Buliding Sacred Modernity: Buddhism, secularism and a geography of 'religion' in southern Sri Lanka

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1.

In 1979, Sri Lanka's most famous tropical modern architect, Geoffrey Bawa, was commissioned by the United National Party (UNP) government to design and build a new parliamentary complex in a site just 10km from Colombo. In a post-colony that had long since turned its back on its post-independent commitment to the multi-ethnic accommodation of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers, the geographical conception of this new parliamentary complex was very much in keeping with Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist intent to fashion a society in which Buddhism informed the polity.[1] Kotte, the location earmarked for the parliamentary complex, was chosen because it was a historic Sinhalese metropolitan centre from which a former King, Parakramabahu VI, was reputed to have fought invading South Indian forces in the mid-15th century in an attempt to re-establish Sinhala-Buddhist rule over the whole island.

Although revisions to the Sri Lankan constitution in 1972 and 1978 respectively were notable for the ways that they, first, accorded Buddhism the foremost place amongst Sri Lanka's other religions (Hinduism, Christianity and Islam), and second, offered it special protection in the national polity (Bartholomeusz 1999, p.185), the country still to this day professes a notional secularism through its commitment to parliamentary democracy and political modernity. Indeed, that abstract commitment to political modernity has been essential for the state to be able to pronounce itself a mature institution firmly under the control of human, not religious, will. As the secularization thesis clearly holds, "in order for a society to be modern it has to be secular and for it to be secular it has to relegate religion to nonpolitical spaces because that arrangement is essential to modern society" (Asad 2003, p.182). Despite the machinations of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism in mid-1970s Sri Lanka, secularism still continues to perform a valuable operation for post-independent Sri Lanka insofar as its geographical excision of 'religion' from the engine rooms of political decision-making was precisely what produced the state *as* a mature and modern political institution.

In this sense then, the choice of Geoffrey Bawa to design the new parliamentary complex was not incidental. Bawa was a modernist, and as such he held a deep commitment to the idea of 'art for art's sake'. His work can be situated within the global circuits of international modernism and landscape design, specifically their tropical variants (Robson 2002, p.238; Jazeel 2013; Jones 2011). Having qualified as an architect from London's *Architectural Association* (AA) in 1957, only thereafter did Bawa return to Sri Lanka to practice professionally. Architecturally, the clean lines and sharp edges of many of his early buildings betray his European training and a range of western influences, including art nouveau, international modernism and brutalism in particular. If these modernist architectural sensibilities were to remain integral to his work, Bawa's story – and the story of Sri Lankan tropical modernism more generally – can also be understood through his attempts to adapt to the tropical materialities and demands of a South Asian environmental context (see Jazeel 2013a). Bawa's training at the AA coincided with the establishment in 1953 of Otto Koenigsberger's newly conceived Department of Tropical Studies (Pieris 2007a, p.64), where he learnt the latest European theories regarding how modernism practised in the tropics might express regional and national particularities, providing 'authentic' reactions to European and North American Functionalism (Goad and Pieris 2005; Pieris 2007a, 2007b pps.1-16). As a result, what has become known as Sri Lanka's own iteration of the regional modern was gradually consolidated (see Robson 2007).

<INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE>

Bawa's design for the parliament complex (Figure 1) was, as we might expect then, a striking and sprawling monument to the post-independent nation-state; one resolutely modernist by design, and thus befitting of a mature and notionally secular post-colonial nation-state. It consists of a series of interconnected pavilions comprising one main structure surrounded by five satellite buildings, all of which are separated by a series of walkways and piazzas. The pavilion structures are set in the midst of an artificial lake, and as Bawa's chief architectural commentator David Robson (2002, p.150) has written, "everything below the roof has been designed in an abstract Modernist mode with a simple elegance." The debating chamber was planned as a symmetrical rectangle based on the Westminster model, containing galleries for

MPs and public viewing spaces rendering transparent to public scrutiny the national political process. Characteristically though, the complex references diverse architectural times and spaces, and has been described as a cosmopolitan and internationalist edifice gesturing variously toward Mogul Lake palaces, South Indian temples and Chinese palaces (ibid., p.148). As Lawrence Vale (1992, p.194; also see Perera 2013) has written, "Bawa's capitol complex stands squarely between the abstract universalism of high modernism and literal localism." Indeed, it is the abstract universalism of these architectural referents that enable a reading of Bawa's capitol complex as a suitable monument to a post-colonial nation-state committed to political modernity and free from the vagaries of religious interference.

