

00:00 - 01:00	<p>Now... this is a project named “Community Memorialization” implementing by us in affiliation with Prathiba Media Network, Matara. We collect and preserve the elders' stories to the next generation. These stories are being stored in the Department of National Archives, or in the website. Is that fine if we took your story to be stored? Do you like? After that, sometimes.... the story is divided in to parts and share with others. The stories from Northern province to be shared with Southern province and <i>Vice-versa</i>. All of us have to be capable of understanding about others and how they live. Is it okay?</p> <p>It doesn't matter. It's not wrong. All the people have to live with unity. They have to be like that. All have to be united. Think like this.</p>
01:01 - 02:00	<p>All the people live here are Muslims. Do you understand? If something happens between the Muslims here and Sinhalese of Akuressa, what will happen? It will definitely be a clash. They will hit when they went there because they have in power in such area. Therefore, it does not look nice. Yes, it cannot be. Nothing is going to happen if all are united.</p> <p>Whether you like to tell your name or not? If you don't like...</p> <p>No, we do not say any wrong.</p> <p>That is right. Normally we should ask that, whether you like to tell your name or not.</p> <p>Take his (husband's) name. It doesn't matter.</p> <p>What is your name Sir?</p> <p>My name is M.A.K. Piyasena.</p> <p>Piyasena...? Okay. Did you born and bred here?</p> <p>I am from here. My village and home are here. Our ancestral home (<i>'Mahaagedhara'</i>) is there at the highland. That is our ancestral home at the top routed from this road. I have built a house here.</p>
2:01 - 3:00	<p>How did you both meet?</p> <p>One of my friend is in Akuressa. This is my wife.</p> <p>If that so... did you marry due to an affair or a proposal?</p> <p>No, it was an arranged marriage.</p> <p>Aah... okay... okay... How long you have married?</p> <p>It is about 10 years now.</p> <p>Is it 10 years...?</p> <p>That is why I told you that others know better than me. That is why...</p>

	<p>Are you not from here?</p> <p>Yes. I... now... truly.... there are some houses. No one has any problem with me. When we go to work, we do not understand whether we are Muslims or Sinhalese. We sit together like this.... when we attend a wedding home. We eat and drink together. Even our working hours.... we never feel that we are from two ethnicities. We are very friendly with each other to that much. There are houses beyond this area. Now... if there is a wedding function.... to our people.... these people have arranged their wedding functions in our home to Sinhala people. They will give all responsibilities for us.</p> <p>It means....? I cannot understand. What is mean by ‘they arrange their wedding functions here’?</p> <p>They give to Sinhalese. Those people.... it means.... Six of them will sit together.</p> <p>What is that? I cannot understand.</p> <p>They will sit as 6 persons in a tray....</p> <p>Ahh... Okay... okay... It is called as <i>Sawan</i> method</p> <p>Yes... they arrange in <i>Sawans</i>.</p>
3:01 - 4:00	<p>That is how they are. We cannot be like that.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>We give plates separately at our weddings. Everything has been put separately like that.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>If we arrange as per our tradition..... If our Sinhala people come here... they will eat here and go, there. Also they chat with others and give gifts as well.</p> <p>Ahh.... Okay... okay...</p> <p>Their three or four weddings had taken place here. Another one is going to be held by tomorrow or day after tomorrow. They are also from here. When we get together, we never feel like that we are from two ethnicities. When we go there, we talk jokingly and have a tea together. That is how we are living. We talk casually with each other. There are many friends with me at these two... three... houses. We will go, if there are weddings in Muslim’s houses. They invite all of my relations for their weddings because we are very friendly with each other. My siblings also come with their children. See... there is a wedding card given by them. That is also given by a Muslim person. I keep it because it is very beautiful.</p> <p>Aahh....</p>
4:01 - 5:00	<p>The people who mingle with us definitely invite us for their weddings.</p>

