

Volume 10

Number 06

December 2014

# Maya Puwath

Bimonthly Newsletter from MGCAANA



## IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1: Opening Page

PAGE 2: Editorial

PAGE 3: Undergraduate/Graduate Scholarship  
Program Announcement.

PAGE 4: Save the Date- 11th AGM Announcement

PAGE 5: Good Byes & Welcomes

PAGE 6: Thank You & Welcomes

PAGE 7,8 & 9: MGCAANA Fund Raising Events

PAGE 10: Job Opportunities & Mayan's Achievements

Page 11 & 12: Children's Corner

Page 13: Obituary/Appreciation

Page 14: Editor's Pick

RESOURCES GOOGLE IMAGES

Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.



– Gautama Buddha, Sayings Of Buddha-



# Editorial

## From the Editor

Dear MGCAANA members and Friends. Greetings of the season and hope you are ready for holidays. Year 2015 is almost here and 2014 gone. It is time to reflect back and also look ahead.

First and foremost, thanks are due to my predecessors for what MCGAANA is today. Thanks are also due to current office bearers and the membership for what we were able to achieve since I took over as the president. My most sincere and heartfelt appreciation goes to all.

It gives me great pleasure to inform the membership that we were able to award 13 scholarships via VSTF in 2014. I am very grateful for the VSTF chair, Dr. (Ms.) Himashinie Diyabalanage, former co-chair, Geetha Eragoda, our new Co-Chair, Vihara Dharmaratne and the trustees here in the USA and in Sri Lanka for their hard work.

We also formed a new Memorial Fund named Mrs. Nanda Pussegoda Leula Memorial Fund (NPLMF) under the umbrella of Graduate and Undergraduate program. This Fund is in memory of Mrs. Nanda Pussegoda Leula, who was one of MGCAANA's precious members and is the first Memorial Fund created under MGCAANA. Mrs. Sujatha Werake, Dr. (Ms.) Dharshani Nanayakkara and Ms Chathuri Nugawela were instrumental in this effort. On behalf of MCGAANA, I thank all of them.

This year we had our first fall fundraising activity, 5K Run/Walk/Ride in October. Even in the cold and rainy weather in October, we were able to hold this event in few different cities. It was fun and was successful. Members and non-members, Mayans and non-Mayans equally participated in this fun out door event.

We have set up an on going fund raising project called "Scarf Project," to continue to raise funds. So far even without much of publicity we have sold about 30 scarves. All these funds will again go to benefit economically disadvantaged children back in Sri Lanka at Mahamaya and Mayans who come to USA and Canada for further studies.

Also, this year our Board of Directors decided to donate \$ 100 towards the Diabetic Research and Action Education Foundation as our local charity.

We were also able to create a new committee called the "Welfare Committee," to help members with issues/matters affecting MCGAANA members, where relevant and practical. I hope it will be a positive development.

Lastly, we have decided to have our Annual General Meeting and get together in Ottawa, Canada. I look forward to this event as it gives an opportunity to U.S. based Mayans to meet with Canada based friends and colleagues. Again, on behalf of MCGAANA, I thank our Organizing committee in Ottawa.

Our objectives for the 2015 will mainly focus on increasing membership carder, and fund raising activities. As our organization status stays as non-profit organization your renewal of membership and new membership play a major roll for our charity work with the help of other volunteer donations. I urge all of you to renew your membership for 2014 & 2015.

May you all have a peaceful and a Happy Holiday Season and a very Happy New Year!

Sriyani Dissanayake





**Time is running out! Dead line is approaching. Remember you will have to apply before December 31st. Application steps are easy. Please spread the word among your friends and encourage your friends to take advantage of this great scholarship through MGCAANA.**

**MGCAANA**

**UNDERGRADUATE  
&  
GRADUATE  
SCHOLARSHIP  
PROGRAM**

**2014-2015**



- This scholarship is intended to provide cost of books and material for a single semester for Mahamaya Girls' College alumnae pursuing under-graduate or graduate studies in the US and Canada.
- **The scholarship award amount has been increased to \$375.00 each, thanks to an anonymous donation from a beloved member of MGCAANA.**
- **One of these scholarships will be awarded in memory of Mrs. N. K. Pilapitiya.**
- The scholarship will be awarded to (a) student(s) demonstrating outstanding academic achievements, leadership ability, participation in extracurricular activities, and a significant level of financial need.

