

MINDSPARK

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The First Creative Writing Magazine
By
Department of English Language Teaching

Untold Expressions of the Students and Staff

MINDSPARK

Literature is a Luxury; Fiction is a Necessity

Department of English Language Teaching
Faculty of Agriculture
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

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MINDSPARK

Literature is a Luxury; Fiction is a Necessity

Underage Girl with a Baby

A beggar with a tiny baby walked into the train cabin. She was no older than 15 years old. "Please save my baby! My baby needs treatments!" she said. Some people looked at the girl disgustingly.

"This is sickening!"

"You're lucky there is no police, scum!"

"Like it is not enough that you are a destitute underage girl almost having a baby!"

"Go get a job instead of begging!"

"Shame on you!"

The others just turned away not to have to see the girl's tears. "I am begging you. My baby needs help..." she repeated.

An old man felt sorry for the girl. So the man handed her a couple of notes.

"Thank you so much sir" she said humbly.

But there was a group of teens who decided to play a cruel joke on this poor girl. "Do you wanna laugh?" "You bet!" teenagers were discussed. One of them put a foot forward, the girl tripped and fell. She lost the grip of the baby and the baby fell to the ground and rolled over. The teenagers laughed and shouted "Oh My God!!". The generous old man jumped on the tripped girl to save the baby from falling to the ground. The world cannot guess the surprise the man saw that it wasn't a real baby, but a doll.

The train cabin filled with voices of condemnation,

"A liar!" "A liar!!" "A liar!!!" all were shouted.

Tears went streaming down the girl's face and said, "You don't understand, I really need help!" but the people shouted again "A liar!" "A cheater! Get out of here before we call the police". At the next stop, the girl ran out of the train cabin in tears and the man went after her taking the doll in hand too.

"You drop your doll, girl"

"You want to condemn me too?" the poor girl asked angrily and sadly.

"No, I felt sorry for you"

"I don't need your pity! All I want is for him to live"

The man could not understand what was going on and the man decided she was crazy for a moment.

"But it's just a doll?"

The girl took the doll from the man and replied "I'm not crazy! I'm asking for money to save my brother! No one wants to hire an underage wretched girl like me. I do what I can!". Tears were streaming down the girl's face. The old man was sorry for her.

"Show me your brother. I want to see him"

On the way, the man bought some food for the girl. It looked as if the girl hadn't eaten for a few days.

"I forgot how tasty fresh warm food can be," the girl said innocently. The man was certain that the girl was raising her brother on her own, but when he entered her home he was appalled.

"OH MY GOD!"

The girl didn't have parents, they lived with their uncle and aunt just didn't care at all. "What a nightmare," thought the man. The girl's brother was in a terrible condition.

"Sis? Is it you? I can't see anything"

"Yes my dear, It's me"

The man realized there was no more time to be wasted. The man called an ambulance immediately. As his son worked at a hospital as a doctor, helped to get a grant for the little boy's treatment. The doctor said,

"If not for you he wouldn't have lasted another week."

For the first time since the man and the girl met, he saw a smile on her face.

"Thank you very much sir for saving my little brother."

The brother and sister's story soon became known to the whole town and social services. The girl and boy were adopted by a wonderful caring family. Feeling happy for those children he left the town.

The doctor, the son of the old man met the girl at a charity fund raising program a few years later. The meeting took place while she was finished her studies and working in a reputed company and also spending her time doing welfare work. She is now a grown-up lady. He couldn't even identify exactly but the girl identified the doctor quickly.

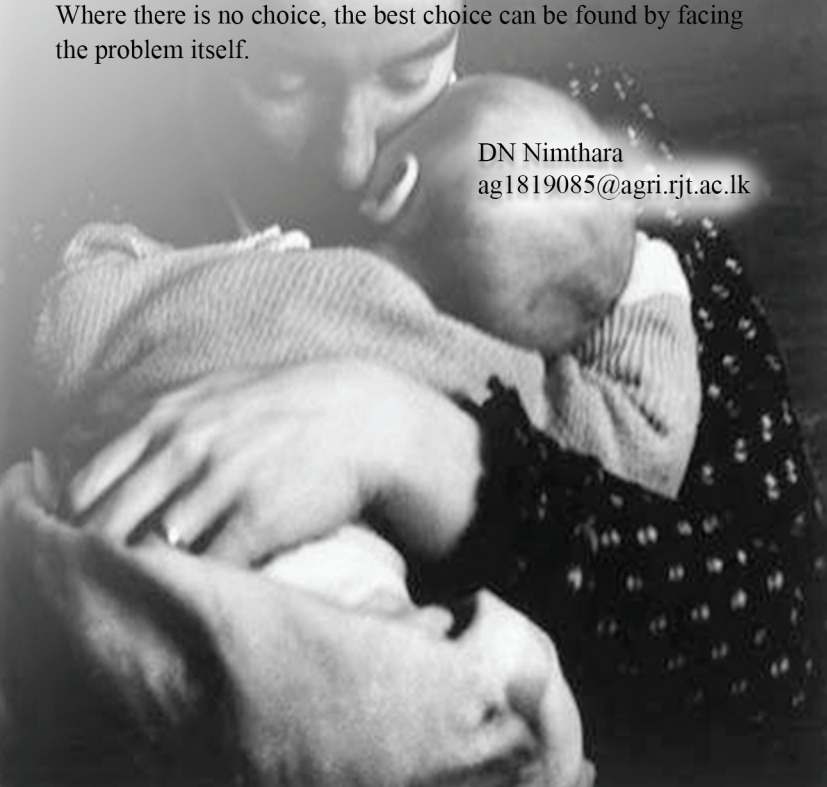
"Doctor! I am glad to meet you here. I've been searching for Mr. Martin all those years to thank because he and you saved my brother; because of him, we have a good family and very good lives now. My brother is studying to become a doctor. My brother and I used to help needy people as we were before."

"I am also delighted to hear about your wellbeing. Sadly, my dad is no longer alive to hear about your progress. He died in the last year but he will definitely be happy for you."

"Oh my god! It is a heart wrecking news. Anyway I am thanking you and your father from the depth point of my heart."

Life is a journey between "B", the Birth and "D", the Death but "C", the Choice is in between. We all have a choice and we take our choices to live happily. But some people do not have any choice but to face their lives as it is as the heroin of this story. Where there is no choice, the best choice can be found by facing the problem itself.

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SEASONS

When orange sun shines
When wildflower blooms
When blue bird sings
I'll meet you once again

When persimmons ripe
When sky is so bright
When whole world smiles
I'll meet you once again

When crescent moon glows
When it's flooding the shores
When a heavy feeling grows
I'll meet you once again

When maple leave falls
When somber wind blows
When autumn rain pours
I'll meet you once again

When hills dressed in snow
When sun is burning low
When our shadows grow
I'll meet you once again

When world's quiet and still
When partition doesn't exist
When your heart is true-blue
Just for old times' sake
I'll meet you once again

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Zambia's looming debt crisis

While the whole world is battling the global COVID-19 epidemic, many countries have to work harder than ever with economic crises. International debt is a serious problem for some countries today. Marking its peak, Zambia recently came to the world's attention as the first African country to have the highest risk of international debt default as a result of the global epidemic. Zambia currently owes more than \$ 23 billion to China for project finance and infrastructure development alone.



Zambia is expected to pay at least \$ 3 billion out of \$ 11.7 billion owed to international creditors of China. According to Zimbabwe's Minister of Information and Broadcasting Chishimba Kambwili, in 2019, Zambia owed more than \$ 23 billion to China if all projects were funded and guaranteed. If Zambia does not have the ability to repay Chinese commercial lenders, the Chinese government may repay their creditors through various means, such as direct money transfer or preferred project shares. Against this backdrop, there is a risk that the Zambian government will give China access to public assets such as copper resources and Kenneth Kaunda International Airport.

Why China needs Zambia?

Zambia is a country located in the center of South Africa. Zambia is also a landlocked country. A large area of the country is sparsely populated and most of the population is concentrated around the developed area associated with the so-called "Line of Rail" railway system. The railway line runs from the copper-rich area known as the "Copperbelt" to the capital, Lusaka, to the southeastern part of Livingstone.

China (3rd) is the world's largest consumer of copper and Zambia (8th) is one of the world's leading copper producers. Since the beginning of this millennium, Chinese investment in Zambia has grown exponentially. At present, more than 600 Chinese enterprises are operating in Zambia. Most of these enterprises are concentrated in the copper-rich region of copper belt.

Aimed at 'Belt and Road Initiative'

Zambia is an active participant in the "Belt and Road initiative" in China. This "Belt and Road" project, also known as the New Silk Road, will enable China to expand its economic and political power from East Asia to Europe through development and investment initiatives. During that journey, China is keen to see the world's economic hubs as well as the copper deposits in Zambia.

White Elephant Projects

Zambia's credit crunch is said to be due to the long-running non-systematic financial management of corrupt governments. Meanwhile, the aggressive construction policy pursued by the Zambian government is gaining prominence. In 2011, the Zambian government unveiled a new plan to boost the country's infrastructure with an estimated budget of \$ 20 billion. 80% of these irregular and rapid construction projects have been implemented from the outset by companies based in Beijing, China. Since 2014, Zambia has built 19 infrastructure projects, borrowing more than \$ 9 billion from China. Many of these chaotic construction projects have been called the 'White Elephant Projects' because of their abnormal cost and impracticality. For example, the "Levy Mwanawasa" stadium, built primarily in the area of Ndola, is said to have cost \$ 65 million and has a maximum audience capacity of about more than 40,000. However, it is said that more than 5,000 spectators rarely come to the stadium.

