



NewZ Lanka

Newsletter of the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation Incorporated

Volume 22 Summer 2003

From the President....

Greetings to you once again from the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation! No doubt everyone has exciting plans as we approach the end of the year. Be it a well deserved holiday, travelling overseas, spend quality time with family and friends or a change in study or the career, we wish you all the very best in all your endeavours.

The first event organised by the new committee of the Foundation, the stage drama 'Putrasamagama' was a tremendous success. Seven most popular and talented stage drama artists from Sri Lanka lead by Presidential Award Winner Jayalath Manorathne performed on 12 October 2003 at Dorothy Winstone Centre to a packed audience. Judging by the positive feedback we received, it appears that everyone enjoyed the show and appreciated the high standards we maintained in the presentation. There was more entertainment for the Sri Lankan art lovers on the following day at an informal gathering in the form of a 'Peduru partiya'. Over 400 people participated in this event, which depicted the evolvement of the Sri Lankan stage drama. All the artists have contacted us personally and wanted us to thank all their fans in Auckland and Hamilton for the hospitality extended, the support given and the appreciation shown.

There are a number of exciting projects being planned for the new year including a visit to New Plymouth in March 2004 for the Taranaki Multicultural Festival. We will keep you updated on these projects in due course.

Our next event is the New Year's Eve function 'Lanka Nite' on 31 December 2003. As we have always done in the past, this year's function too is organised having the best interest of the community at heart. This year's function comes to you with a difference; live music by 'Cream', a popular Auckland based Sri Lankan band and a variety of Sri Lankan foods being available to buy. Tickets are priced at a modest \$10.00 giving you the best value for money and children under 12 enter free. There will also be lots of prizes and surprises waiting for you on this night.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Jayasiri Basnayake



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Next Event:

Lanka Nite 2003- A event not to be missed...

For the sixth successive year the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation is proud to present Lanka Nite 2003 on the 31st of December 2003 at the Auckland Normal Intermediate hall, Poronui Street, Mt Eden.

This year the event is with a difference that caters to the whole family. Popular food stalls to serve, Malu & Seeni sambol buns, hot hot egg & plain Hoppers, Thosai, Rotti and Smak drinks for the young ones, while bar facility will be available for the older folk.

The live band 'Cream' featuring Anusha will entertain you with popular Baila, and pop music to dance your way to the new year. Tickets priced at a modest \$10 and free for children under 12 years. Please contact any committee member for your early table reservations to avoid disappointment.

Calendar of Events:

31 Dec 03: Lanka Nite 2003

14 Feb 04: Summer Outing

28 Mar 04: Cricket Fest – Hamilton

22 May 04: Employment Seminar

19 Jun 04: Arts & Craft show

Celebrating the Success of Puthrasamagama...

The Foundation sponsored an award winning Sinhalese stage drama to Auckland held a very successful event on the 12th October by staging the award winning drama Puthrasamagama.

“Puthrasamagama – The Elder Son”, a Russian drama by celebrated Russian playwright Alexander Vampilov was produced by eminent Sri Lankan actor/producer/director Jayalath Manoratne and staged at the Dorothy Winston Theatre of the Auckland Girls Grammar School.

A cast of 7 people traveled to Auckland to bring a unique experience to the Sri Lankan drama lovers of Auckland.. This drama won 5 state drama awards in Sri Lanka the year it was staged and most of the original cast performed in Auckland after a successful tour of Australia and shows in Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. The group has also performed in the US, Canada, England and several European countries.

Approximately 600 people were present to enjoy the show held in Auckland. The leader of the troupe, Jayalath Manoratne stated that the response of the Auckland audience was very satisfying and he felt that there was a lot of rapport with this particular audience.

The play was about human relationships and is about a father and his children and how a stranger who came into their lives made an impact on their lives. Renowned artists Manoratne, Janaka Kumbukage, Chandani Senviratne, Jayasri Chandrajith, Ratna Lalani Tennakoon, Sampath Tennakoon and Sarath Chandrasiri consisted of the cast while the play was directed by Mano, who is a very well known artist as well as a lecturer in media studies in a Sri Lankan university.

Following the play, due to popular demand, a second show was held at the Eilerslie War Memorial Hall on Monday the 13th of October. The traveling artists had a very lively show which told the audience the historical development and evolving of Sinhala stage drama in Sri Lanka using acts, songs, enactments and poems. The audience packed into the hall appreciated this unique performance, which was very educational as well. Auckland Sri Lankans were able to mix and mingle with the artists after a shared meal during this event. People who had no seats stood or sat on the floor to witness the unfolding of the history of Lankan drama enacted by their favourite artists. The audience joined in the singsongs and most went back to the lively days of their youths in particular their university lives. Many well wishers complemented the organizers of two very well organized events. **Asoka Basnayake**

Sri Lankan News...

