Anurudha Arana

Posted on



The serene Anurudha Arana amidst hibiscus blooms offers panoramic views of the Knuckles Range

In Matale, via Balakaduwa Pass, we arrived at Anurudha Arana – a Buddhist centre of learning where a replica of the Shwedagon Pagoda of Myanmar was being made.

Words Gayathri Kothalawala
Photographs Menaka Aravinda

Ven Mugunuwela Anuruddha Thero, Abbot
of Anurudha Arana

The soft twinkling of a wind chime greeted us as we arrived at Anurudha Arana. It was founded in 2014 by Mugunuwela Anuruddha Thero, Secretary General, World Buddhist Sangha Youth and Abbot of Anurudha Arana.

“We established Anurudha Arana not just as a place of worship where the teachings of the Buddha are practised. We also hoped that the peaceful environment would support the intellectual development of the people, and we wished to create an awareness of the importance of the environment and its protection,” said Anuruddha Thero.

As we spoke with the Thero, a bird flew to perch on a nearby tree branch; already accustomed to the presence of humans, the bird continued to rest while we observed its colourful plumage. “It is the duty and responsibility of humans to protect the flora and fauna of this country. Through Anurudha Arana, we wish to educate both Sri Lankans and foreigners about the country, Matale and the flora and fauna native to the area,” said the Thero.

Throughout the one-acre land, beautiful hibiscus flowers were in bloom; nearly eighty hibiscus species are planted in the garden. While admiring the flowers, we walked towards the stupa. A model stupa of the Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar, the Buruma – Lanka Aung Zabu Seya, was being built under the patronage of Ven Maha Dhamma Jothika Dhaja Bhaddants Pandavamsa, Chief Abbot, Aung Zabu Tawya Dhamma Yiek Thar Monastery in Yongon, Myanmar.

As we saw the stupa for the first time, we wondered whether somehow we had flown to Myanmar. At the time of our visit, the stupa was in its final stages of construction, but still appeared similar to the gleaming golden pagoda in Myanmar. Symbolising the deep friendship between the two countries, the hexagonal stupa, which is built in the architectural style of Myanmar is the first of its kind in Sri Lanka.

An artistic interpretation of the stupa that is being constructed

Six small stupas encircle the ornately adorned main pagoda. Nearby, a white jade image of a seated Buddha, gifted from Myanmar, gazed at us, and we were inspired by the peace that emanated from the image. The façade of the flower altar, built

near the stupa, was also decorated with intricate detailing. We admired a pillar where a Berunda pakshiya – a mythological bird – was built on the top, while the images of four deities stood surrounding its base.

The pinnacle of the stupa will be unveiled this month. From its vantage position, we could also witness panoramic views of the Knuckles mountain range, standing as a giant guardian over Matale.

From the Dhamma Hall, we ascended a flight of stairs to reach the young Bo tree before we ventured towards the two meditation chambers. We arrived at a secluded area in the garden, where a seated Buddha image as well as the images of the 28 Buddhas were placed. Within the peaceful image house, a second white jade seated Buddha image gifted from Myanmar exuded serenity.

The peaceful environment of the Anurudha Arana had allowed our minds to appreciate the beautiful nature and the stunning views of the majestic Knuckles Range. On the drive back to Matale, we imagined the stupa, gleaming golden against the blue sky.