Economic collapse in Zambia

Zambia's economy continues to weaken as it has long relied on copper production which is a main source of income. Zambia's government has failed to diversify its sources of income, and they have to make up 70% of Zambia's export earnings from copper production. Fitch Ratings, a global credit rating agency has revealed that Zambia's debt defaults are being challenged. The end result was that Zambia was downgraded from a "CCC" level to a "B-" level by a long-term foreign currency issuer rating.

According to Fitch Ratings, Zambia's fate was due to over-reliance on copper production. In addition, Zambia's declining agricultural production, new mining taxes, and the uncertain power supply in the Copperbelt region have contributed to this. In the early 2019, Zambia's copper production fell by 9.3%, while Zambia's earnings fell by 23.5%, and Zambia suffered from the consequences of a lack of economic diversification.

Demand for copper in the face of the corona virus has fallen further, with the Zambian currency, the Zambian currency, depreciated by about a third against the US dollar. Traditional concessional loans to poor countries are not available from lenders such as the World Bank. But the World Bank began to create demand for infrastructure and related projects in Zambia. So, in the end Zambia turned to China and other lenders.

Chinese colony in the backyard

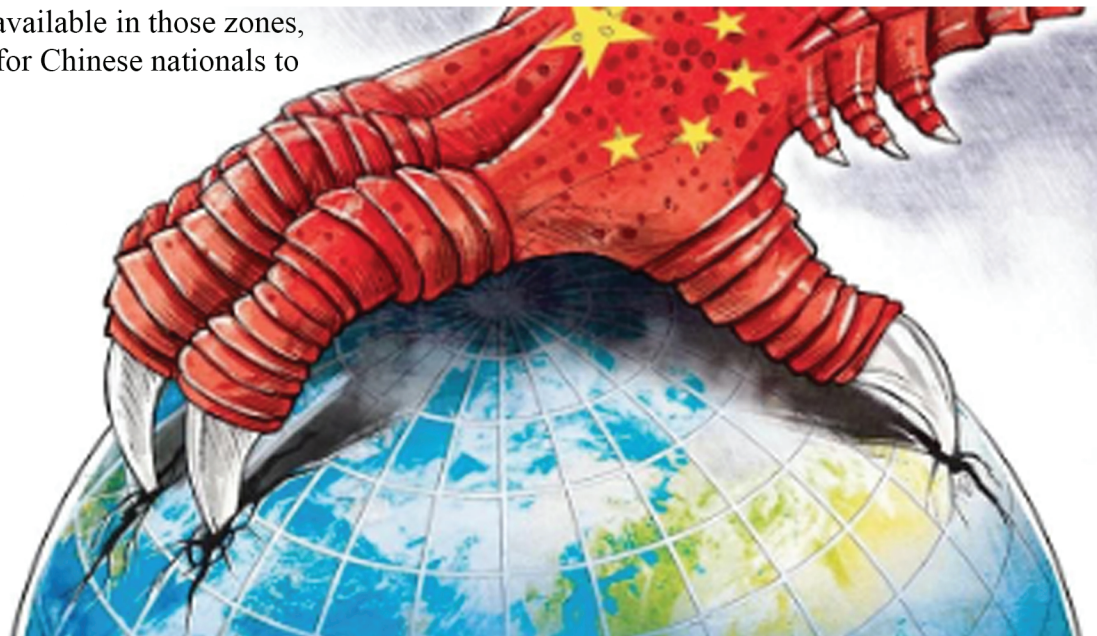
Today, there are more than 100,000 Chinese officially living in Zambia, but the actual number could be much higher. Due to the opportunity to work in the special economic zones established by Chinese development aid and the low tax rates and professional opportunities available in those zones, there is a greater tendency for Chinese nationals to migrate into these zones



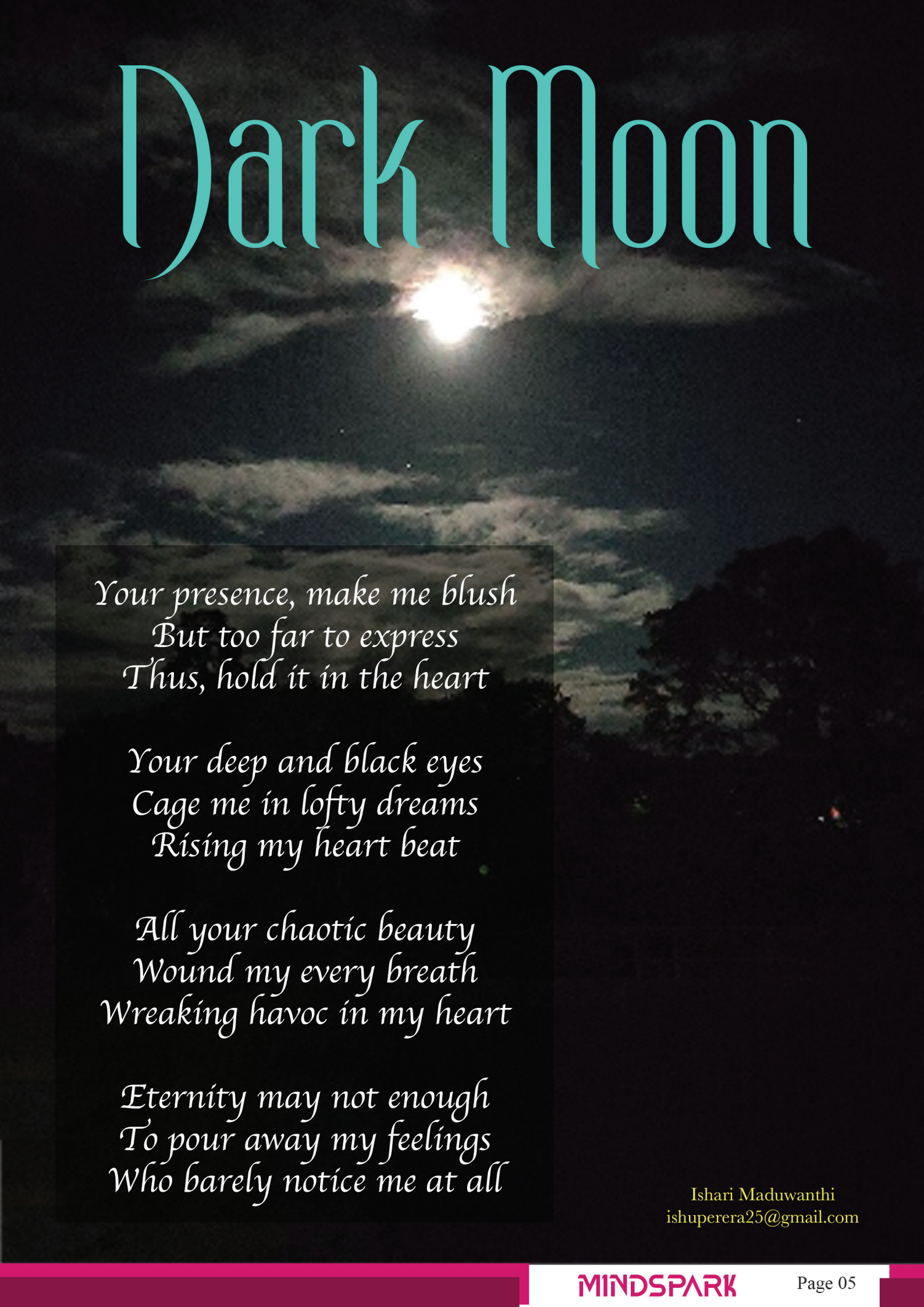
The problem here is that Chinese aid tends to provide little benefit for Zambian people and businesses. This criticism was so widespread that it had become a mandatory topic on the election platforms of Zambian politicians. In 2011, former President Michael Sata won the national election on the grounds that he was clearly anti-Chinese. However, the Zambian leaders who came to power set aside all these accusations and began to pursue Chinese debt in a way that was nothing

References; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zambia>

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Dark Moon



*Your presence, make me blush
But too far to express
Thus, hold it in the heart*

*Your deep and black eyes
Cage me in lofty dreams
Rising my heart beat*

*All your chaotic beauty
Wound my every breath
Wreaking havoc in my heart*

*Eternity may not enough
To pour away my feelings
Who barely notice me at all*

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FATE OF SRI LANKAN FOOD SECURITY

“According to the United Nations’ Committee on World Food Security, food security is defined as meaning that all people, at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their food preference and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.”

Food security means the national security. In the absence of food availability, we are unable to manipulate the economical, political and social well-being of a country. Food security should be continued without considering the inequalities such as class, gender, region, nationality, religion or any other status because all the nations should certify the food security for their progression.

