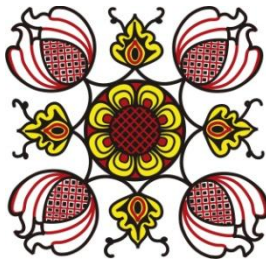


Quarterly Tours – No. 24



National Trust – Sri Lanka

24th November 2012

Compiled by Nilan Cooray

National Trust – Sri Lanka

Quarterly Tours – Saturday, 24th November 2012.

Programme

0700 hrs:	Leave PGIAR
0845- 0930 hrs:	Atapattu Walauwa in Galle
0945 – 1030 hrs:	Kataluwa Vihara
1100 – 1115 hrs:	Kushtarajagala
1145 – 1230 hrs:	Samudragiri Vihara at Mirissa
1245 -1300 hrs:	Old Market at Nupe
1315 -1400 hrs:	Lunch
1415 -1545 hrs:	Matara Fort and the Dutch Reformed Church
1545 -1615 hrs:	Star Fort at Matara
1900 hrs:	Arrive at PGIAR

Atapattu Walauwa in Galle



Located in Walauwatta, a highly residential area on Lower Dickson Road, adjacent to the Galle city centre, Atapattu Walauwa was originally built by Mudliar Don Bastian Gooneratne in 1742. It has been the ancestral home of the Dias Abeysinghe and Gooneratne families for over two and half centuries. Its spatial organization reflects a house form designed to interact with society on a hierarchical basis.

The house has a spacious front verandah and grand interior spaces consisting of a sitting room and a dining hall. A decorated arch separates the sitting room with front and rear sections. The house has a large central court yard. The main

bed rooms of the house are located on either side of the court yard and the ladies dormitory was located above the dining room, while kitchen, store room and the back verandah are located at the rear. The dining hall is adorned with ancient *disa* flags and has a *panka* (manual fan).

The Walauwa has been expended along with some structural changes incorporated to accommodate the needs of the occupations over the years. Such indications are seen in the sitting room where an original base of a door frame is present, indicative of subsequent expansion of the sitting room.

Kataluwa Vihara



Situated in Kataluwa, about 2km from Galle–Matara main road, Kataluwa Poorwarama Raja MahaVihara has an image house reflecting colonial influence on Buddhist art. The image house consists of three chambers. The inner chamber has images of

Buddha and Hindu gods which retain their Kandy period style. The middle chamber has paintings depicting events in the life of the Buddha while the outer chamber has paintings from *Jataka* stories and *Suvisi Vivarana*. Belong to the southern maritime tradition, the paintings of this temple are conspicuous.

Constructed by Rev. Kataluwe Gunaratna Thero, the doorway to the image house carries the date 1886 painted underneath the British crest carrying the picture of Queen Victoria. There are colonial style horse carriages, dresses, shoes, jewellery, lamps and there are even paintings of soldiers with guns as well as those drinking wine and playing cards. The usual guard carrying a sword had been replaced by a soldier carrying a gun. The traditional mode of transport for the elite - the palanquin or elephant - has been replaced by western horse-drawn carriage. Although the traditional dress is commonly depicted in the paintings, in some sections, the traditional grab of both men women have been replaced with dresses, trousers and shoes. The background of the paintings follows the usual Kandy period style of dark hues for the most part. The figures painted in light pastel colours with the material worn by each figure carrying its own distinctive pattern. The style and technique of these paintings are of a very high quality and when compared with the other paintings in the region, the techniques and the attention to details in these paintings indicate that they were executed much earlier than 1886, the date shown on the doorway. This date may indicate a date of alteration or even some renovations rather than actual construction. Although some experts argue that there are two distinctive styles of paintings at Kataluwa, it seems that the style was the same, but executed by two artists who belonged to the same guild of painters. This is attested by oral tradition available from the 18th century and documentary from the 19th century.

Kushtarajagala



Situated in Weligama town, this image carved on a rock face is identified as a Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. Ascribed to a period between 7th -8th centuries AC, it is one of the finest Mahayana sculptures found in Sri Lanka. The standing image is more than 16ft in height and heavily draped in elaborate ornaments and garments. The head dress too is intricately designed and adorned with many necklaces.

