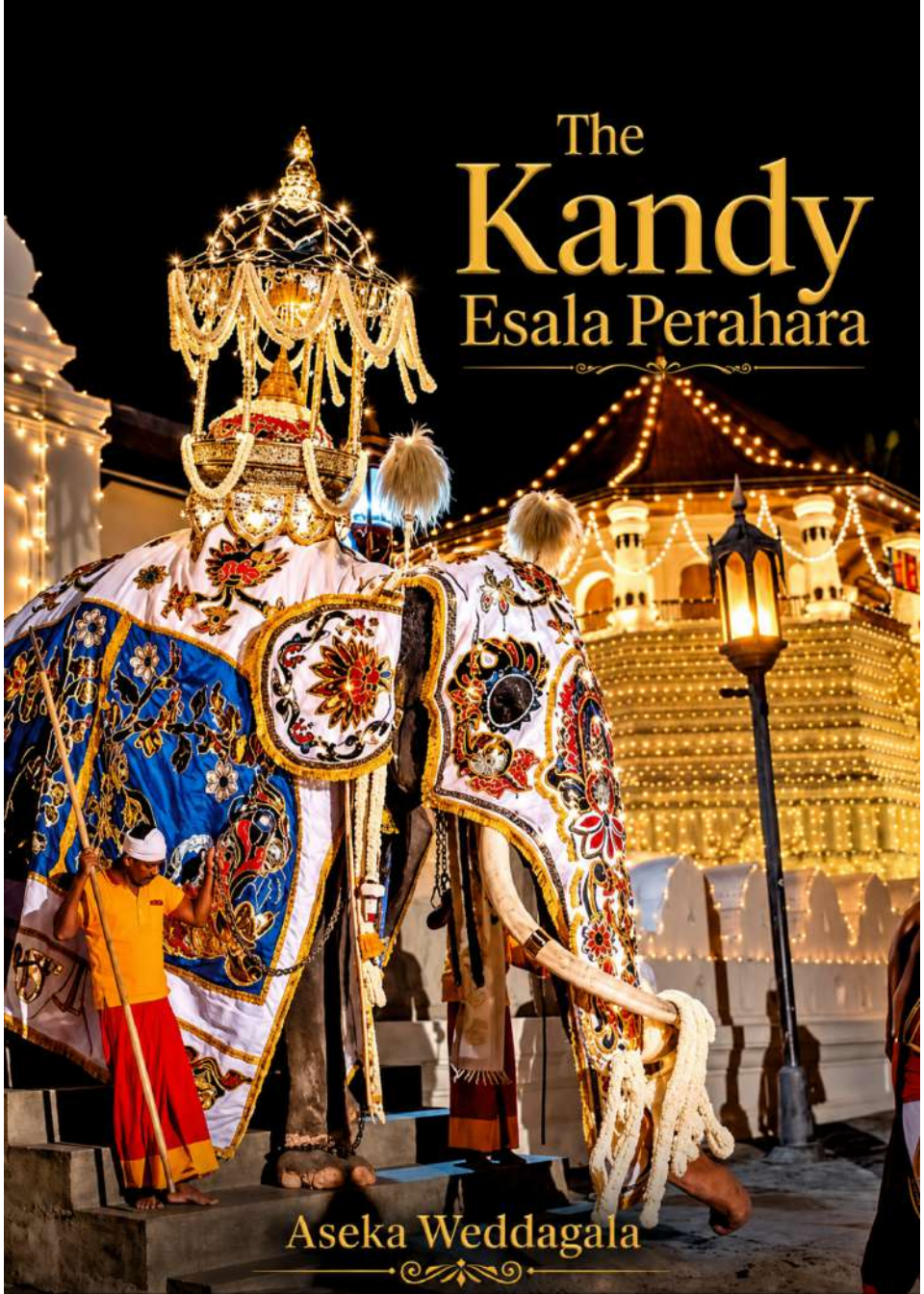




The Kandy Esala Perahara

Aseka Weddagala

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Author

Other Creations -

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LOST

School - Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy

Class- After OL

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Foreword

In an increasingly complex global future, the "Hemamala Upahara" book project, led by Mahamaya Girls' College, stands as a turning point in girls' education. Over a decade, it has successfully nurtured thousands of children to become young authors.

This year, by collaborating with other schools, we aimed to provide students with a wealth of new experiences. The goal was to develop multi-faceted skills, including communication, values, and creative growth. As a result, children have written books that pay tribute to Princess Hemamala, who brought the Sacred Tooth Relic—the supreme symbol of the Buddhist world—to the Hill Country (Kandy).

I extend my gratitude to everyone involved, including the students who contributed their creativity and the teachers who guided them.

Shashikala Senadhira

Principal

Mahamaya Girls' College

Congratulatory Message

It is a great honor for me, as the Governor of the Central Province, to send a congratulatory message for the launch of the books created through the Hemamala Tribute Book Creation Project initiated by Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy.

Education is the fundamental foundation for the progress of society, and it is further strengthened through books and literary creations. It is clearly commendable that students' talents, creativity, and intellectual abilities are emerging through projects such as this.

I believe that this book creation project will provide valuable knowledge and a precious literary contribution not only to the students but to the entire society. Furthermore, I hope that through such efforts, future writers who will bring pride to Sri Lanka will emerge.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation and blessings to the Principal, the academic staff, the students, and everyone involved who dedicated themselves to this successful endeavor. I wish this project and the book launch ceremony great success.

Sarath B.S. Abeykoon

Governor, Central Province

Emeritus Professor, University of Peradeniya

2026-05-10

Congratulatory Message

I highly appreciate the noble and outstanding effort of the Principal and the academic staff of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, the student daughters, the students of other participating schools, and everyone who dedicated themselves to plan and implement this book publication project. The project was organized under the leadership of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, with the participation of other schools in the Kandy Zone, with the aim of encouraging children toward book creation within the current school system, as a tribute to Hemamala Kumariya who brought the Sacred Tooth Relic to Sri Lanka.

