

# **Some Remarks of the International Exposure of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura**

**Ven.Gangodawila Chandima**

**Temporary Tutor**

**Department of Languages and Cultural Studies**

**University of Sri Jayewardenepura**

**Sri Lanka**

**chandima1984@gmail.com**

In bristling with the caption, I would bold enough to state one of decisions taken by the pioneer of this University, Ven, Welivita Sri Soratha Nayaka Thera at his final lapse of life. When the Nayaka Thera was invited to visit the U.S.S.R., he was gravely suffering from a stomach ache. But, Nayaka Thera accepted this instead of the objections of many who cared his health very often. The only reason for this disobedient acceptance was to benefit the university internationally<sup>1</sup> So the value of any discussion about this seems to be more appropriate in this fiftieth year after the commencement of the University.

The newly set up University highly recommended the indispensable necessity of studying English Language for both the research works and practical usage.<sup>2</sup> This was mainly due to the propagation of Buddhism, Pali, Sanskrit and related oriental subjects, culminating the identity of the motherland.

At the time of constructing the University, the administrators seem to have thought of an international plan than the existed academic institutions. For example, a group of scholars embarked on a trip to India and searched for the most splendid types Buildings compatible to this University. Thereon, they found the then library of the University of Kerala as a standard model to one of buildings today called Sumangala. So the

---

<sup>1</sup> The life of the Venerable Soratha Nayaka Thera (Department of Cultural Affairs) Colombo, 1963 p 15.

<sup>2</sup> Annual Report of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura 1965-66, Kelaniya 1966 pp 27-28.

Sumangala building was constructed using the prototype of the library of the University of Kerala<sup>3</sup>

The University was exposed to the west widely with the appointment of Ven. Dr. Walpola Rahula for the Post of Vice Chancellor. Ven. Rahula was in Sorbonne when the Most. Ven, Balangoda Ananda Maithreya resigned from the same post due to sudden reasons.<sup>4</sup> He arrived here while he was invited for a higher post in an American University<sup>5</sup>. When he comes here, his most erudite corpus “what the Buddha taught” was much prevalent all over the world, translating into many languages. His administrative works were heavily scorned by some of the officials in the then prevailing government.<sup>6</sup> So he had to resign after three years of tenure. Then returned to Paris and lived there for 24 years associating world wide scholars like Etienne Lamotte, Jean Rosenbergs, Paul Demieville and Andre Bareau. He has also visited Russia, East Germany and Czechoslovakia for academic and cultural purposes.<sup>7</sup>

Ven.Rahula’s stay in London for 11 years refreshed his studies with the senior members of the Pali text society like Prof. I.B. Honer and Richard Gombrich.<sup>8</sup> Prof. Gombrich very recently also expressed to me the scholastic discussions, he had with Dr.Ven. Rahula at his home in Oxford. The reason for depicting factors about Ven.Rahula is to pinpoint the prevalence of the name Vidyodya with his erudition. Also the appointment of a PhD holder from the University of Sorbonne was also much influenced the University at the inception.

The scholars who very often visited the University were also signified under this caption. Among them were Satischandra Vidyabhushana, Kaushambi Dhammananda, Tachibana and Prof. Richard Gombrich.<sup>9</sup> In this respect, the very first name of forging international

---

<sup>3</sup> Balagalle, Wimal, “A Rough note about the history of the University of Sri Jayewardenepua, Vidyodya Journal of Arts Science and letters, Nugegoda 1984, p 202.

<sup>4</sup> Liyanage, Gunadasa, on the path, Dehiwala, 1995. p 212.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p.213

<sup>6</sup> Ibid pp 219-220.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid pp 223.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid pp 231-241.

<sup>9</sup> Ven Soratha, Kadihingala, Dharmasastronnati, Mount Lavinia, 1963. p 555.

collaboration goes to Prof. Ananda W.P. Guruge, the most intimate official of Ven. Weliwita Sri Soratha, who maintained a sustainable foreign relationship as a UN representative at a later time. He was also the pioneer of the Department of Sanskrit in this University.<sup>10</sup>

Postgraduate scholarships to American and European countries were also an easily seen profile even at the beginning. Prof. A.J. Gunawardhana in the Department of English proceeded to Newyork for his Doctorate in 1965<sup>11</sup> while Ven. Kaluacchimulle Mahanama to the University of York for his PhD in Sanskrit.<sup>12</sup> This Venerable is considered as the first Buddhist monk who was a PhD candidate in a European University from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

