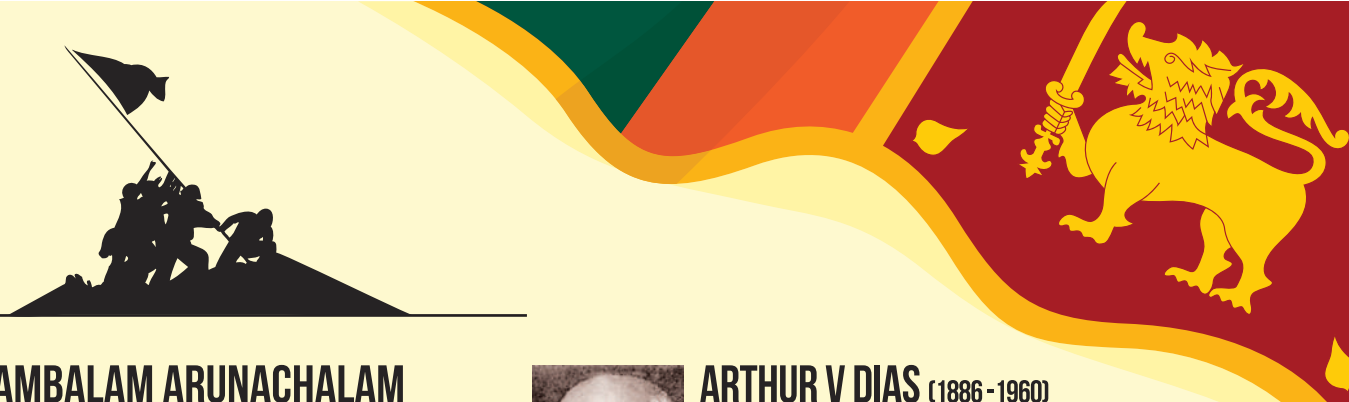
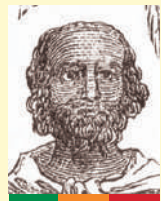


Champions of Courage



VENERABLE WARIYAPOLA SRI SUMANGALA THERA (1795)

In 1818, a rebellion started in the uplands of the country against the British rule. With the outbreak of this rebellion, the Venerable Thera removed the Relic of the tooth of Buddha from the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, and went into hiding in Hanguranketa. He later handed it over to Keppetipola Disawe, who was leading the rebellion. The possession of the Tooth Relic was traditionally regarded as a symbol of the right to rule the country, and the acquisition of it was a large morale boost to the rebels, who intensified their activities after that. However, the British captured Venerable Sri Sumangala Thera in November 1818 and recovered the Tooth Relic, which they ceremonially brought into Kandy again. The rebellion ended soon after this. Venerable Sri Sumangala Thera was convicted for treason and imprisoned in Jaffna. Some accounts say that he was released on April 13, 1821 by order of the then Governor of Ceylon.



GONGALEGODA BANDA (1809 - 1849)

He was seen at the Dalada Maligawa just before the 1848 Rebellion broke out. Gongalegoda Banda led the protest march regarding unjustifiable taxes which was held on July 6, 1848, near the Kandy Kachchery. This rebellion was the first major uprising against the British since the Uva Rebellion in 1818. The anti-colonial movement on the island in 1848 was led by leaders such as Gongalegoda Banda, Puran Appu, Dingi Rala who were supported by many of the local people.



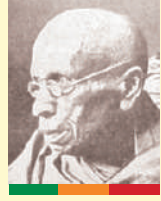
PURAN APPU (1812 - 1848)

He rose from among the common people and he dared to challenge the might of British imperialism at its peak of power and glory during the Victorian era. On July 7, 1848, about a century before Ceylon gained Independence, Puran Appu led an attack on Matale. This was successful. However, the other leaders who attacked Kurunegala and Wariyapola failed.



VENERABLE MIGETTUWATTE GUNANANDA THERA (1823 - 1890)

The Christian missionaries were propagating the religion through the pamphlets and the books. Reverend D J Gogerly of the Wesleyan mission published Christian Pragnapthi in 1849. Venerable Gunananda Thera replied with Durlabdi Vinodini in 1862 for Buddhists. Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thera wrote Christiani Vada Mardanaya and Sanyak Darshanaya in 1862-63. Soon after, publications were replaced by public debates.



