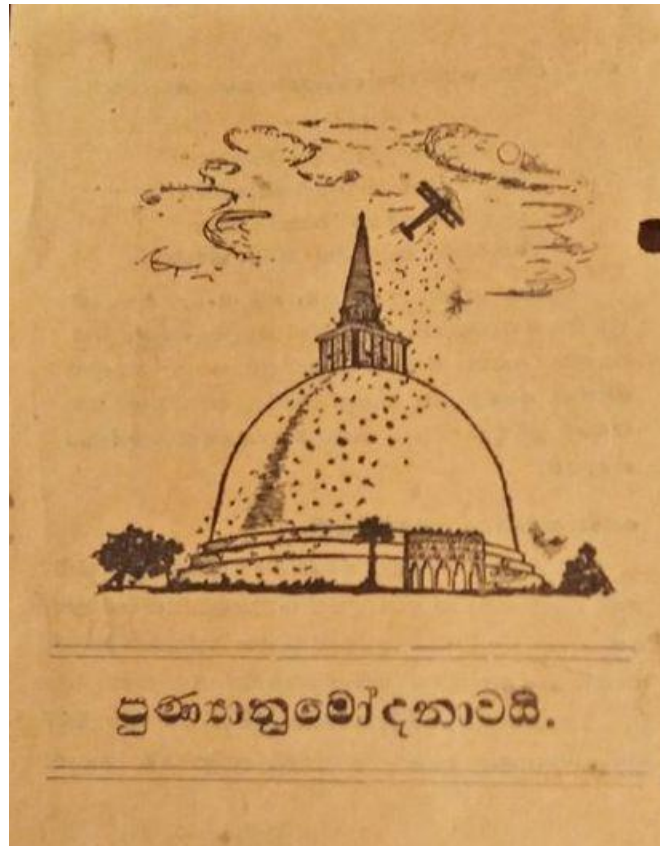


## SRI LANKA'S FIRST AERIAL FLOWER DROP IN 1940

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Courtesy: Archaeological Society of Sri Lanka and Abayadhara Makalanda through Ashi Fernando (aviator, writer and aviation history enthusiast)

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On 19th June 1940, N.S. Makalanda made history when he hired an aeroplane and made a spectacular aerial offering of jasmine flowers and scented perfume over the newly renovated Ruwanweliseya stupa, during the unveiling of its crystal pinnacle. The flight which departed from Ratmalana airport, and flew for 170 minutes costing Mr Makalanda a princely sum One Hundred and Twenty-Seven rupees and Fifty cents [Rs 127/50] made history as the first ever 'Flower Drop' flight of Ceylon's aviation Centenary.

Makalanda, who engaged in this meritorious deed, hails from Kotte and was an old boy of Royal College Colombo. Being a quiet, unassuming and shy person, Makalanda kept his achievements under wraps for decades, until his son decided to share this valuable piece of history with the world.

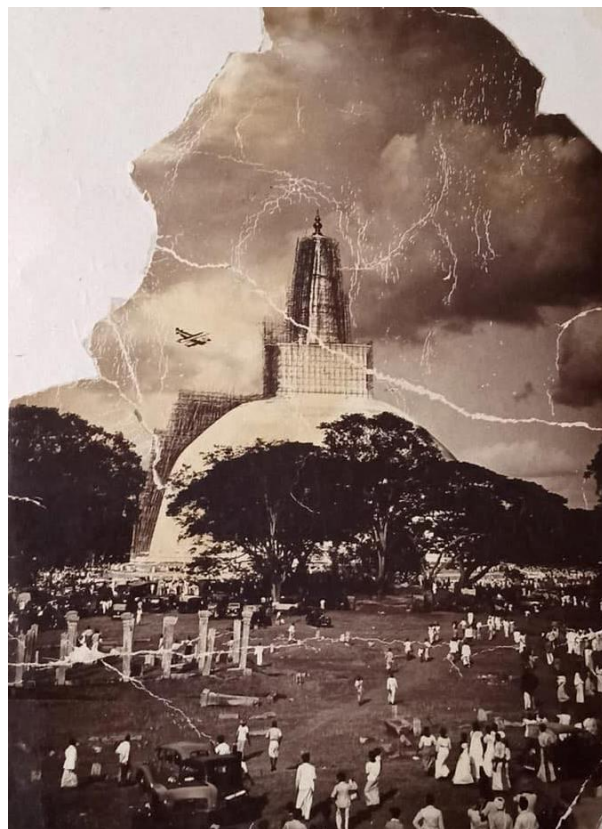
Given below is the correspondence that took place between Makalanda and the relevant authorities that led to the memorable event.

