

## **KANDY THE LAST CULTURAL CAPITAL OF SRI LANKA – A WORLD HERITAGE**

**by Prof. Nimal de Silva**

Lecture No. 72 : 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2015

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Thursday's lecture by Professor Nimal de Silva on "Kandy: The Last Cultural Capital of Sri Lanka, A World Heritage" can only be described as utterly absorbing.

In his presentation, Professor de Silva covered the development of Kandyan culture, its links to the past kingdoms of Sri Lanka, and the influence foreign cultures, particularly that of South India had on its art, architecture and history.

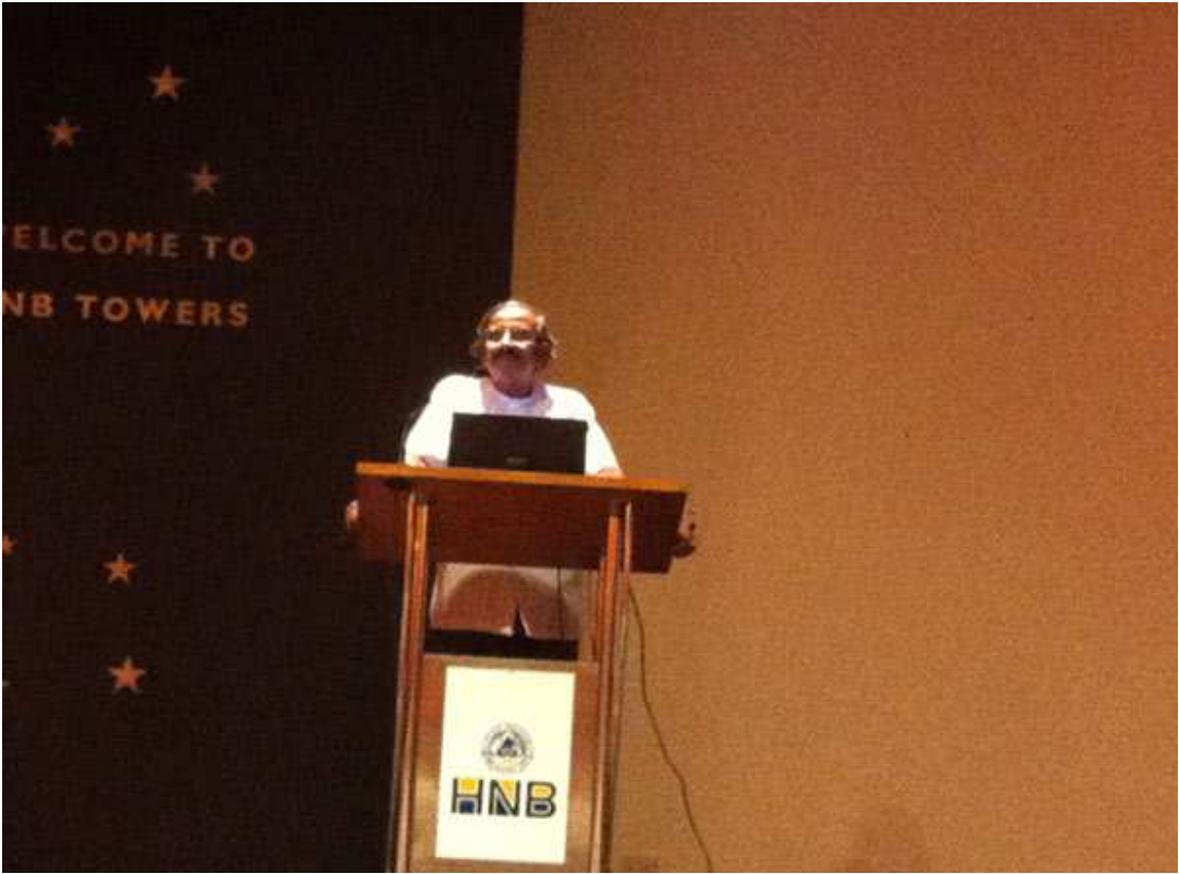
He discoursed on the history, architecture and artistry of the monuments and art left to us, the individual contributions to Kandyan culture and personal histories of the 4 dynasties of kings who ruled the kingdom, and the sometimes disheartening challenges that are encountered in the protection, restoration and conservation work of archaeologists in the course of their efforts.

Of particular interest were Professor de Silva's insights into the restoration of Kandy's many architectural and artistic treasures, and the intriguing details that are sometimes revealed during the process. The fountain that lies at the heart of the Ulpange, the graffiti of ships by (possibly homesick) Portuguese soldiers and the unused Dutch coins embedded into the plaster work of a temple all brought an immediacy to the history of the Kingdom that would have been absent in a lecture by anyone not as intimately involved in its restoration.

Professor de Silva closed his lecture by pointing out that the Kingdom of Kandy constitutes the last flowering and final repository of a uniquely Sri Lankan culture. He noted that at the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom, the "thread" of an intrinsically Sri Lankan culture that remained unbroken whilst gathering the "beads" of influence from foreign cultures was finally sundered, never to transmit this culture to the later capitals that rose in her place.



**Ship Graffiti found on wall of Natha Devala in Kandy**



**Prof. Nimal de Silva delivering lecture no 72**