



THE NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA LECTURE ON
THURSDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2020

**“COLONIAL KNOWLEDGE FORMATION UNDER BRITISH RULE
AND MODERN SRI LANKAN HISTORIOGRAPHY”**

By Professor Gamini Keerawella

The 129th Session of the Monthly Lecture Series of the National Trust - Sri Lanka will be delivered online at 6.30pm on Thursday 29th October 2020.

Please use the following link to join the Lecture on Zoom

<https://bit.ly/3dGqJNm>

Knowledge formation constitutes an important aspect of British colonialism in Asia. In order to understand the totality of the British Colonial Project in Sri Lanka, it is necessary to give due attention to the related colonial knowledge formations, manifested in new ‘orientalism’. Acquiring knowledge of the past of colonial territories and their subjects remained an integral element of the colonial knowledge formation. The modern Sri Lankan historiography took its current shape in this process. Sri Lanka lays claim to one of the ancient and continuous historical traditions in Asia. The origins of this historical tradition were directly linked to the introduction of Buddhism to the island in the third century B.C. This tradition was based on particular political and socio-economic formations. In contrast, reading the history of Sri Lanka in terms of ‘modern nation-state frame’ began during the British colonial rule. In this process, the pre-colonial Sri Lankan historical texts were subsumed and re-read in terms of the evolving new political spaces created under the British colonial rule.



Prof. Gamini Keerawella, BA (Ceylon), M.A. (Windsor), Ph.D. (British Columbia), was a Senior Professor in Modern History at the University of Peradeniya who retired from his University career in 2015. He was Visiting Senior Research Fellow at University of Western Australia (1991), Senior Fulbright Fellow, University of California-Berkeley (1993-94), Japan Foundation Fellow, Institute of Developing Economies in Tokyo (2003-04), Scholar-in-Residence, Centre for Theory, Baroda, India (2008) and Fulbright Scholar-in-Resident Professor, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester (2013-14). In 2016, University of Peradeniya bestowed on him Emeritus Professorship. He also was the Founder Director of the National Integration Unit (1997-2000), Secretary, Ministry of Ethnic Affairs and National Integration and Mineral Resources Development (2000-2001), Advisor to the President on Ethnic Affairs (2004-2005) and Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Sri Lanka, Washington D.C., USA (Oct. 2015 to Nov. 2017). The area of his research includes Historiography under British Rule in Sri Lanka, Peace and Security in the Indian Ocean, Identity Politics and Post-Colonial State Formation in Sri Lanka. He has over 50 research publications to his credit.

The National Trust – Sri Lanka conducts monthly lectures on the last Thursday of each month. The lectures are open to the members and the public. The HNB Sustainability Foundation is the principal sponsor of the events of the National Trust – Sri Lanka.

Further information can be obtained from the Trust Office Tel 2682730 / 0778081214

