

# THE ART OF MAKING SRI LANKAN MASKS

By Prof. LIONEL BENTARAGE

The 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Monthly Lecture Series of the **National Trust - Sri Lanka** will be held at the HNB Auditorium, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, HNB Towers, 479 T.B. Jayah Mawatha, Colombo 10 at 6.30 p.m. on Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

**Dr. Lionel Bentarage**, is a Professor of the Faculty of Dance and Drama of the University of Fine Arts. He obtained a class in Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Institute of Fine Arts affiliated to the Kelaniya University in 1979, and a Master of Arts Degree from Sri Jayawardhanapura University and a Ph.D from the same University in 2004. He entered the University for higher education after completing his education as a low country dancer from the traditional Gurugedara, has a vast knowledge in traditional mask making, stage drama, dancing dresses, dance accessories and jewellery and in the designing of jewellery. He has produced several TV programs, films and served as a member of the Sub-Committee for Drama. He is a member of the Sub-Committee of National Drama and Ballet and is presently serving as the President of the Kalutara District Art Circle. Dr. Lionel Bentarage has published several writings and research papers on the subject. He is the first and only professional artiste of Sri Lanka, who has obtained a Ph.D. in low country dancing.

## The Art of making Sri Lanka Masks

The use of masks is widespread all over the world and is based on the cultural background of each country. Masks depict different characters and are used in native traditional drama, ceremonial dancing and rituals. Local and foreign scholars have contributed several writings and research papers regarding such masks from time to time. However, there has not been any appreciation shown regarding the practical specialty of masks making in this country as yet. The talent of practical creativity of the traditional artiste is very clearly shown when considering how poetry, literature and the drum beat connected with masks have influenced the various characters. There are also varying differences in the appearance of masks, methods of wearing and traditional dancing.

The idea behind this lecture, which includes demonstrative clarifications, is to appreciate the traditional and present position of the art of making Sri Lankan masks with special emphasis on the above facts. The lecture will be presented in Sinhala.

**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 at a nominal fee. Further information can be obtained from the Trust Office at the Post Graduate Institute of Archaeology, 407, Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7. Tel: 2682730,

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