

American Institute for Lankan Studies

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



Newsletter

January 2021

We are happy to present a Summary Bulletin to Capture the Challenging Year 2020

AISL Colombo is now Relocated at 10, Fonseka Terrace [off Havelock Rd] Colombo 06.

We are extremely happy to announce that AISL has now moved into a more spacious location from mid July 2020 onwards. Not too far from the previous location, the new office at Fonseka Terrace is off Havelock Road and located near the Havelock City. The new and improved office facility is a warm and cozy space, and we are excited to welcome our visitors and start our 2021 programs. **Special Shout out to our super energetic staff members for doing a phenomenal job to make it all happen smoothly!**



Images: New AISL Library Section and below, the office frontage



AISL Library holds a significant collection of academic research books that continues to attract diverse researchers. The main collection covers academic works on Sri Lanka in the Humanities and Social Sciences along with other related theoretical works and comparative studies.

AISL recently launched its *Guide to Research Libraries in Sri Lanka* designed for students and scholars in the humanities, social sciences and related fields with entries providing information on the location, contact information, access requirements, facilities, and subject strengths of each library. AISL plans to add more entries to the collection in the future. Now the new active AISL Library with more space and peaceful ambience has been laid out ensuring the right Reading Study/ Work Spaces as well as extra comfortable nooks for relaxed reading along with Computer Access, print stations and scanning facilities, etc., AISL is keeping the patrons and staff safe by adhering to all safety measures including making available hand sanitizers, gloves, and, face masks round the clock!

JANUARY 1st 2021! The New AILS' Office Opens for the New Year!

From Right: Dr. Vagisha Gunasekara lights the oil lamps to herald the New Year at the new office of AILS & Amali Wijesundara, Master Kalaam Salman-Wahab, Ramla Salman-Wahab and Crystal Baines looks on...



Interesting brief facts about the History of the new AILS Office Area;

The area is also known as the *Redi Mola Handiya [Weaving Mill] Junction* - bus conductors usually shout *Redi Mola* when approaching the bus stands nearby – a reference to the Ceylon Spinning and Weaving Mills run by the Captain family in the 1960s and 1970s when it thrived. Founded in 1888, the Ceylon Spinning and Weaving Mill in Wellawatte, was bought by a Bombay businessman in 1899 and over 600 mill workers came from India to join the local residents of the neighborhood totalling to almost 2500 workers. The Mill was taken over by the Government in 1976 and although the Mill has since closed, the descendants of these workers still live in the area making it a multi-cultural hub. The Mill was also the site of the first successful trade union movement in Ceylon led by A. E. Goonesinghe. In 2003 the major share of the Mill site was acquired by the Shing Kwan Group of Singapore to build the Havelock City.

Then & Now →

The Landmark Wellawatte 'Dutch' Canal [also known as *Layards Folly*] just a few meters away from the new AILS office in the years 1918 & 2020!



The Wellawatte canal was built by the Dutch and formed a transportation way until up to the time of building the Wellawatta Spinning and Weaving Mills on its banks. From then the industrial wastes of the Mills freely flowed, passed under an old iron bridge on Havelock Road, which was replaced by the bridge which stands today. This New Bridge was constructed during the tenure of office of the Mayor of Colombo, Dr V.R.Schokman in 1938.

↓ **Below:** Four Places of Worship just next door to the new office confirming the cultural diversity in the area



Hindu Kovil –
Mayurpathi Amman



Sri Yamuna Sadaham
Ashramaya [Buddhist]



Muhiyadeen Jumma Masjid
[Mosque]



St. Anthony's Chapel

CAORC WEBSITE ARTICLE [<https://www.caorc.org/post/aisls-launches-guide-to-research-libraries-in-sri-lanka>]

On June 25, 2020, The Council of American Overseas Research Centers [CAORC] highlights AISLS' Guide to Research Libraries in Sri Lanka launched on June 23, 2020.

AISLS Launches Guide to Research Libraries in Sri Lanka

The American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies (AISLS) recently launched its Guide to Research Libraries in Sri Lanka [weblink: <https://www.aisls.org/guide-to-research-libraries-in-sri-lanka/>]. It is designed for students and scholars in the humanities, social sciences and related fields. Each of the nineteen entries provides information on the location, contact information, access requirements, facilities, and subject strengths of each library. The guide is not comprehensive, and AISLS expects to add more entries in the future.

