



AAUP NEWSLETTER

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January 2002*

The activities scheduled for the last quarter of our alumni year range from 'Sokari' a traditional folk form of dramatic entertainment to 'walking down Memory Lane', on "Graduates' Day" just the day prior to the Annual General Meeting in March.

It was decided that we tie up two major events on our calendar - "Graduates' Day" and the Annual General Meeting for the last week-end of March, ie: Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st March 2002 respectively to facilitate increased participation of our members. Accommodation at the campus Guest Houses will be available to outstation members on prior bookings.

We do hope you will avail yourself of this opportunity and join us here at your beautiful alma mater.

Schedule of Events for the Last Quarter of 2001- 2002 Alumni Year

February/March "Sokari"

Venue- Sarachchandra Open Air Theatre (the 'Wala'), University of Peradeniya.

Tickets- Admission by Programme

Sokari is a form of dramatic entertainment essentially confined to the Kanda Uda Rata and Vanniya. It is enacted in traditional form of mime, dance, and song with the use of masks by a troupe of actors from Ududumbara. (See page 03 for more on Sokari.)

The plays presented are authentic versions of 'Sokari', which were at one time performed entirely for the entertainment of village folk at harvest time. It is with a view towards popularising this form of art hitherto confined to the remote villages of the highlands and creating an awareness of our heritage that this unique performance has been planned. Do come over to the Wala, on the scheduled date for this experience.

Alumni Trip to Uda Walawe- (2nd, 3rd, 4th) February, 2002

Departure - 6.30 a.m. 2nd February from the Faculty of Science University of Peradeniya.

Return - Monday evening 4th February.

Accommodation - WALAWE PARK VIEW GUEST HOUSE.

Estimated Cost - Rs. 2000/= per person (all inclusive)

Children under 12 Rs. 1000/= each

Reservations Limited to the First Thirty (30) Fully Paid Registrants

Complete attached slip (on page 04) before 25th January 2002, and post it to -
General Secretary/AAUP,
Senate Building,
University of Peradeniya,
Peradeniya.

3rd Graduates' Day - Saturday, 30th March 2002

Come over and meet old friends, walk the old beat and visit the familiar haunts of yesteryear.

The Programme comprises :

Registration at the Arts Theatre, at 9.00 a.m. on 30th March 2002.

- Family unit Rs.100/=, individual Rs.30/=

Campus tours with stops at any spot of your choice, including Upper Hantana, Temple, Kovil, Mosque, Church, Gym, Lover's Lane, Hilda Park, Halls and the new Swimming Pool.

Viewing film shows/documentaries on Peradeniya, its history and its legends.

Collection of souvenirs: Before you partake of the buffet lunch.

An Afternoon with NO SIESTA!

Walking down Memory Lane to gather and reminisce at the 'watering hole'.

Evening – Entertainment at the 'WUS Wala'

Overnight Accommodation

Accommodation will be available on prior reservation. Special rates available for AAUP members and guests for University guest houses (Gal Bangalawa at Mahakanda and Upper Hantana guest house).

Large family rooms Rs.250/= Single rooms Rs. 150/=)

(First come first served basis: please book early with payment)

Do not miss this unique event. Come join the fun with family and friends.

To avoid disappointment book early

NB- For further information contact

Mr. Sarath Seneviratne,
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Faculty of Engineering
TP Office 08-388209 Ext.601
Res.08-389159

Dr. A.R. Ariyaratne,
Dept of Agric Engineering
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Faculty of Science
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Dr. Neil Halpe
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TP 071-747140(mobile) Res.08-213043

Ms. Hema Gamage,
Statistics information & Publications Unit,
Senate Building,
University of Peradeniya.
TP Office 08-388301 Ext 2079
Res.074-474393

AGM Sunday 31st March

NB- All members are welcome to share any news through the next AAUP News letter to be circulated at the end of March 2002. Please contact the above members before Saturday 2nd March.

SOKARI

Sokari is one of the earliest dramatic forms of entertainment in the Kanda-Uda-rata and the Vanniya. It is a presentation in mime, music, song, dance and ribald dialogue and it is entirely confined to the highlands of Sri Lanka.

Its origins are shrouded in history. According to tradition, Sokari originated in India and was introduced to Sri Lanka, where it was infused with local flavour, Hindu influence is evident, in the rituals performed in "Sokari" with the association of the cult of Pattini and God Kataragama. The close connection, which appears to have existed between Sinhala and Tamil folk culture is evident in 'Sokari', which is, said to be similar to the Tamil 'Kuttu. More recently, the Sokari ceremonies have imbibed Buddhist influences.

The story of Sokari takes many forms differing in the order of sequences, mode of presentation and duration. However, the basic themes appear to be the same to invoke blessings of the Gods for a plentiful harvest and for the birth of children.

The commonest version of the story is as follows.

In the land of Kasi in India, Andi Guru or Guru Hami of the Andis, who are great entertainers, marries a beautiful woman named Sokari. Guru Hami takes a man of the Paraya caste as his servant. At Guru Hami's suggestion, they come to Sri Lanka. Before they look for a place to settle down, they go to Sri Pada and pay obeisance to the sacred foot-print. They settle down in a village called Tambaravila. One day while Sokari was cooking a meal of rice, Guru Hami went to the village and was bitten by a dog. Paraya, the servant is asked to bring a doctor,

who attends on Guru Hami throughout the night and elopes with Sokari at dawn.

Greatly grieved by this turn of events, Guru Hami prays to God Kataragama and makes offerings to him. Guru Hami is told that Sokari is in the doctor's house and she is brought back home. Sokari is severely dealt with, but is pardoned when she pleads her innocence. Thereafter, Paraya is asked to look after her well.

This story is given in most printed versions, to which are attached, two sets of verses. One set describes how Guru Hami dances and wishes to lie down, as he is tired. As the mat they have is torn, they go out accompanied by Paraya to cut rushes to weave a mat, to lie on.

The sacred set of verses is a lullaby which Sokari sings carrying a baby in her arms. The verses end pronouncing a blessing on the audience, invoking the favours of the Gods and praying for prosperity in cattle and crops. In this form, the poem is ballad-style with the love-element predominating, and is called 'Guru Hatana'. The poem is also alternatively termed 'Guru Upatha' where, Sokari is with child. To ensure a safe delivery, the Goddess Pattini's blessings are invoked and a child is born to her.

The play itself begins with the presentation of the dramatic personae, with a few of them in masks. Most of the characters are burlesqued and the costumes are designed to make them comical. Guru Hami speaks Sinhala with a strong Tamil accent and it is Paraya who acts as the chief interpreter. This provides much of the rough, rustic humour. The doctor's desire for Sokari too provides great fun.

General Secretary/ AAUP
Senate Building,
University of Peradeniya,
Peradeniya.
Date.....

Trip to – UDA WALAWE

I will be joining the above trip scheduled for Feb 2nd, 3rd, 4th 2002.

No: of Persons.....

Children below 12 years

A cheque /Money order for Rs..... is enclosed (cheques should be
drawn in
favour of the Treasurer/Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya.)

Name.....

Signature.....

Contact: Telephone No.....

(Please bring your bed-linen, drinking water and breakfast for the outbound trip)

From

General Secretary
Alumni Association
Senate Building
University of Peradeniya
Peradeniya

To