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The Doon School
WEEKLY

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Art meets Politics

Shikhar Singh and Ashish Mitter talk to Sri Lankan art historian, SinhRaja Tammita Delgoda, who gave a talk on Stanley Kirinde, a prominent Sri Lankan artist

The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Tell us a little bit about your academic background.

SinhRaja Tammita Delgoda (SRD): Well, actually I'm a historian! I did a Phd in 18th century Indian history from King's College, London. I have also done an M.A. in Medieval Literature from York University. In fact, I was raised in the UK and only shifted to Sri Lanka late in life, on the insistence of my mother. I can't imagine living anywhere else now!

DSW: As a Sri Lankan, what role do you see Sri Lanka playing in a rapidly developing South Asia?

SRD: Just as Singapore is considered as the gateway to South-East Asia, Sri Lanka has the potential to become the gateway to South Asia. Colombo, the capital, is on all the major shipping routes, and if developed, can become a major shipping hub. However, the one major disadvantage Sri Lanka faces is that it is a victim of linguistic politics. For a long time, Sinhala was the medium of education, resulting in two generations of people who are not conversant with the West; who are inherently insular.

DSW: You came to give a talk on Stanley Kirinde, and his role in preserving Sri Lanka's identity. In today's world, how important is it for a country to preserve its identity?

SRD: Well, identity is very important to every culture. We definitely don't want a plastic culture. For example, Sri Lankans are deeply influenced by India— we have a Sanskrit tradition, we have a Buddhist tradition, our language is an Indo-Aryan language. But Sri Lanka has always fought to maintain its independence, to maintain its own separate identity.

DSW: When you talk about identity, how do you see the Tamil demand for a separate Eelam?

SRD: Let's look at some facts: 74% of Sri Lankans are Sinhalese Buddhists. Sri Lanka also has many minorities— Muslims, Burghers (Eurasians) and Tamils. The Tamils themselves are split into two major communities— the Indian Tamils who came with the British, and the Sri Lankan Tamils who have lived on the island for centuries. Not all Tamils are crying out for a separate Eelam. More than half of the Tamil population in fact lives in Sinhala majority areas. The LTTE, which is the largest organization fighting for an Eelam is asking for between one-third and two-thirds of Sri Lankan territory, while representing not more than 10% of the population. It is simply unreasonable.

DSW: And India's role in the conflict...

SRD: From the Indian point of view, it is I suppose in a way advantageous to have a conflict in the south. You see Sri Lanka has always maintained good relations not only with India but also with China and Pakistan, countries with whom India has fought major wars. In 1978, when Mrs. Bandaranaike's socialist regime was brought down and replaced with Mr. Jayawardene's aggressively capitalist one, Sri Lanka suddenly became a threat to Indian geopolitical interests. And so we had an armed conflict to bring Colombo to heel. It is also interesting to note the year of Indian military intervention, (that is the IPKF- 1987). It occurred just as the Sri Lankan military was on the verge of crushing the LTTE.

DSW: Do you see Stanley Kirinde's art as a reaction to growing Tamil nationalism?

SRD: Stanley Kirinde is not a Sinhala artist. He is a Sri Lankan artist. His art represents the desire for a united Sri Lanka, and it is for this reason that his art is being used as a medium of diplomacy, as a way of selling Sri Lankan culture, as a way of rectifying Sri Lanka's bad image vis-à-vis human rights. In fact the decision to use his art for this purpose was really taken by the late L. Kadrigamar, a brilliant Sri Lankan statesman, who was recently assassinated by the LTTE because of his work in getting the group branded as an international terrorist organization. Mr Kadrigamar was a Tamil intellectual who didn't support the LTTE, who actively pushed for a united Sri Lanka, and was killed for his beliefs.

DSW: On a slightly more personal note, your favourite book is...

SRD: *A Suitable Boy*, by Vikram Seth. Not only is it a great book, but it also changed the entire face of English literature. It proved that Asians could write in English and write well.

DSW: How would you describe yourself in a word?

SRD: I'll give you a line- if you can't mock the things you believe in, you take life all too seriously.

