

# PERADENIYA MEDICAL SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION *Newsletter*



**MARCH 2024**

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*The cover photograph shows the Prof. Ediriweera Sarachchandra Open Air Theatre, at the University of Peradeniya.*

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# Recent PeMSAA events: Joint Regional CME Programme: Nuwara-Eliya Hill Country Clinical Society & PeMSAA

The first regional CME programme to be organized by the PeMSAA for 2024, was held at the auditorium of the District General Hospital, Nuwara-Eliya on the 26th of March, in collaboration with the Hill Country Clinical Society. A wide range of topics focusing on doctors delivering holistic primary care, were delivered by PeMSAA members as well as consultants representing the Hill Country Clinical Society.



# Joint Regional CME Programme: Nuwara-Eliya Hill Country Clinical Society & PeMSAA.



There was enthusiastic participation of regional doctors and the event concluded successfully. The President wishes to thank Dr Jagath Ranasinghe, PeMSAA Council member and Consultant Paediatrician at DGH Nuwara Eliya, who organized the event with the Council of the Hill Country Clinical Society, all the speakers, and Dr Nihal Weerasuriya, Provincial Director of Health who facilitated the participation of medical officers.

# Faculty Beautification: Landscaping the area adjacent to the Para Clinical Building & a Tree Planting Ceremony

We are happy to inform the membership that PeMSAA was able to landscape another area of the faculty in the recent past. This area adjacent to the new para clinical building was landscaped and handed over to the faculty on 23rd January 2024 during a simple ceremony which was attended by the previous deans of our alma mater. This area is in close proximity to the student canteen.



We were able to provide an opportunity for each of the past deans who participated to plant a tree in the area that was landscaped.



# Landscaping the area adjacent to the Para Clinical Building & a Tree Planting Ceremony

Trees were also planted in memory of the past deans who are no more with us.

A small monument was also erected in the same area to honour the dedication and the vision of all deans of our faculty who have contributed immensely to uplift the faculty to what it is today. We believe that this would give the new undergraduates a glimpse of our past history.



# Article:

## Footnotes on a Selection of Century-Old Medical Papers from Sri Lanka

This list, with its footnotes, is compiled for three reasons: First, it is good to know a little about the early days of Western Medicine in Sri Lanka. It's not a long history, but still a great little one. Many of us have heard names such as Nell, Loos, Attygalle, Marcus Fernando, Kynsey, Spittel, and Nicholls attached to roads, prizes or buildings in the institutions in which we studied.

Second, its heartening as well as worrying to note that we are, a century on, dealing with many of the same problems that our predecessors in Sri Lanka dealt with – in some cases with improved knowledge, in other cases with no solution on the horizon.

Lastly it is humbling to think that the research we do now and here in Sri Lanka may be perused in the same way, a century from now, and a few of us will be called visionaries and many of us will be called fools – all depending on whether the ideas we had are accepted or not a hundred years hence.

The papers below are given in alphabetical order of the authors.

*ATTYGALLE & NELL,-. A case of puerperal eclampsia. CMJ Vol 4(2) 1891 121-126*

**The subject matter is Obstetrics, but this was not by Sir Nicholas Attygalle, but Dr John who also wrote the first Lankan Ayurvedic Materia Medica in English. The Nell in question could be Dr Andreas Nell, who proposed establishing a residential university in Ceylon, outside Colombo – which later became the University of Peradeniya, where a hall of residence bears his name. Or it could be Dr Winifred Nell, who was the first Ceylonese lady to practice medicine and surgery. Both worked during this era.**

*B.A.H.R.P.H. An epidemiological study of filariasis in Ceylon. Parasitology Vol 7 1914 128-156*

**Philip Heinrich Bahr (later Sir Philip Manson-Bahr) was a pupil of Sir Patrick Manson – the father of Tropical Medicine, founder of the world famous LSHTM and author of Manson's Tropical Diseases – and later his son- in-law. Most of the early work on filariasis was done by Manson and then Bahr. P.H. Bahr was a leader in tropical medicine in the first part of the 20th century and edited 'Tropical Diseases' for many years.**

