

Quarterly Tours



Jayatissa Herath

NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA

25 th Nov. 2017

THIRD QUARTERLY TOUR 2017

SIGIRIYA & IBBANKATUWA MEGALITHIC BURIALS

Tour Leader

Dr. Nilan Cooray - Trustee, Assisant Secretary General of the National Trust
Sri Lanka.

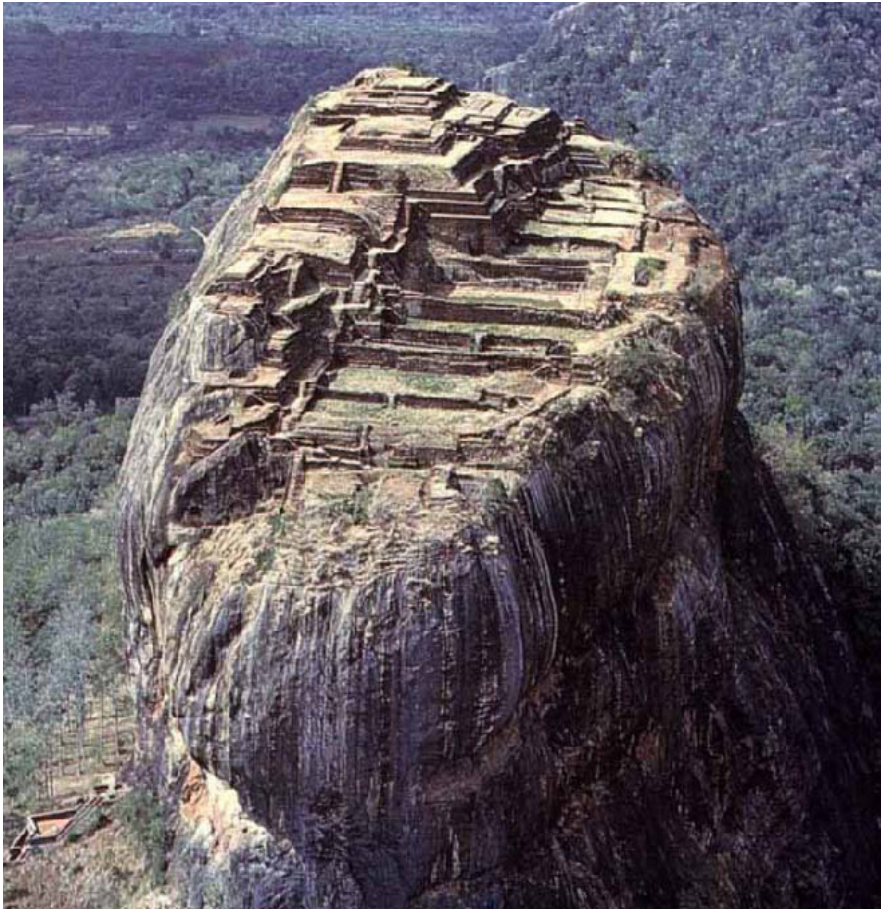
Route

By Bus: Colombo – Kurunegala - Dambula – Sigiriya
Return on the same route.

Itinerary

5.30 am	Meet at PGIAR and leave at 6.00 am
9.00am – 9.30am	Tea and comfort stop at Sigiriya Village Hotel
9.30am – 1.30pm	Visit to the Garden and the Palace
1.30 pm – 2.30pm	Lunch at Sigiriya Village Hotel
2.45pm – 3.45pm	Visit to the Museum
3.45	Leave for Ibbankatuwa
4.15pm – 4.45pm	Visit to Ibbankatuwa Megalithic Burial Site
4.45pm – 5.15pm	Tea at Ibbankatuwa
9.00 pm	Arrive at PGIAR

*The itinerary planned may change depending on factors such as time and weather. **Please refer last page for more instructions.***



SIGIRIYA

Sigiriya, a wonderful creation of man, in its natural setting is one of the major tourist attractions in Sri Lanka. It is believed to be the first recorded site visited by tourists in South Asia. The famous graffiti on the mirror wall provide evidence to such visitations.

