



# REFLECTIONS

AN IB NEWSLETTER OF THE CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL, INDIA



## AUBOWAN...

SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE SRI LANKA TOUR BY THE STUDENTS OF FIRST YEAR IB DIPLOMA

## EDITOR SPEAKS....

### Best Wishes

The fourth issue of IB Newsletter shares the experiences of the first year IB students who had gone on a tour of Sri Lanka in the month of August 2010. The tour was a blend of the experience of a new culture and service to humanity.

Venkatragavaraj

IB Diploma Coordinator

Service, adventure, experience. This is what the students of the IB first year found on their trip to Sri Lanka. We enjoyed many amazing memories and our emotional cup was equally varied and full. Our interactions with the natives were invigorating and we were exposed to a culture that is both inspiring and refreshingly different. We experienced a new country, new customs and new cuisine.

We sincerely performed various acts of service for the villagers we met, and received immense appreciation in return. We ventured to various hotspots as well, such as a famous mall and a popular beach.

By the time we returned, the students had so many thoughts to share, that we had a hard time choosing which of them to display in this newsletter! We finally narrowed it down to the following seven.

Hopefully, this small container of thought can convey to you the magnitude of our enjoyment in our sojourn in this neighboring country.

I sincerely hope that you enjoy this issue of our newsletter and that, in time, you too can visit and experience this country.

-Raj Anirudh Kumar

### Inside this issue:

Editor speaks....	1
The welcome ...	2
Spreading the colour of love ...	3
Children, the angels of God	4
The language barrier ...	5
Building the stage	6
An amazing evening ...	7
Cuisine in Sri Lanka !!!	8



## THE WELCOME ...

For the past few days, we had been eagerly looking forward to an international CAS activity in Sri Lanka. We were supposed to help a village by renovating a hall. We had just arrived in the villagers' midst.

A long line of unfamiliar faces stared at us from all sides as we stepped off the bus. Although we knew that we had come here for a good cause, some of us were starting to get second thoughts. The long day of travel and the thought of 'working' in a new environment was not exactly our cup of tea. A few of us nervously fidgeted and shuffled our feet. Then the music started. We forgot all our inhibitions and allowed ourselves to be treated to the warm welcome that was arranged.

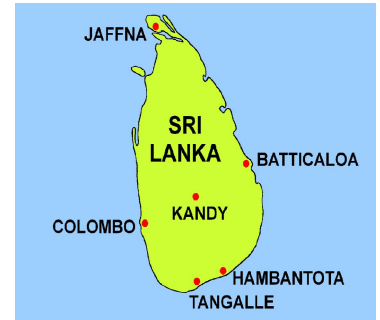
The drum beats pounded away at a quick pace and three pairs of extravagantly dressed girls presented an intricate tradi-

tional Sri Lankan dance. They moved in unison and, slowly led us up the steps to our seats.

It appeared that the dancers were dancing to the tune of some professional band. Our surprise knew no bounds when we found tiny children, barely our waist high, playing so masterfully on their instruments. As another mark of appreciation these children including their very young, staff-wielding band master, were dressed in professional band clothes.

Finally, our procession reached the village hall and we began to perform our duties for CAS. Even though we have long since departed from their village, the welcome procession still remains fresh in my mind, probably because it made me feel so important, so special.

-Raj Anirudh Kumar



### Sri Lanka - some facts

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean, south of India.

Land Area: 64,740 sq km  
 Water area: 870 sq km  
 Coastline: 1,340 km  
 Climate: Tropical  
 Terrain: Mostly low, flat to rolling plain; mountains in south-central interior  
 Highest point: Pidurutalagala 2,524 m  
 Natural resources: Limestone, graphite, mineral sands, gems, phosphates, clay, hydropower



## SPREADING THE COLOUR OF LOVE ...



Sri Lanka history

The history of Sri Lanka dates back to 6th century BC and has gone through rich cultural evolution. It became independent from British rule in 1948. Sri Lanka has also experienced serious ethnic issues and appears to be presently emerging out the conflicting scenario.

As part of the service to the Buddhist Temple in Sri Lanka, we had to take up various tasks like masonry, painting, some manual labor and also a cultural display of the Indian culture. Our team took up the task of painting the village assembly hall. It was going to be easy, we thought, and would certainly be a lot more fun than doing masonry work!

How wrong we were! Our first hurdle was to open the paint tins. Whoever thought that would be a hurdle, but we were learning it all here. After the tedious and time consuming activity of opening the paint tins and distributing the paint into cans we collected the brushes and got into the act. It was a bright yellow and we could see the place brightening up with every brush stroke. Some of us even painted the cobwebs on the walls with supreme care. Contagious as it was in brightness the colour brought smiles on to the faces of the resident priests.