# Footnotes on a Selection of Century-Old Medical Papers from Sri Lanka

*BARTHOLOMEUSZ, O. Thymol in tapeworm, CMJ Vol 3(2) 1891 162-164*

**Thymol is an antimicrobial and antiparasitic agent which was popular before the modern range of drugs emerged. It gained popular use in USA as an anti helminthic only at the turn on the 20th century - so this is very early work. Oliver Bartholomeusz was an uncle of Dr Noel Bartholomeusz, whose residence is home to the College of Surgeons Of Sri Lanka. Dr Oliver Bartholomeusz drowned in the Tissa Weva in 1901.**

*BARTHOLOMEUSZ, F. R. Notes on a case of burn of the 3rd degree, death being due to haemorrhage from a duodenal ulcer. JCBMA Vol 5(1) 1908 41*

**Another uncle of Dr Noel Bartholomeusz. Over a century later, Curling's Ulcers are still a problem in severe burns. Curling described these ulcers in 1842.**

*CASTELLANI, Aldo. Note on a vibrio (*V.kegallensis* Cast, 1913) isolated from cases of paracholera. JCBMA Vol 11(2) 1914 80-82*

**Aldo Castellani was one of the most famous bacteriologists, parasitologists and mycologists of the 20th century. His seminal work was on demonstrating how sleeping sickness was caused and transmitted. Castellani served as bacteriologist to the Government of Ceylon in 1903, where he discovered several new intestinal bacteria. Coincidentally, he also discovered the spirochete causing yaws or 'parangi' about which more follows below.**

*CHELLIAH,S. Rhinosporidium kinealyi. JCBMA Vol 15 1918 29-30*

**A century later, Sri Lanka continues to be at the world forefront in research into Rhinosporidiosis thanks to the likes of Prof S.N. Arseculeratne.**



# Footnotes on a Selection of Century-Old Medical Papers from Sri Lanka

CHRISTIE, T. Notes on diabetes mellitus as it occurs in Ceylon. *Edinburgh Medical & Surgical J.* 1811, 286

**This was the very first scientific medical journal article from Ceylon. Sir Marcus Fernando, at the turn of the 19th century, also contributed to the literature on diabetes, noting that it was commoner among the affluent classes.**

de SILVA, Charles A. Notes of a case of birth palsy of the lower extremities, *CMJ Vol 4(3)* 1891 239-240.

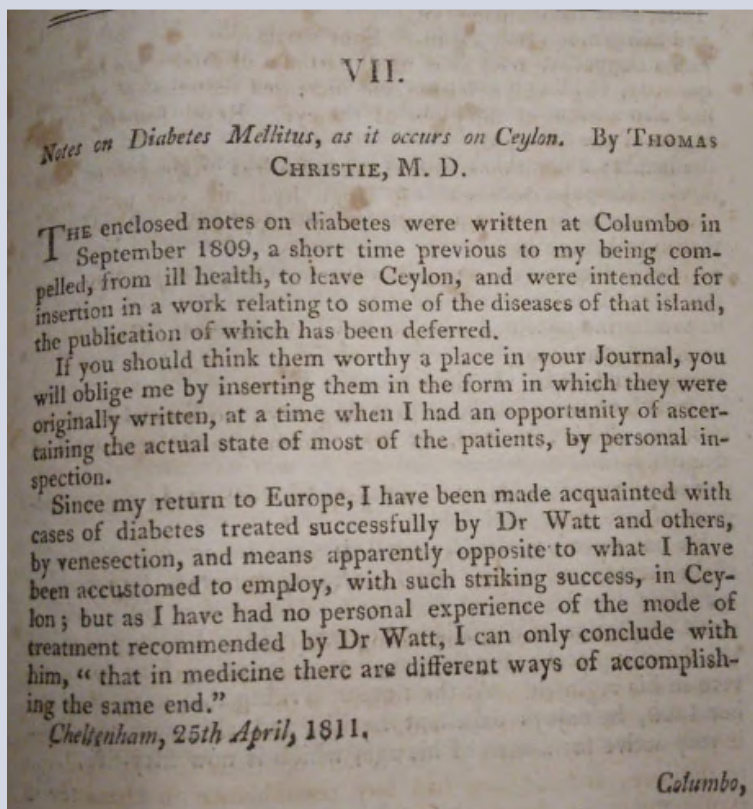
**This was most likely spastic diplegia - very early work, since William Osler first wrote a description using the term 'cerebral palsy' in 1889. William Little described the condition only 30 years before. Charles A. de Silva was also a co-creator of the Buddhist flag.**

de ZILWA, Lucian. Some observations on the time food remains in the stomach. *JCBBMA Vol 15* 1918 36