Sigiriya is located approx. 180 Km away from Colombo. Sigiriya

is a mystique and magnificent creation, where the flexibility of human creation is exhibited in its highest degree by using natural setting and features of the site to achieve the desired built environment.

It is a terraced site runs beginning from flat land approx. 300 feet above mean sea level to rock

summit of 600 feet above mean sea level where the concentration of built structures are located.

Sigiriya is situated in the dry zone of the central region of the Island. The natural formation of the site is also unique and is one of the rising rock boulders belong to a naturally formed range of hills. But Sigiriya rock is isolated and therefore, it acquired its qualities to become a residential site of a King.

The selection of Simha-giri, Sihagiri or Sigiri (Lion Mountain) as a site for a palace was for its aesthetic value than its functional merits.

The functional needs of agriculture were justified by the presence of two rocks, Sigiri and Mapagala, which could have been connected to form a dam and a massive reservoir of water at the source of the Yan Oya.

History of Sigiriya runs back to 3rd Century BC as a Buddhist Monastic settlement.

Periodization Chart: -

1. 3rd Century BC to 1st Century AD – Early Monastic Phase
2. 1st Century AD to 5th Century AD - Abandoned
3. 477 AD to 495 AD – Kasyapa – Main constructional phase

4. 6th Century AD to 7th Century AD – Post Kasyapan –A
 Later Monastic Phase
 Regional Administrative and Military Centre (?)
 Preliminary Graffiti
5. 8th Century AD to 13th/14th Century AD – Post Kasyapan – B
 Later Monastic sub phase
 Major graffiti
 Secondary Graffiti
6. 13th/14th Century AD to 16th Century AD – Abandoned
7. 17th Century AD to 18th Century AD – Regional Military outpost of Kandyan Kingdom
8. 1830 AD – Modern Recovery – Antiquarians
 1894 AD – First Excavations
 1982 AD – First Stratified Excavations

There are carved inscriptions belong to 3rd Century BC to 1st Century AD giving names of the donator of caves to the Buddhist Order. The rock caves are with drip ledges to prevent rainwater flow into interiors.

The major constructions at the site belong to Kasyapa period that is in between 477 AD to 495 AD. King Kasyapa has ruled the country residing at site for 18

years after the death of his father King Dhatusena who ruled the country from Anuradhapura.

Thereafter the site was turned back again into a Buddhist Monastery and was extended up to fourteenth Century AD. And then the site was abandoned for some time until it was converted to a Military Outpost of the Kandyan Kingdom in 17th century AD. The site was again abandoned and the credit to recent discovery goes to the Department of Archaeology. The efforts of the Cultural Triangle Project of the Central Cultural Fund brought many more details into light and made Sigiriya site legible to the extend what we see and enjoy today.

Sigirya sanctuary – declared under wild life protection ordinances contains 12,500 acres in extent.

Sigirya has a great archaeological value, not only because of an ill-fated prince used it for a hideout.

It is a Pleasure Garden, Fortress, Art Gallery and Place to exhibit Art, Architecture, Engineering, Hydraulic Designs, Landscape and many more as well as Technological Skills and achievements. It is a design for defense and protection. Designed as a royal residence in an overall context, Sigiriya is a design for leisure. It is also a design

exhibiting an excellent system of water management.

The Ancient City of Sigiriya, an extra-ordinary creation, has been declared as a World Heritage in 1982 by the UNESCO under their evaluation criteria 2, 3 and 4.

- exhibits an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design;
 - bears a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- and
- is an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history.

The fifth century layout of Sigiri reveals traces of a city built according to a well organized planning concepts. However, the plan was confined to the area of the royal city or the palace compound.

It should be observed that all along, the aesthetic criteria were

given precedence.

