

special thanks to the contribution participants:

kanthi and madhavi shilpadhipathi.
tharangani lakshila nandesena.
dimuth wickramasinghe. anura ratnayake.
kalayatana malagamma. k. ranatunga.
the drummers of the temple of the tooth. kandy.
of the raja maha vihara. kelaniya.
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linda fujie (english translation)

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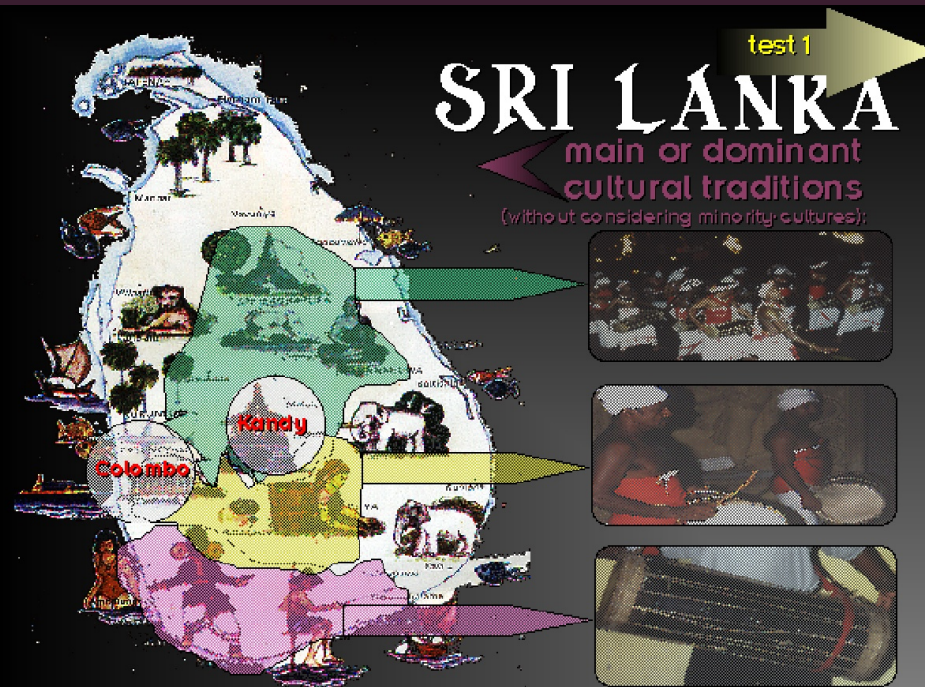
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2000

An interactive Multimedia Excursion to Impressions of an unfamiliar Music Culture by Martina Claus-Bachmann



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overview



test 5

Where have Kanthi and Piyasara Shilpadhipathi been in 1984?

1. Moscow
2. Beijing
3. London
4. Berlin
5. Tokyo



back
to the main menu



go on

recent activities

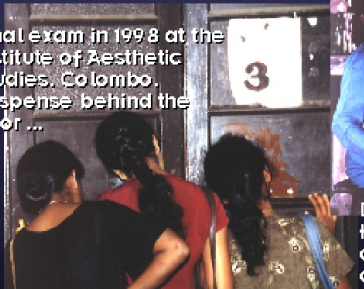
Elphinston-theatre, Colombo 1998: Piyasara teaches dance- and drum-classes.



Piyasara and Kanthi create a lot of dance- and drum-performances. Here October 1999: unity in diversity of all sri lankan cultures: singhalese, tamil, muslim and veddha ...

drum-show
majority- and
minority-
drum- cultures
in Sri Lanka.
united in composition
of P. Shilpadhipathi

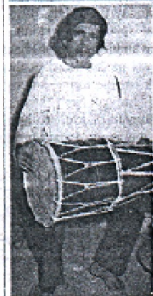
Final exam in 1998 at the Institute of Aesthetic Studies, Colombo. Suspense behind the door ...



Dehiwala/1998:
Kanthi teaches
drum- and
dance-classes

THE SUNDAY OBSERVER, APRIL 23, 2000

Piyasara makes new drum



Piyasara
Shilpadhipathy
with his new
drum "Gavula".

Piyasara Shilpadhipathy, a well-known drummer and traditional dancer has created a new drum.

It is a combination of the traditional drums, "Getaberaya" and "Davula". There-

fore the new drum has been given the name of "Gavula".

The most significant aspect in this drum is that it can produce one sound for Davula and Gataberaya.

The inventor has also composed the suitable drum beats for "Gavula". Another important feature in "Gavula" is, that it can be tuned for every sound which is produced from any musical instrument.

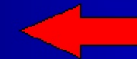
Alawala Nilantha has provided the finishing touches to the new drum under the directions of Piyasara Shilpadhipathy who is a senior lecturer at the Institute of Aesthetic Studies, University of Kelaniya.

