



THE STORY OF TWO DEPARTMENTS: PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY*

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ABSTRACT

The present article attempts to capture a glimpse of the path of Philosophy in the University of Ceylon during its 75 years of existence. Philosophy was among the subjects that were in the curriculum of the Faculty of Arts from the inception of the University in 1942. Later in its course of existence, the Philosophy Department also offered a special degree programme in Psychology, and the latter subject has today established a distinct department for itself. Some papers in Psychology were included in the Philosophy, Sociology, and Education courses from early on, but Psychology as a Special or General Degree course was not available in any university in Sri Lanka until 1990. Considering the need for such courses, the Philosophy Department (which was already functioning under the name 'Department of Philosophy and Psychology') took measures to initiate fully fledged degree courses in Psychology, beginning in the 1990/91 academic year. This article for the first time reports the birth pangs, the struggles, and the problems of this effort. Thus, While observations on the general contribution of the Philosophy Department as well as more specific contributions of some of its members are used to illuminate the role of the Philosophy Department, the article also records the experience of installing a new course of study in a country, beginning with no fixed resources but successfully completing it, leading to the establishment, after 27 years, of a new Department of Psychology in the University of Peradeniya in 2017.

Key words: philosophy, psychology, University of Peradeniya

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PHILOSOPHY

In the general pattern of education in Sri Lanka in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the following is discernible: the *Pirivenas*, intended for the education of Buddhist priests, accommodated some laymen also as students, and provided instruction in languages like Sinhala, Pali, and Sanskrit. The students attending them sat the *Prachina* examinations. Christian missionary schools were spearheading the education mostly of town-based middle-class children. The classical languages Greek and Latin together with English, Mathematics, and Science formed the core of their curriculum.

By the early twentieth century, following the pattern of the missionary schools, a few Buddhist schools like Ananda (Colombo), Dharmaraja (Kandy), and Mahinda (Galle) were introduced. The medium of instruction in all these town-based schools was English and most of their students sat for British examinations. A few who could afford it proceeded to the UK and obtained further academic and professional qualifications. Government schools (except Royal College, Colombo) were vernacular and did not provide a gateway to higher education abroad.

It was the above mentioned town-based English medium schools, or a few of them, that Sir Ivor Jennings, the first Vice-Chancellor, and perhaps the architect, of the University of Ceylon, repeatedly refers to in his numerous observations and talks about the University. They were the main supply line of the University students. Even in his farewell address to the University students in 1955, Sir Ivor speaks of these schools,

“Fortunately, there are a few quite good schools. Not all of you come from them, but their influence on this University has been extremely important” (The Ceylon Daily News, 17th January 1955, cited in Alwis. 2014, p. 229). This report goes on

to say that Sir Ivor “hoped that the taut alliance between the University and the better schools would continue”.

The Sri Lankan agitation for the establishment of a university dates back to the second half of the nineteenth century. The Ceylon University Association was formed in 1911 with P. Arunachalam as its president, to agitate for a university. The Ceylon University College was started in 1921 and Robert Marrs was its Principal almost from the beginning until Jennings took over just prior to the establishment of the University in 1942. The Ceylon Medical College started in 1870. It was these two, the Ceylon Medical College and the Ceylon University College, that together formed the base for the University of Ceylon which started in 1942. Sir Ivor Jennings, in an interview given to *The Illustrated Weekly of India* (February 10, 1952) says, “...The Ceylon Medical College had reached a high standard... and the Ceylon University College had achieved a status roughly equivalent to that of a University College in the United Kingdom, its students reading for London degrees...” (as cited in Alwis 2014, p. 219-220).

The mention of Philosophy as a subject in the curriculum of the new university that was being planned first appears in correspondence regarding provisions for classrooms. In communications sent by Professor Marrs in March and April of 1939 as Principal of the University College to government authorities, mention is made of providing small classrooms for Philosophy (and Geography), along with requests for financial provisions for the post of Professor of Philosophy. It appears from these correspondences that Education, Philosophy, and Psychology (and later Sociology) were considered as belonging to one group.

Despite such planning, when the University started in 1942, there was only one lecturer for Philosophy and there were no students

studying the subject. At the beginning, the demand was for teaching Indian Philosophy in the Faculty of Oriental Studies. According to the Report of the Council of the University of Ceylon for 1942, "The Department of Philosophy at present consists of one Lecturer. We are consequently unable to provide a special course. The Faculty of Oriental Studies will in due course require teaching to be given in Indian Philosophy and Buddhist Philosophy.... We, therefore, recommend that provision be made in 1943-44 estimates for an Asst. Lectureship in Philosophy" (p. 21). Going by the Council reports, the number of Philosophy students in 1947 was seven, which went up to twenty in 1948 but dropped to five in 1950.

The University Calendar for the year 1946/47 records that Ms. K. Mathiaparanam and Dr. A.K. Sarkar served as lecturers in Philosophy. It appears that T.R.V. Murti was appointed Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy in 1950. The University Calendar for 1950/51 lists Dr. Murti as Professor and the Head of Philosophy, and Ms. Mathiaparanam and Dr. Sarkar as lecturers. As will be seen later, Murti's appointment brought some standing to the Department.

Professor Murti served in the Department until 1954, when he left for the Hindu University of Banaras. A revision of the syllabus in Philosophy seems to have been made during his tenure and these new syllabi more or less continued into the 1960s. The University Calendar for 1952/53 mentions the following in the Philosophy syllabus;

Philosophy II A: History of Philosophy (Ancient and Modern), Ethics, Psychology, Epistemology and Logic, Indian Philosophy.

Philosophy II B: Logic and Metaphysics, Ethics, History of Philosophy (Western and Indian), Social Psychology.

K.N. Jayatilleke joined the Department in 1951, as did Basil Mendis. The University

Calendar for 1953/54 lists the following as members of the Department of Philosophy.

T.R.V Murti, M.A., D.Litt., (Banaras),
Professor and Head

K. Mathiaparanam, M.A.(Madras)

A. K. Sarkar, M.A., PhD (Patna)

K. N Jayatilleke, B.A. (Ceylon.), B.A.
(London.), M.A. (Cantab.)

Fernando, B. A. (Oxon.)

Basil Mendis B.A.(Ceylon.), B.A.
(London.)

