



S SPIRITUAL  
SRI LANKA



# CONTENTS

1. Kandy - Temple Of Tooth Relic .....	7	26. Jaffna - Nagadeepa Rajamaha Viharaya.....	57
2. Anuradapura - Sri Maha Bodhi .....	9	27. Kaluthara – Kande Viharaya .....	59
3. Colombo - Kelaniya Temple.....	11	28. Kaluthara - Kalutara Bodhi.....	61
4. Anuradhapura - Loha Pasada (The Brazen Palace).....	13	29. Kandy - Degaldoruwa Rajamaha Viharaya .....	63
5. Anuradapura - Lankaramaya .....	15	30. Kandy - Gadaladeniya Rajamaha Viharaya.....	65
6. Anuradhapura - The Abhayagiri Dageba .....	17	31. Kandy - Lankathilaka Rajamaha Viharaya.....	67
7. Anuradhapura - Jetavana Dagaba .....	19	32. Kurunagala - Athkada Rajamaha Viharaya .....	69
8. Anuradhapura - Mihintale .....	21	33. Kurunagala - Dambadeniya Rajamaha Viharaya – Wijesundararamaya .....	71
9. Anuradapura - Mirisaweti Dagaba .....	23	34. Kurunagala - Rambodagala Buddha Statue.....	73
10. Anuradhapura - Ruwanweli Dagaba .....	25	35. Kurunagala - Ridi Viharaya.....	75
11. Anuradhapura - Sela Cetiya.....	27	36. Monaragala - Kataragama Kiri Vehera .....	77
12. Anuradhapura - Thanthirimale Rajamaha Viharaya.....	29	37. Mathale - Alu Viharaya .....	79
13. Anuradhapura - Thuparamaya .....	31	38. Mathale - Dambulla Cave Temple.....	81
14. Anuradhapura - Avukana Buddha Statue .....	33	39. Mathale - Pidurangala Rajamaha Vihara.....	83
15. Ampara - Deegavapi Rajamaha Viharaya .....	35	40. Mathara - Devinuwara Raja Maha Vihara.....	85
16. Badulla - Dowa Rajamaha Viharaya.....	37	41. Mathara - Weherahena Viharaya .....	87
17. Badulla - Mahiyangana Rajamaha Vihara .....	39	42. Polonnaruwa – Alahana Piriwena.....	89
18. Badulla - Muthiyangana Rajamaha Viharaya .....	41	43. Polonnaruwa – Dalada Maluwa.....	91
19. Colombo - Bellanwila Rajamaha Viharaya .....	43	44. Polonnaruwa – Gal Viharaya .....	93
20. Colombo - Gangaramaya Temple .....	45	45. Polonnaruwa - Rankoth Viharaya.....	95
21. Colombo - Kotte Rajamaha Vihara .....	47	46. Polonnaruwa - Somawathi Chethiya.....	97
22. Colombo - Mahamewnawa.....	49	47. Rathnapura - Samanala Mountain (Sri Pada & Diva Guhawa).....	99
23. Hambanthota - Sithulpawwa Rajamaha Viharaya.....	51	48. Trincomalee - Thiriyaya Girihadu Seya .....	101
24. Hambanthota - Tissamaharama Rajamaha Viharaya.....	53	49. Trincomalee - Seruwawila Mangala Rajamaha Viharaya .....	103
25. Jaffna - Dambakolapatuna.....	55		



# Introduction

Sri Lanka, which is known as the pearl of the Indian Ocean, has a land area of 65,610 km<sup>2</sup>. Its population is around 22.7 million. "Sinhala" is the main language used in Sri Lanka and many languages such as English, Tamil and Hindi are also used by Sri Lankans.

Sri Lanka, which is surrounded by an enchanting beach, has a mild weather and environment. Sri Lanka, which is an attractive paradise for tourists with a historic heritage, has been respected by many foreign tourists/ travellers/ explorers/ scholars. Sri Lankans are famous for their hospitality and the country flourishes as one of the top countries in the list of world heritages. Agriculture sector plays a key role in the country's economy and tea, coconut and rubber are among the main crops cultivated in Sri Lanka.

There are no ethnic/ religious issues in Sri Lanka, where people belonging to various ethnic groups such as Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and Burgher live together in peace. All the Sri Lankans, who are related to a multi religious culture, enjoy the right to observe their own religion. This is a country where there is a wonderful religious harmony, which is depicted through practices such as Buddhists visiting Christian churches and Christians visiting Buddhist temples. Therefore, temples, churches and Kovils are common religious centers open to everyone.

When the spread and establishment of Buddhist philosophy or concept in the world is observed, it is evident that Sri Lanka secures a prominent place. Sri Lanka is the place where Theravada Buddhist philosophy is most practically used in the world. The history of Sri Lanka, the apex of Theravada Buddhism, which has been confirmed by the Archeology, goes back to the Prehistoric era. Archeological evidences of the Stone Age and Iron Age have been found from Archeological

excavations. Clear evidences related to religious history date back to 03 B.C. It has been proved by many inscriptions written at that time.

Sri Lanka is a country where the traditions of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism are well blended. It is evident from Anuradhapura Maha Vihara and Abhayagiri Vihara. Thousands of student monks studied at these renowned institutions at that time and those institutions promoted Buddhist philosophy. They have studied Pali and Sanskrit in addition to Buddhist philosophy.

Practicing meditation was essential for the Monks as religious mentors as well as Buddhist devotees. It was also a main feature of the daily routine.

The leaders, who ruled the country at that time and the officers in lower positions, were affected by the above teachings through the monks. The amazing creations such as Kuttam Pokuna, Samadhi Buddha Statue, Isurumuniya, Avukana and massive creations such as Abhayagiriya, Jethawana, Mirisawetiya were made by craftsmen and leaders, who have achieved mindfulness. Large ambulatories can be observed at famous historic places in Sri Lanka such as Ritigala and Rajagalathenna. In general, ambulatory is a common feature among the ruins of historic monasteries.

One can increase the intelligence by studying the Buddhist philosophical concepts and achieve mindfulness as well as physical and mental wellbeing through a meditative life.





## Temple Of Tooth Relic

The Sri Dalada Maligawa or The Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic is a temple in the city of Kandy in Sri Lanka. It was built within the royal palace complex which houses the one of the two surviving Relic of the Tooth of Lord Buddha, an object of veneration for Buddhists. The other Tooth Relic is believed to be enshrined in a stupa called Somawathi Chethiya.

The Sri Dalada Maligawa in Kandy, the temple which houses the Sacred Tooth Relic of The Lord Buddha, is possibly the most sacred Buddhist shrine in the world. It is venerated not only by Buddhists in Sri Lanka but by Buddhists all over the world.

King Wimaladharmasuriya I (1592 - 1603), the first to select Kandy as the ruling capital, originally built a two storied temple for the Relic and brought the Tooth Relic from Delgamuwa near Kuruwita in Sabaragamuwa which had been hidden for protection. Remains of this temple no longer exist.

Wimaladharmasuriya II (1686 - 1706) built a three storied temple and his son King Viraparakrama Narendrasinha (1706 - 1738), the last Sinhalese King to rule the country, built a new two storied temple seeing that the old temple built by his father had decayed.

The last King of Sri Lanka, Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe (1797 - 1814) built the Pattirippuwa (the

Octagon). Originally, the Pattirippuwa (octagon) was part of the royal palace. It was used by the King to address his fellow countrymen. Today the Pattirippuwa has become a part of the temple and houses ancient textures written in ola leaves.

The entrance to the temple complex is through the "Maha Vahalkada". There are two walls on the sides of the "Vahalkada". The outer wall is called "Diyareli Bamma" ('wall of water ripples'). This same pattern is also used in the wall surrounding the Kandy lake. The inner wall is called "Walakulu Bamma" ('wall of clouds'). Both these walls are built with holes to place oil lanterns during the night.

After passing the "Vahalkada" and the moat, you come to a "Makara Thorana". Next is the tunnel "ambarawa". Passing this you come to the ground floor of the temple complex. The lower floor of the building called "palle maluwa". This inner chamber is fortified with a large wooden door and decorated with bronze and ivory. The area in front of the door is called the "Hevisi Mandapaya" (Drummers Courtyard) where the daily rituals are carried out.

The Tooth Relic is kept in the upper floor in the chamber called "Vadahitina Maligawa". The door at this chamber is covered with gold silver and ivory. The Tooth Relic is encased in seven gold caskets studded with precious stones. The outer casket is studded by precious stones offered to the Tooth Relic by various rulers.





## Sri Maha Bodhi

It was under the Bodhi Tree at Bodh-Gaya in 528 B.C. that the Lord Buddha attained enlightenment. The Bodhi tree at Anuradhapura was grown from a cutting of the original tree and it is the oldest historical tree in the world. The Bodhi Tree Garden is the most sacred place in Sri Lanka.

Mahinda asked his sister Sanghamitta to bring a branch of the Bodhi Tree at Bodh-Gaya to Sri Lanka. It is forbidden for a Buddhist to cut or harm any part of the Bodhi Tree. Sanghamitta and eleven nuns (who were to start the Female order) brought the branch to Sri Lanka, accompanied by guardians appointed by King Tissa who watered the tree daily from gold and silver vessels.

The Tree itself is protected by golden railings and is surrounded by other Bodhi Trees which must have grown from its roots. Most of the Bodhi Trees in Sri Lanka and some in Burma and Thailand have been grown from its seeds. The survival of the original Bodhi-Tree at Anuradhapura symbolises the way that the teachings and faith of the Buddha have survived through the ages in Sri Lanka. Today at the full moon of Poson (May-June) a million worshippers come to celebrate at the Tree in commemoration of the Enlightenment.





## Kelaniya Temple

Kelaniya Temple built on the banks of the Kelaniya River is one of the most sacred sites of Sri Lanka. It is believed Lord Buddha together with 500 Arahats (Supremely enlightened beings) visited Kelaniya on the Wesek day of the Buddhist Era 2531 and expounding of the Dhamma, the Buddhist doctrine to the inhabitants of the island.

Buddha's timely visit to the island resulted in quelling an imminent war between two kings named Chulodara and Mahodara over a jewel-encrusted throne. Lord Buddha having preached the doctrine on the disputed throne offered to him ensued lasting peace between the two kings. The great stupa built upon the site enshrining the throne was since then called Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara.

Kelaniya Temple believed to had been built in the era prior to the chronologically recorded history of Sri Lanka (since 543 B.C) was renovated by Prince Uttiya, brother of King Devanampiyatissa following the arrival Arahata Mahinda in 307 BC. According to the Mahawansa, King Devanampiyatissa's brother Uttiya renovated the vihara for the first time. Prince Uttiya also built the first ever residential quarters of the Buddhist monks (Sanghawasa) there. The entrance to the temple yard is over the park across the main street. The arched grill gate opens up to the lower terrace of the temple yard. The lower terrace leads four sets of flight of steps in four cardinal directions to the Upper terrace which features the Image House, Dagaba and the Bo Tree (Peepal tree) with other buildings.





## Loha Pasada (THE BRAZEN PALACE)

The Loha Pasada or Brazen Palace was first founded by King Tissa in the 3rd century B.C. as a chapter house for the Bodhi Tree monks. But it was made into a palace by King Duthagamani for the monks of the Mahavihara to live in. Duthagamani built a nine storied building with a thousand rooms which had a roof of copper tiles from which building takes its name.

In the centre in a pavilion gaily adorned with the mountain crystal and in the ivory was fashioned a sun in gold, a moon in silver and stars in pearls. Before image worship in Buddhism, the symbols of the Lord Buddha were an empty throne and representations of His Footprints.

The brazen Palace has been destroyed and rebuilt several times. The present ground floor of 1600 pillars bear witness to its former grandeur. These columns are the remains of the restoration work of Parakramabahu the Great and have clearly been collected from several nearby buildings.





## Lankaramaya

A restored shrine with a high platform is seen on the left of the road leading from Abhayagiri to the Thuparama. The building, which was surrounded by a large monastery, has been identified as the Silasobba kandaka cettiya, founded by Vattagamani Abhaya, who went into hiding here after his defeat by the Tamils, on his return to the throne. There are three concentric circles of elegant columns, as at the Thuparama. The thupa is of modern shape and originally it would have had a roof. Outside the platform to the southeast are the remains of three images which were placed around the thupa. the Lankarama is one of the eight sacred Buddhist sites.





## The Abhayagiri Dageba

A vihara (monastery) was founded at the Abhayagiri by King Vattagamani in 88 B.C. Legend related that King Vattagamani, who lost his throne to the south Indians and spent fourteen years “in the wilderness” was feeling from Anuradhapura when he was jeered at by a Jain Hermit and that on his return to power he destroyed the Jain monastery and around the Jotiya shrine he built a Buddhist monastery.

The dagaba itself was the work of King Gajabahu (114-136 A.D.) and it reached a height of 370 feet (115m) and although rather smaller than the Jetavana dagaba, was the second largest thupa in the world.



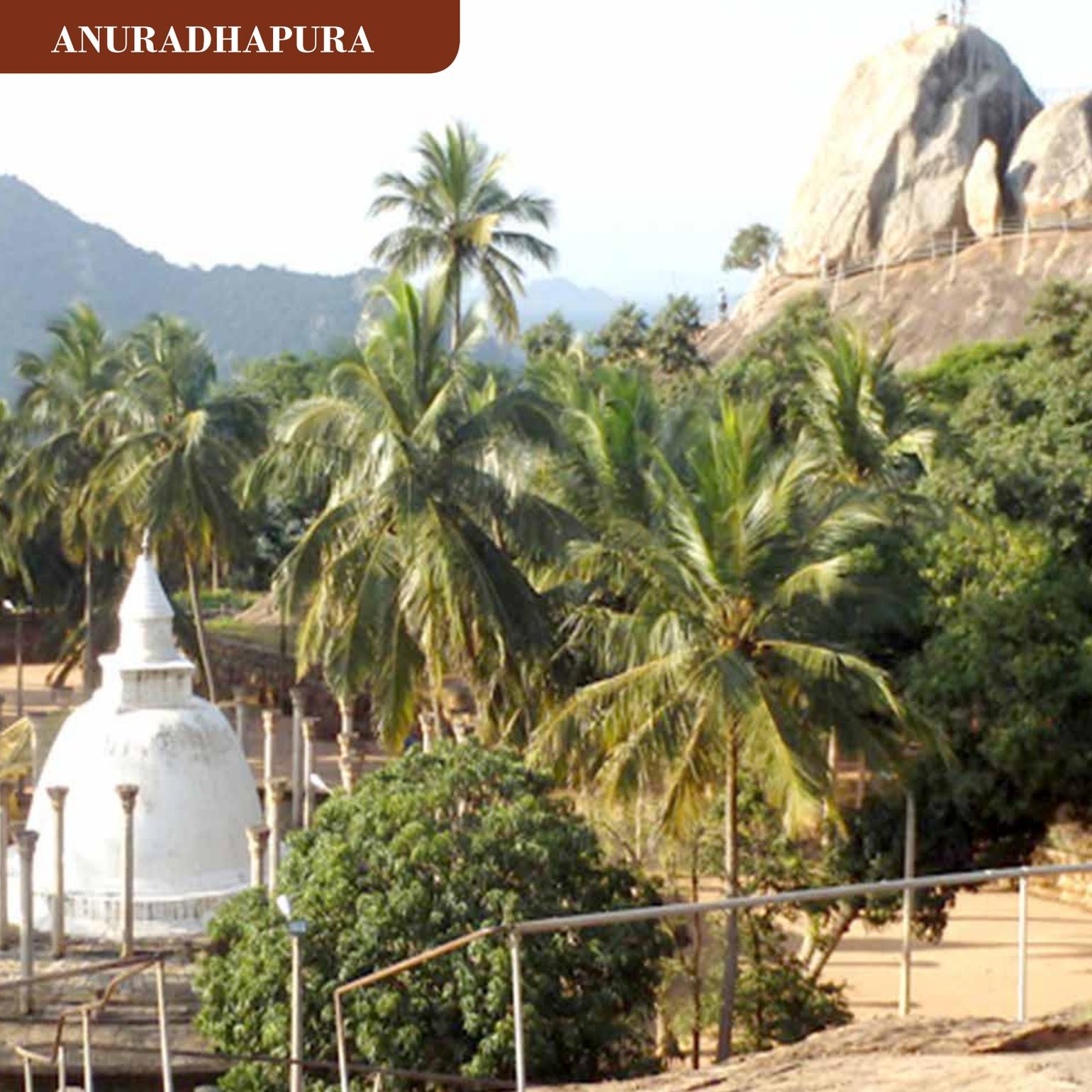


## Jetavana Dagaba

To the East of the Mahathupa lies an enormous brick dagaba, Jetavana. The dagaba was originally built to a height of 400 feet (120 meters), making it the 3rd largest building in the world at that time. The two taller buildings were the biggest of the Egyptian pyramids built two thousand years before.

