



Journey to Independence

Sri Lanka 'The Pearl of the Indian Ocean', our motherland
Separated from the southernmost tip of India's mainland
However, small had a hearing important
In the history of Lanka and its development.

From time to time we faced many an invasion
From South Indian kings and their nations.
They were repelled by our brave royalty
With absolute valour, determination and loyalty.

Then came the nations of the West
'Spices and Christians' were their quest
Missionary zeal in their minds first
Soon turned to be for wealth a thirst.

Our natural resources attracted the powerful, the rich
Western powers like the Portuguese, Dutch and British
At the outset their aims were fulfilled with much delight
Because we were then weak and poor in our might.

Soon they reaped unlimited gains
Yet to expel them and liberate, our kings spared no pains
A country proven by centuries of civilisation
The British made in the East their station.
The British in particular with their mighty naval supremacy
Were, far above the others, leaving behind a worthy legacy
Our ancient historic pride and heritage was in danger
For traditional Lankans the British were a complete stranger.

Due to prevalent disunity in the Sihala kingdom
Lanka then Ceylon lost her precious freedom.
Our countrymen could never tolerate alien rule
Hence all races were ready for their energy to pool.

Strangely influenced by the very same Western culture
Our patriots marched forward to resolve their mental torture.
National heroes desperate for freedom who began their fight
Rose against the British to safeguard their rights.

They knew there was a colossal task ahead
Therefore, they braved all dangers, 'Let us Unite', they said,
No doubt, the heroic leaders had a significant role to play
Which they did perform with no hesitation and delay.

Right through the Tamil leaders espoused their cause
Their impressive role should be upheld with much applause
Similarly the contribution of all races is worthy of praise.
Grave concern and enthusiasm displayed none can erase.

Our leaders honestly discharged their duty
to bring about freedom peace and security

No doubt grave sacrifices were also made with dedication
To realise the dream of Independence with strong determination.

Independence thus gained by heroes with great pleasure
Is the greatest gift we preserve as a treasure
With deep concern irrespective of caste creed or race
Let us strive for unity, prosperity, long lasting
peace.

Independence gives confidence strength and image
And a vision to proceed in life with courage
Hence petty differences, party politics should not hamper
The good intentions achieved for a tomorrow better.

With all communities devoid of conflict and hate.
'Let us Unite' is the bounden duty of Sri Lankans to state.
Fellow Sri Lankans, do contribute your share to
build your future.

- *Rupa Banduwardena*

The moon of yesteryear

Lazily streaming through the lattice
Were the rays of the golden moon.
Towards the moon some clouds were
gliding
No doubt they'd cover it soon.
Was this the same moon I saw
Years ago, when I was small?

Solar powered bulbs had driven away
The darkness of the night
The moon in shame had shrunk itself
For no one needs its light.
It's we at our village who loved its rays.
Sadly I murmured to the moon,
"You'd lost your beauty I admired then
When I was a village lass."

Its beams made intricate designs on the
grass
Shredding through shaking coconut leaves.

They shone on pearl coloured 'Sepalika'
flowers
And other nightly blooms
The soft breeze carrying away their
fragrance
Made leaves rustle, wave and dance.
Even the bunny on the golden moon
Was happily smiling with us, I felt.

What's this life I'm living now
On the third floor of an urban flat?
Only a smooth, richly coloured carpet,
No silky, green grass for my feet.
Neither the lovely ivory coloured flowers
Nor their sweet scent to inhale.
Only the moon is clearly visible
For no trees are there to block its view.
Even the bunny is looking disgusted
For he too is sad and unhappy.

- *Lalitha Somathilaka*