

# Traveller's Master Guide

Sigiriya Fortress,  
Royal Garden, Palace Complex

P.A. A. Kumarasinghe

## Traveller's Master Guide Sri Lanka

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## Fore word



My tour of Thailand in 2003 was the main reason influenced me to prepare this explorative handbook as a guide for tourists. I realized that there is a well organized tourists industry in Thailand. Most of the erections there have been created recently to win the attraction of the tourists. When comparing Sri Lanka with it our heredity goes back to thousands of years in the past, a country of having a higher civilization with so many valuable historical monuments and also with natural beautiful resources, environment, a coastal line and also a country with a good climatic condition for a long period in the year for tourists. Though it is a small island - enjoyable prevailing environment will attract the tourists. As it is what we should do is managing the necessities with a responsible manner carefully.

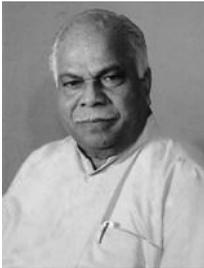
I did my part very carefully and thoughtfully with utmost effort. During our young days in a technologically under developed environment, we were brought up without facilities like television etc. Our elders were in the habit of relating praiseworthy interesting stories belonged to our ancient legends, was a normal tradition. When we reached adolescence we had a thorough knowledge of legends belonged to our historical kings. As such what I realized was to prepare a tourists guide book containing archaeological research based on our ancient monuments and explorations. As there are so many facts it is a difficult task to include all of them in a booklet like this. Therefore I have mentioned here only the very specific informations only. I tried my best, to include these facts very impartially. If there is anything hurting or annoying I apologise.

I very respectfully commemorate everybody who contributed to build these monuments, from the very inception Rev. Arahath Mahinda Thero (250BC) King Devanampiyatissa (250-210BC) very respectful monks and all the kings and our fore fathers are honorably remembered. The idea of preparing a booklet like this came to me due to the participation of my beloved friend Mr. K. H. S. A. Kasthuriarachchi and crowd in the tour in Thailand, my thanks to him too. Though you get this book for a small

sum of rupees, the enormous endeavour, time, labour and money spent by me is very high. A big amount of wealth I gained from the parents too had to spend. By spending so much of money and going all over the country in search and accumulating the informations, at the beginning there were objections from my wife. But after explaining the facts, very humbly accepting them, she did all her duties to my aged father and three of my daughters and me, as well. Mr. A. M. Karunarathna, a skilful writer, former G. A. Kurunegala, Retired Chairman of the western province public service commission, became a teacher of mine, in finding historical informations. I learned from him about stabilizing the facts find in books, by going to archaeological sites. In preparing this booklet, I had to go through a very large number of books. Therefore I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all the undermentioned persons. The educated editors of the associated books, the translators of those books, Anuradhapura Librarian and the working staff, H. C. P. Bel, a British, treated as the father of archaeology and all the archaeological commissioners, who rendered an inestimable service for archaeology of Sri Lanka, the curators incharge of archaeological sites, who did not do any obstruction, when I visited the sites to observe them, the photographers who supplied, photographs of archaeological importance and those who protected them. Last of all I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Somapala Wijesundara, Retired Director, Education incharge of ART, (Kala Bhooshana-Kalakeerthi) N.C.P. for doing a very responsible, strenuous and inestimable work in translating this book to English.