There are various legends associated with the name and the establishment of this image. The favorite among them seems to be that this was done under the patronage of a prince who had a skin disease which was cured at this particular site, hence the name ‘Kushtarajagala’. According to another legend, a king who had a skin disease was cured at this site and was responsible for the carving of this image. The chronicles record that king Aggabodhi IV (667-683 AC), famed as a just king, suffered from an incurable disease and had got this image done under his patronage. Since Aggabodhi IV ruled from Rohana (Ruhuna), some scholars are of the view that king Aggabodhi was responsible for this work.

Samudragiri Vihara at Mirissa

The site where the Samudragiri Vihara is at present is known as Veheragalla owing to the presence of a mound containing the ruins of a stupa which had been washed away due to the erosion of the sea. The development of the Samudragiri Vihara is said to commence from the early 19th century.

The monastery consists of a large image– shrine containing some of the best paintings of the southern maritime style, datable to the 19th century. These paintings appear to have been saved from the infiltration of the 20th century Rococo art forms, which have disfigured most of the 19th century such paintings of the southern temples.



The monastery had apparently played a major role in the development of Buddhism in the South. An ola- leaf manuscript of the vihara refers to a debate on Buddhism that ensued between an erudite monk of the monastery and another belonging to another temple. Several other manuscripts are also in the possession of the monastery. These include the complete works of the Pali Canon and individual *jataka* texts such as the Mahosadha Jataka which is illustrated with paintings. The wooden covers of the Sasa jataka also are painted. Among the script writers of the manuscripts are two of the important artists of the time Garanduwe Edo Sittara and Denipitiye Maha Sittara, who were evidently involved in the painting of the image- shrine. The significance of the paintings of the Samudragiri vihara has been recognized nationally by reproducing some of these in the postage stamps in 1986.

Old Market at Nupe



A British building and a prominent landmark in Matara, it was constructed to be used as the market. It is an open structure with elegant timber pillars supporting the roof. Significant architectural features of this building is the steep roof angle and the use of Kandyan period flat tiles (*peti-ulu*) as the roof covering material which makes this building a distinctive structure of shared cultural heritage during the early British rule.

Matara Fort



Although there was a Portuguese garrison at Matara, the historical records do not suggest any fortifications at the location during Portuguese occupation in the Island. It was made a fortified settlement by the Dutch soon after their capture of Galle in 1640. During the Dutch occupation, Matara was famous for cinnamon production and elephant trade. The Fort was shattered by an attack (which is famous as the “Matara Rebellion”) from the Kandyan kingdom in 1760. By 1761, the Sinhalese army had firmly entrenched themselves near the Fort so that they were able to attack the Fort with Cannon and musketeers. The Dutch spiked the cannon on the rampart and ammunition and provisions were thrown into the sea, and the surviving garrison evacuated from the Fort was picked up by a ship that sailed to Galle. Matara Fort remained in the hands of the Sinhalese for almost one year. In 1762, the Dutch were able to re-capture the Matara Fort without much resistance. Matara was the second important fort the Southern maritime province of the Dutch and also a commanding base for the inland forts at Katuvana, Akuressa and Hakmana. On 24th February 1796, Matara Fort was ceremoniously handed over to the British, ending almost 150 years of Dutch occupation in Matara.



The Fort was defended by a fortification constructed on its east side, with half bastions at its north and south ends and a full bastion at the centre. Close to the full bastion is the arched gateway providing access into the Fort from the east. The date 1789, which appears at the entrance, indicates a restoration or a consolidation rather than a construction. The ramparts and the bastions were built with stone and coral in lime mortar. As per

the historical description and illustrations, there had been a ditch just outside the rampart wall and the access to the Fort through the gate was provided by means of a bridge across the ditch. There were no artificial defense systems on other sides as the fort is surrounded and secured by the river Nilwala and the Indian Ocean. The Dutch town plan of the Matara Fort can still be recognized with its street pattern, but the architecture of the buildings has undergone changes considerably. The clock tower is an addition during the British Period.