The guide's origins lie in the efforts of the AISLS Colombo Center library staff to direct patrons to specialist collections in subjects not covered comprehensively by the AISLS library. AISLS has very strong coverage of academic books in disciplines such as history, anthropology, politics and religious studies, but they do not collect reports by non-governmental organizations, and they do not have an extensive collection in areas such as archaeology. The entries in this guide serve to direct library patrons to specialist collections in a broad range of fields. Each library was visited by AISLS Colombo Center staff. AISLS would like to thank Crystal Baines, Vagisha Gunasekara, Widya Kumarasinghe and Ramla Wahab-Salman for their efforts in this regard.

Forthcoming... AISLS Zoom Seminars 2021

Zoom Seminar on New Books on Anthropology

More details: <https://www.aisls.org/virtual-events/>

February 2021-March 2021 on;

- Restitching Identities in Rural Sri Lanka: Gender, Neoliberalism, and the Politics of Contentment by Sandya Hewamanna / Chair: Michele Gamburd
- The Struggle for a Multilingual Future: Youth and Education in Sri Lanka – Christina Davis / Chair: Daniel Bass
- Tea and Solidarity: Tamil Women and Work in Postwar Sri Lanka – Mythri Jegathesan / Chair: Sharika Thirangama

New Books in Anthropology

A Zoom Series organized by the American Institute for Lankan Studies to showcase new and innovative books supported by AISLS fellowships to a global audience.

| 17th February 2021

The Struggle for a Multilingual Future: Youth and Education in Sri Lanka

Author : Christina P. Davis
Chair : Daniel Bass



| 09th March 2021

Tea and Solidarity: Tamil Women and Work in Postwar Sri Lanka

Author : Mythri Jegathesan
Chair : Sharika Thirangama



| 22nd March 2021

Restitching Identities in Rural Sri Lanka: Gender, Neoliberalism, and the Politics of Contentment

Author : Sandya Hewamanne
Chair : Michele Gamburd



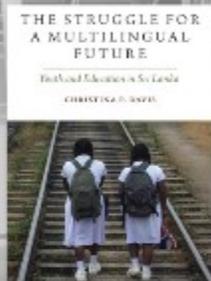
9.00 PM-10.00 PM LOCAL TIME (SL) | 10.30-11.30 AM EST
Please visit <https://www.aisls.org/virtual-events/> or contact phusathi.aisls@gmail.com for more information

New Books in Anthropology

A Zoom Series organized by the American Institute for Lankan Studies to showcase new and innovative books supported by AISLS fellowships to a global audience.



Christina Davis
(Author)



Daniel Bass
(Session Chair)

| 17th February 2021
Sri Lanka: 9.00 PM- 10 PM
Amsterdam: 4:30 PM
London: 3:30 PM
New York: 10:30 AM
Chicago: 9:30 AM
Denver: 8:30 AM
San Francisco: 7:30 AM

Please visit <https://www.aisls.org/virtual-events/> or contact phusathi.aisls@gmail.com for more information

First Session of the Series

Wednesday, February 17th at 10:30--11:30 AM EST (9:00--10:00 PM in Sri Lanka)



AISLS Zoom Seminar on New Research in Sri Lankan History

TIMES: Sri Lanka/India - 8:30 pm to 10:00 pm Amsterdam - 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm
 London – 3 pm to 4.30 pm New York 10.00 am to 11.30 am
 Chicago/ Austin 9.00 am to 10.30 am Denver – 8.00 am to 9.30 am
 San Francisco - 7.00 am to 8.30 am