**P. A. A. Kumarasingha**

## Preface

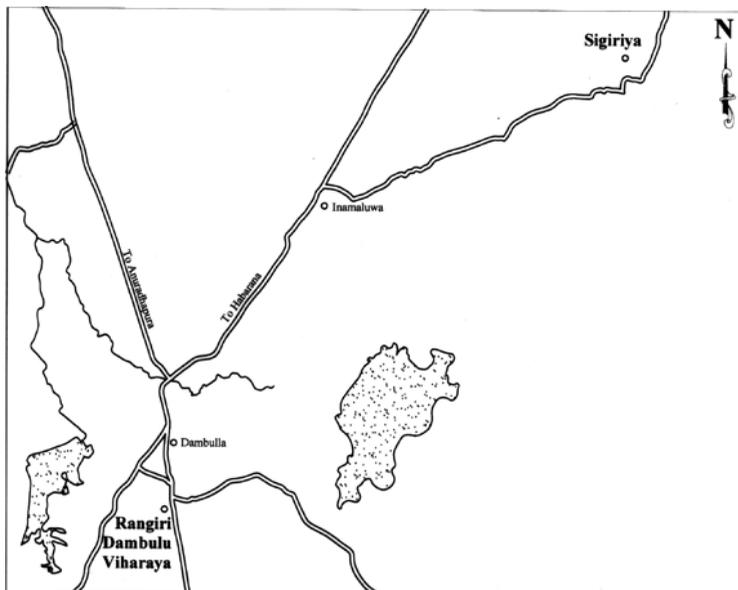


This booklet written by Mr.P.A.A.Kumarasingha about the ancient ruins, paintings, decayed buildings and holy places etc of our country, after a thorough study is very interesting I found him to be a person devotes much of his time in archaeology, though he is not either an archaeologist or an Artist. But anyway as he has mentioned in his foreword, that he was inspired to write a book like this by the tour in Thailand in 2003. Amidst many obstacles, he has travelled in many places of interest, spending much of his time and money in search of facts for this book. He expresses his views as well along with the facts he accumulated. Those views cannot be rejected easily. The way how he is presenting the facts are interesting. This fascinating subject is a vast one, not easily to be compressed in to a few pages. In his analysis of Sigiriya Frescoes mentioning about the two types of prevailing techniques and the historical facts will be very useful for those who study art and archaeology. In translating these articles, it is not an easy task, as certain terms used only in Asian countries, as it is difficult to find English Terms. However I thank him for his determination in preparing this book.

Kala Bhushana, Kala Keerthi

**Somapala Wijesundara**

Retired Director Education/ Art NCP



## Sigiriya Fortress, Royal Gardens, Palace Complex

To:- DD MMYYYY TIMEAM/PM

While proceeding from Dambulla along the Trincomalee Road, about 15km, meet the Inamaluwa junction. Proceeding about 7km from there, can meet the Sigiriya Kingdom. Sigiriya and the places around were prehistoric settlements. (Inhabited Areas) It has been proved by archaeological excavations done in areas like Pidurangala, Ibbankatuwa, Rotawewa and Mulasunu Pothana. Afterwards along with the stabilization of Buddhism, or close to that period Sigiriya became a Buddhist

monastery. This too had been proved by inscriptions found in the caves considering the orthography of those inscriptions the opinion of the scholars is that they belong to 3-2 be periods. It is accepted as this area had been abandoned 1-5 AD. That is due to not having substantial proofs, of any human activities, had taken place within this area. As it is at the time of king Kashyapa's coming to power too this area had been neglected 477 AD. There would have been many reasons for him to build his defensive palace complex here. Presently this area has become a well known worldwide tourist centre as well as

a archaeological centre. Though this beautiful Sigiriya, which makes the tourists amazing, the legend of the place is not so pleasing.

**In brief it is as thus :-**

In the period of 459 - 477 the chief ruler of Sri Lanka was the excellent king named Dhatusena. He came to power, by chasing out the South Indian invaders by a terrible revolt. He had two queens. Both of them had two sons and one daughter. The elder son was the second Queen's son, Prince Kashyapa. The Chief Queen's had a son and a daughter and their son was Mugalan. The chief Queen's daughter (Princess) given in marriage to Migara the son of the King's sister. As such Migara being the nephew of the King, was appointed as the chief commanding officer of his army. One day on a dispute between these two, Migara had beat the princess with a whip, and assaulted. The injured and with bleeding wounds, she went to the father king and complained about it. The antagonized king ordered to arrest him, but by the time, he had bolted away. The king becoming more wild, set fire and killed his mother in public. Probably she would have had involved in this dispute. To take revenge from the king, Migara got fraternized with Kashyapa secretly who had to inheritance to the throne.