2.

There is, however, far more to Bawa's parliamentary complex. Just as the complex's architectural modernism signifies the kind of secularization key to political modernity gestured to above, it simultaneously instantiates what, after Raymond Williams (1977), I refer to as Sinhala-Buddhist 'structures of feeling' that are neither 'religious' *nor* 'secular' (in the Enlightenment sense of those terms). These are what I refer to here, and elsewhere in much more depth (see Jazeel 2013a), as sacred modernity: structures of feeling in everyday life and in modernity wherein Buddhist metaphysics and historical resonances are made palpably and affectively present for and by the subject. As I suggest, sacred modernity is a concept-metaphor that betrays the existence of Buddhism not as 'religion' per se, but moreover as a problem of difference for scholars attuned to 'religion's' colonial history in South Asia. That is to say, to stress that Bawa's parliament complex instantiates Buddhist structures of feeling is not to suggest that Buddh*ism* is present in this space. It is to provincialize our understandings of what the sacred is positioned to name in the Sri Lankan context.

To be clear, my point here is not that conceiving of Bawa's parliament complex as a straightforward concretization of the secularization thesis is in any sense wrong per se, but rather that doing so mistakenly implies that if the space is secular, it cannot at one and the same time be sacred. In other words, if the sacred and secular exist in a binary relation to one another then spatially the secular must necessarily exist outside the sacred, outside religion that is to say. However, to reason as such is to gloss the colonial continuities of self-certain analytical understandings that portend 'religion' to be a universal and stable Enlightenment category (Asad 2003, p.35). As

such, part of the work of this chapter is to stress the postcolonial imperative for critical and introspective engagements with 'religion' as a concept in South Asian contexts, for 'religion' is itself a knowledge domain with its own colonial histories (see Suthren Hirst and Zavos 2011, pps.16-20). To this extent, sacred modernity bears some methodological similarity to the ways that this volume mobilizes spirituality as shorthand for the everyday and practical instantiations of religion conceived as an abstraction. However, it also marks an important difference insofar as my argument is that sacred modernity in the Sri Lankan context should be understood on its own terms, not through extant categorical nouns like religion, or spirituality.

The essentialization of the sacred as an external power emerged as European encounters with the non-European world began to deploy 'religion' as a universal category through which the West could identify and map different variations on the things the concept was thought to name (Asad 2003, p.35). In other words, 'religion' as a concept, and one which implies a rigid sacred/secular binary, has since the colonial era (the nineteenth century in particular) been part of an Orientalist gaze that has effectively disciplined and organized certain elements of South Asian culture and society that were not familiar to the European gaze (Suthren Hirst and Zavos 2011, pps.18-19). As the anthropologist David Scott (1999, pps.53-69) has demonstrated, Buddhism was not simply 'discovered' to exist in place in colonial Ceylon. Its emergence *as* a formal 'religion' in nineteenth-century colonial Ceylon had everything to do with a 'comparative science of religion' driven by Orientalist scholars whose obsession was to identify, classify and interpret the existence of 'other religions' extant in the world. By 'other religions' we must emphasize that world religion scholars at the time were operating with a normative, that is to say Enlightenment, conception of 'religion' in which secularism was already implicated (Abeyesekera 2002, p.40). 'Religions' came to be – explicitly at first, then tacitly – understood as textualized systems of doctrines-scriptures-beliefs for which the operation of Christianity provided a template of recognition. Once other 'religions' were identified by these hallmarks (doctrines-scriptures-beliefs), their truth statuses could be investigated, compared (implicitly and explicitly against Christianity) and disputed. As Scott (1999, p.58) puts it: "the emergence of the modern concept of 'religion' and its plural, 'the religions', occurred pari passu with the emergence of the comparative science of religion. Each was, so to speak, the condition of the other's possibility."