Another memorable contact of the University was the arrival of the Indian President for the first convocation which was held at the University premises in a grand scale.<sup>13</sup> He has also donated some valuable books to the University Library on this visit.<sup>14</sup>

Prof, K.P. Mukharjee, an Indian scholar who worked as the head of Department of Economics, Public relations and Business Administration takes a Special mention among the foreigners of the permanent staff.<sup>15</sup> In peculiar, he coordinated some postgraduate students like N.V. Raghuram from Ottawa to pursue their Ph.D. studies of this University.<sup>16</sup>

Embarking on researches under the overseas University projects is one another golden benchmark of this University. Since the inception we could see a host of such engagements.<sup>17</sup> At present, a number of research projects are being carried out by the all faculties centralizing the continents of Europe and America.

---

<sup>10</sup> Annual Report of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura ,Maradana, 1960. p 28

<sup>11</sup> Annual Report 1965-66, p 25.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid p 25.

<sup>13</sup> Ven. Soratha, Kadihingala, 1963. p 593.

<sup>14</sup> Annual Report, 1960. p 54.

<sup>15</sup> Annual Report, 1965-66. p 35

<sup>16</sup> Annual Report, 1965-66. p 35.

<sup>17</sup> Prof. Ariyaratne, Sunil, Sri Jayewardenepura University quarterly News letter,Nawinna. 1981 .pp 22-25.

Collaborative research programs are also other progressive steps of the University. In the Faculty of Applied Science ,they had this with the Department of Pharmacognosy in the University of Utrecht in Netherland in the early 1981.This work was based on the Ayurvedic Drugs and Plants that influence natural immunity process.<sup>18</sup> At present, one such collaborative program is being carried out by the Department of Geography and the University of Uppsala.<sup>19</sup>

Conferring honorary degrees to eminent personages in foreign countries is another attracted point in this discussion. In special, the University has conferred D.Litt degrees to Martial Edmund Franklyn Perry,<sup>20</sup> an American who worked against the Vietnam War and Prof.John J.Carson.<sup>21</sup>

A recent enhancement of the University's PIM (Postgraduate institute of Management) is the establishment of its international centre in Emirates.<sup>22</sup> The PIM also maintains strong connections with the Konrad Adenaner Foundation of Germany (KAF), the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), the South Asian Association for regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand for collaborative research activities.<sup>23</sup>

At present, the university gets a potential exposure from foreign countries through the two international conferences conducted by the Faculty of Management studies and Commerce and the Department of Forestry and Environment. Former is conducted under the title of International Conference on Business Management (ICBM) since 2004<sup>24</sup> and the latter in the name of International Forestry and Environment symposium since 1995<sup>25</sup> in a grand scale with the participation of various scholars from international countries.

Moreover, an undergraduate of the Faculty of Medicine, Sagari Gunasekara recently won the 3<sup>rd</sup> place from the Miss World University competition held in Manila,<sup>26</sup> raising the name of the University to the entire academic world. The artwork of Ven.Jium Aoki from

Japan in the library of the University can exhibit the cultural and International exposure in a friendly way.<sup>27</sup>

At last I would dare say that the University of Sri Jayewardenepura strengthens its potentialities with variegated foreign Universities and Institutions related to collaborative research works with an exquisite intention to promote international relations since the commencement.

---

<sup>18</sup> Dorakumbura, W.B, Souvenir of the University of the Sri Jayewardenepura, 1959-84  
Maharagama, 1984, p 73

<sup>19</sup> Dr. Deheragoda, Krishan, Self-Evaluation Report of the Department of Geography, Vol 1, Colombo,  
2006. p 1

<sup>20</sup> Lankadeepa 25/03/1968

<sup>21</sup> Calendar of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura 1989, Colombo, 1988. p 286

<sup>22</sup> [www.pim.lk/index.php?option](http://www.pim.lk/index.php?option)

<sup>23</sup> [www.pim.lk/index.php?option](http://www.pim.lk/index.php?option)

<sup>24</sup> [www.sjp.ac.lk/fmsc/icbm/index.html](http://www.sjp.ac.lk/fmsc/icbm/index.html)

<sup>25</sup> [www.environmentlanka.com/sympo/](http://www.environmentlanka.com/sympo/)

<sup>26</sup> Daily News 17/11/1998

<sup>27</sup> Daily News 17/11/1998