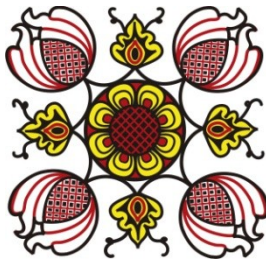


Quarterly Tours – No. 22



National Trust – Sri Lanka

26th May 2012

Compiled by Nilan Cooray

National Trust – Sri Lanka

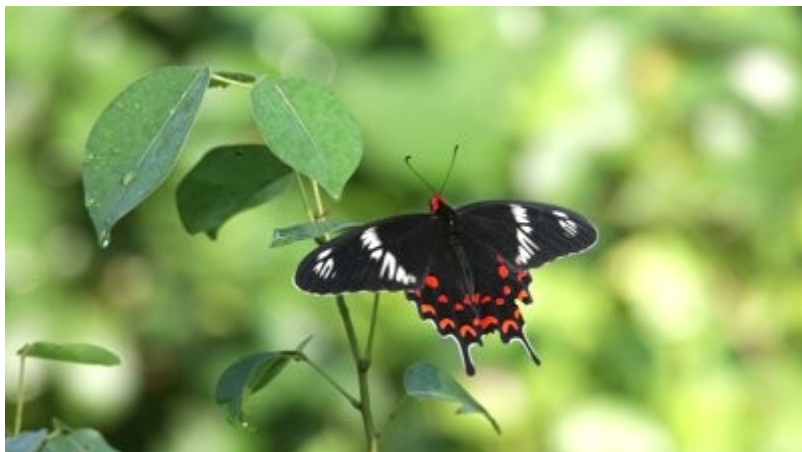
Quarterly Tours – Saturday, 26th May 2012.

Programme

- 0630 hrs. Leave PGIAR
- 0815 hrs. Comfort stop at Giriulla
- 0930 hrs. Arrive at the estate of Dr. van der Poorten and his wife who will take us round the garden which has been carefully planted with butterfly friendly plants, some of which also encourage birds to feed on the berries, and nest in the trees.
- 1130 hrs. Leave for Panduwasnuwara, a mediaeval sub-capital of king Parakramabahu I.
- 1145 hrs. Walk around the site, examine the stone inscription, the rooms in the palace, the fortification and the religious remains
- 1300 hrs. Adjourn for lunch to the Archaeological Circuit Bungalow.
- 1345 hrs. Visit the Circular Enclosure thought to be that of Ummadacitta and the Council Chamber of the King.
- 1415 hrs. Leave for Bingiriya
- 1500 hrs. Drive from Bingiriya to Munneswaram Kovil.
- 1545 hrs. Munneswaram Kovil - walk round the kovil after a short introduction by an official of the kovil.
- 1630 hrs. Leave for Riverine Hotel, Waikal along the coast after crossing the Dutch Canal.
- 1800 hrs. Leave for Colombo
- 2000hrs. Arrive at the PGIAR

(Visit to Panavitiya Ambalama if the time permits)

‘Butterfly Garden’ near Wariyapola



Forty acre private estate of Dr. Michael van der Poorten in Hammaliya off Wariyapola has its most stunning feature, a five acre ‘Butterfly Garden’. Dr. van der Poorten over the past twenty years has developed part of his coconut estate plantation in to a ‘wild garden’, gathering plants which are butterfly friendly, either as food, and host plants for the butterflies, or as food for the larvae. The Garden has recorded 125 species of butterflies, which is testimony to the ideal habitat. Arriving at this picturesque garden, the visitors are literally greeted by a myriad of butterflies before they meet Dr. van der Poorten. Visit to the ‘Butterfly Garden’ with Dr. van der Poorten, will give the team of the National Trust of the efforts taken by him to create such an extraordinary habitat.