Major breakthrough in Asthma control...

A Sri Lankan doctor has introduced a generic drug for asthma that could potentially save millions of rupees per month in foreign exchange while drastically slashing the medical bills of local patients.

The drug developed by Dr Anil Goonetilleke for the State Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing Corporation (SPMC) has already passed clinical trials and won an order worth nearly Rs.75 million for 60 million tablets required by government hospitals next year. This would lead to a substantial saving of foreign exchange. The sustained release (SR) Theophylline tablet, developed for the first time in Sri Lanka, costs just Rs.2.05 each per 300 mg tablet.

The 125 mg tablet costs only Rs.1.25. The equivalent imported tablet - Neulin SR (Australia) costs nearly five times more.

"This is a major breakthrough. The drug is cheap, it acts for 12 hours in the bloodstream and we can save a lot of foreign exchange," Dr. Goonetilleke told the Daily News.

Dr. Goonetilleke, a SPMC board member has earlier won the Presidential Award 2001 for the inhaler he developed for asthma patients. He is a general physician, interested in chest medicine specially asthma.

A bio-equivalence study comparing the SPMC manufactured Theophylline extended release tablet has revealed that it was biologically equivalent to the more costly imported branded version. Dr Goonetilleke explained that when an ordinary tablet is taken by a patient it is absorbed instantly and the patient feels the toxic affect of the drug through vomiting, heart problems and even a fit can occur.

As the drug level in blood decreases, a patient can be affected by asthma again. "Since the sustained release tablets are absorbed slowly while it passes through the digestive system the patient may feel relief as the required level of the drug is released slowly in the blood for 12 hours. The patient can sleep soundly as well," he said.

Dr. Goonetilleke was assisted by his team Kamal Parakrama, B. Herath Manager-Formulation cum Research and Development, SPMC, Sajith Hewage, Production Manager, K. D. Athula Kuruppu, Quality Control Manager, D. W. Berugoda General Manager, M. D. B. Cooray, Planning and Procurement Manager and M. D. A. R. Gunaratne, Maintenance Manager under the guidance of K. M. S. B. Rekogama, SPMC Chairman. (Courtesy of Daily News)

Feature Article....

RAMADHAN: An Introduction

Ramadan is a special time for the Muslim community. As the most blessed month of the year, it is a time for reflection, prayer and renewal of faith. Muslims worldwide fast from dawn to sunset, abstaining from food, drink, and other sensual pleasures to complete one of the five pillars of Islam and to achieve greater self-discipline, self-purification, and compassion for those less fortunate.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How did the fast during Ramadan become obligatory for Muslims?

A: The revelations from God to the Prophet Muhammad that would eventually be compiled as the Quran began during Ramadan in the year 610 A.D., but the fast of Ramadan did not become a religious obligation for Muslims until the year 624. The obligation to fast is explained in the second chapter of the Quran: "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint...Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Quran, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting..." (Chapter 2, verses 183 and 185)

Q: What do Muslims believe they gain from fasting?

A: One of the main benefits of Ramadan is an increased compassion for those in need of the necessities of life, a sense of self-purification and reflection and a renewed focus on spirituality. Muslims also appreciate the feeling of togetherness shared by family and friends throughout the month. Perhaps the greatest practical benefit is the yearly lesson in self-restraint and discipline that can carry forward to other aspects of a Muslim's life such as work and education.

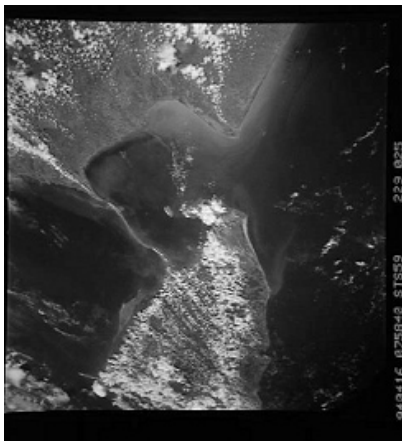
Q: Who Must Fast?

