

EDITORIAL

All good things must come to an end. Or that is how I see my tenure as editor of *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, which is about to come to an end, having tendered my resignation from the post with effect from January 2015. But there is already in place an editor who will not only ensure that the journal will retain its unbroken continuity in publishing but also do all he can to improve it. I wish him the best.

When I took over as Editor of the Journal in 2012, the country had not only emerged, badly scarred, from a 30-year-old Civil War but had already been through one Presidential Election where the incumbent President, widely credited with giving political leadership to the battle against Tamil Tiger separatists had been challenged by his own Army Commander, his one-time comrade-in-arms in that war. In 2014, as I get ready to step down, the incumbent President is once again being challenged, in a snap election that he had called, by the secretary of his own political party, the SLFP. Though the outcome of the Election is still too close to call, the President and his challenger differ on one fundamental point: the executive presidency.

The incumbent President, who, through the 18th Amendment, did away with the two-term limit on the Presidency, sees the sovereignty of the people as allowing people to decide at *Elections* whether his popularity has run out. His opponent (along with his supporters) point to the inherently authoritarian tendencies in the executive presidency that concentrates power in the hands of one individual at the expense of the legislature. They point to the fate of the 17th Amendment to the constitution, which was a move in the direction of democratic governance, as proof of such anti-democratic leanings.

Whatever be the result, there is no question that Sri Lanka is at a crossroads, once again, in its post-independence history. Would the Sri Lankan electorate endorse President Rajapakse's bid for an unprecedented third term or bid farewell to him though grateful in their hearts for the leadership role he played in bringing the Civil War to an end?

In such an infinitely variable socio-political landscape, the Humanities and Social Sciences scholars are offered a veritable

mine of ideas, issues and trends to excavate and study. How the history(ies), culture(s) and psyche(s) of the Sri Lankan people affect and impact on current and contemporary socio-political phenomena, for one thing, make for interesting study. In this Election, Mahinda Rajapakse banks on his road to victory on "gratitude", which he believes is a valued cultural trait of Sri Lankan people. On the other side of the divide, the "Common Candidate" is being patented as someone of *authentic* rural-(farmer) roots. These obviously have some valence - or else the "spin doctors" would not harp on them so much.

So, as I take my own curtain call after only 3 years at the helm of the Journal and *before* I am booted out, I wish to express *my* gratitude to the members of the Editorial Board and Editorial Advisory Panel for their cooperation that helped me much in my job as Editor. One member of the Editorial Advisory Panel deserves special mention: Dr. John Rogers who has worked tirelessly to secure articles as well as to ensure that Sri-Lanka themed books published by reputed international publishers abroad are brought to the attention of a local audience via reviews by eminent local scholars - an exercise that I like to think is mutually beneficial to the author and audience. The present volume thus carries four such reviews in addition to several research articles on subjects as diverse as caste, *Maname*, Sinhala films and Schopenhauer. I cannot help but think that readers of volume 40 of *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, offered such a smorgasbord, would have little to complain.

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