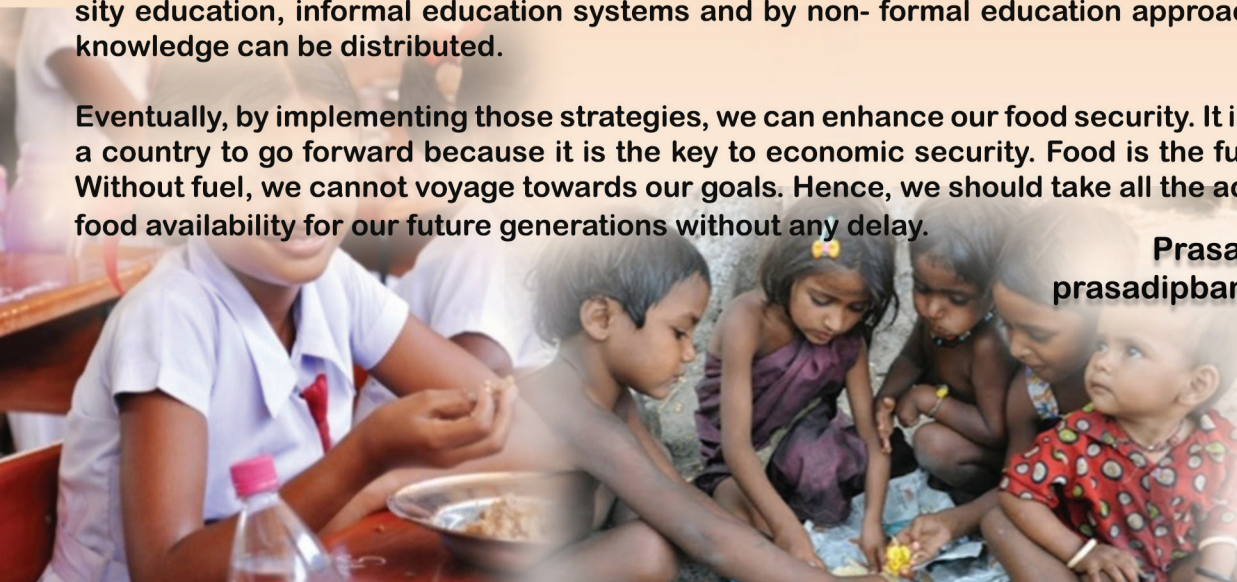
There are a lot of issues in Sri Lankan food production existing as barriers for certifying the food security such as, climatological disasters, geographical limitations for crop production, political decisions, poor dissemination of production and protection technologies, high cost of storage, transport and processing cost, low processing facilities and poor infrastructure. Due to these issues, certification of food availability has not been done yet. Because of that, not only adults but also children badly suffer from malnutrition and different unhealthy conditions while spending miserable lives. Their education, physical, mental and social persistence levels are reduced.

The government has carried out some programs to improve food security from time to time. For instance, by the ‘Samurdhi Program’, 2 million households below poverty line are provided with 2030 calorie requirement as well as by ‘Thripasha Program’ supplementary food provision for low income mothers with children of less than one year. Also, by school mid-day meal program, 500,000 children in 6440 schools’ are provided with 600-800 calorie meal. Additionally, by different kinds of agricultural and economical projects, government has attempted to improve the Sri Lankan food production and food security. Island wide projects like ‘Api Wawamu Rata Nagamu’, Waga Sangrama’ can be indicated as examples.

In my point of view, for the development of Sri Lankan food security, annual food production should be increased while reducing the food wastages. For that, the challenges which are associated with food productivity should be identified precisely. After that, a clear and well-organized, national policy should be planned by experts and those policies must be implemented successfully. Also, the national food security must be handled with a combination of domestic food production and trade. For food production and utilization transparent trade policies and acquisition of new technology should be continued. Also, through direct government intervention, microlevel food security should be handled. New scientific technologies such as new high yield hybrid crop varieties, high efficiency machineries, profitable marketing strategies should be explored by researchers and those research innovations and information should be spread among the field level activists such as farmers through extension officers and those technologies should be utilized to develop the food production and protection processes. Also, while increasing the food production we should reduce the food wastages. For that, efficient post-harvest management technologies can be utilized in a successful manner. Nutritional education is very important for all the people. Therefore, by formal education systems such as school and university education, informal education systems and by non- formal education approaches the nutritional knowledge can be distributed.

Eventually, by implementing those strategies, we can enhance our food security. It is very important for a country to go forward because it is the key to economic security. Food is the fuel for every nation. Without fuel, we cannot voyage towards our goals. Hence, we should take all the actions to secure the food availability for our future generations without any delay.

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Just Smile

Standing under the tree
Which is tall, wide and dim
I glanced through the branches
With my eyes full of tears

The wind blows through my hair
As smooth as a friendly breeze
It swirls around my grimy head
Like a messenger carrying the scent of rose

I see everyone smile
I see everyone twirl
With entwined hands
And their lips address

But, here I stay
With my messy head & broken hopes
Alone, secretive & unloved
Under this tall, wide tree

Far across the parade,
There I spot
The face that I revered
Long time ago

His hands clasping a girl
The missis of his dreams
She kissed on his lips
Those were only mine once

Long time ago
I was his queen and he was only mine
But, everything got changed
From his queen to an unknown

He doesn't love me anymore
Neither do I?
Now, he is someone's jewel
And will never be mine

I watched them kissing
With a fake little smile
While my heart pounds saying
"Hey girl, just smile"



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Attitudes

Auto mobiles! Mobile phones! Pharmaceuticals!
A cheap market for cheap labours.
Our free island! Alas!
The pearl of oceans – The tear of mother Earth

Saw it like a papaw
Paws of lions on this land, brought flags of peace
Land lords paid them with flowers.
To cover the graveyards!

Backyards with pests - florets without panicles
Good for heart not for gold
Fathers Mothers went for black gold, in the Central East
Drunken masters; orphan children!

“Your attitude, not your aptitude.” Zig said.

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'JACK THE RIPPER'

Who was this 'Jack the ripper'?

Jack the Ripper was an unknown serial killer in the late 19th century who was active in the Whitechapel District of London and the surrounding poor countryside. In both criminal cases and contemporary press reports, the killer was referred to as the "White Chapel Killer" or "Leather Apron".

Background

With the arrival of Irish immigrants in the middle of the 19th century, the population of major cities in Britain, including the eastern corner of London, gradually increased. Jewish refugees who had been fleeing to the genocide in Tsarist Russia and Eastern Europe since 1882 also later migrated to these areas. By 1888, with the increase in population, the White Chapel on the Far East end of London also became more densely populated.

As the situation worsened, the nature of jobs and housing worsened, and the number of low-income earners increased. Fifty-five percent of children born in the East End died before the age of five.

Robbery, violence, and alcoholism were rampant at the time. The inherent poverty caused by the continuing rise of social tensions with the economic problems of the White Chapel led many women to turn to prostitution on a daily basis. In October 1888, the Metropolitan Police in London estimated that there were more than 50 brothels in Whitechapel, with about 1,200 women already employed there. It was widely believed at that time white chapel was a den of immorality.

Canonical five - All five murders no doubt came from the same hand

Street prostitutes who lived and worked in slums in the east corner of London were the primary target of Jack the Ripper's murder. The killings were unusual, before the abdomen and genitals were mutilated, their necks were cut off. The internal organs of at least three of the victims had been removed. Then, it was assumed that the killer had some physical or surgical knowledge. The five main female victims of the killings were Mary Ann Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Steroid, Catherine Edwards and Mary Jane Kelly.

All five major murders in Whitechapel took place at night, on or around the weekend, at the end of the month or week. The distortion in the bodies of the other four murders was respectively severe but the assassination of Elizabeth Stride.

Some researchers said that some of these were, in fact, the work of a single killer. Authors such as Stuart P. Evans and Donald Rum below strongly argued that the ripper of white chapel is a myth because three of the cases (Mary Ann Nichols, Annie Chapman, Catherine Eddowes) can inevitably be linked to the same perpetrator, but there is no evidence that the murder of Stride and Kelly was committed by the same person.

Criminal Investigation Department of the white chapel reported four more murders that took place after the five major murders.

Another 4 victims after 'canonical five'

The Whitechapel Criminal Investigation Department reported four more murders that took place after the five major murders. Among them were Rose Millet, Alice McKenzie, Frances Coles, and the headless female body on Pinchin Street. The first such incident was the death of 26-year-old Rose Millet by strangulation on December 20, 1888, in the Clark Yard on Hike Street in Poplar. The second incident took place just after midnight on July 17, 1889, when a woman named Alice McKenzie was murdered in Castle Alley, Whitechapel. She was found with two stab wounds to her neck and further damage to her left carotid artery. Her body showed minor bruises and cuts, and a seven-inch-long surface wound extending from her left breast to her nose. Thomas Bond, surgeon who performed the autopsy, believed that this was Ripper's murder, but his colleague George Phillips disagreed because he had previously examined the bodies of three victims that were not involved each other.

Suspicious and investigations

Many believe that Ripper had a regular job and lived in the area because of the murders that took place on weekends, public holidays, and within a short distance of each other. Others thought the killer was an educated upper class man that would be a doctor or baron.

The root causes of such theories were cultural sentiments such as fear of the medical profession at the time, distrust of modern science, or the exploitation of the rich and the poor.

A Polish immigrant and Queen Victoria's grandson and Well-known Victorian painter Walter Sickert was also charged in the killings.

The letters

There were various theories about Jack the Ripper's identity and profession, but the authorities did not agree with any of them and the number of named suspects exceeded 100.

The media and the Scotland Yard police received numerous letters from people claiming to be the killer. The name "Jack the Ripper" began with a letter that was written by a man claiming to be the killer. Name of Jack the ripper was used there too.

One day, a letter came to George Lusk who was set up to deal with the killings and came with half of a preserved human kidney.

The serial killer known as "Jack the Ripper" was increasingly believed by the public to be an individual.

This was due to both the extraordinary brutality of the murders and the media coverage of the crimes. Extensive newspaper coverage of the Ripper created a great deal of international publicity.

Scotland Yard police was not able to confirm any links between the 1888 massacres and the 1891 massacres at Whitechapel and Spitalfields.