A: Fasting is compulsory for those who are mentally and physically fit, past the age of puberty, in a settled situation (not traveling), and are sure fasting is unlikely to cause real physical or mental injury. Exemptions from Fasting (some exemptions are optional) • Children under the age of puberty • People who are mentally incapacitated or not responsible for their actions, The elderly, The sick • Travelers who are on journeys of more than about fifty miles • Pregnant women and nursing mothers • Women who are menstruating (days missed are made up later) • Those who are temporarily unable to fast must make up the missed days at another time or feed the poor.

Q: How can non-Muslim co-workers and friends help someone who is fasting?

A: Employers, co-workers and teachers can help by understanding the significance of Ramadan and by showing a willingness to make minor allowances for its physical demands. Special consideration can be given to such things as requests for vacation time, the need for flexible early morning or evening work schedules and lighter homework assignments. It is also very important that Muslim workers and students be given time to attend Eid prayers at the end of Ramadan. Eid is as important to Muslims as Christmas and Yom Kippur are to Christians and Jews. A small token such as a card (there are Eid cards available from Muslim bookstores) or baked goods given to a Muslim co-worker during *Eid ul-Fitr* would also be greatly appreciated. Hospital workers should be aware that injections and oral medications might break the fast. Patients should be given the opportunity to decide whether or not their condition exempts them from fasting.

NASA Images Find 1,750,000 Year Old Man-Made Bridge between India and Sri Lanka...



(@PTI) Space images taken by NASA reveal a mysterious ancient bridge in the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka. The recently discovered bridge currently named as Adam's Bridge is made of chain of shoals, c.18 mi (30 km) long. The bridge's unique curvature and composition by age reveals that it is man

made. The legends as well as Archeological studies reveal that the first signs of human inhabitants in Sri Lanka dates back to the primitive age, about 1,750,000 years ago and the bridge's age is also almost equivalent.

This information is a crucial aspect for an insight into the mysterious legend called Ramayana, which was supposed to have taken place in *tredha yuga* (more than 1,700,000 years ago).

In this epic, there is a mentioning about a bridge, which was built between Rameshwaram (India) and Sri lankan coast under the supervision of a dynamic and invincible figure called Rama who is supposed to be the incarnation of the supreme.

This information may not be of much importance to the archeologists who are interested in exploring the origins of man, but it is sure to open the spiritual gates of the people of the world to come to know an ancient history linked to the Indian mythology.

Sri Lankan Kandian Dancing...

In the history of Sri Lankan dancing, according to '*Mahavansa*', it is earliest mentioned during the time of Queen Kuweni. The sacred chronicle mentions the dancing of the Yaksha Community at the wedding of Queen Kuweni and Prince Vijaya. The foundation of modern Kandian dancing was laid at the '*Kohomba Kankariya*' during King Panduwasdev's reign. During this ritual, also known as *Kohomba-Yak-Kankariya* the drummers and the dancers entertain the rural folk with 84 ceremonials.

Kandyan dance, mostly known as the art of famous Hill side Kandy, consists Ves, Naiyandi, Pantheru and Udakki dance forms. Currently, Kandyan dance is more recognized as pure Ves dance.

The creation of a Kandyan dancer is by all means not an easy task needing at least a good 7 years with pure training along with rituals and ceremonies. The initial training in the dance is to learn to take your posture *Mandiya* with the help of a pole called '*Dandiya*.' The pupil holds the bamboo pole while learning the basic 12 steps '*Pa Saramba*'. At the completion of the 12 basics the pupil can start dancing without holding the '*Dandiya*'. To the rhythm of the drum *Gata-beraya* and *Thalam-pota* the pupil starts learning to dance '*Goda Saramba*'. Each of the 12 *Goda Saramba*'s are ended with its own verse called a '*Kasthirama*'. The importance of *Goda Saramba* is the coordination of hands, feet, eyes, head and body also known as '*Panch Anga*' according to the Drum music.

At the beginning and at the end of each lesson, the pupil pays curtsy and respect to his/her Guru (teacher), and pay homage to Lord Budhdha and Gods of Arts. This sequence is a step called *Namaskara adiya*.

Followed by the first dance Mangalam, the student learns many dances including 18 Wannams, 7 Padayans, Wadaka Natum and Jana Natum. When the Guru feels the student has accomplished the required standard, the student will be allowed to wear Ves costume. The ritual of crowning the head gear '*Wes Thattuwa*' is considered so sacred that no one other than the teacher and pupil are present at this auspicious time.

The Kandian dancer not just dances but sings and plays the drum. Kandyan dancing is one of the prestigious dance forms globally which demands such an extensive training in all three fields. **Thesara Jayawardane**

Announcements ...

