

INITIATED BY LECTURER SUGATH RATNAYAKE

# Sinhala Library at a Chinese University

**T**he Sinhala Language Library of Yunnan University, one of the leading state universities in China that teaches Sinhala, was opened recently.

It was inaugurated by Prof. Liu Shusen, Dean, School of Foreign Languages, Yunnan University and Sugath Ratnayake, Lecturer, Department of Sinhala Studies.

Wang Yiguang, Secretary of the Party Committee of the Yunnan University School of Foreign Languages, Prof. Xie Ping, Prof. Zang Yunfa, Prof. Wang Hao, deputy deans, as well as Liu Ye, Chinese Lecturer in the Department of Sinhala Studies and a group of Sinhala language students at the University were present.

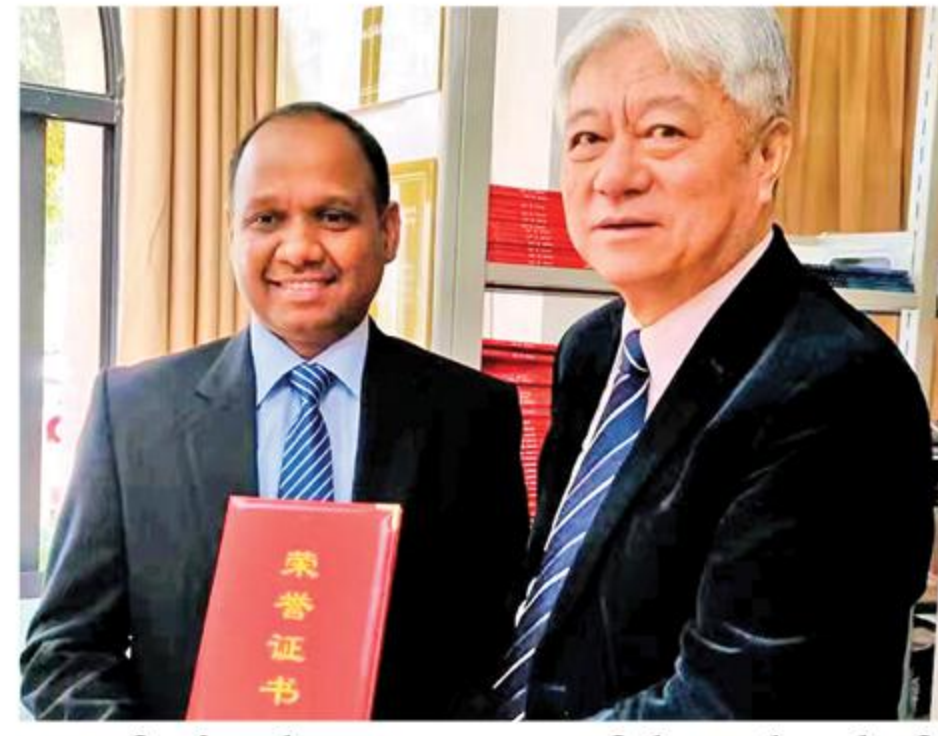
This library of 1000 books was started by the lecturer Sugath Ratnayake for the benefit of Chinese students studying Sinhala as a Major at Yunnan University. The Sinhala books have been donated by Sugath Rathnayake as well as from the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka and the Read Plus Consortium.

Sugath's wife, Nethika Ashinshani, has been coordinating this work from Sri Lanka in the midst of restrictions during the Covid-19 epidemic. His ten-year-old daughter Ihansa Ratnayake and the money she has collected since she was a child have been donated to buy some books.

Sugath Ratnayake's donation has been highly praised and commended by the Heads of Yunnan Universities. They say it has played a vital role in building the Sinhala language curricu-



**Opening of the library by Prof. Liu Shusen, Dean, School of Foreign Languages, Yunnan University and Sugath Ratnayake, Lecturer, Department of Sinhala**



**Prof. Liu Shusen, Dean of the School of Foreign Languages presents a Certificate of Honour to Sugath Ratnayake on behalf of Yunnan University**



**Sugath Ratnayake with the Deans, Deputy Deans, Teachers and Students**



**Sugath Ratnayake, Lecturer, Department of Sinhala Studies, Yunnan University**

ulum at the university and in the Sri Lanka - China friendly exchange.



Accordingly, at a meeting chaired by the university leaders, it was decided to set up a "Sri Lanka-China Friendship Library", said Wang Yiguang, Secretary of the Party Committee at the Foreign Language School, at the opening of the library. He expressed his gratitude to Sugath on behalf of the teachers and students of the

entire university.

Prof. Liu Shusen, Dean, School of Foreign Languages, Yunnan University, said that this large volume of books has made our school's Sinhala book collection one of the top universities in the country.

He said that the "Sri Lanka-China Friendship Library" established by our University based on those books is a testament to the friendship between China and the people of Sri Lanka. The Dean of the Faculty requested Sugath

to extend his sincere gratitude to the former Minister of Education Dinesh Gunawardena, leading Ministry of Education officials, the Reed Plus Consortium, his wife, and daughter and all the friends who assisted in this endeavor.

Lecturer Sugath Ratnayake said that the establishment of the "Sri Lanka-China Friendship Library" was an important milestone in his university career and would turn a new page in the history of Sri Lanka-China relations.

He said he was very proud and happy to start a library with 1,000 less than two years after the establishment of the Department of Sinhala Studies



at Yunnan University. He also appealed to the students to study hard and dedicate themselves to further strengthen the Sri Lanka - China friendship.

At the opening ceremony of the library, Prof. Liu Shusen, Dean of the School of Foreign Languages, presented a Certificate of Honour to Sugath Ratnayake on behalf of Yunnan University.

Liu Ye, a Chinese lecturer in the Department of Sinhala Studies said. "We appreciate the people from Sri Lanka who helped us build this library. Lack of Sinhala books was an obstacle to our Sinhala education. With these books, students can now develop a better understanding of the friendship between Sri Lanka and the two countries."

Several Sinhala language students who participated in the event also commented on the Sri Lanka-China Friendship Library.

"This book donation is very good and important for the cultural exchange between the two countries. We would also like to donate Chinese books to Sri Lanka."

"These books will develop the Sinhala language in our university. Thank you to all Sri Lankans, including you, for donating these."

"I saw a lot of little story books with pictures. Very simple. Now we can read them."

"I am truly honored to be your student. I am amazed at your daughter's sacrifice and your wife's commitment."

Many Chinese media outlets, including Xinhua, China International Radio, Yunnan Daily, and the University website, have praised the book donation initiative, which was initiated by Sugath Ratnayake.

The Department of Sinhala Language Studies at Yunnan University was established in September 2020. That year 20 Chinese students were enrolled to study Sinhala and another group of new students are scheduled to be enrolled in September this year.