For several decades, Sri Lanka has been committed to providing free, compulsory, quality, and equitable education to all children, thereby producing a future generation of intelligent and skilled citizens. In such a context, this book creation program for school children helps develop creative ability, critical thinking, and other positive qualities for a balanced and well-rounded personality, and contributes to building a future knowledge-based society.

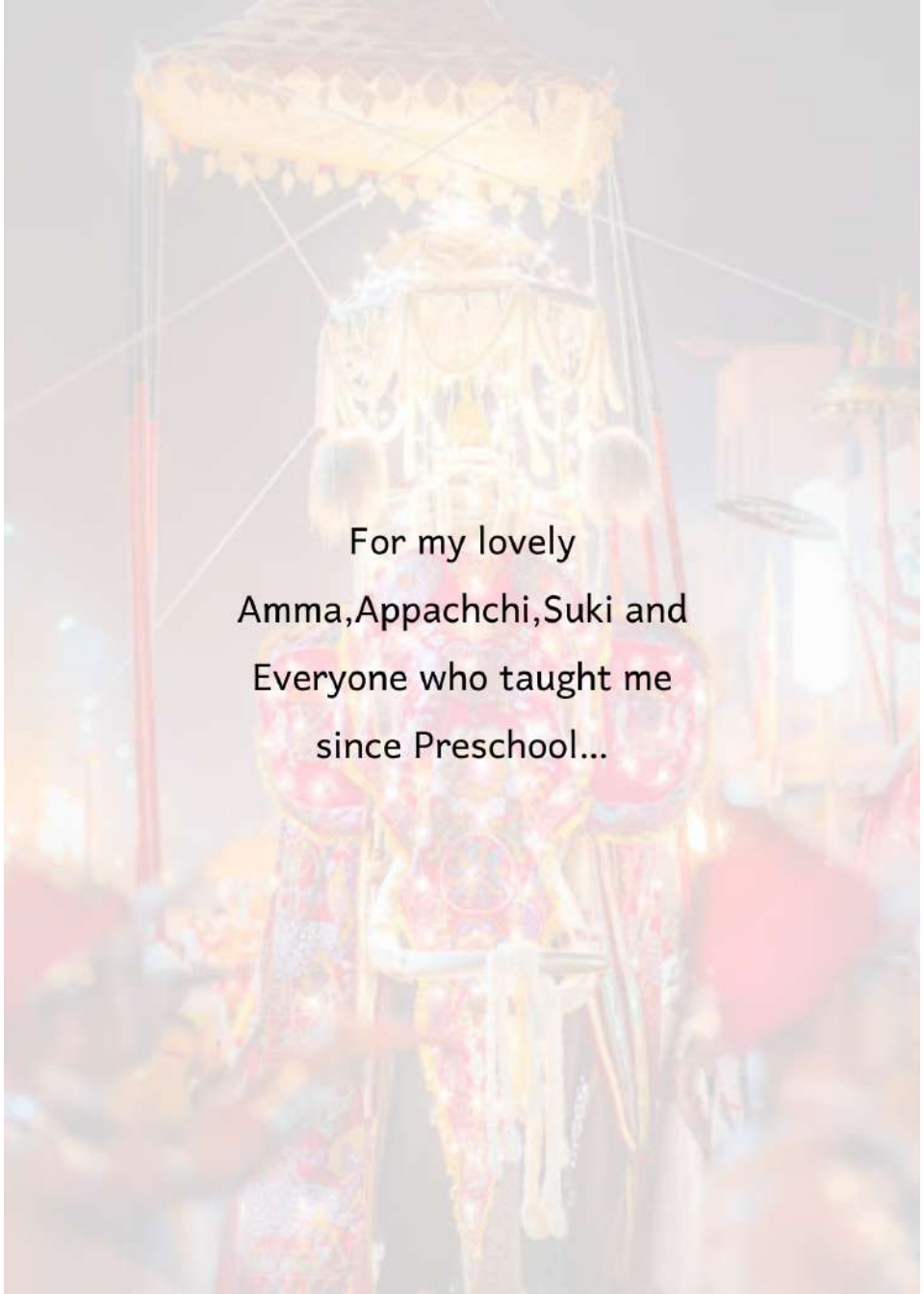
May all activities of the Hemamala Tribute Book Creation Project be successful through the blessings of the Sacred Tooth Relic.

Pradeep Nilanga Dela

Diyawadana Nilame,

Sri Dalada Maligawa.

2026.05.10.



For my lovely
Amma, Appachchi, Suki and
Everyone who taught me
since Preschool...

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The Kandy Esala Perahara



Buddhist literature reveals how the procession of the Buddha was performed by all beings, both divine, Brahma, and human, during the time of the living Buddha and during the Bodhisattva period. The concept of the procession of the Buddha was most popular in India during the reign of King Damba Diva Dharmasoka. During the Bodhisattva period, the special moments of the Bodhisattva's character, such as the conception of Prince Siddhartha from the womb of Mahamaya, the Mahabhinishkramana, the sermon of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, etc., were celebrated on the day of Esala Full Moon Poya. Various pooja processions were held. The festival to celebrate the victories of the Suras in the Surasura war also fell in the month of Esala. Also, since the drought season begins in the month of Esala, various pooja processions were held in this month in anticipation of rain since ancient times. Regarding the subject of the Sri Tooth Relic, various pooja processions were held in the presence of King Brahmadatta of Dambadiva in Kaliguda and King Guhasiva.

The Sinhala Bodhivamsa reveals that the Buddha Puja processions in Sri Lanka began with the procession held when the Venerable Saghamitha brought the southern branch of the Sri Maha Bodhi to Sri Lanka after the arrival of Mahinda. It is known from the chronicles how the processions were held during the ceremonies of placing the omniscient relics such as the Akuda Thero in the pagodas on the grounds of the Maha Vihara of Mahamevnawa.

Among the annual Esala processions held throughout the island in connection with the month of Esala, the Senkadagalapura Esala procession or the Dalada Perahera, held to pay homage to the Sacred Tooth Relic, which is considered equal to the living Buddha, and the island-wide processions held for deities such as the Ruhunu Kataragama Perahera and the Ratnapura Mahasaman Devalaya Perahera, also hold a special place.

