

**Christoph T. M. Krause**

**Tina – My Best Friend**

**My Bitch from Sri Lanka**



**Christoph T. M. Krause**

# **TINA**

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**My Best Friend**

**My Bitch from Sri Lanka**

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# C O N T E N T

<b>Preface.</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Holidays at Last.</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The First Cultural Shock.</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>We are Heroes.</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>A Trip to Wonderland.</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Fruit Market in Kandy.</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Tina.</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Tina, my Best Friend.</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Royal Botanical Garden.</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>The Powder.</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>At the Vet.</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Bureaucracy.</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Tina's First Adventures.</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Visiting the Zoo.</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Evil Intentions.</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Sigiriya.</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Departure.</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Our Flight Home.</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>After Landing.</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>A Long Life.</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Epilogue.</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Appendix. Internet Sources.</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>The Box. Drawing.</b>	<b>84</b>

**This book is dedicated to Tina, Mickey, Beauty, Roxy and Lexi**

## ~ Preface ~

1990 was a positive and fateful year for Germany.

The world around Germany changed as well. New states were founded, others were dissolved and revolutions bore their fruit.

For me, it was a year that changed everything in my life. I went on an adventure trip to Sri Lanka and found my love for a dog.

From this point on, my life changed drastically and turned into something completely different. However, it also introduced certain dark elements. A life-threatening disease was only one of several strokes of fate.

All these changes started with a small dog, who I brought home from Ceylon.

8 years later I turned my passion for dogs into a job, which I still carry out successfully to this day.

All that was possible because of what happened one day in March of 1990 in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

In this book, I finally get to tell this very personal story.





## ~ Holiday at Last ~

For many years I took exotic trips to Sri Lanka.

As soon as you get off the plane and arrive on the runway via the gangway, you are overwhelmed by the humid climate of this beautiful fairyland called Ceylon.

Mystic and exotic like India, Sri Lanka, which is how it was named in 1972, is reminiscent of a drop located on the south coast of India. It is only about five degrees of latitude away from the equator.

In practical terms, this means that the seasons are not at all comparable to what they are like in Europe. There are only monsoon seasons that bring a lot of rain and non-monsoon seasons during which there are droughts, even though they are moist and humid.



“Rain” during monsoon season means, that the rain pours down from the sky like rivers, flooding everything that was not prepared for it.

Due to the sewage systems in towns and villages being broken most of the time and neither receiving maintenance nor repairs, ever since the British installed them, they can’t collect large quantities of water. This results in pedestrians often having to

wade through knee-deep water in order to cross any regular road.

A region without any seasons means that you get to experience something fundamentally different than what the average Central European is used to.

We grew up with the temperatures as well as the brightness of the day changing constantly. In summer it gets light early and dark late and in winter the opposite happens.

We require heating, in order to protect ourselves from the cold in our homes and we have known since we were children, that it is necessary to adapt our clothing to the temperature.

This experience almost seems to be “God-given” and irrefutable; ask yourself if you have ever wondered, whether this could be different, before you went to such countries.

Of course you know it and so do I. I’ve known it since Geography class in school. But experiencing it is an entirely different story.

Now you travel to Asia and wonder why the pavements get “folded up” at 6 pm in the evening (provided there are any!).

You wonder, why it gets light at 6 am and dark at 6 pm all year round, without any noticeable change or shift in the course of the year!

It was a cultural shock for me.

I once spent the night of Christmas Eve in a hotel pool right by the Indian ocean. It was about 30 degrees and in the background you could hear the song “Holy Night” in German. I have to say I truly felt as if I was in a film and a wrong one at that.

The temperature is essentially always the same, always around 30 degrees Celsius, all year long.

A Central European is not made for such conditions, even if he (I always have the “she” in mind, be sure of that!) believes in it at first or longs for it in his wildest dreams.

I, for one, found out that these experiences made me appreciate the different seasons. I enjoy them because they correspond with my nature.

Of course we don’t like the cold and wet days in autumn and winter at first, but as soon as we have experienced the opposite, even once in our lives, we start to think and feel differently.

However, that is something that everyone has to experience themselves. I’m certain that there are people who deal well with it and therefore love it.