	<p>Mmm... Don't there any riots... problems... in this area?</p> <p>Here... in these some places..... no such problems. It was in 1915. It is not here. It's over now. Now... in the recent past.... there was an issue at Beruwala, wasn't it?</p> <p>Yes, at Aluthgama.</p> <p>There was nothing even here during that time. The police were roaming here and there. Nothing was happened here. It was just for a precaution.</p> <p>In such situations.... it means.... when such a problem was arising.... you both communities are living together in this village... isn't it?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>You don't feel a difference based on your ethnicity. However, now... by these medias... or by that Aluthgama incident.... or by each type of stickers.... there are some people shouting that there is a difference exist between two communities.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Then... what do you think about it?</p> <p>We don't get nothing to know whether what was happening there. Such foolish people go there to create such things.</p> <p>Is that mean, don't you consider them? Don't you feel afraid that such a trend will come here too?</p>
5:01 - 6:00	<p>Here... even in the mosques.... they said to their people that keep maintain calm and refrain from talking about these things. Was there any such a thing yesterday or day before yesterday?</p> <p>I don't know.</p> <p>There are such things a little.</p> <p>Yes, there are things just a little bit at place to place. What I'm asking is.... if such a bad thing came here from another village, do you capable of leaving it after gathering with others in this village? Will such an issue come here?</p> <p>I don't think so. They won't come like that. They also have to go. Doesn't it? They are telling now that the business was being continuing with Sinhalese people. Nothing is going to happen when both are getting to quarrel. Therefore, it is not going to happen such a thing here. Yesterday, a person told that.... one from their community told that, "We don't get involve in fighting even if you attacked us".</p> <p>Was it tod by the mosque?</p>

	<p>Yes. They told that don't go to fight and quarrel with others. Stay calm if anybody is going to be beaten. Now... the government also advises to live together like one ethnicity.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>That's why....</p>
6:01 - 7:00	<p>A few people behave like that. There are a few unwise people. Even so.... according to our knowledge... in this area....</p> <p>No... No.... it's good. It means that..... we have to be like this. But I'm telling that... when such a bad trend is existing in other parts of the country, will it be a trouble to the places where people are living unitedly like this? If it is not so, that will be good.</p> <p>Nothing was happened according to our knowledge.</p> <p>If that so... if somebody from such an area came here and told such a thing...?</p> <p>But, I tell them jokingly that your people will come, beat us and go. They will respond us; "Even though we are assaulted, we would not allow anybody to beat you". Yesterday also they told us the same. They told us.... they will be a shield for us. We just say for fun.... We will say for fun that nowadays there are big problems... will they beat us now? They will say; "Oh my god! it won't happen sister. Initially, we will face your problem, at all".</p> <p>Aah... Is that so?</p> <p>It is a good thing that they are telling such a thing. Doesn't it?</p> <p>Yes, it is a great thing.</p> <p>That is not.... There are some things like these in few areas.</p> <p>Mmm....</p>
7:01 - 8:00	<p>Even though such things available in this area, they don't speak about them in front of us. There is such a thing. They tell straight forward it's wrong like us. We also tell that someone is so and so. But there is nothing among us apart from that.</p> <p>How about this area was during the war period?</p> <p>Even in the war period, it didn't affect this area. There were more Tamil people....</p> <p>What I am asking... from this area.... were there many soldiers accompanied with Army?</p> <p>Oh my god! there are two or three from even in my family.</p> <p>Is that true?</p> <p>Even in the Police.</p>

	<p>Is that true?</p> <p>However, they tell this and that. But I don't care about those things that there are so and so. However, they are working there. Two younger brothers are working. One younger brother resigned recently.</p> <p>Mmmm....</p> <p>Even my brother-in-law works for police. He works closely with higher officer at Galle fort Police Station. That is like that. They (the village people) call us as sister and brother. Especially we talk with them. Therefore, we don't have any threats.</p>
8:01 - 9:03	<p>That... during the war period.... this.... When they were talking....?</p> <p>They didn't scold us for the war. It is a problem about Tamil people. They didn't tell anything like that. There was no fear. There was nothing happened even when there were problems in Beruwala. Just they were saying that “they are beating us”. Those incidents have influence to the extent of which change the regime, isn't it? Even now, it is being said that such things are happening in each part. Otherwise. They don't go to beat others from here. No one is coming here to beat us. They are telling that it is being circularized when the government ministers crossed over in to the opposition side or the opposition MPs crossed over to the government side, <i>Vice-Versa</i>. They are telling so and so. They don't tell us that they are beaten or scolded, or not.</p> <p>This... what I am asking is.... during the time of 30 years of war?</p> <p>So ... We were not affected from war.</p> <p>Yes. Okay... Okay... I know. It was affected whole country. Even to all of us. All were affected as whole country, even anyone had not been hit here.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Now, after the war, if we think to say to the next generation about the war period....</p>
9:04 - 10:00	<p>Monuments have to be established. Do you genuinely think that it would be better if we established such monuments?</p> <p>It is not allowed there to do such things.</p> <p>What you mean?</p> <p>Now it is not allowed to do such things in the Northern Province too.</p> <p>What is not happening?..... Monuments?</p> <p>Yes, monuments. Now... Older monuments are not still protected. When our younger brothers came, they told that there are no more such old monuments and only if those things existed, something will happen again. That is why all of them are destroyed. That is what they said.</p>