The origins of the Sri Lankan Esala Perahera are stated in sources that King Gajabahu (174–196 AD) invaded the Cholas of South India and took away 12,000 Sinhalese from Sri Lanka during his reign, and in return brought back 12,000 Tamils from Sri Lanka, along with a golden amulet dedicated to Goddess Pattini and the ornaments of the four devalas. The golden amulet brought to Sri Lanka was placed there, a Pattini devala was built, and the Esala Perahera was held for the first time.

In the year 310 of the Kithuwa era, during the reign of King Kithsiri Mevan, Princess Hemamala, the daughter of King Guhasiva of Kaliguda, and his son-in-law Prince Dantha, brought the sacred tooth relic to Sri Lanka seeking protection. After the relic was brought to Sri Lanka by Mahaperaharan, the tooth relic was brought from the Dhammachakkehiya temple in Anuradhapura to the Abhayagiri Mahavehara, where it was displayed for ninety days and then returned to the temple in Anuradhapura.



The annual procession was held in Anuradhapura by order of the king. The organization of the procession was magnificent. The king spent nine hundred thousand rupees from the royal treasury to hold this procession. The king and the army participated in the procession. Ten days before the scheduled date of the procession, the route along which the procession would take place was beautifully decorated with pandals, flags, banners, garlands, and paintings depicting the characters of the Bodhisattvas. The route along which the procession would take place was beautifully decorated with flags, elephants, horses, and various dances, accompanied by the sound of the Panchaturya and the sound of the Nanvidha Bhera. The casket in which the Tooth Relic was enshrined was seen arriving at Abhayagiriya.

With the transfer of the kingdom from Anuradhapura to Polonnaruwa, its organization became more organized because during the Polonnaruwa period, the Tooth Relic was also considered a symbol of the state heritage. It is seen that, like in Anuradhapura, this perahera would begin a few days before the start with a drummer, and the streets would be decorated and people would come from both sides of the streets carrying flowers, lamps, and incense to watch the perahera, and the perahera was well organized with the intention of praying for the prosperity of the country and obtaining rain. The Mahavamsa states that the perahera was more beautiful than in Anuradhapura at that time.

The Mahavamsa describes the procession of the Tooth Relic, which journeyed from Anuradhapura to the kingdom of Polonnaruwa, as being conducted with unprecedented grandeur. The procession was illuminated from all directions, adorned with garlands of flowers and vibrant flags, while the sky was filled with colorful banners. The atmosphere resonated with the sounds of elephants, the neighing of horses, the clatter of chariot wheels, and the ringing of bells. Melodious wedding bells, flutes, enthusiastic shouts from devotees, the chants of the sadhu, and the rhythmic beating of gongs all contributed to a symphony of celebration.



Adorned with all kinds of ornaments, the king mounted an elephant adorned with golden sacks, etc., and accompanied by his ministers, left the city of Pravara. He went to the Lord of the Tooth Relic and the Bowl Relics, made offerings to the pair of relics, and worshipped the relics. Then, with a flash of lightning, the sky was covered with darkness, and a great, untimely cloud appeared. This procession, which was performed with reverence, devotion, and faith for the Buddha and the Tooth Relic, ended the drought by conducting the procession as it was believed, and abundant rains came. When the Tooth Relic procession deviated from the route it had taken, abundant rains fell everywhere else and the tanks filled up.

Then, during the reign of King Parakramabahu II, a great road, about a mile and a half long, was built from Dambadeni to Sri Vardhanapura, and it was covered with white sand. The road was decorated with various flags and banners, adorned with rows of banana trees, adorned with flowers, and adorned with various full-scale paintings. The king had a decorated pandal and a pallada. He adorned the temple with all kinds of sacred clothes. Carrying white flowers and chanting hymns, the people lined up. Then the king, adorned with all kinds of ornaments, accompanied the people in robes.

He rode a chariot decorated with faith, carrying the Tooth Relic, along with gold flags, silver flags, gold pots, silver pots, gold semera, and silver items. The king, carrying various types of offerings such as a gold casket, a silver casket, a gold vijini, a silver vijini, etc., performed a great puja along the way, accompanied by the music of the Panchathurya. He placed the Tooth Relic on the altar in the Sri Vardhana Purapavara and began the puja. Immediately after this, all the people offered flowers, such as saman, sapuna, etc. Thus, after offering various types of offerings and food offerings, and offering eight pirikaras to the great Sangaruwa, he performed a light puja with lakhs of people on the third night. Dancers and singers, with dancing and songs, and with the music of the five holy waters that moved the heart, the preachers of the Dhamma came and, having heard the Dhamma, led by the sadhu, sang the praises of the Thunuruwan and praised them. The Buddha Puja was held. The Dalada Puja was held for three months as per the previous custom. The four great temples in Dambadeniya were also involved in this procession.

According to folklore, 490 elephants and 490 horses participated in the Yapahuwa Perahera. Accordingly, it can be considered that the Perahera there was also magnificent. As revealed in the Dalada Siritha, "it was established that the Tooth Relic should be brought in procession every year during a severe drought."



The Dalada festival began after observing the auspicious signs and cleaning the house of the Tooth Relic. For seven days, rice, flowers, and lamps were offered, and on the seventh day, the temple was decorated like a sacred city, and the Chief Thero of the Uttara Mulayathana and the two clans of Ganavasi and Kiling were present. The tooth relic was placed in a chariot decorated with ornaments and a noble seat was placed on it, and two clans of Ganavasi and Kiling were placed on the chariot to carry the relic. A beautiful elephant with auspicious signs was used in the chariot, and the chariot first climbed the Supatipanna Mahasangaruvana, and after reciting the Pirith, they brought the Pirith. A Risi of the Doranevasi clan was sent to sprinkle Pirith water in the city from a silver pitcher. On both sides of the chariot were those who wore chamaras and sesaths. The royal court and the wise men rode near the chariot, and the king's court and the wise men followed. The Chaturangani army surrounded the army, and the cabinet followed. After the procession reached the temple of the Tooth Relic, an exhibition of the Tooth Relic was also held.

