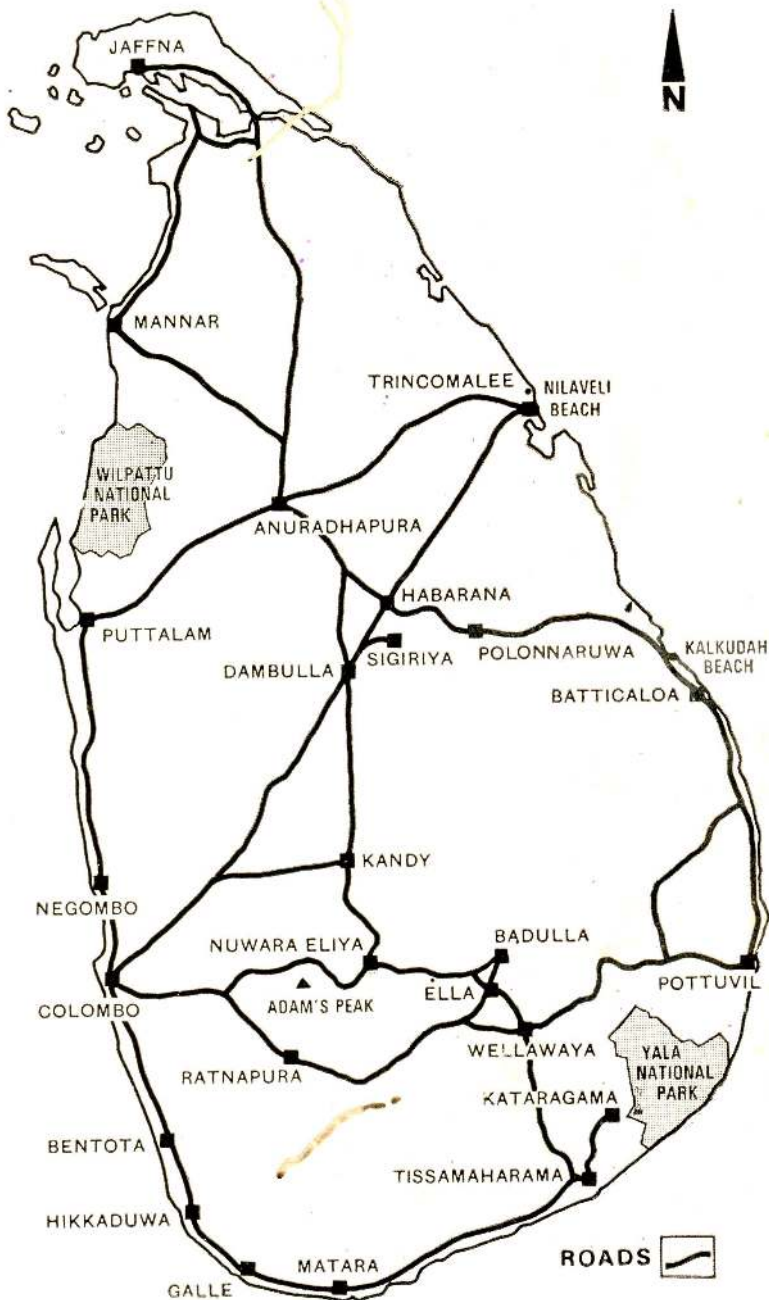


The
Thorana
Guide to
Sri Lanka

LEVER BROTHERS CULTURAL CONSERVATION TRUST

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THE THORANA GUIDE
TO
SRI LANKA

Lever Brothers Cultural Conservation Trust

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THE THORANA GUIDE TO SRI LANKA

INTRODUCTION

The Makara Thorana or arch, as illustrated on the cover, is often found in temples as a symbol welcoming the devotee. Hopefully, this Guide will become your door to the world of Sri Lanka.

Since the Guide is published by the Lever Brothers Cultural Conservation Trust — further information about the Trust is on the back cover — it emphasizes Sri Lanka's cultural heritage but also attempts to cover adequately the other aspects of the country.

The Guide falls into three parts. The first provides essential information for planning a trip to and within the country. This consists of the first two chapters as well as, perhaps, the summary of places of special interest on p. 106. Chapters III—X provide more detailed background information on a variety of subjects in which you might be interested. The Itineraries, which form the third part, are designed to allow you to find your own way around. By assuming that you are using a car, the Guide covers more ground: however, all major centres are served by rail and even the remotest village can be reached by bus. Travel by public transport is cheap but slow and, at times, uncomfortable.

It is not proposed to revise this Guide annually, so it does not contain ephemeral information such as hotel rates, which in any case can be obtained more accurately from a travel agent, nor does it duplicate the information found in the telephone directory, such as addresses of airlines and embassies. The Guide was written in 1979.

In the Itineraries places are shown in *italics*, those of special interest in **bold type**. In the Index, where there is more than one entry for a subject, the main entry is in *italics*. Although there are different ways of transliterating Sinhala, this presents no actual problem, except that if you do not find an entry under "V" in the Index try "W" and vice-versa.

All profits from the sale of the Guide support the Lever Brothers Cultural Conservation Trust.

CHAPTER I

A VISIT TO SRI LANKA — WHY? WHEN? TO SEE WHAT? FOR HOW LONG?

WHY?

Take everyone's idea of a tropical island; sandy, palm-shaded beaches, blue seas with colourful coral reefs, thatched huts and outrigger canoes. Add a cluster of picturesque mountains and valleys, which provide scenic variety and also tone down the extreme heat of the tropics. Add further the traces of a rich civilisation, whose recorded history goes back over 2,500 years. Enliven it with wild, as well as working elephants, the world's only leopards which hunt in daytime, a variety of other animals and a host of birds. Decorate it with tropical rain forests, wild flowers and some of the oldest and richest botanical gardens anywhere. Enrich it with some of the world's best tea, spices, rubber and coconut, as well as gems, and give it to a people with a tradition of smiling hospitality and you have Sri Lanka — or Ceylon, as it used to be.

WHEN?

Sri Lanka has the singular good fortune that, in spite of being quite small, 250 miles (400 km.) North to South and 150 miles (240 km.) West to East, it has two complementary climatic zones with superb beaches in each. The dry season, with calm seas, is from November to March in the West and June to September in the East. April tends to be uncomfortably humid and May and October are apt to be windy and unsettled.

While for sea bathing the dry season is to be preferred there is a lot to be said in favour of the rainy season. Except during the inter-monsoon months of May and October, rainfall is generally confined to the late afternoon and night with bright, dry, dust-free, sunny days. Quite apart from the weather, tourist facilities are less crowded and prices lower in the rainy season.

Tourist facilities in Sri Lanka are limited and visitors arriving in the main November — March season, hoping to arrange their holiday on the spot, are likely to be frustrated. Similarly, a confirmed onward booking out of Sri Lanka is advisable.

There is usually a lull in the Westerly rains in late July and August and this coincides with the great religious festival in Kandy — the Perahera; however, Perahera week is high season for all tourist facilities.

Nature reserves are best visited in the dry season, as the movements of all the animals are more predictable at that time when they are forced to come to the water holes to drink, i.e. Wilpattu: June to September, Yala and Gal Oya: January to March.

TO SEE WHAT?

A description of the various places of interest constitutes the body of this Guide but they can be summarised under various headings. Sri Lanka is compact enough to allow a visitor to sample most, if not all, even on a short holiday.

The Beaches: The main beaches are, on the West coast: Negombo (North of Colombo) p. 69, Beruwela p. 91, Bentota p. 91 and Hikkaduwa p. 92 (South of Colombo); and further East, Weligama p. 93. On the East coast: Nilaveli p. 61 (North of Trincomalee); Kalkudah and Passekudah p. 87 (North of Batticaloa); Arugam Bay p. 86 (South of Batticaloa). Scuba diving facilities exist near Nilaveli and Hikkaduwa, there is shallow coral for skin divers at Hikkaduwa, Passekudah and Beruwela.

Archaeology: There are three ancient, now ruined, capitals: Anuradhapura (400 B.C. — 1000 A.D.) p. 71; Sigiriya (5th century A.D.) p. 59 and Polonnaruwa (12th — 13th century A.D.) p. 62. Of these, Polonnaruwa is the best preserved, the rock citadel of Sigiriya the most spectacular, and Anuradhapura the most important archaeologically, historically and as a centre of Buddhist pilgrimage. Anuradhapura also possesses the main archaeological museum in the country. There are hosts of minor archaeologically interesting sites throughout the island.

Agriculture and Industry: Not interminable ploughed furrows and belching chimneys but the tea gardens around Nuwara Eliya p. 82, the rubber plantations inland from Kalutara p. 91 and coconut estates between Colombo and Negombo p. 69.

Tea factories on the tea gardens can be visited, especially around Nuwara Eliya, as can the gem pits and gem cutters and polishers at Ratnapura p. 85.

Wild Life: The main wild life sanctuaries are Wilpattu p. 70 and Yala p. 94, the former for leopards which are not nocturnal in Sri Lanka, the latter for elephants. Bird sanctuaries are at Wirawila p. 93, Kumanar p. 94 and Bundala p. 93. Colombo Zoo p. 52 is small and pleasant, having been spaciouly laid out by a student of Hagenbeck, the German pioneer of Zoo planning.

Flora: The world famous botanical gardens at Peradeniya p. 54 are near Kandy. The more temperate plants can be seen at Hakgala Gardens p. 83 near Nuwara Eliya and there is a small botanical garden, 20 miles (32 km.) from Colombo at Gampaha p. 53. The Forestry Department maintains an arboretum near Galle p. 92.

In addition to the botanical gardens there are the stretch of primeval forest at Sinharaja p. 33 near Ratnapura, and the wild flowers of Horton Plains p. 83, 15 miles (24 km.) from Nuwara Eliya (December/January being the best times).

Towns of interest: Apart from the ancient capitals (see Archaeology, above), there are Colombo, the capital p. 45, Kandy p. 54, the last Sinhalese capital, beautifully situated in the hills; Jaffna p. 97, a Tamil city in the North; Trincomalee p. 60, one of the world's great natural harbours; Galle p. 92, with its Fort and many relics of Dutch architectural influence.

Art and Architecture: The chief sites are the ancient capitals (see Archaeology, above) and temples. Temple art was, for many years, the main form of painting. The best temple paintings are found along the West coast, around Kandy, and at Dambulla p. 58 in the centre of the island. However, good paintings can also be seen just South of Colombo at Sri Subhadarama Temple, at Karagampitiya p. 51. Visitors short of time will find many typical architectural features at the Kelaniya Temple p. 50.

Places of Pilgrimage: Anuradhapura, the Sacred Bo Tree p. 76; Kandy, the relic of the Buddha's Tooth p. 55; Adam's Peak p. 88 the footprint on the summit variously attributed to Adam, the Buddha and Shiva; Kataragama Temple in the South p. 93, for the accomplishment of vows involving mortification of the flesh.

Scenic Drives and Walks: The road to Kandy through hills and forests. The road from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya through tea gardens. The coast road, especially from Beruwela, 30 miles (48 km.) South of Colombo, to Hambantota, 150 miles (240 km.) from Colombo. Various points on the Southern escarpment: Haputale, Ella, Horton Plains (World's End) and the 18 hairpin bends road due East from Kandy to Mahiyangana. Walking anywhere in the hills, where it is cool and easy to get away from traffic.

FOR HOW LONG?

Bear in mind that, though distances are short, roads are often narrow and bullock carts slow you down. Allow an average speed by car of 30 m.p.h. (50 km.p.h.) and 20 m.p.h. (32 km.p.h.) in the hill country.

CHAPTER II

AN ABC OF PRACTICAL HINTS

Accommodation

Colombo has a number of international standard hotels, but, the bulk of the hotels outside the city are designed for the informal simple but comfortable, life of a holiday; several have bungalow accommodation with central public rooms. While these tourist hotels were mostly built in the 1970s and are similar in the facilities they offer, their standard varies and, regrettably, fluctuates — it all seems to depend on the Manager, and good Managers move from place to place.

A welcome relic of colonial days is the rest house, which originally provided government officials with accommodation as they toured the island. They are to be found all over the country. Rest houses are always reasonably priced and, again, the standard of service varies with the management. Some are enchanting relics of a bygone age, like the Tissawewa Resthouse, in the Sacred City of Anuradhapura, which is a gem of an old colonial building, set in a park; or there is the tiny Ella Resthouse, with only 6 rooms, but one of the most spectacular views on the island. There are a few YMCA, and similar hostels, as well as a limited amount of private accommodation. However, during the main holiday season, accommodation can become very difficult so that advance booking is desirable.

Airport

Katunayake International Airport is 20 miles (32 km.) North of Colombo and one must allow one hour by car to get there from the city. There is an Airport tax for departing passengers. A Bank is open at the Airport 24 hours a day so that money can be changed. While passengers have free access to the Airport, visitors meeting or seeing off passengers require a permit. At present this can be obtained just outside the airport perimeter, but regulations change and visitors should check the latest position. Admission tickets cannot be obtained at the Airport. The Airport has a duty-free shop, which sells to both departing and incoming passengers paying in foreign currency. The domestic Airport is at Ratmalana, 10 miles South of Colombo or half an hour's drive by car.

Bathing

The beaches of Sri Lanka, in the season, are generally very safe but it is wise to heed local advice. The clear waters make snorkelling

a rewarding pastime, so it is important to remember that a wet back burns just as easily as a dry one; a shirt is advisable while floating on the surface. Coral is often sharp and it is easy to get coral cuts; the living polyps of all coral are slightly poisonous and coral cuts often take months to heal if left untended so prompt disinfection of such cuts is important. On the other hand, the brittle spines of the sea urchin are harmless, though momentarily painful; trying to extract them from the skin usually does more harm than good, if left alone they will be absorbed in the bloodstream. Although sharks exist in Sri Lankan waters, there has never been a recorded shark attack on a human — they clearly prefer the plentiful fish in the sea.

Clothing

Except for the hills, the lightest summer clothing is appropriate. Pure synthetics, or synthetic/cotton mixtures where the synthetic predominates, are uncomfortable. Dress is generally informal and, at most functions, men in a safari suit will be slightly over-dressed. (Only in the Hill Club in Nuwara Eliya is a tie and jacket required for dinner). In spite of the apparent belief of certain visitors to the contrary, permissiveness in dress (or undress) is not acceptable in Sri Lanka. In all temples, as well as certain ruins, shoes have to be removed so that slip-on shoes or sandals are of practical advantage.

Currency

The currency of Sri Lanka is the Rupee, which is divided into 100 Cents. Foreign currency can be exchanged at hotels, banks and certain authorised tourist shops when making purchases. Changing money at the bank is a slow business, and usually it is much quicker at the hotel. However, some hotels charge a high commission for this service, others very little; it is, therefore, worth checking on the official exchange rate which, for the major currencies, is published daily in the local papers.

At present, visitors have to declare all currency they bring into the country and this money may be re-exported. A 24 hour banking service to exchange surplus Sri Lankan Currency is provided at Katunayake Airport.

Customs Regulations

Visitors can import, duty-free, virtually anything for personal use. Any item about which the Customs have reservations will be entered on the Currency Declaration Form and will have to be produced for inspection on departure, otherwise duty will be charged on it. Non-commercial quantities of most goods can be taken out of the country freely, except that there is a total ban

on all living animals, animal skins and hunting trophies. Local antiques require an Export Permit from the Department of Antiquities, Edinburgh Crescent, Colombo 7, opposite the Museum. It is advisable to have handy, before departure, receipts for major purchases, particularly of gems and jewellery.

Driving

Officially, traffic is on the left, drivers require a Sri Lankan or international driving licence and self-drive cars can be hired. In practice however, traffic regulations are sometimes observed by a few drivers, but never by pedestrians, bullock carts, bicycles or taxis, who go where and when their fancy takes them. Driving safely in Sri Lanka necessitates a sixth — perhaps even a seventh—sense, which short term visitors are unlikely to acquire. Accidents are frequent but, as traffic is slow, rarely serious. Visitors, who are thinking of hiring a car, are advised therefore to take one with a Guide/Driver. It is significant of local conditions that this is cheaper than hiring the same car on a self-drive basis!

Electricity

230 watts, 50 cycle A.C. Sockets take only English round 5 or 15 amp. plugs and adaptors are not readily obtainable. To read in bed in comfort, carry your own 100 w. bulb!

Entry Charges

Visitors may notice that frequently there are different entry charges for local residents and for visitors. This tends to cause the visitor great annoyance because he feels exploited. In fact the local resident is receiving a subsidy. For many years strong efforts were made to keep prices and wages at a level which is extremely low by world standards, and the visitor from abroad benefits from this. However, in order to allow local residents to participate in entry to places like the Zoo or the Botanical Gardens, they have to be allowed concessionary entrance fees.

Food and Drink

Most traditional Sri Lankan food is well cooked and, therefore, safe, though mild temporary stomach upsets can be expected until the visitor gets used to hot spices. Drinking water served in the major hotels is safe but, elsewhere, it is wise to drink only items which come from sealed bottles such as beer or minerals, or something which has been boiled, like tea or coffee. The commonest, and most refreshing, drink from a sealed container is the juice of the king coconut which is opened at the time of purchase and drunk straight from the shell. Tea is obtainable everywhere, but fresh milk is not and sweetened condensed milk is usually used

upcountry, which means that anybody wishing to drink tea or coffee unsweetened will have problems.

Traditional food is discussed in Chapter VIII.

Health

For marine health hazards see "Bathing".

A hot humid climate is ideal for the propagation of germs. Stomach upsets are common and visitors should carry medicine which kills germs and counters the effect of diarrhoea. It is better to take a pill too early rather than too late, as it takes long to cure a well-established infection. However, most stomach upsets are merely due to the digestion adjusting to a new diet and are not dangerous. On the other hand, if there is no significant improvement in 48 hours, medical advice should be sought. Cholera is not really a danger if ordinary hygiene precautions are observed. Malaria, however, has returned to Sri Lanka after having been virtually eradicated. Visitors should definitely take anti-malaria tablets before they come to the country, even if they have heard to the contrary. A very common complaint, whose symptoms are extreme lassitude often accompanied by a slight feeling of nausea, is salt deficiency. This can be cured instantly by taking a little salt either as a tablet or on a piece of bread and, in the case of false diagnosis, it can do no harm. Another common trouble, whose symptoms are similar, is potassium deficiency. This can be cured even more pleasantly by eating or drinking citrus fruits or, even better, the juice of a king coconut (tambili). The results are not as immediate as salt, but an improvement should be felt within 4 — 5 hours. However, among all the tropical health hazards, the chief, undoubtedly, is sunburn. Many visitors are unaware that one can get severe sunburn on a hazy day, in the speckled shade of palm trees, or even while wearing a loosely woven shirt. Visitors requiring regular supplies of a specific medicine should bring it with them and not rely on local availability.

Holidays

Apart from foodshops and small market stalls, most shops are closed on Saturdays, Sundays and the many public holidays, (even the automatic traffic lights are switched off!). Sri Lankans observe the day of the full moon as a Poya Day where not only all the shops, offices etc. are closed, but no alcohol is served in hotels and restaurants. On Poya Days it is deemed offensive to drink alcohol in a public place; it is, however, perfectly acceptable to order soda and ice to be brought to a hotel bedroom. The Poya Day is a good time to visit a Buddhist temple, because it is then that the temple is alive with people.

Photography

Films are expensive and may not have been well stored, so it is preferable to bring your own.

In Sri Lanka there are none of the taboos against photography which one finds in, for instance, Africa through fear of the Evil Eye. In some museums and archaeological sites a special permit is required, although often that means only obtaining the attendant's co-operation. People carrying out photogenic occupations, such as leading a working elephant, have now discovered the commercial potential of this and will demand payment if photographed.

Restaurants

Sri Lankan restaurants do not yet generally feature high in the gastronomic atlas. Hotels tend to play safe by simply leaving out spices which might prove too much for the inexperienced visitor. The result is often like "Hamlet" without the prince. The same principle applies to some European food, where high-sounding dishes from the French haute cuisine appear on the menu, but if any ingredient is not available — which frequently happens — it is simply omitted. Even odder is the fact that, on an island, it is virtually impossible to get a variety of good fish in a restaurant, other than shell fish. This stems from the snobbish view that only "Seer" is worth serving because it is expensive. European food is best obtained in the restaurants of the big international hotels. It is not the purpose of this Guide to advertise any establishment, neither has the author visited all restaurants, but the following consistently have produced satisfactory meals for the author and may be of help to a visitor wishing to venture out of his hotel. All those mentioned in Colombo are also much less expensive than the big hotels.

On the Galle Face Green, near the Galle Face Hotel, there is a sea food restaurant called Ceyfish which serves excellent and varied fish in somewhat dingy surroundings. Across the lane from the Renuka Hotel on the Galle Road, South of Kollupitiya Junction, is the Palmyrah Restaurant, which can be recommended for local food. Further down that road, but on the opposite side, is a place called "the Green Cabin", which is good for local snacks such as Lamprais at lunch time and Hoppers in the evening. Outside Colombo, the Nuwarawewa Resthouse in Anuradhapura and the Resthouse at Sigiriya justly pride themselves on their food, while the restaurant in Habarana Village Resort combines "playing safe" with the use of interesting ingredients.

When eating in a Resthouse, it is worth remembering that traditionally the menu is rice and curry, which is served quickly,

but other dishes can be prepared to order so the variety available is more than would appear from the menu.

Shopping

The most popular buys among visitors, apart from tea, are gems, batiks, handicrafts and, on leaving, orchids. It is not possible totally to protect the visitor against being cheated, but the Gem Corporation on the corner of York Street and Sir Baron Jayatillake Mawatha will identify and weigh gems free of charge. Similarly, there are government shops, such as Laksala, which sell handicrafts at fixed prices; they may not be absolutely the cheapest but at least a visitor is assured that he is getting what he thinks he is buying, at a reasonable price. Until recently batiks often suffered from poor quality dyes, but this problem has now been overcome. There are many batik makers but most people would agree that those from the studio of Ena de Silva, who was responsible for the banners in the Lanka Oberoi Hotel, are in a class on their own. Recommendations of shops must be treated with great caution because there is a tendency for the poorest quality establishments to offer the highest commission rates to tour guides. The best thing is to look around and get a feel of prices in different shops before actually starting to bargain for an article. To preserve the environment, and incidentally to keep within the law, visitors should not buy tortoise shells, butterflies, animal skins, hunting trophies or coral and rare shells. While one can buy most things, it would be rash to assume that you can get your favourite brand of an article. Toiletries and domestic requisites can be difficult, especially outside Colombo.

Tipping Suggestions

- Porters — Rs. 2/- per piece.
- Hotel and restaurant bills — 10%, unless service had been included already.
- Taxis — No tip.
- Tourist Bus Guides — For a day trip, e.g. Colombo/Kandy return, Rs. 15/- a head.
- Hire Car Drivers,
i.e. with Guide Driver — 10% of bill.

N.B. Buddhist monks, who show a visitor round a temple, should not be offered a tip, as it is forbidden for them to handle money; there is always a collection box for such offerings in the image house. Lay guides, on the other hand, willingly accept a tip.

Begging, especially by children, has become a nuisance, to the extent that the cry "money, money, money" has virtually replaced the traditional greeting of "Ayubowan". It is also worth remembering that, with daily wages of Rs. 15/- or less, giving paper money to begging children, however well meant, is socially damaging. However, there is little harm in carrying a few sweets with which to reward the helpful child who performs some small service.

Tourist Information

Can be obtained from any hotel or from the Tourist Information Office on Galle Face Green, next to the Hotel School.

Tourist Police

Colombo has a special tourist police station just North of the Parliament building, which is close to the Dolphin Fountain at the North of Galle Face Green.

Warning

Many an unnecessary misunderstanding occurs between visitors and Sri Lankans because of the local habit of expressing agreement, or continued attention, by shaking the head in a way which to most Western visitors indicates a negative.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY

In the chronology of legend, the first visitor to the island that was to be known as Sri Lanka, was Adam who, on his expulsion from Paradise, left his footprint on the summit of Adam's Peak—now the object of pilgrimages. The God Vishnu, in his seventh incarnation as Rama, came to Lanka to rescue his wife, Sita, from her abductor, the Demon Ravanna, the ruler of Lanka—their battles being the theme of the great Indian epic, the Ramayana.

Tradition has it that the Buddha himself visited Lanka three times during his life and, in Buddhist tradition, the footprint on Adam's Peak is his.

Legend merges into history in the chronicles of Sri Lanka: the greatest of these is the Mahavamsa, but its chronology is closely supported by other documents. Sri Lanka is, therefore, one of the few countries with a well-documented, written history stretching back nearly 2,500 years.

In 543 B.C., on the day the Buddha died, the North Indian Prince Vijaya landed in Sri Lanka and founded the Sinhalese community. The "Sinhalese" are named after Sinha (Lion) because the legendary Vijaya was the son of a lion who married a princess (A rather more likely, if less romantic, explanation is that his father had earned the nickname "lion", either because of his bravery or his ferocity).

Anthropologists believe that, before the coming of the Sinhalese, the indigenous people were related to the Australian aborigines. Their descendants are the Veddahs, the bushmen of Sri Lanka, who were driven more and more to becoming hunters in the remote parts of the island and by now have virtually ceased to exist as a separate community.

By about 400 B.C. Anuradhapura became the capital of the Sinhalese. In 250 B.C. Mahinda, the son of the Indian Emperor Asoka, came to preach Buddhism. After his conversion by Mahinda, the Sinhalese King Devanampiyatissa became the first of the builders of temples and monasteries, which enriched Anuradhapura and other cities.

In 240 B.C. Sangamitta, a sister of Mahinda, brought to Sri Lanka a sapling from the original Bo tree under which the Buddha received Enlightenment. This was planted in Anuradhapura where

it still grows — the oldest documented tree in the world and a most revered Buddhist relic. Its presence ensured that Anuradhapura, whatever the vicissitudes of war and pestilence, remained the spiritual capital of the island.

From about 200 B.C. began the struggle with the Dravidian Tamils and Cholas from South India, which continued intermittently until the coming of the Portugese. It is idle to attempt to chronicle the varying fortunes of these wars but two names emerge. In 137 B.C. Dutugemunu defeated and killed the Tamil King Elara but held him in such respect that he ordered everyone who passed Elara's tomb to dismount and pay reverence. Dutugemunu and Elara are symbols of chivalry comparable to Richard Lionheart and Saladin in Western history.