The Chronicle's account of the foundation of the Jetavana illustrates quite clearly the way in which the different Buddhist sects which the kings of Anuradhapura followed had become important in the political affairs of Sri Lanka.





## Mihintale

Mihintale is a mountain peak near Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka. It is believed by Sri Lankans to be the site of a meeting between the Buddhist monk Mahinda and King Devanampiyatissa which inaugurated the presence of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. It is now a pilgrimage site, and the site of several religious monuments and abandoned structures. According to Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa, Thera Mahinda came to Sri Lanka from India on the full moon day of the month of Poson (June) and met King Devanampiyatissa and the people, and preached the doctrine.

The traditional spot where this meeting took place is revered by the Buddhists of Sri Lanka. Therefore, in the month of Poson, Buddhists make their pilgrimage to Anuradhapura and Mihintale. From ancient times a large number of large steps were constructed to climb Mihintale. It is stated that King Devanampiyatissa constructed a vihara and 68 caves for the bhikkhus to reside in. At Mihintale there gradually grew a number of Buddhist viharas with all the dependent buildings characteristic of monasteries of that period.





## Mirisaweti Dagaba

Returning from the western Monasteries of coming from the Museum along Tissa Wewa road, lies the Mirisaweti Dagaba. The chronicle records that King Duthagamani built it in gratitude for his victory over King Elara in 158 B.C. during the ensuing celebrations, the King went to bathe in the Tissa Wewa during a water festival and planted spear with the Relic in the ground, where he left his clothes and belongings. It was a standard which had Relics of Lord Buddha inside the shaft and had brought him good fortune and success in his struggle to liberate his country from foreign oppression. When the King had disported himself in the water a whole day together with the women of the harem, he said in the evening " We will go hence, carry the spear before us"

The Mirisaweti Vihara around the dagaba is extensive and very pleasant to walk through. To the northwest of the dagaba are some imposing columns, the chapter house of the Mirisaweti and to the north is its refectory with a curry trough which holds a thousand servings.





## Ruwanweli Dagaba

A dagaba or thupa is a dome which is built over sacred Relics the bodily remains of the Lord Buddha. The Mahathupa or Great Thupa is today known as the Ruwanweli Dagaba and according to the Chronicle its construction was prophesied by Mahinda himself, when King Tissa erected a tall stone pillar on the place for future building.

The legendary hero Duthagamani in fulfilment of the prophesy decided to build a Great Thupa on the site. He had already built the Mirisaweti Dagaba and his magnificent Brazen Palace but he wanted something bigger and better for his greatest work.

The Chronicle tells us that the King asked for designs and estimates from master builders and chose one out of the five hundred who submitted tenders.





## Sela Cetiya

Sela Cetiya is one of the 16 main places of worship or Solosmasthanas and is situated to the west of Jetavanaramaya in the ancient sacred city of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. This was constructed by King Lajjitissa who ruled in the 1st century BC. The diameter of the base of the stupa is 37 ½ feet. This stupa has been given this name as the platform and stupa has been constructed in stone. A moonstone and guard stones can be seen here.





## Thanthirimale Rajamaha Viharaya

Located 40 kilometres North-West to the city of Anuradhapura, the temple ground extending across 250 acres of land is renowned for its many caves, inscriptions, rock carvings, ruins of monastic residences, meditation chambers, a library and the Sacred Bodhi tree. Thanthirimale is shrouded in beauty and a rich history of fact and fable.

The beauty of the environment, especially when it is illuminated by 'Aloka Pooja' is such that a visitor to the place will invariably be inclined to ask himself or herself whether there is a more pleasant place than Thanthirimale.

The holy premises Thanthirimale Rajamaha Viharaya is situated nearly 44 km far from the Anuradhapura city, to its North – West direction.

The fall of the '*Anuradhapura kingdom*', following invasions from South India led the hallowed ground of Thanthirimale into obscurity and dereliction after the 9th CE. It was revived and restored only in 1960 by Venerable '*Kudakongaskada Wimalagnana Thero*'. However, the genesis of Thanthirimale is traced to the Third Century BCE. It received the patronage of '*King Devanampiyatissa*' (307-267 BCE) during the time of '*Thivakka*', a sage who occupied the settlement and was hence known as *Thivakka Bamunugama*. Prior to this, '*Upathissa*', a minister of '*Prince Vijaya*' established one of the first settlements known as '*Upathissa Gama*'.

It is believed that sapling of Sri Maha Bodhi is located at the top of a rock which exists in the premises of Thanthirmale Rajamaha Viharaya. Still it's a miracle for the tourist how the Bodhi Tree was grown well in the hard rock and less watery sand.





## Thuparamaya

Thuparamaya, the oldest Stupa in Sri Lanka built after the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka. The Thuparamaya, built by King Devanapiyatissa, enshrines the sacred collar bone of the Lord Buddha. This Relic, a gift from India, stands testimony to the cordial relations enjoyed by the then Sri Lanka ruler. The columns around the stupa were a part of the walkway that supported a roof which covered the sacred edifice. Aesthetically, the interior of such a structure must have been the stunning expression of wood engineering and of the most skilful craftsmanship.

The edifice's conical design, unique in the architectural history of the world, continues to be discussed and debated by scholars and scientists. The discovery of medical texts and surgical instruments dating back to the Anuradhapura period confirm the Quality of life during that era. The tradition of using stone troughs as medicinal baths to cure the sick was in vogue during the Anuradhapura and subsequent Polonnaruwa periods and before Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka. The patient, whether paralytic or in a coma after a snake bite, was immersed in a bath enriched with the appropriate medicinal potions that would gradually be absorbed into the body. Interestingly, the shape of the vessel was moulded to economize on the expensive fluid. The name Thuparamaya is a residential complex for Bhikkhus





## Avukana Buddha Statue

The Avukana statue is a standing statue of the Buddha near Kekirawa in North Central Sri Lanka. The statue, which has a height of more than 40 feet (12 m), was carved out of a large granite rock face during the 5th century. It depicts a variation of the Abhaya mudra, and the closely worn robe is elaborately carved. Constructed during the reign of Dhatusena, it may have been made as a result of a competition between a master and a pupil. The Avukana statue is one of the best examples of a standing statue constructed in ancient Sri Lanka. It is now a popular tourist attraction.

The Avukana statue is located in the village of Avukana near Kekirawa. It is close to the Kala Wewa reservoir, and faces it. It was carved out of a large granite rock face, but is not completely separated. A narrow strip of rock has been left at the back of the statue, connecting it to the rock face and supporting it. However, the pedestal on which the Lord Buddha stands, which is carved in the form of a lotus flower, was carved separately and positioned under the statue. The statue alone is 38 feet 10 inches (11.84 m) in height, and with the pedestal the total height of the Avukana statue reaches 42 feet (13 m). The statue had been located within a large image house or shrine, of which parts of the walls still remain. The structure was made of brick and stone, and was 74 feet (23 m) long and 63 feet (19 m) wide.





## Deegavapi Rajamaha Vihara

Deegavapi Rajamaha Vihara is yet one of the 16 places which was blessed by the Lord Buddha's presence. Lord Buddha was invited to Kelaniya and during his visit of Kalaniya He visited this place.

In order to reach Digavapiya, take Ampara- Akkaraipaththu Road first. Within 18 km off from Ampara town you will find the Dagoba. Substantial documentary about history of Sri Lanka, written in 5th century) reveals that, King Saddhatissa (137-119B.C) initiated to construct this Dagoba. Not only that but also 'Samanthapasadika' (Pali chornicle) reports the same.

According to the the 'Mahavamsa', great chronicle of Sri Lanka, this stupa was built by 'King Saddhatissa' (137-119 BC). The King has also donated a jacket decorated with gold lotus flowers and various gems to cover the stupa.





## Dowa Rajamaha Viharaya

The highlight of the charming Dowa Rajamaha Viharaya, 6km east of Bandarawela, is a 4m-high standing Lord Buddha cut into the rock face. The walls of the adjacent cave shrine, carved from solid rock, are covered with excellent Buddhist murals. The site belongs to the 1st century. Finally, you will find a small stupa and a tunnel used in King's time. Legend say this temple was used by 'king Walgamba' to escape. Today no one has the permission to enter the tunnel.

Even today the ending point of the tunnel is unknown. The 38 feet Buddha statue and the beautiful gateway to the temple are the most valuable attractions of the temple





## Mahiyangana Rajamaha Vihara

Mahiyangana Raja Maha Vihara is an ancient Buddhist temple in Mahiyangana, Sri Lanka. It is believed to be the site of Gautama Buddha's first visit to the country, and is one of the Solosmasthana, the 16 sacred religious locations in Sri Lanka. Currently this temple has been declared as one of archaeological site in Sri Lanka

Mahiyangana is located to the East of the central hills of the island. It is within easy access of many major towns such as Badulla, Kandy, Ampara, Monaragala and Kandy. As a matter of interest, it is along the road from Kandy to Padiyathalawa that you will come across the famous 18 hairpin bends. The large & beautiful Mahiyangana Stupa a kilometer south of town signifies the spot at which the Buddha preached. Enshrined in the stupa is a lock of blue-black hair of Lord Buddha & a Relic of collarbone of Lord Buddha. The area is very attractive-the park with the dagoba in its well-kept & is overlooked by the hills on the far bank of the Mahaweli The stupa was built by prince Saman of deva tribe of pre-historic Lanka (other two tribes were Yakka & Naga) during the first visit of Lord Buddha to the island.





## Muthiyangana Rajamaha Viharaya

This is one of the main temples in Badulla. On the eighth year after attaining 'Nirvana' the Lord Buddha and 500 'Arhats' visited this Island for the third time on the invitation of 'Naga King Maniakkika' to Kelaniya. The Lord Buddha also visited this temple in Badulla and it is said that here his sweat turned into pearls and his hair is enshrined at the stupa.

Many kings have tried to develop this temple. The moonstones at the entrances to the stupa show workmanship of Anuradhapura Era. This temple is also said to have seven Bodhi trees but many say 4 had been destroyed in the past.





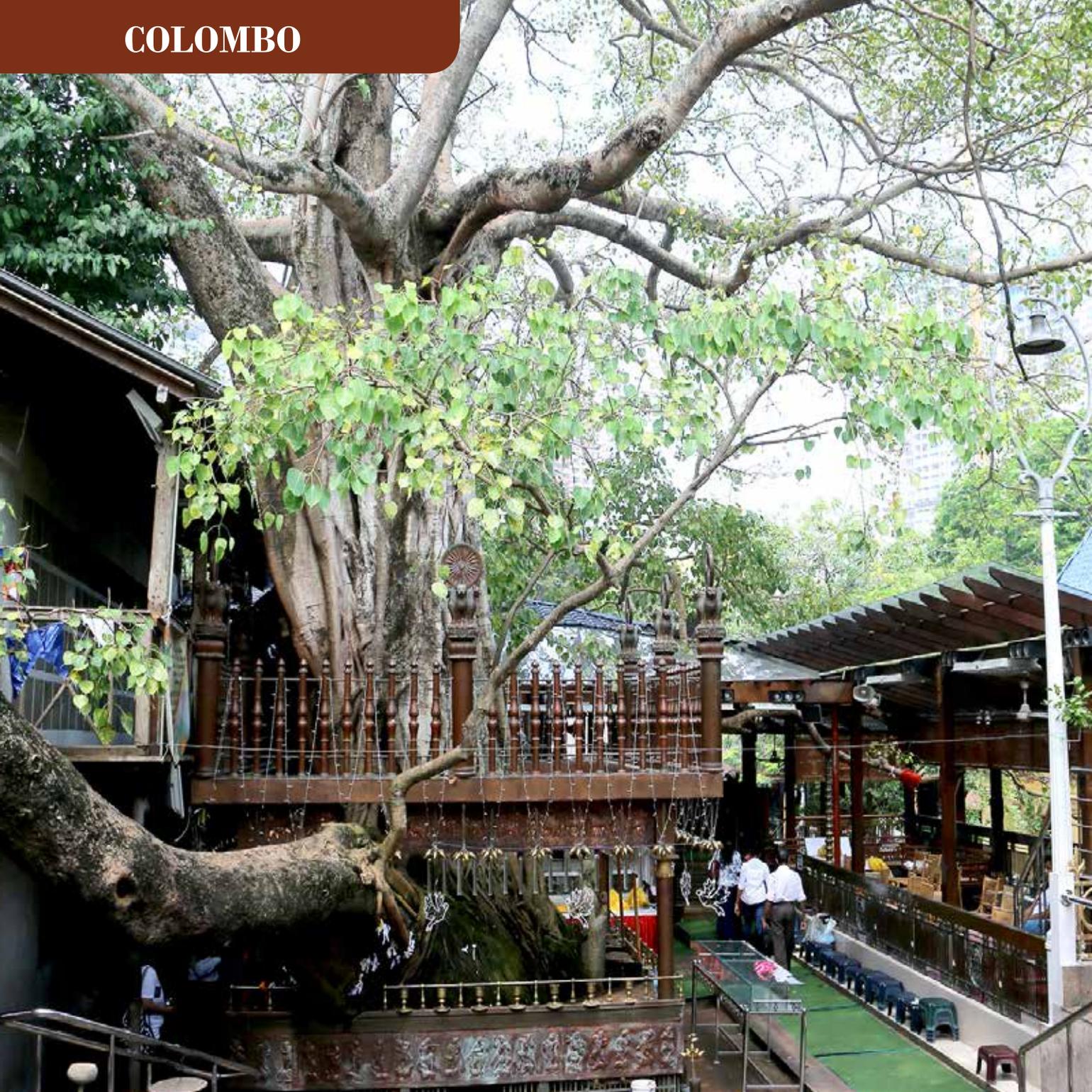
## Bellanwila Rajamaha Viharaya

In a country studded with temples, the Bellanwila Rajamaha Viharaya continues to reserve a special place in the hearts and minds of its people. There is a long-cherished belief that a child who treads the ground under the shade of its scared Bodhi-tree will never fail in life.

Situated in the outskirts of Colombo, the Temple holds a special mention in ancient text. The sapling had grown into a tree out of which 8 new saplings sprouted from the eastern side. One such plant is the towering tree now visible at the Bellanwila Rajamaha Viharaya.

There were two periods when Bellanwila is mentioned in literary works, one is in the 15th century when Kotte was the capital and the other time in the 19th century when a Monk known as Thengodagedra was attracted to the Bodhi tree by the sounds of drummers in the distance. He then cleared the land and with the help of villagers helped build a modest shelter for monks.





## Gangaramaya Temple

Situated in the bustling inner-city Colombo, nearby the scenic Beira Lake, this intriguing temple complex is simultaneously a hugely popular tourist attraction, a place of worship and a learning and vocational training center.