For instance, when the inner moat crossed an outcrop of rock the natural features were left intact, even at the risk of the defense requirements becoming ineffective.

The layout of the western city has been conceived to be symmetrical, but as in the inner moat, natural rocks and boulders were integrated and allowed to stand undisturbed. The natural features were thus incorporated into the geometrically laid out ponds and paths

It is believed that there had been gates from all four directions. The remains of Northern, Southern and Western Gate Houses provide evidence to prove this idea too. The South Western Precinct is excavated and conserved by the Cultural Triangle Project and therefore, the details and features in that part can be easily understood.

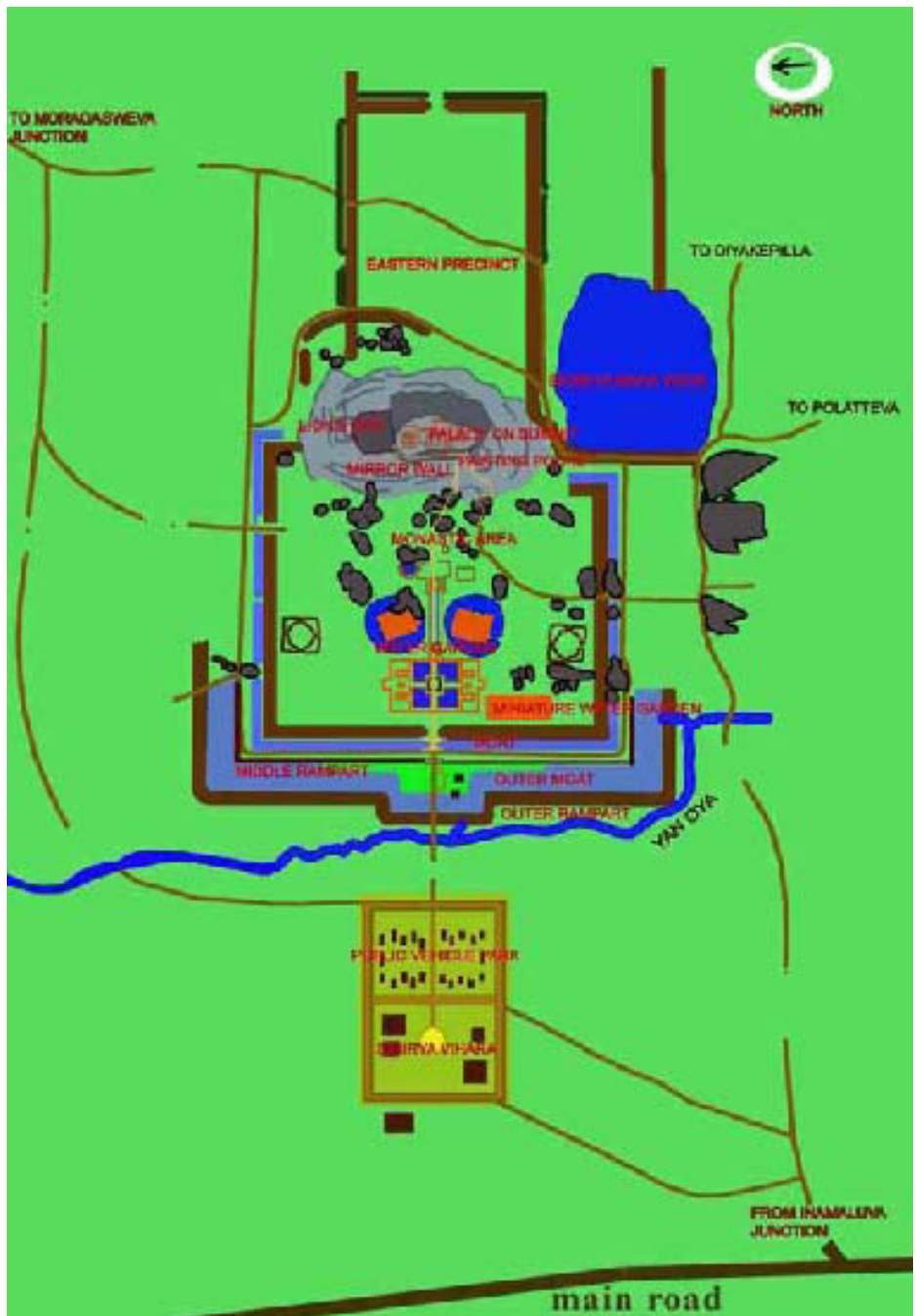
The town have been in two parts,

1. The inner enclosure covering the summit of the 500 feet rock which contained the private apartments of the king and his household,

2. The high plain to the east and west of the rock situated above the flood level of the reservoir. This part of the city was probably reserved for the quarters of the official staff and for administrative units.

The plan displays a sense of aesthetic symmetry and a genuine understanding of natural features of the designers who had integrated the functional needs of the town despite the rocky nature of the terrain. Each rock and boulder, whether erect or fallen, was absorbed into the overall plan and the buildings that were constructed with a deep sense of harmony with nature.

The Outer Rampart, Outer Moat, Middle Rampart are the features to experience before crossing the recent steel bridge over Inner Moat which was conserved and maintained by the Cultural Triangle. The Inner Moat, Inner Rampart, Ancient Paving, Central Axial Pathway, beautifully laid out Water Garden, Miniature Water garden, Fountains, Water causes, Summer Palaces, Ponds, Wall with ancient Plaster samples, Monastic Site with a cave Image House



and a Bo-tree shrine, Boulder Arches, Rock Cut Seat, Steps running through boulder Arches and Boulders, Terraced Gardens, Rock cut Water spout, Cave with Paintings and burnt brick paving, Mirror Wall with graffiti (writings of pilgrims), Wall Paintings of tempera technique and Remains of Prison Cells are the experience up to the Lion's Paw Terrace from the Western Entrance.

