



The mighty Sorabora Wewa and a boatman waiting for visitors

Sorabora Wewa: Giant Bulatha's creation

The Sorabora Wewa, also known as the Sea of Bintenna, is a man-made ancient tank in Mahiyanganaya, about 2 kms away from the town of Mahiyangana in the Badulla District (Uva Province).

The Sorabora Wewa, one of the earliest tanks to be built in Sri Lanka is considered as one of the most important creations of Sri Lankan ancient irrigation technology.

The Sorabora Wewa was built by damming a river, named Diyawanna Oya. The embankment is 1,590 feet (485 metres) high. The tank is 1,100 acres or 4.5 sq kms in extent. The water volume at full capacity 14.6 million cubic feet (11,800 acre-feet). It does not make use of the structure called *Bisokotuwa*, which helps to regulate water pressure at the sluice gates from inside the tank and protect the embankment from erosion. Instead the sluice gate, *Sorowwa* of the tank had been placed strategically away from the embankment and made up utilising the massive natural rock around the tank. It is said that this is the only such type of sluice gate found in Sri Lanka.

The Sorabora Wewa is believed to have been built by a giant named *Bulatha* during the reign of King Dutugemunu (161-137 BC) in the second century BC. *Bulatha*, the giant got his name as he had to provide *bulath* (betel leaves) to the King. He also had to prepare seven chews of betel at different times daily for the King.

After the completion of the dam and tank, *Bulatha* invited King Dutugamunu to see his work and open the dam and tank. This was on the day that the King opened the renovated Mahiyangana Raja Maha Vihara.

Graphic, text and pictures: Mahil Wijesinghe



The sluice gate, *Sorowwa* of the tank



Distant mountains adjoining the tank



Another view of the tank