When Professor Murti left, the Headship of the Department was passed on to Ms. Mathiaparanam, but the Professorship was not filled for nearly a decade, until 1963. During this decade drastic changes occurred in the political and educational fields of the country. The so-called '1956 Revolution' took place during this time, and with it Sinhala became the state language and vernacular the media of instruction in schools. Consequently, universities had to entertain students educated in the vernacular media. Two new universities –Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara – were established in 1958. The University of Ceylon, still in the process of being moved from Colombo to Peradeniya in parts, had to bear most of the impact of this change. The slow and painful process could be felt in the story of the Philosophy Department as well. Although the University was flooded with vernacular-educated students from 1961 onwards, Philosophy was not taught in vernacular immediately. In the annual report of the Faculty of Arts submitted to the Council in 1962 by Acting Dean Professor J. E Jayasuriya, it is stated that there is a drop in the numbers of students registering for Philosophy as the subject was not taught in vernacular due to the lack of teachers, and that vernacular-fluent teachers were to be recruited. By this time the number of permanent members in the Department

had dropped to three: Ms. Mathiaparanam, Dr. Sarkar, and Dr. Jayatilleke. Of these, Dr. Jayatilleke was away in the UK on leave in 1960-61, finalizing the thesis for his PhD which he obtained in 1961 from London.

If we consider the period from 1942-50 as the formative first phase of the Department of Philosophy, the second phase began with Professor Murti's appointment and continued until 1963. Then Professor Jayatilleke was appointed as Professor and Head. The third phase and a new era began with Professor Jayatilleke. Of the old cadre only Ms. Mathiaparanam remained by 1964. Dr. Sarkar went on leave in 1963-64 to the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque, and at the end of it joined that university leaving Peradeniya. Thus, new academic recruitments for all three media had to be made, and a number of young Assistant Lecturers were recruited. Among them were G. D. K. Nanayakkara, A. D. P. Kalansuriya, Gunapala Dharmasiri, Vijitha Rajapaksa, and S. V. Kasynathan. I was appointed a Temporary Assistant Lecturer in 1966 along with Reginton Rajapaksa, and made permanent in 1967. Dr. Padmasiri De Silva who had returned to Vidyalankara after completing his PhD at Hawaii, joined us at Peradeniya at the same time. V. Ramakrishnan joined the Department during the late 1960s. Teaching now was offered in all three media. By the end of 1970, all of the young lecturers except G. D. K. Nanayakkara and Vijitha Rajapaksa went for postgraduate training abroad: Kalansuriya to Reading; Kasynathan and Reginton Rajapaksa to London; Dharmasiri and Ramakrishnan to Lancaster. In 1970 I first went to UCLA in USA on a Fulbright Scholarship, and having completed my Masters there went to Cambridge in 1971 to do my PhD. A dynamic and competent Department was in the make under Professor Jayatilleke, whose contribution I would treat separately later. The sudden and untimely demise of Professor Jayatilleke in 1970 put the Department in the

doldrums again. The shining light was gone. The Headship was again passed on to Ms. Mathiaparanam who was not too enthusiastic about it throughout her long career. Now she was herself reaching retirement age and Dr. Padmasiri De Silva took it over after about two years. Meanwhile, all the lecturers sent abroad during Professor Jayatilleke's period were now returning with training and nearly all of them with postgraduate qualifications.

Professor Padmasiri De Silva continued to be the Head of the Department until 1989 except for a year in 1979-80 when he was away on sabbatical, during which time I was appointed as Head. When Professor de Silva returned from his sabbatical I resigned from the Headship. Professor de Silva was appointed as Chair of Philosophy in 1980 and held it until he resigned in 1990 to take up residence abroad. I shall deal with his interests and contributions later.

The communal riots of 1983 were instrumental in some of the Tamil lecturers leaving the Department and the country. We lost an invaluable member of the Department, Dr. S. V. Kasynathan, as he migrated to Australia. Then Dr. L. C. D. Kulathungam who had joined the Department in the 1970s and obtained his PhD from the University of Toronto, also left the Department and migrated to Canada and eventually, Dr. V. Ramakrishnan also took up residence abroad. The Tamil medium felt the blow of these emigrations. Mr. (later Dr. and Professor) M. S. M. Anes, an alumnus of Peradeniya who had joined us in 1986 from the University of Kelaniya, had to carry most of the resulting burden, until Ms. Mallika Rajaratnam came on a transfer from the Jaffna University. Mr. (later Dr. and Professor) Desmond Mallikarachchi joined the Department in the 1970s and Mr. (later Dr.) G. D. K. Nanayakkara joined us as a visiting lecturer. Mr. (later Dr. and Professor) P. D. Premasiri came to the Department having obtained a transfer from Pali and Buddhist

studies. Mr. Vijitha Rajapaksha left us in the 'eighties to take up residence in U.S.A. Drs. Kalansuriya, Dharmasiri, Premasiri, and myself were made Associate Professors in the 1980s. The Department was by this time called the Department of Philosophy and Psychology.

When Professor de Silva went on sabbatical leave in 1989 I was, again, appointed Head of the Department. In 1990, fully fledged degree courses in Psychology were started in the Department, and Ms. Keshini Soysa was recruited to teach the subject. I deal with the Psychology programme separately later in this article. The syllabi of all departments in the faculty underwent revision in the early 1990s, during Professor Leslie Gunawardena's Deanship.

I continued as Head of the Department until 1995, when I was elected the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Professor Kalansuriya took over as Head for three years. In February 1998 I was appointed as Chair of Philosophy which was vacant since Professor de Silva left in 1990. I was again appointed Head of the Department and just prior to my retirement, Professor Dharmasiri took over the Headship in 2001 for a period of three years. After Professor Dharmasiri, Professor Mallikarachchi held it for some time and Professor Anes took it over and was Head for two terms, that is, six years until 2011. Ms. Manju Gunasekara became the first Psychology lecturer to be appointed as the Head of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology in 2011. She was followed by Dr. Danesh Karunanayake, again from Psychology.

By the early twenty first century two changes in the faculty programme had taken place. The most fundamental change was from the academic year course system to semester and course unit system. Secondly, the postgraduate programme was now rearranged on a more organized basis. By

the end of the first decade of the twenty first century the full time services of Philosophy lecturers who had undergone foreign training were lost to the Department due to retirement, emigration, or demise. A well trained 'successor group' had not properly emerged. Ven. Alpitiye Gnanissara, almost the only recruit for the Sinhala medium in the 1980s, very successfully handled around 400 Sinhala medium students following the Foundation Course in Logic every year, and did a good job as Controller of the GCE A/L Examination in Logic and Scientific Method, but had not gone for academic training abroad. His untimely death in early 2015 was a blow to the Department. In 1996, three more recruitments in Philosophy were made, (now Drs.) Charitha Herath, Namali Handagama, and (now Professor) P. M. Jamahir. Mr. Herath was away for nearly a decade from 2005-15 on secondment in government ministries, but he is the current Head of the Department of Philosophy. Mr. Saman Pushpakumara was absorbed into the Department in the year 2000 and since then three more recruitments have been made: Mr. Sumedha Weerawardhana, Mr. Jayantha Bogoda, and Mr. M. Aboobucker.

