



A fascinating little elephant and utensils at Bodhirukkaramaya Raja Maha Vihare

Halgolla Plantation Home

**Accommodation of a different kind
– November 2015 –**

Not simply to be “different” but in our efforts to offer our visitors a genuinely unique experience of rural Sri Lanka we have begun to explore places and events in our neighbourhood that feature prominently in the lives of those who live in the adjacent villages; nothing particularly dramatic but places that play a part in the day-to-day lives of our neighbours, both in the Central Province in which we live and the immediately adjacent North Western Province down the Weuda valley which spreads out below us in a westerly direction.

On a morning in October we took a drive up two little roads, each less than a kilometer in length, to two temples that, among other things, were places of refuge for Sinhala kings on the run from invading forces more than a thousand years ago. Kande and Bujaslana Raja Maha Vihares do not match the grandeur of Sigiriya or the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, but are temples at which local villagers still worship and which figure very prominently in both their social and spiritual lives. Among other things, they contain extensive and very impressive wall and roof paintings which, fortunately, no one has tried to “improve” on in recent times!

The third temple, Bodhirukkaramaya, seems to have been and still is of greater importance in the region and has a huge array of wall and roof paintings in the rocky overhang in which most of the temple is lodged. Unfortunately, a power outage at the time of our visit prevented us from enjoying it to the full, but what we were able to observe was very impressive, to say the least. One of the priests also showed us a tunnel leading into the massive hill behind the temple which has been barricaded (pending further

excavation by the authorities?) but which, it is claimed, was used by people “on the run” - particularly “royals” in distress - as a passage between Ridi Vihara on one side of the huge hill and Bodhirukkaramaya on the other. Another distinguishing feature on the road beside the temple is the largest (wild) mango tree I have ever seen which is believed to be more than four hundred years old, something that the size of the tree suggests is no exaggeration!



Ancient door handle and lock from Kande Vihare

Yes, apart from the high quality handloom fabrics of Selyn, the fascinating *Ambalamas* at Panavitiya and

Karagahagedera and Dr. George van der Poorten's unique Butterfly Garden, you will find day trips from HPH different from the usual. And, letting you in on a little secret, exploring new experiences for our guests, has provided new "adventures" for us as well! Check our website or this [link](#) for details and if you still have any ideas or questions, let us know and we'll try to help.

In our last newsletter I referred to my father, Ben's, love of planting and nurturing fruit trees in particular and, after a long spell our Okari nut (*Terminalia okari*) tree has borne a few fruit. They aren't as big as they usually have been but Senevi's hand beside one provides a pretty good idea of their size and of how much bigger these are than their humbler, more common, cousin, the *Kottamba* (*Terminalia catappa*). Anyone, who grew up in Sri Lanka will remember cracking open the latter by bashing it with a rock after placing it on a similar surface. Like many of the "exotics" at HPH, this huge tree, the tallest on our land, perhaps, owes its origins to the Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya and I have never seen a similar tree anywhere in Sri Lanka.



Okari nut

With all good wishes
Arlene & Emil

HPH is highly recommended on Trip Advisor.
See what our previous [guests](#) have had to say!



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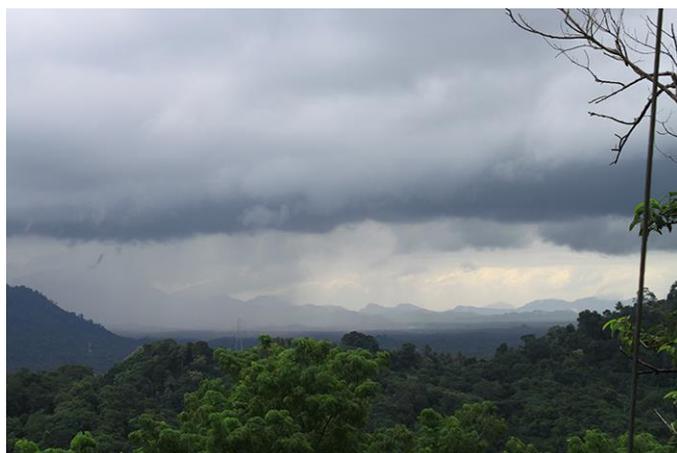
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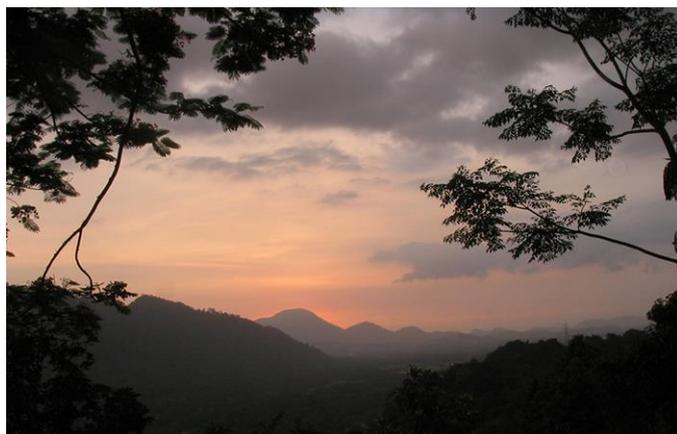
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We are also on [Facebook](#). Bookings can be made on [Trip Advisor](#), [Airbnb](#), [Booking.com](#) and [Agoda](#) as well as by contacting us directly.

Sri Lanka: rated as a top tourist destination by [The Lonely Planet](#); [Condé Nast Traveller](#); [The New York Times](#); and [National Geographic](#). And most recently the (London) Times has rated Sri Lanka the No. 1 tourist destination in the world.



Views down the Weuda valley



For November we'll continue our very popular "Sampler pack" of HPH-grown and -roasted coffee and the "Surprise Basket" of HPH "goodies," both now famous trademarks of HPH hospitality

Halgolla Plantation Home

- now ranked #8/241 B&Bs in Kandy on Trip Advisor
- Certificate of Excellence 2015 from Trip Advisor
- rated as [Best Home Stay](#) in Sri Lanka 2013
- recommended in the [Bradt Travel Guide for Sri Lanka](#) 5th edition, 2014

For information or to book your accommodation, check our website www.halgollaplantationhome.com or contact Emil van der Poorten: emil@halgollaplantationhome.com or by phone: 94-77-347-0702 or 94-72-284-9770