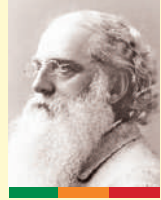
VENERABLE HIKKADUWE SRI SUMANGALA THERA (1827 - 1911)

The Venerable Thera was the chairman of the 'Colombo Committee' which originally designed the Buddhist flag in 1885. He was also a pioneer in Buddhist newspaper journalism in Sri Lanka. The paper Lankaloka was started by him and afterwards he assisted the local Buddhist community to publish papers such as Sarasavisandaresa and Sinhala Buddhaya. He was well honoured and awarded many titles by Sri Lankans as well as the people of many other countries in the East and the West. Reputed and renowned institutions in Ireland, Italy, Hungary and Germany also bestowed felicitation degrees on him.



VENERABLE RATMALANE SRI DHARMALOKA THERA (1828 - 1885)

The Venerable Thera was an educationist and revivalist of Sri Lankan Buddhism. He was reputed for his knowledge of Pali, Sanskrit and Buddhist Philosophy. He was the founder of Vidyalkankara Pirivena, Peliyagoda, which was granted the University status later by the government in 1959, and presently known as University of Kelaniya. Sri Dharmaloka College in Kelaniya is named after him.



HENRY STEEL OLCOTT (1832 - 1907)

Olcott is probably the only major contributor to the nineteenth-century Sinhalese Buddhist revival who was actually born and raised in the Protestant Christian tradition, though he had already left Protestantism for Spiritualism long before he became a Buddhist. His childhood Protestantism is a reason that many scholars have referred to the Buddhist modernism he influenced as Protestant Buddhism.

The American-born military officer, journalist, lawyer and the co-founder and first President of the Theosophical Society is considered a notable hero in the struggle of Sri Lanka's independence and a pioneer of the present religious, national and cultural revival.



PONNAMBALAM RAMANATHAN (1851 - 1930)

Ponnambalam Ramanathan founded the National Reform Association in 1907. He contested the 1911 legislative council election as a candidate for the Educated Ceylonese seat and was elected to the Legislative Council, defeating physician Marcus Fernando. Ramanathan was responsible for the release of the Sinhalese leaders who had been arrested following the 1915 Ceylonese riots, travelling to the UK to make their case. He was re-elected at the 1916 legislative council election, defeating Justus Sextus Wijesinghe Jayewardene.



PONNAMBALAM ARUNACHALAM (1853 - 1924)

Arunachalam got involved in politics during his university days. He agitated for political reform whilst still working in the civil service. In retirement Arunachalam became involved in politics, founding the Ceylon National Association and the Ceylon Reform League, of which he was chairman, in 1917.

He was one of the founders of the Ceylon National Congress (CNC) in 1919 and served as its first president from 1919 to 1920.

Arunachalam left the CNC in 1921 following disputes about communal representation in the Legislative Council, which Arunachalam opposed, and the connivance of Sinhalese politicians which resulted in no Tamils being elected from Western Province at the 1921 legislative council election. He founded the Ceylon Tamil League in 1923.



JAMES PEIRIS (1856 - 1930)

Peiris was first to propose the creation of a University College in Colombo and the means of financing it. Following the establishment of the University College, Colombo (later to become the University of Ceylon), Peiris was a Member of the Advisory Council of the new University College.

In 1915 Peiris led the campaign for a Royal Commission of Inquiry and the vindication of the reputations of those who had been falsely accused during the riots of 1915.

Peiris was the chairman of the committee which was protesting the British Governor's handling of the riots and the unfair and discriminative treatment being meted out to Sinhala Buddhist leaders.



ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA (1864 - 1934)

Born to a devout Buddhist family in 1864, David Hewitvitarne became Anagarika Dharmapala, the leading light of the Buddhist Renaissance Movement in Sri Lanka. As a child, Dharmapala was sent to Christian missionary school.