Afterwards, Migara and Kashyapa conspired and instigated the

soldiers, who were under him, to against the King. As a result the king was imprisoned and Kashyapa was made the King. Along with this incident Mugalan bolted away to India for his safety. Though the Migara's conspiracy was successful, his ambition was to kill the king. Therefore he provoked Kashyapa, saying that the king had hidden lot of wealth. To be given to Mugalan for future use, and slandering like that increased his enmity. But Dhatusena was a very eminent and good king who had spent his wealth and built so many irrigatory reservoirs (tanks) for the welfare of the masses. Because of that he would not have had such a big wealth as Migara had slandered, but Kashyapa and Migara claiming that wealth had severely harassed him. Being unable to bear up the harassment, the requested them to take the king to Kalawewa to show the wealth, that he was hiding. When he was taken to Kalawewa having a good bath in the reservoir, had said "this is the only wealth I own" showing this proclamation as an insult, to Kashyapa instigated Kashyapa to take revenge. So keeping the king leaning to the dam of Kalawewa (reservoir), laying lumps of wet clay on the whole body covering him entirely and put him to death. Along with these series of incidents the Buddhist monks too got disgusted with the new king's behaviour.

As the prince Mugalan was missing the monks too could not do anything other than denouncing to show the dissatisfaction. In the meantime arranged different devices to kill Mugalan who was in India, but failed. However knowing the prevailing situation in the country furious, Kashyapa, leaving the city of Anuradhapura, left to Sigiriya for safety and made his permanent residence and ruling capital city. However he spent his time in great fear, due to patricide and his brother Mugalan, would come at any time to attack him.

## **1, Museum**

The main entrance of Sigiriya is found about 80m to the western entrance. This creation is a donation of Japan. The antiques and replicas found in the excavations from the pre historic period. Up to the present ear are replaced here. The model of the furnace found in Alakoladeniya in which iron - ore was melt is considered that it belongs to 9BC.

## **Moats and Ramparts**

From far ancient times, all the kingdoms of Sri Lanka were protected by moats and ramparts. This kindom too very well protected by two moats, Sigiriya Reservoir (tank) and two ramparts. When examining these, it is clear that there had been very learned specialists with a

profound knowledge of arranging a fortress. Out of the two moats, the inner one had received water from, passing water of water park within the fortress, could be seen clearly. Similarly inside the water park, the first pond we come across to the right side, can be identified, the way how the water was released out.

In the past it is considered that there had been breeding crocodiles for more protection with silt and now archaeologically restorations done. In these moats at the main entrances there would have been folding bridges, is the opinion of the intellectuals. External wall 2.5m in breadth and the inner wall about 17m. in breadth and 5m. in height. When looking back to the history of the security arrangements of those places, it was a very difficult task to cross those moats and attack the kingdom.

## **2. Water Garden**

As entering from the west side, can reach the Royal Water Garden. This is one of the oldest Royal Gardens found in South Asia. In the past, this would have been decorated with beautiful trees and creepers. The park site has been very well planned and designed. The park site is divided in to two parts by a road running up to the foot of the rock. So far left side is not being archaeologically excavated. It has been separated for research work

for the future archaeologists. But the opinion of the archaeologists is that portion also had been done similar to the right side. The entire right side portion had been completely restored after the excavation works. Here, we come across the micro-water park. This is a shallow pond parallel to the rampart, more in length but less in breadth. Here vivid erections have been done, using bricks and limestone. The way how water was supplied to the above mentioned canal can clearly identified. This pond would have been specifically used by the queens and the Royal children's for water sports.

After this we can see two

swimming pools Here we can see two underground entrances. They would have used by the kings and their closets associates. To the right side of these ponds, some ruined foundations of ancient buildings can be seen. They are possibly might have been kitchens and resting places of the Royal Soldiers and servants. Next we come across two small ponds and four water fountains on both sides of the road. Those water fountains are made, piercing round stones. This water is supplied by and underground tube system. Even at present on heavy rainy days, they start functioning beautifully. Next we meet the cold palace covered with



**Sigiri Frescoes**



**Mirror Wall and Sigiri Graffiti**

Before proceeding from here can save your time and abstain from the heavy crowd.

### **3. Sigiri Frescoes**

To :- DD MMYYYY TIMEAM/PM

Their origin of Sri Lankan Art, runs far back as to the Pre-Historic period, is the opinion of the Scholars. The Oldest cave paintings of Sri Lanka are found in Tantirimale in Anuradhapura District. According to the opinion of the Scholars, is that they are old about 7000-10000 years. We can see some fragments of coloured paintings. According to the oldest written history book, the Mahavamsaya, at the time of King Devanampiyatissa (250BC) Offering Mahamegha garden to the monks, that he had used a coloured water can. As such, from the far ancient time up to the Kandy period, our traditional way of

painting had been functioning, while undergoing different changes. But the opinion of the scholars is that Sri Lankan Art of painting had reached the point of perfection during the Anuradhapura period, up to now have found a few paintings belonged to Anuradhapura Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa and Dambadeniya reigning periods.