The long - drawn "battle of sites" preceded the founding of the University of Ceylon. The establishment of a residential university had also been decided on and, finally, it was to be at Peradeniya. The University of Ceylon and its curricula were modelled after the British tradition. Dr. Ivor Jennings was a Cambridge product who was teaching in the London University. Jennings was the architect of the University of Ceylon and its founding Vice-Chancellor who continued for 13 years in the job. He went back as the Master of a Cambridge College and later was the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge in 1961-62. The University of Ceylon, at least the University at Peradeniya, was modelled on Cambridge with the Cam replaced by Mahaveli and the Colleges replaced by Halls of Residence. The Courses taught here were replicating those of

the London University.

As a British colony, it is natural that the country's system (in all its aspects) was stamped with the British legacy. The Ceylon University was started at a time of high tide of British Analytical Philosophy spear-headed by Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein. The other dominating aspect of British Philosophy was its empiricism and positivism. Greek and Latin were the classical languages across Europe, so it is unsurprising that education in Ceylon during the British times was dominated by Greek, Latin, and English. This said, we also have an Indian and Buddhist heritage in philosophy, religion, language, and literature. These aspects are reflected in the curricula as well as works of investigative and creative research produced by the Department during the last seventy-five years.

As mentioned earlier, in 1946, Philosophy lecturers at the University of Ceylon were Ms. Mathiapparanam (M.A. Madras), a Sri Lankan trained in India, and A.K. Sarkar (M.A., PhD Patna), an Indian trained in India. Some of the published articles of Dr. Sarkar dealt with comparative studies in Indian and Western Philosophy. The first year course in Philosophy in 1957 had two papers: The first was Logic, a paper taught by Ms. Mathiapparanam which included elements of Aristotelian Logic and Induction. The other was Greek Philosophy taught by Mr. Basil Mendis, a graduate of English who had served in the Ceylon Civil Service and had undergone training in Philosophy in British universities. The first Professor of the Department, T. R. V. Murti, as we shall see, wonderfully exemplifies this British-Indian orientation and approach.

As was indicated earlier, the Ceylon University was an improved extension of the Ceylon University College which trained Ceylonese students to sit for London degrees. The British heritage here is apparent when we consider the training and background of some of the most outstanding Sri Lankan scholars

and teachers who served in the University of Ceylon during this time. For example, the curriculum vitae of Professor O.H. De A. Wijesekera runs:

Educated at Ananda College, Colombo, where he headed the Cambridge Senior first division list in 1926, securing exemption from matriculation examinations of London, Oxford, and Cambridge Universities.

First class honours in BA (Indo-Aryan), University of London, 1932.

Ceylon Government Scholarship for Research in Indo-Aryan, 1932.

PhD (London), 1936.

Diploma of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1938.

Master of Arts (London), 1940.

Assistant Lecturer in Sanskrit, Pali, and Sinhalese, Ceylon University College, 1937.

Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Ceylon, 1944.

This pattern and orientation, or the academic DNA if I may, continued from generation to generation, recurring in cases like that of Professor K. N. Jayatilleke who later becomes a shining light in the Department of Philosophy:

Educated at Royal Preparatory College and Royal College, Colombo.

Senior Cambridge, First Grade Certificate, 1930.

University College and University of Ceylon, 1939-43.

London Intermediate in Arts with English, Mathematics, Sinhala, and Pali, 1940.

BA (Ceylon) (Indo-Aryan), First Class Honours, 1943.

Government University Scholar in Arts, 1943.

Christ's College, Cambridge University, Moral Science Tripos Parts I & II, Second Class Honours (First Division), 1945-48.

BA (Hons.) (Western Philosophy), Second Class (Upper Division), University of London, 1948.

PhD (Philosophy) University of London, 1961.

That was the pattern. We saw earlier that a generation later, in the 1960's all of us in the Philosophy Department went to the UK for our own postgraduate work. It has to be emphasized that all the members who served in the Department in permanent or temporary categories during the last 75 years contributed to teaching and dissemination of knowledge. However, I indicate below the specific contribution of only those who have served as Head of the Department of Philosophy (or Philosophy and Psychology) at some time or other, in temporal sequence of their Headship.

Ms. K. Mathiapparanam

Ms. K. Mathiapparanam MA (Madras) was Lecturer of Philosophy and Head of the Department by the academic year 1946-47. The present writer could not trace any earlier records to determine when exactly Ms. Mathiapparanam joined the Department or assumed the Headship. He also found no record to determine the first lecturer of the Department who had been appointed in 1942. Ms. Mathiapparanam served the Department during its first three phases outlined earlier, and held the Headship of the Department on and off in all three of these phases; first from 1946-50, then from 1954-63, and again from 1970-73. Ms. Mathiapparanam has perhaps served the longest period as Head of the Department – a total of around 16 years. Ms. Mathiapparanam was also well known for her

remarkable Wardenship of Hilda Obeysekera Hall which, at the beginning, women university students occupied.

Professor T.R.V. Murti

Professor T.R.V. Murti's appointment as Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy in 1950 was significant. He held the degrees of MA, D.Litt. (Banaras). The year before his appointment as Professor here he was the Deputy for Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford and delivered there lectures on Middle and Last Phases of Buddhism during the Michaelmas term of 1949.

Murti's teacher was S. Radhakrishnan, the acclaimed Indian philosopher who held the Spalding Professorship of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford. Murti thus had good standing when he came to the Department, and during his tenure the syllabi in the Department were revised. Murti left the Department in 1954 to take up the Sayaji Rao Gaekward Professorship of Indian Civilization and Culture at the Hindu University, Banaras. The publication of his *Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (George Allen and Unwin, London) in 1955 brought him international recognition. It was a philosophical study of the Madhyamika system and in particular, an outstanding account and interpretation of the Madhyamika Dialectic, making a comparative study of it with Vedantic, Kantian, and Hegelian Dialectics. But this work was mainly his D.Litt. dissertation done under the guidance of Radhakrishnan before he joined the University of Ceylon. It thus has little relation to his stay in Ceylon, although Murti published in the University of Ceylon Review some articles related to it (Murti 1955).

Professor K. N. Jayatilleke

Professor K. N. Jayatilleke joined the Department as an Assistant Lecturer in 1951, during Murti's Professorship, and served it until his demise in 1970. A glimpse of Jayatilleke's

educational record was given earlier. Nine years after Murti left, in 1963, Jayatilleke succeeded him as the Chair of Philosophy which carried with it the Headship of the Department as well. Professor Jayatilleke's contribution to the Department and the subject outweighs that of any other, and as I outline later, it was he who set in motion a trend of a distinctive and fruitful creative tradition in the Department.

