

An Analysis into the Understanding of University Students in the Knowledgebase on the Palm Leaf Manuscripts

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Abstract

With the advancement of technology in the world, discoveries have emerged. This has resulted in many changes in the local and foreign education sectors. When it came to local education, it was clear that the indigenous qualities we inherited from the ancestors of the past should be preserved in an era of decaying age. In this case, particular attention was paid to the nationally highly valued Palm Leaf Manuscripts which anyone is not paying attention nowadays. The Palm Leaf Manuscripts contain a wealth of local knowledge related to various subject areas. The research investigates whether Sri Lankan university students were aware of Palm Leaf Manuscripts. It examined the students' understanding of why Palm Leaf Manuscripts are a locally valued heritage that should be preserved. The contribution of students from the Department of History and Archeology of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura was obtained for this purpose. Students were provided with a questionnaire to collect the data needed for the research. Data analysis showed that they had a general understanding of Palm Leaf Manuscripts.

Keywords: *Palm leaf manuscripts, Indigenous knowledge, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Department of history and archaeology, University students.*

Introduction

Mahindagamanaya can be described as a turning point in the history of Sri Lanka. As a result of this, the art of writing in Sri Lanka has become widespread. It is also stated that permanent positions were established for the writing of this period (Lagamuwa, 2006, p. 60). However, a special place in the art of writing is found in the Aluviharaya which Buddhist monks wrote and preserved the Tripitakas during the reign of King Walagamba (Mahavamsa, 33.102-103). It added a new dimension to the Sri Lankan art of writing. With this state patronage, Sinhala writing art was developed in and around temples (Vihara Arama). The Pothgula (library) in these temples was nourished by Palm Leaf Manuscripts.

Kotte era is known as the golden age of Palm Leaf Manuscripts writing. During this period a new set of Palm Leaf Manuscripts was written and a large number of Palm Leaf Manuscripts were copied. Among them were religious, language literature, medicine, veterinary medicine, astrology, yantra mantra, fictions, customs and ceremonies, law, border (Kadima) , story (Withthi), history, taxes and income, agriculture, state governance, Buddhist education, world