Out of them the naturally protected frescoes find here are of inestimable Sri Lankan heritages. It is mentioned that there had been about 500 frescoes. Surprising to hear that these frescoes old about 1500 years have been in existence safely, such a long period. The opinion of the scholars is that it may be due to the difficulty in reaching the place.

The main reason for winning popularity and attraction of the tourists is these frescoes. The plaster on which the frescoes are drawn, had been prepared, by blending lime, clay of anthills, ashes of chaff, wood apple gum after plastering it is levelled and obtain a very smooth surface and on which frescoes had been done. The pigments of (Sadilingam) Cinnebar (Hiriyal) orpiment, lac and wood-apple gum are taken to the required quantity and had prepared the colours. The experts of this subject had mentioned two methods of drawing these frescoes.

thoughts, details about the Kingdom their vocation, the development of Sinhala Language their sex, whatever laymen or monks, villages and their residences, their lineage, the dresses religion and faiths and other so many things have been written for the attention of the readers. This is considered to be Prof. Paranavitana's the most excellent work. The opinion of the scholars is that there are some more verses belonged to 5, 6, 7, and 12, 13 centuries which did not subject to his attention.

#### **4. The Stone Trap**

It is advisable to see this on the way back from climbing the summit of the rock. Coming to the corner of the mirror wall about 50m to the North, can see a huge stone has been placed on a heap of stone pillars. It is a wonderful technology, keeping such a huge block of stone on a heap of stone pillars and making such stone traps.

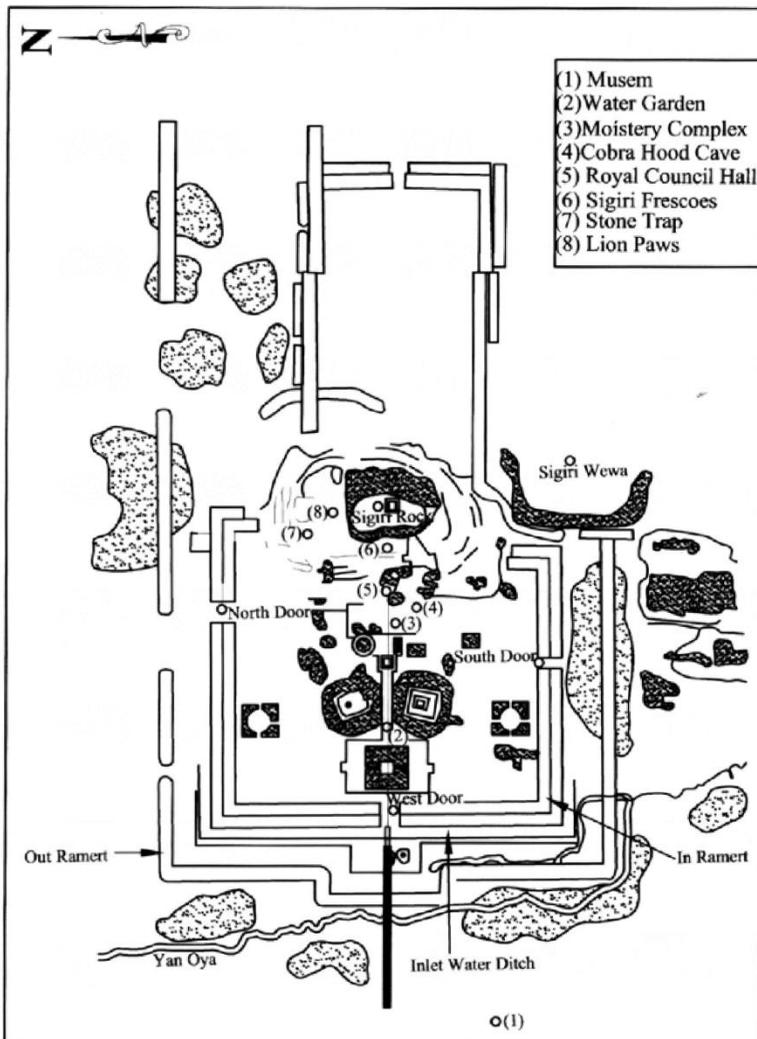
While having a well developed technology at present, it is a difficult and dangerous task to do a thing like this. By a slightest mistake a severe damage could have caused. There is no doubt, this shows, that there was a strategy that they could implement in a moment. If it activates could have caused a severe destruction, while falling down colliding with the other stones, and falling them too on them. Those who study the strategies of

