

The process of physical (illustrations) growth is directly linked to the finances. There were bills to be paid every quarter. We started with a modest sum of around Rs7000 and 175 copies in 2001. More pages meant more funds and more color pages meant that much more. Initially we had lot of problem but Rajan, my husband was of the opinion that more the color pages, more participaton from the Clubs. He and many other senior planters helped to get advertisements from various companies then but it was still just enough to give one free color page to each club. Very few clubs were ready to pay extra for extra color page those days.

It is very encouraging to see that now The Camellia offers an extravaganza of colour pages with pictures from various club activities - Men's Nites, Mid Rains Dances, Swimming Galas, Diwali,Bihu and Christmas celebrations, Golf & Soccer activities, Flower shows and The Clubs's Annual Do. The Camellia has become more visual now than it was in the past.

Sitting miles away as I flip on pages of my memorable journey with The Camellia I am transported back on the lush green landscape. With the onset of winter the Tea bushes must be ready for pruning, new areas preapred for re- planting. Images are so distinct , almost like a movie where visuals and sounds become real.

It is the early misty hours of winter dawn. The planter heads for replanting the uprooted section; the tractor rolls in carrying fresh tea saplings, and the earth waits to receive them once allover again. In those moments of silence the footsteps can be heard and to a more imaginative mind Footprints seen, of those, who too had been there in the past - a time when even bare minimum basic amenities were rare. Times have changed so much from the days of no electricity to internet.

The earlier issues of The Camellia brought many stories of the pioneers and from the pioneers as retired expatriates started sharing their stories. Gradually the stories from that era started depleting . It is natural that with time the old has to give way to the new yet the fact remains that without The Camellia those stories would have been lost in the layers of time. Lest we forget the pioneering painstaking endeavors of the early Tea settlers, perseverance of the subsequent generations; lest we forget the solid foundation ----a system, they laid down to help Tea in North East reach its pinnacle of glory, The Camellia, in its minuscule way, continued to feature and applaud their unfaltering spirit. It has carried stories of changing tea generations and continues to do so. Lets raise a toast to the everlasting spirit of Tea Planters. They never retire. The Camellia is witness to this fact. There is always that lingering yearning for those days that keeps coming back through their reminsces on The Camelia pages.

It is heartening to watch the present walking along with the past, matching their writing prowess and what they lack in experience, they have compensated with variety. New visions, a long-term perspective and efforts have to be prepared; the change has to come from within the system from You: the present Tea generation.

Future of The Camellia is in your hands, everything to sustain and flourish needs dedicated people behind it. The Camellia having completed 14 years and its teething problems over, is now fully set and its work procedure organized. One has to just follow it up and move on from here. Among the dedicated team behind the edit desk and correspondents there are some very capable enthusiasts, who are determined they would not let it fade away. They have it in them to make it bigger, and it is through them I foresee The Camellia's long-lasting life. But with experience I also know promises are kept not through words but through commitment. Motivation is what gets you started; habit and dedication are what keep you going.