And yes, the accident did happen. The paint can did get upturned on to the floor. By the time the yells and screams had reduced to grumbles and sniggers and snide remarks we had cleared the floor of the paint and had also painted all the walls of the hall!

Even before we had finished congratulating ourselves on the success we were informed that it was only half the job and we had to return the next day to apply the second coat! Struggle with the tins again? Clean up the mess once again? Did we want it? Of course! It was fun, but more than that we wanted to complete the job we had taken up! And it was done in record time!

This was not only a learning experience but also a bright way of attempting to return the love shown to us by the local Buddhist community.

- Akash Ghai



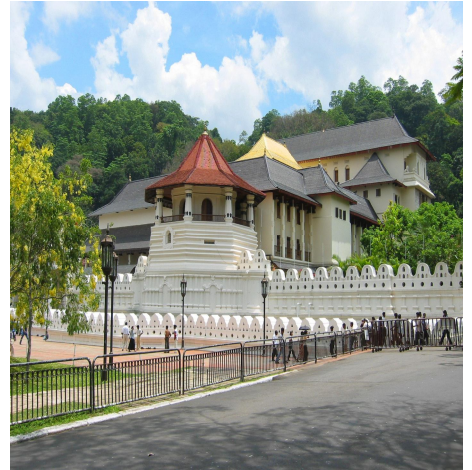
## CHILDREN, THE ANGELS OF GOD

The most amazing part of our trip to Sri Lanka was the 2 days of interaction we had with the children of the village where we were offering our services. Uninhibited and eager to be amidst us, these children made it so much easier for us to adapt to this foreign land. Whenever we needed a break they were ready to play with us. Cricket was on the top of the list. Every opportunity to field and fetch the ball was a game in itself and helped us get close to these children.

Through our interactions they taught us their language and also a lot of the Buddhists traditions. We left the village excited to learn more from these

The next day we reached the village and found a surprise in store for us. Our young friends had plucked some really mouth watering fruits for us. We were so touched by their friendliness. The hospitality we received made our tasks at the village so much fun. Had it not been for the children I doubt if we would have had so much of fun! A million thanks to our young friends for making this experience unforgettable!

- Rohit



Kandy

Kandy is declared as the World Heritage City by UNESCO. This city has numerous temples and places of historic interest. Dalada Maligawa also known as the Sacred Temple of Tooth is the pride of the city for its historic origin. Located at a high elevation, Kandy enjoys cooler climate compared to the other parts of the country and is considered as one of the best tourist locations of Sri Lanka





**Beaches of Sri Lanka**

With a coastline of nearly 1300km, Sri Lanka has beautiful beaches such as Negombo, Beruwala, Aluthgama, Kaluthara, Bentota, Hikkaduwa, Galle, Weligama, Nilaveli, Unawatuna, etc. These beaches provide holidaying activities like swimming, surfing, diving, jet skiing, parasailing and windsurfing. A trip to these beaches is unforgettable and serves as an ideal getaway from the rigorous and monotonous everyday life.

## THE LANGUAGE BARRIER ...

AUBOWAN!!

Our first steps into the village where we were offering our services were greeted with this one word. Guessing it was not a bad word we mindlessly repeated it till someone actually translated it as 'greetings'! By then we hasty teenagers had already concluded that Sinhala was impossible to comprehend and that we had to make actions speak for words. How wrong we were!

Sinhala, with its many complexities and its very lilting intonation, was surprisingly easy and a lot of fun to learn! Of course our pronunciations were horrendously unappealing, but we never gave up and soon enough were able to catch up with commonplace conversation.

For those of us who had not learnt the art of keeping quiet, the inability to communicate was beginning to tell right from the first hour of our service. Seeing our obvious handicap the local children came to our rescue and

started teaching us some basic Sinhala. You can only imagine the fun we had trying out new sounds and new words. It became an exchange program after sometime when they wanted to learn English and Hindi from us, and they beat us to it! They spoke Hindi better than we spoke Sinhala! (Probably speaks volumes of our teaching skills!!!)

From then on we did not spare any opportunity to put to practical use our lessons in the local language. It was an amazingly enjoyable experience! And the benefits of this were unthinkable. We developed a huge fan following as all the locals, young and old came forth to spend time with us! We felt like celebrities! Though we do not remember much of the language any longer, the fun and enjoyment remains etched in our memories.

-Harsh Shah & Narmada Udaykumar



## BUILDING THE STAGE

When I was preparing myself for the trip to Sri Lanka I told myself I was going to a new country and I should come back with new experiences. My aim is more than fulfilled as my cup is so full.

