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**Dhammapada ;
Calm are the Peaceful**
**"Santam tassa manam
hoti, santā vācā ca
kamma ca**

**Sammadaññā vimut-
tassa, upasantassa tā-
dino".**

**"An arahat is calm in
his mind, calm in his
speech, and also in his
deed; truly knowing
the Dhamma, such an
arahat is free from
moral defilements and
is unperturbed by the
ups and downs of life."**



**"What I know for sure is that
what you give comes back to
you."**

.....

**"Where there is no struggle,
there is no strength."**

.....

**"I trust that everything hap-
pens for a reason, even when
we're not wise enough to see
it."**

~~Oprah Winfrey~~

**" Mind is the master power that
molds and makes,
And we are Mind, and evermore
we take**

**The tool of thought, and shaping
what we will,**

**Bring forth a thousand joys, a
thousand ills,**

**We think in secret, and it comes
to pass -**

**Our world is but our looking
glass."**

~~ James Allen~~



Dear Readers,

Another winter season is upon us and for most of us from Sri Lanka, this is the season we wish we were back in our sunny homeland. These short sunless days are the hardest to get by when one first starts life in the west. But winter brings with it the festive season that is quite fun & colorful, full of good cheer & joy.

For MGCAANA members this is the mid season, and we are continuing our work in our many projects. We are hoping this season of giving will encourage our members to contribute to the Vidya Scholarship fund. We are working tirelessly to reach our target of \$20,000 ,which would be set up as a fund that will generate income to help students who are in financial need. By setting up this fund we hope that many Mayans would & could be helped in the years ahead. So please pass on the word to your friends & family and help us reach our goal.

This is the season for family & community. And I would like to add a few word on our MGCAANA community that needs more members to contribute a little of their time. Please pass on the word of our organization to any Mayan you meet. New members are always welcome. We need to reach out to them & make them feel part of our family. It would help many Mayans who move to the West for the first time to be part of this large MGCAANA family. New members are a vital ingredient that helps to keep an organization moving forward. Hence we have to make a concerted effort to enroll as many Mayans as we can, and encourage them to join us in our Maya community.

In this last newsletter for the year 2011, I would like to thank all our newsletter editors for their time & effort. Sometimes it has been a struggle and we have been rushed for time & articles, but in the end we have always made it work . We have made sure that the newsletter, that links all members of MGCAANA, has reached them in time.

Be it with a sigh of relief or a look of sadness, we have to say goodbye to the year that has passed. We wish each & everyone of our readers a happy, prosperous and joyful 2012. May all your dreams, aspirations and hopes be fulfilled in the New year.

Nazrana Caffoor



MGCAANA ANNOUNCEMENTS & NOTICES



New Years Message from the President of MGCAANA

I would like to express my profound gratitude to all the members of MGCAANA and their families for being an invaluable asset to both our organization and also to the progress we have made this year. I also want to express my deepest appreciation to our advisers. They are the driving force behind the progress we have achieved together. I am so honored to work with you intelligent, talented, and dedicated directors and committee members. Furthering the work of MGCAANA would not be possible without your unwavering commitment.

Over the past year, we moved forward in many projects such as the Vidaya Scholarship Trust Fund, which helps economically disadvantaged children at Mahamaya, the Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship Program, which empowers our own members, and the Leap Frog Foundation, the charity through which we helped further the afterschool studies of at-risk youth. We reached a milestone by accumulating 50% of our goal for the Trust Fund. We celebrated our 7th Annual General Meeting at South Carolina and were honored to have our former Principal Mrs. N. K. Pilapitiya as our Chief Guest. Currently, we are also making an immense effort to give forth better service to our members in the USA and Canada. Our achievements provide a solid foundation for the road that lies ahead of us as much work still remains to be done.

So thank you for all the support you have given to this beloved organization. It is vital for us to combine our abilities and align them with our collective goal of promoting the mission of MGCAANA. In doing so, we will gain valuable knowledge and experience, which will enable us to make the great leap onto the next stage for MGCAANA. Please let me know your thoughts and suggestions on ways we can improve our service to both the communities we serve and also to you.

My warmest wishes for a blissful, healthy and rewarding 2012 to each of you and your families!

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of MGCAANA,

*Geetha Eragoda
President, MGCAANA 2011/2012*

Congratulations

“Education is not the filling a bucket but the lighting of a fire.”

William Butler Yeats

On behalf of MGCAANA family, we are so proud to see our Mayans excelling in their graduate and post-graduate studies. We wish all the best and success to the Mayans who graduated this Fall.

Save The Date

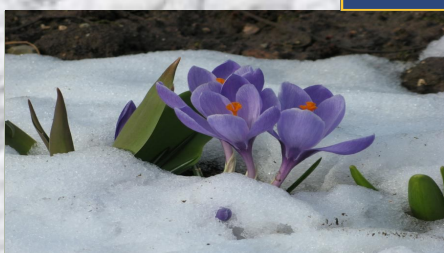
The 8th Annual General Meeting of MGCAANA is scheduled to be held on Memorial Day Weekend, 2012.