This temple was started by the famous scholar monk 'Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Nayaka Thero' in the late 19th Century. Today this temple strikes the fine balance of being a space of worship, a museum, a center for learning and a tourist attraction.

The most extravagant and lavish perahera in Colombo is done by this temple.

The temple is mostly celebrated for its architecture and statues showcasing Sri Lankan, Chinese, Thai, Burmese and many other artistic styles. The exterior of the temple is boldly decorated in elaborate designs and golden adornments. The temple grounds are black slate tiled, with various statues and china vases placed randomly.

Most of the bejeweled and shiny trinkets here are gifts from devotees to the temple's head monk, Ven. 'Galaboda Gnanissara Thero', one of the island's most recognizable religious figures, who assumed administration of the Gangaramaya as a 16-year-old novice monk.



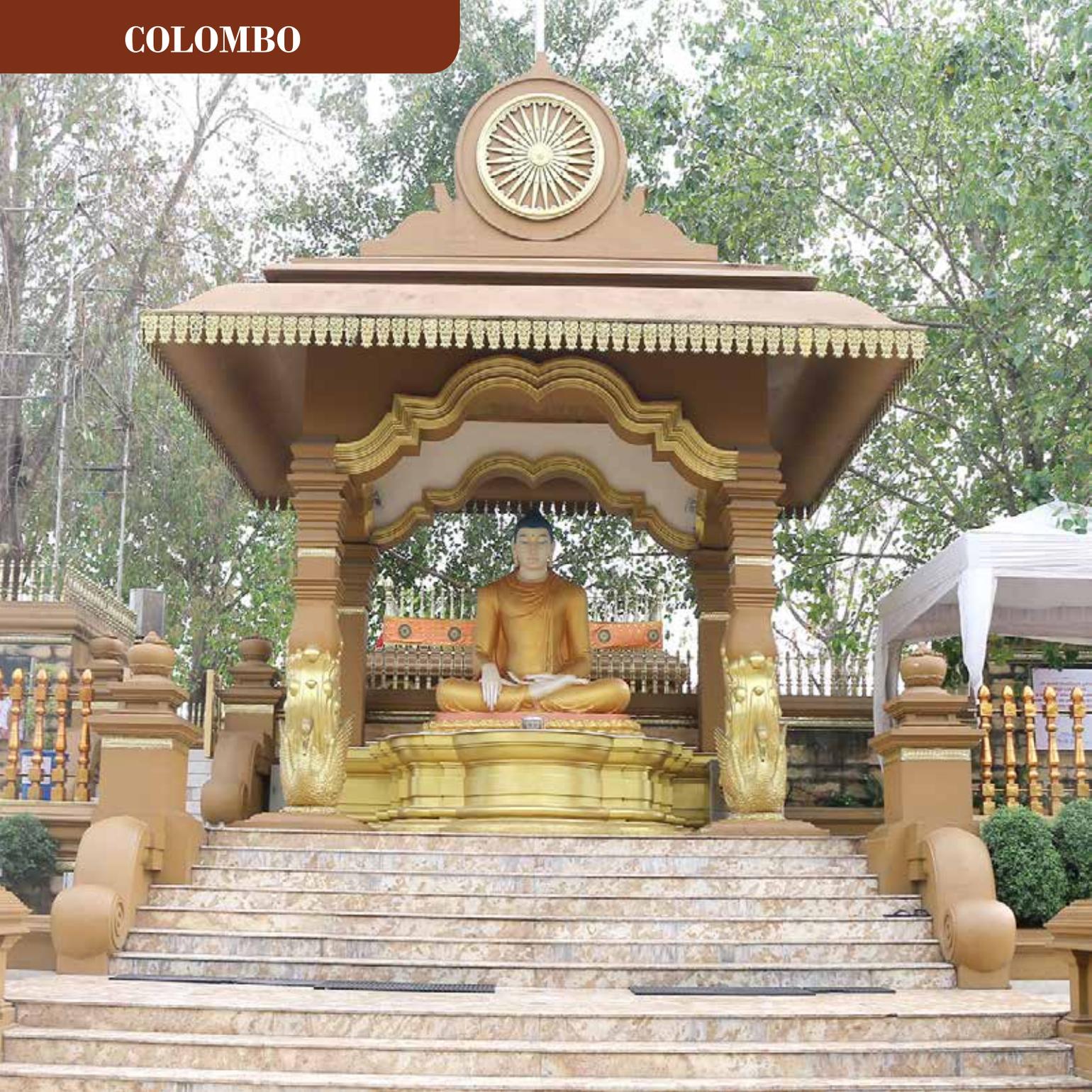


## Kotte Rajamaha Vihara

Away from the hustle and bustle of the Nugegoda metropolis, a 10 minutes drive towards the Pita-Kotte junction leads the way to Kotte Raja Maha Vihara, one of the ancient temples of the city. The tranquillity of the temple invited us for a journey towards a life full of peace and happiness. Since it was almost twilight, the temple was crowded with many worshippers. The light of the oil lamps and the aroma of the incense sticks took us to an incredible world, making us forget that we are at the edge of a busy town. When King Parakumbha VI ruled the country, he built this temple closer to his palace, with the intention of doing the necessary duties to the Sangha regularly.

With the arrival of the Portuguese, the Kotte Kingdom faced a tragic situation. The fate of the temple was no difference. It was in 1813, when Ven. Pilane Dharma Keerthi Sri Buddha Rakkhitha Thera found this ancient temple in ruins and restored it to the present condition. The Thera found the place, with some ruins of the present Chethiya, foundation of the Vihara and the Katharagama Devalaya, and some stone pillars here and there said Anuruddha Thera.





## Mahamevnawa

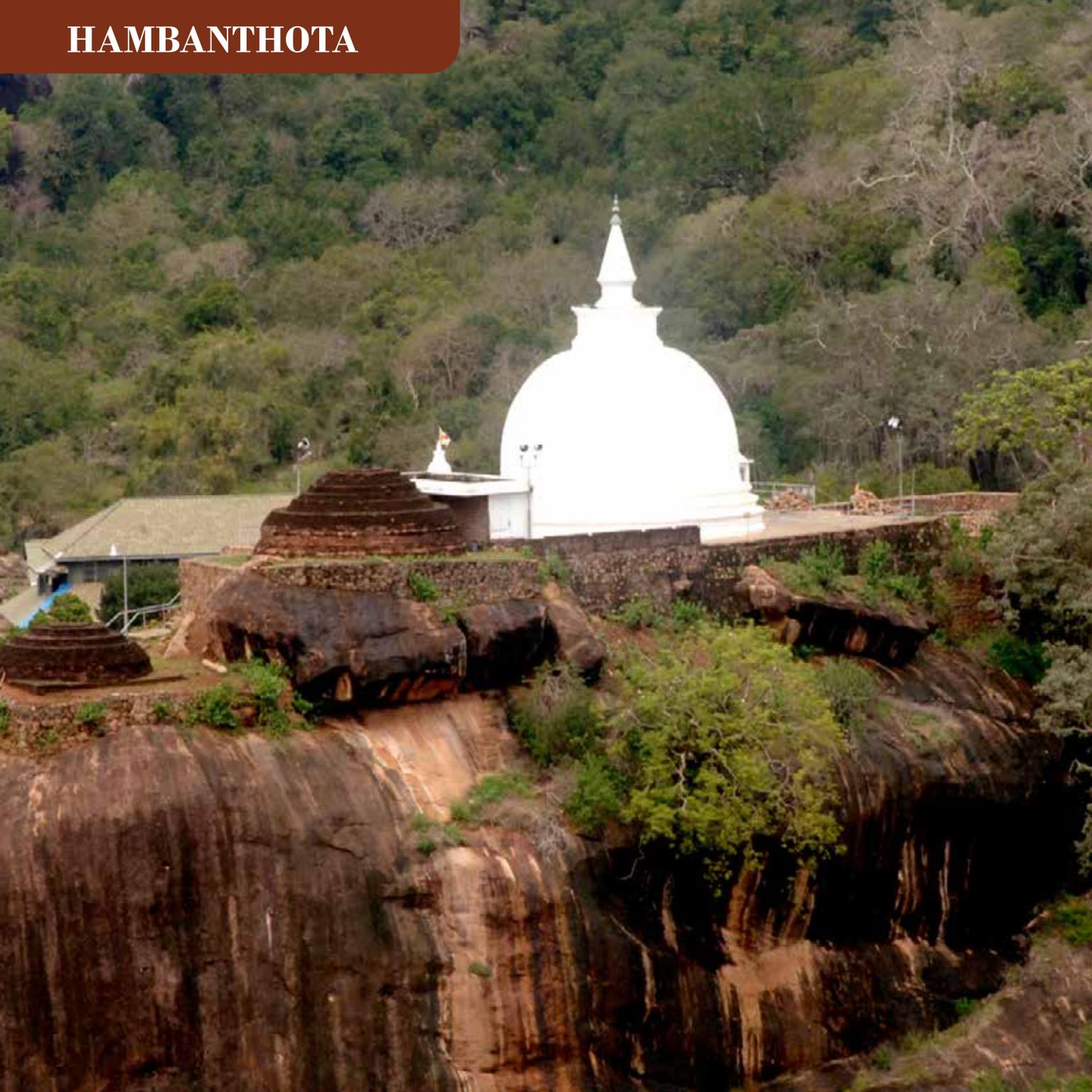
Mahamevnawa Buddhist Monastery is a place for everyone, regardless of the country they hail from or even if they are a Buddhist or not. Here resident will discover like-minded community of people who are interested in finding happiness that is not based on endless consuming and accumulating more and more things.

By learning and practicing the teachings of the Lord Buddha, you will gain a peace and happiness that is not tied to the ups and downs of ordinary life.

Mahamevnawa Buddhist Monastery was established to benefit the spiritual development through the teachings of Lord Buddha. Founded in 1999 in Sri Lanka by 'Ven. Kiribathgoda Gnanananda Thero', its sole purpose is to spread the original teachings of the Lord Buddha.

This is one of the modern temples in Colombo





## Sithulpawwa Rajamaha Viharaya

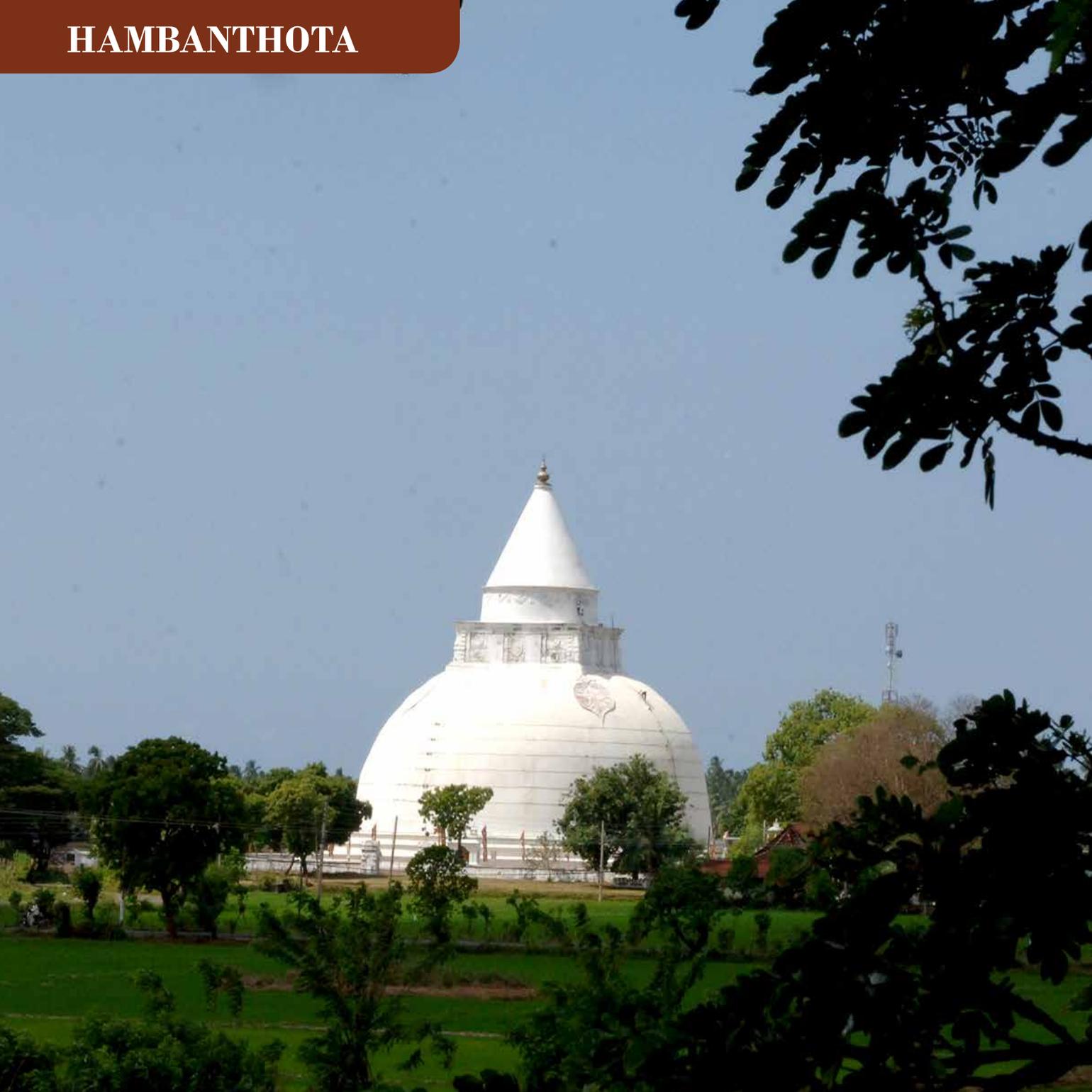
Also referred to as 'Chiththala Pabbatha' in ancient texts, the temple is situated in Kirinda in the Hambantota District. Stone inscriptions say that construction of the monastery was attributed to 'King Kavanthissa' who ruled the southern area of the island.

According to folklore, a monk by the name of 'Thissa' who also reached the state of 'Arhath' lived here and later a stupa was built encasing his remains. This is today called the 'Thissa Thera Chetiya'.

The monastery contains a number of stupas, Buddha statues, image houses spread over a large area. There are paintings that belong to the 3rd century and drawings have a thin layer of plaster on the rock surface

A large number of artifacts have been found at this place during excavations. Rock inscriptions also related to a pre-Christian period some inscriptions showing localization effects compared to the Anuradhapura period.