**Note:** The pilot of the history making flight was Flt Lt R. Duncanson who held a 'B' licence at the time. No mention is made of the type of aeroplane that did this historic flight. However, given the fact that there were three de Havilland aircraft; the DH 60 Moth, Tiger Moth and the Moth Minor and one British Aircraft, the BA Swallow, which were operated by the Aero Club at the time, it is most certainly one of these aircraft that did the flight.

ලංකා ඉතිහාසයේ ප්‍රථම වතාවට "ගුවනින් මල් ඉසීම"

1940 වසරේ (බ්‍රිතාන්‍ය අධිරාජ්‍යය සමයේ) ජූනි 19 වන දින රුවන්වැලි මහා සෑයේ චූඩ මාණික්‍ය නැන්පත් කොට පූජෝත්සවයක් පැවැත්වූ අවස්ථාවේ, ලංකාවේ ප්‍රථම වතාවට, ගුවන් යානයකින් මහා සෑයට මල් පූජා කර ඇත්තේ එන්. ඇස්. මාකලන්ද නැමැති තරුණයෙකුය. එතුමා මේ සඳහා කුලියට ගත් ගුවන් යානය සඳහා, රුපියල් එකසිය දහයක [RS 110/=] ඇඩ්වාන්ස් හැටියට ගෙවා ඇත. ඉතිරි මුදල සමග රුපියල් එකසිය විස්සයි ගන පනහක [RS 120/50] සම්පූර්ණ ගුවන් කාලය වන විනාඩි 170ක සඳහා ඔහුට වැය විය.

ජායාරූප එකතුව හා ලිපි ලේඛන අයිතිය: එන් එස් මාකලන්ද මහතාගේ පුත් අභයධර මාකලන්ද මහතා



