



New Zealand Lanka

Newsletter of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation Incorporated

Volume 30 Summer 2005

From the President

I am delighted to see our members positively responding to my appeal and taking an active role in Foundation matters. This is certainly helping the committee to deliver the desired outcomes to our community.

Welcome on board the new members who joined the Foundation recently. You will feel that you have joined a large family in New Zealand and you can be proud of the professional image of your Foundation.

All those who attended the member's day on 12th November had a relaxed and an enjoyable evening. This is becoming very popular, and you will see more of these in the future. The Arts and Crafts Show scheduled for 22nd October had to be cancelled due to many other events being happening in Auckland on the same day. We hope to re-schedule it to another date.

We have succeeded in securing few grants for the Foundation. Committee is looking into the avenues of utilising these funds for the intended purposes.

Our Tsunami project is still at a stand still due to some uncertainties in the proposed project. The committee is in the final stage of evaluating the viability of this project and also looking into alternatives available to them. Committee hopes to make a decision on this matter soon.

Our next event is the 31st night dance. Please keep the date reserved for this popular and enjoyable night. Remember, this is a family night out to enjoy and celebrate the heralding of the New Year 2006.

Holiday time is round the corner. What ever you do, please take extreme care during the holiday period.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2006!

Lionel de Silva



The New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation celebrated the second member's night on the 12th November 2005.

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Next Event:

LankaNite 2005

"LankaNite 2005" end of the year Dance will be held on 31 December 2005 at Auckland Normal Intermediate School Hall, Poronui Street, Mt Eden at 7.30pm onwards. Tickets are \$12.50 pp, kids under 12 years free.

This gives an opportunity for everyone to enjoy the dawn of the New Year in an ambiance of friendship and joy. Food will be available for purchase at very reasonable prices.

There will be a prize draw for entry tickets. Music is provided by the "Cream", an Auckland based group of musicians that has emerged highly successful in the events performed in the recent past.

Calendar of Events:

Sunday 29 January 2006 – Beach BBQ at Long Bay. All are welcome.

Saturday 4 February 2006 - Sri Lankan Independence Day.

Saturday March 2006 – Food & Dance Festival, date to be announced.

Members Day 2005...

On the 12th November 2005, The New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation celebrated the second members night for the year, and OH WHAT A NIGHT IT WAS!

With the bountiful amount of activities for our children, free-flowing and tantalising food brought in by all and the explosive Baila music played throughout the night, many, if not all, would say that it was a successful and entertaining night filled with laughter, singing and dancing.

The night was targeted for all, as time came for the games to start, you could say that we, the "older" generation, almost allowed our competitiveness to take the better of us, but we knew our turn was coming. So it was our children who took delight in playing various games, mingling and interacting with each other and making it their own.

As the food and drinks flowed in to the timely beat of the drums, riveting plucking of the strings on the guitar and symphonic tapping of the keys on the piano, we could almost feel the food teasing our taste buds, rolling in our mouths and more importantly, lining our stomach! Much to our delight, this was the start of the evening that gave us the energy to keep up with the increasing pace of music.

Potential new members that were brought in by our existing ones were welcomed with open arms to participate in the joyous event that brings us together and makes us a stronger Foundation.

All in all, it really was a night to remember filled with fun and excitement. It truly was a night to be proud of.

Sohan Cooray

Project Oru 100...

Background to Project:

Following the terrible news of the Boxing Day tsunami I was asked by a number of friends if I knew of any way that any donation they gave could be guaranteed to reach the shores and without huge deductions for administration.

I made contact with Merrill Fernando from Dilmah Tea as when in Sri Lanka I had seen some of the work that his Charitable Foundation was carrying out. His Foundation MJF Charitable Foundation was established in 2003 to help individuals or communities that were underprivileged or marginalised.

I witnessed a nutrition programme in the tea plantations with a school milk programme and was introduced to a fishing initiative adding value to fish in an area North of Colombo.