- ANJANA

test 1

What is the name of the cultural tradition in the south province of SRI LANKA?

1. Sabaragamuwa-
2. up-country-
3. low-country-
4. west-coast-
5. south-province-



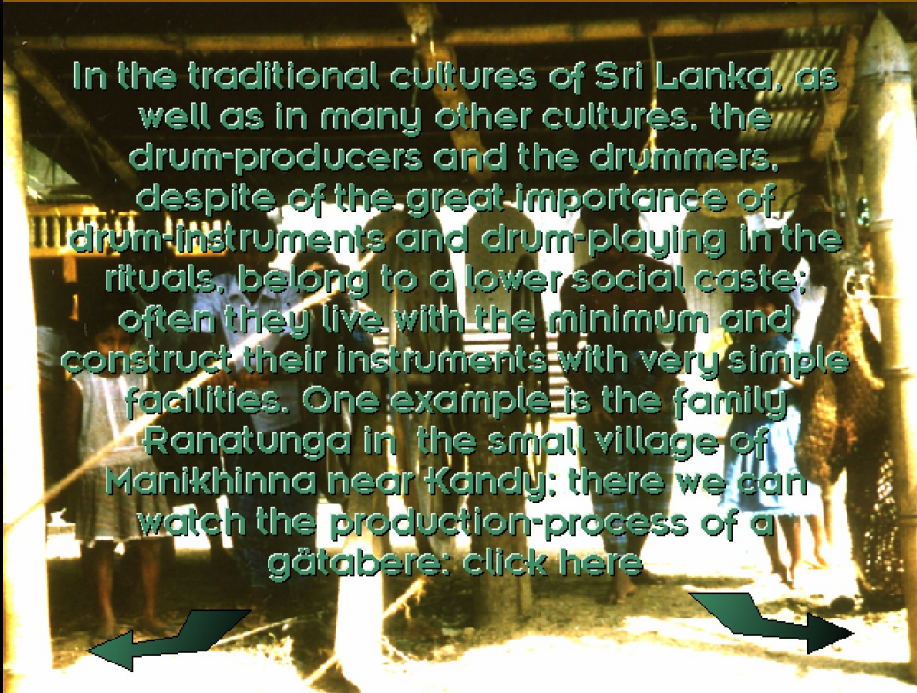
back to the main menu



go on

production of drums

In the traditional cultures of Sri Lanka, as well as in many other cultures, the drum-producers and the drummers, despite of the great importance of drum-instruments and drum-playing in the rituals, belong to a lower social caste; often they live with the minimum and construct their instruments with very simple facilities. One example is the family Ranatunga in the small village of Manikhinna near Kandy: there we can watch the production-process of a gātabere: [click here](#)



tours to foreign countries



1979 my daughter Madhavi was born. Whenever possible she accompanied us on our concert-journeys to other countries.

1991 we got the chance to visit the USA and to join a big multicultural festival in Los Angeles. There I gave some lecture-demonstrations in the University of Santa Barbara at the California Institute of Arts and a lot of museums. After that I used to go to the States every year.

I like to distribute my knowledge about our special sri lankan culture and to inform interested people all over the world and I use to go abroad about 4/5 times a year.

My wife and my daughter are also specialists for dancing, drumming and singing. Now we conduct a private school with about 500 students.

I am member of several cultural communities and senior lecturer at the Institute of Aesthetic Studies at the University of Kelaniya.



work with his wife Kanthi



1967 I joined the Chitrasena-dance-group, who visited the People's Republic of China.
1968 I participated in the governmental college of dance in Colombo and completed my knowledge about Kandyan dance and drumming with studies about low-country-dance and drumming.

1971 I met my wife Kanthi and since this time we work together. We went on tour with the state dance ensemble to Russia (1974) and the EXPO at Japan (1975).

1976 I started my own dance group with my brothers and one of my sister and we visited a lot of countries.

Then I became a dance- and drum-teacher at the Chitrasena-dance-school, where I have been student before.

With Kanthi I was invited from the British Council to go to London in 1984, to teach in the Royal College of Music and to give lecture demonstrations and workshops. I got the chance to record exercises and pieces for BBC and for the archives.

Goatskin and cowhide serve as skins, and for the most important cult drums like the gatabere, monkeyskin is used that is first depilated and dried.

To turn the wooden cylinder, two helpers must set into motion a large handwheel which guides a rope in its groove that has been thrown over the part of the tree.

construction of a GĀTABERE

The latter turns slowly and the wood turner can then shape the truck to the desired size with an iron tool, as well as making already rough notches and decoration.

Depending on the size of drum desired, a piece of wood from the trunk of an alahat tree is clamped between the fixtures of a hand-driven lathe.