Although irrigation "tanks", or artificial reservoirs, had been built as early as the 2nd century B.C., the 4th century A.D. marked the beginning of a period of intensive construction. These reservoirs enormously increased the agricultural capacity of the dry lands around Anuradhapura.

In 331 A.D. the relic of the Buddha's Tooth was brought to Ceylon from India. Now in the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, this sacred relic quickly took on political importance since — unlike the sacred Bo tree — it could be transported. Possession of the Tooth relic gave supreme authority to the ruler who held it.

In 477 A.D. King Kassapa, who had obtained the throne by killing his father, built the cliff-top capital of Sigiriya, but in 495 sallied out to meet his brother Mogollana in battle and was killed. Mogollana restored Anuradhapura as the capital.

In the 12th century Polonnaruwa was developed as the capital of the country and Anuradhapura was abandoned, being too close to the South Indian invaders.

During the 13th century Polonnaruwa's strength declined and the capital was frequently moved. For about two hundred years the Tooth Relic's presence gave brief prominence to places like Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa, Kurunegala, Gampola and Kotte until, by 1592, finally it was brought to Kandy, which thus became the capital of the part of Sri Lanka unoccupied by foreigners.

During the troubled period of changing capitals, the coastal kingdom of Kotte, just inland from present day Colombo, began to establish itself. Kotte achieved importance because its rulers believed in trade and established a working relationship with the

Europeans, both the Portugese who had landed in 1505, and 150 years later, with the Dutch.

The Kandyans were anxious to keep the Europeans out of their territory and repulsed repeated attempts by the Portugese to capture the inland kingdom. In the 17th century, the King of Kandy saw an opportunity of ending this strife by calling in the Dutch to rid him of the Portugese. In this he succeeded by 1658, only to find that he had effectively handed the coastal territories to the new conquerors. However, the Dutch were less eager to penetrate inland and the Dutch and Kandyans co-existed, albeit uneasily.

In 1796 the British successfully and painlessly ousted the Dutch, the conquest being confirmed under the Treaty of Amiens in 1802.

In 1815 the British conquered Kandy as a result of the betrayal of the kingdom by its prime minister. The British exiled the last King, Sri Wikrama Rajasinhe, ending the Sinhalese Kingdom after 2,300 years.

Ceylon remained a British colony until 1948, when it became a self-governing, independent member of the British Commonwealth. In 1972 Ceylon became a Republic, still within the Commonwealth, and the country's ancient name of Sri Lanka was re-introduced.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION

Indian Religion in general

Buddhism, the religion of the great majority of Sri Lankans, was developed against the background of the much older Hinduism of India and is greatly influenced by it. There is, therefore, a common basis of Indian religious attitude which is different from the basis of Western philosophy.

The first belief common to all Indian religions is that the material world is not, as in most European religions, an integral part of a material/spiritual universe, but rather that it is an illusion and an obstacle or barrier, which has to be crossed to enter the spiritual or real world.

The second shared belief is that all living beings are bound up in a cycle of reincarnation and that their position in the world, at any one birth, is determined by their actions in previous incarnations. This is their "Karma". Once a person is born, he controls his fate to a greater or lesser degree — depending on the particular religion — and thereby determines his Karma for the next incarnation. Unlike most religions in other parts of the world, Karma is the manifestation of an absolute law and not the result of divine intervention, providence or fate.

These two basic beliefs are accepted by both Hindus and Buddhists.

Hinduism

Hinduism is impossible to define succinctly; indeed many people deny that Hinduism can be regarded as one religion. Various religious, spiritual and even natural concepts have been personalised in the form of a God or Goddess. These are related to each other in a mythology which is complicated by the fact that Hinduism is an exceedingly ancient religion and in the course of time the place of individual Gods within the mythology has changed. A further complication is that certain Gods, especially Vishnu, appeared in several incarnations or "avatars" which took on an identity of their own. The richness and complexity of Hinduism means that individual Hindus express their religion in a variety of different ways. In this Guide the object is merely to indicate, in a grossly oversimplified form, what the three chief Gods, Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu, represent.

Brahma, at one time, was the supreme God, the creator of the Universe, but, once he had accomplished this supreme act, Shiva and Vishnu became the more important. Shiva is the God of change, of the natural cycle of birth and death, of creation and destruction. Vishnu is the God who gives continuity to the world, especially to mankind. It is Vishnu who intervenes in the cosmic battles on behalf of mankind, by appearing on earth at critical times in various manifestations. The physical representation of these, and of some other Hindu Gods, is described on page 26.

Particular mention must be made of one of these incarnations of Vishnu, because of its special relevance to Sri Lanka. As Rama, the God is the hero of the Ramayana epic. Rama is born as the son of the ruler of Ayodha and in order to allow his father to fulfil an unwise promise, he goes into exile with his wife, Sita, and his brother, Lakshman. In the forest, Sita is fascinated by a golden deer and asks her husband to capture it. While Rama and his brother are pursuing the deer, Sita is seized by the demon Ravanna, who abducts her to his Kingdom, Lanka. The epic deals with the supernatural struggle between Rama and Ravanna. A main figure in the drama is Rama's ingenious ally, the monkey God, Hanuman, who, among other deeds, bridges the gap across the sea between India and Lanka. Finally, Sita is rescued and returns with Rama to Ayodha. Although Ravanna is the villain of the piece, the association with him is proudly recalled in Sri Lanka, where many places are pointed out as sites of incidents described in the Ramayana.

Buddhism

The Buddha and his teachings — The Buddha was born around 625 B.C. as Prince Siddhartha Gautama, the son of the ruler of a small kingdom at the foot of the Himalayas, in what is now south Nepal. The story of the Buddha's life can usefully be told in the series of events which are common themes of Buddhist art in Sri Lanka, especially in temple paintings.

Legend has it that, before the Buddha's birth, his mother had a vision of a white elephant entering her side, which the soothsayers interpreted to mean that she would give birth to a child of great wisdom. He was born when his mother was in a park at Lumbini, when she reached to pluck a blossom from a tree. At his birth, a soothsayer foretold that if he succeeded his father on the throne he would become a great emperor but, if he renounced the world, he would become the deliverer of mankind. His father educated him to become an enlightened ruler, but commanded that all signs of suffering and evil should be kept from him. It was not until he was nearly 30 years old that the young prince travelled

out of the palace grounds and, for the first time, saw an old man, a sick man and a corpse, thus learning of human frailty and mortality. Shortly after, he saw a monk and learnt about the possibility of a spiritual life. As a result of these experiences and his reflections on them, he decided to renounce the material world and, silently saying farewell to his sleeping wife and his infant son, rode away into the forest.

After cutting off his hair as a sign of renunciation, he went to seek enlightenment as to the purpose of human existence. First he tried the method of the ascetic, but found that the path to Enlightenment did not lie there. He then went through a long discipline of meditation and, according to legend, it was during one of these periods that the seven-headed cobra — the Naga — lifted him on its coils to protect him from a rising river with its hood spread over the Buddha's head to shield him from the rain. The powers of evil tried to interrupt his meditation both through frivolity, symbolised by dancing girls, and directly, through the attack of demons. Calling the earth to witness his good deeds, he defeated this attack. Soon after, sitting under a Bo tree, he received Enlightenment, that is he understood that the purpose of human existence was the recognition that all material things are a hindrance and that the true aim of life is the release from all attachment to material things. When this is achieved Enlightenment is obtained and the Enlightened One is ready to pass into Nirvana (in Sinhalese: Nibbana).

Having attained Enlightenment, the Buddha could have passed to this desired state, but, instead, he decided to teach his newly discovered truth to all mankind. His first sermon took place in the deer park at Benares. The remaining 45 or so years of the Buddha's life on earth were spent in teaching — including an ascent to heaven to preach to his mother who had died while he was a child. During this period he also laid down the rules for the Sangha or order of monkhood. At the age of 80, lying in a grove of Sal trees, in Kusinagara, he entered Nirvana.

Buddhist Doctrine — The Buddha presented his teaching to a people brought up in the traditions of Hinduism, just as Christianity was presented within the tradition of Judaism. Similarly, just as the Jews regard Jesus Christ as a prophet, so Hindus look on the Buddha as an incarnation of the God Vishnu.

Buddhism is not a religion; the concept of divinity has no essential place in it. The doctrine, as a guide to leading a purposeful life, can be summed up by saying that life is governed by law; "Dharma". The law consists of four fundamental truths: first,

that birth, life, death and any attachment to earthly things mean only sorrow; second, as long as a man retains any attachment to earthly things and desires, he remains chained to the cycle of death and reincarnation; the third truth is that the extinction of desire is essential for release from the reincarnation cycle. Finally, the only way to extinguish desire is to follow the eight-fold path of (i) correct belief; (ii) freedom from illusion; (iii) correct intention; (iv) correct expression, i.e. truthfulness; (v) correct, i.e. just and peaceable, conduct; (vi) correct living, i.e. causing no injury; (vii) correct effort, i.e. self-control and (viii) correct thinking, i.e. applying the mind to religious experiences and meditation on the purpose of life.

Buddhism is non-speculative. There is, in the teachings of the Buddha, neither a creation story nor a definition of Nirvana, the goal to which all Buddhists aspire. Since Nirvana can be attained only by overcoming attachment to earthly things, one could conclude that any material action would be evil, but the process of detachment depends on doing good work for others. While it is possible for anybody to achieve Nirvana in his life-time, if he fails to do so, he will be reincarnated and his closeness to achieving the final objective in the next life will depend on the merit which he has built up during the previous life. Thus, obtaining merit through performing good deeds is most important in the life style of devout Buddhists.

Apart from his teachings, the Buddha left detailed instructions for the establishment of an order of monks, whose primary task was to help each other along the road to Enlightenment, but also to help others, outside the community, on the same path.

Buddhist Practice — The original teachings of the Buddha imply an awe-inspiring responsibility for the individual, for he, and he alone, is responsible for his fate and his aim, Nirvana, is both unknown and unknowable. Therefore, the Buddhist can approach his goal only through the understanding of negative concepts, i.e. abandoning all worldly things. It is not surprising, therefore, that in practice Buddhists have turned to the comforts of supernatural powers such as Gods, or even pre-destination in the form of astrology, to lighten the burden of this personal responsibility. Indeed this is not in conflict with Buddhist teaching, because the Buddha taught that, on the path to Enlightenment, certain concepts can smooth the way until they are attained, but once attained attachment to them transforms them into obstacles to further progress.

As a result of these beliefs, Buddhists do not pray, they meditate. Temple ritual is not a religious observance — it is a discipline to clear the mind for meditation. Similarly, the flower offerings

made in the temple are a reminder of the transitoriness of human life which withers and fades as quickly as a blossom. A Buddhist monk receiving alms in the street is not begging, but he is providing the Buddhist laity with an opportunity of storing up merit by giving to a monk; it is the donor who thanks the monk for allowing the offering to be made. When Buddhist monks attend weddings or funerals, they do not act as priests but only to remind the family, at that solemn moment, of the four truths and the eight-fold path and, where there is a sermon, of the teaching of the Buddha.

Religious Festivals

Buddhists celebrate every Full Moon day as a Poya Day when, for the one day, many live according to the vows taken by a monk. They go to temples, dressed in white, to make a puja or offering of flowers, light a lamp and stay to listen to a sermon. On a Poya Day businesses close, no animals are allowed to be slaughtered and no alcohol can be sold or consumed in a public place. Each month's Poya Day has a peculiar significance and some are marked by special celebrations, either throughout the island or at certain places only.

The following is a brief calendar of the main festivals:—

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| January | — The Kelaniya Perahera or temple procession; a picturesque spectacle at night at Kelaniya Temple 3 miles N.E. of Colombo. |
| April | — Sinhala and Tamil New Year; a family feast of renewal. Traditionally all old clothes, cooking pots etc. are discarded and new ones taken symbolically; the hearth fire is extinguished and a new one lit. |
| May | — Wesak; commemorating the birth, Enlightenment and passing to Nirvana of the Buddha. Celebrated throughout the island but most spectacular in Colombo. Elaborate paper lanterns are made, religious entertainment and refreshment is offered to passers-by. |
| June | — The Poson Festival; marking the coming of Buddhism to Sri Lanka, celebrated by a great pilgrimage to Mihintale, near Anuradhapura, where the Buddhist apostle, Mahinda, first appeared. |
| July/August | — The period of Festivals. The exact timing is determined by the astrologer who selects an auspicious moment. |

The Kataragama Festival, in the South; in honour of Kataragama or Skanda, the Hindu God of War. Kataragama is, at all times, the place where penitents and votaries come to fulfil vows, always involving pilgrimage and often mortification of the flesh — such as piercing the cheeks and legs with pins, carrying heavy yokes or suspending themselves on hooks. The festival is the most popular time for such acts and, at that time, fire-walking, where the devout walk barefoot, unharmed, over glowing embers — to the puzzlement of doctors and scientists — takes place.

A similar, smaller festival, also including fire-walking, takes place later at Udappuwa near Chilaw 60 miles (96 km.) North of Colombo.

The Vel Festival. This is a more cheerful Hindu Festival in Colombo, where the image of the God Murukan, another manifestation of Skanda or Kataragama, is carried in procession on a highly-decorated carriage from his temple in Sea Street in the Pettah to the Pillayar Temple at Bambalapitiya, 2 miles (3 km.) South of the Fort. Murukan had married a mortal and, once a year, they are re-united, the re-union being the cause of a cheerful temple festival which continues for several days.

In the North, at the magnificent Hindu Temple at Nallur in Jaffna, there is a festival with daily processions for 24 days in August and September.

However, THE festival of the season is the Kandy Perahera. Originally a procession of the four Gods from Hindu temples in Kandy; it later became absorbed in a procession where the Sacred Tooth Relic is carried on an elephant through the streets. The Perahera takes place by torchlight nightly for a week. It consists of the cracking whips to announce its coming and, for each temple, a combination of temple officials, chiefs and dancers, all in their ceremonial costume and all overshadowed by the splendour of the caparisoned elephants, which may number well over 100. The last Perahera, beloved by photographers, is in broad daylight.

October/November — Vap Magul, the ancient ceremony, where the head of state ceremoniously ploughs the first furrow of the season's rice planting, was recently revived by President Jayewardene and takes place in a different part of the rice growing area each year.

The Hindu festival of Deepavali, in honour of a Hindu God who brought peace to the world. It is celebrated by lighting innumerable lamps—a festival of light, best witnessed in Jaffna.

Muslim festivals are more family affairs and their timing changes, being 11 days earlier each year.

In the context of festivals mention should also be made of the pilgrimage season (late December - March) when Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim pilgrims climb the 7,300 feet (2,800 m.) of Adam's Peak. At the top is a shrine built over the giant footprint, which is attributed variously to the Buddha, the God Shiva and Adam, on his expulsion from Paradise.

CHAPTER V

CULTURE

As in Europe, the earliest Sri Lankan expressions of art, architecture, sculpture, painting, handicrafts and even music, were connected with religion.

Architecture

Buddhist Religious Buildings

The obvious starting point for any description of architecture in Sri Lanka is the Stupa or Dagoba, which is the dome-shaped structure found in every Buddhist temple. The Dagoba is a reliquary, containing either a relic of the Buddha or the ashes of a revered monk. It consists of four essential elements: the base, the dome, the crown (generally square) and the pinnacle. Although the general structure of the Dagoba had remained unchanged from earliest Buddhist times, nobody knows for certain what its shape signifies. Most theorists agree that the dome represents the world — not necessarily the physical globe but, more probably, a representation of Mount Meru, the home of the Gods in Hindu Cosmology. The crown has been regarded as a symbol of temporal power, namely a throne, and the pinnacle, the highest and most honourable position, as a symbol of the Buddha, either in the form of a royal umbrella or the sacred Bo tree. Although this may seem far-fetched, the Buddha was represented only by such symbols for the first centuries of the Buddhist era.

There are four traditional shapes of the dome of a dagoba as found in Sri Lanka: the most common is the bell-shape, looking like an inverted chalice, the others are the pot shape, which is actually an inverted Buddhist monk's alms bowl or a sphere with a flat base; the bubble shape, a hemisphere growing out of a vertical cylinder; and the paddy heap, like the inverted chalice but without the opening out of the lip of the chalice. The crown is normally a thick square slab; in modern dagobas, under the corners of this a Bo leaf is carved on the dome. The pinnacle in Sri Lanka is usually spear-shaped; in older dagobas it was made up of horizontal rings, always in odd numbers, but in modern ones the pinnacle is often decorated with spiral lines. However, multiple umbrellas, emphasising the horizontal features, are common and often look tree-like. Many of these dagobas, particularly at Anuradhapura and nearby Mihintale, have elaborately carved altars, called Vahalkadas, at the cardinal points of the compass. They are built round a flat slab where offerings of lights and flowers can be made. Certain dagobas were enclosed by a domed roof, supported by pillars:

a development from small dagobas built in caves. Yet a further development was the placing of Buddha images against the dome of the dagoba and roofing the whole to make a circular temple, or Vatadage.

In Sri Lanka the Bo tree receives particular veneration and, from earliest times, these trees were enclosed by protective walls. A slab throne was often placed under the tree and, later, a Buddha statue in meditation posture added.

As the Buddha statue became of increasing importance, special Image Houses for these were built, separate from the Bo-tree. The statue itself was always in an inner chamber, either reached through a larger ante-chamber or surrounded by a corridor whose walls, especially in Kandy and the South-West, were frequently covered with frescoes. The steps leading into the Image House often exhibit several characteristic features: at the foot, the semi-circular moonstone decorated with concentric friezes; the rises of the steps embellished with dwarves; the balustrade representing a composite mythical animal, the Makara; and the vertical slab guardstone carved with symbols of protection and prosperity. The symbolism of the guardstones and moonstones is described on p. 74.

Another frequently found feature is the octagonal pillar with square bosses at intervals, the bosses being carved. In Kandyan times the capitals often branched out and downward. Hipped roofs, often double-pitched, with patterns created by different forms of tiling, provide a discreet but effective decoration, also associated chiefly with Kandy.

A variant of the Image House is the raised temple, either supported on pillars or consisting of two storeys. The latter were often temples built to house the Sacred Tooth Relic, where the Relic was placed in a higher position than the Buddha image itself, in order to emphasize its sanctity. As possession of the Sacred Tooth Relic was a symbol of supreme royal authority, several places housed the relic at various times and several temples were accordingly built.

There are also two types of minor religious buildings. One is the rest house for travellers, "Ambalama", which is usually a small, roofed but not walled shelter, built to gain merit for the donor. The other is the "Sima Malaha" or ordination hall, built in a lake or lagoon. By tradition, Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka symbolically renounce the world by cutting off their hair after crossing water; this is in memory of the Buddha, who performed a similar act after crossing a river at the boundary of his father's kingdom.

An excellent and easily accessible, example of the various types of Buddhist religious building, illustrating the various styles, is to be found 3 miles North East of Colombo at the temple of Kelaniya p. 50.

Hindu Temples

The early Hindu temples in Sri Lanka, such as the two Shiva temples in Polonnaruwa and certain Buddhist temples built in the Hindu style, such as the Tivanka Image House and Thuparama also in Polonnaruwa, are deliberately dark and oppressive, recreating architecturally a cave temple. They are almost devoid of decoration within and the outside walls are adorned by niches containing statues of the Gods, sheltered under stylised low-relief roofs. Often decorated friezes such as elephants, geese, dwarves or dancers complete the design. The modern temples are South Indian in style. The outer wall, usually over the main gate, is surmounted by a high, pyramidal roof, on which figures of Gods and legend are carved in high relief, usually brightly painted.

The temple building inside the walled courtyard will have an inner sanctum, or Holy of Holies, where the images of the Gods are kept. It is always at one end of the temple, usually topped by a low tower; access is from within the temple and only the temple priests may enter. During a Hindu Puja, or service, the worshippers stand in two rows outside the inner sanctum, looking in to watch the priest perform the Puja with flames and lights.

Architecturally, the rest of the temple, outside the Holy of Holies, serves to protect the worshippers from the elements and to provide an ambulatory to allow the image of the God to be carried around the temple (on Fridays it is carried around the temple compound and, on festival days, it travels in procession through the streets).

Inside the temple are also shrines of other Gods. Adjacent to the Holy of Holies, on the image's right hand, is another room, approached from the ambulatory at right angles to the main shrine. It houses the image of the God's consort. These two shrines form the centre around which the inner procession is made. Set into the outside wall of this passage there are generally other shrines, the one furthest from the Chief God's image on its left being the next most revered. In front of each shrine is a brazier, to allow worshippers to look at the image through flames because the fire purifies, destroying the baser elements of the worshipper's vision. Inside some temples is a well, whose water is used exclusively in the Holy of Holies. Shiva temples have a small platform with nine figures, the central one represents the sun, the others the planets. Many temples also have an ornate

metal pole on which a flag is hoisted during the annual festival of the temple.

Temples become more elaborate as the congregation donates money for improvement. Much of this may be spent on the ornately carved carriage on which the image of the God is carried in procession. A small carriage is used for the inner temple procession, a larger for that in the compound and a huge juggernaut for the street procession. A temple, like the one at Nallur in Jaffna, will have several such carriages for the 24 day festival, the finest being used on the last day. To protect the valuable carriages, special sheds are built, either in the temple compound, often into the boundary wall, or sometimes even outside the temple.

Domestic architecture

Traditionally, private homes were built in a hollow square with public rooms in front, bedrooms round an open courtyard and the kitchen at the back. This plan has seen a popular revival in recent years as a result of a legal maximum to the covered area for any home — the courtyard gives space for future expansion.

The advent of the European, especially the Dutch, produced the spacious bungalow dwelling house with verandahs at front and back and public rooms opening into each other in the centre of the house to allow for through draughts.

Sculpture

The Buddha image is the dominant theme of Buddhist art and is depicted best in sculpture. The conventional presentation is at first puzzling to non-Buddhists because, although the figure is obviously human, it is never presented naturalistically. It is important to remember that, for several centuries, it was deemed improper to represent the Buddha other than by a symbol: a Bo tree, the wheel of the law, an empty throne, or a lotus blossom. When eventually the attempt was made to represent the Buddha in human form, it remained a symbolic figure. Indeed, there are thirty two traditional characteristics of the Buddha: not all are always featured, but they have led to a uniformity of representation and it is only through the minor variations of their interpretation that one can place an image, geographically and in time. The most striking characteristics are: the protuberance at the top of the head, which, in the Sri Lankan representation, is in the form of a lyre-shaped flame; the hair is usually shown as separate, short, spiral curls; the ear lobes are elongated; fingers and also toes are of equal length and, in a standing figure, the finger tips reach below the knees; the facial expression is always both serene and detached. The very pronounced, close-pleating of the robe is a characteristic of Sri Lankan images.

The Buddha is depicted in three postures: standing, sitting crosslegged, and reclining. The hands make a limited number of gestures: blessing, giving gifts, preaching, ordaining peace, calling the earth to witness his good deeds, and meditating. The reclining Buddha is either the Buddha resting or the dead Buddha, when he has just passed to Nirvana. Only in Sri Lankan art is a distinction made; when the feet are on top of each other, toe to toe, the Buddha is sleeping, but when the upper foot is slid back slightly, he has expired.

It is not practical to describe all Hindu Gods, but the following notes may help to identify the most important. Brahma is readily recognised because his head consists of four faces, surveying the four corners of his creation (sometimes shown as four separate heads). All Hindu Gods have their vehicle, or steed, and Brahma's is the goose or Hamsa, which is a popular decorative theme in Sri Lankan art. Shiva is often shown with a third eye in the forehead. He carries a trident, and an iron trident is often found outside his temples. When it is wished to emphasize his character of the destroyer, he is shown with a snake head dress and a necklace of skulls. His steed is Nandi, the bull. Shiva, as the creator, is frequently depicted dancing, surrounded by a circle of flames. His consort is Parvati. Any temple with a lingam is dedicated to Shiva. Vishnu is sometimes represented sleeping on a snake floating in water. He is often shown with a blue skin and has four arms holding a conch shell, a discus, a club and a lotus. His vehicle is the Garuda, a mythical animal, part human, part bird. His consort is Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth, usually depicted with an elephant with raised trunk on either side of her. Vishnu is the God who intervenes on behalf of mankind through various incarnations, or Avatars. The most easily recognisable of these are: a golden fish, a tortoise (not to be confused with the tortoise bearing Mount Meru), a boar, as well as the "human" avatars such as Rama and Krishna. Skanda is the God of War, also called Kataragama or Murukan. His steed is the peacock and the centre of worship in Sri Lanka is Kataragama, in the South. Ganesh is easily recognised, because of his elephant head. Of lesser importance in the Hindu pantheon, but ever popular in Sri Lanka, is Hanuman, the monkey God, who helped Rama to rescue his wife, Sita, from her captivity in Lanka.

There is also a well-established tradition of secular figurative carving. Examples exist in Anuradhapura, especially at the Isurumuniya Vihara p. 77, but this art form reaches its apogee at Polonnaruwa on the friezes of the outer walls of the Tivanka Image House p. 62, the Vatadage p. 66 and Parakrama Bahu's Audience Hall p. 67.

Painting

There is a long tradition of Buddhist temple paintings, although the most famous frescoes are the more secular maidens on Sigiriya rock. The tradition is still alive and, in general, frescoes combine a very sophisticated decorative sense — which is best illustrated in borders and ceiling panels — with a fresh, vigorous, often naive, figurative representation. An example of modern, 1940, temple painting by George Keyt can be seen in the Gotami Temple, off the Kotte Road in Colombo.

There are three common themes in Sri Lankan temple paintings. The first is the life of the Buddha; these presentations usually depict most of the events described on pages 16 and 17. The second is the Jataka stories; there are over 500 of these stories of the Buddha's previous incarnations and they form an almost inexhaustible theme of inspiration for Buddhist artists. The third, and rather dull, form is the repetitive frieze of Buddhas and/or disciples which leads the eye to the image. In some modern temples, of which Kelaniya, p. 50, is an example, there are frescoes depicting the history of the temple and major events in Sri Lankan Buddhist history, such as the coming of the Sacred Bo Tree and the Sacred Tooth Relic, but this is unusual.

It is a tragedy that these paintings are in danger of decay and it was primarily to record them for future preservation that the Trust Fund was started. The profits from the sale of this Guide Book support this Fund. More information about the Trust is to be found on the back cover.