Mr Fernando agreed that if I set up a fundraising initiative he would agree to use the funds for a specific region and without deduction. Because of New Zealand's long association with fishing I wanted to be involved with a coastal project in the South which is helping fishermen to return to the sea and assisting the women and children with work and school projects. The South is also an area with which I am familiar and I love the fish I have eaten there.

I set myself what I felt was a realistic target- funds equivalent to 100 oru (\$NZ75,000) and after Sunday's High Tea I had reached the equivalent funds of 65 oru. After this morning's National Radio talkback and Saturday's Herald I am hopeful that this amount will increase. I would love to reach my target by Christmas as I plan to return there for the one year anniversary in order to be able to come back to tell folks that the tsunami impact is not fixed in one year - with aid fatigue,

people need constant reminders before they will contribute and I felt this would be best achieved by reporting back from experience and real witness.

I plan to travel with film producer Catherine Madigan of Nikau Films and her cameraman. Although we have been unable to obtain funding we are committed to producing a documentary and will self-fund our visit.

In talking with the project management in the South it became apparent that to take this tragedy and enable value-added opportunities to be explored would require the building of a water and ice plant. An initial estimate of such a cost is \$US75,000 – so once I've achieved my oru budget I thought I'd use the Ice Plant as my next fundraising challenge.

For viewing of the MJF foundation visit :

www.mjffoundation.org For viewing of my business visit www.foodmatters.co.nz

Mary Taylor, Food Matters NZ

"Silent Night" The Story of Popular the Christmas Carol...

Why has "Silent Night" become our most beloved carol? Is it the words -- tender, intimate, gentle? Or the tune -- so peaceful, so memorable, so easy to play or pick out with one hand on the piano?

It is not a joyous, fast-paced carol like Handel's "Joy to the World." Nor theologically-rich like Charles Wesley's "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." Nor does it have a complex tune like "Angels We Have Heard on High."

Rather, "Silent Night" is quiet and reflective, calling us to meditate on the scene. It is the ambience conveyed by both the gentle words and melody that create from this carol an oasis of peace.

"All is calm, all is bright."

It calls us to dwell on the Madonna and Child --

"Round yon Virgin, mother and Child, Holy Infant, so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace."

You feel as the "shepherd's quake at the sight." You can imagine as "heavenly hosts sing Alleluia." And you begin to sing "Alleluia to the King" right along with them.

Rays of backlit brilliance highlight many a religious painting, but here the picture of light is painted in words:

"Glories stream from heaven afar...." "Son of God, love's pure light, Radiant beams from Thy holy face...."

Just Who is in this manger? What is the significance of this birth? What is Christmas about -- really? Perhaps most of all, "Silent Night" is beloved because it reminds us in its simple, but exceedingly clear way, the truth behind it all -- the truth that changes everything:

"Christ, the Savior is born!"

Sing it again this Christmas and let its gentle peace wash over you and its bold assertion renew your soul.

"Jesus, Lord, at thy birth! "Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!"

Father Joseph Mohr, Parish Priest. It's the first line from a poem this young Austrian priest had written two years before. Now he can't get the phrase out of his mind. "Silent night, holy night." Tonight is Christmas Eve and St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, north of Salzburg, will be chock-full of people. Father Joseph Mohr has a homily in mind, a message for his flock on this sacred night, but he needs a carol, something special to cap off the service.

Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright... The words won't go away. "I need a tune!" he says out loud, shaking his head. "I wonder if Franz can help me. I hope it's not too late." Franz Gruber is the schoolteacher in the nearby village of Arnsdorf -- a gifted musician, organist at the Arnsdorf church, and occasional substitute organist at St. Nicholas. "Franz will help me!" he says to himself. "He can't resist a musical challenge."