What this reveals reaches beyond just the history of organized religious Buddhist orthodoxy in Sri Lanka. (The emergence of a politicized, majoritarian 'religious' community in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Ceylon has been characterized as the rise of 'protestant Buddhism' (see Obeyesekera 1970; Perera 2002) precisely because its organized institutional structures were derived from the forms of colonial Protestantism at large in the colony.) In terms of a history of concepts it also reveals 'religion's' contemporary force as an "authoritative category[y] through which the histories of the colonial and postcolonial worlds have been constituted as so many variations on a common and presupposed theme" (Scott 1999, p.54). In this sense, one of the fundamental problems of the straightforward post-secular thesis for any engagement with Sri Lanka is that it leaves the very taxonomic category of 'religion' in place, thus dissimulating the *different* ways that Buddhist structures of feeling produce space from the inside out in the Sri Lankan context. The post-secular implies spaces that some-time, or somewhere, were once secular and are now 'religious'. The postcolonial challenge in South Asia is to think Buddhism beyond the coordinates of the concept 'religion'. This is the challenge of what, in a similar context, the Sri Lankan anthropologist Pradeep Jeganathan (2004, p.197) has referred to as the simple elaboration of an unravelling, a slow, uncertain immersion into what has become the ordinary. And it is to those ordinary Sinhala-Buddhist resonances of Bawa's parliament building despite its secularism that I turn to now; resonances that exist both iconographically and affectively in ways not reducible to the sacred/secular binary that inheres in 'religion' as a concept-metaphor.

3.

Colonial Ceylon's first parliament building was located in the centre of Colombo. It was completed in 1929, and built in the Anglo-Palladian style by Austin Woodeson, chief architect at the time of the Public Works Department (Robson 2002, p.146). It was in many senses a concretization of colonial legislative power; an elaborate colonial edifice deliberately located in the centre of a city whose preeminence within the colony emerged because of its importance to the plantation economy (see Perera 1998). In this context, the very decision to relocate Ceylon's administrative capitol from Colombo, the colonial city, to Kotte, a site so resonant historiographically in the Sinhala chronicles, was itself as symbolic as it was practical. It signified a conscious anti-colonial attempt to step outside colonial time, and into the pre-colonial

temporality of an island that nationalists thought to be Sinhala and Buddhist historically, and by nature (see Jazeel 2013a, forthcoming). Nonetheless, this was not in itself Geoffrey Bawa's decision given the site was selected well before he was commissioned.

A closer look at the parliament building itself, however (Figure 1), reveals more clearly the forms of neither religious, nor entirely secular, sacred modernity that Bawa has built at Kotte. Despite the complex's abstract universalism, it contains a litany of quite deliberate references to non-metropolitan times and spaces, all of which consciously look away from the (colonial) city, instead referencing the (pre-colonial) Sinhala village, an agrarian landscape geography and the former interior kingdom of Kandy. For example, the main building's double pitched roof is a direct reference to the distinct roof style characteristic of Kandyan architecture. The four pillared pavilions surrounding the main building and horizontal concrete pillars that adorn the four sides of the main structure also recall audience or assembly halls across Kandyan towns and villages which historically have provided shelter and rest to travellers and Buddhist pilgrims alike. The complex itself is built on reclaimed land set amidst an artificial lake, and Bawa deliberately created an extensive network of stepped, ornamental terracing across the grounds making strong visual connections to Sri Lanka's two millennia of tank (reservoir) building and the agrarian paddy cultivation on which the prosperity of pre-colonial Sinhala kingdoms was built (Jazeel 2013a, p.119). Not usually prone to narrativizations of his own work, Bawa himself once remarked that the whole look of the complex is meant to reflect "the visual formalities of the old Sinhalese buildings" (Bawa, quoted in Robson 2002, p.148).

For Bawa then, the parliament complex was meant to extend out into the pre-colonial geography, and indeed temporality, of a nation-state that was retroactively being fashioned as Sinhala and Buddhist all the way back. He also remarked how:

> We have a marvelous tradition of building in this country that has got lost. It got lost because people followed *outside influences* over their own good instincts. They never built right 'through' the landscape. I just wanted to fit [Parliament] into the site, so I opened it into blocks. You must 'run' with site; after all, you don't want to push nature out with the building. (ibid., my emphasis)

Neither Buddhism nor the Sinhala ethnos are mobilized explicitly or directly here, but his words resonate with popular nationalist refrains of the time concerning the 'outside influences' on an interior and native kernel that is implicitly framed as Sinhala, and just as implicitly thereby Buddhist (even though Bawa himself was not Sinhala-Buddhist). Buddhism then is mobilized not as a 'religion', or religious influence here, but instead as an ornamental facet of the broader effort to historiographically realign the nation-state *in* and *with* its own native modernity. This is the "literal localism" to which Lawrence Vale (1992, p.194) refers (quoted above): "Bawa's capitol complex stands squarely between the abstract universalism of high modernism and literal localism." If Bawa considered his work to be beyond the divisive politics of ethnicity ('art for art's sake' that is to say), being a modernist he deemed an integral part of his craft to be the recuperation of an appropriate and authentic architectural, artistic, and ultimately spatial language for the expression of the nation-state's historical identity. A rooted Sinhala ethnos intractably linked to a historical narrative of Buddhist practice (not 'religion') was part of this anti-colonial modernity. That is part of this space's sacred modernity.

