

Emeritus Professor in the Department of Buddhist Studies
Asanga Tilakaratne

Prof. Asanga Tilakaratne, the former Senior Professor and Chair of Buddhist Studies and Founder Head of the Department of Buddhist Studies retired from University service on the 23rd March 2018.

Prof. Tilakaratne joined University of Colombo in 2009 at the Chair Professor of Pali and Buddhist Studies. Prior to this appointment he served at Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya since 1992 at various capacities as senior lecturer, professor and senior professor, and from 2003 to 2006 he served as the Director of that institute. In University of Colombo, he worked hard to promote the unit of Pali and Buddhist Studies to a full-fledged department of Buddhist studies, and started with the support of the academic and non-academic staff of the unit, BA Special degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Masters, Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy in Buddhist studies.

From 2011 to 2013 Prof. Tilakaratne functioned as the president of Arts Faculty Teachers Association (AFTA) of University of Colombo.

In addition to his administrative activities, Prof. Tilakaratne has an impressive research and publication record. He has published more than 20 books for two of which he received the state award for the best book, and about 150 research papers both in English and Sinhala in local and foreign journals and as chapters of books. He wrote entries on Buddhism to *International Encyclopaedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy* (Willey Blackwell) and *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy of Religion* (Willey Blackwell). In recognition of his research University of Colombo awarded him 'the best researcher' (Faculty of Arts) award in 2013, and University Grants Commission awarded him CVCD award for the 'Most Outstanding Senior Researcher in the Field of Humanities, Aesthetics and Social Sciences' in 2014.

Prof. Tilakaratne received several prestigious fellowships and professorships during his academic career. During 1999-2000 he was a Commonwealth Senior Fellow at Oxford University and Fellow of Wolfson College. 2006-2007 he was the invited professor at Yonsei University, Korea, and in 2015 he served as a visiting professor in the Department of Religion and Theology, Otago University, New Zealand. In 2017 he served as Kheyntse Visiting Professor at the Department of Pali, University of Pune, India.

Among his extra-curricular activities: He founded in 2002 Sri Lanka Association of Buddhist Studies (SLABS), academic and professional organization of Buddhist scholars in the country, and having served as its secretary and joint secretary, currently serves as its president. In 2003, with two other partners, he founded Damrivi Foundation, a Buddhist not-for-profit organization of academics and professionals for social, economic and spiritual development, and continues to function as its founder chairperson.

In recognition of the wide ranging services of Prof. Tilakaratne to the university and the society at large, University of Colombo awarded the title of Emeritus Professor in the Department of Buddhist Studies in 2020.