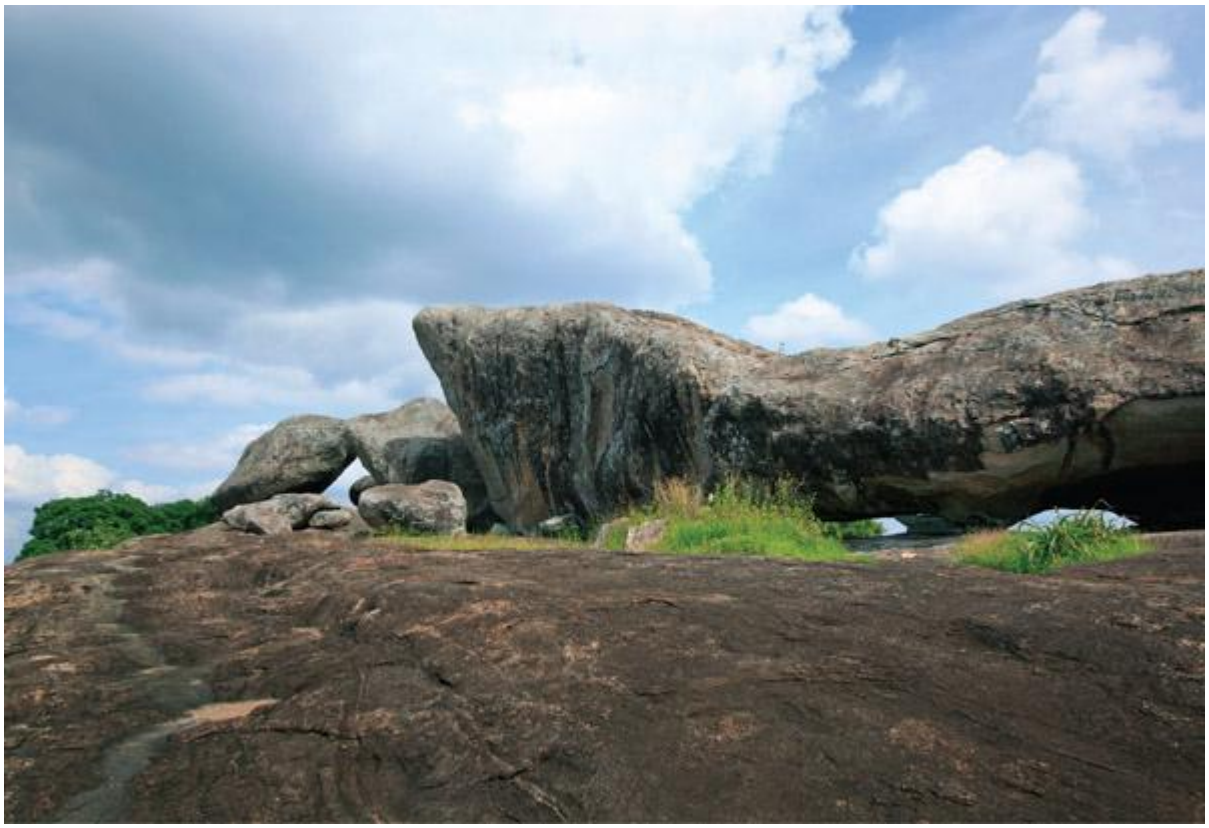
Kimbulagala: Reminiscence Of A Forgotten Past

Posted on



The section that resembles the head of a crocodile

Sitting down with the sun’s warm rays blazing over us, we looked at the panoramic view that encircled the ‘Kimbulagala’ Rock. Stretches and stretches of green tops dazzled the area as far as the eye could see, while we breathed in the air that was mingled with the warmth of the sun. We sat there in reverence, while our minds wandered over to the ancient times – long lost and forgotten by many…..

