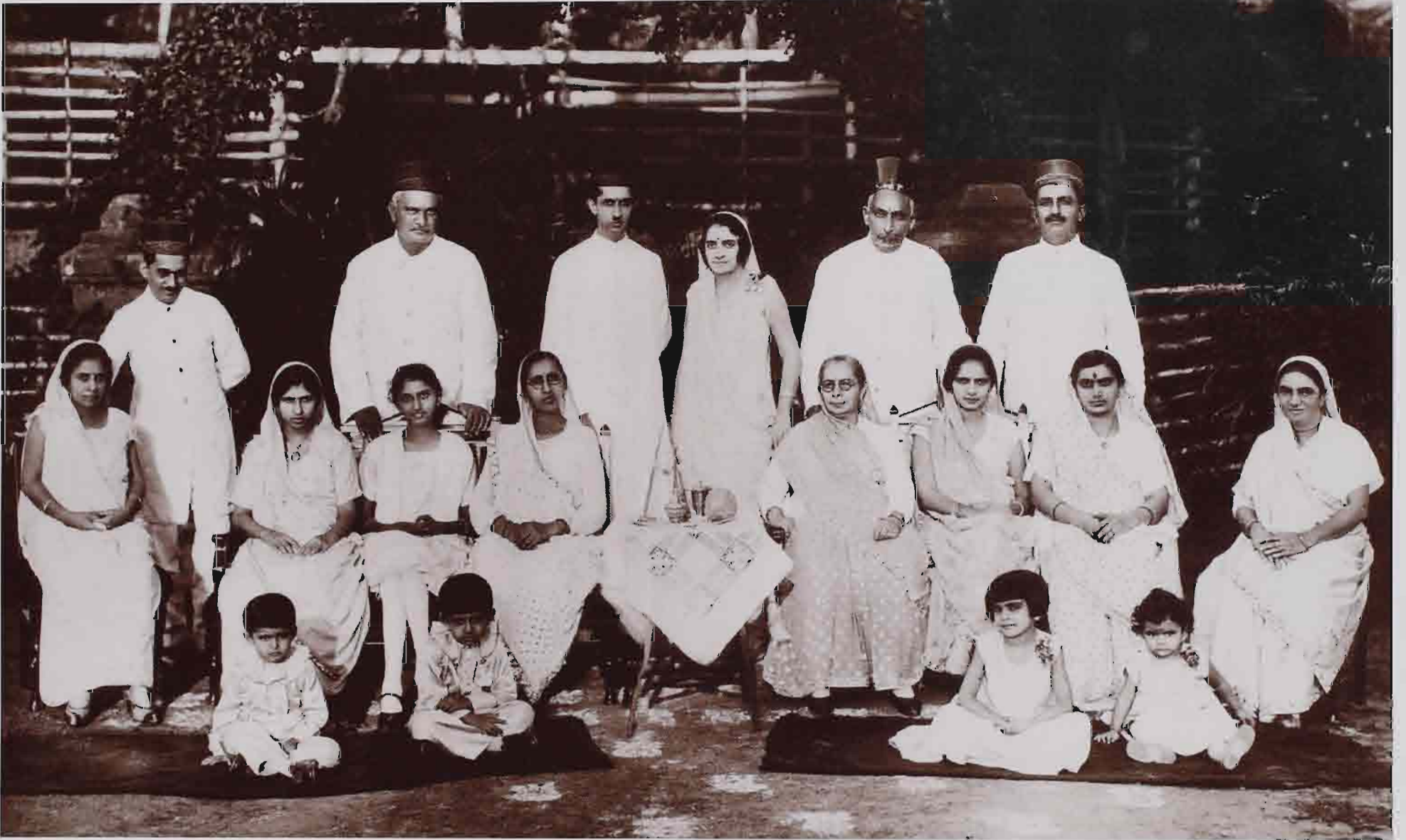


Ruttonjee Pestonjee (above) started business in 1899 on Keyzer Street, Pettah, importing flour and rice. He grew as an importer and as an exporter. On left, from top to bottom are his store, its interior and the office staff who were all Parsis or Hindu Gujaratis. Most Parsi trading families moved out of business and into the professions in the 20th Century.



Below, a Parsi family of the pre-Independence era when they still favoured dressing in traditional fashion, typical round caps on the head in the case of the men and sarees thrown over the right shoulder and head in the case of the women.

At bottom of page, Pesi Pestonjee (seated third from left) is seen at his Navjot ceremony with his younger sister (also garlanded), and his parents, grandparents and other members of his family. Pesi's parents, Nadirshah Ruttonjee Pestonjee and Cooverbai, are the couple in the wedding picture on facing page.





On left, Nadirshah Ruttonjee Pestonjee, son of Ruttonjee Pestonjee, and his bride Cooverbai Billimoria, whose father Eduljee Dosabhai Billimoria came to Ceylon in 1905 with his two brothers and worked in the Ceylon Wharfage Company Limited. The Billimorias came out with five other Parsis, who had been recruited in Bombay, to manage a 5000-strong labour force. Eduljee Billimoria later established his own business, while Pestonjee established a reputation for imported Baby brand tinned butter apart from other products. Pestonjee's seven children include Shera a surgeon, Rattan who migrated to Hawaii, Dosabhai who is still in the family business, Heera, once Vice-Principal of Ladies' College and now an Associate Professor of English in the State University of New York, Roshan who became a journalist, Pesi who with his wife Aban has made Aban's a household name in Colombo, and Veera.

Parsi traditions continue to this day, as the picture below shows. In it, Darius Lakdawalla, the bridegroom, is being blessed by his mother, Rhoda Lakdawalla, as he enters the wedding hall accompanied by his sister and uncle, Pilo Lakdawalla (in black cap).





Freny Jilla, a Parsi, grew from Girl Guide at Ladies' College in 1940 to become Chief Commissioner of Girl Guides and, in 1997, President of the Sri Lanka Girl Guides' Association.

In the 1967 picture above, Lady Baden-Powell, the chief of Girl Guides worldwide, presents Freny Jilla the Lotus Medal of Merit for distinguished service. In 1973, she became Chief Commissioner and five years later received the Hansa Putuwa, the highest award of the Sri Lanka Girl Guides' Association. On left, Freny Jilla on the occasion of being awarded the Chief Commissioner's badge. To her left are Mrs. Hema Basnayake, the then President of the Sri Lanka Girl Guides' Association, and Sir William Gopallawa, President of Sri Lanka.

Freny's husband, N. N. D. Jilla, was in the Ceylon Civil Service. Their families, the Rustomjees and Jillas, were early 20th Century arrivals in Ceylon, distinguishing themselves first in business and then in various professions.

Few communities in the Island have been truer to their traditions and faith than the Dawoodi Borahs. Their allegiance to their Dai-ul-Mutlaq has been total. His Holiness Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, who assumed office in 1963, is at the time of writing their supreme leader. A visitor to Sri Lanka on several occasions, His Holiness is seen in the picture on right, on the occasion of his visit to the Island in 1982 to inaugurate the Borah Community Centre in Bambalapitiya (Colombo 4).

The Borahs' spiritual leader was received at Colombo airport by the Hebtulabhoy, other leaders of the community and Nissanka Wijeyratne, then Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, Sri Lanka (wearing a shawl round his neck). The multimillion rupee Centre was donated to the community by the Hebtulabhoy in memory of the founders of their conglomerate, Mulla Mohamedally Shaikh Hebtulabhoy, Tyebally Shaikh Hebtulabhoy and Shaikh Abdulbussein Shaikh Hebtulabhoy.

In the picture above, right, another leading Boarah businessman, S. H. Moosajee, is seen receiving the Holy Koran from the Great Imam of the Shias, His Eminence Dr. Muhamed Abdul Rehman Bisar. Moosajee was a patron for years of the Sri Lanka Symphony Orchestra which benefited considerably from his support. Amongst his many generous donations was the Intensive Care Unit to the National Hospital, Colombo.



Borahs

The second group of 'Bombay Merchants' to settle in the Island were the Borahs, the first of whose members arrived in 1831.

The Vohras of coastal Gujarat are a Hindu business community belonging to the Baniya caste and derive their name from the word *vohru*, to trade or transact business. When Yemeni missionaries arrived in Gujarat in the 11th Century, the first of their converts was from among the Vohras and these Muslim Vohras became the Bohras or Borahs, one of India's major business communities that has spread throughout the Indian Ocean littoral and, in recent times, further afield. Those who came to Ceylon arrived from Kachchh Mandvi, Morbi Kathiawar, Surat, Bagasra and Nagar. They all belong to the Shia Ismaili Mustalian Dawoodi sect and generally prefer to be called Dawoodi Borahs. Their spiritual leader is the Dai-ul-Mutlaq, who lives in Bombay, and they are linked worldwide by their community organisation, the Dawood-e-Hadiyah.

The Borahs date their arrival to when Jafferjee Essajee arrived in Galle, with a bungalow-load of Maldivian Fish meant for Mandvi. The wind that had blown him off course proved a fair wind and Jafferjee set himself up in Galle as an importer of foodstuffs from India and the Maldives and an exporter of Ceylon produce. When his relatives followed him to Galle, the Borah presence in Ceylon was established. It was a presence that moved into Colombo by the 1850s, with the first settlers living over their Pettah shops that were mainly in Fourth Cross Street. Their first mosque, community hall and *madrassa* were all built on this street. They were a substantial part of the 64 Muslim firms (and 86 Chettiar firms) that dominated the Pettah trade in the 1880s.

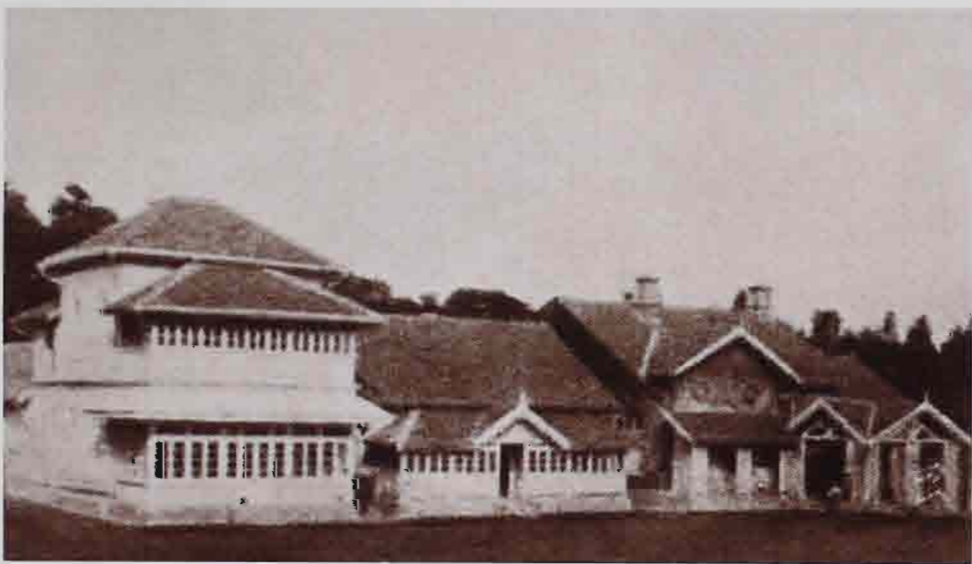
The Borah to leave the most lasting impression on Ceylon was Carimjee Jafferjee, the son of Essajee. Succeeding to the business on his father's death in 1880, Carimjee Jafferjee became the most important Indian merchant in the 19th Century, establishing

an enviable business reputation that enabled further Borah settlement in Ceylon. The Borahs' buggalows brought in goods from all the ports of the Indian Ocean and took back Ceylon produce to countries as far apart as the Strait Settlements and East Africa. The Maldivian dry fish trade, the Burmese rice trade, and Ceylon's arecanut and coconut produce trade owed much to them.

The Adamalys, the Lukmanjees and the Hebtulabhoy, the Jafferjees, the Moosajees and the Mamujees and many more... it is an honoured roll call of traders who became entrepreneurs and industrialists in the new Sri Lanka. As Asker Moosajee stated, "Some of these business houses have ceased, many more have come, some have divided into many branches and have flourished beyond the dreams of their early founders." In doing so, they have moved from feeding and clothing a large part of the country's population to playing an important role in the industrialisation of Sri Lanka and providing new avenues for the employment of its people.

Over the years, the Borahs have also played roles in the councils of the Island, both municipal and parliamentary, their voices speaking not only for the Indians of the Island but for all those whose home was Lanka. Their contribution to welfare activities in the Island has been considerable, as has been their contribution to sport. And while the 2000 or so of them who call Sri Lanka home remain rooted in business and, now, industry, there have, nevertheless, been many of them who made their mark in the professions. Like the Hazaris who have been doctors for three generations, Turab Fazleabbas who has been a leading ENT surgeon, Abbas Esufally, a chartered accountant, and Asker Moosajee, a lawyer.

For a conservative community, wedded to centuries-old traditions, the Borahs have not fought shy of essaying into industry, the professions, sport and the new face of culture. The result has been of considerable benefit to the Island.





Perhaps the most eminent of the Borahs of the early 20th Century was Carimjee Jafferjee, heir of the first Borah merchant to put down business roots in Ceylon, Jafferjee Essajee. The family's business was headquartered in Fourth Cross Street (centre, bottom row) and had branches in Galle, Tuticorin, Calcutta and Malé as well as agencies in several port towns on both coasts of India, on the eastern littoral of the Bay of Bengal and in Hong Kong, Kobe, Yokohama and Adelaide. They were the pioneers of the Maldivian trade and were the first owners of a buggalow fleet (left extreme, bottom row).

Known for his philanthropy, Carimjee Jafferjee built the Karimjee Mosque in Pettah (left), the first mosque of the Borahs and the main one until recent years, donated two wards to the Lady Havelock Hospital, once the main women's hospital in the Island, and was a benefactor of Zahira College, then known as the Zahira Madrasa, and other Muslim educational institutions. The entrance to the mosque is the white door at the left end of the building.

Carimjee Jafferjee was acknowledged as someone much more important than being the leader of the Borah community when he played a lead role in the 'fez controversy' of 1905, when the judges refused to allow a Muslim lawyer to appear in court while wearing a fez. Orabi Pasha, the Egyptian nationalist leader exiled in Ceylon at the time, was a friend of his and was no doubt instrumental in influencing Carimjee Jafferjee's views on the fez, the Muslim cap of the eastern Mediterranean, but it was the Borah leader who brought down the Bombay lawyer Moulavi Rafiuddin Ahmed to address several meetings demanding a place for the fez in court. The Supreme Court responded favourably to the Carimjee Jafferjee-led campaign – and the Borah leader became seen as a leader of the Island's Muslims and not just of one community among them.

Orabi Pasha stayed with Carimjee Jafferjee in his Colombo home, Assa Villa, before returning to Egypt. In the picture on left extreme, top, Orabi Pasha is on the right, Carimjee Jafferjee is to his right and in the centre is E. G. Adamaly, Carimjee Jafferjee's son-in-law. An even better known home of Carimjee Jafferjee's was Jaffer Villa in Nuwara Eliya (left extreme, centre), which later became the 'Europeans only' Hill School and, in more recent times, the Area Headquarters of the Army. When Carimjee Jafferjee bought this sprawling house, he was perhaps the first Indian in the Island to have breached the exclusively European nature of the hill station.



Another early Borah businessman to leave his mark in Ceylon was G.H. Shaikh Tyeb (right), who arrived in Ceylon around 1860. He established the Mohamedi Oil Mills in Grandpass (above) in 1890, one of the leading coconut oil crushers in the Island and pioneers of Indian entry into this business.



In 1864, Shaikh Hebtulabbhoy arrived in Ceylon to seek his fortune. Before long, his buggalows were regular carriers between Ceylon and the Maldives and Ceylon and Bombay. On his death in 1897, the business passed into the hands of his sons Moosbbhai and Mohamedally. Still minors at the time were their brothers Tyebally and Abdulhussein. In 1907, Moosbbhai opted out of the business and began his own. Mohamedally (top in row on right, below) with his two younger brothers, Tyebally and Abdulhussein (second and third in row on right, below) then took over the company their father had founded in 1864, Shaikh Hebtulabbhoy Abdulally, and renamed it M.S. Hebtulabbhoy & Co. That small office-on-the-ground-floor, home-on-the-first-floor building in Fourth Cross Street, Pettah (below), where Shaikh Hebtulabbhoy began trading in Ceylon, is still retained by the family for sentimental reasons and is used for some of its tea and food trade.

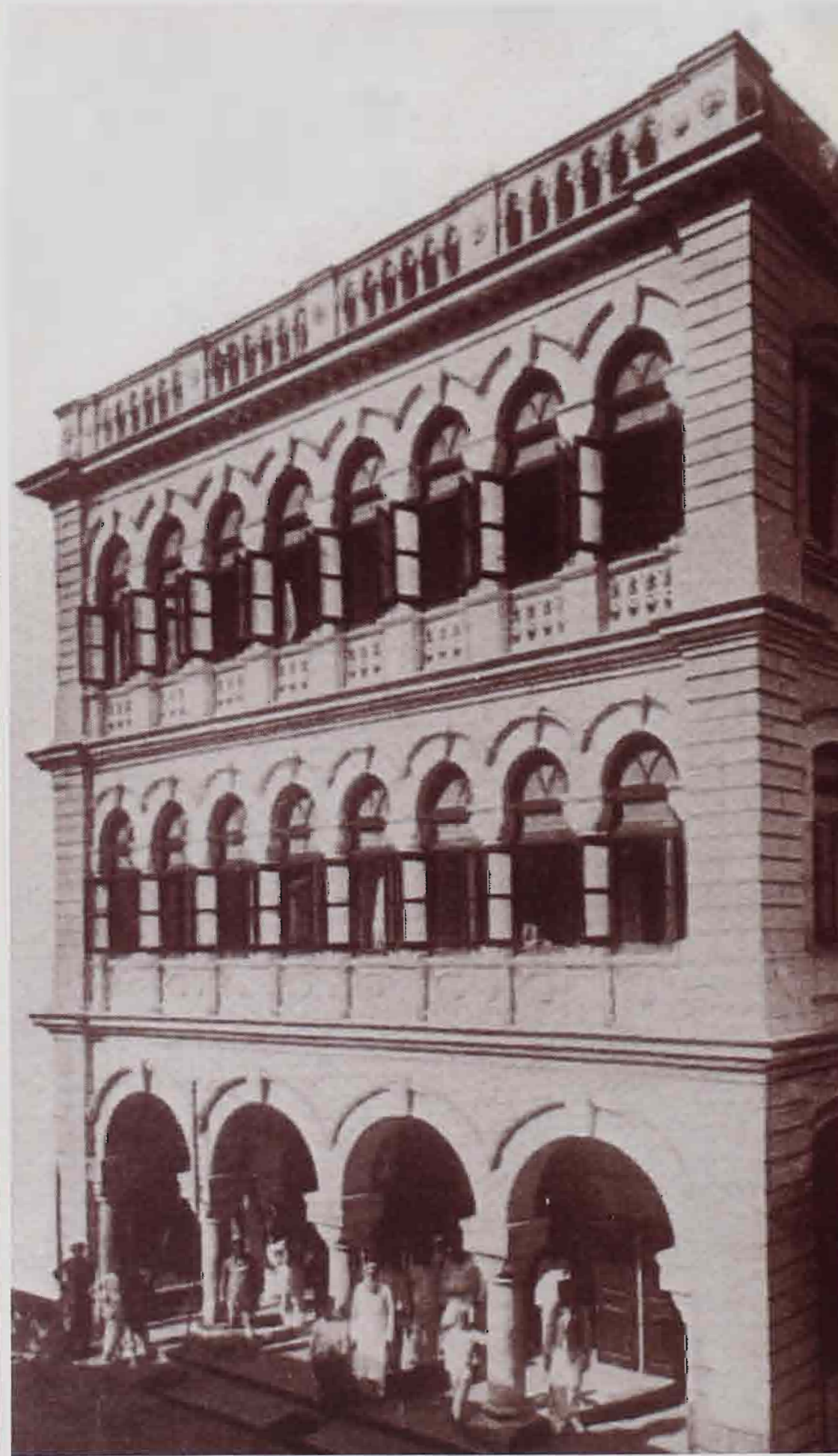
Establishing themselves in the coconut produce export trade, Hebtulabbhoy's grew with the export of tea. The firm was the first non-European one to enter the tea trade. Since then, growth has been in various other areas of export and industry. Today, succeeding generations have moved into several other businesses and activities, but the extended family teamed together to gift the Borah community a Community Centre in 1982. To inaugurate it came the Dai-ul-Mutlaq from Bombay. His Holiness Dr. Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin Sahab is seen seated, extreme right, in the picture on right, giving his benedictions to members of the Hebtulabbhoy family.



Carinjee Jafferjee's cousin Mohamedbboy Allibboy, below, left, established E. G. Adamaly & Sons that was to succeed Carinjee Jafferjee's as the largest Borah business house in the Island. Apart from rice and other staples, the firm had a virtual monopoly on the import of sugar. Its buggalows sailed the Indian Ocean from the Nicobar Islands to the Maldive Islands, specialising in barter trade. The firm, in time, was appointed agents in Ceylon for the Maldivian Government. It also owned estates.

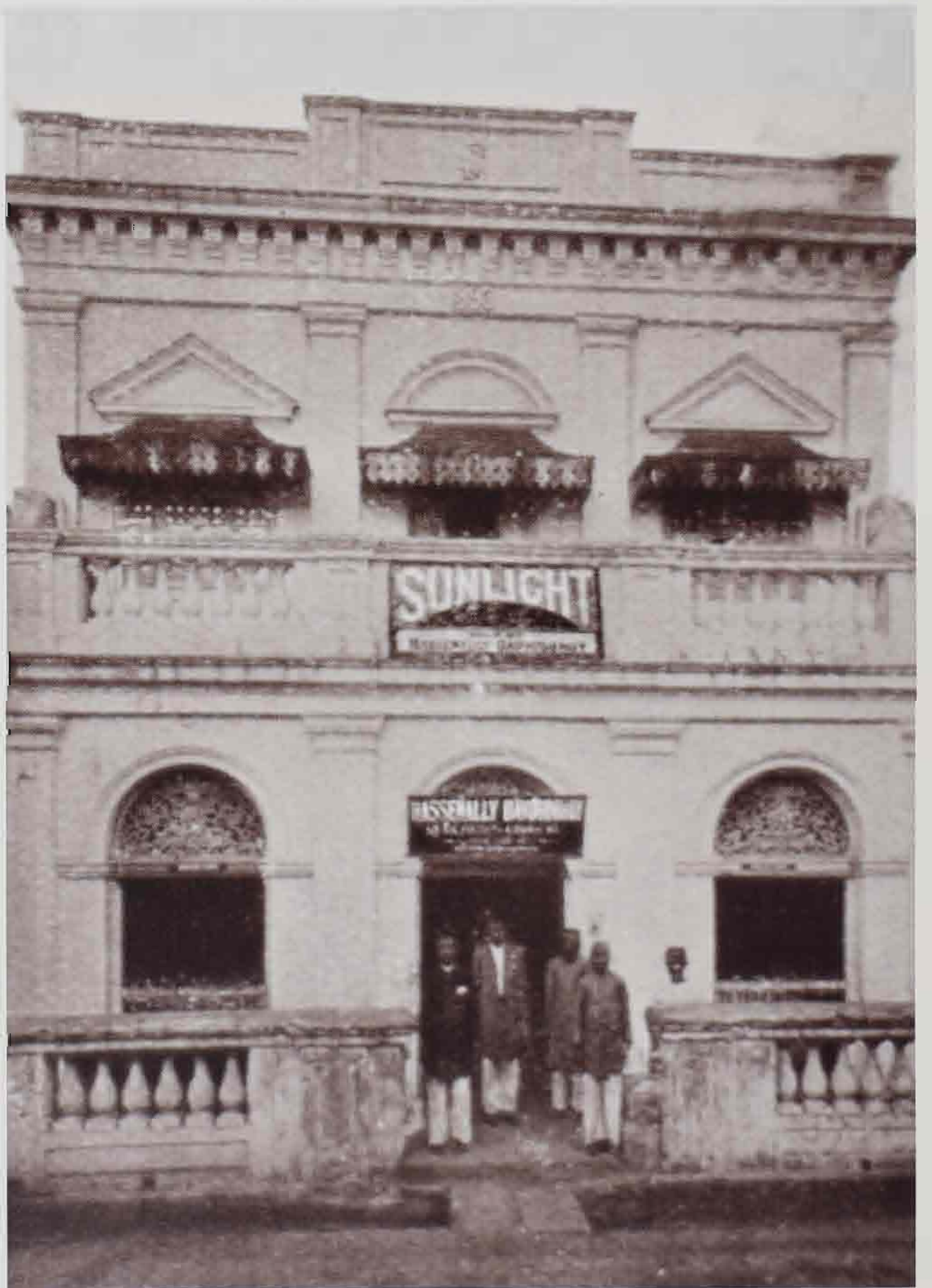
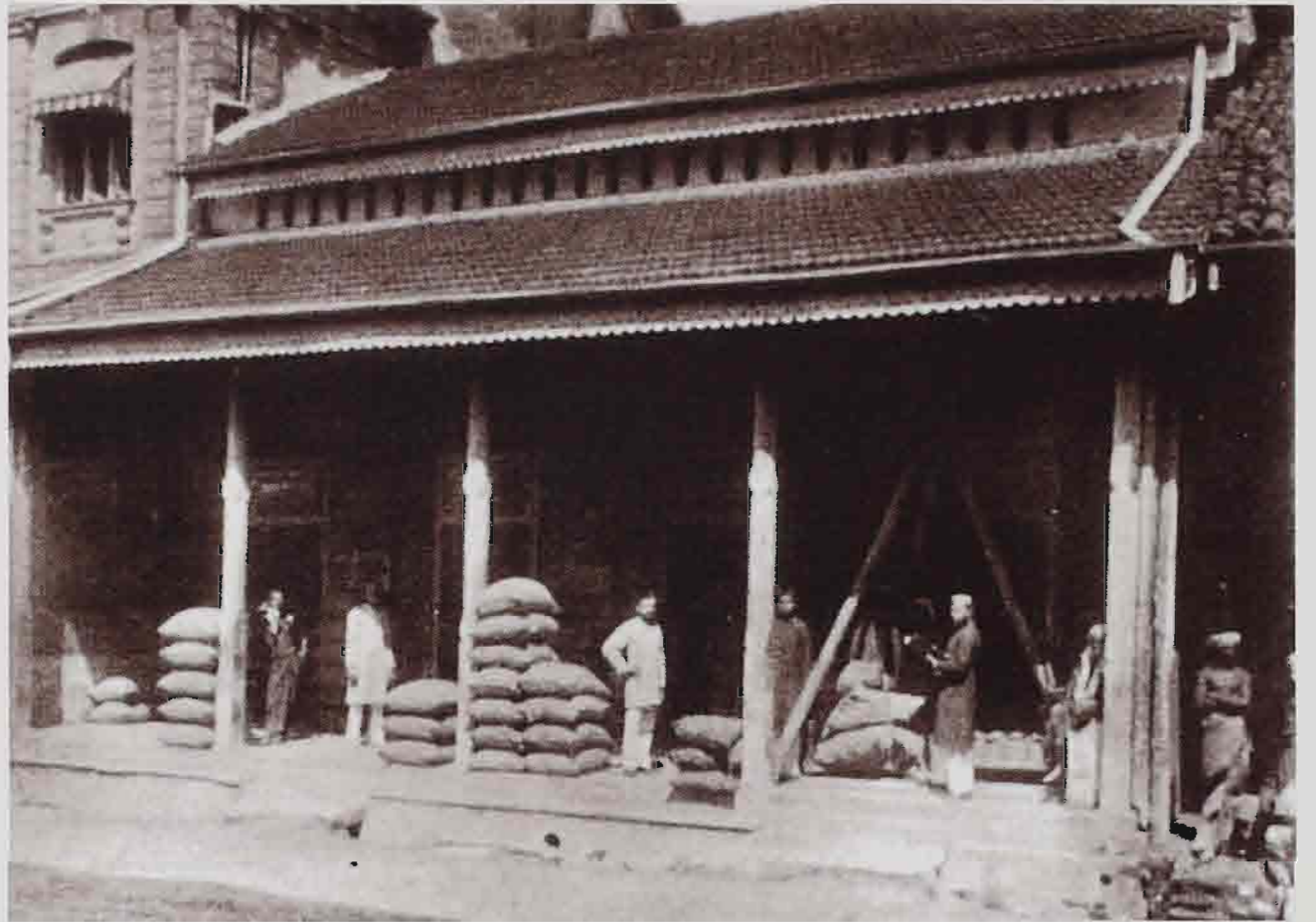


Mohamedbboy Allibboy's three sons (on right), Esufally, Gulambussein and Adamaly (from left to right), built the handsome headquarters of the firm, seen below, right, early in the 20th Century. The firm took the name of the three brothers, the E and G recognising Esufally and Gulambussein. The headquarters staff are seen in the first picture in the row below, beneath which are the Small Pass branch of the business, that became a rice store, in good years milling, cleaning and packaging 400,000 bags of rice a year, and the outbuildings in the spacious grounds of the headquarters.





The firm of Esmailjee Sheikh Jeevunjee was established in Bombay in the 19th Century. When the company established a branch in Colombo in 1900 it was as A. E. S. Jeevunjee, on left. A. E. S. Jeevunjee (above) imported rice, other grains and lentils for the estates and exported arecanuts, spices and coconut products. Another early Borah trading house doing the same sort of business in Pettah was C. Amijee's. On top, right, is Amijee. The interior of his offices is seen on top, left.



Top row, Abdulbussein Shaikh Jeevunjee and the stores of A. H. S. Jeevunjee & Co. in Pettah. The firm, headquartered in Bombay, was established in Colombo in 1903 and its fleet of buggalows regularly brought supplies of 'Maldive Fish' from the Maldives to Colombo.

Hassenally Dawoodbhoy (above), who established his headquarters in Colombo, on right, was one of the few Borah traders who did business that was different. He was an importer of manufactured goods, both everyday items as well as luxuries, from Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Japan. He, thus, had a clientele of both the British as well as Colombo Society and became a well-recognised figure in Colombo.



M. Moosajee of Karachi, in the days when it was part of the Bombay Presidency, established a livery stables there in 1861. His son, H. M. Moosajee, expanded the stables and added a coach-building establishment to it. In the early 20th Century, H. M. Moosajee established a livery stables in Slave Island, Colombo (top, left), hired carriages out to the gentry, imported Sindh cattle to meet the Island's transport needs, and went into other businesses such as stevedoring. His sons, S. H. Moosajee and G. H. Moosajee, a veterinary surgeon, succeeded to the business.

S. H. Moosajee was elected to the Colombo Municipal Council from the Hunupitiya seat in 1944; it was a constituency that had benefited greatly from the huge Moosajee manure works that were once a landmark as trains chugged into Colombo from the north. S. H. Moosajee was a patron of several social welfare and cultural causes in the Island. Also very interested in Buddhism, he and Mrs. Moosajee gifted a portrait of the Head of the Asgiriya Chapter (above), the Most Ven. Udugama Sri Rathanapala Buddhharakkita Mahanayake Thero of the Asgiriya Maha Vihara Chapter, who is seen just behind and to the left of the portrait he received.

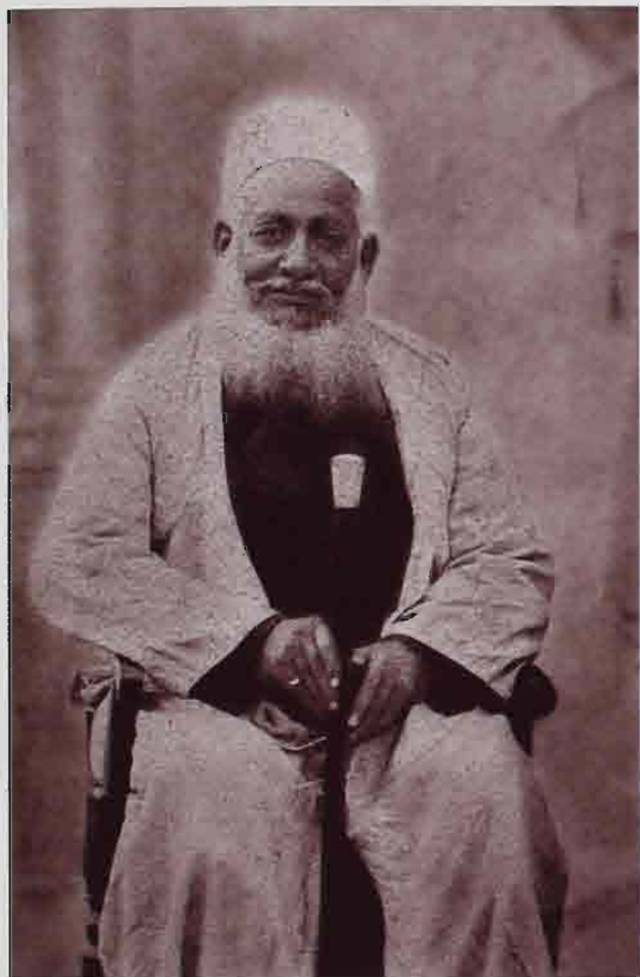
Another of the Borahs to make a mark in Colombo society was A. Mamujee, one of the most elegantly dressed persons in Colombo in the mid-1900s, a patron of the arts and a great orchid fancier. The success of the Orchid Society in Ceylon and the extended propagation of the various species of orchids in the Island owed much to him. A nominated member of the Municipal Council, he took a great deal of interest in the parks of the city. A close friend of Lionel Wendt, one of the greatest Lankan photographers ever, Mamujee was the subject of one of Wendt's favourite – and best known – portraits (left).

The Borah traders till Independence staffed their businesses with Hindu Gujaratis and other Borahs, particularly kinsmen. Typical of the Borahs who worked in the Pettah is the person above, in a 1931 picture.



By the 1950s, Adamjee Lukmanjee & Co was perhaps the biggest Indian family business in Ceylon. Of its founder, Adamjee Lukmanjee (below, left), it has been said, "The enterprise of this millowner, planter, merchant and financier has been responsible for providing work for thousands of Sinhalese, including carters, mill-hands, mechanics, clerks, brokers and a host of other artisans." His sons, Ghulambhussain Lukmanjee and Mohamedally Lukmanjee, once told an interviewer: "Ceylon is our home. Our wealth is yours. We only manage it for the country's good. Is there a greater contribution than providing employment to thousands of men and women and enriching the revenue of the State and City Council?"

Beyond paying salaries and taxes, the Lukmanjee brothers, of whom Ghulambhussain was a nominated member of the Colombo Municipal Council, were generous with their philanthropic contributions. In 1936, they gifted Colombo its third maternity home, the Adamjee Lukmanjee Maternity Home on Prince of Wales Avenue, Grandpass. Apart from the maternity home, the complex (below) has separate buildings for a Municipal Free Dispensary and a Child Welfare Clinic. They also contributed handsomely towards the Victoria Eye Hospital (bottom of page).



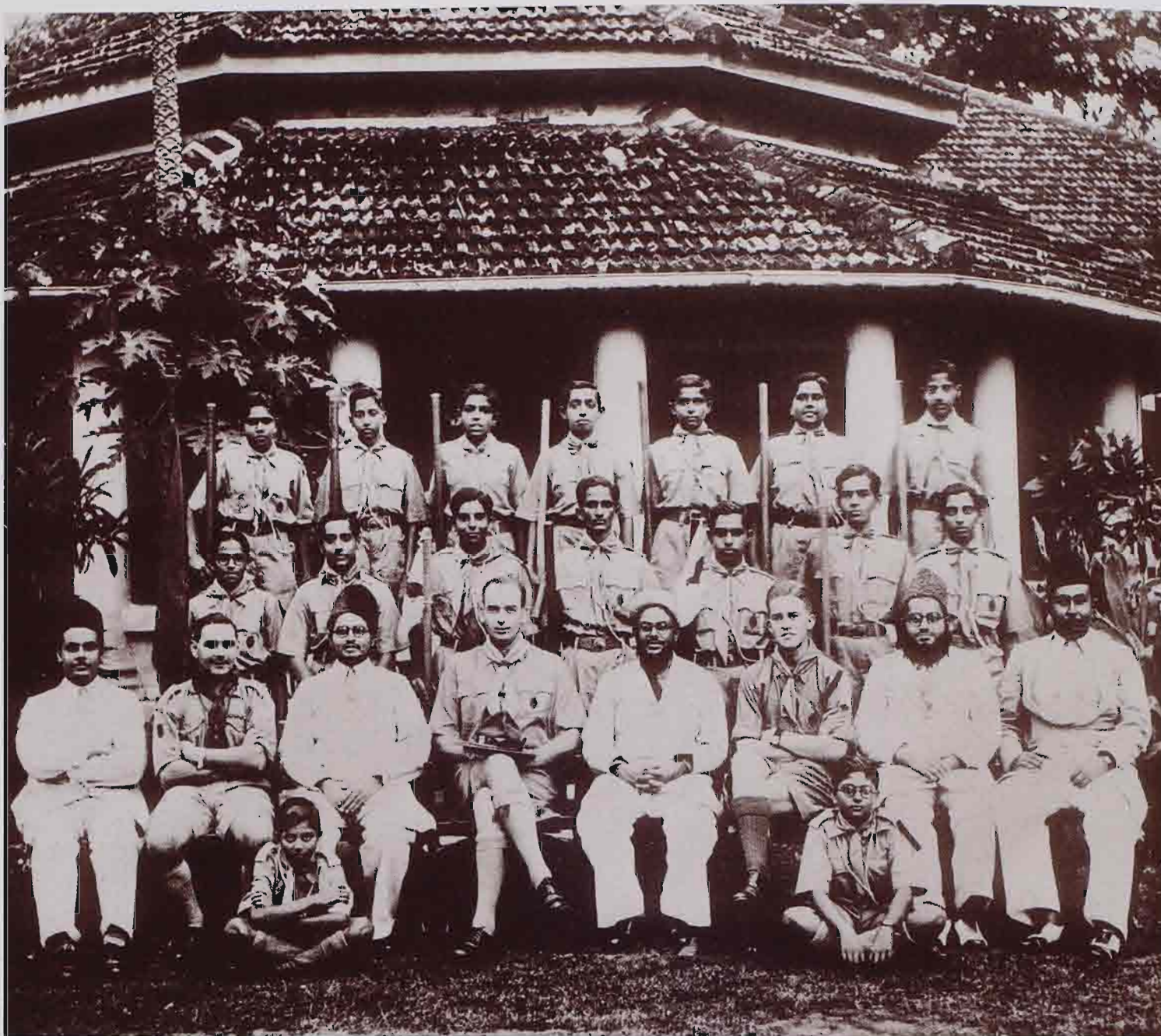
Some of the Borahs built magnificent mansions, others bought them. Adamjee Lukmanjee, one of the biggest businessmen amongst the Borahs of the first half of the 20th Century, bought Lakshmigiri (below) in the 1920s and renamed it Saifee Villa. A part of the Alfred House Gardens property of Jeronis de Soysa, another part became the property of the Bank of Madras, then the State Bank of India's and now the Indian High Commission's. Inspired by Buckingham Palace and castles in Yorkshire and the Isle of Wight, Lakshmigiri was bought from Sir Charles de Soysa and is today occupied by a great-grandson of Adamjee Lukmanjee, Zainudeen K. Hussein. His Holiness Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin Saheb, the Dai-ul-Mutlaq (Pontiff) of the Borahs, has stayed in this house whenever he visited Lanka and considered it his local headquarters.

While building for themselves, the Borahs also built for the community and also for activities in which the whole community could participate. As the community prospered and grew away from its Fourth Cross Street roots in Pettah and began to move into homes in some of the best parts of Colombo, the need was felt for a bigger and more central mosque. And so the

magnificent mosque in Bambalapitiya (on facing page) came up through a joint effort of the community. Other community efforts

were the Borah Sports Club, which had a number of enthusiastic players but never really offered a climate for the better players to develop and so

faded out, and a Boy Scouts troop started by S. H. Moosajee (below) in 1938. This too is no longer in existence.





Three important Borah families, who are very much part of the Sri Lankan economic scene today, focus on the export of cultivated produce and industrial products, a far cry from when their forefathers were focused on imports that provided food, clothing and even a bit of shelter to the population of the Island.

Back in the 1930s, an Indian representative in the State Council spoke in gist: "We are Indians racially, but we are Ceylonese in spirit. We have invested a vast amount of capital here, in mills, estates and other commercial concerns and have invested profits locally, conferring lasting benefits on the people of Ceylon. We are as concerned as anybody else in the development of the Island. It's prosperity is ours too." Those sentiments can be expressed many times more emphatically by families like those featured on this page who are a significant part of a growing industry-based economy.

From top to bottom on right are:

— The Jafferjee family, one of the pioneers of industry in Ceylon. Apart from traditional exports, they are into the manufacture of synthetic textiles, garments, fishing nets etc. In the 1960s picture are Ibrahim and Sugra Jafferjee (seated centre) with their daughter Shirin (Nuruddin Esufally) and sons. Seated, Abbas, and standing, left to right, Gulzar, Yusuf, Taber, Mohsin, Saifuddin, Mohamedally and Munsoor.

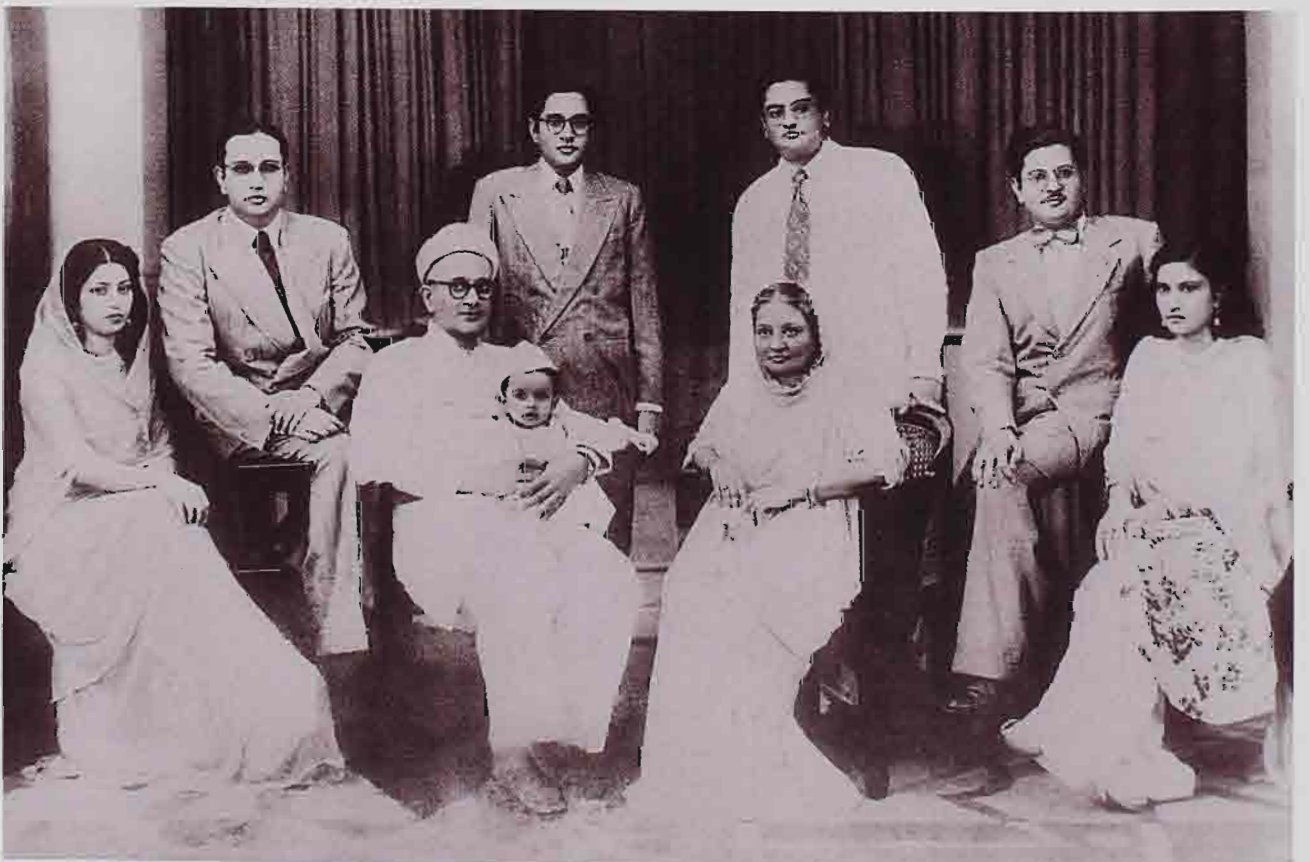
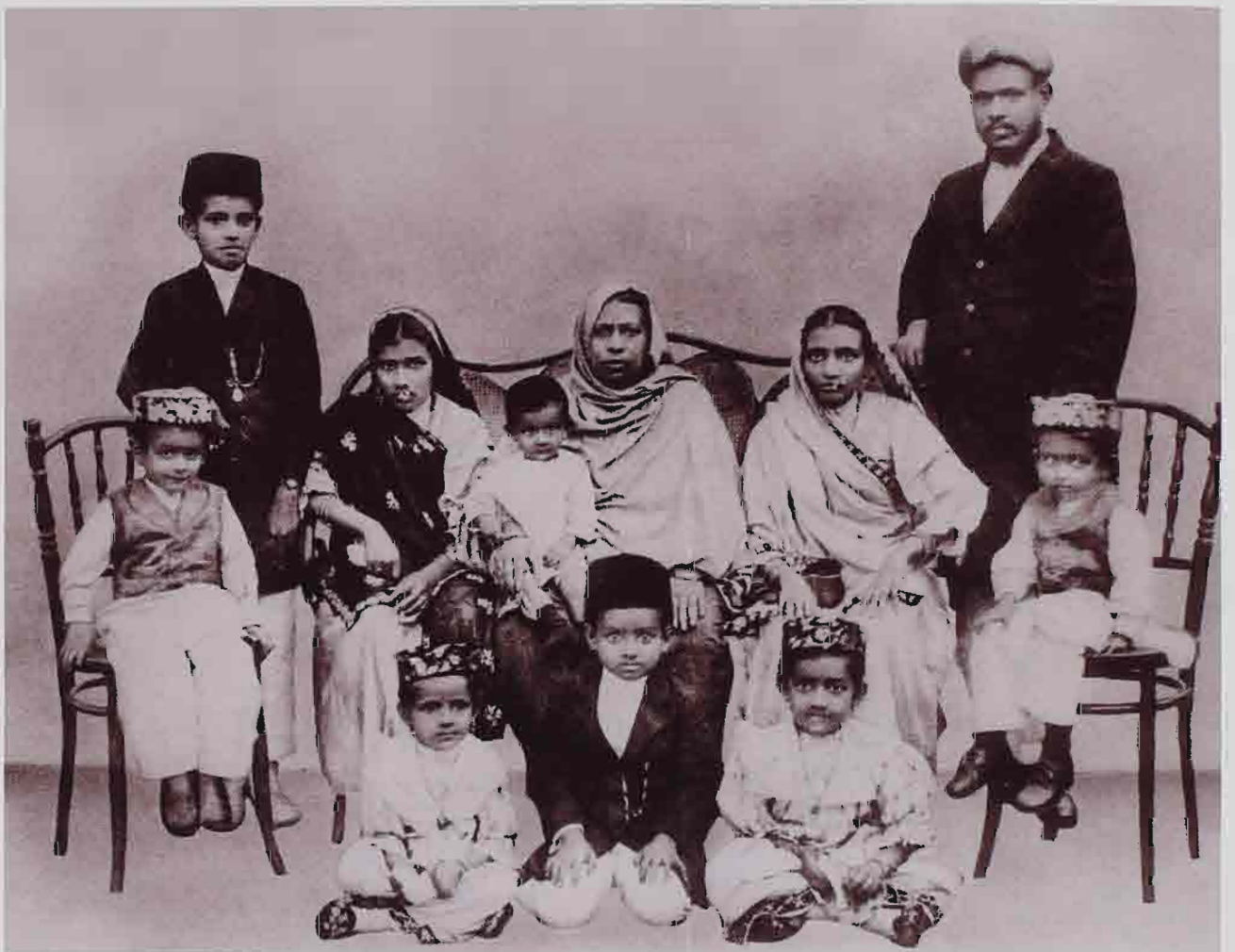
— The Abdulhussein Shaikh Hebtulabhoy family. All the children in the picture are now grown up and play significant roles in Sri Lankan industry and commerce.

In the 1923 picture are, standing, Anverally (on left) and Abdulhussein Shaikh (on right), and, seated, from left to right, Mohsinally, Asmabai, Mrs. Sakinabai Shaikh Hebtulabhoy Abdulally, Amiruddcen (on lap), Mrs. Safyabai Abdulhussein and Taberali. On ground, from left to right, are Kulsumbai, Qurbanhussein and Shirinbai.

Shaikh Abdulhussein's two surviving sons and the large extended families of all his children are in a variety of businesses today.

— The Hassanally Esufally family is descended from Mohamedbhoy Allibhoy who arrived in Ceylon around 1870 and established E. G. Adamaly & Sons. The Esufally line descended through Mohamedbhoy Allibhoy's son Esufally and his son Hassanally Esufally (seen here with his family): back row, from left to right, Nuruddin Esufally, Munnawar Esufally, Abid Esufally and Mohsin Esufally, and, seated, Shirin Nuruddin Esufally, Hassanally Esufally (seated on lap: Suraiya Esufally), Asmabai Hassanally Esufally, and Fatema Esufally.

Mohamedi Manzil, one of the first big Borah mansions, was built in Bambalapitiya in the 1920s and Hassanally Esufally moved into it and his children were born in it. Today, they are all part of the Hema's Group, their interests ranging from travel and tourism to hoteliering, from property development to tea plantations, from apparel manufacture to healthcare.



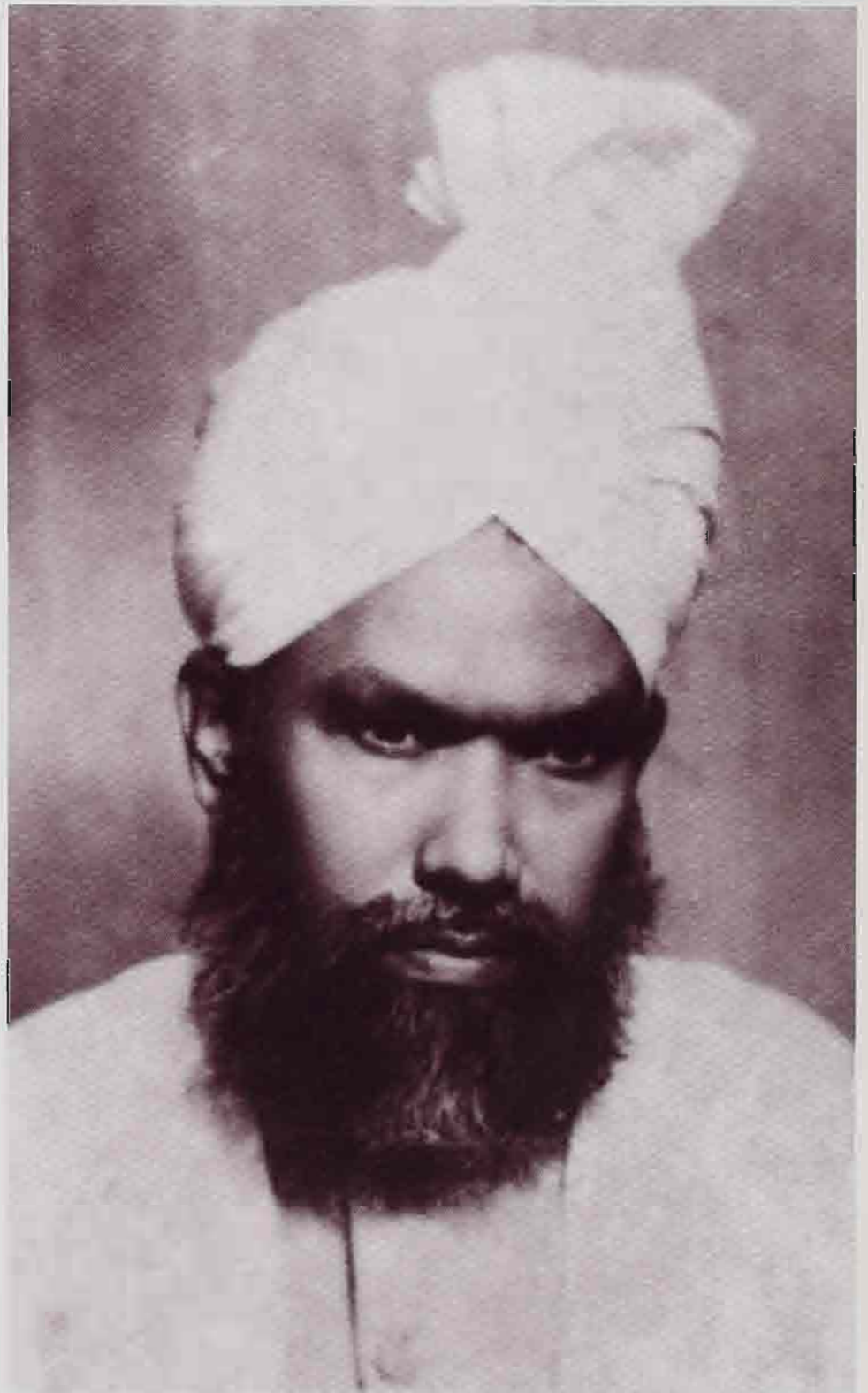
Memons

When members of the Lohan community in Sindh (now in Pakistan) were converted to Islam in the 15th Century, the Memons were born. A trading community like the Hindu Sindhis, they too began to migrate from arid Sindh in search of better business opportunities. When General Charles Napier allegedly sent the shortest telegram ever, reading *Peccavi* ["I have sin(ne)d"] in 1843, the Memons began to migrate to Gujarat and Bombay. With the largest number of them settling in the Kathiawar peninsula of Gujarat, they became known as the Kathiawadi or Kachchhi Memons, known for their business acumen as well as for their intrepid seafaring.

The first Memon arrival in Ceylon was in 1870, said to be an Abdul Rahman, and he and his fellows established themselves in Jaffna, before moving to Colombo by 1875. The Memons have, since, been known for their philanthropy and, amongst the numerous contributions made to Lankan society by various families, one that has passed into history was the building that was gifted by Haji Omar Haji Usman to the Boy Scouts as their Headquarters. This building, raised in 1935, was to remain with the Boy Scouts for several decades. Security considerations made them move out some years ago.

As late as 1963, there were 189 Memon business houses in 26 towns in the Island. There were estimated to be around seven to ten thousand Memons in the Island at the time. Those numbers have reduced somewhat now, but they remain an important contributor to Sri Lanka's economy, many of them moving from trade to manufacture. Once they were major textile traders, but today they are amongst the leading apparel manufacturers and exporters.

The priest on right came to conduct the first prayer meeting held in the Hanafi Mosque of the Memons when it was opened in Third Cross Street, Pettah, in 1927. The picture below is of the Rana Seth, the leader of the Memon community, when he visited Ceylon in the 1940s. When the Memons migrated from their original home, Sindh, to Bhuj in Kachchh, in the Kathiawar Peninsula of Gujarat, they were led by Kaneya Seth, the grandson of Adam Seth, the first leader of the community who had been appointed by Pir Yusuffudin Saheb, a saint of Baghdad and a descendant of Prophet Mohammed's family. Rana Seth of Porbandar (Gujarat) is a descendant of the first leaders of the community and is revered by the Kachchhi Memons.





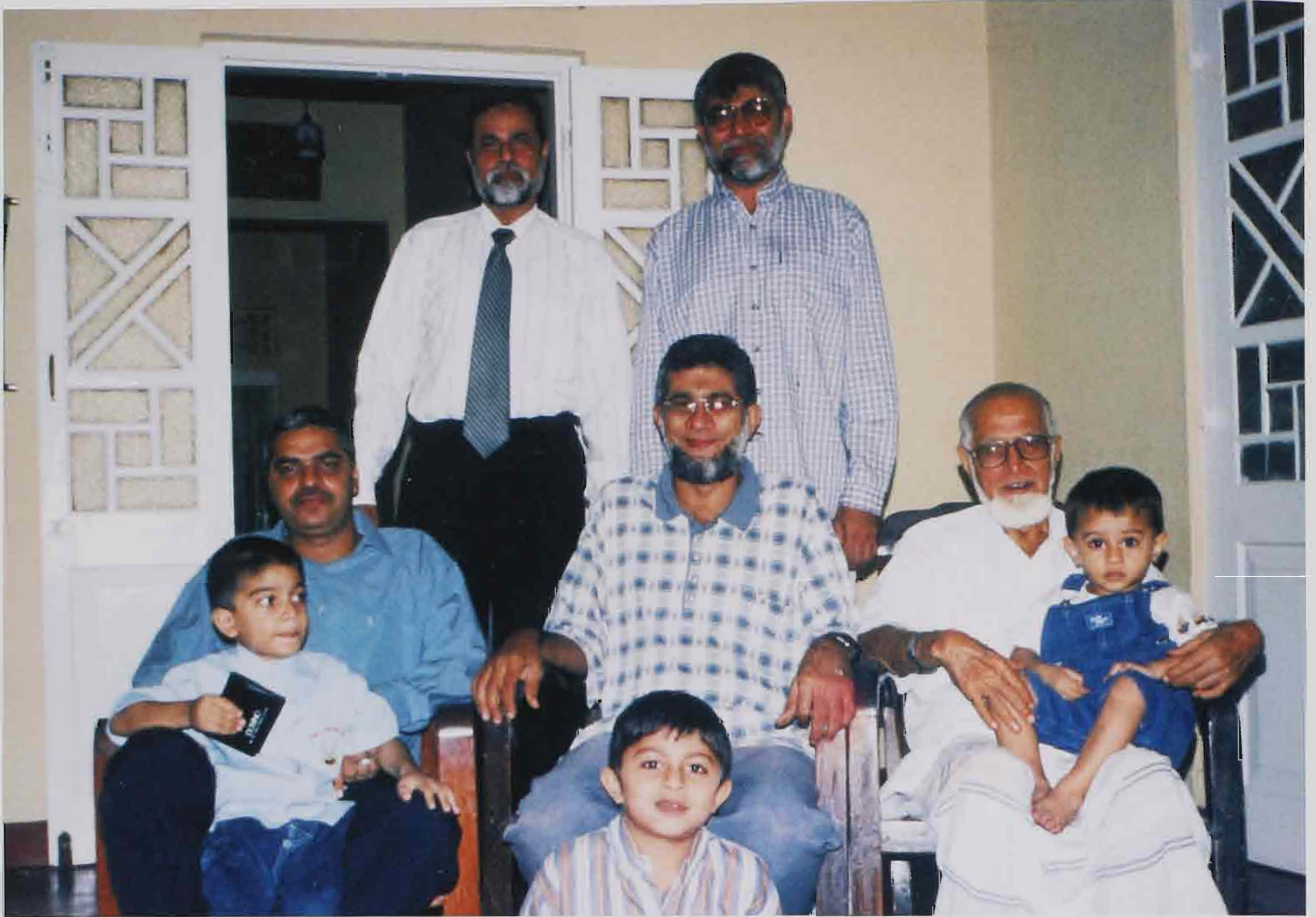


Some of the first Memons to arrive in Ceylon in the early 20th Century are seen on the facing page. Seated, second from right, is Haji Omar Haji Usman. To his right are his mother-in-law and father-in-law and to his left is his brother-in-law. Standing, centre, is Kasim Hindi, who returned to India.

The earliest Memon firms still remembered are Ibrahim Abdul Latheef & Co and Dawood Moti & Co. established in 1875. A. R. Careem & Co., which grew into a giant, was founded in 1894. Another major player was Valli Noor Mohamed & Co, leading grain and textile importers, while Aboobakkar Ibrahim Bhoi was well-known in the gem business.

On right, Haji Omar Haji Usman (on right, in picture) who arrived in Ceylon in 1910 with his brother (to his right) and started a retail textile business in Pettah. Standing is Kasim Hindi.

The Omar family, starting in Ceylon with the takeover of a retail textile business in Pettah, Phoenix & Co., has grown into several manufacturing companies today.

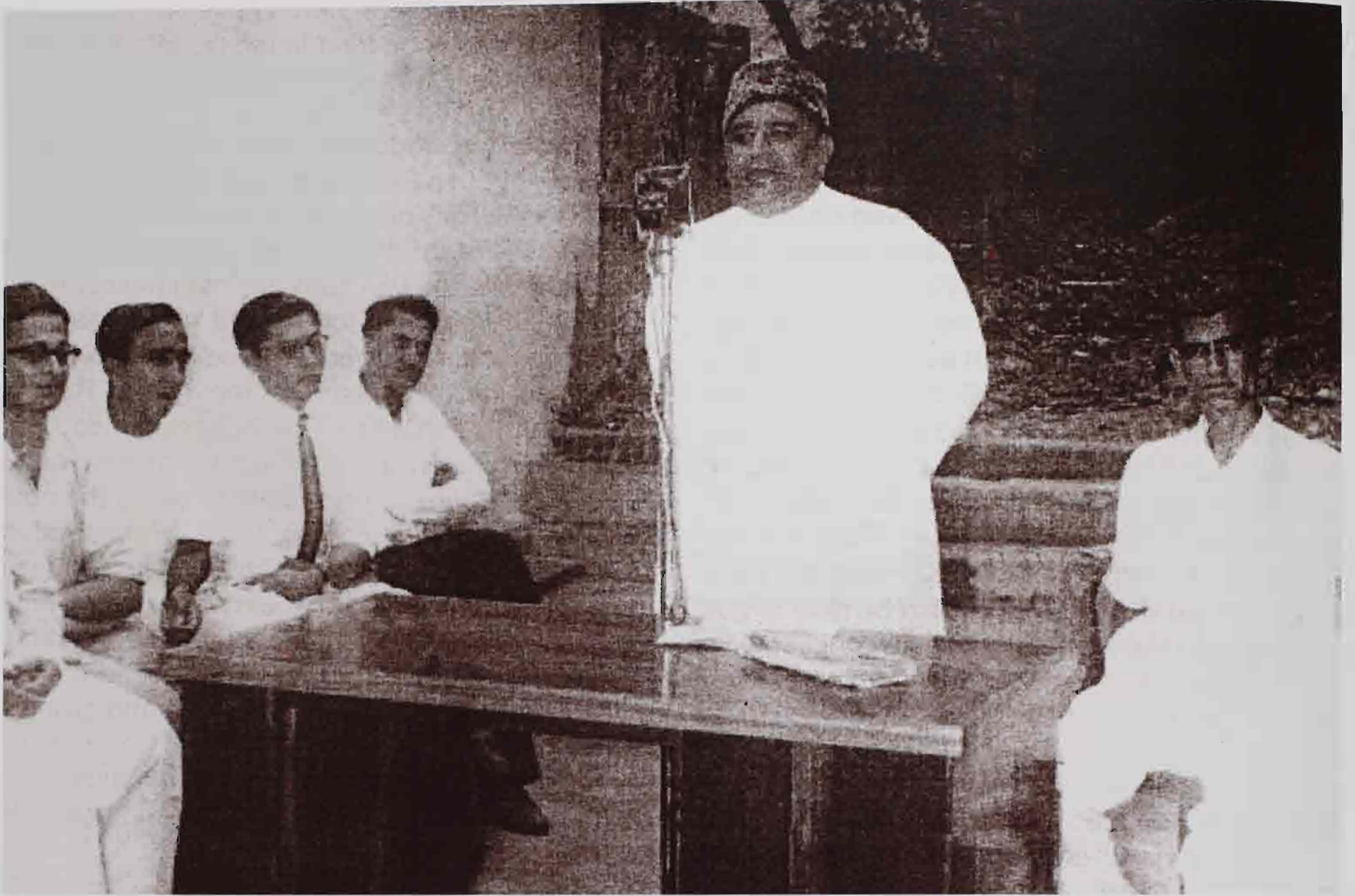


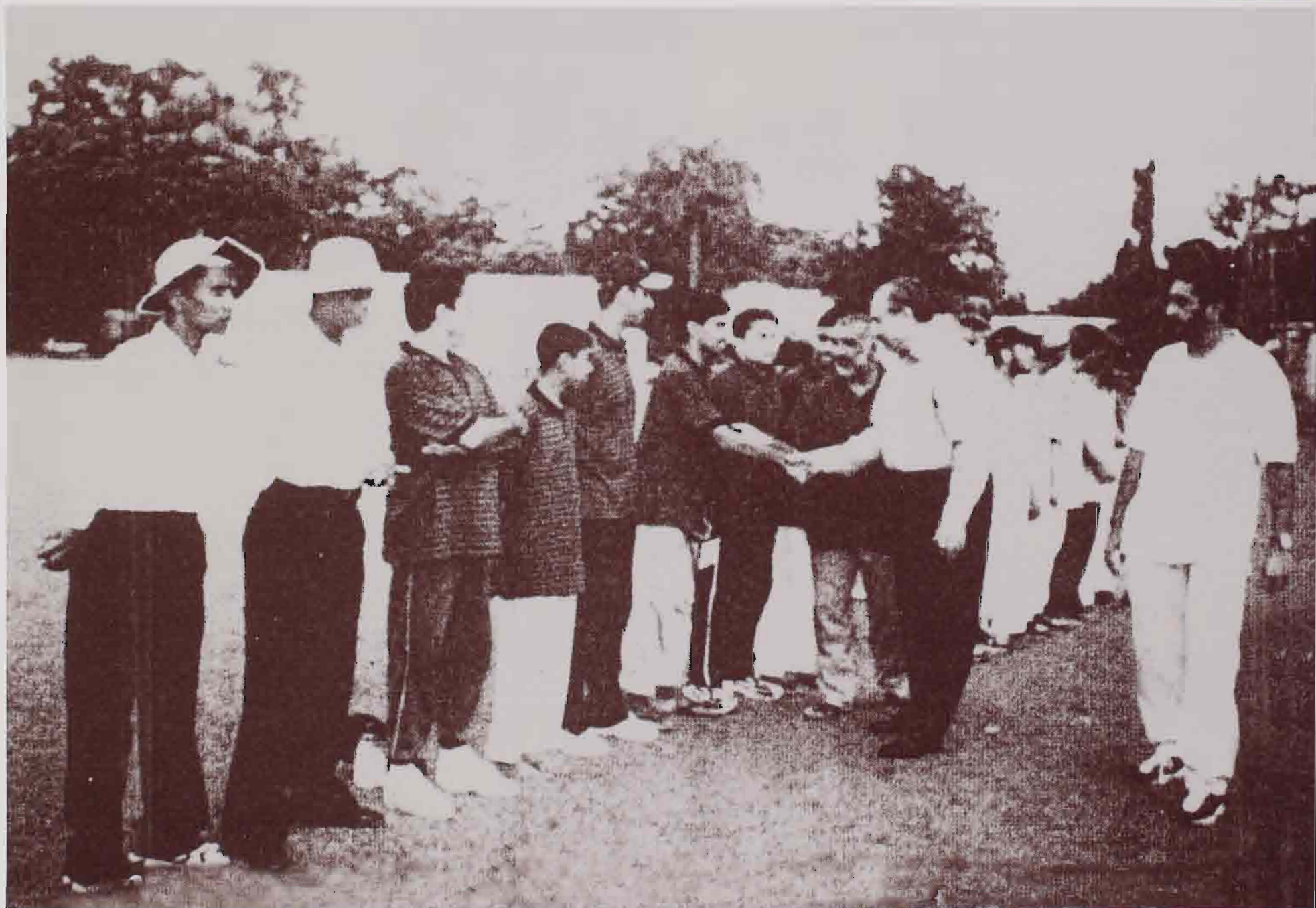
Above, Haji Omar Haji Usman's son, Haji Abdul Karim Haji Omar (seated, right) with three of his eight sons, his son-in-law and three of his 21 grandchildren. Haji Omar, following in his father's footsteps, was President of the Memon Association. Seated centre is Haji Omar's son Hameed Karim, owner of a bookshop in Fort, 'Bibiliomania', that specialises in old books. He has for some years now edited the Memon newsletter, Samachar. Seated on left in the picture is Razak Sattar, a son-in-law, who is in business. Standing are two other sons of Haji Abdul Karim Haji Omar, on left Omar Karim and on right Hanza Karim. Haji Omar's family owned much property in Pettah, the whole family were involved in the textile trade and they owned a rubber plantation. Starting with its first retail business, Phoenix & Co., the family has spread its wings and established several major manufacturing units, like Phoenix Industries and MAST Lanka.

On left is Zabara Cader, daughter of Haji Omar Haji Usman and director of Tallman Tours, which she started over 25 years ago. At a time when Memon girls were not encouraged to do higher studies and she could not go to the University, she took a Chartered Secretary's course and then moved into the travel trade.

On the facing page, top, Haji Usman Bhaila, one of the early Memons to arrive in Ceylon and one of the founders of the Memon Association, which he went on to head, receives a National Award from the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, D. B. Wijetunge. In the picture below it, another Memon, A. R. M. Yonus (left), receives an award, this one from the Sri Lanka Life Insurance Corporation for producing the best All-Island results and being the Colombo Region's best agent for general insurance for 1988. Yonus has been continuously winning this award from 1973.







On facing page and top, the story of the Memon Association whose membership concentrates on fund-raising activities for social welfare projects. The Association also brings the community together several times a year and publishes a newsletter, Samachar.

The Association also produces a Memon Diary, which lists all the Memon business houses in Sri Lanka. Under its auspices is the Memon Sports Club which brings together the community with a six-a-side cricket carnival. As many as 32 teams from Borah business houses competed in the tournament in 2001 and some of them are seen above being introduced to the Chief Guest.

The Memon Association of Ceylon was formed in 1956, with premises on New Moor Street (facing page, bottom, left). The picture, facing page, top, is of Haji Usman Bhaila, one of the 20 founder members, speaking on the

occasion of being elected President of the Association in 1957, succeeding Founder-President Haji Moosa Ahmed. To his left is Ibrahim Dhangra, the Secretary. The Association later moved to new premises in Hulftsdorp Street (facing page, bottom, right) and still later to a new building on Galle Road, Kollupitiya, from where it now functions.

The picture at the top of this page is of Hussein Bhaila, a nephew of Haji Usman Bhaila, being inducted as the President of the Association in 1999. From right to left are, Zubair, Rauf Hakeem, Azwan, Deputy Mayor of Colombo Maharroof, A. R. M. Yonus, Hussein Bhaila, outgoing President Hafëez, Parliamentarian Alavi Moulana and Omar. As this publication goes to press, Hussein Bhaila has been appointed Chairman, Central Freight Bureau of Sri Lanka.



The three-storied Hanafi Mosque of the Memon community in Third Cross Street, Pettah. Built with subscriptions from the community, its foundation stone was laid in July 1925 and work on it was completed in 1927. The mosque has changed little over the years as the pictures show, the one below dating to the pre-Independence era and the one on left, being of the mosque today.



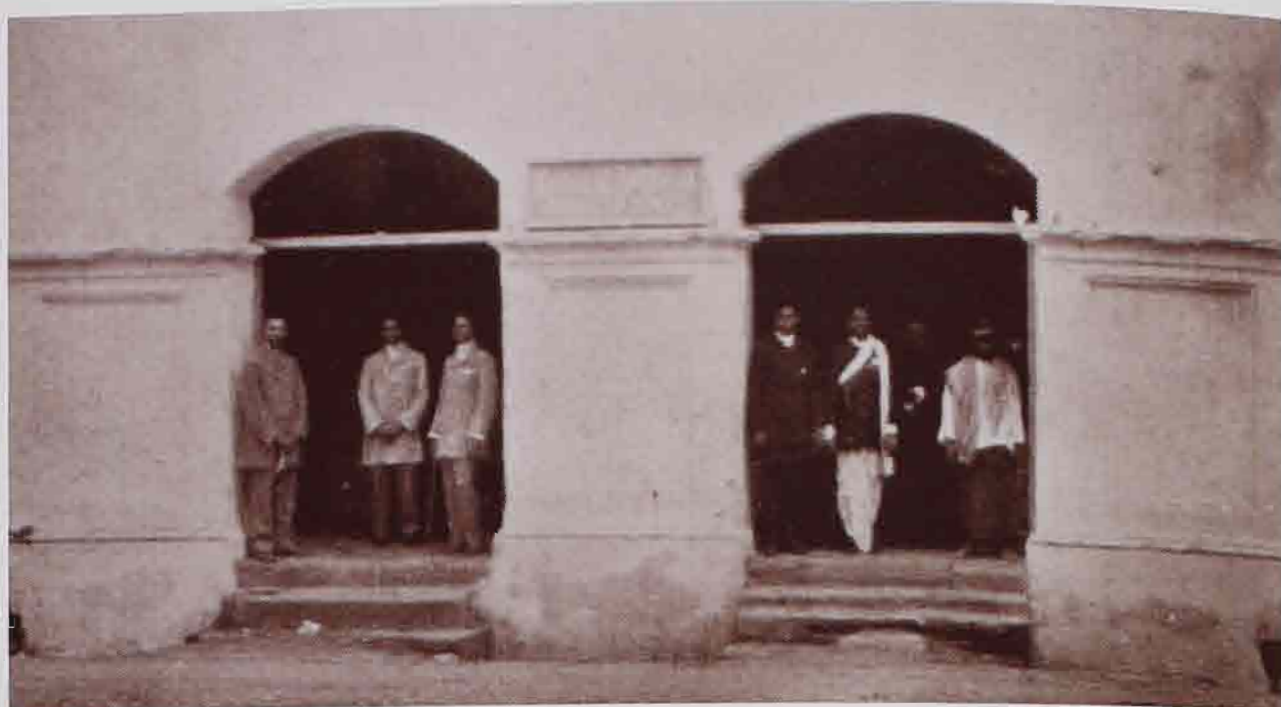
Gujaratis

The Hindu Gujaratis arrived in Ceylon almost simultaneously with the Borahs, to work in their businesses as managers and accountants, maintaining records in Gujarati. It was to be 1898 before a few Hindu Gujaratis, like M. Popatlal, Gangjee Premjee and Maganlal Nathalal, established businesses and began to play a prominent role in the Island's import-export trade. The community, about 200-strong today, has in recent years moved from trade and service to merchandising and manufacture. Some of those making a significant contribution to Sri Lanka in both are some of the few Gujarati families in the Island, such as the Amaleans, Ambanis, Modys, Udeshis and Bhattas. Many of the younger Gujaratis have also entered the professions.

A Gujarati Hindu Mandal was established in Kotabena in the 1940s. A permanent home for it opened in 1958, built mainly through the efforts of the chief initiator, Chatrabhuj (C. B.) Mody, who had arrived in Ceylon in the 1920s. On the first floor is a temple dedicated to Lord Krishna (below, left), one of the few Krishna temples in the Island. Krishna bhajan-singing is held here every Sunday and draws both Gujaratis and non-Gujaratis (bottom). An elaborately decorated mantapam, with ornately adorned and garlanded statues of Krishna and Radha, is the centrepiece. Worship is conducted by a local priest. Leading all the way from the entrance of the building to the first floor shrine are imprints of the infant Lord Krishna's feet (below, right).

The mandal is dedicated to promoting Gujarati art and culture and, in the past, had a resident-teacher who taught the language and culture of Gujarat. This cultural centre has an auditorium and a stage, a library and several guestrooms. The one occasion in the year when all the Gujaratis in Sri Lanka gather here, is for the annual Navaratri festival when they sway to lilting folk music through the night, and dance the garba and the dandiya ras, folk dance forms that are maintained in their pristine forms, uncorrupted by the influences of cinema and modern dance.

