



Ancient Buddhist Monuments of Sri Lanka

Select Features of Art, Architecture, and Iconography

CVS Ranga Sai (2013)

Unpublished Monograph



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This monograph intends to present a mosaic of historical, religious and architectural perspectives of Buddhist monuments in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has the unique distinction to have preserved the Theravada school of Buddhism. The associated monuments truly represent the philosophy of simplicity and serenity.

The cultural heritage of Buddhism is reflected in the art and architecture of Sri Lanka. The evolution of Theravada architecture into more ornate presentation can be seen between the monument of Anuradhapura and Pollunaruwa. Anuradhapura presents the advent of Buddhism; Theravada school and Pollunaruwa represent the influence of South Indian Style.

The ideological controversies of the clergy between Theravada and Mahayana led to the consolidation

and synergies of rich schools of thought.

Each monument is spectator of contemporary interests, religious orientations, regal policies and prosperity. What is normally called as the cultural triangle is the

network of Anuradhapura, Pollunaruwa and Kandy. These three places represent different time periods. Anuradhapura as Golden Capital dates from 4th Century BC to 5th Century AD. Pollunaruwa as Silver capital lasted up to 11th century AD. Kandy is as recent as 15th Century AD. The evolution of architectural concepts, designs, and motifs can be seen distinctly in these places.

In terms of architectural evolution, Theravada, Early Buddhist architecture is plain with less decorations and details. This trend is identified with Anuradhapura. Subsequent developments added greater detail and design to

architecture. Pollunaruwa is a testimony to these trends. Here again one can see the influence of Chola style in addition to the Sinhalese style of architecture.

End of first millennium, evolution of Kandyan style, the designs become more ornate, drawing inspiration from the wood work. Embekke and Dalida Maligawa (Tooth Temple) are great examples of decoration in wood and stone.

Such trends in architecture provide richness and serenity to Sinhalese heritage architecture. This book is an attempt to identify salient trends in styles and developments with

respect to contemporary monuments. This is an indicative study; a exhaustive study can bring out the splendor of art and architecture in its full glory. Till then, this work will be tribute to the tranquil Buddhist heritage in Sri Lanka.

Historical Date Line

Anuradhapura as Golden Capital

Arrival of Aryans in Sri Lanka – V century BC headed by Pandukabhaya, I ruler at Anuradhapura – Aryan civilization replacing natives called Yakshas and Nagas.

Devanampiya Tissa (250-210BC)- Introduction of Buddhism into Sri Lanka by Thera Mahinda and bringing of Maha Bodhi by Thera Sanghamitra

Dutthagamini, II Century BC, unified Sri Lanka resisting invasion from South India and Buddhism emerged as state religion.

Mahasena (274-301) upheavals in Buddhist clergy and consolidation of Theravada Buddhism.

Jetavana Monastery was built

Meghvanna (301-318) had friendly relations with Gupta Emperor Samudra Gupta. Arrival of Tooth Relic from India

Kasyapa (473-491)

Sigiriya developed as a fortress

Polljunaruwa as Silver Capital

Vijayabahu (1055-1110) Established Sinhala Kingdom in Pollanaruwa

Parakramabahu (1153-1186): resurgence of political power, better international relations, growing economy, development of Buddhist activities.

Sigiriya frescos 6-13 century AD

Kandy as Bronze Capital

Kandyan Period 14-18 century

Vimaladharmasurya I (1590-1604) established Kandy as the capital

In the first millennium, Anuradhapura had been the capital of the Sri Lankan kings. Polonnaruwa (A World Heritage Site) was developed as a strategic outpost for defending the country. During this period it had developed a flourishing agricultural economy. In 991 AD the Chola king from South India conquered Sri Lanka and the capital was moved to Polonnaruwa. The Cholas ruled till 1056 AD when they were defeated by the Sinhalese king Vijayabahu. He reigned for 55 years. Polonnaruwa and Buddhism flourished under him. He was succeeded by king Parakramabahu and then Nissanka Malla. The period between 1056-1120 AD was, indeed, a golden period for Polonnaruwa.

Kandyan civilization leads to the Europeans and Portuguese

* Co existence of Hinduism and Buddhism. 14 century temples at Gadaladeniya and Lankathika have buddhist and hindu gods worshiped, simultaneously.

