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We set off in search of a villager who made kitul hakuru - a type of jaggery prepared with the sap collected from the flower of the kitul or palm tree - a sweetener savoured over generations. At the very onset of our journey we were warned by our guide. "He lives there... on top of that hill," said our guide of the hakuru maker's home, pointing to a distant mountain bordering the Sinharaja Rainforest, a few kilometres from Kalawana, Ratnapura. He cautioned, "it's not the easiest of climbs."

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