**APPLICATION PERIOD AND DEADLINE:**

- **August 15, 2014 – December 31, 2014**
- Applications postmarked after the deadline will not be accepted.

**AWARD NOTIFICATION:**

- **By January 31, 2015**

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Please visit our website at [www.mahamayaalumnae.org](http://www.mahamayaalumnae.org) to view and download the scholarship application.

If you have any questions about the MGCAANA Scholarship Program, please email us at [Mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com)

**We look forward to reading your completed application!**

US BASED MAYANS WILL MEET CANADIAN BASED MAYANS TO CELEBRATE OUR  
11<sup>TH</sup> AGM AND GET TOGETHER!

# SAVE THE DATE!

**For the 11<sup>th</sup> AGM of MGCAANA**

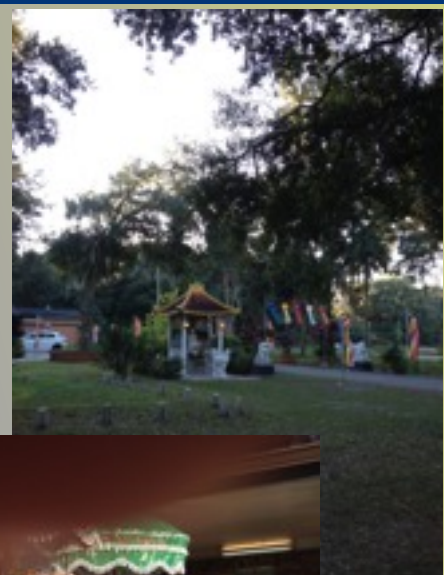
**Date: Sunday May 24th , 2015  
Memorial Day Weekend in the U.S.A.**

**Venue: Ottawa, Canada**

**Hosted by our Canadian Members:**

**Deepani Waidyaratne  
Samudrika Amarakone  
Vihara Dharmaratne  
Nayana Fernando  
Medhavi Kumaratne  
Upeksha Ranpatabendi**

**Formal Invitation to follow**



In the name of Mrs. N.K. Pilapitiya Geethanjali Wijayapla Selvendran, Pavithra Wettasinghe, Udharshani Morapaya and Sriyani Dissanayake participated in a Sarvarathrika Pirith Ceremony held at the Buddhist Vihara in Tampa for the Katina Pinkama. We offered an Ata Pirikara during the Katina Pinkama. May she attain the Supreme Bliss of Nirvana.





## "Good Bye"

After spending seven fruitful years in the USA, the time has come to say "Good Bye". My husband Sachith and I came to Lubbock, Texas in 2008 with lots of dreams. Sachith was under study leave as a probationary lecturer at University of Peradeniya and our plan was to return to Sri Lanka after finishing our studies. After many hours of studies and research work, both of us graduated with our doctoral degree in Mathematics this year. I also accepted a position at the University of Peradeniya and now we are ready to go back to our motherland.

Looking back at those years we spent in the USA, we are happy with all the experience we gained and merits we have achieved. We travelled a lot and you may be familiar about our road trips from my articles "33 and counting". We became proud parents of a beautiful and charming daughter. I got a chance to bond with Mayans through MGCAANA and I enjoyed publishing Maya Puwath as a member of the Newsletter Committee.

I take this opportunity to thank all the members of MGCAANA and everybody who helped to achieve our goals. Although I am leaving MGCAANA, I will continue my service to Mahamaya as a member of the OGA- Kandy branch. I am looking forward to see you all someday again.

Wishing you a happy and prosperous New Year!

Hemalika Abeysundara (nee Karunaratne)



“I have learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

by Maya Angelou.

Thank you and Welcome!

On behalf of MGCAANA I would like to Thank you Mrs. Gayathri Gankanda, for your out standing hard work through out many years with MGCAANA. I wish you the best.

Also, I like to thank you and appreciate your hard work Mrs. Geetha Eragoda as our VSTF Co-Chair. Your effort at VSTF tremendously helped us where we are now. Though she is still working with us in other committees, thank you again for all your hard work went to VSTF.

Also, would love to thank you and welcome Ms. Vihara Dharmaratne as our new Co-Chair for the VSTF and what a wonderful addition to the team.