**Gastric emptying time in Sri Lankans is still under research in the 2000s. Dr Lucian De Zilwa was a gynaecologist and the original owner of Tintagel of Rosmead Place, which later circumstances obliged him to sell to the Bandaranaike clan. Ironically, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was shot at Tintagel in 1959, suffered severe injury to his stomach. Partly thanks to our knowledge of gastric emptying, his request for orange barley was disallowed postoperatively. Even more ironically, Tintagel is now a boutique hotel famous for its food!**

DONALD, W.D. Sprue: Ceylon sore mouth. *BMJ Vol 1* 1881 661

**Tropical Sprue was commonly known as 'Ceylon Sore Mouth' in the 19th Century. The cause it still not known - the sore mouth is probably due to vitamin deficiency secondary to malabsorption.**



# Footnotes on a Selection of Century-Old Medical Papers from Sri Lanka

*FERNANDO, H. Marcus. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in a young subject. CMJ Vol 4(1) 1891 81*

**Sir Marcus Fernando was not only a brilliant physician, but also a statesman and banker. He lends his name to an SLMA Oration as well as a Hall of Residence at Peradeniya. This account of Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is all the more interesting when we consider that Charcot – the father of Neurology – had first discovered the disease only 20 years ago, and the term ‘amyotrophic lateral sclerosis’ was only translated into English usage in 1881 – just 2 years before this account from Ceylon was published.**

*FRETZ, W.H. A case of compound comminuted fracture of leg : tetanus : amputation of thigh: recovery. CMJ Vol 1(4) 1888 188*

**With modern antibiotics, immunotherapy, theatre facilities and intensive care, anaerobic infection in compound fractures still kills patients. This is a remarkable achievement at a time that people saved lives through amputation before infection, not after. Dr Fretz was born in Ceylon to a Dutch Burgher family and later migrated to England.**

*GRATIAEN, E. The use of ergot in lingering labour. CMJ Vol 4(3) 1891 243-247*

**This is no longer practiced due to the sustained uterine contractions generated. However the safer alternative, oxytocin only arrived in 1954, with a Nobel Prize for its discoverer. Dr Gratiaen was a Colonial Surgeon. His grand-daughter, Doris, was the mother of Michael Ondaatje and lends her name to the Gratiaen Prize.**

*HALLOCK, S. A case of imperforate anus. CMJ Vol 1(4) 1888 183*

**Ninety-eight years later, in 1986, Prof Arjuna Aluwihare of Peradeniya described a new surgical technique for imperforate anus in the Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (pubmed ID 2923413).**

*KYNSEY, W.R. Report on the "Parangi disease" of Ceylon. Colombo : Govt. Printer, 1881*

*KYNSEY, W.R., Report on anaemia or beri-beri of Ceylon. Colombo: Govt. Printer, 1887 p35 - 1887)*  
*Abstracted in CMJ Vol 1(4) 193-195*

**Later styled Sir William Kynsey, Dr W.R. Kynsey was the moving force behind the formation of the Sri Lanka Medical Association, in the same year that this article was published. The Ceylon Medical Journal (CMJ) was also first published in August 1887. Kynsey Road, which the Colombo Faculty of Medicine faces, is named after him. ‘Parangi’ was the colloquial term for yaws, an endemic syphilitic disease of Sri Lanka. As the name implies, it probably came to Sri Lanka in the same way that syphilis arrived in the Americas. Dr Spittel was largely responsible for spearheading control of yaws in Sri Lanka]. “Beri-Beri” is also a medical term that has its etymology in Sinhalese.**