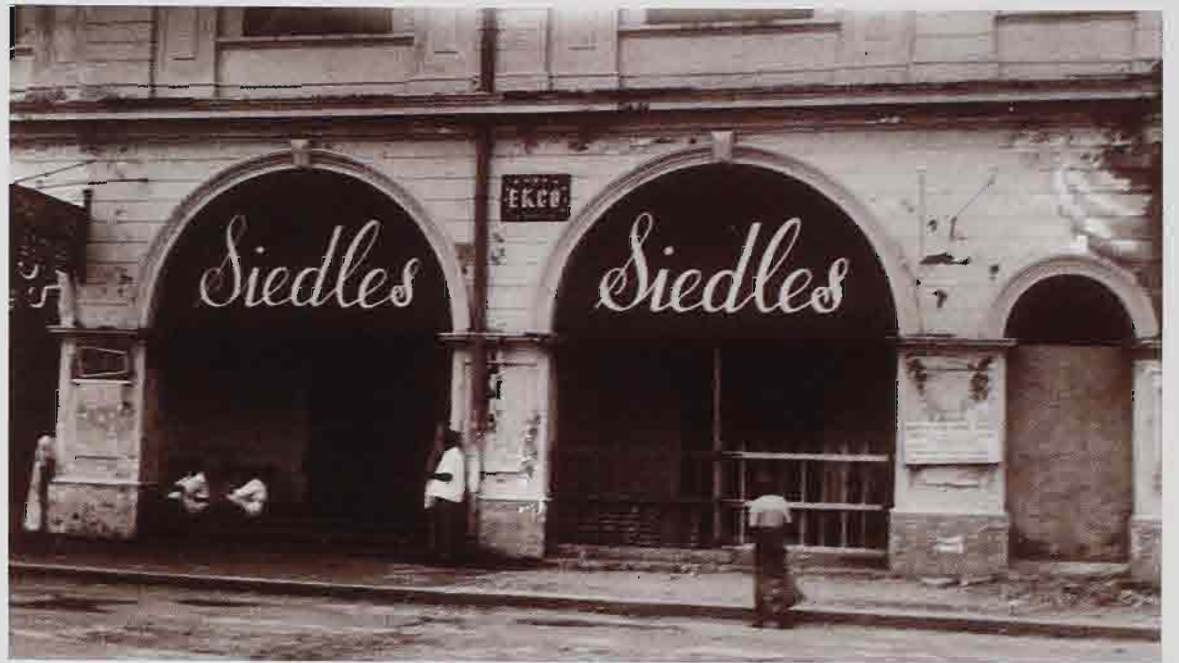




On this page are pictures of two of the earliest Gujarati businesses in the Island. On right are the exterior and interior of the Colombo branch of Calcutta-headquartered Maganlal Nathalal, major rice suppliers to Ceylon. The firm put down roots in Colombo in 1905 and these pictures date to shortly afterwards. Below is an early 20th Century picture of the staff of the National Dairy Company, Colombo, a branch of a Bombay-headquartered Gujarati firm that supplied butter and other dairy produce from its large dairy in Gujarat. One of the partners, P.V.Dalvi, managed the Colombo branch.



Some Gujarati names prominent in business and industrial circles in Sri Lanka today are the Bhatt, the Udeshis, the Ambanis and the Amaleans. C. V. Bhatt, who came out to represent Jeewanlal & Co, Indian aluminiumware manufacturers, and Mrs. Kundanben Bhatt, were very active in bringing the Gujaratis together. Their son Niloo, who studied in Shantiniketan, promoted art and culture in Ceylon. After Niloo Bhatt's death, his partner, Morarji Udeshi, took over C. V. Bhatt & Co., and the business expanded into plastics and aluminiumware manufacture. It is today managed by Harin Udeshi, Morarji's son.



C. V. Bhatt's were neighbours of another Gujarati-owned firm, Siedles, in the column on right, top, in the 1940s, before it was taken over by Morarji Udeshi's father, M. L. Udeshi, and on right in the 1950s. Siedles is today run by Morarji Udeshi's brothers and their sons. The firm, which had made a name for itself for its sales and service of German radios and gramophones, today focusses on the entire Sony electronic audio-visual range.



M. L. Udeshi came out to Ceylon in 1922 as a Dyeing Master in the Wellawatte mills. In the 1930s, he joined European-owned Siedles, which exported desiccated coconut to Germany and imported German radios. During World War II, Udeshi took over the firm and began to concentrate thereafter on electrical white goods. Siedles made a significant contribution to the Island in the late 1960s, manufacturing radios for the common man, the Vahini that sold at Rs. 95 each.

M. L. Udeshi's sons H. M. and N. M. Udeshi joined the firm in 1945. Today, their sons, Kaushik, Anand, Nimish and Rajen manage the firm, guided by N. M. (Naro) Udeshi. The firm assembles Sony transistor radios and TV sets and manufactures electric table fans and water heaters.

A well-known name in Sri Lanka in the field of information, communication and imaging solutions is the Metropolitan Group of the Ambanis. J. J. Ambani, Chairman of the Group, is seen third from right in the picture below, at a launch conference. J. J., D. J. and L. J. are the sons of Jammadas Ambani, an accountant who came to Ceylon in 1943 and, in 1958, started an office machines retailing business. Metropolitan is now into IT, communications and infrastructure.



Sindhis

The Sindhis, a Hindu trading community from Sindh, established themselves during the days of inter-ocean travel in almost every major port of the world. Their shops generally catered to the tourists and offered them artefacts and textiles from the East, supported by a quick-service tailoring establishment. During the days of the Raj, they were perhaps the most prominent Indian business community internationally, the 'Indian shops' in port towns generally being theirs. After Pakistan was born, large numbers of them joined their kin in Bombay, which, in the pre-Independence India, was as much their city as was Karachi. Others migrated to join those in distant parts of the world, those Sindhis who had never lost touch with home, maintaining ties particularly through marriage. In a Sindhi family with several daughters, it would be no surprise to find the girls in adulthood in as many countries as they numbered.

Topansingh Motoomull is believed to have been the first Sindhi to establish a business in Ceylon. His shop in what is now the Pagoda Tea Rooms in Chatham Street established several trends. The Sindhis who followed him also concentrated on Indian, Japanese, Chinese and other Eastern artefacts as well as rugs, embroidery and textiles. It was in his shop that the first meeting of the Sindhi Merchants' Association was held in 1924. Topansingh Motoomull's was followed by J. N. Ramsammy & Sons in 1880. Ramsammy's not only established shops in the *Bristol Building* as well as in *Mackinnon's Building*, closer to the harbour, but they also earned the privilege of boarding all incoming and outgoing steamers and running shipboard shops. The descendants of the Ramsammys are today the Surtanis.

Topansingh Motoomull's lead in establishing himself in up-market Fort, in Chatham Street, unlike other Indian trading communities who operated from Pettah, was followed by other Sindhi merchants who arrived in Ceylon around 1900. Hassaram Motoomull, Siroomal Topandas, P. Chandiram, Shamdas, W. Lalchand, the brothers Parmanand, Jivatram and Uttumchand Hirdaramani, the Boolchands and C. Parsram were some of these pioneers. Most of them had their shops on Chatham Street or in nearby *Bristol Building*.

In the last few years, like Sindhis in every part of the world, Sri Lanka's Sindhis too have moved from trade into industry and other major businesses, their presence noticeable in the close-to-roots garments industry, electronics and hoteliering. Of all the 'Bombay Merchants', they are probably the community who have moved the least from business into the ranks of the professionals.

The Sindhis of Ceylon, around 1000 today, gather for worship in the temple (below) on the first floor of the Sindhi Community Centre in Kollupitiya. The temple has a resident priest, Pandit Jaidev Sharma from Jaipur, who conducts the various religious ceremonies for the congregation. The walls of the shrine are adorned with pictures of the various saints and gurus of the Sindhis. Also prominently placed in the room are the icons of the Hindu deities and the Guru Granth Sahib.

The Sindhis, who dominated the retail textile trade, and whose shops also offered artefacts and objets d'art for tourists, ran shops in Chatham Street and Main Street that were household names in the first half of the 20th Century. One of the best known names was Hirdaramani's on Chatham Street (on left, facing page, top). Their business was started by the brothers Parmanand, Jivatram and Uttumchand in the early 20th Century. After Uttumchand set out on his own, Parmanand and Jivatram built up the business and their descendants, Kishore and Janak, the son and nephew of Bhagwandas Hirdaramani, have made it one of the major garment manufacturers in the country. Hirdaramani's are also major shareholders in Taj Hotels at Bentota and near Katunayake airport.

On facing page, bottom, is Motoomull's of Main Street which goes back to Hassaram Motoomull who came to Ceylon in 1904 and started his textile business at this site in 1911. Motoomull's, now looked after by Hassaram Motoomull's grandson, Suresh Melyani, is now at a different Main Street site; the site in the picture was taken over by the Indian Overseas Bank, who have now constructed a new building here.







PANCHA MAHA YAGNA

In the presence of a large gathering of Saints and procession of devotees a "Maha Yagna" was performed in the year 1949 in Hyderabad, India. Amongst these Saints were Swami Ramdas and Baba Purandas Tapaswaiji.

In the year 1965, a "Pancha Maha Yagna" was performed in the compound of the Sindhi Community Centre - Sri Lanka.

The Five "Yagna Kundas" installed here are in memory of the Pancha Maha Yagna, from 5th May to 7th May 1965.

The Fire for the above Yagna was lit from the holy Perpetual Fire maintained by a Udasi Saint - "Puj Baba Purandas Tapaswaiji", who was brought here from the Himalayas, when he was 142 years old. The "Dhuni" was housed at Hirdaramani's Residence, Barnes Place for 8 Months, from September 1958 to May 1959.

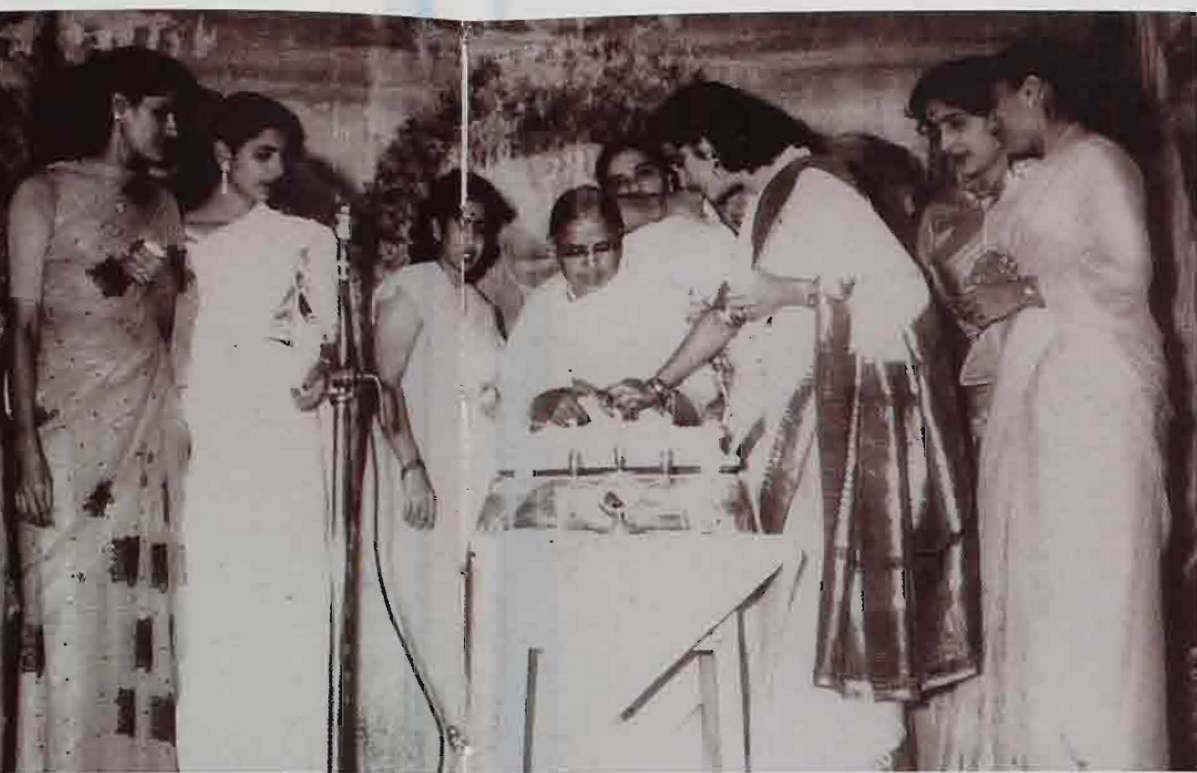
Two Years after his Departure from Sri-Lanka, Prum Puj Baba Purandas Tapaswaiji attained Jala Samathi in river Ganges on "Ganga Saptami" day in May 1961.

Puj Baba Purandas - Dhuni Saheb, "Mandir" is presently in Worli, Mumbai.



A Sindhi Merchants' Association was founded by Hemandas Chandiram in 1926. His father, P. Chandiram, came to Ceylon in 1889 and was one of the leading retailers of textile and artefacts in the island. The Association also developed a community centre with its own building (top), which was inaugurated in 1952 by the then Prime Minister, Sir John Kotelawala (above). Seen in the picture are, C. Parsram (in white suit), the President of the Centre, at right extreme Narain Shewakram, and S. Mangharam. The Centre has guest rooms and is a popular meeting place for the community. The Sindhi Ladies' Club meets here regularly. Once, the Centre had outdoor facilities for badminton, etc., but these no longer exist. A Pancha Maha Yagna was performed in the compound of the Centre in 1965 and is commemorated in the plaque (in the centre). On right, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, elected Prime Minister of Ceylon in 1956, was felicitated by the Centre shortly after his election. Seated to his left is the Founder President, C. Parsram, and next to Sirimavo Bandaranaike is Hemandas Chandiram, the first President of the Sindhi Merchants' Association. Standing behind Parsram is Narain Shewakram, a livewire of the Centre at the time.





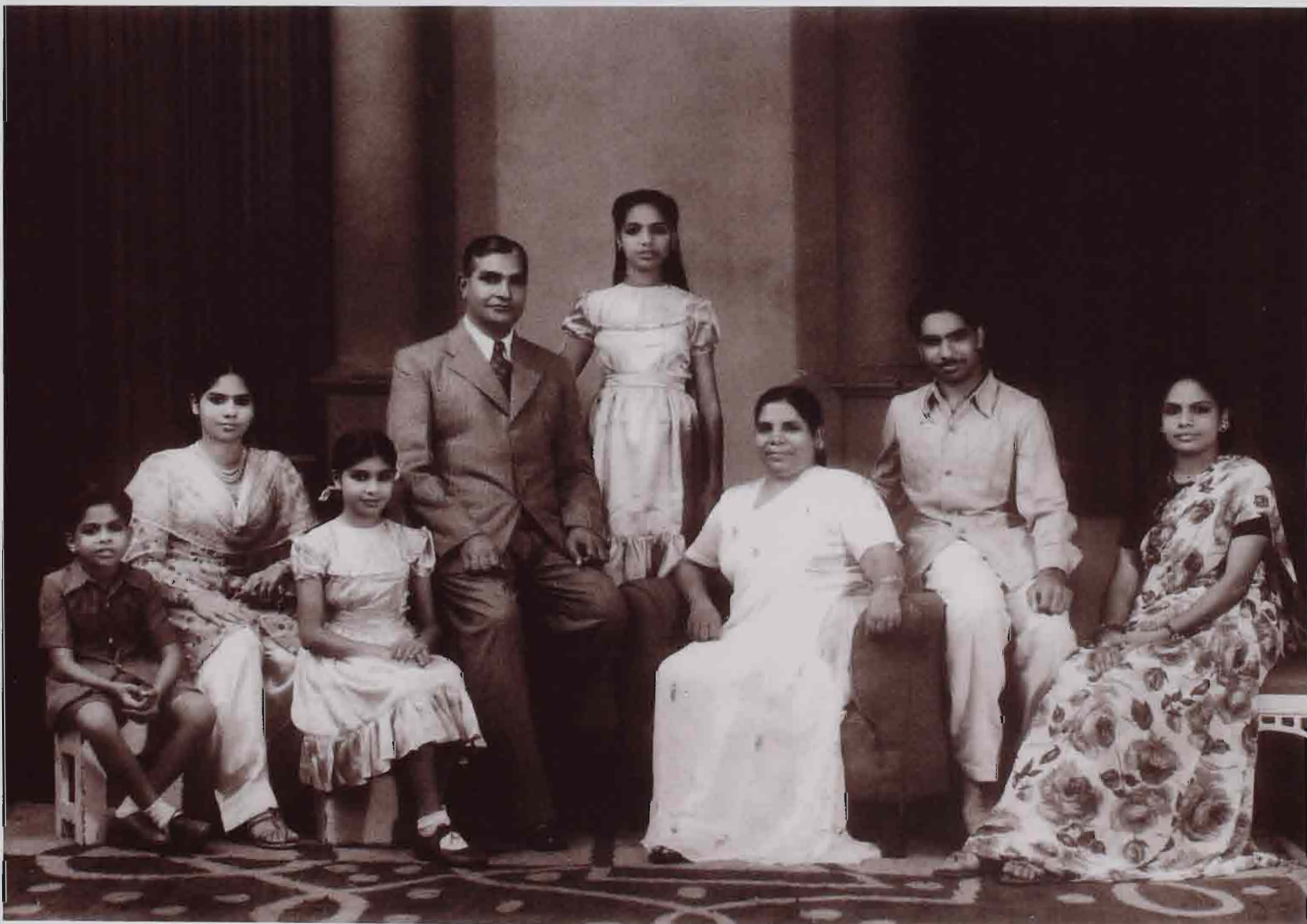
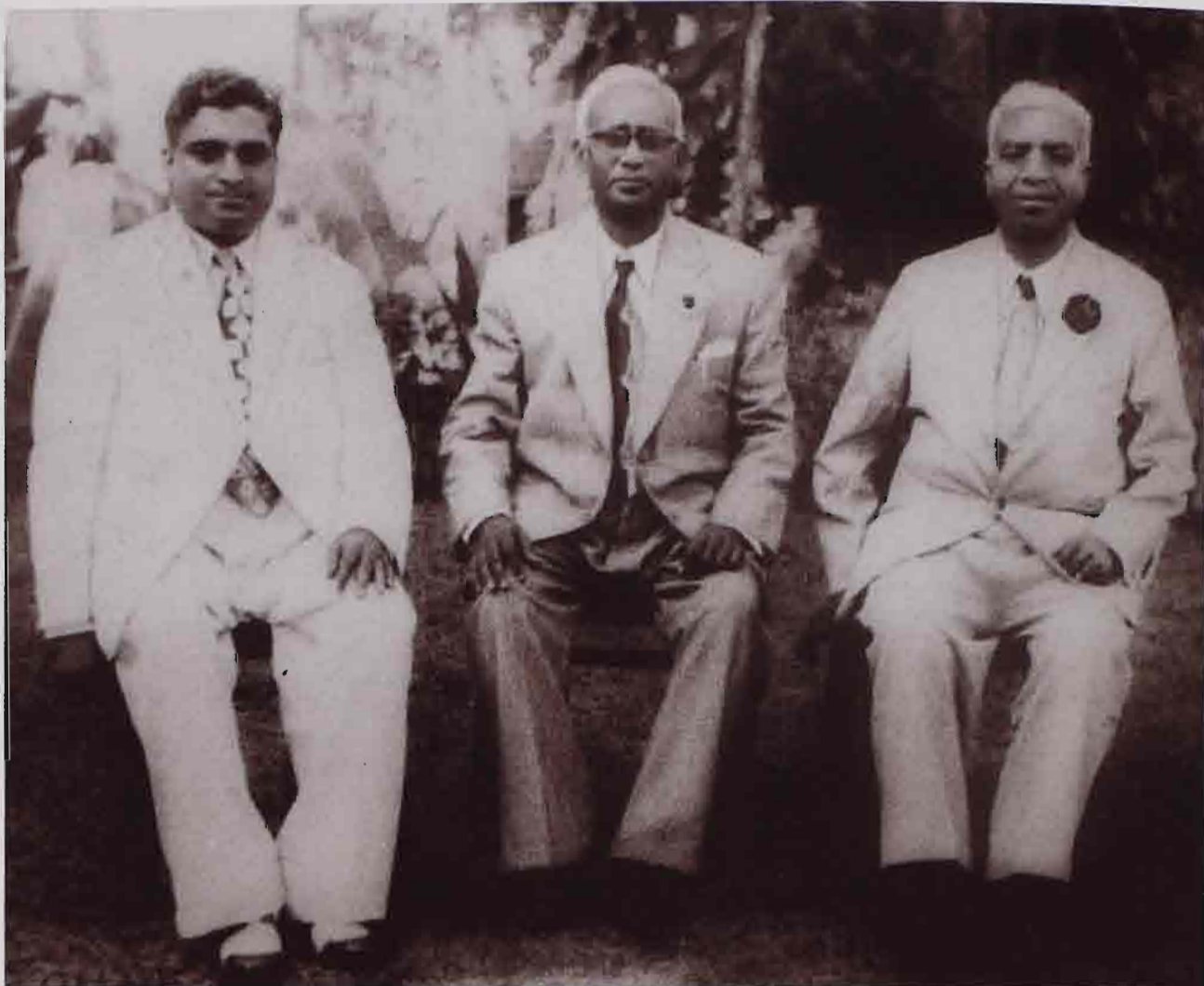
The Sindhi Ladies' Club, started shortly after the Centre got its own home, celebrated its first anniversary in 1953. Mrs. D. Kundanmal, its first President, is seen (in all white) on left, cutting the anniversary cake, while the committee members look on. Below left, the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Club and, below, a year-end sale of the Women's International Club in which members of the Sindhi Women's Club, like Mrs. Kamala Hirdaramani (centre, in white saree), played an active role, together with other members of the Indian community, like Mrs. Nilgiriya on her left, and Mrs. Parvin Chattoor to her right.

At the bottom of the page, Muni Kundanmal greets Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai during the latter's visit to Ceylon in 1979. Muni Kundanmal, President of the Sindhi Merchant's Association from 1970 to 1995, was responsible for expanding the textile business his father, D. Kundanmal, started in 1929 into a major textile and garment manufacturing conglomerate. He is also in a variety of other businesses.



Dharamdas Kundanmal (centre) in the picture on right, who came to Ceylon early in the 20th Century, started out in partnership with Lalchand's in Fort and went on to found his own business with his brothers Jivatram (on right in the picture) and Sobhraj (on left in the picture), and his brother-in-law Mangharam, who branched out on his own in 1951. Muni Kundanmal joined his father and uncles in the business in 1948. By then Kundanmal's was a name to reckon with in Main Street.

Another Sindhi contemporary, M. Pesumal, arrived in Ceylon in the early 1900s and started a small textile business in Main Street. His sons, W. Pesumal (seen below with his family) and T. Pesumal, inherited M. Pesumal & Co. Later, they separated and W. Pesumal formed Pesons on Main Street in 1950. Today, W. Pesumal's sons, Arjun W. Hathiramani and Lal W. Hathiramani (who took the family name), and their sons have built up a major trading business specialising in electrical, electronic and household items, are into garment manufacture, and have made Levis a household name in Sri Lanka.





The major contribution of the Sindhis to Ceylon was the retailing of textiles, particularly sarees, though when they moved into industry they played a significant role in the skirt-and-blouse replacing the traditional saree/cloth-and-jacket as workaday wear. From here it was a short step to fashion designing, which became part of the Ceylon scene in the 1950s, encouraged by the journal Ceylon Woman. With a slightly bigger step, the Sindhis became major players in the garment manufacturing industry in the 1960s. On top left, are Kosbu Sobhraj (left) and Meena Hirdaramani wearing fashions designed for them by Hiro Sobhraj, Technical Director of Kundanmal Industries, who, 30 years later, is seen in picture top right, blessing the bride, the daughter of Kosbu Sobhraj, now Poonam Lalchand. Kundanmal Industries, which started in 1964 manufacturing a wide range of silks, terylenes, etc., later introduced a variety of lace made in Ceylon for the local market. Hiro Shobraj was a regular winner of prizes at the annual fashion designers' contest.

Retailing textiles and fashion designing led to many of the Sindhi shops draping the early contestants in the Miss Ceylon contests which started in the 1950s. In the picture above, one of the first Miss Ceylons, Maureen Hingert, picks a part of her wardrobe for the Miss World Contest from Tolaram's, in Bambalapitiya, where she is helped by Lekhraj (on right, in the picture).

On right, the Suresh Melvani family. Hassaram Motoomull was succeeded by his son Kripaldas Motoomull. Kripaldas's second son Melvani and his wife are seen with their sons Suresh, Ashok and Mungo. Suresh now runs the family business.

Malayalees

The Malayalees of Kerala, going back to the days of the Chera kingdom, have played a significant role in the shaping of history in the Island as we have already seen. From King Gajabahu's time till King Parakramabahu VI's, they served the rulers of Lanka as statesmen, soldiers and artisans and, in time, were absorbed among the local population. This was an integration that was to continue into Portuguese and Dutch times.

It was with the migration from the principalities of Travancore and Cochin in British times that Malayalee identity began to be recognised more distinctly in the Island. It was a migration that grew in the early years of the 20th Century as commerce, infrastructure and industry developed in the Island. Few of these migrants, however, became traders, except for some of the Malapuram Muslims (a couple of whom we have already taken note of) and a few others. The bulk of them sought urban work, skilled and unskilled; many, however, were clerks and professionals, particularly teachers. And there were several who established tea shops and eating houses.

In the 1920s and 1930s, many of the Kochiyas (those from Cochin, and from whom the name Kochikkade in the Harbour area derives) worked in the few mills and factories in the Island as well as in the Port and the Railways. Colombo's upper class depended on their services as butlers, houseboys and cooks, and the arrack industry depended considerably on the Malayalee tappers. The Malayalees, between the 1920s and 1940s, "were vital to the Ceylon economy", community leaders hold. They were also in the forefront of the nascent trade union movement in the Island, going on to strengthen the Leftist unions when they were no longer wanted in the union they had helped to found as Ceylon's first. Many of these Malayalees left the Island after Independence, but as many married locally and have been absorbed in the Island's population.

The greatest contribution of the Malayalees to the Island, however, was as teachers who, between the Wars, were a significant factor in the high quality of 'English' education in the Island. They, several doctors, accountants, government servants, and trade unionists, the majority of whom left Ceylon after Independence, were the most dedicated guardians of the Malayalee identity in the Island. With them in this commitment were the small number of traders, some of whom contributed significantly to the Island's well-being.

Sree Narayana Guru, the great Travancore-born Hindu reformer who proclaimed, "There is only one caste, one God and one religion; therefore do not ask, do not think and do not talk about caste", first visited Ceylon in 1918 and founded the Ceylon Sri Vignodaya Yogam. He had come to inaugurate the Narayana Guru shrine. Sree Narayana Guru visited Ceylon again in 1926. In 1935, the temple at Layard's Broadway was redesignated as a memorial hall and a Sree Narayana Guru Society was started. Bottom, left, is the Sree Narayana Guru Shrine in the 1930s and, bottom, right, is the Sree Narayana Guru Memorial Hall as it is today. Here, the birth anniversary of Sree Narayana Guru has been celebrated - with unavoidable interruptions - from 1918. Since 1972, when a constitution was first drawn up for it, the Sree Narayana Guru Society has enjoyed a new lease of life and has been considerably more active in various cultural fields.

Perhaps the best-known person of Malayalee origin associated with Lanka is M. G. Ramachandran, born in Kandy (see certificate below) who went on to stardom in Tamil films and the Chief Ministership of Tamil Nadu.

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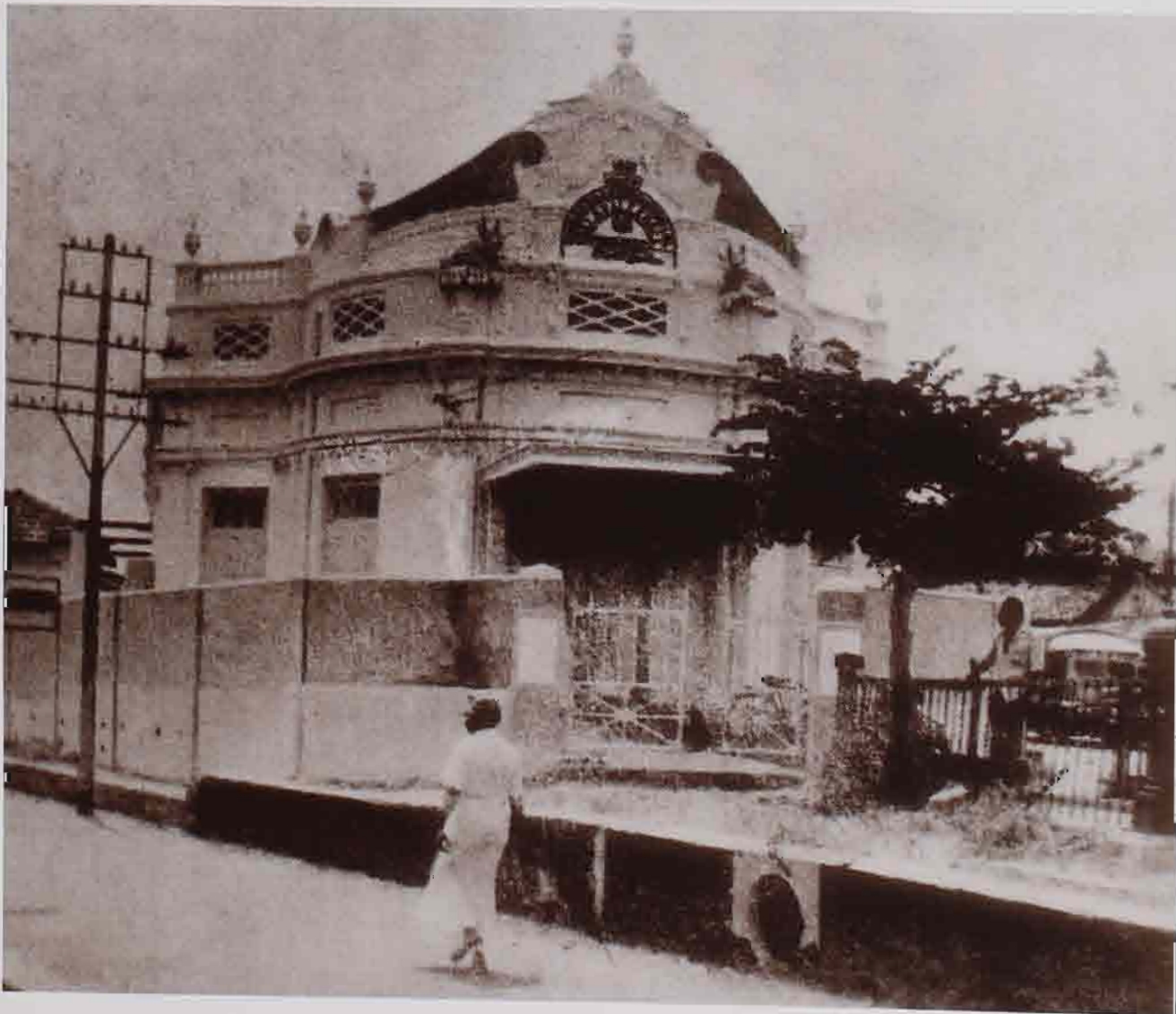
(අ) උපුටාගැනීම, විවාහය හෝ මරණය? / (a) Birth, Marriage or Death? } විවාහය / Birth

(ආ) උපුටාගැනීමේ වර්ෂය හෝ මරණය සිදු වූ දිනය සහ ස්ථානය / (b) When and where born, married or died? } 1917. 01. 01 / Kattakkele - Kandy

(ඇ) උපුටාගැනීමේ හෝ මරණයේ සම්බන්ධීතාවය සම්පූර්ණ නම, විවාහයේ සම්බන්ධීතාවය සම්පූර්ණ නම / (c) Name in full in the case of birth or death or full names of parties in the case of marriage } M. G. Ramachandran

(ඈ) උපුටාගැනීමේ සම්බන්ධීතාවය සම්පූර්ණ නම / (d) Names of parents in the case of birth } M. G. Ramachandran

[ශ්‍රී ලංකා රජයේ ප්‍රියංකු ලේඛනවේදනා / P.T.01



The first President of the Sree Narayana Guru Society under the new constitution, and the person responsible for not only the revival of the Society but also for the hall itself, was K. K. Madhavan (seen with his family on right, top), one of the few Malayalee businessmen and traders in the pre-Independence era. Madhavan, a hotelier – his Hotel Metropole in the Fort was famous for its steaks – was the first person to bottle and brand toddy in Ceylon. ‘Ambassador’ toddy is now a forgotten name. Madhavan helped to establish the National College in Slave Island and the Mahatma Gandhi College in Kandy. A well-known philanthropist, he contributed generously to the building of the Sugathadasa Stadium and to the repairing of the breaches in the irrigation tanks in the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa Districts. Madhavan, who passed away in 1974, was succeeded by his son Devendra.



On right are the K. N. D. Pillais. Pillai was the founder Secretary of the Kerala Samajam (a successor institution to the Ceylon Malayalee Mahajana Sabha set up in 1932 with K. C. R. Vaidya as its President) when it was launched in 1952. His wife helped launch the Kerala Vanitha Samajam (the women’s wing) in 1956. The Samajam was founded by T. P. Kesavan (see pg. 90), an auditor turned estate-owner.



Not a family that was in trade, though some of the younger generation may be in business, but one of the largest extended Malayalee families in Sri Lanka (below) is that of ghatam master K. K. Atchuthan and his wife, together at extreme left. Standing fourth from left is Atchuthan’s son-in-law Mohanraj, a well-known singer and musician in his own right, and standing second from right is Ravindran, Atchuthan’s son, a well known mridangam player. Seated in the centre at this birthday celebration is Atchuthan’s mother-in-law.





The Kerala Samajam was founded to promote Malayalee culture, music and the arts; it has also encouraged an active role for women in it, including presiding over its destiny. Seen at an annual general meeting of the Samajam (top of page), is Prabha Nair Nagalingam (centre, back to the camera) presiding over the meeting during one of her two tenures as President. Facing her (reading report) is M. A. Nair; who, sadly, passed away while this book was being compiled. This Gandhian was the elder of the community at the time. A founder of the Kerala Samajam and its President for many years, Nair set up the Hindi Pracharaka Sabha in Colombo in 1938 to teach Hindi to both Malayalees and Ceylonese. Though the Sabha closed down in the 1980s, Nair, a qualified Hindi teacher, continued to teach Hindi till his death; his students included many Buddhist monks. The Samajam in 1972 recommenced classes in Malayalam in the Narayana Guru Hall under the banner 'Sree Narayana Guru Memorial Malayalam School'. Hindi was also taught here. In the pictures above and on right, clockwise: The school is inaugurated; K. K. Madhavan, the President of the Samajam, takes the first class; and, the first batch of students and teachers pose for the record.





The Narayana Guru Society used to annually hold processions reminiscent of the Trichur Pooram festival on the occasion of Sree Narayana Guru's birthday every October. The picture on left was taken in the 1930s. The procession is no longer held, but a meeting is now organised in the Sree Narayana Guru Hall every year on the occasion. The community celebrates Onam annually, both individually and as a group. As seen in the picture below, taken in the 1970s, the celebration features typical Kerala dance forms.





On left, Saroja Chandrasekaran receives the “Most Outstanding Sri Lankan Malayalee Award”, given by the Sree Narayana Guru Society of Sri Lanka, from Sri Lankan Minister S. Thondaman. On extreme right and left are the Society’s President, Krishnan and Mrs. Krishnan, and next to him its Secretary, Rahulan. Saroja Chandrasekaran is the daughter of M. A. Kumaran who came to Ceylon in 1900 to join his uncle in the toddy trade but went on to become a founder of the Toddy Tappers’ Union. His concern for the Malayalees in Ceylon led to his opening libraries in several towns in the Central Province. His daughter Saroja shows the same regard for the community at large by contributing much of her time to teaching the needy and the disadvantaged.



Left, centre, K. C. Kuttan receives, from the Kerala Samajam, an air ticket to visit Kerala in April 2000. The ticket, being presented by V.N. Nair, President of the Samajam, was in recognition of Kuttan’s 60 years of service in the Galle Face Hotel, Sri Lanka’s best known heritage hotel.

And, left, below, seen with V.K. Krishna Menon (second from left) during his visit to the Island in the 1950s is Abraham Kovoov (standing third from left), a founder of the Kerala Samajam, one of the first Malayalee teachers to arrive in the Island. Also in the picture on extreme right is Palandy of Pilawoos Hotel. Kovoov, founder President of the Rationalist Association of Ceylon, bequeathed his skeleton (below) to Thurstan College, where the Association used to meet regularly.



Others from India

Apart from the Indian communities recorded in the previous pages of this section, there have been several from other communities from across the Palk Strait who have made Lanka their home during the last two hundred years. Some of them have come in very small numbers, others in larger numbers, but the largest numbers came to work in the plantations or help out in shops, a few of whom grew into trade and business.

Among those from North India were the 'Afghans', mainly Pathans from the old North West Frontier Province and Baluchis from Baluchistan. They came as itinerant cloth-sellers and horse-traders, but stayed to become petty moneylenders. A familiar sight, before a more liberal banking era made them redundant, was of tall, well-built, turbanned and bearded 'Afghans' in their baggy shirts, waistcoats and 'pajamas', waiting outside offices for clerks and subordinate staff to come out on pay day. Moneylending to the disadvantaged may not be the most welcome of contributions, but it was one which kept many a homefire burning and the administrative wheels of government and business turning. Today, few among those left follow what became recognised as traditional 'Afghan' business; most have moved into employment themselves.

Another small group of Muslims who settled in the Island were the Khojas, traders from Gujarat like the Borahs and Memons and who like them have grown into business and industry. These 'Bombay Merchants' are Sunnis, a small Ismaili sect, their worldwide leader the Aga Khan. Prominent among them in the Island today are the Chattoors, the Reimoos and the Merus. Curiously, the Sikhs and other Punjabis, who migrated to several other parts of the British Empire to do business, offer artisanal skills and serve in quasi-militaristic work, never came to Ceylon except in very small numbers.

From further south, but nowhere near the traditional areas of migration, came the Goans, the Tulus of the Kanara districts and the Kannadiga of the Belgaum area. A mystery needing explanation one day is why there are no more than a couple of score of Goans in the Island compared to other parts of the world where the Portuguese influence was strong. Angola, Mozambique, even Brazil and Portugal have notable Goan populations. Lanka must have had one in Portuguese days, but did it, like other communities, get absorbed in the Island's population? Certainly it is a field worth exploring, but what is certain is that in British times Goan migration to Ceylon, from Goa or, more likely, Bombay, was very small, but very much of a professional class. The Tulus and Kannadigas, on the other hand, followed the Malayalee migration that arrived to meet the demands of semi-skilled and skilled workers.

Larger than all these groups were the Telugu-speakers from the Madras Presidency, who in British times were almost totally responsible for conservancy work and keeping the Island clean. Traders from Telugu Desam were few. The largest numbers of traders came from what is Tamil Nadu today, following the track beaten by the Bharathas, the Nattukottai Chettiars and the South Indian Muslims, whose presence in the early years was so marked that they have been treated as individual communities in this chapter, while those from other Tamil communities have been grouped together in this section.

The 'Others' from the old Madras Presidency included the Brahmins, the Nadars, the Reddiars, the Telugu Chetties, the Vaniya Chetties, the Aarunaadu Vellalar Pillais, the Acharys, the Maravar, the Udayar and the Konar. Starting with working in others' shops or as pedlars or by establishing small trading outlets, many have grown and established large retail outlets while others are in a variety of businesses and a few have even moved into industry and expanded into conglomerates. They have been joined by several from the communities to which the plantation workers belong, and who have broken out of the plantation milieu.

Featured in this section are mainly those 'Others' who have had a trading background, or who became estate owners and then grew into commerce and industry.

Many among the communities featured in this chapter came to the Island as professionals or grew from family businesses into the professions. Others made their mark in the professions, in arts and sport, entrepreneurship and in religion. They figure in the pages devoted to the contributions the people of Indian origin have made in these particular areas. The pictures in the pages that follow reveal a singular contribution to the Island in every field of endeavour outside of what has been seen as the traditional Indian fields of contribution: the plantations and labour for infrastructural development.



The 'Afghans' – in fact, Pathans and Baluchis – recognised as a community in Ceylon from the 1880s were once suppliers of horses to the gentry in the Hill Country and of hand-me-down warm clothes to the estate workers. In time, they became petty moneylenders, familiar figures in the estate bazaars as well as wherever clerks congregated in urban areas. In Colombo, they mainly settled in Slave Island. The picture, on top, is of an early 20th Century Afghan trader from the Hill Country. Above, a petty moneylender waiting for his clientele in Fort in 1935. His familiar heavy stick, waistcoat, baggy pajamas and army-style boots were, together, typical Afghan costuming of the period.





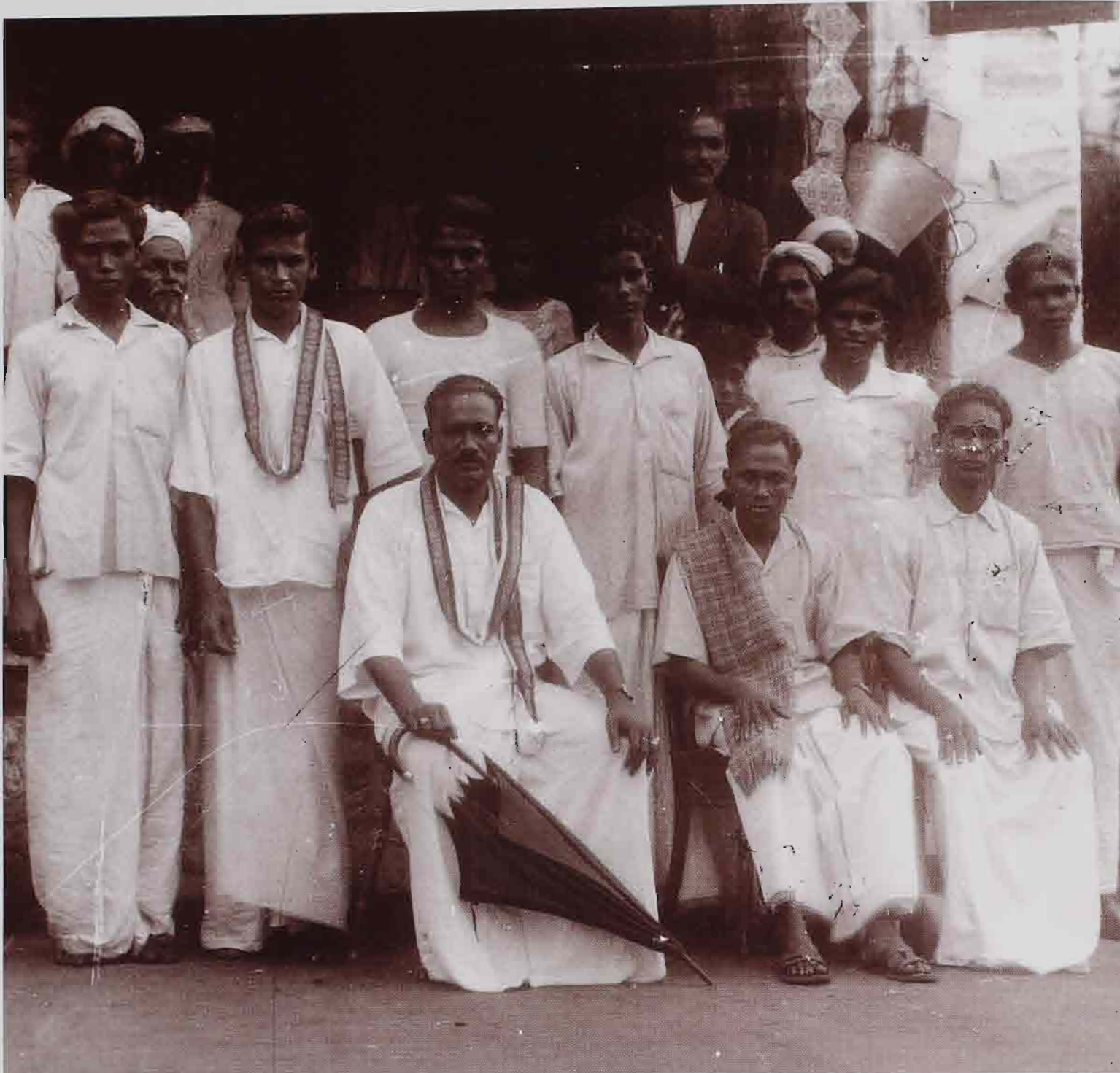
The Uberois pioneered the sports goods industry in Sialkot in the Punjab in the 1880s. They were followed by the Chawlas, who established the Diana sports goods companies in many urban centres in India and Ceylon.

P.C. Chawla arrived in Colombo to establish Diana's in Chatham Street in the early 1900s. Another Punjabi sports company, Pioneer's, was later established and N. R. Chand, who came to work with it, established in the early 1940s his own business, Chand's. The Chawlas and the Chands are the only two Punjabi families who have had a long presence in the Island, though there have always been Punjabis who had been part of the floating population, like Karnal Singh, who long served the Ceylon Government Railway, and R. C. Khera, who was a successful veterinary surgeon.

Counterclockwise, from left, on these two pages are:

- P.C. Chawla and his staff, shortly after Diana & Co. was established in Colombo.
- P.C. Chawla, extreme left, together with Mrs. Chawla and their son Subash Chawla (third from right) seen with Victor Barna (third left), the world table tennis champion for many years, who visited Ceylon in the 1960s. Diana's helped bring to Ceylon several champions in the various racquet games. Mrs. Chawla belonged to the Buddharaja family of Rawalpindi, a family which helped Buddhism considerably in the region.
- P.C. Chawla, a founder member of the Indian Club in Colombo and President of it during the visit of Jawaharlal Nehru to Ceylon in July 1939, is flanked by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. Third from his left is his brother, P.L. Chawla. Other prominent members of the time seen in the picture include (third from right) H. Chandiram, (fourth from right) M. Subbiah, (fifth and sixth from right) Mr. & Mrs. H. M. Desai and (second to the right of Pandit Nehru) Dr. B. B. Das Gupta.
- Dr. Subash Chawla, Honorary Consul for Nepal in Ceylon/Sri Lanka for ten years and now in charge of Diana's, seen with King Birendra of Nepal (below). Chawla was the first person of Indian origin to represent a foreign country in Lanka, until Nepal established its own diplomatic mission.



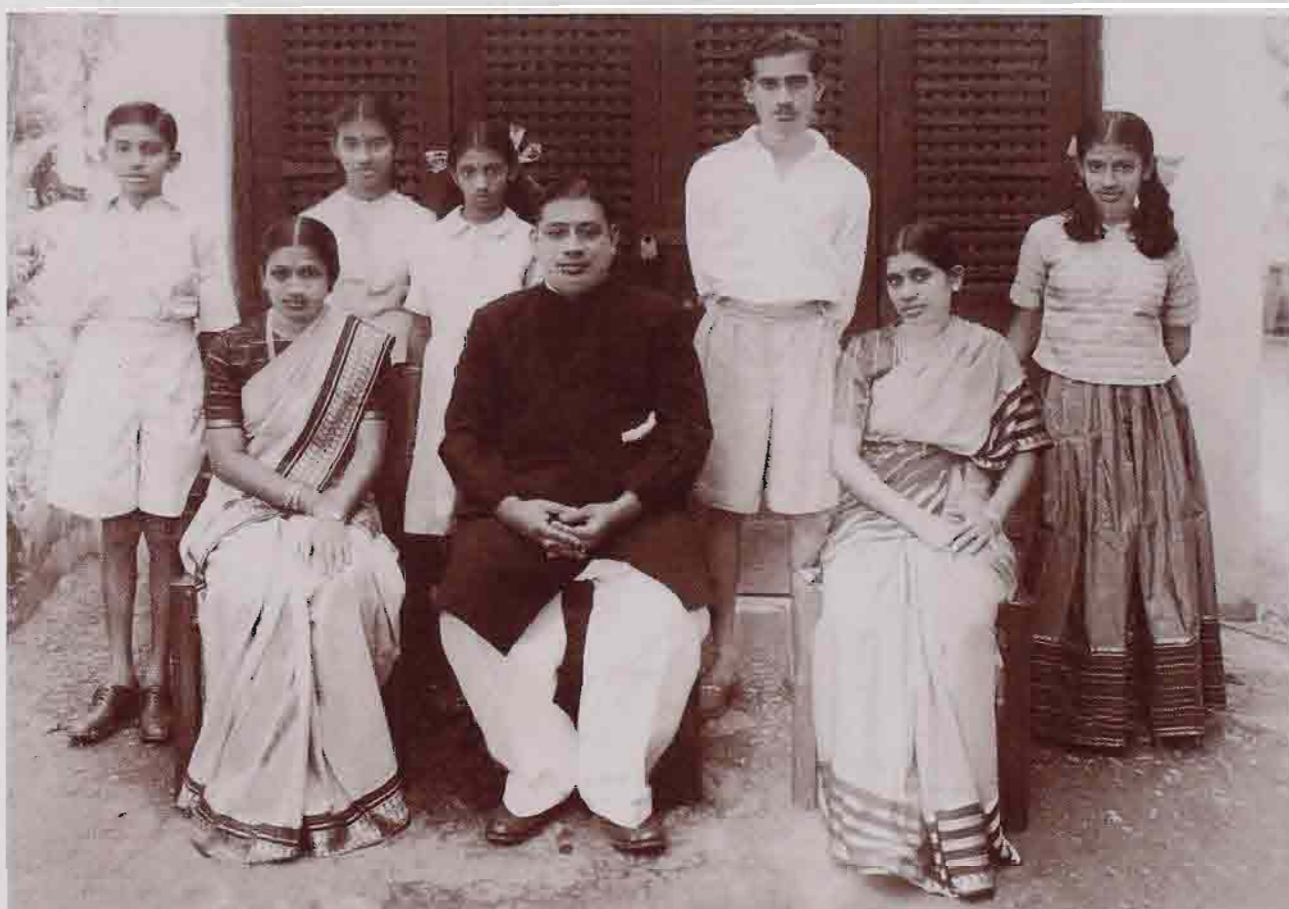


Apart from South Indian estate labour, there were large numbers of Tamils from various communities who, till the 1960s, were a prominent part of the trading scene in Ceylon. Many of their heirs are still part of the Sri Lankan scene but have now moved from trade to industry, as have the descendants of many of the kangany families who first moved into estate ownership and then into business.

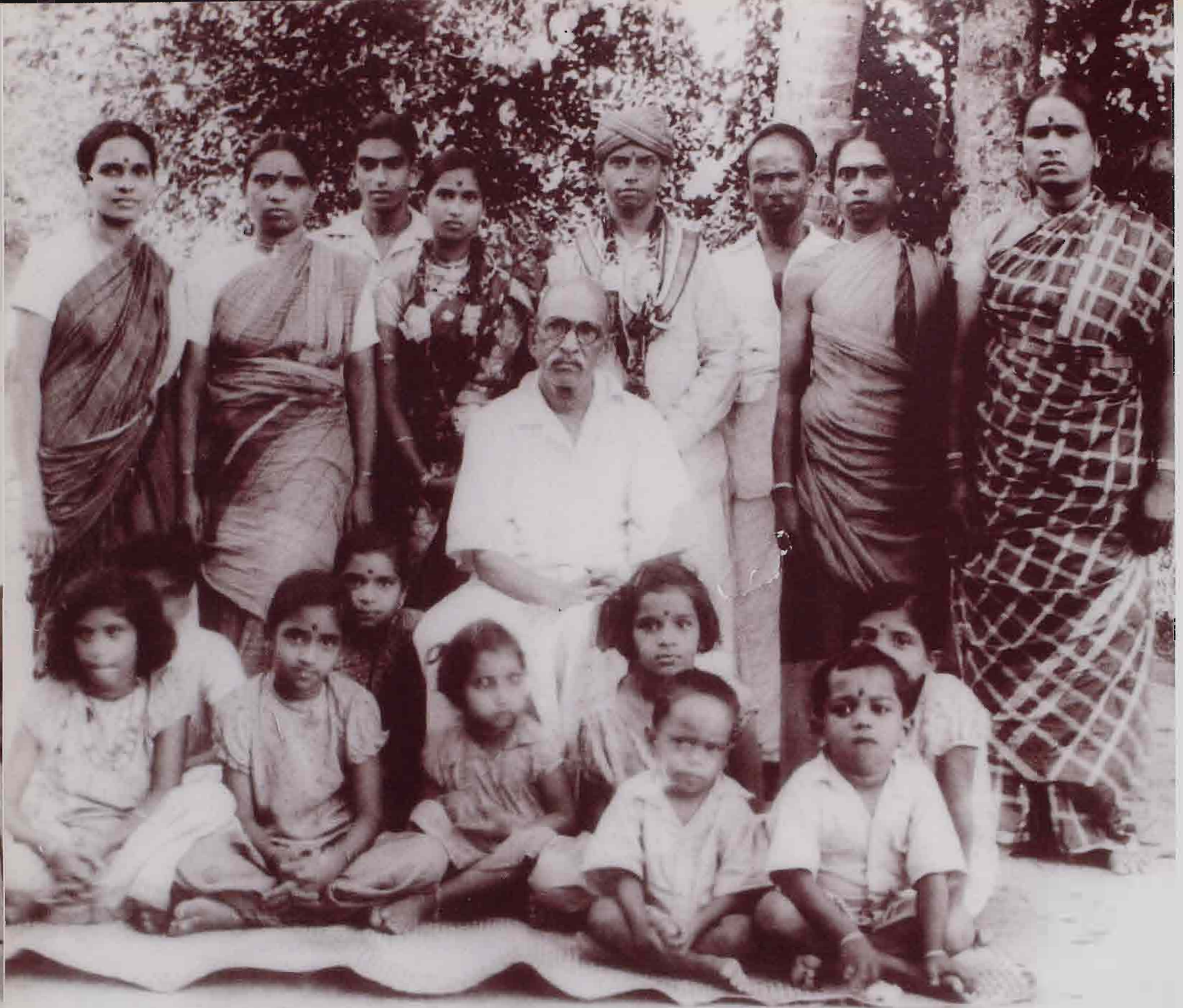
On left is a group of Indian traders and shopkeepers belonging to different South Indian communities but bonded by their settling in the Nawalapitiya area. In the picture below is a colourful array of silks worn at a temple festival by the women of such South Indian families.

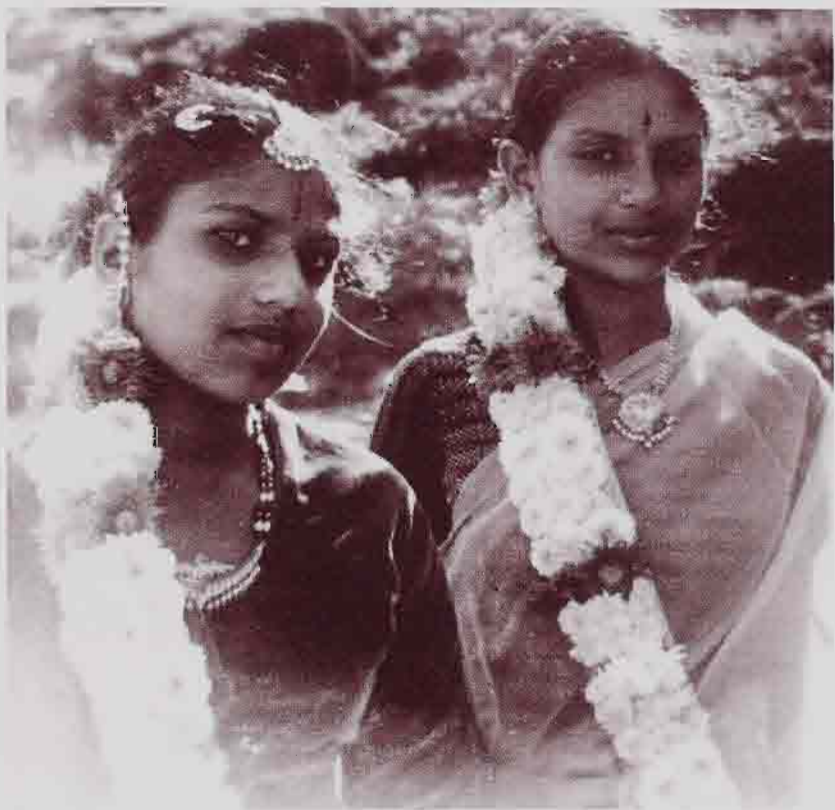
Many a trader and artisan from the hill-country prospered after moving down to Colombo. One of these was a pioneer of the jewellery business in modern Ceylon, Pattakkannu Achary (on facing page, top row, left) who came from the Nagercoil area in 1895 and set up a workshop in Gampola. He was accompanied to Ceylon as a 20-year-old by his brother N. Lakshmana Achary. They moved to Colombo in 1901 and in 1910 established the office in New Chetty Street where the headquarters of the business remains today. So does its reputation, "The most trusted jewellers in Colombo".





Colombo-based South Indian businessmen, traders and their businesses included:
 Top, right, Sundaram Madura Nayagam, one of the pioneers of industry in Ceylon as well as of film-making. In this family picture, Nayagam is flanked by his wife and his eldest daughter Kamaladevi who married P. P. Manikam. Standing are his other children.
 Right, The Madras Palayakat Co., dating to 1836 and established in Colombo in the 1930s by A. Thiagaraja Mudaliar and T. Sabapathy Mudaliar.
 And above, the V.S. Nadar Building, facing the western end of Main Street. Little is known of the family, but the building is one of the few recognisable landmarks reflecting yesteryears' Nadar presence.





A few who migrated from the southernmost regions of the old Madras Presidency to the estates of Ceylon began to prosper in the 1940s and '50s. Their extended families became entrepreneurs in fields ranging from trade to proprietary planting and then on to industry. On these pages and in the next two is one such extended family.

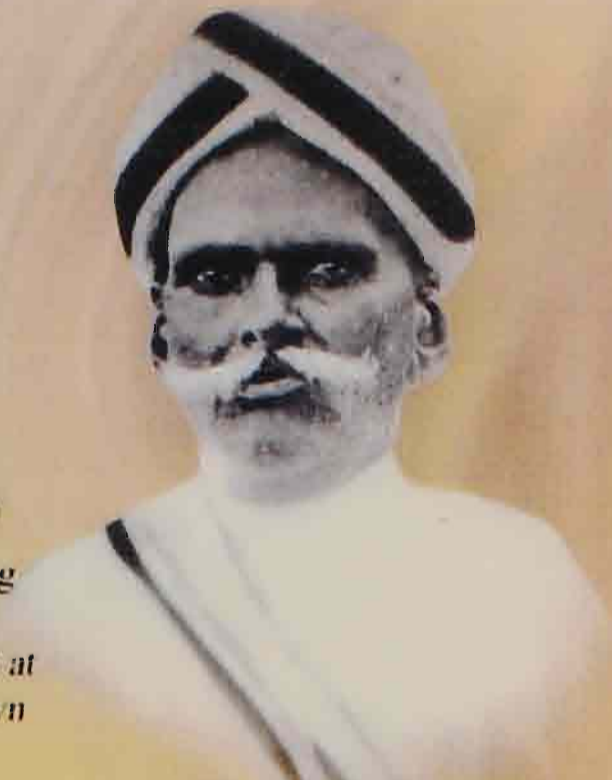
On facing page, top, is R. A. Alaghoo Pillai (centre) who migrated to Ceylon in 1888 as an 18-year-old and started life working in tea and rubber estates in Koslanda, Badulla District. He went on to acquire estates in the Koslanda area, then diversified into printing. He established the Nadaraja Press in 1930. Alaghoo Pillai is seen in the picture on facing page, top, at the wedding on his grand-daughter Vedavalli, daughter of his son R. A. Appavoo Pillai, to his grandson Karuppiab, son of his daughter Papammal. The pictures in the second row on the facing page are of the wedding of Vedavalli's daughter, Pushpavalli, to Vijayarajah in 1964. In the picture on extreme left, note the tinned roofshed in the background, which was the wedding hall, Namadhu Illam, on the family's estate at Nickapotha.

Anti-clockwise, on this page, from top left, are:

- Pushpavalli in a theatrical group at the Little Flower Convent, Bandarawela, in 1962.
- Vedavalli's daughters, Rajeshwari (left) and Maheswari, seen in 1963.
- A family group on Dickapitiya Estate in 1965. The couple standing on left are K. A. Karuppiab and Vedavalli, and next to them are Pushpavalli, their daughter, and Vijayarajah. Second from right is Rajam, Vedavalli's sister, and next to her is Maheswari, the other daughter of the Karuppiabs.
- The interior and exterior of Vijayarajah's Sumathi Trading Company, an all-purpose store in Bandarawela. Vijayarajah is seen with daughter Sumathi in 1982.



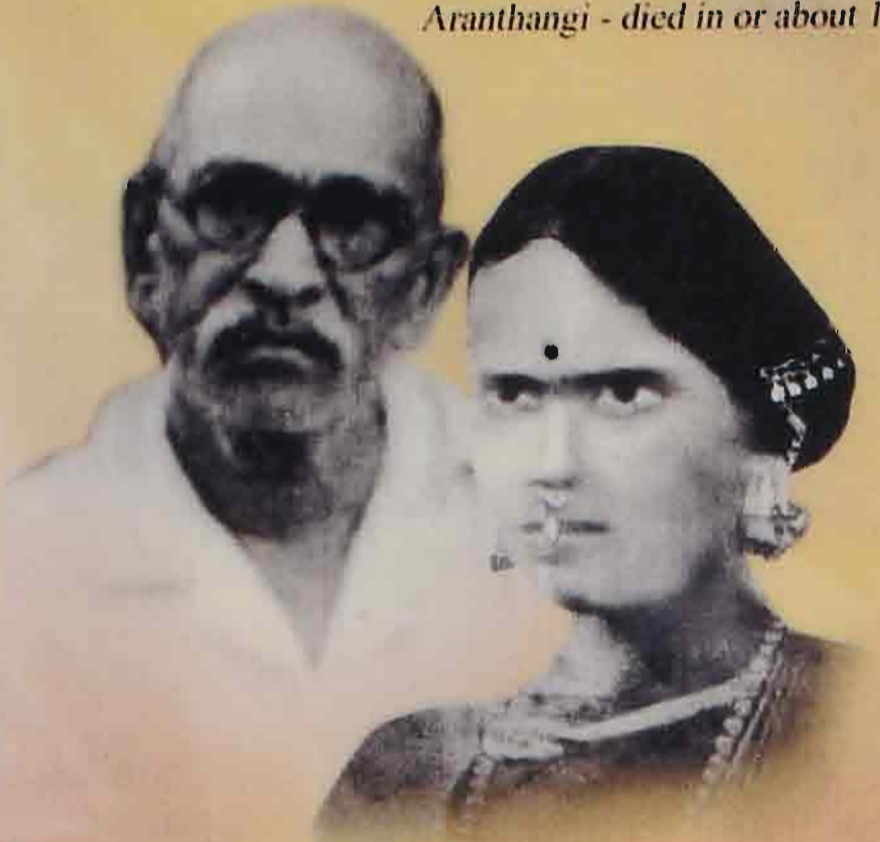
Pavai Vilakku representing Alaghoo Pillai(snr) and Alagammai of Aranthangi at Avudayar Koil - First known generation of the family.



A. Ramachandran Pillai of Aranthangi - died in or about 1912.



Ramasamy Udayar of Keelapulioor was Hd. Kg in one of Lipton's Plantations in Sri Lanka, and Chellaie Ammal.



R. Alagoo Pillai (1872 - 1945) of Aranthangi and Sri Lanka and Alagammai of Kudikadu Village in Perambalur (dist).



Mookaie Ammal mother of Seethalakshmi.

Sittupulle Ammal mother of Rajalakshmi.



R.A. Appavoo Pillai (1898-1955) lived in Sri Lanka and Seethalakshmi (1910-1936)



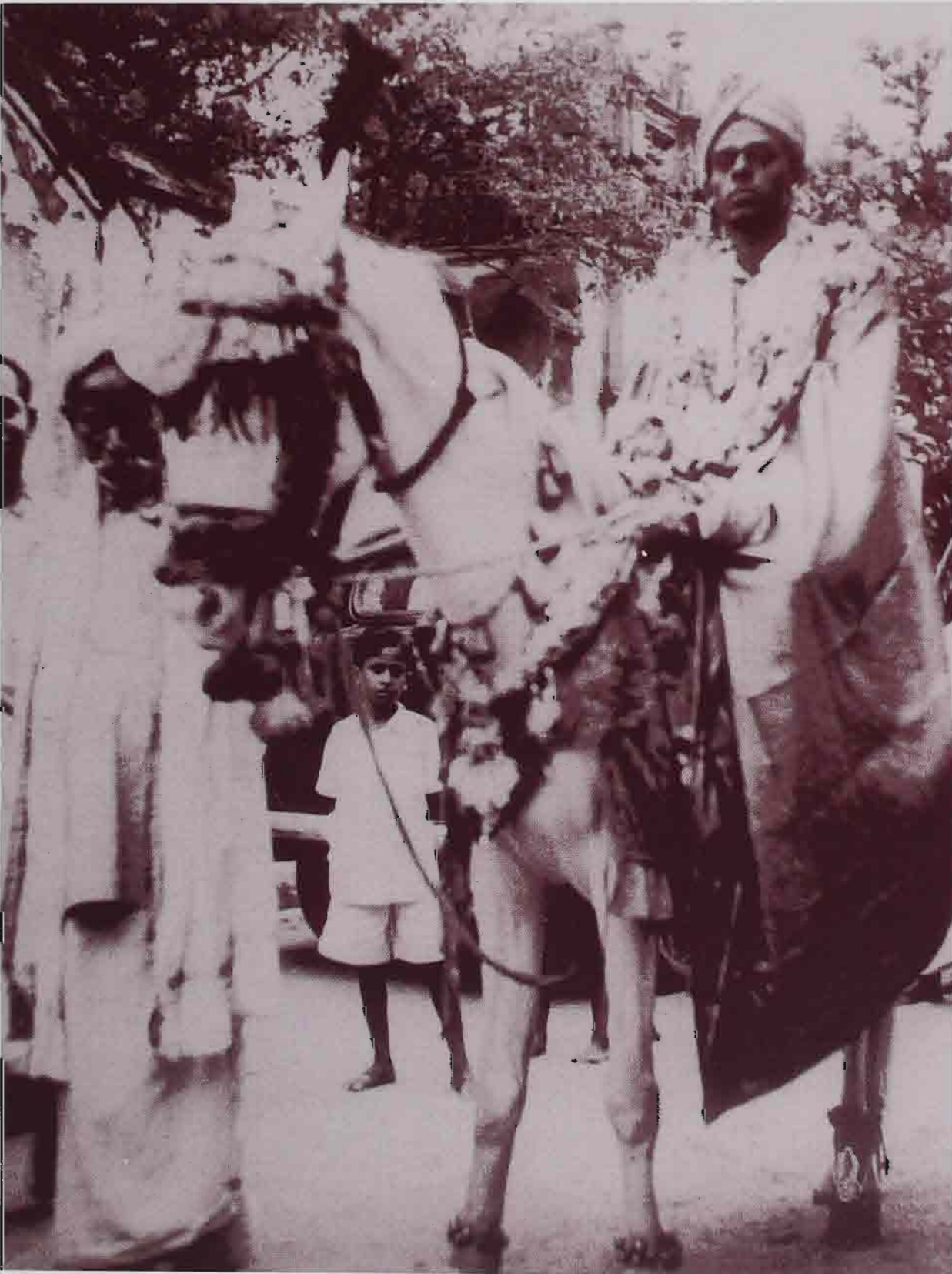
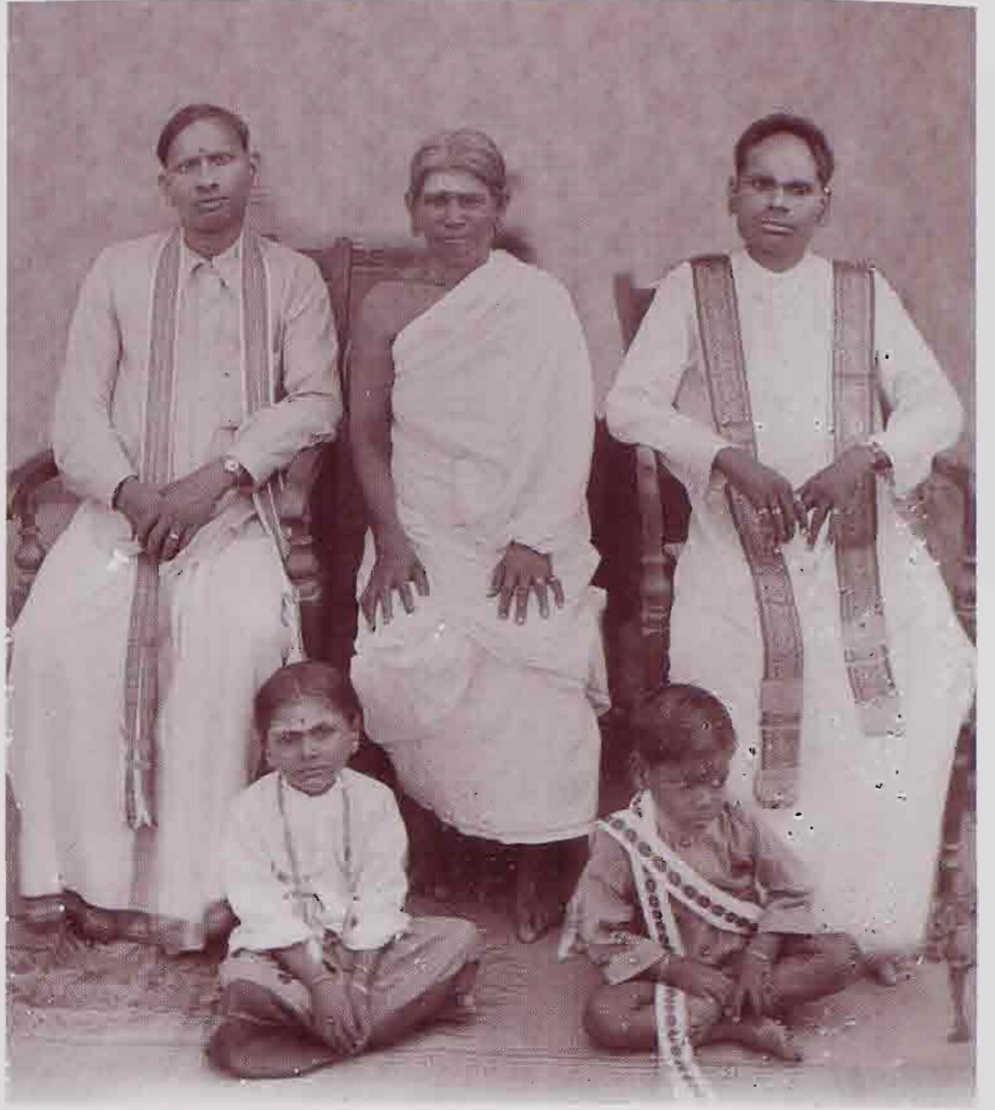
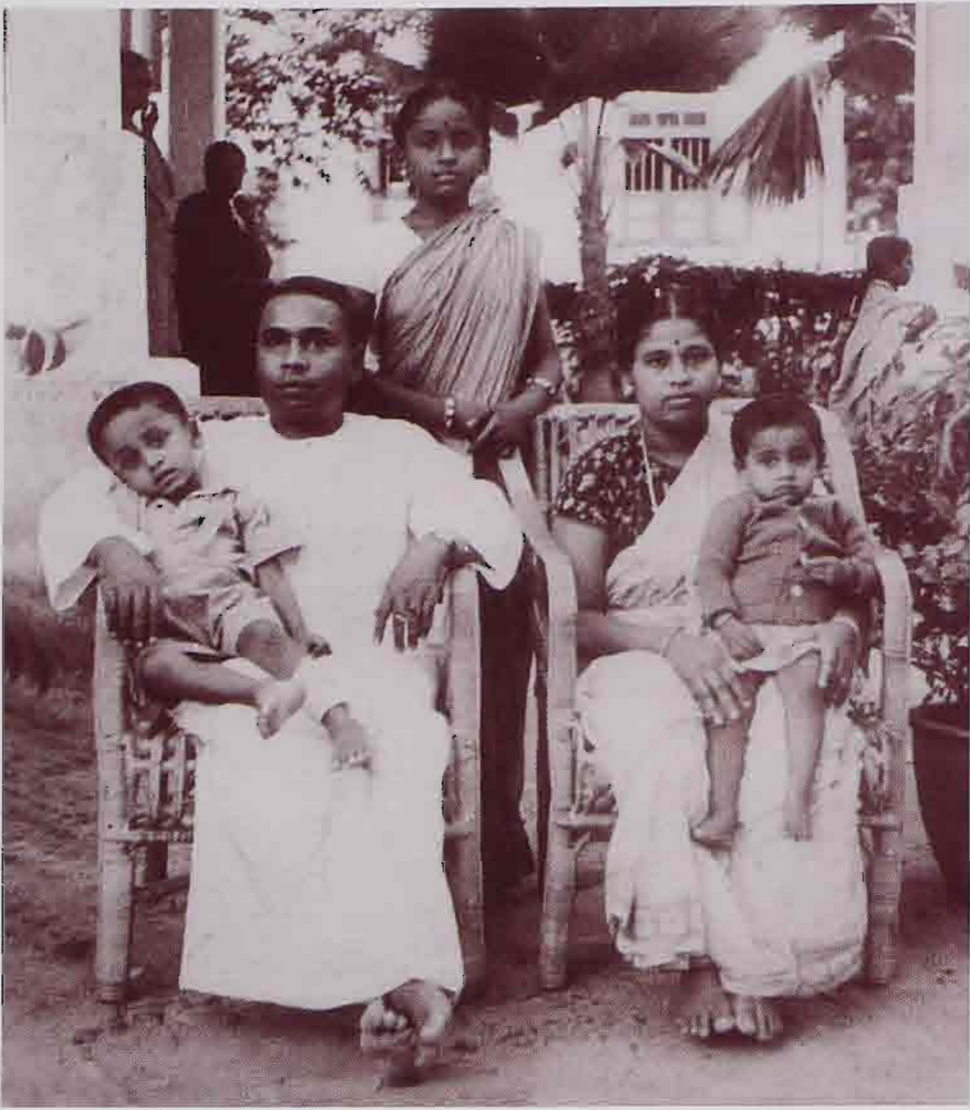
R.A. Nadesan OBE, JP (1906-1985) lived in Sri Lanka and Rajalakshmi (1918-1967).



The family tree of R. A. Appavoo Pillai and R. A. Nadesan, who was a well-known figure in business circles, is seen on facing page. On top left in the 'tree' is A. Ramachandran Pillai of Aranthangi, father of R. Alaghoo Pillai seen below him. To the left of Ramachandran Pillai, are the Pavai Vilakku representing their ancestors, Alaghoo Pillai and Alagammal, of Kulathukudi village near Aranthangi, which were gifted by the family to the Arudayar Kovil around 1865.

R. A. Appavoo Pillai and Nadesan were the sons of R. Alaghoo Pillai and grandsons of Ramachandran Pillai. To the right, at the top of the 'tree', is Ramasamy Udayar, who was the Head Kangary of a Lipton estate in Ceylon, and his wife Chellaie Ammal. Seen together in the second row, right, are their daughters, Mookaie Ammal (left) and Situpulle Ammal (right). They were mothers of Seethalakshmi and Rajalakshmi respectively. Seethalakshmi married Appavoo Pillai (third row, left) and Rajalakshmi married Nadesan (third row, right). R. A. Nadesan went on to expand the family's Nadaraja Press in Colombo and developed around it the Nadaraja Building in Kollupitiya (left). At the time of this picture it housed the offices of the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka. Nadesan's grandson Ravindran has today established one of the most modern packaging units in South Asia, Printcare, and in its scenic grounds is a small museum (below), exhibiting some of the earliest machinery of the Nadaraja Press.