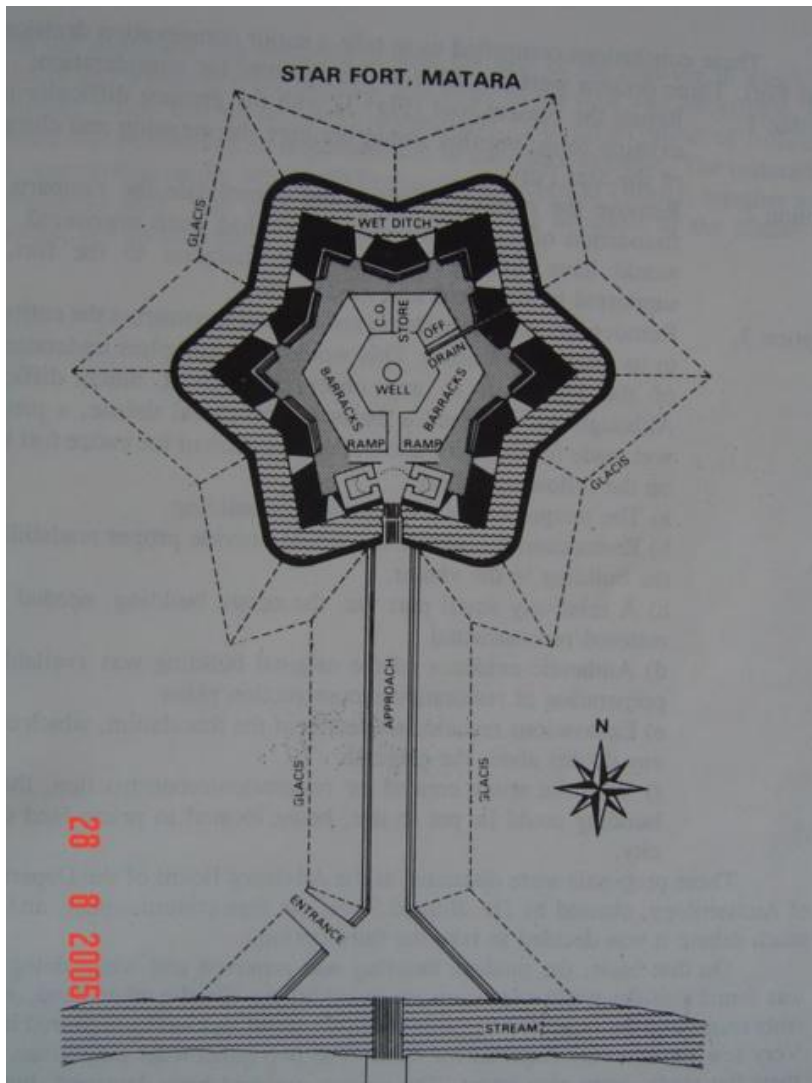
Dutch Reformed Church at Matara



The Dutch Reformed Church is the only monument within the Matara Fort which has survived without alternations from the Dutch occupation. Although the date above the entrance to the Church bears 'Anno 1767', the original foundations of the church were much older.

Although its gable facade reflects the Dutch architecture, its half round tiled roof, the wide verandah supported on pillars give it a strong tropical flavor. The tomb stones paved on the floor of the church are dating from 1686. These tomb stones contain memories of a bygone era. The memorial plaques of the tomb stones give an interesting insight into the life of the Dutch, British and native people who lived in Matara.

Star Fort, Matara



Situated on the opposite bank of the river Nilwala, where the main Fort is located, it was used as a defensive structure to prevent the inland attacks on the Matara Fort by the Sinhalese army. Commenced in 1763 and completed two years later by Baron Van Eyck, the Dutch Governor who invaded the Kandyan kingdom in 1675, it was a small fort in the shape of a six- pointed star, to house a small garrison of Dutch troops. The moat and the glacis which surround the fort also follow the star shaped plan of the ramparts. Form the interior of the fort, where the cannons could be used, the six points of the star offer vantage points to all directions. The hexagonal building within the fort also follows the plan form of the fortifications with a hexagonal central courtyard. A deep well built within the courtyard has brought fresh water into the fort.



In 1796, the Star Fort fell into the hands of the British and it was later used as the residence of the provincial engineer. The property is now under the ownership of the Department of Archaeology and the monument has now been conserved and a drawbridge has also been installed.