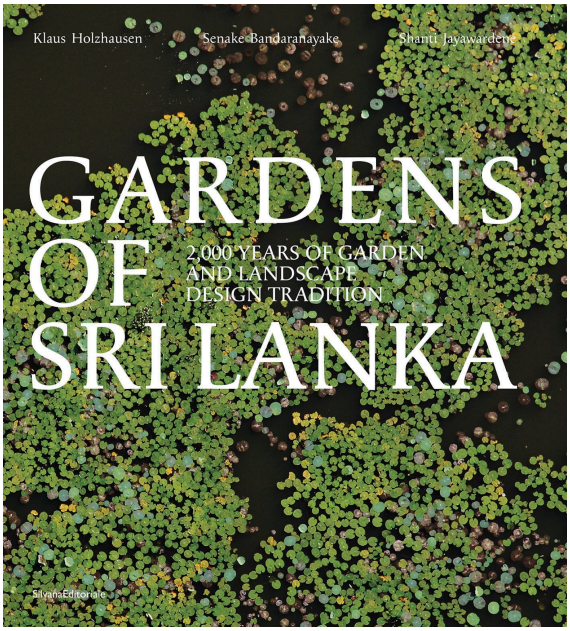
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Gardens of Sri Lanka

2000 Years of Garden and Landscape Design Tradition

Edited by Senake Bandaranayake

Edited by Klaus Holzhausen

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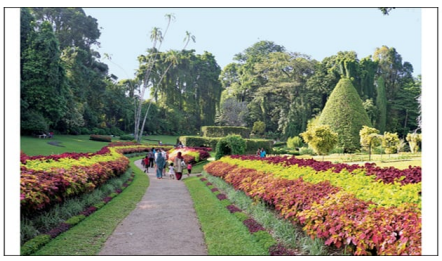
- The Sri Lankan relict gardens are an archaeological phenomenon little seen elsewhere in Asia from a period prior to the 13th century

Sri Lanka takes its place in Asian garden history not only by virtue of its chronicle accounts, inscriptional records and literary descriptions of gardens and natural environments, but even more so on account of the unique survival of the archaeological remains of many planned garden forms, especially from time horizons earlier than those of surviving historic gardens in other South Asian societies and cultures. The Sri Lankan relict gardens are an archaeological phenomenon little seen elsewhere in Asia from a period prior to the 13th century.

Following the journey proposed by Klaus Holzhausen and the authors of this volume, one goes from surprise to surprise. First of all, there's the unsuspected world of the great royal estates: spatial generosity here reflects a local aristocratic civilisation which found in the garden the highest point of its art. Another essential tradition presented in this volume is that of Sri Lanka's monastic gardens. The sheer number of Buddhist monasteries scattered all over the island since almost 2000 years is incredible. Most of these sites contain rather gardens than buildings. Then there's the more complex case of colonial gardens, those magical but often forced amalgams between a self-celebrating culture from outside and the local topography and vegetation. Last but not least – and the volume that Klaus Holzhausen, as a true prophet of the places he has traversed for nearly three decades, makes clear – is the existence of contemporary gardens that have, physically and immediately for those lucky enough to walk through them, an extraordinary force and something to teach the world.

The extremely meticulous way in which ***Gardens of Sri Lanka*** has been elaborated and the quality of the iconic and written documentation permit readers to already be there and to discover page after page the existence of another world.







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