It is best to start with some of his outstanding personal academic achievements. The work that Jayatilleke submitted in 1961 to the London University for his doctorate was published under the title *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* by George Allen and Unwin in 1963, the year in which Jayatilleke was appointed as the Chair of Philosophy. It turned out to be a landmark, breaking a completely new path in Buddhist scholarship. It immediately brought him wide international recognition and fame. The magnitude of the achievement could perhaps be gleaned from the numerous reviews of it. For example, Professor Richard H. Robinson hailed it as a masterpiece by any standards and went on to say that it was almost a fine poem (as cited in de Silva 1971). Building on this, in one of my articles I wrote;

Professor Jayatilleke's writing in his magnum opus, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, has a smooth, rhythmic, unforced flow like the movement of an elephant and no wonder that Robinson called it 'almost a fine poem'. However, it was a torrent and like the waters of a beautiful but a powerful waterfall it left no stone unturned in its path. Hardly any contemporary scholar of Indian and Buddhist Philosophy stood uncorrected by Professor Jayatilleke. For whether it was Radhakrishnan or Murti, Mrs. Rhys Davids or Barriedale Keith or dozens of others, the well substantiated and incisive analyses of Jayatilleke touched

and turned them all (Gunaratne 2006/7, p. 4).

The radical change that Professor Jayatilleke brought about in Buddhist scholarship and its epoch making nature is captured by George Chatalian when he wrote;

Among Western students of Buddhism... there was unanimity... that Early Indian Buddhism of the Pali Canon was a religion. Among the most prominent of the numerous Western students who had come to this conclusion were the following: Bertrand Russell, Alfred North Whitehead, C. D. Broad, H. H Price, W.T Stace, George Santayana, John Dewey, Arnold Toynbee, Ninian Smart, E. A. Burt, Arthur Danto, Richard H. Robinson...-philosophers, theologians and scientists of all kinds-too numerous to mention.... But... after it had happened, another curious development took place; for in 1963, K. N Jayatilleke, who is unquestionably the foremost of the twentieth century students of Pali Buddhism-both a professional philosopher and a massively equipped student of Pali and Sanskrit forms of Early Indian Buddhism- published his *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, and Buddhist studies took a new turn: for he clearly interpreted the Early Indian Buddhism of the Pali canon as a system of philosophy... (1983, p. 181).

Professor Jayatilleke in 1958 co-authored with Professor G.P. Malalasekara the UNESCO publication *Buddhism and the Race Question*. His Hague lectures on *The Principles of International Law in Buddhist Doctrine* was another major contribution. His efforts in the interpretation of the Catuskoti form of expression which he called the Buddhist logic of four alternatives started in the 1950's (Jayatilleke 1950; 1963; 1967), and again constituted a path finding contribution. His standing in the field of Buddhist philosophy

was so high that foreign scholars visited him at Peradeniya, some of them for guidance and consultation in their doctoral work.

Professor Jayatilleke also had interest in the study of rebirth and extra-sensory perception. I remember how he arranged for Professor Bannerjee, a visiting Indian Professor of Parapsychology, to talk on research in rebirth studies to a full packed audience at Hilda Obeysekera Hall one night in the late 1960s, with me as the translator into Sinhalese. When I was doing my Masters' at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1971, I picked up an American book dealing with a rebirth story at a second hand bookshop. The book was *The Search for the Girl with the Blue Eyes* by Jess Stearn. Back in my flat when I started reading the book and reached page five, to my amazement, what did I read? The author was saying,

Here I was in Virginia Beach, finishing up a book on the amazing mystic Edgar Cayce, who, in a trance, had discussed past lives in Atlantis, Egypt, India and other lands of antiquity with the same matter-of-factness and clarity of detail that some would discuss contemporary affairs in London, Paris and New York. Only the week before, I had watched a dark, handsome Professor of Philosophy from the University of Ceylon skillfully regress a middle aged subject, successively to young adulthood, childhood, the womb and before. Marveling, I watched as the woman scratched her name in response to his command-the hand writing reflecting the determined flourish of youth, and the undisciplined scrawl of childhood and then, further regressed in time, to presumed previous life, revealing not only a different script but, lo and behold, an entirely different name. Professor K. N Jayatilleke had seen nothing unusual in the performance. He had regressed

many people and felt they were all reliving some phase of a previous life. With a shrug he observed that "Two thirds of the world accepts reincarnation" (1968, p. 5).

I think Professor Jayatilleke viewed extra-sensory phenomena as amenable to scientific study. He also thought Early Buddhism to be scientific in a broad sense. Jayatilleke (with Malalasekara) wrote, "In fact Early Buddhism can be stated in the form of a scientific theory which each individual... is to verify for himself" (Malalasekera and Jayatilleke 1958, p. 11-12). Philosophy as taught in the Department was mostly Western Philosophy, but our roots lay elsewhere, in Buddhist Philosophy. Jayatilleke's crowning achievement was in unearthing and interpreting the Philosophy of Early Buddhism in contemporary terms. Jayatilleke was superbly equipped for that task with his training.

Professor Jayatilleke was a keen disseminator of knowledge, both in the lecture room and outside. He gave regular radio broadcasts on Buddhism, on the Dhamma, some of which have been published as a collection of his popular talks and writings, edited by Professor Ninian Smart, under the title *Message of the Buddha* (1974).

Jayatilleke had come under the influence of the British analytical tradition of empiricism and positivism, and his studies brought out the empiricist bases of early Buddhism. This frame of mind was also reflected in the works of scholars who had come under his influence like Professors Kalupahana and Upadhyaya at Hawaii, living in other climes.

Jayatilleke played a major role in developing the Department of Philosophy. When he was appointed as the Chair of Philosophy in 1963, the Department had to teach students in three media, but except for himself, the only permanent member who continued in these conditions at the Department was Ms.

Mathiaparanam. Due to the lack of teachers, student numbers had dropped. We saw earlier how new recruitments were made and trained during his Professorship. Jayatilleke's stature and leadership, together with the new recruitments, led to a resurgence of the Department, and by the time of his untimely passing away in 1970, the Department was getting rebuilt on solid foundations.

Professor M. W. P. de Silva

Professor M.W.P. de Silva did his Special Degree in Philosophy at the University of Ceylon (Peradeniya), joined the Vidyalandara University academic staff, and did his doctorate at the University of Hawaii. In 1967 he joined the Department at Peradeniya. He was appointed as the Chair of Philosophy at Peradeniya in 1980. He served the Department until 1990, when he resigned to take up residence in Australia.