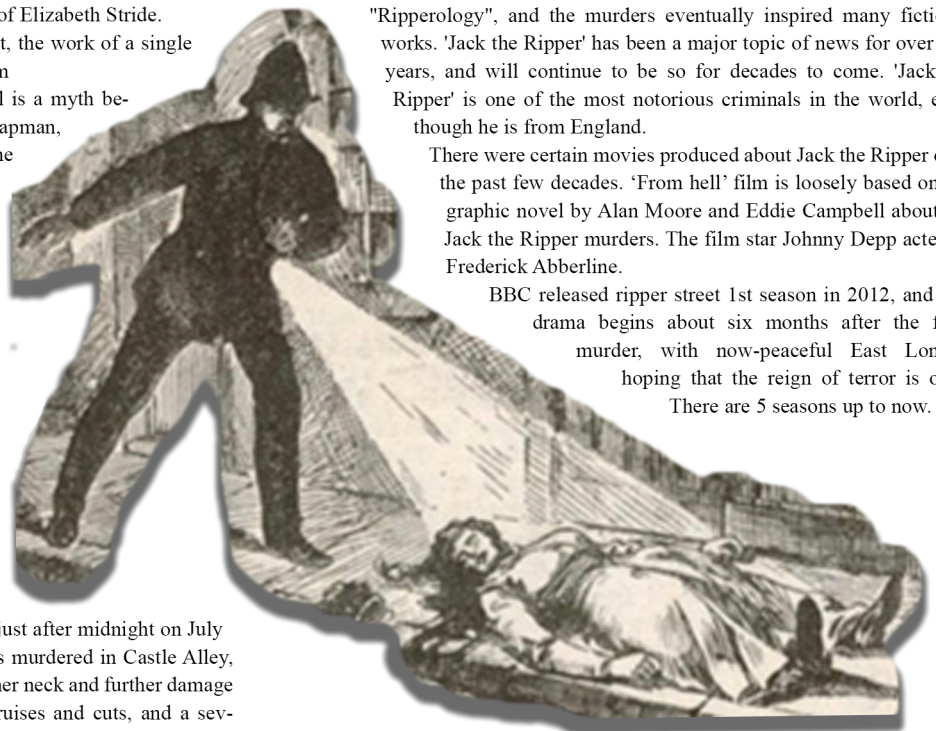
Legacy

None of these killings had a final solution, and they later became a collection of legends, myths, and pseudo-histories.

The study, analysis of events and reports related to the Ripper were called "Ripperology", and the murders eventually inspired many fictional works. 'Jack the Ripper' has been a major topic of news for over 120 years, and will continue to be so for decades to come. 'Jack the Ripper' is one of the most notorious criminals in the world, even though he is from England.

There were certain movies produced about Jack the Ripper over the past few decades. 'From hell' film is loosely based on the graphic novel by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell about the Jack the Ripper murders. The film star Johnny Depp acted as Frederick Abberline.

BBC released ripper street 1st season in 2012, and this drama begins about six months after the final murder, with now-peaceful East London hoping that the reign of terror is over. There are 5 seasons up to now.



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EASTER ATTACK & MY LOVE

The rest of the dead ruins,
Ask from my mind,
Then church mirrors laugh with me
“Oh” my pinky princess...
Can you hear me?
My notes with sad tones and shiny tears
Sing that song you had written
It's a dream of an evil
This poem has no reason
But near to black season
She was reading my eyes
“Oh” my pinky princess...
Dark hail falls
Cry my heart in pain
Why I asked again?
Please, Jesus, tell me,
I'm yet alone in church
But that black Sunday still teasing me
“Oh” my pretty pinky princess...
Where are you?

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Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)

Fears and Truth



GMOs are one of the most arguable areas of science.

Genetic engineering is used in many fields. Even though medical application like GM insulin is widely accepted, the debate heats up when it comes to food and Agriculture. Why is that? Why is the same thing treated so differently?

The Past and the Future of GMOs

Plants and animals have been modified genetically by humans for thousands of years. Maybe, a few of your field crops had very good yields. So, you did smart things, bred the plants and animals had traits that are beneficial for you. Traits are suggested and expressed by genes. So, with each generation, those genes have got more pronounced. After thousands of years, almost every single plant and animal around us is vastly different from its pre-domesticated state. Selective breeding is what we basically do, but we cannot ensure that the particular trait has been passing through successfully. Genetic engineering eliminates this factor. We can choose the traits that we want and make foods so bigger or immune to pest and so on.

Are GMOs bad?

There is a common objection. Gene flow meaning GM crop could mix with traditional crops and introduce unwanted new characteristics into them. There is a method that might guarantee complete prevention, but is a big anti GMO argument by itself. They don't produce either seeds or seeds may be sterile. The idea is that seeds of GMOs couldn't produce fertile plans, requiring farmers to buy new seeds every year. The very concept of this, however, caused a public outcry, stopping the technology being put to use. This brings us back to the unintentional spreading of engineered DNA. There have been GMOs growing where they weren't planted, and traces of modified genes were found in foreign crops. But GM plants can't run wild entirely. Many crops have to be related to mingle. There are also cultural methods like buffer zones, to keep unintentional crossing at a minimum. After more than 30 years and thousands of studies, the science is in. Eating GMO plants is no more risky than their non GMO equivalent.

Could plants that have been engineered be toxic? For example, BT crops, a gene borrowed from the bacterium *Thuringiensis*, let engineered plants produce a protein that destroys the digestive system of specific insect pests. The plant makes its own pesticide. Insects eat it and die. Pesticide sprays be washed off, while the poison in BT crops is inside the plant. What is harmless to one species, might kill another. Coffee, for example, is a poison that kills insects but is harmless to us. Plants are engineered to be resistant to certain weed killers. This way, farmers can use them widely killing the other plants competing for resources without harming the crop.

Who makes us fear?

The Pesticide industry is a big business. Over 90% of all cash crops in the world are herbicide resistant, mostly to glyphosate. As a result, the use of glyphosate has increased greatly. So, farmers rely on pesticide widely in there cultivations. This is the hidden truth. A few big industries control the food production all over the world. There are many bad effects of over using pesticides and it directly causes environmental pollution.

But we should...

We need to change agriculture to a more sustainable model. GMOs as a technology are actually an ally and not an enemy, helping to protect nature and minimize our impact on the environment. Using GMO decreases pesticide applications and saves the nature. GMOs provide high yield, safe, healthy, nutritious and more vigorous plants and foods for us. GM Plants with Self-Nutrition avoid the chemical fertilizer usage and protect the environment. Here is a sustainable solution, so why don't we admit it?

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'Mihintale' is our Campus near to Anuradhapura
Agriculture Faculty is situated at 'Saliyapura'

Rajarata University where we keep our study
Expert academic staff teaches us each faculty

We love our campus with our own heart
Science, Medicine, Agriculture and Art

Knowledge ability and wisdom we receive
From here the well learning that we perceive

New comer's are fit one's feature and figure
If you want to change it in vain your vigour

It is long lasting till the word say bye
Understand not the sarcasm is applied why?

Console the hungry at the canteen is like shrine
Only dhal and rice are tasty like meat and wine

Writing tutorials, cramming lessons are quite common sight
Close to the exams we prepare day and night

We learn, listen, read within three four years
We are parted by final exam by saluting and cheers

Firstly pay homage to religion leaders as our preachers
Secondly we must pay our tribute for our teachers

Dilshani; I, learn in the 'Agri' in years three
Wish the success to the magazine, with support by me

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Stop Hunger through Food Security

“No man can be wise on an empty stomach.” -George Eliot

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The world population is growing at an alarming rate. It is estimated that the earth will be crowded with another 2 billion more people by 2050, altogether 9 billion. All of them need water, homes, jobs, and medicines. But the most important thing is that, how will they all be fed? Thus, additional food has to be grown on less land and in a way that protects the environment while ensuring enough food for future generations. According to FAO, food security can be defined as “Ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.” But how can we ensure food security to stop hunger? According to statistical data, the current global food system produces more than enough food, yet more than 800 million people face undernutrition and malnutrition. Hence, current advanced technologies and all other possibilities should be taken into urgent consideration to stop hunger through food security. At the same time, a proper understanding of the underlying causes of food insecurity is critical to step forward.

Food security, improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture are among the leading objectives for achieving zero hunger which is one of the 17 sustainable development goals established by the United Nations in 2015. It seeks to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition while at the same time doubling agricultural productivity. Malnutrition addresses three broad conditions including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweightness. Anyhow, food insecurity within the family leads to malnutrition that can end up with diet-related non-communicable diseases, growth problems in infants, irreversible physical and mental disorders, and complications during pregnancies. Food insecurity can occur either when the family is unable to produce or buy enough food or a good variety of food for its needs or when there is enough food in the household, it may not be distributed equally, and priority may not be given to vulnerable categories such as children and women. Inadequate mother and childcare and inadequate healthcare and improper hygiene are also significant when considering underlying causes for food insecurity. Sometimes, mothers and children do not eat the right food due to limited knowledge, local taboos, or poor caring attitudes and practices. Even though food security is not achieved, Sri Lanka has a high degree of social welfare among other South Asian nations. From the perspective of agronomy, the current global issues of climatic changes and anthropogenic effects of conventional intensive cropping have led to the decline of in-country food production. Since land is a limited resource, measures should be taken to enhance crop productivity to ensure food security. Moreover, the use of resistant cultivars, breeding suitable crops, and proper agronomic management of food crop systems can ensure sustained productivity. Eloquent, it provides solutions for changing climate, rising food prices, and rapidly growing population that can be considered as hidden causes of food insecurity. At the same time, adaptation strategies and policy adjustments also play a vital role in achieving zero hunger. Postharvest management is significant of all.

Roughly one-third of the food is lost or wasted among the food produced for human consumption. And the bitter truth is, all the resources used in food production including a single drop of water and the greenhouse gas emissions during the production are released to the atmosphere in vain.