But Geoffrey Bawa's architectural production of this kind of sacred modernity was not just instantiated iconographically. The fluidity and transparency of his architecture was equally, if not more, important in his attempts at making palpably present these post- and anti-colonial temporalities and environmental aesthetics of the nation-state. Historically, tropical modern architecture across the continents has characteristically blurred the boundaries between inside and outside space (see Goad and Pieris 2005). In large part this has been a stylistic innovation born from the historical necessity to build well-ventilated structures through which light, air and breeze can flow with maximal ease in challenging environmental contexts (see Chang 2016). And in the case of Sri Lankan tropical modernism, tropical architectural innovations in the service of thermal comfort must also be positioned in a historical-political context where expensive imported air conditioning units were increasingly scarce. In Bawa's architecture, these seamless transitions between inside and outside were common, and beyond their techno-political origins they have come to epitomize the types of fluid spatial experience typical of Sri Lankan tropical modernism. He typically employed verandahs, internal courtyards, terraces, folding doors or columns in place of walls, and open hallways as transition spaces and techniques for softening the stark divisions of inside-outside, natural-cultural, public-private (see Figures 3 and

4). And just as typically, though these architectural devices were in reality drawn from a range of historical influences (Muslim, Hindu, Mughul architecture), they often came to be narrativized as historically Sinhala architectural traditions, often by Bawa's commentators more than himself.

Although the parliament complex is not the best example of his experiments in opening structures out (security requirements limited his capacity to do this at the Kotte site), it is conceived and realized with much of Bawa's characteristic attention to the drama and fluidity of spatial experience. As much as it was a concrete edifice, for Bawa the parliament building was a spatial event extending to the outside and back again. As Nihal Perera (2013, p.87) writes of the complex:

> … the rooms are open to terraces and outside lakes. There are strong thresholds in the Parliament House, not least due to security. Yet, the people who enter walk through covered and artificially lit corridors to arrive at rooms in gardens and offices opening to terraces reminiscent of paddy-fields which are again replicated on the site below, thus creating continuity.

It is not just these smooth transitional features that create a sense of continuity in the Parliament complex, Bawa's use of water also aimed at the production of fluid space. His use of reflecting pools and water-retaining structures opened the building's internal spaces out, but also served to link those structures with the wider spatiality of the complex whilst facilitating temporal continuities with places celebrated in popular accounts of anti-colonial Sinhala historiography. As one Sri Lankan archaeologist put it, Bawa's considered use of water "reflects the ancient traditions of Anuradhapura, Polannaruwa, and Sigiriya" (Senake Bandaranayaka, quoted in Perera 2013, p.88).

All of these architectural devices aimed, as I have stressed, at producing particular kinds of spatial experience for the user of these built spaces, and elsewhere I have written in depth on how Bawa's architecture, as well the architecture of other Sri Lankan tropical modernists, has been experienced, lived in, consumed (see Jazeel 2013a, 2013b). In her work on Brazilian artistic tropical modernism, Nancy Leys Stepan (2001, p.230) suggests how similar artistic managements of tropical nature in mid-twentieth century Brazil aimed at fashioning an appropriately Brazilian disposition to the natural world against a history of European tropical vision. Similarly, if Bawa's tropical modern architecture aimed at creating the experiential illusion that there is little between nature and social space, he did so as a way of

expressing something of an 'appropriately Sri Lankan' disposition to the natural world. The effect of building with and into site like this was, for Bawa, the production of built space that affectively was felt to emerge from the surrounding tropical environmental context, and equally, as we have seen, from a particular historical milieu that was being written as ethnically Sinhala and aesthetically Buddhist. In other words, he was intent on building spatial experience rather than visually prominent structures, and he intended his work to be experienced as *ordinary* components of landscapes not easily divisible into their human and non-human components.