The NZSLF Website

New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation is building a website and will launch it very soon. The URL will be www.nzslfoundation.com

The Foundation has come up with the idea of hosting a website that would cater to the needs of the Sri Lankans living in New Zealand by providing a range of useful information and resources. The Foundation has always prioritized to cater to the settlement needs of new Sri Lankan migrants and the launching of this website is a major step towards fulfilling this objective.

The main features of the site will be a professional Trade Directory listing for Sri Lankans advertising their trade or business. It will be free for Sri Lankans during the first year and a nominal payment is expected after this. The site will also feature a news board that can be used by people who wants to buy or sell items and/or services. It will also display the best air travel deals or specials to Sri Lanka and other destinations and latest events. We envisage this site to offer networking opportunities for the Sri Lankan community.

The Job Search and Migrant information section will hopefully give invaluable information about finding a job in New Zealand and issues that a prospective job seeker may require. As we all know the employment market in New Zealand is very different to what most migrants have faced in their own countries and this section will not only offer hints on job search but will also have links with major employment websites and other organizations that would be able to help one in their job search. We also would like to expand this to offer networking opportunities to find employment.

The Newsletter section will list the latest issue and display an archive of previous issues as PDF's. The website will also have a cultural section that would offer information on the ancient history of Sri Lanka to non Sri Lankans or our children to educate themselves on the enriched cultural values we have inherited from our glorious country.

Sri Lanka National Day celebrations.

Venue: Lower Hutt Town Hall

Date: Saturday, 7th February 2004

Time: To be announced

Gate: Gold coin per person.

Bring your own: Traditional plate of food (not Kiribath or lunu miris). **Programme:** Religious talks, Hoisting of National Flag, Cultural items, President's Message. **Rudra de Zoysa (Sri**

Lankan Consulate).

In Lighter Vein...

Show-and- tell. I've been teaching now for about fifteen years. I have two kids myself, but the best birth story I know is the one I saw in my own second grade classroom a few years back.

When I was a kid, I loved show-and-tell. So I always have a few sessions with my students. It helps them get over shyness and experience a little public speaking. And it gives me a break and some guaranteed entertainment.

Usually, show-and-tell is pretty tame. Kids bring in pet turtles, model airplanes, pictures of fish they catch, stuff like that. And I

never, ever place any boundaries or limitations on them. If they want to lug it to school and talk about it, they're welcome.

Well, one day this little girl, Erica, a very bright, very outgoing kid, takes her turn and waddles up to the front of the class with a pillow stuffed under her sweater. She holds up a snapshot of an infant.

"This is Luke, my baby brother, and I'm going to tell you about his birthday. First, Mommy and Daddy made him as a symbol of their love, and then Daddy put a seed in my mother's stomach, and Luke grew in there. He ate for nine months through an umbrella cord."

She's standing there with her hands on the pillow, and I'm trying not to laugh and wishing I had a video camera rolling. The kids are watching her in amazement.

"Then, about two Saturdays ago, my mother starts going, 'Oh, oh, oh!'" Erica puts a hand behind her back and groans. "She walked around the house for, like an hour, 'Oh, oh, oh!'" Now the kid's doing this hysterical duck-walk, holding her back and groaning. "My father called the middle wife. She delivers babies, but she doesn't have a sign on the car like the Domino's man.

They got my mother to lie down in bed like this." Erica lies down with her back against the wall. "And then, pop! My mother had this bag of water she kept in there in case he got thirsty, and it just blew up and spilled all over the bed, like psshheew!" The kid with her little hands is miming water flowing away. It was too much!

"Then the middle wife starts going push, push, and breathe, breathe. They start counting, but they never even got past ten. Then, all of a sudden, out comes my brother. He was covered in yucky stuff they said was from the play-center, so there must be a lot of stuff inside there."

Then Erica stood up, took a big theatrical bow and returned to her seat. I'm sure I applauded the loudest. Ever since then, if it's show-and-tell day, I bring my camcorder - just in case another Erica comes along.

For all travels from and to Sri Lanka please contact **Westmann Travels & Tours (Pvt) Ltd** at 208, R.A. De Mel Mawatha Colombo 03. Please e-mail our member Charles Seneviratne at : lanka1@xtra.co.nz and he will give you the best fare possible. Charles will also arrange an airport pickup for those traveling to Colombo absolutely free.

That is not all, on any booking, quoting this advertisement the Sri Lanka Foundation will be donated with a 3% commission on the fare

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 Autumn Issue by the end of March 2004 to the correspondence address below, Attn: Editorial Committee or by email to: **omar12@hotmail.com**

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