Other families with estate backgrounds who moved into business and the professions include:

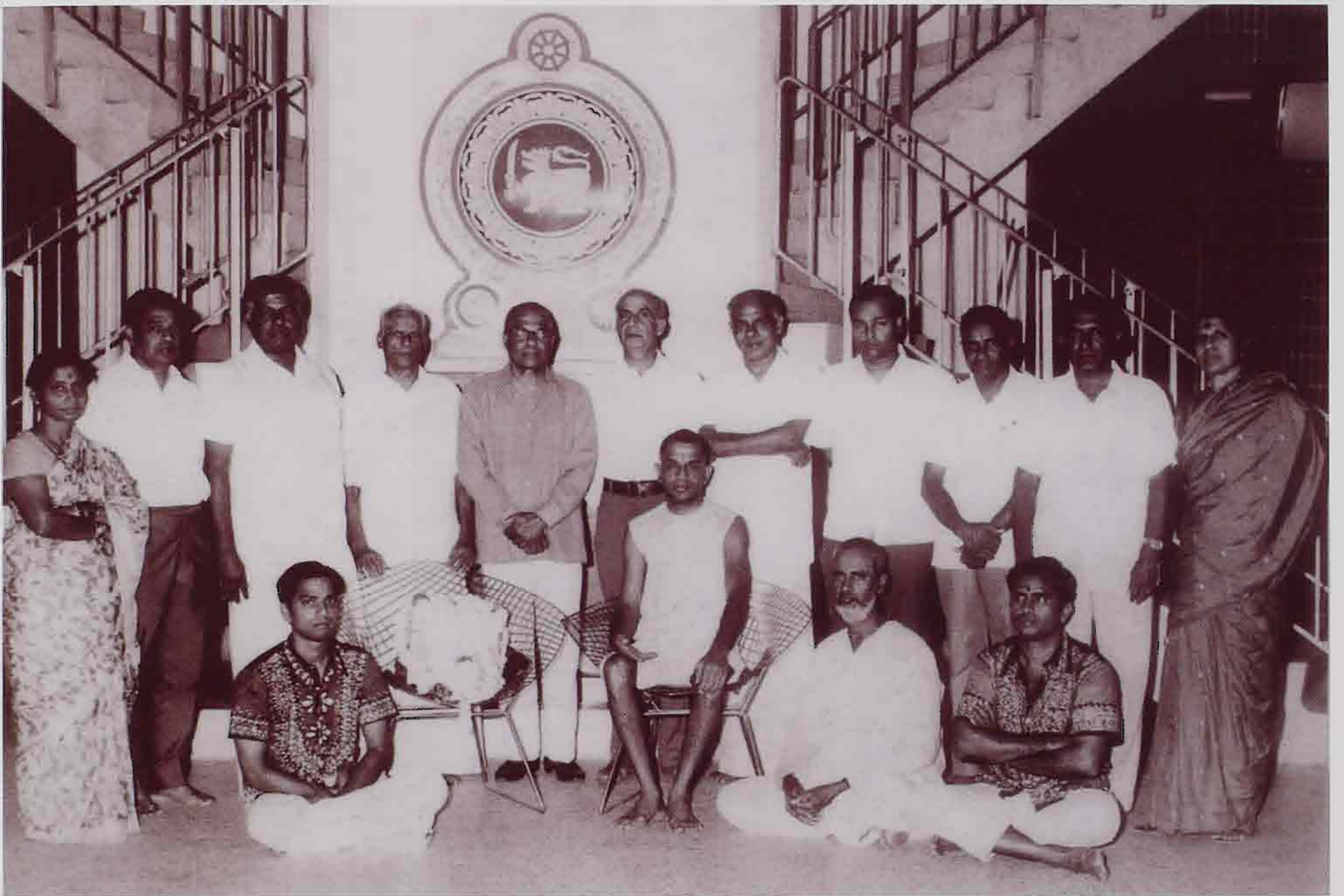
Top left, Sp. Vythialingam and his family in the 1940s. Vythialingam, from a kangany family that became plantation owners, was an M. P. for several years.

On left, Sp. Vythialingam's son-in-law during the Maapillai Alaippu ceremony (when the bridegroom on horseback is taken in procession to the bride's house for the marriage).

Above, V.S. Mariapillai, on left, and his elder brother V.S. Sivanadiapillai with their mother S. Ponnammal at Maskeliya in 1933. Both had business backgrounds but their children, in due course, became professionals. Mariapillai's son, M. Radhakrishnan, is a leading lawyer today and is an active participant in the affairs of the Udayam Foundation, Ceylon Estate Workers' Education Trust, and other organisations committed to improving the educational lot of the people of Indian origin working in the estates.

On facing page, top, K. P. Kaliappa Pillai (fourth from left), who built up a large trading business in the 1940s, is seen at the Colombo Airport in 1982 with Sri Haridas Swamijee (seated on chair), Bagawathar and his two disciples (seated on floor), and other Indo-Lankans. Kaliappa Pillai came to Ceylon as a 17-year-old in the 1920s and, after helping a relative in his shop in Ramboda, struck out on his own, establishing his own shop there. Then he moved into Colombo, where he was one of the few to keep his provision and saree stores open in 1942 when large numbers were fleeing Colombo with Japanese invasion appearing imminent. He was then encouraged by the Government to handle its food distribution and import food supplies. After the War, he became a plantation owner. He established the Kumara Perumal Farm Science Research Centre, donating 63 acres of land to it.

On facing page, bottom, A. Y. S. Gnanam, founder of the St. Anthony's Group and, today, one of the leading industrialists in the Island, is seen receiving the Deshabandhu Award from President J. R. Jayawardene in 1986. Gnanam, who was awarded the Deshamanya title in 1994, also received a special award, Vishwa Prasadini, in 1996. The St. Anthony Group's humble beginnings were with a hardware store in 1944.



சென்னை
சிவமயம்

S. Kanapathy Chettiar,

GENERAL COPRA MERCHANT & COMMISSION AGENT.



DEALER IN
MOTOR OILS, LUBRICATING OILS,
CASTOR OIL, CATTLE FOOD,
MANURE, GREASE, BELT PASTE,
COTTON WASTE, CARBIDE,
TALLOW & COAL TAR
ETC., ETC., ETC.

15/17, GRAND PASS ROAD,

Colombo, 1/24 1937

TELEPHONE: 2220.
GRAMS:

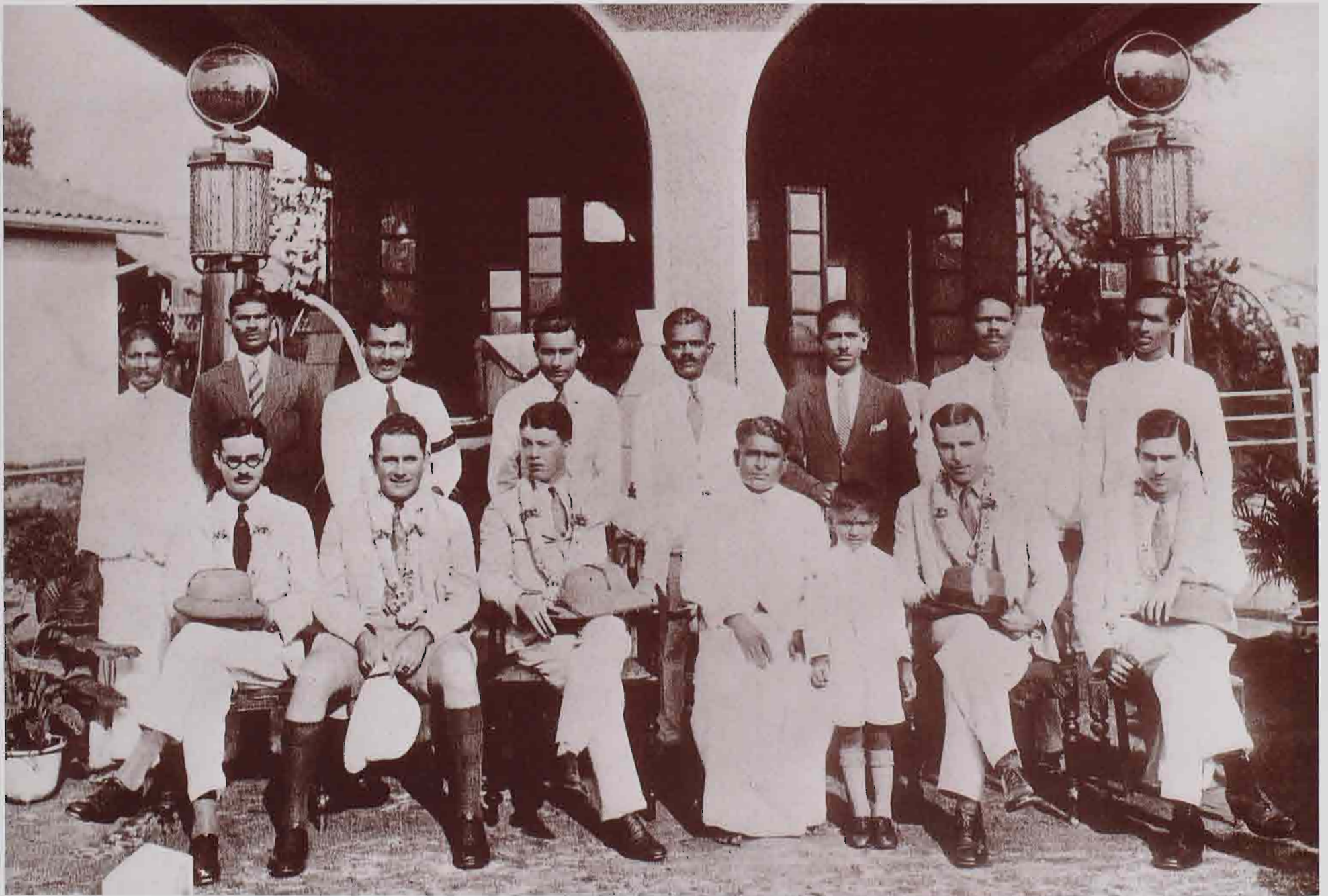
தமிழ் தேசிய சர்க்காருக்கு
இந்தியா. நான். எனது மகன்
கொண்ட. ஆகியவை நான். நான்
உடையது. உடையது. உடையது.
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உடையது. உடையது. உடையது.



Today, the Sri Krishna Corporation group is a major conglomerate in Sri Lanka. But its beginnings in 1924 were with the retailing of petroleum products by S. Kanapathy Chettiar, who came to Ceylon in the first years of the 20th Century. In 1928, he helped operate a Shell petrol station opposite the Regal Theatre. Three years later, he built a service station of his own in Panchikawatte. The service station on Sangaraja Mawatha (below) is the only one in the Island that has not changed hands during its over 70 years of existence. Kanapathy Chettiar, third from the right, seated, is seen with his son Selvanathan who, with his sons, was to expand the business considerably in the 1970s and 80s and also take it overseas, investing in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Kanapathy Chettiar's first diversification from petroleum products was in 1934, when he went into coconut produce, including copra, oil, cattle feed and manure. The document on left, dated to 1937, records his purchase of a chekku, the traditional press used to extract oil from the coconut kernel.

That year, Kanapathy Chetty and a partner bought a coconut oil mill in Ja-ela, a mill which he took over in 1942. Around the same time, he bought the office premises in Grandpass, which are still the family headquarters.



The picture on right shows the headquarters of the Sri Krishna Coconut and Rubber Mills Ltd. in the 1940s. In 1954, the name of the organisation was changed to Sri Krishna Corporation Ltd. and is now known as SKC.

S. Kanapathy Chettiar, a trustee of the Sivasubramania Swamy Temple, was committed to providing education to the underprivileged whose numbers were large in the Grandpass area. In the 1950s, he persuaded his fellow trustees to allow the little-used Assembly Hall of the temple, where a night school offering primary education functioned till the 1940s, to be used for a regular primary and secondary school. The school was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister, Dudley Senanayake, seen in the picture below being led into the school premises with full temple honours by Kanapathy Chettiar (second from the right). The SKC Trust still monitors the administration and performance of the school established by the founder, even though this Tamil medium school is now managed by the Education Department.

S. Kanapathy Chettiar was succeeded at SKC by his only son, K. Selvanathan, seen on left, in the picture below, right, with Cabinet Minister M. D. H. Jayawardena in 1978.



The Professionals

The workers were the first to arrive from India. To serve their growing numbers, as well as the opportunities a developing island offered, came the traders. As infrastructure and business grew, as local wealth increased, and as education became in greater demand, there also developed the need for qualified professionals in a country where higher educational facilities were slow to get off the ground. And it was to meet this demand there came a stream of professionals from India where higher education had begun to put down roots from 1857.

The early professionals came to serve the government and the institutions it was developing for the people. But as education began to spread, particularly with the establishment of schools in Jaffna, Colombo and the Kandyan highlands, the need for qualified teachers was considerable and it was to meet this demand that there came a steady stream of teachers from what is now Tamil Nadu, to teach in institutions in Jaffna and the Hill Country, and, later, from Kerala to teach in Colombo as well as elsewhere. It was a signal contribution these teachers made, to education in Ceylon and the developing of the leaders, administrators and professionals of the years to follow.

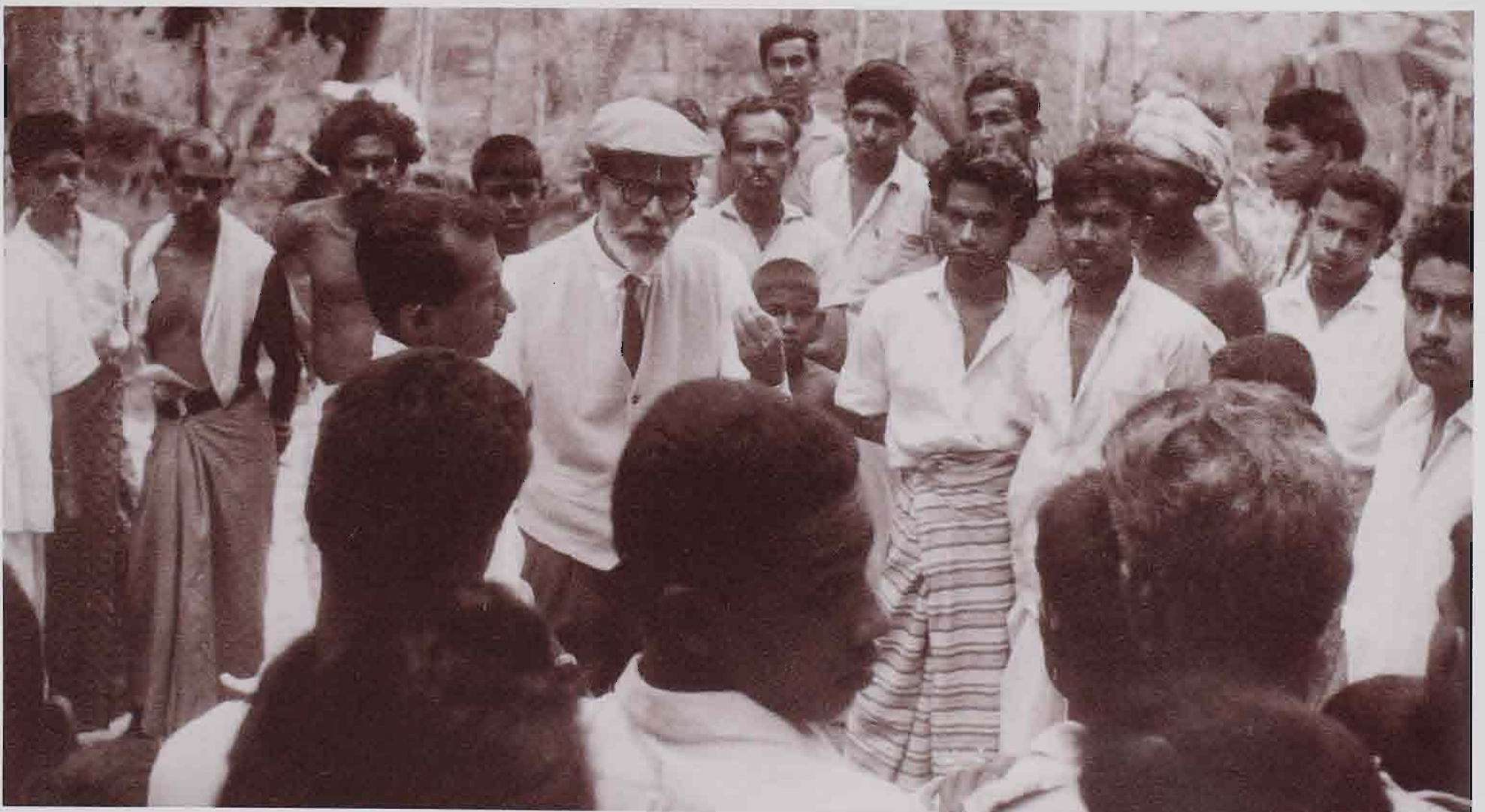
Benefiting from their contribution too were the sons and daughters of the traders from India and of the upwardly mobile *kangany*-s from the plantations. Many followed their forefathers into business, but many also chose to become qualified professionals. A few may not have put their qualifications to fullest use, but many did and in the Sri Lanka of today there is no field where there is not an Indo-Lankan who has not made significant contribution.

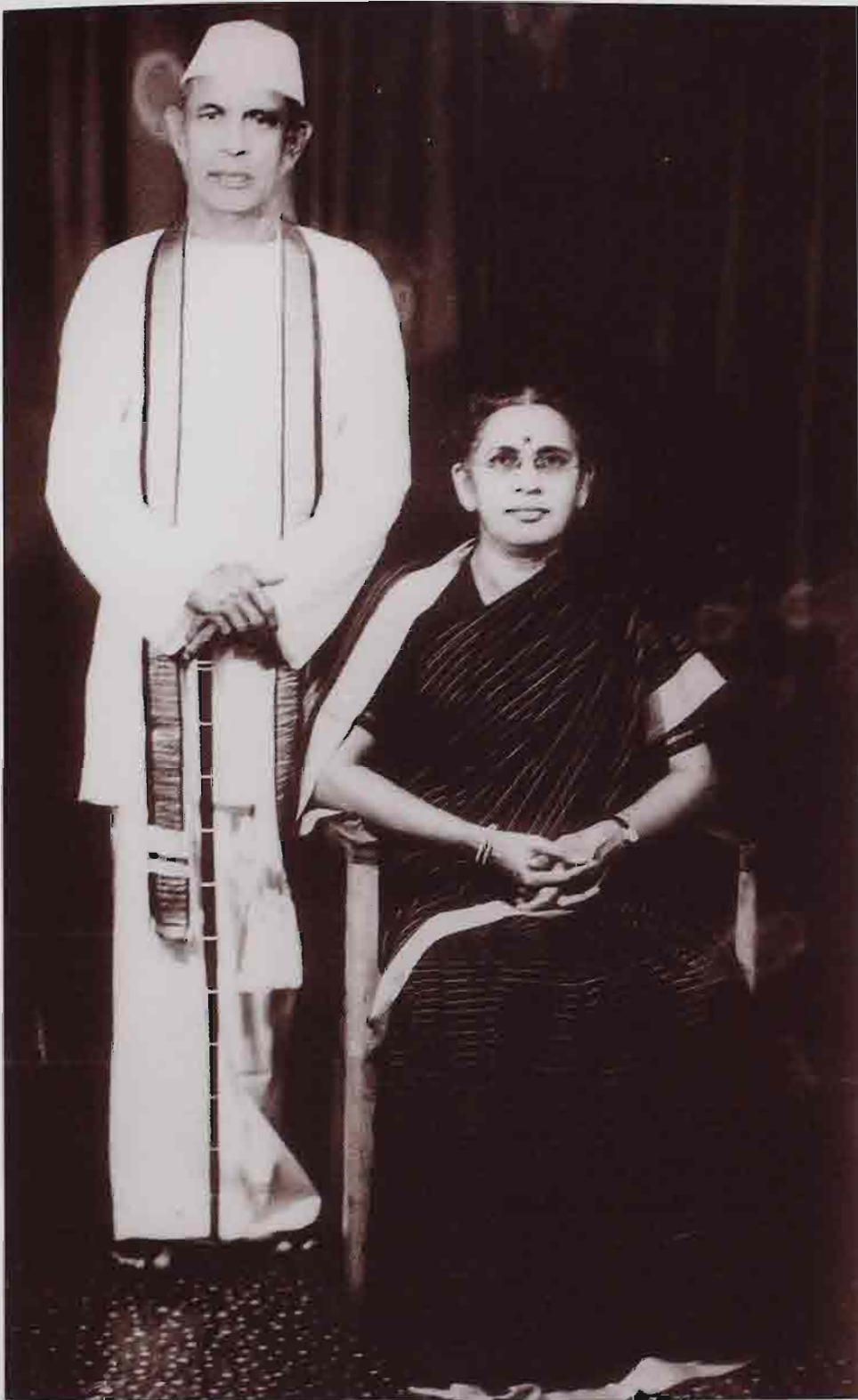
Over the years, people of Indian origin have left their mark in the Island as academics, administrators, doctors, engineers, journalists, lawyers, services personnel, surveyors and in several other fields. Equally important have been those rather dismissively called workers in minor employment. In the category of these lesser professionals, there have over the years been thousands of artisans, mechanics, blacksmiths, carpenters, fitters and others who worked in the Public Works Department, railway factories, Colombo Iron Works, the graving docks and plantation machinery manufacturing engineering firms. There were others who worked in printing presses and on the tramways. Additionally, professionals in their own way, there were household and service staff, rickshawpullers, carters, tailors, laundrymen, shoemakers, butchers, drivers, barbers, gardeners, horsekeepers, craftsmen, pedlars who depended on their skills as craftsmen or their knowledge of what they were selling, and sweepers. Many who worked in these fields returned to India in the 1950s. But several have been absorbed into the local population, though a few still maintain their persons-of-Indian-origin identity.

The roots of many of them in the Island may go back 200 years, but it is in the last 100 years that they have made a significant contribution in their respective fields. It is a contribution that in recent years has become even better honed through education in the best institutions in the Island and abroad, the children of many of those listed as toilers, moving into pastures new. Almost none among the 'lesser' professions remain in those same professions through which they helped to develop the Sri Lanka of today.

Perhaps the most important contribution made by people of Indian origin in the first half of the 20th Century was in the field of Education, filling the numerous vacancies in educational institutions caused by the lack of qualified local personnel resulting from the country having scant facilities for higher education.

Perhaps one of the best known persons in the field of education was Dr. Abraham T. Koor (in cap, below) who taught at Jaffna Central College, then at St. Thomas' and Thurstan Colleges in Colombo. But it was as a founder of the Rationalist Association of Ceylon and debunker of psychic, para-psychological and spiritual phenomena that this free-thinker was best known in the Island. Koor, the son of a Vicar General of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, spent much of his time, away from the world of Botany and Zoology, in the villages of Ceylon getting the villagers (below) to believe that they had nothing to fear from gods, demons and spirits – that, in truth, did not exist. "He who does not allow his miracles to be investigated is a crook, he who does not have the courage to investigate a miracle is a gullible, and he who is prepared to believe without verification is a fool," Koor was fond of repeating wherever he went.





The earliest Teachers from India came to schools in Jaffna where schools increased apace after the establishment of what has been known since 1872 as Jaffna College, but which had its roots in the Batticotta (Vaddukkoddai) Seminary established by the Americans in 1823. When the University of Madras was established, the first two graduates of the University, Caroll Visuvanathapillai and C.W. Thamothersampillai from the Batticotta Seminary were the first graduates. Both Seminary and College had close connections with the Universities of Calcutta and Madras for many years.

With the College and other educational institutions established in Jaffna, there came a steady stream of teachers from what are now known as Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Many of them went on to become principals, particularly of Jaffna Hindu College and Manipay Hindu College.

On extreme left, Sellamah Perumalpillai who was the Principal of Ramanathan College, Jaffna (1945-1960), and her husband, N. Perumalpillai, who was on the staff of Parameswara College, both from Kerala. On left, from top: G. Shiva Rau, Principal of Jaffna Hindu College 1910-1913; V. Sanjiva Rao, who succeeded him as the Principal in 1914; and V.R. Venkatraman, yet another Principal (1928-1933) of the College that was founded in 1890. S. D. Gupta, Madhava Menon and U. G. Panikkar (not featured here) were Deputy Principals of the College.

There were numerous teachers from India in the College and one of the last to serve it was V. Ramakrishnan (1943-1961), (fourth from top), an outstanding Zoology teacher with an islandwide reputation. He also was a superb hockey player who contributed much to the sport in the College. Fifth from top is S. Thiruvengkatachari, popularly known as S. T. Chari, who joined the Manipay Hindu College in the 1940s to teach Biology and later became its Principal. Old students of the College consider Chari as "inseparable from the life of Manipay".

Below, the faculty of Manipay Hindu College in 1934; it included Ajar Nath Ghose Gautamadasa (seated fourth from right) who took English from 1933 to 1952. He acted as Vice-Principal before his retirement. Others in the picture are unidentifiable today, but from their dress many would seem to have been from India.





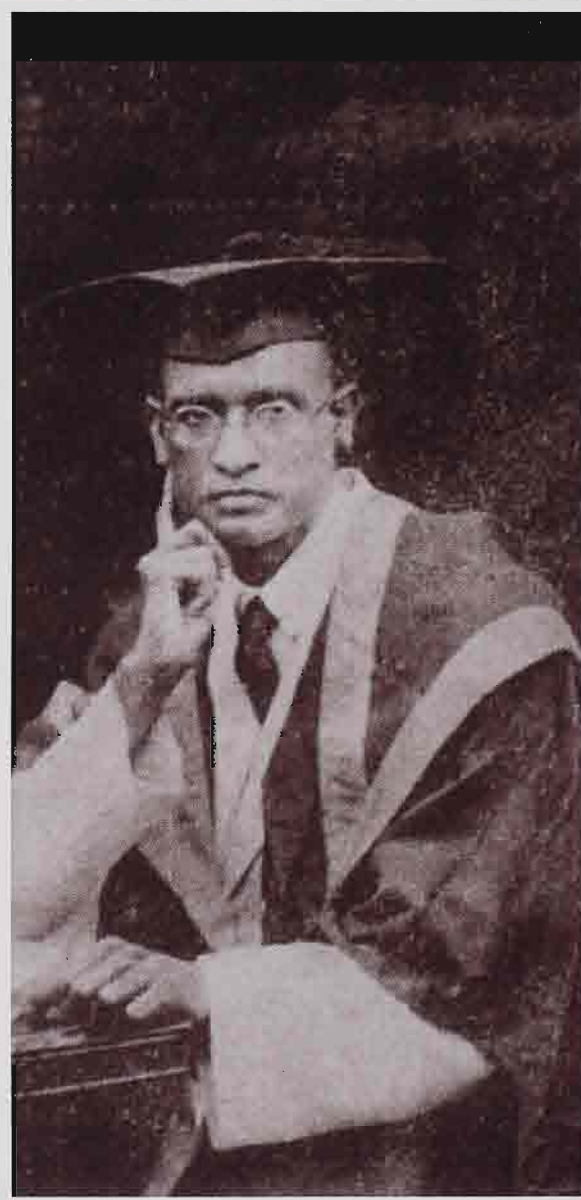
The influx of teachers of Indian origin into Jaffna was followed by others into the hill-country and, then, into the growing number of institutions in Colombo. As early as 1867, the Borella Girls' Boarding School and, in 1875, the Boys' Boarding School were founded by the Tamil Cooly Mission (now the Tamil Church Mission) in Colombo. The schools catered to the children of the kangany-s and the subordinate staff of the estates, particularly the Anglicans. In 1922, the girls' school was amalgamated with a fledgling girls' school in Kandy to become Mowbray College, and, in 1923, the boys' school became one with Christian College, Kotte, now the Sri Jayawardenepura Maha Vidyalaya. Joining Mowbray in 1926 was an Australian, Miss Mabel Simon, who became its Principal in 1928. Over the next 20 years, she made the school a noteworthy institution, particularly in drawing out the talents of the girls from the enclosed bounds of the estates.

Above, Miss Simon is seen distributing the prizes on Annual Day when she returned to the school in 1957 to inaugurate its new hall. Her Vice-Principal, Ebenezer T. Doss of Indian origin (right), succeeded her as Principal, a post she held till 1970. Below, the Mowbray School Hall that Miss Simon opened, as it is today.





Although Anuruddha College, Nawalapitiya, started as early as 1895, it never really got going till the 1920s, with poor attendance, absence of workers, floods, plague, all affecting its progress. The fortunes of the College improved remarkably in 1930 when a Bengali – Ajar Nath Ghose (on right) – who had arrived in the Island in 1919 and, having taught at Siddhartha College, Balapitiya, and Manipay Hindu College, Anacoddai, was invited to be Principal of the School and revive it. On left, he is seen behind Sir Herbert Stanley (garlanded) during the Governor's visit in 1930 to inaugurate the new building of the school. In foreground right, extreme right, is D. B. Jayatilleke, President of the Buddhist Theosophical Society of the time. Ghose became a member of the Society and took the name Gautamadasa. In 1933, he returned to Manipay Hindu College. Below, left is a 1949 picture of Anuruddha College's main building and below right a picture of the staff of the College of the same period with Principal K. C. Abrahams, a Malayalee (fifth from right). The College, till more recent times, offered education to students of Indian origin from the plantations as well as local Sinhalese students. The staff always included a number of Indian Tamils and Malayalees.



Above, Saraswathi Maha Vidyalayam, Pussellawa, the Tamil school of the Gampola area. Saraswathi Maha Vidyalayam was founded in 1932 by K. Rajalingam, later to be the Nawalapitiya M.P., who named it after Saraswathy Menon, wife of K. P.S. Menon, the Indian Government's Agent in Ceylon in the 1930s. Till he founded the school, students from the estates had to go to Kandy to study.

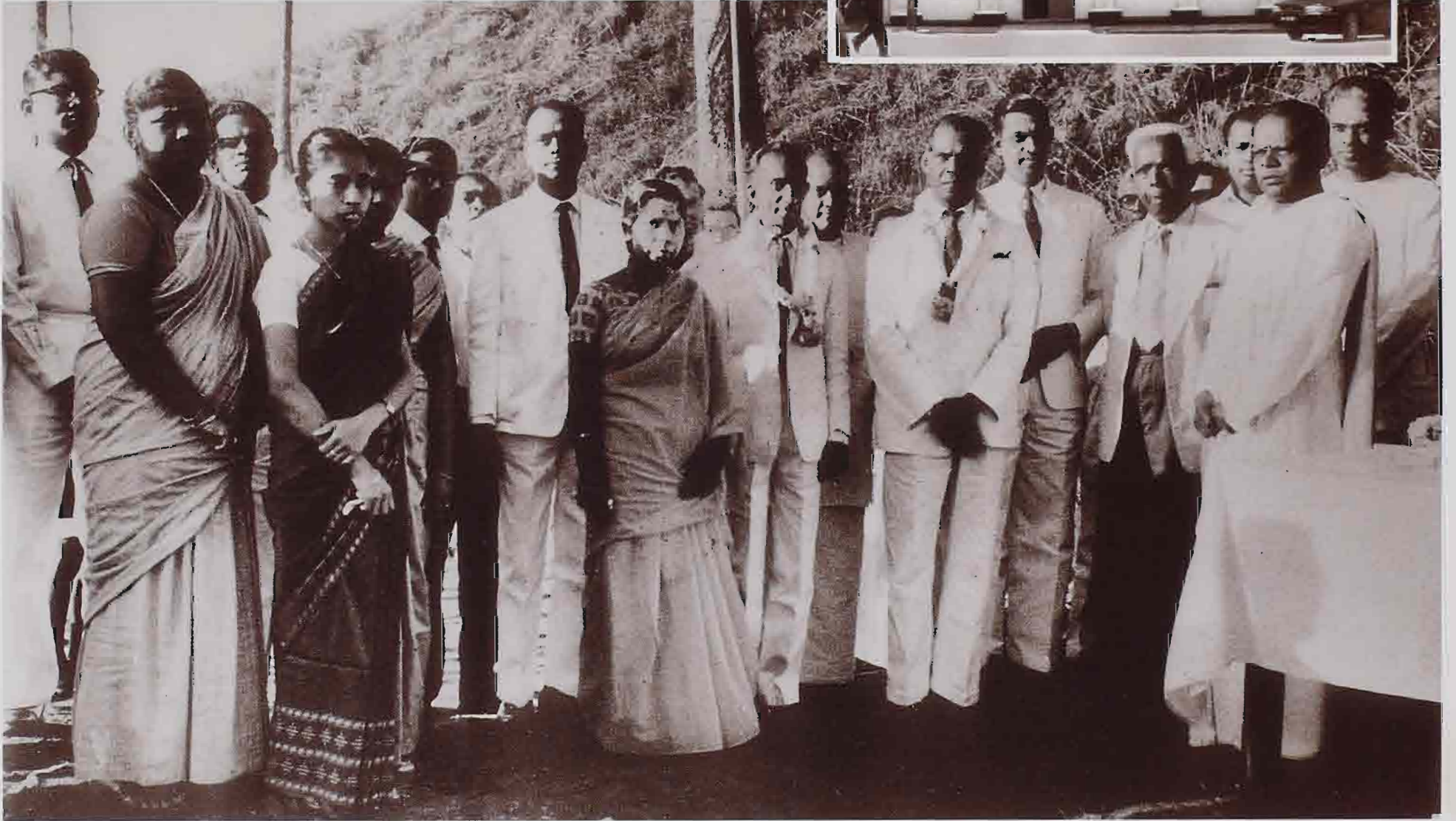


Another landmark institution in the hill-country is the Asoka Students' Hostel (right) and the Asoka Vidyalayam (bottom of the page) founded by P. T. Rajan (below). Rajan, who arrived in Kandy in 1933 as a 20-year-old from India with a hockey stick in hand, introduced the game within months to the hill capital and founded the Kandy Hockey Club. He soon found that there were several boys from the plantations who could not benefit from a school education in Kandy because they had no place to stay. To meet this need he started the Indian Students' Hostel in 1935. In 1951, the hostel was renamed the Asoka Students' Hostel, and is, today, five blocks large, most of its residents students of Kingswood, St. Anthony's and St. Sylvester's. Seeing the need for greater attention to be paid to the students from the estates whose educational foundation was not strong enough, he founded Asoka Vidyalayam in 1962 and, by restricting the number of students to 350, maintained a high standard of education with considerable personalised attention to those attending it.



Another institution that has contributed much to the education of people of Indian origin in the hill-country is Kathiresan College, Nawalapitiya, founded in 1924 by the Nawalapitiya branch of the Young Men's Hindu Association in the building, on right, that still stands. The school, now called Kathiresan Kanishta Vidyalayam, has expanded over the years and, in the picture below, is seen the foundation stone-laying ceremony in 1966 for new buildings of the College. In the picture are K. Subbiah (second from right) and V.Rm. Letchumanan Chettiar (fourth from right) of the Ceylon Indian Congress.

In the picture at bottom, seen at the College's 1972 prize-giving function, are (standing) civil rights activist R. Sivalingam (left) and A. Azeez of the Democratic Workers' Congress (right).



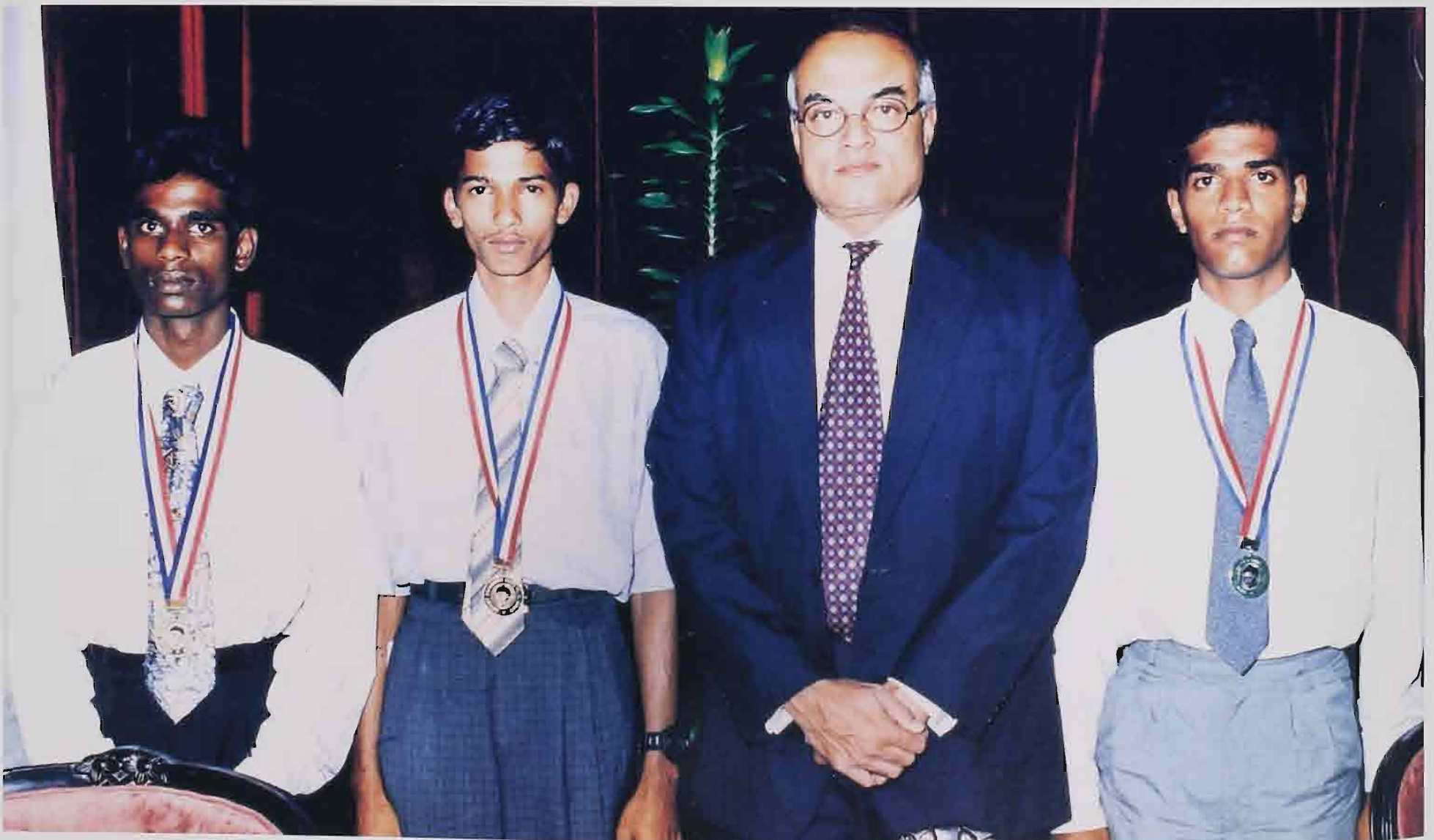
For over 150 years, education and skills training facilities for the children of plantation workers were virtually non-existent. Greater attention began to be paid to such facilities from the 1960s and several institutions have been established in the hill-country, offering the young in the estates education and a way out of the line rooms, which would enable them to contribute more to the Island. Many of these facilities owe their origins to the Ceylon Workers' Congress. In the column on right, top to bottom, are the Thondaman Vocational Training Centre, the Congress' Technical Training Institute, and the Government Teachers' Training College, all near Kotagala. A happy feature of these institutions is that many of their staff come from the same background as the students.

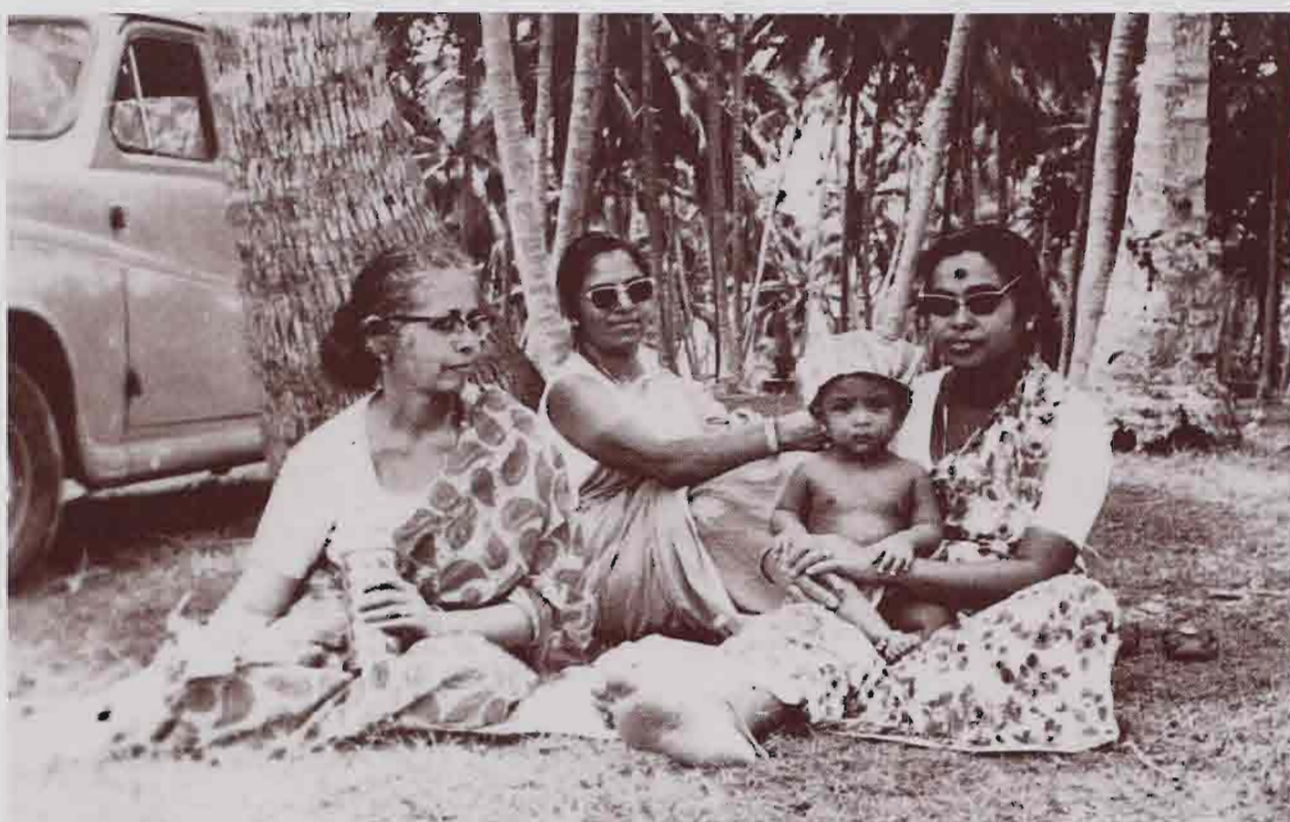
The Ceylon Workers' Congress, the Democratic Workers' Congress and the National Union of Workers give bursaries to children of their members. They also contribute to the Ceylon Estate Workers' Education Trust, which was established in 1947 on the advice of M. S. Aney (on left), who, in 1943, arrived as the representative of the Government of India in Ceylon. The Trust offers scholarships to children of estate workers resident in the plantations in Lanka, to obtain A-Level and University education. It also helps run schools and hostels for children of estate workers. At the end of 1998, the Trust had awarded scholarships to 1,191 boys and 534 girls to a tune of Rs. 6.7 million. Of these scholarships, 147 were those for students to complete degrees or post-A-Level diplomas. Today, the Trust annually gives scholarships to over 200 students, about a tenth of them for University education. Funding for the



Trust originally came from members of all communities of Indians settled in the island and included C.V.Bhatt, H.M.Desai, Gobindram, A.N.N.Panikar, I.X.Percira, Thirathdas Pesumal, Ponnusamy Pillai, N.E.S.Ragavachary, R.Rajalingam, Saley Mohamed, Narain Shewakram, S.Thondaman, Uttumchand, S.Rm.Valliappa Chettiar and Sp.Vythialingam.

The picture below is of Indian High Commissioner Shivshankar Menon with three of the scholarship winners in 1998, at a function held in Kandy to mark the Golden Jubilee of CEWET.



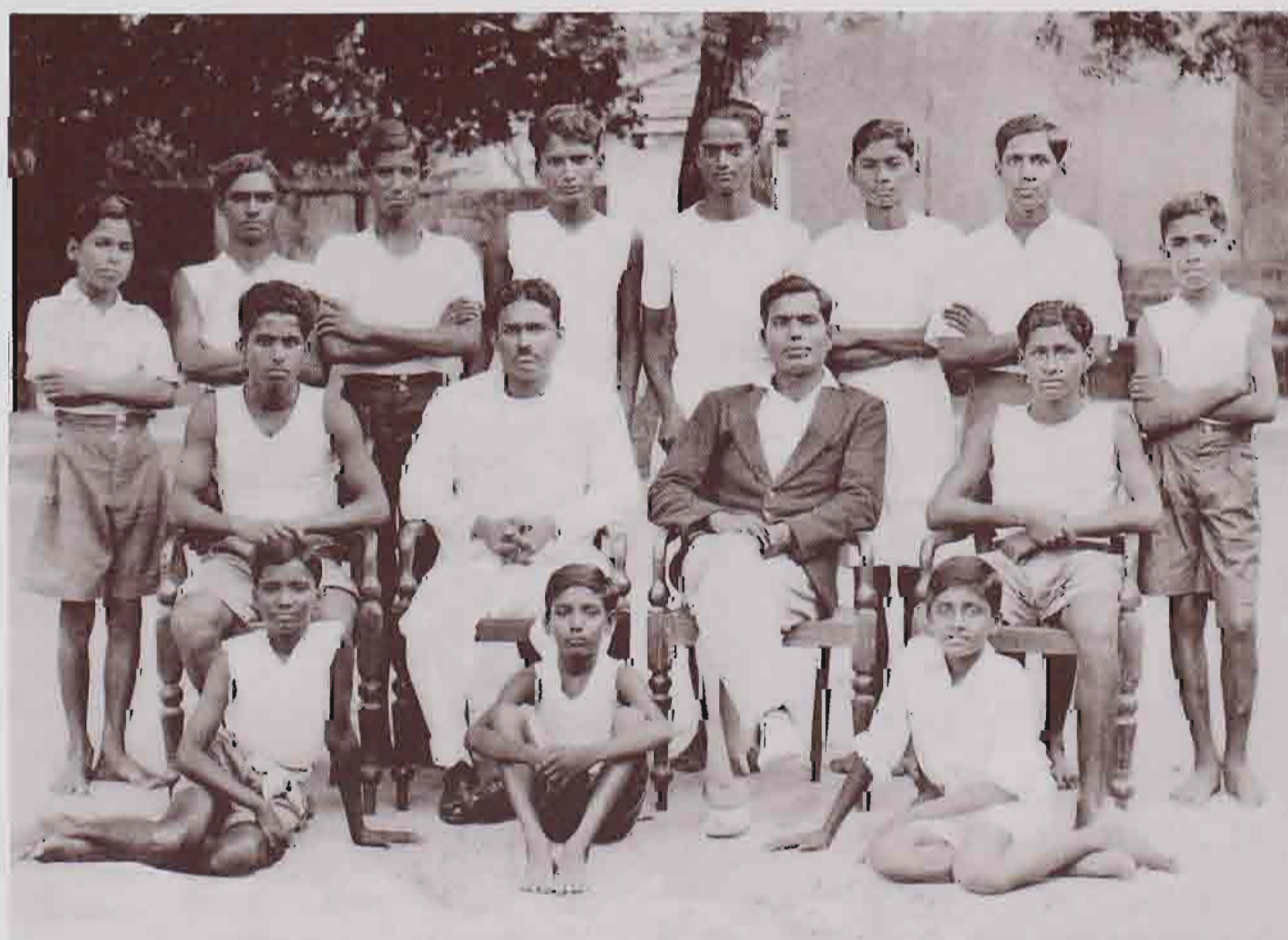


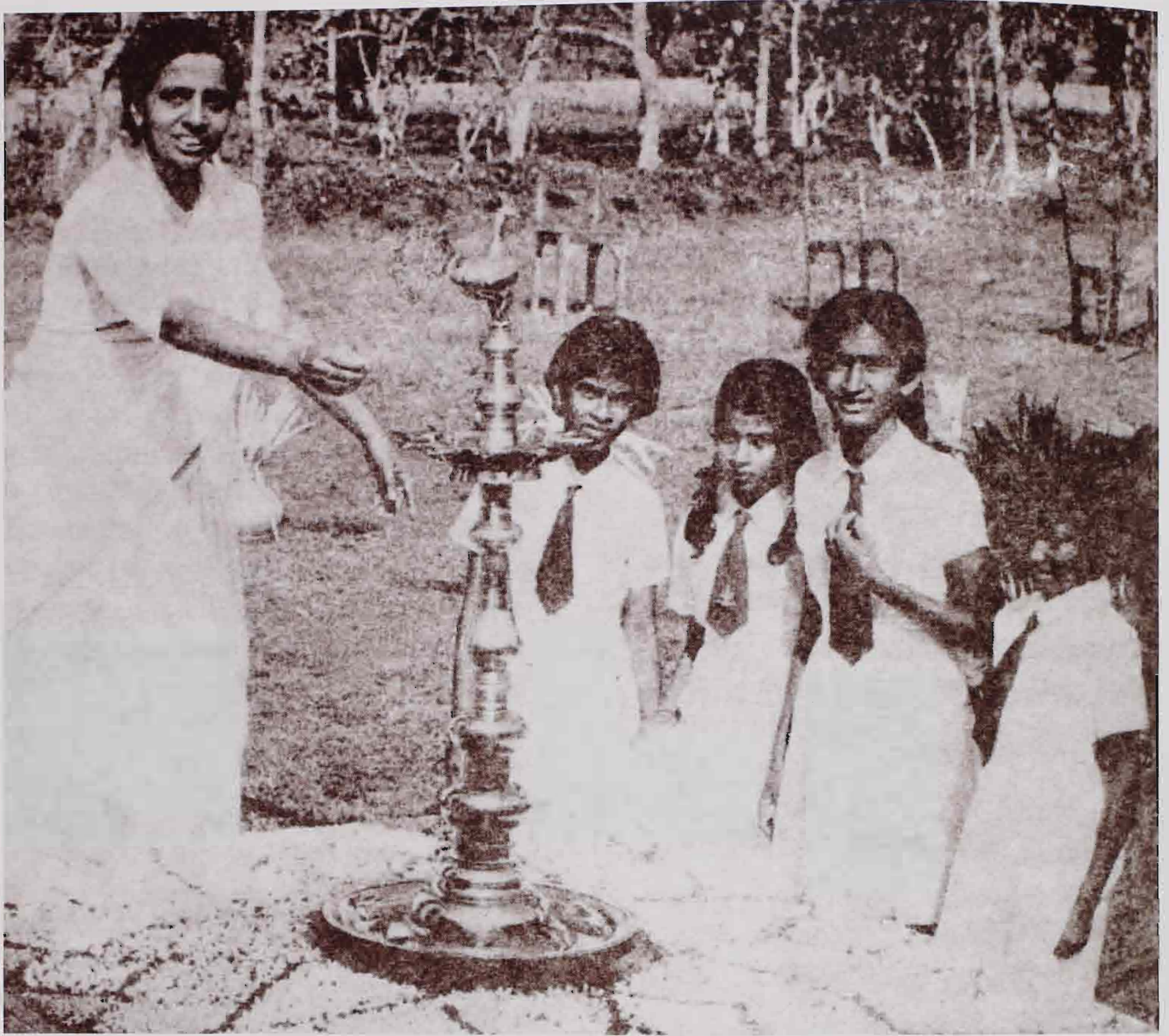
Early in the 20th Century, a large number of Malayalees, especially Syrian Christians, arrived in Ceylon to teach in the increasing number of schools in the Island. In the picture on left are Mrs. Jacob (on left) who taught in Kandana and to her left Mrs. Kuruvilla who taught in the Girls' High School, Mt. Lavinia, and Dr. Mrs. Williams. The centre picture is of Govindapillai (a science teacher at Karavatti School) and his family with Mrs. Abraham Kovoov (third from right). Mrs. Kovoov, like her husband, taught Biology, but was better known for her interest in cross-pollinating and creating various new hybrid species of Bougainvillea. She named one species after Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike and another Jacqueline Acque Rouge, after her French daughter-in-law. Kovoov's son, Aries, is seen in the picture in front of his mother, wearing a hat. Aries Kovoov went on to the Sorbonne in Paris, now works at the Institute of Fundamental Studies in Sri Lanka, and is a Science Advisor to the Sri Lankan President.



Below, left, the 1932 picture of a house team at Zabira College in which P.R. Kuruppu, the Vice-Principal of the school, is seen second from left. Kuruppu, an orator and a political and social activist, was the President of the Ceylon Malayalee Mahajana Sabha and also of the Servants of Young India Society.

Below, the P.T. Mathias-es. He was a teacher of Mathematics in St. John's College, Jaffna, and was considered an exceptional teacher of the subject. Among other outstanding Malayalee teachers was M. I. Kuruvilla, who was the Head of the Department of English at Aquinas College of Higher Studies, Colombo (1960-84). He was considered one of Sri Lanka's most discerning critics, demonstrating the power and range of his thinking in his prize-winning Studies in World Literature, which postgraduate students still find invaluable.





As well-known and as outstanding as Abraham Kovoor amongst the Malayalee teachers in Ceylon was Susan (née Joshua) Pulimood, who came to Ceylon in the late 1930s to work at Visakha Vidyalaya and spent over 20 years with the institution. Under her stewardship, first as Acting Principal and then as Principal, Visakha grew to be the premier Buddhist girls' school in the Island. She introduced Science in the school curriculum at a time when the school did not have lab equipment or staff to teach Science.

That she succeeded in her efforts at making Visakha more science-oriented speaks as much for her determination as for her dedication to a scientific education for girls. She co-authored with her sister Anna Joshua, who taught Botany at Bishop's College, a textbook of Botany (cover seen on right) which became a standard text in Ceylon schools.

On facing page, counter clockwise from top

- Susan Pulimood lighting the oil-lamp on the occasion of the formal takeover of one acre of land in the 1950s from the Old Kathiresan Kovil, Bambalapitiya, to expand the school;
- With her students in a happy mood in 1964, an era considered the golden era of Visakha;
- And marching with the flag-bearing head girl of Visakha Vidyalaya at the ceremony inaugurating the Golden Jubilee of the School on January 16, 1967. Susan Pulimood retired shortly after this.

Susan Pulimood is seen below (standing to address the gathering) at the farewell party to her organised by the Malayalees of Colombo. Seated next to her is Susie Kuruvilla, perhaps the only Malayalee teacher in the Island who learnt Sinhala and was able to teach in it, at a time when the language policy was becoming more stringent, forcing the Malayalee teachers to leave. Susie Kuruvilla taught at Sri Sumangala Girls' School, Musaeus College, Bishop's College, Buddhist Ladies College and Girls' High School, Mt. Lavinia. One contemporary of hers at Musaeus was Mary George who taught Botany.

Mary George's daughter is the mother of Indian tennis ace Mahesh Bhupathi.

At the bottom of this page is Susan Pulimood being welcomed back to Visakha in 1983, with smiles from many of her old students. During her visit she opened the Jeremias Dias Hall.



TEXT-BOOK OF BOTANY

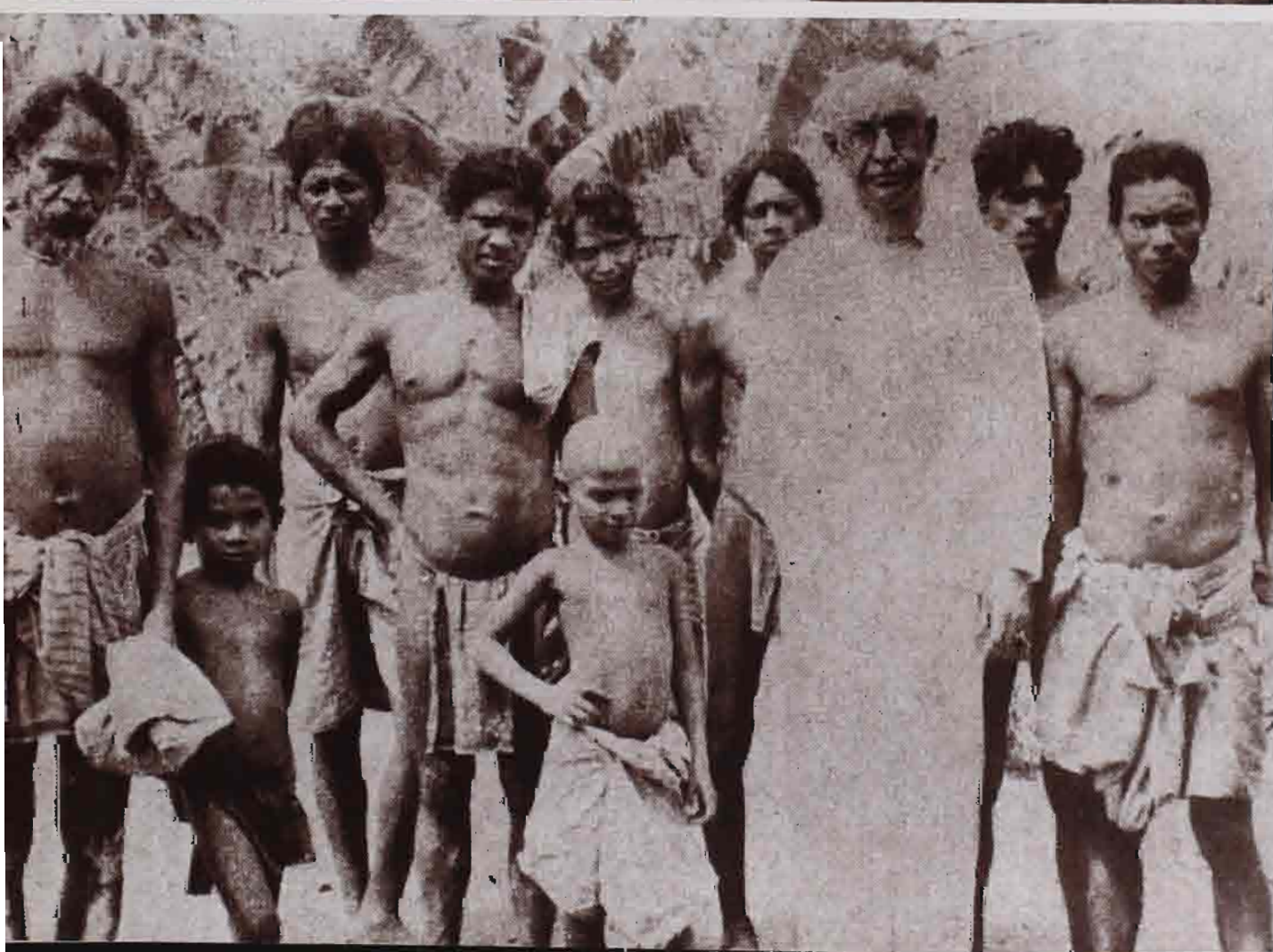
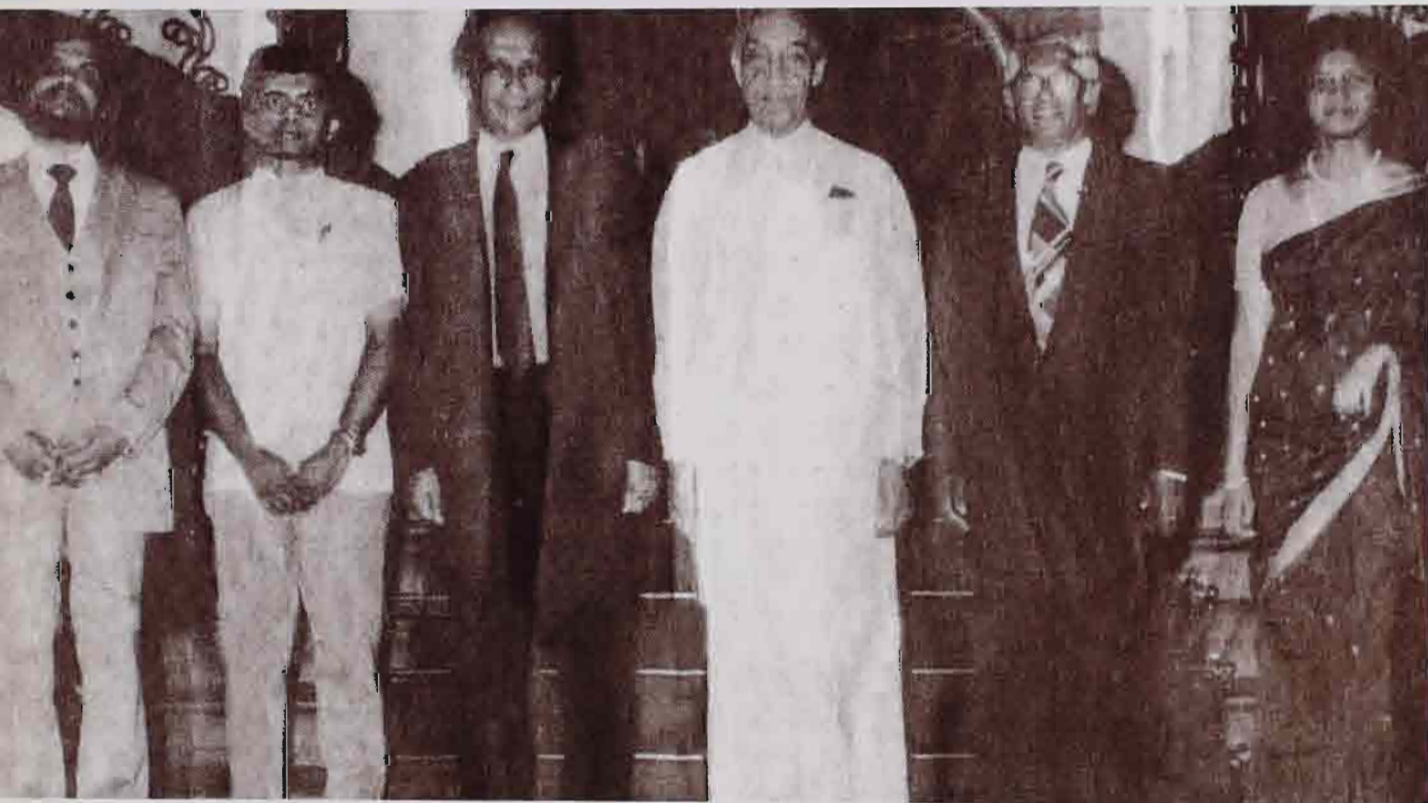
FOR
SENIOR & MATRICULATION

BY
SUSAN GEORGE PULIMOOD, M.A., L.T.
(Née Joshua)
AND
ANNA K. JOSHUA, M.A. (Madras), R.Sc. Hons. (Lond.)



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The Indian presence in **Higher Education and Scholarship** was notable in the years before Independence. And as then, now, remains a significant one in the professions, as seen on these and the following pages.

Clockwise from left, in the column on left:

- Dr. M. D. Raghavan with some Veddhas. Raghavan, the first Head of the Department of Anthropology, University of Madras, came to Ceylon in 1946 to conduct the Ethnological Survey of Ceylon. Over the next 20 years and more he became an authority on the people and the folklore of Sri Lanka and published some of the most authoritative books on these subjects.
- Prof. Vijayakumar (second from left), Professor of Chemistry, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, and son of Mr. & Mrs. K. N. D. Pillai, Malayalees who arrived in the Island in the 1930s, is seen with his wife Prof. Savitri Kumar (extreme right) at a function in 1985 where they were presented the NARESA Award for Scientific Achievement.
- Prof. M. S. Mookiah, the Vice-Chancellor of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka from 2000, is the first person with a plantation background to become a Vice-Chancellor in the Island. Here he is seen lighting the oil-lamp on the occasion of the external degree programme being started in Batticaloa in 2001. Prof. Mookiah's father, Sellamuthu Pillai, who arrived in the tea plantations of Ceylon in 1925 started life as a helper in a kangany's kitchen in Ramboda, where



Significant contributions have been made in the world of **Architecture** in Ceylon by people of Indian origin, particularly the Parsis. They include, above, the Hall at St. Anthony's College, Kandy, designed by H. J. Billimoria, and Independence Hall (on left), and Mumtaz Mahal above, left, both designed by H. F. Billimoria.

Homi Framjee Billimoria, the grandson of Jamsheedjee Rustomjee who came to Ceylon in 1877 and became a partner of Adamjee Lukmanjee, was the first Ceylonese architecture graduate. He later established the architectural firm of 'Billimoria and de Silva' and was responsible for several well-known buildings in

Colombo including the Elphinstone and Majestic Theatres and Mumtaz Mahal, which was first built for Mohamed Hussain in 1929 and was until the middle of 2002 the residence of the Speaker of Parli-



ment. It is now the office of the Constitutional Council. His greatest work was Independence Hall, built in 1947. In 1953, he was the first Ceylonese to be appointed the Chief Government Architect.

H. J. Billimoria, who qualified as an architect in the J. J. School of Architecture, Bombay, was the grandson of Nadirshah Ruttonjee Pestonjee who came to Ceylon in the late 19th Century to establish business in Keyzer Street.

H. J. Billimoria, who worked under the guidance of H. F. Billimoria, rose to become the Chief Government Architect. In 1968, when the Department of Architecture was



created at the University of Colombo, he was appointed its first Professor. Then, when in 1972 all technical studies were taken to the University of Moratuwa, Katubedde, he was the Professor-in-Charge, who steered the change. Till his retirement in 1976, H. J. Billimoria was truly 'The Father of Architectural Education' in the Island. More recent Parsi architects are J. C. Nilgiriya and Phiroze Choksy.

in Higher Education and Scholarship the years before Independence. And as significant one in the professions, as following pages.

in the column on left:

van with some Veddhas. Raghavan, the Department of Anthropology, Madras, came to Ceylon in 1946 to conduct the Geological Survey of Ceylon. Over the years he became an authority on the geology of Sri Lanka and published some significant books on these subjects.

Dr. S. I. Pinto (second from left), Professor of History at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, and son of N. D. Pillai, Malayalees who arrived in Ceylon in the 1930s, is seen with his wife and daughter (extreme right) at a function in 1953 where they were presented the NARESA Award for their contribution to the movement.

Dr. D. N. Wadia, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka from 2000, is the first Parsi to have a Ceylonese education background to become a Vice-Chancellor in the Island. Here he is seen lighting the lamp on the occasion of the external degree ceremony which started in Batticaloa in 2001.

Dr. S. I. Pinto, Sellamuthu Pillai, who arrived in Ceylon in 1925 started life as a grocer in his father's kitchen in Ramboda, where

he was fed those employed by the kangany in his grocery shop, cattle sheds and vegetable gardens. Sellamuthu Pillai graduated to being a sales assistant in the grocery store and, in time, established his own store, then acquired shares in tea estates. Sellamuthu Pillai's sons all graduated and four of them became professionals. Prof. Mookiah, who was long with the Geography Department at the Universities of Colombo and Peradeniya, was closely involved with the trade union workers' education programme of the Ceylon Workers' Congress. He also served with the teams which planned the election campaigns of the CWC.

The University College, which in 1942 became the University of Ceylon, had in its earliest days several faculty members from India, particularly from Bengal. Some of the best known amongst them were Prof. B. B. Das Gupta (Economics), Dr. Hem Chandra Ray (History), Dr. A. K. Sarkar (Philosophy), Fr. S. I. Pinto (History), A. T. A. de Souza (English) and Dr. T. R. V. Murthy (Philosophy). From Madras came P. G. Dowie (Geography) and Dr. S. P. Aiyar (Agricultural Chemistry).

Dr. Das Gupta from Bengal (in picture) came to the University College in 1927 and was appointed to the Chair of Economics in 1939. After helping develop the Economics Department, particularly during the post-Independence years, when he brought it closer to the economic aspirations of the Government, he resigned in 1959 to become the Deputy Chairman of the Planning

Commission. He was later appointed the Deputy Chairman of the Central Bank of Ceylon. His was an outstanding contribution to economics, fiscal matters and planning in the Island.

— Another major name in the world of academics was that of Hem Chandra Ray, who in 1943 was appointed to the Chair of History, at the University of Ceylon. He went on to teach at the Peradeniya University till his retirement in 1958 and then at Vidyalankara University from 1959 to 1964. He had the rare distinction of being the founding Professor of History at two universities, the Universities of Ceylon and Vidyalankara. He is acknowledged as having been "the man with the magic touch who transformed the study of History". During his tenure, he launched the ambitious University History of Ceylon project, but unfortunately could not proceed with it. When Volume I of the history was published in two parts in 1959-60, under Dr. S. Paranavitana's stewardship, Paranavitana paid tribute to Ray by acknowledging him as the 'Editor-in-Chief' and was content to call himself 'Editor'.

— Dr. D. N. Wadia, a Parsi, described as 'The Doyen of Indian Geologists', came to Ceylon in the early 1940s to set up the Department of Mineralogy (now the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau). Wadia, a Fellow of the Royal Society well-known for his work in Himalayan Geology, was also a founder of the Ceylon Geological Society.



Several persons of Indian origin have served successive Lankan governments in the field of Administration.

Starting from the time of Maurice Salvador Sreshta (Ceylon Civil Service 1896) and continuing through Murari Prasad (1912), Savaksha Dhunjisha Dhondy (1913), Mohan Hargovindan Kantawalla and Navroji Maneckji Bharucha (1914) and Siavax Hirji Wadia (1915), the line continues today, through the change from CCS to SLAS and other services, with Dr. P. Ramanujam (above, on right) and M. Vamadevan (on right) (shaking hands with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in New Delhi), two administrators with hill-country backgrounds.

Dr. Pratap Ramanujam, who is seen with his Minister, S. Thondaman, in the 1990s, is the son of Desikar and Sarojini Ramanujam of Kandy. His father was a trade unionist, municipal councillor and parliamentarian, a staunch member of the Ceylon Indian Congress. Ramanujam, the first person of recent Indian origin to be appointed a Secretary to Government, has served in several Ministries and, at the time of writing, is Secretary for Tourism.

Vamadevan, who belongs to the Sri Lankan Planning Service, is from the plantations. His grandfather came to Ceylon in the 1890s and became a kangany, then a KP. His father too was a KP and many in the family are teamakers and other staff members in the plantations. Vamadevan was a pioneer among the growing number breaking out of the estate milieu and making a contribution to Sri Lanka in other fields. He received his M. Phil degree from the Jawaharlal Nehru University of New Delhi, focusing on the rehabilitation of Sri Lankan repatriates in Tamil Nadu. As a member of the National Planning Department, he has been closely connected with various resettlement and rehabilitation programmes.



From time to time in the years since Independence, there have been people of Indian origin who have served Sri Lanka well overseas, as **Diplomats**. On right is K. Marimuttu (on right), Sri Lankan Ambassador to Jordan, at the time of publication, presenting his Credentials in Amman to His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al Hussein in 2001. An active member of the Ceylon Workers' Congress, he had before his appointment been an appointed MP. Before that, he was an Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Tourism.

Perhaps the first person of Indian origin to join the Ceylon Foreign Service was Suhita Gautamadasa, who retired as Ambassador to China and is seen below being welcomed by the Chinese President Jiang Zemin at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing in 1991/92. Gautamadasa was the son of Ajar Nath Ghose, who was Principal of Anuruddha College, Nawalapitiya, and who taught for many years in Jaffna. Ajar Nath Ghose married a fellow teacher in 1927 and settled in the Island, bringing up a family of six children in Manipay and Nawalapitiya, to where he retired in 1952. All his children became professionals.





Numerous persons of Indian origin contributed significantly as Doctors. They included Dr. Rustom Pestonjee who in 1875 became Superintendent of the General Hospital and in 1918 did yeoman service at the Leprosy Asylum, Hendala. Jamsheedjee Rustomjee's youngest son Kurshad played a major role in eradicating malaria in the country and helped establish the Cancer Society and Hospital. Many of its buildings in Maharagama are lasting memorials to Dr. Kurshad Rustomjee. Dr. J. Dadabhoj was the chief surgeon of the Eye Hospital in Colombo. And there were several others, some specialists, many general practitioners with wide practices in the country.

Connected with medicine was one of the best known Goan families in Ceylon, the family of John Baptista Manuel Joseph Pinto. At the bottom of the page is the extended family of J. B. Pinto who came to Ceylon in the late 19th Century as the weaving master and manager of the Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mills, then owned by Darley, Butler & Co. Moving on, he became in 1898 Colombo's leading tobacconist, having established his business in Chatham Street. Here he also established J. B. Pinto & Sons, the well-known pharmacists.

J. B. Pinto's children included Xavier Pinto (lecturer in Pharmacology at the University of Colombo and seen on left with his bride Bastiana), Fr. Ignatius Pinto (Professor of History in the University of Ceylon), Fr. Julius Pinto (Rector, Holy Cross College, Kalutara and later Vice Rector, St. Joseph's College, Colombo), Dr. Victor Pinto (a well-known general practitioner in Gampola), Louis Pinto, Augusta (a well known paediatrician), and Veena Pinto (Principal of St. John's School, Panadura). His grandchildren include Dr. Ernest Abeyratne (Director, Agricultural Research Institute, Peradeniya), Hilary Abeyratne (Vice Principal, Trinity College) and Dr. Michael Abeyratne, a well-known paediatrician, all children of Augusta, who married Dr. Lloyd Abeyratne; Dr. Brightie de Mel (a leading nutritionist); Jeanne Pinto (a well-known journalist of the 1950s and '60s and the daughter of Xavier and Bastiana Pinto); and Dr. Leonard Pinto (Government Analyst). In the picture, below, are, back row, extreme left, Father Julius and extreme right Louis, who in later years was in charge of J. B. Pinto & Sons. To Louis Pinto's right, in cap, is Dr. Victor. J. B. Pinto's daughters in the picture are Dr. Augusta Abeyratne in saree and, to her right, Veena (de Silva) and, to her left, Patsy. The younger boys and girls are J. B. Pinto's grandchildren.