Professor de Silva's doctoral dissertation, later published as *Buddhist and Freudian Psychology* (1973), was a comparative study of the concepts in Buddhist and Freudian Psychology. His later interests centered on the comparative studies of concepts in the field of emotions. His inaugural lecture delivered in January 1981 was, again, a comparative study in Philosophical Psychology which dealt with emotions and therapy. It introduced the Buddhist approach to therapy as a "third paradigmatic zone ... The Humean mode of therapy has its focus on feeling, the Spinozian on thoughts and the Buddhist on attention" (p. 19). His study of emotions continues in his other publications like *Twin Peaks: Compassion and Insight* (1991), which was sub-titled 'Emotions and the "self" in Buddhist and Western Thought'. His *Tangles and Webs and Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974) consisted of comparative studies in Existentialism, Psychoanalysis, and Buddhism. Commissioned by Macmillan, he wrote *An introduction to Buddhist Psychology* (1991). Some of these books have gone into

a number of international editions.

Professor de Silva served the Department for 23 years and held its Headship for a long period of about 15 years. It was during Professor de Silva's Headship that the Department came to be known as the Department of Philosophy and Psychology. His interest in Psychology was probably instrumental in this change in nomenclature. He founded the Sri Lanka Philosophical Association which had island wide attendance and fruitful annual sessions. He was a Fellow at the Institute of Fundamental Studies, Kandy, where he organized field research related to subjects like suicide, and he edited *Suicide*, a collection of articles on the subject.

Professor R.D. Gunaratne

Professor R.D. Gunaratne obtained his BA (General) and BA (Special Honours) degrees from the University of Ceylon, MA from California (UCLA), and PhD from Cambridge. He joined the Department in 1966 as a temporary Assistant Lecturer and was made permanent in 1967. His academic training has been in Logic and the Philosophy of Science. His doctoral dissertation, a study of Relativism in the Philosophy of Science, was published as *Science, Understanding and Truth* by the Research Publication Service of the Ministry of Higher Education, Sri Lanka, in 1980.

He was Head of the Department during 1979-80 and 1989-95, and left the Headship in 1995 upon being elected Dean of the Faculty of Arts, but was Head of the Department again from 1998-2001. He succeeded Professor Padmasiri de Silva as the Chair of Philosophy in 1998. His contribution to the study of Buddhist logic begins with three published articles, namely 'The Logical Form of Catuskoti: A New Solution' (1980), 'Understanding Nagarjuna's Catuskoti' (1986), and 'Kathavatthu: The Logic and its Form' (2003). His seminar article (unpublished) 'Did the Buddha use a three-valued logic?'

examines the suggestion made by some contemporary quarters that Buddha used a logic with more than two-values. He has initiated a postgraduate course in Buddhist logic. He also took interest in the study of Buddhism and Science, which resulted in his giving a series of lectures on Buddhism and Science in the Fall of 1996 at the Humboldt State University, California, where he was a Fulbright Scholar in Residence for the year 1996-97. He won a John Templeton Award in 1997 for that Course. He went back to Cambridge in his sabbatical year in 1983-84 as a Commonwealth Fellow and spent a part of his time on a study of the differences between the methodology and epistemology of modern science and that of the study of ESP.

Although Professor Jayatilleke had initiated the teaching of mathematical logic with truth tables, Professor Gunaratne systematized it by introducing rigorous mathematical methods of derivation. Courses in Philosophy and Methodology of Science were developed in the Department curriculum. He also lectured in History and the Philosophy of Science in some postgraduate courses in the Faculty of Science at Peradeniya and in courses at the Open University. The syllabi in Logic and Scientific Method for Advanced Level students were revised completely in the late 1970s, and for the last 40 years he and the Department at Peradeniya have been centrally involved in the Advanced Level examination in Logic and Scientific Method.

Vidyatmaka Kramaya, Vidyatmaka Kramaya ha Tarka Sastraya, Naveena ha Bharatiya Tarka Sastraya, Akyata Kalanaya, and Taraka dwara ha Ruk Kramaya are Sinhala texts by Professor Gunaratne. He also wrote *Saratchandra: Philosopher and the Artist* (English and Sinhala). Among his articles in Sinhala and English are 'Rebirth Research: A Scientific View Point', 'Science Fiction', 'Dialectics', 'Evolution', 'Humanism', and

'Newtonian Vision; Its Origin, Significance and Problems' (as cited in Weerawardhane 2008).

Professor Gunaratne also started the Psychology degree programme in the Department and guided it during its first twelve years both as Head of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology and as Dean of the Faculty of Arts. That story is narrated separately below.

Professor A.D.P. Kalansuriya

Professor A.D.P. Kalansuriya had a BA from the University of Ceylon, M. Phil from the University of Reading, and PhD from the University of Ceylon. He joined the Department in the mid-1960s, was made an Associate Professor in the 1980s, and a Professor in the 1990s. He was Head of the Department for three years during 1995-98. He taught subjects like Analytic Philosophy, Western Philosophy, and the Theory of Knowledge. Professor Kalansuriya wrote a large number of Sinhala books outlining the history of Western Philosophy, as well as on the work of some individual Western Philosophers. Among these books are *Darsanaya Hedinvimak, Nutana Batahira Darasanya, Darshanika Chinthana Dhara, and Darshanika Gatalu saha Wittgenstein* (as cited in Amarasekera 2004). His *The Buddha's Discourse and Wittgenstein* (2003), in his own words, is an "...attempt to apply the later Wittgensteinian Philosophical techniques to Buddhism" (p. 3). He served the Department for about 40 years – one of the longest terms served by a member in the Department.

Professor G. Dharmasiri

Professor Dharmasiri read for his BA at the University of Ceylon, and did his PhD at Lancaster University. He joined the Department in the mid-1960s, and was made an Associate Professor in the 1980s. He was Head of the Department for three years from 2001-2004. Professor Dharmasiri's doctoral

dissertation published as *A Buddhist Critique of the Christian Concept of God* (1974), a work in comparative religious philosophy, won international acclaim. This work, as well as his *Fundamentals of Buddhist Ethics* (1986), which was based on lectures delivered in American Colleges as Fulbright visiting Professor, went into a number of international editions. He later wrote *Nature of Medicine* (1997), a critical account of the practice of current Western medicine. He wrote numerous books and articles in Sinhala and English including some short stories in the *Hibbert Journal*. His interest in Mahayana Buddhism made him translate into Sinhala a large number of Mahayana sutras. He taught Philosophy of Religion, Ethics, and Mahayana Buddhism at the Department. He too served the Department for a long period of about 40 years. He organized the library of the Department, and with the assistance of the Intercollegiate Sri Lanka Education programme developed the computer facilities in the Department during his Headship.