* World Heritage sites: Anuradhapura, Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa, Dambulla, Kandy and Galle are recognized as World heritage sites by UNESCO.

Places and Monuments: Evolution

Ancient Period (200 BC 1000 AD)

- Anuradhapura - Ancient Capital
- Mihintale - Ancient Monasteries
- Kantaka Cetiya
- Thuparama, Brazen Monastery, Abhayagiri, Ruwalvelli
- Avukana - Buddha Statue
- Sigiriya : Frescoes and monastic caves
- Pidurangala : Buddha statue in brick and stucco
- Ritigala monasteries and hospital

Medieval Period (1000 AD - 1500 AD)

- Gadaladeniya Temple - Vijayanagaran Architecture
- Gal Vihara (Polonnaruwa) - rock-cut Buddha statues
- Lankatillaka Temple - Polonnaruwan Architecture
- Gadige nalanda
- Satmahal Prasada
- Polonnaruwa - Medieval Capital

Modern Period (from about 1500 AD)

- Aluvihara - Kandyan Sculptures and Paintings
- Dambulla Caves - Kandyan Sculptures and Paintings
- Embekke Temple - Carved Wooden Pillars
- Kandy - Temple Of The Tooth

RELIGION

Theravada Buddhism: Principle and Practice of Theravada

The Theravāda school is derived from the Vibhajavada grouping which emerged at the time of the Third Buddhist Council (around 250 BC), during the reign of Emperor Asoka in India.

After the Third Council, due to geographical classification, the Vibhajjavādins gradually evolve into four groups:

- a. Mahisasaka,
- b. Kāśyapīya,
- c. Dharmaguptaka, and
- d. Tāmraparnīya.

The Sri Lankan lineage, Theravada is descended from the Tāmraparnīya,

In Theravada, the cause of human existence and suffering (dukha) is craving (tanha), which carried with it the defilements (which are anger, ill will, aversion, greed, jealousy, conceit, hatred, fear, sensual desire, obsession, passion, irritation, distraction, vengeance, depression, anxiety, clinging to the body, etc.).

Such defilements level can be coarse, medium, and subtle. It is a phenomenon that frequently arises, remains temporarily and then

vanishes. The defilements are said to be not only harming ones self, they may also harm others. They are also said to be the driving force behind all inhumanities a human being can commit.

Religious Practices

Theravada Buddhism has prescribed practices for a Lay person and for the monks.

Lay people are identified with Karmic Buddhism, commonly termed as 'merit making'. Merit making activities include offering food and other basic necessities to monks, making donations to temples and monasteries, burning incense or lighting candles before images of the Buddha,

Monastic practices: The most orthodox forest monastery, the monk usually models his practice and lifestyle on that of the Buddha and his first generation of disciples by living close to nature in forest, mountains and caves.

Meditation monks, often called forest monks because of their association with certain wilderness-dwelling traditions, are considered to be specialists in meditation.

Buddhism teaches the practice of Meditation and the observance of moral precepts. The basic doctrines include the "four noble truths"

taught by the Buddha: existence is suffering; the cause of suffering is desire; there is a cessation of suffering, called Nirvana, or total transcendence; and there is a path leading to the end of suffering, the "eightfold noble path" of right views, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

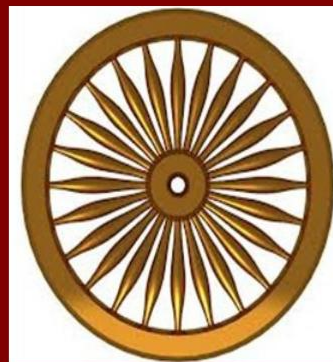
Monastic practices

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1. Scholar monks undertake the path of studying and preserving the Pali literature of the Theravada. They may devote little time to the practice of meditation, but may attain great respect and

renown by becoming masters of a particular section of the Pali Canon or its commentaries. Masters of the Abhidhamma, called Abhidhammika, are particularly respected in the scholastic tradition.

2. Meditation monks, often called forest monks because of their association with certain wilderness-dwelling traditions, are considered to be specialists in meditation. While some forest monks may undertake significant study of the Pali Canon, in general meditation monks are expected to learn primarily from their meditation experiences and personal teachers, and may not know more of the Tipitaka than is necessary to participate in liturgical life and to provide a foundation for fundamental Buddhist teachings.