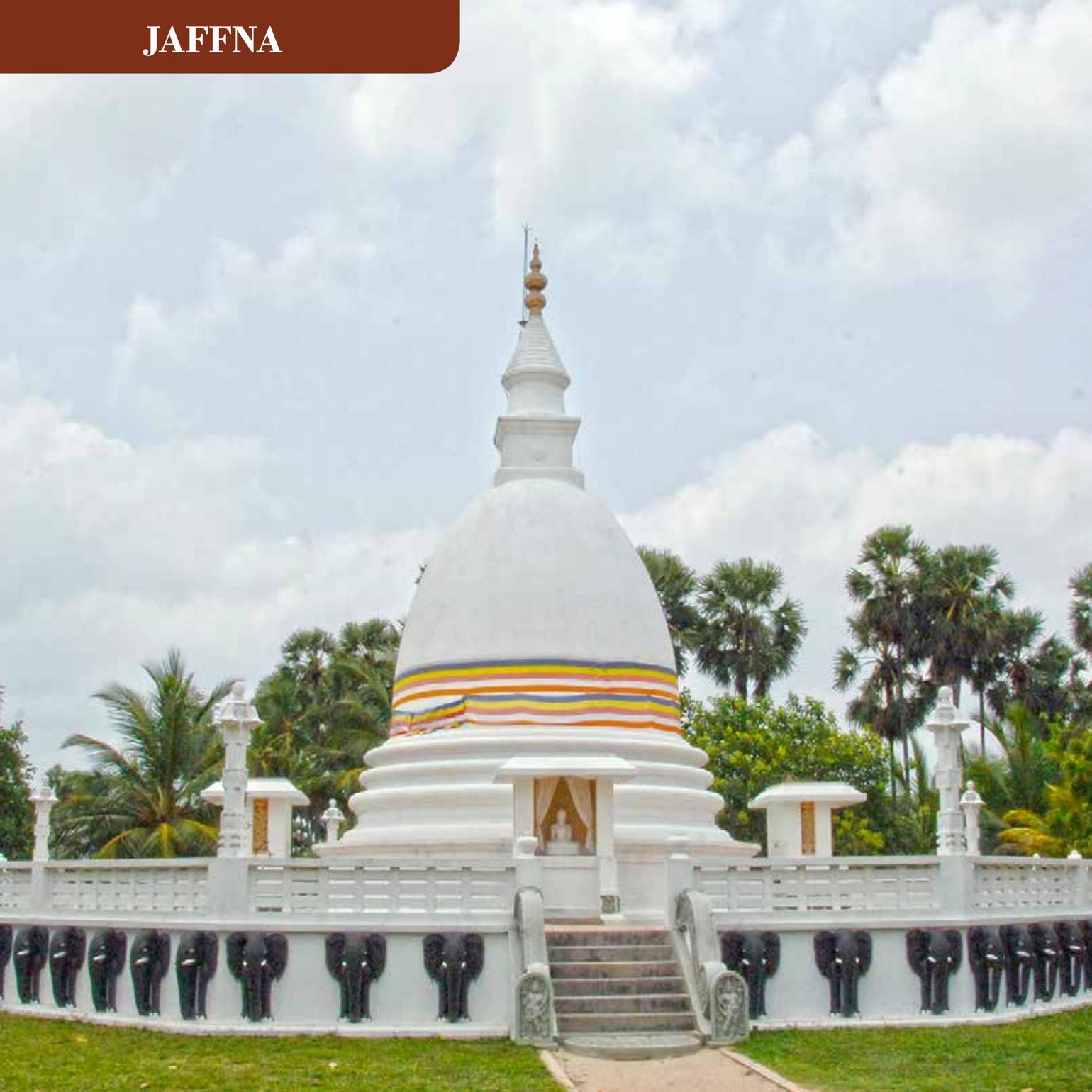
## Tissamaharama Rajamaha Viharaya

In the city of Tissamaharama, there are four ancient stupa's belonging to the Anuradhapura period, these include the Sandagiri Stupa, Tissamaharama stupa, Yatala Vehera and Menik Vehera.

According to ancient texts, the largest Tissamaharama stupa, was either built by '*King Kavantissa*' who ruled 'Ruhunu' in the 1st century BC or a belief that it was initially built by '*King Mahanaga*' in the 3rd century and '*King Kavantissa*' who probably enlarged the shrine.

The Relic enshrined in the stupa is subject to debate, according to popular belief the frontal bone Relic of the Lord Buddha was temporarily enshrined in this stupa but later it shifted in to the '*Seruwila Rajamaha Viharya*.'





## Dambakolapatuna

If temples in Sri Lanka were to be ranked based on how old and sacred they were, the Dambakolapatuna temple will rank high.

Upon the arrival of Buddhism to Sri Lanka over 2000 years ago, Buddhist nun Sanghamitta the daughter of ancient Indian '*Emperor Ashoka*', landed at the ancient port of Dambakola Patuna with a sacred sapling from the Bodhi Tree under which the Lord Buddha gained enlightenment.

A temple was built here to commemorate the arrival of the sapling; however, no remnants of this ancient landmark exist today. The Sri Lankan Navy however, has since built a new temple named the *Sri Sangamitta Viharaya*, and is one of the key Buddhist landmarks of the Northern Peninsula.

The Dambakola Patuna was used as a port in historical times. Today the Port is still marked by a temple of the same name.

*'The Sri Sangamitta Viharaya'* is situated on a coastline that skirts the Northern edge of Sri Lanka, overlooking the azure waters of the Palk Strait. On a clear day, you may even be able to see the edge of India's Southern coastline.





## Nagadeepa Rajamaha Viharaya

Arguably one of the most visited of Jaffna's islands, *Nainativu*, or Nagadeepa as it is referred to in Sinhala, holds an important place in Buddhist and Hindu histories.

For the Buddhists, Nagadeepa Purana Viharaya is worshipped as one of Sri Lanka's holiest sites where the Lord Buddha said to have once called upon two Naga kings in disagreement with each other. And for the Hindus, the '*Nagapooshani Amman Kovi*', is referred to in several ancient chronicles as one of the 64 Shakthi Peedams located across South Asia – shrines dedicated to Shakthi, the Hindu goddess of power.

In the '*Mahavamsa*' this island is one of the sixteen sacred places and the Tamil Buddhist epic, '*Manimekala*', mentions a gem studded throne and a stone with the Lord Buddha's footprints at Nagadeepa which pilgrims from India used to come and worship. The heroine of the epic is described as wandering amongst the island's 'long sandy dunes and lagoons'.

The road from Jaffna runs across a long causeway to the island of Kayts from where another causeway leads to '*Punkudutivu*'. The landscape is much different than it is to other parts of the country.

Travelers to Nainativu must first hop across two islands on a journey to the '*Kurikkaduwan Jetty*', located approximately one hour away. From here, you will embark on a crowded 15-minute ferry to either the Nagadeepa Rajamaha Viharaya. You may even choose to enter '*Nainativu*' from one, then walk or take a short tuk-tuk ride to the other when leaving, in order to experience both journeys in one go.





## Kande Viharaya

The renowned Kande Vihara is situated in the village of Kaluwamodera in Aluthgama, 2 kilometers from Bentota. Well placed on a mount with an enchanting environment, it attracts multitude of devotees and relief seekers daily to its manifold units of religious interest, which seems to be a unification of the two main religions in the country namely Buddhism and Hinduism. The Vishnu Devale (shrine of God / Deity Vishnu) well known for its miraculous powers of granting relief to relief seekers and several other Devalas are located side by side with the main components of the Buddhist Temple depicting how these two ancient religions have harmoniously coexisted for many centuries in the 'Noble Island', Sri Lanka.

The village temple has been traditionally providing various services to the devotees for their spiritual as well as mundane well being. Therefore a Buddhist Temple comprise a complex of components necessary for providing those services. Kande Vihara is a temple well endowed with all essential components of a Buddhist Temple.





## Kalutara Bodhi

The dagoba and the Bo tree are attracting every traveller those who cross Kalutara along Galle road. As mentioned in chronicles the Bo tree is a sapling of Sri Maha Bodhiya, Anuradhapura and it is one of the 32 saplings which were planted in several parts of Sri Lanka as directed by Ven. Mahindha Thero long time ago. During some difficult times of Ceylon, the sacred Relics of Lord Buddha was enshrined here. This is the main reason for the continuous visit of pilgrims and Buddhist devotees to the Bodhiya temple.

The temple was also a famous and old land mark of the country as well as a good tourist spot. Located on the main road from Colombo to Galle with a distance of 41 km from the capital. Well known tourist destination in the island with annual head count of 5000+. Lots of tour guides can be found around the area.





## Degaldoruwa Rajamaha Viharaya

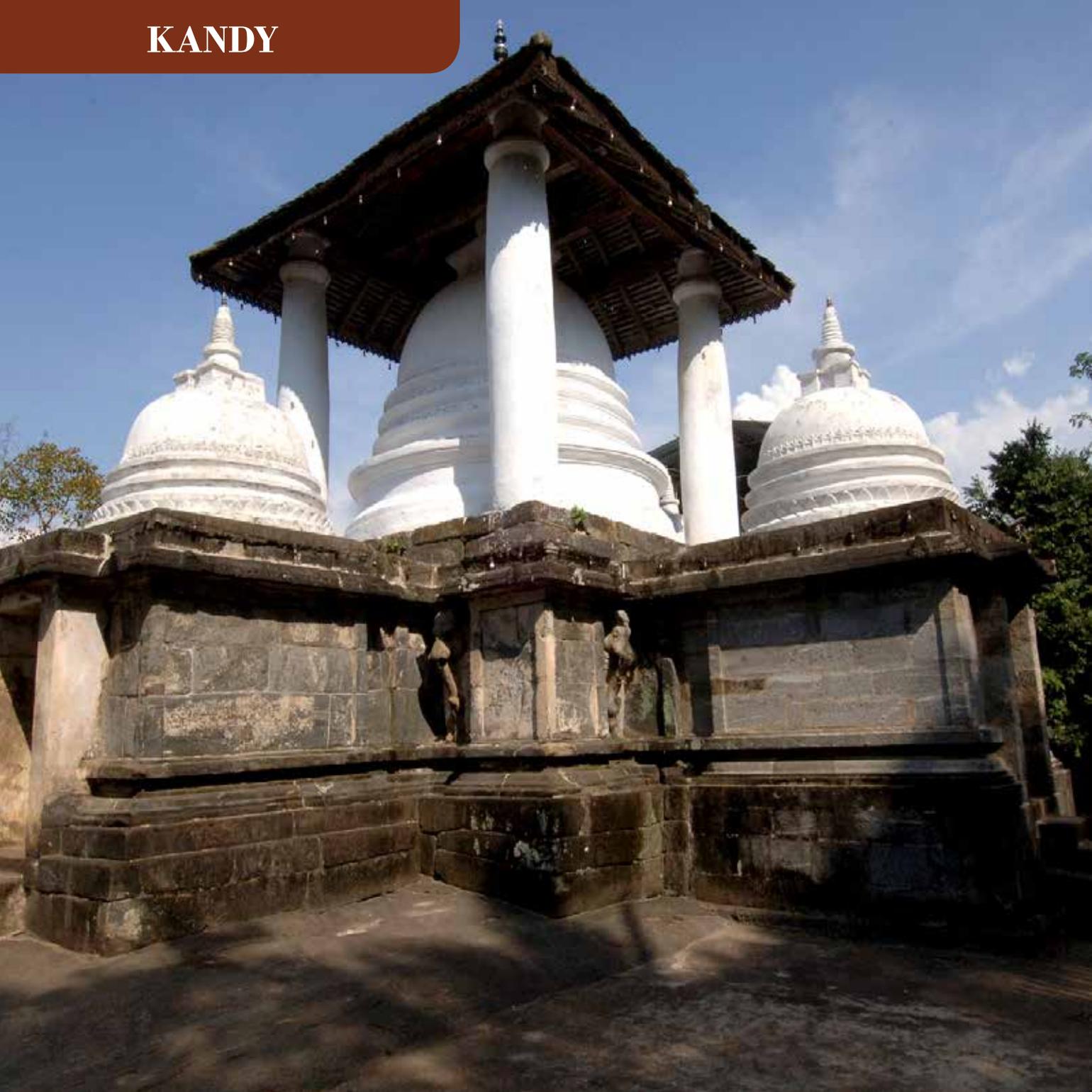
Situated in Amunugama, a village near Kandy town, the Degaldoruwa Rajamaha Viharaya was built in 1771 AD by 'King Rajadi Rajasinha'. This temple is considered a cave temple and has paintings which depict the Kandyan era it was from.

The temple is built in a place where two rocks touch each other from above and below. The rock is a height of 40 feet and a cave was made by breaking the rocks to accommodate a shrine room for Lord Buddha's statues.

The paintings are the works of four painters and are recognized as some of the best examples of the Kandyan period paintings. The shrine room ceiling as a rock surface which the painting of Lord Buddha and the 'Mara' and his forces. There is also a painting of 'Mahi Kantawa' or the earth Goddess on the ceiling.

There is a Bo tree and a stupa at the terrace of the summit and a path carved out which leads to the lower terrace.





## Gadaladeniya Rajamaha Viharaya

Gadaladeniya temple has south Indian influence and It is also reported that the Viharaya fell into neglect over a period of time until 'King Viraparakrama Narendrasinha' (1707 – 1739) handed its care over to 'Ven. Weliwita Saranankara Thero' and it was maintained thereafter by his students and generations of students that followed.

The image house has a massive wooden doorway that opens in two pieces, preceded by a simple moonstone. At the entrance there are two stone pillars, each with another set of pillars which makes up a tri-pillar on each side. Inside the image house, the countenance of the seated Lord Buddha statue is of 'pride and authority', different from that of the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa period.

The temple grounds also have a stupa, about 40 feet high with four small stupas surrounding, with a roof over it.

Visiting the Gadaladeniya Rajamaha Viharaya to travel back in time to view the magical amalgamation of south Indian inspiration and ancient Sri Lankan workmanship and craftsmanship.





## Lankathilaka Rajamaha Viharaya

Located in the 'Udunuwara Hiyarapitiya Village' in Kandy is the famous temple of Lankatilaka. The huge rock where the temple was built is called 'Pahangala Rock' and is one of the three famous temples near Peradeniya.

This temple dates back to the 'Gampola Kingdom period' under 'King Buwanekabahu IV' this temple was built. A South Indian architect 'Sthapati Rayar' designed this with a blend of Sinhalese architecture of Polonnaruwa and of Dravidian and Indo-Chinese style.

Facing Lankathilaka from a distance, the Hanthana mountain range appears like a phantom lying supine. The locals used to believe that it is a spirit guarding the temple from far afield.





## Athkada Rajamaha Viharaya

Athugala is synonymous with the name Kurunagala. When coming towards Kurunagala, the Athugala is clearly visible looming on the horizon. The temple belongs to the 'Maya Rata' and is known by the name Athkanda Viharaya.

According to the legends This rock was used for Surya Wandanawa. The Temple built by 'King Suratissa' (CE 187-177). The Viharaya is a cave temple. There are two idols made of stone and is covered by mortar.

In the cave temple is the 'Mahindagamanaya, Pajapati Gathamige Katina Chiwara Poojawa' and 'Pidusiga Wadima' to Rajagaha Nuwara painted on the wall. The Bodhi tree there belongs to the period of Anuradhapura.





