

Visiting Lipton Seat

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One can reach the top of the Poonagala Range through the narrow lanes that run through the Dambethenna Estate in Haputale or the Nayabedda Estate in Bandarawela. They will no doubt see breathtaking views of the mountainous areas of Sri Lanka. Second only to the end of the world in the Horton Plains, this amazing place is located at an altitude of about 6,000 feet above sea level.

On the top of the Poonagala Mountain is the 'Lipton Seat' from where one can see not only many of the provinces of Sri Lanka, but also significant places such as the Handapanagala lake, the Chandrika lake, the Udawalawe lake, the Vedihitikanda mountain range as well as the Hambantota port.

Ceylonese tea industry

The term 'Lipton' is no stranger to tea lovers. Thomas Lipton was born and raised in Glasgow, Scotland. He was thus involved in the Ceylonese tea industry, introducing the world famous Lipton brand for tea to Ceylon and also establishing a tea factory at the Dambethenna Estate. It is said that Lipton, who used to visit his tea factory on the top of the Poonagala hill, was fascinated by the beautiful scenery he saw on the top of the hill. For this reason, he has arranged a seat at the top of the Poonagala hill to enjoy a cup of tea while relaxing. This is what is known today as the 'Lipton Seat'.

The Dambethenna Estate is nine kilometres (km) away from the town of Haputale, hidden among the frozen mountains of the Uva Province. About 6 km from there, the Dambethenna Tea Factory has been built on the top of the Poonagala hill and can be reached by a narrow path that runs through the middle of the tea estates. In addition, there is a road to reach the top of Poonagala hill through the



Bandarawela Nayabedda estate.

Footpaths

Although the two roads are well maintained and in good condition, the total distance that can be traveled by bus is only 4.7 km. Then the rest of the journey has to be completed on foot or in a small car. Rs. 100 will be charged from cars entering the Lipton Seat. Pedestrians can also walk 500-800 metres (m) as there are footpaths in the middle of the tea estates.

One who reaches the Lipton seat

on such a clear day will be able to see Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Matara, Badulla, Ratnapura and Moneragala. They can also see the Kirinda, Batticaloa and Matara lighthouses in Devinuwara from the Lipton Seat. But this beauty can only be seen by one who reaches the Lipton Seat early in the morning. The reason for this is that the top of Poonagala hill will be covered with mist at around 8 in the morning. However, on a hot day, if you are lucky, you will be able to see the beauty of Sri Lanka's mountains even around 10 a.m.

Replica of Lipton

There is also a tea shop that sells black tea near the Lipton Seat. So, as Lipton did decades ago, tourists can enjoy the beautiful scenery of the mountains while enjoying a cup of tea with some snacks. There is also a replica of Lipton erected at the place, showing the image of a proud tea estate owner.

It is said that Lipton lived a fun life, but loved nature. Evidence of this can be seen in the numerous English words on the stone walls on either side of the road leading to Lipton's Seat. The sentence which can be seen there "If a person wants to be a good man, they must first avoid cruelty to animals. Think of the land we all live in as one society and use it to spread love and respect," is still valid today.