REGULARS

APPOINTMENTS

Anirudh Kapur has been appointed the **School PT Leader** for the forthcoming year.

Ashwin Bhaskar has been appointed **Boy-in-Charge of Motor Mechanics** for 2007.
Congratulations!

PICTURE PERFECT

Dilawar Kapur, Vishesh Goel and Vivek Santayana participated in the **National Photography Competition 2006** and were awarded prizes for their work. Well done!

RACQUET RESULTS

The following are the results of the **Individual Squash Championship** held last term:

Under-19: Rajnush Agarwal

Under-17: Udai Singh

Under-15: Ananth Agarwal

Under-13: Sumer Sandhu

Well played!

IAYP ACHIEVERS

The following boys have successfully completed their **IAYP Award**:

Bronze Standard: Vishnu Vardhan, Aditya Kothiwal, Yojit Mehra, Varun Agarwal.

Silver Standard: Ramakrishna Pappu, Shantanu Garg, Ayyappa Vemulkar, Adhip Chopra, Pranav Matta.
Congratulations!

NEW BOYS IN TOWN

We congratulate Kamal Ahuja, Pankaj Joshi, Debasish Chakrabarty and Priyanka Bhattacharya on the birth of their respective sons.

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TAK

Dhruv Velloor has a quick conversation with Jasbir Kaur Anand (JKA), a member of our English faculty. She joins us with 20 years of teaching experience.

DSW: Has your transition from Welham to Doon been difficult?

JKA: No, not really, as they both follow a similar boarding school pattern. I actually feel quite at home here.

DSW: What gives you the most joy from teaching?

JKA: Being with children.

DSW: Has teaching been a childhood aspiration or was it fate?

JKA: Definitely a childhood aspiration. It was right from the start that I decided to teach.

DSW: Name the single greatest quality any good teacher must have.

JKA: To listen to the children.

DSW: If you were not a teacher, you would be...

JKA: (Laughs) Probably a doctor.



doonspeak

As a boarding school, what does Doon need to improve?

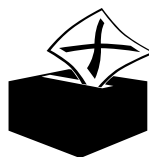
We need to work in improving our sports infrastructure and providing international education – **Vatsal Modi**
Personal development of each student – **Eshaan Puri**
Public-speaking skills of the boys – **Abhimanyu Chandra**
Providing better career guidance – **Ankit Chowdhary**
Emphasis on the coaching of major sports to everyone – **Apurv Agarwa**
Personality development and mass participation in all spheres – **Udai Pratap Singh**
Better boarding facilities – **Sachin Uppal**
Keeping the school infrastructure up-to-date – **Chinmay Sharma**

CAREER CALL

The Careers notice board will focus on **The Indian Institute of Cost and Works Accountants of India** this week. All those interested should lookup the board.

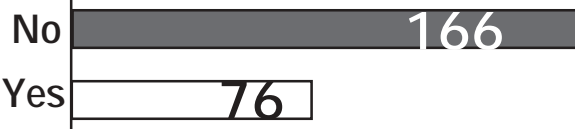
OBITUARY

We regret to note the passing away of Aditya Lall (ex-538 H'01), in a car accident, on December 3, 2006. Our condolences to the bereaved family.



Opinion Poll

Do you take reality TV shows seriously?



242 members of the community participated in the poll.

Next Week's Question: Does the outcome of the Uttarakhand polls engage and interest you?

beg your pardon

by Tanuj Bhramar



PT begins: "Squad short... um, stiff movements."

First Impressions

Geoffrey Tibbs, on arrival at Doon

Having left school recently, I wondered whether it would be inadvisable to come to another one. Surely the point of a gap year, to get away from it all, would be missed if I were to come back to school. It hasn't taken long for The Doon School to silence my worry. For a start, my experience of the place would be from a rare angle: I'm the same age as the Sc Leavers, but I have a pigeon-hole in the Staff Room.

I had heard a fair bit about The Doon School before. My uncle, Nikhil Senapati, was here some time ago. As with most people who spend six years here, I'm sure the experiences formed or transformed him to some degree. The habit of running early each morning, for instance, can only be a residue of 06:30 PT!

