



THE NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA
FRIDAY 21st MAY 2021

"Ancient Sri Lanka and Study of Trade in the Indian Ocean through Buddhist Iconography"

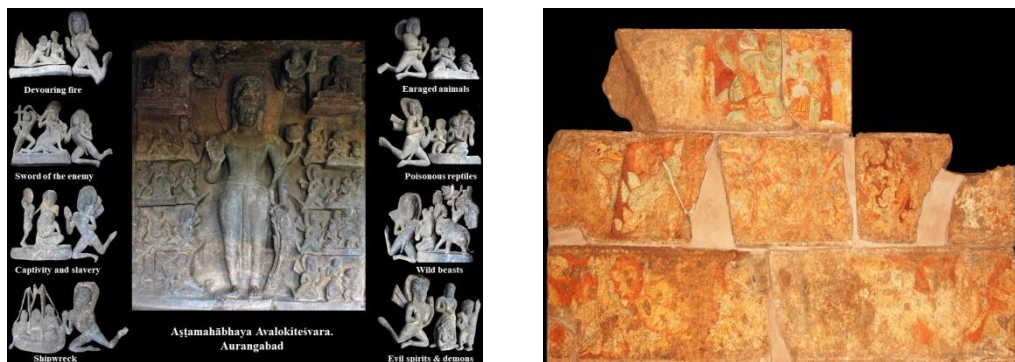
Prof. Osmund Bopearachchi

The 134th Session of the Monthly Lecture Series of the National Trust will be delivered online on Friday 21st May 2021 at 6.30 pm. By Prof. Osmund Bopearachchi

Link will follow:

Both maritime and inland trade brought peoples of many cultures, languages, beliefs and aesthetic aspirations together. Traders were, to a certain extent, the mediators of these cultural interactions, because Buddhist monks and nuns, philosophers, artists, and diplomats travelled together across merchant networks. As a result, not only goods but also philosophical thoughts, ideas, and artistic traditions were exchanged. Apart from archaeological evidence, in particular coins, metals (gold, silver, bronze and iron), ceramics (pottery and amphorae), glass (wares, beads and jewelry), seals and sealing, Buddhist visual culture help us to evaluate the dynamics of trade and the chronological and geographical orientations of routes. This talk will focus on the symbiotic relationship between Buddhism and trade in ancient South and Southeast Asia. Examination of this relationship will be underscored by textual narratives and archaeological and art historical research across the regions. It will demonstrate how images and associated symbols can be seen as the visual manifestations of social, commercial and religious networks, and will illuminate patterns of circulation and exchange between India and Sri Lanka in particular and more broadly across the Indian Ocean.

Buddhism encouraged trade and invited donations by rich merchants. Aside from hundreds of inscriptions detailing those contributions and Buddhist texts extolling merchants who supported Buddhist complexes, Buddhist visual culture, i.e. paintings and ex-votos, can help us evaluate the dynamics of trade and the chronological and geographical orientations of routes.



Prof. Osmund Bopearachchi is the Emeritus Director of Research of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (C.N.R.S.-E.N.S. Paris) and former Adjunct Professor of Central and South Asian Art, Archaeology, and Numismatics, University of California, Berkeley. He is a numismatist, art historian and archaeologist. He has authored 16 books, edited six volumes and published 145 research articles and 14 book reviews in reputed international journals. He has read 90 papers at international colloquia; presented 275 conferences in 80 cities, and has carried out 120 archaeological missions in 24 different countries. Prof. Bopearachchi holds a B.A. from the University of Kelaniya (Sri Lanka), and B.A. honors, (M.A.), M.Phil., Ph.D. from the Paris I-Sorbonne University, and a Higher Doctorate (Habilitation) from the Paris IV-Sorbonne University. His talk is partly based on his recent book: *"Roots of Sri Lankan Art"* published by the Department of Archaeology, Colombo in 2020.

The National Trust – Sri Lanka conducts monthly lectures generally on the last working 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 / 0777397403.