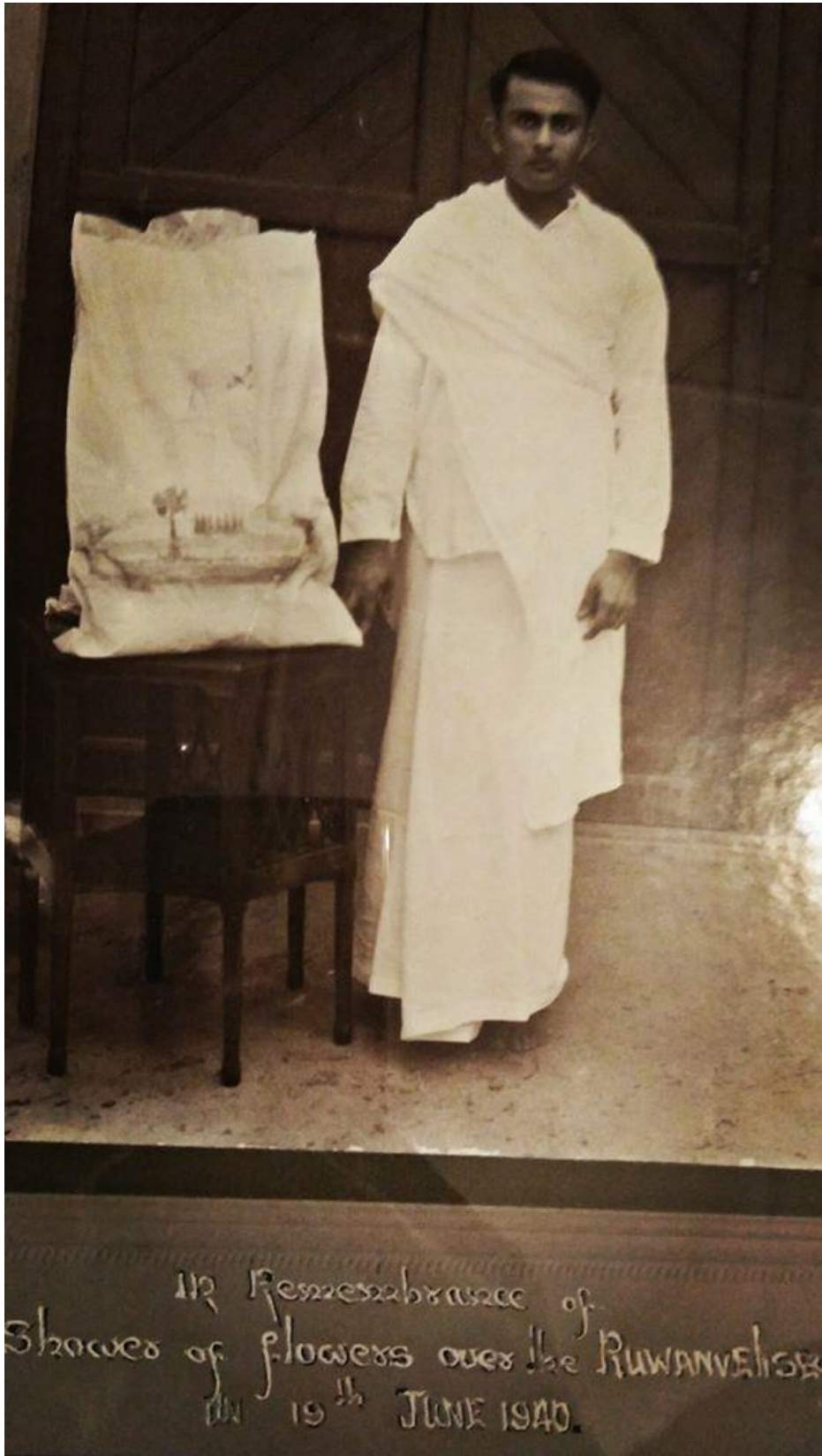
උපුටා ගැනීම : පුරා විද්‍යා සංගමය

Courtesy:

Archaeological Society of Sri Lanka

Abayadhara Makalanda [Son of N.S. Makalanda]

Additional info: Capt Ashi Fernando



**N.S. Makalanda**

Kurumanana,  
K. O. S. S.,  
2<sup>nd</sup> April 1940.

The Secretary,

Ceylon Aero Club Limited,  
Ratmalana.

Sir,

On the occasion of the unveiling ceremony of the Ruwanvelisaya Dagoba on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May 1940, I am intending to send down from the air a shower of flowers on the Dagoba. Please be good enough to let me know as earliest as possible if your club is able to hire out a plane and if so the charges for a trip to Anuradhapura and back.

Thanking you in anticipation of a favourable reply.

B. S. Mahabandula

I am, Sir,  
Your Obedient Servant  
B. Mahabandula

Telegrams: "AEROCLUB."

Telephone: 293, Mt. Lavinia.

THE AERO CLUB OF CEYLON LTD.

Registered Office: COLOMBO AIR PORT.

Patron: H. E. THE GOVERNOR.

Vice-Patrons: Viscount Wakefield of Hythe, Vice-Admiral The Hon. Sir A. R. H. Ramsay, Major J. L. Kotlawala.  
President: Douglas de Silva.

In reply please quote GM/27 2627 3rd April 1940

N. S. Makalanda, Esq.,  
Kusumana,  
Kotte.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter of the 2nd instant, the contents of which are noted, and wish to advise you as follows:-

In all probability a club 'plane could be hired by your goodself on the 21st of May 1940 for a trip to Amuradhapura and back and our charges would be approximately Rs. 110/-. In the meanwhile, in order to comply with Air Navigation Regulations, you will have to get permission from the Government Authorities regarding the dropping of flowers from the air and in this connection we would advise you to write to the Home Minister, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Colombo, and endeavour to obtain such permission.

In the event of your obtaining this permission, please communicate with us again regarding the hire of our club 'plane.  
Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

*D. H. S. S. S. S.*  
Secretary.