When a mob of Sri Lankan Catholics attacked a Buddhist procession in 1883, Dharmapala left school and turned his intellectual pursuit to Buddhism.

Soon afterwards Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, founders of the Theosophical Society in New York, arrived in Sri Lanka and filed suit on behalf of the Buddhists who were injured in the attack. Dharmapala, who felt that the Society's aims were identical to those of a Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka, became a member. Madame Blavatsky took the young man under her tutelage, and he remained her loyal supporter for the rest of his life.



SIR D.B. JAYATILAKA (1868 - 1944)

Being an activist in the Temperance Movement because of the love he had for Buddhism and the people of the nation, Sir DB was one of the leaders who was victimised and imprisoned through Martial law with false allegation by the British colonial ruling in 1915.

He was a well-respected personality in the country by both the eminent and the common public, therefore was instrumental in the revival and upgrading of the religious, national and cultural values of the nation that had deteriorated due to colonial ruling.

Sir D.B. had close relationships with intellectual and eminent personnel such as Venerable Rathmalane Sri Dharmaloka, Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala, Migettuwathe Gunananda, Rathmalane Sri Dharmarama Theras, Anagarika Dharmapala, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, F. R. Senanayaka, Pandith Batuwanthudawa, Walasinghe Harischandra, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanadhan, D. S. Senanayaka, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, C.W.W. Kannangara and T.B. Jayah. He also understood the pulse of the common man and was a noble personality who spent time with the general public.



EW PERERA (1875 - 1953)

Fearing an uprising the inexperienced British colonial Governor of Ceylon Sir Robert Chalmers declared Martial Law on June 2, 1915 and on the advice of Inspector General of Police Herbert Dowbiggin began a brutal suppression of the Sinhala community by giving orders to the Police and the Army to shoot anyone who they deemed a rioter without a trial, it is said the numbers of Sinhalese killed this way were thousands. Many local leaders that included D.S. Senanayake, D.R. Wijewardena, Arthur V. Dias, Dr. Cassius Pereira, Dr. WA de Silva, F.R. Dias Bandaranaike, H.M. Amarasuriya and A.H. Molamure who were imprisoned and Captain D.E. Henry Pedris, a militia commander, was shot for mutiny.



WALISINGHE HARISCHANDRA (1876 - 1913)

Brahmachari Walisinghe Harischandra was a social reformer, historian, author and revivalist of Sri Lankan Buddhism.

He was a follower of Anagarika Dharmapala, who gave leadership to the Buddhist revivalist movement, after the lead given by Colonel Henry Steel Olcott. Walisinghe Harischandra is also regarded as the saviour of the citadel of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura.



FREDRICK RICHARD SENANAYAKE (1882 - 1926)

He was a lawyer and independence activist. A leading member of the Independence Movement, he was an elected member of the Colombo Municipal Council. He was the principle supporter of the early political career of his younger brother D. S. Senanayake.



DON STEPHEN SENANAYAKE (1883 - 1952)

Don Stephen Senanayake emerged as the leader of the Sri Lankan independence movement that led to the establishment of self-rule in Sri Lanka. A planter, Senanayake became active in the temperance movement which grew into the independence movement.

The three Senanayake brothers were involved in the temperance movement formed in 1912. When World War I broke out in 1914 they joined the Colombo Town Guard. The brothers were arrested and imprisoned without charges during the 1915 riots.



ARTHUR V DIAS (1886 - 1960)

Arthur Vincent Dias was a philanthropist, temperance movement member and an independence activist. A planter by profession, he is known for the jackfruit propagation campaign he pioneered throughout the country, which earned him the name Kos Mama.

Dias also helped a number of educational establishments in the country. Before Sri Lanka gained independence from British rule, he was imprisoned by the colonial government and sentenced to death, although he was later released.



D.R. WIJewardENE (1886 - 1950)

In 1913, Wijewardene was elected Secretary of the Ceylon National Association, marking his formal entry into politics and together with its President Sir James Peiris he agitated for constitutional reform and self-rule.

D.R. Wijewardene and E.W. Perera traced the location of the banner of last King Sri Vikrama Rajasinghe, the last king of the Kingdom of Kandy to the Royal Hospital Chelsea where it was kept since the surrender of the Kingdom to the British in 1815.



