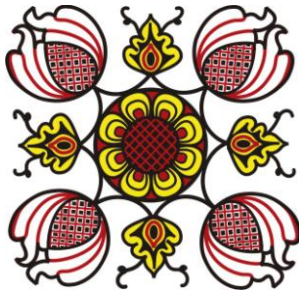


# Quarterly Tours – No. 15



**National Trust – Sri Lanka**

**28th August 2010**

**Compiled by Nilan Cooray**

## **National Trust – Sri Lanka**

### ***Quarterly Tours – Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2010.***

#### **Programme**

- 0700 hrs. Leave PGIAR
- 0830 - 1000 hrs. Visit to the Antiquities Replica Centre at Bataleeya
- 1015 - 1045 hrs. Visit to a traditional cane weaver's workshop at Wevaldeniya
- 1115 – 1145 hrs. Visit the Beligala Vihara to see the ancient Bodhi-kotuwa
- 1230 – 1330 hrs. Lunch at Pinnawela (near the Elephant Orphanage)
- 1345 – 1430 hrs. Visit the Elephant Orphanage at Pinnawela
- 1500 – 1545 hrs. Visit the Dalivala stupa, the oldest surviving stupa in Sri Lanka showing the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC features and characteristics
- 1630 – 1715 hrs. Visit the Kadigamuwa Vihara, which has two shrines on stilts and a stupa house
- 2000 hrs. Arrive PGIAR



## **Antiquities Replica Centre at Bataleeya**

Situated on the Colombo – Kandy Highway (about 2.5 km. from Pasyala Junction) at Bataleeya, famous for its road side sale of Kadjunuts, Antiquities Replica Centre is managed by the Central Cultural Fund. Its main objectives are:

- to reproduce high quality replicas / models of the antiquities (artifacts and monuments) to promote the artistic and cultural heritage, both at national and international levels and to prevent smuggling of antiquities by making models available for sale.
- to conduct special training courses for the youth in reproducing replicas / models of high quality, to encourage young artists to keep up with these rare and valuable field of arts as a profession and income generation avenue.

The Centre is the only state institution in the Island in these fields and has two main activities, namely, the production of models and the training. The production unit focuses on reproducing authentic, high quality replicas / models in different media such as terracotta, brass, bronze, wood, stone,

ceramic and fiberglass. The main sales center is located within the Replica Centre and there are several sales outlets in Colombo and at the heritage sites of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, Kandy, Galle, Tissamaharama and Kataragama. In addition to the mass scale productions, the unit undertakes special orders. The replica center has produced many items for distinguished clients and the products include the making of the official lamp for the South Asian Games, held in Colombo, 2006, the casting of the famous Samadhi Buddha image at Anuradhapura in dolomite stone, as a gift to China by H.E. the President of Sri Lanka to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> year of recent friendship between Sri Lanka and China in 2006 - 07, and the replicas for the international exhibition of Sri Lankan Heritage held in Japan, 2008.



The training unit conducts special courses for the youth free of charge in art, sculpture carvings and in casting related to the reproduction of replicas. The Centre provides raw materials for the courses, pay a monthly allowance for the trainees during the training period, and meets any expenses related to lectures and as instruction fees.



The visit to the Centre will provide an opportunity to see the whole process of reproducing quality replicas and how the youth are engaged in their training. It will also give an opportunity for one to see the quality replicas on display and to purchase a variety of replicas depending on one's taste.

### **Traditional cane weaver's workshop at Wevaldeniya**

Cane weaving is an age old tradition in Sri Lanka, and the cane weaver, as an artisan creates both utilitarian and ornamental items of work. The village known as Wevaldeniya along the Colombo – Kandy highway is one of Sri Lanka's famous locations for this activity. The utilitarian items include



boxes for storing paddy, linen baskets, winnowing fans, food covers, beetle leaf containers, tea-plucking baskets, food and vegetable boxes etc., while the ornamental items are the wall plaques, lamp shades, standard lighting stands, vases, racks, spice jars, jewellery boxes, fancy toys, etc. Although cane furniture is very popular today, it does not have a long history as those of the other cane products.

Raw material for the cane industry is the cane and rattan. Only a small quantity of the raw materials is available in the locality, and it is not adequate for the demand. Therefore, the weavers buy cane and rattan that are transported from other parts of the country such as Polonnaruva and even those imported from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and India.



Traditional methods continue to be used for processing the raw materials and for creating these products. Depending upon the utility of the product, the open-weave or the closed-weave is used. There are also several weaving patterns depending upon the required strengths of the final product.

The visit to one of the weaver's workshop at Wevaldeniya will provide one an overview of making cane products.