Literature

Sri Lanka lacks a tradition of creative writing. The early literary works which survive are the great historical chronicles, such as the Mahavamsa and Chulavamsa, which trace the history of the Sinhala Kingdom from the earliest legendary times. Other works are, in the main, translations of Buddhist scriptures or commentaries on such texts. There is evidence in the chronicles of poetry and song as a courtly pastime, but, apart from a few very stylised and virtually untranslatable early poems, nothing has survived.

It was the influence of Europeans, particularly British and American school teachers, which inspired Sri Lankan authors to express themselves creatively. Initially they tended to write in English, the language of their schooling, but later turned to Sinhala. However, even in modern times, much of the best Sri Lankan writing is instructive rather than literary. Dr. R. L. Brohier writes beautifully, but his purpose is to write the history of the Dutch period or to describe the tanks and irrigation systems he knows

so well. Similarly, when R.L. Spittel wrote novels about the Veddahs, Sri Lanka's aboriginals, his avowed purpose was to present his anthropological findings to a wider public. There is a school of evocative writing describing the country side or village life. The style is consciously poetic and is used both by local authors, such as J. Vijayatunga in his "Grass for my Feet", and English authors writing about Sri Lanka, such as John Still in his "Jungle Tide". Perhaps the best novel about this country is still "the Village in the Jungle", which grew out of Leonard Woolf's experience as a District Officer in the South.

Sri Lanka has been well served by the descriptions of foreign visitors; the most famous of these was written by Robert Knox who had been an unwilling guest in the Kandyan Kingdom for more than 20 years in the 17th century. Several of the descriptions have been re-printed recently.

Another recent re-print, which perhaps can tell the visitor more about the traditional attitudes of the people of Sri Lanka, is H. Price's collection of "Folk Tales of Ceylon".

Music and Dance

Just as there is no tradition of creative writing for its own sake, so Sri Lanka lacks a tradition of music per se. Although the records mention singing and music as court pastimes, none of this has survived.

The existing Sri Lankan musical tradition arises out of the drumming which accompanies temple ceremonies, and the traditional dances, most of which serve a religious purpose. Sri Lankan music is clearly dominated by the drum, in its many varieties. Associated with the drum are cymbals and, to a much lesser extent, wind instruments. Traditionally the Puja or temple offerings were accompanied by drums and drumming halls were attached to major temples.

Traditional dancing is either to invoke the blessing of the God, as for example in the Kandyan Ves dance with the elaborate head dress and intricate movements, or in the form of exorcism dances, sometimes known as "Devil Dances", to be found in the South. For these the dancer wears a wooden mask, which represents the God or Devil associated with the particular disease from which a sick man suffers, and the object of the dance is to threaten or cajole the spirit to release the patient from the disease.

A more secular development is the Kolam, a more narrative masked dance. In this some or all the characters wear slightly

grotesque masks, the dancer miming in accordance with the character of the mask.

At Ambalangoda, the home of the exorcism mask makers, there is also a tradition of stilt dancing.

There is a revived interest in traditional dancing and a chance to see the Chitrasena Group, for example, should not be missed.

Handicrafts

No description of the culture of Sri Lanka would be complete without some description of the minor arts. Many of these, such as wood and stone carving, brass and silver work and painting arose naturally from the desire to decorate temples. Many have since degenerated into mass production for the tourist market but some craftsmen still produce work of a high order. In your travels you will come across the decorations made of palm fronds, known as Gokala. In its simplest form, young leaves are hung from a line stretched over a road to mark some ceremony; in its more sophisticated form, elaborate gateways are constructed, carefully-made patterns of weave and colour, using the lighter green of the tender leaf and the darker green of the mature frond. Less common are the elaborate, fretted paper screens made for a Pirith, or special chanting of the Buddhist Precepts. Both these require great skill and patience to produce a confection of beauty which disappears in a few hours.

As in many other countries, the finest workmanship is to be found in the traditional making of everyday articles such as mats, baskets and handwoven cloth.

Museums

Sri Lanka is in the strange position of having two parallel sets of museums: the National Museums and the Archaeological Museums.

The complete list is as follows:—

National Museums (Open 9 - 5 every day, except Fridays and Saturdays).

Colombo (the main museum) (p. 48)

Kandy (p. 56)

Ratnapura (p. 86)

Archaeological Museums (Open 8 - 4 every day, except Tuesdays and Sinhala New Year.)

Anuradhapura (the chief Archaeological Museum (p. 71) with a small one being built at Isurumuniya).

Amparai

Colombo (Dutch Museum in the Pettah — currently being prepared) (p. 47)

Dedigama

Galle

Jaffna (p. 98)

Kandy (p. 56)

Panduvass Nuvara (also known as Parakramapura)

Polonnaruwa (p. 67)

Sigiriya (p. 60)

Trincomalee

Yapahuwa (p. 104)

CHAPTER VI

THE ECONOMY

In the past, before being exposed to European influence, Sri Lanka was primarily a rice growing, agricultural country. The population lived chiefly in the dry zone, the mountains and jungles of the wet zone being regarded as unattractive for farming. The establishment of the tanks, i.e. irrigation reservoirs, mainly from 300 - 500 A.D., allowed the growing of two rice crops a year and supported both a large population and a high living standard. The 13th century marked the end of the Polonnaruwa period and also the beginning of a long decline in the economy, especially in the dry zone which had been the chief area of wealth creation. The cause of this decline was twofold: the result of Tamil and Chola invasions, and the spread of malaria which resulted from the creation of stagnant pools due to tanks being breached in times of war.

When the Portugese came at the beginning of the 16th century, they took control of the coastal areas and the Kandyan kingdom formed a fairly self-contained inland entity. The Portugese, and later the Dutch, were interested in Ceylon primarily for cinnamon and other spices and, to a lesser extent, for coconut products and gems — not only the coloured stones now popular, but also pearls from Mannar. Colombo, which was the port of the small kingdom of Kotte, became important in international trade because of its position at the mouth of the major river of the cinnamon growing area. As a port it left much to be desired as it could not be used in all seasons, until the building of the breakwater in the 1860's.

Economically, the change from Portugese to Dutch rule in the middle of the 17th century made little difference, except that the Dutch were perhaps more efficient in organising the economy and were responsible for building canals and roads.

With the extension of British rule to the Kandyan kingdom in 1815 the high country was opened up and extensive areas were cleared for coffee, while the smuggling of rubber seeds from the Amazon enabled rubber to be planted in Sri Lanka.

In the late 1870s a blight ruined the coffee plantations in the hills and, after a period of great economic hardship, the tea industry was established. This became, and remains, the mainstay of the economy.

Coconut, which produces oil, copra, coir and desiccated coconut for export, as well as thatch and fuel for home use, has been increasing in importance. From the mid 1950s the Government followed a policy of economic self-reliance with minimal imports and successful efforts were made to keep down prices and wages. However, the consequent low level of investment resulted in a general low level of economic activity. At the same time many firms and all plantations were nationalised.

After 1977 this policy was reversed and the new Government encouraged investment, free imports and competition, in the belief that, in this way only, could growth be generated. This Government also encouraged foreign investment in a free trade zone north of Colombo, and accelerated the gigantic Mahaveli irrigation programme, which is designed, not only to bring large areas under cultivation, thus making the country independent of food imports, but also to absorb unskilled, unemployed labour.

CHAPTER VII

FLORA AND FAUNA

Without a wealth of colour illustrations, the amount of information about plants and animals which can usefully be given in a Guide Book is very limited. The standard work on birds, G. M. Henry's "Guide to the Birds of Ceylon", has just been re-issued. Unfortunately, the standard work on flowers, "Tropical Gardening and Planting" by H. F. Macmillan, is out of print, as is the best reference on trees. A less scientific work which is still available is Dorothy Fernando's "Wild Flowers of Ceylon", with particularly beautiful flower illustrations. There is no adequate guide to insects or butterflies.

Flora — The natural flora of the wet zone is the tropical rain forest but little remains of this, except Sinharaja near Ratnapura. Most of the country is cultivated but in a way which enhances its beauty in the eyes of the traveller. The valleys of streams and rivers are ploughed to irrigate rice fields, while the slopes are planted with forests of rubber trees or coconut palms. The hill country very largely has been cleared for tea, with sugar cane planted on marginal land. At last, on the highest land, efforts are being made at re-forestation. Near Nuwara Eliya is a high plateau, Horton Plains, famous for its wild flowers.

The natural vegetation of the dry zone is scrub jungle, and the unique system of artificial reservoirs (tanks) allowed some of this land to be cultivated to become the main rice growing area of the country. The Mahaveli irrigation scheme, which involves the diversion of the waters of the Mahaveli river into, not one but two, normally dry river beds, will greatly increase the area of irrigated land.

Sri Lanka is fortunate in having two famous botanical gardens. The outstanding one is at Peradeniya, just outside Kandy, and the other is at Hakgala, near Nuwara Eliya. There is also a small botanical garden at Gampaha, containing the original rubber tree grown from smuggled Brazilian seeds, which is the ancestor of all the rubber trees in Malaysia. There is also an arboretum 13 miles (21 km.) north east of Galle. Sri Lanka has a wealth of wild flowers, including orchids, and a wide range of trees, some of which produce superb timber for furniture, such as satinwood, calimander, tamarind, jak and ebony.

Fauna — Although wild life still exists in the sanctuaries and reservations, the traveller, will be lucky if he sees more than monkeys,

mongoose, lizards and an occasional star tortoise in the open country. However, tame, working elephants are still a common sight; for festivals they are transformed, Cinderella-like, into splendidly caparisoned works of art. There are two major wild life sanctuaries — Wilpattu near Anuradhapura, and Yala on the South-East coast. However, visitors should not expect the wealth of game which is found, for example, in East African wild life sanctuaries. Wilpattu is renowned for its leopards, which are probably unique in not being nocturnal; Yala is famous for its elephants. As in East Africa, the publicity for the wild life sanctuaries concentrates on the larger animals and tends to ignore the rich variety of bird life. There are also a number of special bird sanctuaries, the chief of which are in the South: Bundala, East of Hambantota; Wirawila near Tissamaharama; Kumana on the Northern part of the Yala sanctuary and Minneriya near Polonnaruwa. However, unlike the wild animals of Sri Lanka, birds can still be found in the fields and forests outside sanctuaries.

CHAPTER VIII

FOOD AND DRINK

The staple dish is rice and curry. This differs from Indian, or to be precise North Indian, curry in that coconut milk is included in the curry sauce. For a curry meal there should be at least one fish or meat curry, two vegetable curries and a sambol, which is usually chilli-spiced, grated coconut, as well as a chutney. Restaurants catering to tourists often serve mild curries or two dishes of the same curry — one milder than the other. One way to avoid making the curry hot is to refrain from adding the sambol. (If, in spite of everything, you find the curry burns, eat plain rice, plain grated coconut or a banana, if available, but do not drink anything. Even if the first mouthful tasted like fire the second will be milder — one can get used to chilli or curry hotness very quickly, but after drinking, the next mouthful is as hot as the first).

Another traditional dish, which used to be a breakfast dish but is now a popular snack at any time, is the egg hopper. This is a thin, crisp, bowl-shaped pancake made of rice flour in which an egg is placed, and curry and sambol are added: additional hoppers, without eggs, are normally served, 4 to a helping. The sticky-looking, brown "seeni sambol" is popular with egg hoppers and is quite mild. Hoppers, without eggs, can also be eaten with butter and jam — like toast.

String hoppers are nests of rice flour noodles; being lighter than boiled rice, they are popular with curry for breakfast or at night. A Northern variant is the even lighter Pithu.

Lamprais (not to be confused with the European fish of that name) are a tasty snack dish consisting of various meats, spices, sambols and rice, cooked enclosed in a banana leaf to impart an extra flavour.

While there is a variety of sea food, most restaurants confine their choice, apart from shell-fish, to "seer", which is a pity because mullet, paraw and sole are at least as good, if not better. Local shell-fish is excellent. Baked crab has become almost a national dish and is not to be missed.

There are few specifically Sri Lankan desserts. Wattalapam, a thick custard made from eggs, coconut, palm sugar and nuts is worth trying—it is a traditional Muslim ceremonial dish—while

curd, reminiscent of yoghurt, eaten with palm sugar syrup, makes a splendid light dessert or breakfast dish.

The chief drink is, of course, tea; the local coffee is of very high quality though not to everyone's taste, being unblended Robusta. The juice of a young coconut (green shell) or the king coconut (orange shell) is a refreshing and perfectly safe drink, obtainable everywhere in the low-lying, wet zone.

The local alcoholic drink is "toddy", which is the sap of the coconut palm flower, sweet and mild when tapped but becoming acid and very potent within hours. Old toddy is distilled into "arrack" (no relation to the Mediterranean drink of the same name) which is drunk like whisky, but the flavour is, of course, different. (And a hint to gin & tonic drinkers; if you find the local tonic too sweet, try a mixture of 50% tonic, 50% soda).

The available fruits may not be specifically Sri Lankan, but some could well be unfamiliar to a visitor from Europe. Chief of these fruits is the mango—the best come from Jaffna, greenish yellow with aromatic yellow flesh. Less aromatic but similar in texture is the papaw (or papaya). Not related to the mango, in spite of its name, is the mangosteen; this white fruit in a thick, dark reddish-purple skin, is the favourite tropical fruit of many Europeans. Bright red, plum-shaped, with soft spikes but with a white fruit like a lychee inside is the rambuttan. The sapodilla is a brown, plum-like object, in texture rather like an over-ripe pear, but easier to handle. The jak fruit is eaten as a curry vegetable when unripe, and as a dessert fruit with a strong, sweet flavour when ripe. Another popular dessert is the woodapple, whose flesh, beaten up with custard, makes a pleasant, astringent, brownish cream. Even better is the soursop, prepared as a delicious, slightly acid, fluffy cream. Another better-known, soft-centered fruit is the custard apple; less creamy than the soursop, it is still very tasty. Finally, mention must be made of the durian, another creamy fruit which is obtainable during July; it provides the paradox of having a delicious taste and a nauseating smell—no airline will allow one on the plane. The politest description of its flavour is: an over-ripe Camembert with strawberry topping.

Not readily classifiable, is the betel chew, where the astringent arecanut is cut into small pieces, mixed with spices and lime, and wrapped in a betel leaf. This is chewed and the marks are seen on the reddened teeth and gums of the chewer and the traces of expectoration on the streets.

CHAPTER IX

SPORTS

Most Colombo Sports Clubs provide day membership to tourists, who may, however, be asked to show their passports.

Swimming

With Sri Lanka's magnificent beaches, one thinks first of water sports. For sea bathing itself the beaches are listed on p. 3. Most hotels have swimming pools, free to residents but visitors can use them for a sizeable fee.

Scuba Diving and Skin Diving

The coral reefs are a standing invitation to diving. Skin divers will be attracted by the inshore reef at Hikkaduwa, on the West coast, and Passekudah, on the East. Scuba diving equipment is available in season at Hikkaduwa, both in the grounds of the Coral Gardens Hotel and at Poseidon in the main street; also on the East coast, just North of Trincomalee on the Nilaveli road, near the Club Oceanic Hotel. Diving expeditions out of Colombo and training to British Sub Aqua Club certification can be arranged through Underwater Safaris Ltd., 25 Barnes Place, Colombo 7. Divers should also remember that some of the world's best diving can be obtained in the Maldivé Islands some 450 miles (720 km.) from Sri Lanka.

Water Skiing

Facilities are expanding. Currently, skiing is available on Bolgoda Lake, reached from Colombo by turning left off the Galle Road just South of the Panadura bridge, and in the estuary of the Bentota river; bookings in the grounds of the Bentota Beach Hotel.

Sailing

There are two sailing clubs near Colombo, the Colombo Yacht Club in Colombo harbour and the Colombo Motor Yacht Club at Bolgoda. The latter is reached from Colombo by turning left off the Galle Road where it is still a dual carriage way, opposite a church with a crenellated tower and porch.

Golf

There are two golf clubs in Sri Lanka: the Colombo Golf Club and the Nuwara Eliya Golf Club.

Riding

Sturdy mountain ponies can be hired at the race course in Nuwara Eliya.

Fishing

Deep sea fishing can be organised from the Sea Anglers Club in China Bay, Trincomalee, on the East coast. (Since members have priority for the use of boats, it is wise to avoid week-ends).

There used to be superb trout streams South of Horton Plains; these have been totally neglected, but moves are afoot to re-stock and protect them.

In the lower reaches of most rivers fish are varied and plentiful and this is even more true of the river estuaries.

Tennis, Squash and Badminton

The Gymkhana Club, Maitland Crescent, Colombo 7, has squash courts and several hotels also have tennis courts.

Spectator Sports

The most popular spectator sport is undoubtedly cricket, which can be seen most week-ends. This is followed by rugby and, a long way behind, by hockey. Soccer is played in a less organised way. For these sports it is advisable to consult the local papers.

CHAPTER X

QUESTIONS ON A STREET CORNER

The last few chapters were written to give the interested visitor some background information to help him understand more clearly what he sees in Sri Lanka. Yet, having read them and going out of his hotel in Colombo for the first time, he will see all sorts of things which will raise questions not as yet answered in this Guide.

Instead of writing a socio-economic treatise, let us imagine that we are standing on a busy street corner in Colombo.

Any visitor not used to the East will be struck by the colourful bustle presented by the crowds of people in the street. This in itself is a little misleading: Sri Lanka is probably the least affected of all countries by the flight from the land and the swelling of the urban population. On the other hand, if you are unemployed, as many Sri Lankans are, the kaleidoscope of the street is a cheap and absorbing form of entertainment.

Much of the colour of the scene comes from the bright dresses and saris of the women. Saris still predominate, since Sri Lanka is a very traditional society. If you look closely you will see that women do not wear their saris in the same way; a frill of material folded over the waist indicates the Kandyan style. The girl wearing tight cotton trousers and a long shirt-like garment is a Muslim in traditional dress. Muslim women do not go about veiled here.

Another touch of bright colour comes from the orange-yellow robes of the shaven-headed Buddhist monk. You notice that some of the men wear a sarong, either to their ankles or above their knees. This is the traditional garment, tubular in shape and folded and tucked in the front, normally worn long, but when freer movement is required, it is tucked up. The man with an expensive, perhaps gold cloth, skull cap is a member of the small but wealthy Muslim Borah community.

Looking more closely, you may see that some women, even if relatively poorly dressed, are wearing a heavy gold chain round their neck. This is a Tamil custom, whereby the husband gives the wife such a chain at their wedding and it becomes a last reserve against misfortune; it is never sold, but in dire straits it may be pawned. The coloured mark in the middle of the forehead worn by some women is neither a caste mark nor a sign of marriage; it is merely a form of adornment, a beauty spot, favoured mainly by Tamil women.

You will be struck by the number of young people, not surprising since half the population is under 15. Many are also at school because Sri Lanka has very widespread education, high literacy and, perhaps as a result of this, one of the lowest population growth rates in the developing world. With a free medical service the standard of life should be high, but unfortunately you will also see the crippled, the deformed and beggars.

After the people, the next thing a visitor notices is the traffic—a seemingly endless procession of red buses, all packed. The Sri Lankan is an inveterate traveller; the country must have the largest number of buses per head of population anywhere and yet there are never enough. Although new cars have recently appeared in the streets, there are also many of great age, often lovingly maintained—the envy of the veteran car collector. The import of private cars has been severely restricted for many years and those which come in are extremely expensive when related to income levels. As a result, the bullock cart and the hand cart are still very much in evidence, adding obstruction to the general chaos of the traffic scene. Occasionally you may even see an old rickshaw, now used only to carry goods or children.

If you look at the buildings and the pavements, you will see signs of neglect and decay, but also the more hopeful signs of fresh construction—an accurate reflection of the state of the national economy. The shops are open-fronted; often it is difficult to decide what sort of shop it is since, if the shop owner specialises in, say, bicycles he may well decide that a consignment of wooden toys offers a profit and will stock them, too.

However, there is still a good deal of the medieval specialisation in districts, the goldsmiths in Sea Street, the motor spare part dealers in Maradana etc. The number of eating places is striking. Many people go out for a snack and the numerous so-called “hotels”, which clearly have no accommodation, are merely small restaurants. On the other hand, the bicycle, with a large open crate on the back containing several dozen plates each neatly wrapped in a cloth, represents the opposite; this is the office worker’s “hot” lunch, prepared at home, carried by the wife to a central collection point and then taken for a small fee by the bicycle messenger to the husband’s desk. Only the most progressive employers will rise to a canteen for their workers.

Much of industry is still under state control and that is why so many places are called “.....Corporation” and so many trucks belong to the “.....Co-operative”. It is also the reason why there is so little street advertising, except for that folk art—the

gigantic hand-painted cinema poster. You may also be surprised how often the name Ceylon is seen, although Sri Lanka has been the official name of the island since 1972, there is a reason for this: the name "Sri Lanka" is held in great respect and it is not allowed to be used commercially.

If we stroll through the streets long enough, we will see the delicate pale green palm flowers strung across the road, which are a sign of festivity, be it private or marking the visit of an eminent person. If there are strings of plastic bunting in green, blue or red, it announces a political meeting. The flag, consisting of five vertical stripes with the same colours repeated horizontally at the end, is the Buddhist flag indicating a temple festival. In the country, the entrance to the area of the festivity will often be marked by an elaborately-made gateway, constructed from fresh palm fronds woven with great skill and artistry. White flags denote a funeral. The coffin is accompanied to the burial or cremation site in procession: if the mourners are all male, wearing head coverings and walking fast, chanting, it is a Muslim funeral.

Two sturdy banana trees at either side of a doorway indicate a Hindu wedding is taking place inside. Any wedding is a sight worth seeing for the magnificent show of dresses and jewellery which, even in a poor country, it occasions. Weddings, incidentally, can take place at the unlikeliest times of the day as the auspicious hour is determined astrologically. The reception is held at a convenient time later.

Astrology is a very important influence in all sections of society, irrespective of community, education or social status. Casting a horoscope is a highly complicated and individual matter and the sort of astrological forecasting according to zodiacal signs, beloved of Western women's magazines, is looked on by a Sri Lankan as a master builder would on a baby's wooden building blocks.

Although a visitor, one hopes, would not actually see the divisive influence of race, religion and caste in Sri Lanka, they are factors which are very much in existence and racial intermarriage is rare. Race in this context has nothing to do with colour but refers to two communities of Indian origin, the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The twin barriers of religion and language aggravate the "racial" differences. It is Sri Lankan nationalism and the English-speaking Christians of both communities which form a link.

Among the Sinhalese, caste is no longer of profound importance, though in some families it still matters when it comes to marriage.

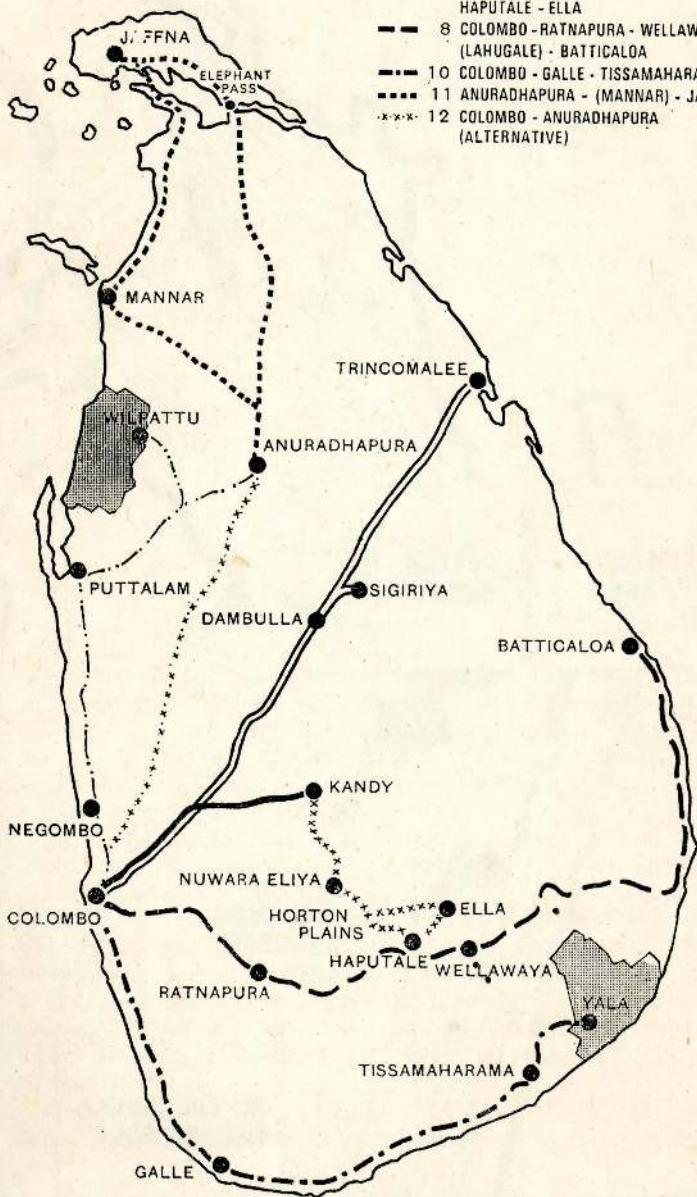
Caste is very different from social class. Class is always hierarchical with the small minority occupying the tip of the pyramid. In the Sinhala caste system the pyramid is reversed; the top caste are the cultivators, who form the great majority of the community. Also, unlike the Indian system, there are no Harrijans or outcasts. Sinhala family names denote caste and the many Portugese names, such as Perera, Fernando and Pieris, are, in part, a sign of conversion to Christianity in Portugese times, but, more often, were adopted deliberately to escape the identification with a low caste, which the old name implied. The Jaffna Tamils are organised more closely along Indian caste lines, though the absence of a significant number of Brahmins means that, in Jaffna, they do not hold the dominant position in the caste structure which they occupy in India.

Standing on the street corner, it will not be long before someone comes and speaks to you; while it may be a beggar or a street vendor, the chances are it is merely a Sri Lankan displaying the usual friendliness of the people. Do not be embarrassed by his personal questions: "What is your country?" "Do you have children?" etc. Courtesy demands that he should take an interest in the important matters of life and not confine his remarks to the weather.