It is believed that during the Kotte period, the four temples participated in the Perahera. The Sandesha Kavyas reveal that King Parakramabahu VI of Kotte built a very ornate Temple of the Tooth and offered various offerings, so it is possible to consider that the annual Perahera was held.

Even today, an annual Dalada Perahera is held at the Kotte Rajamaha Viharaya. However, it is possible to assume that the Perahera was not held continuously due to political disputes in this kingdom.

It can be assumed that during the time when the Tooth Relic was enshrined at the Delgamu Rajamaha Viharaya in the Seethawaka Kingdom, by order of King Rajasinghe I, the annual procession of the Ratnapura Mahasaman Devalaya was continued, in a manner that the Tooth Relic still precedes the procession today.

It is revealed that the Esala Perahera was organized to be held in a beautiful manner in all the kingdoms where the Tooth Relic was enshrined, such as Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa, and Kurunegala.

The fact that the Dalada Perahera has been held continuously under each king since 1592, when the Tooth Relic was brought to the Senkadagalapura Kingdom, is confirmed by the fact that this Perahera festival continues to this day.



During the Old Kingdom period, the Perahera was organized with government leadership and state sponsorship. Kings and state officials actively participated in the procession. Land was designated for the event, and necessary officials were appointed to manage the various responsibilities. Funds were allocated from the state treasury to support the Perahera. The Kandy Esala Perahera, as we know it today, was established in 1753 AD under King Keerthi Sri Rajasinghe. Since that time, the Dalada Perahera has been preceded by the Sivu Maha Devala Perahera.

As noted by observers John Dave and Welles, the city was adorned as if it were a realm of the gods. The procession featured flags denoting ranks, a multitude of elephants, flag bearers, government officials, swordsmen, turban bearers, spearmen, and representatives from various backgrounds, including foreigners and skilled artisans. Women also took part in the festivities. Prominent figures, including the king, paraded with great splendor. The procession circled the city, with the reliquary beautifully decorated and petals showered upon it.

The nobles, military officers and other officials, dressed in their finest attire and carrying their own flag, await the arrival of the king at Patthirippuwa. After the arrival of the two Adikarams carrying the silver scepter and the Gajanayaka Nilame holding the ankusa, the singing of praises began as soon as the king appeared at Patthirippuwa.

The king addresses the chief guest and asks if people are lined up in each direction. Once the chief guest has said so, the procession begins on the king's orders.

In 1828 AD, during the reign of Governor Sir Edward Barnes, the Sri Dalada Maligawa was reported that the Thero left the Great Perahera on 14th. "After that, it is not mentioned that the Tooth Relic left the Sri Dalada Maligawa. Nowadays, the Perahera casket containing the relics is carried on the royal elephant.

The current Kandy Esala Perahera procession is arranged as it was during the reign of King Keerthi Sri Rajasinghe in 1753. The procession was arranged from that time onwards with the procession of the Temple of the Tooth being the forerunner, followed by the four temples of Natha, Vishnu, Kataragama and Pattini.



Traditional organizational activities of the Kandy Esala Perahera

The organization of the Kandy Esala Perahera is a complex process. Several special rituals are followed during it. The month of Esala, the third month of the lunar calendar, has been a month reserved for the Perahera festival since ancient times. Nowadays, this ritual is planned to end with the Randoli Maha Perahera on the Esala or Nikini Purapasaloswaka Poya days, according to the auspicious times, and the Perahera will be held in the afternoon the following day. As soon as the Vesak and Poson Perahera festivals are over, the planning of the basic requirements of the Esala Perahera festival begins. In order to obtain the elephants required for the Perahera, the elephant owners must be informed, invited by offering traditional betel leaves, the elephants' costumes must be repaired and new costumes must be made, artists and others must be informed and new costumes and items must be prepared for them, torches and other equipment must be repaired, and all necessary steps must be taken to address any remaining deficiencies.

Then, the auspicious signs are prepared by the auspicious Mohottala of the Sri Dalada Maligawa for the dates reserved for the Perahera. Then, as per the instructions of His Eminence the Mahanayake Theros of the Malwatta and Asgiri Ubhaya Mahaviharas, government officials and representatives of voluntary organizations are called and discussions are held regarding the services required for conducting the Perahera. This initial discussion meeting Held at the Sri Dalada Maligawa. After this initial meeting, another discussion will be held at the District Secretariat under the patronage of the District Agent, bringing together heads of government institutions, private institutions and voluntary service institutions, etc., to discuss the organization of the Perahera. Thereafter, heads of media institutions and journalists will be called to the Sri Dalada Maligawa to inform them about the media's responsibility for publishing news related to the Perahera, conducting detailed publication activities, and resolving issues through discussions.

The current Esala Perahera is organized according to a Subha Neketh Patra prepared by the Neketh Mohottala of the Sri Dalada Maligawa on the advice of the Diyawadana Nilame. After that, the Perahera begins by taking a branch of the Panasa tree, which is decorated with good auspiciousness as per the custom, and placing the Esala at all the temples, mainly the four Mahadevalas of Kandy. From that day on, five internal Peraheras, five street-going Kumbal Peraheras, five Randoli Peraheras, a Diyakepum Perahera, a noon Perahera, and a Viliak Dance are held, and the Perahera concludes.