Words Krishani Peiris Photographs Prabath Chathuranga

Passing the vibrant town of Vavuniya, we proceeded along the Vavuniya-Horowpathana road. Turning to the Mamaduwa road we took a gravel road by the

‘Sri Sudharmarama’ Buddhist temple. Passing through lush paddy fields and a village by the name of ‘Malmaduwa’ – which showed some signs of life with small houses,
scattered around – we arrived at ‘Kelebogaswewa Road’. Rambling through, we glimpsed ruins that are strewn around within the thick forest shrubbery, which bespoke of the ancient history, yet to be discovered. Finally, after a few kilometres, we reached the Kimbulagala Rock.

The Kimbulagala Rock is encircled by Kebithigollewa, Anuradhapura, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu districts on all four sides.....

Looking towards the entry point shrouded with trees and shrubs, we felt a sense of foreboding at first. However, laying all our fears aside we started forward, going through the small forest area and finally stumbling to the foot of the rock. Looking up, we saw a Buddhist flag on top of the mountain, marking the spot as an important Buddhist archaeological site. It is believed that Nandimithra, one of the ten giant warriors of King Dutugemunu, used this place as an assembly point for troupes during war times. It is indicated that there is evidence of King Dutugemunu frequenting the area while some believe that the rock also served as a resting spot for weary travellers.

Here on we started our assent with the occasional aid of a helpful guide. Following his lead we clambered up, helter-skelter, sometimes using our hands to keep our balance and pull ourselves upward. At one point we stopped and took our shoes off, feeling the hot sun burning our feet.

After a while we reached the top where we took some time to rest and catch our breath. The view from the pinnacle of the rock was breathtakingly beautiful as forests punctured with lakes and rocks and mountains bedecked the surrounding periphery and beyond. Atop, the chirping of the birds, the rustling of the trees and the slight wind, all intermingled to bring an array of pleasant sounds to our ears. We peered around hoping amidst our awe, to catch a glimpse of a leopard or a bear that is known to inhabit the locale.

The Kimbulagala Rock is encircled by Kebithigollewa, Anuradhapura, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu districts on all four sides and the magnificent Eropothana Tank and the Mamaduwa Tank is also visible as shimmering water bodies in the distance. The Eropothana Rock formation – another significant archeological sight closely related to the history of Kimbulagala Rock – stood majestically, rising from the forest close

by.

Surveying the top we understood the reason as to why the rock is named ‘Kimbulagala’ or the crocodile rock – the three largest rocks on top resembled a gaping crocodile, each rock reminiscent of the head, body and tail. Inspecting around, we took note of ‘kataram’ – a carved ledge on the rocks to distribute rain water so that it does not drip inside the enclosures – inscriptions written in ancient letters, polished surfaces where people used to grind or make medicine and sharpen swords while preparing for battle. Passing these we continued on with our clambering, as we made our way across the rock in the quest of seeing more historical elements. The rock itself was a fascinating sight to behold, as it was filled with crevices and many other small rock formations that provided shelter. We went through and under these at times, bent double so as to not hit our heads on the roof of the rock.

Gazing upon the wide expanse we contemplated the prosperous and adventurous times of great Kings and legacies that were left behind, somehow forgotten, in the wake of their many admirable heroics.

Ducking through vines and branches and slipping and sliding on the rocks, we made our way to a secluded area that housed more medicine grinding spots and some beds – maybe used for sleeping – smoothed into the rock. Here we also located a seating area that is deemed to be an ‘asanaya’ or a seat for the leader to survey the area. On top of the rock that acts as a shade for this seat, there were markings of an archaic pool, where water was once believed to have amassed to cool the seating area below. Sitting on top of this ‘asanaya’ we tried to channel the spirit of our ancestors, taking our time, pondering and marvelling at their skills. The drifting wind seem to carry the whispers of a past that is hidden and lost to many at this historically significant compass.

We sat there, staring at the wide expanse and the clear blue skies above us, as we contemplated the prosperous and adventurous times of great Kings and the legacies that were left behind, somehow forgotten, in the wake of their many admirable heroics. These are places that need to be preserved and nurtured so that they will still stand as attestants to a nation that was once deemed to be a great civilization of olden times.

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