Professor D.D. Mallikaracchi

Professor Mallikaracchi holds degrees of BA (Ceylon), MA (Peradeniya), and PhD (London). He joined the Department early in the 1970s. He was appointed a Professor early in the 21st century. He succeeded Professor Dharmasiri as Head of the Department in 2004. He concentrated on teaching in areas like Continental Philosophy, Marxism, Psychology, Post Modernism, and Methodology. He has written a number of books and articles in Sinhala and English, among which are *Marxvadi Rachana* (2003), *Buddha and Marx* (2003), and *Karl Popper: Marxvadaye Vyaja Vivechakayek* (2003).

Professor M.S.M. Anes

Professor Anes holds a BA from the University of Ceylon, and MA and PhD from the University of Peradeniya. He is a Tamil medium graduate in Philosophy who first joined the

academic staff of the University of Kelaniya, then served in Jaffna in the late 1970s to 1980s, and joined the Peradeniya Philosophy Department in 1986. He was appointed Head of the Department in 2005 and served two terms until 2011. He was made a Professor in the first decade of the 21st century. In the 1980s, with the exodus of the Tamil lecturers from the Department and the country, he had to carry the heavy burden of conducting Tamil medium courses in the Department with little assistance. Although Ms. Rajaratnam joined the Department in the 1990s, the shortage of Tamil medium lecturers in Philosophy continued in the last two decades of the 20th century. A person of wide interests, Professor Anes has many publications in Tamil to his credit. Among these are books on the History of Philosophy, Methodology, Trial of Socrates, Islamic Philosophy, Islamic Literature and Arts, and the contemporary reform movement in Islam.

The Philosophy Department of the University of Ceylon has served newly created Sri Lankan universities well. Teaching Philosophy in the new universities has been handled by its alumni mostly. Dr. Nanayakara, in addition to teaching at Peradeniya, taught at Colombo and Vidyodaya, and his students like Dr. Bandaranayke and Professor Edirisinghe were full time involved in Jayawandhanapura and Kelaniya Philosophy teaching. Professors Padmasiri de Silva, Anes, and Kulasena, all alumni of Peradeniya, were attached to the Kelaniya Philosophy Department. Later Professor Krishnarajah in Jaffna and Mr. Ravi in Batticaloa, also Peradeniya alumni, played major roles in the teaching of Philosophy in their respective institutes.

The Department's tradition of creative research begins with Professor Jayatilleke. As we saw, Professor Jayatilleke contributed to the study of Early Buddhist Epistemology and Logic and also presented it in contemporary terms. Professor Padmasiri de Silva contributed

to the study of Buddhist Psychology and made comparative studies of it with Western Psychology. Professor Dharmasiri contributed to the study of Buddhist Ethics and Religious Philosophy, and my own contribution was to further the study of Buddhist Logic.

Philosophy as an academic discipline at the University of Ceylon has had its periods of ebbs and tides in the 75 years of its existence. Early in the 21st century, roughly between 2005-2015, Philosophy Department seemed to be losing track. As indicated earlier, a vacuum was generated largely due to trained, foreign exposed, English competent senior staff not being in full time service in the Department. English language deficiency both in the students and the staff led to limited exposure to the outside world, a resultant narrowness of outlook, and with it narrowness of purpose. Further, the economics of higher education which bases itself on student numbers in each field is perhaps not the measure by which to judge a discipline like Philosophy, though it could not be avoided. After the separation of the Departments of Philosophy and Psychology, we are now taking measures to overcome these difficulties. It is perhaps time to reflect and plan a resurgence.

Let us look at the conception of Philosophy. One of the first things I heard when I started following Philosophy classes in the good old days was that worn out definition (or joke?) that 'Philosophy was the search for a black cat in a dark room which is not there'. Wittgenstein was emphatic that philosophy is an activity to rid ourselves of the pseudo-problems that language creates for us; an activity like that of the fly to get out of the fly bottle. Richard Rorty, writing on Derrida, says "Derrida's point is that no one can make sense of a last commentary, a last discussion note, a good piece of writing which is more than the occasion for a better piece" (1982, p. 109). Rorty further says "[p]ragmatists are saying that the best hope for philosophy is not

to practice Philosophy" (ibid, p. xv). In Wilfrid Sellars' view, Philosophy could be looked at as "an attempt to see how things, in the broadest possible sense of the term, hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term" (as cited in Rorty 1982, p. xiv). John Maynard Keynes, the outstanding economist of the Keynesian revolution in economics, in his notice of Frank Ramsey, refers to the activity of a philosopher as engaging in "the tormenting exercises of foundations of thought and of psychology, where mind tries to catch its own tail..." (1931, p. x).

One does not want to be elitist but one could see by all this that breadth, depth, and sharpness are necessary for the activity of philosophy, if it is to be done meaningfully. Philosophy has been a pathfinder; it has seen ahead or indeed guided the thinking and action ahead. It has laid the foundational attitude and thinking of societies. Plato did it even though it was utopian. Descartes did it and I think, the British Empiricists did it. Nietzsche did it. In more socially applied or practical terms, Voltaire, Marx, Lenin, and Gandhi did it.

In the contemporary context, let me refer to one news item in the Newsletter of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Cambridge.

Now, thanks to a £ ten million grant from the Leverhulme Trust to a team led by Professor Huw Price, the University is to establish a Centre to explore the challenges of the future machine intelligence ... The Leverhulme Centre for Future of Intelligence will explore the ramifications of this potentially epoch-making development The Centre brings together computer scientists, philosophers, social scientists, psychologists, lawyers and others It is a collaboration led by Cambridge with links to ... University of Oxford, Imperial College, London and the University of California, Berkeley As Huw Price

puts it, “Machine intelligence will be one of the defining themes of our century The Centre will bring together some of the best human intelligence to help us to make the best of artificial intelligence”(2016, p.1)

Huw Price is the current and in fact, the first, Bertrand Russell Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge and one could see here the leading roles that Philosophy and philosophers could play.

It is true that Peradeniya Philosophy does not have the competencies or finances to move that far. But we may involve in cognitive studies or the study of consciousness, for example, by examining whether Eastern or Buddhist thought can contribute something to enlighten these areas. We also saw that our Department has contributed something in exploring logical, psychological, and epistemological aspects of Buddhist thought. The contemporary relevance of these discussions had engaged attention, particularly of Professor K.N. Jayatilleke.

It was not long ago when physicists were looking for illumination from the East for understanding contemporary Physics; thus Fritjof Capra’s popular tract *The Tao of Physics* (1975). Robert Oppenheimer (1954), the physicist who directed the Manhattan Project, once saw similarities between Catuskoti and the present tetralema in Quantum Physics and wrote

The electron is a wave

The electron is a particle

The electron is both a wave and a particle

The electron is neither a wave nor a particle.