Panduwasnuwara



This is the provincial capital of the deputy king of *Dakkhinadesha*, who later was consecrated as king Parakkramabahu the Great of Polonnaruwa of united Lanka during the 12th century. The present remains consist predominantly of a citadel and two ancient Buddhist monasteries located to the north and south of the citadel. The citadel is fortified by a high and wide brick rampart and a moat with a single entrance gateway facing east. Within the citadel, the dominant monument is the royal palace, which resembles the counterpart at Polonnaruwa, but to a smaller scale. The council chamber located beyond the fortified citadel and

restored by the Department of Archaeology in recent times still shows the lost glory of this ancient political center.



The Tamil inscription found at Panduwasnuwara records the construction of certain edifices in *Sripuranakara* by the Commander-in-Chief. The title given in the inscription is that of “the Ruler of *Dakinadesha*”. The circular moated site close to this council chamber is very popular among the locals as being the residence of the legendary noble lady Ummadacitta. It is alleged that this site with unusual features is the *akas-stamba* (*ektam-ge* or single pillared chamber) where this prince was forced to reside in by her brothers due to the soothsayer’s prediction that the child born from her would destroy all the brothers and become the ruler. Paranavitana who excavated the central edifice at the site discovered the

central brick of the inner most edifice which had a curved aperture and refers to it metaphorically as being possibly a symbol to represent the center of the universe.

Bingiriya Vihara



Situated between Daduru Oya and Kolommuna Oya in the Kurunegala district and approached by turning off from the Hettipola-Chilaw Road, Bingiriya Vihara is significant due to the fact that it has the largest image house on stilts. According to the oral tradition, the history of the vihara goes back to King Aggabodhi IX (831 – 833 AC), who was responsible for the

establishment of a monastic edifice at this site. When King Parakkramabahu the Great (1153 – 1186) was the deputy King, he is said to have renovated the structures of this vihara. However, the image house on stilts would have taken its present form in a much later period, probably during the Kandyan period. The stilts of this structure provide adequate head-room which facilitates the congregation at ground floor level. Two timber stairways on either side of the ground floor link the shrine room on the upper floor. Both the inner and outer walls of the upper floor are decorated with paintings of the Kandyan School.

Munnesvaram Kovil at Chilaw



Munnesvaram Kovil is located within two miles of Chilaw on the Kurunegala Road. It has been a centre of Hindu worship with the shrine dedicated to Lord Siva. It is an extensively laid out Kovil comparable to the many such shrines located at the various ports such as Konesvaram or Trincomalee, Tirukesvaram or Mantota or Kankesanthurai, at the northern limits of Jaffna Peninsula, and Devundara at the southern tip of the island. Paul E. Peiris in his book titled “Ceylon” covering the Portuguese era refers to the destruction of Munnesvaram under the command of the Portuguese armies thus:

“One of the five Isvaram or residences of Siva in Ceylon, it claimed precedence over the great fames at Trincomalee, Mantota, Kangesanturai and Rameswaram, and was said to have been built by Rama Chandra, the Avatar of Vishnu himself, after the defeat of Ravana. Numerous inscriptions bore record to the wealth which the devotion of successive Kings had dedicated to the service of the Temple, and sixty-two villages of the district to which it gave its name, comprised its separate domain. Much plunder was anticipated and the Portuguese pressed early on. The Attapattu Mudaliyar was however on the watch and barred the way, but the Sinhalese were driven back with the loss of the Mudaliyar himself, whose head was sent to Colombo, and then they sacked the temple, which they razed to the ground, loaded with booty they turned back to Colombo, taking with them four panguels of areca as well.” (Peiris, vol. I, pp. 199-200).



The temple official will explain the rituals and myths associated with this important pilgrimage site in Sri Lanka.

Panavitiya Ambalama



Although it is microscopic, this *Ambalama* (way-side rest hall) is perhaps the most decorated wooden structure in the country. It probably belongs to a period not long after the Dembadeniya era. Its nearest counterpart is Embekka. The measurements of various utilitarian elements that are used for sitting, leaning, sleeping, etc. confirm to modern anthropometric standards. It is truly a gem in wood carving.