The body is then taken out of the lathe and is hollowed out at the premarked notches on the clamping device with a chisel. This is done carefully in order to avoid fissures or cracks in the wood. The edges are filed down and evened out, and now the body is ready to be covered.



Many drum makers are also passable drummers, and thus Mr. Ranatunga also breaks in his newly made instrument himself.

construction of a GĀTABERE

The gatabere is double-skinned and therefore receives on each side a dampened skin that is fixed on to the body with a ring of very strong, braided raffia. The edges of the skin are cut off.



The edges of the raffia are fixed by pulling a long, thin strip of raffia between the two rings back and forth in a zig-zag pattern. In this way the skins can be tuned after drying and when the tension slackens, e.g. tightening again with humidity.

test 2

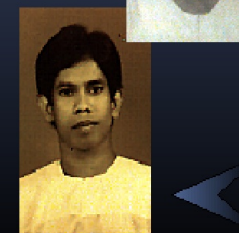


My name is Piyasara Shilpadhipathi. I was born at 19th of march 1945 in Polgahawela near Kegalle in a family of dancers and drummers, who have in earlier times performed for the court of the Kandyan kings and for the sacred bo-tree ceremonies in Anuradhapura.

I have 4 brothers and 2 sisters. The name of my mother is Sawwathi and of my father Saranga. My uncle Saimon had a dance school and my uncle Shilpa was a great teacher.

I started to learn in the age of 5. My grandfather Sewranga has been my first teacher in dancing and drumming. He took me to the ceremonies, where I could watch the players and I liked it very much. 8 years old I had to absolve a practical ritual, called ves bedeema. After this complex ceremony you are a professional drummer or dancer.

About 1960 the dance school of my uncle got a governmental status with a small fond. At the same time the governmental schools also started to teach traditional dancing and drumming. The result was, that a lot of teachers must be educated, but mainly they learned to dance and to drum, because they wanted to get a job.



performing artist: Piyasara Shilpadhipathi

test 2

biographical notes of a sri lankan drummer

- youth and education
- work with his wife Kanthi
- tours to foreign countries
- recent activities



test 5

back to the main menu

The question is: what is the name of the great religious festivities, where many drum-instruments are played and which take place once a year? You will find the term putting in order the blue-coloured characters in the description for constructing a drum...

1. GODA SARAMBA
2. POYA HEWISI
3. KOLAM
4. PERAHERA
5. GIRIDEWI

back
to the main
menu



1	2	3	4	5	★ A
---	---	---	---	---	-----

go on

drum-instruments

DRUM-INSTRUMENTS

In the main
cultural traditions
of SRI LANKA



back to the main menu

test 3

test 4

Which term is used for
the opening of a drum-performance?

1. HEWISI
2. POYA
3. GODASARAMBA
4. VANNAMAN
5. NAMASKARA



back
to the main menu



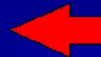
1	2	3	4	5		
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go on

test 3

What is the name of the most important drum of the low-country-tradition?

1. udäkki
2. yakbere
3. gätabere
4. dawula
5. tamätamä



back to the main menu

1	2	3	4	5	
---	---	---	---	---	--

go on

basic exercise 5



TA	KÉ	TE	TA	KÉ	TE	KUN	DE
L	R	R	L	R	R	L	R
TA	KÉ	TE	KUN	JIN	JIN		
L	R	R	L	R	R		



basic exercise 6



TA	KE	TE	KUN	DE	TE	TA	KE
L	R	R	L	R	R	L	R
♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪
TE	KUN	DE	TE	KUN	DE		
R	L	R	R	L	R		
♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪		
TA	KE	TE	KUN	JIN	JIN		
L	R	R	L	R	R		
♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪		

test 4



tamätamä

play-technique

basic exercise 4



TA KE TE KUN JIN JIN
L R R L R R
♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

DRUM PLAY TECHNIQUE
here: gätabere





basic exercise 3



TA	KE	TE	TA	KE	TE	KUN	DE
L	R	R	L	R	R	L	R
♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪
TA	KE	TE	KE	TE	KUN	DE	
L	R	R	R	R	L	R	
♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	

basic exercise 2



TA KE TE KE TE KUN DE
L R R R R L R
♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

basic exercises

namaskara









performed by
Piyasara Shilpadhipathi.
one of the most experienced and
famous drummers of Sri Lanka

basic exercise 1

As well as in dance-exercise
the beginning of a training-
performing-period is marked by
a **NAMASKARA**
that means a salutation
concentration, meditation
and honouring of the teacher ...



There exist 12 basic exercises
if a student wants to be
educated in the
Kandyan drum-tradition
on the gatabere.
Here you can follow
six of the basic exercises

TA	KE	TE	KUN	DE	TE
L	R	R	L	R	R
					



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