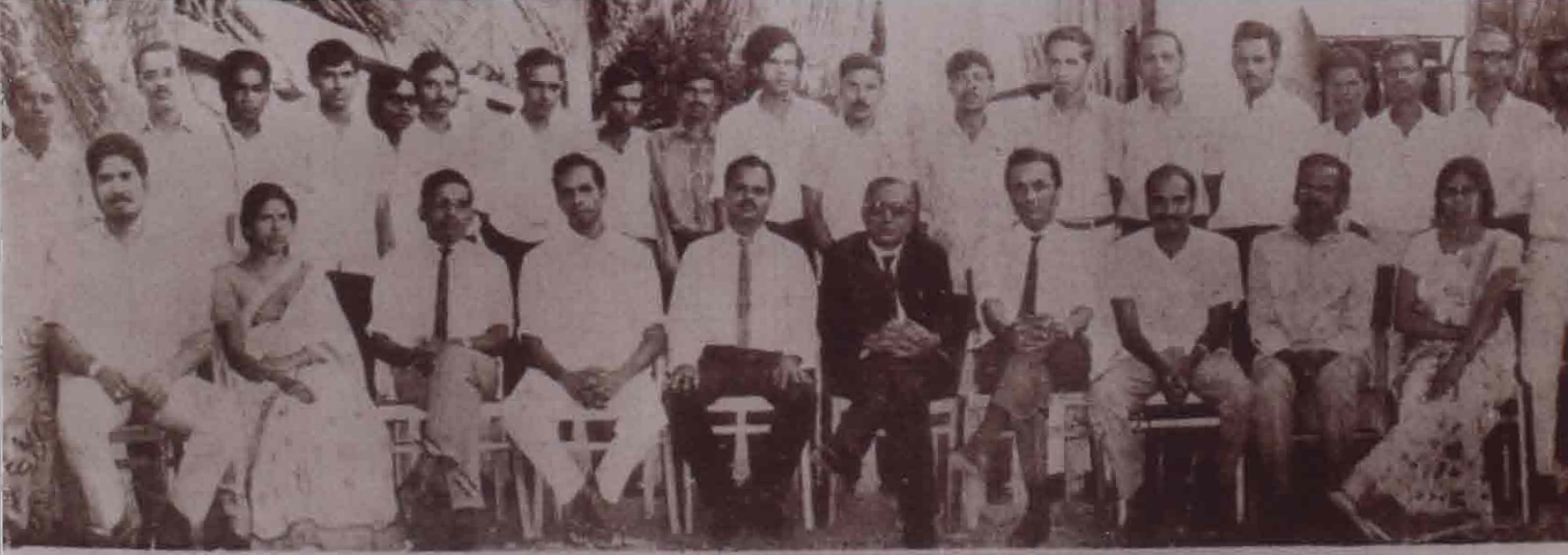
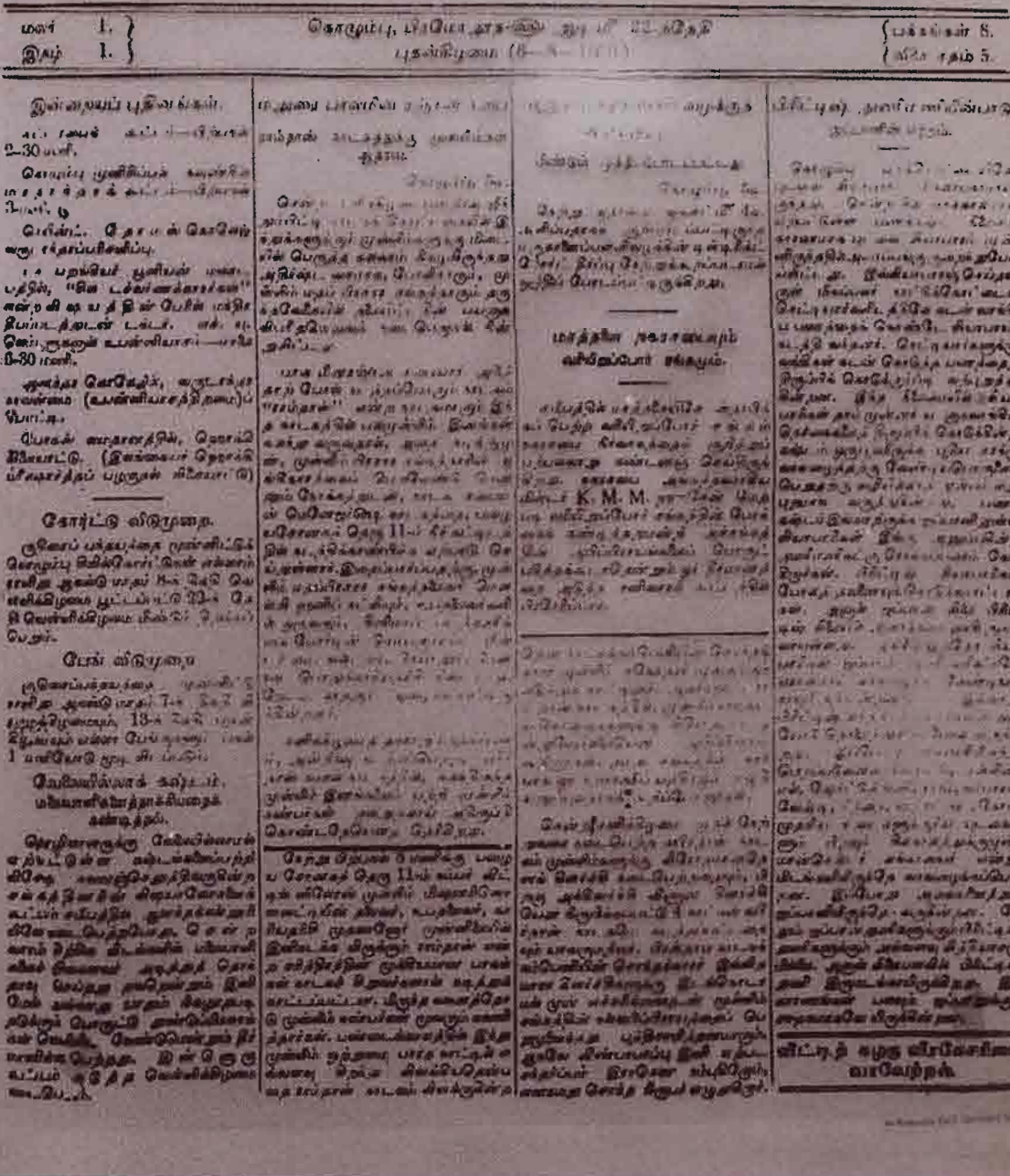


On right are two pictures of Malayalee doctors who served long in the Island. On right, top, are Dr. & Mrs. Nair. He was in Government Service and on retirement was active as a social worker. He had served as the President of the Ceylon Malayalee Mahajana Sabha in its early days. The picture on right is of Dr. R.C. Chacko (left) who had nursing homes in Kotahena, Kollupitiya, Wellawatte and Wattala. His sons followed in his footsteps, but died young in tragic circumstances.



In Journalism, too, there have been several significant contributions by people of Indian origin, particularly in Tamil but also in English.

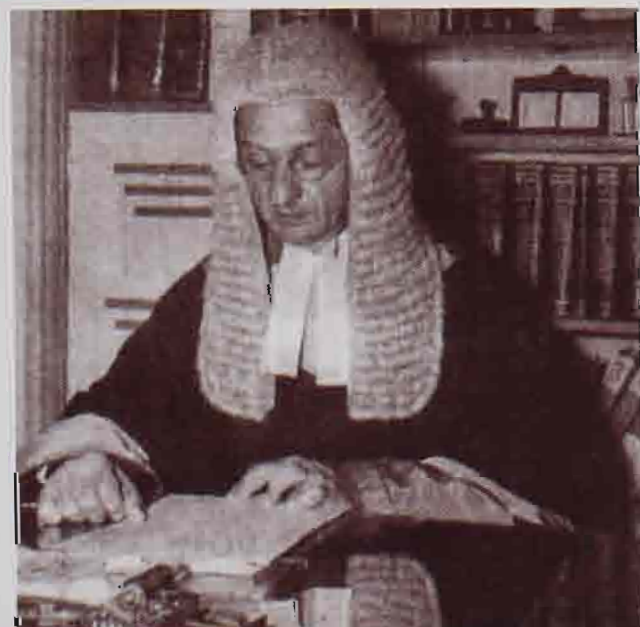
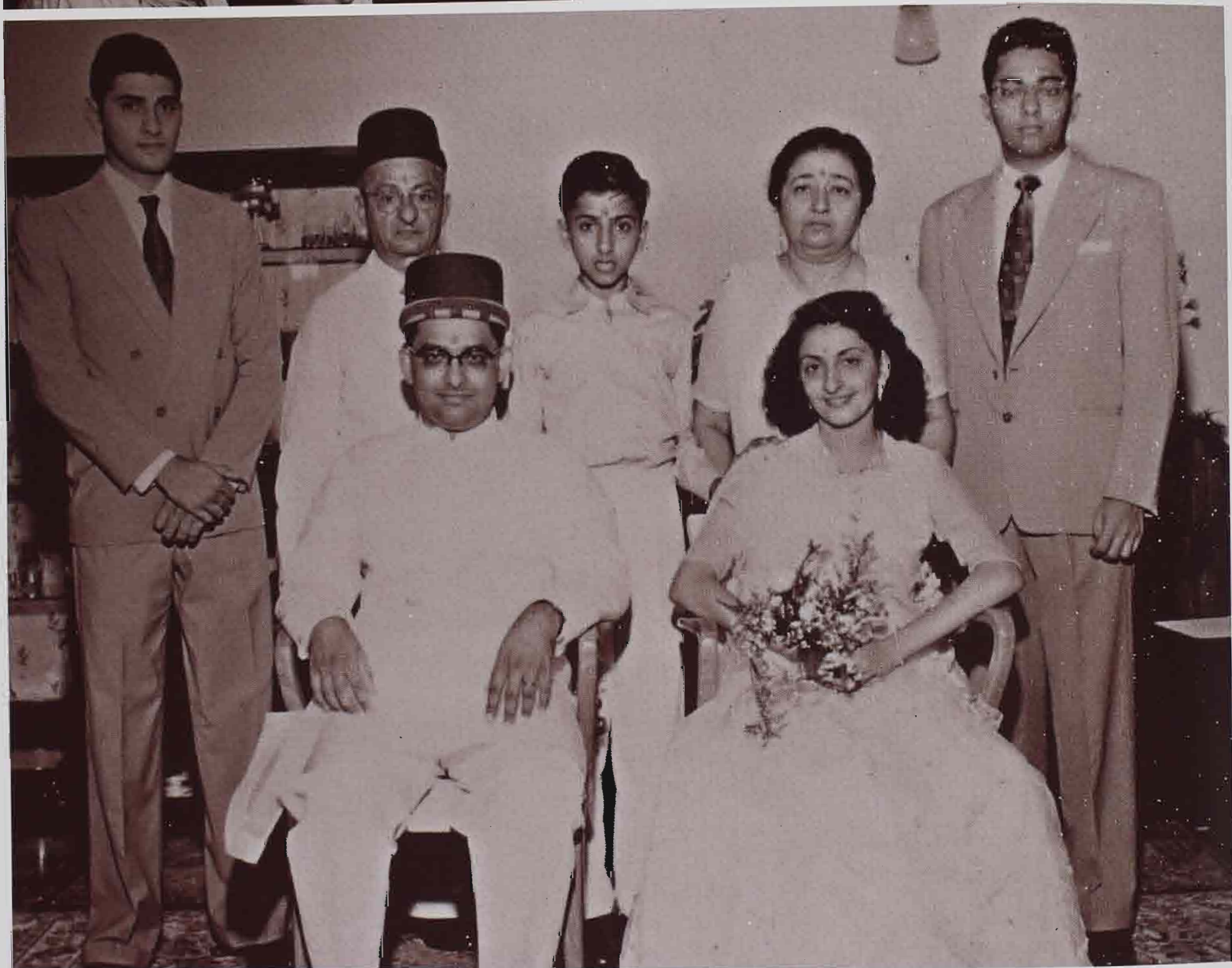
The voice of the people of Indian origin, particularly of the Tamils from South India, but which also made a significant contribution to all Tamil interests in the Island, has been the Virakesari. The paper was started with an investment of Rs. 25,000 by Avanipatti P.P.R. (Peri) Subramaniam Chettiar, the first issue coming out on August 6, 1930. He was well supported by H. Nelliiah (below, left), who was the paper's first editor, and S. Eswara Iyer, an advocate (below, centre) who was the venture's first Managing Director. The first page of the first issue they brought out is on right. Below, right, is Haran, who succeeded Nelliiah as Editor. In the second row are Subramaniam Chettiar (left), Kesavan who succeeded Eswara Iyer as Managing Director in the 1950s and A. Ramanathan, another Director of the 1950s. At the bottom of the page are the editorial and proof reading staff of the Virakesari in 1963. In dark suit, front row, is K.V.S. Vas, the Editor at the time, and seated third from left is S. M. Karmegam who, after his Virakesari days, founded Chennai Virakesari in 2000, but who is at the time this book is published, the Consulting Editor for the Virakesari in Colombo.



(Seated Left to right) Messers. S. Thechchanamoorthy, Mrs. A. Rajadurai, S. M. Karmegam, K. Nithyananthan, E. V. David Rajuh K. V. S. Vas, K. Sivapiragasam, P. Rajagopal, V. S. Nadarajah, Miss. Nirmaladevi,
 (Standing Left to right) Messers: P. S. Thiyagarajah, S. Visvaratnam, A. F. Joseph, R. Mylvaganam, E. Solomonraj, S. Sothilingam, C. Sothinathan, S. Perumal, C. S. Gandhi, G. Nesamani, S. Sooriyakumaran, S. Kanagasingam, S. Thillainathan, S. Jayapalan, S. Ramachandran, S. Ramasamy, S. Edward, V. Ponnuthurai, M. A. S. Shanmugam.



In the history of Lankan journalism, one of the best known names was that of Armand de Souza, of Goan origin, who edited the Morning Leader and went to jail for his convictions. His son Tori de Souza was the Editor-in-Chief of The Times of Ceylon group of publications in the 1950s and '60s. Tori de Souza was an outstanding editor whose love for the English language was as much as his love for Western Classical music. In the picture on left, Tori de Souza (right) says farewell to S. Muthiah, Features Editor of The Times of Ceylon, who made The Sunday Times and The Times of Ceylon Annual, two of the Island's most prestigious publications. Muthiah, a Nattukottai Chettiar who did not stick to convention, was with The Times of Ceylon for nearly 20 years. He was also known for the contribution he made to sport in Ceylon through his column 'By The Corner Flag' which campaigned to broaden the social base for such games as cricket and rugby.



The best known of the families of Indian origin in Law in Lanka is the Choksy family, above. Kaikushbroo Dadabhoy Choksy, a Parsi, arrived in Ceylon in 1884 to start life as a book-keeper in the firm of Framjee Bhikhajee and Co. His son Nariman (N. K. Choksy) became a well-known lawyer, was the first Indian to become a Queen's Counsel, and was elevated to the Supreme Court Bench (on left) in 1951-52. He chaired the Local Government Service Commission, and the Choksy Report which resulted is still in use. He also served as Chairman of the Land Acquisition Board. The picture above was taken on the occasion of the wedding of his daughter Threety to C. R. Irani, at the time of this publication Chairman and Editor of The Statesman, Calcutta. Standing behind are the Choksy family (left to right): Kairshasp N. Choksy, the eldest son, who followed in his father's footsteps, became a President's Counsel and is, at the time of publication of this book, Finance Minister of Sri Lanka; N. K. Choksy, the youngest son, Phiroze Choksy, now an architect; Mrs. N. K. Choksy; and second son, Rointun N. Choksy, who headed one of the major garment manufacturing units in the Island, Hentley's.



Several Priests from India, who performed both priestly functions as well as those of gurukkal, have officiated in Lanka from the earliest times. They have included numerous Hindu and Christian priests from South India, as well as Christian priests from Goa. Priests from North India have been few and far between. One of the few from North India who performed priestly functions in Ceylon was Devi Dass Rai Shastri from the Punjab (below), who came to Ceylon in the early 1900s on military service and stayed on in the country. Fondly called 'Das Maharaja', he officiated as the priest at various functions organised by the various North Indian communities in Ceylon, most of them held in the Sindhi temple. His wife's father lived with them and practised Ayurveda in Colombo.

The Rai Shastris became friends with the S. B. Roys (on left) from Bengal, when Roy arrived in the first years of World War II with the armed forces from India. It was a friendship that led to the Dass Rai Shastris' son D. R. B. Durgabakshi, a lawyer, marrying Basanthi Devi, the daughter of the Roys, in Colombo. The picture at the bottom left is of D. R. B. Durgabakshi, his wife Basanthi Devi and their two daughters. D. R. B. Durgabakshi, who practised as a lawyer in Ceylon, passed away in 1987. His brother, also a lawyer and who also took the name Durgabakshi, still practises in the Island.

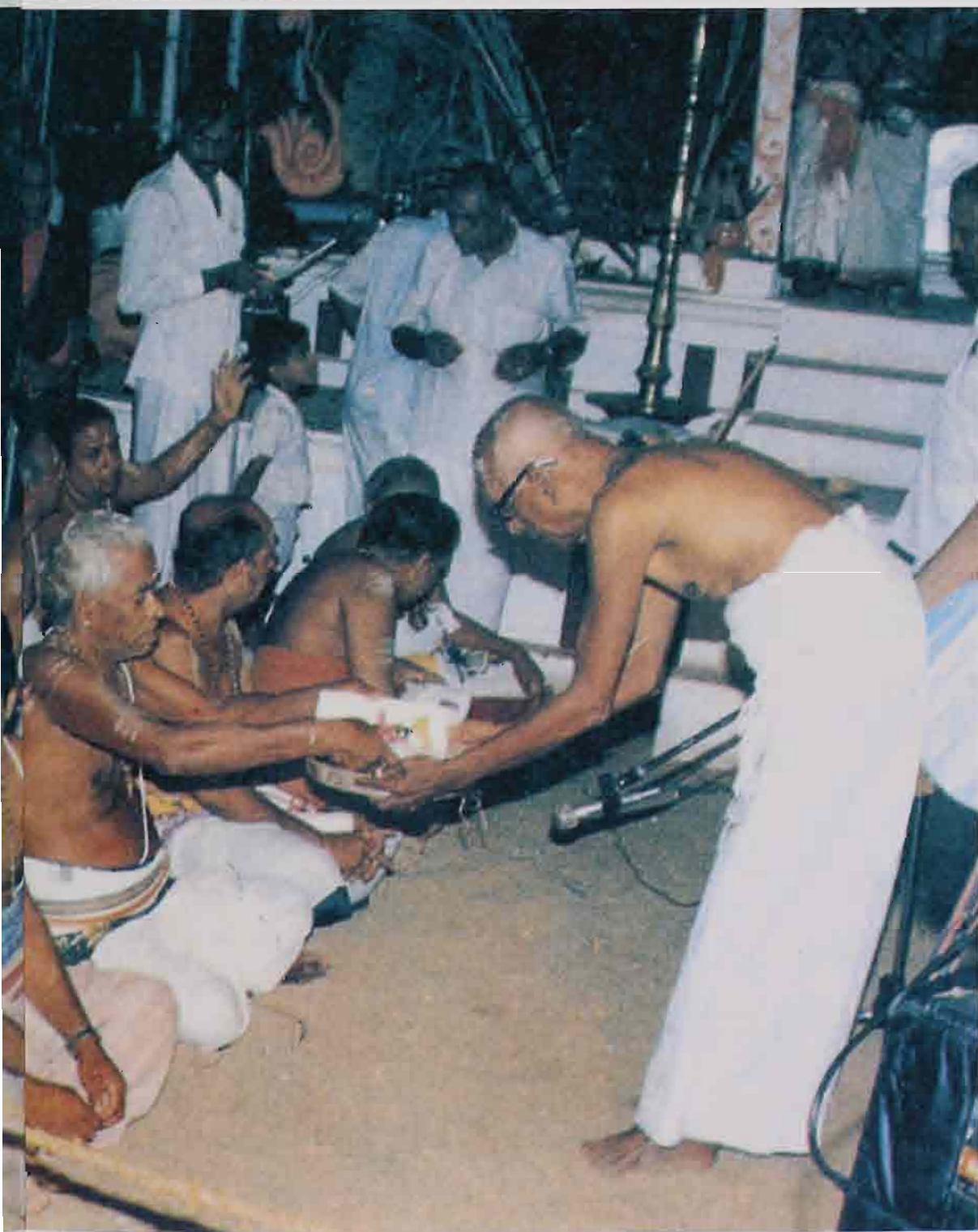






Once, the Hindu priests from South India (like the one on extreme left) travelled back and forth between the mainland and Ceylon regularly, with homes in both countries. But over the last 200 years, many of the South Indian Brahmin priests and others connected with the temples settled in the Island and their descendants have continued to serve the Hindu places of worship in Sri Lanka. From left, clockwise in the three columns in the middle of these pages, are:

- Sometimes, gurukkal from India also performed the duties of fortunetellers, horoscope readers or analysts of auspicious and inauspicious times. Others, like this itinerant fortuneteller, did not adopt religious roles, but were often considered to have spiritual powers.
- The gurukkal, all of South Indian origin, who participated in the Mahakumbabishekam of the New Kathiresan Temple, Bambalapitiya, in 1992, receiving offerings from the Chief Trustee, Palaniappa Chettiar.
- Sironmani Navalayur Brahmashri Sami Viswanatha Gurukkal who conducted the Mahakumbabishekam in 1992 of the New Kathiresan Temple, Bambalapitiya.
- Siva Shri B. Sirsabesa Gurukkal (Mani Iyer), third generation priest of the Manika Vinayagar Temple, Bambalapitiya, the temple of the Sammankoddar, a clan of traders from South India. He participated in the Mahakumbabishekam of the temple in August 2001, which was performed by Siva Sri Thiagarajah Gurukkal of Thirukazhikkunram in Tamil Nadu.
- The Manika Vinayagar temple was restored for its Mahakumbabishekam by Sthapathy Vishva Brahma Shri V. Nagalingam, a fourth generation sthapathy from South India working to a design by Brahma Shri Ganapathy Sthapathy of Chennai. The 80-year-old sthapathy spent five years on the renovation which was done with the help of Arch-Triad Consultants, whose architect, S. Sivaraman, is also of South Indian origin.



Protestant priests from the Tinnevely and Ramnad Districts of South India spent years in Ceylon where many settled after they came as members of the Tamil Cooily (Church) Mission from the middle of the 19th Century. Many a Roman Catholic priest came from Goa, following in the footsteps of Fr. Joseph Vaz, or from the areas covered by the Madurai Mission and the missions of the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Coast. Fr. Alfred Lobo (left) came from Goa in 1947 to help Bishop Edmund Peiris with his research and translations of Portuguese texts. Fr. Lobo, now fluent in Sinhalese and Tamil, is Professor of Philosophy and Theology at the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka, in Ampitiya, Kandy, after working in several predominantly Catholic parishes on the northwest coast.

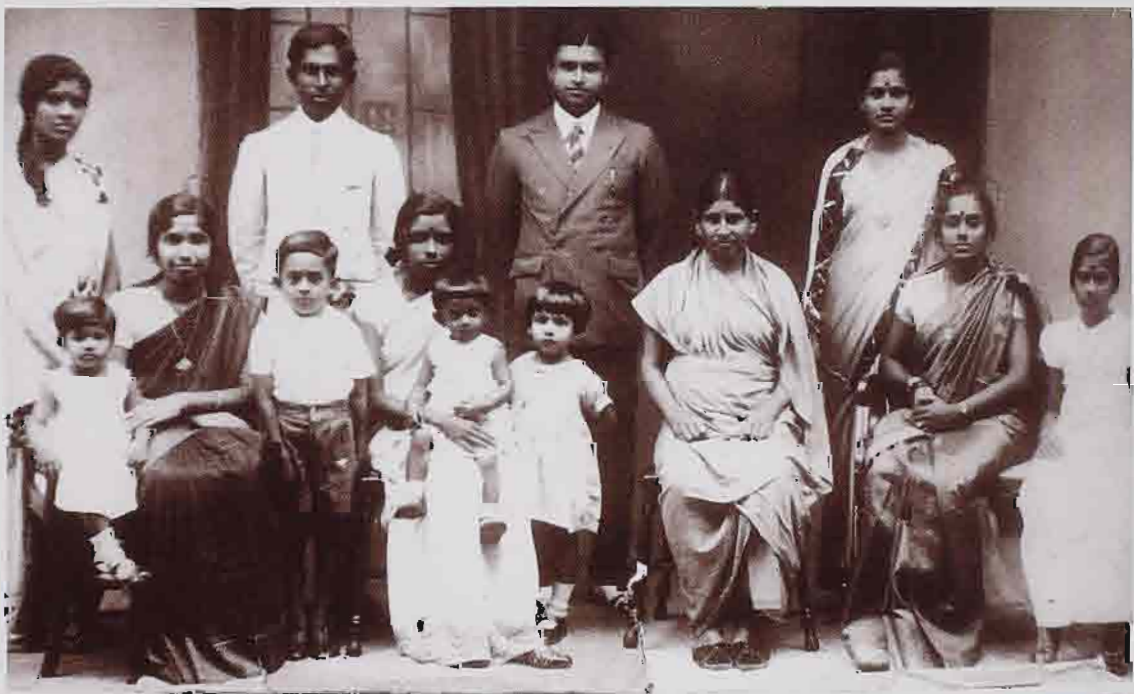


Several persons of Indian origin served in the various Services (Police and Military) in the days before Independence and even in the first years after Independence. Of South Indian origin was Wing Commander R. Vivekanandan, one of the first pilots of the Royal Ceylon Air Force. Wing Commander Vivekanandan commanded the Air Force base at China Bay in the late 1960s and early 1970s and is seen above, right (second from right) with the Government Agent, and, in the column on right, top, with his officers. Vivekanandan's brothers were also in the services, R. Manoharan, a Sandhurst-trained Army officer, and R. Mahendran, who flew helicopters with the Sri Lankan Air Force.



The Police had many of South Indian origin in all ranks. Among the first members of the Ceylon Mounted Police was R. E. Kitto, seated extreme right in the 1953 picture above. Kitto, of North Malabar origin, was a champion sprinter and, after his Police days, went on to a very successful career in the mercantile sector.

Many a person of South Indian origin also played a major role in the Surveying of the Island in the early years, first as the helpers of the British surveyors and, later, as surveyors themselves.



One such surveyor, Subramania Iyer Sathasivam (in shorts in the picture on right, bottom) is seen in one of his jungle camps in the 1930s. Subramania Iyer Sathasivam is the person in dark suit in the picture on right, middle, with his family. Wearing the traditional Brahmin saree is his mother. Her husband, Subramania Iyer, came from Vadacheri in South India towards the end of the 19th Century and worked in the PWD in many parts of the Island. Subramania Iyer Sathasivam retired as a Superintendent of Surveys.



Professional qualifications, either from the halls of academe or formalised training institutes, do not alone a professional make. Over the years, there have been thousands in Ceylon whose professions have been handed down from father to son or through training on the job. Most of these 'professionals' may not be seen as professionals by those more usually described as such because of their academic qualifications, but their contribution as professionals to the Island have been none the less for the fact over the years. Some of them are seen counterclockwise from below, left:

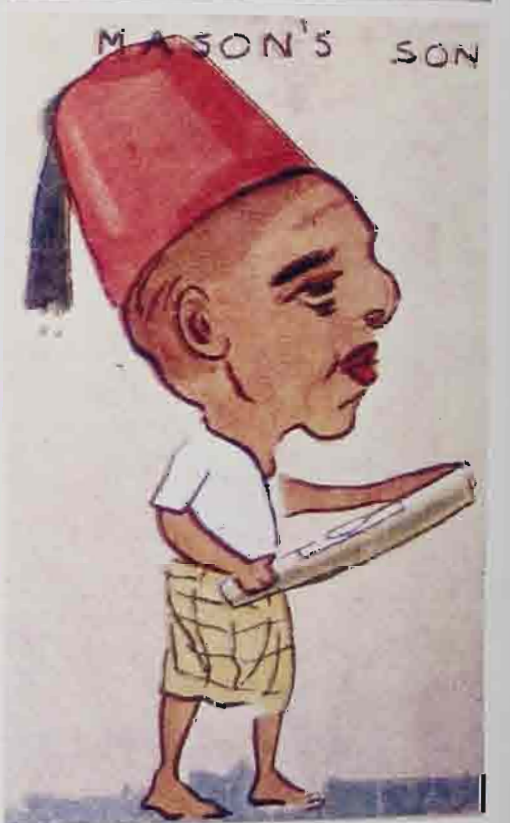
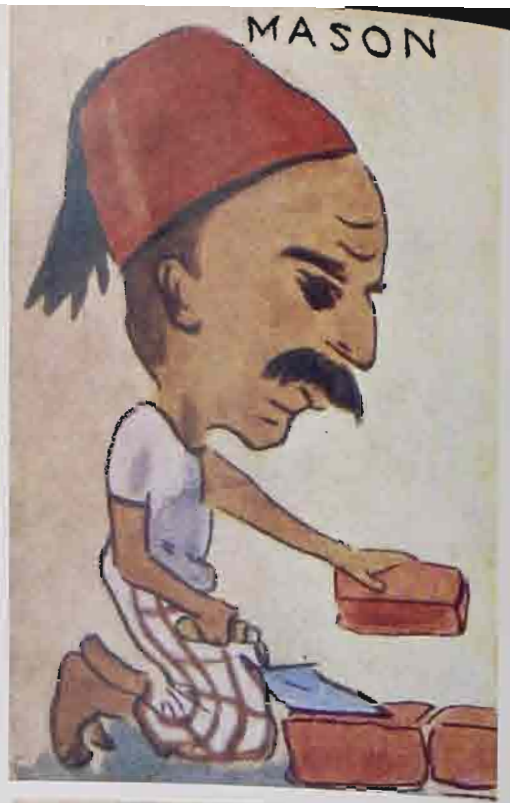
— **Barbers**, whether they were from South India (as in the picture) or the Ceylon Ambattaya, themselves arriving from South India centuries ago, have over the years played key roles in Hindu and Buddhist lifecycle rituals, particularly at births, weddings and funerals, in the Island. They have also practised as

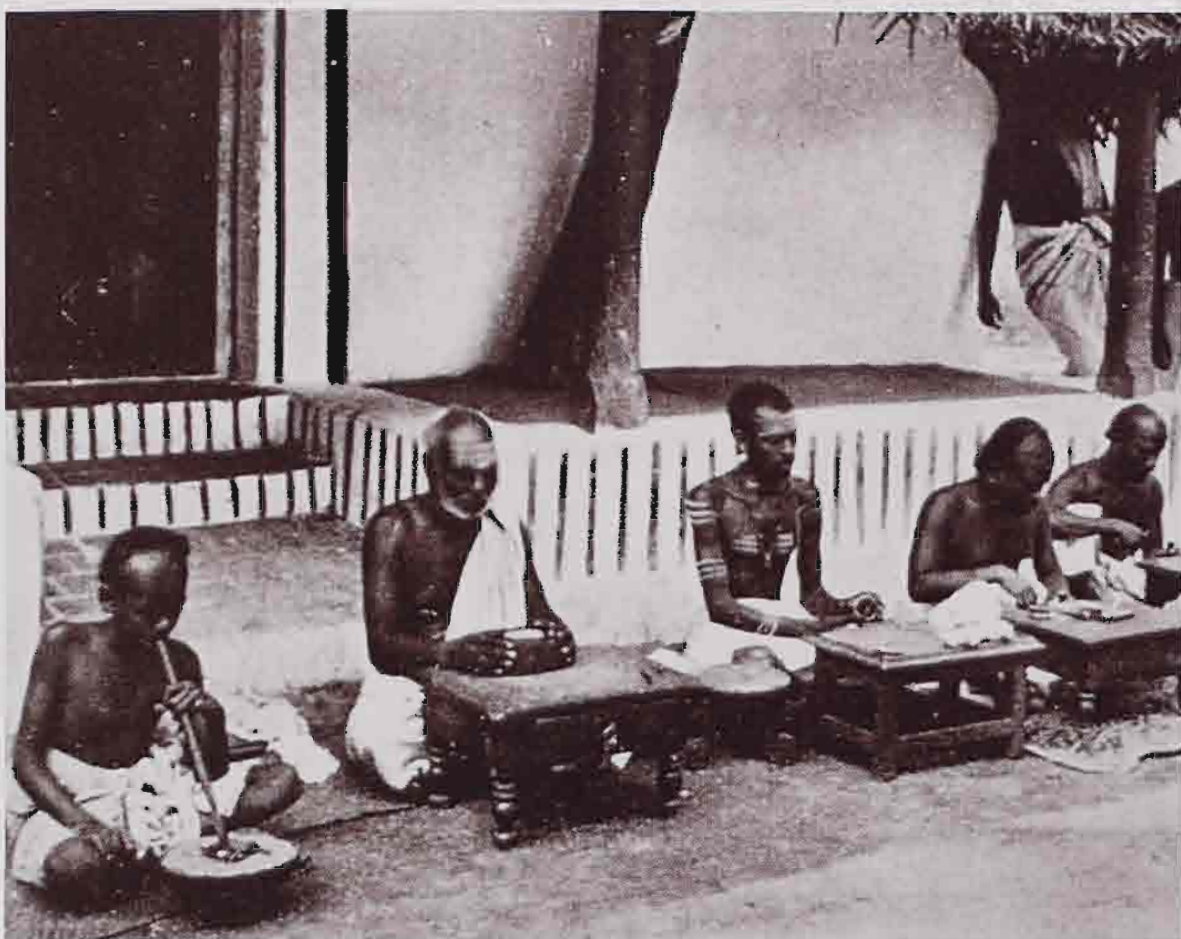
Ayurvedic physicians, while their women have been the traditional midwives in the villages.

— There was a time when almost every **Gardener**, whether in urban mansions or parks, was from South India. Peradeniya Botanical Gardens, seen at the bottom of page (in an 1860s drawing) owed much to the gardeners from South India (in the picture) for its development.

— Whether they were the **Syces** (muthus) of the planters and gentry who rode some of the finest imported steeds in the days before Independence or whether they were the coachmen of the latter days (as in this 1860s drawing, below) or whether they were the grooms who tended racehorses, most of them came from South India. Today, with the horse virtually having vanished from the Sri Lankan scene, theirs is a profession of much-diminished scope.







On left on facing page, is K.C. Kuttan, the chief welcomer at a heritage hotel in the Island, the 140-year old Galle Face in Colombo. Kuttan, a Malayalee who joined the hotel in 1942, still represents the dignity that many Malayalee and South Indian Tamils brought to Domestic Service, whether in the walauwe-s and mansions of the well-to-do or in the leading hotels of the Island. In their immaculate white sarongs and spotless white, brass-buttoned coats or white shirts, they offered meticulous service, bringing dignity to a profession which could have so easily made them seem subservient.

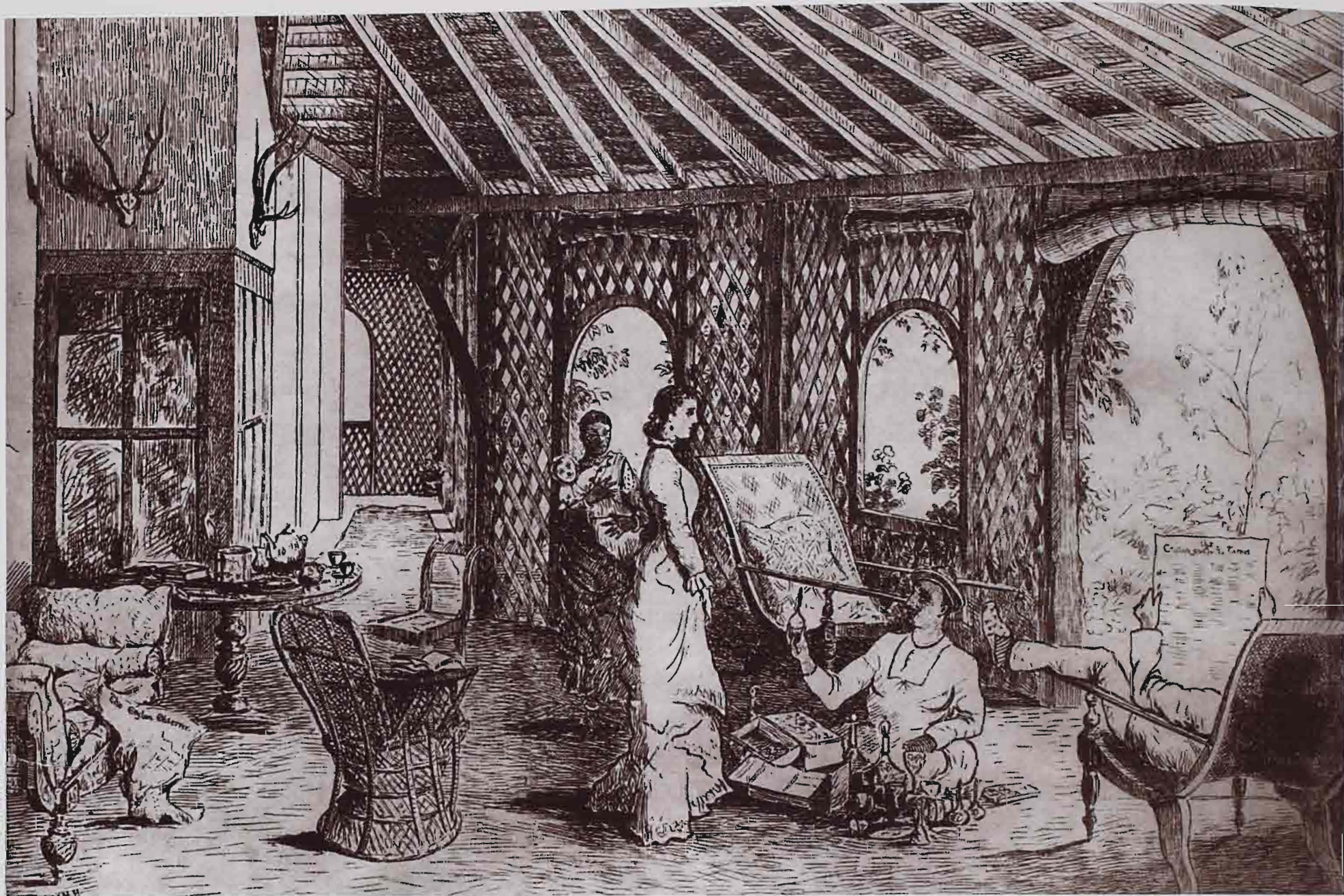
Traditional Tamil Goldsmiths and Silversmiths and Indian jewellery was always crafted by craftsmen (like those on left) from South India, many of whose descendants still continue in the business as well as in the field of modern jewellery in the Island.

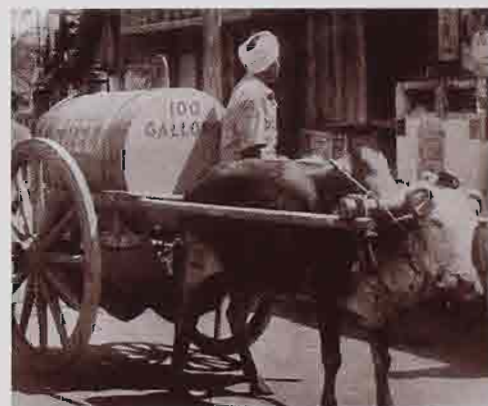
The column on right, facing page, features the traditional South Indian Muslim Mason who, with his family, at one time contributed significantly to building the mansions and walauwe-s of Ceylon.

Below, right, if he was not selling horses and worn clothes, petty Moneylending was the profession of the Afghan who would wait at key junctions to either lend money or collect what he believed was his.

Below, left, this handsome woman of the 1930s, a face from another age, is one of those who was responsible for the reputation Ceylon had for cleanliness. The Sweepers of urban Ceylon were Telugu men and women who came from the Madras Presidency, and whose descendants remain in the Island but, today, integrated with the population.







Petty trade was the profession of the peregrinating **Vendors** seen on these two pages. Every one of these pedlars knew his products, whether crafted by him or obtained against specific orders placed with other craftsmen.

On facing page, top left, the Muslim pedlar, the 'Thamby', seen in an 1880s drawing, would bring, house-to-house, a range of knick-knacks from textiles to costume jewellery, from ebony boxes to stockings, and bargain a sale before he left. On facing page, bottom, craftsmen from the north of India, bringing stocks of handicrafts from Kashmir and Rajasthan, were frequent visitors to the Island in the years between the Wars. And above, were the embroiderers from North India.

On extreme left on this page is the South Indian Tamil with his travelling library of popular fiction which generations between the two World Wars grew up on, benefiting from his advice. His knowledge of popular fiction was unsurpassed. At left, a basket weaver from South India who had made Ceylon her home. A frequent visitor to homes in Colombo, she is here seen in 1935.

And above, a vendor of kerosene, following the practice established by Santiago Aiyya Tamby de Mel in the early 20th Century. These vendors, each with his drum of kerosene borne on a single bullock cart, would travel from home to home, village to village, their distinctive bells chiming their arrival followed by their calling out to housewives to replenish their kerosene supplies. In those years, you could run up charge accounts with every one of these pedlars who were part and parcel of making life more comfortable in Ceylon.

The Players

The Arts

There are few fields of activity in which there have been greater contributions by the people of recent Indian origin in the Island than the Arts and Sport.

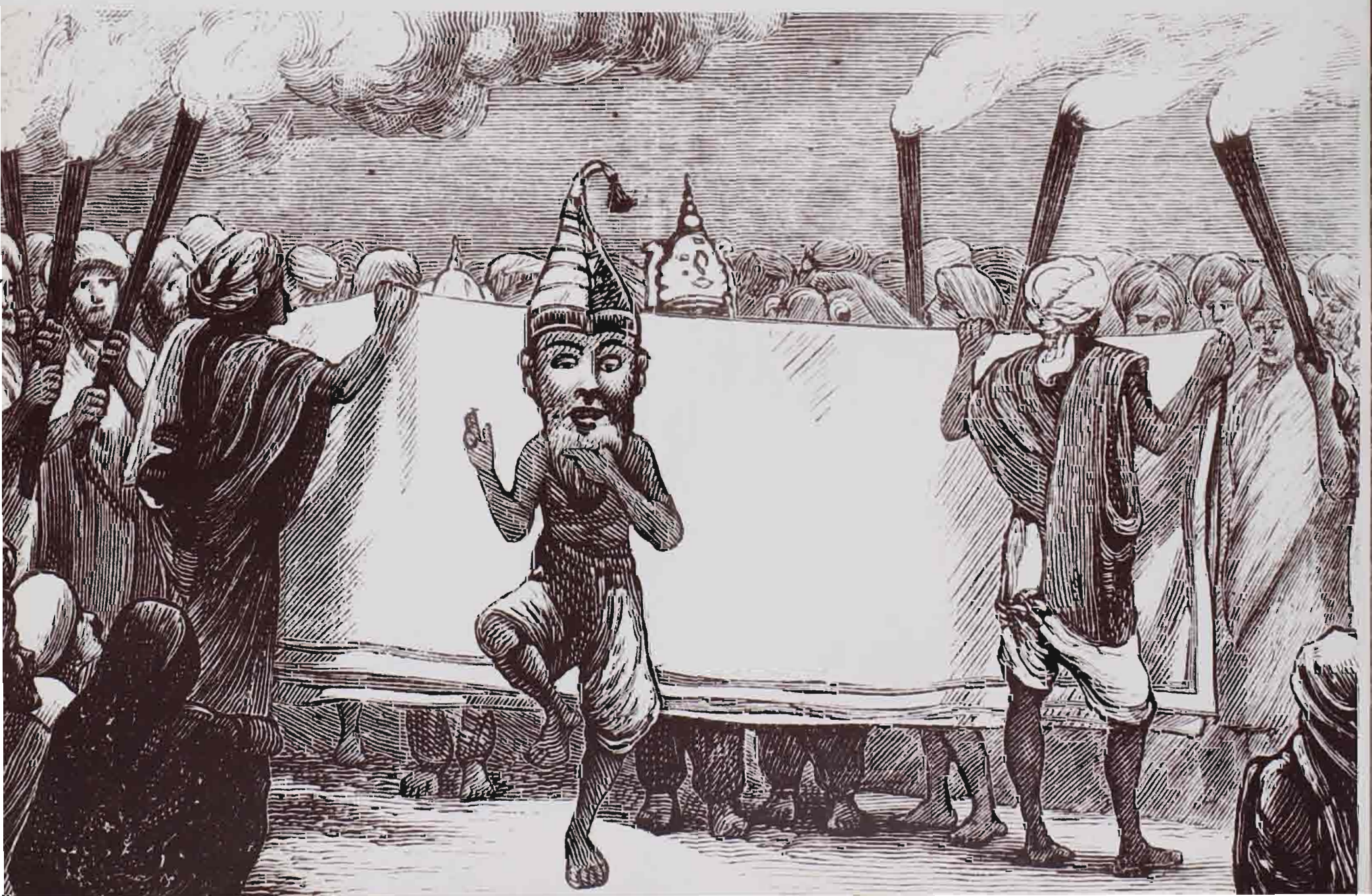
The theatre and entertainment by the "boys' companies" – the drama troupes with boys playing female roles – and travelling groups of artists from South India may not have had a major impact on Theatre in Ceylon, but Rabindranath Tagore's visit in 1934 to bless Wilmot Perera's Sri Palee, Horana, that sought to follow the path beaten by Shantiniketan, was to influence the way Sinhala dance, drama and music were to develop. Equally, Rukmani Devi's Kalakshetra was to provide the impetus for Classical South Indian dance and music to establish themselves in the Island.

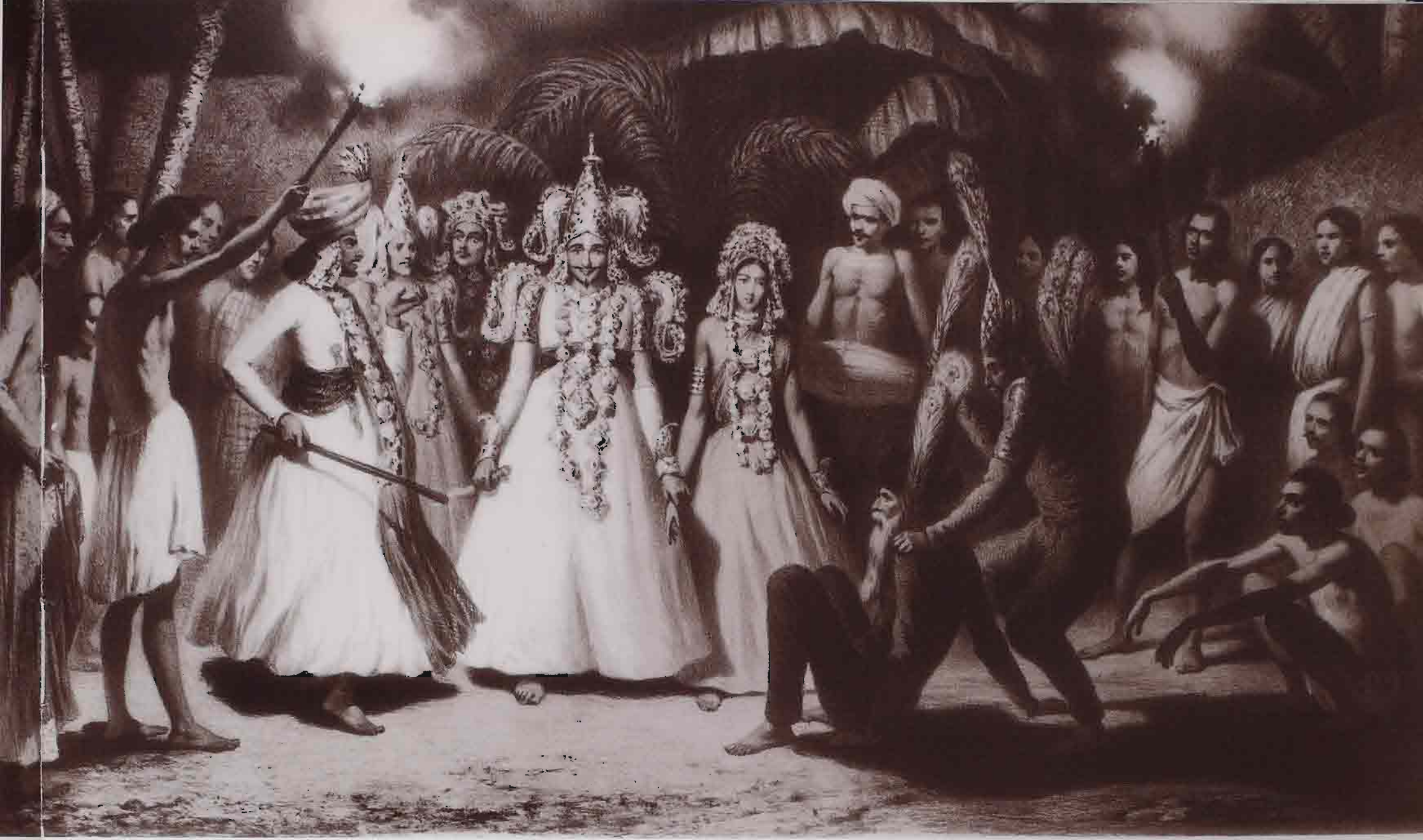
If dance and music in Sri Lanka owe much to these traditions — and the influence they have had on local forms, like the Kandyan dance and the demonic folk dance forms, that themselves have over the centuries derived from dance forms in the southernmost reaches of Peninsular India – there is no art entertainment form which owes more to India than the Cinema. Starting with films being made in India by Indian directors and technicians, who then worked here and trained their local successors, the Lankan film is a child of popular South Indian cinema. And serious Sinhala cinema owes not a little to the Satyajit Ray school.

And in the world of radio, television and music, particularly in Tamil, many with Indian roots have made significant contributions and continue to do so. Indeed, in every field of the Arts today are found Indo-Lankans playing significant roles.

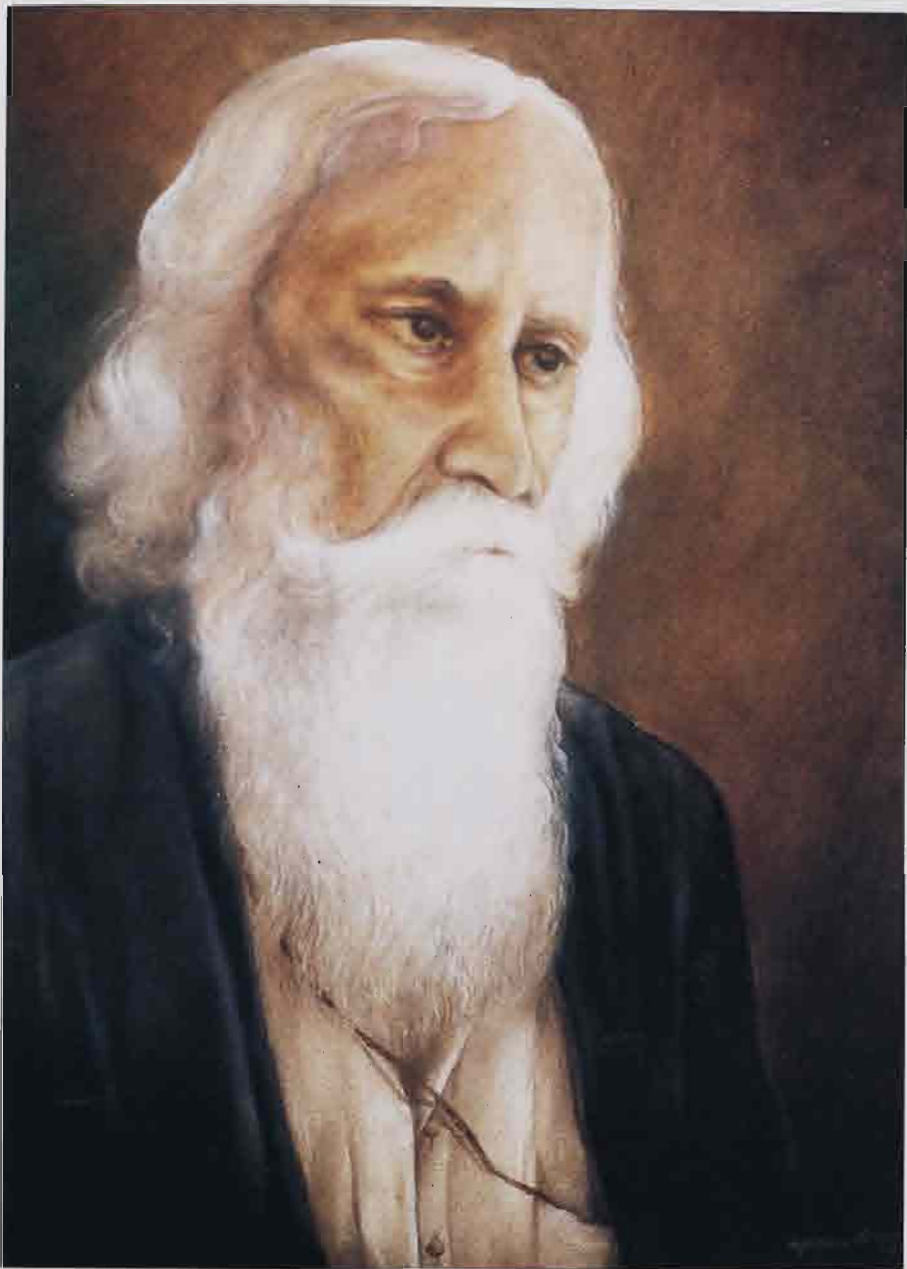
Amongst the earliest contributions to the Arts in the Island was the Koothu – a folk performance of sorts – that was performed by the estate workers to audiences comprising both their fellows as well as the various dorai-s and staff. These performances, like the 1878 one below, told in song and declamation the ancient stories of India, like the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Silappathikaram, Manimekalai and, most popular of all, Kaman Koothu, the 'Dance of Cupid'. One thing common to all these performances was the chorus or storyteller who held the performance together by linking scenes with his narrative. Koothu had a great influence on what developed as Nadagama in Lanka.

In later years, theatrical troupes from South India, like those on the facing page, and storytellers, musicians and nautch girls (clockwise, page 206) provided entertainment both in the plantations as well as the cities, laying the foundation for the further development of the Arts in the Island. These troupes were followed by dance-drama troupes from Bombay around the 1900s, and their Nurthi style of drama, with its song, dance and theatricality, had a strong influence on early Sinhala theatre.







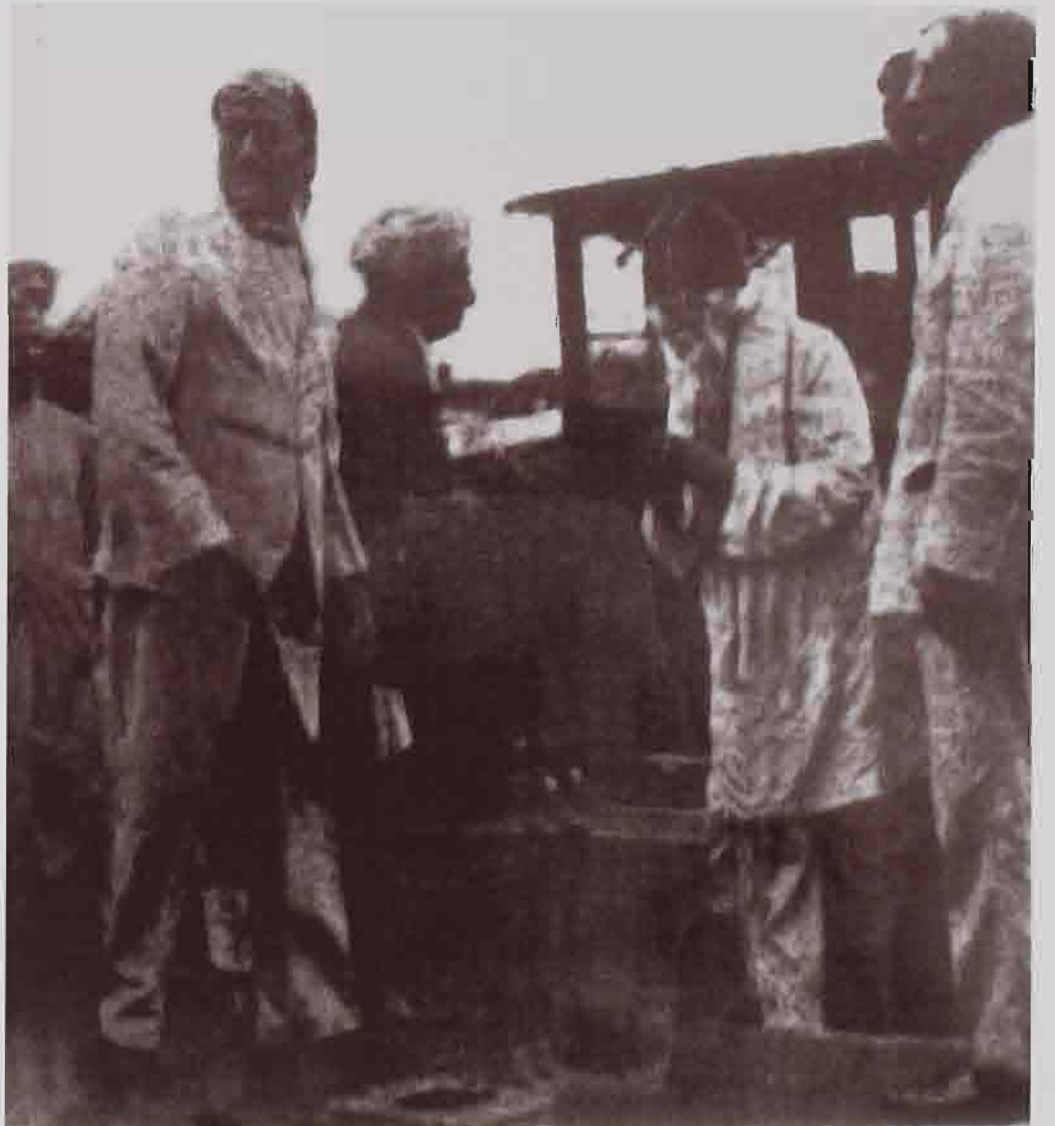


Ceylon **COLOMBO ED.**
Daily News

ES LARGEST CIRCULATION IN CEYLON
 101 St. E.O. 4 COLOMBO : MONDAY, MAY 28, 1934
 London

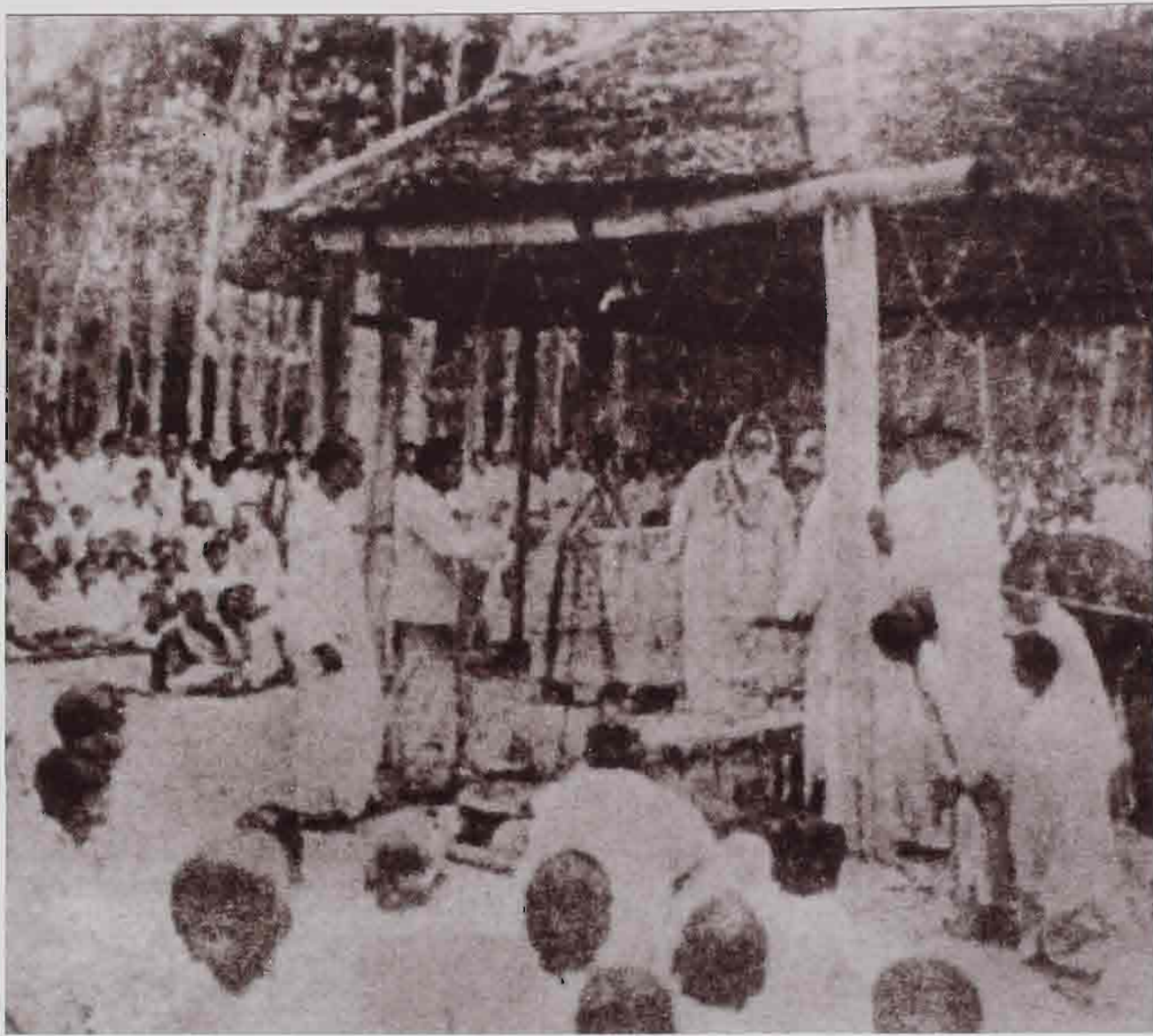
To The Buddha

The world today is wild with the delirium of hatred,
 the conflicts are cruel and unceasing,
 crooked are its paths, tangled its meshes of greed.
 All creatures are crying in anguish for a manifestation of Thine.
 Oh Thou of boundless life, save us, raise the eternal voice of hope,
 let love's lotus with its inexhaustible treasure of honey
 open its petals in thy light.
 O Serene, O Free, in Thine immeasurable mercy and goodness
 wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.
 Thou giver of immortal gifts, give us the power of indication,
 claim from us our greed,
 In the splendour of a new sun-rise of wisdom
 let the blind gain their sight, let life come to the souls that were dead.
 O Serene, O Free, in Thine immeasurable mercy and goodness
 wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.
 Rabindranath Tagore
 Translated from his Bengali song
 by the author.



Chitrasena, one of Sri Lanka's most famous modern dancers and a past President of the Tagore Society, Sri Lanka, has stated that Rabindranath Tagore's month-long visit to Ceylon in 1934 was most significant, "spiritual and cultural advancement in the Island receiving a remarkable stimulus". It was stated at the time, "Tagore has kindled a new enthusiasm. He has awakened a great yearning and has left a great idealism. It is not this generation that will thank him for his inspiration to Ceylon. Generations cannot measure the value of his services... that (have) opened our eyes to a vision of the joy and grandeur of our song and music, of our art and culture." Dr. Ivor Jennings, Vice Chancellor, University of Ceylon, said some years later, "Tagore had more influence than anyone on the revival of the Arts in the Island." During his visit, Tagore stated, "I have brought some part of our culture and I hope that you will realise that it is of eternal value. Politically you may be apart from India, but culturally you are part and parcel of India. We want you to come to us and share our heritage." Chitrasena has emphasised over and over again that Tagore's Shantiniketan was where Ceylon's dancers, musicians and painters "went on pilgrimage and came back inspired". Recording that historic visit are these pictures. Clockwise, from the painting of Tagore above by Upasena Gunawardene, a product of Shantiniketan, are:

- the poem "To the Buddha" that Tagore composed on the occasion of Vesak for the Ceylon Daily News and which he recited at the end of the dance-drama staged at the Regal Theatre by the students of Shantiniketan he led on a visit to the Island in 1934.
- Tagore arriving for the reception given to him by the Indian Mercantile Chamber of Commerce during that visit.
- Tagore arriving at the Art Gallery for an art show organised during his 1934 visit.



When Tagore established Shantiniketan, he provided not only an environment for art and drama to develop, but he also created a modern dance and music form synthesising the dance and music of different parts of India. It was these forms that scores of students from Ceylon studied, brought back to the Island, wedded them to the traditional folk dance and music forms of Lanka and created the indigenous forms of today.

In the 1940s and '50s, singers like Ananda Samarakoon (who composed the National Anthem), Suriya Shankar and Sunil Shantha, dancers like Chandralekha, Chitrasena, Shanthi Kumar, Vasantha Kumar and Premkumar, musicians like Lionel Edirisinghe and artists like Upasena Gunawardene were some among the scores who benefited from the Kerala Kala Mandalam, Shantiniketan and the Bhatkande Music School, Lucknow. All played their role in influencing the development of Sri Palee, Horana, by Wilmot Perera, who teamed with them to develop the Island's own Shantiniketan, a brief glimpse of its story seen on these two pages.



From top to bottom, on left:

- *Rabindranath Tagore laying the foundation stone for Sri Palee in Horana in 1934.*
- *The first buildings of the School that came up and which are still in use.*
- *The painting by a visiting Indian artist on a wall at Sri Palee.*

And below, another painting on a wall, 'Manjusri Bodhisatva' by the famous Indian artist Jayantbilal Parekh.



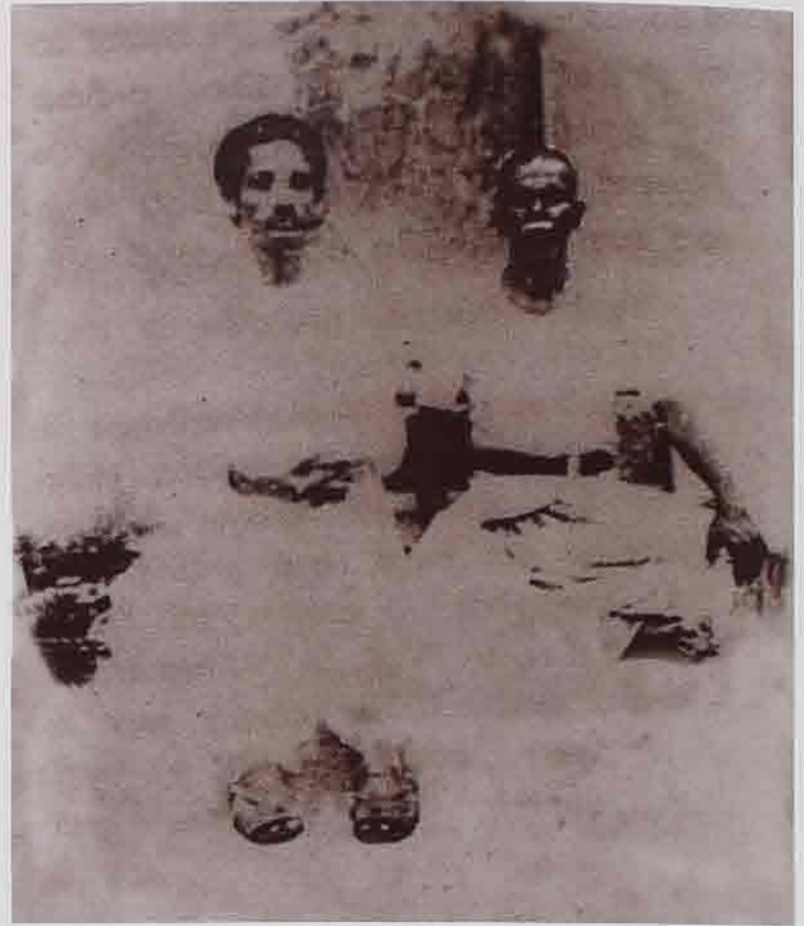


Above, India's President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan visits Sri Palee. To his left is Wilmot Perera and to his right is Prime Minister S.W.R. D. Bandaranaike. On extreme left is the Indian High Commissioner, Y.D. Gundevia (1957-60).

After this visit, musicians from India (in the pictures on right) were regular visitors to Sri Palee, both to perform as well as to give lecture demonstrations.

Few institutions in the Island have benefited more from Shantiniketan and other Indian schools of music and dance than Sri Palee, which, in turn, influenced the development of dance and music in the Island.





On these two pages are many from the Island who studied art, music and dance in India and who laid the foundations that have contributed significantly to the development of these art forms in Sri Lanka.

Facing page, counterclockwise from top, left:

- Standing fourth from left is art student Upasena Gunawardene at Shantiniketan. Seated second from left is the famous artist Nandalal Bose who taught there, came to Ceylon in 1934 with Rabindranath Tagore and was requested to do the murals at the Kelaniya Vihara.
- Lionel Edirisinghe, playing a surbhar, a different kind of sitar, studied the sarod and sitar with the famous Allaudin Khan. Edirisinghe, a product of Shantiniketan and Bhatkande, was for many years in charge of musical education in the Directorate of Education and ensured that a steady stream of music maestros visited Ceylon from India. He also never gave up the simple Bengali attire he had got used to while at Shantiniketan. When at the dawn of Independence, leading artists in the Island got together to present the Pageant of Lanka, Lionel Edirisinghe's orchestral composition owed much to North Indian raga-s.
- Dayaratne and Amara Ranatunga performing with Indian musicians (foreground second and first from right) at an Indo-Sri Lankan music festival in New Delhi in the 1990s. Both husband and wife had received their Doctorates in Music from the Benares Hindu University where many others from Lanka have studied over the years. Dr. Dayaratne was the Director of Music and Dance Research at the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation and Prof. Amara Ranatunga is the Head of the Department of Music at the Institute of Aesthetic Studies, Kelaniya University.
- Nirmala Kumari Rodrigo, Sri Lanka's best sitar player, performing with Pandit Ishwarlal Mishra at the Tulsi Ghat Music Festival, Lucknow. She studied at the Bhatkande College of Music, Lucknow, in 1973 and received her Doctorate in Music from the Benares Hindu University in 1984, the first Sri Lankan woman to earn the degree. Ustad Ilyas Khan, her teacher, once said, "Your music fills my soul with happiness". Dr. Nirmala Kumari is a senior lecturer at the Institute of Aesthetic Studies, Kelaniya University.

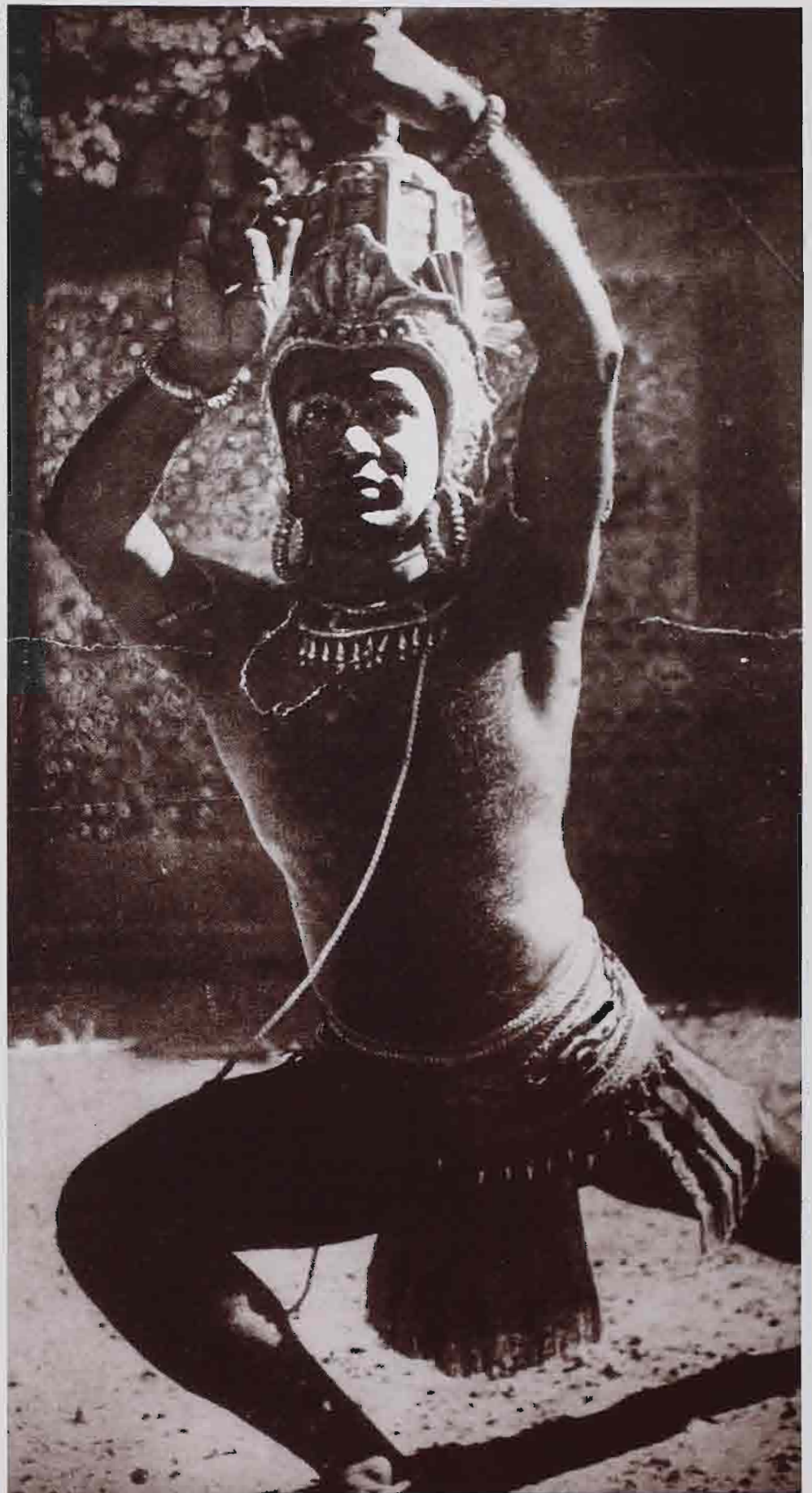


After the visit of Rabindranath Tagore to Ceylon in 1934, Gurudev sent Shantidev Ghosh, who had also made the 1934 visit and was the leading exponent of Rabindra Sangeeth and Oriental ballet, to teach at Sri Palee. During the years when Shantidev was at Sri Palee, Gurunanse Jamis Dhammanangoda taught Kandyan dancing there. Together (seen here, with Shantidev Ghosh on left) they danced on many occasions and each derived much from the other. In July 1936, Shantidev produced Sita Harana, the first Oriental ballet to be staged in the Island. Till then, no girls had danced on stage and Wilmot Perera had to coax their parents to get Maisie Attygalle and Lakshmi Dias to take part in the dance-drama. Wilmot Perera himself played the role of Rama.

In the years that followed, Kiran Sasir Dé arrived from Shantiniketan to teach art and Rabindra Sangeeth at Sri Palee. Jayanthilal Parekh from Bombay came to teach art and Ananda Sivaraman came from the Kerala Kala Mandalam to teach dance. Manohara Bandhanam, adapted from a Jataka tale, was a dance-drama which they all performed together in 1937, with Lakshmi Dias and Vidhyadhar Wazalwar from Lucknow participating. The dance-drama was performed in several urban centres in the Island.

- Right, above, Chitrasena, who took Sri Lankan dance-drama to international audiences, was inspired as a 13-year-old by the performances of Rabindranath Tagore's troupes in Ceylon in 1934. The son of Seebert Dias, the great actor who also produced the first Sinhala ballet, Sirisangabo, with Chitrasena in the lead, went with Chandralekha, the first major woman dancer in Ceylon, to study Kathakali under the celebrated Guru Gopinath (above) at the Chitrodaya School in Travancore. Both of them thereafter went to Shantiniketan and returned to Ceylon to change the face of Ceylon dance and drama. Many of Chitrasena's famous dance-dramas, like Naladamayanthi, have been based on Indian legends. But it is the same Indian influence that is seen in his own Lankan creation, Karadiya.

On right, Chitrasena is seen with Dr. Suresh Awasthi, the leading Indian critic, after a 1990s performance of the Chitrasena troupe in Delhi. Awasthi describes Chitrasena as the 'Uday Shankar of Ceylon'.





If Shantiniketan and other North Indian institutions like Bhatkande and Benares Hindu University had a great effect on Ceylon, particularly Sinhala Music and Dance, the Tamil art traditions were fostered by the folk forms as well as the Classical traditions of the Trinity and Bharata Natyam from South India.

On facing page, the three pictures on extreme left show the kavadi dance, playing keyboards during a procession and villupattu being performed in schools in the Nawalapitiya area, where, as in other parts of the Hill Country, the Tamil folk traditions still remain strong. Below left, the staff and students of the Ramanathan Government College for Fine Arts, Jaffna, which received major encouragement from people like Lionel Edirisinghe, seen here seated sixth from left. The College, with its focus on Carnatic Music and Bharata Natyam, grew from the Ramanathan Music College founded in 1960.

Several vidwans and music teachers from Tamil Nadu not only visited Ceylon regularly over the years, but many also stayed here for long periods of time to teach and perform.

Portraits, counterclockwise, from left:

- Maharajapuram Santhanam, the great Carnatic vocalist, who sang with his father, Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer, in 1960, when Viswanatha Iyer was invited to preside over the inauguration of the Ramanathan Music College in Marudanarmadam, in Jaffna. After the inauguration, S. Natesa Pillai, the founder of the College, requested Santhanam to stay for a few months and get the College going. What was to have been three months became five years and Maharajapuram Santhanam made an immense contribution to Carnatic music in Ceylon through not only his work in the College but by singing in almost every town in the Island.
- Santhanam was followed as Principal of the College in 1964 by Sangeetha Kalanidhi Chitoor Subramaniam Pillai, the great Carnatic vocalist, who had served as the Principal of the Music College at Annamalai University.
- Examining the students of Indian Music in Jaffna and Colombo and other centres in Ceylon was, for years, Prof. Sambamoorthy (and Mrs. Sambamoorthy) who was the Head of the Department of Indian Music at the University of Madras for over 25 years.