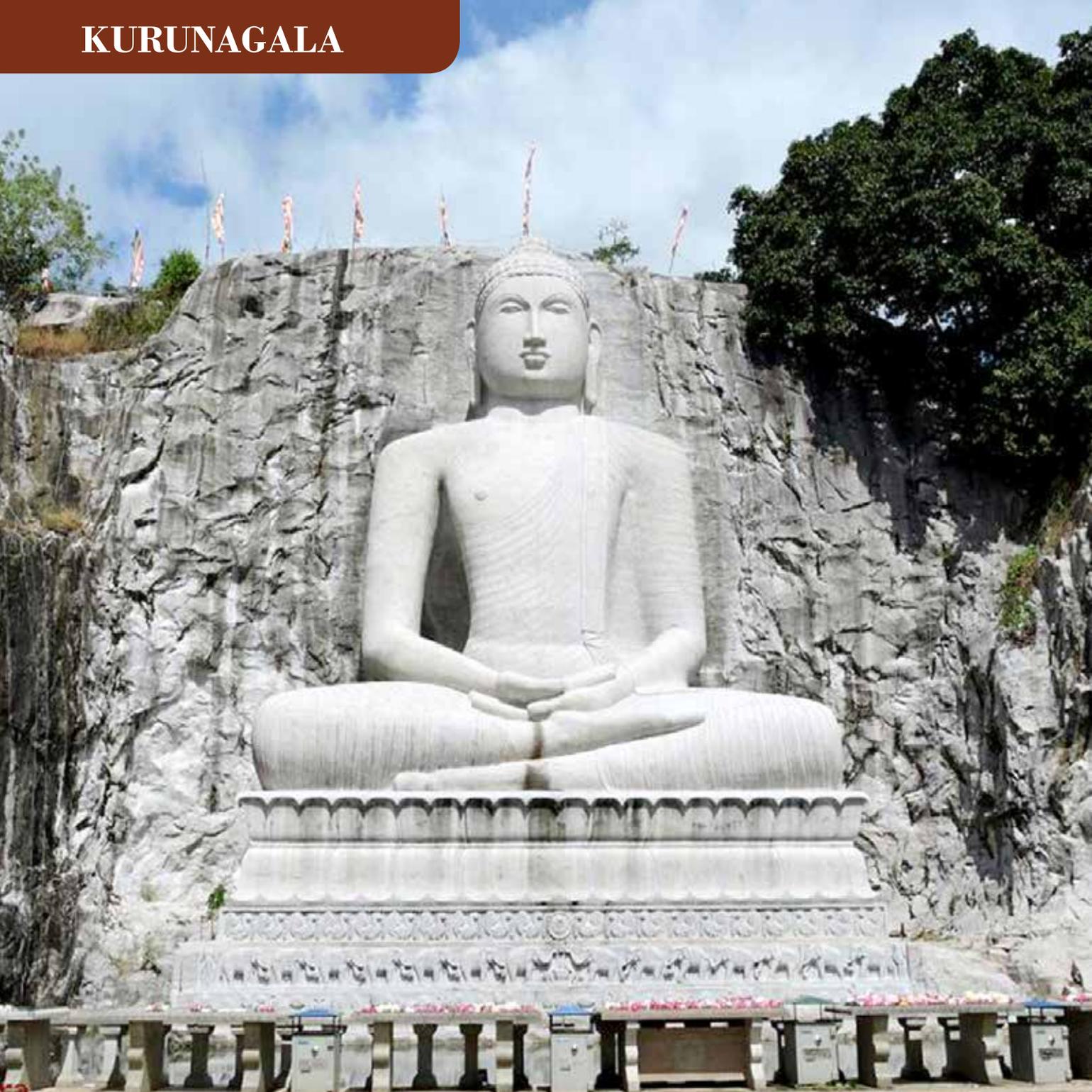
## Dambadeniya Rajamaha Viharaya – Wijesundararamaya

One of these rulers was 'Vijayabahu' at Dambadeniya and established a palace called 'Maliga Gala' or Rock palace. The remains are still there and the main attraction of the Dambadeniya kingdom where he built a temple by his name Vijayasundaramaya. Soon he was able convince the Buddhist monks to hand over the Relic to his care. But because Dambadeniya was susceptible to enemy attacks, he kept the Tooth Relic at Beligala temple for safety.

Upon the death of the king, his son took over and built a formidable army. He even brought back the Tooth Relic to the Vijayasundararamaya. He built a two storey Dalada Maligawa. The remains of this temple are still intact today.

The 'kingdom of Dambadeniya' did not have a long history. Although 'King Parakramabahu' chased away 'Magha' from Polonnaruwa the city was in a derelict state. When he died he was succeeded by 'King Vijayabahu IV'. Although the King was a kind person he was killed by one of his military commanders. The brother of 'King Vijayabahu IV' defeated him and came to the throne. He then relocated capital to Yaphauva





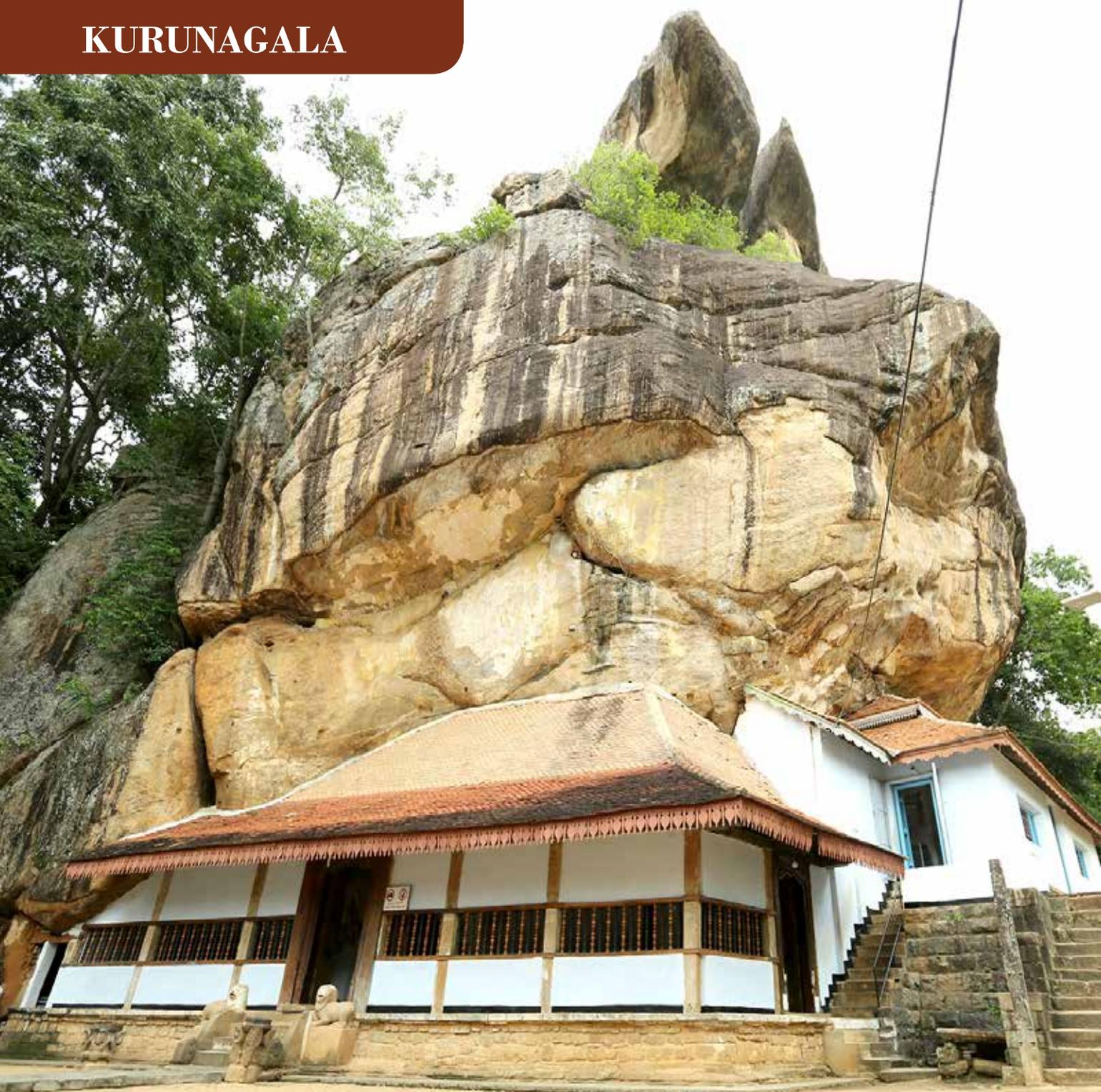
## Rambodagala Buddha Statue

Rambodagala which belongs to the North-western Province and Kurunegala District owns a prominent place in the hearts of Buddhists for having the largest Buddha statue. The venue is nearly 20km apart from Kurunegala, 5km from Rideegama and 94km from the capital city, Colombo.

The Samadhi Buddha statue located at the Rambadagalla Monaragala Viharaya in Ridigama, Kurunegala is 67.5 feet in height.

The statue is considered as world largest statue of Samadhi Buddha. The works for this carved Buddha statue was started in 2003 September. The main artistic works of the statue was maintained by a South Indian architect named Muththaiya Isthapathi. The gigantic Buddha statue was carved out of a massive rock in the Rambodagala Temple premises. The devotees are more common in visiting the temple area and the statue.





## Ridi Viharaya

Ridi Viharaya or Silver Temple is a 2nd-century BCE Theravada Buddhist temple in the village of Ridigama, Sri Lanka. Built during the reign of Dutthagamani of Anuradhapura, the temple is considered as the place where the silver ore, which provided silver to complete Ruwanwelisaya; one of the largest stupa in Sri Lanka, was discovered. According to the chronicles Mahavamsa and Thupavamsa, the Ridi Viharaya complex was built in gratitude for helping him cherish his dream of completing Ruwanwelisaya.

Approximately 18 kilometres northeast of Kurunegala, Ridi Viharaya is located in the city of Ridigama. Kurunegala is located 94 kilometres northeast of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. The temple is approximately 10 kilometres from Ibbagamuwa, in the A6 highway, which connects Kurunegala and Dambulla.

The cave walls of the Rajatha lena are painted with images that relate to incidents of Gautama Buddha's life. Some of these frescos were never completed, but early sketches can still be seen. The cave walls contain small carved out drains known as "Kataram", to drain rain water away from the paintings.





## Kataragama Kiri Vehera

Kiri Vehera is an ancient stupa situated in Kataragama, Sri Lanka. This stupa probably dates back to the 6th century BC and is believed to be built by King Mahasena, a regional ruler of Kataragama area. One of the most popular Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the country, Kiri Vehera is among the Solosmasthanas, the 16 most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage sites of ancient Sri Lanka. This stupa which is 95 ft.

In height with a circumference of 280 ft. is located 800 m North to the famous Ruhunu Maha Kataragama Devalaya. The height of this stupa is 280 feet. Kataragama Kiri Vehera, is at about 800 meters away from the Ruhunu Maha Kataragama Devalaya. Katharagama is in Monaragala District of Uva province, Sri Lanka and from Colombo it is 228 kms. Kiri Vehera which stands in close proximity to the Katharagama Devalaya was built by the King Mahasena





## Alu Viharaya

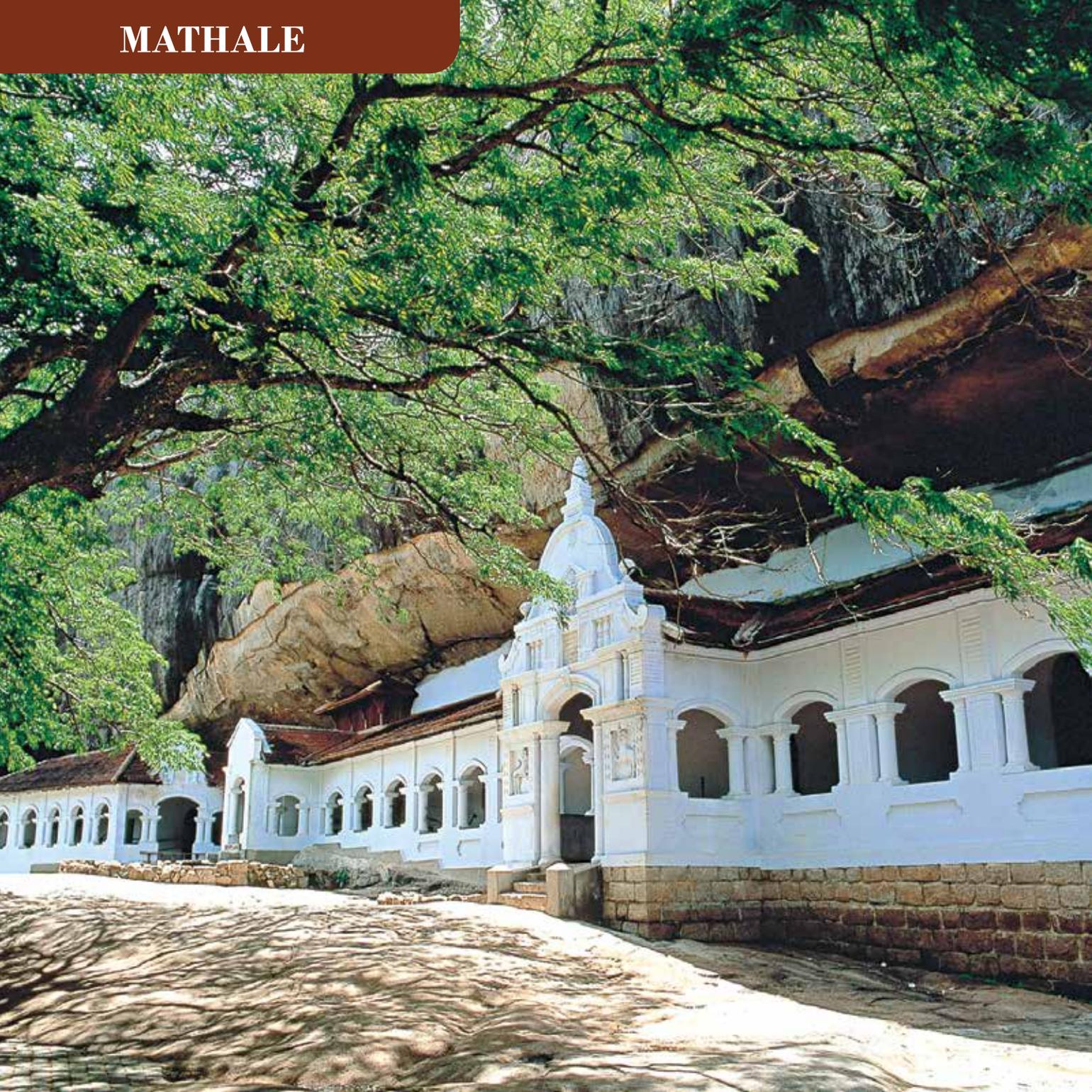
The significance of the Alu Vihara is the writing of the 'Thripitaka' in 'Pali' (Buddhist scriptures), the Lord Buddha Dhamma which was passed on from generation to generation.

Even before talking about the magnificence of the temple, its name itself calls for some contemplation. The 'Aloka Vihara' has become Aluvihara. Folklore has it that the name has many meanings. One is that in 'Pali' word 'Aloka' means Alu meaning light and in ancient Sinhala it was the abode of Thera's, it was a Viharaya. So, the combinations of the two words make it Aluvihara.

Another view is that there is a rock east of the main rock, it has not cut off light, so the temple came to be called Aloka lena, cave with light. Surrounded by hills, the temple is 30 km south of Kandy on the Malate-Dambulla road.

There is a belief that the rock caves are a result of a massive landslide in the hill country. There are 13 rock caves. To enter the cave, one needs to climb many steps





## Dambulla Cave Temple

The Rock Temple of Dambulla, called Jumbukola Vihara (Dambulla Cave Temple) in the (Mahavamsa) also known as the Golden Temple of Dambulla, the principal Pali Chronicle of Sri Lanka, is situated about forty seven miles north west of Kandy, the last capital of the Sinhalese kings, on the main road to Anuradhupura.

The shortest way, from Colombo to Dambulla lies via Kurunegala, one of the capitals of the medieval Sinhalese kings. The other rock temple of equal fame, Aluvihare, where, according to tradition, the Buddhist scriptures were first committed to writing about the first century B.C., list about twenty-six miles to the south on the Kandy Dambulla road. And the famous fortress of Sigiriya with its beautiful frescoes rises aloft like a gigantic cylinder at a distance of about twelve miles to the north-east of Dambulla.

The caves of Dambulla, like the Mihintale caves, were occupied in very early times by Budd-hist hermits. The antiquity of this place has been authenticated by the presence of pre-Christian inscriptions in Brahmi character immediately below the drip-ledge of the central cave.





## Pidurangala Rajamaha Vihara

Although located very close to Sigiriya Rock Fortress, Pidurangala archaeological site is not so commonly visited place. The gravel road by the Sigiriya leads you to Pidurangala. You can follow the Archilological department name road and need to travel around 2 km.

The place become a prominent Biddhist Monastery during the King Kasyapa time .The ancient Buddhist temple situated in Pidurangala village of Matale District, Sri Lanka. The temple was constructed on a massive rock called Pidurangala, which is located a few kilometres north of the historical sigiriya.