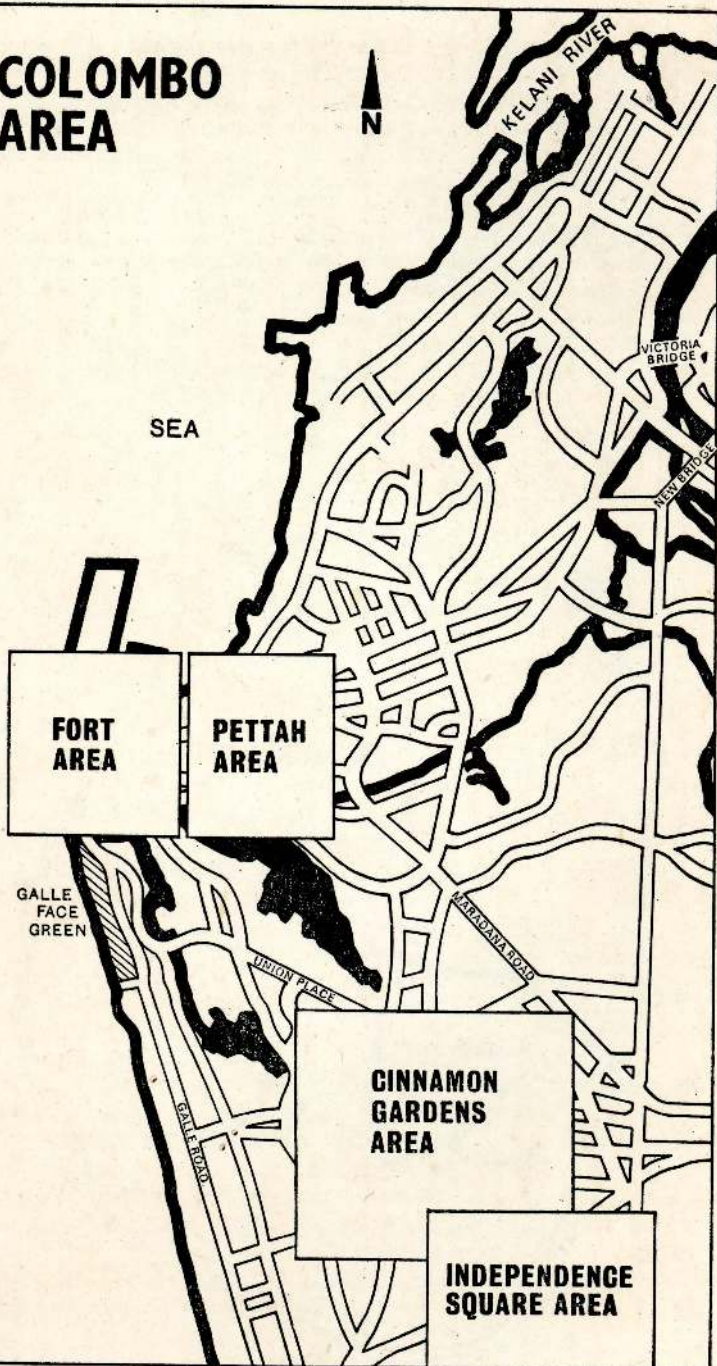


ITINERARIES

- 2 COLOMBO - KANDY
- == 3 COLOMBO - DAMBULLA - SIGIRIYA - TRINCOMALEE
- - - 5 COLOMBO - NEGOMBO - PUTTALAM - WILPATTU - ANURADHAPURA
- xxxx 7 KANDY - NUWARA ELIYA - HORTON PLAINS - HAPUTALE - ELLA
- - - 8 COLOMBO - RATNAPURA - WELLAWAYA - (LAHUGALE) - BATTICALOA
- - - 10 COLOMBO - GALLE - TISSAMAHARAMA, YALA
- ... 11 ANURADHAPURA - (MANNAR) - JAFFNA
- .x.x.x. 12 COLOMBO - ANURADHAPURA (ALTERNATIVE)



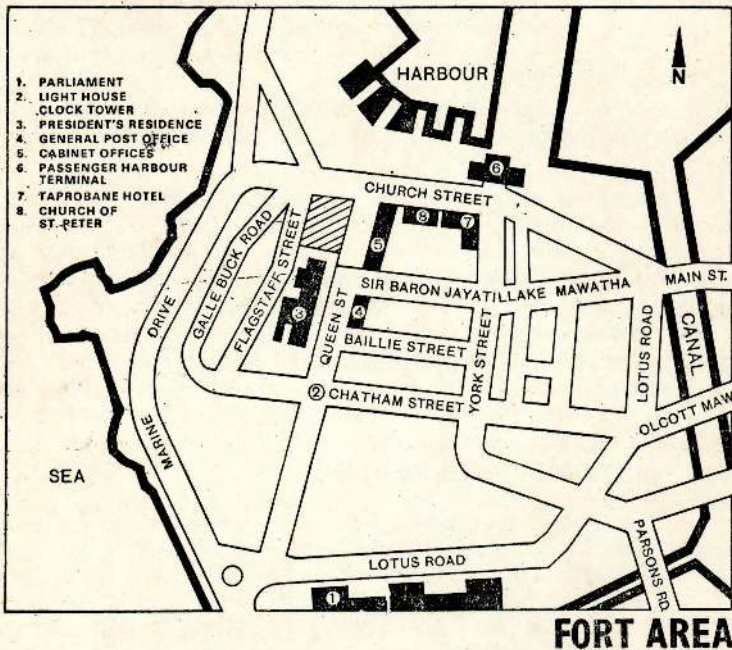
COLOMBO AREA



ITINERARY 1

Colombo (4 walks and 2 excursions)

Walk No. 1 — The Fort (1 hour)



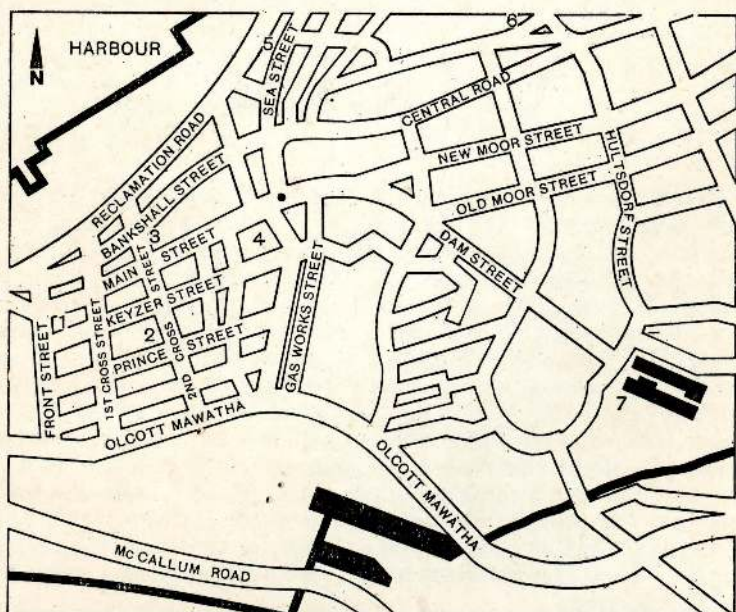
We start from the North end of *Galle Face Green*, at a fountain with three dolphins. On our left is the sea and a promenade lined with old cannons, going past a small lighthouse on the foreshore, past the unfinished Dagoba to commemorate 2500 years of Buddhism, eventually to the harbour, and the breakwater. (This is a pleasant, but by no means essential, seaside stroll taking 20 minutes each way). Standing at the dolphin fountain, on our right is the brown stone *House of Parliament* (1), with the Ministry of Finance directly behind (opposite the Ministry is the Tourist Police, whose services, hopefully, will not be needed). Straight ahead is a slight rise with a *lighthouse clocktower* (2) at the top, probably the only lighthouse in the world in the middle of a cross roads. It was on this hill that the Portugese and the Dutch built their forts. On the right, at the foot of the incline, is a series of elegant, two-storied buildings built round a grassy parade ground—*Echelon Barracks*.

As we walk to the clocktower, we leave the *Inter-Continental Hotel* and *Central Bank Building* on the left. We continue on,

beyond the clocktower and past the *Hatton National Bank*. The next building on the left is the *President's residence* (3) once the residence of the Governor. *The General Post Office* (4), is immediately opposite. Beyond, the road swings right and, as it does so, looking to the left and at right angles to the street, we see a line of buildings with awnings over the windows. These are the elegant *Cabinet Offices* (5), once the Senate. The road continues slightly downhill and traffic forks left and right, being barred from going straight on. Colombo's largest shops are on either side of the road before the fork (and continue along the road to the right). We, however, will turn left.

Ahead of us is the now disused *Passenger Harbour Terminal* (6). On the corner on the left is the *Taprobane Hotel* (7), the oldest in Colombo; from its 4th floor Harbour Room Restaurant the best view of the harbour can be obtained. Making a brief detour by turning left at the Taprobane Hotel corner, we follow the signs to the Mission to Seamen, and come to the interesting early 19th century *Garrison Church of St. Peter* (8), which was at one time the banqueting hall of the Governor's House. If we retrace our steps to the Taprobane Hotel and go straight on, skirting the harbour on our left, we come to:

Walk No. 2 — The Pettah (2 hours)



- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. OLD DUTCH CEMETERY | 5. SEA STREET TEMPLES |
| 2. THE OLD POST OFFICE | 6. THE WOLFENDHAL CHURCH |
| 3. PETTAH MOSQUE | 7. COURTS OF JUSTICE |
| 4. OLD TOWN HALL | |

PETTAH AREA

The Pettah, once a Dutch residential suburb, is now the busy bazaar of Colombo. Except on Sundays, when most shops are closed, a visit to the Pettah is best made on foot. The following route can, however, also be followed by car.

At the entrance to the Pettah stands another clock tower; just to the right is the moderately wide Main Street. Following this, we take the first turning to the right (First Cross Street). This is, in turn, crossed by Keyzer Street. We turn right at this cross road and a few yards along, on the right, is the police station. Along the far boundary wall of the police station yard is the site of the *old Dutch cemetery* (1) founded in 1656. Many of the tombstones have been preserved there and give some idea of the hazards of life in those days.

Retracing our steps to First Cross Street and turning right to the next cross road (Prince Street), we then turn left into Prince Street. The colonnaded building on the left, near the Second Cross Street, is the *old Post Office* (2), at present being converted by the Department of Archaeology into a museum of the Dutch period. Turning left down Second Cross Street, back to Main Street, we see, just beyond Main Street, the startling red and white *Pettah Mosque* (3). We turn right into Main Street and continue along it. Main Street ends in a round-about, with the *old Town Hall* (4) on the right, surrounded by a covered produce market. There are plans to move this market to make more space in the centre of the Pettah.

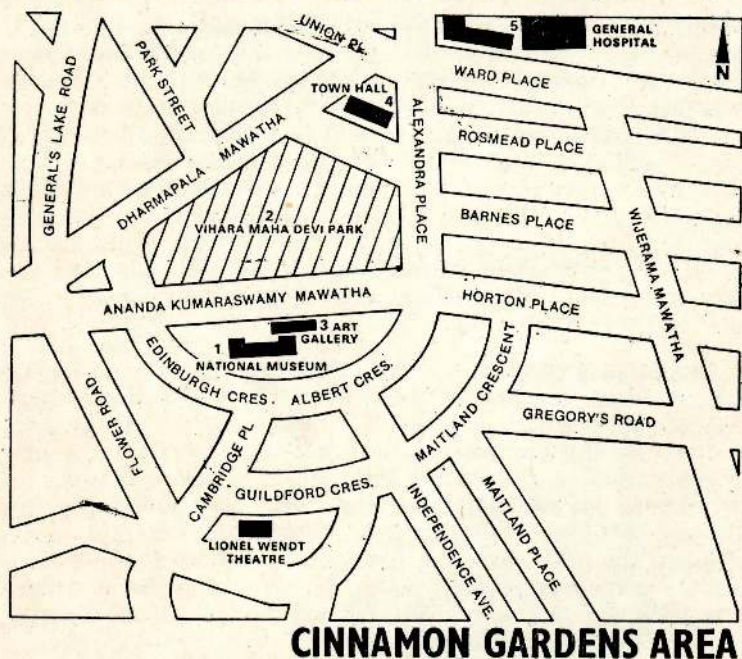
Immediately to the left is a small square, at the far end of which are three roads. The one on the extreme left is *Sea Street*, which starts off as the road of goldsmiths, whose shop signs give the street an atmosphere very reminiscent of Hong Kong. Beyond the goldsmiths' shops, on the left, are *three Hindu Temples* (5) with ornate, but relatively restrained, decorated roofs. They are dedicated to three personifications of the God Kataragama. As Murukan, the god married a human princess with whom he is re-united each year in July, when, in procession, he is carried on a decorated carriage to the Pillayar Temple, Bambalapitiya, in South Colombo, marking the Vel festival.

Returning down Sea Street to the small square, we take the third of the three roads out and this shortly swings up a hill to the right. At the top of the hill is the large, grey **Wolfendhal Church* (6), with its red corrugated roof. This is the oldest extant church in Colombo, having been built in 1749. The inside is of great interest, mainly because of the fine tombstones, some of which pre-date the church (having been transferred there from the old burial ground in Gordon Gardens in the Fort). Also of interest are the fine old pulpit and pews, and the church registers.

From Wolfendhal Church we continue the few steps to the top of the hill and into Central Road. We cross Central Road and go down the narrow road just by the clocktower, which stands at its highest point. This lane leads first downhill then uphill through typical old, and rather dilapidated, Dutch-style buildings to the legal centre of Colombo, the colonnaded *court houses* (7) of Huldsdorf.

Following the road downhill from the law courts and bearing right, we reach Olcott Road, which marks the boundary between the Pettah, on the one side, and both the railway line and Colombo's main bus stands, on the other. Ahead, the buildings of the Fort are clearly visible.

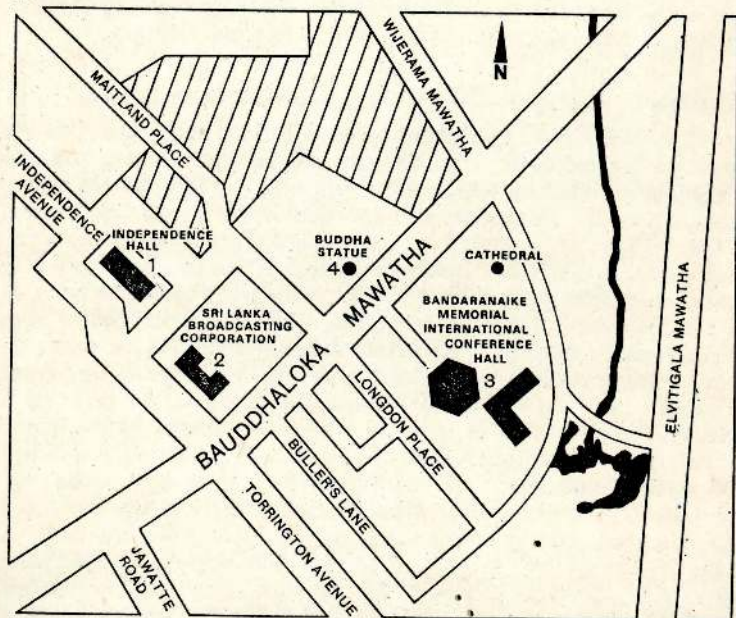
Walk No. 3 — Cinnamon Gardens (½ hour, excluding museum)



We will start at the *National Museum (1) (closed Fridays & Saturdays). The ground floor contains a collection of antiquities, the first floor natural history, some pictures and furniture. A visit is best begun by turning right inside the building, going through the stone age artefacts, to a permanent exhibition which shows the development of Sri Lankan art in a well laid-out and clearly-labelled way, thus providing a good introduction to the rest of the collection.

After looking at the museum, we come out on to the road and turn right, continuing until we come to a dual carriageway (on the way note some of the fine old residential buildings opposite). When we turn right into this dual carriageway at the Boy Scout Memorial, we have *Vihara Mahadevi Park* (2) on our left. On the right hand side, opposite the Park, is the *Art Gallery* (3), which sometimes has interesting special exhibitions. Crossing the road from the Art Gallery, we turn into the park and walk through it. On our right is a white-domed building, the *Town Hall of Colombo* (4), behind it is a mosque and beyond that again, De Soysa Circus, with the complex of hospital buildings which make up the *General Hospital* (5). South of the hospitals, and going away from the park, are four parallel roads (Ward Place, Rosmead Place, Barnes Place and Horton Place) which form the heart of the fashionable *Cinnamon Gardens Residential area*.

Walk No. 4 — Independence Hall, Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (½ hour).



INDEPENDENCE SQUARE AREA

We start at *Independence Hall (1), a building inspired by the Royal Audience Hall at Polonnaruwa. The Hall stands at the head of Independence Avenue. Looking down the Avenue, on the left near Independence Hall, we see a white building with a row of

arches, the *Sri Lanka Foundation Institute*, which is primarily a conference hall donated by West Germany. Beyond it strange-shaped buildings mark the remains of a trade fair held in the 1960s, of which only the planetarium remains functional. If we turn round so that Independence Avenue is now behind us, we can see the aerials of the *Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation* (2) ahead. Walking round this block to the left, keeping the broadcasting complex on our right, we turn right into Maitland Place and pass the *Ceylon Institute of Scientific & Industrial Research* on our left. We then come to a major road, called *Bauddhaloka Mawatha*, and turn left.

A short walk takes us to a large, octagonal building, set well back on the right: this is the *Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall* (3) presented to Sri Lanka by the People's Republic of China. Opposite, on our left, is a replica of the *giant, standing Buddha* (4) of Aukana. Just beyond the Memorial Hall stands the *Anglican Cathedral*. On a Sunday it is worthwhile retracing our steps along *Bauddhaloka Mawatha*, past the Broadcasting Station, to the fruit and vegetable market, which lies just beyond.

Excursion I — Kelaniya (By car 1½ hrs. incl. tour of temple)

Three miles N.E. of Colombo, just off the Kandy Road, is the temple of Kelaniya. It is an ancient and revered temple, the site of a legendary visit by the Buddha himself. The temple was partly destroyed by the Portugese and restored, with modern additions, in the 1920s. In January an important Perahera (procession) takes place. A visit to **Kelaniya Temple* is particularly popular with visitors who have little time but who wish to get an idea of the various types of temple architecture in Sri Lanka. Steps from the road lead to a typically Kandyan gateway, the *Makara Thorana*, the arch being formed by mythical animals (*Makara*) issuing from the mouth of a central mask. Beyond the gate, on the right, is a small Hindu temple. It is, however, the main image house which is particularly interesting. It has a typical, Kandyan, double-pitched roof, with a pattern of monochrome tiles. It is approached by a few steps (it is here that visitors must remove their hats and shoes). Below the first step is a semi-circular stone—the moonstone, which is one of the prides of Sri Lankan temple architecture. There is no fixed rule about the decoration of the moonstone except that it consists of concentric bands, the centre being a lotus blossom; other circles represent flowers, animals, flames, but never human figures. The steps have a carved dwarf in the centre of the rise and the balustrade is in the form of an elephant. The roof of the image house portico is supported by Kandyan pillars, i.e. octagonal with square sections at intervals. The capitals loop down in four directions and are carved.

The main hall is, apart from the Dagoba, the oldest surviving part of the temple and is decorated with frescoes. The geometrically patterned ceiling paintings are also of note. On the right, stucco guard figures flank the entrances to the hall housing a gigantic, reclining Buddha image. The other rooms of the image house are modern additions and the frescoes, especially those in the outer chamber to the actual image room, are consciously reminiscent of the style of the Sigiriya frescoes. In the centre, they illustrate the sacred ploughing ceremony (which, incidentally, is Brahminical) and the council at Aluvihare, where Buddhist scriptures were codified: the ante-room on the right shows the bringing of the Sacred Tooth Relic, while that on the left illustrates the coming of the Sacred Bo Tree. The paintings in the room to the left of the main hall show the history of the temple, the scenes opposite the entrance illustrating the destruction of the temple by the Portuguese and its restoration in the 1920s. The exterior wall of the image hall is decorated by figures of gods and goddesses, in niches, and by rows of elephants and dwarves, copied from Polonnaruwa.

On the right of the image house, as we face the entrance, is the Dagoba or Stupa. This is a symbolic structure, without which no Buddhist temple is complete. Legend has it that it is built over the jewelled throne on which the Buddha sat when he visited Kelaniya. On the left is a Bo tree with a Buddha image and metal stands for oil lamps. Further left are a small museum, a preaching hall and a very modern belfry (1977).

Excursion II — Dehiwela Zoo (5 miles) and Mt. Lavinia (7 miles)

If we start from Galle Face Green see Walk No. 1, p. 45 at one end of the Green, beside the sea, is the *Galle Face Hotel*. The Galle Road runs parallel to the sea all the way to Mt. Lavinia, and eventually, as the name implies, to Galle. Moving South, immediately behind the Galle Face Hotel, is the *American Embassy* on our right, *St. Andrew's Scots Church* and the *Lanka Oberoi Hotel* on our left and then, a little further on, the gardens of "*Temple Trees*", the official residence of the Prime Minister and, immediately opposite that, the *British High Commission*.

Beyond that, it would be difficult to find the route of inspiring beauty or interest; it is a ribbon development of shops and houses, with dense population in the municipalities of Wellawatte and Dehiwela. At Dehiwela we find a traffic island with a quadruple lamp standard. Taking the first lane on the left after the island, we come to the *Sri Subhadarama Temple*, Karagampitiya, with some most charming wall paintings. There is also a reclining Buddha image, with sapphire eyes shining in the light of an oil lamp.

A little further down the main road is a sign on the left, directing traffic to the Colombo Zoo. *Colombo Zoo is well stocked, in a relatively small area, but its trees and flowers make it a pleasant, relaxing zoo to visit and the skilful layout gives the animals generally ample space: cages and bars are kept to a minimum. In the evening, at about 5 p.m., trained elephants give a demonstration of their skills.

Having returned to the main road from the Zoo, a couple of miles further South, we come to the turning half right to the *Mount Lavinia Hotel*, originally the Governor's week-end residence. By its North side is the nearest, sizeable sandy beach to Colombo. Bathing is not always safe and local advice should be heeded—it is never safe to bathe near the hotel itself, because of rocks.

ITINERARY 2

Colombo — Kandy

Shortly after crossing the river Kelaniya, which marks the Colombo City boundary, there is the opportunity for making a detour to visit the Temple at *Kelaniya p. 50.

Once out of the suburban sprawl of Colombo, the road enters the landscape that gives the Wet Zone its charm: paddy (rice) fields winding their way along the banks of streams, often between coconut palms or hills planted with rubber trees.

About 17 miles (27 km.) out there is a turning on the left to *Gampaha*, beyond which are the small *Heneratgoda Botanical Gardens*, apart from their charm, these are of historical interest as some of the original rubber seeds smuggled from the Amazon were successfully grown here. These trees, which are still alive, are, therefore, the ones from which all rubber trees in Sri Lanka and throughout S.E. Asia are descended.

About 23 miles (37 km.) from Colombo, on our left, is the *tomb of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike*, former Prime Minister of Ceylon, who was assassinated in 1959. His widow, Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike, became the world's first woman Prime Minister.

29 and 30 miles (46 km. & 48 km.) from Colombo are two villages; the inhabitants of one specialise in growing cashew nuts, those of the other in weaving cane. Both are happy to sell to passers-by.

At the foot of the hill which descends from *Kegalle*, 52 miles (85 km.), is a turning to the left which leads to the *elephant orphanage* at *Pinawella*, where orphaned elephant babies are brought to be cared for until they can be trained to work. Like all small animals they are very charming but, before going, it is worth checking whether the orphanage is still functioning as, there are rumours of its impending transfer.

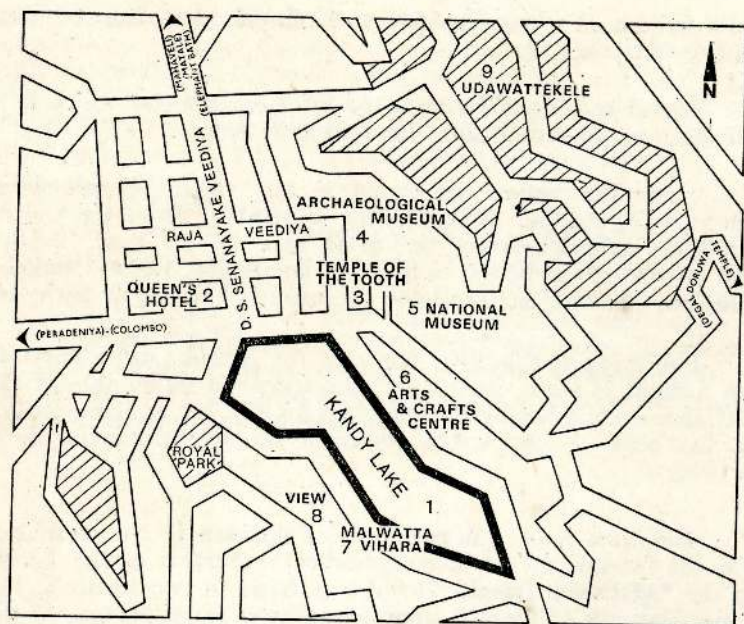
60 miles (96 km.) from Colombo the road climbs steeply, with a superb view to the right. The flat-topped mountain in the distance is called Bible Rock. At the last hairpin bend the road goes through a rock and it has been suggested that the tiny tunnel was made, in preference to simply removing the rock, so as to fulfil a prophecy to the effect that nobody could conquer Kandy permanently unless they had pierced the surrounding mountains.

At the highest point of the road, at *Kadugannawa*, there is a tall column commemorating Capt. Dawson, the soldier who supervised the construction of the road between 1823 and 1832 and died before its completion.

65 miles (104 km.) from Colombo a track on the right leads to three important 14th century temples. The first, called *Gadaladeniya*, is built on a low rock, and strong Indian influence can be seen in its architecture. The second, ***Lankatilleke**, is superbly positioned on a hill top, with a magnificent Kandyan tile roof with decorative pendant tiles at the edges, serene images and good murals. There is also, in a separate building, a treasury with a modern carved door of outstanding workmanship. Lankatilleka is a superb example of the brief Gampola period. The third, ***Embekke**, is a Hindu temple at the foot of a charming village street. It consists of a series of open pavilions, the largest with a rectangular roof resting on twin fans of beams radiating out from both ends of the central rafter. The whole roof is supported by superbly carved wooden pillars, which are the special glory of Embekke. One can reach Kandy from Embekke either by returning to the Colombo Road, or cutting through to the Kandy Gampola Road and rejoining the main Colombo Road at Peradeniya.