Evolution of art and architecture

The human form of Buddha was originally not intended for worship. The religious worship was directed towards symbolic representation as found in foot prints, chakra, lotus, conch, swastika and elephant. Several other symbols emerged in different regions with confluence of local religion and practices.

This is the aniconic period up to 3rd century BC. The representation of Buddha, the religious symbols and decorations on the places of worship, monasteries was rudimentary.

Gradually, worship of relics came into practice. Stupas were built on relics, mortal remains and at places of special significance

Confluences of local cultures, religions and traditions brought in vivid representation of Buddha and expressions in more ornate form. With the advent of Kushan style in Buddhist architecture, iconography became more defined and intricate.

Mahayana Buddhism gained acceptance and widely practices in India and east of South Asia. The original Buddhist ideology remained as Hinayana and practiced as Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and

certain parts of India. Long with came the transition in Buddhist architecture and iconography.

The evolution of Buddhist iconography can be traced back to 3rd BC. Representing Buddha as a person is alien to local architecture. Visualizing as person, the robes, the gestures, body styles are drawn from varied sources and architectural influences.

Facial features, head and hair are contribution of the typical Gandhar style; the Greco Buddhist style with robe covering shoulders, curly hair, and ushnisha, the top knot of the head is commonly conceived as the Buddha incarnate.

The stand and the hand gestures: mudras have been derived from the Indian and conspicuously, Hindu insignia.

Buddha is depicted in different poses like the standing Buddha, sitting Buddha and the sleeping Buddha. Sitting Buddha is again found in classical yoga posture or on a seat with feet hanging downwards.

Mudras, the hand gestures are found in different variations each with a classical interpretation based on the Indian classical dance forms.

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Sole of both feet facing upwards is padmasana. This is common in Sri Lanka. Cross legged with only one sole of feet facing upwards is vajrasana is common in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka

Arahat Mahinda's arrival in Sri Lanka is regarded as the beginning of Sinhala culture. He brought to Lanka not only a new religion but also a whole civilization then at the height of its glory.

He introduced art and architecture into the island along with Sangharamas and Cetiya.

Theravada is identified with its aniconic architecture.

The structures are less ornate. May it be the balustrade, wing stones, guard stones or pillars; all are presented in their simplest form.

At the same time, all superstructures are required to be in harmony with nature. This is made adequately, clear in the preaching of Thera Mihinda and the monasteries that came to being during III century BC and III century AD.

Sleeping Buddha rests on the right side with arm under the head, feet together. There is a variation in the feet posture. Both large toes together are the case of maharapinirvana and toes together unequally, is smadhi Buddha, yoganidra. Both these postures can be found in Sri Lanka.

Eyes can be found closed, partly open or fully open. All these variations can be seen at Dambulla. Unique at Dambulla is sleeping Buddha with eyes partly closed and lips slightly apart.

However the architecture became more and more ornate with carvings of designs, animals and persons in bass relief. Pollunaruwa is an excellent example of transition of simple inornate architecture to finer iconic presentation. The Image houses of Pollunaruwa stand testimony to this.

The pair of balustrades that join the guard stones at the entrance were simple slabs of stone with no decoration at the start but later like the guard stones and the moonstones, became elaborate and decorative.

Subsequently, carvings developed into Naga guard stone with seven cobra-hoods, the flowering spring, the pot of plenty, Apsara and the dwarfs, and the Naga king.

Use of decorative pilasters and stucco relief motifs are not found in Anuradhapura

Origin of Stupa

Buddhist stupa is the direct descendent of the sepulchral (Chamber) tumulus (mound) of the Turanin races, whether found in Etruria, Lydia or the Skyths of the northern steppes.

The worship of Stupas arose from the idea that the sanctity of the relics was shared by their shrine and gradually, Stupas grew in number.

The Stupa traces its origin to very early times. After the death of the Buddha his ashes were enshrined by Atoka in eight Stupas which have since not been found. Ashoka is said to have constructed as many as 84000 Stupas and thus initiated the Stupa worship.

The earlier ones were very plain. It was made up of a base, the dome was regarded essential feature of stupa, with square capital in the form of box and the chhatra as a symbol of dignity. The stupa has a surrounding path for pradakshina or circumambulation fenced by a wall or railing.