Rather than increasing the production, reducing the postharvest losses can contribute more to the growth of the food supply, since the resources used for producing food are all becoming increasingly scarce such as land extent for cultivation and water. Better post-harvest management is the best strategy to make more food available without increasing the burden on the natural environment. On the other hand, food losses can occur in any stage of the supply chain up to final consumption. While food wastage is prominent in developed countries, food is lost mostly during the supply chain in low-income countries, due to improper postharvest handling. Lack of processing facilities, inadequate market systems, poor storage facilities, and lack of infrastructure are core causes for food losses in developing countries like Sri Lanka. Therefore, efficient solutions should be taken by improving harvesting techniques, proper mechanization, farmer education, adequate infrastructure, and storage facilities to ensure food security within the country.

Home garden is a common form of food production in many rural communities in developing countries. And also, it is the best place for improving household food security through providing access to diversify nutritionally rich foods. At a time when safe food production and secure food supply become a serious challenge for less developed countries, the importance of home gardening is emphasized in terms of ensuring food security. The vegetables and fruits grown in home gardens provide all essential micronutrients which help to mitigate hidden hunger. Not only that, it is the easiest way to get a variety of nutritious food on daily basis but also it is a production system that the poor can easily enter. As mentioned, there are numerous reasons behind food insecurity. Economic hardships force people to consume less and settle for food with low nutrition. More importantly, home gardening can be done virtually with no economic resources, using locally available planting materials, organic manure, and biological pest control methods. Garden systems with livestock can supply the cheapest, primary, and often the only source of animal protein for the family. In most scenarios, women's contribution to household food production is immense since they consider much on household nutrition especially child nutrition. However, every member of the family has a well-defined role in achieving food security within the family.

‘The world's hunger is getting ridiculous. There is more fruit in a rich man's shampoo than in a poor man's plate.’

Sri Lanka was ranked 66th among 113 countries in the Global Food Security Index even though child malnutrition has been a long-lasting crisis in Sri Lanka. Food insecurity and poverty have an everlasting bond. Therefore, as mentioned previously, measures should be taken by considering agronomic, social, economic, and cultural aspects. Covid 19 pandemic has given us an opportunity to rethink about our prevailing simple suspicious lifestyle. Different strategies have been taken to promote home gardening and proper postharvest handling practices while most of the people have given more concern about the family nutrition with this pandemic. So, this is the best period to achieve the goal of ensuring food security to stop hunger. It can be started from your own family. Then, we can make this country a better place where everyone has the right to physical as well as economic access to food.



SHE

I see a fully blossomed rose
Walking along the corridor
Your gorgeous swaying pony tail
Maddened my tranquil soul
The pinkish inviting lips
Took me to an exuberant world

In an unexpected hour
She walked into my life
With all glory, grace and pageantry
Giving me all the world's hope

You, with your charming smile
Lights me up every time
Taking me to a heaven full of blossoms
I glitter because of your smile

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Sri Lanka, the Pearl of the Indian Ocean is the paradise I currently reside. And, Kandy is my hometown which is the cultural capital of Sri Lanka and also a world heritage site. Nestled in the hills, Kandy embraces a diversity of cultures and traditions.

Every year, during the month of July or August, Kandy comes into life with the onset of the Kandy Esala Perahera which is one of the extraordinary, cultural pageants that takes place in Sri Lanka.

Kandy Esala Perahara

In Kandy Esala Perahara, the sacred Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha is carried around the streets in the Kandy city to honor Lord Buddha and also God Natha, Vishnu, Kataragama, and Goddess Pattini are venerated. Kandy Esala Perahera first started with the arrival of Prince Dantha and Princess Hemamala who carried the Tooth Relic to Sri Lanka

During the perahera, this sacred Tooth Relic is only carried by a tusker that is carefully selected. This selected tusker is normally more obedient and much calmer compared to the other tuskers that join the perahera. For many years, these gentle giants have been used to showcase the royalty, religion, and culture of Sri Lanka and on the day of the perahera, they are lavishly and colourfully decorated.

Throughout the perahera, the best of the Sri Lankan dancing items, and musical items is displayed featuring a lot of dancers, drummers, jugglers, musicians, acrobats, and even fire breathers. In the Kandy Esala perahera, the Randoli perahera takes place for five consecutive days after the commencement of the Kumbal perahera for the first five consecutive days.

It can be concluded that Kandy Esala perahera is one of the most significant, glamorous events that takes place in Sri Lanka and it is our responsibility to preserve the heritage and hand it over to our younger generations.

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LIFE

*Will we have a beautiful morning,
if the sun does not rise in the sky...*

*Why a fragrant flower,
if there's no wind to spread fragrant...*

*Will a stream of water form,
if there's no water bubble barriers...*

*Will the moon shine in the sky,
if there's no darkness under the sky...*

*Does the sweetness of life feel to the heart,
if there were no sighs of sorrow...*

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Are we ready to feed the exponentially growing population adequately?

Only 29% of earth comprises of land while 71% of it is used for agriculture functions. However, the more of it has already been used. So, to extend the food production in order to meet the human needs using conventional farming methods, we have got to destroy our forests changing them into farm lands. But those forests are essential with several alternative measures to guard the atmosphere and stop the global warming. So, the agriculturists have paid their attention to bring the standard farm lands into cities.

In conventional farming, we need several factors to be considered as sun light, soil, irrigation, and fertilizers. Thus, if we have an idea to build up a vertical farm, we have got to overcome these issues. That means, we have to search out some alternatives for them. Sun light is vital among the factors. Consultants use LED lights which offer specific wave lengths that have been pre-determined according to the crop grown. Blue and red LED lights are most often used to obtain the purple hue, because it is more energy efficient than white lights, and they allow most efficient absorption of nutrients simultaneously.

Here, we use a soil less farming system but alternatives which can replace the soil's role. We use farming techniques such as hydroponics, aquaponics and aeroponics. In hydroponics, we use a mineral nutrient solution in a liquid solvent. Terrestrial plants can only be grown when their roots are exposed to the nutritious wholesome liquid, or additionally, the roots could also be physically supported by an inert medium like perlite, gravel, or alternative substrates. In aquaponics, we use a system integrated with fish farming. Thus, not like in hydroponics, the nutrients used are provided by organic matter in fish wastes. The latest technology is aeroponics. The fundamental principle of aeroponics is to grow plants by spraying the plants' roots and crown with an atomized or sprayed, nutrient-rich water solution. We spray water oxygen and nutrients to the roots. Through aeroponics, plants use 95% less water than in conventional farming as the evapotranspiration is low, thanks to the closed system. Sometimes, the time period of seed to reap is just fifteen days. Half of this time is taken in ancient farming, 30 - 45 days. Owing to the closed atmosphere and vertical snacking of the farm, they will grow 390 times per square feet more than in conventional farming.

The biggest benefit of this is, it is not being smitten by the fluctuation of weather. We use a closed atmosphere separated from the outer environment.

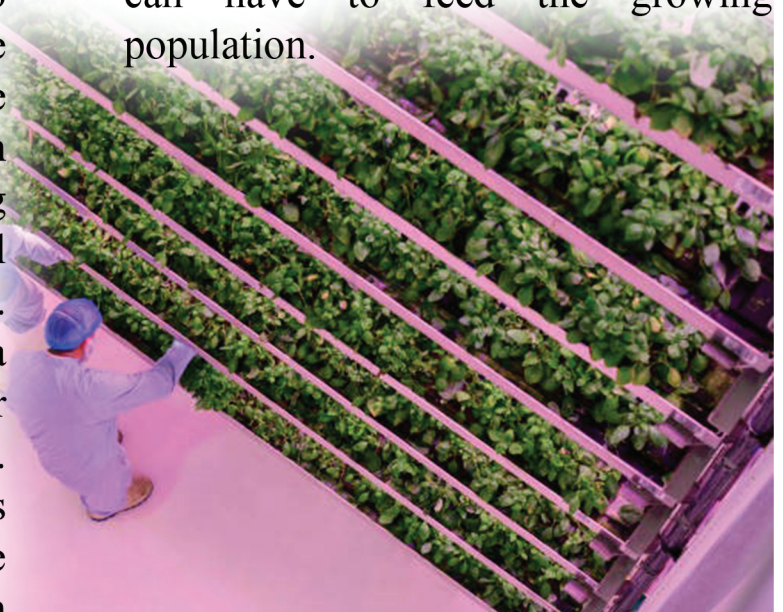
Consequently, everything is in check, which means, you will obtain a good, uniform, year-round crop production without being frightened of the impacts of adverse climates. Thus, you will have a top-quality production and a yield. Vertical farms can be built in any climate or location, irrespective of climate or temperature extremities. Since their stacking grow system enables them to expand upwards, it is possible to attain higher productivity on a tiny space.

Another one is that the hydroponics growing method uses 10% of the total amount of water used by conventional farming, and the nutrients and fertilizers too. Indoor farming is good for the environment as it massively reduces the number of fossil fuels required for farming instruments that are needed to sow, fertilize, weed or harvest crops. Vertical farming additionally helps enhance biodiversity as it doesn't cause land surface disturbance, by aiding animals to thrive. Global organizations estimate that 20% to 40% of crops we grow are being destroyed due to the pests in conventional farming. Thus, growing in a sealed environment without soil means no pests and pesticides. Consequently, consumers can have a lot of wholesome and healthier foods. The standard of living is rising. Consequently, farm work is not as enticing as it used to be. Therefore, the vertical farming helps to combat with this labor shortage.

Totally automated indoor growing systems don't need a large amount of manual labor to attain a flourishing year – round production. Labors with low-level skills are needed to sort and pack the harvests.