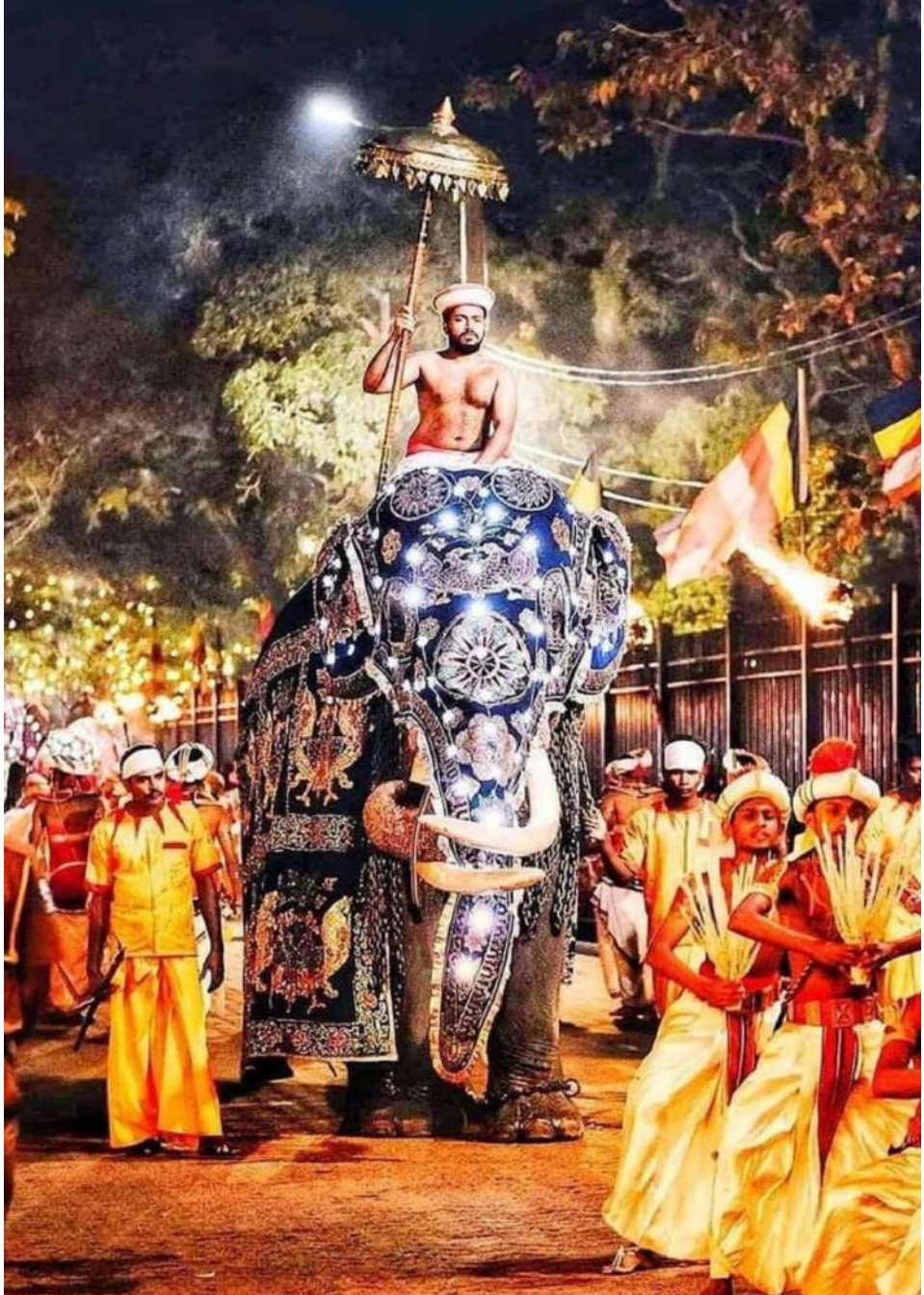


The beating of drums before festivals and the playing of various musical instruments during auspicious occasions, which are reflected in Sri Lankan culture, have been a tradition since ancient times. This Hela cultural heritage is nurtured not only through the annual Esala Perahera festival of the current Sri Dalada Maligawa but also during daily, weekly, annual pujas and other annual pujas. The Hevisi playing, which is the sacred and most valuable part of the perahera festival, is built to a certain pattern.

During the Hevisi Puja, which is a prominent cultural feature of the Esala Perahera, the casket of the procession first travels through Hevisi and is placed in the hands of the Diyawadana Nilame by the head of the Thero in charge of the Dalada Theva. The casket of Ransivi is then brought to the temple. The Theva Hevisiya is played until it is placed. After that, the Bhairawa Walinada is played on the Sandagala and the Perahera moves forward and enters the main road. From there, the Walinada and each of the stages begin their street tour. After reaching the Rajagedara Gate, the Hevisiya Paha Hevisiya is played and the Hevisiya players enter the Dalada Maligawa. The Hevisiya players continue playing the Vada Hevisiya until the Perahera casket is placed on an elephant and placed in the hands of the Theva Thera. After that, the Perahera casket is carried to the Udumalaya with the Geveddum Hevisiya and placed there, and the Perahera Hevisiya is concluded by lowering the Alatti.

This Hevisi group, which consists of about eighty Hevisi players selected from the four Panikkimuras of Ihalawela, Molagoda, Malagamma and Uduwela, which are descendants of the Gandharva clan, one of the eighteen clans that came to Sri Lanka from Dambadini during the visit of Venerable Sangamitha Thera to Sri Maha Bosamindu, and the four Panikkimuras of Ihalawela, Molagoda, Malagamma and Uduwela, which were descended from the Dambadeniya, Kurunegala eras, and the four Panikkimuras of Ihalawela, Molagoda, Malagamma and Uduwela, is led by the leaders of the four Panikkimuras of the Sri Dalada Maligawa mentioned above. The Hevisi performance, which is filled with musical instruments such as the Daula, Thammattama, Horanawa and Thalampata, demonstrates the pride and grandeur of the Hela art culture to the world. The entire procession moves in accordance with the rhythm of the Hewisi group. The elephants move, the other artists dance, sing, and perform, the torchbearers and flag bearers move, and the entire procession moves forward in a certain pattern according to the rhythm of the majestic and solemn Hewisi. This musical technique is like a mirror of the Sinhala Buddhist sacrificial culture.

