

# **Dedication**

## **Children of the Irrigation Civilization**



**The second longest river in Sri Lanka (102 miles), the Malwatu River is also the most historic. Lying at the very heart of Sri Lanka’s ancient past, it is of enormous significance to the story of civilization in Lanka.**

**The Malwatu Oya runs across northern and central Sri Lanka. This region was known as the Dry Zone, dry and sometimes arid, it was a land of soaring temperatures and great rolling plains. Without the ability to store water, man could not have prospered.**

**The waters of the Malwatu Oya laid the foundation of a chain of waterways, dams and reservoirs, which marked the beginnings of ancient Lanka’s irrigation civilization. This enabled the cultivation of rice on a vast scale, transforming the Dry Zone into a huge granary. For the first one and half millennia of her history, this was where most of Sri Lanka’s people lived.**



**The lifeblood of this culture was water; this was the source of its wealth and its vitality.**

**Thousands of years later, rice is still the single most important crop for Sri Lanka's people. 34 percent of the available land is still devoted to the farming of rice. 1.8 million families are still engaged in its cultivation. Rice still provides 45 per cent of the total calorie and 40 per cent of the total protein requirement of the average Sri Lankan.**

**Yet for the people of the Dry Zone, the successors of Sri Lanka's ancient legacy, it is a hard and draining life, at the mercy of the changing weather and the availability of water.**

**Many of the children of farmers of the Dry Zone lack the necessary resources to complete their education. We encountered these children through **Educate Lanka**, a US based non-profit that provides scholarships to underprivileged children of Sri Lanka. The inspiration for dedicating our journey In Search of Malwatu Oya to the Children of Irrigation Civilization of Sri Lanka came from these children. **Through the efforts of Malwatu Oya Soya, we hope to improve the conditions of these children through Educate Lanka scholarships.****



As a country Sri Lanka still depends on its farmers and their families to sustain its economy. They are the Children of the Irrigation Civilization that started around Malwatu Oya. **The Search for the Malwatu Oya is part of their story as well.**