Franz Gruber, Schoolteacher and Organist

Quickly now he slings on his heavy coat, dons a fur cap and gloves, and ventures into the brisk December morning. The snow is crunchy underfoot as he makes his way across the churchyard towards Arnsdorf, just a 20 minute walk. "Silent night, holy night ... silent night, holy night." The rhythm of the words echoes with each step. Elizabeth opens the door at his knock. "Father Mohr, how nice of you to stop by. Franz will be glad to see you." She takes his coat and ushers him in. Franz is picking something out on his guitar.

"Franz, remember that poem I told you about: 'Silent Night'?" says Mohr. "I know it's too late to ask, but could you help put a tune to it? I want to sing it tonight for Christmas Eve." Gruber's face lights up. A challenge. A song. He takes the lyrics from the priest and begins to say them over and over, looking for a cadence. Then he hums a line and scratches it down. Mohr soon tires of the process and begins to play with the children. But within an hour or so, Gruber seems to have a melody and is working out the chords on his guitar. "Father, how does this sound?" he calls and begins to sing the words:

Silent night, holy night, All is calm all is bright...
He stops to make a correction in the manuscript, and then continues: ...Round yon virgin, Mother and Child, Holy infant so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace! Sleep in heavenly peace!

Father Mohr is ecstatic. On the second verse Gruber's deep voice is joined by Mohr's rich tenor. Elizabeth, baby on her hip, who has been humming along, now joins them on the last verse. The song fills their home with its gentle words and memorable melody.

New Year's Eve at St. Nicholas Church, Oberndorf, 1818

That night, December 24, 1818, the song fills St. Nicholas Church at Midnight Mass. Mohr sings tenor, Gruber bass, and the church choir joins the refrain of each verse, while Mohr accompanies on the guitar. By the time the last notes die away, the worshipers are a-buzz with joy and wonder at the song. On Christmas Day, the song is being hummed and sung in dozens of homes around Oberndorf. "Silent night, holy night." And in Oberndorf, they would sing their beloved carol again and again each Christmas. The song might have stayed right there had it not been for an organ builder named Karl Mauracher, who came to repair the pipe organ at Arnsdorf in 1819 and made several trips to Oberndorf over the next few years, finally building a new organ for St. Nicholas in 1825. The Song Finds Its Way to Emperors and Kings -- and to America.

Whether Mauracher found the music and lyrics on the organ or they were given to him by Gruber, we don't know. But he carried the song to the Ziller Valley east of Innsbruck, where he shared it with two local families of travelling folk singers, the Rainers and the Strassers, who began to sing it as part of their regular repertoire. The following Christmas of 1819, the Rainer Family Singers sang "Stille Nacht" in the village church of Fügen (Zillertal).

Three years later they sang it for royalty. Emperor Francis I of Austria and his ally Czar Alexander I of Russia were staying in the nearby castle of Count Dönhoff (now Bubenberg Castle). The Rainer Family performed the carol and was invited to Russia for a series of concerts.

Various English translations blossomed, but the definitive English version of the song was penned by Rev. John Freeman Young and first published in *The Sunday-School Service and Tune Book* (1863).

Ralph F. Wilson, Courtesy of the web

Fasting in the month of Ramadan...

Fasting is found in all religions. It has been observed by followers of all religions throughout history. The Qur'an says: "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may (learn) self-restraint".

Fasting in Islam is different to the previous fasts in the number of days, the time or manner or in other incidents. Ramadan is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam occurring in the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

The month of Ramadan contains 29 to 30 days. The dates of observance differ each year. Every year the Muslims will fast 11 days ahead enabling fasting Muslims to experience it on all seasons over a period of time and not be confined to a routine set date.

Fasting extends each day from dawn until sunset, a period which varies by geographical location and season. For instance, this spring, Muslims in New Zealand fasted each day for 15½ hours; in summer, they would have fasted 18 hours.

Adults and children learn to fast with ritual precision. They abstain from food, drink, smoking and intimate relations from dawn to dusk.

Today, the world over, 1.4 billion Muslims fast concurrently. Every one starts on the same day, in the same month, break fast and have a dawn meal on the same day, end on the same day and celebrate the festival on the same day. It is universality transcending geographical barriers, colour and race and global citizens.