One of our beloved long time MGCAANA member and our own Newsletter committee member, Mrs. Hemalika Karunaratne will leave us in January 2015. She has taken up a position at the University of Peradeniya and will continue to support us from there. Priyanka Jayakody and I have had tremendous support and she has created great newsletters for MGCAANA all these years. She is a great editor for us too. We will miss her but wish her and her family the very best in their new lives together in Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

At the same note, I like to welcome Mrs. Erandi Ranaweera as our new appointee for the advisory board. We are so happy to have you and looking forward to work with you in many tasks and many years to come.

Prepared by Sriyani Dissanayake

### **Our beloved Kindergarten class teacher Mrs. Gunapala**

What an amazing day for few of us in Kandy this summer. I put the idea in few of our friends to get together so that we could go visit our much loved Kindergarten teacher Mrs. Gunapala at her residence in Aruppola, Kandy. Fortunately, our MGCAANA BOD member and vice president, Nirmala Gunapala was visiting her mother during the same time and it was a nice and pleasant gathering that we had at her mother's place. She still remembered all of us and very vigilant. She was charming and beautiful inside and outside as she was years ago when we all walked into her classroom. By Sriyani Dissanayake.







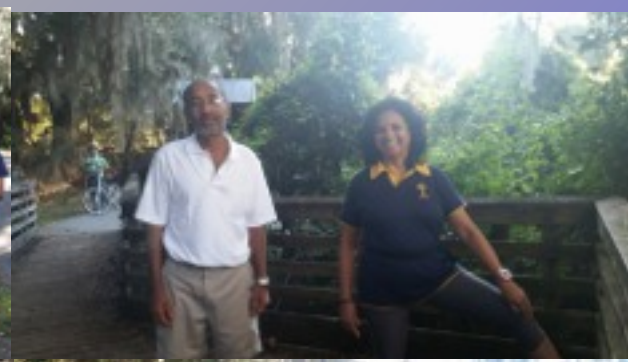
## 5K Run/Walk/Ride

October 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday was another memorable fund raising weekend for Mayans in the USA and in Canada. This time we took a different path to raise funds towards MGCAANA. We arranged a 5 K run/walk/ride event in different cities in the USA and in Canada.

We had 27 runners signed up to do the run. In Gainesville we had the event in the famous Hawthorn Trail. It was a lovely morning and the day was very comfortable for a good run. In Seattle Mrs. Werake had organized her group to come together in a cold rainy day. In Canada despite the cold wintry weather, Nayana had organized her team. In California, Geetha Eragoda signed up for her family for a run and in Portland Oregon, Harshi Waters and her daughter ran for the 5K. Likewise, in many different cities many individuals signed up to do the race. Despite the weather we all came together for one aim and one goal.

I thank you very much for those of you who took part in this event. I appreciate everyone who donated money for this fund raising event. Your contributions and help go long way in many lives that needed our help. Thank you again and we can organize a similar event in late spring and early summer next year.

Prepared By Sriyani Dissanayake

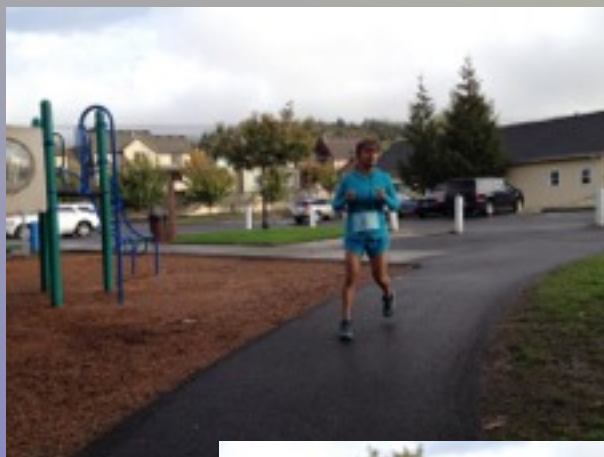
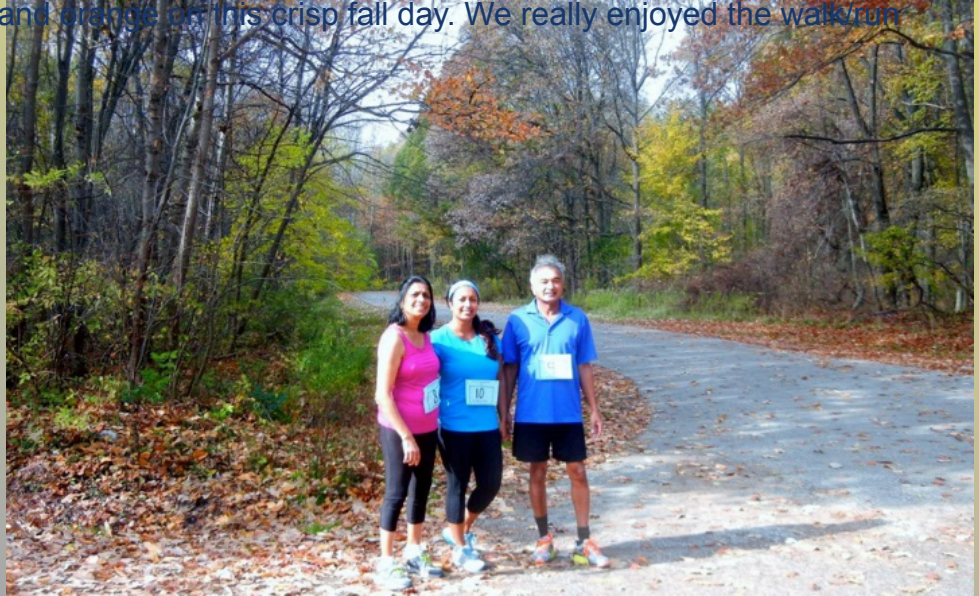