"Kusumand"

Kotte,

10<sup>th</sup> April 1940.

The Secretary,

The Aero Club of Ceylon Ltd.

Ratmalana.

Sir,

With reference to your letter of 7/4/40 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. I am anxious to have a personal interview with you on the subject. So, please be good enough to let me know per return a date, time and place suitable to meet you.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully  
N. S. Mabalana

N. S. Mabalana

Telegrams      Telephone  
MINISTER: HOMEMIN      3185  
SECRETARY: HOMESec      2065

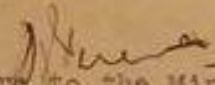


No. E.200/40.

The Ministry of Home Affairs,  
Colombo,      18th April, ... 1940.

Sir,  
With reference to your letter dated the 5th April, 1940, regarding a proposal to drop flowers from an aeroplane on the Ruwanwelisoya Dagoba on the 21st May, 1940, I am directed by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Hon. Sir D.B. Jayatilaka, to enquire whether you have obtained the approval of the Ruwanwelisoya Maha Dagoba Restoration Society, and the Venerable Salmillawewa Sri Sumana Rewatha Nayaka Thero, Maha Vihara Pirivana, Ruwanwelisoya, Anuradhapura, who is in charge of the Dagoba.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,

  
Secretary to the Minister of  
Home Affairs.

Mr. N. S. Makalande,  
"Kusamana", Kotte.

"Kusumana",

Kotte,

20<sup>th</sup> April 1940

The Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs,  
The Ministry of Home Affairs,  
Colombo,

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge with thanks your letter N<sup>o</sup> F 209/40 of the 15<sup>th</sup> inst; and beg to inform you that I will be obtaining the approval of the Society and the Incumbent of the Dagoba as soon as possible. After which I shall make further communications with you on the subject.

Thanking you.

I am, Sir  
your obedient Servant  
N. S. Makalanda

N. S. Makalanda.





අනුරාධපුර  
රුවන්මැලි මහා ස්‍රාවණාවතීන සමාජය.

THE RUWANMELI MAHA DAGOBA  
RESTORATION SOCIETY.

ANURADHAPURA

31<sup>st</sup> May

2009  
14/05

A. S. Madalanda Esq.  
Kusumana  
Kotte.

Dear Sir.

With reference to your letter of  
30. 4. 10, I have the honor to inform  
you that the Society has decided to hold  
the Festival on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1910 by the  
auspicious hour of 8.50 AM. But the actual ceremony  
will take place on 12. 1910. So please make arrangements  
to perform the flower offering suggested, on  
the latter said date.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully

*W. J. Jayasinghe*

(Hon. Secy)

N. B.

Mrs B. K. Jayasinghe will explain further details.

Hon'ble H. Rewatha.  
High Priest.

Office of the Alama  
Maha Vihara Peruwane,  
Ruwanmelliseya.

Anuradhapura. 5<sup>th</sup> May 1940.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter of the 2nd instant. The Alamas' Committee heartily endorses your suggestion of offering flowers to the Dagaba on the day of the Crystal Crowning Ceremony. But as to offering them from an aeroplane, though the suggestion is a good one, the Committee requests the following information from you, before permission can be granted.

- (i) The name of the pilot.
- (ii) The qualification he holds, whether 'A' or 'B' certificate.

The committee feels that it cannot take the risk of giving you the necessary permission on a day when thousands will be gathered together unless the pilot holds a 'B' certificate.

Yours faithfully,  
R. Duncanson.  
"B" Lines

I remain,  
Yours sincerely,  
R. Duncanson

Harry Seey,  
Alamas' Office

H. Madalanda

Kumbhalinga,  
Kolla,  
7<sup>th</sup> May 1940

The Venerable H. Ramatha,  
High Priest,  
Maha Vikasa Pinnasa  
Purwanmelaseya,  
Anuradhapura.

Dear Venerable,

I thank you for your letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> instant and have the honour to furnish<sup>you</sup> with the following information as request by ~~the~~ you.

- (i). The name of the Pilot is  
Flight Lt. R. Duncanson
- (ii). He holds a "B" license.