The temple was said to be 'panchavasa', consisting of five main ritual buildings. Among the buildings are Ancient Stupa, Chapter House, Image House, Bodhighara, Preaching hall, Sangharama and inscriptions with drip ledged caves can be seen. It is believed that the history of Pidurangala Vihara goes back beyond to the first and second century BC. From those days Pidurangala was used as a Buddhist monastery and but became a prominent place during the reign of King Kashyapa.



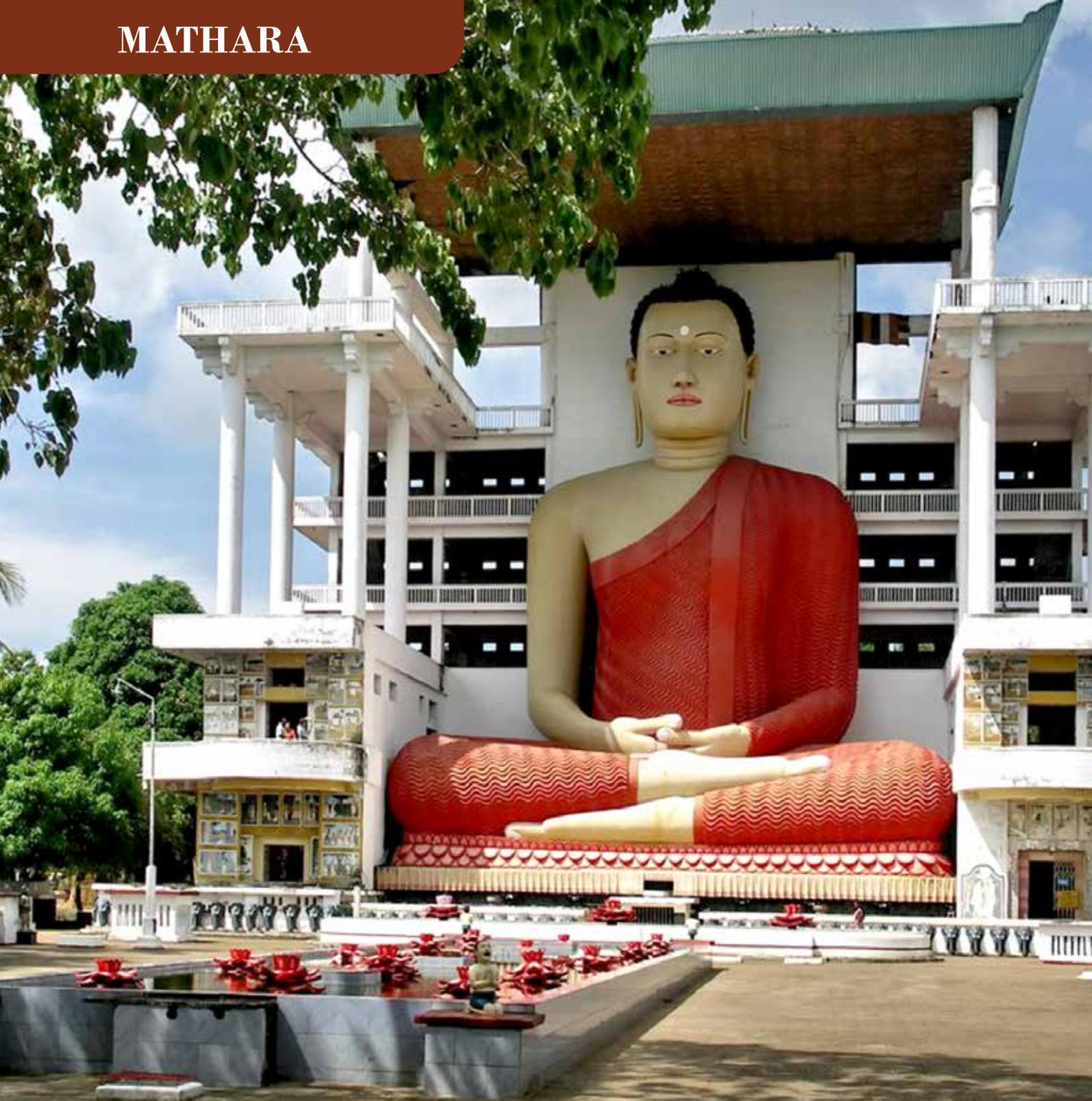


## Devinuwara Rajamaha Vihara

Devinuwara Raja Maha Vihara is situated 6km away from Matara facing the Matara -Tangalle high road. It is believed that this vihara once known as Kihireli Pirivena was built by King Dappula I who reigned in ancient Rohana. The temple of Devinuwara stands adjoining the famous Sri Vishnu Devale. According to recorded history the temple and the Devale (Shrine) was built by King *Dappula I (Dappula-sen)* during the 7th century. *The Dagaba* is situated in an elevated level of above 12 feet from the ground circling about 200 feet. The Dagaba has taken its present form (The Shape of a Bubble) at its renovation after the Portuguese destruction of the original temple in 1587.

After liberating the country from the tamil invaders, King Vijayabahu I (1070-1110) is said to have renovated the temple. and his queen "*Leelawathi*" has built the "*Galathurumula paaya*".





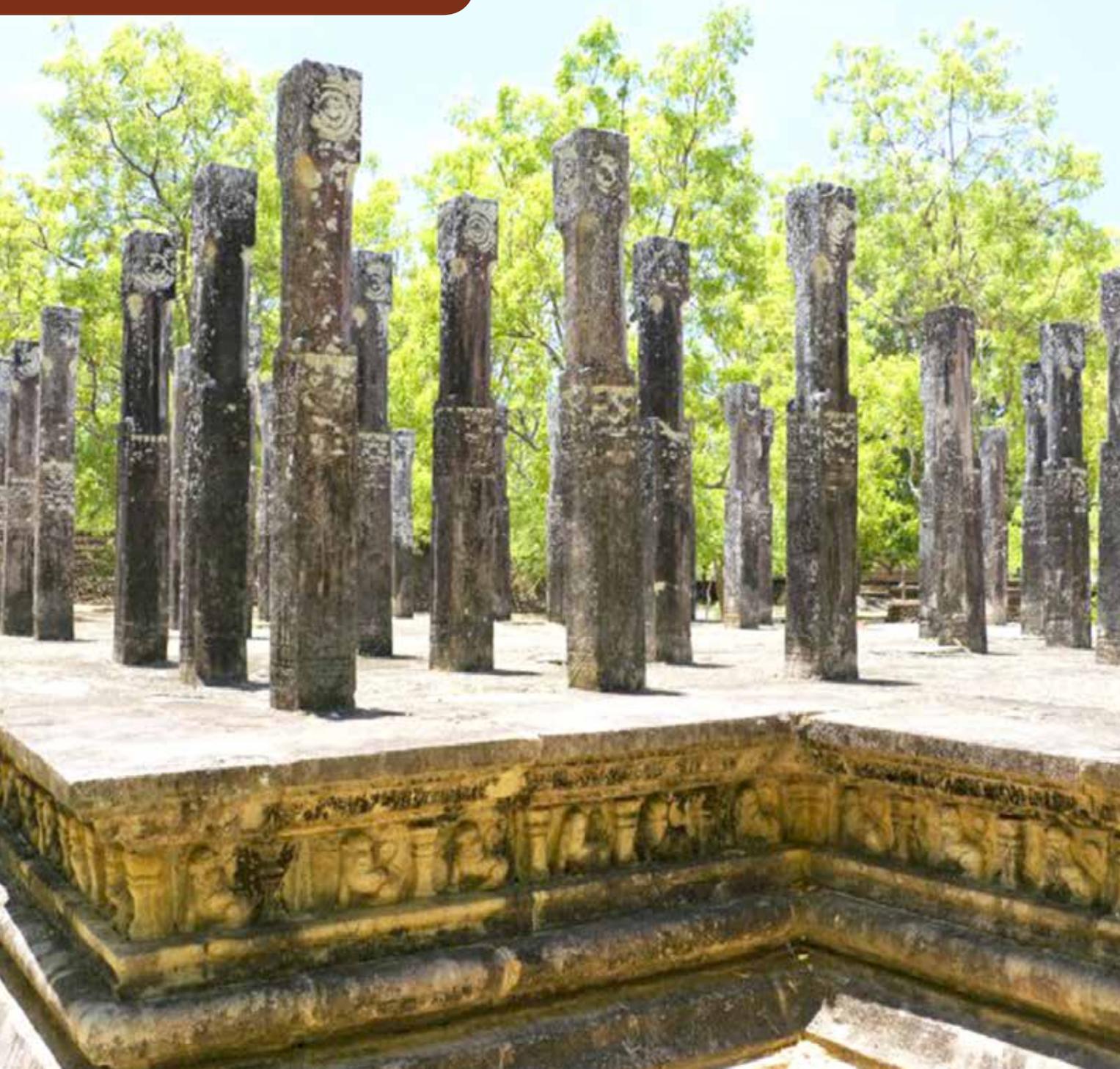
## Weherahena Viharaya

There aren't many historical accounts of this particular temple but it is said to be the largest and first modern tunnel temple in modern period. The story according to legends dates back to a time when the 'Parawahera Rewatha Thero' was sent to Weherahena as a punishment by his teacher. At the time Weherahena was just a mound of ½ acre of jungle with a Bodhi tree.

With the help of the villagers he was able to build a clay house for himself but later came up with the idea of building the largest Lord Buddha statue in the world. He also wanted to build a tunnel temple as the 'Ummaga Jathaka story'.

It was 'Angarika Dharmapala' who is said to have laid the first foundation stone for the temple in 1939. The 600 feet tunnel was built by excavating the mound of earth. Once this was complete, the 88-cubit Lord Buddha statue was started. The statue was completed in 1976 and the whole tunnel was decorated with scenes from the 'Jathaka stories'.

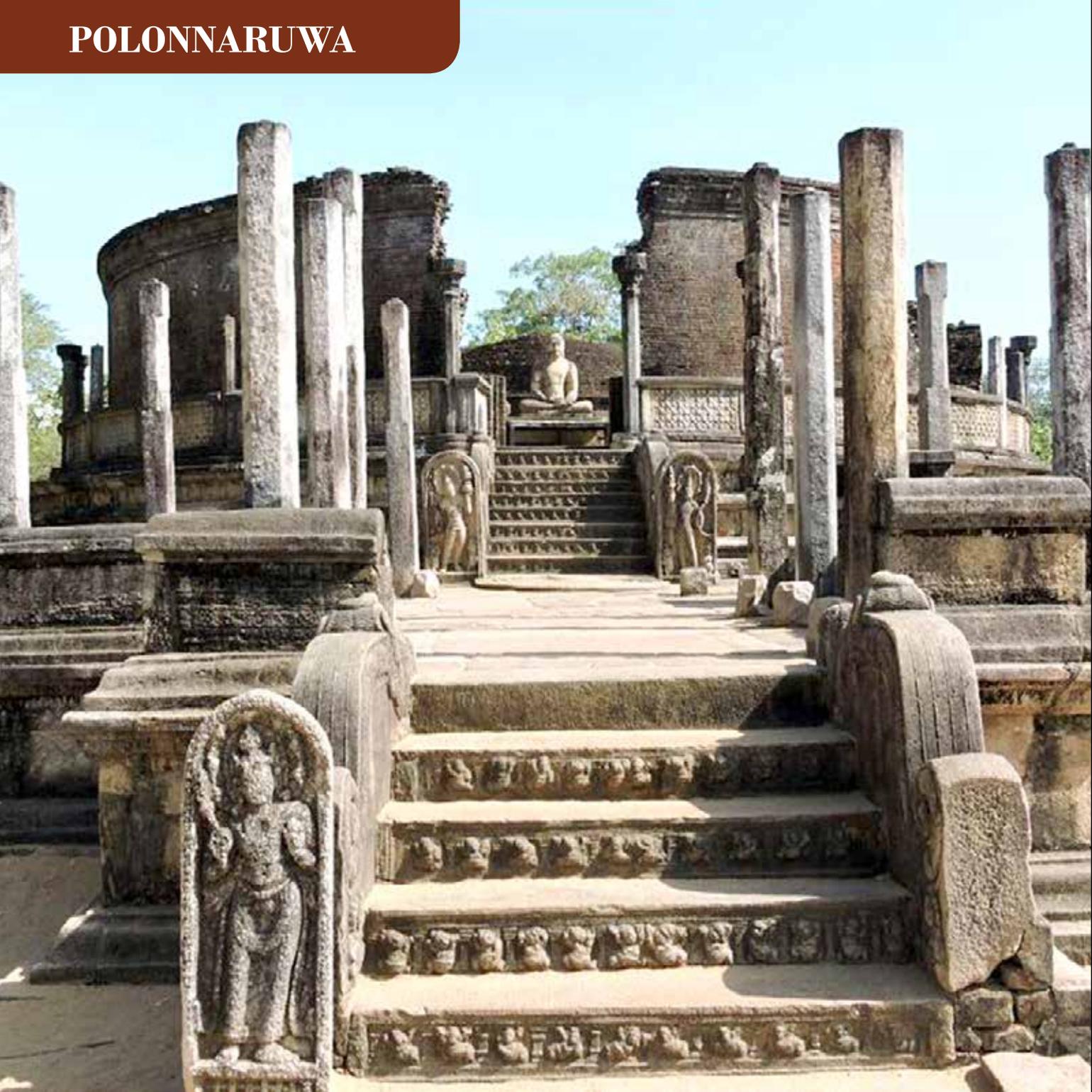




## Alahana Piriwena

Having an extent of 35 hectares, this is the largest monastery complex in Polonnaruwa extending from here up to Gal – Vihara. Established by King Parakramabahu the Great (1153-1186 A.D.), the name suggests that the site had been a former cremation ground which has been confirmed by archaeological excavations carried out here in several places.<sup>3</sup> It is believed that the small stupas here were built on the cremation sites of prelates or of the Royalty. The monastery has a terraces layout. Kiri Vehera, Lankatilaka Image House, Baddhasima Prasada and located on the two upper terraces while the monastic hospital, Ponda and hundreds of resident Monks' cells are located on the lower terraces