5K Walker from West Palm Beach FLorida  
Geethanjali Wijayapala Selvendran.



October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 was a beautiful fall day in Windsor, Canada ideal for the MGCAANA 5k walk/run/ride in aid of Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund. There is a naturally preserved forest with walking trails 5 minutes from our home. We chose this location for the 5k walk/run. It was 18 degrees Celsius with blue skies, the leaves turning yellow and orange on this crisp fall day. We really enjoyed the walk/run and hope to do it next year too.

Nayana, Chanika and Lal Fernando

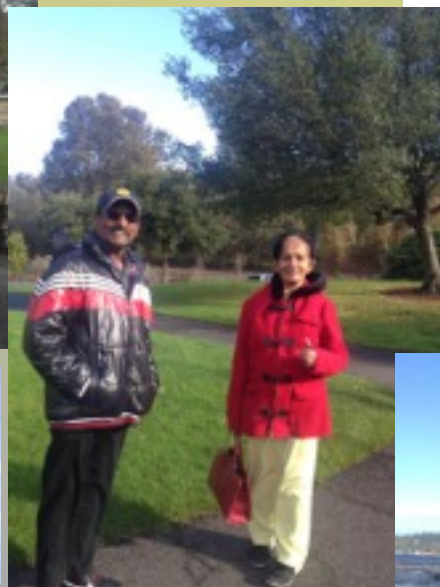


Supporters for 5K from Oregon

Harshi Waters and our cute and youngest supporter Tarika Waters



**Our 5K Runners/Walkers from Washington State.  
Group led by Mrs. Sujatha Werake and Mrs. Priyanka Bandara Jayakody.**



More Chances of getting involved with MGCANNA

Our Next fund raising project is on now.

Please go to MGCANNA site and find this link.

<http://www.mahamayaasunnina.org/ScarfProjectform.html>

Order your scarf/scarves today and contributed to a worthy cause of MGCANNA.



# Job Opportunities

## Tenure-track Position, Assistant Professor of Physics

**Institution** University of Hartford

**Location:** West Hartford, CT

**Category:** • Faculty - Science - Physics

**Posted:** 12/15/2014

**App. Due:** Open Until Filled

**Type:** Full Time

Please go to this link for more information.

<http://www.higheredjobs.com/m/details.cfm?JobCode=175996971&Title=Tenure%2Dtrack%20Position%2C%20Assistant%20Professor%20of%20Physics>

Sent by Hashini Mohottala- University of Hartford

## Mayan's Achievements



**Congratulations to proud Mayan, Dr. Mrs. Hemalika Karunaratne Abeyesundara and Dr. Sachith Abeyesundara. May your return back to Sri Lanka will give you the opportunity to spread the knowledge you both have obtained! Bless you all !**



## Ruwanwelisaya Temple

**By Medha Dorabawila Bulumulla**



The bullock cart, which is a cart pulled by two bulls, stopped. My grandfather and his family got out of the bullock cart. He was tired from the long trip. They had arrived at the Ruwanwelisaya temple. The pagoda at the temple was white with a gold tip on the top. It was magnificent.

