

American Institute for Lankan Studies

5/22, Sulaiman Terrace, Colombo 5. Sri Lanka.
Tel. 94 11 2508512 tel. 94 11 4513706
Email: aisls@sltnet.lk
Web: <https://www.aisls.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/SriLankanStudies>
United States Director - Dr. John Rogers
Head of AISL Colombo - Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara



Newsletter

April to August 2019

We are happy to present our summary bulletin for April--August 2019 showcasing some of the AISL events that took place in this period.

AISL Public Lecture: Who was Dharmapala?

Steven E.G. Kemper – 13th June 2019

Steven E. G. Kemper, Charles A. Dana Professor of Anthropology at Bates College, Lewiston, Maine, USA., conducted a workshop and public lecture titled 'Dharmapala: Home and Abroad' and 'Who was Dharmapala?' respectively.

Using extensive textual research on the corpus of diaries, notebooks, Maha Bodhi journals and other material produced by Dharmapala, Kemper's sessions highlighted Dharmapala's life and travels from England, the US and Japan that included the incongruities of his life and mission. The discussions centered on Kemper's publication "Rescued from the Nation – Anagarika Dharmapala and the Buddhist World" (2015) aimed at restoring the humanity of Dharmapala, which in doing so, would also question both the valorization and denigration of Dharmapala. The events were well attended by a diverse audience of academics, students and researchers.

The lecture was moderated by Prof. Premakumara De Silva, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Senior Professor of Anthropology and Sociology, at the University of Colombo.



Professor Kemper with AISL Staff. From left to right: Sharmini Nagendran, Crystal Baines, Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara, Prof. Steven Kemper, Ramla Wahab-Salman & Deepthi Gunaratne



The audience at the Lecture: Dr. Nirmal Dewasiri - University of Colombo, expresses a point of view



Prof. Steven Kemper with moderator Prof. Premakumara De Silva

Lecture by AISLS President Sharika Thiranagama [Asst. Professor, Department of Anthropology Stanford University CA] on Ethnography and Ethnographic Research Methods for Qualitative Research

On 31 August 2019, AISLS President Dr. Sharika Thiranagama, of the Department of Anthropology, Stanford University CA, delivered a compelling lecture on Ethnography & Ethnographic Research Methods for Qualitative Research to an engaged audience. The Head of AILS Colombo, Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara welcomed the participants and delivered the opening address highlighting the unique and holistic perspective of Ethnographic Research, a process that also requires intuitiveness. Dr. Thiranagama's delivery of the lecture contained detailed descriptions on research design and methodological approaches, defining qualities and uses of ethnographic

research methods, planning ethnographic fieldwork, preliminary inquiries, research questions, standpoint and positionality, interviews, participant observation, ethnographic process, representative narratives, revising and adapting through fieldwork, as well as guidelines on writing field notes in a variety of settings, both cultural and formal. She also expounded on the contribution of ethnography to major fields of applicable research as well as the impact and strengths and weaknesses of ethnographic methods, also emphasizing ideas, and practical advice for research in a variety of backgrounds.



Head of AILS Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara delivers the opening speech.



The Engaging Q&A Session



The workshop paved the way for the participants to develop an in-depth understanding of ethnographic research methods and apply same in real world contexts and made the participating researchers see beyond 'taken for granted' assumptions in research, and generate critical awareness among students of their own observational and facts recording processes. It was obvious from the feedback at the end of the session, that the workshop generated a fervent interest within the researchers present. A lively Q&A session followed with Participants receiving Certificates.