David Bohm, grappling with current physics and inspired by Krishnamurti, experimenting with a language suitable to express reality,

downplaying the importance of measurement which is so fundamental to current science, suggesting a language in what he called ‘rheomode’- a language which does not assert non-flowing, static things, went on to say;

now, in the East the notion of measure has not played nearly so fundamental a role.... Thus in Sanskrit...there is a word ‘matra’ meaning measure... close to the Greek ‘metron’. But there is another word ‘maya’ obtained from the same root which means ‘illusion’. This is an extremely significant point. Whereas in Western society measure... is the very essence of reality... in the East measure has now come to be regarded as in some way false and deceitful (maya) (1980, p. 29).

I refer to this just to indicate a few possibilities for Philosophy at Peradeniya. Our competencies in Eastern thought and languages, together with modern knowledge and techniques could help us be pathfinders.

The Faculty of Arts in Peradeniya is at the moment re-structuring its programme and procedure. I understand that the Faculty is now contemplating the introduction of a course on ‘critical thinking’. Dr. Charitha Herath, the present Head of the Department of Philosophy, indicated that the Faculty sees the significance in making a distinction between hard skills and soft skills that a subject or field imparts, in that soft skills are regarded as immediately useful in contemporary professional life. A philosophy course with analytical, logical, and critical approaches could impart soft skills to spot non-sensical thoughts and misleading presuppositions, and also make a person alive to the possibilities of different approaches to a problem. A philosophy course would help one to be aware of the ethical and value aspects of a position which could be invaluable to sail safely in the contemporary seas of discourse.

PSYCHOLOGY

The Department of Psychology was established in 2017, with the administrative separation of Philosophy and Psychology. Although teaching a few Psychology courses in Departments like Philosophy, Sociology, and Education was seen from the beginning of the University in 1942 even by 1990 there were no degree courses in Psychology, not to mention Departments of Psychology, in any university in Sri Lanka. In the 1960's, although a fully qualified psychologist, Dr. D. Laksiri Jayasuriya, was attached to the Sociology Department at Peradeniya and was helping the work in the Philosophy and the Education Departments there as well, fully fledged degree courses in Psychology were nowhere in sight. There was some campaigning by Professor Jayatilleke and others for beginning a Psychology Department but nothing materialized. During the Headship of Professor Padmasiri de Silva whose interests linked with Psychology, initiating proper Psychology courses 'popped up' in discussions in the Philosophy Department now and again. When, upon Professor de Silva's going on leave, I was appointed Head of the Department, we started working on a concrete proposal to start a Psychology degree programme to be run by our Department. Some of the senior members of the Department, with reason, were not keen on this move but they did not oppose. The task was formidable and perhaps the move was not wise.

To seriously engage in this move, the following considerations had to be made.

1. Financial (mainly cadre) provisions (along with administrative, spatial, and other facilities)

The move was to provide cadre positions temporarily from the few unfilled cadre vacancies in Philosophy for which, of course, financial provision was there. Administrative

and other matters were to be handled by the Philosophy Department. The idea was for Psychology to emerge first as a sub-Department and eventually be independent. We had the example of Archaeology first being under History and then separating (the difference, and a very significant difference at that, was, they had no less a person than Professor Senarath Paranavithana to begin with!).

2. Availability of teachers in Psychology

No properly qualified teachers in Psychology were available at Peradeniya. This, in fact, was the biggest problem. We had a few possible paths to explore.

- I. A few foreign Psychology degree holders were known to be in Colombo. We wanted to see whether we could recruit some of them.

- II. The Departments of Philosophy, Education, Sociology, and Psychiatry had teachers handling Psychology courses. A suggestion was made to pool the resources available at Peradeniya. We thought we also could tap Departments like Economics for teaching subjects like Statistics in the Psychology programme.

- III. Exploring the possibility of getting visiting lecturers from abroad sponsored by agencies like the United State Educational Foundation (USEF) in Sri Lanka.

It was not difficult to draw up syllabi for two papers in Psychology to be taught in the first year with the staff available, the courses being of Introduction to Psychology and History of Psychology. With draft syllabi for the first year we submitted to the Faculty of Arts the proposal to start Psychology courses which would eventually lead to Psychology degrees. When it was taken up in the Faculty, there was strong and, I thought, even organized,

opposition arguing against it. There probably were a number of factors behind this opposition, but they had one solid argument: Where were the qualified staff to handle Psychology? I argued my case, but I felt 'a loner' fighting for a lost cause. Fortunately, the Dean, Professor J. M. Gunadasa, was sympathetic to our proposal. Therefore, when the discussion heated up, he postponed it to another day. When the Faculty met the following month, I went ready for battle, but, amazingly, the proposal went through the Faculty without much discussion. To this day, I do not know why or how it happened.

The Faculty sent the proposal to the Senate, and again, the Senate discussion began with stiff opposition. Some members of the Medical Faculty rose up in protest, and a few from the Science Faculty also opposed the proposal. The Senate opposition had three arguments. First, was not Psychology a science? If we are starting Psychology, it should be offered by the Medical Faculty or the Science Faculty. I argued that Psychology is both a Natural and a Social Science and that the Arts Faculty which had Social Science under it had an equal or better right to have Psychology there, particularly in view of the current application of Psychology in areas like



Ms C. Keshini Soysa: the invaluable service

Management. Second, medical professors argued that Psychology was already in the Medical Faculty in the Psychiatry Department. I pointed out that from the beginning of this University, if any general Psychology was taught, it had been in the departments of Philosophy, Education, and Sociology, which were all in the Arts Faculty. Thirdly, and most importantly, where were the qualified teachers to handle Psychology? I said with some confidence that there are some available persons for recruitment. In fact, a lecturer in the Psychiatry Department itself had previously given me a list of Psychology graduates available in Colombo. All the same, I was arguing with formidable opponents like Professor Mark Amarasinghe of the Medical Faculty. Again, Professor Gunadasa, the Dean/Arts, solidly stood behind the Faculty proposal and I felt that the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lakshman Jayatileke, was also sympathetic to our case. At one stage, the Vice-Chancellor said there *is* a Department of Philosophy and Psychology! I must record here how magnanimously Professor Mark Amarsinghe more or less concluded the discussion, saying "Well, if you have the staff, go ahead". And how Dr. Ranil Abeysinghe, the then Head of Psychiatry in the Medical Faculty, who at the beginning of the Senate discussion questioned the feasibility of the project, later, on my request, gave our Psychology students lectures on Clinical Psychology. For a number of years, and indeed until some Psychology Special graduates passed out, he conducted classes, and at the beginning of the Psychology Course our students were allowed to visit the Psychiatry ward. I feel, with nostalgia, that it was a time when there was still the possibility of an academic, fair, and decent debate at university level.