About 70 miles (112 km.) from Colombo, where the main Kandy road swings across the Mahaweli River, is *Peradeniya* village. On the right across the bridge is the *University Campus*—set in a park that was once a tea estate. On the left are the ***Botanical Gardens**, 150 years old and one of the finest botanical gardens to be found anywhere. Just inside the entrance is a plan of the gardens. There are three main sections. On the right are the green-houses (specially noteworthy is the orchid house), the spice garden and a formally laid out dell. To the left is a lake, beyond which, on the left, is the collection of different palms, medicinal herbs, and the garden illustrating the evolutionary relationship of plants—a kind of botanic family tree. Above the lake on the right, is a superb herbaceous border. The third and major part of the Gardens is devoted to trees, some planted in avenues, others arranged informally for the pleasure and relaxation of visitors.

Kandy itself is a further 4 miles (6.5 km.). ***Kandy** was the capital of the Kings of Ceylon for 300 years, while the whole coastal area of the island was under foreign, i.e. Portugese, Dutch and British control. It, therefore, became the repository of Sinhalese culture and this makes Kandy, even for a visitor, a place with an atmosphere and interest of its own.



KANDY

The main road brings us up the hill to the N.W. corner of the *lake, (1) beside the *Queen's Hotel* (2). A little further on, keeping the lake on the right, we come to the Temple of the Tooth and the remains of the Royal Palace, as well as two museums.

***The Temple of the Tooth** (3) houses the most sacred relic of the Buddha, the guardianship of which has been the symbol of supreme power in the land for centuries. Although the temple is open throughout the day, it is preferable to visit it between 9.30 - 11 a.m. and 6 - 9 p.m. when the doors of the inner shrine are opened and various other treasures can be seen. During this time traditional drumming takes place. The inner shrine is brightly painted, the actual reliquary being on the upper floor. The reliquary is behind a curtain and is protected by a thief-proof glass screen. The relic itself is inside a gold dagoba about 3 feet high and embellished with votive chains from various kings through the ages. This dagoba contains a further six of declining size—the Sacred Tooth Relic resting in the innermost. A smaller copy, which is carried in procession during the Perahera, p. 20, is also kept beside the true reliquary. The Sacred Tooth itself is normally displayed only once every four years.

Further precious Buddha statues, donated to the temple, are on display in a separate room and the library of Buddhist texts,

most written on rectangular strips of Ola palm leaf, can be seen in the Octagon.

Behind the Inner Shrine is the new Audience Hall which is a fine example of ornate, late Kandyan architecture.

Inside the palace compound is the small *Archaeological Museum* (4), reached by continuing straight on from the temple entrance, without crossing the moat back to the road. Behind the Temple of the Tooth, outside the compound, lies a ***National Museum** (5) with an excellent collection of Kandyan antiques.

Following the lake we come to the *Arts & Crafts Centre* (6) up a flight of steps on the left; the rooms at either side of the entrance contain Kandyan handicrafts for sale, but on the verandah at the back we can watch workmen actually producing these articles.

The drive round the perimeter of the lake is recommended. On the far side of the lake, opposite the Temple of the Tooth, is the ***Malwatta Temple** (7) which is built in two sections. The more Easterly of these is approached by a ramp leading to the monks' domestic quarters and is an interesting example of Sri Lankan domestic architecture. The other, containing the more public buildings, is approached by a flight of steps. The Image house is unusual and interesting. Built in two stories, the east side of the lower has vigorous stone carvings, while the upper is decorated with fine paintings. The shrine room itself is less distinguished, but contains images of both Vishnu and Saman—a local territorial deity—in addition to the more usual Buddha images and donor statues. The Malwatta Vihara is the chief temple of the Siamese Sect of Buddhists who revitalised Buddhism in Sri Lanka in the 18th century; as such, it is one of the few temples, in the island with the eight, typically Siamese, boundary stones round the image house.

Instead of returning to the Queen's Hotel along the short West bank of the lake, we continue West and bear left uphill. This steep road, Rajaphilla Mawatha, passes a small park on the left and goes to a point, almost opposite the Temple of the Tooth, from which there is a superb ***view** (8) of Kandy. From here you can also see the large forest behind the Temple of the Tooth, the *Udawattekele* (9). This peaceful wood can be reached by returning to the Queen's Hotel and following the road running at right angles to the lake. A little more than $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile along on the right, beside the Post Office, a road leads into the forest.

The road which leads from the Queen's Hotel to the Udawattekele forest is also the main road to the North. On this road, just to the left of the bridge across the Mahaveli River (still on the Kandy side), is the *Katugastota elephant bathing* spot. The elephants are real enough, but it would be idle to pretend that they perform any function other than pleasing tourists.

Across the river to the right, about a mile along, the road leads to the first diversion of the gigantic *Mahaveli irrigation scheme*, where surplus waters of the river are taken through a tunnel to feed the bed of another river and then through another tunnel to yet a third river. When the scheme is finished, large sections of the dry zone will become irrigated. On the way to the diversion, just after crossing a stream, the road on the left leads to *Matale*, with the rock enclosed temple of *Aluvihara* just beyond the town on the left, thence to *Dambulla*, P. 58.

ITINERARY 3

Colombo - Dambulla - Sigiriya - Polonnaruwa - Trincomalee

This route follows the one to Kandy until the 36th mile stone (58 km.) where there is a junction on the left to Kurunegala. We take this turning and the road goes past a rubber plantation, then across the Maha Oya river, through excellently kept coconut plantations to Kurunegala. This is one of several places which served briefly as capital of the country after Polonnaruwa became unsafe and before Kandy established its supremacy. Nothing of that glory remains.

A little way out of Kurunegala, the road goes through a short stretch of dark forest—there is another one nearer Dambulla. These are jak plantations, grown here for timber rather than fruit. The tree is a favourite for furniture, the light jak decorated with dark ebony providing the material for much of the best Dutch-style Sri Lankan furniture.

90 miles (144 km.) from Colombo is the sacred city of ***Dambulla**. Dambulla can also be reached from Kandy (Itinerary 1) and from Anuradhapura.

The temples of Dambulla consist of five caves on a ledge up Dambulla rock. The approach is from the Kandy Road on the East side of the rock. Although the ledge is 350 ft. (110 m.) up, the way is not hard; at first it goes across reasonably sloping bare rock and, finally, up 250 well-maintained, graded steps to the Kandyan entrance porch. The original temple caves were built in about 100 B.C. by King Valagamba who had used the caves as a refuge after being driven from Anuradhapura and converted them into temples in gratitude for the successful recapture of his capital. The temples are closed between noon and 2 p.m.

The first cave is a small one containing a large reclining Buddha some 40 ft. (13 m.) long, its fine workmanship was considered to have been beyond the skill of man and legend has it that the statue was carved by a god. The second cave is the one offering most to the visitor. It contains a small Dagoba surrounded by seated Buddha statues, and along the walls there are 66 images, some carved out of the rock, some brought later as votive offerings. Most are statues of the Buddha, but near the more westerly of the two entrances, facing into the cave, is a statue of King Valagamba and opposite him statues of Vishnu and Rama. The large, standing Buddha statue is surrounded by frescoes depicting the attack on

the Buddha by the demon Mara. On the bottom left the elephant bearing Mara makes obeisance to the Buddha, thereby unseating his rider. Behind the statues running along the end of the cave is a further series of frescoes depicting the battle between the Sinhala hero Dutugemunu and the Tamil prince Elara, the 2nd Century B.C. rulers who are the Sri Lankan symbols of chivalry. The remaining frescoes in geometric designs following the contours of the cave create the impression of walls covered in rich cloth. A curiosity in this cave is the constant drip of water from the roof which never ceases even during the most severe drought. The third cave also contains a large number of Buddha images but the walls are covered rather monotonously by 1001 repetitive paintings of the Buddha. The small cave of the five statues has fine frescoes but the restored paint is covered with a bloom which dulls their impact. The last cave is late Kandyan and was heavily restored in the 20th century. Apart from the temple caves, the ledge and its approaches offer superb views of the surrounding hills and countryside.

From Dambulla, a direct road offers an alternative route to Anuradhapura with the opportunity of making a short detour to view the giant Buddha statues at *Aukana* and *Sasseruwa* p. 105.

7 miles (11 km.) North of Dambulla a road to the right leads to the rock palace of **Sigiriya*. Although potentially an impregnable stronghold, the citadel appears not to have been fortified, but rather built as Mount Meru, the abode of the Gods in Hindu mythology—an immense public relations exercise by the patricide king Kassapa, who wished to be classed with the Gods in the eyes of his subjects.

Sigiriya's glory was brief: it was built in 477 A.D. and was abandoned when the founder king was killed 18 years later by his brother's armies—having inexplicably sallied forth out of his stronghold to do battle in open country.

The rock is best approached by a road across paddy fields just beyond the rest house. Visiting *Sigiriya* involves climbing many steps. People suffering from vertigo will not manage to go beyond the Lion's Paws but, by then, they will have seen the best *Sigiriya* has to offer. The smaller rocks on the approaches to the citadel were obviously used as lookout posts and the narrow footholds cut into the rocks for the guards can still be seen clearly. When in use, ropes and chains were fixed to provide a handhold. The first set of modern steps leads to the spiral staircase to the gallery in which are the famous **frescoes*. Whether these charming and beautiful figures represent goddesses or court ladies is not known

and matters little. They are certainly the oldest and arguably the finest frescoes on the island; stylistically they show great similarity to the Gupta frescoes at Ajanta in India.

Beyond the stairs to the frescoes are the remaining sections of the "*Mirror Wall*" with its original plaster which, tradition says, was given its high gloss by a mixture of lime, eggwhite and honey. Still visible are the 7th - 9th century graffiti, most referring to the frescoes. One speaks for visitors through the ages: "Who is not happy when he sees those rosy palms, rounded shoulders, gold necklaces, copper-hued lips and long, long eyes"?

A short climb from the Mirror Wall leads to the two gigantic *Lion's Paws* which are all that remain of the Lion Gate guarding the approach to the citadel itself. Originally the head must have been nearly level with the top of the rock. Metal steps lead to the edge of the rock but, before reaching the top, we have to traverse the rock face using the ancient footholds. These are deeply cut and, if taken slowly, present no difficulty since there is a modern hand-rail. The warnings against noise and smoking should be heeded because of the presence of hornet nests. Only foundations and reservoirs remain on the summit but the climb is worth while for the spectacular view. The palace was extended at ground level west of the rock, and is currently being excavated. A small *archaeological museum* stands at the West entrance.

There is a cross-country road to Polonnaruwa from the rock, but this is not passable after rain. A safer way is to return to the Dambulla - Trincomalee road and turn off to Polonnaruwa, p. 62, at *Habarana* 102 miles (165 km.) from Colombo. Habarana is a major cross-roads; to the East the road goes to Polonnaruwa and Batticaloa, to the West to Anuradhapura. The main road continues for 60 miles (90 km.) to Trincomalee, through scrub jungle, where wild elephants are seen sometimes, monkeys always, and at certain times of the year one section is alive with butterflies. The road at one stage runs along the "bund", or retaining wall of the large tank at *Kantalai*.

***Trincomalee**, 160 miles (250 km.) from Colombo, is one of the great natural harbours of the world. It has been claimed that the inner harbour alone could have accommodated the combined fleets of the Allied powers during the Second World War. The lack of hinterland means that, at present, the harbour is little used, but the building of a large flour mill and the proposed extension of the Free Trade Zone to Trincomalee will revitalise this town.

Apart from the naval dockyard, which is not open to the public, the most interesting spot is the Dutch *Fort Frederick built in 1655, with some superb banyan trees in the courtyard, through which one passes to the Hindu temple on *Swami-Rock. The original temple, associated with Ravanna, the villain of the Ramayana, p. 16, was destroyed by the Portugese. The present structure was built fairly recently but some statues from the old temple were recovered and can be seen in the grounds. Visitors are welcomed to the service, or Puja, and the evening service at 6 p.m., set against the sunset sky, is deeply impressive.

The coast road North of Trincomalee leads to superb bathing beaches at *Nilaveli*.

Five miles (8 km.) out of Trincomalee along the Anuradhapura Road (A12), we find the *hot springs of Kinniya*. They are used for ritual ablutions by Hindus and are remarkable for the fact that, although the springs are all within an area of about 10 yards square, the water of each is of a different temperature.

There are coast roads from Trincomalee to Jaffna in the North and Batticaloa in the South, but both involve using several ferries and so should be attempted only after obtaining reliable confirmation that the ferries are, in fact, operating.

ITINERARY 4

Polonnaruwa

For the route to Polonnaruwa from Colombo see Itinerary 3.

Of all the ancient cities in Sri Lanka, Polonnaruwa is the most immediately satisfying for a foreign visitor. It can be appreciated even without knowledge of religion or history; although the least accessible of the ancient capitals, its well-preserved ruins set in a park at the side of a large artificial lake should not be missed.

Polonnaruwa had been used by many Sinhalese Kings as a temporary refuge when Tamil pressures became too strong for them to remain in Anuradhapura. At times it too had fallen to the invaders from India. But it was only in the 12th century that it was established as a permanent capital, enriched with the royal buildings which go with this status. Almost all the remains of Polonnaruwa are from this century; by the end of 13th century Polonnaruwa had effectively passed out of history. The builder of royal Polonnaruwa was Parakrama Bahu I (the Great) and his work was continued by Nissanka Malla, a lesser man who deserved the sobriquet "the boaster"; a number of buildings were added in his time, but not nearly as many as he claimed.

Polonnaruwa is on the Batticaloa Road, 25 miles (40 km.) S.E. from *Habarana* on the Colombo-Trincomalee Road. 14 miles (22 km.) from *Habarana* a signpost to the left indicates *Hingurakgoda*; 12 miles (19 km.) along this road is *Medirigiriya*, a particularly fine round temple (*Vatadage*) but the length of the detour makes it more of a goal for a specialist than for a casual visitor. 25 miles (40 km.) from *Habarana*, just after some dull cement-walled stores, the road opens into a forest clearing with a few stone pillars marking ruins on both sides. On the left, making a sharp turn, is a lane signposted "to the ancient sites".

This marks the entrance to the North area of **Polonnaruwa* which stretches North to South along the banks of an artificial lake, the Sea of Parakrama Bahu. The easiest way to see Polonnaruwa is to start either from the North or from the South (where overnight visitors will have stayed). Some places are seen to distinctly better advantage in the mornings, when the sun is still not at its zenith.

Following the sign "to the ancient sites", the first site on the left is the ruins of two *Hindu shrines* (1), dedicated to Vishnu and Shiva. If we continue to the end of the road, ignoring for the moment the sign, "to the Lotus Pool", we come to the **Tivanka Image*

House (2), which stands on a hill at the end of the road. This is a Buddhist Image House built in South Indian style. The entrance at the East has the traditional guardstone depicting the guardian figure of the Naga King — a man crowned by the 7-headed cobra— holding the water pot and rice plant as symbols of wealth and prosperity. Behind the stones are Makara (a mythical composite animal) balustrades. The massive Buddha image is a badly-damaged, headless torso of a standing Buddha in the relaxed position— weight on one leg with the knee of the other slightly bent. (The name Tivanka means three bends and refers to this posture, which is common in attendant statues, but not usual in Buddha images). The interior walls of the Image House are decorated with superb frescoes of Jataka tales (stories of previous incarnations of the Buddha) and votive processions. The style is a clear development of the Gupta style of Sigiriya and marks its last flowering: later temple paintings are strongly influenced by the more primitive “folk art” of South India. The outside of the Image House is richly decorated and is best seen by walking round the “wrong” way, i.e. anti-clockwise, (traditionally Buddhist temples should be visited clockwise, “with the right shoulder to the building”). The architectural designs used on the external decorations are traditional South Indian, but represent a style of building which was ancient even by the 12th century. Some of the deities represented in niches are particularly fine. The West side of the Image House is noted for its irreverent frieze of numerous dwarves which continues along the South side, where the lower lion frieze should also be noted.

Retracing the road down the slight hill, we come to a path which branches to the right and leads to ***the Lotus Pool (3)**, a charming, artificial, stepped pool in the shape of an open, eight-petalled lotus blossom. The pool was fed by an underground conduit from the tank and presumably was used as a purification bath before visiting the temple.

Retracing the road further, we pass a path on the left leading to the unfinished *Demalie Maha Seya*, which was to be the largest Dagoba in the land; it is really not worth the detour. Beyond the path we turn left at the notice pointing out the way to the sites, past a small pond on the left. Here the road opens out, with several ruins and a Dagoba on a small hill on the right.

On the left, down a slope, is the way to the ***Gal Vihara (4)** (the glory of Polonnaruwa, which some visitors may prefer to leave as the grand finale to their visit). The Gal Vihara consists of four statues of the Buddha carved out of the granite cliff. The first is a seated Buddha in a contemplative posture. The background

shows a traditional Buddhist arch, in a style derived from the stone screen round the Stupa at Sanchi in Central India. Next, inside a cave carved into the rock, the pillars being part of the original rock, is another seated statue with attendants. Though of the same period, the style of this statue differs from that of the other three, suggesting it was carved by a different artist. It is less serene and its more naturalistic treatment indicates a greater Indian influence. On the right hand (East) side of the rock, beside the cave, is a large flat surface, which, on closer inspection, is seen to be an inscription listing in detail the behaviour expected of a Buddhist monk. Next is the large standing figure, with hands crossed in an unusual posture and body relaxed in the Tivanka posture (see 2 above). At one time this figure was thought to be that of the disciple Ananda, mourning the passing of the Buddha, but several signs prove it to be another image of the Buddha himself. Finally the 43ft. (13 m.) long, reclining statue of the Buddha as he passed finally to Nirvana. In Sri Lanka a distinction is drawn between the sleeping Buddha and the dead one. In the latter, the upper foot is slightly drawn back and the stomach drawn in to show that the last breath has been expelled. This statue is unusually naturalistic with the force of gravity indicated by the partial crushing of the pillow, the ear lobe following the line of the head, and even the little toe of the lower foot being slightly compressed.

Opposite the entrance to the Gal Vihara, on a low hill, is a complex of buildings. These are the remains of what is thought to be the University and royal burial grounds, as testified to by the number of relatively small, funerary Dagobas. The University was built on three levels. The first consisted of residential and general purpose buildings of which little except foundations and a few vertical supporting pillars remains. The brick wall separating the lower from the next level is being restored. On the next level is the *Kiri or Milk Dagoba* (5) which no longer looks milk white, but is the best preserved, unrestored, ancient Dagoba in the country. The small buildings around it are altars for flower offerings and small Image Houses. Behind the Dagoba is the large, cathedral-like Image House, the *Lankatilleke* (6), with architectural external decoration of the style of the Tivanka Image House. The fluted columns reinforce the impression of a European cathedral: their inward slope increases their strength to support the corbelled roof, which has disappeared. Opposite the Lankatilleke is a drumming hall of which only rather indifferent, carved pillars remain. Drumming forms part of the temple ceremony. At the next level is the *Buddha Sima Prasad* (7) or residence of the monks running the University. Of this little remains, but from it there is a fine view over the city.

Returning to the road, we continue South, leaving Gal Vihara on the left and the Lankatilleke complex on the right. The next

building we come to is the Dagoba of the *Rankot (Gold Pinnacle) Vihara* (8). The top of the pinnacle was sheathed in gold, hence its name. Near the entrance is a square table with an inscription describing the building of the Vihara. Various carvings are to be found around the flower altars and Image Houses; bearded gnomes, lotus rosettes, elephant heads and the brick core of a reclining Buddha statue.

Continuing, the road leads through the city wall into the Inner City by the North gate, where the original paving has been restored. Just inside the wall are a few remains of two Hindu shrines; it was here that some of the famous Polonnaruwa bronzes (now in the Archaeological Museum at Anuradhapura) were found.

Shortly after, we come to a cross roads. Turning left we continue $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to the end of the road where, in a peaceful clearing, stands a small 11th century **Shiva temple* (9), a reminder that before becoming the Sinhalese capital, Polonnaruwa was at times occupied by the Tamils. The temple is a jewel of restrained Hindu art with the Lingam and Yoni still in the central chamber. The present guardians of the temple are the monkeys, who are the subject of scientific study, and visitors are requested not to feed them.

Retracing our path, about halfway to the cross roads, on the left we see the *Pabalu Vihara* (10). This Dagoba, currently being restored, is remarkable in that it appears to consist of an inner, pot-shaped Dagoba with an outer bubble shape built over it, giving it now the appearance of an astronomical observatory. Around the base of the dome are some fine, quartz Buddha images.

Returning to the cross roads we turn left, i.e. we continue in the same direction as before branching off to the Shiva temple. After a short distance, on the right is "the Quadrangle", an artificial platform on which has been built a collection of fascinating temples. The steep steps up are original and the trough at the foot was for the washing of feet. In the N.E. corner is an unusual, square, pyramidal, *seven-storeyed Dagoba* (11) (one storey is missing), with niches for statues. It is Burmese in style and probably reflects the contact between Sri Lankan and Burmese Buddhists at that period, also recorded in the Chronicles. Nearer to the stairs is an inscription stone 27 ft. (9 m.) long, *the Galpotha or Great Book* (12). This was prepared at Mihintale, 70 miles (112 km.) away, and brought to Polonnaruwa on wooden rollers, pushed by elephants. Not surprisingly the inscription tells of the deeds of the boastful Nissanka Malla. The figure carved into the side of the "book" is the Goddess Lakshmi. Behind the book is the *Hatdage* (13), an Image House also built by Nissanka Malla to

house the Sacred Tooth Relic. The outer wall of fitted, dressed stones is unusual for Sri Lanka. The first inner chamber has many inscriptions and three Buddha images remain in the second inner chamber. Steps lead to an upper storey where the Sacred Tooth Relic itself was kept. It was an indication of the sanctity of the Relic that it was placed above the heads of the Buddha images in the chamber below: normally nothing except a roof was allowed to be higher than the Buddha image.

Moving further into the Quadrangle the next building we come to, behind the Hatdage, is the older *Atadage* (14), also built to house the Sacred Tooth Relic, by Parakrama Bahu the Great's predecessor, Vijayabahu. Opposite is an unidentified Royal statue and, beside it, the *flower altar* (15), with its writhing stalk columns. It is said this was built by Nissanka Malla for public display of the Sacred Tooth Relic and for the king to sit during the reading of the Buddhist scriptures.

On the edge of the wall nearest the tank is an unidentified temple and, looking over the wall, we can see a well-preserved example of 12th century domestic plumbing—a latrine with its septic tank.

Following this wall to the South (left), we reach a large building (the only one with its roof intact). This is called the *Thuparama* (16) and is in the style of a South Indian temple. The outside is rectangular but, inside, a corbelled arch of great delicacy provides cover for eight quartz Buddha images. The walls, where pierced by window openings, are 6 ft. (2 m.) thick.

Further South are the remains of the oldest building of the Quadrangle, a *Shiva temple* (17), but it is in such a ruinous condition that it is of little interest, except to the professional archaeologist.

Finally, as a climax to a visit to the Quadrangle, we come to *the Vatadage* (18), or round temple, of Parakrama Bahu the Great. This combines Dagoba with Image House, four Buddha statues being placed around the small central Dagoba. The whole was covered with a wooden, domed roof, supported by stone pillars. The Vatadage is approached by stairs, an inscription at the side of which falsely* claims the credit for its building for Nissanka Malla. A beautifully-preserved moonstone at the foot of the steps shows realistically carved animals. Unlike Anuradhapura, where the animals share one frieze, in Polonnaruwa each has its own and each elephant's posture is different. At the right hand end of the friezes the animals turn to look back to round off the design (or perhaps the artist had not left enough space!). Also

unlike Anuradhapura, there is no representation of the bull, probably because growing Hindu influence had made it unacceptable to step on so sacred an animal. The rises of the steps are richly carved. The outer wall is made up of flowers, filigreed near the entrance. Just to the left of the North entrance to the inner chamber, we should note the dwarf frieze of boxers, drummers etc. At the East entrance is a pair of magnificent guardstones. The elegance, lightness and even slight decadence of the Vatadage celebrates the final flowering of the Polonnaruwa civilisation.

From the Quadrangle the road goes on through another part of the city wall, where an inscription tablet states that beyond the wall lay the pleasure gardens of the Royal Palace; but of these, nothing remains. In this inner enclosure are the massive walls of the original 7-storeyed *Royal Palace* (19). The ground floor, first floor and parts of the second floor remain. The grooves in the wall were made to house the huge wooden beams, both vertical and horizontal, which supported the ceilings. Much plaster remains on the walls and the composition of the rock-hard mortar, which still holds the bricks after more than eight centuries, is a mystery.

Standing with our backs to the Royal Palace, and with the Quadrangle on our left, we can see a restored city wall. Between it and the palace, are the foundations of the administrative buildings and, just beyond the city wall, near the canal, is the restored *Royal Bath* (20) and the adjacent dressing room. Just inside the wall are the remains of the **Audience Hall* (21). Its main attraction is the stone friezes on the base of the platform, especially the wonderfully lively elephants forming the bottom frieze.

Returning to the Quadrangle, but turning left just before reaching it, we come to the main road just outside the city walls. There we turn left and then bear right up to the bund, or edge of the lake. At the top is the *Rest House* (22). It is also the last royal residence of Polonnaruwa; what is now the dining room was added as an apartment for Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain during her state visit in 1954. Just north of the Rest House are traces of *Nissanka Malla's* palace (23) — he built his own as he was too proud to occupy Parakrama Bahu's; just beyond it is his *Audience Hall* (24), where the names of the counsellors are inscribed on the columns. Rather more interesting, just below the Rest House on an adjacent hillock, is a small but well-arranged *Archaeological Museum* (25).

We then follow the bund South for about a mile until the road continues straight inland while the lake shore swings right.

On the left, just opposite the Residency, is a small parking place. A hundred yards away, half right, is the *Potgul Vihare* (26) or library, a dome with decorative Dagobas in each corner. The ruined remains of small surrounding buildings suggest rest or reading rooms.

Finally, turning to the North, we find, carved into a rock, the famous *Statue* (27) of a bearded man, carrying what might be an ola-leaf book. There is considerable controversy as to who he is and what he holds. However, it is pleasant to think of the statue as it is popularly regarded: Parakrama Bahu the Great, the builder of Polonnaruwa, with his task complete.

ITINERARY 5

Colombo - Negombo - Puttalam - Wilpattu - Anuradhapura

The road to Negombo also leads to Colombo's International Airport. This road consists of 25 miles (40 km.) of ribbon development and a slightly longer, but considerably more attractive, route is to go along the western edge of Negombo lagoon. This route is easy to find if, after crossing the Kelaniya River, we follow the signposts to the Pegasus Reef Hotel, to the left of the main road. These signs lead to a canal, built by the Dutch to connect Colombo with Negombo and Puttalam. Abandoning the signs where they indicate crossing the canal, we continue North, crossing at the next bridge. The road then goes straight to Negombo.

