



A Complete Illustrated History of Sri Lanka by Dr Anton Sebastian was launched earlier this year followed by a 'Meet the Author' event held recently. The 696 pages hardback tome is Dr Sebastian's fourth publication that follows, History of Medicine, a Dictionary of the History of Science and Dates in Medicine. On his motivation to publish a book on history, he says, "my first credential is my unabated passion for this Island, which never deserted me since I left the Island three decades ago."

The book is a culmination of six years of research that involved sourcing information from museum archives of different parts of the world and afforded a visual impetus to his writing. "Whilst studying Sri Lankan history, I realised it was wanting in so many aspects, in that you have to look at Sri Lanka not in isolation but how people from ancient times looked at our country. As a result I have taken, Sri Lanka out of an isolated perspective and into a global context," he explains.

The book begins with the geological formation of the Island and takes the reader through prehistoric, and historic events up to the year 2009 in his attempt to do justice to the word 'complete' in the title. Dr Sebastian has analysed myths, legends, prehistory, chronicles and inscriptions in Sri Lanka through geology, pathology archaeology and other allied sciences and his research found him venturing into the remotest parts of the Island. A singular feature of the book is its timeline. "I constructed timelines which compared events in the Island to the rest of the world. For instance it was fascinating to know that when King Gajabahu ruled in the second Century AD, the Greek geographer Ptolemy had already put Lanka on the map to a fair detail," explained the author.

The book is written in a simple logical manner to carry through to a greater audience. It is a

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hybrid of academic and popular history while preserving the best of both worlds.