

PROFESSOR S. L. KEKULAWALA

AN APPRECIATION

The late Prof. Kekulawala whose death occurred recently at the age of 52, was a brilliant product of Ananda College, Colombo, where he was educated from his early days until he entered the university. He had a distinguished academic record both at Ananda, where he won the gold medal for the best student, and at the University of Ceylon where he gained First Class Honours in Sanskrit in 1954 and won the much coveted Murugesar Thambiah Memorial Prize and the C.A. Hewavitharana Memorial Prize for Sanskrit.

After graduation, the late Prof. Kekulawala served on the academic staff of Ananda College, his *alma mater*, for a few years. Thereafter, he joined the Vidyalankara University (now University of Kelaniya) at its inception in 1959 in the capacity of an Assistant Lecturer and rose to the position of Professor of Linguistics in 1980. During the period of his service at this university, he proved his efficiency as an administrator, first as the Head of the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, then as the Dean of the Faculties of Arts and Humanities, and finally, as the Vice-Chancellor, a post he held until the time of his death. He held these positions with distinction and dignity and made significant contributions towards the development of the various disciplines and departments of study that came under his supervision.

Although his basic training was in the field of Sanskritic studies, the late Prof. Kekulawala diverted his interest towards research in Linguistics, sometime after joining the academic staff of the Vidyalankara University. Subsequently, he proceeded to the United Kingdom on a UNESCO Fellowship and conducted research at the University of London, on the basis of which he was awarded the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics. He continued his research in this field further at the University of York, while on a Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellowship in 1979. Despite his larger involvement in Linguistics, he found time to keep alive his interest in Sanskritic studies, to which he made some useful and significant contributions in later years. His Sinhala translations of the Sanskrit texts, the *Ghaṭakarpara Kāvya*, the *Aucityavicāraeacā* and the *Bodhicaryāṅkataka*, and the *Prasna* and *Kaṭha Upaniṣads* are noteworthy. Likewise, his Sinhala translations of Edgerton's *Sanskrit Historical Phonology* and Woolner's *Introduction to Prakrit* are the results of a painstaking endeavour.