

Kada-Im-Doratu and Travel Procedure of the Sinhalese within the Kandyan Kingdom

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"There is an unfortunate tendency, even among people who should be better informed, to assume that the British are to be given the credit for all roads in Ceylon."

Major Raven-Hart

The Sinhalese have travelled on established ways before 1815. The elite travelled by palanquin or on elephant or on horse back. Certain stretches of roads were wilfully kept treacherous and sometimes limited to single-file, to keep the invaders away from Kandy.

The Kandyan Kingdom consisted of 21 *Disavenis* under the *Disavas*. Each of this area of administration had very defined boundaries (*Kada-Ima*). Crossing these boundaries was strictly at the *Kada-Im Doratu*. Furthermore, there was no free passage except for the king. Even the *Dissave* of the neighboring *Disaveni* had to stop at the *Kada-Im Dora* and send a message to the host *Disave* who then sends his security men to escort the visiting *Disave*. Until then, the visiting *Disave* and team had to wait at an *Ambalama* at the *Kada-Im Dora*. The masses travelled through boundaries only on a pilgrimage and that too under guidance.

Conch shells were also sounded at *Kada-Im Doratu* to signal the host *Disave* of an arrival. Fortunately even today, this tradition is practised at a *Perabera* of the 225 year old *Kadadora*

¹ "Siri Sevana", Imbulana, Ruwanwella

Devale. The name of the village *Kadadora* has derived itself from *Kada-Im Dora*.

According to the rank of the traveller, the rules and privileges at *Kada-Im Doratu* had changed. A travelling *Adigar* passing over a *Disaveni* did not stop at *Kada-Im Dora*. Also it was mandatory that the relevant *Disave* follows him with his own team, 2-3 miles behind as a rear-guard. Once *Sri Wickrema Raja Singha's* Army commander *Lewke Disave* was beheaded for violating this rule. When an attack at *Hannella* was repulsed by the British, the King decided to retreat and in his haste *Leuke Disave* had overtaken the King.

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