HENRY PEDRIS (1888 - 1915)

Sinhalese Muslim Riots (known as the 1915 riots), which began in Kandy when a group of Muslims attacked a Buddhist pageant with stones, soon spread across the island. The British Governor of Ceylon, Sir Robert Chalmers, feared he might lose control of the colony and, on the advice of Brigadier General Malcolm, came down with a heavy hand on the Sinhalese community. Chalmers declared martial law on June 2, 1915, and ordered the police and the Army to shoot without trial anyone who they deemed a rioter. With the escalation of the violence, looting broke out within Colombo. Pedris, as he was responsible for the defence of the city, successfully managed to disband several rioting groups after peaceful discussions.



TB JAYAH (1890 - 1960)

Jayah emerged as a leader of the Muslim community of the country. He entered the politics and became a prominent figure in pre-independence politics of Sri Lanka. He was elected to the legislative council, state council and parliament. He was also a founding member of the United National Party. He became the Minister of Labour and Social Service in the first independent government of Sri Lanka. After retiring from politics, Jayah was appointed as the first High Commissioner for Ceylon in Pakistan. He died in 1960, falling ill on pilgrimage to Mecca.



AE GOONESINHA (1891 - 1967)

Alexander Ekanayake Gunasinha was a pioneering trade union leader known as the Father of the Labour Movement. He was the founder of the Ceylon Labour Party, Sri Lanka's first labour organisation and former Mayor of Colombo. The campaign against the tax brought Gunasinha into contact with Ceylonese workers. He found that the workers were poorly paid, with wages averaging between 30 cts. to Rs. 1.00 for a day's work, sometimes as long as twelve hours. He was determined to get the working class better and more equitable wages. As a result, members of the working class looked to Gunasinha as the leader they had longed for.



S W R D BANDARANAIKE (1899 - 1959)

In order to promote Sinhala culture and community interests, Bandaranaike founded the Sinhala Maha Sabha in 1936. He introduced the Free Lanka Bill in the State Council in 1945. In 1947, when Leader of the House, D.S. Senanayake, presented the Soulbury Constitution to the State Council, Bandaranaike seconded the motion stating that he does so as the Sinhala Maha Sabha was the largest party in the State Council.



VENERABLE S MAHINDA THERA (1901 - 1951)

The Venerable Thera soon became fluent in the Sinhala language, and established himself as a poet and author. He has written over 40 books; most of them are poems inspiring patriotism. His first book was Ova Muthu Dama, which was written around 1921. His final book is believed to be Sri Pada. He also appears to have created a number of unpublished works. In his works, he has focused on the past glory of the country, and the weaknesses of its people in the present, urging them to work towards their freedom. He also wrote several books for children as well, and in these too he has tried to inspire patriotism upon the reader. His most famous works include Nidahase Dehena, Nidahase Manthraya, Lanka Matha, Jathika Thotilla, Ada Lak Mawage Puttu, Nidahasa, Videshikayakugan Lak Mawata Namaskaraya and Sinhala Jathiya.



WILMOT A PERERA (1905 - 1973)

The Suriya-Mal Movement was inaugurated at his residence in 1933. In 1935 he became a founding member of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, becoming active politics and the Sri Lankan independence movement he was elected to the first post independence parliament in 1947 as an Independent Socialist, defeating CWW Kannangara. He was also a member of the Viplavakari Lanka Sama Samaja Party for a short while. He was appointed as the 1st Ceylonese Ambassador to China in 1957 when Ceylon established diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China. In 1961 he was appointed to head the 1st Salaries and Cadres Commission (known thereafter as the Wilmot A. Perera Commission).



DR N M PERERA (1905 - 1979)

The work done by Perera (as a member of the Suriya-Mal Movement) in the Kegalle district during the Malaria Epidemic of 1934 and during the subsequent floods gained for him the support of the poor and caste-oppressed people of the area, who called him Parippu Mahathmaya after the dhal he distributed as relief supplies.



LEGACY OF LIBERATION

Celebrating the 76th Anniversary of Sri Lanka's Independence