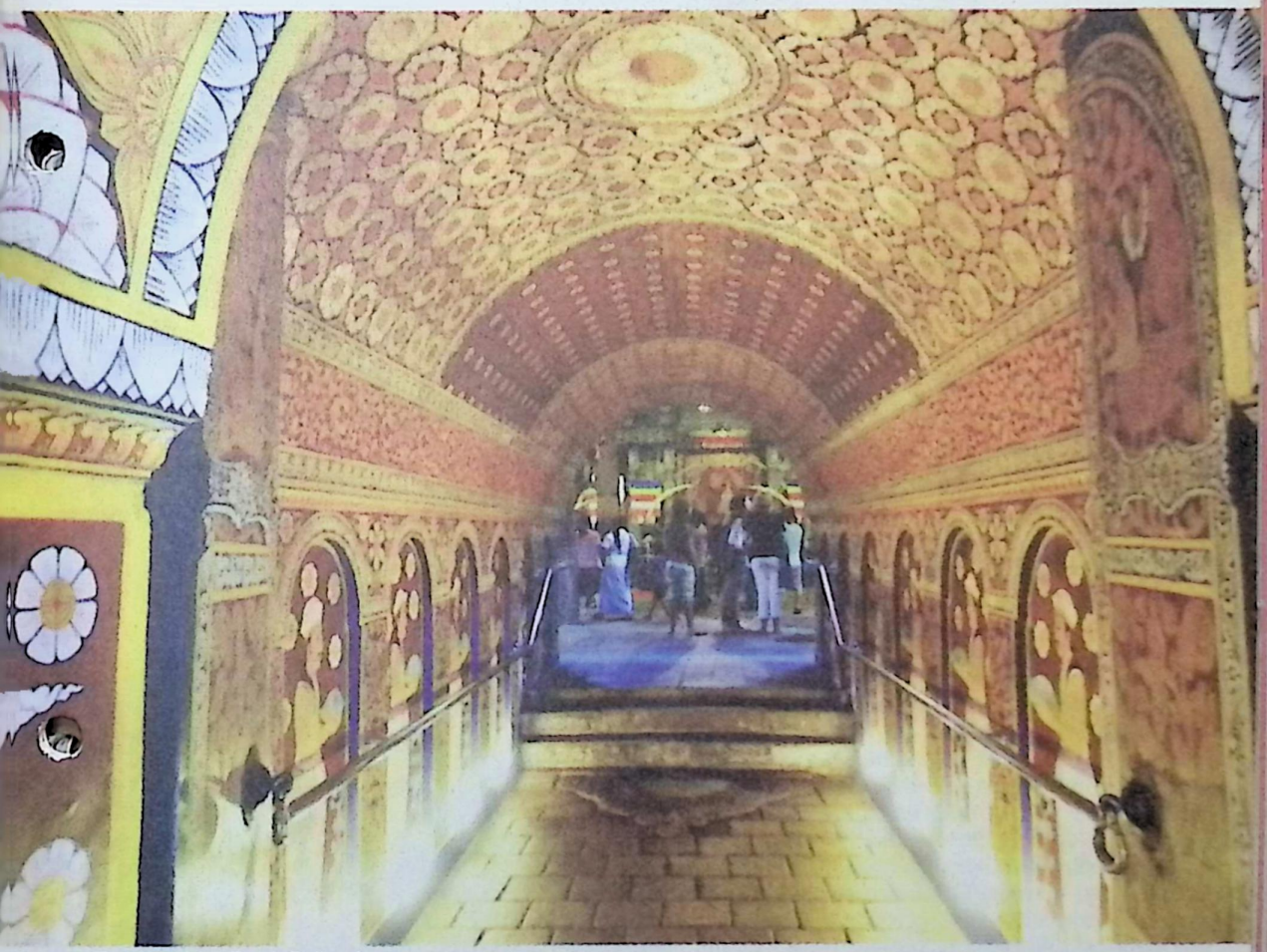
Kandy, the second largest city after Colombo and home to the Temple of the Tooth Relic (Sri Dalada Maligawa). Buddha's left canine tooth was collected from his funeral pyre in 543BC and given to King Brahmadatte who kept it in his kingdom (present day Orissa). The tooth became an object of political scrutiny, further fanned by the strong belief that whoever possessed the tooth had divine rights to rule the land. After changing many hands, the tooth was smuggled into Sri Lanka by Princess Hemamali and her husband Prince Dantha, who handed over the relic to King Kirthi Sri Meghavarna. He enshrined it at Anuradhapura. The relic changed custodianship a number of times in the next few centuries and even bear testament to the Portuguese invasion of Kandy in the 17th century. Currently housed at a temple in Kandy, the tooth is opened for public viewing only at certain times of the day.

Exiting the temple, we made a pit stop at a local eatery and requested short eats. The waiter presented us with a platter of savories and we munched on samosas and sipped rich milky tea while figuring out our next step.

We settled for gemstone shopping. After all, yet another name for the Pearl of the Indian Ocean is Ratna-dwip (Gem Island). Our guide took us to a flashy outlet named Handuni's Gem and Jewelry, where we were overwhelmed by a magnificent collection of glittering precious and semi-precious stones. Later on, we made a quick trip to Laksala as well, the government-owned gift and souvenir shop. Although the authenticity of the gems here was a sure shot the variety of jewelries was dismal compared to its privately-owned counterpart!

The following day, we made our way out of the Shady Grove lodging facilities where we halted at in Kandy and settled down for a couple of hours' drive to Nuwara Eliya. We feasted our eyes yet again on the numerous waterfalls dotting the roadsides, often hopping out of the car to take a picture or two. The hairpin turns were sharp enough to instigate nausea and we made a few more necessary stops to save the car from semi-digested breakfast!

As we approached Nuwara Eliya, we felt the elevation before our guide mentioned anything. Our ears popped and the temperature dropped several



Temple of the Tooth Relic, Kandy.