Later contributions to Carnatic music in Ceylon were made by K.P. Sivanandam, whose ancestors were the Thanjavur Quartet with expertise in musical instruments and dance, and Saradha Sivanandam. In the pictures below, the Sivanandams are seen giving a performance on their favourite instrument, the veena, in Sri Lanka, and at the opening of the Vipulananda Music and Dance College, Batticaloa, in 1978. Speaking on the occasion is Minister Rajadurai, who introduced Prof. Sivanandam as the College's first Principal. Both Prof. Sivanandam and Saradha Sivanandam helped the College to grow and put it on a sound footing during the three years they were in Batticaloa.





Guruvayur Kandaseri Krishnan Atchuthan arrived in Ceylon from Travancore in 1943 and, playing the ghatam, tambura and mridangam, became a leading Radio Ceylon artist. Like Shanmugam Pillai (on facing page), he too received several awards from the Government of Ceylon for his achievements in the world of classical music. He started the Tyagaraja Samajam in the 1960s, which trained about 30 artists, and launched the Tyagaraja festival in Colombo. It was as the country's leading ghatam artist (above) that he was best known.

His son, A. Ravindran, on left, is today a leading mridangam player: He learnt the mridangam from his guru, Kochi Basker (on right in the picture).

In the picture on facing page, bottom, South Indian filmstar K. R. Vijaya is seen at a private concert where Atchuthan plays the mridangam, his wife Kamala the violin, and Gowrieswari Rajappan sings.

In the picture on facing page, top, M. K. Shanmugam Pillai plays the mridangam at a recital at which his wife Vijayalakshmi sings. Atchuthan is in the background behind the mike. Shanmugam Pillai's forefathers came from Tiruvarur to Ceylon 150 years ago and were attached to the Kandasamy Temple, Inuvil. Vijayalakshmi taught music at the Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam and Kalalaya in Colombo.

When Radio Ceylon became a full-fledged institution in 1962, Shanmugam Pillai and Atchuthan were its Tamil Programme's first two full-time musicians. Several others from India worked there till the 1970s on residence permits.





Several persons of Indian origin became leading exponents of Classical South Indian music and dance from the 1940s and, in turn, made a significant contribution to others in the Island interested in these art forms.

On left, Prameela, now Professor of Music at the University of Madras, is seen at her vocal arangetram in Ceylon with her mother, the eminent vocalist Musiri Subramaniya Iyer who presided over the function (extreme left), and chief guest Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake (on right). Prameela's parents, S. Cunjithapatham and Moni (Mrs. Cunjithapatham) had each in their own fields made significant contributions to Ceylon. Cunjithapatham, seated above (extreme left), with C. S. Jayaraman (second from left), who had come to sing at the annual Thyagaraja festival in Colombo, was of Tinnevely origin. He worked for many years at Radio Ceylon, eventually becoming Tamil News Editor. In 1956, he became the first simultaneous interpreter in Parliament, a post he held till he left the Island in 1973. His wife, Moni Elias, graduated in music from Queen Mary's College, Madras. Her father, C. O. Elias, had joined Jaffna College in 1922, to teach History, together with other teachers from Kerala like M. I. Thomas (History) and K. V. George (Arts). Moni Elias went on to head the Tamil Service of Radio Ceylon and, then, for 24 years was the Head of its Educational Services. Her sister Alice taught at Jaffna College for 35 years and another sister worked as a nurse in Colombo.

South Indian music, established in Jaffna from the early years of the 20th Century, and Classical dance, beginning to establish itself from the late 1930s, found two institutions in Colombo encouraging their development in the city. One was the Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam in Wellawatte, the other the much more broad-based Kalalaya School of Oriental Music and Dance established by the Ceylon Tamil Women's Union in September 1948. Kalalaya built its own hall near Torrington Road and it was inaugurated by Vijayalakshmi Pandit (right) on 16.4.1954. The inspiration for Kalalaya was Rukmani Devi Arundale's Kalakshetra in Madras. The Colombo school followed the curriculum and the Pandanallur style of dance Kalakshetra favoured.

Kamala Johnpulle, the first Ceylonese to obtain the coveted Kalakshetra diploma, joined Kalalaya as its first Bharata Natyam teacher and helped build the institution over its first decades. In 1973, Kalalaya received further encouragement when its inspiration, Rukmani Arundale, visited and met with numerous old students from Kalakshetra as well as those following the Kalakshetra curriculum (bottom of the page).

Kalalaya today teaches Bharata Natyam, veena and vocal, but once it also taught Manipuri, Kathak, Kathakali and other Indian dance forms. This was when Sukhendu Dutt (right), a Bengali exponent of Manipuri and Kathakali from the Uday Shankar School of Dance, Almora, spent over 20 years with Kalalaya.







Today, apart from the Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam and Kalalaya, there are several privately run institutions in Colombo and other parts of the Island which teach Bharata Natyam. The picture on the facing page, top, was taken on the occasion of the arangetram of two of Vasugi Jagadeswaran's Bharata Natyam students. On extreme left is Kala Manya M. K. Shanmugam Pillai, whose daughter is Vasugi (third from right). Next to her are her husband and son. Vasugi, who learnt dancing and music initially from her mother Vijayalakshmi, was later a student of Adyar K. Lakshman.

Further inputs to Bharata Natyam in the Island in recent years have come through regular visits both for performances as well as lecture-demonstrations by some of the leading exponents of the art form from South India. On the facing page, bottom, first and third from right, facing the camera, are Dhananjayan and Shantha speaking to the members of the Kerala Samajam after a lec-dem.

Apart from Sri Palee, Horana, North Indian dance forms and dance-dramas based on them have been popular in the Island ever since Rabindranath Tagore's visit. In the years preceding the revival, several themes from India's myths and legends were chosen in Ceylon for dramatic performances with musical accompaniment. Shakuntala (on top of the page) was staged at the YMCA in 1938 with Leelavati Aserappa (née Sreenivasan from Madras) and her husband Dr. C.V. Aserappa playing the lead roles (centre in the picture). Third from left in this picture of the cast of Shakuntala is Manek Rustomjee

and, seated with musical instrument, on right, is Banu Rustomjee, two others of Indian origin. Banu Rustomjee, like Leelavati Aserappa, helped pioneer women's participation in stage performances.

The continuing influence of Rabindranath Tagore was seen at the annual celebration, Rabindra Jayanthi Utsav, held for many years. In the picture above, left, a ballet by the students of Nachayana, established by Rose Gnanapragasam, who had herself studied at Shantiniketan after Tagore had heard her play the veena in 1934 and offered her a scholarship in his school. Nachayana was started in 1945 and it continued till around 1992. Rose Gnanapragasam taught Manipuri in the school and Sukhendu Dutt, Kathakali, with teachers from India for Bharata Natyam. The Manipuri form was adapted in July 1969 for this ballet based on Tagore's poem Hundred Years Hence and those performing the dances of the seasons included Koshu Sobhraj, a Sindhi (second from left).

Shakuntala returned to the Ceylon stage in 1997 when the troupe from the National School of Drama, New Delhi, was brought out to Ceylon by Prof. Rita Ganguly (above, right) as a prelude to the Svarna Jayanti Festival. Rita Ganguly was a regular visitor to Ceylon from the time she organised theatre workshops for the National School of Drama, Sri Lanka, at the Town Hall Foundation in 1980. She produced many plays during her visits to the Island and trained many an actor and actress.



Light music, both Hindustani and South Indian as well as Western, was made more popular in the Island by Radio Ceylon's Commercial Service than by live concerts. In fact, from the 1950s, it was Radio Ceylon which took this music back to India and created a mass following at a time when All India Radio, strictly non-commercial, preferred to go with the Classical.

At top of page is Vijayalakshmi Pandit arriving at Radio Ceylon in September 1950 to inaugurate Radio Ceylon's commercial relay to India. In the picture are Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake and several of his Cabinet. One of the livewires of the Commercial Service of Radio Ceylon from its inception in 1951 was Jimmy Bharucha (centre, top row), whose father was a member of the Indian Civil Service, came to Ceylon in the 1920s and joined the Ceylon Civil Service. He became a distinguished judge but died young. His mother was one of the first women in Ceylon to act on the stage, joining The Thespians. More than almost anyone, Jimmy Bharucha was responsible for making Radio Ceylon's Commercial Service the most listened-to service in India, as a programmer, announcer, and compère par excellence.

Another major contribution to the music scene in Ceylon was by the Menezes family who played a variety of instruments in hotels, night clubs and at private parties. When bandmaster Menezes, whose roots were in Goa, immigrated to Ceylon in the

early 1930s from Calcutta with his family, Mike Menezes (top row, extreme right) was eight years old. Menezes Senior opened a chain of music shops in Colombo, where practically every musical instrument was taught, the piano, however, being the most popular. Mike Menezes (Miki to all) was inducted into the 'Golden Clef Hall of Fame' in 1991 for his contribution to music in Sri Lanka. Miki, who played piano, saxophone and clarinet with many local bands, led the Mike Menezes Quartet, perhaps the most popular dance band playing the old music. He was also perhaps the best tuner of pianos in Colombo.

Above are the singers and musicians who made Hindustani and South Indian music popular – and even more successfully adapted Sinhala songs to both. The picture on extreme left is of Kala Suri Alhaj Mohideen Baig, perhaps the greatest popular singer in Ceylon, particularly during the gramophone age of the late 1930s and '40s. Arriving in Ceylon from Salem, Madras Province, in 1936, his talent was honed by Mohammed Ghouse and he became the most popular voice in Radio Ceylon as well as the most popular playback singer in Sinhala films. Starting with the second Sinhala film and singing for 45 years, he sang well over 6000 songs for the Sinhala film industry. Mohideen Baig sang in Tamil, Sinhala, Urdu and Arabic. Above, centre, is his son, Isak Mohideen Baig, who has followed in his father's footsteps and is proving a popular singer today.



Clockwise, from above, right are:

- Mohammed Ghouse with his orchestra. Mohammed Ghouse, called by all as Prof. Mohammed Ghouse, was the leading musicologist and music director in the 1930s and trained and directed many a singer who was to become a household name in later years. Among them was a violinist, W.D. Albert Perera, who, later, as Amaradeva, was to contribute immensely to musicology in Ceylon. Ghouse was, perhaps, the foremost of several South Indian musicians who played a major role in Lankan music.
- Rocksamy, a popular music director for three decades from the 1950s in the Sinhala cinema. He was one of many from South India who contributed to film music in Ceylon.
- The best known of them, R. Muthusamy from Nagercoil who started his career in Ceylon cinema as an assistant music director with the very first Sinhala movie, Broken Promise. Muthusamy, who was associated with Radio Ceylon till his death in 1970, scored music for about 80 Sinhala movies. His best work was in Prema Tharangaya in 1953.
- Mohammed Sali, another popular singer of recent Indian origin.





Before the advent of Sinhala and Sri Lankan Tamil cinema, it was films from South India, particularly Tamil films, that entertained the mass audience. Once cinema began to sing and speak, no film had a greater following or a greater influence on Sinhala cinema and film music — to this day — than Chinthamani, starring M.K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar and K. Aswathamma. South Indian film historian Randor Guy, who in 2000 attended a film festival in Sri Lanka of old Tamil films, later wrote, “What I found significant during my visit was the continuing impact of the songs of Chinthamani even after 60 years. Many of them ... have been used in Sinhala films and, driving to Kandy with the car radio on, there was a new song on the FM station being rendered by a leading Sinhala singer. The tune was that of Enna Janmam Eduthen Yen Ayyaney...”

Made in 1937, Chinthamani (a scene from it is seen on left) ran for over a year at the Elphinstone Theatre (below). The theatre, which was designed by Homi E. Billimoria, was managed for Madan Theatres Ltd., Calcutta, by Framroze Cawasji Parekh, another Parsi, who also managed for Madan & Co. the Empire, Palace, Public Hall, and Empire, Kandy. Parekh later bought some of these theatres. J. F. Madan’s bust still figures above the entrance to the Elphinstone.

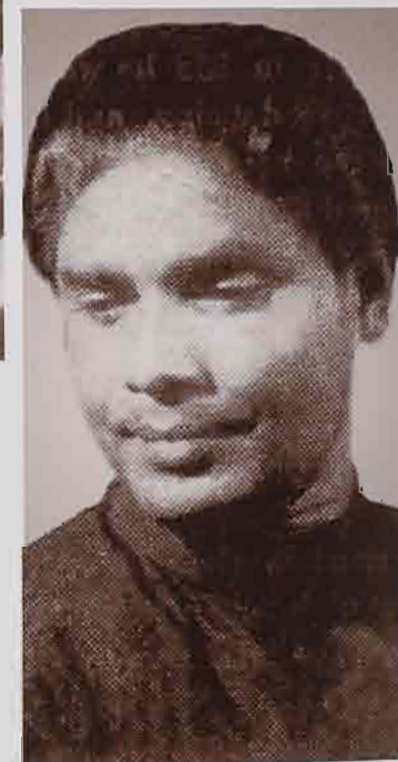




The Sinhala and Sri Lankan Tamil film industry is more than 55 years old as these lines are written. Of around 1000 films made in that period, the first 43, that were made in India, and the several more made in Ceylon, till the late 1950s, had South Indian technicians handling virtually all the behind-the-screen activity. Theirs was an influence which remains with Sri Lankan films to this day.

The first Sinhala film to be made was Kadavanu Porundhuva (Broken Promise) which was made in India and released on January 21, 1947, in Colombo. It starred Rukmani Devi, to become the nightingale of Lanka and the undisputed First Lady of the Sinhala screen, and B. A. W. Jayamanne. It was directed by Joti Sinha, a Bengali, and produced by S. M. Nayagam, who pioneered both Industry and Film in Ceylon. In the picture above are the Minerva Players, the theatre group which contributed most of the players to this film version of their play. In the picture with S. M. Nayagam (fifth from right), are the production manager Navanani (third from right), Nayagam's secretary Varghese (fourth from left) and Joti Sinha (fifth from left), all seated. Rukmani Devi and Eddie Jayamanne are on extreme right and fourth from right is B. A. W. Jayamanne (seen on right with Rukmani Devi in a scene from the pioneering film). In 2001, there was a South Indian film retrospective held after several decades in Sri Lanka and one of the members of the Indian delegation was Antony Bhaskar Raj (on right, below, third from left), who lived many years in Ceylon and directed several of the early Sinhala films, including such hits as Prema Tharangaya. He is seen here with P. P. Manikam (extreme right) and Mrs. Manikam on her husband's right. Kamaladevi Manikam was the daughter of S. M. Nayagam, and her grandparents, the Sundaram Pillais, came to Ceylon early in the 20th Century from the Tanjore area and went into trade in the Island. Kamaladevi Manikam was a vocalist and veena player who sang in many programmes of the Tyagaraja Utsavam and the Saiva Mangaiyar Kalagam. She is also an artist. Manikam's grandparents were also from the Tanjore District. They came to work in the plantations and became proprietary planters, but he became a professional and was a chief engineer in several major state-owned industrial plants. In 1989, he started the Udayam Foundation along with M. Radhakrishnan and S. Thambirajah to educate the children of plantation workers. It is a fund which still continues. Manikam was also instrumental in getting a few sculptors from Mahabalipuram to spend 2-3 years in Ceylon in the early 1990s to train local sculptors as well as execute some sculpture for the Gangaramaya Vibara (Buddhist temple) in Slave Island.





Even as Indian technical inputs decreased and, eventually, vanished from the Lankan film industry, several persons of Indian origin settled in the Island entered the industry as technicians, musicians, directors and actors and actresses. In the picture on top of the page, Lenin Moraes of Indian origin (second from left) directs a scene in what became a popular Sinhala film. He was trained in Revathy Studio, Madras, in cinematography and make-up.

Another of these Indian technicians was J. A. Vincent who was Art Director for over 100 films made in Ceylon. Vincent, who first worked on the Sinhala film *Asokamala* made in Central Studios, Coimbatore, came to the Island for its release and decided to stay on, working in the local film industry. But what Vincent was better known for was the posters he did for over 500 films during his years in the Island. In the picture above, Vincent, second from left, watches Sivaji Ganesan autographing a painting done by his daughter (to his right) when Sivaji visited Colombo for the shooting of *Pilot Premnath*.

On right, from top to bottom, several from India, or settlers of recent Indian origin, who had an influence on Lankan cinema:

— Few persons from South India have had a greater influence on Sinhala films than Mohamed Mastan. Cameraman for several South Indian films, he first came to Ceylon after shooting *Asokamala* in Coimbatore and *Sujatha* in Salem. As a cameraman, he became the guru for several

cameramen who are still in the industry in Sri Lanka. He was also a pioneer of outdoor shooting in Ceylon. Later, starting with *Sugumali* in 1957, he directed half a dozen other Sinhala films, most of them for K. Gunaratnam.

— Another of the directors from Madras was A.S. Nagarajan who directed several Sinhala films after having been a scriptwriter in Madras. His Sinhala films included *Mathalan*, based on the great Madras hit *Mangamma Sabadham*. He also directed the first Sinhala film to be produced by a woman.

— Kunchunni of Kerala Kala Mandalam, who assisted Shanthi Kumar in teaching Indian dance to students in Colombo. Shanthi Kumar, with Kunchunni's help, played a major role in *Asokamala* which would have been the first Sinhala movie to be released if circumstances had not allowed Kadavanu Porunduva to pip it at the post.

Others of Indian origin associated with the making of films in Ceylon included Ceylon-born A.S.A. Samy, P. Neelakantan who directed films for Jaber A. Cader; and L.S. Ramachandran (on right), who directed Sinhala films, most of them focussed on village life, a theme he pioneered. When in the late 1950s Government introduced legislation to encourage local film production, the Indian connection with Lankan films waned, but its influence remained, for most of the Sri Lankan film directors and technicians had been trained in South India.



In the world of letters and languages, significant inputs to Sanskrit and Tamil in Lanka were made by many from South India. As far back as the 3rd Century A.D., Sanskrit was a language prevalent in the Island. From the 17th Century, the Dutch encouraged the settlement of several South Indian Brahmins in Jaffna, who nurtured the study of Sanskrit. In the 18th and 19th Centuries, there were 70 persons in Jaffna working on Sanskrit projects. In 1953, the North Lankan Sanskrit Association and the Northern Districts Sanskrit Teachers' Association were founded and held the first Sanskrit conference in the Island.

Playing a notable role in the conference were S. Natesa Pillai (S. Natesan), Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, as Founder President of the Association, and Prof. O. H. de A. Wijesekera, Professor of Sanskrit, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. Sanskrit was taught as a subject at the University College in Colombo from its inception in 1942. Many of the leading schools in Jaffna had excellent Sanskrit teachers from India, like M. D. Balasubrahmanyam at Jaffna College, who contributed two Professors of Sanskrit to Peradeniya, and Seetharam Sastrigal at Parameswara College. Wijesekera, speaking at the conference said, "Sanskrit... is practically our own past and the mother of the Sinhalese language (either in the Vedic or post-Vedic periods). Therefore Sanskrit study should be even held superior to the study of the Greek or Latin Classics. The two major languages, Sinhalese and Tamil, have grown side by side being influenced by this... The time has come for us to re-discover India's past, and simultaneously strengthen all our contacts with our immediate neighbour, India... Indian civilisation belongs to us and we are part of it. Any student of the history of languages and the civilisations of the Sinhalese and Tamils will admit that the roots of all these go back to India and in particular to that civilisation preserved in Sanskrit." He added, "Linguistically speaking, to borrow from Sanskrit wherever possible will be the most correct and most convenient method to develop our languages."

Several from Ceylon, particularly from Jaffna, studied in India and returned to the Island to play significant roles in its history. D.C.V. Visuvanathapillai and C.W. Thamotharampillai were the first B.A. graduates from the University of Madras, the former going on to help Rev. Myron Winslow in editing his Tamil-English dictionary with William Nevins (Muttucumarar Sidambarampillai) and the latter becoming a judge. Arumuga Navalar, who helped Percival translate The Bible, spent many years in Madras, like Arumugampillai. Mootootampillai, who wrote the first history of Ceylon in Tamil. Swami Vipulananda, the first Professor of Tamil at Annamalai University and the first Professor of Tamil of the University of Ceylon, played a major role in establishing the Sri Ramakrishna Mission activities in the Island.

From across the Palk Strait came others who contributed significantly to scholarship. Amongst them, was, left, in the picture above, Thanjavur Arulaparananda Swamy's grandson Subbiah Natesa Pillai, born in Tanjore, where he later practised as a lawyer. He came as Principal in 1924 to Parameswara College, Jaffna, which had been established by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan whose guru was the Thanjavur Swamy. Natesan, while Principal of the College, also acted as private secretary to Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. He married Sundari, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan's daughter (extreme right in picture), seen with her mother and Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar on the occasion of a Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan Memorial Lecture. Natesan, who managed the Parameswara and Ramanathan Colleges till their takeover by the Government in 1960, presided over the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Madurai Tamil Sangam. He was recognised both in Ceylon and India as an outstanding scholar of Tamil and Hinduism. He was the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in the 1950s.

The "three literati who adorned Eelath Tamilakam in the 20th Century" were S. Natesan, Karunalaya Pandiyanar (right, top) and Navaneetha Krishna Bharathi (right). Pandiyanar came to Ceylon as a private tutor for a Chettiar's family. Staying on, he remained a pandit and writer all his life. He wrote and taught, it is said, "the best Tamil of his generation". He also helped found the Colombo Tamil Sangam. He wrote 18 books, of which only five have been published. Krishna Bharathi came in 1917 from Krishnapuram in the Tanjore area, to teach as Tamil pandit at Parameswara College. He is considered one of the outstanding Tamil poets of 20th Century Ceylon.

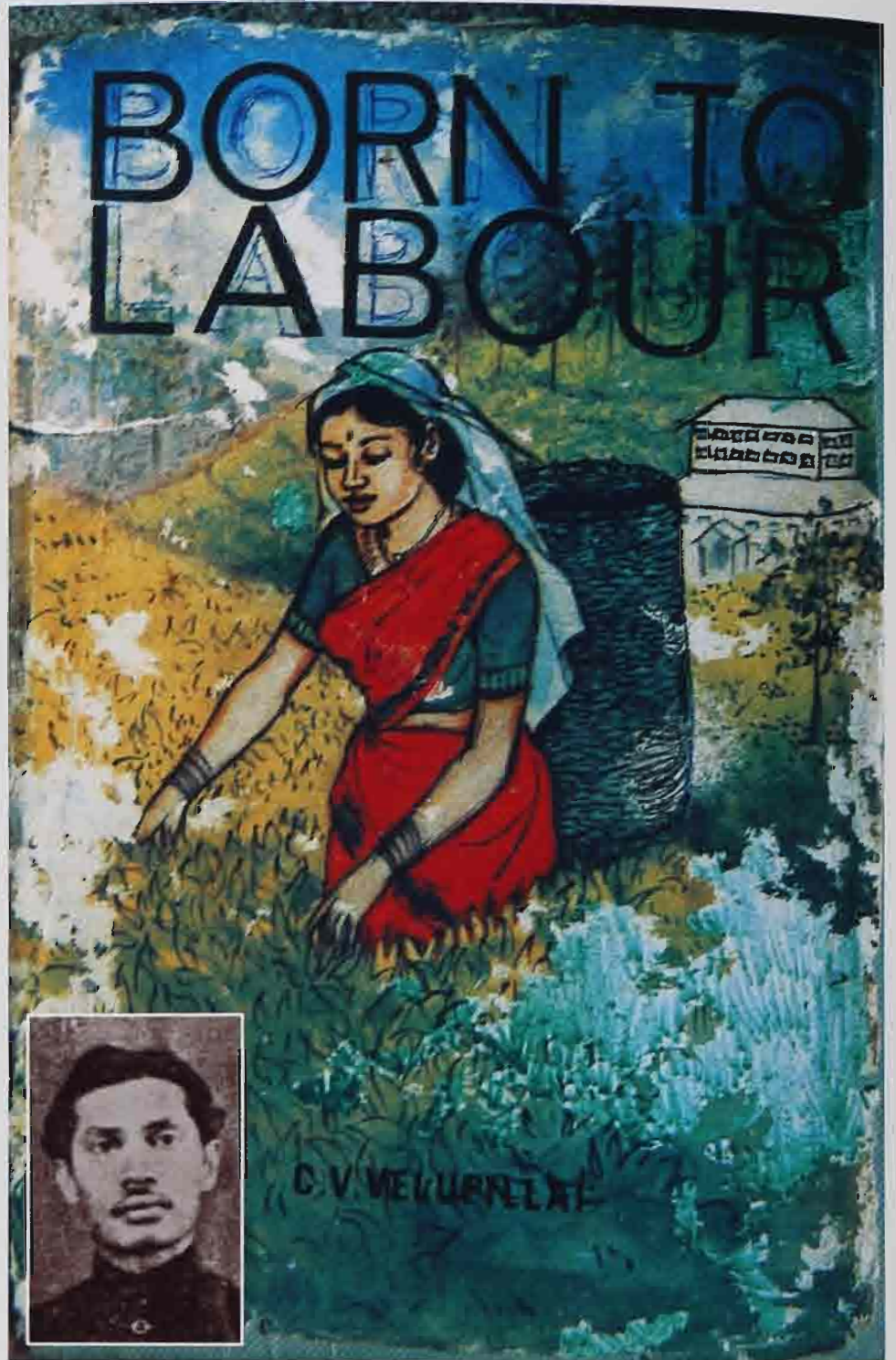


Also contributing considerably to the literature of the Island, especially in Tamil but also in English, have been several of the Malayaba Tamils as well as many Muslims from India.

Perhaps the best known of the writers to come out of the plantations was C. V. Velupillai (inset, right). Born in Punduloya, he moved out of the plantation milieu to become a teacher and then moved on to journalism, literature, trade unionism and politics, becoming a parliamentarian in the first Parliament of Independent Ceylon. In his writings in English and Tamil, particularly his poetry, he has more poignantly than anyone else described the plight of the estate workers from the first years of their migration till times began to improve. Among his best-known collections of poetry are *In Ceylon Tea Gardens* (1954) and *Born to Labour* (1970), a compilation of his writings, the cover of which is featured on right.

Counterclockwise, from below are featured a few others from the plantation country and elsewhere who contributed to this body of literature.

- S. (Thelwatta) Joseph, a writer and literary critic whose novels and short stories on plantation workers have made him renowned, receives the 'Kala Suri' award from the then President, D. B. Wijetunge.
- Anthony Jeeva (centre), well-known writer and drama director, presents the first copy of a new book of his to an eminent social worker who was once a leading businessman, V. T. V. Deivanayagam Pillai.
- Amongst other eminent writers and poets from the plantation area were men like Arul Kavi Abdul Cader Pulavar, Chidambaranada Pavalur, Kurinji Thennavan, Perianpillai, Kandasamy and, featured here, centre, N. S. M. Ramiah and K. Ganesh, extreme right.
- One of the best known among the Muslim writers of today is Memon Kavi (left) seen presenting a copy of his work to Minister Rauf Hakeem. Memon Kavi, of whom it has been said, "His name will be remembered among the best in the history of 20th Century Sri Lankan Tamil Poetry", was awarded the Sahitya Award of the Sri Lankan Government for his collections of poems, which strikingly reflect trends in modern Tamil poetry in the Island.



Sport

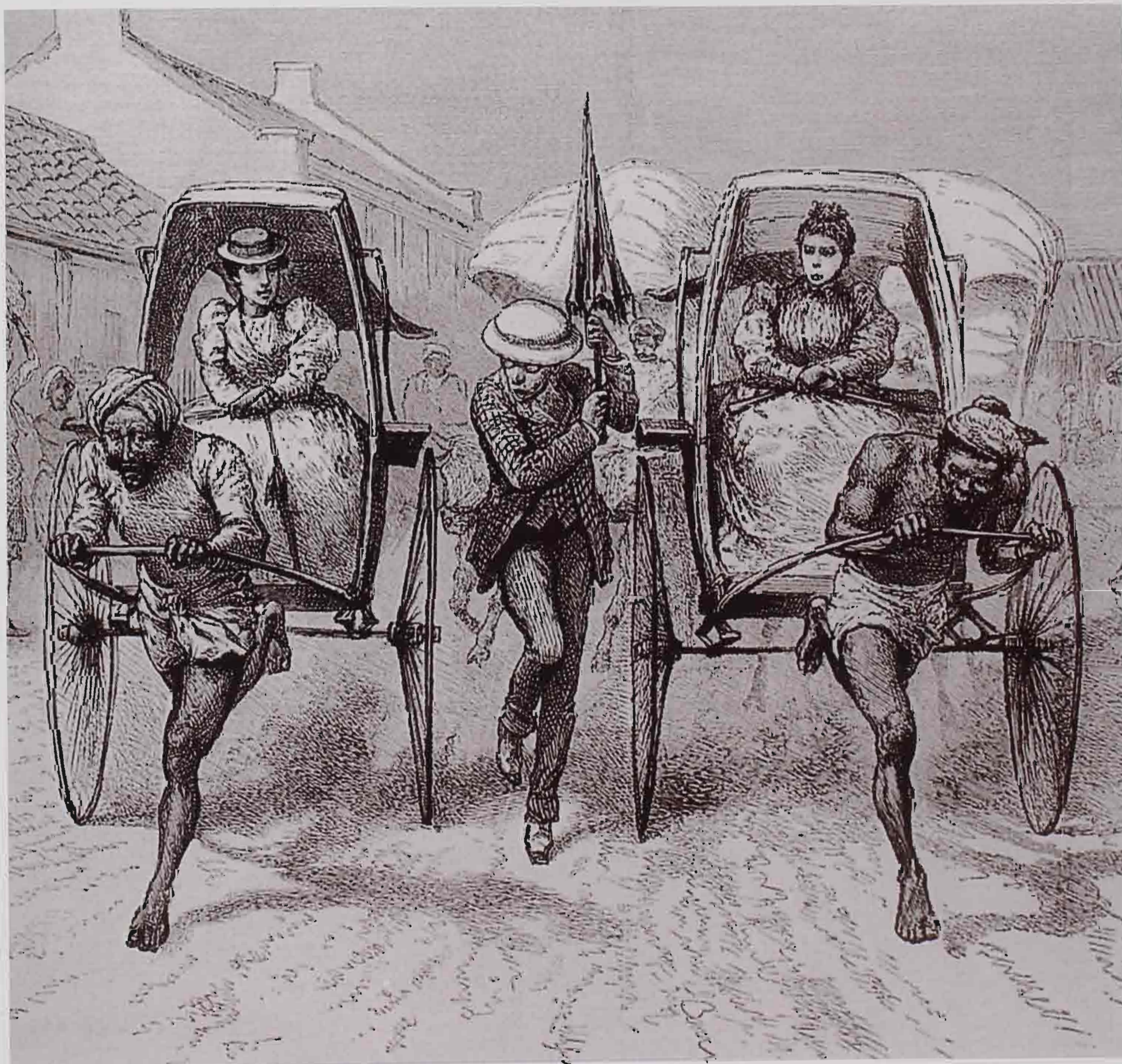
Starting with the Calcutta Cricket Club and the Madras Cricket Club providing the early opposition cricket teams in Ceylon needed to develop the game, to basketball introduced by the YMCA College in Madras, where Harry Crowe Buck had first introduced the game in South Asia, and volleyball introduced by the sports goods firms in the Island from the Punjab, Lankan sport has grown with regular competition and support received from Indian clubs and associations.

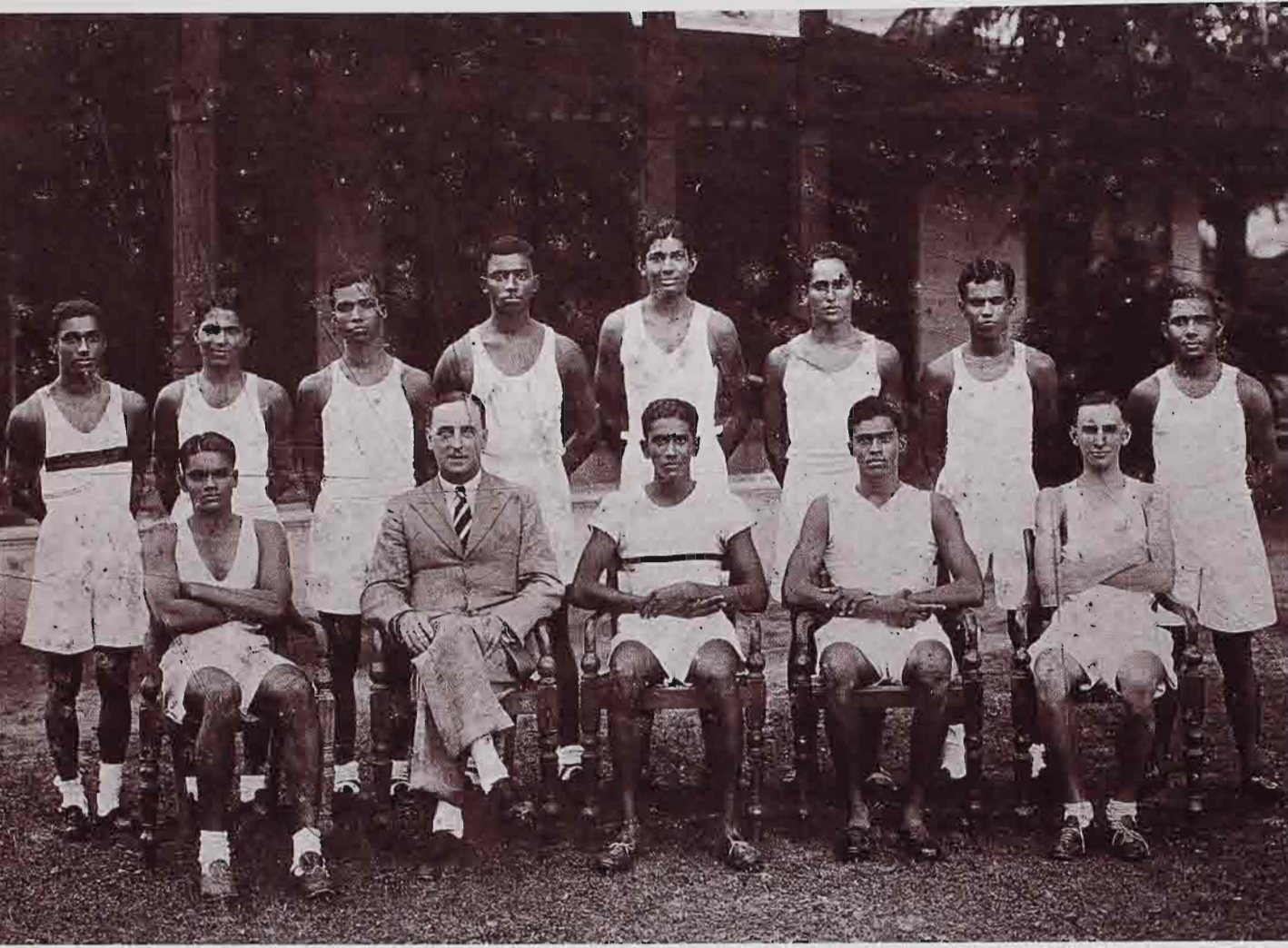
Players of Indian origin have represented Lanka in almost all sports. In the Fifties and Sixties, the Parsis

and others from among the 'Bombay Merchants' dominated the various racquet games and represented the Island over and over again. In more recent times, no one has made a greater mark in sport internationally than Muttiah Muralitharan, who has been playing a key role in keeping Sri Lanka in the forefront of world cricket.

The following pages are merely indicative of that contribution to sport. But as in the Arts, so in Sport too. It is a diminishing contribution, with the priorities of Indo-Lankans today greater in the professions and entrepreneurship.

A day ashore in the days of sail and steam was a break passengers on the long voyage to and from Britain and Australia looked forward to. A common experience during the day, when sporting activity was still minimal in the Island, was travelling in rickshaws in Colombo which, at the drop of a hat, would race each other, providing considerable excitement to the passengers and threatening pedestrians, as seen in this 1894 engraving.

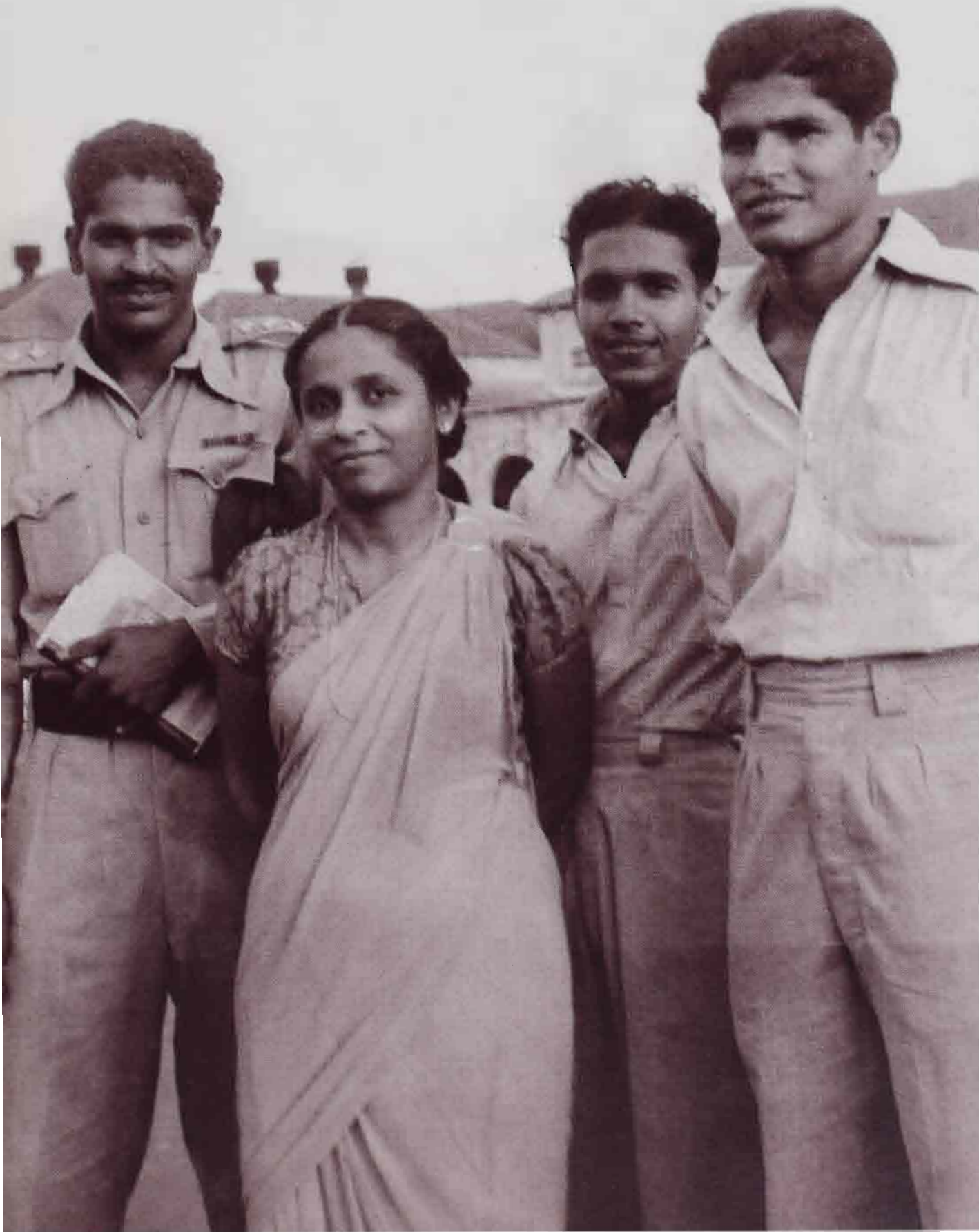




Making a mark in Athletics in the Island and amongst the early record-setters were several of Indian origin. The University of Ceylon athletics team on left, includes R. E. Kitto, seated third from left. Kitto, a Lankan sprinter of North Malabar origin, held several sprint records in the Island and represented it in the Indo-Ceylon meets and the Olympics.

Also holding a national athletic record for many years was V.G. George, another with a Malabar background, who served in the Ceylon Army. Seen with three of the four George brothers is Mrs. Abraham Kovoor, a sports enthusiast, in the picture on left, below. V.G. George, for many years the Ceylon High Jump champion and record-holder, is seen on extreme left. To Mrs. Kovoor's left are Kurien George (who became a doctor) and V.G. George Junior. Matthew George, the fourth brother, who is not in the picture was also in the Army and captained Ceylon in Basketball. He was the moving spirit not only behind Army basketball but also basketball in the Island.

Cricket in the Island was pioneered by the European business community in Colombo, particularly with the formation of a club in 1832 that in time became known as the Colombo Cricket Club. Almost simultaneously, cricket got underway in the Kandyan highlands (on facing page, top), the two districts meeting for the first time in 1867.



Cricket in Ceylon.
July 1918



How our baggage got there

The Kandapolla Club and Grounds

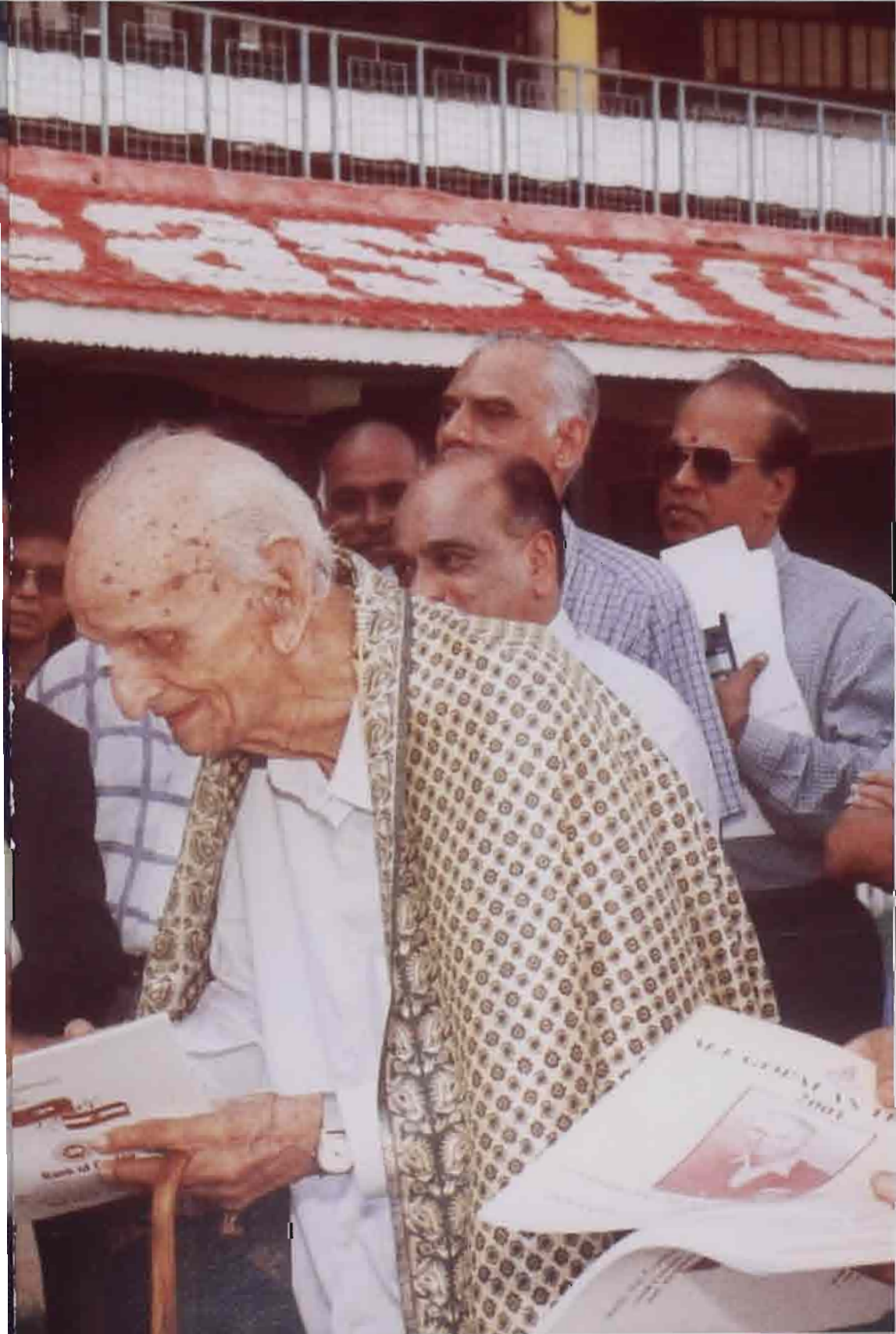


How some of us got there

Our ducky substitutes for England's youth & beauty



Md. Me

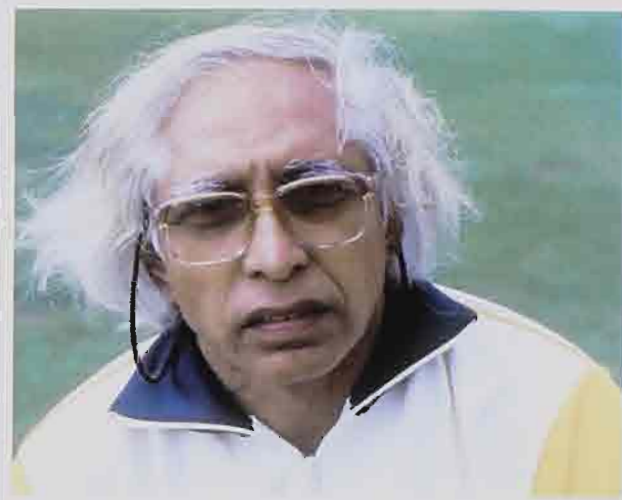


The Indian connection with Ceylon cricket started when the Ceylon Europeans visited Calcutta in 1884 to play the Calcutta Cricket Club and the next year visited Madras to play the Madras Cricket Club, after which there were regular exchanges of visits. As the game spread in both countries, with increasing numbers from the local population taking to it and gradually taking it over, cricket became a major sport in both countries. In the years after Independence, when India became an established Test-playing country, paving the way for Ceylon to play in the same international arena was the annual Gopalan Trophy contest between Madras and Ceylon which commenced in 1953. The trophy, donated by V. Pattabhiraman, a Madras friend of Ceylon cricket and the Colts' Cricket Club, was named after one of India's few double internationals, M. J. Gopalan of Madras. Once Ceylon entered the Test arena with India's support, the annual contest took various shapes and, in 2001, it was the Colombo District and Tamil Nadu Cricket Associations that contested the trophy. Present on the occasion was M. J. Gopalan, now in his 90s (on left) and his feats on Ceylon cricket and hockey fields were remembered when Colombo team coach Roshan Mahanama presented him a memento. The first person of Indian origin to represent Sri Lanka in a Test match was right arm, fast medium bowler Kaushik Nagindas Amalean (above) who played for the Island against Pakistan in the Third Test in 1986. He also played against Australia in 1987-88. He took 7 wickets in the two Tests he played and 9 wickets in eight One-Day Internationals. The Amaleans, a major name in the industry, go back to the textile and cap-making business founded by Harilal Govindjee Amalean under the name Nagindas, a family name he later changed to Amalean. Kaushik is his grandson.



Sri Lanka's first cricketing success in the 1990s owed much to Muttiah Muralitharan (left), of Indian origin and from Kandy. Considered "the best ever Test bowler in the world" by Wisden in 2002, this left-arm spinner, with over 400 Test wickets to his credit as this book goes to press, has played a major role in every Sri Lankan triumph in recent years.

Muralitharan works with Janashakthi Insurance, one of the Island's major insurance organisations and headed by C. T. A. (Chandra) Schaffter (below) and his sons. Schaffter opened the bowling for Ceylon in a few one-day matches and in Gopalan Trophy matches in the 1950s, played hockey for Ceylon and has been a selector and manager of both Lankan Cricket and Hockey teams. In the group picture below, of the Sri Lankan team which won the Asia Test Championship Trophy



in 2002, Schaffter, the manager, is seen in the last row, his long white hair unmistakable. Schaffter's Indian origins go back to the Tinnevely District from where Peter Adolphus came to the Island in 1870 as a teacher-catechist of the Tamil Cooly Mission. Peter Adolphus served in the Hanguranketa area where C. H. de Soysa encouraged the Mission's work by establishing a school in his estate.

The younger of Peter Adolphus's sons, Adolphus Jeshuran Schaffter, born in Hanguranketa, taught at St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, till his death in 1941. Chandra Schaffter belongs to the next generation.

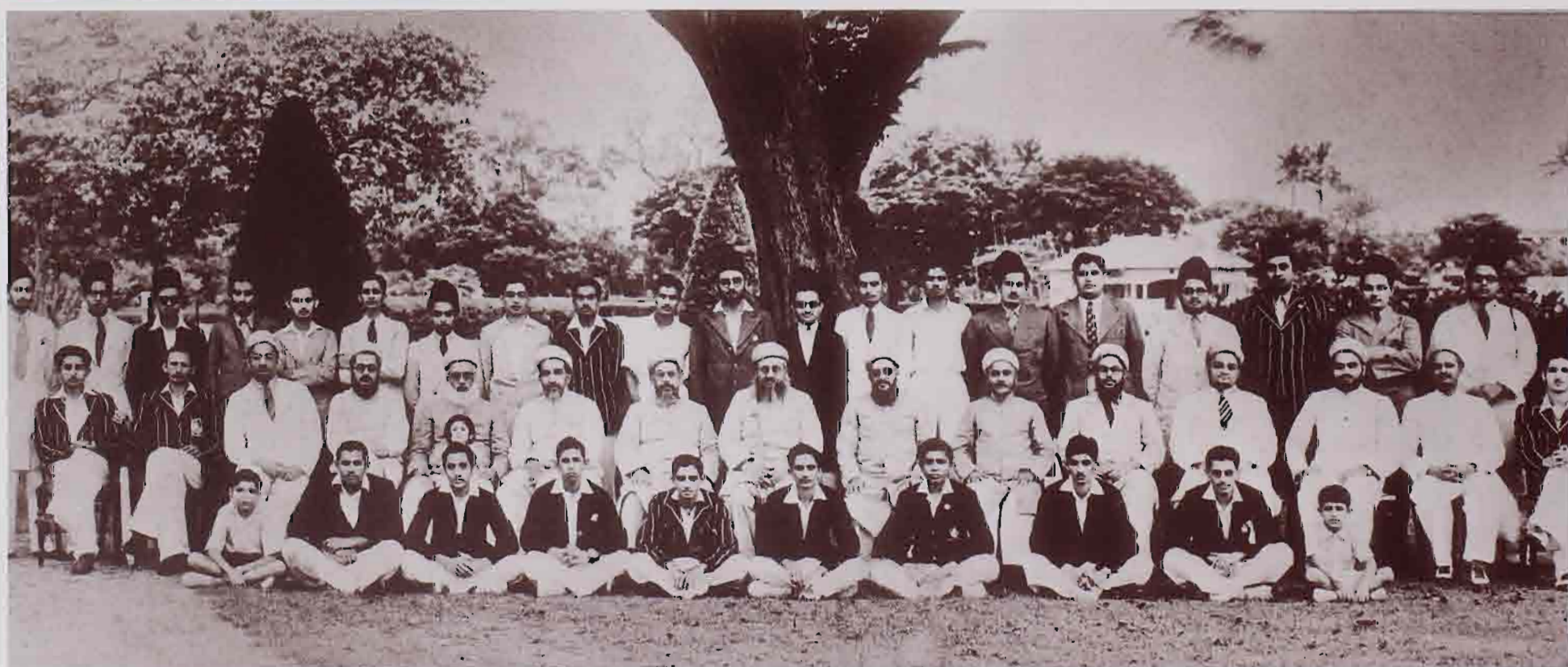


Several of Indian origin in Ceylon played cricket in good company but never really concentrated on the game. In the picture on left, R. A. Nadesan (seated second from left) is seen in a group of cricketers for the plantations who met in a friendly match in the 1920s. Most of the Lankans in the picture came from a background of proprietary planting.

The Parsi family seen in the second picture in the column on left are the Jillas who had a unique record in Cricket. Nusserwanjee Dadabhoy Jilla came to Ceylon in 1909 and started the Colombo Dye Works (another major name of Indian origin in the dyeing and dry-cleaning field in pre-Independence days in Ceylon was Sitlani's, Sindhis). Jilla married Banoobai (whose father had been a member of Colombo Municipal Council, 1911-16) and they had ten sons who, with their father, literally, made a cricket team. Pheroze Jilla died young. But in the 1940s, a Parsi Sports Club cricket team depended considerably on the Jillas. Eight of the nine Jilla boys were from Royal College, four of them playing for the school. Six of them were wicket-keepers! All of them served Ceylon well: Jamshed in Government Service and the Mercantile Sector, Dadabhoy in the Army, Savak managing the family business, Faredoon in the Police, Nariman in the Ceylon Civil Service, Minocher, a commanding officer of the Ceylon Army Medical Corps, Homi in the Ceylon Aviation Department, Kirshasp in the Navy and Behram in the Mercantile Sector. Other Parsi schoolboy cricketers of note were P.L. Pestonjee, who was in Ceylon's first public school cricket team to meet a foreign side, the New South Wales cricketers (1914). In later life, Pestonjee was one of the leading football referees in the Island. The Banajee brothers also played for Royal.



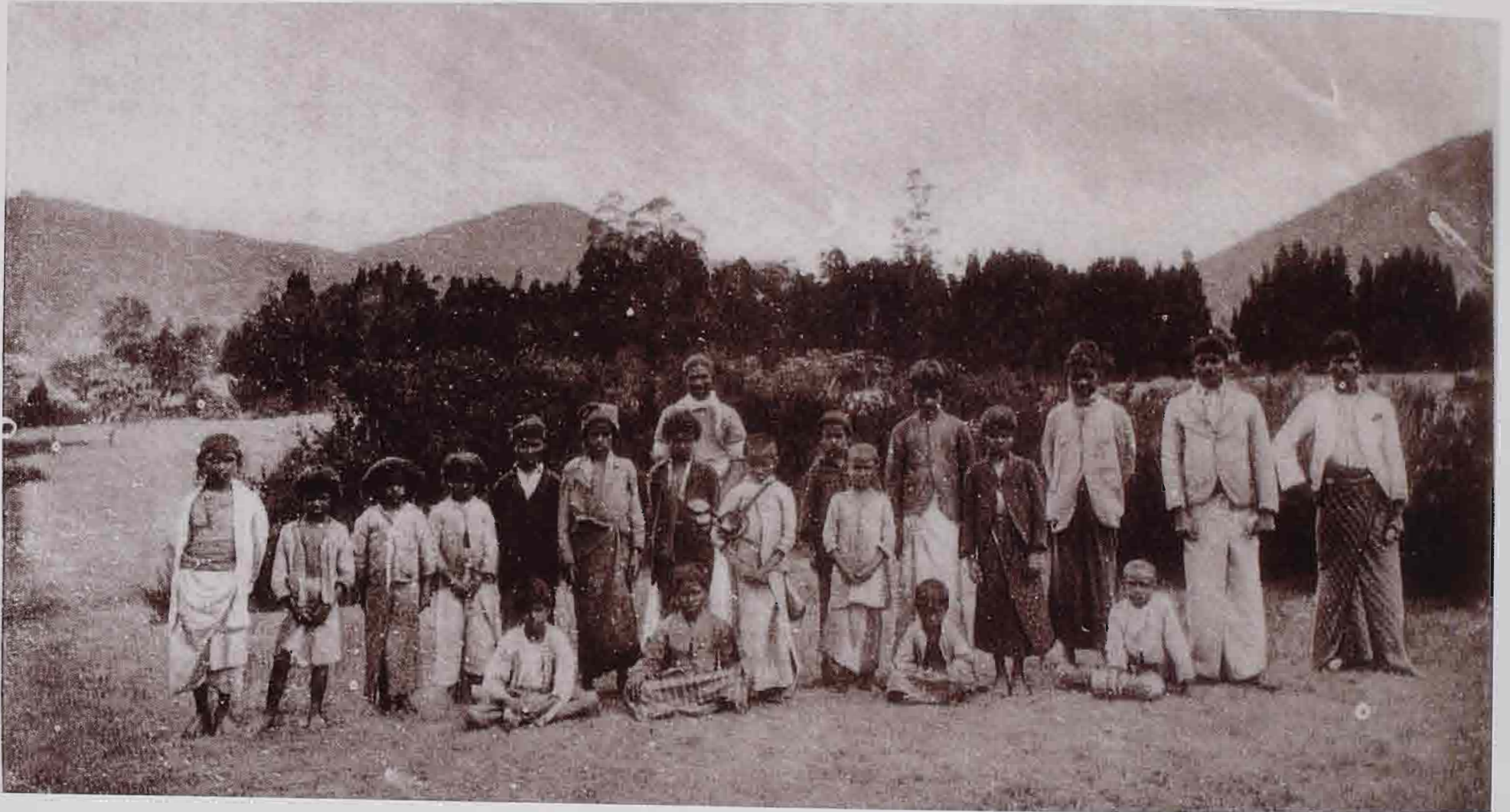
As early as 1900, the Borah Cricket Club was formed and Anverally Abdullhusein Hebtulabbay, a member of the Club, played for St. Peter's College. Sadly, he died young. Dr. Turab Fazleabbas played for St. Joseph's College and the Medical College in the mid-1930s and was perhaps the best known batsman produced by the community. In 1932, the Young Borah Cricket Club was formed and then, in 1936, the Borah Sports Club. The amalgamation of the clubs took place in 1939 through the efforts of E. G. Adamaly who obtained a ground for them. The picture below was taken on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Club. The Borahs versus the Parsis was, for many years, their 'Big Match'. Other talented Borah cricketers included Askar Ansari, F. Mansur and M. Fazlealy (who was Treasurer of the Board of Control, from 1977 to 1979). The Parsis and Borahs, however, preferred to concentrate on business and the professions rather than sport, and their talent, therefore, did not take them further though their enthusiasm for the game remains undiminished.

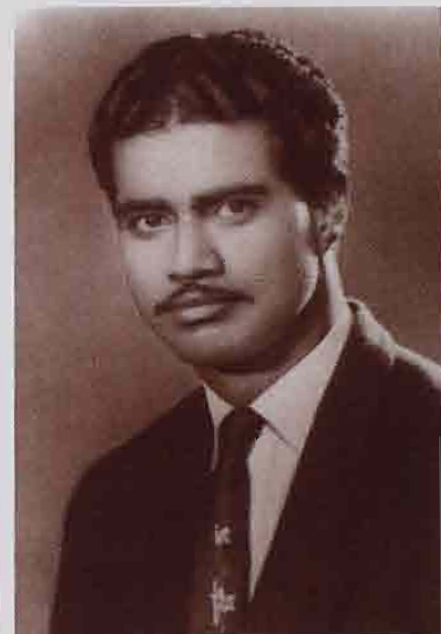




Golf in the 19th Century in Ceylon, particularly in the hills, was made easier for the players mainly through young boys of Indian origin (like those below in Nuwara Eliya) who served as caddies. Of them, H.W. Cave wrote in 1900, "They are mostly small children and often o'ertopped by the clubs they carry. Considering their size and tender age, their physical endurance is remarkable. The subject of our photograph (on left) is quite equal to thirty-six holes in the day."

In more recent times, however, many of Indian origin have taken to the golf links of the Island as players. One of them, Soli Captain (second from left in the picture at the bottom) was captain of the Royal Colombo Golf Club in 1975, won the RCGC championship twice and played for the RCGC team against international competition.





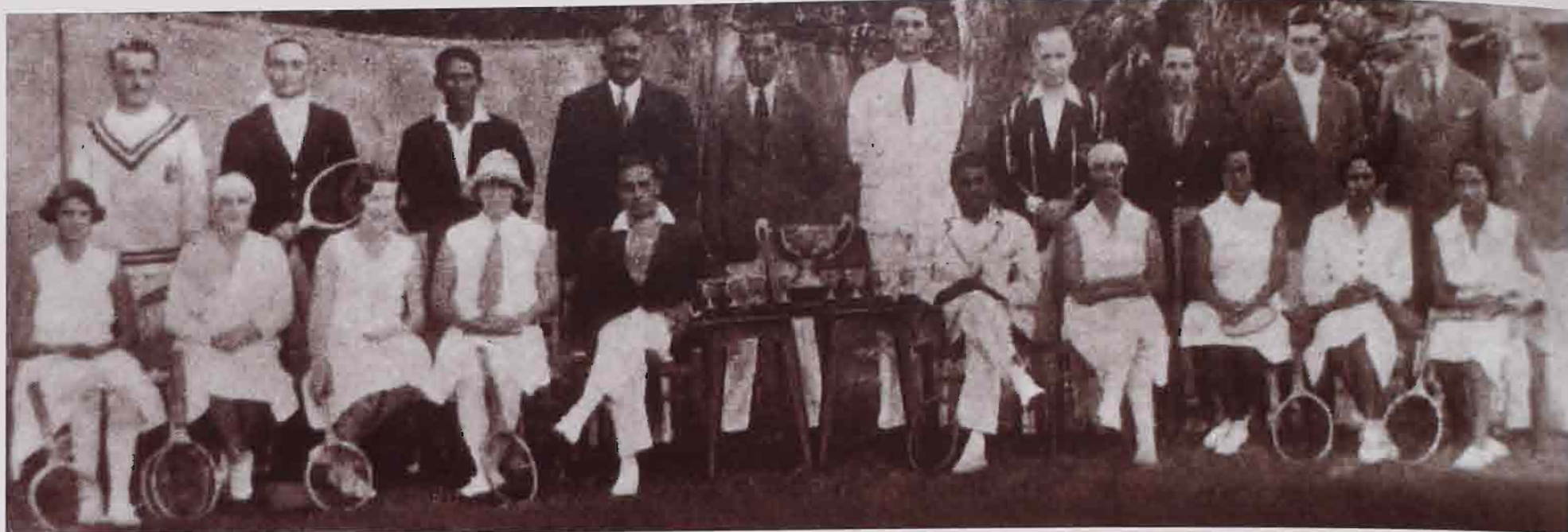
Team games like **Football** and **Hockey** in Lanka not only had considerable support from people of Indian origin, but had several players, coaches and managers involved in the games.

In the top picture, in the column on left, is the unbeaten 1960 football team of St. Benedict's College, Colombo, a school which always had a large number of players, masters and coaches of Indian origin. Seated extreme left is one of them, Albert Fernando (also above) who coached the school and went on to coach Sri Lanka. Albert Fernando was a Brazilian-trained coach who, in the '60s, returned to India and coached several notable teams in the South. One of Sri Lanka's finest soccer players ever, P.D. Sirisena, was coached by Fernando and is today following in his mentor's footsteps as an outstanding coach.

Another all-conquering team from St. Benedict's was this hockey team of the late 1950s (on left). Standing extreme left is L. P. Rayen, a right winger who went on to play for Ceylon and captained it. Other Rayen brothers played for the school, the Mercantile Services and Ceylon. The team was coached by Brian Assey (in blazer). Assey, who also played for the champion Tamil Union hockey team, was best known as a hockey umpire and, at one time, was considered amongst the best in Asia. While old boys of St. Benedict's dominated hockey in Colombo, much good hockey was played in the hill country, particularly in Matale, where several players of Indian origin represented the district and then Ceylon.



Seated extreme right in the third picture on left is Chandra Schaffter who toured India in 1956 on the first tour abroad by the Mercantile Hockey Team. Schaffter, a speedy right wing forward, went on to captain Ceylon and played a major role subsequently in hockey as selector and administrator. As already mentioned, Schaffter has played a significant role in Sri Lankan cricket as well.



The Indian presence in the racquet games in Lanka well into the 1970s was quite a remarkable one.

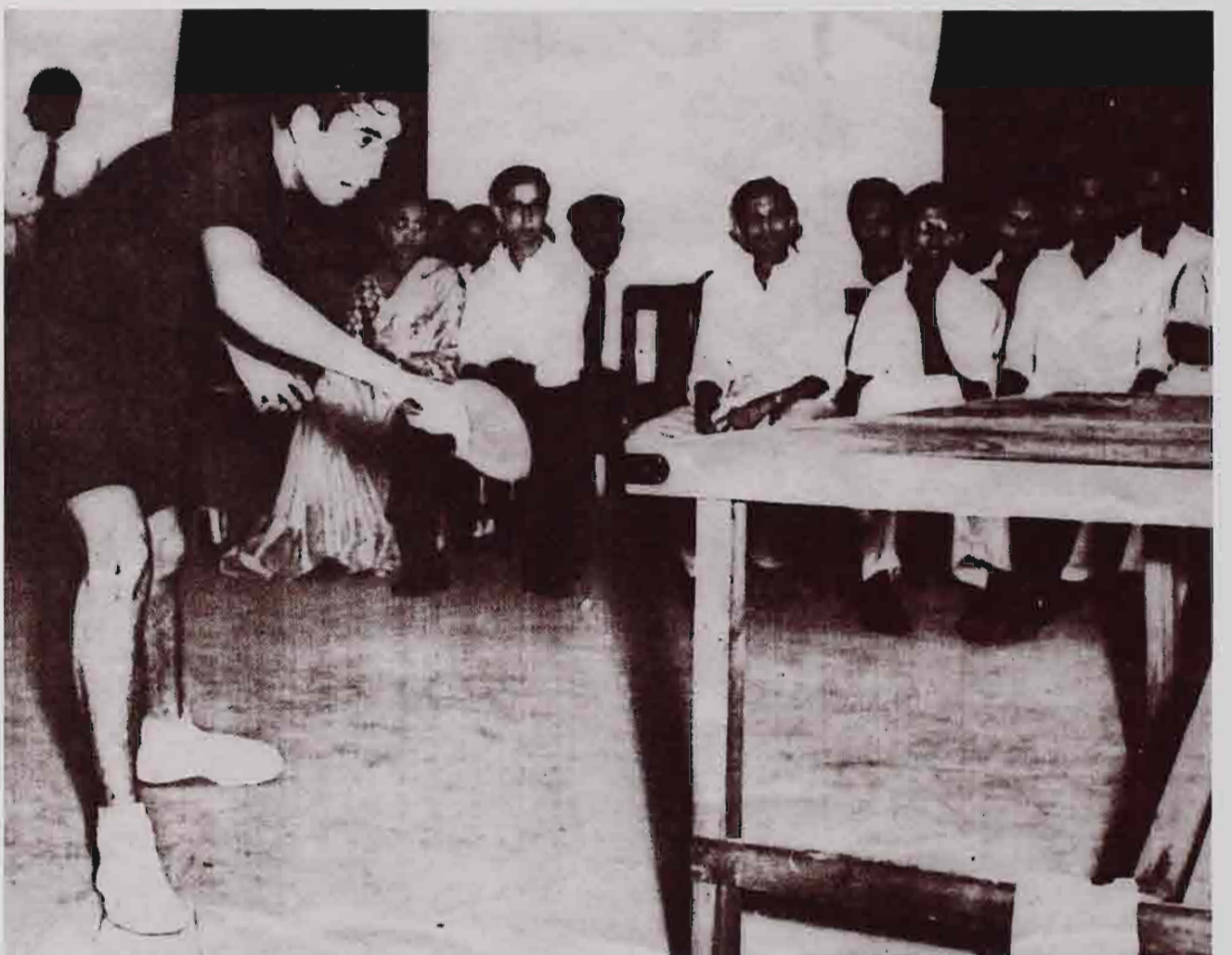
In Tennis, O. M. L. Pinto of Goan origin (fifth from left above) captained Ceylon tennis teams in the 1920s and '30s. Pinto (right) excelled not only in tennis but in other sports as well. On left, Bernard Pinto, O. M. L. Pinto's son, played a major role in Ceylon Tennis in the 1950s and '60s, representing the country in the Davis Cup competition.

Among women, Mrs. Abraham Kovoov was an enthusiastic tennis player in the 1940s and '50s and coached the tennis team of the Holy Family Convent, Jaffna. Below, she is seen with two of her wards who won championships in a local tournament.





Table Tennis was for many years dominated by players of Indian origin settled in the Island. They included Naro Udeshi (Gujarati), Pилоo Lakdawalla (Parsi) and the three Melvani brothers, Mungo, Suresh and Ashok, all of whom won national Table Tennis titles and represented Ceylon. By 1966, Suresh Melvani, who had won all the table tennis titles in the country, retired from the game when he was just 17 and took to Tennis. He represented Sri Lanka in the Davis Cup in 1968 against India (above) and again in 1978 against Pakistan. He continued in the game well into the 1980s, coaching many young players.



The eldest of these Sindhi brothers from the Motoomull family, Mungo, faces the camera in the top picture in the column on right, playing in the 1964 World Table Tennis Championships in Peking, China. In the 1958-59 regional ranking, he was the only Ceylon player to gain a place, listed as third amongst the juniors.

The youngest of the Melvani brothers, Ashok, in the second picture in column on right, represented Ceylon from 1966 to 1974 in several international championships. Sadly, he died under tragic circumstances when he was just 24 years old. He is remembered in a table tennis tournament named after him, which is part of the Sri Lankan Table Tennis Association's annual programme.

In the picture on right, Subash Chawla of the sports goods house Diana & Co. figures (centre) in an advertisement for the company after winning the first Masters Squash Championship in Sri Lanka in 1981. Moving from tennis to Squash, Chawla became one of the leading squash players in the Island and has contributed much to the sport.

Another Grand Slam

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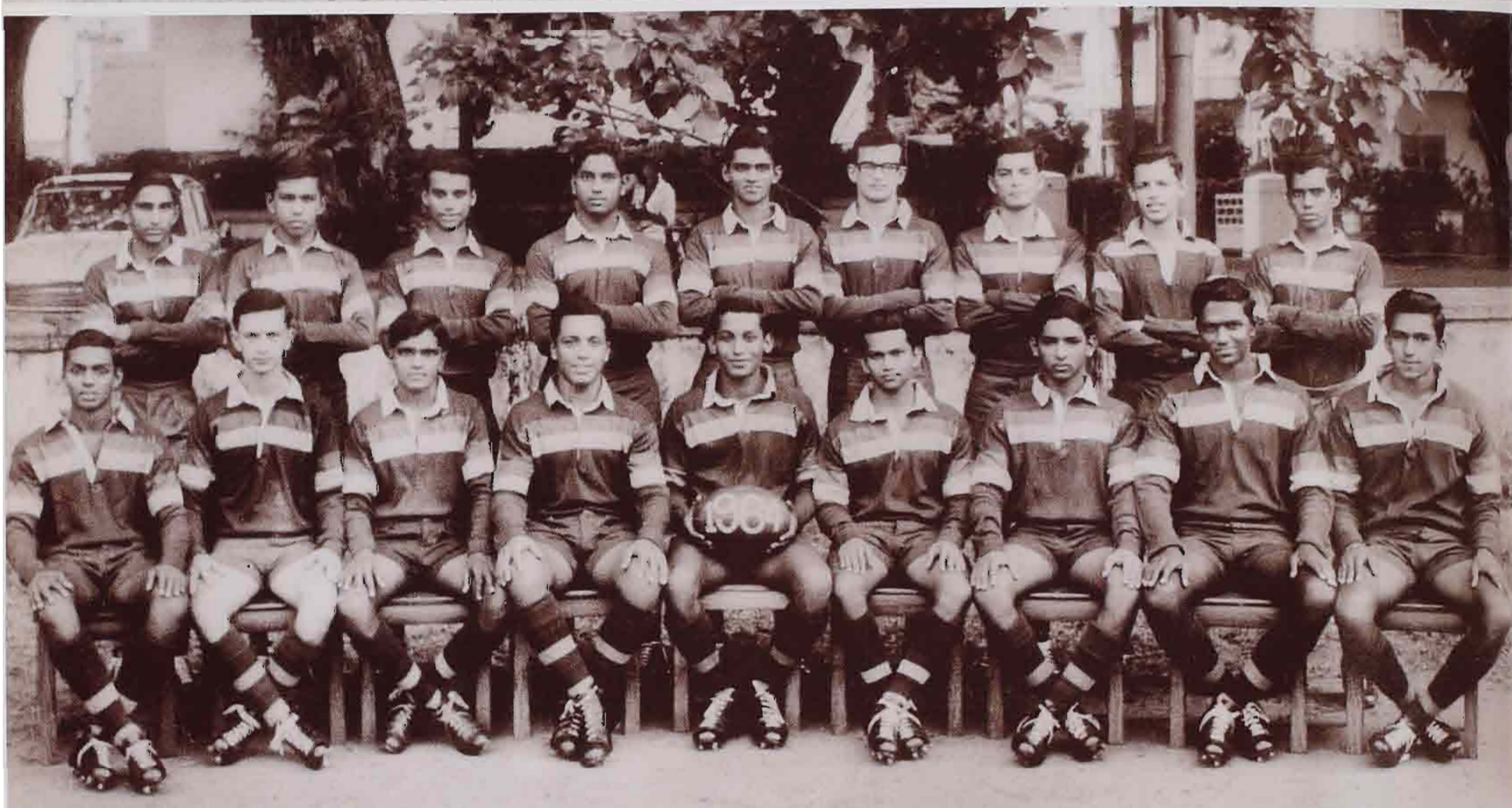
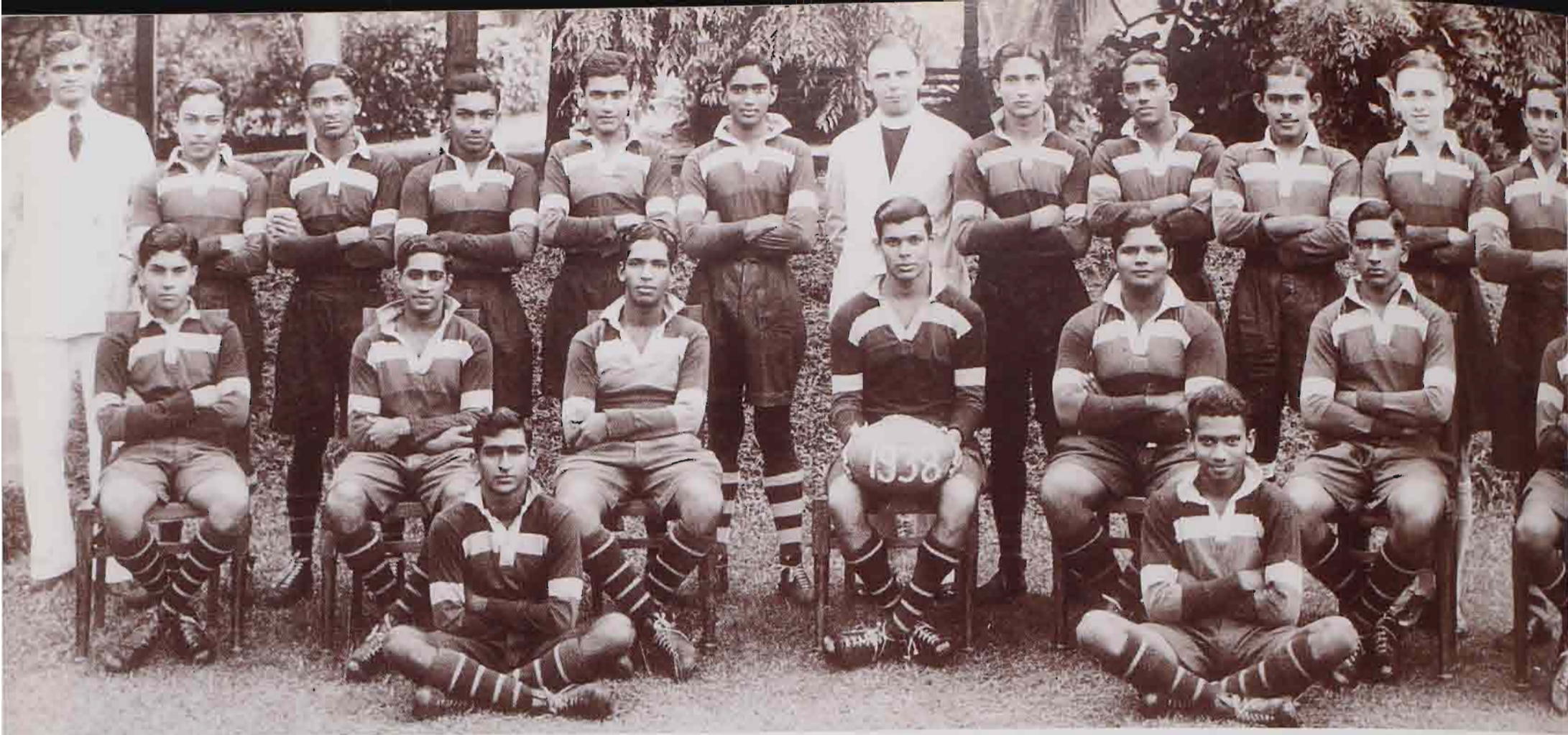
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Rugby has never been a very popular game in India and, in its heyday in the subcontinent, few Indians participated in the game. In Lanka, however, from the 1930s, several players of Indian origin have made their mark in the game not only in leading rugby playing schools but also representing the country. From top to bottom, facing page:

— V.K. Vellayan (seated third from left) with the 1938 Trinity College rugby team. The next year, he captained the side and won his Lion. In 1937, there were three other players of Indian origin who played on the same team as Vellayan, namely Soosai, P. Muthucaruppan and G. Sannugam. Vellayan, from the plantation districts, went on to become a trade unionist, a leader of the Ceylon Workers' Congress and then founder of his own party.