I arrived on campus four days before term started. Empty schools often have an uneasy feeling of readiness about them. Every sound was clearly audible, every scurrying figure was noticeable in the absence of students. It was as though the spaces were missing the bustle of all those now on holiday. I had a chance to find my way around the spacious playing fields and to look at the unoccupied architecture. On my first evening, I unpacked my clothes in my room in Oberoi House, feeling slightly nervous. That night, sleep was interrupted frequently on account of the wedding season, which seemed to be culminating outside my window. Oberoi House, I discovered, was not completely deserted. The Sc Leavers were welcoming and, in-between long hours hunched over books, they took time to tell me about the place in action. I gathered that the Doon School in full swing is a little like an anthill. With barely enough time to draw breath, the boys, each set on a certain cause, ran restlessly from one building to another. Working thoroughly, they need to sleep thoroughly, but not for too long because they have two lessons before breakfast. I also received the message that the students were highly competitive and that corresponding success was thoroughly and highly rewarded.

The grounds seemed bursting with expectation by the afternoon of the 31st January, and my own expectations turned out to be quite accurate. Everything, everyone, seemed immediately in full flow. Meal times are punctual; everybody's day is full. On a gap-year it can be easy to drift, to travel aimlessly. So an energetic system, instantaneously launched before my eyes, was a welcome sight. Aimlessness seems out of the question.

During a visit to the Headmaster, I was shown the plans for the new Art School. When it's finished it will surely be one of the best such departments in the world. I was sorry to have arrived a couple of years too early, but was none the less excited at the prospect of teaching art. In England, some schools (including my old school) teach life drawing. This, Dr. Bajpai informed me, was out of the question. I was soon aware, on seeing some student work, that art at The Doon School is made and taught in a very different tradition to that which I've been exposed to. Within a few days, I'd been given my own art class. Being just a few days older than those in it, it feels odd to say that I'm teaching them. I'm sure, in the end, they'll teach me just as much.

| From Vancouver |

Deepansh Chowdhary (ex- 498 K'06) shares his initial experiences at college in Canada

Studying abroad is something that most people in their S and Sc forms start looking forward to, and this is precisely what I planned. From then until now..... all that I wanted, I got. Destiny had Canada for me and after all the tussle I finally arrived at Pearson International Airport, Vancouver. Here I was, for the first time out of India, and there was a whole new world waiting for me out there. Living in the third most liveable city of the world is an altogether new experience; people from all around the world can be seen here. My initial days in Vancouver were those in which I explored the city. In the beginning everything appeared to be very expensive but slowly I got accustomed to the dollar price. Living all alone is indeed a big responsibility. Managing your residence is nothing less than managing a typical *grihasthi* life, like, going grocery shopping on the weekends, customising the house budget according to the pocket and other such mundane concerns. There is an even bigger challenge in meeting new people; every person whom you meet has a nice, warm outward appearance but there is a hidden side to this.

University started with orientation days, and then classes kicked off. A class here has about 200 students (the number could be more in some cases) in one lecture theatre, equipped with all the AV aids. There are weekly assignments for every course, much like the assignment schedule listed in our school diary, which are great tools to inculcate the habit of team work. Students are grouped into tutorial sections (about 25 students to one tutorial) where a professor and a teaching assistant (TA)

who is a graduate student or a senior undergraduate student, assists students in doing their assignments. Everyone discusses the problem, puts forward their views and if need be, the TA helps out, and slowly the entire problem is solved. In the university laboratories I encountered a completely different system and terminology (e.g. a conical flask is termed an 'Erlenmeyer flask' and a rubber stopper is called 'rubber policeman' etc.). Before doing the experiment in the lab, the student is supposed to devise a method on an experimental design form and start the experiment right from scratch. We have to prepare the solutions that we use, unlike in school, where it was prepared by the lab assistant. Also, there is immense importance laid upon safety in labs (even the janitor is supposed to wear eye protection while doing the cleaning!). At times it felt that unnecessary precautions were being taken, but that's the system.