Venue _ West Bloomfield, Michigan

Date _ Sunday, the 27th of May, 2012

Hosts _ Dr. Parakrama and Mrs. Deepthi Weerappuli

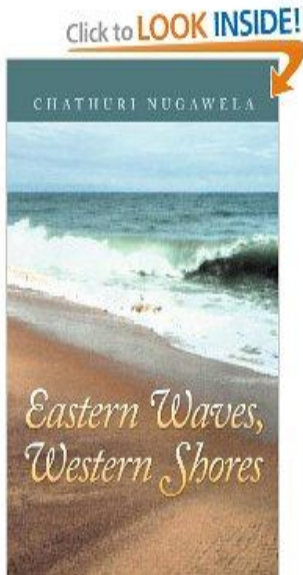
Stay tuned. More details in the next newsletter.



If you have made mistakes...there is always another chance for you...you may have a fresh start any moment you choose, for this thing we call "failure" is not the falling down, but the staying down.

--Mary Pickford--

Book Review



Eastern Waves, Western Shores

Author: Chathuri Nugawela

Genre: Fiction

247 p.

<http://chathurinugawelabook.com/aboutBook.htm>

Picture courtesy of Amazon.com

"Eastern Waves, Western Shores" the fiction written and published by Chathuri Nugawela is an important literary endeavor undertaken by a young Mayan, one of the brightest in her generation. She has shown that she is a powerful new voice of the new generation. The story, a family saga unravels the social and cultural history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in Sri Lanka, mainly focusing on the Kandyan gentry and the changing society. Sri Lankan born women novelists who write in English are not many. Consequently, this novel tells us a story of the social, and economic decline of the gentry, tragedy of creating family tensions over inherited land and property that pulls families apart, painful changes and challenges Parami's family faces, due to social change as well as the emergence of the intellectual, affluent, educated classes as a result of the country's free education and democracy, and the technological advances in modern Sri Lanka. The story reminds me of Martin Wickremasinghe's classic novel "Gamperaliya" written in 1944, that depicts the breakup of the traditional village life due to rapid social change during the first half of the twentieth century. "Eastern Waves and Western Shores" reflects the change that occurred during the second half of the twentieth century.

The author with Parami as the first-person narrator, captures vividly the transformation of Parami's life, defining in vivid detail that opens whole worlds of emotion and penetrating insight, with conflicting loyalties, painfully coming to define herself. The complexity of Parami's challenges is apparent in her conflicting thoughts, carrying the burden of her heritage, trying to be a dutiful daughter to her family that firmly upholds old traditions and Buddhist thought, and her modern thinking that made those traditions look so obsolete. Navigating between inherited tradition and the new world is a daunting task. The experience of exposure to the Western world through education and spending her formative years in the West does not make things easy for Parami. However, she sticks to her family's core values while navigating away from tradition.

The tangled ties between generations make her life more complicated. Uncle and aunt who spent on her education in England had their own expectations. She was expected to wear "Osariya" the Kandyan sari at nineteen to board the plane to England. Parami has to promise them that she will return to Sri Lanka after her education. Little did they know that Parami's life can change immensely at her young age, with the experience they themselves were providing for her. Parami did not want to remain haunted by defying her families' dreams, and she returns to Sri Lanka after her graduation.

The author creates images and characters that remind us of our culture in Sri Lanka that we lived in. The protagonist's cultural conflicts, generational conflicts, doubts, insecurities, heart-breaking moments, which belong to all of us, that makes the story all the more real and gets much of our affection. Amidst generational conflicts, Parami agreeing to go along with her mother's efforts in finding a suitable man for her, was her acceptance of the compromises of adulthood, in order to make her parents happy. The aunt/matchmaker reminds Parami to cover the second toe with her saree before meeting the proposed man and his family for the first time in her parents' living room. The belief is that if a woman has a longer second toe she would dominate her husband. She portrays her aunt/matchmaker character with a comic twist in a serious situation. She relates how several suitors came and went without much luck.

The author beautifully replicates the voice of the mother of Parami and captures her innate interpretation of Buddhist philosophy into day-to-day life's experiences, no matter how dreadful the experience can be. The voice of the mother can be heard throughout the story with Parami's conflicting situations. Most of the time mother and Parami never agreed.

"She went on to tell me to always do what is right. This is exactly what I did, but somehow, her "right" and my "right" were never quite the same."

However, the reader can enjoy the wisdom of Parami's mother in many situations, whether Parami agreed with her or not. Mother was the nucleus of her family.

Finally, Parami finds love in her own terms and the struggle was over. For me, that was the climax I was waiting for. That defined the outcome of the story and the reader can have a sigh of relief. The author's eloquent and powerful prose that flows elegantly and effortlessly through the story, makes the novel pleasurable to read.