Sigiriya is well known for its 5th century paintings of excellent artistic quality. What is remaining today are only small fragments found in two depressions on the rock surface, depicting eighteen female figures of immense beauty known as Apsaras. This painting would have spread throughout the western surface of the rock, forming a back drop to the western guard covering an area of more than 100 meters by 40 meters and it would have been the largest mural ever done by man. It is a good example of the oriental painting tradition. The artists have carefully followed the principles and methodology described in the 'silpa' texts that have recorded the painting traditions while depicting the beauty of the female figure, the jewelry, head dress and other adornments.

It is an unique occasion and

opportunity to see such a collection of handwriting of the people who lived thousand years ago on the mirror wall.

The Western part of the site is with more elaborate details and features responsible for the Pleasure Garden. The Eastern Part of the site is believed to be the Inner City.

The recently discovered paintings on the exterior face of the Mirror wall is a clue to strengthen the idea of that the Western face of the rock was then enriched with paintings

The Lion's Paw is also a fascinating creation. It is believed that the name SIGIRI was given after the erection of this Lion Figure to provide entrance to the staircase leading to Summit. The cut marks on the rock provide a clue to understand the shape and construction of the ancient stairway. The Summit is the Palace of the King.

The Palace buildings consist with several centre courtyards and split-levels keeping with the natural levels and setting of the summit of the boulder. The remains on the summit is a best example for an Ancient Royal Palace, which is still at easily readable state of preservation.

The Pond and the deep pit may have been to meet water and sanitary requirements of the Palace complex. In addition, there are pockets on the rock used as watch huts to guard the palace for external invasions.

The whole site with its moats, ramparts and locations of significant features that the visitors' attention should be drawn are clearly marked in the Graphic Plan provided.

On the way back the Cistern Rock, Audience Hall, Small Cave with Paintings and Seat, and a Naturally formed Cobra Hood with a painted ceiling and a Cave shelter are the significant items to experience.