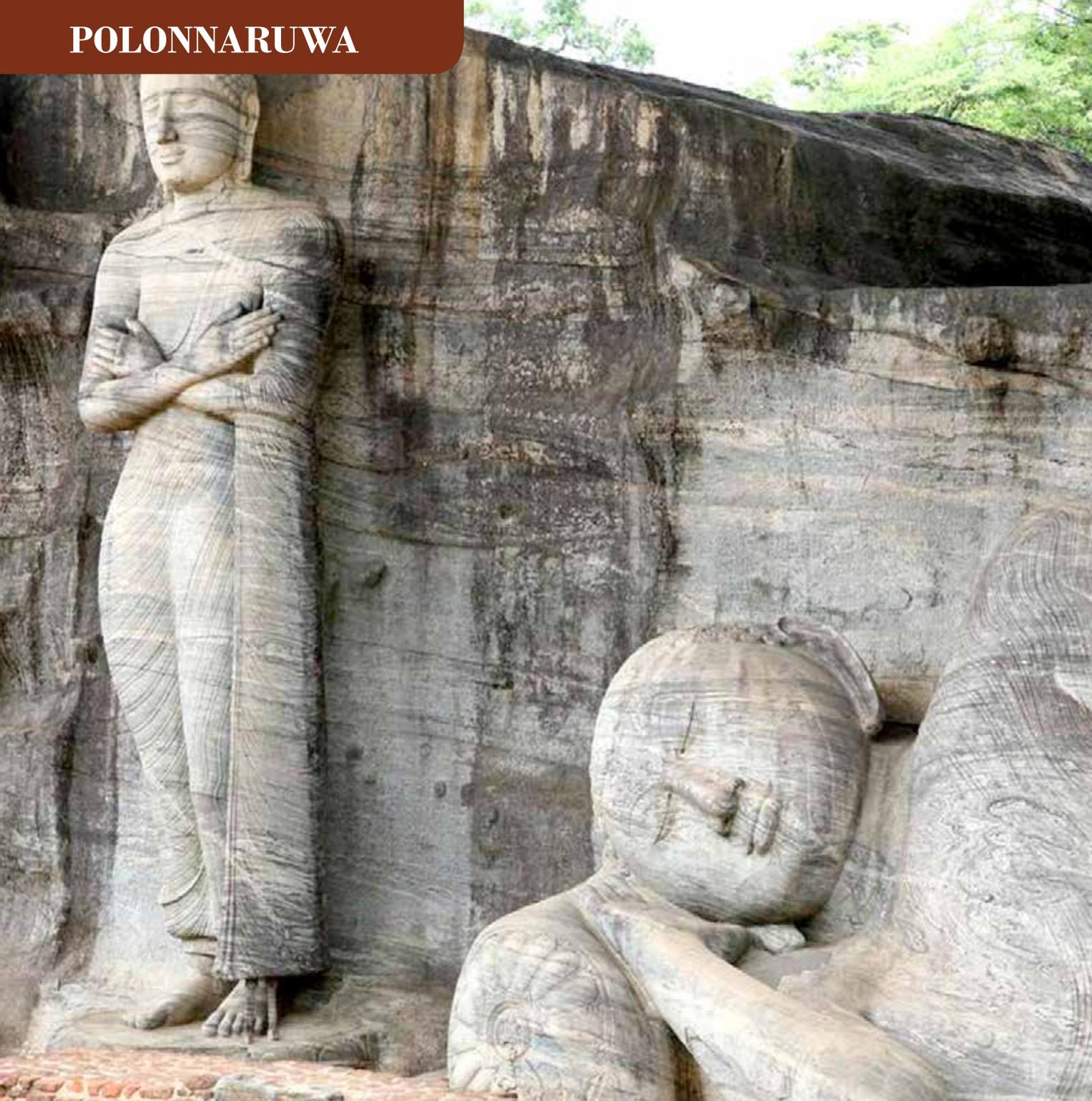




## Dalada Maluwa

This elevated terrace is known as Dalada Maluwa (the Sacred Quadrangle) because the Temple of the Tooth was located here. The building called Atadage located here is the Temple of the Tooth built by King Vijayabahu the Great (1055-1110 A.D.). A stone inscription near it states that the security of the temple has been entrusted to Velaikkara soldiers. The Vatadage found here may be the Temple of the Tooth built by King Parakrambahu the Great (1153-1186 A.D.). In front of this is the building called Hatadage which is the Temple of the Tooth built by King Nissankamalla (1187-1196 A.D.). The Galpota (Stone Book) inscription to the east is by King Nissankamalla describing his heroic deeds. The monument called Satmahaprasada is a rare type of stupa. The other important buildings in the Sacred Quadrangle are the Thuparama, one of the best preserved image houses, and the building with creeper-like lotus pillars called the Nissankalata mandapa.

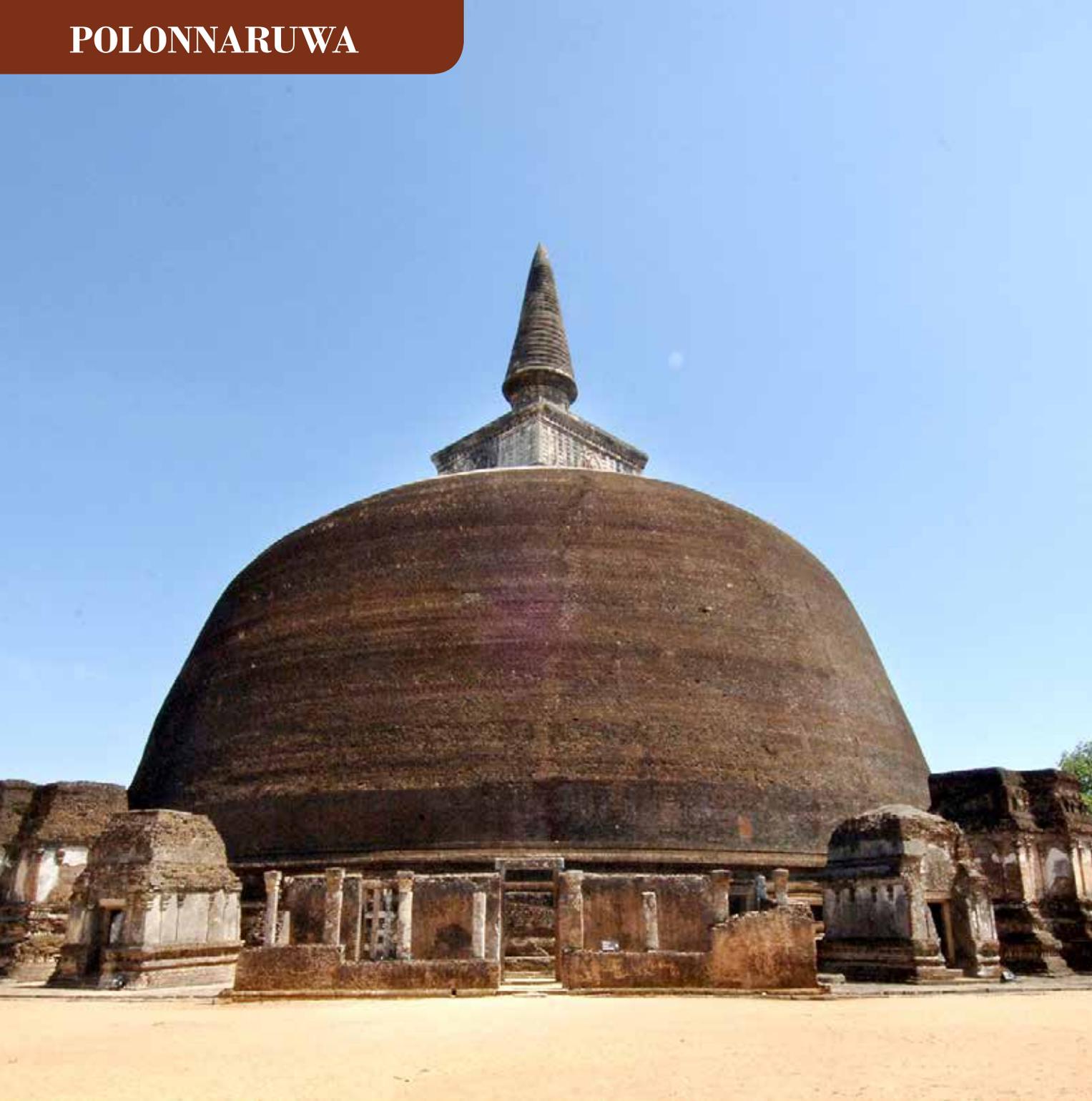




## Gal Viharaya

Popularly known as Gal-Vihara, the site has been identified as the Uttararama built by King Paakramabahu the great (1153=1186.A.D.).The Lord Buddha image here are wideaiy known because of their exquisite workmanship. There had been individual shrine rooms for the images suggested by the ruined brick basements. The standing image has been the subject of much controversy because of the rare posture of its hands.The central cave shrine,Which houses a relatively small image,has traces of ancient paintings. The inscription on the face of the boulder between the standing image and the cave is the Katikavata of King Parakramabhahu the great,which contains the details of the reformation of the Sasana snd the code of discipline enforced on the Monks.





## Rankoth Viharaya

Rankoth Viharaya is the most prominent Buddhist attraction located just 27 kilometers south of the city of Colombo in Panadura. The temple was built on top of a natural rock and can be seen quite a distance away. Because of this natural rock formation, this temple is also called the 'Galkanda Viharaya' and later renamed Rankoth Viharaya in 1980s after the Stupa was built. The word Rankoth means golden pinnacle.

People believe the Bo Tree at Rankoth Viharaya is older than the temple itself. Many pilgrims visit the Rankoth Viharaya in order to conduct 'Bodhi Pooja' and obtain blessings. There are also dedicated shrines built for prominent deities to the side of the Bo trees.



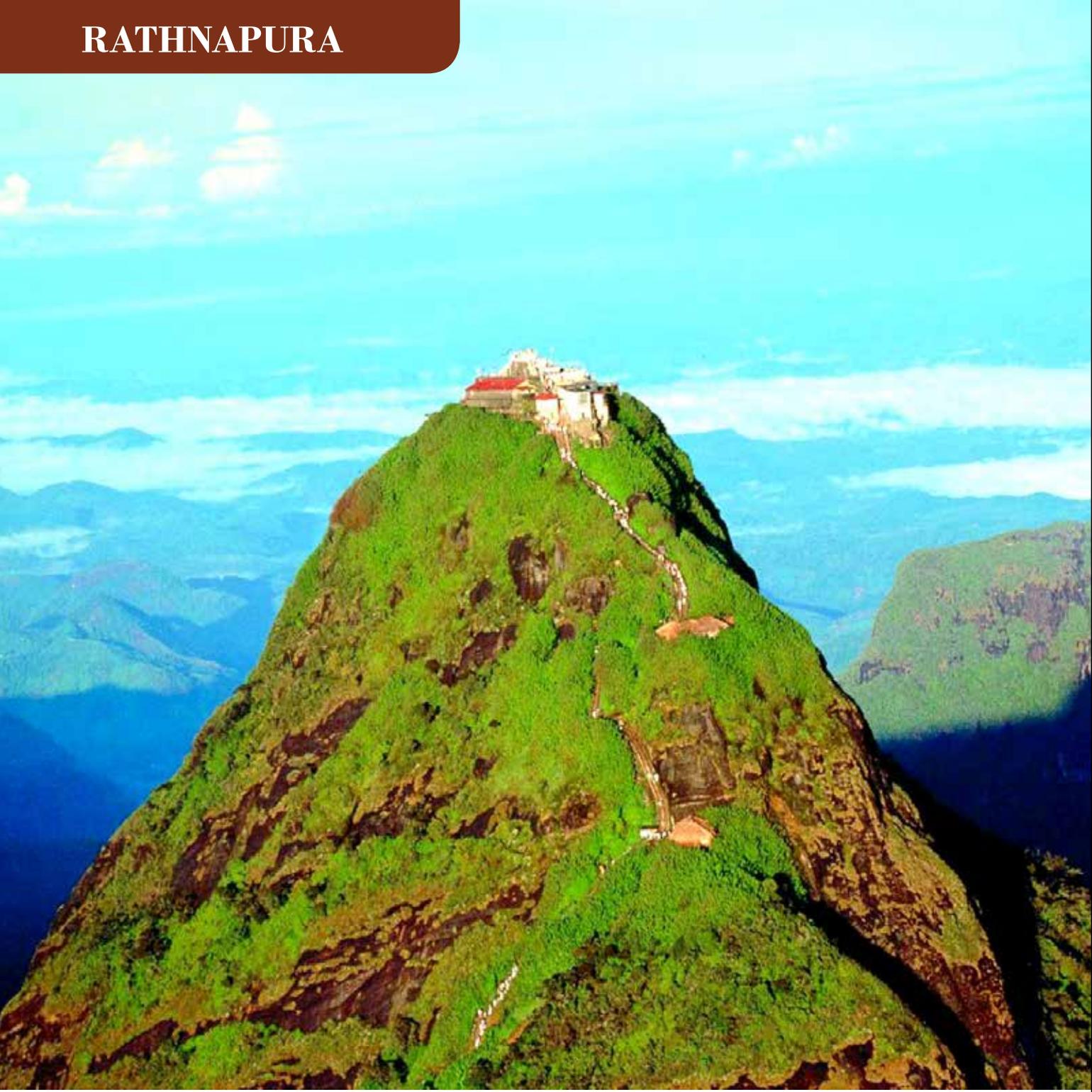


## Somawathi Chethiya

Based on chronicles, *'Prince Giri Aba'* and *'Princess Somawathi'* constructed the Somawathi Chethiya on the request of his wife to engage in religious activities. A monk named *'Mahinda Thero'* gave them the right Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha to be kept safely. In 1964 when archeologists were excavating the site, they found a smaller stupa in side main the Stupa with four moonstones and flower pedestals.

Some other pilgrims believe that the sound of drums beating can be heard from the belly of the stupa on some days. While others say that the whole sky changes to yellow color on significant or ceremonial days. This occurrence is said to have taken place on two occasions, once on 30th June in 1977 when pilgrims had come there.





## Samanala Mountain (Sri Pada & Diva Guhawa)

Sri Pada is first mentioned (as 'Samanthakuta') in the Deepawamsa the earliest Pali chronicle, (4th century), and also in the 5th century chronicle Mahawamsa, where it is stated that the Lord Buddha visited the mountain peak. The chronicle Rajavaliya states that the King Valagamba (1st century BCE) had taken refuge in the forests of Adam's Peak against invaders from India, and later returned to Anuradhapura. The Mahawamsa again mentions the visit of King Vijayabahu I (1058–1114) to the mountain. The famous Chinese pilgrim and Buddhist traveler Fa Hien stayed in Sri Lanka in 411–12 CE and mentions Sri Pada although it is not made clear whether he actually visited it.

The Batatotalena Cave, also known as the Diva Guhava in Buddhist literature, is a cave system in Sudagala, 8 km away from the town of Kuruwita, in the Sabaragamuwa Province of Sri Lanka. Diva Guhawa is mentioned in ancient Buddhist Chronicles as a cave that was visited by the Lord Buddha, he is said to have stayed here the day after visiting Sri Pada (Adam's Peak)





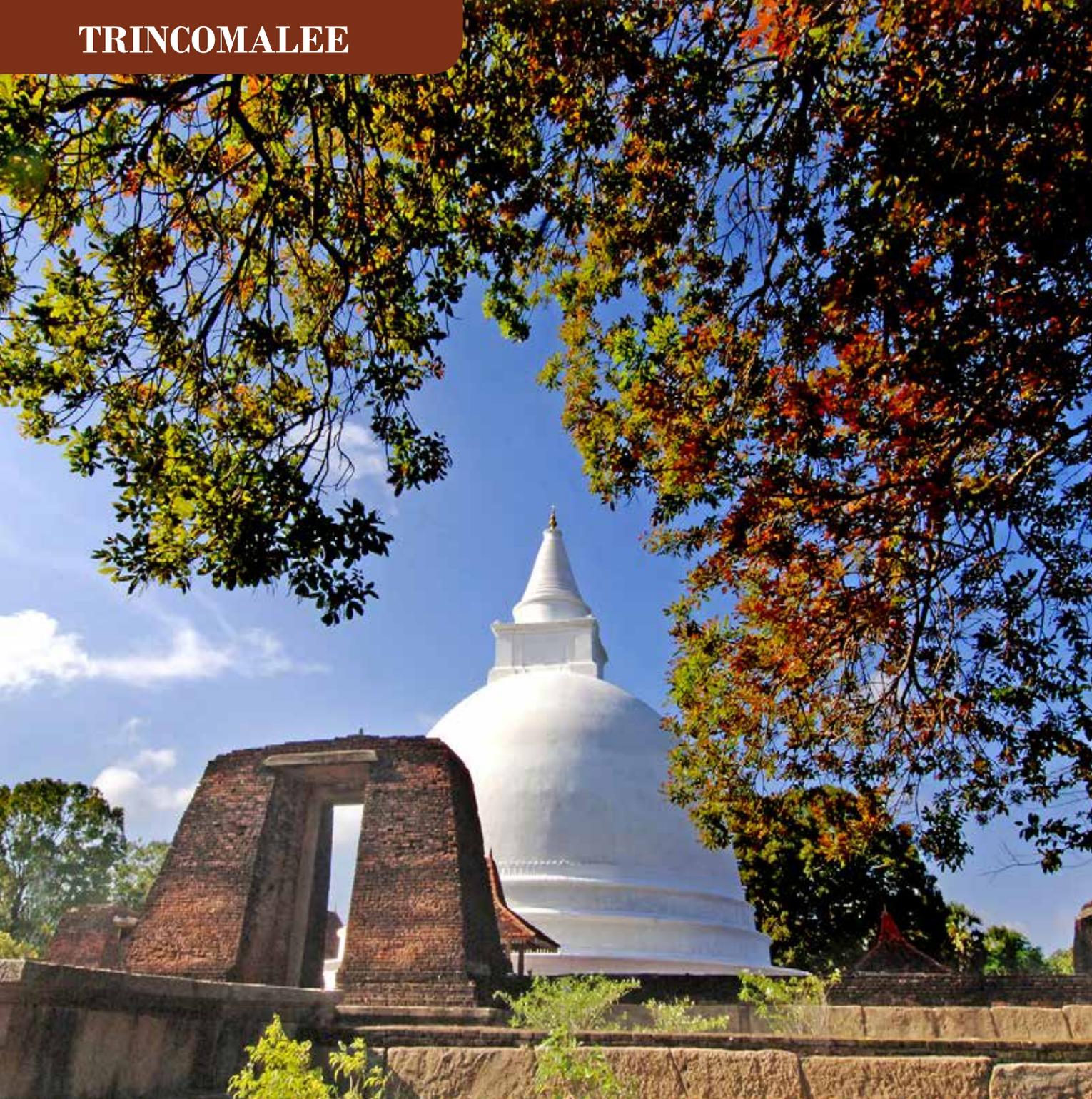
## Thiriyaya Girihadu Seya

Situated 20 miles north of Trincomalee, the oldest incident connected to the Thiriyaya Girihadu Seya is the 8th century Sanskrit epigraph which refers to the shrine as being established on the hill top by a company of merchants headed by 'Tapassu' and 'Bhalluka'.