## ~ The First Cultural Shock ~

Heat and humidity take hold of the newcomer as soon as the doors of the airplane are opened and at first you have a hard time imagining how you are supposed to endure that for the entire duration of your time there.

The airport was already considered quite modern and internationally designed in the 1980s. After your first step out of the airport, you are once again stoked at the dimensions.

Hundreds of people are waiting in front of the building, curiously watching the newcomers, anticipating business connections or other contacts. Taxi drivers in particular are waiting right here for new customers. Even if they only have „tuk tuks“<sup>1</sup> to offer or sometimes donkey carriages to take tourists to their destinations.

As I mostly travel privately and not on a package deal, there was no tourist bus ready to pick me up. As an experienced traveller to Ceylon, I organised my own personal driver, who was waiting for me patiently.

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<sup>1</sup> An auto rickshaw is a motorised version of a rikshaw, which has its origins in Ja-pan. These are small vehicles with two or three wheels that are either pulled by a person on foot or on a bicycle (cycle rikshaw) and are used for transporting goods or persons. Due to the noise that the two-stroke engine typically makes, there are sometimes called tuk tuk.

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Internet quoting: Cf. Appendix No. 1



## ~ We are Heroes ~

I quickly walked past all those that were waiting, but not without having my light-coloured skin touched as I brushed past them, as some considered it “God-like”. It was apparently a new sight for many Ceylonese people and lead to some joyful reactions.

Us Europeans (as well as other people) love to tan our mostly pale skin in summer by means of sun bathing (and perhaps even the use of tanning beds). We do that in order to reach a more desirable “brown” colour, which suggests that we may also participate in the nimbus of a fit, modern human, but sadly only for a short period of time.

It seems as though the behaviour of the locals is the exact opposite. The lighter the skin is and the more blond your hair is, the more desirable. Quite a few locals dye their hair blonde or a different light colour in order to conform to this concept.

I have always found this strange twisting of these ideal images to be quite bizarre. Even though it shows that humans tend to never be satisfied with what they are and what they have. Instead we always look at our neighbour’s “happiness” and try to imitate him or her.

The “hero worship”, given to our species, has always seemed very submissive to me, even though I never felt uncomfortable being touched. Their touches never felt demanding or presumptuous, but shy and full of respect for, what the locals considered “God-like” ideal images.

I have to say that this “cult of worship” made me feel alienated to a great extent. Especially since I knew about the colonial history of the British, the Dutch and the Portuguese, who had not treated the locals delicately, to say the least. Bizarrely, this is what made it come full circle in my mind.

Colonialism was only possible, because lots of Asians traditionally seemed to exhibit a “natural” reverence for Europeans, at least during colonial times, which might have been why the European’s behaviour during those times was tolerated by them.

Of course, this also says something about how this people or rather this ethnic group, sees itself. Do they consider themselves equal, do they have feelings of inferiority, wherever those come from? Or are these feelings of inferiority a sort of tradition, or maybe it is just our impression? Is it perhaps a question of politeness and respect towards strangers and has nothing to do with subservience?

Should we even generalise these impressions or does it require an empirical investigation?

These questions need to be answered by scientists. This experience was very new to me. But I do understand the temptation it holds.

I once was invited to the home of a Ceylonese middle class family. The conditions were very similar to European palaces, except that it was a small townhouse.



Being their guest, I was provided with all-round care by their staff. Without ever having to ask for it, my shoes were polished, my suitcase was unpacked and everything was arranged in a way that made me feel like a king who did the family's bidding.

My overnight accommodation was with the youngest son, who was 13 years old. We shared a double bed.

This decision seemed the strangest to me, as I was not sure whether this meant that they offered their own son as a "present" to me (I heard that those things really do happen).

On the other hand, it could have also meant, that the parents trusted me a great deal and wanted to show me their respect.

I am sure that the parents knew I wouldn't abuse this situation, but how can you be really sure of that? Nowadays we know what kind of things go on in the world, but back then you didn't talk about those things, especially in Sri Lanka. It seemed as though there was no other place to stay in the house.

All these seemingly contradicting experiences were pivotal and I felt like I was on a volcano. I always felt as if the house of cards inside of me could collapse at any moment. The experiences I had in this country, regardless of their nature, were disconcerting and enticing at the same time.