war in the past will come to know, that there were experts, surrounding the enemies and attack them. Hence following this method can cause a severe damage to a large crowd of enemies, within a short time. Prince Mugalan too would have known well about the readiness for war in the Sigiriya Citadel. As such he would have taken out the king Kashayapa and his crowd tactfully and attacked them. On the both sides of this stone trap, there are ruins of some ancient buildings, which would have been used by the soldiers.

#### **5. The Middle Terrace with Lion Paws**

While climbing upwards, come across an open area with Lion Paws. Around these paws too there are ruins of ancient buildings. They would have been used by sub units, of the army. In an exploration carried on, have found two paths leading to the North and the East, from here. As such can identify, there had been four (4) routes of entering and exiting, close to each other in an emergency. Hence it is clear that amount of attention he paid for his protection. Though we cannot satisfy about the things had taken place in the 30 years in the North and East.

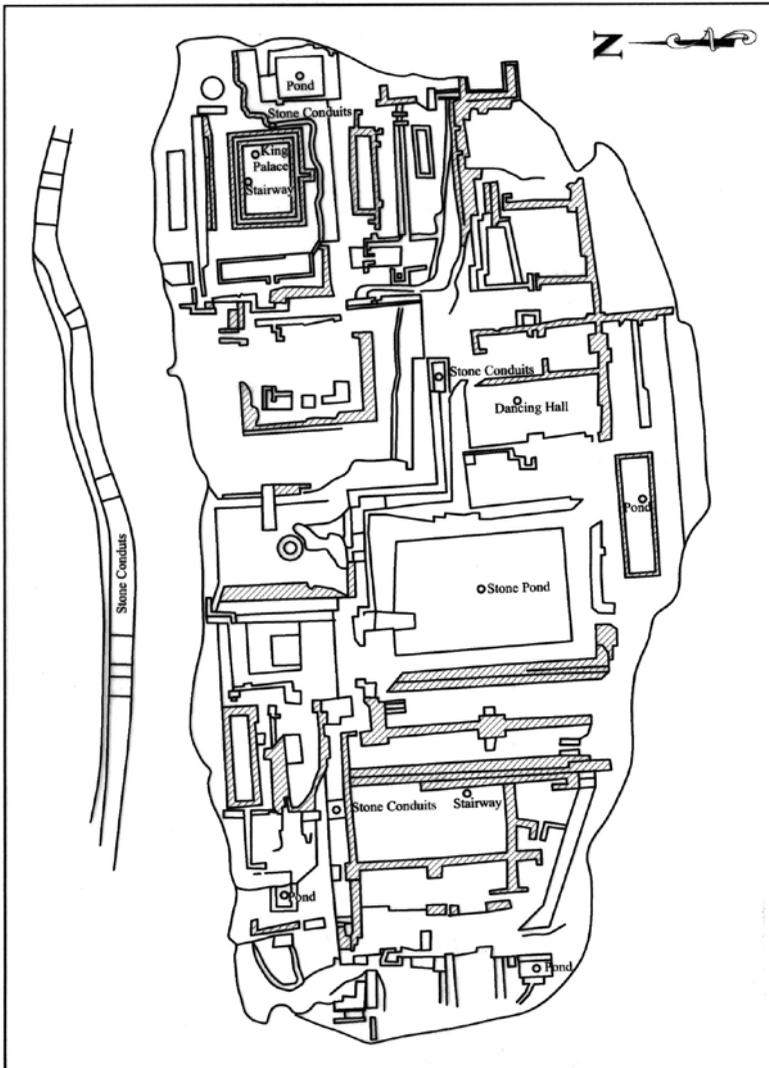
When considering how the leader of the war managed to plan out, can realize to a certain extent. Because of that we can imagine that the king had



four (4) plans about these routes, to face an attack.