The novel is absorbing, compelling, intricate and strong. It is one of a kind, based on Sri Lankan modern culture that we all know too well.

Sujatha Werake



Nothing is predestined: The obstacles of your past can become the gateways that lead to new beginnings.

~~~ Ralph Blum ~~~

## **Isolation in a global village (And communication devices)**

Every morning, I walk down a long hall-way to get to my undergraduate physics-classroom. Just before entering the room, I always wonder how quiet it is and often miscalculate the number of students attending the lecture. When I walk in, to my surprise, I see a class full of heads, looking in one direction - downward, at a square or a rectangular shaped device, wearing different emotions on their faces; while some frown, others smile at the device. Their fingers work fast on the device but none of the other body parts move. The minute they sense my presence, they put the device away and grab the textbook or the note-pad. I hardly ever find them talking to the person who is sitting next to them or trying to socialize with others. In fact, I have to make an additional effort to initiate the interactions among students. This effort either comes in the form of extra credits or regular grade points. Educators often refer to this as "learning through peer interactions". The age group of the students that I assist on a daily basis varies from 18 to 23. These students are pretty smart and meet deadlines and finish any given task quite successfully. But for sure they don't know the name of the person who sat next to him for one whole semester or even two. They don't necessarily see the importance of conversation or lack the habit. They are aware of all online search engines and believe Google has solutions to anything and everything in the world and overlook the benefits of discussions. Google is their new God!



The square shaped devices come with various different names; some are regular cell-phones, some are smart phones and others are i-Phones. As common features to all they come with Wi-Fi access and unlimited texting.

When I recall our classrooms at school, our school buses and hostels (dorms) they were pretty noisy. We were talking, talking and talking. It was a very lively environment. No one had to teach us how to intermingle with peers. We knew how and largely benefited by such interactions. Then later, as young adults we knew how to be productive at the university. We knew pretty much everyone in the batch (300+) by name (or the "card") and another hundred or more from the senior and junior batches, and from other faculties (schools is the US term). We used the university playgrounds, gymnasium, drama theaters turning them into noisy yet energetic places. We were very cheerful and had hardly any time for isolation.



Present day teenagers do not (or hardly) verbally communicate with their parents. They don't have time to talk as these cleverly manufactured, portable communication devices come out with multiple applications (games, music, movies and much more) that attract the younger crowd. On the other hand young parents are equally addicted and they just prefer to have their kids "engaged" with whatever. Husbands and wives have minimized their communications and exchange text messages instead. A friend of mine once said and I am quoting, "texting saves me from lot of troubles in my marriage life otherwise could cause in verbal communications". While the world was transforming into a global village, it has also changed the "villagers" in to zombies. Talking and talking has changed into no talking but texting.

When I was growing up, I maintained a very close relationship with my parents. My father used to accompany my sister and I to the school bus every morning and from there back home in the afternoon. I used this time, to talk and share pretty much everything of my life as a small girl and when I grew up, to discuss about school projects, math problems etc. When I reached home, over lunch and dinner I used to repeat the same stories all over to my mother and my father, who had heard the stories ahead of time, used to fill the gaps! It was so much fun and the bond within the family grew stronger day by day. My parents never got bored and had enough time to listen to us. They indeed felt our lives and grew up with us.



Recently, we visited a temple on a lovely morning. It was quite a long drive for us and we had to leave home before dawn. At the temple, we offered Buddha pooja and engaged in routine religious tasks and soon after we all were left to idle in the large hall. A young priest was there, but was staring at the same square shaped device. After a while the priest realized our presence, put the device away and walked to us ignoring the continuous, "text- beeps". We engaged in a brief discussion with him and returned home. It was rather an unpleasant experience for all of us. Once again, the cleverly designed, portable tool has become a can-not-wait type of a thing.

I can talk about this as I have seen both sides of the story. Even to this date, I recall the wonderful discussions that I had with my parents and so do they. But will I or my son ever have a memory to remember the way how I do about my parents and vice versa? I am not sure, is all what I can say at this point!

Hashini Mohottala

All pictures on this page & the pictures of the winter scenes are courtesy of Google images

### **Samaneri Ordination (Pabbaja) of Anagarika Kemanthi**

In our previous Maya Puwath volume we published an article about Anagarika Kemanthi.

On Sunday the 30th of October Anagarika Kemanthi took her next step in to holy life by ordaining as a samaneri (10 precept nun). Venerable Bhikkhuni Satima was her preceptor and this beautiful ceremony took place near the Stupa 2 site at Dhammasara Buddhist Nunns Monastery, Western Australia. Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso suggested a new name and from now Anagarika Kemanthi will be known as Sister Karunika (the compassionate one).

You can see some photos of this beautiful ceremony at the following link.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/67319631@N04/6338450919/in/set-72157628114610722/> <http://www.dhammasara.org.au/>

**A PUBLICATION OF THE MAHAMAYA GIRLS' COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA  
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