## Beligala Vihara

Beligala Vihara is located about 3 km. from Yattogoda on the Veragoda Road that branches off at Yattogoda (about 5 km. before Kegalla Town) on the Colombo – Kandy highway. The history of the *vihara* goes back to the Dambadeniya Period (13<sup>th</sup> century). During this Period, the *vihara* seems to have been a prominent place of worship due to the fact that the Sacred Tooth Relic, which has been taken away to a safer location in Kotmale during the turbulent period after the fall of Polonnaruva kingdom, was reported to have been brought by King Vijayabahu III (1232 – 1236) and deposited here in a shrine built for the purpose on top of Beligala rock, which is in close proximity to the *vihara*.



The most interesting structure here at Beligala is the stone built bodhi-kotuwa for the sacred tree which is still living. It is recorded that this is one of the 32 saplings that grew from the sacred Sri Maha Bodhi at Anuradhapura. The archaeological evidence suggests that the sacred tree was originally associated with a Bodhighara, a roofed structure built around the tree for



the purpose of ritual worship. The terrace on which the Bodhighara once stood is square and raised above the rest of the precinct. Held by a retaining wall faced with stone blocks, the terrace is reached by a stone flight of steps consisting of stone balustrades on either side. The bodhi-kotuwa which encloses the sacred Bodhi-tree is constructed upon this raised terrace and is lined with stone blocks.

The moonstone at the entrance to the ritual precinct of the *vihara* which is dated to the Dambadeniya Period, also offers some exceptional features. Unlike in the conventional type,



where the rows of four animals (elephant, horse, lion and bull) are sculptured, and made to move in one direction, here, the animals in each row are sculptured to move from either ends to meet at the middle of each row.

The other buildings of heritage interest within the *vihara* are the image house for a recumbent Buddha, showing the 18<sup>th</sup> century wall paintings of the Kandyan School (but re-painted during subsequent phases), preaching hall and the monks residence. The *vihara* also has a *Sannasa* (ola leaf manuscript) of the Dambadeniya Period, providing information of the lands granted to the *vihara* and other shrines that were affiliated to it.



## Elephant Orphanage at Pinnawela



Situated at Pinnawela on the banks of Maha Oya, the Elephant Orphanage has the largest herd of captive elephants in the world. Located about 6 km. from Kegalla on Rambukkana Road and managed by the Department of Zoological Gardens, it provides the home for a large number of orphaned baby wild elephants. Except those that are born at the Orphanage, all the others are motherless baby elephants brought here. Opened in 1975 with five orphans, the Orphanage has launched successfully a captive breeding programme since 1982. It is also world's one of the largest elephant conservation and breeding center. Today it has more than eighty elephants. The physical environmental condition at Pinnawela is also conducive for the breeding programme. Some orphans enjoy the fortune of seeing their grandchildren born in the same location. While most of the elephants are healthy, one is blind, and one, named Sama, has lost her front right leg to a landmine. The orphanage has given out more than sixty grown up elephants to temples, devales, private elephant owners and to foreign zoos.



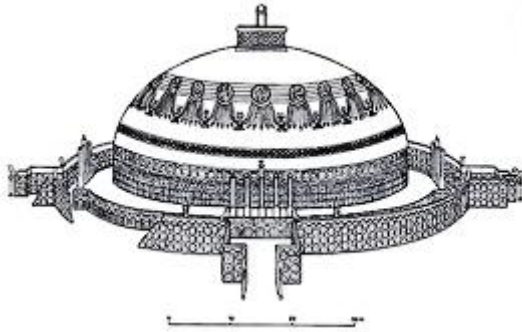
Visit to the Orphanage will provide an opportunity to get an overview of the captive breeding programme, scientific research and animal welfare activities as well as to see the bottle feeding for the motherless babies. It is also interesting to see the heard comprised of weeks old babies to fifty year grandparents proceeding to the Maha Oya for their daily bathing and fascinating to observe how they enjoy themselves by splashing and playing during their dip in water.

### **Dalivala Stupa**



Located at Dalivala, 4 km. from the town of Rambukkana on the Dombemada Road, the *stupa* is probably the earliest surviving example in Sri Lanka recording 1st century BC features and characteristics of the

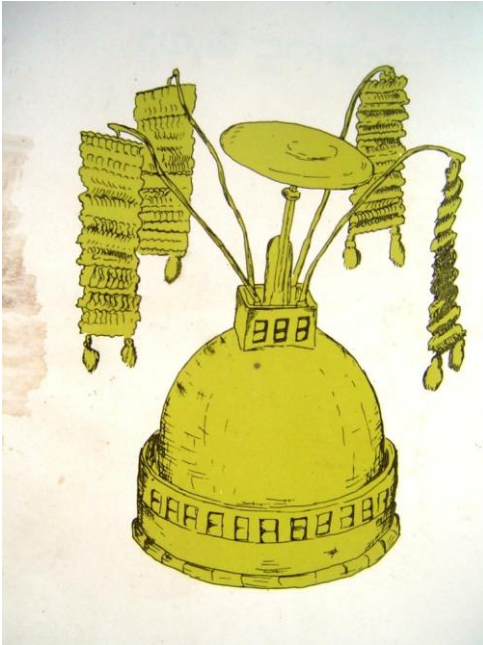
*stupa* design of this period. The research excavations conducted and the archaeological evidence available at the site suggest that the *stupa* has a raised circular platform, on which the dome rests, which is reminiscent of the *stupa* design of Amarawati in India. The *stupa* shaped gold reliquary found during the excavations and dated to the same period also show similar characteristics. Since the circular platform on which the dome of the *stupa* stands is also seen as a truncated dome, the *stupa* is popularly called a Kotavehera.