The intent and spirit of Ramadan lies in the transformation of the human soul. Hunger and thirst are only the first stage. The external dimension is a month-long inner journey of struggle and discovery.

To begin with, fasting is not about hunger and thirst. Islam teaches that if a person fasts and does not give up his bad habits, God has no need for his hunger and thirst; meaning, one who fasts cannot and does not hurt others, violate their dignity and usurp their rights. Thus, fasting of the stomach is matched by the fasting of all of the limbs. The eyes, the ears, the tongue, the hands and the feet. The tongue is the sharpest of the arrows that Satan shoots at the character and dignity of other people. The tongue's temptations, lies, backbiting, slander, vulgarity and senseless argumentation must be challenged and curbed for the integrity of the fasts. One has to guard his tongue zealously. The Prophet Mohamed said: "There is a piece of flesh between your lips. If you guard it, I guarantee you Paradise".

All the above requirements point to consciousness of one's behaviour and vigilance. They are meant to lead one to the most profound dimension of fasting: the fasting of the heart in continual focus on and attachment to the Divine. God

says: "All the good acts done by the son of Adam are for himself except fasting, which he does for my sake and I reserve the reward for it". It is in this experience and in this state that Ramadan is a source of peace and solace. It imparts a sense of what it means to be truly human. People become extraordinarily charitable, kind and courteous in this month more than in any other month.

Fasting is not always a rigorous exercise or, as some think, a torture. Knowing about hunger is different from knowing hunger. The poor, the sick, the traveller, the menstruating women and women with post-natal care need not fast. So do the old, the infirm, the child, the disenfranchised and the oppressed. It is fasting that allows us to know the suffering they undergo. We have rarely walked a mile or even a few footsteps in their shoes.

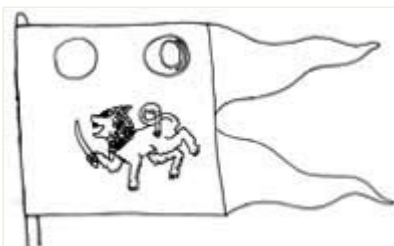
In this a Muslim longs for the fruits of his efforts. The true fruit of fasting is a rich inner life which embellishes justice, generosity, kindness, sharing, forgiveness mercy and cultivates value and empathy. If one experiences the pangs of hunger, he will never refuse food to a hungry man. The true reward that he expects from this exercise is a peaceful life while on earth and Paradise in the world to come.

Though the ritual of fasting may take 29 or 30 days, its true destination is one's infinite journey. A fasting Muslim hungers to find the gold within himself and he hungers to discover the heart.

M.C.A. Hassan

The Lion flag -how it came to be...

Sri Lanka's national flag is steeped in history and tradition. From its hoary past to the present day, the events linked with this national symbol of freedom and independence are so packed with drama, suspense, and political intrigue that it could easily go down in history as one of the most unique flags in the world.



Dutugemunu's flag which he carried after his victory over his enemies



Copy of the flag of the Kandyan Kings in the 18th century, made according to the design of the original flag found in England.



The flag as it exists today.

Much of these fascinating and exciting events has however been forgotten in the mists of time, and many of our younger

generation are unaware of the significance and importance of their National flag.

Many may not know that the birth of the Sinhala race began with the planting of the Lion flag for the first time in Lankan history. Here is how H.M. Herath describes this epoch making event in a recently published book on the National flag and National anthem of Sri Lanka.

He writes: "In about 486 BC, Prince Vijaya, the eldest son of Sinha Bahu, King of Sinhapura landed at Tammana with seven hundred companions from his father's kingdom in North India. So delighted was he, that he took a handful of sand and called it the land of the copper coloured sand, and planted the flag they were carrying (a flag with a lion symbol). He then kissed the sand and called it "Thambani." So began the history of Sri Lanka, the birth of the Sinhala race."