Thus formal approval was obtained. Getting over such formal challenges, though formidable, turned out to be much less troublesome than the implementation of the project as it got ridden with disappointing

difficulties. When the posts for lecturers in Psychology were advertised, a few with foreign degrees applied but out of the applicants only a handful appeared at the interview. There was only one applicant whom we thought could be selected, and that was Miss C. Keshini Soysa. She had a good first degree in Psychology (a magna cum laude and phi beta kappa) from Mount Holyoke College, USA, and fortunately for

the Psychology Programme, she was willing to take up the post. At the same time we were conscious of our obligation to maintain University standards. Therefore, before the final appointment was made, I personally checked about the level of her degree qualification with the Executive Director of the USEF in Sri Lanka, Mr. Tissa Jayatilaka. I reproduce here the response he gave in this connection;

The USEF in Sri Lanka,
Sir Ernest de Silva Mawatha,
Colombo 7

March 12, 1990

Professor R.D. Gunaratne
Head,
Department of Philosophy,
University of Peradeniya.

Dear Professor Gunaratne,

I refer to the letter you handed over to me in my office on Friday, March 9, 1990.

The answer to question one of that letter is that a *magna cum laude* could be considered the 'rough' equivalent of a Sri Lankan second class upper division honors degree.

The answer to question two is that Mount Holyoke College, in Massachusetts, is one of the top colleges in the United States.

With warm regards,

Your Sincerely,
Tissa Jayatilaka
Executive Director

One can see now in hindsight that Keshini's joining us was a significant event in the history of the Psychology programme at Peradeniya. For if not for her availability, we might not have begun that year. She was the first and, for some time the only, permanent member of the Psychology staff. She found accommodation at Lady Hill at Dangolla, but drove up from Colombo often. We drew up General and Special Degree course syllabi in Psychology and got them through the Faculty and the Senate. We were teaching Psychology

in two media, English and Sinhala. With her background in Colombo and USA, Keshini was probably little used to working in Sinhala. And at a time when even proper Sinhala terms for concepts in modern Psychology were not all that readily available (some were not yet even coined), the way she successfully managed the Sinhala medium was extremely creditable. Keshini worked very hard and carried a heavy load of work but never was there even a murmur of protest. She was the anchor of the Psychology programme until

the first batch of special degree students in Psychology were about to pass out. She then went back to USA to do her postgraduate work. While it is true that she was taking a fairly long time completing her PhD programme and the Peradeniya University was compelled to terminate her services, it was also a great loss. She was a bundle of competence, energy, and commitment, and the yeoman's service that she rendered the Psychology programme – the first such programme in the country – deserves to be recorded here.

We were, as we intended, able to pool available resources at Peradeniya for some of the work. Mr. Justin Perera (and later, Mr. Somapala) of the Education Department conducted courses in Educational Psychology. Dr. Ranil Abeysinghe, the Head of Psychiatry lectured in Clinical Psychology. Dr. Anoma Abeyratne in the Economics Department helped us by teaching Statistics. The Philosophy Department had resources to provide a course in Buddhist Psychology and Therapy to Special Degree students. Indeed, it was in our mind at the beginning that Psychology at Peradeniya should evolve

with some Eastern ideas and practices in it, at least to make it distinctive.

Although persons like Mr. Tissa Jayatilaka, the executive Director of USEF in Sri Lanka, were very appreciative of our programme and explored any possibilities of helping us by sponsoring some qualified Psychology academics from abroad, their efforts ended up producing no satisfactory result. Professor Jeanne Marecek of the ISLE programme, an American Psychologist, taught a course in our programme for a year, but some of the Psychology books that were donated to the Psychology programme by the ISLE (sent from USA) did not reach the Department properly. We managed to get Miss Kalhari Hewage with qualifications in Psychology from Georgia (Eastern Europe) to come as a visiting lecturer for a couple of years. We had also Father F.A. Fernando to assist teaching in the programme on a temporary basis.

The first batch of Psychology Special students passed out in 1994. It had students from both media, English and Sinhala. Out of those who passed out Ms. Malkanthi Gunaratna was



The first quartet: The first batch of Psychology students - November 1993

(seated ,L to R) Misses M.U. Gunaratna, E.S. Ekanayaka, Fr.F.A. Fernando, Prof R.D. Gunaratne, (Head / Philosophy & Psychology), Prof. J.M. Gunadasa, (Vice -chancellor), Prof. Ashley Halpe, (Dean / Arts), Prof. P. D. Premasiri, Dr. Ranil Abeysinghe, (Head / Psychiatry), Dr. G.D.K. Nanayakkara, Miss. M.K. Hewage, Revds. P. Maithri, K. Sasanasiri.

taken in to the Department as a Temporary Assistant Lecturer. Ms. Manju Gunasekara was in the third batch of Psychology students and was the first to pass out with a First Class in Psychology. She and her batch mate Ms. Gothami Yapa were appointed to the Department in 1997. Manju went on a Fulbright scholarship to USA in the following year and completed her Masters. During my Deanship of the Faculty we made the justifiable plea for cadre positions for Psychology as the staff in Psychology were maintained so far on the Philosophy Department cadre list and the Faculty budget. At a meeting in 1997 which the University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Professor Sirisena Thilakaratne had with Deans of all the Faculties, he allocated three new cadre positions to the Department for recruitments in Psychology. This was an encouraging gesture by the Chairman, in the light of the fact that he was unable to approve new positions for any other Faculty. In 2001, three new recruitments to the Psychology staff were made, those of Ms. Gunendra Dissanayake, Ms. Malathi Dissanayake, and Ms. Buddhiprabha Pathirana. During the first decade of the 21st century, Ms. Pavitra Godamunna, Ramila Usoof, H.A.U. Manel, and Dr. Danesh Karunanyake were taken in to the Psychology staff.

From the beginning of the Psychology programme there was student interest in it, and admission became fairly competitive. The programme was restricted to the English medium later on. In 2017, it became independent with the new Department of Psychology being gazetted that year. Dr. Buddhiprabha Pathirana was appointed as the first Head of the newly created Department. According to her, at the moment, Psychology is studied by about hundred undergraduates. The Department is still understaffed, and accommodation and other facilities for the Department are being attended to. The Department has five members at the moment, all with postgraduate qualifications,

four of them doctorates. They have a number of Temporary Assistant Lecturers to help them with the work, but they are awaiting UGC specifications as to the available cadre positions to make new recruitments. Dr. Pathirana thinks that the restriction of the Psychology Special programme to English medium limits the number of students the Department can admit, and that the Psychology programme should be made open to a wider audience.

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