*Conjectural reconstruction of Amarawati Stupa in India*

The *stupa* is constructed by incorporating an existing natural mound as at the *Damila Thupa* at Polonnaruva and Borobudur in Indonesia. The dome of the *stupa* is, therefore, basically an in-fill of stone rubble. Since the core of the dome is a natural mound, the relic deposits were arranged as 173 small enshrinements along the floor of the raised circular platform instead of a single relic chamber as in the conventional type.

The artifacts found during the excavations are displayed within a site museum. Among them, the *stupa* shaped gold reliquary that is dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC is a special find showing



similarities to the *stupa* design of Amarawati style in India. It also showcases the elements and features of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC *stupas* in the Island and contributes immensely to the study of the evolution of the superstructure of the Sri Lankan *stupa*. The *Hataraskotuva*, is molded as a solid metal fence indicating clear railing marks on the exterior. The symbolic *yupa* pillar (the obelisk)

stands erect at the center of the empty square court that is defined by the fence. The *chattravali* (parasol) is raised on eccentrically positioned *yasti* (stem) shading the *yupa* pillar in the customary pose of respect to the symbolic object. Four banners are also raised at the four corners of the square court. During the succeeding centuries, the empty square court that is defined by the fence evolved into a cube of solid brick construction and the original fence was indicated by a railing shown by the molded brickwork and stucco. The *yupa* and the *yasti* fused together and evolved into a single structure of cylindrical brick unit called the *devatakotuva*. The *chattravali* developed into a *chattravali* (series of parasols) and finally evolved to be a brick spire called the *kotkerella*, and the parasols of diminishing diameter were indicated again through molded brickwork and stucco.

## Kadigamuwa Vihara

Situated at the village of Kadigamuwa, 5 km. from Rambukkana on the Mawanella Road, this is the only *vihara* in the country that consists of two *Tampita Viharas* (shrines on stilts). The *vihara* is also called the Nagawanarama due to the fact that there had been many *Na* trees within the *vihara* precincts.



Positioned on the lower terrace of the *vihara* is the oldest of the two shrines on stilts, built during the reign of Buvanekabahu VI (1469 – 77) or Buvanekabahu VII (1521 – 51) and

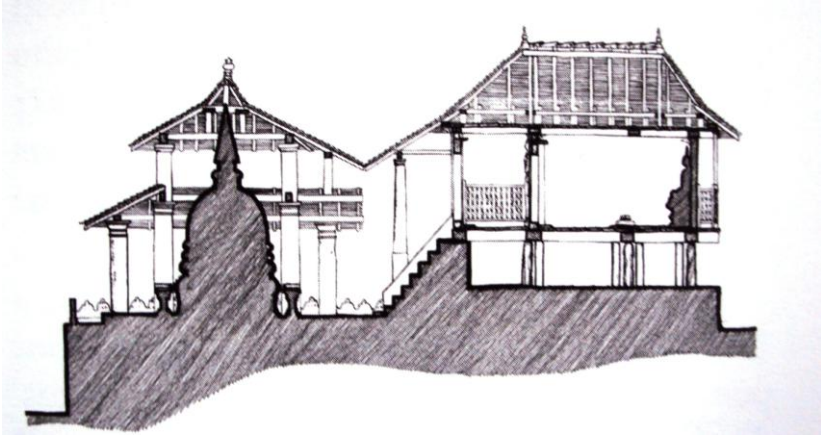
restored by Monaragammana Disawe in the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century and by Ven. Dhammajoti Thero in 1744.



The shrine situated on the upper terrace was built around 1835 through the contributions from the families at Kadigamuwa and Kempitiya villages.



Both these shrines are almost similar in design and construction. The stone stilts supporting the timber framework of the shrines are erected on raised platforms of rubble masonry. The raised timber deck of the shrine rooms are reached by a flight of steps positioned in front. The section of the hip roof in front is extended downwards to create a porch for each shrine. The extended roof is supported on circular masonry columns. A seated Buddha image positioned at the lower end of the shrine room is the principle object of worship within each shrine room, and there are several other images of the chief disciples and deities as well. The interior walls and the ceilings of the shrines contain paintings of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Kandyan School.



Another interesting feature of this *vihara* is the presence of a *kuludage* (sheltered *stupa*), located on the upper terrace and in front of the shrine on stilts. It is a building type showing probably a later evolution of the concept of a *vatadage* (enclosed *stupa* shrine). The roof of the building is in two levels, and the upper roof is attached to the roof of the shrine on stilts, and hence read as a single building, a feature that is not found elsewhere.