

## **Destruction, Construction: An Approach to Rescue Archaeology**

Dr. Prishanta Gunawardhana, Senior Lecturer, Department of Archaeology,  
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

and

Dr. Robin Coningham

Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, UK

### **Abstract**

The destruction of the World War II (1939-45) provided an assured sphere for archeological initiatives in many countries. It is certain that this era appeared to be the beginning of archaeological heritage management as a total element of an economic planning. The economic boom of the rich nations resulted in a considerable amount of investments in and aid to developing countries.

However, after introducing the open economic policy in 1977 mega construction work have been carried out in Sri Lanka. For instance, Mahaveli scheme system was expedited to complete within the shorter period, the major highways spread in all directions, free trade zones were established in several parts of the island. However, it seemed that these massive constructions caused a mass destructions or disappearance of archaeological heritage sites as a result of lack of proper planning to protect the heritage during this period. At present apart from such development projects it can be seen that some individual Buddhist monks have attempted to enlarge monastic sites by adding more religious monuments or buildings within the original cultural landscape at the expense of the heritage sites. According to the archeological laws and ordinances there is no provision to construct new buildings within the original premises. In terms of the archaeology amendments in 2000, impact assessment must be launched prior to the construction to justify whether it has an impact on the original cultural landscape. However it is obvious that construction work has been carried out because of the lethargic implementation of the laws and ordinance of the archaeology.

This paper intends to discuss the recent constructions and the destructions at Veheragala monastery in Anuradhapura. This paper will be concluded after considering the rescue approach to the monastery.