When it comes to the disadvantages, vertical farming should be set up by experts and needed to be monitored frequently. This has a high upfront cost and a significant operational cost too. Though no pesticides are used and crops grown density is very high, even a small mistake is enough for disease spread.

The global food production has to be increased by 70% across the globe to keep up the current consumption trend. Despite the fact that it has several disadvantages, we have to adapt to this concept and scientists across the world are carrying out several researches regarding this, because this is a good alternative we can have to feed the growing population.



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Savior

"Hey girl, just hang on there...
For God's sake, please, just don't move"
The scream behind me...the words stopped
me.
His arms...pulled me back...
I looked down... It was very high... 35
floors...
I needed it... just to fall from here...
To get rid of this cursed life...
How could I live... with my broken legs...
forever in a wheel chair?
No, I don't even want to imagine it... I just
needed to end.
That's what I thought...

But...he pulled me... said, "Let your life to
live... you are not the one to decide the
time to go...
Just value what you have gained... that's
what we normally do."
The angel who saved me...
Today...beside me...on our bed... my loving
husband....
Supporting me...admiring me in each step I
make with the wheel...
Now, my life is full of love...
So.... why these foul plays...
There's always something... we could try...
to gain energy...
For me, it's your love and care...
You are my strength... the reason to
laugh...
Path to my happy ending...
I feel it... the best life....
For the sake of you.... I really live...

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POET'S PEN

I blended myself in your arms.

I dived into your heart.

I know about you than you do.

Because I sang all the poems of your past life.

In pain, you come looking for me.

Again, all your sorrows and smiles close out of me.

You handle me lazily when I'm sad.

I'm the only who has seen your naked heart.

I wish you all the best in the world.

Even if you die, your words will not die.

I swear my clear letters will speak your heart felt voice.

I know the reason you slept all nights.

I have filled you with your lament.

I'm alone with you in the depth of your mind.

I'm seldom in your joys.

It's true. You never smile.

I know you.

The thickness of your tears is bigger than the monsoon clouds.

I'm glad, I did.

Because I was the one who actually kissed your soft hand.

Even when you die I live forever.

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Seed of Happiness

"To Fall in Love with Yourself Is the First Secret to Happiness"
-ROBERS MORLEY

You love your parents, siblings and your friends. They love you back. You find a partner who you love, and who loves you too. But you have missed someone? who is that? It's you. Have you ever thought about how much you love yourself? I think the answer is no. Our life is the best gift we have ever deserved from God. But the question is how much we value, love and use it in an effective manner. Self-love is the key element for success of life.

Therefore, what is this self-love? It is to simply choose yourself and respect yourself even when others refuse or underestimate you. Self-love is taking care of your own happiness and needs and not sacrificing your happiness to get others' attraction or please others. How many times have you pleased others? How many times have you done that? That indicates the quantity of your self-love, doesn't it? We are different from each other. Therefore, the quantity of self-love also varies from person to person.

Before loving someone else, we should love ourselves. We can never share what we do not have. This rule is also same for love. First, you must love yourself, and next love others. If you cannot show affection towards yourself, if you possess no self-love, it causes you to seek love acceptance, approval, care and love from others. But love coming from outside can be changed any time that leaves you alone at any unexpected moment. So, is it successful to devote yourself to beg love from others? Absolutely no, as the seed of happiness of your life is self-love and it should grow inside you with care and attention. Self-love never depends on others' situations or presence. self-love will make you happy even though you are alone because you believe, care for yourself and you know that you are capable enough to tolerate any situation. Self-love motivates yourself and helps make healthy choices in life without any bias.

How to start love yourself?

Self-love starts by being kind, patient, gentle, respecting and loving yourself. You must understand the real values, abilities and needs of yourself. By staying focused on what you want, you turn away from interference in the outside world. Talking and thinking about yourself with love enhances your confidence about yourself. Self-love develops with caring yourself, prioritizing yourself, trusting yourself, being true to yourself, being nice to yourself and forgiving yourself. On the other hand, you must identify your strengths, weaknesses and celebrate even small achievements and victories of your life. Healthy foods, exercises, enough sleeping time, giving yourself some rest can also be considered as ways of showing love towards yourself. Oneself is more responsive to these self-love habits and reacts to these habits in an amazing way which help you to achieve your dreams.

Hence, choose yourself and love yourself because only your self-love can make you shine. That's why Self-love is considered as the seed of happiness of life.



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Trials of thriving

Splintered fortresses with withered vows
Cherished moments and kept up hopes
Where are those cues of dreams?
That were mended & tinkered in those early years?

Frisky kindergarten
Was turned into a battlefield
By instants of despair
And a ton of nightmares

The days of growing up
Were the playing with shattered hopes!
Which made us to idle
Between the future and the past

Older the self gets
Sturdier the decisions become
Which tangle with the knots of life
And made us combat in ways to unravel

With frenemies and plastic smiles
Still, we ponder sieving love
Misreading and disbeliefs
Made our heads strong

No more play days
And pleasing story tells
All you are going to deal is with
Hectic times & chaotic minds

Pleasing others
Were made a practice
Moments of humiliation
Made our hearts to tremble

Abated trust and beaten hopes
Are the signs of a grown up being
And anybody can't be there in this world
Who don't wish to become a child again?



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Economic and Social Importance Of Aquaculture and Fisheries Production in Sri Lanka

Aquaculture and Fisheries production play an important role in our country in different ways. According to the statistics, apparent per capita fish consumption was estimated to be 31.4 kg in the year 2016. When considering the present status of fisheries and aquaculture sectors in Sri Lanka, marine and inland fishery activities are carried out under the fisheries sectors while shrimp farming, ornamental fish and non-traditional practices are carried out under the aquaculture sector.

Both these sectors contribute a lot to the economy of Sri Lanka and to the social development of the country as well. When paying the attention to the economic contribution from these sectors, there are different ways where this sector contributes to the economy such as through trade, market, employment etc.

A considerable amount of foreign exchange is earned through the export of ornamental fish. Sri Lanka exports ornamental fish to more than 18 destinations, with the 10 main export markets being based on the value of ornamental fish exported to such as Germany, France, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Japan, United States of America and Italy. The contribution by ornamental fish exports from Sri Lanka in monetary terms is just over 1 percent of the value of the global trade in ornamentals.

So generally, development of aquaculture in Sri Lanka has mainly targeted the potential export commodities with the opportunities available for the rural poor coming in the form of employment, mainly as labourers.

Besides, with income generation through direct fishing activities, these sectors create substantial income and job opportunities through secondary service activities, such as gear provision and maintenance, processing, and distribution. Secondary activities increase the market value of the fish products, overall economic value of fisheries and aquaculture production.

When considering the social importance through this aquaculture and fisheries production, cultural services, human health and well-being services, various recreational services can be carried out under this social importance.

These sectors contribute significantly to food security by serving as a major source of protein, essential fats, and micronutrients for hundreds of millions of people, particularly in rural communities. Small fish eaten by the people provide an important source of nutrients (calcium and vitamin A) that are difficult to obtain through other dietary sources. Consumption of fish has been shown to mitigate the effects of some micronutrient deficiency-related illnesses. Secondly, for the direct human consumption, such products can also be used in feed for livestock and aquaculture operations.

Providing means of livelihood through commercial and industrial aquaculture and these sectors plays an important role in communities around different places in Sri Lanka too. They also support valued recreational activities like production of sportfish and recreational fishing, public and private aquarium trade and also production of bait-fish for commercial and sport fishery.

Also, this provides opportunities to empower individuals to meet their own physical and psychological needs and their dependents. This role is particularly important in poverty prevention for populations including ethnic minorities, the rural poor, and women.

This way, both fisheries and aquaculture sectors play an important role in terms of the economy, well-being and development of the society.

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Sunstruck Dew

*Once drizzles filled with joys
on the leaves
So misty, early in the morning
Still the dawn
Still the dawn*

*Prince of smiles in glittering minds
on flower petals
So pearly , tiny and dazzling
Till the morning
Till the morning*

*Since rays peep through woods
on the lawn
So classy, priceless shimmering
Until the end
Until the end*

*Hence lights flow with heat
on the drops
So sunny, surly steaming
Kill the charm
Kill the charm*

*Cause dews are fated with deaths
For the sake of daybreak
So silly, wishing and kissing
And sparkles yet!*

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GOOD WORK

Sky is high than I thought. Cold breeze from north hits the mountains harder and tries to reflect back to where it had come. Even though the sky is high, a secondary sky is emerging beneath the mountains and it's full of white clouds. It is a heaven on earth. But, there is no goddess I see flying over the clouds, unlike in films. A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide and methane) that are generated by our actions. To have the best chance of avoiding a 2°C rise in global temperatures, the average global carbon footprint per year needs to drop under 2 tons by 2050. It is well known for the 'Sri Pada' or Adam's Peak; a "sacred footprint", a 1.8 m (5 ft 11 in) rock formation near the summit, which in the Buddhist tradition is held to be the footprint of the Buddha, in Hindu tradition that of Hanuman or Shiva. "Mountain of Shiva's Light", and in some Islamic and Christian traditions that of Adam, or that of St. Thomas.

