

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION IN PALI AND BUDDHIST STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION

It was due to the tireless effort of the late Professor G.P. Malalasekera, the Doyen of Oriental Studies, that Pali and Buddhist Studies attained a very high level of respectability in the Peradeniya University curricula. Under his able guidance blossomed a large number of Pali and Buddhist scholars such as Professor O.H. de A. Wijesekera, N.A. Jayawickrama, Jotiya Dhirasekera, K.N. Jayatilleke, W.S. Karunaratne, and many others, all of whom won international fame. The good grounding they had in Sri Lanka enabled them to perform very well in their postgraduate studies, which they generally had in universities in England.

Besides these academicians, the Pali and Buddhist Studies Department of the Peradeniya University was successful in producing some brilliant administrators who adorned the public service. These features induced many to incline themselves towards Pali and Buddhist Studies.

The establishment of Vidyodaya and Vidyalandara Universities contributed to the increase in the number of students who pursued studies in these fields. With the increase in the numbers of those who completed their graduate studies, there was an increase in demand for postgraduate studies. Unlike previously, since late sixties, it was becoming extremely difficult to obtain scholarships to go abroad for postgraduate studies in these fields. Hence, a need for some local institution to pursue postgraduate studies in these fields was greatly felt.