

An ancient port

The ancient sea port of Godawaya lies about four kilometres from Ambalantota on the Galle Road, turning right at the Dehigahalanda school towards the seaside. It has a quiet little bay, which is a thriving fishing centre at present.

estuary in the Hambantota district.

Stone ruins

Several boulders rocky boisterous bay on its west, while on the landside there are numerous stone ruins, including rock caves, stone pillars, a dagaba and the torso of a Buddha statue.

Some stone ruins, including a carved stone statue of the Buddha, in the Godawaya temple, have been restored by the Department of Archaeology.

A rock inscription

The rock inscription at the temple

site states that the dues collected from the port were to be donated to the Godawaya temple.

Text and pix:

MAHIL WIJESINGHE

The records also state that King Gamini Abaya donated the customs duties of the port of Godawaya to the nearby Vihara at this site. Initially, the Godawaya temple was attributed to King Gota Abhaya of Ruhuna, in scattered around, facing the the third century BC. History records that Godawaya came to be called Gota Pabbatha Rajamaha Vihara as a result of this association.

The Silk Route

According to ancient chronicles, Godawaya had been on the Silk Route, where ships had anchored to take precious stones, spices and ivory, in exchange for clothing and porcelain.

The most picturesque site that adorns Godawaya is the estuary of blocks on the rock boulder facing the endless seascape.

The sea is very turbulent around the rocky boulders and it is not advisable for visitors to enter the sea at the Godawaya bay.

A *Brahmi* inscription

The *Brahmi* inscription on the rock at the temple premises, states that the old port of Godawaya is also called Godapavita. In ancient times, the Walawe basin was considered a prosperous rice producing area in Magama and the Walawe Ganga was said to have been navigable for transportation. It is said that, in in collaboration with the University ancient times, the paddy harvest was transported by boats along the Walawe Ganga, which also had a ferry service, transporting paddy and spices to be shipped abroad from the ancient port of Godawaya.

A Dutch bhikkhu

The part of the ruined Buddha statue conserved in the temple premises

Indian Ocean on the shore at Godawaya, which gave a fascinating view of the sea.

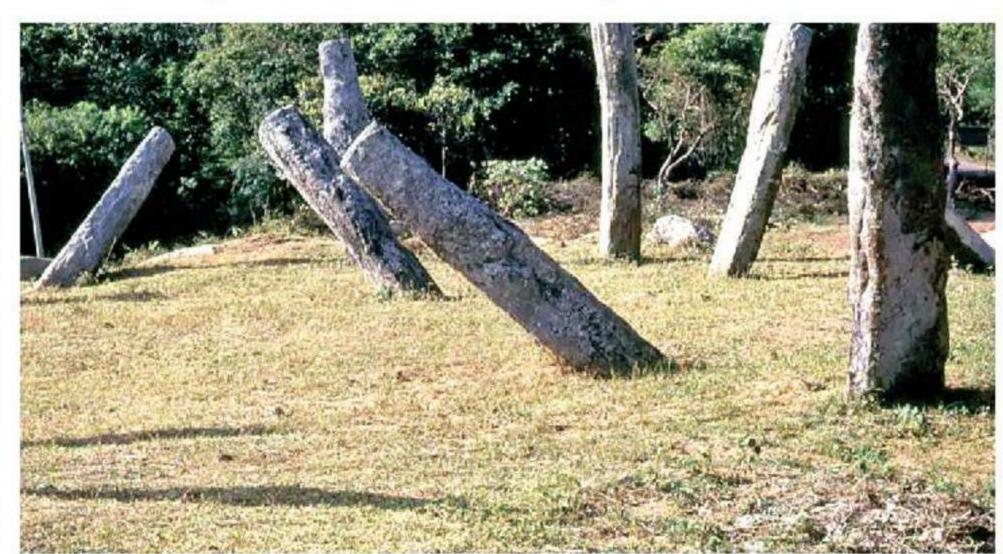
The ruined abode where the bhikkhu dwelt can still be seen at the rocky boulder of Gota Pabbatha Rajamaha Vihara premises.

In 1993, a group of archaeologists from the Department of Archaeology, of Bonn in Germany, carried out an extensive excavation at the Gota Pabbatha *Rajamaha Vihara*, and found several ancient coins, which indicated that Godawaya was an ancient port along the Silk Route.

A visit to this remarkable place built by ancient kings whose During World War II, a Dutch monumental achievements are bhikkhuresided at the Gota Pabbatha treasured centuries on, is a must, Rajamaha Vihara.He had lived in a where one can enjoy the tranquility small kuti (abode) built with cement that prevails surrounded by an



The large outcrop boulder overlooking the old port and kuti built by the Dutch bhikkhu



Standing stone pillars buried in the temple premises