Today we can see only the paws of the lion and a portion of the stairway, and that is too restored according to archaeology. The opinion of archaeologists is that there had been

a figure of a seated Lion about 185m in height. In about (4) four graffities on the mirror wall have mentioned about this lion. In one such graffity we can see written as follows (Sakala Lowa Pethiri Kith Yasasin Yuth Sinha Raja Api Sigiriyedi Dutuwemu) We



saw the lion king, spreaded its fame far and wide in the world. According to that verse, even that time too Sigiriya had been a famous centre of attraction. Due to this lion figure Sigiriya has got this name. Going

through the throat of a Lion is the simple meaning of it (Lion's + Throat)

### **The Drip Lines around the Sigiri Rock**

The drip line is cut on the rock to avert falling rain water into the cave.



The Stone Trap



I. Fresco - Secco

It was a method used in olden days, as a canal in which water is flowing down. The best place to see these drip lines with the naked eye is near the lion paws. It would be very much better if it is on a rainy day or on the following day early morning after raining. The way how the drip lines have been cut is a wonderful process. When observing carefully at the drip lines, cannot imagine the risk they had taken in cutting them and at the same time it is reasonable to think, that how many lives would have been sacrificed.

## **6. Sigiri - King's Palace – Complex**

To:- DD MMYYYYTIMEAM/PM

Anybody can reach the premises, where king's palace is situated, while climbing up passing lions paws. In 1815 the entire ruling power of Sri Lanka seized by the British. Afterwards along with the span of time, they realized about the past heritage and the excellent civilization of Sri Lanka. But at first their chiefs were under the impression that all those legends were mere thoughts and exaggerations. As such at first by establishing the archaeological Department in 1880, got down a report on the Kegalla District through the District Judge of Kegalla District, a British named Harry Charles Perves Bel in 1892(Report On The Kegalla District Of The Province Of Sabaragamuwa). As a result a special emphasis was given on Anuradhapura,

Polonnaruwa, and Sigiriya consist of historical ruins. An efficient, intellectual H. C. P. Bel contributed a lot, using his maximum efficiency. As a result of that in 1894 started the archaeological activities. At the time of his arrival for that project, the entire Sigiriya area was ruined and covered with plane wilderness, so that none could identify the place even. More emphasis was given towards the summit of the rock. Because in ancient chronologies as well as in legends have mentioned about the summit of the rock. After climbing up the summit of the rock with a great effort, the first thing he saw was broken ruins and the plane wilderness, covering the entire area. His first task was removing them and protecting the ruins. Afterwards he started excavations based on archaeological Datas (theories) A considerable amount of damages also had been caused due to using of undeveloped archaeological methods. That was not his mistake. As it was the primary stage of archaeology and due to using primary methods. The great honour goes to him for the archaeological surveys done on the summit of the rock. From that time upto now many researches have been implemented.

No doubt that all the raw materials needed to build the palatial complex in the site consisting of 1.2141

Hectares (03 acres) had been brought from the foot of the rock. They would have used comfortable and very rapid methods in the past. Within this site there had been buildings created in (11) eleven floor levels (terraces)

The building find on the highest place in the site considered to be the king's Bedroom or the chief palace. In front of the ruins of a small Stupa can be seen. It is so ruined cannot decide, whether it belongs to pre-Kashyapa period or after him. To the right of the palace, ruins of two small bathing pools can be seen. It would have been reserved for king's personal use. To the middle of the palatial complex can see a stone seat made from the living rock. The site below this considered as the theatre hall. Other associated buildings would have been reserved for the chief queen's two daughters and the other for working men and women in the palace. The buildings of the lowest terrace would have been used as the kitchen. As the walls of these palatial complex are very thick and the two remaining steps of the stairway in the chief palace and also the nine steps of a building, and the theatre find to the right side of these, it is clear that it was a storeyed building, Similarly those buildings would have been arranged strategically to face any strong wind.

There is a great belief that the needed water for the palace complex,

would have brought through conduits from the reservoir at the foot of the rock. There are vivid opinions about such technologies. But the scholars are silent about them. There are scientific or archaeological proofs for bringing water to the summit of the rock, having a height of 200m.