I hope that this information will be to your entire satisfaction and you will be kind enough to grant me the necessary permission, as immediately as possible as I have to make <sup>further arrangements</sup>.  
Thanking you in anticipation of an

Walter H. H. H. H.

Alamogordo, N. M.

Alamogordo, 25th May - 1940.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 7<sup>th</sup> instant, the Alamogordo Committee has very great pleasure in giving you the necessary permission, so the information supplied by you is to their entire satisfaction.

Please inform us of the day on which you propose to offer these flowers by aeroplane, and the time you have fixed to do so.

The Alamogordo Committee stresses on you the necessity for taking the utmost care, while the flowers are being so offered.

Yours sincerely,

R. Weaver

Hon. Secy

Alamogordo Committee

No. A. 18/40.

Ministry of Communications and Works,  
Colombo, 23rd May 1940.

Sir,

With reference to your letter dated the 5th April 1940, to the Hon. the Minister of Home Affairs, who has referred it to this Ministry for disposal, I am directed by the Minister for Communications and Works, the Hon. Major J.L. Kotelawala, to inform you that your request will be granted.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,

*N. A. Deo*  
Secretary to the Hon. the  
Minister for Communications and Works  
BA.

alanda, Esq.,  
Kusumana",  
Kotte.

Kusumana,

Kotte,

25<sup>th</sup> May 1940.

The Secretary to the Minister of Communication & Works  
Ministry of Communication & Works  
Colombo.

Proposal to drop flowers from an aeroplane  
on the Puwanweliseya on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1940

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge with thanks your letter N° A. 18/40 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1940 and to inform you that I will be much obliged if you would kindly send me the necessary permission as early as possible.

Thanking you in anticipation of an early favourable reply.

I am Sir,  
your obedient servant.  
N. S. Makalanda

N. S. Makalanda.

G. S. Mahabalan

"Kusumana",

Kotte

12<sup>th</sup> June 1940

The Secretary

The Ruwanveli Maha Dagoba  
Restoration Society,

Ruwanveliseya

Anuradhapura

Dear Sir,

I am sending for the present  
500 pamphlets about the shower of  
flowers <sup>at the Dagoba.</sup> Please be kind enough to  
send distribute same among the  
public on the 15<sup>th</sup> instant. A further  
1000 will follow in two days time

Thanking you

Yours faithfully  
G. S. Mahabalan



C. D. N.  
Ruwanweli Seya

Crowning

June 14 - 1946

Special Ceremonies  
To Be Performed

THE ceremonies in connection with the Crystal crowning of the Ruwanweli Seya begin tomorrow with the offering of a "Bodhi puja" at the sacred Bo-Tree at Anurādhapura by the Mahanayake Thero of Malwatte, assisted by a large assembly of monks.

The actual crowning of the pinnacle with the Crystal from Burma takes place on the morning of June 17. The Ven. U. Vinayalankara, High Priest of Burmese monks in Ceylon, who is representing his country at this ceremony, the Ven. Paddegama Piyaratana Nayake Thero, and representatives of the Ruwanweli Seya Restoration Society will take part in the placing of the Crystal on the pinnacle.

UNVEILING

The unveiling of the Seinbu is to take place on June 19. A full programme has been arranged for the day, beginning with the taking of "Atasil" by a large number of persons including some of the Ministers of the State Council.

In the afternoon Sir Baron Jayatilaka will deliver an address after which the pinnacle with the Crystal will be unveiled. The chanting of "pirith" by the Bhikkhus of all Nikayas assembled round the dagoba will precede the unveiling while following it there will be the firing of guns and crackers and the offering of perfume and flowers to the Chaitya.

There will also be the spectacular offering of jasmin flowers and scented perfume from an aeroplane by Mr. N. S. Makalande.

In the night the Dagoba will be illuminated and there will be a display of fireworks.

Fees	Flying Subns.	N. F. Subns.	Joy Rides	Credit	Sundries
					110/-

*Att. to kindly*

**THE AERO CLUB OF CEYLON LTD. 85**

*7 June 1940.*

Received from *Mr N. S. Makalanda Esq.*  
the sum of Rupees *one hundred eleven only*

account (s) as above *advance for a flight*  
*back - subject to confirmation for*

Rs. 110/-

*Chq. No. P.M. 017701.*



Secretary.