More Details: <https://www.aisls.org/historiography/>

Date	Speaker	Discussant	Publication
Friday Feb 5	Dileepa Witharana (Open University of SL)	Harshana Rambukwella (Open University of Sri Lanka)/ Douglas Haynes (Dartmouth College)	Some Missing Pages from History: D. J. Wimalasurendra and Developmental Nationalism of Ceylon
Friday Feb 12	Dries Lyna (Radboud University)	John Rogers (U.S. Director AISLS)/ Aparna Balachandran (University of Delhi)	Justice consumed: Dutch civil courts in 18th-century Sri Lanka'
Friday Feb 19	Bente de Leede (Leiden University)	Charles Hallisey (Harvard University)/ Danna Agmon (Virginia Tech)	Life After Death: dying, mourning and inheriting in Dutch Sri Lanka
Friday Feb 26	Luc Bulten (Radboud University)	Nirmal Dewasiri (University of Colombo) and Sumit Guha (University of Texas at Austin)	Entangled categories? Dutch and Lankan tenurial, fiscal, and social concepts in the colonial records, southwestern Sri Lanka 1745-1796
Friday March 5	Mark Balmforth (University of Toronto)	Paul Halliday (University of Virginia) and Indrani Chatterjee (University of Texas at Austin)	Tobacco Rāṇi: Commodity, Caste, and Slavery in British Colonial Jaffna
Friday March 12	Binyamin Blum (University of California, Hastings College of the Law)	Nira Wickramasinghe (Leiden University) and Trais Pearson (Independent Scholar, Boston)	Herbert Dowbiggin and the new vision of colonial policing

AISL STAFF NEWS

Joining the AISL' Permanent Staff ...



Ms. Phusathi Liyanarachchi
 Programme Assistant
 Joined October 1st 2020



Ms. Amali Wijesundara
 Finance Manager
 Joined November 1st 2020



Retired from AISL Services...



Mrs. Deepthi Guneratne
 Retired Effective November 30, 2020

Latest Acquisitions to the AISL Library



Prof. Asanga Tilakaratne's eight
 volumed Four-decades of writings
 [5 in English & 3 in Sinhala]



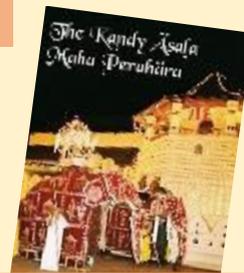
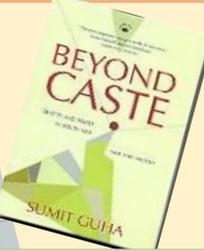
Prof. Charlie Hallisey's *Works and Persons in Sinhala Litera Culture* Sinhala Translation by Prof. Liyanage Amarakeerthi



The Many Faces of Kandyan Kingdom – Prof. Gananath Obeyesekere



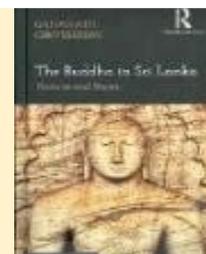
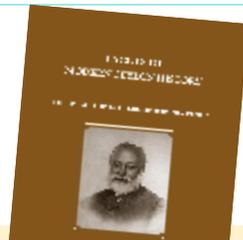
Sumit Guha's *History and Collective Memory in South Asia & Beyond Caste*



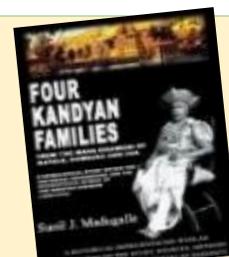
The Kandy Esala Maha Perahera - Lorna Dewaraja



Facets of Modern Ceylon History – Michael J. Roberts



The Buddha in Sri Lanka – Gananath Obeyesekere



Four Kandyan Families – Sunil J. Madugalle



Democracy and Civic Space in Sri Lanka – Edited by Gamini Keenawinna/ Natasha Fernando

Image: Another facet of the new AILS Library.....



Ample Daylight, Natural Ventilation, Display of Cultural Artwork, Noise Management with an Ambience Conducive to Reading, are some of the features existing in the New AILS Library, shown above in a Different Angle

AISLS Member Institutions

- Brandeis University**, Center for Global Development and Sustainability
<https://heller.brandeis.edu/gds/>
- Brown University**, Center for Contemporary South Asia <https://watson.brown.edu/southasia/>
- Columbia University**, Southern Asian Institute <https://www.sai.columbia.edu/>
- Cornell University**, South Asia Program <https://sap.einaudi.cornell.edu/>
- Five Colleges Buddhist Studies Consortium** <https://www.fivecolleges.edu/buddhism/>
- Johns Hopkins University**, Department of Anthropology <https://anthropology.jhu.edu/>
- 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/>
- University of Chicago**, Department of South Asia Languages and Civilizations
<http://salc.uchicago.edu/>
- University of Michigan**, Center for South Asian Studies <https://www.i.umich.edu/csas/>
- University of Otago**, Religious Studies <https://www.otago.ac.nz/religion/about.html>
- 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/>
- Yale University**, South Asia Council <https://macmillan.yale.edu/>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

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