

The Panamure Elephant Kraal: The Last Kraal of Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Since ancient times, Sri Lankan elephants were famous in foreign countries because of their unique features. Elephants were traded as well as donated for foreign countries for cultural purposes for the last 2000 years. According to the great chronicle Mahavamsa, elephants and their tuskers were exported to the countries like Rome and Greece. Later the trading was regularized with the colonialism in Sri Lanka. The “Kraal Method” was invented and introduced to Sri Lanka by the Portuguese. The method was continued by the Dutch and British.

The last Kraal was held in Sri Lanka in somewhere 66 years ago. This was held at a forest land approximately extent of 99,000 acres which belonged to the Sir Francis Molamure who became the first speaker of the Sri Lankan Parliament of Ceylon in 1947. The “Panamure” had been a flourishing Kraal Town since 1896, which attracted many herds of elephants in the area and was proven to be a very successful kraal until 1950. Sir Francis Molamure owned the “MaduwanwalaWalawwa” and large extent of land including the “Elephant Kraal” belonged to MaduwanwalaMahaDisawa.

Elephant Kraals were held in 1896, 1898, 1902, 1907, 1912, 1914, 1918, 1922, 1924, 1929, 1944 and the last in 1950 Panamure was held by Sir Francis Molamure. In the last Kraal the Majestic Panamure elephant made the history by sacrificing its life to protect 16 elephants in the herd. The great elephant was not surrendered and stood by blocking the gate to protect its herd. To capture the elephants in the herd the great elephant was shot dead by the Navy Commander Sam Kadiragamr.

Because of this torture of wild animals, there were protests in the country. The reactions were so powerful and it led to emotions and commotions spreading all around the country. Further this public uproar led to a hot debate in the Parliament. Accordingly the government which was ruling the country established a law banning elephant killing and capture and killing of elephants. This resulted fate of all Sri Lankan elephants.

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