In the course of time stupa was considered as Buddha himself; had image fixed to the drum, decked with parasols, garlands of flowers, flags, and ribbons.

In Buddhism Stupas are said to contain the Saririka, bodily relics, Paribosika, objects associated with Buddha, or Udesika relics sacred to Buddhism.

In Sri Lanka there is saririka stupas containing Tooth of Buddha at Kandy, paribosika stupa containing Alms bowl of Buddha at Kandy and also udesika stupa erected at Mihintale to mark the visit of Thera Mahinda.

The shapes of the Stupas developed according to their size and one is able to recognize six significant examples defined by the shape of the dome.

The Bubble, Bell shape, Pot shape, Heap of Paddy shape are common. Lotus shape and Amalaka shapes are not common in Srilanka.

The stupas were covered with a coating of lime plaster, plaster combinations changed with the requirements of the design, items used included lime, clay, sand, pebbles, crushed seashells, sugar syrup, white of egg, coconut water, plant resin, drying oil, glues and saliva of white ants

Stupa has principle components the basal rings at the bottom, the spherical dome standing on it. There will be square chamber on the dome. There are several variations in different regions as per architectural influences and evolutions.

On the square chamber there will be cylinders leading to spire of varying heights. The spire culminates into a minaret. Crystals are mounted on the minarets.

The stupa represents the stages of physical to astral consciousness. Symbolically, the Stupa denotes five quintessential elements of earth, water, fire, air and space.

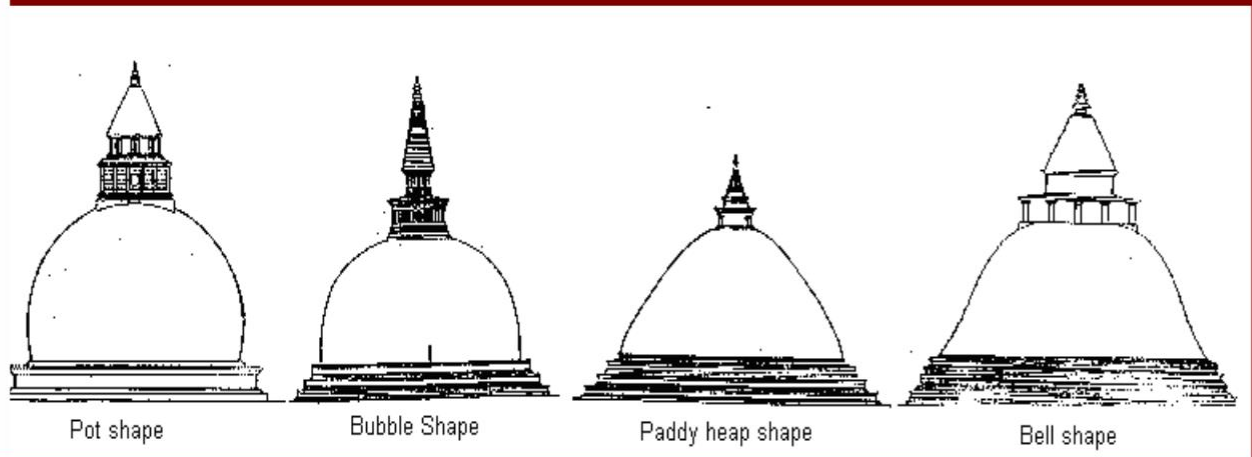
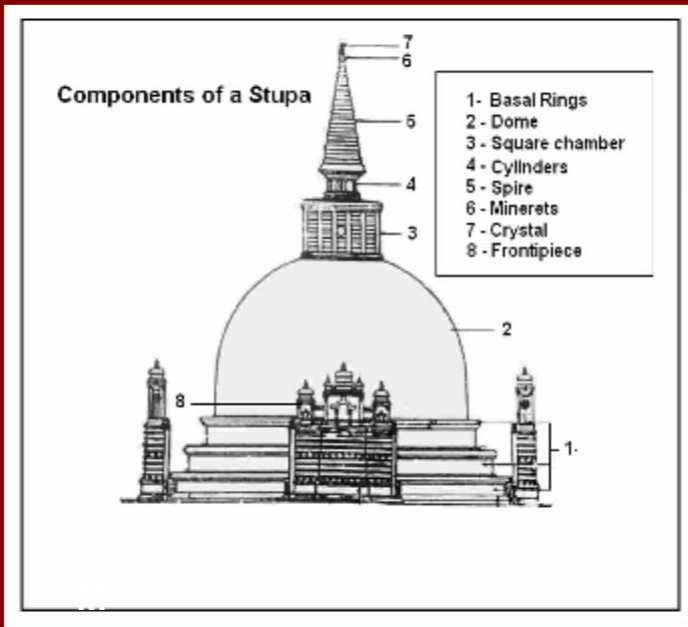
The Stupa