Negombo is a small fishing village with a largely Roman Catholic population, although originally founded by Arab traders. It is particularly picturesque in the early morning when the fishing boats come in to land their catch on the North shore of the town, where the market is also situated. On the South end of this shore is a small Dutch fort, which is a jail and not open to the public; beside it there is a church prettily situated on the water's edge.

Just North of Negombo are some pleasing beaches and a number of tourist hotels.

As we rejoin the main road North, our way goes through coconut plantations. The miniature, thatched huts one occasionally sees suspended between trees, are chicken coops, raised to protect the birds from predators. About 45 miles (72 km.) from Colombo is the village of *Madampe*, with a lake on the right. At the entrance to the village is a Hindu Kovil, or Temple with the horse on which the Image is carried in procession standing in the temple compound like a giant rocking horse. Hindu drivers invariably stop here to pray for a safe journey. A little further on we come to Chilaw.

Chilaw is a fishing port with a pleasant resthouse by the sea. In July/August a Hindu festival, including firewalking, takes place at the nearby village of Udappuwa. The road continues for a further 30 arid miles (48 km.) to *Puttalam* which is again on a lagoon, before turning inland towards Anuradhapura. 27 miles (43 km.) from Puttalam is a turning to the left which leads to *Wilpattu*, one of the two, large, wild life sanctuaries in Sri Lanka; the other being Yala, p 94.

If we have a jeep—an ordinary car is not recommended—we can go into *Wilpattu for a few hours and might see game, but the waterholes are about 15 miles (24 km.) from the park entrance and game is best seen at dusk and dawn so it is much better to spend at least one night, preferably more, in the park. Such a visit has to be organised in advance; a cabin has to be booked and all provisions and equipment, except furniture and cooking utensils, must be taken. This can be arranged through travel agents, but, to avoid a 100 mile jeep ride from Colombo, many people prefer to arrange their safari through the management of the Anuradhapura Resthouses.

The speciality of Wilpattu is leopards which, unlike leopards anywhere else, are not nocturnal. Although there are elephants in the park they are not as common as around Yala, the other major reserve. Bear, wild boar, buffalo, several species of deer, jackal, monkey, and crocodiles are to be found and the park is rich in bird life. But the dry climate does not support the large number of animals which are found in East Africa for example.

From the branch road to Wilpattu it is another 20 miles (32 km.) to *Anuradhapura*, p. 71.

ITINERARY 6

Anuradhapura - Mihintale

Anuradhapura

To reach Anuradhapura from Colombo, see Itinerary 5 and, as an interesting but slower alternative, Itinerary 12.

***Anuradhapura**, founded about 400 B.C., was the capital of Sri Lanka for 1,400 years, with only brief interruptions. It has always remained the spiritual capital for the Island's Buddhists because in 240 B.C. Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka at Mihintale, just outside Anuradhapura and 10 years later a cutting from the Bo tree under which the Buddha found Enlightenment, was planted in the city, where it still flourishes.

Anuradhapura, for the tourist, presents problems, especially if he is in a hurry. Because of their sanctity, ancient monuments have been restored and embellished by people whose devoutness was not always matched by a desire for historical accuracy. Regrettably, these restorations are large and distract the eye from the real beauties to be found in the city. It is worth making a conscious effort to enjoy the natural jungle setting and to look for the attractive small treasures, contrasting with the glare of white-washed, modernised Dagobas. The Sacred City of Anuradhapura is extensive and a car, or at least a bicycle, is essential.

A good starting point is the *Tissawewa Rest House* (1), within the Sacred City. The early colonial-style hotel, now itself a scheduled monument, is set in a park, full of fine trees. The trip round the Sacred City, including the museum, can be done in 4 hours.

Just North of the Resthouse, leaving the Government Offices on the right, there is a sign on the right pointing across to the ***Archaeological Museum** (2) on the left. Alternatively, the museum can be reached from the Ruwanwelisaya - Thuparama Road. The museum is the chief Archaeological Museum of the country and should on no account be missed (visit 3/4 - 1 hr.). A visit to the museum makes a useful start to a tour of the ancient city: on the other hand, if the visit is in the morning, it may be better to visit the ruins before the day gets too hot, returning to the museum later. The museum (open 8 - 4, except Tuesdays) consists of a single storey building, containing large Buddha statues from most

parts of the country, and a two-storey building, with various artefacts on the ground floor. These include some excellent, non-Buddhist carvings and a model of the Thuparama Dagoba, showing how it was originally covered by a wooden roof. Upstairs are some outstanding Hindu bronzes from Polonnaruwa. In the painting room, which is kept locked but will be opened on request, is the relic chamber from the Dagoba at Mihintale, with some interesting 7th century murals stylistically linking 5th century Sigiriya with 12th century Polonnaruwa. In the grounds are a number of stone inscriptions, other stones, with box-like holes (for treasures which were stored in Dagoba relic chambers) and mysterious ornately carved urinal stones. Nobody really knows why such effort was spent on such utilitarian articles but one theory is that it was the way a sect of very puritanical monks chose to show their contempt for artistic effort.

Taking the road running along the Western boundary of the museum to the right (North), on the right is the *Folk Museum* (3), open 9 - 5, except Fridays and Saturdays, which has a small, but charming, collection of everyday articles from rural homes, as well as agricultural and craft implements. There is a collection of rice granaries in the grounds.

Continuing along the road until we come to a tank (reservoir) on the left, (called Basawakulam), there is a branch road to the right. If we take this, on our right we find the huge ***Ruwanwelisaya Dagoba** (4). The original was built by the Sinhalese hero King Dutugemunu in 2nd century B.C. It was the first of the gigantic Dagobas and great care and devotion went into its construction. There was keen competition to receive the honour of building it, the task being given to a builder who demonstrated the shape by dropping water into a bowl causing a bubble to form. This original shape was lost in later restoration. Dutugemunu did not live quite long enough to see its completion: the nearly finished Dagoba was covered with scaffolding and white cloth to allow the dying king to visualise its completed state. It was last restored in the 19th century. The restored base of the Dagoba is surrounded by the front halves of elephants in high relief. The best approach is not direct from the road, i.e. the North, but rather from the West. Just behind this, and between the backs of the Archaeological and Folk Museums, is an excellently-restored fresh-water bath with steps. Walking towards the Dagoba, we should turn back to look at the outer wall, which has been skilfully restored. Just to the right of the steps, leading to the platform on which the Dagoba is built, three of the original elephants of the elephant wall have been left unrestored — now only brick cores. The steps to the platform

are immediately opposite one of the flower altars, built up against the Dagoba; this altar has a carved elephant frieze which is in good condition. Such altars are convenient spots for the devout to place their offerings of flowers and oil lamps. On the platform to the North are a number of stones recovered during restoration, some beautifully carved; to the South is one rather fine portrait statue, said to represent King Dutugemunu.

Because of the condition of the road, it is advisable to retrace our steps to the tank and continue right (North). The road swings East and leads to the ***Thuparama Dagoba (5)** on the right. This is the Dagoba which, in the past, was covered with a roof, as shown in the Museum. It is the oldest of the Anuradhapura Dagobas, having been built in the 3rd century B.C. shortly after Buddhism was introduced to the country, and is believed to contain the collar bone of the Buddha. The Dagoba itself was heavily restored, the original paddy-heap shape being transformed into a bell shape. The pillars, particularly the capitals, are finely carved. Immediately S.E. of the Dagoba is a temple with a good moonstone at the East entrance, a lintel door and pillars with unusual capitals behind it. This is all that remains of the original *temple*, built to house the relic of the *Buddha's tooth* (6), brought to Sri Lanka in 5th century A.D.

Taking the road due North from the Thuparama Dagoba we leave some small funerary Dagobas on the right. Eventually the road branches; along the right hand branch we can see a gigantic ruined Dagoba, to be visited later. For the moment we will branch left. On the right of this road is another small, restored Dagoba, *The Lankarama (7)*, 1st century B.C., whose pillars show that it too was covered by a roof. Just to the left of the entrance, beside the first of the outer row of pillars, is a finely-carved lion slab.

We follow the road past an artificial pond on the right—the ancient stone steps and walls on the far side being clearly visible—to a 'T' junction. The road to the left leads to the ruins of the Western Monasteries which were formed by a breakaway sect of puritanical monks. They offer little to the visitor as their treasures are now in the Museum, p. 71. Turning instead to the right, after about 100 yards on the right, we find excavations around a now isolated, seated Buddha statue, with very powerful and finely-carved features. A little further on, the road bears sharply to the right, with a dirt road to the left offering a short 200 yard detour to two real treasures. Just along the dirt road on the left, the large 8th century *Ratnapasada (8)* has one of the finest ***guardstones**. Under a Makara arch, supported on one side by a kneeling elephant, stands

the Naga king as a guardian figure. The Naga (seven-headed cobra) crowns the head of the figure, which stands for protection; the flower pot, in the figure's left hand, is a symbol of plenty; in the right hand the figure holds a lotus stalk, also symbolising prosperity. This is an excellent example of the later guardstones; earlier ones tended to use one or the other of these symbols in isolation.

A little further on, also on the left, on a bend in the road, is a temple made up of five square buildings, only the foundations of which remain. It is sometimes called the Queen's Palace, sometime *King Mahasena's Palace* (9). The *moonstone at the entrance to the central building is undoubtedly the finest in Anuradhapura. It has been suggested that the outer band of flame represents the fiery basis of the world, the next band represents the four peril of birth, disease, age and death, symbolised by an elephant, a horse, a lion and a bull; while the wide, floral band represents the life force. The next band depicts geese, carrying lotus blossoms. The goose is a symbol of discrimination: legend has it that when a goose is given milk mixed with water, it can drink the milk, leaving the clear water. The discriminating geese naturally lead to the central Lotus, the symbol of Buddhist philosophy.

As the dirt road is a cul de sac, it is necessary to return along it to the tarmac road and we then turn left. A few yards on, there is a 'Y' junction, both arms going into a bend. Before following the left-hand branch, it is worth looking at two strange structures, known as *medicine boats* (10), immediately to the right of the right hand branch. One is a long stone trough, open at the top and sealed at both ends; the other is a rather shorter version, with a flat grind stone in between them. The official theory is that this was a hospital and medicines were prepared in bulk in these tubs, having been ground and mixed on the flat stone. A set of very similar tubs at Mihintale is identified as food receptacles, while others think they were dyeing vats for monks' robes, which all goes to show how archaeologists can come to widely differing conclusions on the same evidence!

If we take the left-hand branch at the "Y" junction, there is on the right, a black, badly-weathered, seated *Buddha Statue (11), with the right arm broken off above the elbow. This statue, which looks unremarkable and even ugly from the road, is best appreciated by taking one short step from the left-hand corner of the railing towards the back of the statue. From here some people regard it as even finer than the far more famous Samadhi statue, which will be reached shortly.

We continue along the road. On the left, just where a road from the right forms a junction, stands the *Abhayagiri Dagoba* (12) (1st century A.D.). Larger than Ruwanvelisaya, it is in ruinous condition, with part of the base unfortunately restored in modern brick. The guardstones of oversized dwarves are unusual and old. In the 2nd century A.D. the monastery built around the Dagoba, had the dubious distinction of housing heretical monks, whose intrigues persuaded the king to dissolve and destroy the original Mahavihara monastery built round the Ruwanvelisaya Dagoba.

The road continues and bears right, soon coming, on the right, to a Buddha statue under a roof: the **Samadhi Buddha* (13). The statue is particularly fine but the unfortunate, opaque roof prevents adequate light from falling on it, except early in the morning. Still following the road, we cross a road marked "Sangamitta Mawatha" and, immediately on the left, are the superbly restored, interconnected *Twin Ponds* (14). Water for bathing was brought nearly 4 miles by underwater conduit and the piping can be seen near the far, left-hand corner of the further, smaller pond. The water was conduited to a settling tank and fed into the pond itself through a spout, near the beautifully carved Naga stone. Water from the small pond flowed through a now-covered hole into the larger pool.

If we retrace our steps a few yards to the crossroads and take the Southern or left-hand branch of Sangamitta Mawatha, after $\frac{1}{2}$ mile ($\frac{3}{4}$ km.) we reach a village which straggles for about another $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. On the far side of this village is the site of the former royal secular, as opposed to monastic, city, whose walls can still be seen. On the right is the foundation platform of the *Royal Palace* (15), behind two dwarf guardstones. These foundations have been excellently restored, using the original brick. The homes of ordinary people of that period, having been made of wattle and daub with thatched roofs, have long disappeared.

We then continue South along Sangamitta Mawatha to a crossroads, (Thuparama, with its pillars, is nearby on the right), and turn left to a second crossroads; this point can also be reached by continuing East then South from the Twin Ponds. Here we turn right (South) on to the surfaced road. On the right is a large, modern Pilgrims' Rest, and beyond is a very large, very ruined Dagoba — the *Jetavana Dagoba* (16), the largest in Anuradhapura. It is only a little smaller than the Great Pyramid, being 400 feet (120 m.) high and nearly as wide. The approach from the South is marked by two flower-pot guardstones. Opposite, and a little further on, is a modern building, with a lotus-shaped roof, housing the Anuradhapura Municipal Offices and, just beside it, nearer

the road, are the remains of an ancient *stone rail fence* (17). This is a traditional Buddhist design found around the ancient Stupa or Dagoba at Sanchi in Central India.

Next we continue along the road to the first crossroads and turn right. This road ends near the Sacred Bo Tree, which can be approached only on foot. On the left is a vast array of 1,600 stone pillars, most still standing. These were the support for the *Brazen Palace* (18), a nine-storey building with a copper roof, built to house the monks of the first great monastery.

We skirt the Brazen Palace, leaving it on the left. The path meets a long lantern-lit avenue at a fountain. On the left is the white, traditional gateway leading to the enclosure containing the ***Sacred Bo Tree** (19). The entrance is over a fine moonstone. The thick wall, pierced by square stones laid on their points, was built to protect the Tree from elephants.

The Tree is a sapling from the Bo Tree under which the Buddha received Enlightenment, and was brought to Sri Lanka in 230 B.C. by Sangamitta, the daughter of the Indian Emperor Asoka and sister of the Buddhist Apostle Mahinda, who had introduced Buddhism to Sri Lanka. The sapling has been growing on this spot for over 2,200 years and is, therefore, the oldest tree in the world with a recorded history. More important, it is, with the Buddha's Tooth, the most sacred Buddhist relic in the country. The sacred enclosure is surrounded by a gilt railing and contains the Bo Tree and some saplings from it. The original Bo Tree, best seen from the Eastern side, now consists of only one branch, supported on five props.

The Tissawewa Resthouse is about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to the West of the Bo Tree, reached by following the southern boundary of the Sacred Area. On this route we pass the partially restored ruins of a Dagoba, the *Dakkhina Thupa* (20), built in the 1st century B.C. It is now believed to be King Dutugemunu's Tomb. Two uprights from the flower altars on the South and North remain, both finely carved, the one on the North showing an unusually large, almost Persian, figure.

There are a few further sites worth visiting in Anuradhapura itself. Starting once more from Tissawewa Resthouse (1), we can take the Puttalam Road to the left outside the Resthouse garden: the prison is on the right and shortly after, the ruins of the *Mirisavatiya Dagoba* (21). This was built in the 2nd century B.C. by Dutugemunu, the Sinhalese palladin, after his victory over the Tamil ruler, Elara. Legend has it that when he put his standard in the ground it miraculously struck root and the Dagoba was built over it. There is, however, another story to account for its origin: the name means the "Chilli Dagoba". The story

is that one day the King ate some chillis without offering to share them with the monks and, as penance for this omission, built the Dagoba. The lower part of the bell-shaped Dagoba has been restored; the most interesting part is the finely-carved flower altar and canopy on the West side.

The Puttalam Road runs up to the bund (bank) of the Tissawewa tank, one of the two large tanks supplying Anuradhapura with water. It was built in the 3rd century B.C., at the same time as the Thuparama Dagoba. We then turn sharp left along the top of the bund and, a few yards after the pumping station, some ruins can be seen on the left; a hundred yards beyond them are some rocks and pools below the bund, on the left. This is signposted as the ***Gold Fish Park** (21), a royal pleasure garden consisting of two pools and three lotus ponds (of which two have dried out). The entrance is from the bund: first we cross the open conduit which used to bring the water. A rock, with steps, is on the right and an artificial, stone pool on the left. From the far side of this pool, looking back at the bund, a charming low-relief elephant frieze, carved in the rock itself, can be seen. The second pool is a little further South, supplied with water through conduits from Tissawewa direct as well as from the first pool.

We then return to the bund and continue South. A few hundred yards further, again on the left, is the rock temple of Isurumuniya. A flight of steps leads to the temple from the bund but a more attractive approach is to continue beyond the temple and to come down from the bund as the bank swings to the right, following the track until it joins a tarmac road and then turning left. On the right is *Vessagiriya* (22), where there are three caves which, in the past, were occupied by hermit monks. Drip ledges and ancient inscriptions can be seen. We must climb the steps from the road, walk along the ridge to the right and, near the South end, are the caves, one facing West, two East.

After returning to the road, the first turn to the left leads to the ***Isurumuniya Temple** (23) itself. The temple is a very old foundation, stemming from the earliest times of Buddhism in the island in the 3rd century B.C. It is a strange structure, incorporated in the rock. The temple buildings themselves are of little interest, but before we even reach the temple and its ticket office, there is a splendid stone throne on the left. Going beyond the large Image House, left of the ticket office, we come to a carved slab of very high quality, depicting a king in the traditional pose of relaxation with one knee raised, surrounded by three consorts and a child. On the right of the ticket office and on the left of the staircase is the famous carving of "the Lovers", believed to be

Prince Saliya and his wife, Asokamala. He was the eldest son of Dutugemunu, she a low-caste girl and by marrying her he forfeited his right to the succession. This subject, unusual for a temple, is thought to have been brought from the nearby pleasure garden. Beyond "the Lovers" are several grotesque carving and, actually on the outer side of the balustrade itself, are two fine, framed carvings of relaxing nobles. A new archaeological museum is currently being built to house these carvings but it is intended to replace them in situ with replicas. To the right of the steps is a small pond, at the edge of which are two low relief carvings of sportive elephants, treated with great skill and naturalism. Higher up, in a niche, is a carving of a man resting, with a horse's head seen above his right shoulder.

Retracing our path from Isurumuniya, we turn left at the main road to return to the Tissawewa Resthouse.

Mihintale

*Mihintale is 7 miles (11 km.) East of Anuradhapura, on the Trincomalee Road, and is the place where Buddhism first came to Sri Lanka in 240 B.C. This event is celebrated by the great Poson festival at the time of the June full moon. A newly-restored Dagoba on a hill dominates the landscape of Mihintale. The road to ancient Mihintale is a clearly defined crossroads in the centre of Mihintale village. We turn right and, after 400 yds., left. A short distance beyond, on the right, is the *old hospital* of the monastery. Close to the road is a carved stone *medicine bath*, used for immersing patients in healing oils. The foundations of the individual rooms can be seen clearly. In the central hall is a large grindstone where, presumably, medicinal herbs were blended with religious solemnity.

A little further on, where the steps to Mihintale hill begin, there is, on the left, a *temple*, consisting of five different structures, in outline similar to the so-called Mahasena Palace in Anuradhapura, except that here the central building was circular.

There are reputed to be 1,840 steps to the Dagoba of Mihintale, most well-cut and shallow, shaded by frangipani trees; however, the first half or so can be avoided by taking the road which leads to the right when we face the first flight of steps and following it to a 'T' junction. At this junction, where there are two small Dagoabas, we turn left and, after 400 yards, there is a dirt road, again on the left. This is the old carriage road from Anuradhapura and part of the original paving is still preserved. This road is motorable with care and comes out on a platform at the top of the first half of the steps.

Opposite the old Anuradhapura road, or to the left of the steps, is the *Refectory*, at the end of which is a long stone boat, i.e. trough, and to the left a smaller one. They probably contained the communal food for the monks. Although they seem enormous, they are just the appropriate size to contain a substantial meal for the number of resident monks mentioned by the Mahavamsa Chronicle. Other theories are that the troughs were for dyeing monks' robes or for storing herbs, needed in large quantities to distil medicines. Next to the refectory are the remains of a large *Image House* with two enormous slabs bearing 10th century inscriptions.

Beyond this again is the second flight of steps. About half way, on the right, is a large rock area with an ancient *inscription* in an archaic script, roughly protected by a railing. Opposite, on the left, near two small funerary Dagobas, is a shallow cave where drip ledges (to channel rain water to the side) indicate that it was inhabited at one time.

At the top of the steps is a flat area dominated by a Dagoba which, like Thuparama and Lankarama in Anuradhapura, was once covered by a roof; most pillars, but few of the capitals, remain. This is the *Ambastala Dagoba*, containing relics of Mahinda. Tradition has it that, in 240 B.C., on the spot on the South side of the Dagoba marked with a railing, Mahinda, son of the Emperor Asoka of India, met King Devanampiyatissa who was out hunting.

To test the King's intellectual fitness to understand Buddhist doctrine, Mahinda asked him:

"Oh King, what tree is this?"

"This is called a mango tree."

"Are there any other mango trees apart from this?"

"Yes, many."

"And are there any other trees which are not mango trees?"

"Yes, many."

"Apart from the other mango trees and the many trees which are not mango trees, are there any other trees?"

"Yes, this mango tree", said the king, pointing to the original mango tree and so proving himself fit to receive the teachings of the Buddha, which he quickly accepted. The site of this original mango tree is marked by a modern, octagonal structure.

Behind this is a rock with ancient steps, but modern handrails, leading up to a breath-taking *view*. Very near the top are two steep steps, otherwise the path presents no problem.

Returning to the Ambastala Dagoba and climbing the opposite hill, on the left beside a little pool we see a small cave temple, the *Mahinda Vihara*. The images in the Vihara are a modern portrayal of the Mahinda - Devanampiyatissa story. At the top of the hill is the *Mahaseya Dagoba*. The Dagoba has recently been restored and is a good example of the "bubble" shape. The relic chamber has been removed and can be seen in the Archaeological Museum in Anuradhapura. Behind the Dagoba is a modern Image House and a ruined, smaller Dagoba. From this vantage point two further ruined Dagobas, lower and to the North, can be seen. We shall visit the left hand one, the Kantaka Chaitiya, later. Returning to the Ambastala Dagoba, we continue to a path of rough steps leading down to the East to a small cave open at both ends, with a carved stone slab as its floor. This is *Mahinda's Cave*, where the apostle of Buddhism lived. The view from the cave is spectacular, but to reach it requires a long, steep walk in a "no shoes" area.

Returning, yet again, to the Ambastala Dagoba and going down the main steps, just beyond the railed rock inscription, now on the left, there is a not very clearly distinguishable path going half left. A detour of 400 yards or so along this path leads to the *Naga Pool*, a rock pool artificially enclosed, with an ablution basin at the North and steps into the pool. Between the two, cut in low relief into the rock opposite, is a five-headed Naga.

Returning to the main flight of steps and descending to the bottom, i.e. to the level of the Refectory and the Image House, we go along the Anuradhapura carriage road for a few yards and, on the left, are ruins of three small Image Houses, of little interest except that one has early flower-pot guardstones. On the East side, however, are the ruins of a **lion fountain* which formed part of a bath. A lion rampant, in full relief, facing outwards, filled the pool with water from its mouth. The wall against which he stands has lively dancer and lion friezes.

We next cross the old Anuradhapura carriage road and climb a straight flight of steps to the Dagoba, previously seen from the top of Mihintale hill. This Dagoba is called the Kantaka Chaitiya, named after the Buddha's loyal horse which lay down and died of grief when the Buddha left his home on renouncing the world. On the way, there are shallow *caves* on the left, once inhabited by hermit monks. Like so many Dagobas in and around Anuradhapura, the **Kantaka Chaitiya* has flower altars for offerings. The southernmost (facing the steps) and the one facing East are the best preserved. We should notice particularly the decorated vertical columns growing out of pots of prosperity and the fine female torso on the right-hand side of the Eastern altar.

From this Eastern offering table, a flight of frangipani-lined steps leads back to the Refectory level. We must now return to the tarmac road, either along the old Anuradhapura carriage road or by turning left at the foot of the 1,840 steps and following the path. From the Anuradhapura carriage road, we should turn left and go along the tarmac road for 400 yards to where there is a dirt track and a Sinhala signpost on the left.

Following the dirt track on foot, in less than 100 yards, we reach the ***Kaludiya Pokuna**, the Black Water Pool. It is a place of undisturbed quiet and tranquility with the remains of a 10th century temple complex built around the West side of the pool. We enter through a restored outer chamber with a slab roof; the remains of a square Image House built beside the pool opposite, can be seen. Continuing straight, on the right, we find a cave chamber with thick vertical and horizontal stone beams supporting a slab roof: the round arch was still unknown in Sri Lanka at that time. Although this temple was built for a very puritanical sect of monks, as we can see from the almost aggressive lack of ornamentation on the guardstones and balustrades, the whole complex has a tranquility and serenity which makes it memorable.

From the Black Water Pool we can either turn left for Kandy or retrace the road to Mihintale, from which we can go to Anuradhapura or Trincomalee.

ITINERARY 7

Kandy - Nuwara Eliya - Horton Plains - Haputale - Bandarawela - Ella

This route covers some of the most spectacular roads of the Hill Country. Our road starts just 4 miles (6.5 km.) outside Kandy at Peradeniya, where the Colombo - Kandy road swings North (or left, coming from Colombo) across the Mahaveli River. Instead of crossing the bridge into Kandy we keep straight on and our way leads to *Gampola*, 12 miles (19 km.) from Kandy. Gampola is another of the places which briefly housed the court, before Kandy finally became the capital.

Immediately after Gampola, the countryside changes and the road starts to climb through the tea plantations to Nuwara Eliya, just over 30 miles (48 km.) away but also 4,500 ft. (1,500 m.) higher. As the road climbs and twists through the hills new views open up; if there has been rain, waterfalls catch the eye, but the dominant theme is tea.