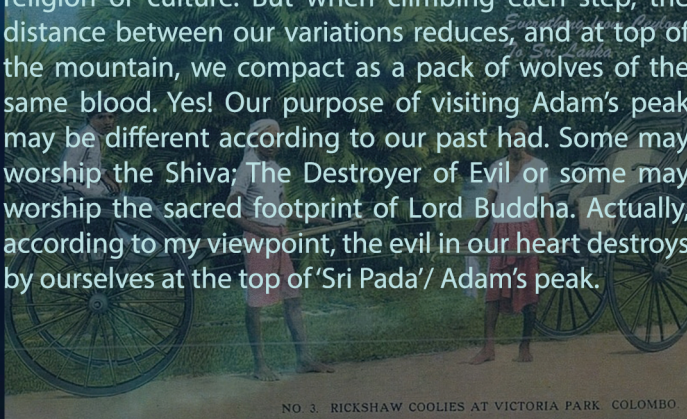
Back to the viewpoint now! An American motivational writer, William Arthur Ward Quotes that, "Opportunities are like sunrises. If you wait too long, you miss them." At around 6.10 a.m. the sun came out of the mountains in the East. The flares of light were spread over our secondary heaven, just like milk spread on a milky way. The Milky Way is the galaxy that includes the Solar System, with the name describing the galaxy's appearance from Earth: a hazy band of light seen in the night sky formed from stars that cannot be individually distinguished by the naked eye.

Right now, I am going to save this good memory at 'Sri Pada', from my first visit to it on the 4th of February. I feel like a free and happy person in this earth's heaven. Many things had occurred on this day through the history of the timeline. Roman Emperor Septimius Severus dies, leaving the Roman Empire in the hands of his son Caracalla, one of the most notorious and unpleasant of Roman emperors because of the massacres and persecutions he authorized and instigated throughout the Empire. During the Battle of Sinhagad, Shivaji commander Tanaji Malusare recaptures the fort of Sinhagad from the Mugals, scaling the walls with help of a pet monitor lizard. The worst quake in 8 years kills some 50,000 in Calabria, Italy. Earthquake in Quito, Ecuador kills 41,000. You will see wins and losses happened across history on the 4th of February. But, for me as a Sri Lankan youth climbing this mountain, it is Independence Day which was freed our country from British rule on the 4th of February 1948. The British Ceylon period is the history of Sri Lanka between 1815 and 1948. It follows the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom into the hands of the British Empire. It ended over 2300 years of Sinhalese monarchy rule on the island.

On this holy day, I feel like I have done good work by climbing the Adam's peak, of course not the Everest. At the bottom of the mountain we, Sri Lankans are divided, of course not according to our blood, but because of our religion or culture. But when climbing each step, the distance between our variations reduces, and at top of the mountain, we compact as a pack of wolves of the same blood. Yes! Our purpose of visiting Adam's peak may be different according to our past had. Some may worship the Shiva; The Destroyer of Evil or some may worship the sacred footprint of Lord Buddha. Actually, according to my viewpoint, the evil in our heart destroys by ourselves at the top of 'Sri Pada' Adam's peak.

The United States of America is a diverse country, racially and ethnically. Six races are officially recognized: white, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, black or African American, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander, and people of two or more races. More than 19,500 languages or dialects are spoken in India as mother tongues. So, our world is full of different people. At the beginning of stepping down journey from Adam's peak, I saw an old woman; as she wore a Burka dress I guessed her as a Muslim, she was carried by two Tamil persons. I heard that price for carrying by two Tamil people was Rs. 5000/= equals to \$25 US. That reminded me about the era of Sinhalese had become slaves of the British. At that time many native drivers carried British people on rickshaws by their barefoot. However, with the evolving new technology, humans are lucky to have cable cars to climb mountains. But for Sri Pada still, there is no cable car. Now a days vans are able to drive to the bottom of the mountain only. On the journey to the mountain peak, the price of a cup of tea and a 'rotti' was increasing from bottom to top of the mountain. Then, we realized that price of a 'rotti' at the bottom shop of the mountain is very cheap. 'Rotti' is a round flatbread native to the Indian subcontinent made from stoneground whole wheat flour, and water that is combined into a dough. That gives the irony of costing a lot of money to bring peace and harmony to different people in a country. Even though the unity and cooperation among people are high at the peak of the mountain, the prices of people's needs had become high. Yes! Of course. Our country had won a war that prevailed for more than 30 years at a high cost. Many lives of innocents had been sacrificed for the sake of peace and harmony. Now we have to fight against Covid-19. There is no selection specificity to Corona virus when infecting us; human beings.

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NO. 3. RICKSHAW COOLIES AT VICTORIA PARK. COLOMBO.



THE SEVEN NOTES

*I heard a thousand blended notes
While I was walking by the hallway
In that sweet face when her hands swinging
Brought sad thoughts to the mind*

*Felt something on my hand
Over the glance of my girl
Eyes spoke more than her lips did
When I turned my head up*

*Sofia!
Swinging along with the melody
That came out of her tender hands
Touched my veins and hold my breath

Was with my sweetheart
Whispering and playing around
My pencil ran across
In an evening that Moena kisses the heaven*

*Ran away, never turned her head around
My beloved Amelia!
Please don't leave
"Sofia was my acquaintance!"
Holding the sketch in my hands
I whispered to the air*

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*Birds around me flew and chirped
All I heard was her melodious play
Rums the four strings while
Wind kissing her supple hair*

Agro – ecotourism

“Learning and innovation go hand in hand. The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow.”

- William Pollard-

It's pretty sure that you have heard of or even experienced first hand about different types of tourism such as business tourism, culinary tourism, sports tourism and even medical tourism. But, Agro – eco tourism? There is a problem.

As a matter of fact, it is not a novel concept or practice for the world. Nevertheless, unfortunately, Sri Lankans are not yet familiar with this concept. When considering the current status of the Sri Lankan agriculture, we are unable to experience a satisfied or delighted situation. Not only in farmer or field level operations but also within post-harvest management, transportation, value addition of products, agricultural marketing, agri-business management and even imports and exports related to this sector, we can hear a numerous issue which restricts the agricultural product potentials, well-being of farm families as well as the development of the nation. In my point of view, it is because of the backward technology and knowledge. With these regressive facts, going forward is just a dream for Sri Lankans. Therefore, we should find out new overseas positive propensities as well as explore modern technologies and strategies which are suited for our country.

Agro – ecotourism is an extraordinary concept which is a mixture of both eco-tourism and agri-tourism. It encourages to bring both international and domestic tourists to a farm or ranch to teach them about various agricultural systems, agricultural operations, sustainable environmental approaches, country life, livelihood of rural population etc. while enhancing the farmer economy. The special thing is, all these processes are done in an eco-friendly way. That means, it helps improve the productivity of farm lands while protecting the environment. This is a new experience for tourists who live in cities and are curious and interested in agriculture as well as in tourism. It is a lot more than just learning about the farming process.



Farmers can create an abundance of invigorating and memorable activities that guests can take part in when visiting eco-friendly farms, such as meeting local farmers, learning different agricultural processes and issues, tasting a variety of fresh food, knowing about farmer's markets and associations, learning about their history, culture, their future endeavours, and experiencing adventurous activities.

Taiwan, Tuscany, Mallorca, Brazil, Hawaii, Grenada, California and Philippines have these kinds of Agro-ecotourism areas and they earn a lot of extra revenue from this marvelous practice. So, we are also able to manipulate this valuable project, because we have already had a significant and peculiar agricultural system since ancient times. We can attract tourists who are curious and interested in agriculture as well as the tourism to our agricultural fields, irrigation systems, animal farms and rural villages. From this profitable practice, the distribution of agriculture to the national economy can be enhanced easily without any hard approaches. We must only manage and organize our agricultural system which attracts the tourists.

Also, since Sri Lanka is known as a conspicuous country, people overseas always trend to ambulate the country. It is a hugely extra advantage to encourage the Agro-ecotourism within our motherland. Also, there is a trend of Sri Lankan youth who are not interested in farming to come away from agriculture. Hence, we can identify this group and inspire them to engage in this extraordinary practice. It will also be a good solution for reducing the unemployment.

If we develop this concept enhancing our creativity, knowledge and technology, it will be an efficacious solution for current issues in the Sri Lankan agriculture...

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The Mirror of the Room

I'm in the corner,
Since you've born,
Saw the cute smiles
With shiny teeth
I surprised much
By looking at your image...

First time and stepwise
To your studies
I saw a little guy,
Who dressed in front of me

Tying the tie,
For grade one,
Before to school,
Saw you as a prince
By your mother in front of me.

Time flew faster,
Cute guy at grade five,
Saw how you tired,
To won scholarship.

When you were playing
A little black wasp.
Stung on your nose.
You cried and you,
Showed it to me.

I felt dreadful sad,
Though I haven't a heart
Don't cry little son
You will get well soon.

Some hairs on your chin and mouth,
I could see,
The ugly pimples,
On your face.

Now you are 11,
I am also fifteen,
What is done to your hair?
It isn't suitable.

After a few days,
Where is your hair?
Principal might be cut it.
I am totally happy!

You passed the O/Ls.
I saw your smiles,
I could remember,
And I was happy.

You are now an adult,
And going for A/Ls,
Your choice was science,
The marvelous stream of World.

At midnight,
How much you learnt?
By sending SMS,
And cheating your parents.

Using perfumes early in the morning,
And styling the hair,
Made you as a handsome
I don't know how I felt it.

I couldn't advice you,
As your parents.
But I am also happy,
I was a part of your evolution.

You passed the exam,
And made us proud,
You entered the University,
But, I can't wish you the luck

The day you enter there,
You came in front of me,
I imagined a successful citizen,
From a deep life journey.

Saw your every moment,
Since the day you born,
Wish you the happy,
I am your,
Mirror in the room.