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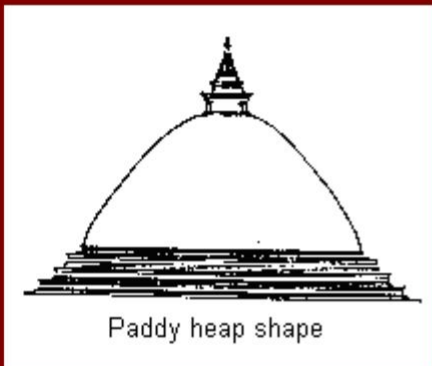
In Sri Lanka or elsewhere the Stupa indicates a spot sacred to Buddhism Stupas are said to enshrine the Saririka, bodily relics, Paribosika, objects associated with the Buddha, Udesika relics sacred to Buddhism.

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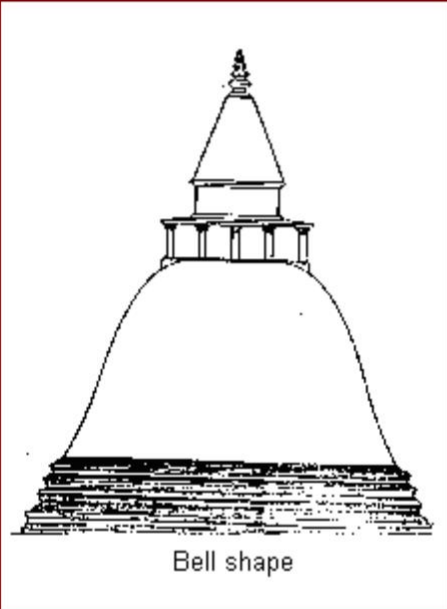
Jetwana Stupa



Jetvana Stupa

Jetavana Dagoba in Anuradhapura is the tallest stupa in Sri Lanka. 400ft (122m) tall and stupa has a diameter of 367ft (113m). The Jetavana Dagoba is part of the 3rd century Jetavanamaya, or Jetavana Monastery, which was the residence for 3000 monks. The monastery was founded by King Mahasena (276-303AD).

Mihintale



Mahaseya Dagoba:

The Mahaseya Dagoba is the largest stupa in Mihintale. It enshrines a single hair relic of the Buddha. Located on the summit of Mihintale hill, the Mahaseya Dagoba was built by King Mahadathika Mahanaga (7-19 AD). The base of Mahaseya Dagoba is 136 ft in diameter.





Bubble Shape

30" crystal on summit



Ruwanweli

Ruwanweliseya Dagoba is the third largest stupa in Anuradhapura. In 144BC. The Ruwanweliseya Dagoba is surrounded by a wall embellished with full-size sculpted elephants.





Rankot Vihara

Rankoth (Rankot) Vehera (Goldern Pinnacke) Stupa, is the 4th largest stup in the country after Ruwanveli Seya, Jetawanarama and Abhayagiriya in Anuradhapura. Built by King Nissanka Malla (1187-1196), it is 55 metres in height 185 metres in circumference. This is the largest Stupa in Polonnaruwa.