4.

The idiom of the ordinary spatial experiences Bawa attempted to create through his work are a crucial component of sacred modernity, and to elaborate on the idiomatic register of Bawa's landscape experience I move now from the architect's parliament complex to his rambling estate, Lunuganga, on the south-west coast of Sri Lanka. Lunuganga was an old, disused rubber estate fringed by a lake. Bawa bought it in 1948. He chose to keep and renovate the main house on the estate's northern hill, and gradually over the next half century he opened up the landscapes and vistas around it with slow and steady precision, imagination and purpose. He experimented by building forms, shapes and structures across the estate, but always in ways attuned to what he perceived as the genus of this place. The garden and estate evolved in texture and dimension, and today its open spaces, terraces, and ornamental paddy fields are liberally sprinkled with statues, pavilions, and walls, all of which form part of the estate's careful choreography. But as David Robson 2002, p.240) has written, "[t]oday the garden seems so natural, so established, that it is hard to appreciate just how much effort has gone into its creation."

Elsewhere, I have written in more depth on Lunuganga (Jazeel 2007, 2013a, 2013b), and it is not my intention here to elaborate on the estate itself. However, Bawa's treatment of the estate stands as an important testimony to the idiomatic configuration of the ordinary spatial experience that Geoffrey Bawa attempted to instantiate through his built space. In other words, his authorship of the estate speaks of the kind of sacred modernity that mobilizes Buddhist structures of feeling as an historical, aesthetic, and ornamental component of places that are at once resolutely modernist and thus secular.

Compositionally, Lunuganga is characterized not only by the ways that outside space blends with inside space within its boundaries. As at the parliament complex, it also extends out and into the environment beyond the estate itself, into the landscape and nation-state beyond so to speak. In a glossy, illustrated coffee-table book on the estate, Bawa is himself quoted as saying that "Lunuganga from the start was to be an extension of the surroundings – *a garden within a garden*" (in Bawa, Bon and Sansoni 1990, p.11, my emphasis). It is in this context that we should read Bawa's work to ornamentally, and scopically, draw into Lunuganga a view of the gleaming dome of the Katakuliya temple, a Buddhist dagaba, positioned on a hill some distance beyond the estate itself. Indeed, this carefully choreographed long view to the south that "ended with the temple" (ibid., p.13), was Bawa's favourite from the estate. Rumour has it that Bawa even paid the monks at the temple to keep the temple's dome white and clean enough such that it was always visible from his vantage point on the estate. If Lunuganga then was to be a "garden within a garden", it is precisely this kind of work that evidences Bawa's desire that at tropical modernism's core was a naturalization of Sinhala tradition and Buddhist structures of feeling. Bawa's single minded work, typical of modernism, to make the temple central within his landscape composition, such that as he also wrote, it "now looks as if it had been there since the beginning of time" (ibid.), leaves us under no illusion that the idiom of the larger garden – the garden of the post-independent nation-state, so to speak – is Buddhist ornamentally and historically, if not religiously.

But as I have been suggesting, the idiom of the ordinary in this tropical modern architecture reveals itself not just visually and ornamentally, but also affectively or aesthetically. And here, the coffee-table book, entitled simply *Lunuganga*, is once again useful. The book, published in 1990, is a hardback montage of black and white photographs taken at Lunuganga. The montage is accompanied by a short English language essay on the estate, as well as some of Bawa's sketches and plans of the estate. The book's price tag is discerningly high, and the combination of text and image as well as the book's high production values suitably convey the aesthetic qualities of Lunuganga. All in all, it is a fitting tribute to the special meaning this haven held for Bawa and his closest friends and collaborators.

Precisely because of this, it is also a text that betrays the Buddhist structures of feeling I have been suggesting are key to tropical modernism's sacred modernity. The book's short epilogue is a first person narrative reflection on the estate written by Bawa. In its very last line, he defers to the reaction of a visiting lorry driver who took the opportunity to walk around the estate during a delivery. Bawa (in Bawa, Bon & Sansoni 1998, p.219) describes the encounter thus:

> …when his bricks were being unloaded – [the lorry driver] said to me "මේක නං හරි සිදේවි තැනක්" (but this is a very blessed place).