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"The Light of Asia or The Great Renunciation (Mahābhinishkramana)": The Western Confrontation with Buddhism

Buddhism, the fourth-largest religion of the world, which is widely spread through much of Asia, originated in India between 6th and 4th century BCE and it encompasses a variety of beliefs, rituals, traditions and spiritual practices, which are largely based on the teachings of the Lord Buddha, who was born as Siddhartha Gautama in India, in the 4th century BCE. Although there was a widespread knowledge and popularity about the Lord Buddha and his early life in Asia, the direct confrontation of Europeans with Buddhism took place from the 13th century onwards and the first comprehensive Western study on Buddhism, which was named as "*Recherches Sur Buddou*", was published in 1817 by Michel Jean Francois Ozeray. Sir Edwin Arnold's "*The Light of Asia or The Great Renunciation*" was published in 1879 and it is considered the first publication about the life of the Lord Buddha and Buddhist philosophy in English. It can be considered a landmark in English literature because it was the first encounter of Buddhism with English literature in its history, which made the Buddhist philosophy accessible to a wider audience in the Western world as it was translated into the other European languages too within a very short period of time after its first publication.

The narrative poem, "*The Light of Asia*", subtitled "*The Great Renunciation*", has had a profound effect in bringing the story of the Lord Buddha to the audience of the Western world. The poem is divided into eight books or cantos and each canto contains around five to six hundred lines narrated by an imaginary Buddhist votary. "*Book the First*", "*Book the Second*" and "*Book the Third*" are reserved to celebrate prince Siddhartha's birth, youth and his wedding. The poet narrates prince Siddhartha's seeing of the omen through "*Book the Fourth*" and "*Book the Fifth*" is dedicated to discussing ascetic Siddhartha's quest for truth. He describes the end of austerities and enlightenment of the Lord Buddha through "*Book the Sixth*". The Buddha's visit to "*Kapilavatthu*" is described in "*Book the Seventh*", while "*Book the Eighth*" is dedicated to a vivid portrayal of the Buddha's demise. Accordingly, the writer presents a complete account on the life of the Lord Buddha from his birth to demise.

Orientalism, one of the most popular Western scholarly disciplines of the 18th and 19th centuries that comprises of the study of the languages, literatures, arts, religions and philosophies of Asian societies was a paramount feature of the time when Arnold wrote "*The Light of Asia*" and as a result of that, like many orientalist of his generation, Arnold also shared that the liberal Victorian view; all religions have some core of the truth and therefore deserve respect. The purpose of Arnold in writing this epic poem was to aid in the better and more wholesome mutual understanding between East and West. By fulfilling his expectation, millions of readers all over the world embraced this epic poem of him very quickly as they were extremely impressed by both the poetic qualities and subject of the poem. Arnold's narration of the Buddha's life is truly admirable and remarkably exceptional.

"..... when midway in the road,
Slow tottering from the hovel where he hid,
Crept forth a wretch in rags, haggard and foul,
An old, old man, whose shrivelled skin, sun-tanned,
Clung like a beast's hide to his fleshless bones.
Bent was his back with load of many days,
His eye pits red with rust of ancient tears,
His dim orbs bleary with rheum, his toothless jaws
Wagging with palsy and the fright to see
So many and such joy...."

(60, Arnold)



Prince Siddhartha's first encounter with the harsh realities of the human life is narrated in this way by Arnold in "Book the Third". The writer describes it in a powerful way by creating a powerful effect on the Western readers. This incident created a powerful effect on the young prince as that was the first instance when he got to know about the unchangeable pathetic reality of human life. A similar strong sensation is given to the Western readers too by Arnold through his narration of the incident, because the reality that the prince experienced is not an aspect which is addressed in Christianity or any other Western religions. Thus, the Buddhist philosophy revealed through the poem along with rich poetic devices created a strong and a remarkable impact on the Western audience for the first time in the history.

The first word of the Lord Buddha, which gave a great message to the world and revealed an unarguable reality, is inserted into the narration by the poet very creatively and attractively in its original language, Pali, and to make an influence on the western readers, the meaning of the word is declared in English.

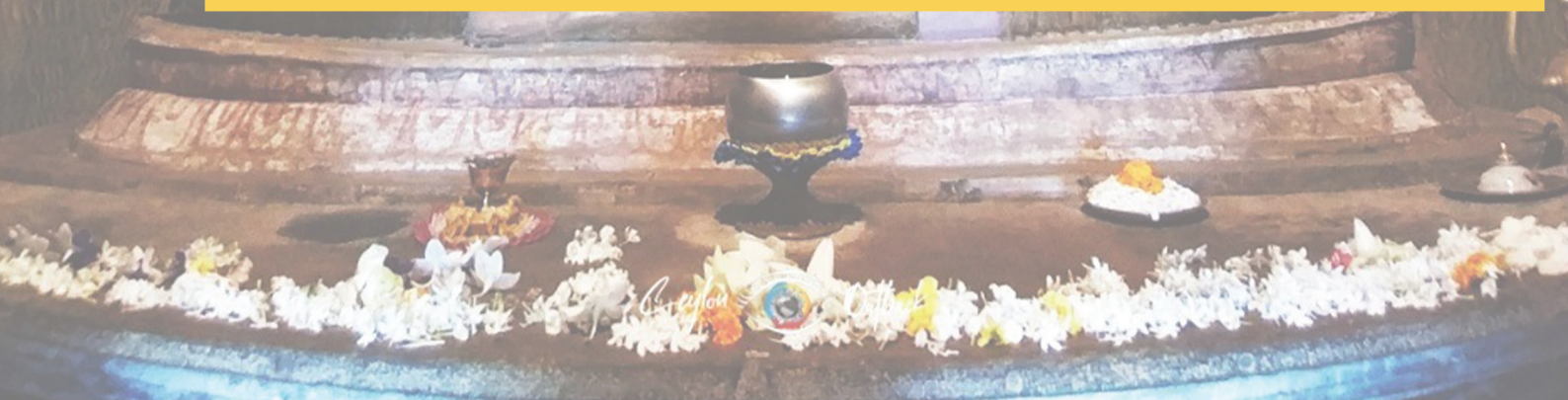
"Then he arose – radiant, rejoicing, strong-
Beneath the Tree, and lifting high his voice
Spake this, in hearing of all Times and Worlds:-

*Anekajatisansarang
Sandhawissang anibhisang
Gahakarakangawesanto
Dukkajatipunappunang*

.....
MANY A HOUSE OF LIFE
HATH HELD ME – SEEKING EVER HIM WHO WROUGHT
THESE PRISONS OF THE SENSES,"

(158, Arnold)

Accordingly, the poet unfolds the core-values and the teachings of Buddhism by using various techniques throughout his epic poem. Step by step, the poet reveals so many aspects of Buddhism along with the life story of the Lord Buddha. This revelation of the Buddhist philosophy aided immensely in having a mutual understanding between East and West as Arnold expected when publishing the poem. In addition, the narrative poem of Arnold changed the perception of the Western audience about the Lord Buddha and Buddhist philosophy.



Arnold transformed the Buddhism's reception in the Western world by creating a persuasive and moving account on the Lord Buddha's life and philosophy. He creates a portrayal of Lord Buddha which is similar to "Jesus Christ" in terms of his love for the world, his sympathy for the poor, equality in treating all human beings and the way that he leads his followers to salvation. And also, he describes the power of Lord Buddha to conquer death which is not a consideration of Christianity. Through that, he takes an approach to describe the concept of "Nirvana" in Buddhism. He vividly and attractively explains the teachings of Lord Buddha about good and bad deeds and how they lead us to another birth after the death. Through that, he presents an account on one of the most important Buddhist beliefs, reincarnation, one of the most annoying concepts for the Victorians as they believe extinction of individual identity at death. Arnold accurately addresses some of the key Buddhist concepts such as; the wheel of existence, four stages of the path to nirvana, the four noble truths along with the noble eightfold path, and the five precepts for lay people who follow Buddhism, karma, dharma and nirvana. Further, he skillfully explains the major difference between Buddhism and Christianity through this narrative poem. He reveals that even though, in Christianity, the existence functions according to a sin system of their-own and redemption, the existence of living creatures is a system of karma and reincarnation in which all living beings are capable of ending by their own effort of reaching the bliss of nirvana one day according to Buddhism.

Arnold does not describe most of the Buddha's miracles in his poem and that may be because he wanted to avoid harsh criticisms of the Victorian Christianity who were totally strangers to the Buddhist philosophy at that period. Arnold had tried to rationalize some incredible miracles of the Lord Buddha's story. Thus, the poet was smart enough to present the core-values of Buddhism in an appealing way to the oriental mind-set and as a result of that the Western reception of Buddhism turned into a totally new path. It appears that despite some of the criticisms, "*The Light of Asia*" appeals to a broader Euro-American audience of liberal Christians and spiritualists, as the poem became a Buddhist palimpsest through which they believed that they could bridge the distance between West and East.

Arnold's "*The Light of Asia*" was a lightening sensation to the literature as the sub-genre of the life and philosophy of the Lord Buddha was initiated with the publication of this narrative poem. After Arnold published his epic poem in 1879, various other literary works were created on Buddhism and the Lord Buddha across the world. Inspired by Arnold's poem, Dudley Buck, an American composer, wrote a full-length oratorio for mixed voices with the same title, "*The Light of Asia*" and it was first performed in 1887, in Washington DC and then in London, in 1889. Jack Kerouac's "*Wake Up: A Life of the Buddha*" (2008) and Hermann Hesse's "*Siddhartha*" (1922) are two other works on Buddhism and the Lord Buddha which were inspired by Arnold's narrative poem. Accordingly, "*The Light of Asia*", can be viewed as the first Western confrontation with Buddhism, which created the sub-genre of the life and philosophy of the Lord Buddha, one of the landmarks in English literature.

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