The current Esala Perahera reflects the religious rituals and royal practices that have existed there since ancient times through all its cultural elements. The first to march in the Perahera are the Kasakarus. This custom was originally reserved for kings. After the Kasakarus, there are the fireballers, the Buddhist flag bearers, the flag bearers, the sword bearers, the front row, the hevisikarus, the Gajanayake Nilame, the horn players, the Chamara dance, the Leekelikarus, the Pantheru dance, the Thalam, the Hawadi Danga, the Naiyandi group, the Athraban group, the Wewel dance, the Udekki dance, the Thammattam players and The Pathuru dance troupe, the costumed dancers, the Korala dancers, the Nagasingham dancers, the Mangala Hasthirajaya carrying the Golden Casket ,the elephants carrying the Buddhist flags, the kavikara maduwa carrying the flower lamps, the Vidanas accompanying the Diyawadana Nilame, and other artists and officials march in the palace procession. The procession of elephants, flag bearers, torch bearers and sword bearers is a unique cultural feature. The palace procession is preceded by the Natha, Vishnu, Kataragama, and Pattini Four Mahadevala Peraheras.



Some features of the current Esala Perahera procession

1.Security vehicle

A feature added to the Esala Perahera in recent history. This is used to provide space and ensure security along the route of the procession.

2.Whippers

The whippers who walk first in the procession prepare their whips by tying flax leaves cut from the linden or dry bushes to a board and then taking the threads that emerge from the surface of the flax leaves and preparing them. It is customary to tie the whip, which is about 7 feet long and tapered at the end, with ropes or other materials to make it easier to hold.

In ancient times, it was customary for kings to beat their whips before the king when they were traveling. Whips were used to clear the way for the king and to signal his approach. This custom is also seen during Buddhist festivals, when whips are used to clear the way for the procession and to signal the approach of the procession. In the past, one of the purposes of holding a procession was to bring rain in time. It is believed that rain will come when the relic of the tooth reed is brought to the door. The sound and appearance of the whip symbolizes the lightning that flashes before the rain.



3.Fireballers

This serves to illuminate both sides of the procession route, light up the path, and enhance the attraction of the approaching procession, drawing the eyes and hearts of the spectators to the procession and making them feel the joy of Buddha.

4.Buddhist flags

This represents a Buddhist religious procession moving forward nearby. A national flag is also carried here, indicating that this procession is also a national festival.

5.District flag (cloth)

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දෙවනුව හත් කෝරළේ -සිංහයා මහ කොඩිය

ඌවේ -හංසයා මහ කොඩිය

මාතලේ -සුදු මහ කොඩිය

සබරගමුව -කහපාට පටරෙදි මහ කොඩිය

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වලපනේ -මයුර මහ කොඩිය

උඩපලාන -නෙළුම් මහා කොඩිය

නුවර කලාවිය -ගජසිංහ මහ කොඩිය

වෙල්ලස්සේ -කොටියා මහ කොඩිය

බාම්තැන්නේ -ගිරවා මහ කොඩිය

තමන්කඩුව -චලහා මහ කොඩිය

There are 12 district flags symbolizing these 12 directions

1. උඩුනුවර
2. හේවාහැට
3. යටිනුවර
4. කොත්මලේ
5. තුම්පනේ
6. උඩබුලත්ගම
7. හාරිස්පත්තුව
8. පානබුලත්ගම
9. දුම්බර

The nine flags, divided into nine, were also used to symbolize the administrative unit of the country, the Rata, which was under the Rala Varuna of the country.

It was a traditional custom for the district chiefs and the country chiefs to participate in the procession with their respective officials, carrying their respective flags, representing each district and country through these flags. Although those officials are not involved today, carrying these flags symbolizes the representation of the districts and countries belonging to the ancient Kandy Kingdom and symbolizes that authority.

6.Brass Directional Flags

These flags are carried symbolizing the 21 directions mentioned above.



7. Sword bearers

are a symbol of providing security to the procession, a feature that has been preserved since the ancient procession. In the days of the previous kings, the sword-bearing soldiers of the royal army participated in this.

8. The procession on an elephant is a part of the Rala-Kandyan royal procession of the late Kandy period. He rides on an elephant and carries a silver casket, symbolizing the secretary's hammer, which contains the official records, the property records of the Sri Dalada Maligawa, and the route of the procession. He is dressed in a white turban, a white shirt, and a headscarf.

9. Hevisikaru

They use instruments such as daul, thammattam, horn, thalampata, kombuwa, hakgediya, and gejjii. They move forward playing various melodies for worship and communication, enhancing the charm of the procession. They also enhance the splendor and solemnity of the procession. It is a unique feature that all four generations of Hevisikaru of the Sri Dalada Maligawa are included in the daul group. Among those who were skilled in daul playing in ancient times, the generations of Wellethota, Moladanda, Hewawissa, Uduwela, Kahalla, and Udupihilla were very skilled. Also, among these generations, generations such as Molagoda, Ihalawela, and Malagammana have become famous even today.

10.Gajanayaka Nilame

He rides on an elephant carrying a royal branch in his hand and has been symbolized as the leader of the elephant class since ancient times. The participation of elephants in puja and wedding ceremonies is a custom that has been going on since ancient times. In particular, the symbolization of the rain cloud is achieved by elephants. In ancient times, such as Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, it is seen that in addition to elephants, horses were also taken along for the procession.

11.Horn Players

The horn has a special place as a type of flute that produces a sweet sound related to the melodious part of the local panchaturya music. The horn is also used in the Hevisi playing. It is a new element added to the Sri Dalada Maligawa Perahera since 2006. This horn playing group plays various devotional melodies including Jayamangala Gatha, Gajaga Wannam were used.

12.Chamara Dance

The Chamara is used to wave the wind to the Sri Dalada Maligawa and the kings and other dignitaries. The Chamara Dance was later organized as a royal dance to demonstrate that function. Since the dance is performed with an instrument in hand, it can also be called a village dance. However, when looking at the singing and movements used for this, it cannot be called a village dance. However, the Chamara Dance, which is created by combining simple drum verses and dance for pure entertainment, occupies a special place in this procession.



13.Li Keli Group

A very simple dance form. A dance form that is a remnant of tribal dances. It is a folk dance form created by rhythmically clashing wooden sticks using simple drum beats, simple poems, dance patterns and simple movements to express pure fun. This dance form, which has been developed according to the traditions of upland dances, was performed in ancient times by people who excelled in it, and the Uduwela, Paranagama, Dulwala and Parapuras play a major role.

