

YAPAHUWA

Initially established as a strategic 'frontier fortress' complex by Sinhalese Chieftan 'Subba' to defend against invasions from the northern Kalinga king Magha. Later on, King Buvanekabahu made it his capital (1272-1284 AD). The Sacred Tooth Relic was also held here during that time. Yapahuwa evidences early human settlement from the proto historic era, ancient monastic caves, ramparts and moats. Chinese coins (996-1225 AD) and Chinese porcelain was also uncovered during early excavations indicating diplomatic trade links between Buvanekabahu and China had existed. Unique stone carvings and construction puts Yapahuwa amongst the iconic archaeological and historical sites of Sri Lanka.



Looks like a stylized lion carving at the base of a carved pillar.



Above; Flights of steep steps to the main temple. Apparently at an angle of 71 degrees. Each step so narrow that one has to place your foot at an angle or sideways. An apparent defense strategy to slow down any invaders who may want to rush up the steps in attack.



Above: One of the prominent stylized lions 'guarding' the way up.



Intricate stone carvings above a doorway. Note: 4 slabs of stone of different sizes fit perfectly to match the designs.



Above: The doorway at the top of the stairs, leading to the palace grounds beyond and the sacred Temple of the Tooth. The ornate stone carvings have prompted some to comment that there is a South Indian, Pandyan influence in the design and structure.

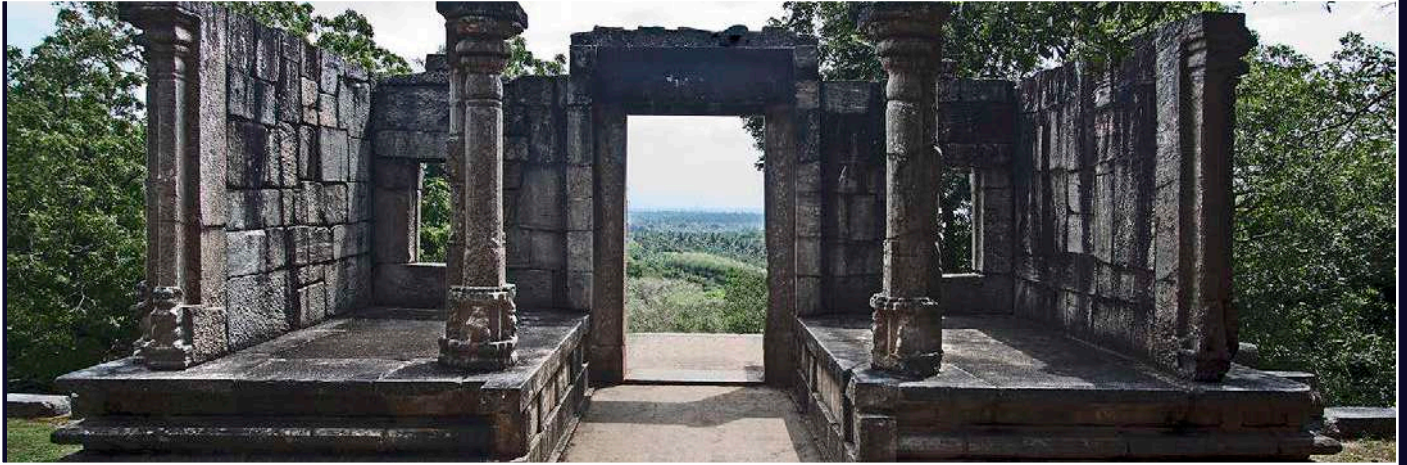


Above: Female dancers, drummers and one doing handstands (an acrobat?) are some of the unique stone carvings at Yapahuwa. **Above right:** Carving thought to be a river goddess (one of a pair) carrying a water vessel, apparently another unique feature. **Below:** The square hole in the wall is supposed to have been an escape tunnel constructed to evacuate the Sacred Tooth Relic from the temple above when (or if) the sacred relic was threatened by invading armies.





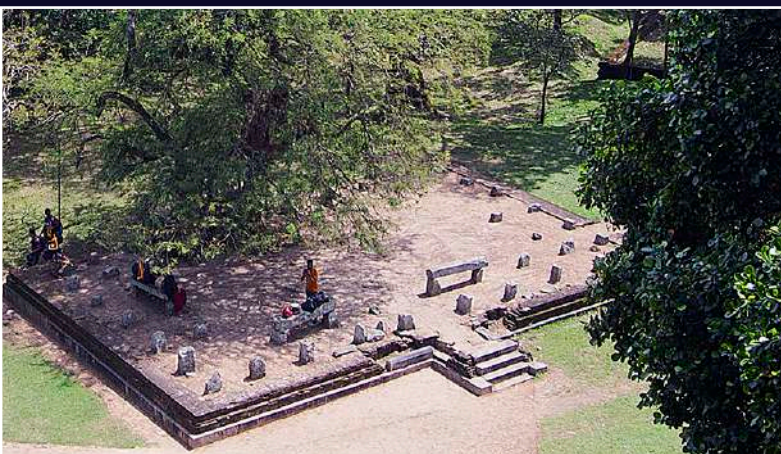
Above: The Gajasinghe balustrade of an elephant's head on one side and a lion's body on the other.



Above: The Temple at the top of the steps. The stone slab construction of the walls and floors adds to the wonder of the mathematics that must have been used at the time.



Above. The Royal residential ruins. **Below:** The Assembly Hall.



It is impossible to encapsulate all of the history in such a short presentation. However, if the personal interest has been stimulated an informative short read is;

(1) <http://www.ft.lk/article/637853/Yapahuwa---the-Royal-Abode-of-King-Bhuvanekabahu-I>

(2) https://www.srilankaclassicart.com/en_US

(3) The Essential Guide to Anuradhapura- Phillipe Fabry's travelling note book- Viator Publications

(4) Reference:

The Decline of Polonnarwa and the Rise of Dambadeniya (circa 1180-1270) -Amaradasa Liyanagamage -1968 -Dept of cultural affairs.