— Skipper of the 1964 Trinity College team and a Trinity Lion, was Mohan Sahayam, whose father was a teacher and Vice Principal of the school. Sahayam went on to play for Sri Lanka and was one of the Island's best players in his time.

— S.P. Sundaralingam (third from left), in the Trinity College rugby team of 1967, was another who made his mark at the highest levels of the game in the Island.

When the first International Sevens' Rugby Tournament was held in Colombo in 1994, the winners were a team of Fiji Islanders raised from players appearing for local club teams (top, right). Sponsoring the team and managing it was Kishan Butani, a leading Sindhi entrepreneur (second from right). The Butani group of companies, one of the first to establish garment manufacture in rural areas, was one of the pioneer sponsors of the game in the Island when sponsorship began to play a role in its spread.

The first Sri Lankan rugby team to win an international trophy was this 1984 team (above) that won the Bowl for the Losers' Championships at the famed Hong Kong Sevens' tournament. The team is seen here with Nizar Haji Omar, the then President of the Sri Lanka Rugby Football Union. Omar, a member of the well-known Memon family of the same name, was an outstanding rugby player in his day and captained Sri Lanka in 1969 and 1970. He was a member of the selection committee and chairman of it on several occasions.



Other Memons who played a notable role in Sri Lankan sport were Haroon Ahmed (above, left), Sri Lankan Snooker and Billiards champion in 1997 who represented the country in the World Championships, and Frickey Khan (Sayed Alimiya Farook, above, right), ace 250 c.c. motor cyclist who dominated the Speedways in India and Sri Lanka in the 1970s but, sadly, died young in 1980.

The Entrepreneurs

As important to Sri Lanka today as those who live and work in the plantations, contributing significantly to the economy of the Island, are those of Indian origin who have with their entrepreneurship led Sri Lanka into the Age of Manufacture. Today, the garment sector and many other areas of manufacture have become significant contributors to the economy through the entrepreneurship of people of recent Indian origin. The businesses and manufacturing units they have developed, meeting international standards of production, have provided employment to thousands in the Island, and contributed significantly to Sri Lanka's foreign exchange earnings and income from taxes.

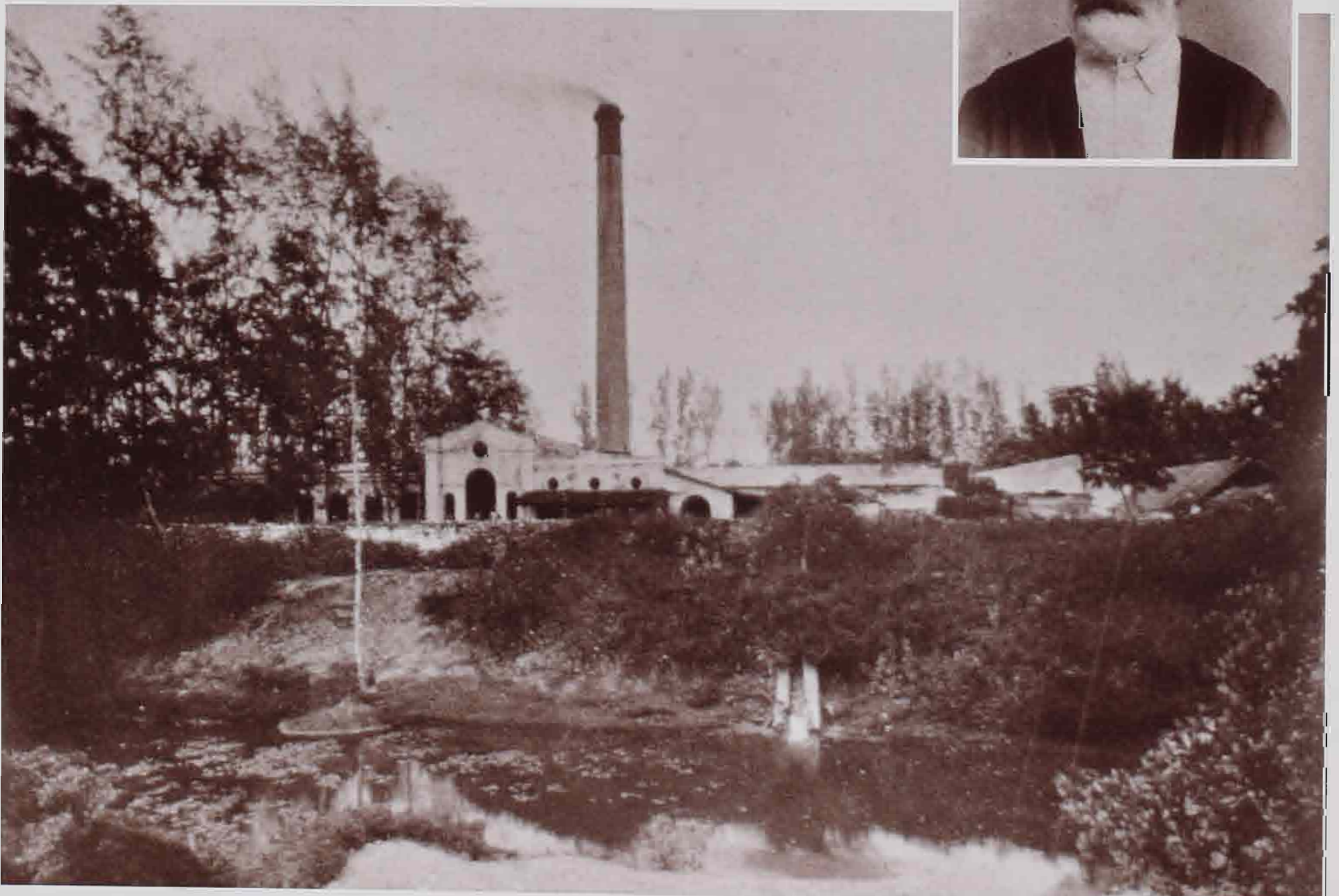
This contribution to entrepreneurship has come from three directions. The earliest to enter manufacturing were the traders of Indian origin in Colombo who moved into the manufacture of what they knew best, textiles and garments. And as they grew, they diversified in other fields of business and manufacture. Others of this generation helped lay the foundations of a light industry base in the Island.

A second group of entrepreneurs were those who had worked in the plantations, established stores in the plantation towns and, in time, became plantation owners. A few of these plantation owners but many more of their children saw opportunities for business in Colombo and grabbed them, even moving into the manufacturing sector.

The third group of entrepreneurs of Indian origin are the newcomers who, as Sri Lanka threw its doors open for foreign investment, came from among India's leading business houses to establish joint ventures in the Island or industries of their own. Even the Indian public sector has begun to look at the Island, with the Unit Trust of India, Life Insurance Corporation of India and the Indian Oil Corporation set to become major players in Sri Lanka.

Even as the businesses established by entrepreneurs in the three categories increase and contribute significantly to all aspects of the Island's economy, the small trader still continues to be an enthusiastic entrepreneur in the Island, running a variety of businesses from food to textile retailing, from jewellery to smallscale manufacture. In fact, there is no area of business in the Island today where there is no contribution by the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. Theirs have been businesses that have enabled the Island's economy survive all the challenges to it.

Perhaps the first major industry to be set up in Ceylon was the Ceylon Spinning and Weaving Mills in Wellawatte, established in 1888 by M/s Darley Butler & Co. Shirting, sheeting, drills, towels, tarpaulins, tents and many other kinds of cotton goods were made for the local market from cotton from the Tinnevely, Adoni and Coimbatore Districts of South India. By the early 1900s, the Mills were taken over by Ahmedbhoj Habibhoj of Bombay (inset below), a leading member of the Khoja community there. He owned many pressing mills and ginning and textile factories in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. When he acquired the Wellawatte Mills, he got a factory with buildings spread over five acres and with 20 acres of land surrounding them on which extensive cotton-growing experiments were carried out. The Mills (below) passed into the hands of F. E. Dinshaw, a Parsi, around 1914 and not long afterwards he brought out Edulji Sorabji Captain, a fellow Parsi, as its General Manager. Captain continued as the General Manager after the Mills were taken over by the Maharaja of Gwalior and also after the Mills became a public company in 1955. After Captain's retirement in 1961, the Mills began to decline and were nationalised by the Government in the 1970s. They have, since, closed down. By then, other mills had been established in the Island, but the Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mills, with its large Malayalee workforce till the 1930s, will remain in memory as the beginnings of industry in the Island and also of industrial trade unionism.





The earliest Western-style banking institution to be established in Ceylon was in 1841 and it was followed by a few others, all of which merged in 1851 as the Oriental Bank Corporation, which itself collapsed in 1884. Meanwhile, branches of British banks incorporated either in London or India, and whose business was focussed on India, established branches in the Island. Following the Mercantile Bank putting down roots in 1854 was the Bank of Madras in 1867, its handsome buildings in Colombo by the late 19th Century being seen above. The Bank of Madras, headquartered in Madras, controlled most of the Indian trade. This Bank, in time, was to, with the Banks of Bombay and Calcutta, become the Imperial Bank of India and is today the State Bank of India, its operations in Sri Lanka still centred in this building.

Other British banks, with their main business focus being India and which established branches in Colombo, included the National Bank of India (1881), whose Kandy office is seen on right, above.

In the early part of the 20th Century, indigenous banks began to be established in India. Two to establish active branches in Ceylon were the Indian Bank and the Indian Overseas Bank, both founded by Nattukottai Chettiars. As nationalised banks today, they still maintain an important presence in the Island. The Indian Bank opened its Colombo branch in 1932, the Indian Overseas Bank in the building on right, in 1945. In 1951, the Indian Overseas Bank moved to the site of Motoomull & Co. (see page 155) and in 2001 re-developed the site.

In 1934, when the Ceylon Banking Commission was established, it was chaired by a Parsi banking expert from Bombay, Sir Sorabji Pockhanawala. The Commission recommended the founding of what is now known as the Bank of Ceylon and of significance is the fact that the Nattukottai Chettiars, who were the focus of much of the attention of the Commission, were the only non-Ceylonese group to urge that a state-aided bank be set up. Indian advice also helped considerably in another area of finance, namely insurance, when A. Rajagopal, who had prepared the ground for nationalisation of insurance in India and was the first Managing Director of the Life Insurance Corporation of India, arrived in Colombo in 1961 to advise the government on its nascent nationalised life insurance business.



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50

Years Today

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1941

1991

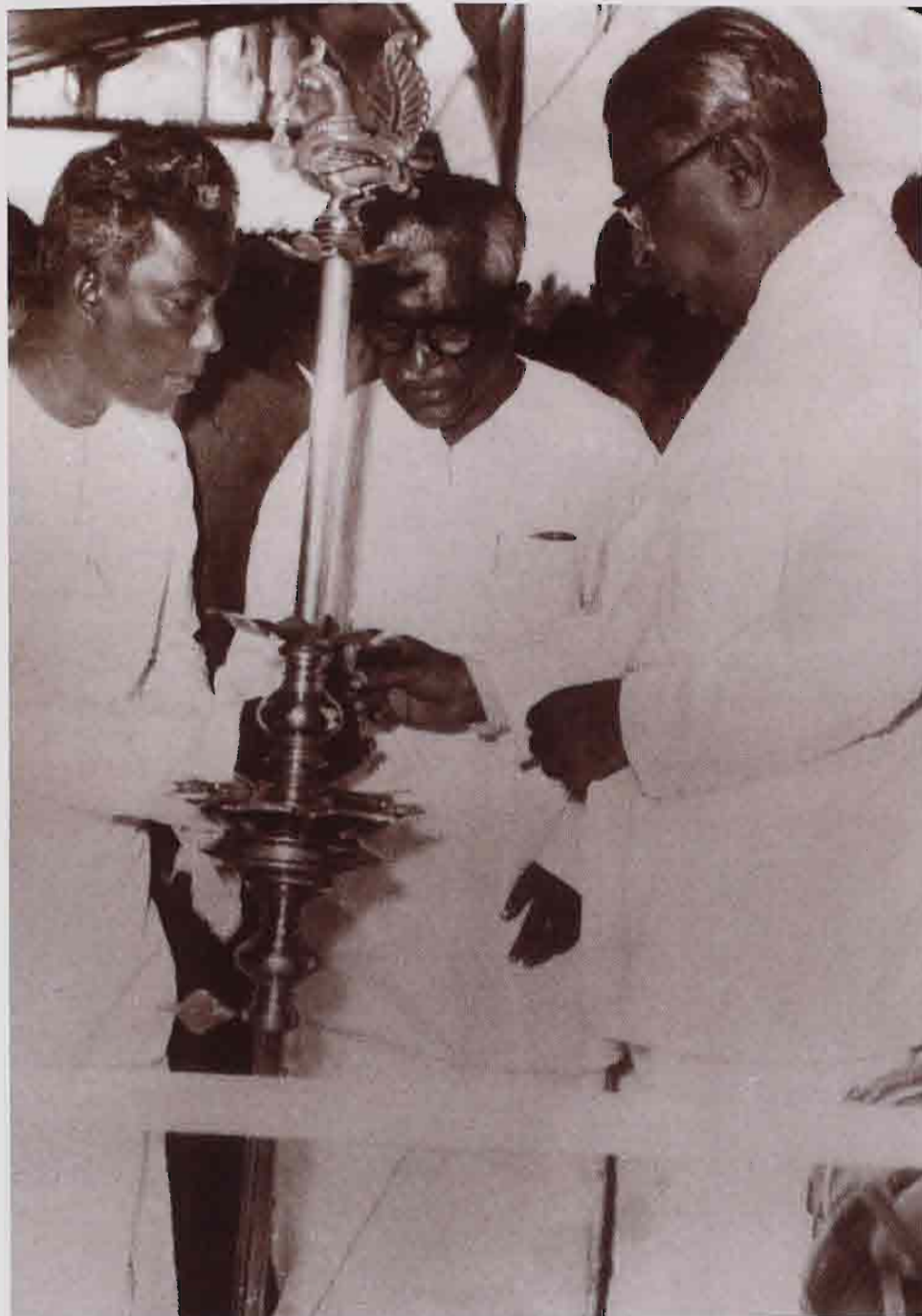


Described as “the first person of Indian origin to set up an industry in Lanka” was Sundaram Madura Nayagam, from the Tanjore District of the Madras Presidency. He was inspired by Gandhiji’s ‘Swadeshi’ movement and started by manufacturing matches and, then, soaps at home. These cottage industries he expanded into larger scale manufacture when he established the ‘Swadeshi Manufacturing Company’ at Kandana, a suburb of Colombo. Fifty years later, the Company had grown as ‘The Swadeshi Industrial Works Ltd’ (seen in a celebratory advertisement, above), though by then the Nayagams were no longer involved in it. The family had, by then, also moved away from Lanka’s film industry which Nayagam had helped to found.

It was in the early 1960s that industrialisation began to put down roots in the Island and amongst the first industrialists of this period were the Jafferjee brothers, a Borah family. Starting with textiles, they moved into a variety of other industries, including fishing nets. On left, is the huge warehousing complex of the Jafferjee Group.

Another of the Borah families to move into industry were the Hebtulabhoyes. Their focus remains on tea, spice and foodgrain, but their Weliveriya factory (left, below) is one of the major manufacturers of packaging in the Island.





A. Y. S. Gnanam's is a rags-to-riches story. Arriving from the southernmost reaches of South India in 1931 to work in his father's provision store, Gnanam went on to work for one failing trader after another, before he started his St. Anthony's Hardware Stores in 1944. From those beginnings, his St. Anthony's Consolidated Group has grown to be one of the major players in the Sri Lankan industrial scene.

Gnanam, seen below, with his wife (right) and Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, on the occasion of his eldest daughter's wedding, opened his first major industry in 1963, the Ceylon Synthetic Textile Mills whose brand name CYNTEX became a household name in the Island. The first international joint venture of the group, its factory was inaugurated, on left, by Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake (right, in the picture) in 1963, seen here with Minister of Industries Philip Gunawardena (centre in picture) and Gnanam.

The Japanese connection that began with CYNTEX has continued and, in 1982, St. Anthony's established the Tokyo Cements Company (Lanka) Ltd. (bottom of the page) in Trincomalee, to manufacture Mitsui Cement.





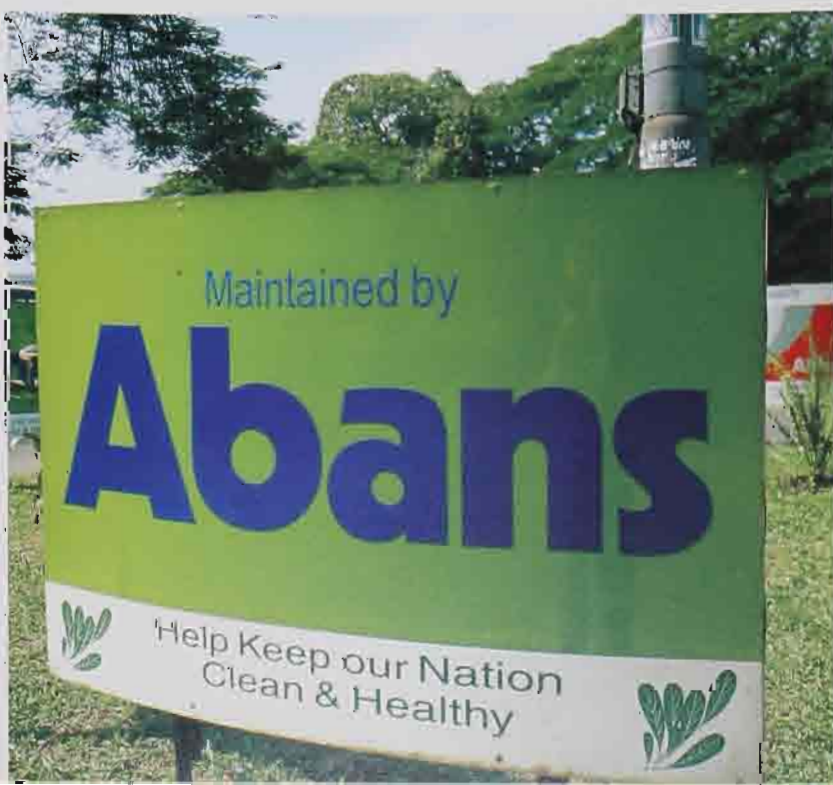
Growing from the petrol station S. Kanapathy Chettiar established in 1924, the Sri Krishna Corporation is today one of the major conglomerates in the Island. Counterclockwise from left:

- Entering the coconut oil milling industry in 1937 and then rubber manufacture, these activities were gathered under the umbrella of the Sri Krishna Corporation Ltd. in 1954 and expanded many fold, as seen in the coconut oil milling factory of today.
- In 1979, the Group entered the Free Trade Zone as one of the pioneers in garment manufacture and established Korea Lanka Garments Ltd., one of the foremost garment manufacturing companies in the Island, specialising in manufacture and export of major marks like Manhattan, Van Heusen and Levis.
- With the takeover of the old British agency house, Carson Cumberbatch & Co., in the 1980s, the Group not only acquired interests in major plantations in Ceylon and Malaysia, as well as in the hotel and travel industry in the Island, but it also became owners of one of Ceylon's historic manufacturing units, Ceylon Breweries in Nuwara Eliya. The company later set up a second brewery in Biyagama, seen here, one of the most modern units in South Asia.
- The Group later acquired an interest in Express Newspapers (Ceylon) Ltd., which had taken over that successful Tamil daily the Virakesari, today printed at a modern press. The Virakesari's popularity has so increased that it is now the largest circulated Tamil newspaper in the Island.



Other industries and major businesses run by people of recent Indian origin include, clockwise from right:

- One of the most modern packaging units in South Asia, Printcare, its factory and office seen in the picture. Not only is the architectural design and the landscaping of the factory in the suburbs of Colombo something happily different from the usual industrial scene, but the unit also manufactures packaging considered as being of international quality. K. R. Ravindran, who heads the organisation, has come a long way from the letterpress printing units founded by his great grandfather Ramachandran Alaghoo Pillai.
- MAS Holdings, incorporated in 1988 to manufacture foundation and leisurewear apparel for the international market, has grown with joint ventures with international giants in the trade. Today, MAS Holdings runs 15 specialised units in the Island and has now begun to look at opportunities overseas. Mahesh Amalean (white hair, in picture), Chairman of the company, has been eyeing the huge Indian market and, in 2001, met (as seen in the picture) progressive Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to discuss possible entry of MAS Holdings into India.
- MAS Holdings, which has been active in several community development programmes, teamed with its employees in 2001 to help build ten houses in Horana and Pannala (Kurunegala District) for employees who each had a serviceman or policeman in the family disabled or missing in action. Mahesh Amalean, Chairman, MAS Holdings (extreme right) watches as the title deeds of the houses are handed over to their new owners by Defence Minister Tilak Marapane at the inauguration of the Ranavirugama Housing Scheme. Third from right is Sherad Amalean, Director, MAS Holdings.
- Hema's Building, owned by the Esufally Trust started by the late Hassanally Esufally, is the headquarters of the Hema's group, which is in personal care, healthcare, transport, hotels and tourism, garment manufacture, property development and management, and tea plantations.
- Aban Pestonjee née Gandhi started her business in the 1970s buying and selling secondhand household equipment to housewives. Today, she runs several successful businesses, including the import and sale of the latest electronic household appliances and mobile phones. The Group is also into travel facilitation. But the Aban name most seen around the Island is that of Abans Environmental Services, an ISO 9002-certified organisation, which offers janitorial maintenance services to most of the major government and commercial complexes in Colombo but, more importantly, to the Municipality of Colombo. Keeping the nation clean, is a commitment it proudly proclaims, as in the picture.



In few areas today is the Indian contribution to Sri Lanka greater than in the field of transport. It is in this field too that the first joint ventures with Indian participation were set up, though today Indian participation in collaborative agreements is a growing aspect of the wider business and industrial scene in the Island.

From left to right, in the row on right:

- Headquartered in Kandy is the joint venture established by TVS – a name with which nationalised Lankan bus transport has long been associated, particularly for the know-how in running the corporation, maintaining its fleets of buses, and bodybuilding. TVS's new venture, however, focusses on distributing a wide range of automotive spare parts from more than 35 suppliers in India. Today, there are over 50 dealers sporting the familiar sign seen here, located in all the major towns in the Island. The joint venture is now looking at setting up a service infrastructure to serve various types of cars.
- The two most familiar heavy duty vehicles on the Island are Ashok Leyland's and Tata's, competing as much in sales as in this picture on the road. Leyland's of Chennai have also set up an assembly operation in Sri Lanka, M/s Lanka Ashok Leyland Ltd., one of the first joint-ventures with India.
- Another familiar sight on Sri Lankan roads is the Bajaj 3- and 2-wheelers. Fast becoming the most popular public transport in the city are these Bajaj-s, the manufacturer's name now a generic one in Sri Lanka.
- In a unique adaptation, Ashok Leyland bus chassis are today being used in Sri Lanka for railbuses (below) produced by the Ratmalana workshops of the Sri Lankan Railway. The experimental venture has proved so popular that the railbus fleet is being increased.





Another major joint venture in the transport field is Ceat Kelani International Tyres (Pvt.) Ltd. Tyres both for Sri Lanka and for export are manufactured at this factory, whose head office is seen on the facing page, top.

Some of the biggest joint ventures in the Island with Indian collaboration have been in the service sector. An early presence in the Island has been the Taj Group in the hospitality sector, with its flagship, the Taj Samudra, facing the Galle Face, seen at the bottom of the page, and its internationally famous beach resort Taj Exotica, seen below, left. India's other major hospitality group, the Oberoi's, also has a presence in the Island. The meticulousness of Oberoi management and service are offered in the Lanka Oberoi (below, right), where its participation is in managing the hotel.

Amongst the most recent major Indo-Lankan joint ventures is the Lanka Hospitals Corporation Ltd.'s Apollo Hospital, Colombo. Seen on facing page, bottom is the hospital shortly after its inauguration in 2002. The famed Apollo Hospitals of Chennai, who first introduced corporate medical facilities in India, has teamed in Colombo with businessmen of Indian origin, like the Kundanmalls and the Esufallys, to set up this 500-bed hospital with the latest medical facilities in 3,50,000 sq.ft. of space.

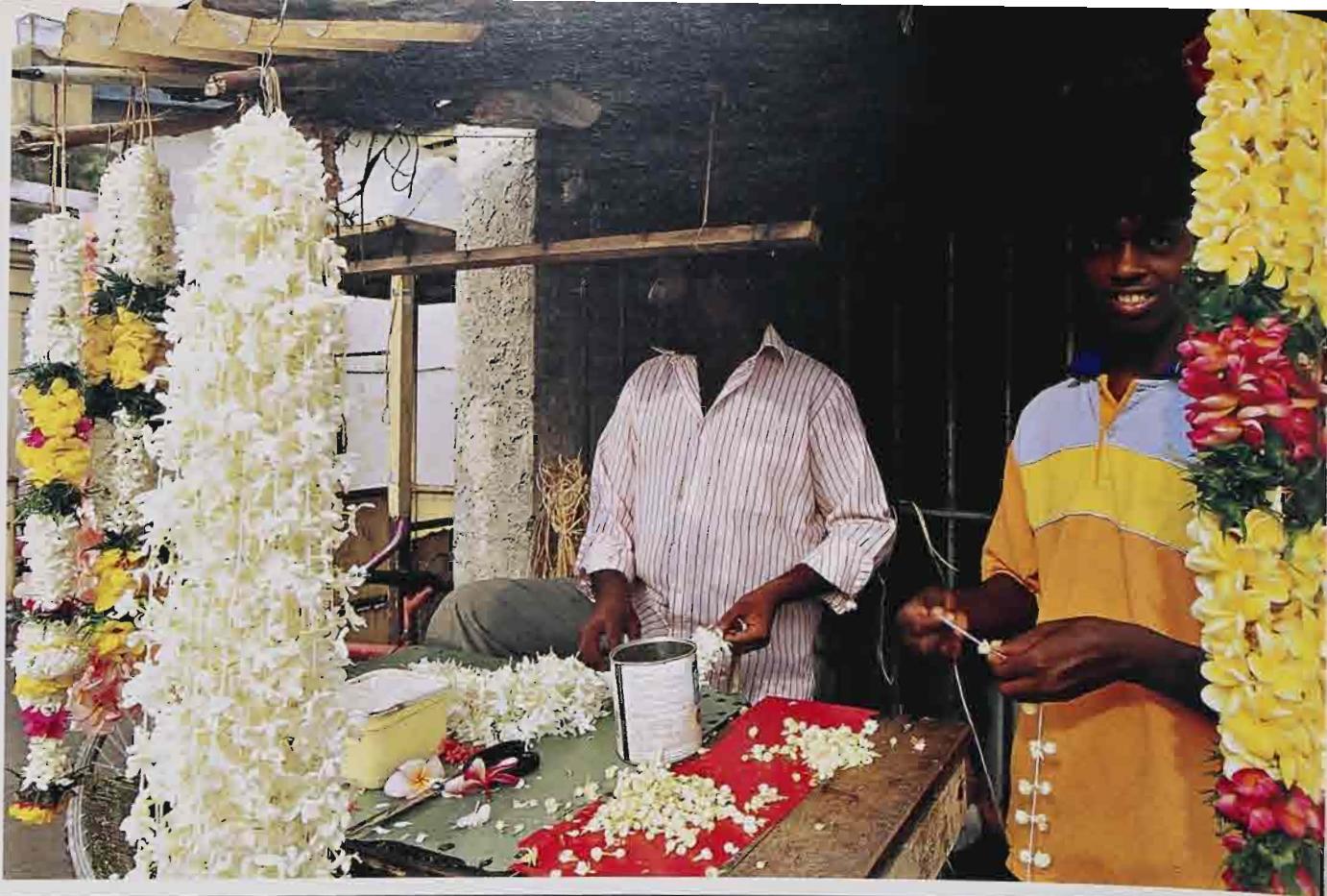




Apart from major industrial investment by people of Indian origin in the Island or by Indian corporates, there remain a considerable number of trading establishments and smaller businesses in the Island run by Indo-Lankans, many of whom have tended these businesses for generations.

On right, near every Hindu temple, are the flower-sellers, most of them, like these two men of Indian origin, selling flowers often flown in from India.

The dry fish trade still continues mainly in the hands of those of Bharatha descent, like the trader below, who, today, besides the blessings of Mother Mary and Jesus Christ, seeks those of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, as well.





Indo-Lankans are to be found today in a much wider variety of businesses than in the past. Nevertheless, their presence in textile retailing still continues to be a significant one. For Kanchipurams and other rich South Indian pure silk sarees as well as sarees in all their variety from elsewhere in India, Ranjana's of Main Street (on top of page) is the best known name in Sri Lanka. Today, owned by Telugu Chetties, it offers the ambience of a Chennai saree shop with its numerous salesmen ever ready to spread out sarees in the Chennai manner (second row, right). The multistoried building next to Ranjana's is the re-developed offices of the Indian Overseas Bank.

Thangaraj Rajeswaran Rajaram Rajan (above) today heads the Sun Match and Asoka groups, perhaps the largest Kandy-based conglomerate. He also runs the Asoka Students' Hostel and Asoka Vidyalayam in Kandy that were founded by his father P. T. Rajan for the children of those working in the plantations. P. T. Rajan started as a small trader in the hill-capital, an operation which his son has now expanded into 14 companies. Sun Matches, with which they began, is still the symbol of the group. Today, it benefits from inputs from 'the match capital' of India, Sivakasi. T. R. R. Rajan is also active in the Jaipur Foot programme in Sri Lanka and is Chairman of the Sri Lanka-India Cultural Association in Kandy.

On right, the Chand family from the Punjab still continues in the sports business, but now away from Chatham Street and on Galle Road where they are, next to each other, 'Chand Sport' and 'The Chand'.





Several restaurants and establishments manufacturing food items continue to be run by people of Indian origin.

Saraswathie Lodge, left, has been a Bambalapitiya landmark for well over 75 years, offering traditional South Indian vegetarian food. Today, its idli-s, dosai-s and vadai-s are offered in a more up-market ambience.

Greenland Hotel, below, has been Colombo's answer to the famed South Indian Woodlands chain. The first vegetarian hotel to be established in Colombo, Greenland has been a popular place since 1954 for visitors to the Island seeking South Indian vegetarian fare.

Bottom of the page, a Slave Island landmark is the Hotel Nippon, which has passed through the hands of owners from many countries. Once owned by Burghers, it passed into the hands of a Japanese family and then into the hands of a Polish family with Japanese connections. It was subsequently bought by Valson Vethodi Kumaran, a Malayalee businessman with interest in the food and beverages trade. His son, Valson, was Sri Lanka's Deputy High Commissioner in Chennai not so long ago, and has maintained close links with the U. N. P. leadership in the Island. As this book goes to press, Dr. K. Valson has been appointed Ambassador to Sweden.

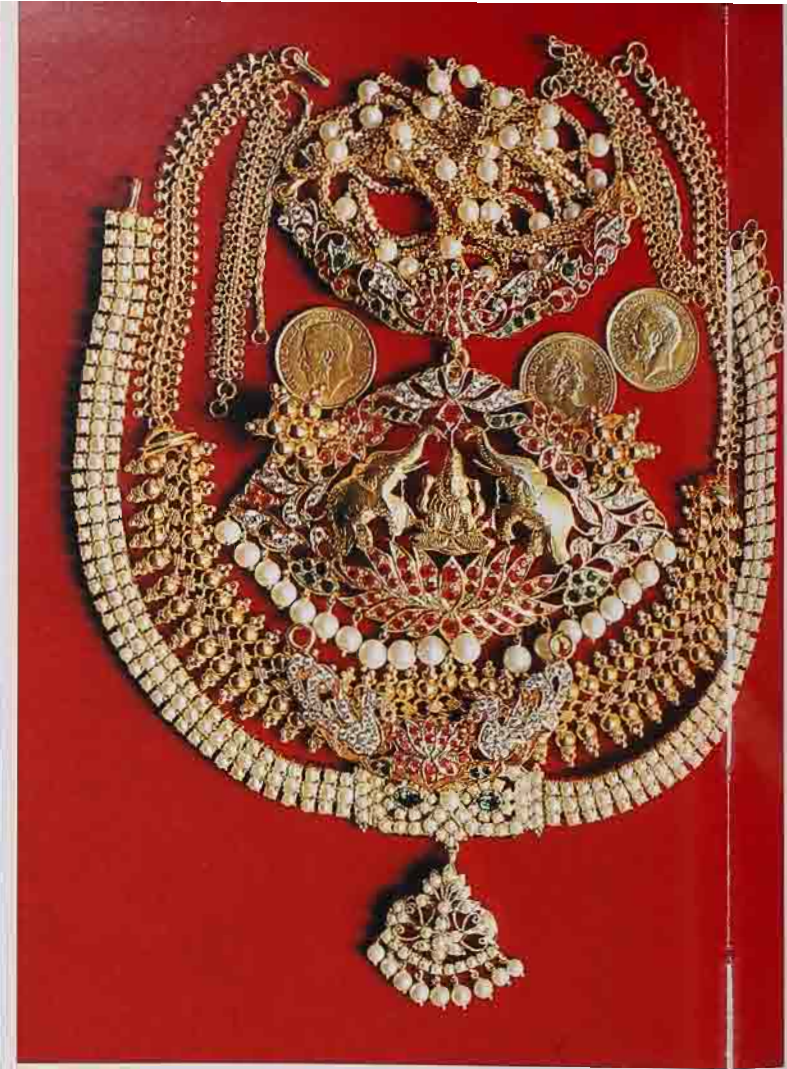


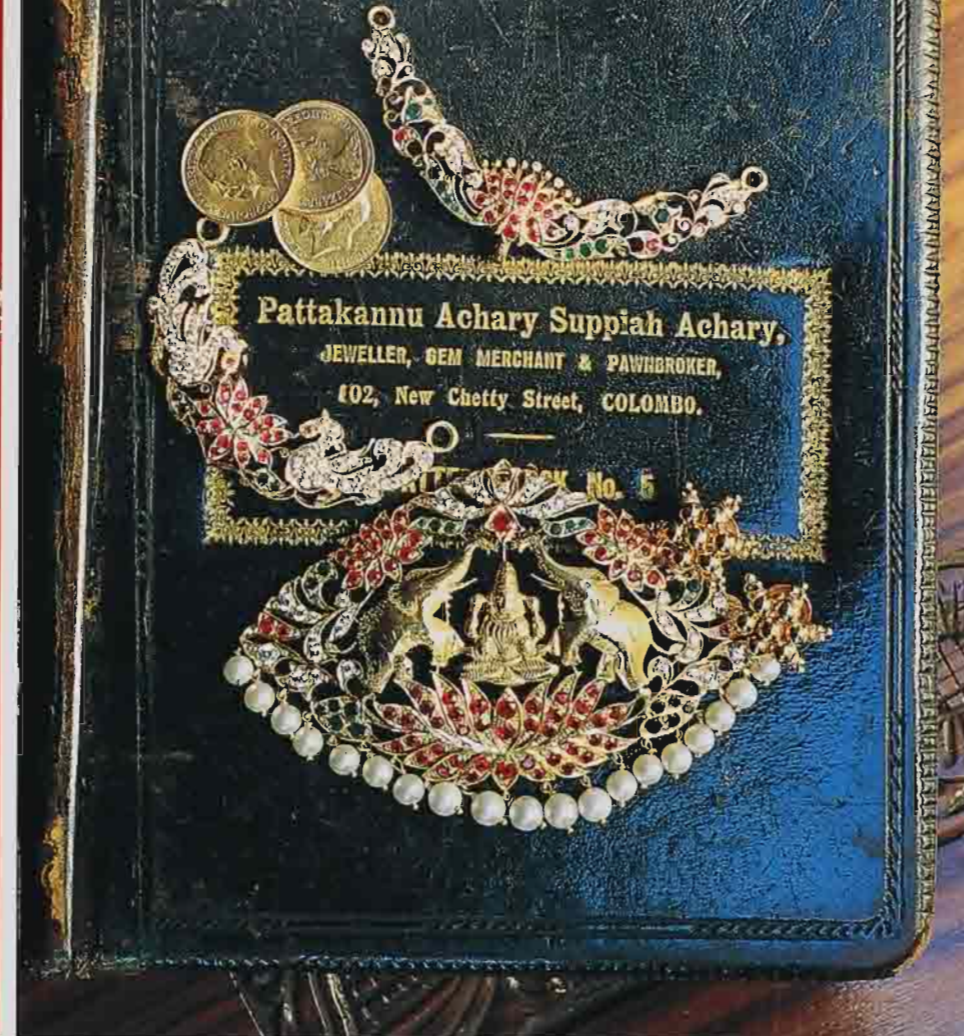
Chettinad cuisine never made its mark in the Island when the Nattukottai Chettiars were an important presence, but with the cuisine becoming almost a brand name in Chennai, Colombo has not been far behind, establishing Chettinad restaurants like the two below, even if one of them offers Tandoor and Chinese fare as well.

North Indian sweets have long had a small presence in the Island and Bombay Sweet House, Kollupitiya, below, right, is a name with a lineage in this field.

At bottom of the page, despite the international renown of Muttiyah Muralitharan, Sri Lanka's main strike bowler, his father Muttiyah continues to reflect the almost Gandhian simplicity of many an Indo-Lankan of Tamil origin. Muttiyah is seen in front of his Luckyland factory in Kandy, his confectionery business now growing into a full-fledged biscuit factory.







Traditional South Indian jewellery manufacture still thrives in the Island, though it has also moved beyond Sea Street and the neighbouring Chetty Streets. But wherever it has put down roots, neither quality nor workmanship has suffered. Pattakannu Achary's, one of the best known names in the business, is one of the few to remain close to where it first started in Colombo, the New Chetty Street address being where he moved his business to in 1910. The headquarters building here was built by his son Suppiah Achary in the 1940s and the business today is run by the third generation, Suppiah Thiagarajah and his wife Mallika who was trained in the US. Together, they now offer not only traditional jewellery but also the latest international designs.

Featured in the row on top, from left to right are: Traditional craftsmen at Pattakannu's working in the traditional manner but with modern lighting and instruments; an example of traditional Pattakannu jewellery; and the Pattakannu design book with more pieces of jewellery.

Above, an old name still remains in Sea Street in the jewellery business, but like most of the other jewellery shops in Sri Lanka, this too is now Sinhalese owned, the old name (going back to the Nattukottai Chettiar days) still retained, like so many British names, for goodwill.

And on left, is another of the big names in traditional jewellery, Lalitha's, but its new showrooms in Kollupitiya reflect a business that brings traditional skills to jewellery of modern design. Lalitha's too is owned by people of Indian origin, who today have a major presence in Chennai too.

The Faithful



All the Island's religions came from India. The people of recent Indian origin themselves belong to different faiths and they maintain their own shrines as repositories of their beliefs and commitment. There are, however, a few places of worship, a few festivals, some religious institutions, some more recent contributions of religious significance that cut across faiths, that are universally observed, or are considered part of the greater national consciousness, despite their Indian origins of several centuries ago or of more recent times. All of them are symbols of the Indo-Lankan links in matters of faith.

Many of these links date to long before the 200-year timeframe of this book. But they are featured here because they remain vibrantly alive today for peoples of all faiths in the Island, despite the Indian origins of these institutions. Whatever else may be the differences among the people of Sri Lanka, religion is not one of them. Faith is something everyone respects.

Indeed, faith as seen in the pages that follow often supersedes religion itself. From the word of Buddhism that Mahinda brought to the Pattini cult that Gajabahu returned with, from the Kandy Perahera to the relics of Lord Buddha, from the legends of Adam's Peak sacred to those of all faiths to the festivals of Lord Muruga, from the shrines the disciples of Joseph Vaz and the Tamil Cooly Mission raised to the message of Swami Vivekananda and the institutions his followers developed — they are all parts of an all-Island faith that transcends religion. In the universal participation in religious contributions with Indian origins, there are seen almost every day the close ties between the two countries. No wonder the Island has bred nearly a hundred generations of those of Indian origin. In time, it will absorb the generations of the last 200 years. And then, maybe, only the identities recorded in these pages will remain.

Recent satellite photographs (see cover and page 306) show Adam's Bridge, linking southern India and Lanka, and that there may indeed have been a man-made link between the two countries dating back to the Ramayana. Legend has it that Adam's Bridge was created by Lord Hanuman and his followers dropping rocks in the Palk Strait to form a causeway that would help Lord Rama to cross into Lanka and recover Sita from King Ravana. Sita, legend has it, had been kept prisoner in the fastness of the hills of Hakgalla, near Nuwara Eliya, in the Nandanaodiyana (pleasure grounds) and Asoka Aranaya (Asoka groves) of Ravana. Here, there has for centuries remained a small Sita Amman Kovil (shrine) with images of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Krishna, Ganesha and Hanuman and, over the years, it has been visited by thousands of pilgrims on their way to Kataragama, where too the events of the Ramayana are still part of the faith.

Sita herself is believed to have been kept prisoner with Trisida, the niece of Ravana, as her sole companion, in Seeta Talawa (the Plain of Sita) at the northern end of the Hakgalla range. Legend has it that Hanuman penetrated the ring of guards and delivered to Sita the ring of Rama promising that he

would free her soon. Hanuman thereafter set fire to the surrounding forests and cleared the area around Nuwara Eliya.

On facing page are two views of the Sita Amman Kovil at Sita Eliya, after recent renovation aimed at making the temple and the area around it a major site of pilgrimage and tourism. Below left is the temple as it used to be in the 1960s and below right is the shady pool where legend has it Sita bathed.

The picture at bottom of the page is of the old Hindu temple at sacred Sivanadipathamalai, Adam's Peak. The peak (7475 ft.) has for centuries been sacred to Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians. The impression of a giant footprint in the rock is worshipped by the Buddhists as the sacred footprint of Lord Gautama, by the Hindus as that of Lord Siva and by the Muslims and many Christians as that of Adam. Other Christians believe it to be the footprint of St. Thomas, the Apostle of India. To make the steep climb up the peak and worship atop it as the sun rises is an act which the faithful believe bestows on them great merit. For the more pragmatic, the view from the peak as the sun rises is an unforgettable one. Pilgrims of all faiths worship at all the shrines atop Adam's Peak.





As anthropologist M. D. Raghavan once wrote, "The Gods of the Hindu pantheon are an integral part of the religious life of the Island." The gods venerated by Hindus and Buddhists alike, and at whose devalé-s (temples) both worshipped, are Saman (Vishnu), Vibhushana, Ayyanar, Karthikeya (Skanda/Kathira/Muruga), Ganesha and the Goddess Pattini.

The pilgrim destination most thronged by the faithful in Lanka is the jungle shrine of Kataragama on the banks of the Menik Ganga, deep in the forests of southeastern Lanka. Here, it is believed, Skanda, the son of Lord Siva, established his home when banished by Lord Siva. Apart from the Maha Devalé to Skanda, there are near it temples to Ganesha, to Theivanai Amman and Valli Amman, his consort. Pilgrims visit the temples right round the year; but the annual fortnight-long festival is in July-August and to it come pilgrims of all faiths, in years past walking all the way from the north, the hill country and Colombo, much of the way through thick jungle. Today, some still do the long trek, but with easier access many arrive by vehicle almost to the shrine's doorstep, though several still walk the 12 miles from Tissamaharama to Kataragama.

On these two pages are pictures out of the past. On facing page, top, the Skanda Kumara Devalé in the jungle, as it was in 1920. On facing page, bottom, the shrine and devotees in the 1930s, in both pictures the pillared vestibule more visible than the shrine well to the back. On this page are more pictures from the 1920s and 1930s. In years past, Kataragama (Kathirgamam to the Tamils of the Island and South India) welcomed large numbers of pilgrims from South India, like the yogi and his followers, right, top. Pilgrims from the plantation areas have over the years walked the distance through sun and rain, through jungle and along the beater track, carrying their provisions and cooking at wayside halts, as on right.



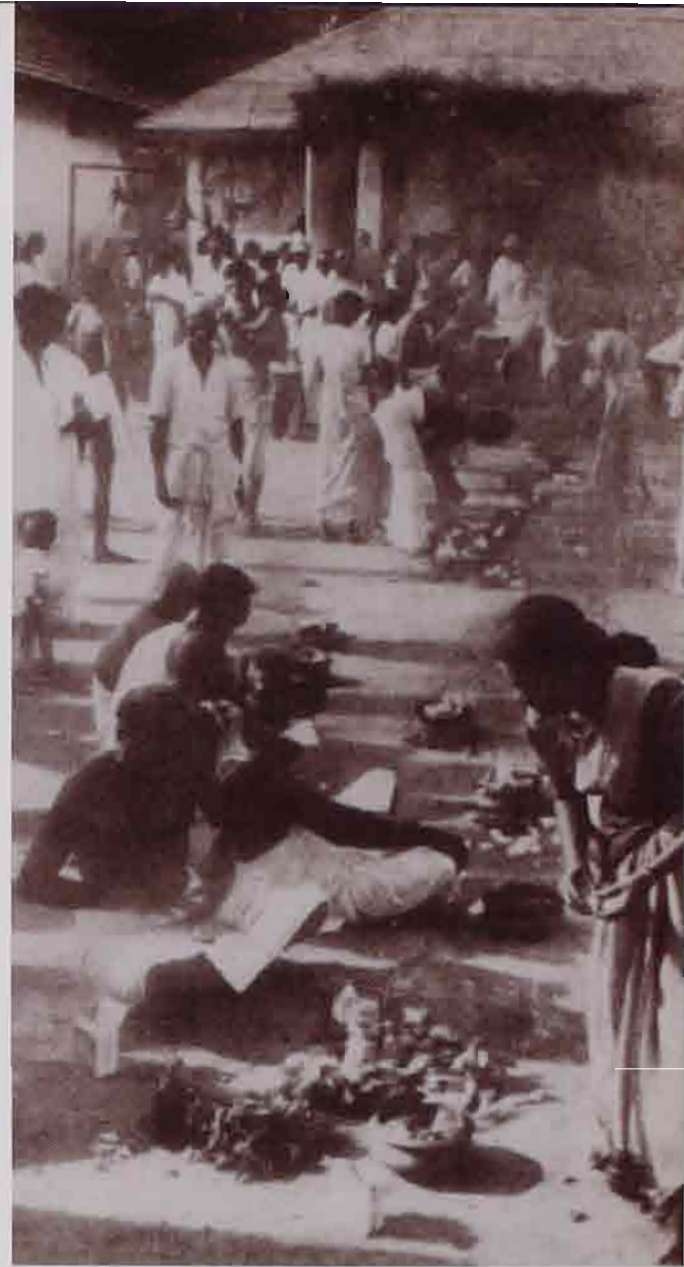
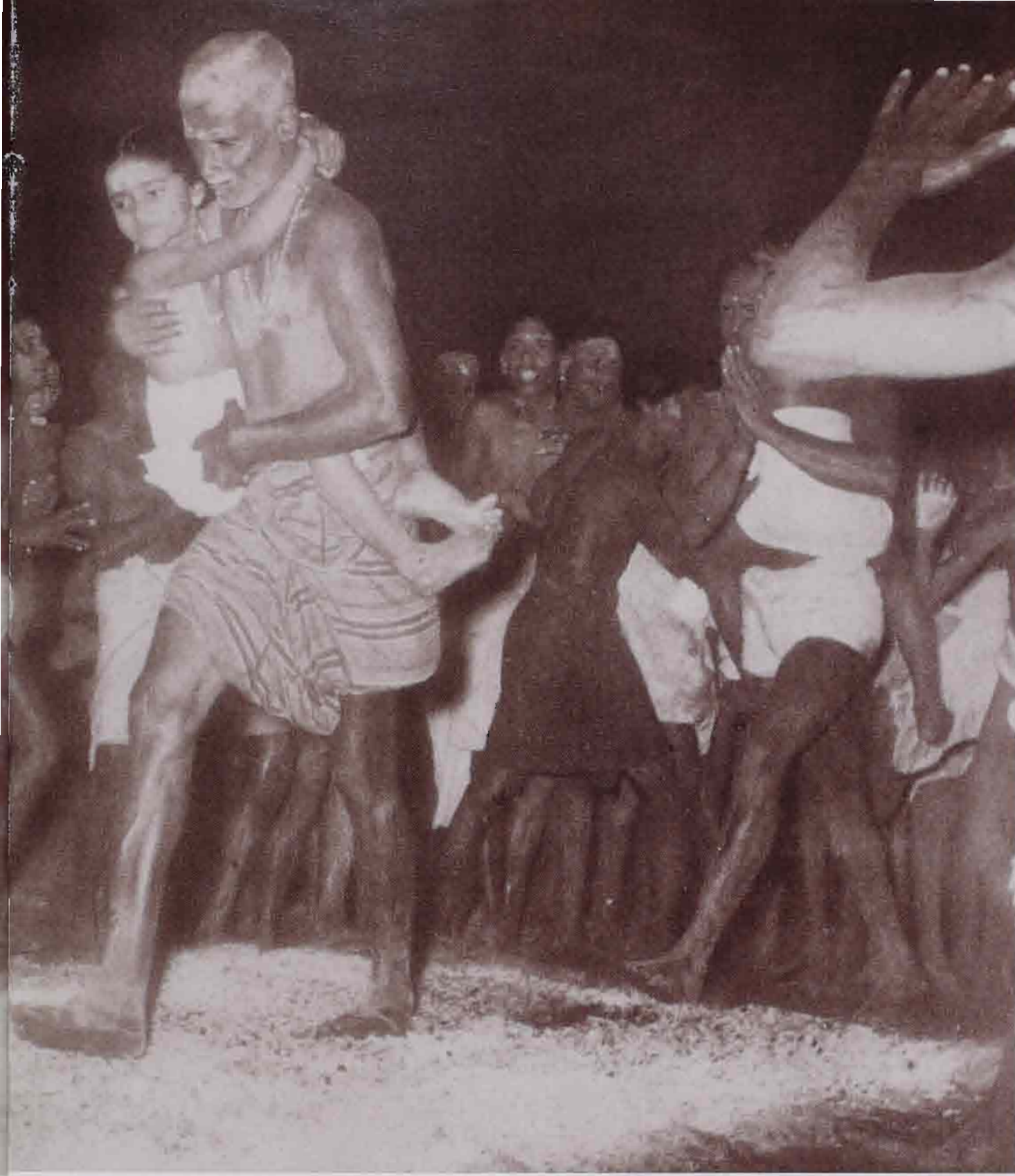


Once, the great Paada Yatra was made from as far as Wattapalai Amman Kovil in Jaffna to Kataragama, starting in May and reaching Kataragama in time for the festival at the end of July, the pilgrims walking 300 kilometres. Now much of it is done by road, though many still walk from the plantation country. The pictures on these two pages are from a pilgrimage in 2001 from Jaffna to Kataragama with others joining them all along the way. Everywhere along the way there are Amman shrines that provide wayside shelter for the weary traveller. Rivers and pools of water have to be forded, but also afford welcome relief from the scorching days beneath the July sun (on facing page).





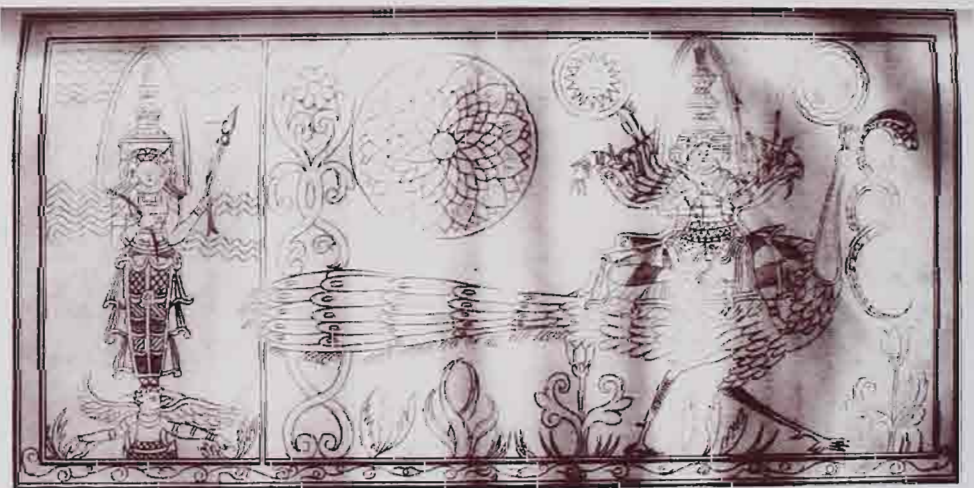
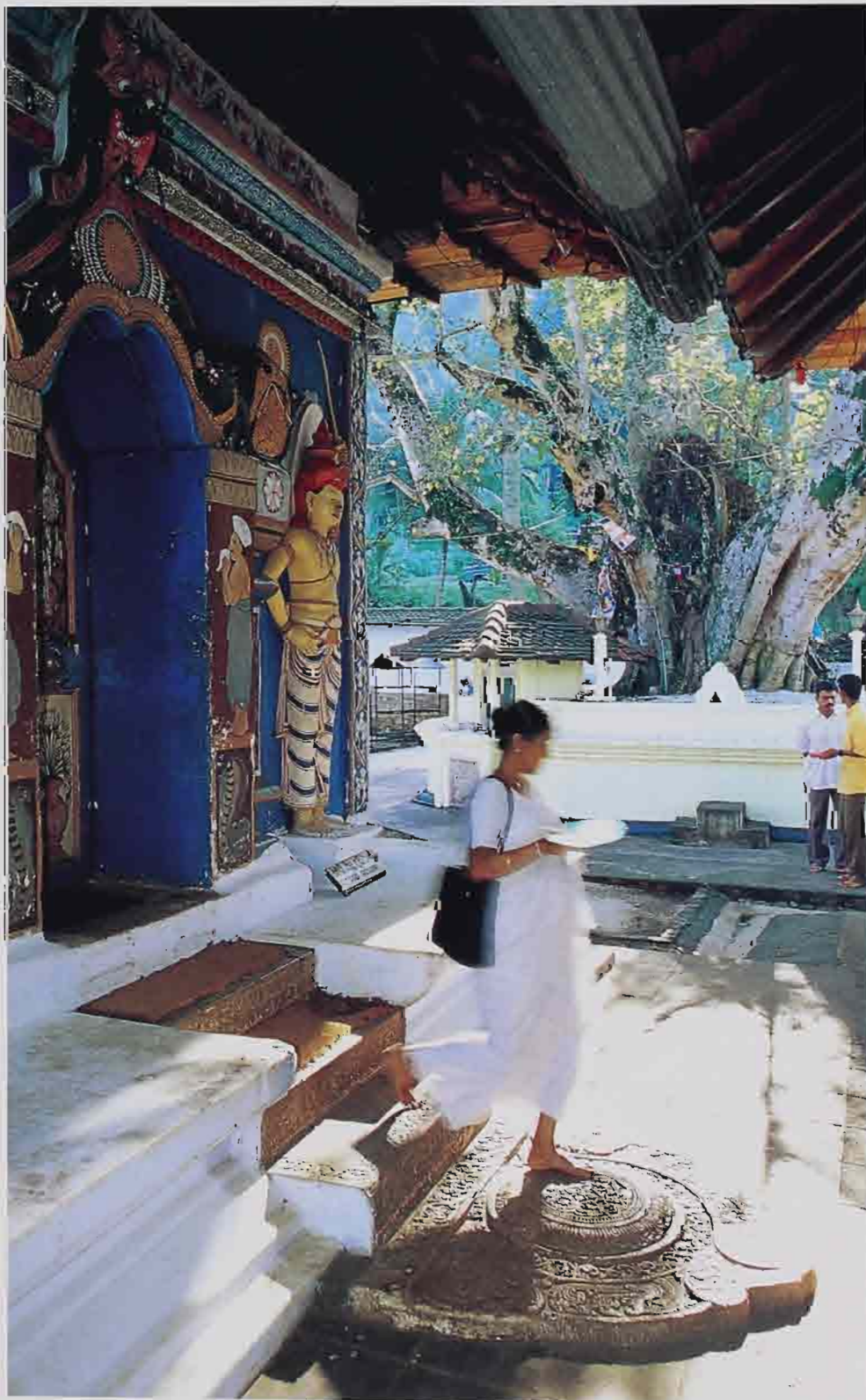




Of the long pilgrimage undertaken by many, particularly those who walk a long part of the way, it has been said, "This is hell and heaven; the pilgrimage is penance for all we have done." However, atonement and the quest for spiritual salvation take harsher forms such as suffering physical pain or mortification of the flesh. From the South of India have come the traditional forms of penance, such as the kavadi (the decorated arch carried on the shoulders of dancing pilgrims). In the column on extreme left are kavadi carriers from the estates, seen in the 1950s (top) and the 1960s (below).

Other forms of penance in Kataragama are fire-walking (left top) when the penitents walk on burning coals, piercing parts of the body with spears and hooks (left and above), walking on nail-studded sandals or lying on beds of nails or rolling barebodied around the enclosure.

And through the long days and nights, as penance is performed and Lord Muruga is worshipped ecstatically, sacred fires burn in the courtyard opposite the Maha Devalé (top, this column).



Perhaps the most famous of all Lankan festivals is the great Esala Perahera in Kandy, held on the day after the New Moon in the month of Esala (July/August). Once, a religious festival associated, according to anthropologist M. D. Raghavan, with the celebration of Maha Vishnu, the God of Lanka, it later became incorporated with the festival of the Sacred Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha. On each of the ten days of the festival, the huge procession follows a set route along the main streets of Kandy. The festival begins with the planting of the kap, a portion of a jak tree, at the four devalé-s in Kandy, the abodes of Naatha, Maha Vishnu, Kataragama and Pattini. Over the next ten days, the perahera (procession) from each of these devalé-s wends its way to the Temple of the Tooth, the Dalada Maligawa, to join the Maligawa Perahera and create one memorable procession of dancers, whip-crackers, torch-bearers and scores of caparisoned elephants.

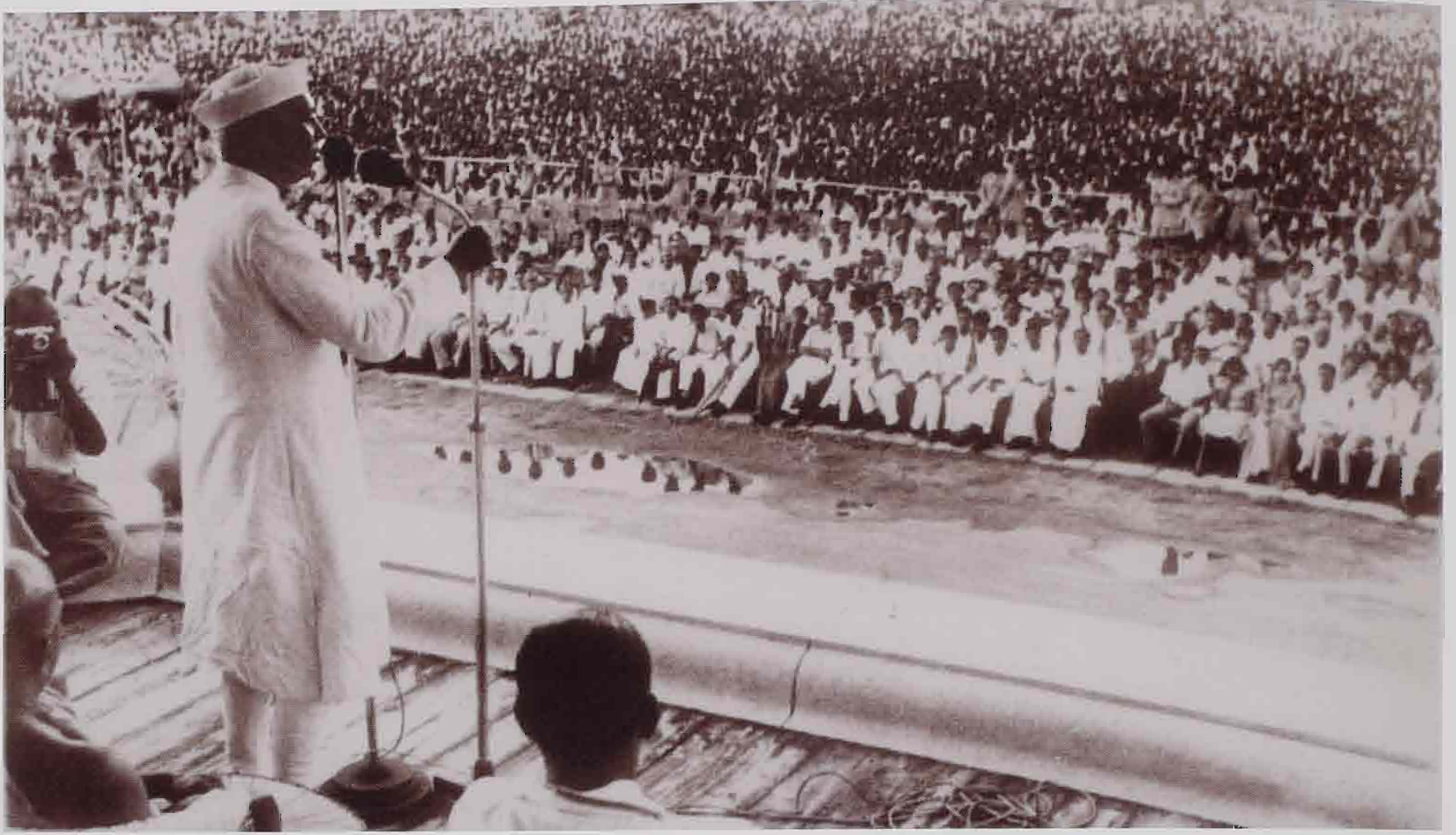
The painting of Vishnu and Kartikeya (above) is in the Maha Vishnu Devalé, Kandy (seen on top of page and on left). This devalé, like the Naatha Devalé, is said to have been built by King Narendrasinghe of Kandy (1707-1739).

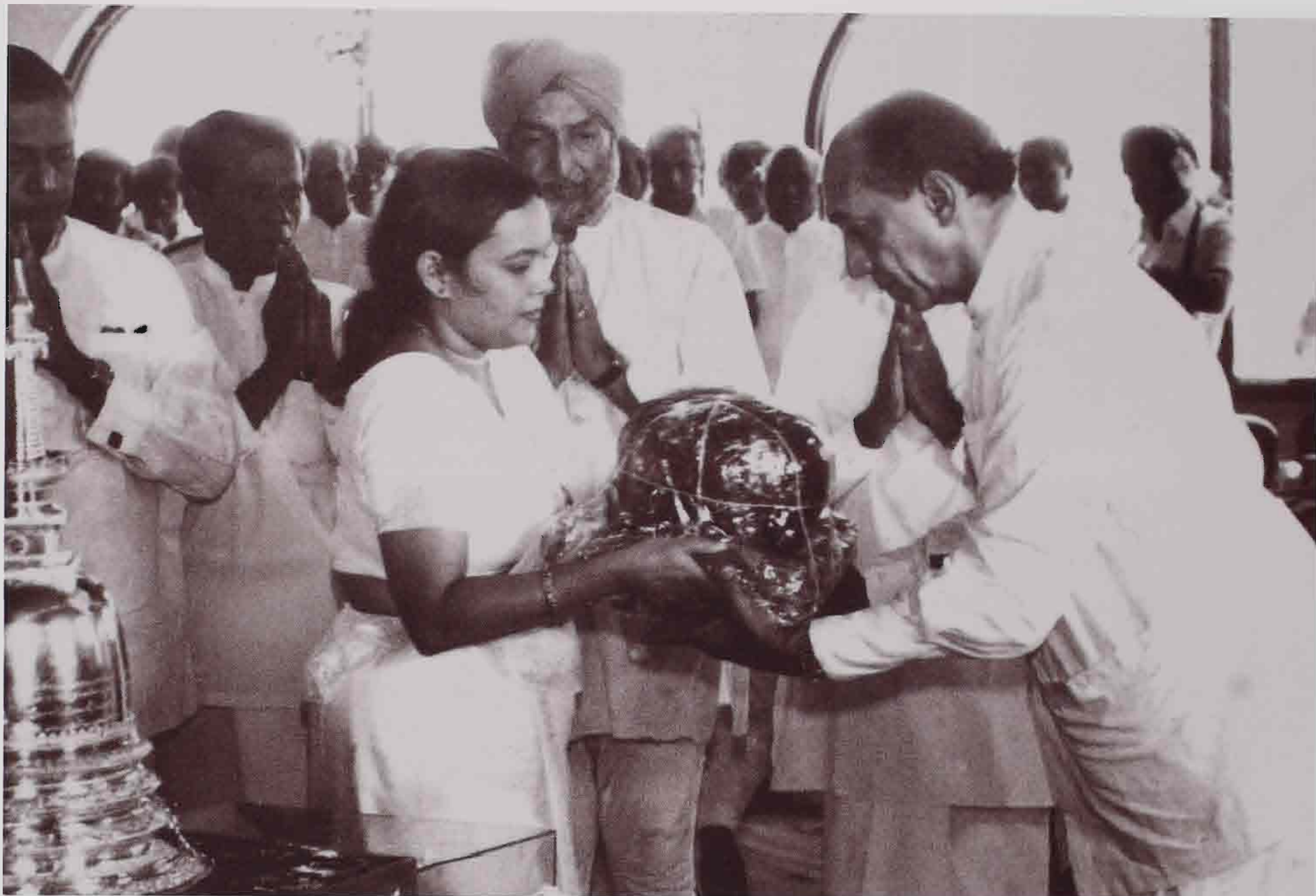
On facing page:

Top and bottom right, the Pattini Devalé. Pattini, the deification of a mortal being, Kannagi, the wife of Kovalan, was brought into folk religion in Sri Lanka, from the Chera kingdom of South India, by King Gajabahu I (174-196 A.D.), who was present in person at the installation of the Goddess Pattini in the temple to Kannagi raised by King Sengottuvan, at the behest of his Queen. The story of the great Tamil epic, the Silappathikaram, is forgotten in the Island. But the worship of Kannagi of Kaveripoompattinam (on the Chola coast) and Madurai, remains a cult tradition of worship in Lanka.

Bottom left, the Kataragama Devalé in Kandy, the shrine to Karthikeya (Lord Muruga). Like the other devalé-s, this too has ornamental gateways with granite moonstone and guardstone sculptures.







Buddhism is no longer a major religion in India. But it remains India's greatest contribution to Lanka. When imperial rule had dampened the spirits of the great indigenous religions of the Island, it was Colonel H. S. Olcott, who came to Ceylon in 1880 from the Theosophical Society headquartered in Madras, Swami Vivekananda who came to the Island in 1897 and Orabi Pasha from Egypt, exiled in Ceylon from 1882 to 1901, who were the catalysts who re-vitalised Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam in Lanka. Secular and religious leaders from India have ever since helped nurture these religions in the Island.

On facing page, above left, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India addresses a giant meeting on the occasion of the Buddha Jayanthi celebrations in Ceylon in 1957, marking the 2500th anniversary of the death of Lord Buddha in 543 B.C. Bottom of the page, two years later, President Rajendra Prasad of India, during a visit to the Island, laid the foundation stone for an extension to the Vajiraramaya Vihara in Bambalapitiya.



India's contribution to strengthening Buddhism has continued over the years and, in 1973, what were called the Kapilavastu relics were brought to Sri Lanka and handed over by Mrs. Obeyesiri to President J. R. Jayawardene in the presence of the then Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Gurbachan Singh (above). The relics were found during excavations on the banks of the river Ganga, not far from Patna. In Kapilavastu, neighbouring Pataliputra as Patna was once known, was born Prince Gautama (Lord Buddha after His Enlightenment) in 623 B.C. The golden casket containing the relics was received by President Jayawardene at the airport, next taken to the Jetavanaramaya Vihara and then to the Vidyodaya Pirivena.

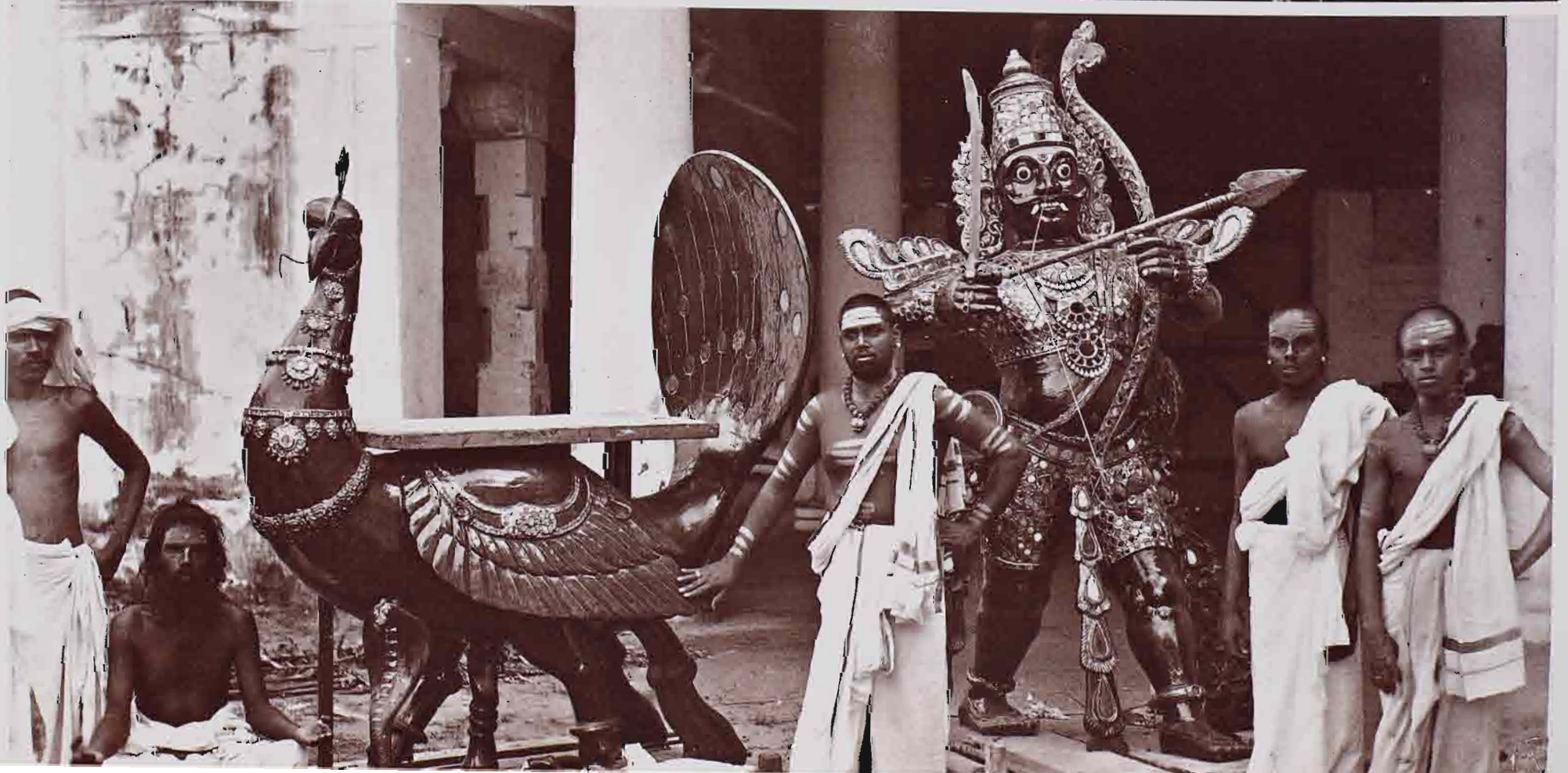


On right, top, three fellow-monks in 1935 accompanied the Venerable C. Krishna (second from right), a Malayalee living in Ceylon who had become a Buddhist monk in the Island, to spread the wisdom of Buddhism in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. On right, the Venerable Gnanapala Thero of the Vajiraramaya Vihara, Colombo, and Dr. Subash Chawla of Diana & Co. (on extreme right), present in 1991 a copy of the Sinhala-Hindi Similarity Dictionary they co-authored, to Lalith Athulathmudali, the then Minister for Higher Education. The dictionary contains more than a 1000 Sinhala words that are strikingly similar to Hindi words and with the same meanings, reflecting the Indo-Aryan origins of Sinhalese. Hindi is not very dissimilar to Chawla's native Punjabi.



Hinduism has been a faith that has been an intrinsic part of the Island from the first days of settlement. Hindu shrines, old and new, are to be found everywhere in Lanka and, in a country where ethnicity has at times been a divide, religion has never been. People of different faiths visit vihara-s, temples and churches unrestrictedly. And blessings are sought in each of them by all.

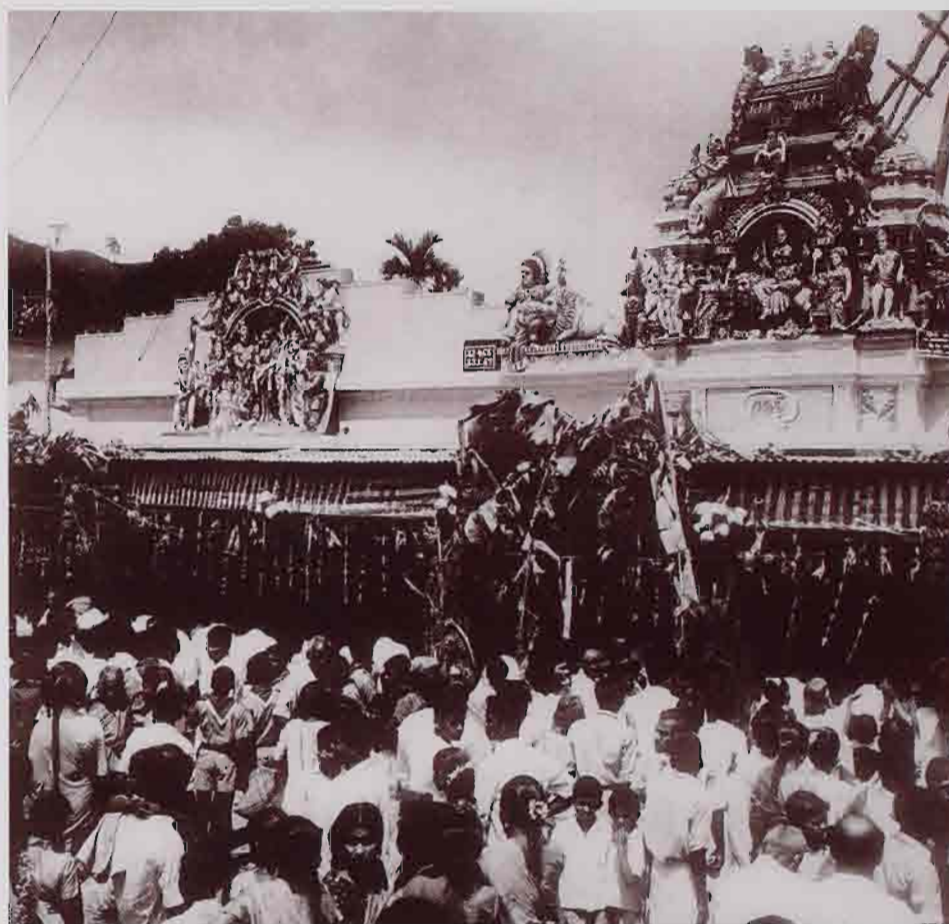
Below is the gateway to an ancient Hindu temple. This turn of the 19th Century picture shows the image-decorated entrance leading into a grove in which the temple is. And in a temple of the same period, at the bottom of the page, the vahana of the gods and other imagery to be taken in procession are seen with the Brahmin priests of the shrine. Once, Indian sanyasi-s like the one seen in 1922, in the picture on left, wandered around the Island, living on alms and bestowing blessings on the believers. Today, fewer of them are seen. But roadside Lord Ganesh-s/ Vinayagar-s (Pillaiyar) are to be found in several parts of the Island, particularly in the hill country, from where come the two pictures on extreme left, and on left top, facing page. The blessings of roadside Pillaiyar-s are sought by people of all faiths.