My task was different and 'difficult' for me. I had to help clean up the temple vicinity so that it could be laid with concrete and eased access to the temple.

We began with the challenge of weeding out grass under the scorching sun. It was the thought of doing something to help the people of the village that egged us on. But the greater challenge was yet to come. We were asked to create a stage on which the villagers could stage small shows or have some meetings. This was the longest and most tiring of all assignments. We had to shift the rubble, mix

cement and sand with shovels and use the concrete to make the stage. It took us a lot of time but when the last patch of the stage was covered with cement we jumped in ecstasy and patted ourselves for this wonderful accomplishment.

We realized the tremendous amount of physical work we had put in when our muscles were stiff and aching the next morning. But that evening was fun and our heartfelt thanks to the local people for providing us with snacks from time to time, talking and playing with us whenever we were on the verge of giving up. That sense of achievement has given me a big boost in my confidence.

- Manish Punjabi



### Buddhism in Sri Lanka

Buddhism was introduced in Sri Lanka in 250BC. It is the national religion of the country. The founder of Buddhism is Lord Gautama Buddha who was born in Nepal around 560BC. Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka have distinct architecture and can be identified by their 'Stupas'.



## AN AMAZING EVENING ...



Sri Lankan pop music

One of the popular and respected music of Sri Lanka is BAILA. It is a blend of the local music and Portuguese influence. BAILA is very rhythmic and uses instruments such as bongo drums, violin, mandolin, box guitar, etc. This music can be often heard during parties, school reunions, hotel concerts, charity dinner dances, and weddings.

Home away from home, that's what we felt when we reached Sri Lanka. The terrain is very much similar. The people are very much like us except for that distinct Sri Lankan feature of the face. Even culturally we are quite similar. We saw that from the program they organized for us the first evening.

Exhausted and drained after all our work at the temple we were all looking forward to a warm bed and rest. With that frame of mind we sat ourselves for the evening show. And within minutes our exhaustion disappeared and we were entranced by the wonderful dance performances.

The traditional dance of Sri Lanka performed by the professional group won our hearts. We saw various types of dances like Maha Sohon Samayama, Uda Rata Natum; Ruhunu, Pantheru dance. The Maha Sohon Samayama dance was the most interesting out of all because in this type of dance the performer dis-

guises himself as a bear and wears a mask and a dress to resemble one. In the Sri Lankan traditional dances one thing which amuses me a lot is the way they play the Gatabera and the Udekki. They are both Sri Lankan drums used for traditional dances. The professional group also included some Indian dances in their show. They did the Punjabi Bhangra which was very catchy. After the program we had spend some time interacting with the dancers. While speaking to the dancers we were shocked to know that the lead dancer was 45 years of age! She was so remarkably fluid and had such a flexible body even at that age!

It has been some time now that we are back from Sri Lanka and back to our hectic school schedules. But nothing can wipe away the grandeur of the show from our memories!

- Yash



## CUISINE IN SRI LANKA!!

What would a batch of teenagers who have nothing to study and no place to play want most? Food and food and more food! Here we were in a new place, with no knowledge of the language. What would we eat? How would we order? What would we order? We were troubled. But not for long. Food was wonderful, different but a wonderful new taste.

The cuisine in Sri Lanka, is normally, spicy and peppery. But the food at the hotel was quite a blend. There were salads, soups, a dish called pootu, bread and chilly puree, among the many other dishes we did not attempt to taste. It was a delicious new experience for us.

In the village, food did play a very important role. We were exhausted and

sweating. At the end of it all to get home made food is such a blessing and we are grateful to the villagers for being so understanding. They prepared sweet ghee aapams which is very commonly eaten in Sri Lanka. Then we also had delicious munchies, made out of wheat flour and coconut oil, deep fried. We had a constant supply of some mouthwatering beverages, black tea and fresh masala fruit juice.

The food was such a refreshing, and different experience and we are glad to have been given this chance to taste Sri Lankan cuisine. The taste really does linger even today!

- Lakshmi Shekhar



Sri Lankan Cricket

British colonization of Sri Lanka resulted in the introduction of the game of Cricket to Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan team was awarded the Test Match status in 1981. The first biggest achievement for the Sri Lankan team was the winning of the World Cup in 1996 by defeating Australia. Leading cricketers of Sri Lanka are Kumar Sangakkara, Muttiah Muralitharan and Sanath Jayasuriya.

### Contact information

Chinmaya International  
Residential School  
Nallurvayal Post, Siruvani Road  
Coimbatore - 641114  
Tamilnadu State. INDIA  
Phone : 0422 - 2613300  
Fax : 0422 - 2615725  
Email: [info@cirschool.org](mailto:info@cirschool.org)  
[www.cirschool.org](http://www.cirschool.org)

