

ESSAYS IN ARCHAEOLOGY :

IN HONOUR OF
PROFESSOR

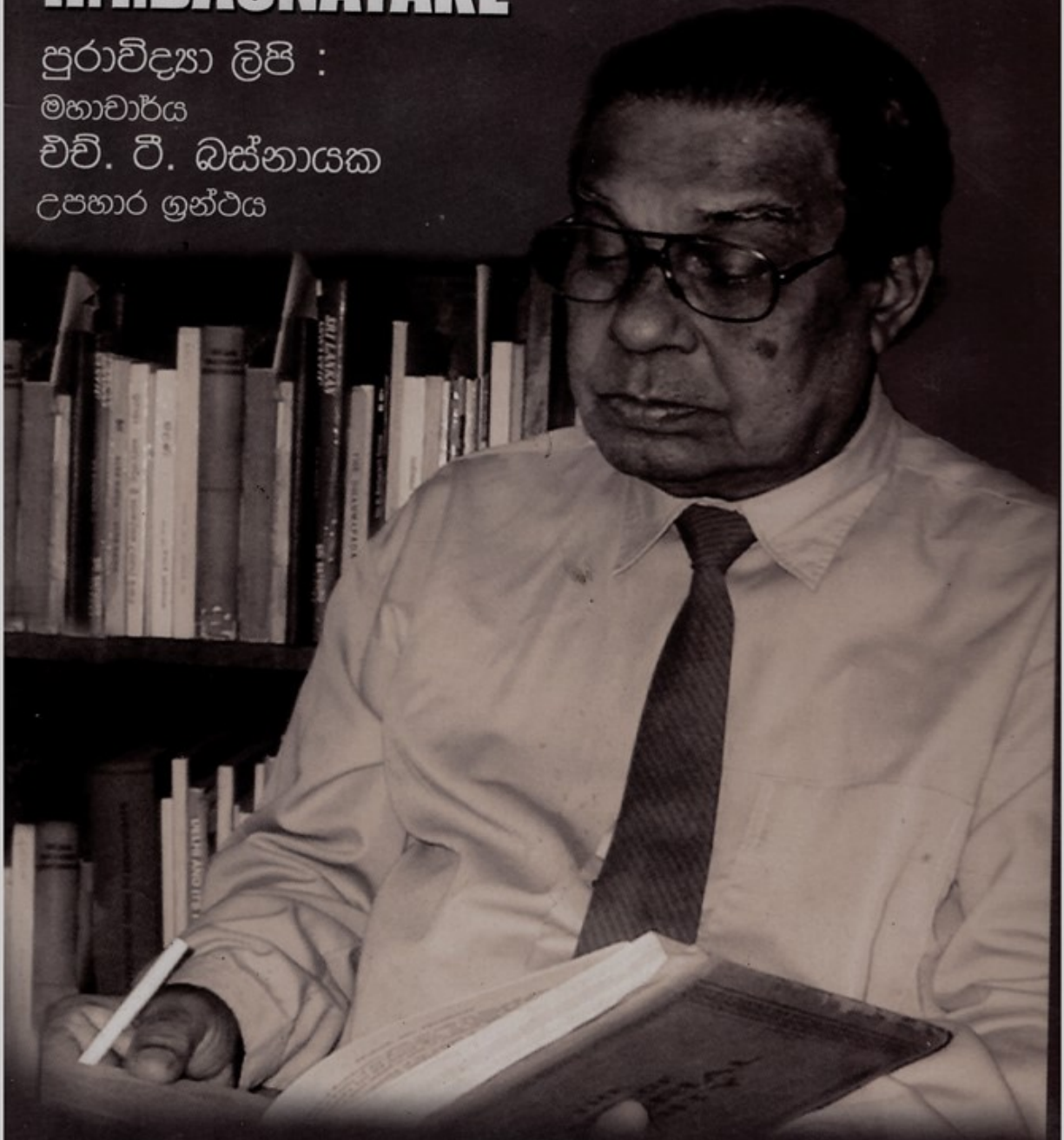
H.T.BASNAYAKE

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Edited by
PRISHANTA GUNAWARDHANA
and
ROBIN CONNINGHAM

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Editorial Consultants

Professor Mahinda Werake
Professor Daya Edirisinghe
Professor U.B. Karunananda

Edited by

Prishanta Gunawardhana
and
Robin Coningham

Editorial Assistants

Mangala Katugampola
Reshani Dharmawardene
Shyamalee Rajapaksha

*Department of Archaeology,
University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.
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Preface to the Volume

Professor H.T. Basnayake has initiated a new trend in the field of Archaeology without treading on the conventional path. There is no doubt that we can call him a savant in the field of ancient Art and Architecture in Sri Lanka and South Asia. His knowledge of history and primary sources highlights different new approaches in the subject of Archeology. His strong hold is entitled Sri Lankan Monastic Architecture (Polonnaruwa Buddhist Commemorative Monuments) is an authoritative research treaties which acclaims local and international recognition.