14.Pantheru Group

A special dance element of the Kandyan dance tradition. Dance events such as Suvisi Bevarana, Satsathiyala Pansaliswasala are colored by the Pantheru Dance. It is a well-known opinion that the Pantheru Dance is composed according to the Salamba of Pattini Devi. The Gataberaya or Kandyan drum is used for playing here. The dance is performed with special skills related to Kandyan dance. The head wrap, the suraya, the kadukkanthodu, the bangles, the cloth, the pacchawadama, the silambu, the kalulensuwa, the havadiya can be seen among the clothing items. In the past, the Urupola, Werakay, Alapalawala, Bootawattha, Batugoda, Medagoda, Kadigamuwa, Batagalle, and Pathahewaheta tribes were named.



15. Thalam Group

A type of folk dance. It is a simple dance element that is performed using the Thalam instrument, a rhythm instrument, and simple dances and songs that are appropriate for that purpose, to the accompaniment of the gat drum.

16. Hawadi Danga

A graceful dance element that developed from the wooden dance. The specialty of this is that the poles and ropes used in the wooden dance are used to create a beautiful pattern. The group dances around a central pole Using a string to weave patterns around it and then releasing the weave back into place is a unique task that is performed while dancing. This is also a part of folk dance.

17. Naiyandi Group

A traditional Kandyan dance performed by skilled artists dressed in Naiyandi without headgear. The gatabere is used for playing and the poems related to the Kandyan dance are sung. (There are two groups)
A dance unique to the Kandyan. It is a dance that should be studied before the Ves dance. Kalaeli is also used for the performance before the Ves dance. The costumes consist of Aul Haraya, Bandi Balla, Urabahuwa, Silambu, Raeli Manthaya, Kalisama, Atiriyaka Adina Redda, Pachchawadamala etc. In the past, the Narampanawa, Alaotuwa Galdola generations were skilled in Ves dance. A dance element related to the Kandyan dance tradition.

18.Kadu Saramba

A popular folk dance based on kadu saramba. Prashasti and Hatan songs are used as accompaniment.

19.The Pantheru Dance

20.Hand Drum

Among the tambourines of Sri Lanka, the maha tambourine, the hand tambourine and the viridu tambourine can be divided into three parts. The important feature of the hand drum section is the unique technique of playing the tambourine by rotating it with the hands, throwing it up, cutting it around the hands, etc. The songs and chants related to the tambourine are used. The lower trousers are worn slightly above the waist, and brown cloth, a mantaya, aul, kadukkan, silambu, and other items are used as clothing.

21.Talang dance

22.The Pantheru Dance



23.Cane Dance

A special folk dance performed by creating dance patterns using canes. This dance has a set of dance patterns that are more attractive than dancing. The group performs by holding the ends of long canes and moving from one to another, captivating the audience. There is no special place for singing and playing instruments.

24.Udekki Dance

A simple dance performed by holding the Udekki, a stringed instrument, and playing it with one hand, chanting the virtues of the Buddha, while wearing a unique theatrical costume. The specialty here is the creation of a dance. When performing as part of a procession, specific dance patterns are used, accompanied by the use of hand gestures, etc., and the performance is performed.

25.Naiyandi Group

26.Sword Dance Group

27.Thammattam Band

A band that performs exclusively using the Thammattam, which is a five-stringed instrument and a hewisi instrument. It is a very important and academically valuable new addition to this perahera since 2006. The generations of Thammattam players include Udunuwara, Arawwawala, Hewawissa, Yakawela, and Ridigama.

28.Tambourine Performance Group

29.The Pantheru Dance

30.Pathuru Dance Group

A folk dance performed with a wooden stick. The dance uses traditional poetry, songs and instruments. Popular as a folk dance, Pathuru Dance is a creative dance form that uses colorful dance patterns and movements and involves dancing with hands and feet to the beat.

31.Udakki Dance

32.Ves Group

The Ves Dance, which is the crowning glory of the Kandyan Dance, is a popular dance not only in Sri Lanka but also abroad. This dance is performed by expert artists. This Ves Dance, which is performed to the accompaniment of the drums of expert musicians while singing poems related to the Kandyan Dance, is performed in two groups in front of the Sri Dalada Karaduwa and the Hon. Diyawadana Nilame. The Kandyan Ves Dance is a unique and respected dance of the Kandy Esala Perahera. It is said that this dance element has been part of the Kandy Esala Perahera since 1919 AD.

33.The Korala, the conductor of the procession

Among his duties, it is considered an important duty to carry the procession's casket. A white turban, white shirt and headscarf are his official attire.

34.Nagasingham

This also holds an important place among the instruments played at the Sri Dalada Maligawa during the Nanumura Mangalaya and special festivals. Nagasingham, Tabroruwa, Udakkiya, Kaithalama are their musical instruments. This was developed through Hindu influence.

35.The royal elephant, which has now become a national heritage, was used as the royal elephant carrying the casket for about fifty years. Since then, other elephants have often been used for this purpose year after year.

36.Carrying 02 Buddhist flags

37.Kavikara Maduwa

The Kavikara Maduwa of the Temple of the Tooth Relic participates in this.



38.Those who carry flower lanterns

This is also an ancient custom. It has resurfaced in the recent past.

39.Ves dance

40.Diyawadana Nilame

Since 1814 AD, 19 Diyawadana Nilames have been in official duty and Pradeep Nilanga Dela Diyawadana Nilame will participate in this procession as the 19th Diyawadana Nilame.

41.Swordsmen and the pearl shield on both sides

42.Two Burmese flags

43.The Vidanewaru of the Ten Villages

In the past, 09 Vidanewaru participated and currently 13 participate. They are dressed in official attire and walk behind the Diyawadana Nilame.

44.From here, after the Dalada Maligawa Perahera, the processions of the Natha, Vishnu, Kataragama, and Pattini Sivu Maha Devalayas will proceed in the order of processions.