The tea bush is botanically a *Camellia* and teams of pluckers move across the fields every twenty days to pick the light green new growth — only two leaves and a bud. They pluck with both hands simultaneously and toss handfuls of tea into baskets on their backs. Each estate, indeed each section of the estate, has its own character and the time of day and the weather when plucking all affect the flavour and quality of the tea. The large, white buildings scattered across the countryside are the tea factories where the tea is processed. There are several stages in the preparation—withering, fermenting, drying, sorting and packing—and it is a highly skilled task to know exactly at which stage to start the next process, the fermenting being particularly sensitive. The tea taster has to be as expert as the most skilled wine taster.

At 6,000 ft. (2,000 m.) is *Nuwara Eliya, the City of Lights. Although the route from Colombo to Nuwara Eliya via Kandy is shorter and easier, there is an alternative road via Avissawella and Hatton, which is, if anything, more beautiful (see Itinerary 9). However, although only 10 miles longer, it is much slower because of its many twists and turns and is not recommended to travellers prone to car sickness.

As one approaches Nuwara Eliya, just beyond the top of the pass, on the left, are new trout hatcheries. Nuwara Eliya was originally a sanatorium, but, when roads improved and motor cars came to Sri Lanka, it became the hill station for expatriates

from Colombo. The climate and landscape were reminiscent of Scotland and it was in imitation of Scottish homes that Nuwara Eliya was built. The Hill Club and the Church are perfect relics of a Victorian life-style, but this is deceptive; the Hill Club, for example, was built as late as 1930. Nuwara Eliya boasts an excellent golf course, to which visitors are welcome, and a race course, where only ponies race. There is a large Municipal Park and an extensive lake, Lake Gregory. (Gregory was a Governor of Ceylon and his wife, Lady Gregory, became a patron of Yeats and of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin). But the chief attraction is the crisp, cool air.

Six miles (10 km.) from Nuwara Eliya, along the Badulla Road, are the ***Hakgala Botanical Gardens**, smaller and less exotic than Peradeniya, but with a great deal of charm. Beyond the entrance drive is a cunningly close-planted arboretum, with a particularly splendid collection of tree ferns. A great stillness pervades these woods, unless the resident family of monkeys is chattering nearby. By contrast, from the more open parts of the Gardens, there are fine views of the hills.

Two miles (3 km.) beyond the Gardens, a narrow, unsignposted road to the right leads to *Ambawela* and Horton Plains. This is a 20 mile (32 km.) detour which should not be attempted without a jeep unless the weather has been dry for several days, and then only after enquiry. (Instead of taking the detour we can continue to *Palugama* and turn off right to *Diyatalawa*, or go beyond *Palugama* to *Welimada* and then right to *Bandarawela*.) The road to *Ambawela* is spectacular but it is a mere hors d'oeuvre. It is followed by a brief drive to *Pattipola*, where the road crosses the railway track and becomes distinctly rougher. The road then climbs sharply up to the plateau of Horton Plains. What it may lack in quality—and it lacks a great deal—is made up for by the spectacular views.

Horton Plains is famous for its wild flowers which are at their best around Christmas. A food-growing campaign resulted in a short-lived potato farm there, but the land is now given back to the flowers which, one hopes, will speedily re-establish themselves. After several miles, past a track to the right and a house, the road forks, and to the right of the fork is the Farr Inn (not because it is far from everywhere, which it is, but named after Mr. Farr who built it). This is a place for refreshment before taking the track, preferably on foot as a car cannot get much further. Following the right fork, a 2½ mile (4 km.) walk brings us to the two look-out points: the ***Lesser and the Greater World's End**. These are about ½ mile apart, both are at the edge of sheer cliffs, with a drop of

over 3,000 ft. (1,000 m.) and look straight across the Southern plain, beyond the huge Uda Walawe reservoir, to the sea near Hambantota. The chances of the view being clear are better in the morning. Incidentally, Horton Plains are named after Governor Horton, whose wife was the inspiration of Byron's "She walks in beauty like the night". From World's End the path goes downhill amid wonderful streams and pools which offered very fine trout fishing at one time (there are plans to re-stock). Nearby are Baker's Falls, named after Sir Samuel Baker, the African explorer, who spent 8 years in Sri Lanka. Eventually the path joins the Ratnapura-East Coast road at *Belihuloya* 7 miles (11 km.) away.

From the Farr Inn the motorable road follows the left-hand fork, across the plain, twisting down through eucalyptus forests to *Ohiya* and eventually joins the same Ratnapura-East Coast Road. If we turn left, or East, along this road, our way leads back up the escarpment to *Haputale*, from the main street of which is a view almost as spectacular as that from World's End.

From Haputale the Badulla Road goes to *Bandarawela*, about 8 miles (13 km.) further, through a small forest of eucalyptus and pine, planted by the Forestry Department. A short detour takes in *Diyatalawa*, the military cantonment town.

About half way along the 10 miles (16 km.) stretch of road between Bandarawela and Ella there is the *Dowa Temple*, on the right. Only an ornamental gateway can be seen from the road; the temple itself is a cave a few steps down and has some charming paintings, lovingly restored by the monks.

Leaving the Badulla road, we should stop at the tiny *Ella Resthouse*, without a doubt the resthouse with the finest view in Sri Lanka, again, looking from the top of the escarpment to the sea.

Near the resthouse is the famous *Ravanna cave* where the demon Ravanna, ruler of Lanka, is said to have kept captive Sita, the wife of Rama, hero of the Ramayana epic.

Finally, the 15 mile^s (24 km.) stretch of new road descends 3,000 ft. (1,000 m.) to *Wellawaya*, passing the foot of the *Ravanna Ella Falls*. At Wellawaya is a road junction offering a choice between the main road to Colombo via Ratnapura, p. 85, or to Hambantota, p. 93, in the South, or Batticaloa in the East p. 87. Close to Wellawaya are the colossal Buddha statues at *Buduruvagala* and the *Diyaluma Falls*, p. 86.

ITINERARY 8

Colombo - Ratnapura - Wellawaya - (Lahugala) - Inginiyagala - Batticaloa

This road skirts the Southern edge of the mountains to reach the East Coast.

The influence of urban Colombo stretches along the A4 road as far as *Avissawella*, 30 miles (48 km.) away. Here the road to Ratnapura branches South and passes along the edge of the best rubber growing area. The slender rubber trees, with the tappers' cups, can often be seen planted in regular rows. The rubber is obtained by cutting a sliver of bark sufficient to encourage the milky sap (latex) to flow into a cup: care is taken to leave enough bark to allow the tree to survive and, when old cuts are healed, the process can be repeated. The latex is gathered and, in a small factory, crepe is made in three stages. First the latex is coagulated in an acid bath, then water is expelled by passing it through rollers until the rubber is a thin lace, and finally several layers of this lacy substance are pressed together into sheets of crepe.

The Ratnapura road is gently wooded, overlooked by the hills on the left all the way. The road appears to dance with a disused railway line, whose track it crosses and re-crosses. Just as one enters the built-up area of Ratnapura, a road on the right leads to the **Saman Devala*, a beautiful Kandyan-style, 15th century, Hindu temple dedicated to the God Saman, one of the ancient Gods who shared the island territorially. The varied tile patterns of the double-pitched, hipped roof are particularly attractive. With unusual tolerance, on the North side of the temple is a small Buddhist shrine, much more uncommon than Hindu shrines in Buddhist temples.

Ratnapura, 60 miles (96 km.) from Colombo, is the city of gems (which is the translation of its name). Approaching from Colombo, we come first to the town, where we can watch precious stones being cut and polished on primitive wheels. This is done in the back streets, in doorways to catch the light. It is not until we leave Ratnapura on the way to *Pelmadulla*, 10 miles (16 km.) away, that we can see gems being mined. The road runs alongside numerous **gem pits* where workers will gladly explain the basically simple process. A hole is dug about 30 ft. (10 m.) down to the gem-bearing level. The soil is removed and placed in a pit where, under strict supervision, it is washed and examined for gems by the owner, or his trusted representative. All the workers share in the value of any stone found and an additional element of excitement is introduced by the labourers' right to any stone found among the piles the

supervisor has rejected after sifting. The speed with which the pebble-like siftings are examined is amazing and would encourage the visitor to back the chances of the labourer against the apparently careless methods of the supervisor, but few fortunes are made from the siftings. Just after leaving Ratnapura for Pelmadulla, the road swings right over a new bridge. If instead, we carry straight on towards the old bridge and turn left to the bus depot, we come, after a few yards, to a *National Museum* with a small but outstandingly well-labelled collection of arts and crafts, as well as a natural history section.

The road continues East and after *Balangoda* it begins to climb towards the hills. 100 miles (160 km.) from Colombo the *Belihuloya Resthouse*, nestles beside a mountain stream. 13 miles (21 km.) further on, the road forks left into the mountains to Haputale, p. 84, and straight on, at a lower level, to *Wellawaya*, but 8 miles (13 km.) before reaching Wellawaya the road passes the foot of the beautiful 70 ft. (21 m.) high **Diyaluma* waterfall.

At *Wellawaya* two roads link up with other itineraries: South to Hambantota (Itinerary 10) and North to Ella (Itinerary 7). Just 3 miles (5 km.) South of Wellawaya and a further 2 miles (3 km.) into the jungle, on the right, i.e. West, along a jeepable track, are the giant Buddhist statues, carved into the rock at **Buduruvagala*, arguably the finest of their kind, after Gal Vihara in Polonnaruwa. This 8th century monument is one of the few relics of the brief period when Mahayana Buddhism was dominant in Sri Lanka.

Returning to Wellawaya, we re-join the A4 and travel due East for about 40 miles (64 km.) through dry scrub country, until we reach *Siyambaladuwa*. In the dry season a trip to **Lahugala* 11 miles (18 km.) on to the East, will almost certainly bring its reward of wild elephants at dusk drinking in the lake a few hundred yards North of the road. There is a resthouse at *Pottuvil* on the coast 8 miles (12 km.) further on close to the beaches of Arugam Bay.

The road North from *Siyambaladuwa*, going past the rock formation nicknamed *Westminster Abbey*, leads through what used to be Veddah country—the Veddahs being descendants of the pre-Sinhalese aboriginal inhabitants of the island. We then come to a large earth dam at *Inginiyagala* which created the *Senanayakè Samudra* (the Sea of Senanayake). This lake formed part of the first of the major modern irrigation schemes. Work on this scheme was suspended a few years ago, but has been revived recently. Just below the dam is a fish farm. Around the lake is the Gal Oya National Park, particularly rich in bird life. There is a safari hotel at *Inginiyagala*, from which excursions by boat or jeep can be arranged.

From Inginiyagala it is 25 miles (40 km.) to the East Coast and a further 30 (48 km.) to Batticaloa. *Batticaloa* is a pleasant, seaside town with a small Dutch Fort and famous for its singing (or rather croaking) fish. The town was badly damaged by a cyclone in 1978. From Batticaloa, we can return West via Kandy, taking the highly picturesque, but difficult, 18 hairpin bend road via *Mahiyangana*, or we can go 20 miles North to the beaches of *Kalkudah* and *Passekudah*. The spot between the two beaches is fringed by a fine coral reef and *Passekudah* has a particularly shallow, safe beach. Inland from *Kalkudah*, the road leads West to *Polonnaruwa*.

Adam's Peak

The steep pyramid of ***Adam's Peak** rises 7,300 feet (2,600 m.) above sea level. On the summit is a giant footprint, now enclosed in a simple shrine. The footprint is variously attributed to Adam, who is said to have been compelled to stand on one foot on this spot for a thousand years after his expulsion from Paradise; to the God Shiva; and to the Buddha, who rested there on one of his three visits to the island. As a result, the Peak is an object of pilgrimage for Moslems, Hindus and Buddhists alike. The pilgrimage season is from late December to March and this is also the time when tourists should make their visit; not only are the paths lit, but the probability of witnessing a fine sunrise is greater at that time of the year.

Most people climb up to the Peak in the cool of the night, to be at the summit by 5 a.m. when the dawn begins to break. Before dawn the strings of lights marking the paths to the top can be seen, while in the distance are the lights of Ratnapura and, even further, the glow of Colombo. As dawn breaks the various mountains forming part of the range gradually become visible and finally, as the sun rises, it casts the huge shadow of the Peak itself on the adjacent hills and mist behind them. Under certain conditions, when the cloud is close to the Peak, the shadow is projected as a magnified image, so that the shadow even of the people on the summit can be seen.

There are three routes to the Peak. The most popular, because it is both the shortest and the best maintained, is from the North East of the Peak, near *Maskeliya*, which itself is near Hatton. This route starts from a car park at 4,000 feet (1,300 m.) above sea level and at first climbs gently through a tea plantation, following the course of a stream. After two miles (3 km.) the path arrives at the new "*Peace Vihara*", presented to Sri Lanka in 1978 by the Buddhists of Japan. From this point the ascent is virtually a continuous staircase up the two miles (3 km.) to the summit—approximately 3,600 steps. As we climb, there are fine views of the hills and reservoirs towards Hatton; only after reaching the summit can we see to the South and the West. On average it will take about 3 hours to make the ascent, but on week-ends and especially Poya days, it may take longer because of the number of people on the narrow path.

The other two routes come from the South and South West, both starting near Ratnapura. These routes are not only considerably

longer, 7 and 9 miles (11/14 km.), but also much rougher. They are recommended only for experienced and really fit hill-walkers.

The shorter of the two starts at 1,000 feet (300 m.) above sea level, from a tea estate called *Carneys*, 10 miles (16 km.) due North of Ratnapura. This point can be reached by car or bus. The path begins by winding its way steeply up rather high steps, through the woods of the foothills, and then climbs 3,000 ft. (1,000 m.) straight up a bare hillside. It then twists along boulder-strewn river beds and up rough forest tracks until it meets the third route just below the summit. This route would take on average 8 hours to the summit.

The third route is reached via *Kuruwita*, 7 miles (11 km.) from Ratnapura on the Colombo Road, and a further 10 miles (16 km.) along a scenically beautiful, motorable road to the North. Like the Carney route, it starts from about 1,000 ft. (300 m.) above sea level. This route is less rough and less steep than the path from Carneys so that, although 2 miles (3 km.) longer, the ascent will also take about 8 hours. This Kuruwita route is by far the most beautiful of the three. If the logistics of getting to the starting point and getting back from the mountain can be organised, the ideal trip is to climb up at night from Maskeliya and come down in daylight to Kuruwita.

Anybody climbing Adam's Peak should bear in mind that, although the paths are lit, power failures can occur and individual lights get broken; it is, therefore, wise to take a torch. The Peak is very exposed and can be bitterly cold, so although there is a little sheltered space, a warm pullover is essential. There are stalls at intervals where tea, soft drinks and fruit can be bought.

Adam's Peak is a sacred mountain and the pilgrimage is undertaken with deep reverence by the majority of pilgrims. There are a number of conventions which a tourist also should observe: alcohol and meat should not be consumed on the mountain. People passing each other exchange the greeting "Karunavai" (Peace); it is bad form to remark on the difficulty of the route or to ask how far it is to the summit; when you reach the top you strike one of the bells—once for each time you have completed the ascent.

For the Carney and Kuruwita routes, we follow Itinerary 8 to Ratnapura. For Maskeliya, we take the A4 from Colombo as for Itinerary 8, but, instead of turning right at *Avissawella*, go straight on, the road now being the A7. The road at first goes along a well-wooded valley, where incidentally much of the film

“The Bridge on the River Kwai” was shot, and then climbs into the tea country. At about 73 miles (117 km.) from Colombo there is a branch road on the right to Maskeliya. Alternatively, we can go through *Hatton*, which is on the A7, through *Dickoya* to Maskeliya. This slightly longer route offers more overnight accommodation. The A7 from Hatton provides a picturesque but very twisting alternative route to *Nuwara Eliya*.

Colombo - Galle - Tissamaharama - Yala

This route is the coast road to the South. The first 25 miles (40 km.) are monotonous because of the ribbon development along the road. (A slightly longer, but more pleasant road is further inland, along twisting lanes via Bandaragama to Kalutara; even longer, but really beautiful in parts, is the Horana/Matugama Road to Bentota). Crossing the river Kaluganga on two bridges, the road approaches *Kalutara*. On the left is an impressive modern Dagoba; unlike the traditional Dagobas this one is hollow and forms the roof of an Image House. On the seaward side of the road is a Bo tree and shrine where travellers make offerings to ensure a safe journey. Kalutara marks the northern boundary of Ruhuna, a kingdom which frequently fought for supremacy with Anuradhapura. Even in modern times the people of Ruhuna have a reputation for sturdy independence—or obstinate rebelliousness, depending on whose standpoint you take.

After another 6 miles (10 km.) of ribbon development, the road crosses the railway line and suddenly we are travelling along the sea, through a coconut grove enlivened with fishermen's thatched huts. Here the coconut palm is grown less for the nut than for the nectar of the flower from which palm wine or "Toddy" is collected. Toddy is a somewhat milky liquid, whose slight acidity makes it a most refreshing drink. When tapped it is sweet and scarcely alcoholic, but within hours it becomes both more acid and more potent and, after 12 hours or so, it is no longer fit for drinking and is sent to a distillery to be made into "Arrack", the local answer to whisky. A pair of coir ropes joining the tops of a number of coconut palms is the toddy tappers' rope-walk. At each end is one tree with coconut husks tied to the trunk as footholds to allow the tapper to climb up or down. The speed and nonchalance with which a tapper moves among the swaying palm tops is fascinating to watch. The steady procession of casks marks the route to the Beruwela Arrack Distillery.

At *Beruwela* the landing of the first Arab traders in 1024 is commemorated by the famous *Kechimalai Mosque* on a spit of land. The fine, sandy beaches have attracted a cluster of tourist hotels and week-end bungalows at *Bentota*, just a little further South. In January at night it is still possible to see giant turtles trundling ashore like tanks, to lay their eggs and depart again into the sea. Unfortunately turtle eggs are a delicacy and the destruction of the eggs has meant that the turtle, unhappily like

so much of Sri Lanka's fauna, coral and even forest, is threatened with extinction. The thoughtful visitor can contribute to their preservation by refusing to buy coral, tortoise shells and other "souvenirs" of this kind. For the experienced swimmer the Bentota beaches provide surfing during the S.W. monsoon (May - October) and calm, clear waters from November to March.

53 miles (85 km.) from Colombo is *Ambalangoda*, which is the traditional home of stilt dancers and devil mask carvers. The devil mask is used for exorcism of illness: the masked dancer, impersonating the god of the particular sickness, dances over the sick man while the priest/doctor, by offers—and threats—finally persuades the god to depart, taking the sickness with him. In the grounds of the resthouse is a well-preserved, 17th century *Dutch Church*, now a barn. Along the main road, the second turning to the left after the bus station leads in a few yards to the *Mahavihara temple*, with its highly ornate entrance gate and some old frescoes in the Image House. Some of the geometric designs formed out of pictures of living creatures are of particular interest. This area is famous for its temple paintings and *Telwatte Vihara* at mile 58 (93 km.) provides a good example of these.

At mile 61 (98 km.) is *Hikkaduwa*, another popular holiday resort with a fine coral reef close to the shore. Scuba divers can hire equipment here. Just out of Hikkaduwa is the *Kumarakanda Rajamahavihara* and a little further the *Sailabimibaramaya Temple*, both with fine murals.

72 miles (100 km.) from Colombo we reach ***Galle**. Unlike Colombo, Galle has a natural harbour which made it strategically important to all seaborne conquerors. In modern Galle, Dutch influence prevails. The large ***Fort** is prominent. Inside it is the impressive Dutch ***Church**, built in 1755, which houses beautifully carved tombstones, often of a much earlier date. Next to the Church is the New Oriental Hotel which preserves the atmosphere that greeted the 19th century, luxury-loving traveller. Just beyond the Church, left down Queen Street, over a gateway on the left, is a fine coat of arms of the Dutch East India Company. The streets inside the Fort are full of well-preserved Dutch-style houses with Verandahs and carved grille ventilators above doors and windows. The atmosphere of 17th century Holland remains fresh. Just across the harbour to the East, is Closenburg, built to look like a liner, once the home of a 19th century P. & O. Line Manager, and now a hotel. Almost opposite the drive to Closenburg a road goes North East to Nakiadeniya. Twelve miles along this we can visit the *arboretum* maintained by the Forestry Department.

If we continue East from Galle, near the 82 mile stone (131 km.) a turn inland leads to the temple of ***Kataluwa** whose frescoes are among the most charming on the island. (Any owner of this Guide has a proprietary interest in this temple. It was the decay of these murals which largely inspired Lever Brothers (Ceylon) Ltd. to set up the Lever Brothers Cultural Conservation Trust, to which the proceeds from the sale of this Guide Book contribute—more information about the Trust can be found on the back cover.)

Just beyond the temple, on the coast, is *Weligama* where the unusual habit of stilt-fishing survives: men perch uncomfortably on a pole in the sea a little way out from the land.

Near the 90th mile (144 km.) by the second railway crossing, is a colossal statue carved into the rock, said to represent Kusta Raja, who reputedly introduced the coconut to Ceylon.

100 miles (160 km.) from Colombo is *Matara*, virtually the southernmost point of the island. It has a fine, star-shaped *Dutch Fort* and, like Batticaloa, the town has an indefinable charm of its own, depending on its atmosphere rather than on any individual striking item. North of Matara is the centre of citronella or lemongrass cultivation.

Just over 120 miles (192 km.) from Colombo is the striking Tangalle Hotel, built like a ship, on a spit between two bays.

Hambantota, with its sweeping bay overlooked by the resthouse, is associated with the author Leonard Woolf, once Government Agent here. The view from the resthouse is well worth the slight detour.

Beyond Hambantota are salt pans and 10 miles (16 km.) on, a good road to the right leads to the bird sanctuary of *Bundala*.

The road now, for the first time, goes inland and after skirting the *Wirawila Bird Sanctuary*, reaches *Tissamaharama* with its large Dagoba. It is here that the Sinhalese hero King Dutugemunu was born in the 2nd century B.C.

11 miles (18 km.) on, and 175 miles (280 km.) from Colombo lies the sacred city of ***Kataragama**. Our first sight is of the stalls with colourful arrangements of flowers and fruits on sale as Puja, or offerings, for the temple. We then cross a high bridge over the Menik Ganga (river) and walk the half mile to the temple of the God Kataragama, another name for Skanda, the Hindu God of War. The temple is not large or architecturally imposing,

but the reverence it inspires is obvious. Kataragama is the goal of many devotees who have made vows to perform painful penances and it is rare not to see such devotees either carrying a heavy yoke or with pins stuck through their cheeks or limbs. In July, at the great festival, the crowds of devotees and penitents thicken; men hang suspended on hooks and walk unharmed over burning embers, to the continued mystification of doctors and scientists. Nearby is a Muslim mosque where Muslim votaries perform similar penances.

Tissamaharama also marks the final approach to the ***Yala Wild Life Sanctuary** famed for its elephants. As in Wilpattu, p. 70, a casual visit is possible and will be pleasant, but to increase the probability of seeing wild life it is preferable to stay in the park overnight, to be on the spot at dusk and dawn. To do this a bungalow must be booked and a jeep with all equipment, other than cooking utensils and mattresses, arranged through an agent. At its Northern boundary, the Sanctuary joins the Kumana bird sanctuary, which can also be reached from Pottuvil—see Itinerary 8.

ITINERARY 11

Colombo - (Mannar) - Jaffna

A trip to Jaffna is not only a journey from the Buddhist, Sinhala South to the Hindu, Tamil North; it is also a journey to a totally different geographic region with a different vegetation and landscape. This difference occurs with dramatic suddenness at the narrow Elephant Pass, which links the Jaffna Peninsula with the rest of the island.

From Colombo, Jaffna can be reached by air, train or car. This trip can be made following a visit to Anuradhapura since all trains to Jaffna stop there. The route to Anuradhapura is described in Itinerary 5 and an alternative is suggested in Itinerary 12.

From Anuradhapura the Jaffna road, which is clearly signposted, goes for over 80 miles (130 km.) through scrub jungle until the country opens up into the flat salterns around *Paranthan*, where a chemical factory makes chlorine and caustic soda. 5 miles (8 km.) beyond Paranthan is the *Elephant Pass*, so narrow that the railway and road take up all available dry land, leaving the electricity supply to pick its way over poles sunk in the waters of the lagoon. From Elephant Pass to Jaffna is a further 35 miles (56 km.).

There is an alternative route, which is actually shorter in distance, but, in parts, poor road surfaces slow the traveller. The main problem, however, is that this route involves the use of a ferry, which can take only three vehicles at a time and which has been known to break down, in which case a detour to Paranthan adds 50 miles (80 km.) to the trip. However, this alternative route is much more interesting; it goes as follows:—

We take the Jaffna Road from Anuradhapura as far as *Medawachchiya*, 17 miles (28 km.) away, and then turn left on to the Mannar Road. After 26 miles (42 km.) at *Madhu Road*, a side road on the right leads, through a thick forest reserve, to *Madhu Church*. Originally a tiny church in a remote part of the jungle, curative miracles were attributed to the Image of the Virgin Mary discovered there. Now the church, much enlarged, is a centre of pilgrimage not only for Roman Catholics but for devotees of all faiths.

Retracing the road to the Madhu Road junction, we turn right towards Mannar. About 12 miles (20 km.) from Madhu Road, just

beyond *Murunkan*, the road crosses the railway line and, on the right, is the southern bund of the *Giant's Tank*. This huge reservoir was built in ancient times but was badly breached. Several modern engineers failed to repair the tank and believed that this was due to a basic design fault. However, more careful surveying justified the skills of the ancients and the *Giant's Tank* was restored in 1897.

15 miles (24 km.) beyond the Tank, a causeway leads to the island and town of **Mannar*. Immediately to the right of the causeway is the **Dutch Fort*, Built on the site of an older Portuguese Fort, it was completed in 1686. The plan is a simple rectangle, with bastions at each corner; inside some of the old buildings remain. The gable ends of the main building on the right of the entrance appear to be the originals. The far end of this building is the jail, which looks like a luxuriant cottage garden, surrounded by an easily climbed wall; perhaps the prisoners like their picturesque home! On the left of the entrance, a ramp leads to the parapet and belfry on the south-westerly bastion. However, the most interesting part of the Fort is the *chapel*, freshly restored, after having been used as a cement store. The oldest memorial is to the wife of a Portuguese Governor but several Dutch tombstones remain, as do the pulpit, lectern and a more recent altar.

The road going North-East, immediately behind the Fort, after $\frac{1}{2}$ mile leads to the only *baobab trees* in Sri Lanka. These grotesque-looking trees, with their bloated trunks and slightly eerie twisted branches, are imports from West Africa.