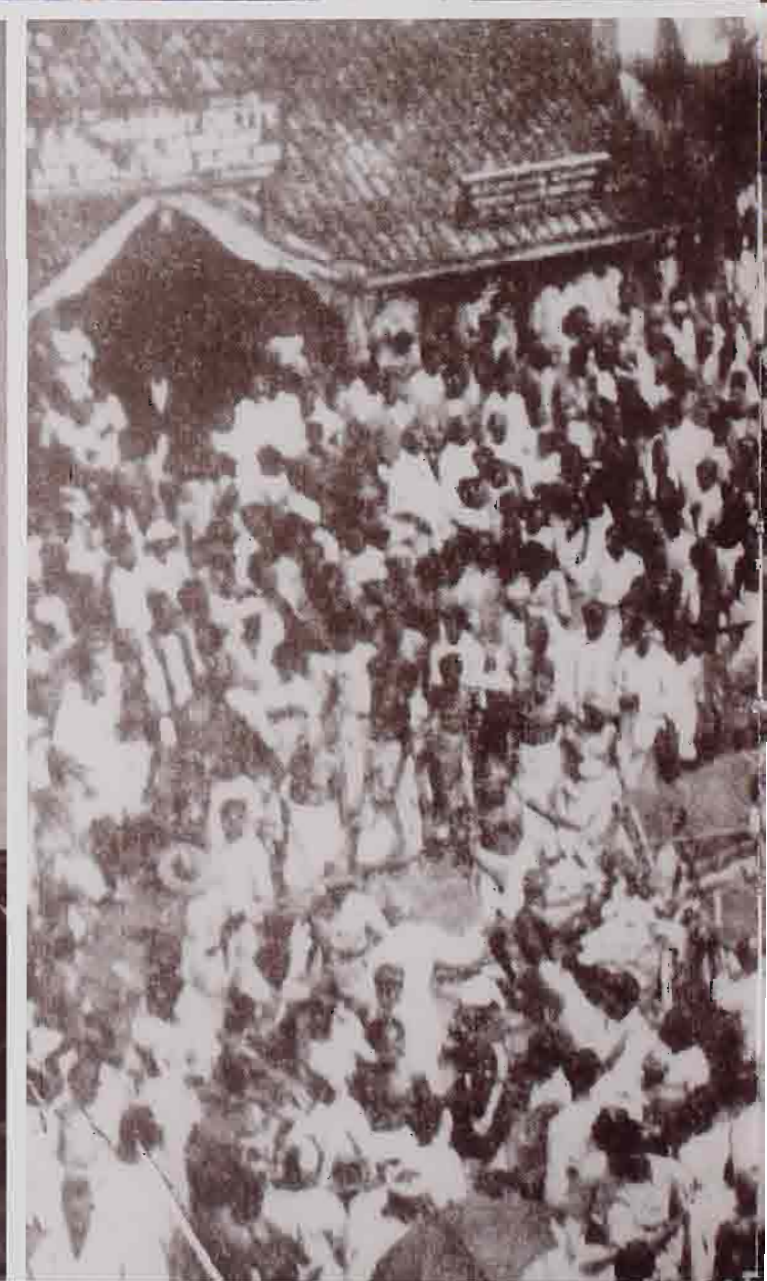




Temple festivals, where the temple thér (chariot) takes the Lord out in procession through the streets of the town, are also occasions for people of all faiths to join the celebrations, like the one below at the Muthumariamman Kovil, Nawalapitiya.

At the bottom, the old Kathiresan Kovil, Sea Street, built by the Nattukottai Chettiars in 1809, is seen in a picture taken around 1914. This temple was the main shrine of the Hindus of Colombo for many years and, together with its neighbour, the new Kathiresan Temple, initiated the Aadi Vél festival in Colombo.



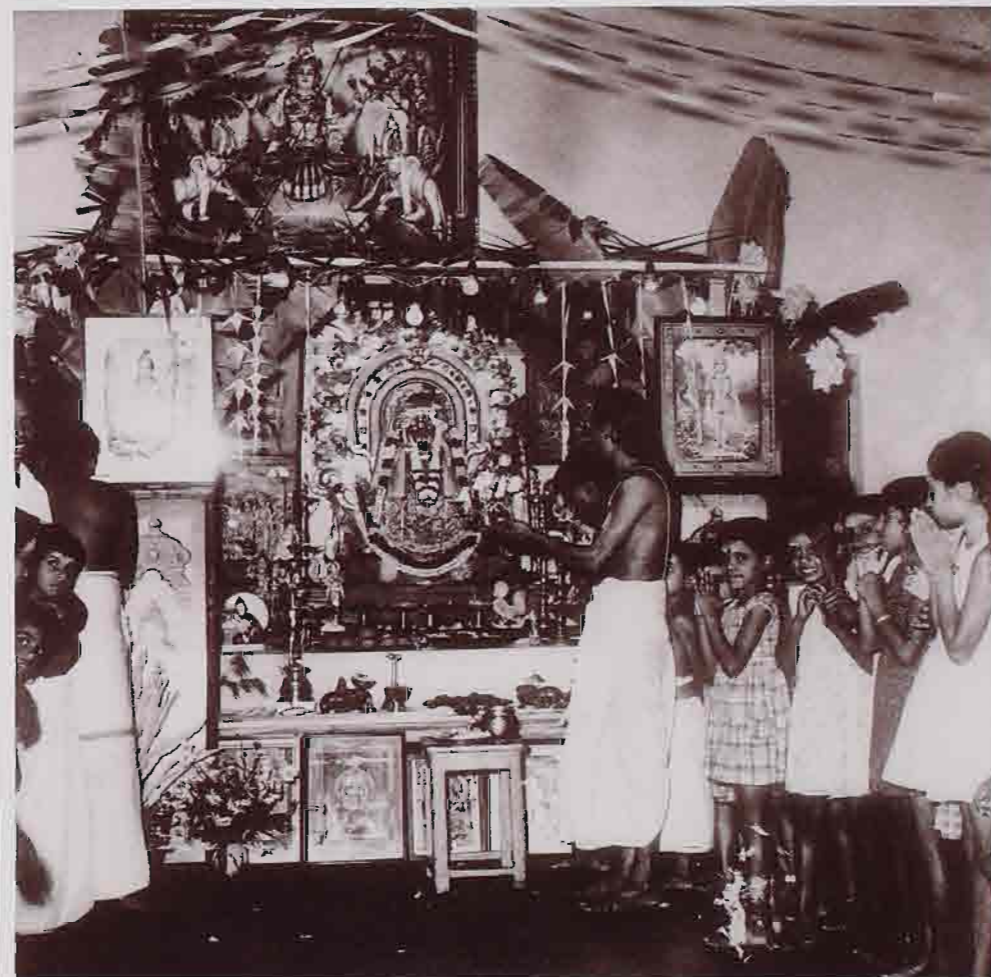




Temple festivals are occasions for people of all faiths in the Island to join in and break coconuts, as in the scene in Colombo, left.

Perhaps the biggest of the thér festivals in the hill-country is the Masi Mahotsavam of the Sri Muthumariamman Temple, Matale. This festival (below) draws crowds from the numerous plantations to pull the massive thér of the temple. But perhaps the best known of all Hindu festivals in the Island is the annual Aadi Vél festival in Colombo, born of the Kataragama festival. When, in 1874, there was a cholera epidemic in southern Ceylon and the pilgrimage to Kataragama was temporarily banned, the Nattukottai Chettiars organised the Vél festival in which the Vél chariot leaves with Lord Skanda (Lord Muruga) and his vél (spear) from one of the Kathiresan Temples in Sea Street to one of the Kathiresan Temples in Bambalapitiya, the temples alternating every year. All along the way, the thér stops for the faithful in the neighbourhoods to make offerings and seek blessings and it is at such stops that the gathering of the people of all faiths is best seen. For three days there are special poojas and offerings in the Kathiresan Temples in Sea Street as well as in Bambalapitiya. In 2002, the Vél festival was revived after an eight-year lapse and the giant silver chariot was seen on the roads of Colombo again, much as it was in the pictures on extreme left, below, in the 1960s, when the trustees of the temples posed alongside, and in 1932 (centre, below) at a time when the crowds every year would swell with devotees from South India making the journey to Kataragama and complete their pilgrimage by participating in the Vél festival.





Throughout the hill-country, in towns and estates, temple festivals are celebrated round the year with people of all faiths participating.

Clockwise from top, left:

- *Kavadi aattam through the streets of Nawalapitiya during the annual temple festival.*
- *The kumbabishekam (consecration) of a temple in a large estate.*
- *Vijayadasami celebrations in estate schools when children seek the blessings of Saraswathi, the Goddess of Learning, for their studies.*
- *Devotees gather carrying the thambula thattu (offerings) to an Amman temple on an estate during its annual thér thiruvila (chariot festival).*
- *Bhajan singers on an estate, gathered to sing Thévaram during a temple festival.*





In several parts of the Island are other temples with Indian links, temples either impressive in their construction or renowned for their festivals.

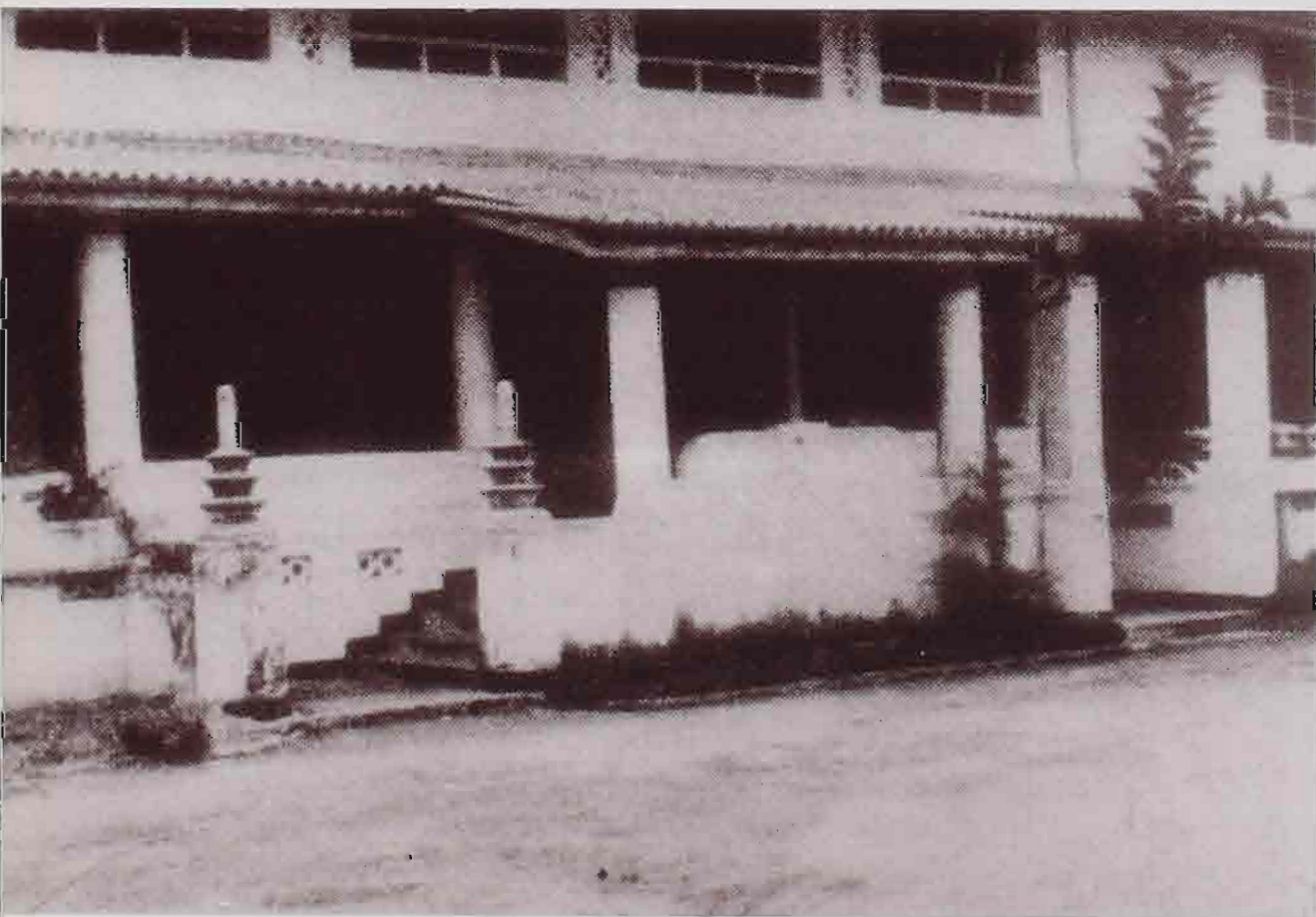
Counterclockwise, from top:

- Linked with the legends of Sita Eliya is the recently built Hanuman Temple at Ramboda, its construction urged by Swami Tejomayananda of the Chinnmaya Mission in India when he visited the Island in the mid-1990s. Legend has it that Lord Hanuman journeyed from Ramboda to Sita Eliya with his message from Lord Rama and, so, his commemoration in Ramboda, where the Chinnmaya Mission runs several community projects focussed on the children of the area.
- With an ancient history is the Munceswaram Sivan temple where the ancient Kings of Kotte expressed fervent devotion to 'Mummainathar'. Destroyed by the Portuguese, the temple was rebuilt in 1753 by the Kandyan King, Kirthisri Rajasinghe, and in it were installed the 63 Saivite Nayanmar, the only place in the Island where they are worshipped.
- Another ancient temple is the 350-year-old Draupadi Amman temple in Udappuwa. As in the case of Munceswaran Temple, crowds drawn from all faiths gather here for the annual festival, the picture showing some of the festival participants. Drawing a crowd almost as big as the event in Kataragama is the firewalking festival in Udappuwa.
- Next to the new Kathiresan Temple in Bambalapitiya is the Manika Vinayagar Temple of the Sammankoddar, which also participates in the Aadi Vél festival. The new gopuram was consecrated in 2001.

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முதல் நாள் உறை
FIRST DAY COVER



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சுவாமி விவேகானந்தர் - இலங்கை விஜயம்
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA - VISIT TO SRI LANKA



The Saivite-oriented Hinduism of Lanka underwent a significant change after the visit of Swami Vivekananda to Ceylon. On his way to the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, Swami Vivekananda made a brief stop in Colombo. The first place he touched in South Asia, after that momentous message he delivered at the Parliament and then expounded throughout the United States, was Colombo, where he arrived in January 1897 as “a world celebrity and a prophet of a new order”. The Centenary of the famous Chicago address as much as that of his visit to the Island were commemorated in 1997, with a special stamp and a first day cover (left). During the visit to Colombo, he stayed in a newly built house (middle, column on left), which, thereafter, was known as Vivekananda Lodge.

In Colombo, advocating a universal religion based on the Vedas, he spoke to the public at the Public Hall (bottom, column on left, now the Empire Theatre) and stressed over and over again, that “the lessons of mildness, gentleness, forbearance, toleration and brotherhood (are what) everyone should learn, whether man, woman or child, learned or unlearned, without respect of race, caste or creed”. “They called Thee by various names; Thou art One,” was his message throughout his visit.

Not long after his visit, he arranged for his brother disciple, Swami Shivananda, to journey from Calcutta to the Island and stay there some time, spreading the message of Sri Ramakrishna whose direct disciples they both were. From that time, apart from these two, six other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna have visited the Island to keep alive the flame first lit by Swami Vivekananda.

On July 13, 1902, the Vivekananda Society, Colombo, was formally convened and, within the next five years, Vivekananda Societies were formed in Jaffna, Manipay, Matale, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. From their first years, besides their religious and cultural focus, they contributed significantly to education.

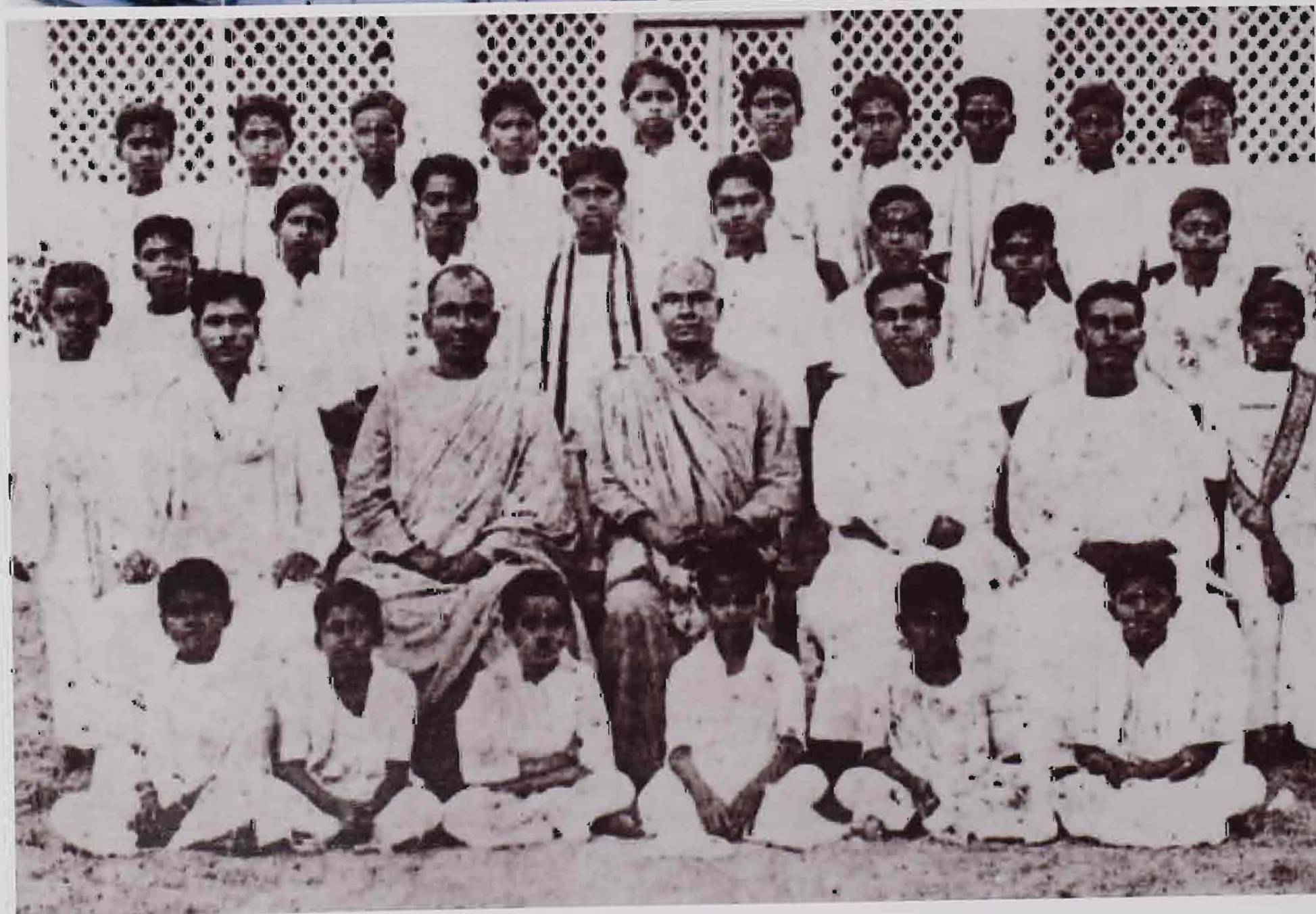
Founded in 1913, based on the gurukulam system of education expounded by Swami Vivekananda, was Vaitheeswara Vidyalayam in Jaffna. Its founder Nagamuthu, who felt that the school would better benefit if it was managed by the Ramakrishna Mission, had discussions with Swami Sharvananda, head of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras, a regular visitor to the Island, and handed over the institution to the Mission in 1917. On facing page, top, left are the present buildings of what is now called a college.

The Vivekananda Society in Jaffna was started by Pandit Mailvaganam, a teacher at St. Patrick’s College, who was inspired by Swami Sharvananda. Joining the Mutt in Madras in 1922 as a novice, Pandit Mailvaganam was initiated into sanyasa in 1924 under the name Swami Vipulananda and returned to Jaffna in 1926. Swami Vipulananda became the manager of the Vaitheeswara Vidyalayam, then started with six students a students’ home called ‘Vellikilamai Madam’ at Vannarpannai, Jaffna, to provide a roof and character-building for orphans and destitute and needy children. His activities gave an impetus to the Mission’s work throughout the North.

Meanwhile, the first branch of the Ramakrishna Mission was established in Colombo in 1924, but the first Ramakrishna Ashrama was opened in Trincomalee in 1925. It was in 1930 that the Ramakrishna Ashrama was opened in Wellawatte and became the headquarters of the Mission in the Island.

To spread the message of the Ramakrishna Mission in the Eastern Province and having established Vaitheeswara Vidyalayam on a firm footing as the centre of the Mission's activities in Jaffna, Swami Vipulananda in 1929 moved the Vellikilamai Madam (seen on right when it was first started) to Kallady-Uppodai (now known as Ramakrishnapuram), near Batticaloa. At bottom, Swami Vipulananda (seated second from left) with Swami Sundarananda is seen in 1932 with the first batch of students of the Kallady-Uppodai Boys' Home (orphanage).

The Mission's commitment, to education in Sri Lanka and the provision of residential facilities for needy children that began in Jaffna, led in the years from 1926 to an involvement in 26 schools, 19 in Batticaloa, 2 in Jaffna, 3 in Trincomalee and 1 each in Vavuniya and Lunugala, and several students' homes. With the Government takeover of assisted schools in 1960, the Mission's involvement with education is now only through Sunday Schools and pre-schools, but it plays a major role in religious and spiritual upliftment, promotion of arts and culture, and runs orphanages, performs relief and resettlement work, and helps with resource development.





The Ramakrishna Mission, Ceylon Branch, headquartered in Colombo, has two main branches, the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, and Ramakrishna Mission, Batticaloa, tending a variety of activities. Some of the activities of the Batticaloa branch are featured on these two pages.

Top row, left, the first building of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home in Kallady-Uppodai, which started with 12 residents in 1929. This building served both as dormitory as well as home of the Shivananda Vidyalayam Boys' School started in 1925. Top row, right, the Home's own premises, Shivalaya, to which it moved in 1931 from rented ones.

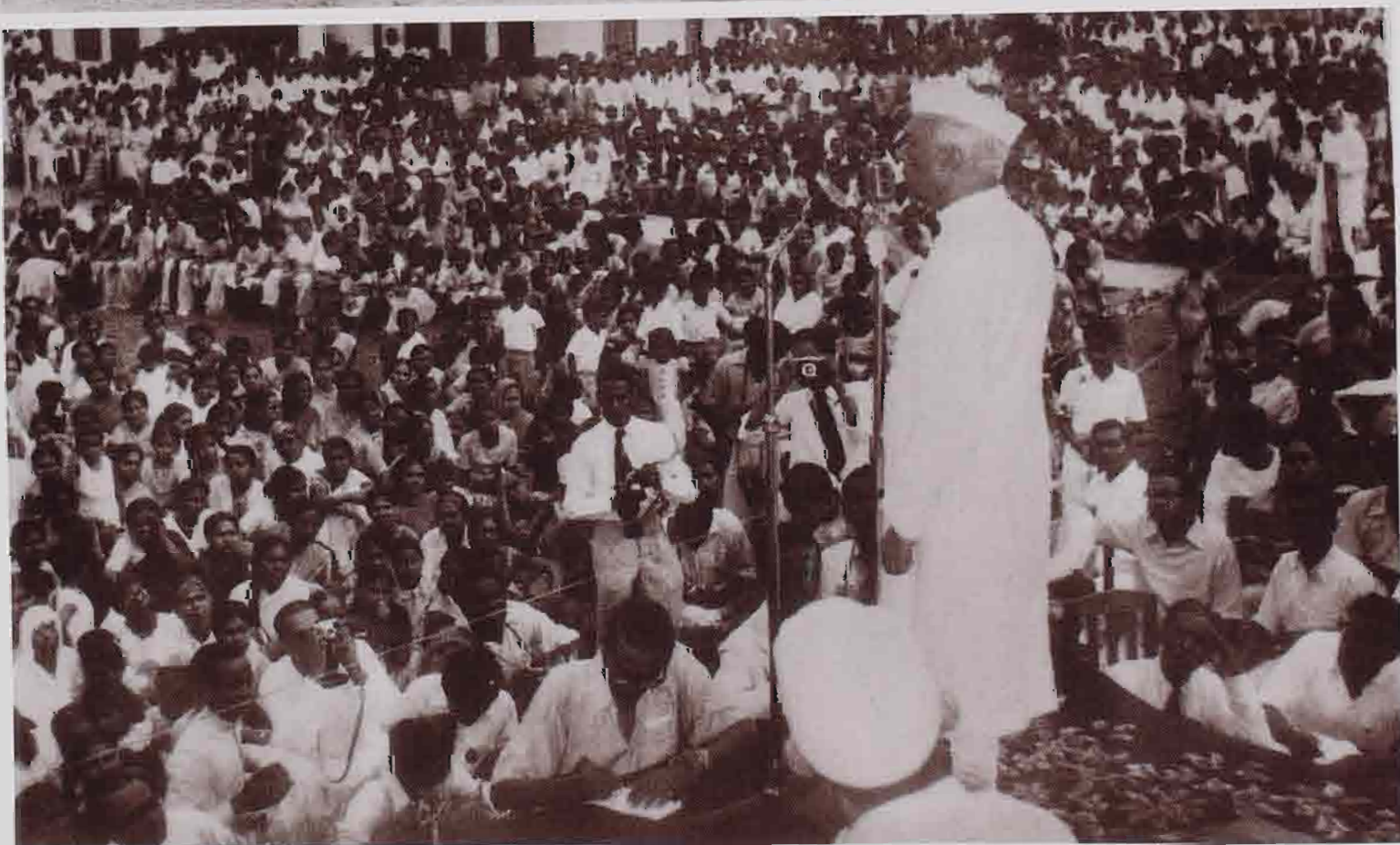
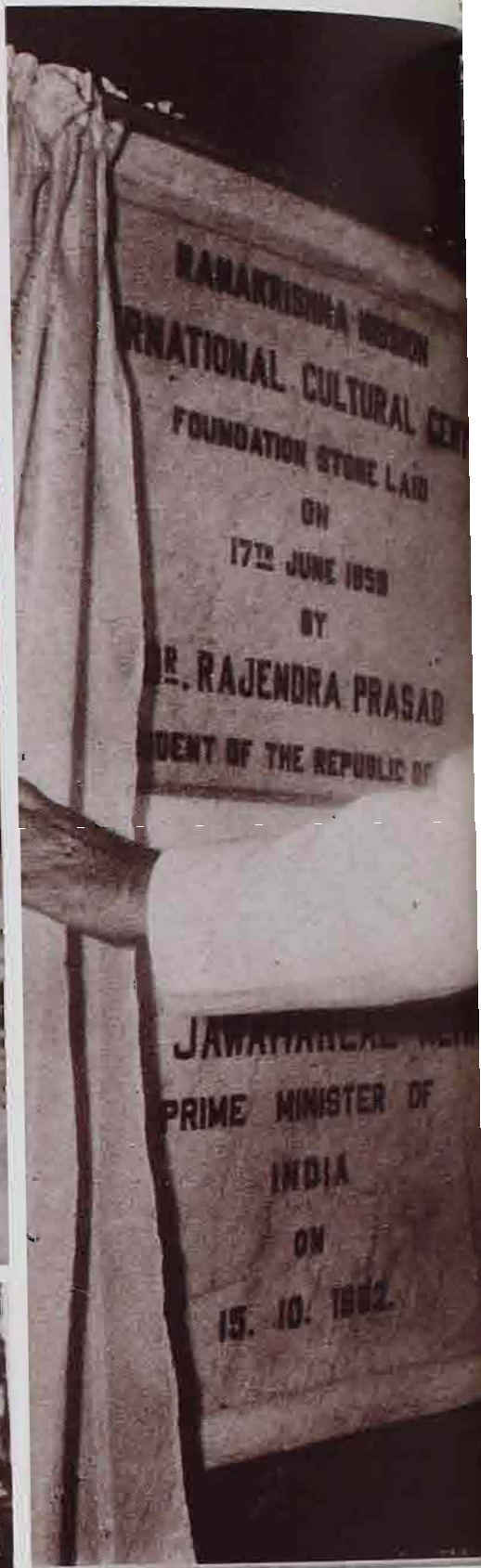
Second row, left, the newer buildings of Shivananda Vidyalayam. Today, it is a school open to children of all races and religions and is one of the biggest in the Eastern Province.

Above, the new home of the Sri Sarada Girls' Home opened in 1985. This girls' home in Anaipanthy was first set up in 1951. On left are the young girls living in the Home for Girls at Karaitivu attached to the Ramakrishna Vidyalayam there. The Home was built to mark the centenary of Sri Ramakrishna's birth.

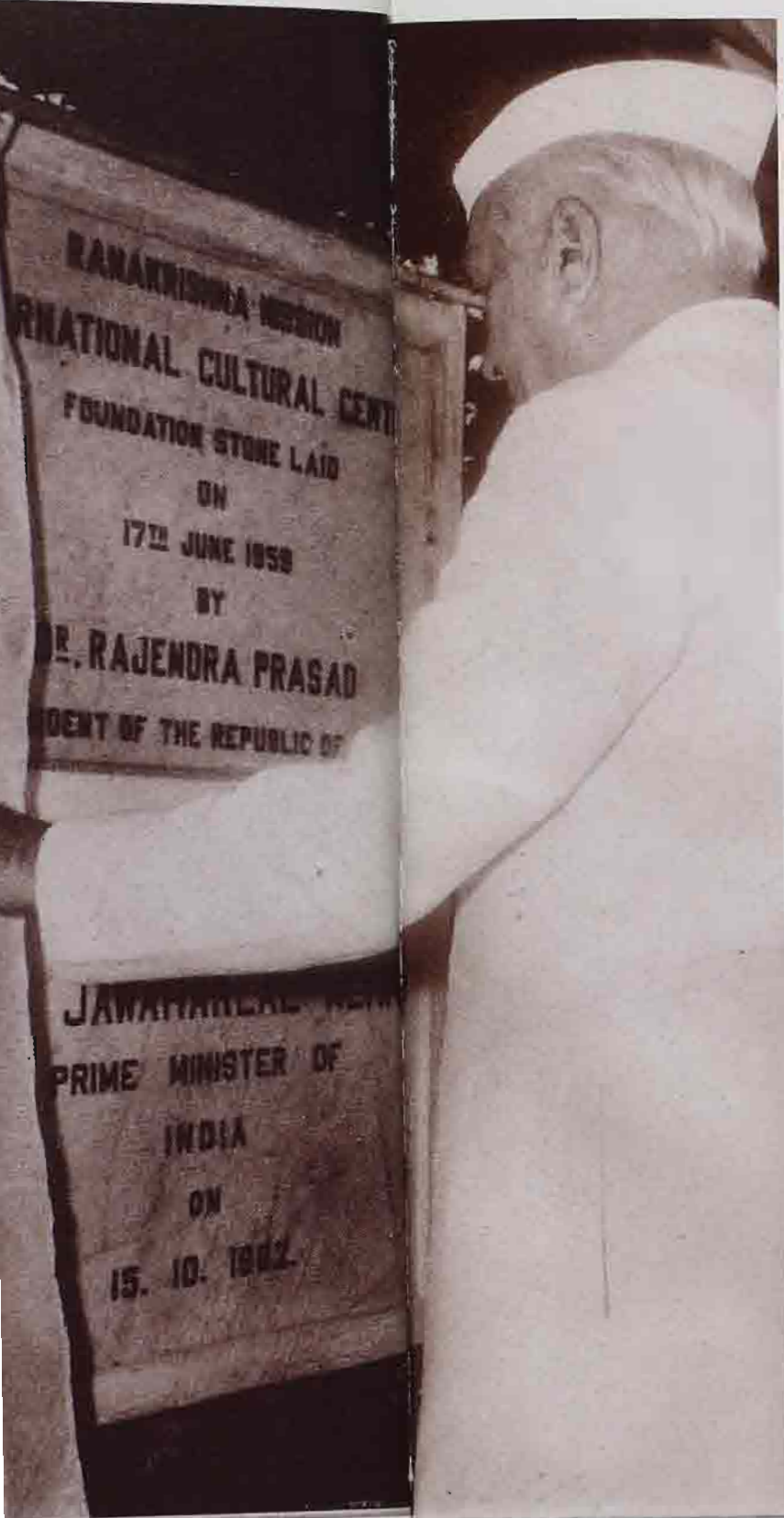
On facing page, top, girls from the Sri Sarada Girls' Home tend the garden in the campus of the Anaipanthy Vivekananda Girls' School which they attend.

On facing page, bottom, a model housing project for sanitary workers built by the Ramakrishna Mission in Vivekanandapuram to commemorate the centenary of Swami Vivekananda's visit to Ceylon. The model project has 27 houses and all facilities, such as roads, electricity, temple, and a community centre. The Ramakrishna Mission has, since 1965, been doing considerable rehabilitation and humanitarian work throughout the Island. It has also launched housing schemes for needy families in places like Maddikaly, Akkaraipattu and Valaichenai.





Facilities at the Ramakrishna Mission headquarters, in Colombo, have been growing apace ever since land was purchased at 44th Lane, Wellawatte, in 1935. The foundation stone for the present headquarters at Colombo was laid on May 6, 1935, which marked the beginning of a permanent home of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission in Colombo. The Sri Ramakrishna Birth Centenary Temple (on top) was inaugurated in 1936; it was built through the generosity of Premjee Devjee, M. K. Kapadia and M. J. Patel, reflecting the all-India nature of the movement. The Jerbai Memorial Hall for discourses, public meetings, etc. was later built next to the shrine through the contribution made by Dosabhoj Hormasji Marker of Colombo. During his visit to Sri Lanka in 1957, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India visited the Mission and addressed a huge gathering (above).



During the visit of President Rajendra Prasad of India in 1959, he laid the foundation stone in the Ramakrishna Mission campus for the International Cultural Centre and he was shown the model of the planned Centre (below). The Centre was inaugurated during Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's visit in 1962 (on left) and at the bottom of the page are the International Cultural Centre and the Swami Vivekananda Memorial Hall, set in scenic green surroundings. The Hall, built to commemorate Swami Vivekananda's birth centenary (1963-64), was completed in 1969 and is one of the biggest and best-equipped auditoriums in Sri Lanka.



At the request of the planters, several of whose labour force were Christians from the Tinnevely District of the Madras Presidency, the Tamil Cooly Mission (since 1943, the Tamil Church Mission) was started in 1854 and six catechists trained at the Tirumaraiyur Theosophical Seminary, Nazareth, in the Tinnevely District, came out, first to work on particular estates, but, then, finding their services needed throughout the hill country, to become travelling catechists.

In time, the Tamil Cooly Mission, which was responsible for establishing over 400 primary schools in the estates (though many did not survive for long), helped found the Borella Boarding Schools, for Girls in 1867 and for Boys in 1875.

Less remembered is the fact that those who helped to found the Tamil Cooly Mission contributed to the raising of Christ Church, just to the east of Galle Face, then the esplanade of Colombo Fort, to meet the needs of a large number of Tamil Christians living in the Slave Island and Kollupitiya areas. The donors included the Rev. J. T. Tucker, Rev. John Devasagayam, Rev. J. K. Best and the Pannavillai Native Christians, all of the Tinnevely District.

The Church, built of cabook, opened for worship in October 1853. But when its west wall collapsed during heavy rains in 1861, the Church was rebuilt in brick and in its present form (seen on this page), becoming a landmark in Colombo, till surrounding highrise dwarfed it. It is said that the plan of the church of today reflects that of the original church.



The Leaders

People of Indian origin have over the last 100 years played a significant role in providing leadership in Sri Lanka, in fields as wide ranging as labour and politics, governance, commercial unity and social and cultural improvement.

Both the workers of Indian origin and the leaders they threw up pioneered the trade union movement in Ceylon, many of the names connected with it now forgotten among the wider population of the Island.

Through the trade union movement, there emerged many a political leader speaking for the people of Indian origin, and if Lisboa Pinto and Natesa Aiyar are almost forgotten for what they contributed to the labour movement, Savumiamoorthy Thondaman is unlikely to be ever forgotten for the distinct identity he created for the plantation population – an identity that said “separate, but very much part of the Island whole” and which today those who followed where he had led see as a separate entity even in name, the Malaiyaha Tamils.

Political leaders of the people of Indian origin they may have been, but whether in the Municipal Councils of the Island or as representatives in the halls of Parliament, as Ministers of the Governments of Lanka or as representatives of the Island in international fora, every one of these leaders, Indo-Lankans all, spoke for all the people of the Island. Never have they in these roles been anything but the leaders of Lanka, their parochial leadership visible only on other more local platforms. That has been a contribution considerable in its significance, whether in governance and administration or speaking for Lanka.

It is in the wider commercial sector and in the need for commitment to social welfare in the wider context that entrepreneurs, professionals and administrators of Indian origin have begun to play a more significant role in recent times. It is a contribution that is increasingly being recognised and which will grow with that recognition. As a leader of Indian origin said decades ago, “We have taken nothing from the Island. We have only invested our own money and reinvested our profits in the Island. These have been investments that have benefited thousands in Ceylon.” Those thousands benefited not only from employment and business, but also from the exercise freely of philanthropy for social welfare. That is a contribution that is ever increasing.

“The King of the Hills” is how the Island’s best-known cartoonist, Wijesoma, depicted Savumiamoorthy Thondaman, after electoral victory in 1993. Thondaman, a curious contradiction who saw no contradiction in being a Minister in a United National Party government as well as in a People’s Alliance government, being an estate owner as well as being the leader of the largest trade union in the country, that of estate workers, and in leading it in a down tools “Prayer Campaign” while serving as a Minister, was certainly the most commanding figure ever in hill-country politics. But he was from 1977-78 a major figure in Sri Lankan politics as well. No person of Indian origin was better known in the Island than Thondaman in his time, and no person of Indian origin is likely to find more space in the history books of Sri Lanka for the period 1940-1999.



While Thondaman will for long be remembered for his political leadership of the people of recent Indian origin in Lanka, little remembered today are those of Indian origin who laid the foundations not only for Thondaman's leadership but, indeed, for the entire trade union movement in the country.

A. E. Buultjens was the first Ceylonese to advocate a trade union movement. But it was his fellow reformist, Dr. P. M. Lisboa Pinto (second picture in column on right, with mortar board) who lived up to his own description of himself, "The great raiser of rebellion and arch agitator". Pinto, a medical doctor of Goan origin, was elected the first president of the first trade union in the Island, the Ceylon Printers' Union, founded during the printers' strike in 1893. Pinto, who practised amongst the poor in Dam Street, Colombo, urged the educated "to feel for the poor workmen and come forward to help... Not try to smother in the labourer's throat his first cry for independence". Amongst the other causes which Pinto championed were the need to provide relief from urban health hazards and adequate transport for workers. He was a pioneer of the temperance movement. And he founded a group called the Independent Catholics, challenging the jurisdiction of the Papacy and Rome.

Generally better remembered today as the founder of the trade union movement in Ceylon is Alexander Ekanayaka Goonesinha. But here too, it was a person of Indian origin who played a vital role in the success of its early growth. K. Natesa Aiyar (on right and below, left), a South Indian journalist who arrived in the Island in 1920, was for the next 25 years to play a major role in giving new life to what had become a moribund trade union movement in the Island. Influenced in Madras by the passion for trade unionism and social reform and the literary and oratorical skills of Thiru Vi Ka, Natesa Aiyar started his career in Ceylon, editing and publishing two radical journals, *Thesa Nesan* in Tamil and *The Citizen* in English. Both were influenced by the Indian freedom movement and the British labour movement. In recognition of his contribution in the past, he was, in 1998, named one of the freedom fighters of Lanka by President Chandrika Kumaratunga on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Independence. Though a member of the Legislative Council (1927-31) and of the State Council (1936-47), it was to the trade union movement that Natesa Aiyar made his most lasting contribution. When

A. E. Goonesinha in 1922 founded the Ceylon Labour Union, the Island's first major trade union, its Vice President was Natesa Aiyar and together they led the country's first general strike in 1923, when, of the over 20,000 workers who went on strike in all sectors, the Indian Tamils and Malayalees were the majority, answering the call of Natesa Aiyar. Other leaders of Indian origin leading the strike were Kandasami and Kuttan of the Wellawatte mills. Throughout the 1920s, Goonesinha and Natesa Aiyar led a series of strikes. But when the Great Depression was upon the Island, differences cropped up between the two and led to Natesa Aiyar breaking with a man who had drawn his inspiration from Indian leaders like G. K. Gokhale, B. G. Tilak, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Lajpat Rai and Motilal Nehru, but who later began to adopt what Natesa Aiyar saw as a communal stance.

Moving closer to the Communist Party and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party after the visit of D. M. Manilal in 1921, the Indian activist in the Mauritian and Fijian sugar plantations who went on to become a major figure in the Indian Communist Party, Natesa Aiyar began taking a greater interest in the estate labour. He formed the first trade union in the plantations, the All-Ceylon Estate Labour Federation in 1931, which later became known as the Ceylon Indian Workers' Federation. Till his death in 1946 and the subsequent disenfranchisement of Indians in the Island, Natesa Aiyar was probably the loudest voice of the Indian estate workers. The Minimum Wage Ordinance of 1927, which went into force

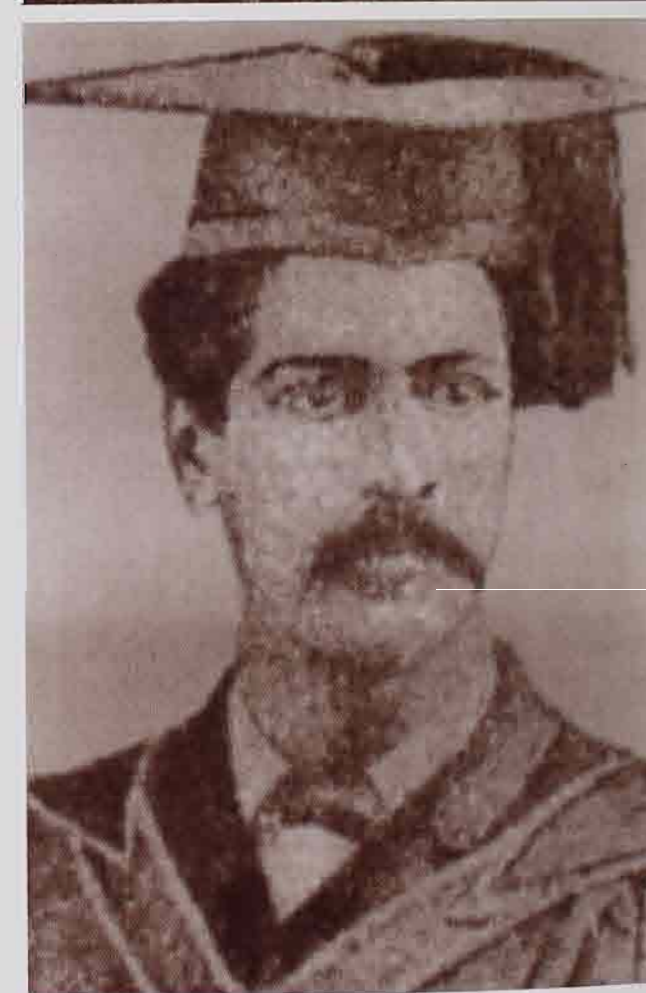
in 1929, perhaps the most significant labour law introduced in Lanka, was entirely due to his efforts.

Natesa Aiyar's was indeed the foundation on which the trade union movement in the Island, both urban and plantation, was built by those who followed. Helping him in his pioneering efforts were his wife Meenakshi Ammal, V. P. Nathan and the Satyavagiswara Aiyars, husband and wife.

Another of those of Indian origin associated with the trade union movement in its early days was Dadabhoi Nusserwanjee (below, right), who came to Ceylon in 1871 and joined the printing department of *The Times of Ceylon*. Quitting his job with *The Times* in 1880, Nusserwanjee, a Parsi, became a trader in Main Street and for long a representative of his fellow Indian traders. He was elected Vice President of the Indian Association, but more significantly the Union of Compositors and Printers elected him as President to succeed Lisboa Pinto.

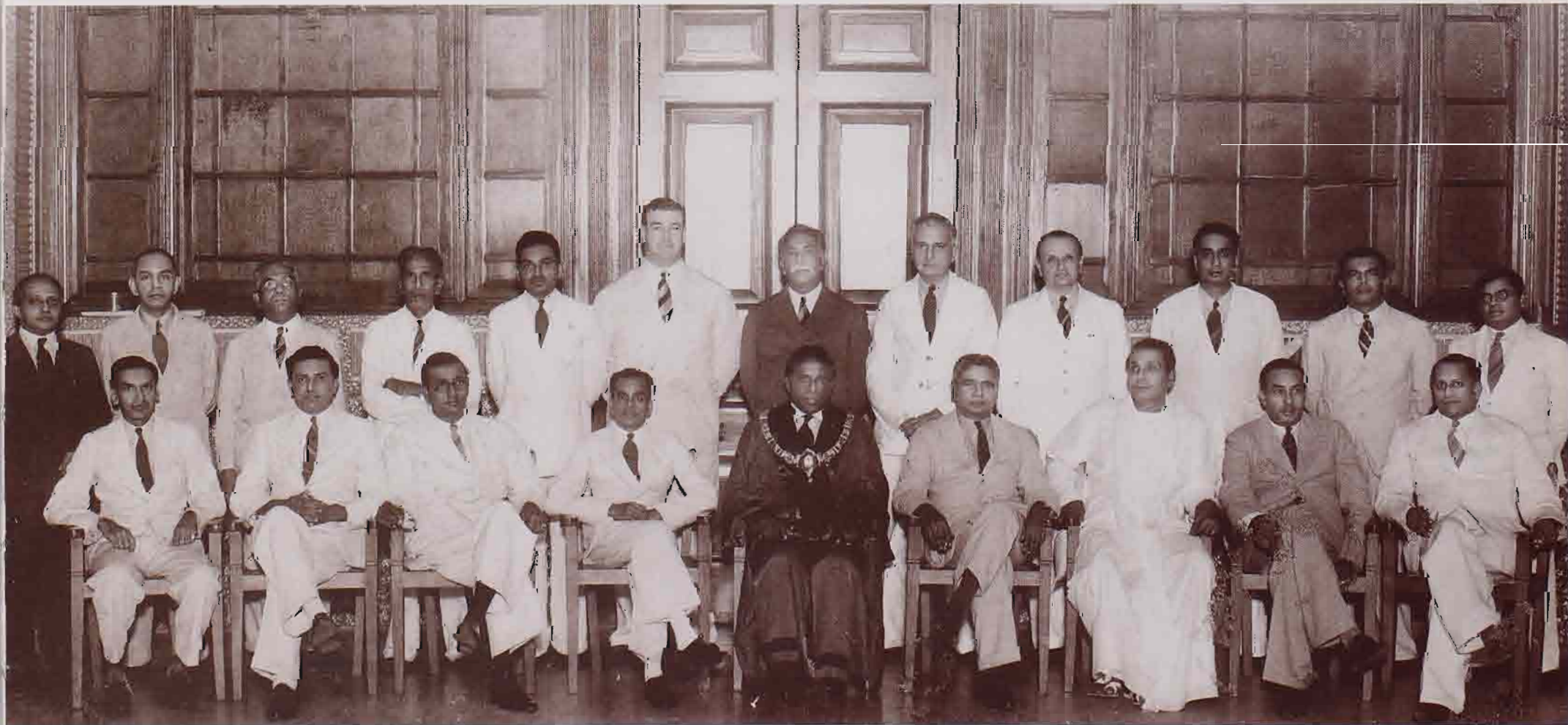
More in the fiery spirit of Pinto was George R. Motha (on extreme right), a Bharatha who arrived in Ceylon in the early 1900s. Coming from an affluent family and being a graduate in law, he had a bright professional future ahead of him. But after travelling through the hill-country and seeing the plight of the Indian labour, he dedicated the rest of his life to the labour wing of the Ceylon Indian Congress. At the first sessions of the Ceylon Indian Congress in Gampola in 1940 his was the angriest voice, calling loudest for the workers to rise and fight for their rights. A Joint Secretary of the Ceylon Indian Congress he may have been for several years, but he always felt the Congress was going too slow in helping the workers win their rights.

When the Ceylon Communist Party was formed in 1940, the *Toddy Tappers' Union*, led by K. Ramanathan, an Indian Tamil, and P. Shankar and M. A. Kumaran, Malayalees, was one of its staunchest supporters. When the Ceylon Trade Union Federation was founded the same year, the *Toddy Tappers' Union* was one of the 16 constituent unions. The Federation leadership too included a Malayalee, T. K. Madhavan. Indeed, the trade union movement throughout the Island owes much to the people of Indian origin.



The earliest participation of people of recent Indian origin in civic affairs – what passed for politics in those days – was in the municipal and town councils of Ceylon. The Colombo Municipal Council was founded in 1866 and from the first there were nominated Indian members in the Council. With the population in the early years of the 20th Century 16% Indian Tamils, 6% Indian Moors and 5% 'Others', mainly other Indians, an Indian nominee on the Council was de rigueur. The Framjee Bhikhajee Khan family were members of the Council from 1902, Pestonjee Dinshawjee Khan the first of them. In the picture below, M. F. Khan (2nd from right, with hat) is seen at a meeting of the Colombo Municipal Council at the old Town Hall in 1906. B. F. Khan was a member from 1919-21. Other Parsis in the council were J. Hormusjee and F. Dadabboy

in the 1930s and early 1940s. When a commission was formed to inquire into the grievances of the carters after their strike in 1906, P.D. Khan was one of the Goonesinha Commissioners. Another person of Indian origin who in the 1930s was active in the Colombo Municipal Council was M. Subbiah, a Nattukottai Chettiar. Subbiah (seated 4th from left, bottom of page), was the first Indian to be elected Deputy Mayor of Colombo when his unlikely friend A. E. Goonesinha, was elected Mayor. Subbiah, who is to the Mayor's right in the picture, was a stockbroker who was also interested in sport, particularly the Turf. This led to close friendships with several of the Island's political leaders and facilitated some of the early bridge-building efforts between the Indian and Ceylonese leaderships.





Outside the capital, there have been over the years several people of Indian origin elected to municipal office. A. Chockalingam Chettiar (garlanded, above) was re-elected as Chairman of the Anuradhapura Union District Council in 1938 and the picture shows him returning from the Kachcheri.

On left, in Mayoral regalia, is Stanislaus Fernando, whose grandfather arrived in the Island from the Tuticorin coast in the early 1900s. Coming from a family of successful traders, Stanislaus Fernando got interested in Kurunegala politics in the 1960s and was the Deputy Mayor of Kurunegala for 12 years and Mayor of the town for two years in the early 1990s. He and his wife Maureen had three sons. One of them was Johnston Xavier Fernando, who followed his father in the business and then into politics in the Northwest Province. He is today one of the youngest Members of Parliament and, at 36, Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs. He is seen, on facing page, bottom, speaking to Sri Lanka's strike bowler Muttiah Muralitharan, after the off-spinner had captured his 400th Test wicket during the series against Zimbabwe in 2002.

In the picture on facing page, top, yet another person of Indian origin is seen after being elected to high office. Al Haj Omar Z. Kamil (in dark suit) is seen being felicitated by the Memon Association after his election as the Mayor of Colombo in 1999.



Several women of Indian origin played a notable role in the social reformist and, even, political movements in Ceylon in the years before Independence at a time when women were expected to be demure and retiring and not seen championing causes from public platforms.

Pioneer amongst these women leaders was Meenakshi Ammal, the wife of Natesa Aiyar. Wherever he campaigned in the estates, urging the workers to rise, she sang the songs of Subramania Bharati as well as her own militant compositions inspired by the great Thamilakam poet-patriot, like the following:

Indian workers came here,
To develop Sri Lanka by their sweat.
Workers unite together now,
Look ahead with courage.
Long live labour unity
To win our rightful goals.

When the Bracegirdle affair became a national issue in the 1930s, Meenakshi Ammal, at a public meeting held on Galle Face Green in Colombo in 1937, demanded the rescinding of the order for the deportation of Bracegirdle, a young Australian planter with Leftist leanings. She sang before thousands, narrating in song the Bracegirdle epic, and appealed to every Lankan to join in the fight for the liberation of the country from the thralldom of slavery. A collection of her songs on the estate workers was first published in 1940; the cover of the reprint, with Meenakshi Ammal on it, is featured on right.

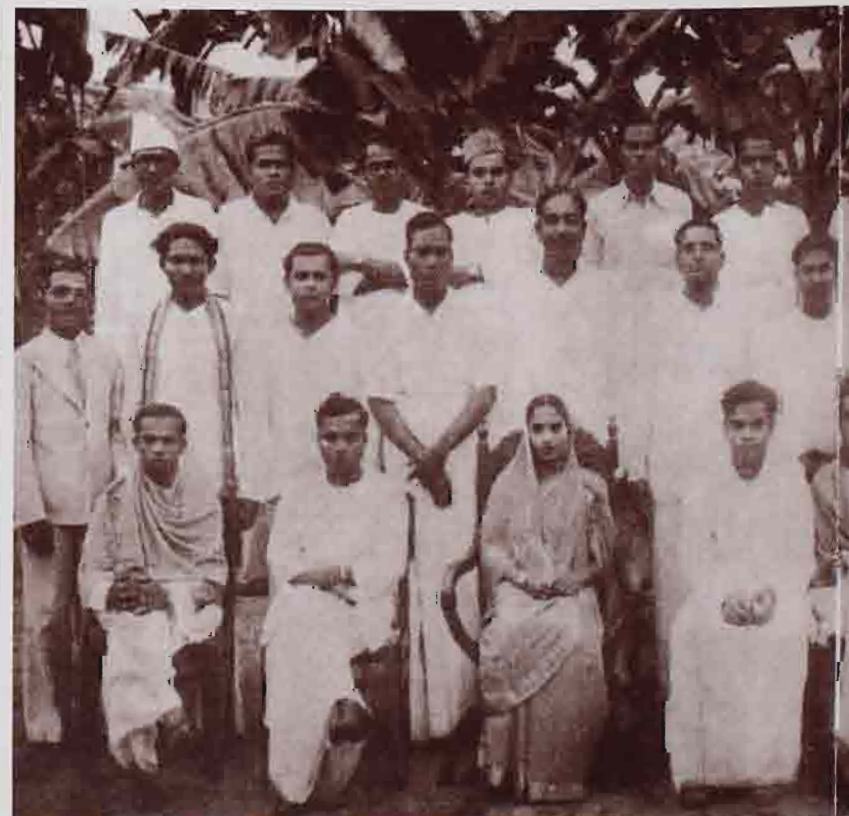


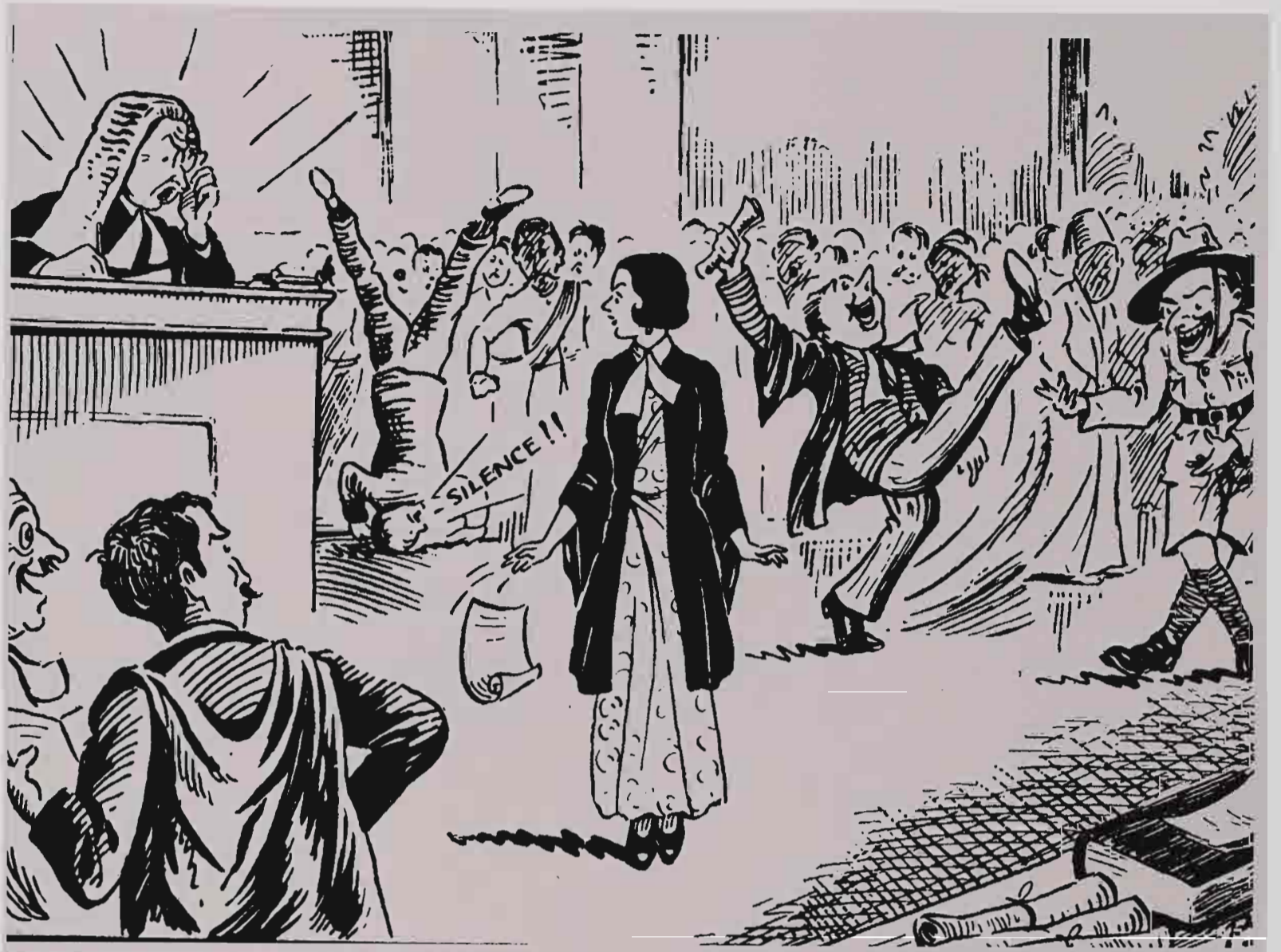
The Ceylon Women's Franchise Union was formed in 1927 shortly before the arrival of the Donoughmore Commission. The representatives of the Union met the Commission on January 11, 1928, and amongst them was its Joint-Secretary Dr. Nalamma Satyavagiswara Aiyar (standing third from left, bottom row, extreme left). Her husband, from South India, was a colleague of Natesa Aiyar and active in the trade union movement in the plantations. She, a Ceylon Tamil and the first Tamil woman to practise medicine in the Island, had studied in Madras and joined her husband in his trade union work in the estates. The

Women's Franchise Union, first inspired by Indian women political leaders like Sarojini Naidu (who visited Ceylon in 1923) and Kamaladevi Chattopadyaya (who visited Ceylon in 1931), was responsible for Ceylon becoming the first British colony to achieve universal suffrage. One of the first two women who sought to contest at the first elections held under universal suffrage on June 13, 1931, was Leclavati Aserappa (right). Both of them withdrew from the contest when it was ruled that they could not contest as their husbands were government servants.

Mrs. Aserappa, born Sreenivasan in Madras and educated there, was influenced by the Gandhian movement. On coming to Ceylon after marrying Dr. C.V. Aserappa, she was, from the beginning, involved with various local women's associations. In

1932, she was the President of the Women's Political Union (below, left, seated seventh from left) and represented it and the Franchise Union in discussions with the Ceylon National Congress. Active in Theatre too, she is seen in the picture below, right, standing with crown, on the occasion of the visit of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his wife, with their daughter Indira and Kamaladevi Chattopadyaya to Ceylon in 1931, when they were entertained by Kalalaya. Also in the picture is Dr. Nalamma Satyavagiswara Aiyar (seated second from right).





Amongst other women pioneers was, above, Avabhai Mehta, a Parsi, who was the first woman lawyer to practise in Ceylon. This cartoon, lampooning the landmark event, appeared in October 1933, soon after she took her oaths.

Bottom row, centre, Mrs. Ayesha Rauf, a Deputy Mayor of Colombo and a Ceylon Indian Congress stalwart whose origins were in Kerala, with a group of Malayalee political activists in Ceylon. Seated left to right are C. Muthu, Kalathil Madhavan, M. A. Nair and K. C. S. Adiyodi. Standing behind Mrs. Rauf is K. C. Abdul Cader.

Bottom row, right, a picture taken on the occasion of the members of the Working Committee of the Ceylon Indian Congress hosting Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru during his visit to Ceylon in 1950. Standing behind Jawaharlal Nehru are his daughter Indira and, to her left, Sivapakiam Kumaravel (also in inset), the daughter of trade unionist N. M. Palanisamy, standing extreme right in second row. The first and only woman member of the Ceylon Indian Congress Working Committee in its early years, she founded the Ceylon Indian Women's Association (Mathar Sangam) in the plantations in 1941 and the Tamil Women's Association in 1965. She was the founder editor of *Women's World and Mangai*, as well as author of several books. Her focus was on education for the plantation workers and she had hoped the funds with the Congress as well as the temples in the area would be utilised for this purpose, particularly to establish a University in the plantation area.





Another woman leader of Indian origin was Sarojini Ramanujam, wife of Ceylon Indian Congress trade unionist Desikar Ramanujam. A doctor, she worked amongst the plantation poor in the Kandy area and took an active role in the welfare activities of the Congress. She is seen on left with Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, right in picture, in Kandy.

A few women of Indian origin have run for election in Lanka at various times. One of them was Mrs. Hadiya Gaffar Sattar (on right), a Memon, who contested a Parliamentary seat (Negombo) in 2001. She is kin of Haji Abdul Karim Haji Omar.

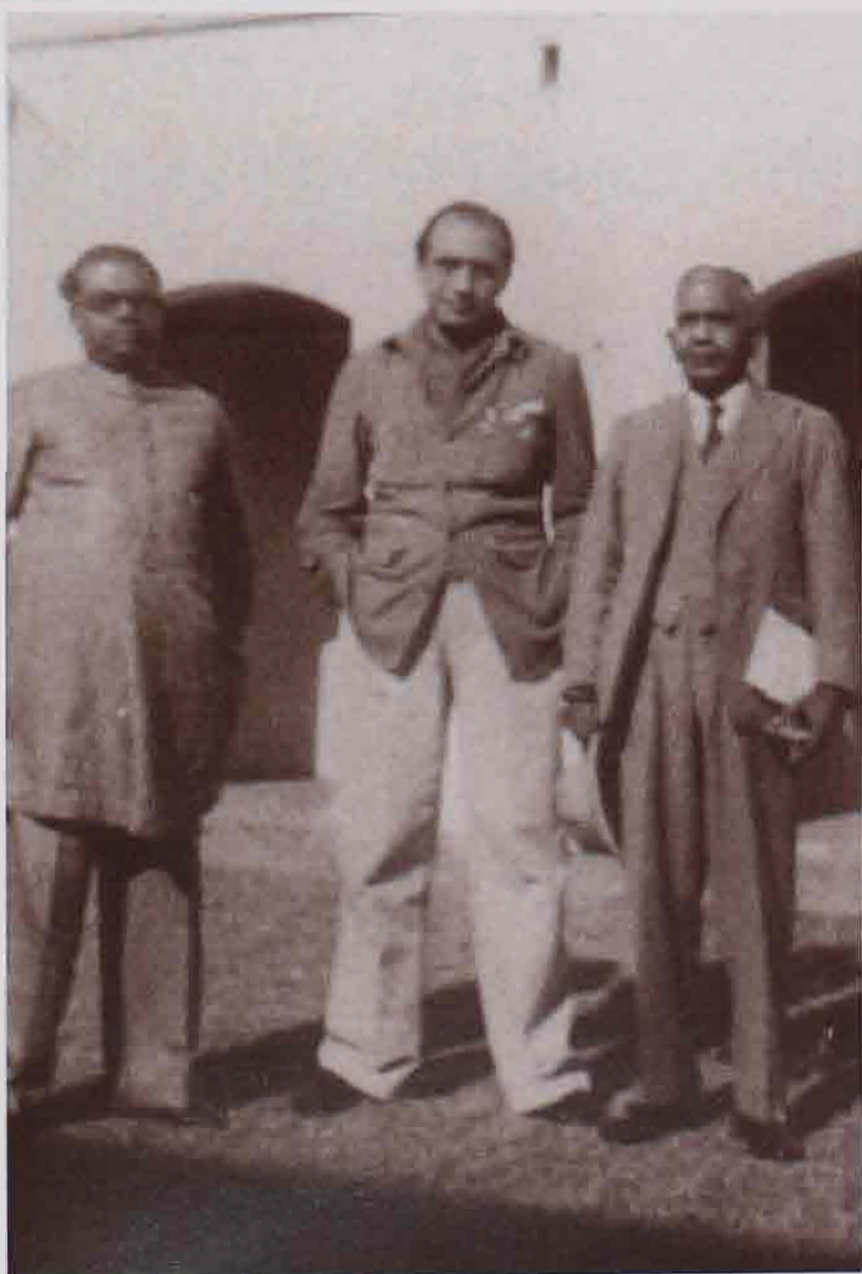
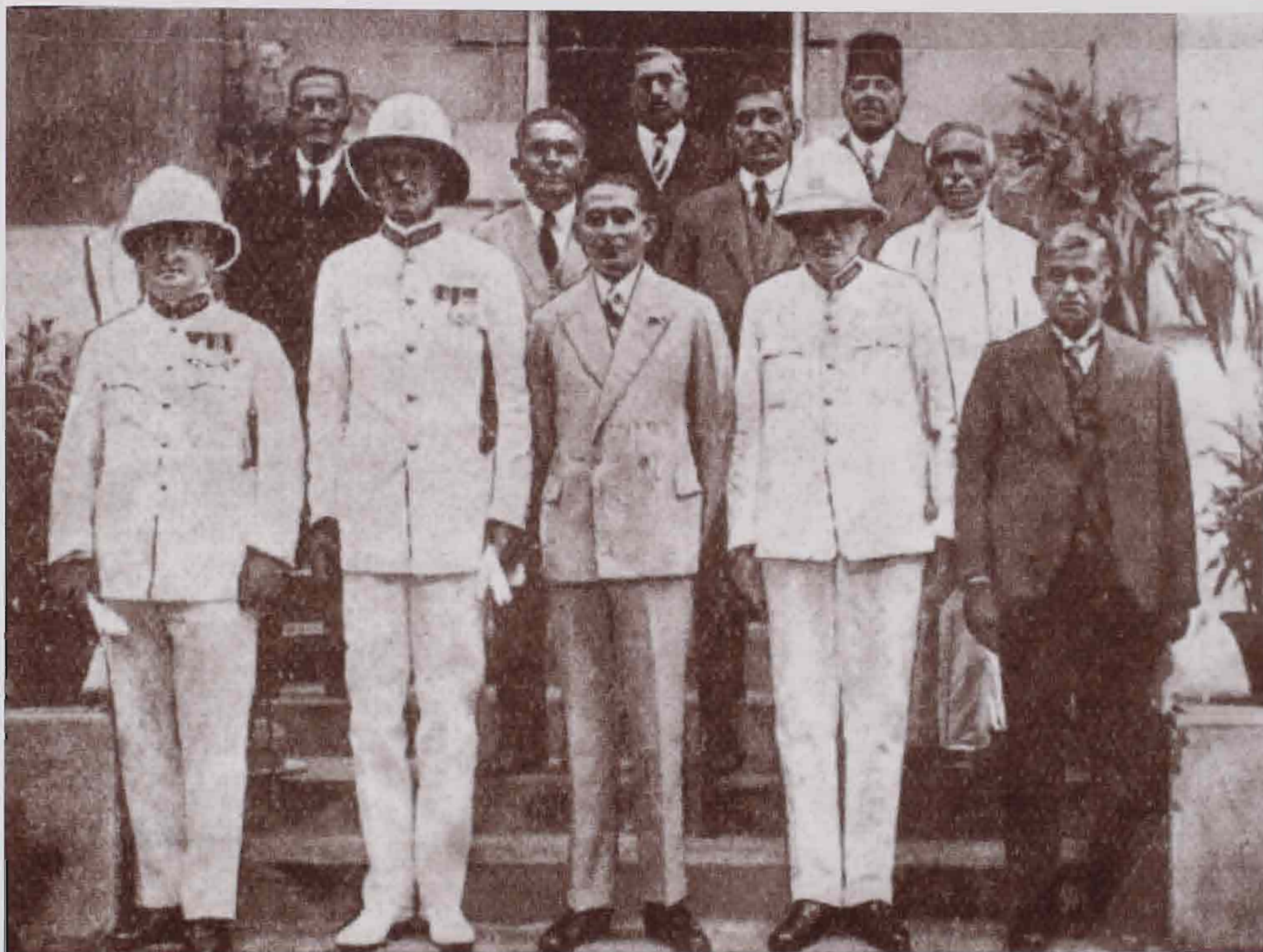


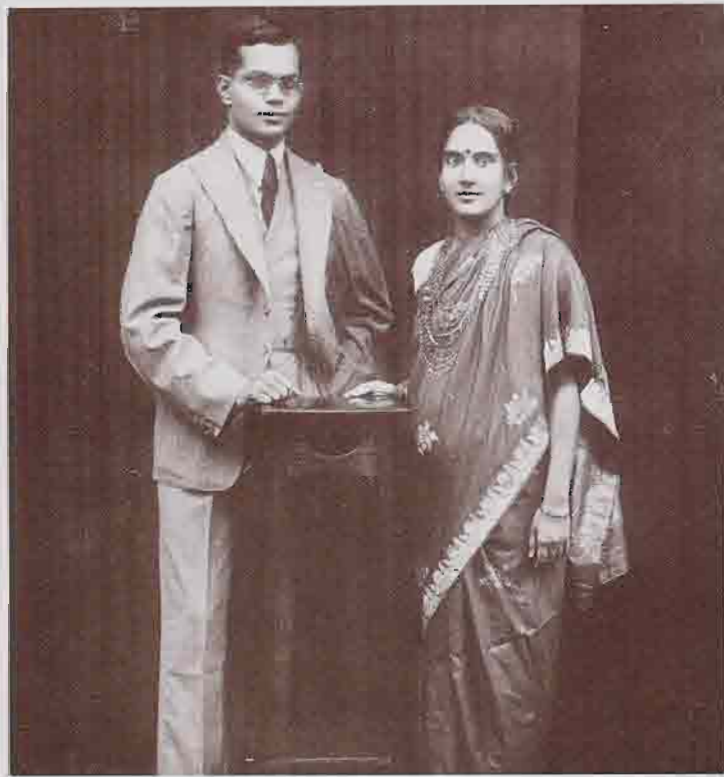
Several women of Indian origin have played active roles in groups focused on social service and cultural activities. One of the newest such organisations is the SAARC Women's Association, women from the SAARC countries in each of the seven SAARC nations banding together for such activities and to interact with women in other SAARC countries. The 30-member Sri Lanka chapter elected Prabha Nair Nagalingam, a former President of the Kerala Samajam (standing on right, red saree, picture, below, left), its Project Secretary in 2001. At extreme left is Mano Muthukrishna, whose mother was Maharashtrian and whose father was closely associated with Natesa Aiyar. She is the founder President of the Association whose active members include Sunitha Jiwatram (Sindhi, sixth from left and partly hidden) and Madhuri Mody (Gujarati, extreme right, yellow saree).

On facing page are pictures of Periannan Sundaram, better known as Peri Sundaram, the first of the people of Indian origin from the hill-country to play a major role in the national scene in Lanka. Peri Sundaram, son of a Head Kangany, was the first of the plantation Tamils to study in England, graduating from Cambridge and being called to the Bar in London. A founder member of the Ceylon National Congress and founder Secretary of the Workers' Welfare League founded in 1919 as the first wide-based labour association in the Island, he was, in 1931, elected to the first State Council of Ceylon after the Donoughmore Commission reforms. He served as the first Ceylonese Minister for Labour, Industry and Commerce, from 1931 to 1936. During his tenure, he introduced the Workmen's Compensation and the Trade Union Ordinances, the latter giving workers the right to join their own organisations and providing legal immunity for those participating in trade union activities. He also recommended the establishment of the Bank of Ceylon. In the late 1930s, he grew closer to the Ceylon Indian Congress and in 1940 was elected its President as well as the first President of the Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union, the largest in the Island at the time, with 180,000 members. In 1947, he became a member of the Senate, the upper house, representing the Ceylon Indian Congress.

On the facing page, top, Peri Sundaram, second row, left, is seen with the first Council of Ministers in 1931. On left, bottom of page, Peri Sundaram with his Ceylon Indian Congress colleagues, S. Thondaman and A. Azeez in the 1940s. At bottom right, Peri Sundaram (standing second from right) with his family. His son Alageswaran, standing extreme left, became a doctor in the Royal Ceylon Air Force, another son, Manthri, a lawyer, was in the ILO and the third son, Jaya, was Sri Lanka's ambassador to Indonesia in the late 1990s. His wife Selavanatchiar (seated extreme left) was active in the women's movement in the plantations.







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FIRST DAY COVER



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I. X. PEREIRA



Jawaharlal Nehru's first long visit to the Island was in 1931, when he spent a month-long holiday after being advised by his doctors "to take some rest and go for a change". In the picture (on top of page), he is seen on the occasion of a felicitation organised in Kandy by George E. de Silva. Kamala Nehru is second to his left and Saraswathy (Mrs. K. P.S.) Menon third to his left. His daughter Indira stands behind him in a light-coloured saree. K. P.S. Menon, then Agent for the Government of India in Ceylon, headquartered in Kandy, is seen standing sixth from the right (in spectacles).

George E. de Silva, "Our George", was a founder member of the Ceylon National Congress and had been strongly influenced by the Indian National Movement. His wife, Agnes, led the campaign for women's suffrage in the Island.

The Government of India in 1922 appointed an Agent to look after the interests of Indians in Ceylon. In 1927, when the Minimum Wage Ordinance was passed, it was on the basis of calculations by the Indian Agent at the time, Ranganathan, who estimated the requirements of the Indian labour force. When the Act, in later years, progressively reduced the minimum wages, it was the new Indian Agent, K. P.S. Menon (1929 to 1934) (seen above with his wife Saraswathy) who ensured that wages were returned to what they should have been. Menon also campaigned for more schools in the estates and staunchly supported Natesa Aiyar's activities, thereby helping estate workers to be better recognised by the managements. This 1933 picture of the Menons was taken in a Kandy studio.





Several organisations played their part in developing a political consciousness amongst the people of Indian origin in the Island. One of them was the Ceylon Indian Association founded by Ignatius Xavier Pereira who came with his father F. X. Pereira from Tuticorin to Colombo in the early 1900s. In 1924, he was the first person of Indian origin to be elected to the Ceylon Legislative Council and, thereafter, championed the cause of the Indian workers in the Council. In 1931, he was nominated Indian representative in the new State Council and continued in this role till Independence. The first day cover and a stamp (facing page, second row, right) were issued in April 1988 to commemorate his birth centenary.