If history had not yet begun to be written in Sri Lanka, how do we know about this event? Replies the author, "The inscription of this great and grand event on record is among the archaeological remains at the Sanchi stupa, an ancient Buddhist monument built during the reign of Emperor Asoka in the second century BC in the native state of Bhopal in India."

Since its arrival in Sri Lanka, the Lion flag has played a significant role in the political history of the country. To our monarchs of yesteryear it became a symbol of freedom and Hope. The warrior King Dutugemunu, used the heraldic lion carrying a sword on his right forepaw with two other symbols, the Sun and the Moon on his banner.

An illustration in the frescoes of the rock temple at Dambulla which traces the beginning of the Lion flag of Sri Lanka shows the victorious king proudly carrying his royal banner depicting the Lion symbol after he freed his people from foreign invaders.

As Herath points out, the lion symbol was used by the Lankan monarchs from the time of King Vijaya. This has been recorded in both the Mahavamsa and the Chulavamsa. The last king to use the flag as a symbol of national freedom was King Sri Vikrama Rajasinghe who was the last king of Sri Lanka, and whose rule ended in 1815.

Commenting on the significance of the emblems on the Royal Standard of Sri Vikrama Rajasinghe, Herath writes: "The heraldic Lion standing holding a sword upright by its right paw stands for Justice and Righteousness.

"Bordering this is a rectangular line with four Bo leaves at the four corners, symbolising Metta, Karuna, Muditha, Upeksha, called the 'Four Brahma-Viharana in Buddhist matbaphysics.

"The yellow border represents the Maha Singha who played an important role in guiding kings in ancient times and directed and participated in the emancipation of the country as recorded in the national chronicles." He adds, "All these emblems, on a brilliant background of crimson indicate immortality, and remained the Royal Standard of King Sri Vikrama Rajasinghe, the last king of Kandy."

The ceremony in which the flag was replaced by the British Union Jack was full of drama and colour. Describing it Herath writes: "The Kandyan Convention was proclaimed at 3.30 p.m. on March 2, 1815, in the Audience hall, then called the Magul Maduva of the Palace of Kandy.

This was signed by governor Robert Brownrigg on behalf of His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, on the one hand,

and the Adigars, Dissavas and other principal chiefs of the Kandyan Province. ...Outside, drums were beating all around the hall. British troops guarded all the entrances to it and also patrolled the streets. The treaty was next read aloud to the chiefs in Sinhala and both parties agreed to its contents.

Then the Lion flag was hauled down and the Union Jack took its place amidst salvos of artillery and His Majesty King George III was acclaimed King of Ceylon."

But the act of hoisting the British flag in place of the Lion flag was premature, a violation of the law, as it was done before the last Kandyan chieftains had signed the treaty, and prompted retaliation from the Maha Sangha, a who were present on the occasion.

Herath re-enacts details of that suspenseful and dramatic epoch making event." " From amidst the spectators who watched this drama, stepped out a Buddhist monk, the Ven. Wariyapola Sumangala of the Asgiri fraternity. Fortified with confidence, fortitude, self-respect and patriotism he approached the English general to ask, "who gave you permission to hoist your flag here?"

You have no right to do so - Yet." He then proceeded to pull down the Union Jack, trampled it and hoisted the Lion flag in its place. Only after chief Adigar Ehelepola had signed the Convention with much reluctance on March 10 that the Union Jack was hoisted." Not many may know that the Royal standard of the last king of Lanka languished in a military hospital in London after the British took control of the Kandyan Kingdom.

According to Herath, it was removed to England by the British Raj and kept in the Royal Military Hospital Chelsea in London until a E. W. Perera, a staunch patriot also known as the Lion of Kotte, discovered it.

The first time the Lion flag became a centre piece of attraction and the public became aware of the actual design of the flag following the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom was when the Dinamina issued a special edition of the paper on March 2, 1915 to mark the centenary of the end of Sinhala independence, with the intention of re-kindling the desire of the people to win back the freedom they had lost to the British, Herath states. He adds, "On the front page were portraits of the last King and Queen of Kandy surmounted by the royal insignia Crown and the Lion flag in colour.