The significance of this passage is twofold. First, it is in the fact that Bawa chooses to leave the final endorsement of his garden to a working-class Sinhalese lorry driver (we know he is Sinhalese from the Sinhala script). It suggests something of his own desire that, despite his work's quite evident class exclusions, the broader Sri Lankan public might embrace his modernist vision for an appropriately national form of landscape architecture. In other words, the lorry driver's endorsement of the estate is an allegory of its acceptance by the Sri Lankan folk in ways that speak directly to Bawa's lifelong desire to develop a suitably national modern architecture equipped to bring the post-colony into modernity on its own terms.

Second, however, and not at all unconnected to this, the significance of this passage is in the simple desire to reprint the lorry driver's compliment in the language in which it was uttered, Sinhala, in what is an English language publication. For Bawa, the richness of the lorry driver's compliment inheres in its linguistic and cultural idiom in a national context where language politics have a troubled anti-colonial nationalist history. In 1956, the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) government passed a Sinhala Only Language Act. In doing so they replaced English with Sinhala (the language of the majority Sinhalese) as the post-colony's official language, at once marginzaling Tamil speaking minorities which included Tamil and Muslim communities. This, however, is but a historical backdrop, and my intention is not to equate Bawa's decision to relay this compliment in Sinhala with the divisive politics of linguistic nationalism in Sri Lanka. As I have stressed, Bawa was always keen publically to distance himself and his work from national politics. Rather, it is the comment's apparent untranslatablity that interests me here, and the precise ways that such untranslatability might be activated as what

Emily Apter (2013, pps.1-27) refers to as a theoretical fulcrum for techniques of reading for difference. In this case, the untranslatability of the Sinhala expression offers a way of comprehending the idiom of the very ordinary, yet radically different, structure of feeling that Bawa means to equate with his architecture; its sacred modernity so to speak. By retaining the Sinhala script, Bawa suggests that the literal English translation cannot capture the essence of the compliment. In other words, he conveys the sense that the English language cannot capture the essence of this place; an essence on which the lorry driver seems to have put his finger. But this is a brief passage caught between untranslatability and translation for the simple fact that it *is* translated for the English language reader. And crucial within this context is the significance of the English language word "blessed" offered in brackets *as* translation, because it is a word used frequently to refer to the Lord Buddha's enlightened metaphysical state. It is word that describes an affective state of oneness. In other words, what the lorry driver names is a residual structure of feeling in the spatial present that is quintessentially *Buddhist*, yet at the same time un-nameable in the English language as Buddh*ism* for all the 'religious' connotations this precipitates. As an affect, this is not in any way non-representational, but it is not reducible to any affective resonance that the English language can adequately name; the translation is precisely what transports the language beyond its own limits (Spivak 2008, p.189). This is Sri Lankan tropical modernism's sacred modernity.

5.

It is my argument that this very same sacred modernity, with its characteristic Buddhist structures of feeling, is key to the production of tropical modern architectural space more generally, and equally thus at Bawa's parliament complex. It is pivotal to my argument that we recognize this Buddhist structure of feeling as not 'religious' in the Enlightenment sense of the term. As I have suggested, 'religion' names a self-contained historically European concept with its own objective reality identical to itself the world over. Insofar as the sacred/secular binary is inherent in Enlightenment conceptions of 'religion', then spatially 'religion' implies a secular outside some*where*. On the one hand then, the parliament complex *is* a materially secular institutional space, and it is its very modernism that performatively produces it as a secular space; a secularism on which the proper functioning of political modernity in Sri Lanka depends. On the other hand however, when we conceive of

Buddhism not as a 'religion' per se, but instead as an historical and metaphysical register, Bawa's parliament complex is at one and the same time a space replete with Buddhist structures of feeling produced ornamentally, architecturally, and affectively. In this way, sacred modernity is not a politically benign formulation. It serves a dual purpose: first, to give the lie to the secularism inherent to, and essential for, political modernity, and second, to spatially produce the post-colony in modernity as historically, essentially, and metaphysically Buddhist and Sinhala all the way back. This is precisely what makes it impossible for Tamil, Muslim and other non-Sinhala-Buddhist others to be anything but guests in a national polity spatially produced as such.

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[1] In this chapter, I use the terms 'post-colony' and 'post-colonial' to refer to the Ceylon/Sri Lanka's status after formal decolonization and thus the time period after colonialism. I use the term 'postcolonial' on the other hand to name methodological and theoretical approaches attentive to the ideological presence of colonialism in the present and attempts to transcend those colonial remains.