*N. S. Makalanda Esq.*  
Kusumane  
Kotte

22nd June 1940

Dr. To THE AERO CLUB OF CEYLON, LTD.  
COLOMBO AIRPORT, RATMALANA. TEL: No. MT. LAVINIA 893.

1940					
June	19	To 170 minutes @ 45/- A'pura and back	127.50	127.50	
		By cash		110.00	
					Rs 17.50

P.S.  
Kindly remit Rupees Seventeen and cents fifty only by return of post and oblige.

*J. R. S. Rajaguru*  
Secretary.

E. & O. E.

All cheques to be crossed and made payable to:  
"THE AERO CLUB OF CEYLON, LTD."

Fees	Flying Subns.	N. F. Subns.	Joy Rides	Credit	Sundries
				17/50	

**THE AERO CLUB OF CEYLON LTD. 130**

*20 July 1940*

Received from *Mr N. S. Makalanda*  
the sum of Rupees *Seventeen and 50 paise*

account (s) as above *Balance money of the flight to foundation*

Rs. 17/50

*Chq. FM 17707*

RECEIVED PAYMENT  
WITH THANKS.

*J. R. S. Rajaguru*  
Secretary.

Telegrams: "AEROCLUB."

Telephone: 893, Mt. Lavinia.

## THE AERO CLUB OF CEYLON LTD.

Registered Office: COLOMBO AIR PORT.

Patron: H. E. THE GOVERNOR.

Vice Patron: Viscount Wakefield of Hythe, Vice-Admiral The Hon. Sir A. R. M. Ramsay, Major J. L. Kotkowski.  
President: Dunstan de Silva.

In reply please quote GM/27

14th July 1940

N. S. Makalanda, Esq.,  
Kusumane,  
Kotte.

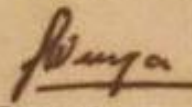
Dear Sir,

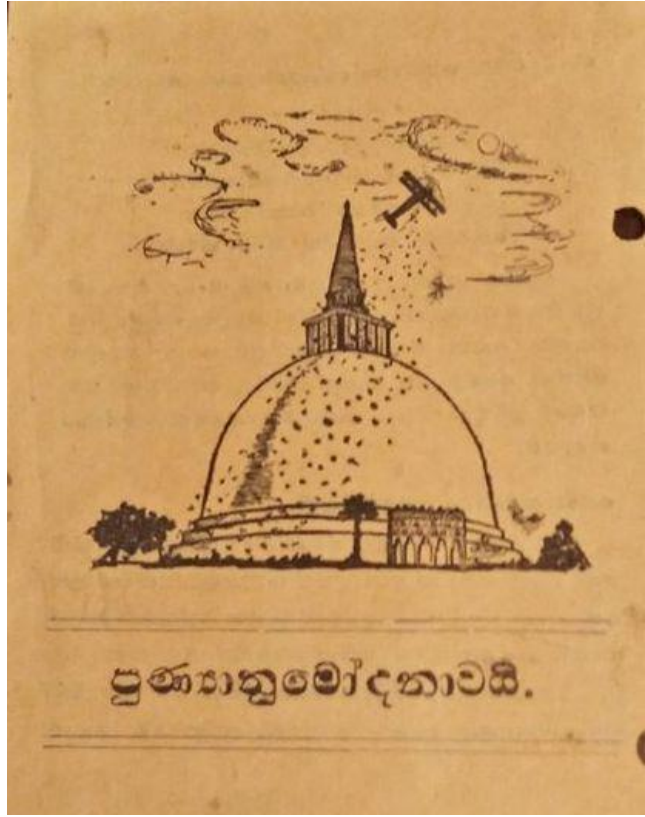
### Flight over Dagoba

This is to confirm that all arrangements have been made for the above flight on the 19th instant at 3.30 p.m.

Kindly be at the Airport on time. Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

  
p.p. Secretary



\*\*\*\*\*

KWK\_25-8-21