This was the first time since the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom that the people became aware of the actual pattern of their national flag." Although the Ceylon Independence Act 1947 passed by the parliament of Britain stated that the flag of the British empire, the Union jack would continue to take precedence over the Lion flag, the national leaders of the time were openly opposed to such a decision. Still, barely nineteen days prior to the dawn of Independence Day, Lanka's first Prime Minister Mr. D. S. Senanayake's cabinet had yet not taken a decision with regard to hoisting the National Flag on the first independence celebrations of February 4, 1948. It was left to Mudaliyar A. L. Sinnelebbe, the Member of Parliament for Batticaloa to move a motion in parliament stating that, "This house is of the opinion that the Royal Standard of King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe depicting a yellow lion passant holding a sword in its right paw on a red background, which was removed to England after the convention of 1815, be once again adopted as the official flag of free Lanka."

The flag was hoisted on that historic occasion amidst the joyous sound of temple bells, crackers and beating of tom toms by Lanka's first Prime Minister, and it occupied a pride of

place when it replaced the Union jack at the Independence Square, Colombo on the occasion of the first session of Lanka's independent parliament which was opened by the Duke of Gloucester.

On March 6, the same year the Prime Minister appointed a seven member National flag Committee headed by the leader of the House Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike to advise him on the question of the National flag of Ceylon. After several sittings spread over two years, the committee gave its final recommendations on February 13, 1950.

"The Lion in gold on a crimson background has been retained. Four Bo leaves in gold have replaced the pinnacles at the four corners of the crimson background. Two vertical stripes of equal size in saffron and green represent the minority communities; the Muslims and the Tamils. The stripes in relation to the entire flag are in proportion 1:1:5.

A gold border runs around the flag." A detailed description of the emblems on the flag and their significance concludes this fascinating account of Lanka's national flag, followed by a short description of the origin and significance of the national anthem written by Ananda Samarakoon.

Carol Aloysius Courtesy of the web

Moor or Muslim? who came first?...

Ever think about it? Or are they one and the same? Well, if you guessed Muslim, you'd be wrong. Surprised? Don't be, many Sri Lankans would have had to think that one through, and would still have come up with the wrong answer. Astonishingly the descendants of the Moors themselves would think there was no difference as well.

Actually Arabs came to trade in Ceylon " a well known spice outpost "quite sometime before the advent of Islam in Arabia. "I seem to think these people were here before Mohamed. They were here as traders," says Sir Emerson Tennant, a widely respected historian. Prophet Muhammed, or Mohamed as the non-Muslims would say, passed away about 670 A.D. and Islam spread overseas as far ashore as Ceylon, only after his departure.

The Arabs who settled in Ceylon at that time, were brought the message of Islam by the Arab Muslims " great sailors and a renowned maritime trading power; as preached not so long ago, by the one they called, "The light of Arabia". The Arab Muslims preached about the brotherhood of man and man's accountability for his actions; that the wealthy had a duty towards their poorer brethren. They spoke so sincerely and with such fervency that the Ceylon Moors (Arabs) hearts were filled with a devotion to this faith that had sprung from the soil of their homeland.

"The Mohammedan is a full blooded native of this country. He is just as much a native as a Sinhalese or Veddha because he is here for the last 2000 years" says Dr. W. Balendra L. M. S. (Ceylon) L. R. C. P. (London).

According to the research and investigation conducted by the anthropologist de la Hall Marret there is a pure Arabic stock " the Semitic type, the Persian type still in this country. "You can spot them out at once whether in Jaffna, Puttalam, Malwana, Galle or Trincomalee. Undoubtedly this Arabic/Semitic infusion dates back to the 8th century, or says de la Hall Marret, even longer.

