

Abstract No 33

Sri Lankan Sanskrit Literature which Revived after the Colonial Era

Ven. Girambe Dhammaruchi

Assistant Lecturer

Department of pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Ruhuna
girambedhammaruchi@gmail.com

Polonnaruwa Era can obviously be concerned as the climax of Sri Lankan Sanskrit literature. Venerable Sariputta Sangharāja thero made a commendable contribution towards the upgrade of Sanskrit literature. Surprisingly, there were no Sinhalese scholars enough to produce literary works in Sanskrit. It clearly depicts that Sinhalese scholars who had a profound knowledge in Sanskrit were very rare to find then and there. In the context of Sri Lankan literature, it had its golden ages during the Kotte Era. To our dismay, this flourished literature started its downfall with the invasions of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English respectively. The period which prevailed under the control of them is called the Colonial Era though ven. Saranankara Sangharāja thero set up Niyamakanda Academy where Sanskrit was not used at all. Similarly, during the colonial era several schools of thoughts emerged in the hope of renaissance of Sri Lankan literature. Among them, Dodanduwa School of thoughts played a vital role for the betterment of Sinhala, Pali and Sanskrit. Further, Dodanduwa School of thoughts deserves the credit for producing a Sanskrit taught scholar following Saripuththra Sangharāja thero, who lived in Polonnaruwa era. This Sanskrit learnt scholar was none other than ven. Aluthgama Seelakkhanda thero. The sole purpose of this research is to publicize this very notion. Surprisingly, Sīlakkhanda thero was the one and only Sri Lankan who provided “Tīkā” in Sanskrit. He promoted Sanskrit across Sri Lanka and India. The research methodology was to study literary sources. Moreover, library reference was done at Shailabibbaramaya where he stayed. The final conclusion was that the founder of modern Sri Lankan Sanskrit literature was Ven. Seelakkhanda thero who belonged to Dodanduwa School of thoughts.

Keywords: *Colonial Era, Dodanduwa, Sanskrit, Literature, School of thoughts*