# Footnotes on a Selection of Century-Old Medical Papers from Sri Lanka

*NICHOLLS, L. The aetiology of sprue. IM Vol 53 1918 409-414*

**Lucius Nicholls was a pioneer in Biochemistry and Nutrition and the foremost researcher of his age into Beri-Beri – a name he established in use due to his work in Ceylon. He mentored Prof T.W. Wickramanayake of Peradeniya who wrote an authoritative Text on Food and Nutrition in Sri Lanka.**

*PAUL, S.C. Operative treatment of hydrocele. JCBBMA Vol 2(2) 1905 76-77*

**Dr S.C. Paul, a product of Jaffna, was the leading surgeon of his time in Ceylon, and President of the SLMA (then CMA). He was the father of Dr Milroy Paul, also a Sri Lankan Surgeon – who delivered the Hunterian Oration of the Royal College of Surgeons on no fewer than three occasions.**

*SPITTEL, R.L. An improvised drop regulator. JCBBMA Vol 25(2) 1928 55-57*

*SPITTEL, R.L. Transplantation of the lower two inches of the radius from one individual into another. JCBBMA Vol 10(1) 1913 43-45*

**The contributions made by Dr Richard Lionel Spittel are impossible to summarize in a paragraph. He was a senior surgeon in Colombo as well as a Lecturer in Surgery, and President of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. This first article on a drop regulator is significant considering that he performed Sri Lanka's first blood transfusion. Cadaveric bone transfer was also pioneering work a century ago. Spittel also singlehandedly turned the tide of yaws in Sri Lanka, and still found time to become a much loved author, explorer and anthropologist.**

*WIJEYSAKERE, W. Chorea in an aged person. CMJ Vol 1(4) 1888 183-'866.'*

*WIJEYASEKERE, W. Rare fracture of the scapula. clinical report. CMJ Vol 4(3) 1891 242-243*

*WIJEYSAKERE, W. A case of ovariectomy. CMJ Vol 4(1) 1891 78-80*

**George Huntingdon described hereditary chorea in adults 16 years before this paper. Perhaps in the 19th century chorea among the young was commoner in Sri Lanka due to rheumatic fever. With regards to the second paper, it is interesting to note that X-ray machines only appeared in Britain 5 years afterwards. Dr William Wijeyesakera MRCS was at the time District Medical Officer of Ramboda, Nuwara Eliya District.**

**Buddhika Dassanayake,**

Senior Lecturer in Surgery

Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya

Honorary Consultant General Surgeon

Teaching Hospital Peradeniya

2000/2001 Batch



# Recent PeMSAA Events: Launch of the Autobiography of Emeritus Professor Nimal Senanayake: Dashaka Hathak

Emeritus Professor Nimal Senanayake is an outstanding alumnus of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya. It was an honour for the PeMSAA to facilitate the launch of his autobiography, 'Dashaka Hathak', in collaboration with the Kandy Society of Medicine. The event was held on the 21st of March 2024, at the Physiology Lecture Theatre of the Faculty of Medicine.



# Launch of the Autobiography of Emeritus Professor Nimal Senanayake: Dashaka Hathak

This well-attended event was graced by many dignitaries, including the Chief Guest Dr Palitha Abeykoon, the Guest of Honor Professor M.D. Lamawansa, and the keynote speaker Emeritus Professor N. A. De S. Amarathunga, among others. The story of seven decades of life of this amazing multifaceted personality is bound to inspire generations to come. The President and the Council of PeMSAA wish to thank all the attendees as well as the Kandy Society of Medicine, who helped to make this event a success.



