

COLONEL H. S. OLCOTT

(1832—1907)

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
OF HIS DEATH

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*Commemorative Stamp*

8th December, 1967

POSTS & TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT  
CEYLON

## CEYLON STAMP NEWS—BULLETIN No. 4

OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL  
AND DIRECTOR OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS,  
NEW POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
HEADQUARTERS,

Duke Street, Colombo 1. (Ceylon)

20th November, 1967.

THE Posts & Telecommunications Department of Ceylon, will issue a Special Stamp on 8.12.1967, to commemorate the Sixtieth Anniversary of the death of Col. H. S. Olcott. Ceylon remembers with gratitude and veneration Col. Olcott, a great American who has been a source of inspiration and guidance to the Buddhists of Ceylon.

Col. Olcott was born on 2.8.1832 at Orange, New Jersey, U. S. A. After graduating from College in 1851 he devoted himself to the promotion of Scientific Agriculture in his own country. When Civil War broke out in 1861 he joined the Northern Ranks as a volunteer, and fought through the Burnside campaign in Virginia. At the conclusion of this he was invalided home. On his recovery he was appointed Special Commissioner of the War Department. For four years he worked in the Army and Navy Departments unearthing gigantic frauds committed by contractors on the Government. On the termination of the war he retired, and practised as a lawyer for a short time.

In 1875, with Madam Blavatsky and others, he founded the Theosophical Society in New York and he was elected the first president of the society. He left for India in 1879, arrived in Bombay the same year and set about his great spiritual work.

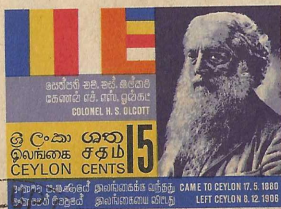
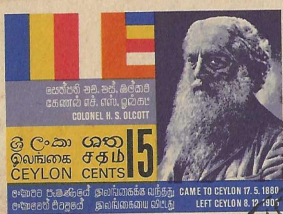
Olcott arrived in Ceylon in 1880 when a religious awakening was just starting and Buddhist leaders were working actively for the restoration of Buddhism. He became a Buddhist and dedicated himself to the promotion of Buddhism. In a remarkable way the Buddhist High Priests gathered round him, and under his inspiring leadership forged their way to win the rights they had lost.

One of Olcott's first acts was to establish a Buddhist Defence Committee to combat the forces working against the Buddhists. Through this Committee he was able to get the Wesak Full Moon Day (The day of greatest religious significance to the Buddhists) declared a Public Holiday, and the Buddhist Temporalities Bill passed in 1889.

One of his most valuable contributions to Ceylon was the Buddhist Education Movement started by him in 1881. He founded the Buddhist Theosophical Society with the object of establishing Buddhist Schools, and within a short time hundreds of Buddhist Schools were opened in all parts of the country. Of these Ananda College in Colombo, Mahinda College in Galle and Dharmarajah College in Kandy rank among the best schools in the country to-day.

In order to promote the unity and solidarity of Buddhists all over the world Olcott conceived the idea of the Buddhist Flag. The five-colour flag designed by him in 1885 is accepted by Buddhists all over the world as a common symbol of their faith. He also convened at Madras the First International Buddhist Conference of delegates of the Buddhists of Burma, Cittagong, Ceylon and Japan.

He visited Japan in 1889 and on his return established the Head-Quarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, Madras. He worked for the revival of ancient learning in connection with the great religions of India by organising the Adyar library which is to-day one of the well known oriental institutes of the world. He continued to have an abiding interest in the religious and educational movement in Ceylon and visited Ceylon at frequent intervals. He left Ceylon for the last time on 8th December, 1906 and passed away in Adyar in Madras on 17.2.1907.



## Technical Details

<i>Denomination</i>	15 cents
<i>Printers</i>	Bruder Rosenbaum, Austria
<i>Design</i>	A portrait of Colonel H. S. Olcott and the Buddhist Flag
<i>Colours</i>	Blue, Yellow, Red, White, Reddish Orange and Shades of Blue
<i>Format</i>	Horizontal
<i>Size</i>	25 × 36 m.m.
<i>Date of Issue</i>	8.12.1967
<i>Printing Process</i>	Photogravure
<i>Sheet Composition</i>	10 × 10 = 100 stamps per sheet

*First Day Cover Service.*—An Official First-Day Cover with a picture of Col. H. S. Olcott and Ananda College, the first English School founded by him, will be available for sale in two sizes. The price of a large cover is 20 cents and a small cover 15 cents.

## Terms of Sale

Overseas orders for the supply of the new stamps and First Day Covers should be addressed with full particulars to the Director, Philatelic Bureau, 5th floor E. 9 & 10, Ceylinco House, Colombo 1, Ceylon, and should be accompanied by mail transfer, international money order or bank draft payable to the Director, Philatelic Bureau.

A. L. PERERA  
Postmaster-General and  
Director of Telecommunications



*Posts & Telecommunications  
 Department  
 Ceylon*