Components architecture:

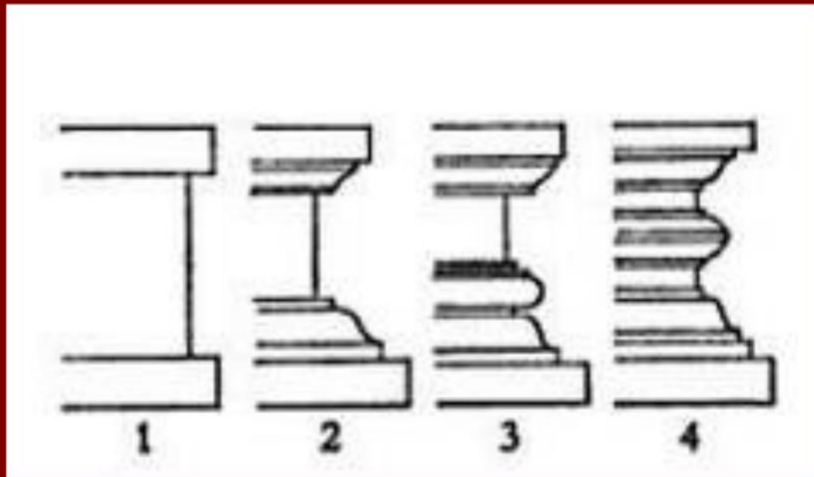
Base Moldings

Base moldings are the designs at the elevation of a structure. Base moldings were simple at the beginning and became more intricate with passing time.

Base moldings between 3rd century BC and 2nd century AD at Anuradhpura, Mihintale, and Ritigala were simple (1 and 2).

Evolution of base moldings

These molding became more ornate after 3rd century at Polunaruwa.





Base of Sigrirya Monastery 2nd century AD

Entrance

The two sides of the entrance to these religious or secular buildings were decorated with guardstones flanked by a pair of balustrades plain at the beginning but later decorated. The beginning of these so-called guardstones or muragal as they are known in Sinhala, was a pair of dressed rectangular slabs of stone with no sculptures on it.

The earliest of these were shaped archwise at the top and remained rectangular at the base both in plan and elevation. This was achieved by chiselling off the corners of the rectangular slab of stone. At the next stage of its development the shape at the top was made more elaborate by raising its centre smoothly to a point at the apex. The first attempt at decorating the guardstone is seen with the sculptural design of a purnaghata (Sinh: punkalasa) a full pot with lotus buds or flowers which symbolizes prosperity.

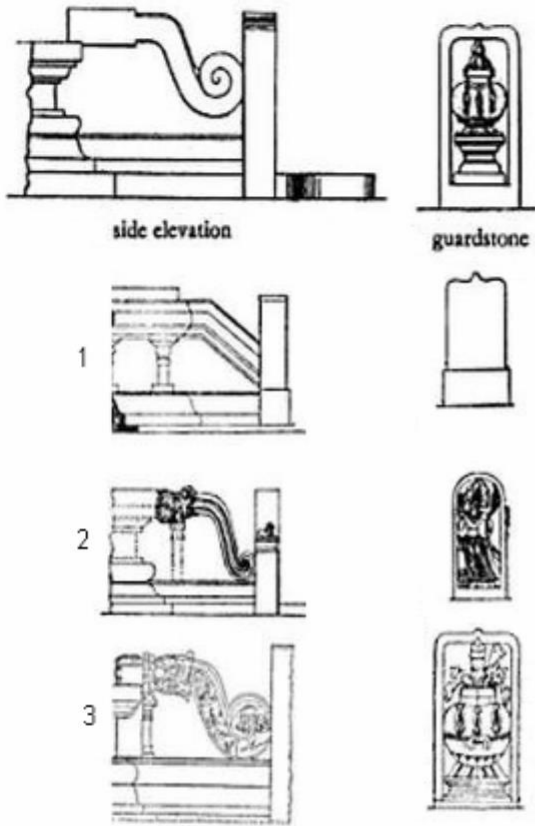
The buildings near the beginning of the flight of steps to the Mihintale mountain. The pair of balustrades that join the guardstones at the entrance were simple slabs of stone with no decoration at the start but later like the

guardstones and the moonstones, became elaborate and decorative.

Theravada Architecture is less ornate. The monasteries constructed between II century BC and III century AD have less of carvings. The guard stone was plain and moon stone was absent or a semicircular stone slab. This is commonly found in monasteries in and around Anuradhapura.