# Recent publication: Buddhist Philosophy and Neuroscience by Dr Channa Ratnatunga

*“Reprinted by popular demand”*

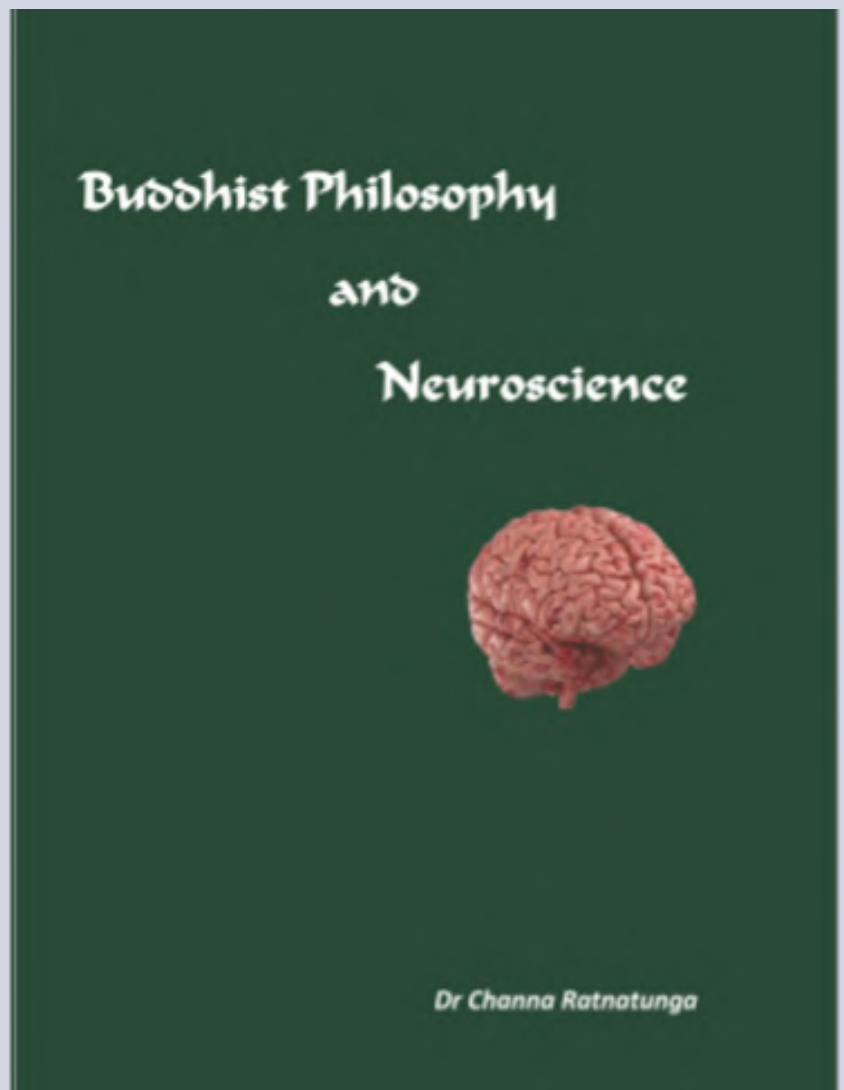
PeMSAA is proud to announce the reprint of the book, “Buddhist Philosophy and Neuroscience” by Dr Channa Ratnatunaga, a brilliant and very well respected alumnus of Peradeniya.

This book is published for the Migara Ratnatunga Trust.

The finances accrued from the sale of this book will be entirely used to fund needy Medical Students of the University of Peradeniya.

The book is available at:-

**The Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya**  
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150 pages/ in colour  
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# 17<sup>th</sup> International Medical Congress

21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024

Kandy, Sri Lanka



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# Donations to the PeMSAA Students' Crisis Fund

The PeMSAA Student Crisis Fund was established to help undergraduate students at the Faculty of Medicine, Peradeniya, in the event of an acute personal crisis such as serious personal health problems, serious health problems of parents or guardians including sudden death or permanent disability or loss of houses due to natural disasters, and other similar situations. We welcome donations, either as one-off donations or as regular monthly sums to the fund. We sincerely hope our alumni will generously donate to this cause, remembering how difficult life could sometimes be during undergraduate years. The details of the fund are as follows.

**Name of account: 'PeMSAA Student Crisis Fund',**

**Account number: 87997354, Bank name: Bank of Ceylon**

**Bank branch: Super Grade Branch Peradeniya, Swift code: BCEYLK LX.**



*Men's Tie*

**Rs. Rs. 2000**

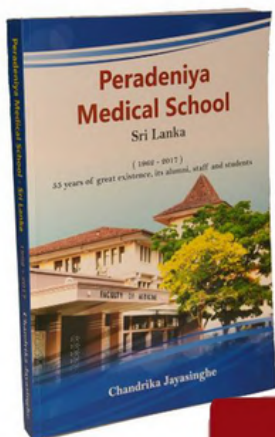
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