My grandfather was hungry and wanted to have his dinner immediately. However, the plan was to eat dinner only after they went to the temple. Before going to the temple, they had other things to do so as well. He wanted to go to the temple the next day or to go to the temple as soon as possible, so he could eat.

There were little shops everywhere. Some had fresh fruits in them. He sprinted towards one. He sniffed the amazing fruits. There were mangos, bananas, pineapples, durian, rambutan, and watermelon. Durian is a fruit with big spikes on the outside. It has a super strong smell. The smell isn't too bad. It will give some people a headache after a while, though. Inside it is white and gooey. Rambutan is a small red fruit. It has something like spikes on it but the spikes aren't hard. The spikes are quite flimsy and are sort of like sharp strings. Inside of a rambutan is white. In Sri Lanka, they have small bananas, which are called plantains. Long big bananas are not common in Sri Lanka. Plantains taste the same as bananas, though. Looking at all the fruits made him even hungrier.

Then, he overheard two people talking. He heard that they had just completed restoring the temple. Today was the day they were re-opening it. He also heard they were having a special celebration for the grand re-opening of the temple. He was so excited. My grandfather couldn't catch the conversation on details of the celebration. Now, he really wanted to know what the celebration was going to be. My great grandmother was buying lotus flowers to take to the temple as an offering.

"Would you like a flower?" his mother asked my grandfather.

"Yes, I'd love one," my grandfather replied. She handed him a flower and some to his big family. He walked towards the temple with his family. My grandfather removed his shoes. People are not supposed to wear shoes in the temple. It is considered impolite. Devotees also wear white clothing. He looked at the temple and it looked amazing. "They did a great job on the restoration", he thought.

Lotus flowers are offered at the temple. He walked with his family towards a table used to offer flowers. My grandfather removed the stem of the lotus flower and put the stem in a bucket. He took off the stem, because he wanted to offer the beautiful and delicate part of the flower. My grandfather offered the flower on the table and put his two hands together. His big family went back and sat down to pray.

Then he smelled something extremely strong. It was much stronger than any smell he had experienced before. The smell was of lotus flowers, but felt more potent. He looked at the table, but there weren't too many flowers there. No one had a huge amount of flowers in their hands either. He thought about where it came from, but he could not come up with an answer. Then, the smell got stronger. Finally, he figured out where the smell was coming from. It was coming from the sky.

Then, something big and loud appeared in the air. It was right above the gold tip of the temple and was astonishing. He thought about it hard. It was pretty big and noisy. Something above it was spinning fast and creating a strong wind.

"What is that thing!" he yelled at my great grandmother.

"That's a helicopter. It flies in the air and takes people to their destination." My great grandmother said to my grandfather.

"Wow! I want one!" my grandfather said.

My great grandmother smiled.

Soon something was falling from the helicopter. When they came down, my grandfather noticed what they were. They were lotus flowers. Soon more helicopters came. More flowers came down. It was very colorful. There were white, purple and pink flowers. Some kids were running everywhere trying to catch flowers. Some of the older kids sat and watched the flowers drop down. Many of the kids were laughing and smiling. Most of them had a bouquet of flowers in their hands from the flowers they caught.

One landed on my grandfather's head. He stood up. He took it off and held it in his hands. He smiled brightly and looked at the purple flower. He held out his right hand to catch flowers. He kept his purple flower in his left hand. A lot of flowers landed on his hand. He put all the flowers in both of his hands.

The helicopters stopped dropping flowers and flew somewhere else. When it ended there were many flowers all over the temple. One flower even landed on the gold tip. It was amazing. It was almost like a rainbow of flowers. He looked everywhere. Everyone was smiling. My grandfather stuffed his nose into some of the lotus flowers. He inhaled the beautiful smell of the flowers.

My grandfather left the temple. He was so glad that they were at the temple that day and not the next morning.

"Can we eat something now?" my grandfather asked.

They walked toward the fruit stand. My grandfather chose a mango. The man at the stand sliced the mango. The whole family shared the mango. It was juicy and delicious. They left the temple area. My grandfather never forgot that beautiful and fun day.