It is not only the site itself bears such qualitative attributes but also the surrounding hinterlands having geological, geographical and natural and man added features which forms a part of the creation of authentic Sigiriya.

With similar weightage given to appreciate and enjoy the beauty and the value of the site it is necessary all the visitors pay their attention and render their fullest cooperation to protect Ancient City of Sigiriya and its hinterlands with all features and elements in their authentic state and values not only as an archaeological

remain but also as a natural and manmade formation and creation together with its setting and surrounding which forms the heritage of mankind in its totality.

References: -

- Sigiriya – Seneke Bandaranayake, The Cultural Triangle – UNESCO Publishing / CCF – 1993,
- Presentation on “Is Sigiriya the earliest True Tourist Site in Asia – Roland Silva – 2003
- Brief Description of Sites – World Heritage Centre – UNESCO – 1992
- National Trust Lecture – “Sigiriya, its Mirror Wall and the Graffiti” - by Prof. Nimal De Silva
- Presentation on “Sigiri - A Fossilized Artifact of Once an Endured Landscape- Dr. Roland Silva
- “World Heritage City of Sigiriya” article by Jayatissa Herath, “Vasthu” - Sri Lanka Institute of Architects - 2004

Photographs: -

The Dept. of Archaeology, The Central Cultural Fund, R. Jayasekera, Late Tissa Senarathne, Maya Upananda, and Jayatissa Herath,

Graphic Plan: - Jayatissa Herath



IBBANKATUWA MEGALITHIC BURIALS

Ibbankatuwa Megalithic Burial Ground or Tombs site is an ancient burial site located near Ibbankatuwa Wewa. The site is believed to belong to the megalithic prehistoric and protohistoric periods of Sri Lanka and is considered as one of the several ancient burial sites that have been found in the country. The site is situated on the Kurunegala - Dambulla road approximately five kilometers before Dambulla town. Currently the tomb site has been designated as a protected Monument in Sri Lanka.

The prehistoric period of Sri Lanka ranges from 250,000 – 1,000 BC. The transition period between the end of the prehistoric period and the commencement of the historic period is known as the protohistoric period. The Ibbankatuwa tomb site was first identified in 1970 by the Department of Archaeology who caused to carry out the Radiocarbon dating of the remnants found in the site and have revealed that these tombs are dated back to 700 – 400 B.C. time periods. After that a number of archaeological excavations

were carried out in 1983–1984 and again between 1988 and 1990.

It is believed that the ancient Ibbankatuwa settlement is located about 150 m (490 ft) southwest of Dambulu Oya river and approximately 200 m (660 ft) east of the eastern edge of the cemetery. The site is approximately 6 ha (15 acres) in size. The first excavation was done in 1988 and then in 1989, 1990 and 1991. The tomb complex covers an area of about 1 km² (0.39 square miles) with 42 clusters of tombs and each cluster contains about 10 tombs. Each tomb is enclosed with four stone slabs and covered by another slab on the top. According to the way of interment, two distinct burial customs, urn (bodies were placed in urns and interred) and cist (ashes of deceased were interred) have been identified.

Cremated remains with grave goods and tools used by the deceased have been found at the site in large terra-cotta urns and cists as well as in the area between the cists. The finds include a variety of clay pots, iron, copper and gold artifacts, beads, necklaces, etc. The gemstones found in some necklaces are not naturally found in Sri Lanka, which indicates that they may have been imported.

The area where the tombs have been found is about 15×15 metres. About 10 tombs have been unearthed and each tomb is separated by four stone slabs and covered by another slab on the top. This Early Iron Age burial ground has been dated to 750 BC to 400 BC.

References: -

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibbankatuwa_Megalithic_Tombs
- <http://amazinglanka.com/wp/ibbankatuwa/>

Meals

Breakfast should be whilst travelling. Each participant is requested to bring their own breakfast

Tea and a buffet lunch has been organised to accommodate both veg and non veg meal preference.

A pack of fruit juice will be provided on board.

Bottles of water are available on board.