The island of Mannar is about 30 miles (48 km.) long and, at the far end, *Talaimannar* marks the terminus of the ferry to India. The island is, in fact, the eastern end of Adam's Bridge, which is not really a bridge, but a series of reefs and islands joining India and Sri Lanka. (It is also associated with Hanuman, the Monkey God of the Ramayana epic, who built it to help Rama invade Lanka to rescue his wife, Sita.) Legend has it that Vijaya, the leader of the original Sinhalese conquerors of the island, landed here. Mannar, or rather Arippu, just to the South, was the base for the annual pearl fishing which continued well into this century until becoming unprofitable.

Returning to the mainland along the causeway we turn North (left) towards Pooneryn, just over 50 miles (80 km.) away. Only 5 miles (8 km.) from the causeway on the left is the large Hindu Temple of *Tirruketisvaram*, colourful, modern and not particularly distinguished in its execution. However, it is one of the chief Shiva temples on the island. A temple existed on this site over 2,000 years

ago and was destroyed by the Portugese who wondered at its fine Roman pillars. The site remained derelict until the 19th century and the present temple was finally completed in 1960.

The road to Pooneryn is rough and empty and the scenery varies between open plains, looking like African savannah, and forests. Because it is not a busy road, the chances of seeing wild life are high; while encounters with elephants cannot of course be guaranteed, they do occur. For obvious reasons, a wild elephant always has right of way on the road; a lone elephant can be very dangerous and a car is no match for it. Should you meet one, reverse gently until a good distance away and wait until the road is clear.

At *Pooneryn* there is a road junction to the left leading to the Jaffna ferry; on the right is a small, moated Dutch Fort with the wall and its two bastions intact, but with a house built into the West wall.

If the Pooneryn ferry is not working, or the queue is too long, we must continue East to Paranthan and turn left along the main road to Elephant Pass and Jaffna.

Whatever the approach to ***Jaffna**, the visitor will notice the flat aridity of the land and the numerous, shallow lagoons. The tufted tops of the palmyrah palm, which is as versatile to meet the needs of the North as the coconut is in the South, create the skyline. Much of the peninsula is densely cultivated, with onions, chillies, tobacco, and mangoes as the cash crops. Vegetables grow in fields irrigated from wells with large pivoted poles: when heavy irrigation buckets are fitted, the well arm is moved by the weight of a man climbing up and down it as it tilts. The Tamils insist on privacy and each house and garden is fenced, often by palmyrah leaf cadjans or screens which form beautiful patterns.

Jaffna was established as a separate Tamil kingdom in the first half of the 13th century, when Polonnaruwa was in decline. The kingdom held out against the Portugese, who had landed in Sri Lanka in 1505, until 1619. The Dutch captured the town after a three-month siege in 1658 and it capitulated to the British without a struggle in 1796. The Jaffna peninsula can conveniently be visited on two circular tours, one devoted to the islands, the other to the peninsula proper, but both include a part of Jaffna town.

In Jaffna it is impractical to give precise directions, as elsewhere in this Guide: the narrow streets and the enclosed gardens make

landmarks scarce. However, cars can be hired and seeking direction presents no problem as knowledge of English in the peninsula is widespread and people are friendly and helpful.

To the West of the main city area is a large open space, part of which is Jaffna Park. Around this space are the Moghul-style Public Library, (education is at a high level in the Peninsula), the Municipal Offices, the Post Office, the Stadium, the Police Station and the Dutch Fort.

A useful, if unusual, place to begin a tour, is the Police Station to get a permit to visit the Dutch Fort later. A permit is necessary since this, as so many other Dutch Forts in Sri Lanka, is used as a prison. Next we cross to the opposite, i.e. East side, of the Square where, beside the Resthouse, Main Street leads due East. Some of the *Main Street houses* are pure Dutch, especially the second and third on the left-hand (North) side of the street. They house the Jaffna Literary Society and the Archaeological Museum respectively (there are plans however to move the museum to Nallur). A visit to the Archaeological Museum is worth while. It contains some fine wood carvings from temples, but its chief interest lies in the variety of Hindu and Buddhist excavations which have been discovered locally. Many people today do not realise that until the 8th century A.D. Buddhism had a strong following among the Tamils of South India and the religious divide is something relatively recent. While at the museum, arrange that the Dutch Church in the Fort should be open for your visit.

The ***Dutch Fort** is moated, star-shaped and approached by winding road, to prevent a massed attack. On the ramparts is a structure often, and wrongly, identified as the gallows (even hefty Dutch criminals did not require beams of such dimensions). It is, in fact, the Belfry for the tocsin bell. The old square Fort, after being captured from the Portugese, was rebuilt by the Dutch in 1680, having been extended and strengthened by providing it with a star-shaped perimeter, thereby greatly increasing the field of fire from the ramparts. The dominant building in the Fort is the ***Church**, built in 1706. It is similar in style to the churches at Wolfendhal in Colombo and in the Fort at Galle. The fine old pulpit faces the Governor's pew. On the floor and, to a lesser extent on the walls, are the beautifully carved, armorial tombstones of Dutch officials and their families, with a few, simpler, British additions. In one aisle is a large dais, decorated with a painting of King David playing the harp: it was here that the musicians and choir sat, separated from the rest of the congregation. Beyond the Church is the old Governor's house (or "*King's House*" as it is still called). Here the chief official of Jaffna lived, both under

Dutch and British rule. The finely-proportioned rooms and some period furniture remain.

From the Fort a causeway leads to the island of *Kayts*. This road provides a good impression of the lagoon, whose shallowness becomes startlingly apparent when one sees the water scarcely covering the feet of wading birds. On the North end of *Kayts* is a market where the produce from the surrounding islands is sold. At *Kayts* is a small harbour from which a frequent ferry runs across the narrow strait to *Karaitivu* Island.

Alternatively we can take the long ferry ride to the largest of the islands, *Delft*, where the descendants of Capt. Nolan's early 19th century efforts at pony breeding can still be seen—also, so it is said, more human descendants of the gallant captain. A much shorter trip from *Kayts* is to hire a local fisherman to run out to the minute Dutch Fort at **Hammenhiel* in the straits between *Kayts* and *Karaitivu*. The Dutch built this fort on a rock which commands the only deep water channel to *Jaffna*. The fort was used as a prison for some of the young insurgents who took up arms in 1971 and their defiant slogans can still be seen on the walls.

Crossing the ferry to *Karaitivu*, we see a naval base on the left and, on the right, a small shipyard where fishing boats are made, out of all materials, reinforced concrete! From the northern end of *Karaitivu* another causeway leads back to *Jaffna* but just north of the causeway, reached by a road farther inland, is **Casurina Beach*, a strand of the finest, white sand, shaded, as the name implies, by *casurina* trees. This is a favourite spot for sea bathing.

From the *Jaffna* end of the causeway, we turn right to return to the town.

The second circular tour begins, like the first, at *Jaffna* Fort. However, instead of crossing the lagoon, we turn inland to *Tellipalai*. A mile beyond *Tellipalai* is the ancient **Maviddapuram Temple*. Legend has it that in the 7th century A.D. a South Indian princess, who suffered from a disease giving her the features of a horse, was advised to bathe in a fresh water pool nearby. The cure was successful and in gratitude she built the original temple. Her story is shown on the pyramid roof facing the roadway. The Portuguese destroyed this, like so many other temples. The present temple was built in 1798 but badly damaged during riots in 1968, concerned with the admission of caste-less Hindus into the temple.

The rebuilding is nearly complete. Although much of the temple is modern, the craftsmanship is of a high order.

The main entrance is on the side furthest from the road. The ante-chamber to the Holy of Holies is elaborately carved; two figures show the original benefactress, the first disfigured, the second cured. There are chains carved out of solid stone on the top of the pillars behind the statues. On the capital of the pillars is a grim puzzle carving: an ape is giving birth as she is bitten by a venomous snake and the ape in turn is biting the serpent. The question is: who will die? Although the temple was originally a Shiva temple it is now dedicated to his son Kataragama. Just to the North of the ante-chamber, beside the customary nine, small statues, representing the sun and eight planets, is a well. It was here that the sacred images were hidden before the Portugese destroyed the temple and a mango tree was planted nearby to mark the spot. This tree still stands and bears fruit all the year round. The secret of the hiding place was preserved by the hereditary priests until the images were recovered in the 18th century. The present High Priest is a direct descendant from the original 7th century incumbent. (Before leaving Maviddapuram Temple let us return to the puzzle carving: all three die; the snake's poison will kill the ape and its infant through the umbilical cord, while the ape's teeth will not relax their hold on the snake.)

A road to the North-West leads to *Keerimalai*, passing a cement factory on the way. At a road junction in *Kerimalai* we bear right onto the beach. Beside a small temple is a bathing pool on the far side of which are statues of the horse-headed princess. This is the spring where she was cured. The spring is pure, fresh water, which is remarkable so close to the sea.

From *Keerimalai* the coast road goes due East, with numerous views of the sea through the palmyrah plantations. It is from this area that the most prized palmyrah toddy comes. It is subtly different in flavour from coconut toddy and should be drunk from a cup fashioned out of a palmyrah frond.

The township of *Valvedditurai* is unusually prosperous-looking and its inhabitants are reputed to make their living from smuggling. Whether this is a fact or the result of the jealousy of less prosperous neighbours a mere visitor is unlikely to discover.

As the road approaches Point Pedro it comes closer to the sea and one can see the extraordinary fishing rafts used in this area. They consist of 3 or 5 slightly curved pieces of wood, a little like the runners of a sledge. These are merely tied together to form

the craft. Nowadays outboard motors are often fitted and fishermen venture out as far as 10 miles (16 km.) on these flimsy constructions. These are the original catamarans, as this word is derived from the Tamil for "tied logs".

Point Pedro is the most northerly point in Sri Lanka. From here the road swings back to Jaffna.

On the way to Jaffna the road approaches Putoor with its mysterious well. The water is fresh on the surface becoming progressively saltier the deeper one goes. Powerful pumps were quite unable to lower the level of the water in the well so that one must assume that there is a still undiscovered link with the sea, several miles away.

About two miles from the city is *Nallur*, with the **Kandasamy Kovil*, the most richly endowed of the Hindu temples of the country. The original temple was founded in the 15th century, about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the present site, but it was later destroyed by the Portuguese who built a church on the site. In the present position, a temple was built in the 18th century but the existing building dates from 1902, with more recent embellishments. The wealth of the temple can be seen by the richness of its decoration, especially the high pyramid roofs, the elaborate carvings of pillars and the illumination of the inner shrine, all immaculately kept. There are numerous carriages whose shelters are equally lavish. The Nallur temple festival lasts 24 days in August and September each year and culminates in the "water-cutting" ceremony, where the immersion of the Image takes place in the artificial pond beside the temple.

From Nallur the main road continues into *Jaffna*.

ITINERARY 12

Colombo - Dambadeniya - Yapahuwa - Anuradhapura

This final itinerary differs from the previous ones: it is away from the usual tourist routes and it does not cover any of the major tourist attractions. It takes the visitor to some of the minor gems of Sri Lanka. There are dozens of such itineraries which could be prepared and the purpose of including one in this Guide is to make the point that there is still plenty to see in Sri Lanka on a second or third visit. Partly for this reason, and partly because the route is not always easy to follow, this itinerary is treated in considerable detail.

From Colombo we take the road to the Airport and Negombo. 9 miles out (14 km.) is the township of *Ja-Ela* where a large signpost indicates the turning to *Minuwangoda* on the right. We take this turning which comes immediately after crossing the river at *Ja-Ela*. A short distance along, while still in the township, the road forks, one branch going straight on, the other veering left. We follow the right-hand branch, i.e. continuing in a straight line over a level crossing immediately after the junction.

The road passes coconut plantations and a number of wireless transmitting aeriels. After 8 miles (13 km.) it passes through *Minuwangoda*, after a further 6 miles (10 km.) it goes through *Divulapitiya* and after a further 10 miles (16 km.) it comes to *Giriulla* where, after crossing a bridge, we reach a 'T' junction. We turn right along the road signposted to Kurunegala.

3 miles (5 km.) further on is ***Dambadeniya**, one of the places which briefly served as a capital in the troubled 13th century. The road goes gently downhill into the centre of the township. In the built-up area, on the right, is a school and, shortly after the school a lane with a signpost to the temple, ***Sri Wijayasundararama Rajamahavihara**, some of which dates from 1215. We follow this lane which forks, the right hand branch leading apparently to a white-walled house. This is one of the outbuildings of the temple. The temple itself is on a raised platform and has a number of interesting features. The first building on the right is the *Dagoba* which is roofed, not in the circular manner of a *Vatadage*, but by a rectangular roof with an ante-chamber or porch, like an *Image House*. The approach is up some steps with an elephant balustrade. Beyond the *Dagoba* is a two-storey *Image House*. The staircase leading to it has two old, rather worn, and most unusual guardstones, set into the wall. They represent scenes from a *Jataka* story. The one on the left features a seated

Buddha in the centre with scenes of fighting above and below, the one on the right appears to show three scenes of war or execution with an elephant trampling its victims at the bottom. The entrance porch to the Image House has a fine Kandyan, decorated roof. Although the roof is rectangular, it is supported by a large number of beams, fanning out from the ends of the central rafter. The ground floor of the Image House has been restored in the 19th century, but the upper storey, approached by a rickety staircase, has unfinished frescoes on the outside wall and quite good wall paintings inside. The ceiling of the inner Image chamber is decorated with elaborate geometric designs. We should note also, on the right, Vishnu, dressed in Buddhist robes, leading a row of monks making obeisance to the Buddha. The large Image House between this and the Dagoba is quite modern and contains a reclining Buddha. Opposite the entrance to the two storey Image House is a path which leads through paddy fields to the hill on which the short-lived citadel was built. Only foundations remain and visitors other than archaeology specialists are unlikely to find the climb worthwhile.

Returning to the Kurunegala Road, we continue for 3 miles (5 km.). On a slight incline on the left is a dirt track with a sign to the *Panavitiya Ambalama. This sign can easily be missed; set into the ground, it is about 5 ft. (1½ m.) high, faded sepia-colour, with a great deal of writing, but with the Dagoba—indicating an Archaeological Department site—on top. We follow the dirt road, ignoring the turning left after ¼ mile, and take the track on the left after 1 mile (1.6 km.), just beyond an outcrop of rocks. After ¾ mile (just over 1 km.), on the right, near the edge of a paddy field, is a tiny, raised Ambalama or travellers' shelter. Basically it is a roof under which the weary traveller may sit. The roof is a finely decorated, Kandyan tile one, but the glory of the Ambalama is the carved beams, again twin fans of beams supporting a rectangular roof, each crosspiece elaborately carved and the whole supported by 8-4-8 pillars, i.e. eight-sided with square bosses. The carving of these is comparable to those at Embekke, p. 54, even the octagonal sections being decorated.

Again returning to the main road, we continue to *Narammala*, 4 miles (6 km.) away. We go straight through the town and continue for 3½ miles (5½ km.) before turning left (North) at *Kalugamuwa*. The road continues for about 11 miles (18 km.) through coconut plantations to the A10 Kandy - Puttalam road at *Wariyapola*. We follow the main road half left and after 3 miles (5 km.) at *Padeniya*, there is a road to the right, signposted to Maho and Anuradhapura.

Immediately opposite this turning is the *Padeniya Temple built on a rock. It is surrounded by a wall with the type of pierced crenellations found on the wall surrounding the lake at Kandy. Immediately we enter the temple compound, with the Dagoba on the right, we can see a storehouse on the left. Beyond it and on the left are two halls. The lower, on the right, is a preaching hall, the other is a unique Image House, built about two hundred years ago, on the highest part of the rock. The elegant, hipped double roof is supported by wooden pillars inside the wall and later stone pillars outside (these are in the process of being replaced by replicas of the original wooden pillars). The wall itself is not weight-bearing and is topped by a free-standing frieze of carved and painted lions. The pillars are of the 8-4-8 type, elaborately but not very elegantly carved. A good view of the temple can be obtained from across the small adjacent lake and also from the boundary wall beside the road.

We now take the Anuradhapura road and, after 12 miles (20 km.), there is a clearly defined junction to Maho, 1½ miles (2½ km.) away. We go through *Maho* and yet again continue straight where the road forks to the left, coming to Yapahuwa after 4 miles (6 km.). *Yapahuwa is an isolated, fortified rock, which immediately recalls Sigiriya on a smaller scale. Although a fortress for at least two centuries, it was a royal capital for only 11 years in the 13th century. The southern and eastern approaches to the peak are surrounded by two moats and walls. There is a small cave temple on the right, just inside the inner wall, and a small archaeological museum on the left. The chief remains of Yapahuwa are the steep staircase leading to the foundations of the Temple of the Tooth immediately above. The main flight of steps is massive, plain and utilitarian. The last flight, from a platform where, presumably, guard houses stood is highly ornate. The balustrade is dominated on each side by a large, pawing, Chinese-looking lion. But the chief attraction is the frieze of dancers on either side of the gateway at the head of the steps. They are a curious mixture of vigour and decadence: they are full of life and movement, but carelessly executed, rather like rag dolls. Of the Temple of the Tooth only foundations remain. From the left of the temple a rough path leads to the top of the rock. It is more an easy scramble than a hard walk, and should not be attempted in wet weather without appropriate footwear. On the top are two small ruined Dagoabas and a few remains of a hastily erected royal palace; no foundations appear to have been dug. On the way up is a small cave, where the traces of another small Dagoba remain and, near the top, is a natural water tank. The climb may not be justified by the ruins, but on a clear day the view for miles in every direction, from the Kandyan hills to those near

Anuradhapura, is truly superb. The flimsy structure of the palace, the failure to extend and enlarge the water tank and the derelict state of the path all suggest that Yapahuwa was not really a royal capital, but rather a frontier fort which briefly became a royal residence.

From Yapahuwa we retrace our way, through Maho, back to the Padeniya-Anuradhapura Road and turn right towards Anuradhapura. After about 35 miles (56 km.) we reach the township of *Talawa*. There a road leads to the right and after 15 miles (24 km.) comes to a junction just after crossing a railway line. We turn right and shortly reach the *Kalawewa Tank*, the road going along the bund on the tank's western shore. Just before the spillover, a track branches right and leads in under 2 miles (3 km.) to the gigantic statue of the ***Aukana Buddha**. Carved out of the rock about 400 A.D., this massive statue rises majestically 39 ft. (13 m.) above its pedestal. The carving of the statue is very fine, but it is rather stiff and formal. To preserve it from the elements an arch was recently built over it so that, to see it in the best light, a morning visit is preferable. About 7 miles (11 km.) further, along rough roads which in wet weather require a jeep, we come to ***Sasseruwa**, where a similar *Giant Buddha* has been carved into an artificial niche in the rock face. Less skilful in execution than the Aukana Buddha, it has more vitality. Legend has it that master and pupil carved these statues in competition, the Aukana Buddha being the master's and the Sasseruwa Buddha the pupil's effort.

We can either retrace our steps to Talawa and then drive 10 miles (16 km.) to Anuradhapura, or from Aukana we go back to the Talawa road but turn right to Kekirawa on the Dambulla-Anuradhapura Road, and then turn left to reach Anuradhapura 20 miles (30 km.) away.

SUMMARY OF PLACES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

These are indicated in the Itineraries by bold type and asterisks.

Itinerary 1

Wolfendhal Church	— Colombo
National Museum	— Colombo
Independence Hall	— Colombo
Kelaniya Temple	
Zoo	

Itinerary 2

Lankatilleke Temple	near Peradeniya
Embekke Temple	near Peradeniya
Peradeniya Botanical Gardens	
The Lake	— Kandy
The Temple of the Tooth	— Kandy
National Museum	— Kandy
Malwatta Temple	— Kandy
View	— Kandy

Itinerary 3

Dambulla caves	
Sigiriya Rock and Frescoes	
Fort Frederick	— Trincomalee
Swami Rock	— Trincomalee

Itinerary 4

Tivanka Image House	— Polonnaruwa
Lotus Pool	— Polonnaruwa
Gal Vihara	— Polonnaruwa
Shiva Temple	— Polonnaruwa
The Vatadage	— Polonnaruwa
Audience Hall	— Polonnaruwa

Itinerary 5

Wilpattu Wild Life Sanctuary

Itinerary 6

Archaeological Museum	— Anuradhapura
Ruwanvelisaya Dagoba	— Anuradhapura
Thuparama Dagoba	— Anuradhapura
Guardstone—Ratnapasada	— Anuradhapura
Moonstone—Mahasena's Palace	— Anuradhapura
Two Seated Buddha Statues	— Anuradhapura
The Sacred Bo Tree	— Anuradhapura
Gold Fish Park	— Anuradhapura
Isurumuniya Temple	— Anuradhapura
View From Summit	— Mihintale
Lion Fountain	— Mihintale
Kantaka Chaitiya	— Mihintale
Kaludiya Pokuna Temple	— Mihintale

Itinerary 7

Nuwara Eliya	
Hakgala Botanical Gardens	
World's End	— Horton Plains

Itinerary 8

Saman Devala	— near Ratnapura
Gem pits	— near Pelmadulla
Diyaluma waterfalls	
Buduruvagala carved statues	— near Wellawaya
Lahugala elephant sanctuary	

Itinerary 9

Adam's Peak

Itinerary 10

The Fort	— Galle
The Dutch Church	— Galle
Kataluwa Temple	— near Galle
Kataragama	
Yala Wild Life Sanctuary	

Itinerary 11

The Fort	— Mannar
The Fort	— Jaffna
The Dutch Church	— Jaffna
Hammenhiel Island	
Casurina Beach	
Maviddapuram Temple	
Kandasamy Kovil	— Jaffna

Itinerary 12

Dambadeniya Temple	
Panavitiya Ambalama	
Padeniya Temple	
Yapahuwa	
Buddha Statue	— Aukana
Buddha Statue	— Sasseruwa

AN APPEAL FROM THE WILD LIFE & NATURE PROTECTION SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA

The natural environment of Sri Lanka is also the setting for its cultural heritage so that those who value the one are likely to appreciate the other.

Unfortunately, the flora and fauna of the Island are under threat. Visitors can help to reduce this threat in several ways:—

A number of species are being driven to extinction because they are being killed for sale to tourists. If visitors refuse to buy, these animals would be left in peace, so please do not purchase anything made from wild animals, i.e. leopard, crocodile or lizard skins; ivory, leopard claws or boar tusks and, above all, do not be tempted by the beautiful shell of the star tortoise which is a highly endangered species, as is the marine turtle. These animals are protected by law and the export of such trophies could get you into trouble with the Customs when you leave the country.

Consumer resistance is also a useful weapon in restaurants; please do not order venison even if it is on the menu.

If you visit the Wild Life Sanctuaries, please do so in a manner which does not disturb the animals: do not drive fast, ideally 10 m.p.h. (16 k.m.p.h.): do not make unnecessary noise: avoid wearing brightly coloured clothes and leave no litter. These precautions will prevent your frightening the animals away and so will increase your own enjoyment.

Another way you could help is to give direct support to our Society either by joining it or by making a donation.

Thank you for reading this appeal.

T. H. Hoffmann

President

Wild life & Nature Protection Society
of Sri Lanka

Chaitiya Road, Marine Drive, Colombo 1

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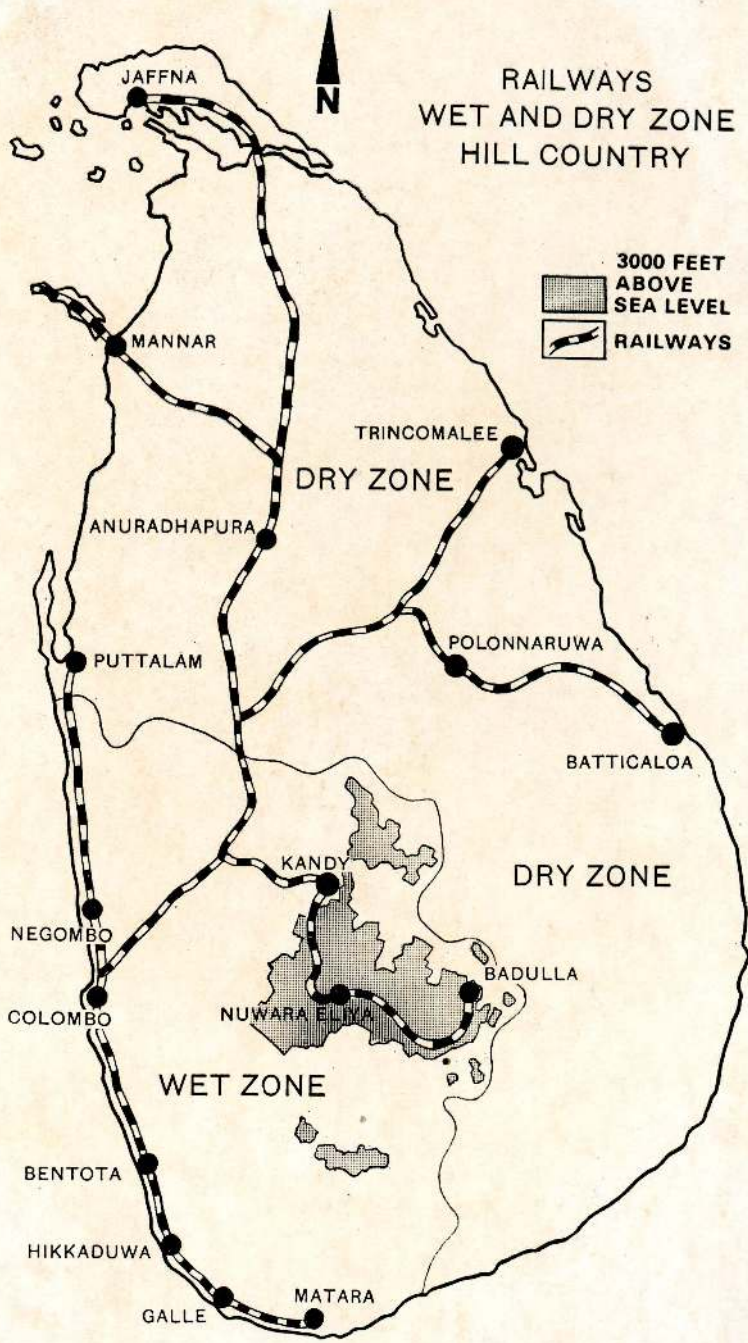
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