The British school of thought, headed by Sir Alexander Johnstone also confirms this, agreeing that the

Mohammedans were Arabs and they came into Ceylon during the 8th century and landed at Jaffna and also settled down in Colombo, Beruwela, Galle and Trincomalee. However Sir Emerson Tennant disagrees with this, his contention being that the Arabs came as traders before the dawn of Islam, to Ceylon, and settled down. They accepted Islam when it was preached to them by the Arab Muslims who came over after the demise of the Prophet of Islam.

The commercial capital of Ceylon is Colombo. This name is derived from "Cullambo" as the Abyssinians "who first settled here, later embracing Islam " called it. They were a civilized people having many arts and crafts and their settlement directly influenced the development of Colombo. "Hobson Jobson" is the name of a book by Colonel Yule, who proves by way of records that Colombo was mainly a Mohammedan centre at first. He also gives a description of Colombo as an Abyssinian outpost at that time. Moors had gone to the South of Spain and there they had found grand buildings. They had learned the art of building towns, regrouping the bungalows, bringing them to the standards that we now follow.

The Moorish influence on the Buddhist and Hindu civilization of Ceylon is clearly seen. "Marakkalage" meaning the house which belongs to the man who came in a big wooden vessel. This man taught the man in the village in which he chose to settle, how to build. The Moor learnt the art from the South of Spain, from the Roman and Grecian civilizations. As a result the history of Ceylonese development especially in the fields of building and navigation owes much to the influx and influence of the Ceylon Moor, both before and after the advent of Islam. Anthropologist de la Hall Marett, says that in Beligalla "a Vedha village " the commerce/trade revolved round a few of the important Mohammedan families. Transporting goods over a long distance was not practical on foot because of the time it took plus the limitations of what a single man could carry.

The Mohammedan introduced the "Thavalam" or two bulls tied to a cart, thus showing the villagers how with the help of and harnessing of animals, more goods could be carried over longer stretches in a shorter period of time. This was the forerunner to the bullock cart which the Dutch introduced.

Many think that all Moors are traders or gem merchants. While this is not the case today, the precedent for this lies in our history which shows that the Moors followed up stones lying in the river beds of the Kaluganga, unearthed and brought them to the surface. Thus the gem industry was mainly in the hands of the Moors and in Ratnapura.

Embracing Islam, the Moors continued their age-old business of trading, which their religion told them, was good as long as

it was done fairly and not with an extreme margin of profit. With the passage of time the Moors intermarried with the Sinhalese and today most cannot claim that they're of pure Arabic/Semitic descent. However the fair skin " so prized in this country is a legacy which is still to be found in this land that the Arabs called "Serendib"

Hafsah Isfahan

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In Lighter Vein...

Mischievous Kids

A couple had two little boys, ages 8 and 10, who were excessively mischievous. They were always getting into trouble and their parents knew that, if any mischief occurred in their town, their sons were probably involved. The boys' mother heard that a clergyman in town had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The clergyman agreed, but asked to see them individually. So the mother sent her 8-year-old first, in the morning, with the older boy to see the clergyman in the afternoon.

The clergyman, a huge man with a booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, "Where is God?" They boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response, sitting there with his mouth hanging open, wide-eyed. So the clergyman repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "Where is God?"

Again the boy made no attempt to answer. So the clergyman raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, "WHERE IS GOD!?". The boy screamed and bolted from the room, ran directly home and dove into his closet, slamming the door behind him. When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked, "What happened?"

The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied, "We are in BIG trouble this time, dude. God is missing--and they think WE did it!"

Views expressed in articles are those of the contributing authors and may not necessarily reflect the views of the NZSLF

Contributions

This newsletter is published quarterly. We thank everybody who sent contributions to this newsletter and apologize for not being able to publish all contributions due to the limitation of the available space. Please send your contributions to the Summer Issue by the end of March, 2006 to the correspondence address below. Attn: Editorial Committee or by email to:
nzslf@nzslfoundation.com