	<p>It means.... monuments mean.... are they war related monuments?</p> <p>Now.... we went to such places when the war was concluded. During that time, we visited and saw all the Prbakaran's own properties. Now, they are saying that those things are no more remaining in such places. If they are available, it will be a problem....</p> <p>Problem means.... what kind of problem?</p> <p>I don't know about any. I don't know how to describe it beyond this.</p> <p>So what we thought generally is, if sometimes there are any such monuments or similar things remaining; next generation will observe and speak about it curiously as not to do like this.</p> <p>Oh god! no one will speak about it. Everyone requests to not to memorize about those things.</p>
10:01 - 11:00	<p>We directly seen it from what was happened here. We had bomb blasts.... Bomb blast at Godapitiya.</p> <p>What was happened on that day? When it was happened?</p> <p>It means... several ministers such as Mahinda Wijesekara and others came on that particular day. A lot of people in Akuressa were dead.</p> <p>Tell me what was happened on that day?</p> <p>Here it is. There was a festival at the school or mosque. It was a festival at the mosque. All the ministers were highly welcomed in a way like a <i>Perehera</i> by playing drums (<i>Rabaan</i>). A bomb was blasted in front of the street markets while they were welcoming. We went after to those ministers. We saw the blast. When we were checking, I told myself that “when we are going to take sit after all these checking end up”. At that time.... When I was seeing like this.... There was a huge sound. I thought that it was a fire cracker. I never seen it before. Thereafter, I ran away with a lady who accompanied with me along. I was holding her finger, when I was running.</p>
11:01 - 12:00	<p>It was closed that side. Children were running and crying here and there. Parents were running too. I also ran without loosening of that lady’s hand. I was unable even to take a phone call to my home. They had thought that something has happened to me since I failed to talk with them via phone call. After that incident our lives were saved. So it is not good to talking about such a war again. The children were welcoming them by playing drums (<i>Rabaans</i>).</p> <p>Were the children also died?</p> <p>No, the blast not spread to this level. Doesn’t it? It spreads at a height more than this level. None of any injuries were happening to those children. Those children were standing at the entrance for welcoming the guests.</p> <p>How many were died on the spot?</p>

	<p>I don't know exactly. There was around 10 or more than it. I can't remember how many it is. However, Mahinda Wijesekara is still disabled. Two or three were died from Akuressa. Even a lawyer was died.</p> <p>Did you mean from this bomb blast?</p> <p>Yes, this was the last bomb blast. They even told that it was the last. Isn't it true?</p>
12:01 - 13:00	<p>It was finished from Godapitiya. It was ended with such month. The next month everything has finished. It means.... In TV channels.... this and that.... the last bomb blasted in Godapitiya.... thereafter no more bomb blasts... everything finished.</p> <p>After that, the war is concluded. Doesn't it?</p> <p>Yes, the war was concluded after one month later from that incident.</p> <p>Someone was telling me that many children were survived from this incident was like a miracle. It might be because of that place was a sacred area, doesn't it?</p> <p>We don't know that it is due to a miracle or not. No... No... I asked about it from my younger brother. They know about it since they are soldiers. They told that, generally a bomb blast should take place at a certain height. At the time of blasting, adults were separated from their necks but not these children. Children were survived. They say that the bomb will blast at such a height. However, it was not blasted at the middle. At that time, somethings were happened aside.</p> <p>Who set the bomb? It means... the bomber also was there?</p> <p>I don't know about that matter.</p>
13:01 - 14:00	<p>Some people were rounded up here and there, but no one was arrested.</p> <p>Had they set the bomb and gone away?</p> <p>I am unaware about whether the bomb was kept or the bomber was there. It might be done by using a remote controller. But some people say that the bomber was died. In this matter... someone came to me..... it means... regarding to the suicide bomber..... they have taken statements.... the police served a letter to me in Matara.... When I went to Matara police station... the police officer who served the letter to me was not there. Then... I entered into the police station and talked with higher officers. At that time, they responded me that "Miss... you go... he is not here.... We will manage this matter". Only my presence is not worth. Many people received such letter. However, all were get useless. It was over. We don't know about what and who, doesn't it? Our people never keep a suicide bomber among us. Those people also never like to kill their people after arranged this much of good event. They will never do such a thing at any time. Also, many of their children were attended in that function.</p>
14:01 - 15:00	<p>We participated in that event since they invited us.</p>