A Scholar, a researcher, a teacher, a social worker Professor H.T. Basnayake retired after his long service from the Department of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. To felicitate his sterling service we publish this volume entitled Essays in Archaeology in Honour of Professor H.T. Basnayake. This volume comprises six major sections such as (1) Professor H. T. Basnayake and his career. (2) Archaeological Heritage, Monasticism, Tourism and Transformational Models. (3) Domestication, Environment and Settlement Patterns. (4) Communication, Socioeconomic inequalities and Women Studies. (5) Archaeological and Historical Concepts and Pre-modern Society. (6) Art, Sculpture and Technology in Evolution.

We extend our special gratitude to the editorial consultants of this volume who evaluated the articles. We thank Messrs Saman Wijesundara who undertook the type setting and also finally, convey our appreciation to Messrs S. Godage who published this volume.

Prishanta Gunawardhana
Robin Coningham
10-06-05

Traditional Methods and Systems Associated with the Paddy Cultivation in Ancient Sri Lanka



Uda Hettige

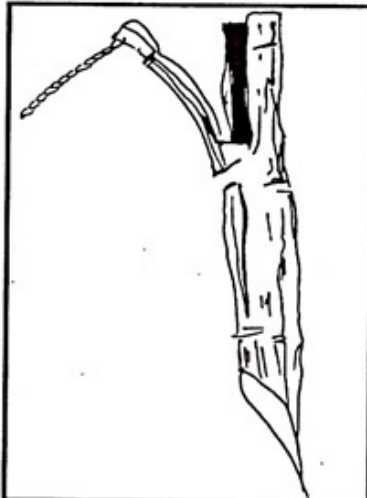
Introduction

Sri Lanka being an agricultural country from time immemorial definitely possessed various methodological and technological systems to promote, nourish, protect and safeguard their cultivations. At the outset it is necessary to analyse the climatic and environmental factors that prevailed in the island of Sri Lanka. This island is situated in the Monsoon region which provides seasonal rains during certain months of the year. The rest of the year, at times brings drought which dries up almost all the water sources in certain areas of the island. In ancient Sri Lanka the early agricultural settlers (Harris, D.R. 1969) preferred to set up their settlements in the dry zone, because these areas provided flat lands (Siriweera I, 1990) and less forests. However the main problem they had to face in this area was the non-availability of sufficient water for their cultivation. (Brohier, R.L. 1989) Since there are no rivers in Sri Lanka which provide a perennial water supply for the entire year, farmers had to depend on reservoirs built for storing water for agricultural needs. Hence a system of irrigation had to be devised in order to carry out the agricultural activities (Chang T.T. 1989).

In this paper an attempt will be made to explore the various methods and systems that the ancient farmers (Porters, R. and J. Barrau, 1981) devised to protect their cultivations from harmful elements such as insects, animal attacks (i.e. ravages by wild elephants) and environmental and climatic conditions (Harris, D. R. 1989). Our special attention will be directed to paddy cultivation as rice is the staple diet of Sri Lankans. Out of various methods they applied to protect their cultivation, the following devices will be discussed here i.e. *pälräkeema* (watching the paddy cultivation), *Pambayan situveema* (setting up of effigies), *Takaporu bandima*, *Appidi Lälla Bändima* (binding a clapping board), *Diyaholmana ätaveema* (erecting a water ghost), *Diya-yaka bändima* (binding a water demon), *Sulanholmana ätaveema* (setting up a wind ghost), *Pahan ugul ätaveema* (setting up a lamp trap), *Mässan atugā dämeema*, *Visa dum älleema* (spreading harmful smoke), *Hulan bambara bändima* (erecting a wind fan).

Ancient farmers adopted traditional methods of protecting and safeguarding their cultivation by watching the crops in the paddy field, when the young paddy pods are at risk from animals and insects.

Appidi Lälla Bändeema:



This is a peculiar form of technique employed by farmers, especially in the up country area (ex. Meemure in the Kandy district) Appidi lalla or the clapper board is usually made out of bamboo wood. Bamboo wood is hollow inside, but it is separated by means of joints (Tikira, M. A.: 2004/09/07).

Figure No-1 - Appidi Lälla