

3. PREPARATION OF INTRODUCTION, NOTES AND RUNNING COMMENTARY ON PLATO'S PHAEDO

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The phaedo is the last of four dialogues devoted to the last days of Socrates. The first three are already available in a Sinhala translation by Prof. Merlin Peris and Dr. D.P. Ponnampereuma. But this dialogue which records the last conversation and death of one of the world's greatest men, has not been available to the Sinhala reader up to now. The subject of this dialogue is the problem of the immortality of the soul and the duty of the Philosopher.

The introduction, notes and running commentary are designed to accompany the Sinhala translation of the Phaedo which I prepared with the help of a research grant in 1986. The introduction furnishes the historical and biographical background for understanding the work of Socrates and Plato. The notes are designed to clarify philological, literary and cultural matters arising from the text. The detailed running commentary deals with the literary and dramatic qualities of the composition as well as with the various philosophical, religious, moral and social issues raised by the dialogue.