	<p>Are there any graves of burial of two or three mystics, inside this mosque?</p> <p>Yes, there are.</p> <p>The people coming to that place are not only Muslims? Doesn't it?</p> <p>A person called as <i>Bawa</i> was arrived from India. He was called as '<i>Fakeer Bawa</i>'. He further alias as <i>Seedhu Saadath Fakeen Mohideen</i>. After his demise, he was buried in that place. His wife's tomb also is in nearby in a small scale.</p> <p>Ohh... is it his wife?</p> <p>Now... even all our people there. It is like this.... you come and see on Fridays nearby to the mosque. All are our people who make vow.</p> <p>Are they Sinhalese from this area?</p> <p>They are coming from everywhere. They are coming from even faraway places and performing prayer rituals, then leaving. For some people... there is a chance to fulfil their willingness beyond their religions. It is a kind of belief.</p> <p>Yes... it is belief no?</p>
<p>15:01 - 16:00</p>	<p>Yes, it's about belief. Now... you can see on Friday, now... our gods are (<i>not clear</i>). Oaky...? Our gods are doing good deeds. No one is vengeful. That is how we must think. They are... (<i>not clear</i>). our gods are not vengeful. They call wrong things as '<i>Achchu</i>'. If it is a wrong thing, it is called as '<i>Achchu</i>'.</p> <p>No like that. Sometimes it may be correct for them if they keep something as substitute.</p> <p>Our people tell that it has happened alike. Because of that, people are coming. Lot of people are coming. In Friday mornings... Friday is the day they go to mosque and performing prayers, doesn't it? Sometimes they come in other days too and make vow.</p> <p>Mmm</p> <p>There is a person it that place. He comes and inquires... then collect coins for making vow. Some people.... in outsides.... doing a work like cutting lemons.</p>
<p>16:01 - 17:03</p>	<p>After that, some persons collect coins for making vow by recitation of religious words. Then, they tell to keep in mind what we are going to give when the matter comes successful. As an example, we can think like this.... we will give a bulb when the matter comes succeed. We just keep it in mind. If the matter became successful, we donate a bulb to that place. Did you ask anything to Muslims here as what you asked us?</p> <p>Yes, about this village..... and the history of this village.</p> <p>Then, what was their response?</p>

	<p>They told similar things.... Same stories. All are staying good without any trouble.</p> <p>Now... in this area.... Sinhalese have married Muslims and converted. We cannot say no.</p> <p>It says that there are no problems in this area. All are living together....</p> <p>There is nothing like that. It has happened before 1915.</p> <p>What was happened?</p> <p>I don't know what it is. An uprising has occurred. Even all over the country in Sri Lanka. The mosques were destroyed and ruined. After that... they have re-constructed such mosques with the help of the government.</p>
17:04 - 18:00	<p>Are these Sinhalese in this area being living from that period?</p> <p>Our Sinhalese are the culprits.</p> <p>What do you mean by that?</p> <p>They, our Sinhalese, had entered into the prison here and there. It was happening many years ago.</p> <p>In this area.... Sinhalese and Muslims are living to together continuously from the past.</p> <p>Yes, all of them had been friendly from the past.</p> <p>It means, since 1600s?</p> <p>Since before 1915.</p> <p>Yes... yes... I am saying about settle in this place.</p> <p>I don't know in which period they came here. Then it was not that much of population. It might be around 50 - 100 families. Now it is around 500 – 600 families. It is more than 500 families. When we see, it seems that their houses are very close and attached to each other. It is like that.... they have married from the same families and stay at the same place.</p>
18:01 - 19:00	<p>The next thing is that, we are arranging marriages to our people even outside. But here, they arrange marriages within same families through mutually transferring brides and grooms.</p> <p>Mmmm.... They don't like to marry outside.</p> <p>No... no... They don't accept outside marriage proposals for their daughters. They will stay with their mothers. If men, they will go outside and marry. Because, in their community, the houses are belonging to women. But in our community they are owned by men. But in case of their community, house and properties are going to</p>

