

## Nissanka Latha Mandapaya, Polonnaruwa



Nissanka Latha Mandapaya is a square building with fine rock cut railing going all around lying the Dalada Maluwa area of the ancient kingdom of Polonnaruwa. This building has been built by king Nissanka Malla (1187-1196).

The most important feature of this building is the shape and the carvings of the stone pillars. These pillars are carved in the shape of a lotus stalk and are curved in three places. The top of the pillars take form of a lotus flower. On the center is a small Stupa. The whole building is surrounded by a fence made out of stone.

Nissanka Latha Mandapaya is located in the Polonnaruwa Dalada Maluwa, where the Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha was located in Polonnaruwa period. This is the place where king Nissanka Malla (1187-1196 AD) used to come and listen the Pirith Chanting. Pirith is a protective Buddhist text.



## Front View of the Nisshanka Lata Mandapaya, Polonnaruwa



## The historical records on Nissanka Latha Mandapaya





This pavilion is surrounded by a railing ( fence, Garadhi Weta), which was done with stonework. Entrance is from the east side with a stone doorway.

There is a stupa ( Dageba) in the middle of the stage, which was done with stones. There are 8 stone columns, on the stage around the Dageba. These pillars are not straight, have curve(angular) shaped from three places. Each pillar is around 8 feet in height. You can see a Blossoming Lotus at the top of the each stone column. Its believed that the roof was done with wood.



The structure is an elevated stone platform with a number of stone columns and surrounded by a low stone wall. These stone columns are the unique feature about the Nissanka Latha Manadapaya, since they are carved in a manner that is found nowhere else in the country. The eight granite columns are arranged in two rows, with four in each row.[2] Presumably used to support a roof,[3] each of them is approximately 8 feet 4 inches (2.54 m) in height. In each of these columns, the crown is carved in the shape of a blossoming lotus bud. The rest of the column is elaborately carved to resemble the stem of the flower.[4] Unlike stone columns commonly seen in the architecture of this period, these are not

straight, but are curved in three places. According to archaeologist Senarath Paranavithana, the stone columns at the Nissanka Latha Mandapaya are the best examples of this feature of ancient Sri Lankan architecture.

At the center of the platform, flanked by the stone columns, is a small stupa. This is also made from stone, but the top part of it has been destroyed. Its base is decorated with a carved design. The platform is surrounded by a stone railing, and the structure is entered through a single stone doorway. In contrast to the elaborately carved stone pillars, these have an undecorated and plain finish.