The procession of the four great Devala

Of the four great temples, Natha Vishnu Kataragama Patthini, three are located near the Sri Dalada Maligawa, while the Sri Kataragama Temple in Kandy is located in the city center on Kotugodella Street. Of these, Natha and Patthini temples can be seen surrounded by a wall in the square of the Dalada Maligawa. These four great temples are also important in the four festivals of the Sri Dalada Maligawa. Especially after the year 1753, from the time of King Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe to the present day, these four temples are seen moving in procession in the order of Natha, Vishnu, Kataragama and Patthini, preceding the Sri Dalada Maligawa.

Sri Natha Devalaya

According to the procession of the Esala Perahera, the first devala procession to follow the Sri Dalada Maligawa Perahera is the Natha devala Perahera. The Natha Temple is dedicated to the future Buddha, Natha. King Wickramabahu III (1360-1375 AD), who ruled Gampala, sought a place of victory through his princes to establish a new kingdom. Accordingly, at the request of the princes, a Brahmin named Senkanda took a few pebbles from the cave where he was staying and threw one of them into a nearby pond, from which a white rabbit emerged. When he threw another pebble, a white rabbit emerged, and the rabbit was chased by the white rabbit. It is said that a hare ran to the tree near the forest where it was hiding, turned around and was chased by a fox, and a deer chased by a tiger came to this land and turned around and chased the tiger. According to the miraculous incident, King Vikramabahu III, after learning about this as a victory ground from a Brahmin named Senkhanda, built the Senkadagalapura and the Natha temple at this place. According to legends, the city was named Senkadagalapura after a Brahmin. According to the Chulabodhi dynasty, the place where the thirty-two-palaruha Bodhi tree was planted, brought by a Brahmin named Natha during the reign of King Pethis II, is also said to have been named Natha after that Brahmin. This devala building is one of the oldest buildings in Senkadagalapura. It is said that this building was built before the Sri Dalada Maligawa.



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The coronation of the kings of Kandy. The sword-striking ceremony was also performed, and when naming a king, a few names written on palm leaves were placed before the Natha deity and a name was chosen in front of the Natha deity. The first part of the kapa is distributed during the planting of the kapa, and during the water-cutting ceremony, the Natha deity is the first to descend into the Gatambae Thota. The color of the Natha deity is yellow, and the white swan is used as the chariot. The procession of this deity is very similar to the procession of the Dalada Maligawa.

Vishnu Devalaya

Among the processions of Devala that take part in the Esala Perahera, the procession of the Vishnu Devala takes place second. This devala is dedicated to Lord Vishnu, who appears in ten incarnations as the Guru, the vehicle of the Guru, and who seeks to bring peace and prosperity to all beings in the world, and who is the guardian of the Buddhist religion and provides protection. There are several major devala dedicated to him on the island.



The Aluth Nuwara Devalaya, located on the main road from Kolonthota to Kandy, is one of the oldest such temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It is said that in ancient times, before the Esala Maha Perahera in Kandy, the kapa was distributed from the Aluth Nuwara Devalaya and handed over to the four Maha Devalayas for planting kapa. After the construction of the Vishnu Devalaya in the Kandy Kingdom, it came to be known as the Maha Devalaya. It is said that the ritual of tying the forehead band after the king's abhishesaka was performed from this devalaya. This devalaya holds a special place as the devalaya where kapa is distributed for planting kapa in the Esala Maha Perahera and as the temple where the Valiyak dance is performed after the perahera.

Katharagama Devalaya

The Kataragama devalaya in Kandy, believed to have been built around the 14th century, became more popular in the 16th century. This devalaya is dedicated to Skandhakumara, also known as the Kataragama God. The main devalaya dedicated to the Kataragama God, who was born from the auspicious sign of Kethi, is located in Kataragama, Ruhuna. The Kavadi dance is a special dance performed for the Kataragama God, who has six faces and twelve arms and is depicted riding a peacock in red.



Pattini Devalaya

Pattini Devalaya is considered one of the ancient buildings located in the Sri Dalada Maligawa square. According to folklore, Goddess Pattini, who is revered as a great woman who preserves devotion to her husband, was born seven times. It is mentioned in the Pattiniyadinna that she was born once from water, once from a flower, once from a snake's tear, once from a coconut bark, once from a dew drop, once from a lightning strike and finally from a mango.

It is believed that the Pattini faith, in particular, brings blessings to young children and women, and cures hidden diseases. Goddess Patthini is believed to be a great goddess who is responsible for fertility and for giving children to those who are childless. The Patthini Temple procession is the last procession of the Esala Temple procession. A small golden statue of Goddess Patthini is placed in the golden casket tied to the back of an elephant that is carried in this temple procession.



This procession of the Esala Perahera beautifully illustrates the cultural elements of Buddhist and royal festivals along with the membership and official structure that existed since the days of the king. From the past to the present, foreign visitors come to watch this Perahera because the Kandy Esala Perahera is the only religious and cultural festival in the world that is maintained in accordance with the ancient traditional rituals. The continuous maintenance of the Esala Perahera culture while preserving those ancient traditional rituals is undoubtedly a source of great pride for the nation.





Afterword

With the approval of the Ministry of Education, this research-based project has empowered thousands of student authors for over ten years. Educationists recognize it as a program that significantly enhances the quality of school education.

In alignment with modern educational reforms, encouraging students to author a research work is a milestone in this journey. In this digital age of "Smart" technology, the modern school must demonstrate through research that books and technology should be used together. This is because the unique joy a child receives from a book cannot be replaced by anything else.

To prevent children from drifting away from books—which remain our primary educational tool and storehouse of human knowledge—Mahamaya Girls' College has spearheaded the "Hemamala Upahara" project for many years. Its primary objectives are to foster academic discipline, promote values, and pay tribute to Princess Hemamala, who fulfilled a historic mission to empower women.

We express our gratitude to the Principal, teachers, parents, alumni of Mahamaya Girls' College, representatives of other schools, the Diyawadana Nilame, and the staff of the Sri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic) for their support.

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(Project Creator)