According to the legend both were brothers who offered rituals to the Lord Buddha. There were also considered the first lay disciples of the Lord Buddha who sought refuge of the master and 'Dhamma'. On their request, the master gifted them a handful of Relics which are enshrined here at this temple

Archeologists who have studied the place however say that the general patterns of the round chamber (Vatadage) and its architectural features have been altered. The pillars of the Thiriyaya have not been separately carved and joined as other places. Instead the entrances at the cardinal points are alter of carved granite slabs. At the head of each flight of steps is a stone doorway. Another unusual feature is the evidence of wooden upright of railing which may have covered the space between the top of the stone wall and the roof. A pilgrimage to the Thiriyaya 'Vatadage' is a memorable experience for both the Buddhist and naturalist in all.





## Seruwawila Mangala Rajamaha Viharaya

Regarded as one of the sixteen holiest sites in Sri Lanka the Seruwawila Mangala Rajamaha Viharaya is an ancient Buddhist temple in Trincomalee district in Eastern Province of the country.

It is said to be built during the reign of *'King Kavantissa'* (2nd century BC) and contains the (Lalata Dathun Wahanse) sacred forehead bone of Lord Buddha. It can be reached by land and sea. The sea route begins at Trincomalee to Muttur on boat and another 16 km by roads and the land route is via Kantale, to Allai which is approximately 45 km through dense forest.

Seruwila region was a vast swamp or villu where the flood waters of the Mahaweli river collected. This villu was the home of large flocks of teals (seru) during migratory period. That perhaps was how the place came to be known as Seruwawila





# MEDITATION CENTERS

## Rockhill Hermitage INTERNATIONAL MEDITATION CENTER



The Rockhill Hermitage is a International Meditation Center located deep in the central mountainous close to the city of Kandy, with easy access from Colombo. The surrounding nature is unaffected by its presence and offers impressive views as well as the opportunity to get to know the lush tropical fauna and flora of the country.

It is a non-profit institution funded by the Sri Lankan government and dedicated to charitable purposes. Located on a hillside, the center consists of a monastery, an area for men, an area for the nuns and a women's area.

The monastery has its own supply of clear spring water. The name of the center derives from the numerous rock blocks and prisons in the immediate vicinity of the monastery, which form several natural caves on the monastery grounds, which are also used for residential and meditation purposes.

All meditation courses are intensive courses and are conducted by the Center's founder and teacher, 'Ven. Kassapa'. He is a very experienced meditation teacher who has taught 'Vipassana meditation' and 'Dhamma' for more than 35 years and regularly teaches locals and Westerners interested in Buddhism. He teaches in both Sinhalese and English when foreign guests are present. He is well-known overseas and has traveled extensively in recent decades teaching meditation and introducing people to Buddhism.

A library and a number of caves and student houses are scattered throughout the peaceful 15-acre grounds. The name "Rockhill" refers to the impressive boulders and rocks which form some of the caves. The Rockhill Hermitage is one of the few retreat centers in Sri Lanka where it is possible for women to live alone in small cottages within natural surroundings. Intensive meditation courses are held for ten days at the beginning

<http://www.rockhillsrilanka.com/about-us/>



## Kanduboda Siyane Vipassana MEDITATION CENTER



The 2500th Buddha Jayanti saw a great revival in Buddhism in Sri Lanka. There was renewed attention to 'Vipassana Meditation'. 'Prime Minister at the time Sir John Kotalawala' held discussions on what could be done.

The Burmese ambassador at the time 'U Ba Lwin' during a meeting had suggested that the best thing to do was to promote Insight meditation techniques to the Sri Lankans, which is the only way to bring immense satisfaction to them. The Lanka 'Vipassana Bhavana Society' (Lanka Insight Meditation Society) was formed.

On 28th July of 1955, a Burmese delegation of four Theros led by 'U Sajata', a close assistant to Mahasi Sayadaw, arrived in Sri Lanka. Under their guidance and with from locals a complete meditation center was built in about six months at Kanduboda, a serene suburb 25kms from Colombo.

On 8th January of 1956 the Kanduboda Siyane meditation center was officially declared open. 'Ven Kahatapitiye Sumathipala Thero' was elected as the chief instructor and in-charge of the meditation center as an honor to his immense commitment to the creation of the

meditation center.

Foreigners and locals alike are welcome to come and discover the fountain of wisdom within themselves through Vipassana (Insight) at the center for no cost.

The center offers Vipassana meditation instruction in the style of 'Mahasi Sayadaw' of Burma. The meditation center can accommodate up to 70 meditators at a time. Accommodation, meals and services are offered free of charge, the center being funded by donations. Programs are designed for meditators to stay for a number of weeks or months.



## Nilambe INTERNATIONAL MEDITATION CENTER



Just off Kandy, Nilambe is quite a well-known retreat that has an enticing and comprehensive program. You have to turn off your mobile phone and disconnect from the connected world, entirely. There are no drop-in sessions, so you have to check on their upcoming programmers' (<http://nilambe.net/upcoming-programs.php>) and join at the start of a retreat and see it through to the end.

You wake up, early, every morning, to the sound of a gong and you are then taken through a guided meditation. You're also required to

do a few chores that they refer to as working meditation. What's is unique about this experience is just how immersive it is into the practice of the 'Dhamma'.

The meditation center was established with the aim of disseminating Lord Buddha noble teaching to people of all race and religions. They have over 50 years of experience in meditation and specialize in Vipassana meditation – a technique which allows a person to see the reality of life as it is.

<http://nilambe.net/>

## Paramita INTERNATIONAL MEDITATION CENTER



Perched on top of hill Kadugannawa with panoramic views of the sprawling valleys below, Paramita Meditation Centre is built on the site of a previous tea plantation. Its terraced hillside, thickly forested with old tea bushes, pepper vines, jackfruit, avocado, nutmeg and clove trees, attract rich native wild life as long-tailed Macaques live along side squirrels, indigenous birds and their human brethren. The Centre is designed as a spiritual home for the resident monastics and all visitors alike.

Away from the hustle and bustle of Colombo, many find this place to cleanse one's soul judging by its surrounding and space provided.

The Centre was specially established for those who seek the Dhamma, the word

of the Buddha. It provides more and more opportunities for those who come from other countries to Sri Lanka, with the intention of learning and practicing the Dhamma and to develop their mind.

The centre provides systematic instructions and appropriate environment for both concentration meditation (Samatha) and Insight meditation (Vipassana). There is a well equipped Buddhist Library for those to deepen your knowledge of the Dhamma and for other references.

Reading , Practising and Realization (RPR) is the Triangular Concept that is promoted here.

<http://www.metta.lk/temples/paramita/about%20.htm>



## Sri Subodharama INTERNATIONAL MEDITATION CENTER



**S**ri Subodha Meditation Centre is located in the hill country of Sri Lanka, surrounded by the green misty mountains creating the serene Valley, Ambuluwawa, Nilambe, and Peradeniya. More than 1500 children attend the Sunday Dhamma School to study the Buddhist teaching and practice the precept.

The Sri Subodharama is a charitable organization and is managed 'Subodharama Sasana Seva Society'. Most 'Venerable

Wattegama Dhammawasa Nayaka Maha Thero' who is the Chief incumbent and the President of the Centre, (the Chief Sanganayaka for the Central Province of Kandy and the Chief Incumbent of the Sri Subodharama International Buddhist Centre, Peradeniya, and the 'Sanganayaka' for Australia), provides guidance and meditation instructions to those who seek it.

## Dhamma Kuta Vipassana MEDITATION CENTER



**A** meditation center where Vipassana meditation courses are given in the tradition of 'Sayagi U Ba Khin', as taught by 'S.N. Goenka'.

The center is located in an abandoned tea estate on a mountain slope with scenic views and a cool climate. Only intensive 10-day meditation courses are held here, both for males and female. One is not allowed to talk during the courses, except for interviews with the teacher, and there are several group sittings during the day.

There are no fixed charges for the courses, but donations are welcome. It is best to book well in advance as the courses are often booked out. One can not stay here before and after courses. It is located 5 km from Peradeniya. Take a 'Deltota' or 'Galaha' bus from Kandy and get out Mowbray, Hindagala'. From there take a tuk-tuk up the mountain or walk, which is more than half an hour walking. There are two other Vipassana Meditation Centers in the low country, one, called 'Dhamma Sobha', is at Kosgama' near 'Avisavella'



## Dewanampiyathissa

### INTERNATIONAL SAMATHA VIPASANNA MEDITATION CENTER



Strict methods of Meditation in terms of the Buddha's discourses are followed.

He was also a firm believer that women were spiritually more caring and the Buddha Sasana will continue its existence through the piety and devotion of the Buddhist Women.

Therefore, he sought the assistance of these lay women 'Upasikavo' in white robes. In 1996 he invited 'Chandra Manio' from Pothuhera, Kurunegala, who was an ordained yellow robed 'Sil Matha' to head the Order of Nuns, he intended to establish later.

The contribution of 'Venerable Amatha Gavesi' to the Buddhist

**D**evanapathis International Samatha-vipassana Meditation Center is most often known as the Pallekele Meditation Center is Buddhist monastery because of the location it is situated in. It was founded by late 'Ven. Walane Amatha Gavesi Thero' in 1991.

Its founder the Late 'Venerable Amatha Gavesi' wanted a Meditation Centre where the

Meditation in Sri Lanka is unique, as he initiated the establishment of the Order of Dasa Sil Manio-lay women, who had given up their homes to live a monastic life keeping ten precepts, and uplifting their status among the Buddhist laity, giving them the responsibility of teaching the method of Meditation he founded based on his own personal experience.

## Arankele Forest Monastery

If you are looking for a haven of peace and quietude – why not spend the day at Arankele Monastery. Its green sylvan surroundings will relax and refresh you instantly and completely. According to theories, the place was never meant to be a centre but it was once an ancient forest monastery.

The name Arankele exaggerates about a hermitage where Arahants resided. It is witnessed that famous Buddhist monk, Arahat Malyadeva there was accommodated here. Even today about 18 bhikkus are practicing old and new meditation methods in the hermitage. The hermitage was supposed to be built around 8th century.

The monks who dwell here are called Pansukulika, which means rag-robles. Here the monks take a vow to wear only robes made from rags. A special feature of these buildings is that it is raised by platforms formed by retaining walls of massive stone in pairs and linked by a stone bridge. The buildings are also surrounded by water troughs to keep the interior of the building cool.

There are Jantagara or hot water baths at the entrance to the site while archeologists have found ediating promenades ponds and winding



pathways at the site.

Arankele forest monastery is frequented by both local and foreign tourists. It is the most appropriate place for the travelers whom are coming to Sri Lanka purposely to visit peaceful and quietude sites. You will be completely refreshed and relaxed with the first visit to the Arankele forest hermitage.

It is listed as one of the premier forest hermitages in Sri Lanka. The hermitage is located in Ganewatte of Kurunegala district, Sri Lanka.



## Pagoda MEDITATION CENTER



Situated at 49/2 2nd cross street, Pagoda road in Nugegoda, the Pagoda Meditation centre started by well-known Ven. Olanda Ananda, a senior dutch monk. He

speaks Sinhala fluently and has been teaching meditation for a long time both in Sri Lanka and abroad.



## Amawathura MEDITATION CENTER



The Mahamewna Amawathura Bhavana was once an old home before being converted to a meditation centre. It is so popular that the place is today a distinct landmark along the road to Kaduwela.

Having gathered artisans from around the country, Venerable Kiribathgoda Gnanananda, equipped with only the generosity of followers there, initiated the construction of a new building that stands today.

The Bhavana Asapuwa was built on different levels. The summit is dedicated to the Great Stupa, surrounded by eight smaller stupas on columns; a magnificent site that could be venerated even from a distance.

The Sacred Bodhi Tree has been placed in direct view of the passerby, above the decorative entrance on the roof-top. In its miniature Bonsai form, the tree stands out at the centre as an oasis of life in the midst of the imposing structure.



## Dekanduwala MEDITATION CENTER



**S**prawling across 20 acres, the meditation center was established in 1993 by Ven. Kirama Wimalajothi Thero in filling the void of a meditation centre which could cater to both monks and lay people- local and foreign alike

The Centre has been conducting several Dhamma training programs since 1994. In house meditation programs and educational programs including dhamma and counseling sessions for both foreign and local women were introduced in 2002. A two-week Temporary Ordination was launched in 2003 which was designed to give basic knowledge in Dhamma, meditation and social work.

The Dhamma Training and Meditation Centre

is to be expanded to a fully-fledged bhikkuni training centre and an international Buddhist educational faculty through which extensive English knowledge, communication skills and Buddhist research studies are to be imparted to both local and foreign bhikkunis and dasa sil mathas who aspire to be ordained. A library to facilitate their endeavors and a hostel for overseas bhikkunis are also planned.

Dekanduwala Meditation Centre is located in Kananwila, Kahatapitiya, Horana. Inquiries and bookings should be made through: Buddhist Cultural Centre, 125 Anderson Road, Nedimala, Dehiwala.



## Sanatha Suwaya MEDITATION CENTER



**S**anatha Suwaya is a meditation and holistic wellness center in Sri Lanka's Central Province providing a forum for instruction and practice in mindfulness traditions and holistic therapies.

Sanatha Suwaya is intended to be a place for discussion, learning, mental and physical exertion, exploration, growth, dissemination, communion, and exposure.

Sanatha Suwaya is non-religious organization and does not promote any philosophy over another. As a "wellness" center, they work to

provide a space of peace, where a variety of wholesome experiences and services can be offered.

Long and short term guests can join guided meditation sessions, extended retreat programs, and will be provided options to participate in "like practices" on an everyday basis. "Like practices" are systems intended for development of human health including both mental and physical modalities. Systems such as Yoga, Reiki, Ayurveda and acupunture are but a few examples.