	<p>women. Even though, few men.... in their community..... will take such properties under their ownership.</p> <p>There was a school for children in this area. Is it a Tamil medium school?</p> <p>It is in their language... Doesn't it?</p> <p>Where do the Sinhalese children go to school?</p> <p>There is a Sinhala school at that side.</p> <p>Is it Godapitiya Primary School?</p> <p>It is situated at that side. There is another one at Welihena. Not only that, another school also available on the road, next to the bund. Schools are located at all places such as Welihena and Korathota. Even some Tamil children go to Sinhala school.</p>
19:01 - 20:00	<p>Are there Tamil children in this area?</p> <p>Yes, they are settled and living in these lands. There are more Tamil people here and they have religiously converted.</p> <p>Is it true.....? It means that.....?</p> <p>Christians have converted into Islam. They are Tamil peoples.</p> <p>I thought that Tamils are not in this area.</p> <p>No, they are here in estate sides.</p> <p>Ah..., are there estates in this side?</p> <p>There are a few in Deniyaya. The other thing like this...</p> <p>Are they Rubber estates or....?</p> <p>Tea estates.</p> <p>Tea Estates, Okay... Okay....</p> <p>Another thing is like this.... In Deniyaya area.... families from different areas have come and settled. A land has given by the mosque to such people. They have settled on it. They are religiously converted people.</p> <p>Aahh... Right..., Right..., Right....</p> <p>They are not like other communities. They will convert the people into their religion. A lot of Tamils have converted alike. There are a few Sinhalese among them.</p> <p>Do you like to say any other special thing about this village? About the history of the village?</p>
20:01 - 21:00	<p>I don't know to describe that much about this area.</p> <p>Has this gentleman known about this village?</p>

	<p>I also can't remember that much about it. Actually I don't know. Now... like this.... you may know any matters relating to this village from an old man. He will say more than me about our temple.</p> <p>What explanation about the temple?</p> <p>It is Godapitiya temple. People who know than us will describe it very well.</p> <p>What is that Godapitiya temple? Since how long it is here?</p> <p>The name “Godapitiya” derived from what filled up with soil and created as highland. The name “Godapitiya” has been created because of this temple. A person has arrived and settled in this place, before. After his arrival, he has.....</p> <p>Constructed the temple?</p> <p>Yes, he has constructed the temple. It is called as “<i>Raja Maha Viharaya</i>”. The Chief Buddhist monk of that <i>Vihara</i> knows this information very well.</p> <p>Mmmm...</p> <p>If you ask the details, he will say.</p>
21:01 - 22:00	<p>Is it an older temple, I mean “<i>Raja Maha Viharaya</i>”?</p> <p>Yes... Yes... it is called as “<i>Raja Maha Viharaya</i>”. There are two temples here. We called them as “<i>Uda Viharaya</i>” (upper temple) and “<i>Palleha Viharaya</i>” (lower temple).</p> <p>Are there any frescos in that temple? Are they been drawn?</p> <p>Yes, there are.</p> <p>Old matters?</p> <p>Yes, there are old matters.</p> <p>Aahh....</p> <p>There is a Buddha statue. At present, when we compared with the past, there are more temples have been constructed. If you ask Buddhist monks, they will say about it. It will be better Buddhist monks stay at temples. They should develop the temples through renovating processes. This <i>Bodhiya</i> is also belongs to Godapitiya temple. Another <i>Bodhiya</i> is beautifully constructed at that place too. It is being maintained by the temple. It means.... those Buddhist monks from the temple sermon <i>Dhamma</i>. There are Muslims living in front of the <i>Bodhiya</i>. There are no any interruptions. The houses in front of the <i>Bodhiya</i> are also belonging to Muslims. Even they are in back side of <i>Bodhiya</i>. It means, they are in both sides, front and back.</p>
22:01 - 22:35	<p>Yes, there are no any problems.</p> <p>No... No... we are looking about the history.</p>

I don't know much to tell about the history.

Right.... Right.... Right..... We will get information about the temple from anyone.

Ask at the temple. You should ask it to an elder person who is being a contributor of the temple. Buddhist monk from the temple may know about it. Old people are not here now. They all are died. My parents know about such information. But, they also no more at present.

You mean.... information about the temple. Isn't it?

You may know information of the temple from Buddhist monks. However, they are not available at this time. Miss, where are you from?

Colombo.

Are you coming from Colombo?

We both are from Colombo.

Is that so?