Another of the Indian groups active in the 1930s was the Servants of the Young India Society, an offshoot of the Travancore-based Bharatha Yuvajana Seva Sangam started in 1931 to campaign for temple entry and which, in later years, grew closer to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, such as the advocacy of khaddar and temperance. In Ceylon, the members of the movement were closely associated with the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and, in 1939, they welcomed A. K. Gopalan (garlanded, in the picture below). Members of the Society, wearing khaddar and Gandhi caps, used to go around Colombo selling khaddar and the Society's newspaper and, in 1938, started the Hindi Prachar Sabha to teach the language. Congress Socialist Gopalan later became a member of the Communist Party of India.

Below, right, another all-Malayalee society, the Meherali Youth League named after Yusuf Meherali, a Congress Socialist, like Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia and A. K. Gopalan. Lohia is seen seated (fourth from left) with members of the League during his visit to Colombo in the 1930s.

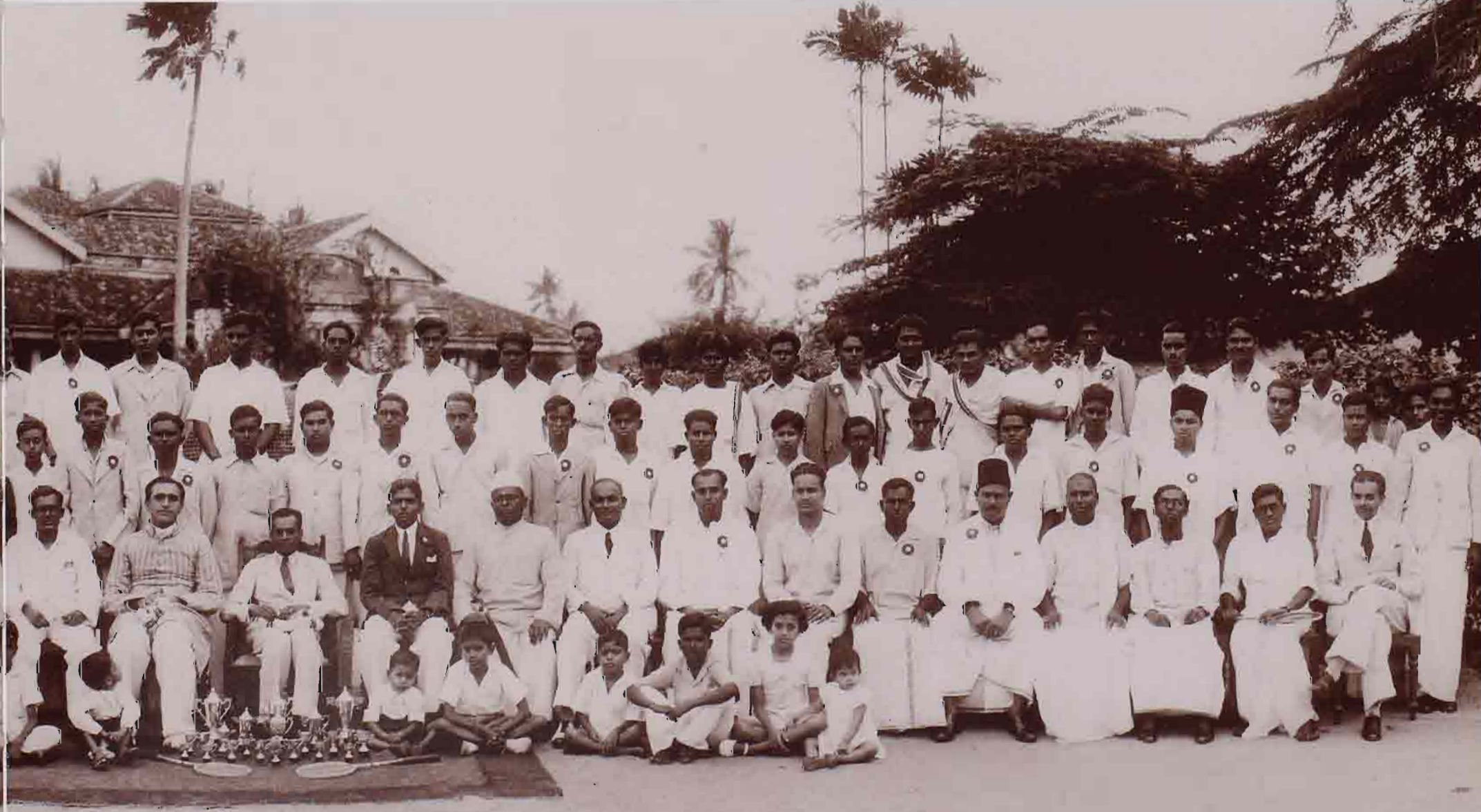
These associations were among 16 Indian associations in the Island that differed with the outlook of the Ceylon Indian Association and met in the old Kathiresan

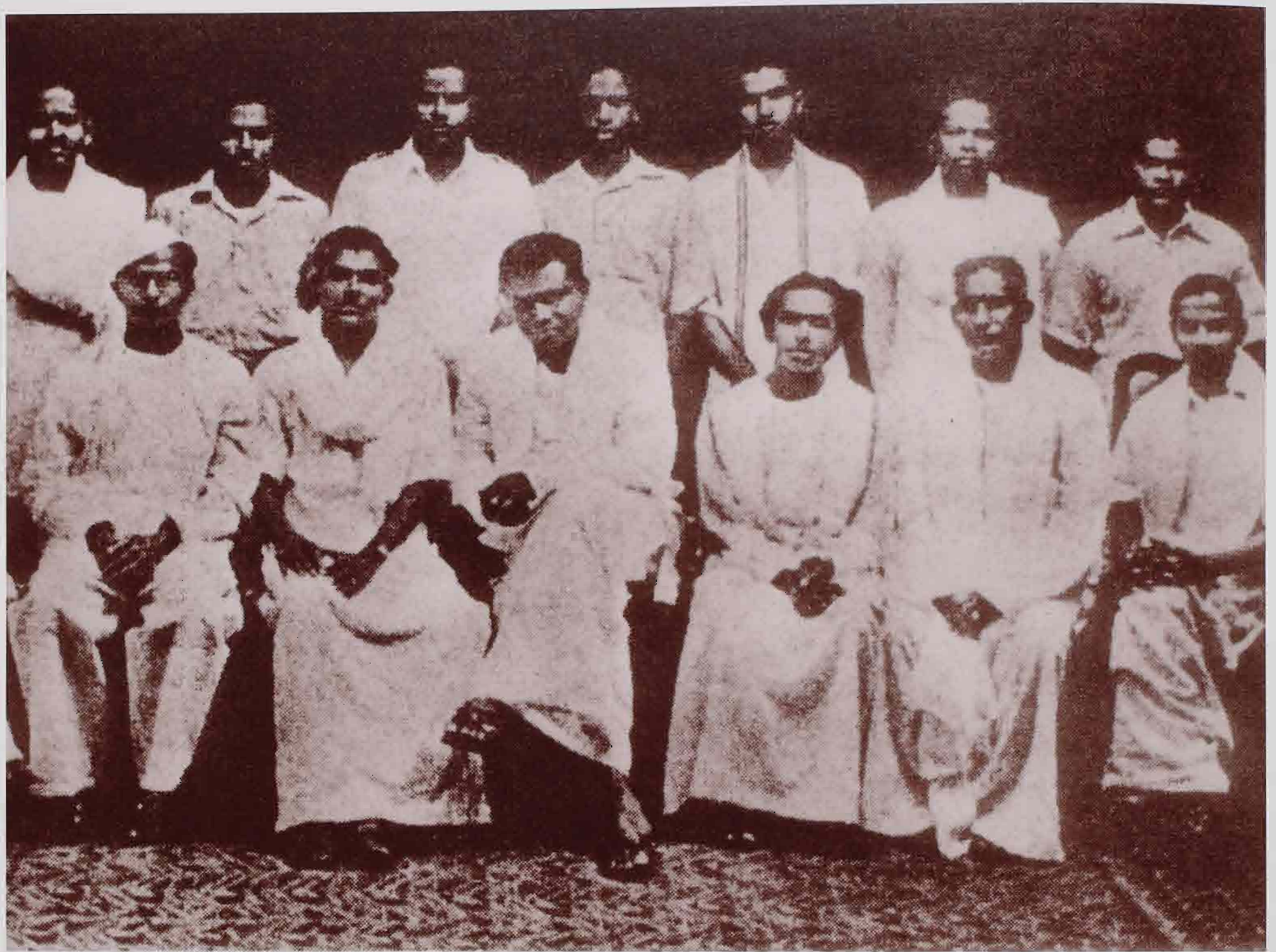
Temple, Bambalapitiya, in July 1939 under the chairmanship of K. Satyavagiswara Aiyar to do something about their differences. At this meeting, M. Subbiah, then Deputy Mayor of Colombo, was elected the President of the Ceylon Indian Congress, the organisation which the attending associations agreed to form. Abdul Azeez was elected the General Secretary and S. Rm. Valliappa Chettiar Treasurer with Satyavagiswara Iyer and Natesa Aiyar as members of the Constitution Committee and, with Sp. Vythialingam, also members of the Executive Committee. Vythialingam was the other person of



Indian origin from the hill-country elected to the first State Council in 1931 with Peri Sundaram. In his presidential address, Subbiah said, "The Ceylonese and the Indian community are children of Mother India, though a few centuries stand between the waves of immigration which brought all of us here. We have confidence in the Ceylonese, in their goodwill towards us."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru arrived in Colombo later that month to help resolve the differences between the Indian groups and, on his suggestion, there was formed a united Ceylon Indian Congress. V. Rm. Letchumanan Chettiar was elected its President and A. Azeez and H. M. Desai, its Secretaries. In the picture at bottom, taken at an Indian get-together in Ratnapura under the banner of a pro-Indian Congress group called the Indian Seva Sangam, with M. Subbiah presiding and A. Azeez at his right, the need for the founding of a Ceylon Indian Congress was first discussed in 1938. This group represented several associations who felt the Ceylon Indian Association was not doing enough to protect the interests of the Indian workforce in the Island. The picture in inset is of M. Subbiah in 1938.



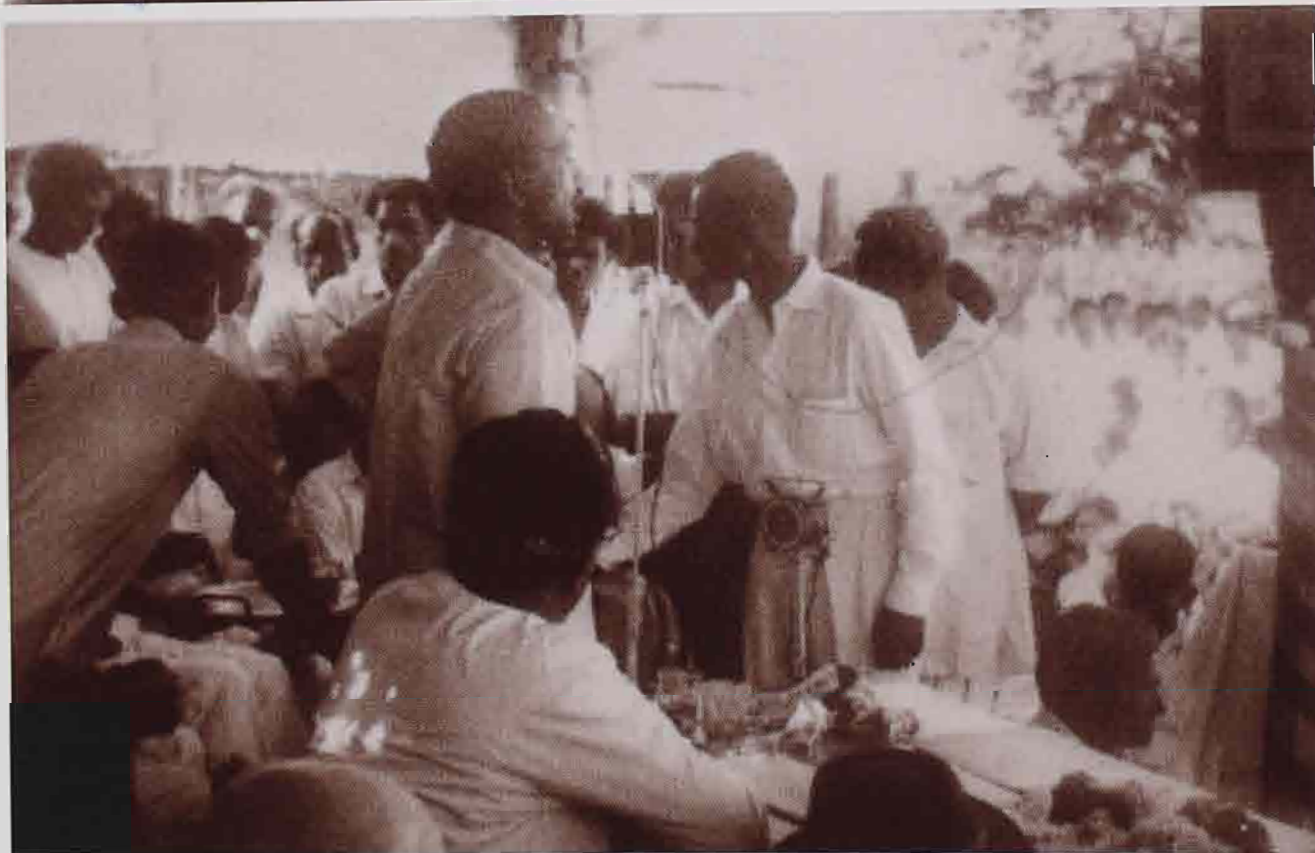
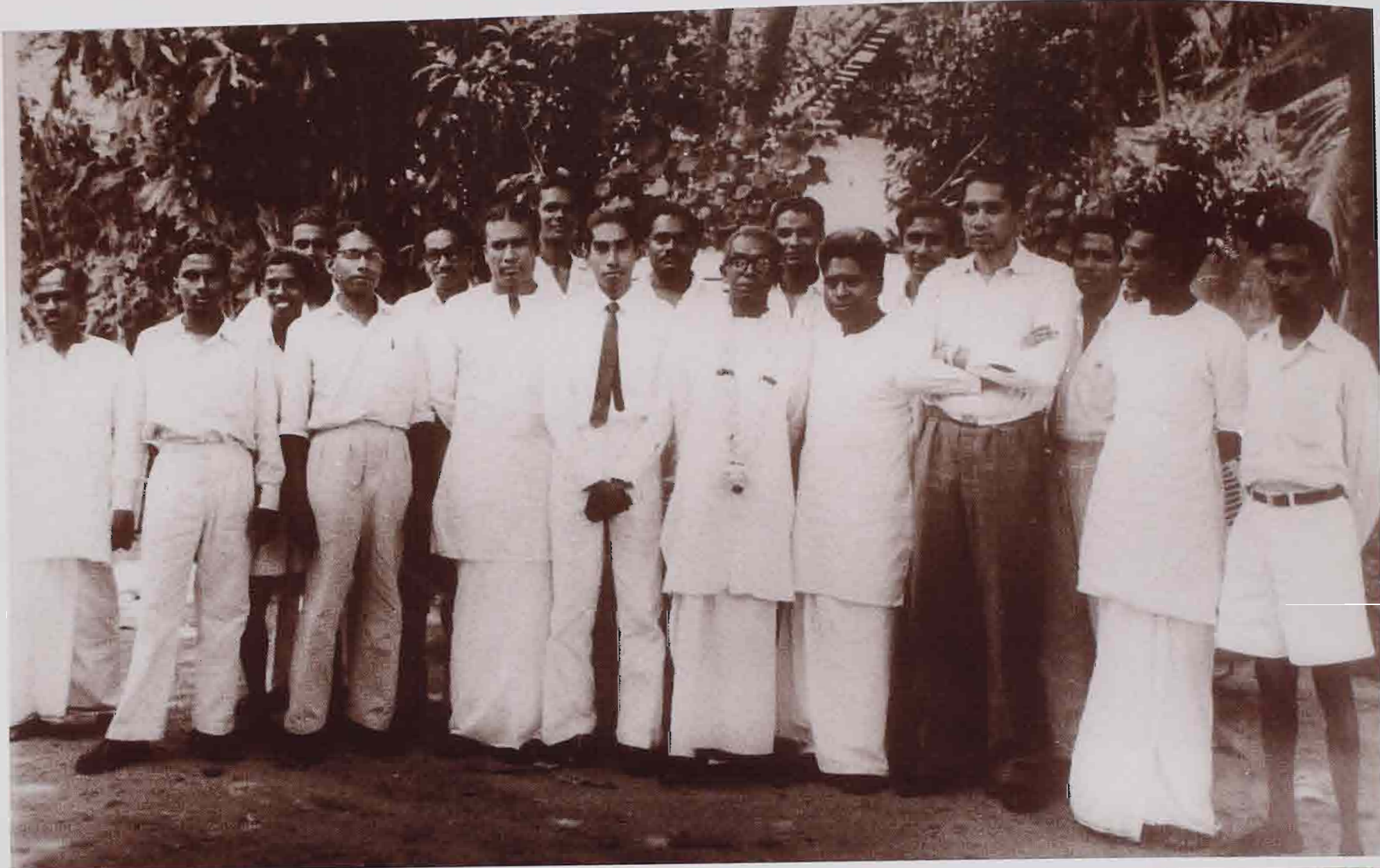


The first annual conference of the Ceylon Indian Congress, later to be known as Ceylon Workers' Congress, was held in September 1940 in Gampola, the conference venue being named Nehru Nagar. The Reception Committee for the Congress (facing page, top) was headed by S. Thondaman (seated fourth from left), who was assisted by K. Rajalingam and S. Sockkalingam Chettiar. Thondaman's welcome speech on the occasion was his maiden political speech.

The 5th Annual Session of the Ceylon Indian Congress, held in Motha Nagar, Hatton in 1944, was attended by C. Rajagopalachari, then leading the Congress in the Madras Presidency. Rajagopalachari in shawl (on facing page, bottom) is seen with the then President of the Congress, Abdul Azeez, to his left, and other Committee members, including Sp. Vythialingam and N. P. Sinnayya, the Joint Secretaries, and S. Rm. Valliappa Chettiar, the Treasurer.

And so the years passed. The last Indian Agent in Kandy was V. V. Giri, later to become President of India. On August 15, 1947, he announced the Independence of India, addressing several people of Indian origin at his residence (below). Six months later, Ceylon was to become an independent nation too and the role of the Ceylon Indian Congress began to change. Shortly afterwards, he became the first High Commissioner for India in Ceylon.





Above, left, K. Kumaravel, one of the Ceylon Indian Congress members of the first Parliament and a son-in-law of S. Thondaman. He was a Gandhian and a staunch Sairvite who also spread the word of God amongst the estate workers.

Another of the Ceylon Indian Congress members of the first Parliament was Desikar Ramanujam, above, right, who came to Ceylon in the 1930s, on the advice of Thiru Vi Ka, to join Natesa Aiyar's Desa Bakthan. In 1943, he was elected to the Kandy Municipality and, in 1946, became the first person of recent Indian origin to become Deputy Mayor of Kandy. Trade unionist, journalist and translator, he also spent some time as an English teacher at Dharmaraja College, Kandy.

In the elections to the first Parliament in 1947, seven persons from the Ceylon Indian Congress and one Independent were elected to represent the interests of the Indian Tamils in the plantation country. The Ceylon Indian Congress Members of Parliament were George R. Motha, K. Rajalingam, D. Ramanujam, K. Kumaravel, S. M. Subbiah, C. V. Velupillai and S. Thondaman, the Independent was K. V. Natarajan.

In the picture on top, the 'Malainattu Gandhi', K. Rajalingam (garlanded), is seen with his supporters after his victory. Rajalingam, a workers' representative in the Gandhian tradition, died in 1963. V.K. Vellayan, a maverick trade unionist of the Ceylon Indian Congress, delivered the funeral oration (above), even though he had by then left the Congress to start his National Labour Front. Vellayan, the son of Head Kangany Kalimuthu of Bogawantalawa, had a public school background and was a splendid sportsman at Trinity College; he, however, chose trade unionism in preference to the opportunity of being a dorai on a tea estate. An aggressive trade unionist, estate workers owe much of their benefits, such as compensation when the Maskeliya dam was being built, pension rights, leisure privileges and maternity benefits, to his representing them in courts and before labour tribunals.



Several members of the Ceylon Indian Congress represented Sri Lanka at various international trade union conferences. Above, a group of Ceylon representatives at the International Conference of Free Trade Unions in the 1940s being seen off by S. Thondaman (second from left) and K. Rajalingam (second from right). The members of the delegation, all garlanded, were, from, right to left, C. V. Velupillai, D. Ramanujam, K. G. S. Nair and V. K. Vellayan.

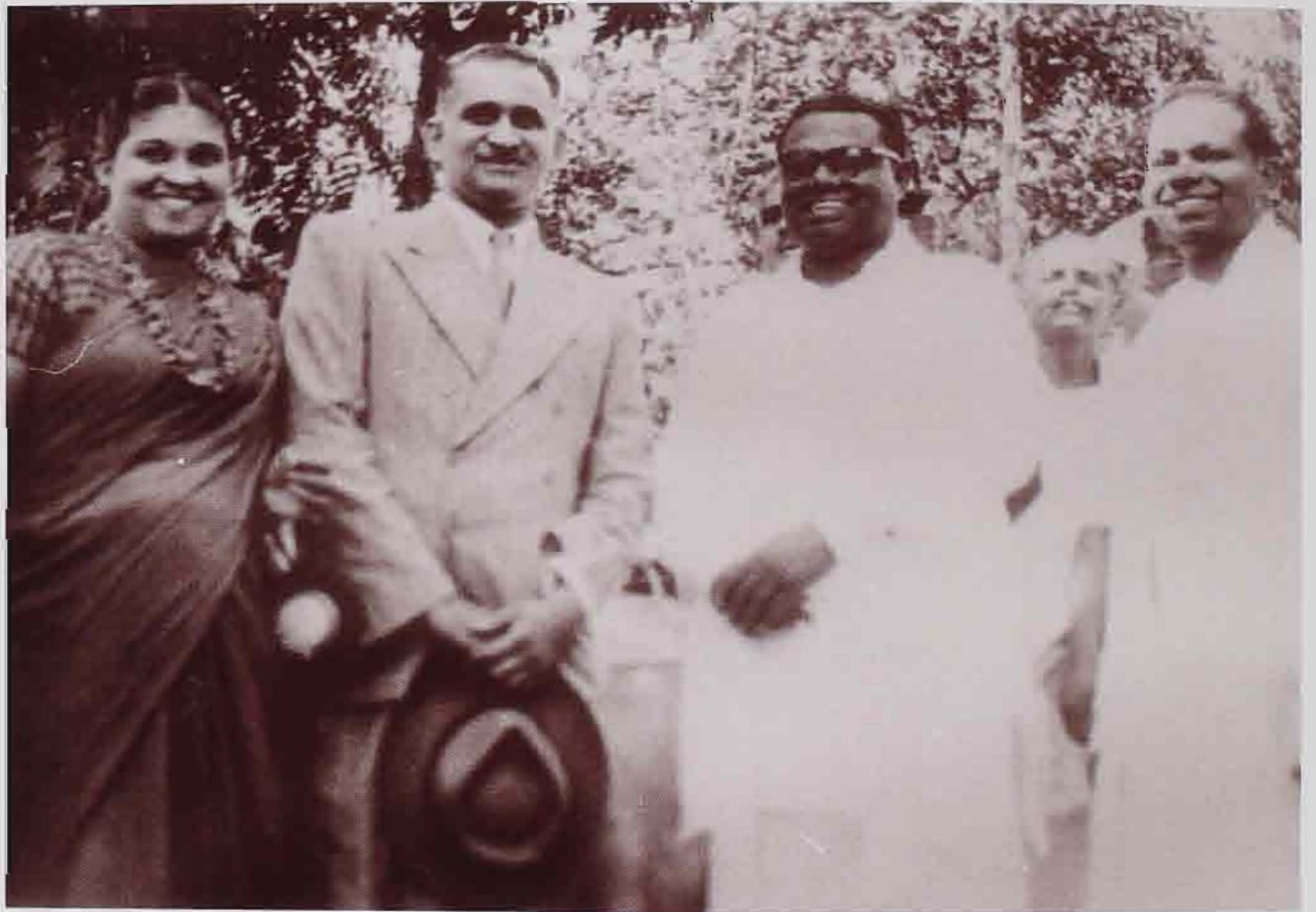
In the picture on right, seen at an international labour convention in the Soviet Union in 1950, representing the Ceylon Indian Congress, were, (third, fourth and second from right) V. K. Vellayan, and K. G. S. Nair and K. Suppiah, both Joint Secretaries of the Ceylon Indian Congress. Nair, who came to Ceylon in the 1940s to work in a tailoring establishment in the hill-country, learnt Tamil, English and Sinhalese, and became a trade union stalwart of the Ceylon Indian Congress, before quitting the party in 1955 to join hands with Abdul Azeez to establish the Democratic Workers' Congress.





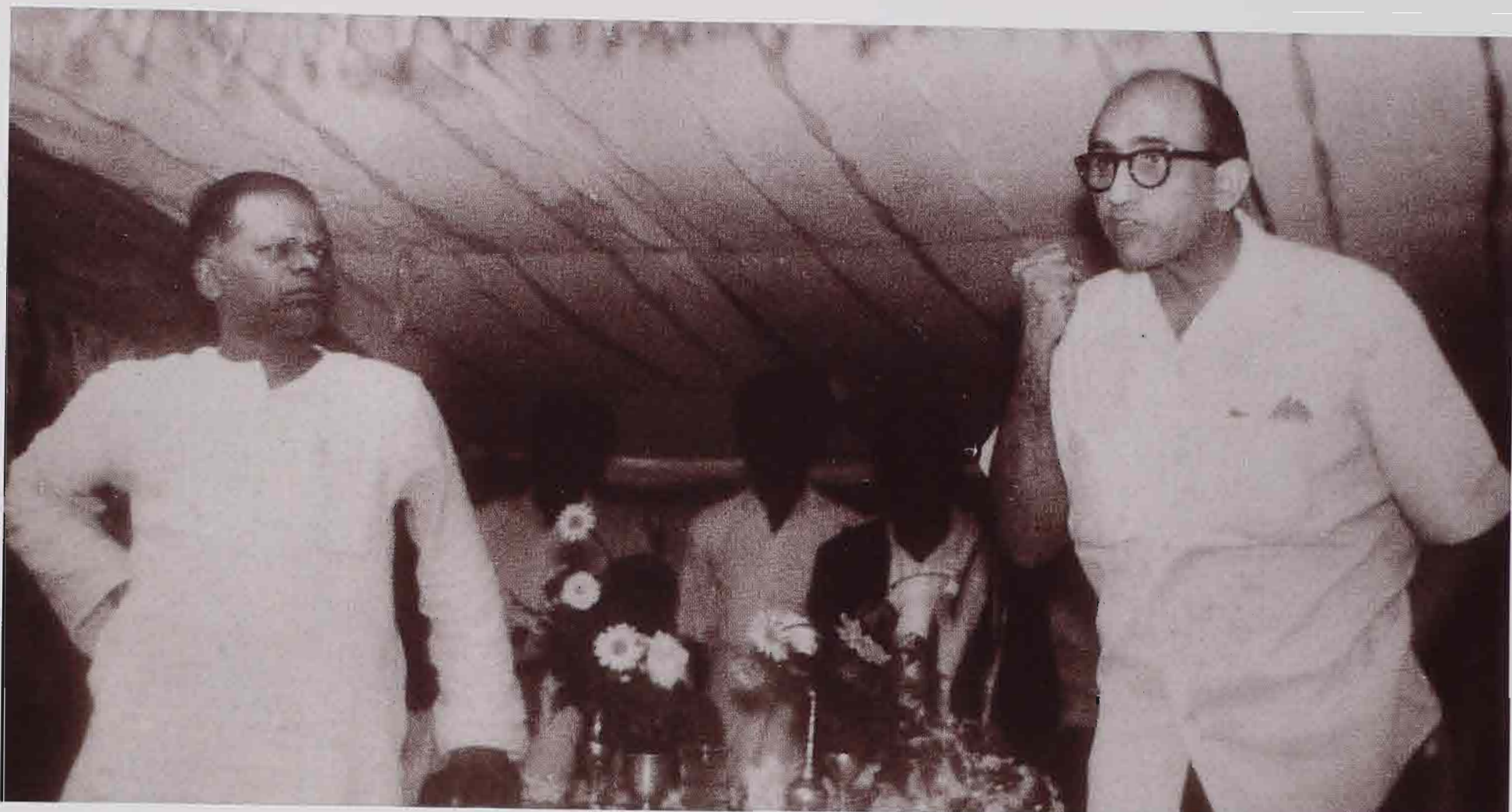
At the dawn of Independence, the Indian Tamils and a much smaller number of others of recent Indian origin in the Island numbered close to 1.5 million. The bulk of them were estate workers and it was their cause that Savumiamoorthy Thondaman espoused, first playing a low-key role when the Ceylon Indian Congress was formed in 1939 and gradually playing a greater role after he was elected President in 1945 for the first time. It was a role that Thondaman was not only to make a larger-than-life one, that had him crowned 'The King of Hills', but was to develop into ministerial roles that contributed significantly to the development of modern Sri Lanka.

Thondaman, born in 1913 to Head Kangany Karuppiah who had become the owner of the Wavendon Estate in Ramboda, came to Ceylon as an 11-year-old and grew up as a prosperous young planter. Influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's role in the Indian freedom struggle and Jawaharlal Nehru's advice when he midwifed the Ceylon Indian Congress, Thondaman began to take a greater interest in the cause of the estate workers of the Island. Elected to the first Parliament of Independent Ceylon in 1947, he soon found himself out of office when legislation in 1948 and 1949 deprived the Indian Tamil community of citizenship and the franchise they had enjoyed from the time of Donoughmore Commission in 1939. In 1950, the Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union, that Thondaman helped to found, was re-named the Ceylon Workers' Congress and, in time, the Ceylon Indian Congress became the political wing of the Ceylon Workers' Congress. Today, both political and trade union wings are under the umbrella name Ceylon Workers' Congress. His campaign to obtain voting rights for the disenfranchised electors of Indian origin began with a Gandhian satyagraha that he and his fellow Ceylon Indian Congress members launched in April 1952. The satyagrahi-s, thousands in number, fasted from one to five days on the doorstep of the Prime Minister's office, for a period of 142 days.



The picture on top shows, from left to right, C. V. Velupillai, A. Azeez, S. Thondaman and K. Rajalingam together with other satyagrahi-s during the first days of the fast.

Thondaman, who was President of the Ceylon Indian Congress from 1945-48, was elected President again in 1953 and is seen above after his election. To his left is K. Suppiah, a Secretary of the Congress. They are seen with R. E. Jayatilleke, Chairman, Urban Council, Nawalapitiya, and Mrs. Jayatilleke.

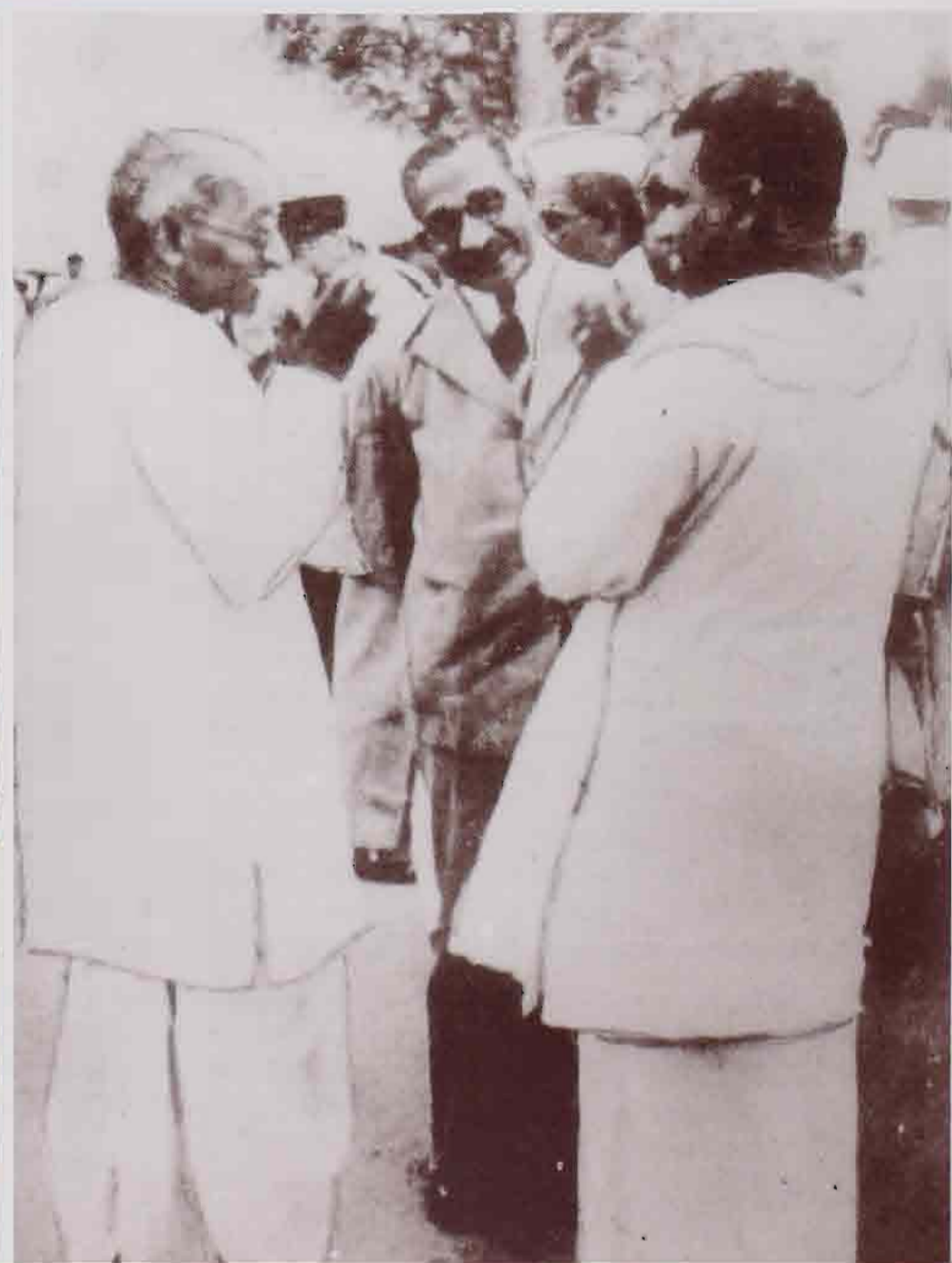
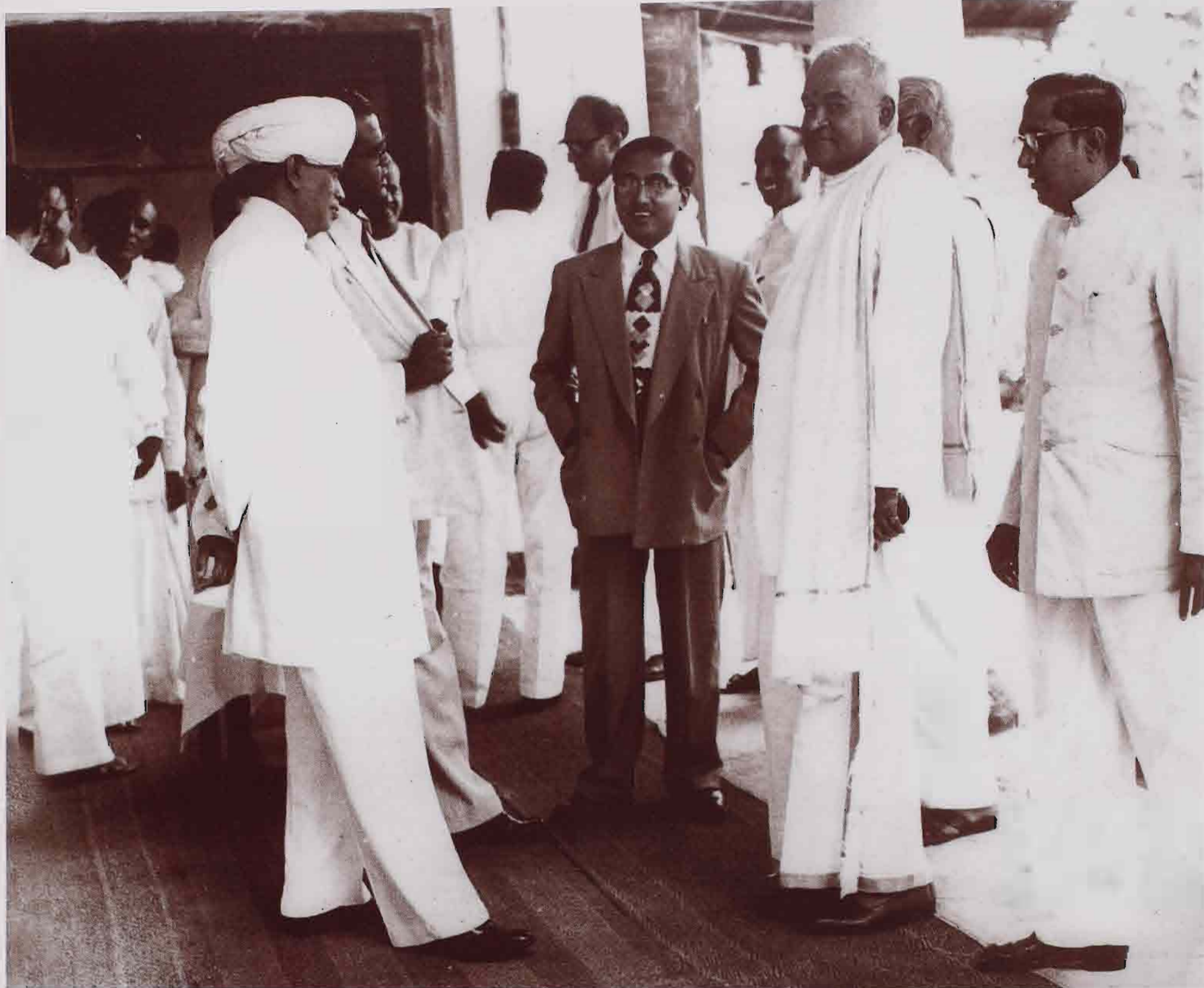


One of the founders of the first Ceylon Indian Congress was Porbandar-born Abdul Azeez (Reimoo) who arrived from India in 1935 to join his father's business in Colombo. A student leader in India who had participated in the freedom movement, Azeez, strongly influenced by Natesa Aiyar, began to take an interest in the future of Indian workers in Ceylon and helped form the first Ceylon Indian Congress. In 1942, he succeeded Letchumanan Chettiar as President of the Congress and served as its leader till 1944 and again in 1948-49. Despite their differences, both Azeez and Thondaman worked closely together till 1955 when there came the parting of the ways, with Azeez forming the Democratic Workers' Congress in 1956.

Several Ceylon Workers' Congress leaders joined Azeez in the new, more Left-oriented party and one of them was K. Suppiah, on left, in the picture on top, seen with Azeez on the occasion of the 1958 Annual Sessions of the Democratic Workers' Congress in Colombo.

Also joining the Democratic Workers' Congress were K. G. S. Nair, C. V. Velupillai and, at a later stage, V. P. Ganesan, who was active in the Ceylon Workers' Congress trade union movement, following in the footsteps of his father Palanichamy, the Ceylon Indian Congress leader for the Kelani Valley region. V. P. Ganesan was later instrumental in leading a wing of the Democratic Workers' Congress which rejoined the Ceylon Workers' Congress. The Democratic Workers' Congress had earlier had a brief rapprochement with the Ceylon Workers' Congress in 1960, but that did not last long. Becoming a successful businessman in Colombo, Ganesan produced three Tamil films focussing on the lives of plantation workers and played the lead role in all of them. The picture above is of Ganesan and Thondaman when they negotiated the reunion in 1997, shortly before the 1998 General Election.

Above, right, Abdul Azeez's son Ashraf, who became President of the Azeez Foundation and General Secretary of the Azeez Democratic Workers' Congress, distributes biscuits to the children of plantation workers in 1997 on the occasion of the annual remembrance of his father's birthday, October 6th.



The many faces of S. Thondaman are seen on these two pages. On facing page:

- Top, Thondaman (extreme left, facing camera and partly hidden) on a visit to Jaffna in 1954 with a delegation that included Azeez (seen in profile, centre rear), P.P.R. (Peri) Subramaniam Chettiar (in dhoti), the founder of the Virakesari, and, to his left, his editor, K.V.S. Vas. They were greeted by S. Natesa Pillai, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs (turbaned). The Virakesari still has Indo-Lankan connections, the major shareholdings being with families of recent Indian origin long settled in the Island. The present directors are Deshamanya A. Y.S. Gnanam (Chairman), Kumar Nadesan (Managing Director), Hari Selvanathan, Mano Selvanathan (Alternate Director), K. Ravindran and K. Sounderarajan.
- In the 1950s, Thondaman, with his wife Kothai, are seen, bottom, left, with the Governor-General of Ceylon, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, and the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.
- Of the same period is the picture bottom, right, with Indian High Commissioner Gunderia watching C. Rajagopalachari and Thondaman exchange greetings.

Over the next twenty years, Thondaman bided his time, building his strength in the hill-country to a point where, from 1978 till his death in 1999, he not only became a Minister in successive Sri Lankan Governments, be they United National Party/Front or People's Alliance, but was very much the kingmaker. As Minister for Rural Industrial Development (1978), Minister for Livestock Development and Estate Infrastructure (1998), Minister for Tourism and Rural Development (1998), his contribution to Sri Lanka was as much as it had been to the people of the hill-country over the years. It was during this period that he would repeatedly say, as he was saying in the picture top, right, "We are all Sri Lankans". Of all the Presidents of Sri Lanka in whose cabinets he served, he was closest to President R. Premadasa (on right, with Mrs. Premadasa) who he felt for the first time "gave the Tamil plantation workers a place under the sun in many ways".

In 1990, the Ceylon Workers' Congress celebrated its golden jubilee in Hatton (below) and thousands turned up to hear Thondaman address them and remind them that, for all of them, "people of recent Indian origin, Ceylon was their home, their country".



From the first days of the Senate, when a bicameral legislature was established in 1946 as an outcome of the Soulbury Commission, there has been at least one person of recent Indian origin in the Senate, the first to represent the Indian interest in the Upper House being Peri Sundaram, who, from 1946 till his death in 1957, was a Senator, the first from the plantations. He was also the Deputy President of the Senate and the Leader of the Opposition in it.



Other early senators of Indian origin were Sir Donatus Victoria (left), Kurban Adamaly (on right, with turban) and Doric de Souza (left, in picture at bottom).

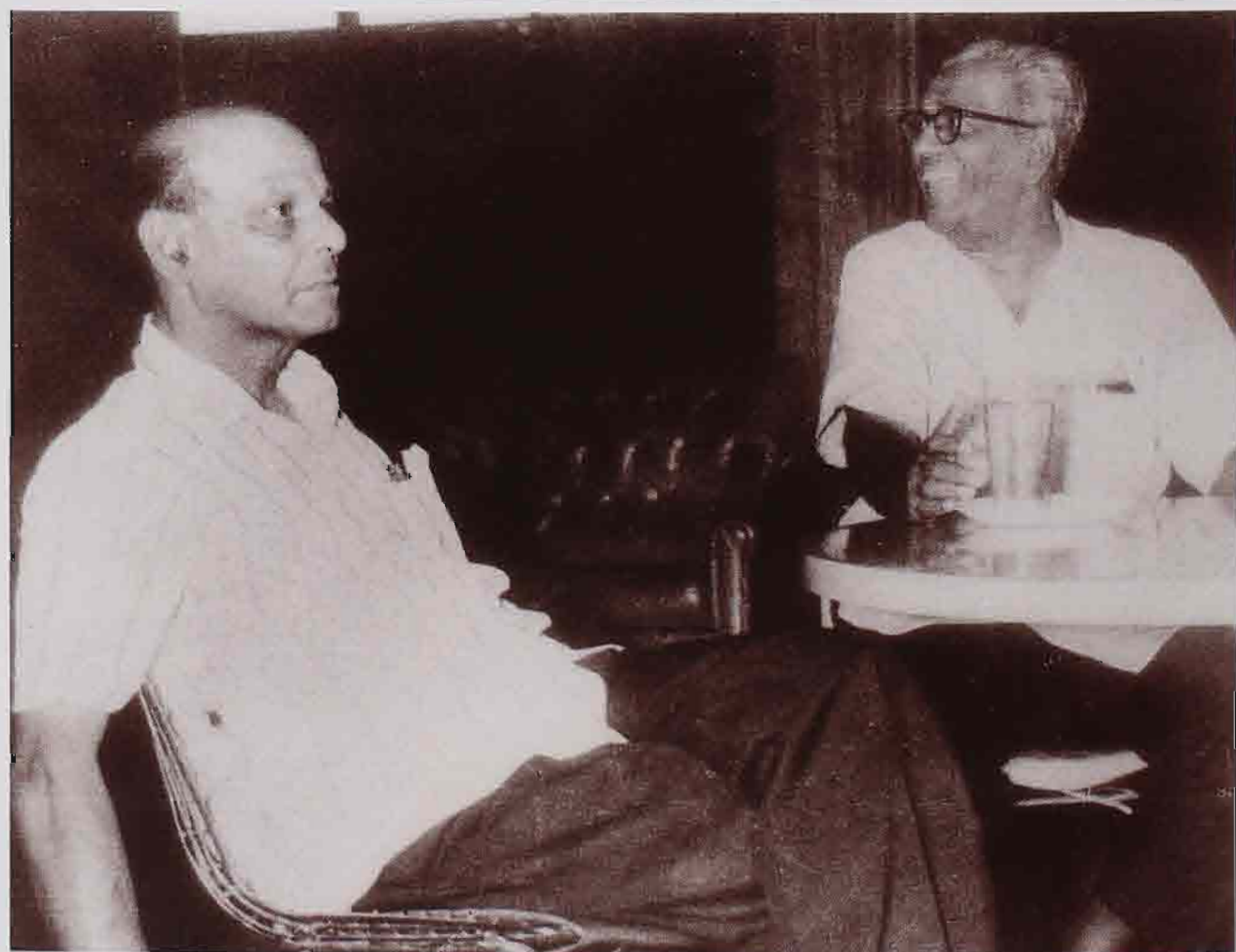
Sir Donatus Victoria, from the Tuticorin coast, was a successful businessman who owned the Victoria Hotel opposite the Fort railway station and several up-market provision stores.

Victoria Stores, Kollupitiya, was a Colombo landmark in the years between the two Wars. Victoria's also ran the catering services on the Ceylon Government Railways for many years. Sir Donatus was a Senator from 1949 to 1955.

Kurban Hussain Adamaly, a member of one of the leading Borah families in Ceylon, was a Senator from 1955 till the Senate was abolished in 1971. He had been a municipal councillor in 1944 and 1947, winning the Bambalapitiya seat. His father, E. G. Adamaly, who owned more than 1000 acres of rubber in the early 1900s, was an Appointed Member for the plantations from 1920 to 1947 in the State Council.

Doric de Souza, a popular academician in the English Department of the University of Ceylon from the 1940s to the 1970s and Professor of English at the Kelaniya University, was a dedicated member of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. In the picture on right, he is seen in his role as Permanent Secretary to the Minister of Plantations Industry, fellow Sama Samajist Colvin R. de Silva (extreme right).

Doric de Souza was the younger son of Armand de Souza, who was a nephew of Dr. Lisboa Pinto and editor of the Morning Leader. Armand de Souza, was one of the founders of the literary associations, which in 1913 formed a Congress and which de Souza envisioned as a forerunner of a Ceylon National Congress. He called on the young men in the literary associations to shame the older generation into accelerating the advent of the National Congress. When the National Congress was formed, one of its founder members was Armand de Souza. Convinced that "the old days when strong cliques imposed their opinion upon silent masses around have gone", he in 1919 chaired the inaugural meeting of 700 railway workers which led to their unionisation and the strike of 1920. That inaugural meeting was addressed by Peri Sundaram in Tamil and C. M. Jacob in Malayalam. Doric de Souza followed in his father's footsteps, championing the cause of the workers.





More recent representation in Parliament by people of Indian origin was provided by those on the left, from top to bottom, M. S. Sellasamy, P.P. Devaraj and P. Chandrasekaran, all of them appointed Ministers in Sri Lankan Governments of the 1980s and 1990s.

— Sellasamy, born in an estate worker's family in Wattagoda, entered politics in the 1950s and became an active trade unionist in a short time. In 1963, he was elected as General Secretary of the Ceylon Workers' Congress and was later its Deputy President. He first entered Parliament in 1988, representing Colombo Central and was Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport. He is at present the Chairman of the Common Amenities Board under the Ministry of Housing and Plantation Infrastructure. His wife Vellammal is a member of the Western Provincial Council.

— P.P. Devaraj, second from left, is seen with Milinda Moragoda (third from left), Mano Ganesan, son of V.P. Ganesan (fourth from left) and Vallipuram (extreme right), trustee of the Sri Mayurapathy Temple, seeking the blessings of the Almighty after electoral victory. Devaraj, an active Ceylon Workers' Congress leader, is now the leader of a splinter group, the Ceylon Democratic Alliance. He was Deputy Minister of Hindu Affairs in 1988. Devaraj, a former Vice President of the Ceylon Workers' Congress, was elected to Parliament in 2000 on the United National Party national ticket, as was M. S. Sellasamy, who formed the Ceylon National Workers' Congress after his ouster from the Ceylon Workers' Congress.

— P. Chandrasekaran, from a trader's family in Talawakelle, entered politics as an active member of the Ceylon Workers' Congress. He parted ways with the Congress in 1989 and established his own trade union and political party, The Up-Country People's Front (Malaiyaha Makkal Munnani). In 1994, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Estate Infrastructure and Housing in the Chandrika Kumaratunga Government. He is here seen with President Chandrika Kumaratunga. In 2001 he was appointed Minister of Estate Infrastructure in Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe's United National Front Government.

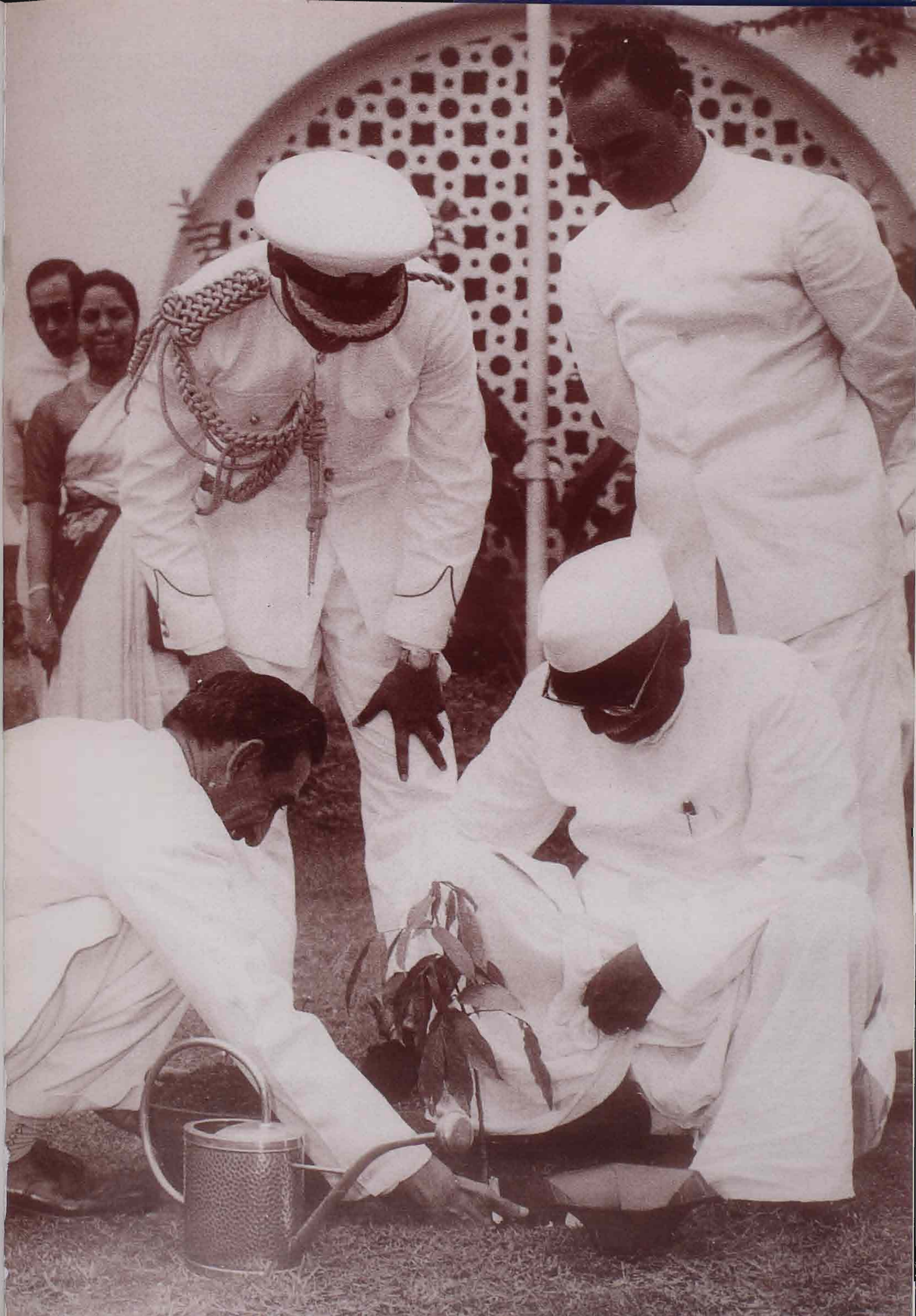


The Ceylon Workers' Congress is today led by Arumugam Thondaman, the grandson of Savumiamoorthy Thondaman. He was inducted into plantation politics by his grandfather in 1991 and succeeded M. S. Sellasamy as the General Secretary of the Congress. Thereafter, he not only became a politician but was seen as his grandfather's heir. Elected to Parliament in 1994, he succeeded to his grandfather's ministerial portfolio, Estate Infrastructure and Rural Development, as well as the Presidency of the Ceylon Workers' Congress, when 'The King of the Hills' passed away in 1999. He is today Minister of Housing and Plantations Infrastructure in the United National Front Government and continues to lead the Ceylon Workers' Congress, still the biggest trade union and political party in the plantation sector. He is seen in the picture on left with the Ven. Rambukwella Sri Vipakshi Mahanayake Thero, head of the Malwatte Chapter, at the Mahanayake's residence in Kandy in 2002.

On bottom, left, is another Minister of recent Indian origin, Finance Minister Kairshasp Nariman Choksy, here seen assuming duties in Colombo in December 2001. Standing behind him are his wife and, to her left, his son, Vishvasp K. Choksy, a lawyer like his father and grandfather, N. K. Choksy. This Parsi family has lived in Ceylon for over a century and has from Independence played significant roles in public life in the Island. Finance Minister Choksy, a Member of Parliament since 1989, was a Sri Lankan delegate to the United Nations General Assembly in 1986 and Minister of Constitutional and State Affairs in 1993-94.



On facing page is a picture symbolising the continuing Indo-Sri Lankan relationship and in the pages that follow are pictures of this partnership from the pages of recent history. A permanent contribution to both countries has been the Ashoka tree today standing tall and spread wide in front of the portico at the entrance to India House on Reid Avenue in Colombo. The first occupants of India House were Y. D. Gundevia and Rokshi Gundevia during their first tenure in 1957-60. Y. D. Gundevia and daughter Rapti were responsible for creating the beautiful garden of India House and, in it, on June 21, 1951, the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, planted an Ashoka sapling during his official visit. That tree has today grown tall and expansive (as seen in the picture on page iv) like the relationship between the two countries. In the picture, the President, crouching on right, watches as green-fingered High Commissioner Gundevia adds the finishing touches to the planting ceremony.

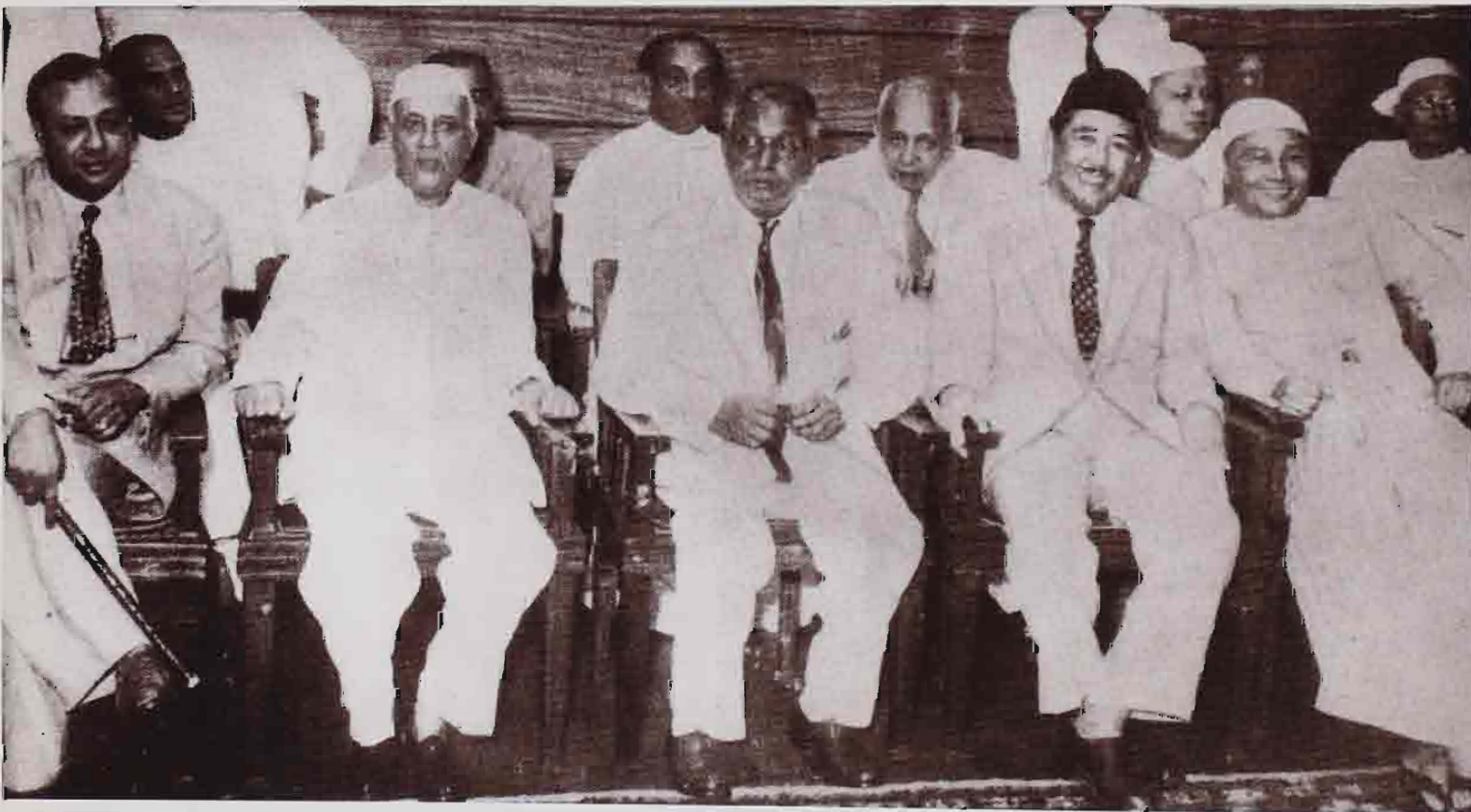
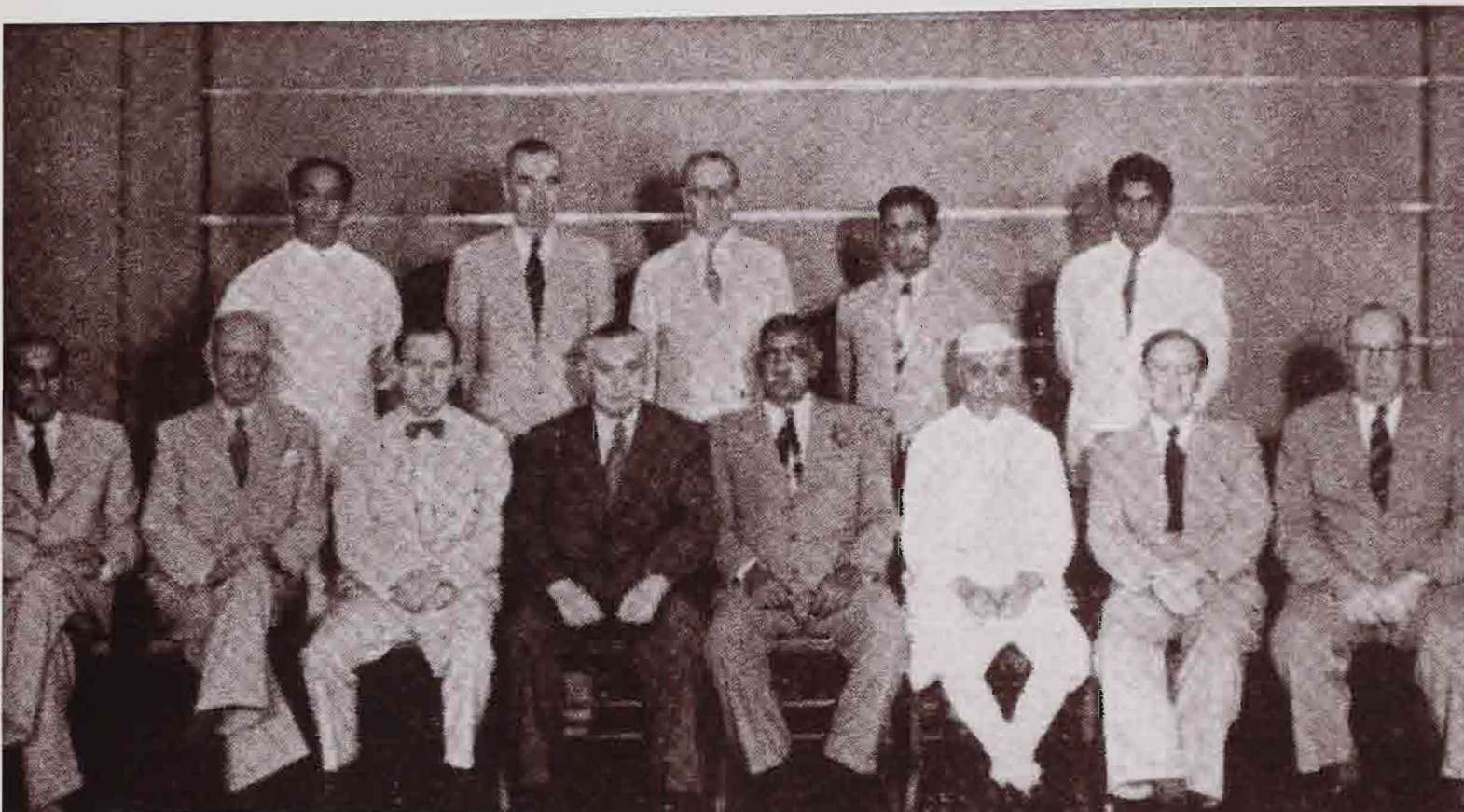


From the first years of Independence, the ties between India and Ceylon strengthened, particularly in international affairs and in bilateral relations.

Among the first international organisations in which the two countries played a major role was the Commonwealth. It was at a Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' meeting in 1950 in Colombo (top picture, column on left), in which Prime Ministers Don Stephen Senanayake and Jawaharlal Nehru played major roles, that the Colombo Plan was launched. It focussed on education and training being provided to citizens from member countries of the Commonwealth in the countries of fellow-members.

By the mid-50s, there was a greater search for an Asian identity among the Asian members of the Commonwealth and the landmark Bandung Conference in 1955 gave rise to Afro-Asianism and the Non-Aligned Movement. Shortly before this, a conference was convened in Colombo when the Colombo Powers – forerunners of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation – emerged as a group, Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawala, seated centre, second picture, column on left, and Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru playing leading roles in the meetings in Colombo in 1954.

Ever since people of recent Indian origin were deprived of the franchise in the 1948-49 period, their status in the Island has remained a vexed question. Several rounds of negotiations have taken place in the years that followed, but none ended with any kind of agreement till 1964 when Sirimavo Bandaranaike, during her first term as Prime Minister, and Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri met in Delhi in 1964 and arrived at a compromise citizenship agreement to eradicate the statelessness of the plantation workers. The Sirimavo-Shastri Pact was not exactly welcomed by the Ceylon Workers' Congress, because it fixed numbers for Sri Lankan and Indian citizenship and for the repatriation of the latter to India. Seen at the Delhi conference, below, are Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike (third from right) and Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri (seated third from left).





When Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike met with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1974, among the issues discussed was the question of the demarcation of the maritime boundary between the two countries. The two Prime Ministers, seen on left top, at one-on-one discussions, subsequently signed the Indo-Lanka Maritime Agreement which was based on the principle of demarcation along the median line. This gave the disputed island of Kachchativu to Sri Lanka. The uninhabited island was regularly used as a rest halt by the fishermen of both countries who would also gather for the annual St. Anthony's Feast here.

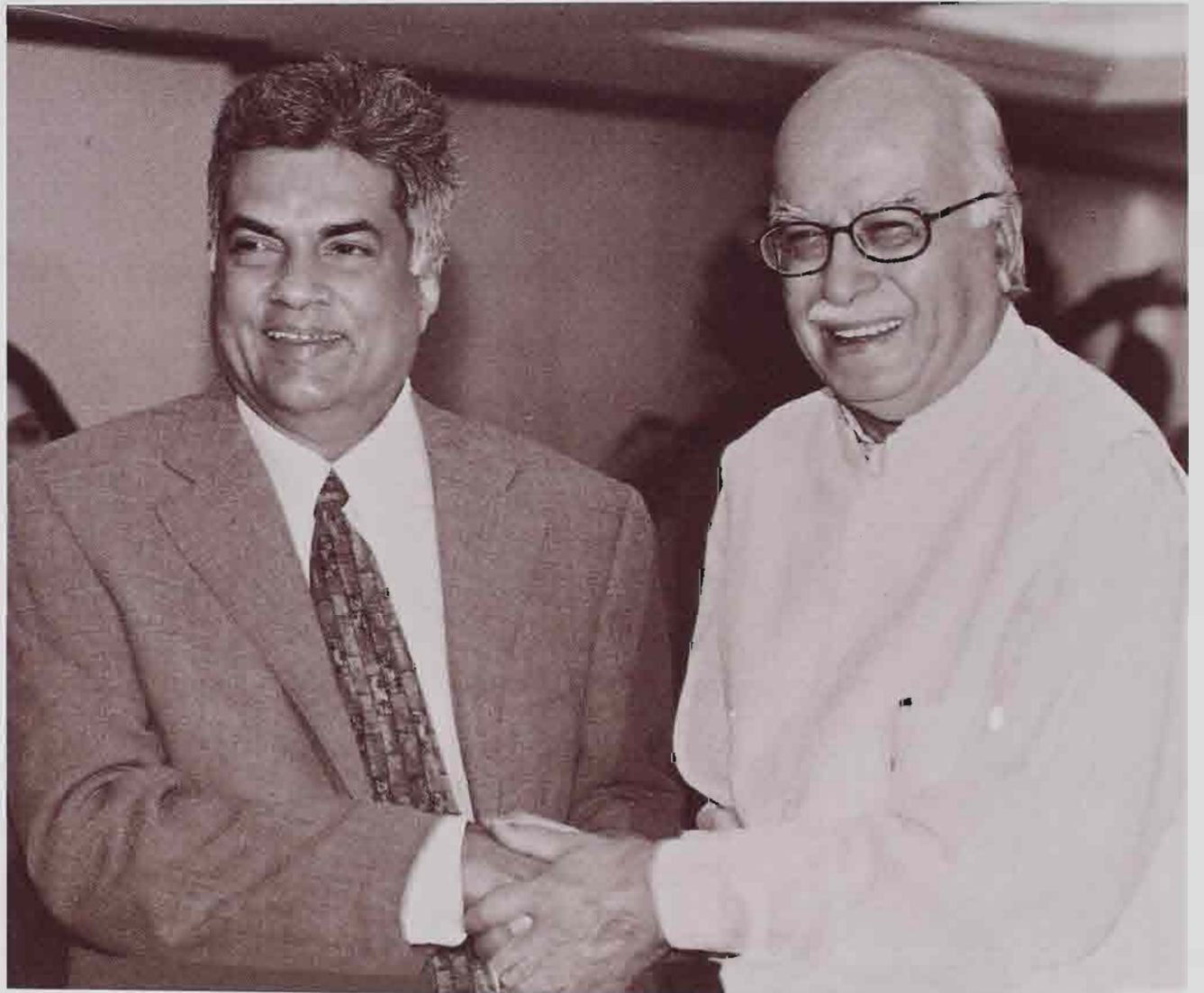
India, which on earlier occasions, had offered assistance to Sri Lanka in troubled times, once again responded to a request of the Sri Lankan Government in 1987 when it felt the unity, territorial integrity, peace and political stability of the Island were threatened. On left, centre, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (seated, left, in picture) and President J.R. Jayawardene (seated right) signed the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in Colombo on July 20, 1987, agreeing to a range of mutual obligations and responsibilities.

One of the outcomes of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord was the dispatch of an Indian Peace Keeping Force to the Island in 1987 to play a peace-keeping role in the ethnic conflict that broke out in Sri Lanka in 1983. On left, Sri Lankan Defence Secretary Gen. Sepala Attygalle, watched by a representative of the Indian Peace Keeping Force and other Indian Army officers, hands over amnesty papers to a representative of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.



In 1985, the countries of South Asia – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – agreed to form an association for their mutual economic and cultural benefit, which they named the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation. SAARC countries now meet regularly at Head-of-State level and at various ministerial levels and several agreements have emerged from these meetings. In 1998, the tenth SAARC summit was held in Colombo and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee (above, second from right) presented President Chandrika Kumaratunga, a six-year old elephant, ‘Chamarajendra’, as a token of Indian’s goodwill and continued support for Sri Lanka.

The warm relations between the two countries have continued ever since, and determined to forge closer ties with India has been Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe, who assumed office in 2001. Prime Minister Wickramasinghe’s concept of ties between the two countries extends to the extent of wanting both countries to partner each other in building a bridge, literally, across, the Palk Strait. In the picture on right, Prime Minister Wickramasinghe (on left) is seen with Indian Deputy Prime Minister L.K.Advani during a visit to Delhi in 2002, when this was a subject discussed.





Leaders of recent Indian origin in the Island have begun to play a much greater role in various spheres of activity in Sri Lanka. The brothers Selvanathan in particular have played notable roles in various broad-based organisations in the country which have sought to bring India and Sri Lanka together.

Above, Manoharan Selvanathan, extreme left, the first President of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce of Indian origin, accompanies Prof. G.L. Peiris, Minister of Justice, Constitutional Affairs and National Integration, Sri Lanka (second from right), and the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Shiv Shankar Menon (extreme right), to the inaugural function of a symposium on Sri Lanka-India Economic Relations organised in Colombo in March 1998 jointly by the Chamber and the High Commission. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, established in 1837, is the oldest organisation representing the mercantile interests in the country.

Another joint Indo-Sri Lanka effort has been the India-Sri Lanka Foundation established in 1999 by the governments of the two countries to promote and support cultural and academic exchanges. A joint committee meets regularly to discuss support programmes. In the picture on right, at a meeting of the committee in Colombo in 2001, are seen former Secretary of External Affairs of India, M. Rasgotra (second from left), Indian High Commissioner Gopalkrishna Gandhi (fourth from left), Senūke Bandaranayake, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India (third from right), and Hariharan Selvanathan, a non-official Sri Lankan member of Indian origin (second from right).



Postscript



Even as Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe in 2001/02 pursues his dream of a man-built bridge linking Sri Lanka and India, with the Government of India as a partner, space images from NASA shuttles clearly show what has been for centuries called Adam's Bridge, linking the Island with India's Rameswaram Island. Our cover picture, from India's National Remote Sensing Agency, also shows the historic link. In the days when a ferry service linked the two countries, this 30 km long chain of shoals and rocks was clearly visible to travellers just below the water level. Whether this bridge's curvature and composition reflect that it is man-made and, if so, when it was constructed are questions to be studied in scientific depth, but that Adam's Bridge has long been a link with the Island and a link which needs to be further strengthened, both through a man-made bridge as well as a meeting of minds, is the hope with which this book has been published.

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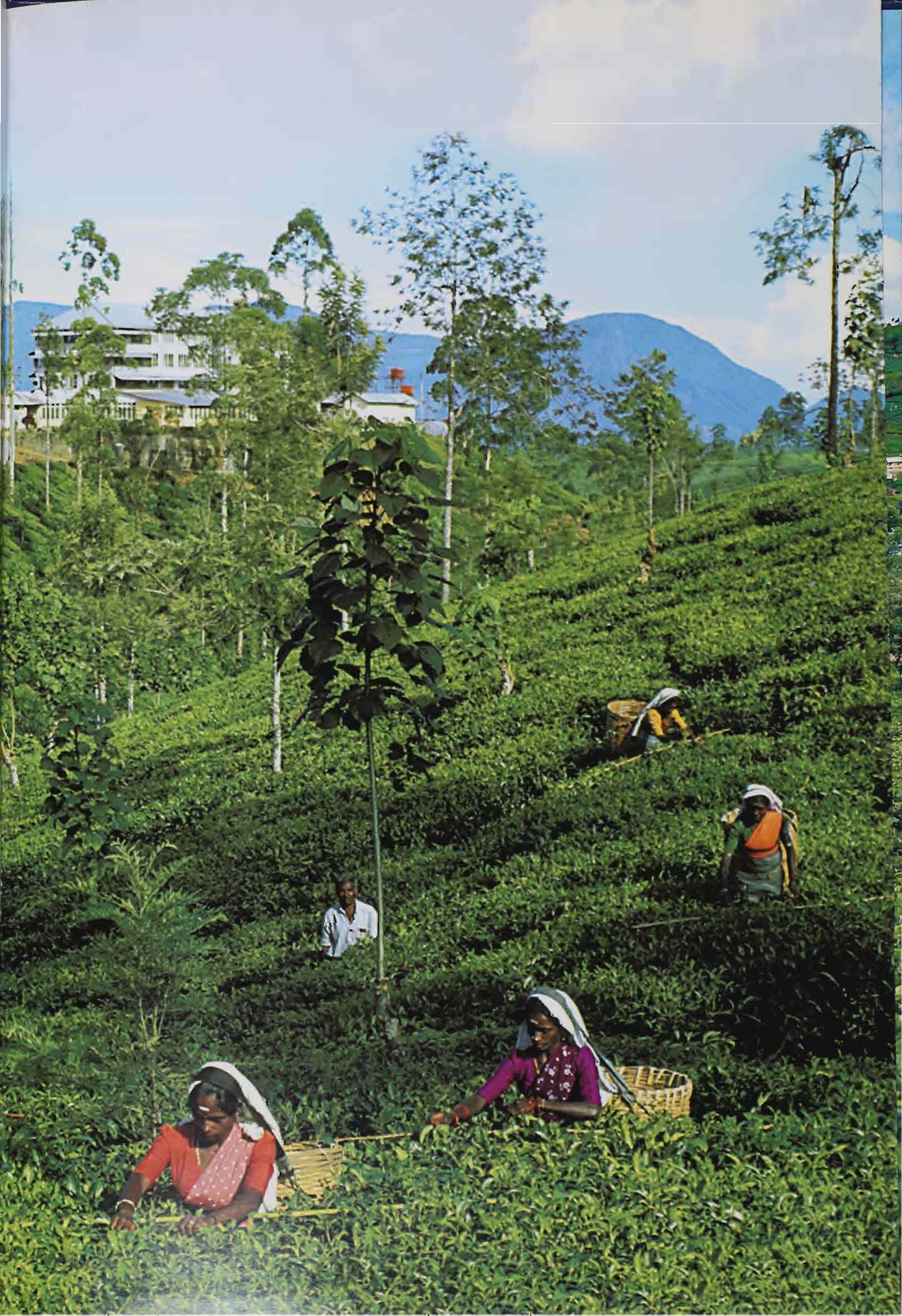
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