

Ruwanweliseya: White-washing of a different nature?

By Ravi Ladduwahetty

A Sri Lankan Ayurvedic doctor living in Germany yesterday accused the Public Trustee's Department of fraud for allegedly collecting funds for whitewashing the Ruwanweliseya in 2006 when he has volunteered to do the job out of his personal funds.

The philanthropist, Dr. Jayanath Abeywickrema who was a Lecturer, Doctor and author living in the German city Cologne for six months of the year and the rest here, said that he was injecting Rs. 3 million out of his personal funds for the project after obtaining the consent of the Chief Prelate Ven. Pallegama Ratana Thera and added that it was ludicrous

for the Public Trustee's Department to solicit funds for the project.

Taking the Department to task on a leather hunt, he alleged that it was collecting funds to commemorate the 2,550th year of the Buddha Jayanthi for Poson, when in fact the Buddha's birth, Enlightenment and Nirvana were on Vesak!

The project has already kicked off with around 60 people working on the site and Dr. Abeywickrema was confident he could complete the project in time for the Sinhala New Year in April.

He said he was doing this for meritorious purposes and volunteered to do it single handedly every year, if there were no volunteers.

The Ruwanweliseya Chief Prelate Ven. Pallegama Ratana Thera told the 'Daily Mirror' yesterday that the Doctor had personally offered his services and funds for the project, and that the department, had by mistake repeated the advertisements in the media, oblivious to Doctor Abeywickrema embarking on the project in a solo effort.

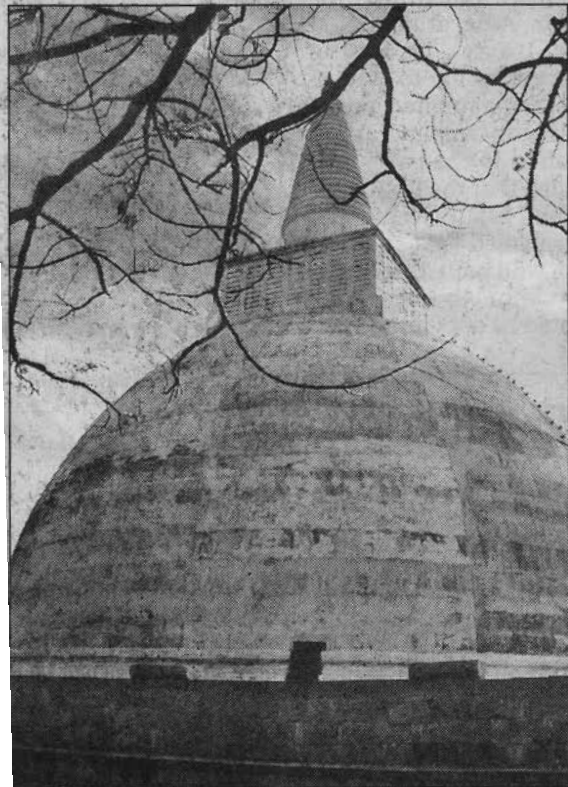
He said that the advertisements were placed in the media when the Department had neither Public Trustee nor two Deputies.

When confronted by this newspaper with the details, Public Trustee K. Kalupahana said that neither Dr. Abeywickrema nor the Priest had informed him of the project and that it was up to the department to collect the funds and provide it to the priest.

However, when pointed out that there was no necessity for the funds with the project having got off the ground, he said that the department would still proceed with the project.

Asked how much the department had collected, he said that the funds collected were a small amount.

He was extremely tightlipped when asked for the actual amount



Ruwanweliseya gets a different type of whitewashing