

Dashamanya Vidya Jyothi Ashley de Vos
PORTS ALONG THE ANCIENT TRADE ROUTES

Abstract:

This paper will discuss and identify the ancient ports of trade in Sri Lanka, and the connection between the rivers and trade routes leading to and from the ancient kingdoms and Kandy.

Biography:

Ashley de Vos is a Fellow of the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (1973), and a Member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (1970). He trained as a Chartered Architect and Landscape Architect in the UK, and in Architectural Conservation and Heritage Management in Rome. He worked under Geoffrey Bawa, Ulrick Plesner and Valentine Gunasekera in Sri Lanka, and with Anthony B. Davies Associates and Eginton, Spink and Hyne in the UK. He was the National Chairman of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) from 1990-93. From 1980 to 1989 he served as Director Conservation on the Jetavana Project, Anuradhapura, the UNESCO/Sri Lanka Cultural Triangle Programme. He is a Member of the Advisory Board to the Department of Archaeology, and a Faculty Member of the Department of Architecture, University of Moratuwa, Faculty Member, Department of Landscape Architecture, and Faculty Member of ACOMOS, Department of Conservation, University of Moratuwa. He is an external examiner to the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Design & Conservation. In 1994 he was awarded the National Honours of Vidya Jyothi and Desamanya by the President of Sri Lanka for his contributions to Conservation, Architecture and the Environment.

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Ramla Wahab Salman**THE MOVEMENT OF SPICES ALONG THE SILK ROAD OF THE SEA****Abstract:**

This study locates Sri Lanka in the period of the ancient Silk Road at an intersection of international maritime and commercial interests across the Bay of Bengal. While silk was the primary commodity traded across this route, this presentation will examine and understand the significance placed on spices in the accounts (real and imagined) of spice gathering which travelled along these routes. Examining commodities literally worth their weight in gold, emphasis will be placed on spices in Sri Lanka through travel accounts of the island including the writings on the spices of Serendib by Ibn-Khurdabhbih (845 AD), Al-Idrisi (1155 AD) and 14th century Rehla of Ibn Battuta. While exploring the histories of sailors and movement of spices through Sri Lanka, I will draw on wider historiographical debates on commerce and mobility across an island space within the Indian Ocean region.

Understanding historical sources of the ancient trading routes which regained scholarly interest from the late 19th century as the ‘Silk Road’, this paper will attempt to better understand the role and relevance of the island of Sri Lanka positioned at the centre of the Indian Ocean. It will examine the island along the Silk Road of the Sea through a lens of convergence of commerce, culture and religion. The paper thematically engages with the arguments presented in the 1988 UNESCO Silk Roads Project which describes influences the route as ‘dynamic and porous’ across the spheres of science, technology, poetry and religion.

Biography:

Ramla Wahab-Salman is a researcher in the field of History of South Asia. She holds a Masters degree in History (South Asia) from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London and Bachelors (Hons.) degree in History from Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi.

Ramla has worked as the Actg. Director of the American Institute for Lankan Studies, Colombo and Researcher at the University of Kelaniya (HETC) Samkathana Research Programme. She has presented academic papers at the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies workshops on ‘Muslims in Social Sciences’ in Colombo titled the Development and decline of the language of Lisanul Arwi in Sri Lanka. Ramla’s Masters’ Degree dissertation research was titled Sonahar, an exploration of Moor language in Ceylon. She has spoken at the Galle Literary Festival on the Bittersweet Histories of the Muslims of South-West Sri Lanka. She has produced a documentary film supported by the Prince Salie Foundation on Prince Salie: A Story of Sapphires and Steamships.

Ramla has handled professional roles in research and administration with the British Museum, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo, Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies and the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies.

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