As I got immersed in the mainstream of college life in Vancouver, I noticed that my first semester had flown past and finally I have time at hand. I realised that my maximum capacity of working was way more than what I had in school. The university system is such that one has to work to survive (no short cuts!). A word of friendly advice to all those aspiring to pursue higher studies abroad. I must say that it does appear very glamorous and appealing till the time you have not seen it but once you experience it, then you discover the truth about the harsh world and yes, it does require strong determination to resist adverse social pressure.

‘Suitcase and Guitar in Hand...’

Harsh Mall records a musical experience

Music is an experience, a sensation, which pleases everybody, no matter what form it presents itself in. Today, with the kind of media coverage, the growing entertainment sector and an appreciative and often discriminating audience, one finds oneself bombarded with variety and choice when it comes to music. In the rapidly growing and competitive world of entertainment, many artistes are born, and there to further their endeavours and present them to listeners, is the increasingly sophisticated (in terms of technology and know-how) recording industry.

This summer break, Gaurav Sood and I decided to put our ideas on vinyl (or rather CD) and headed to the hub of entertainment in India: Mumbai. Although it is here in school that we build on our talent, after a point we felt that we could go a little further and decided to explore and venture into something new. A small adventure back in A form at a local home studio really sparked us off and from then on, there was no stopping. We patiently waited as we passed through our Board exams and finally hit the perfect time to record our own compositions.

The recording studio we booked was a very new one: started by a seasoned musician, Mr. Kenneth D’Souza, who now produces and promotes amateur artistes. The two technicians who helped us were under-graduate students studying sound engineering and both of them are extremely enthusiastic musicians too. Mr. D’Souza introduced them to us and once the ice was broken, we were on a roll. For the first time we realized the difference between performing live and recording in a studio. The latter requires huge amounts of concentration, pinpoint accuracy and loads and loads of patience. As one layer is added over another, one tends to get increasingly frustrated at the smallest of errors but the engineers make sure the end result is perfect.

As it was just the two of us, we had to do a lot of multi-tasking. Thanks to the technology available today, one can afford to take it easy and record a song track by track. We made the most of the three days of recording we had and even brought in two other friends to add on to some of the tracks. The final step was the mixing, which involved editing the songs and making them ready for the listeners. And finally, we had it in our hands; a mere CD, but it held our best ideas and the result of our week’s hard work (the average time spent at the studio was 11 hours a day).

On one of the tracks, we put down the skeleton and

then starting building up on it. But soon both of us started getting a lot of new ideas and kept adding and adding to the song till it sounded chaotic. It was here that the engineer came to our rescue and balanced the levels of all the tracks and when we heard the final version it was jaw-dropping. The entire essence of the song had changed and it seemed like a completely new track. Such incidents made the whole process extremely memorable and there was never a boring moment.

We decided to be as ‘professional’ as possible and gave our collection a name. We called it *Hiatus*. The name actually says it all: as we are only at the threshold of this fascinating and complex world, learners still, experimenting, exploring the many facets of composition, instrumental technique, lyric-writing, and, of course, the all-important ‘marketing’ of our product and locating its niche in the rather daunting musical spectrum of today. Our ideas are based around the ever-popular genre of rock and from here we have branched out to experiment with other types of musical techniques and genres. Hearing our own music on a CD was itself a very pleasing sensation but one is the greatest critic of one’s own work and we still keep coming up with newer ideas on how some things could have been done differently and, in some ways, made better.

This was a wonderful way of playing around with our hobby and copies of the CD are available with either of us (yes, we have taken the marketing into our own hands!). In our final year at school we have many other priorities but having set our first step on that ‘rocky road’, we will continue in our current role of learners and explorers. Meanwhile, we can look back and say: we had the time of our lives!

funny FACTS

Snails can sleep for three years without eating.

It’s possible to lead a cow upstairs...but not downstairs.

The sentence “The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog,” uses every letter in the alphabet

An ostrich’s eye is bigger than its brain.

Months that begin on a Sunday will always have a ‘Friday the 13th’.

The beating human heart is capable of squirting blood thirty feet away.

Banging your head against the wall uses 150 calories per hour.

You are more likely to be killed by a popping champagne cork than by a poisonous spider.

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weekly@doonschool.com



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