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## History of Medical Cannabis in Sri Lanka

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Island of Sri Lanka was occupied by Homo sapiens since 40,000 years ago. They separated into Yaksha, Naga and Deva tribes. A Yaksha king called Ravana ruled Sri Lanka around 10,000 BC and established methods of medical practices. In 509 BC a team led by Indian prince Vijaya arrived and started agriculture civilization. In 341 AD King Buddadasa wrote a medical pharmacopeia; Sarartha Sangrahaya in which he medicinal values of Cannabis were described. Since then medical books described Cannabis as an important herbal ingredient. These books include Yogarnavaya and Prayagorathnavaliya (1232), Vaidyacintamani – wish-fulfilling gem of Medicine (1707), Glossary of Synonyms of Medicinal Plants (1798), *Yogasekaraya* (1894), *Kolavidiya* (1900), *Es Veda Potha* (Ophthalmic treatments) (1908). *Saraswathi Nigantuwa* (1918), *Sri Sarangadara Samhitha* (1929), Chemistry and Pharmacology of Indian and Sri Lankan Medicinal Plants (1935), Sri Lankan Ayurvedic Pharmacopeia (1937), Senehe shathakam (1940), Thel beheth potha (book of Medicinal Oils) in 1954, *Atheesara Chikithsawa* (Diareal treatments) in 1962, Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants (1963), Purana Rahas thel beheth Potha (Ancient secretes of Medicinal Oils) in 1969, Desheeya Vaidya Sabdakoshaya (Dictionary of Indigenous Medicine) in 1970, *Go Rathnaya* (Treating Cows) in 1980, Desheeya Guli Kalka Sagaraya (Edible Medicines) in 1999. In 2015 Minister of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine Dr. Rajitha Dissanayake initiated promotion of Cannabis for Indigenous Medicine. In 2017 a comprehensive book about Cannabis was written by W.S. Weliange. Government interference is necessary to educate people about the overall importance of Cannabis for health, society and the Nature.

## Biography

Wasantha Sena Weliange is a Sri Lankan male of 53. Has a PHD in Natural Sciences, MPhil in Zoology, BSC in Zoology and a Diploma in Archaeology. He has about 15 papers published in international peer reviewed journals and books. He has received the Presidential award for the publication in peer review journals for the year 2003. He also have received the Professor M.T.M. Jiffry Memorial Award for Popularizing Science in Sri Lanka for the year 2014. In 2018 he received State Literary Awards for Children's English literature. Currently working as a Senior Lecturer attached to the Department of Biological Sciences of the Faculty of Applied Sciences of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. His research interest ranges from Fish Ecology, River Ecology, Speleobiology (Cave Biology) and Ethno-Zoology.

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