

Historically valuable Dutch plate in the library of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura

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The Dutch who arrived in Sri Lanka for the first time in 1602 AD were working to oust the Portuguese who were ruling the coastal provinces of Sri Lanka. At that time, the Portuguese were looking to take over the entire country, including the upcountry. In 1638, King Rajasinghe, who was ruling the Kingdom of upcountry, signed an agreement with the Dutch in 1638 in Batticaloa to oust the Portuguese. King Rajasinghe of the kingdom of upcountry thought that the Portuguese were to be expelled from Ceylon and although the Dutch aimed to expand trade and power on the island. The Dutch succeeded in expanding the trade and power of the Island by tricking the king into changing the terms of the treaty. They have issued various commands for different situations and functions during their reign. The Library of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura commenced with small book collections in the Maligakanda Pirivena in 1959 and nowadays it is one of the leading libraries of universities in the country. The University of Sri Jayewardenepura Library has received these Dutch Plates during its inception. The main objective of this study is to educate the readers about these Dutch Plates as well as provide the necessary environment for the researchers who wish to study these Dutch Plates. The purpose is to highlight the need for conservation in order to preserve historically valuable Dutch Plates.

The Methodology used for this research is the visual observation and it adapts the content analytical technique using the primary data included in the Dutch Plate in the Library of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Twenty out of the Dutch Plates in the possession of the Sri Jayewardenepura University Library were used as samples for this research. These are from the 18th century and are written in Sinhala conjunct character. The style of the essay on Palm leaf manuscripts can be seen in this Dutch Plate. The Dutch plate also features the Kundalaya (කුඳලයා), which is used at the end of a sentence when writing the folios in the Palm leaf manuscripts. Analysis of the Dutch Plate's conclusions made it clear that the Dutch contained various orders or decrees in the administration and trade of Sri Lanka. Analysis of the contents of the Dutch plate shows that it contained various orders or decrees issued by the Dutch for the administration and trade affairs of Sri Lanka.

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