---

This is based on an anecdote from my maternal grandfather on an experience, he had around 1940, when he was 3 years old, but the details are fictional. He passed away on 11/10/2014. I wrote this a few years ago when I was 11 years old. That summer, with my grandfather, I visited the Ruwanwelisaya temple and offered lotus flowers. This is picture I took of the temple on that visit.



## Dr. Bandara

Dr. Bandara, loving husband of Mrs. Bandara who taught at Mahamaya Primary Section for many years until her retirement, precious father of our dear Mahamaya alumnae and hard-working members of MGCAANA, Dr. Vajeera Dorabawila, Dr. Samanmala Dorabawila, Dr. Nelum Dorabawila, Dr. Tamara Dorabawila Jayasundare, active Rajan Mr. Kamal Dorabawila, and loving father-in-law of Mahamaya alumna Dr. Nilmini Wickremeratne Dorabawila passed away in November. Dr. Bandara Mrs. Bandara brought up five extraordinary children. He led an exemplary life.

On behalf of our Maya family in United States and Canada we would like to express our deepest sympathies to the Dorabawila family on their loss. We all know how difficult it is to lose a parent.

We are so fortunate to have Dorabawila family as part of MGCAANA. Dorabawila family energized MGCAANA throughout the years by their active participation which is unforgettable and needs to be mentioned with much gratitude. From the humble beginnings of MGCAANA in 2005, Dr. Vajeera Dorabawila, Dr. Samanmala Dorabawila, Dr. Tamara Dorabawila, and Dr. Nilmini Dorabawila served in the Boards of Directors, the Executive Committees, and other service oriented Committees of MGCAANA for several years. As part of our program to support economically disadvantaged students, Vajeera and Tamara sponsored Mahamaya children for years. Vajeera and Nilmini, being members of the Publication Committee, gave their unfailing support and leadership to publish the "Mahamaya 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Volume." Samanmala took the leadership to set up the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund in Kandy for the economically disadvantaged Mahamaya students, on behalf of MGCAANA. Mrs. Bandara supported MGCAANA's activities from Sri Lanka. We are so thankful for their unfailing support through the years.

Dr. Bandara lived an active and worthy life. He was an inspiration to others around him. His passing is a great loss to his family. We are certain that the family members will find comfort in one of the great teachings in Buddhism, the impermanence.

May he attain the bliss of Nibbana!!!

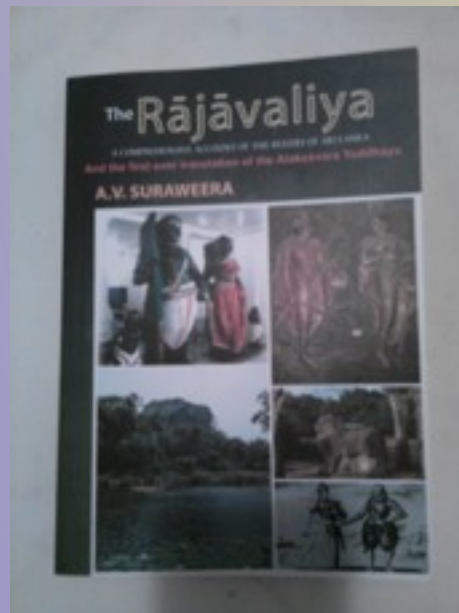
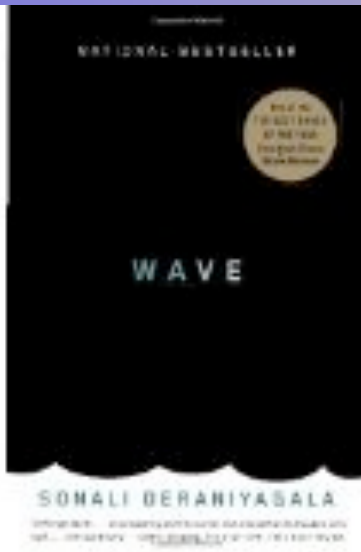
**Sent by Sujatha Werake**

*"Each of us has an image of what we think we are or what we should be, and that image, that picture, entirely prevents us from seeing ourselves as we actually are."*

*by Krishnamurthi-*

## Editor's pick

Great Books to read during your winter holidays!



A PUBLICATION OF THE MAHAMAYA GIRLS' COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF  
NORTH AMERICA Newsletter Committee:

Sriyani Dissanayake, Priyanka Jayakody, Hemalika Abeysundara.