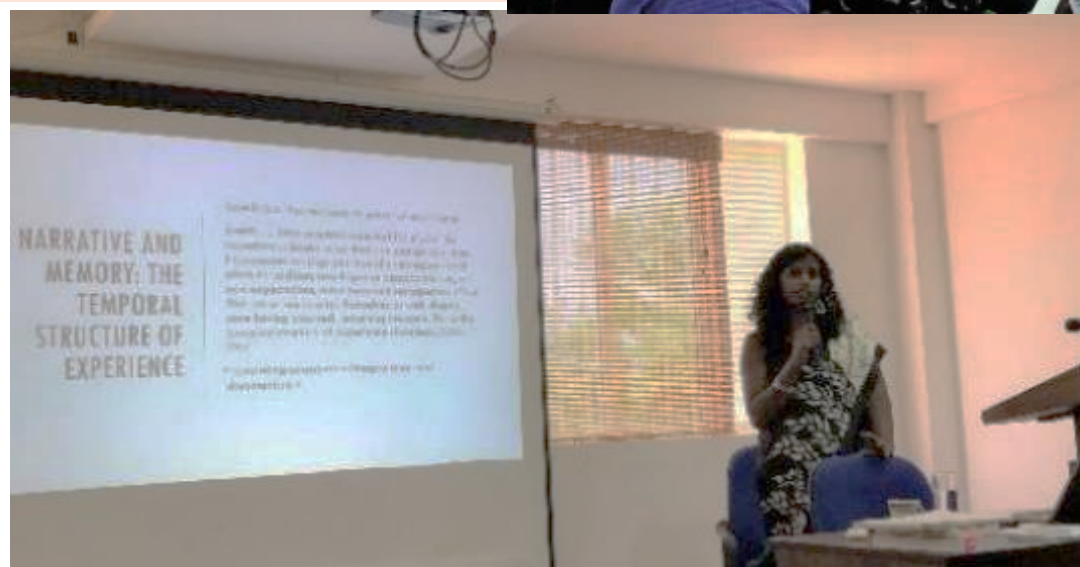


Photo: Dr. Sharika Thiranagama delivers the lecture



Head of AILS Colombo Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara delivers the opening address at Prof. Steven Kemper's Dharmapala Home & Abroad Workshop



Dr. Sharika Thiranyagama [3rd from left] with Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara [extreme right] and AILS Colombo staff



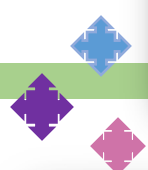
Prof. Janice Leoshko [University of Texas] with Prof. Jagath Weerasinghe of PGIAR at the Sigiriya Museum, Sri Lanka.



From Left: Prof. Steven Kemper – Bates College, Prof. Sandagomi Coperahewa- [Uni of Colombo, Prof. Jayadeva Uyangoda - Uni of Colombo & in front., Prof. Asoka De Zoysa - University of Kelaniya



Prof. Jonathan Spencer [University of Edinburgh discusses projects at AILS



Visit of AISLS Past Presidents Dennis McGilray and Jeanne Marecek, From left: Crystal Baines, Prof. Marecek, Ramla Salman-Wahab, Sharmini Nagendran, Prof. McGilray, Deepthi Gunaratne, & Nilam Hameed



Prof. James Nye - University of Chicago [extreme left] at AILS Colombo office. From Left: Crystal Baines, Ramla Salman-Wahab, Dr. John Rogers, Jean Nye and Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara



From left: Crystal Baines [AILS], Dr. John Rogers [AISLS] & Director Centre for Society of Religion, Rev. Fr. Ashok Stephens at the signing of an MoU between CSR and AILS



From left: Crystal Baines, Dr. Mythri Jegathesan, Harsha Wanninayake - Deputy Director, Satyodaya, Kandy and Satyodaya Staff at the signing of an MoU between Satyodaya and AILS



AISLS United States Director - Dr. John Rogers
Head of AISL Colombo - Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara

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Miami University (Ohio), Asian/Asian American Studies <http://miamioh.edu/cas/academics/programs/aaa/>
New York University, India and South Asia Research <https://www.southasianyu.org/>
Princeton University, Program in South Asian Studies <http://piirs.princeton.edu/sas>
Stanford University, Center for South Asia <https://southasia.stanford.edu/>
University of California-Berkeley, Institute for South Asia Studies <https://southasia.berkeley.edu/>
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University of Michigan, Center for South Asian Studies <https://www.i.umich.edu/csas/>
University of Pennsylvania, South Asia Regional Studies <http://www.southasia.upenn.edu/>
University of Texas-Austin, South Asia Institute <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/southasia/>
University of Virginia, Center for South Asian Studies <http://southasia.as.virginia.edu/>
University of Washington, South Asia Center <https://jsis.washington.edu/southasia/>
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for South Asia <https://southasia.wisc.edu/>
Wake Forest University, Middle East and South Asia Program <http://mesas.wfu.edu/>
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Old Images of Sri Lanka

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