Ornate guard stones and wing stones are more prevalent in Pollunaruwa constructed after XII century AD

Evolution of Wingstone and Guardstone



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Wingstones

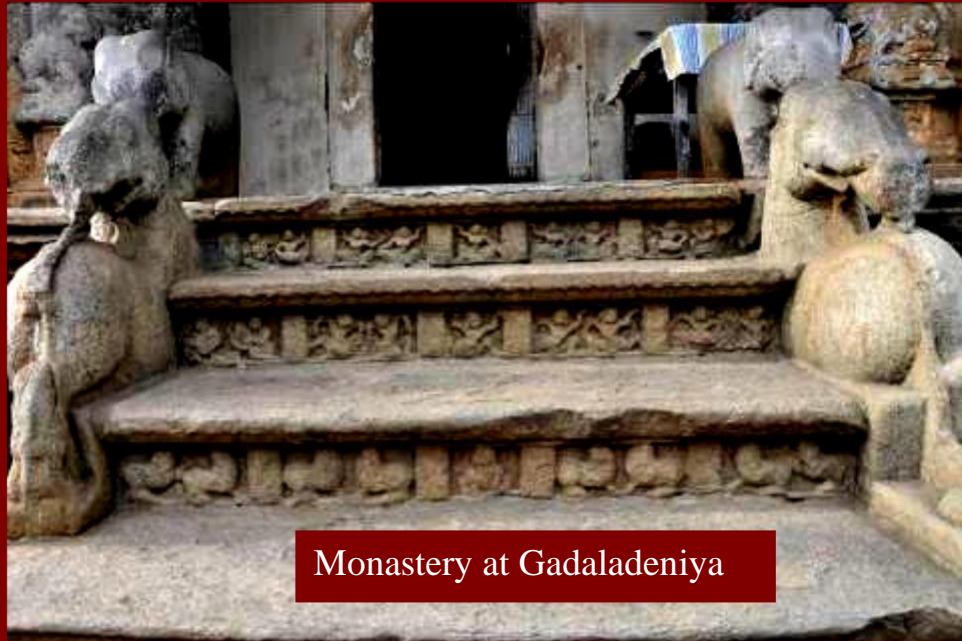
The moldings on either side of entrance steps are called wingstones. Two guard stones are kept at the opening end of wingstones.

The area in front of the wing stone is covered by semi-circular stone slab called moon stone.

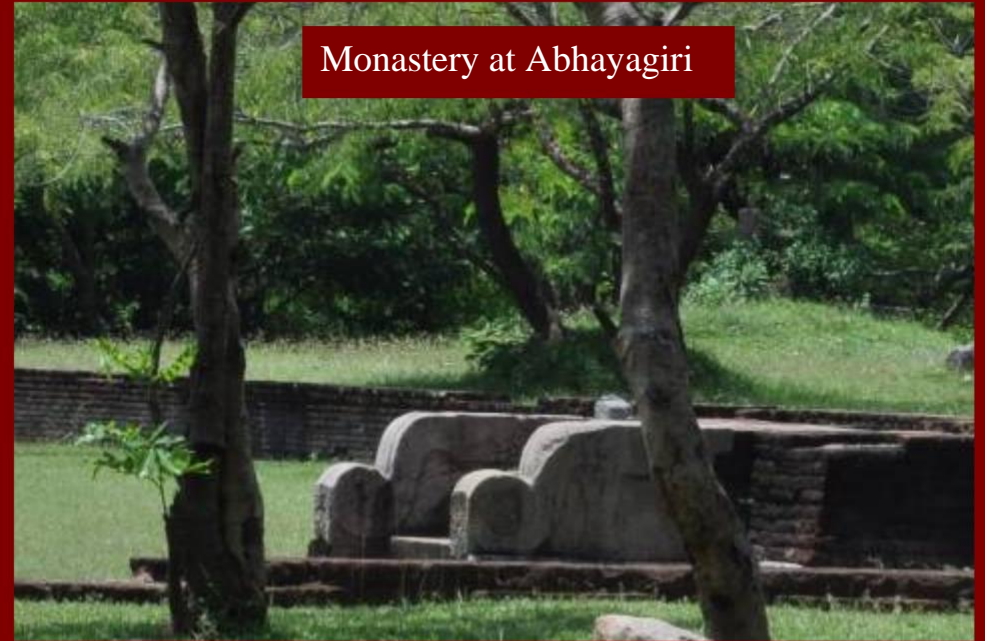
The wingstones can be decorative or simple landings over slopes.

The decorative wingstone represents seven animals: Crocodile body, lion mouth, peacock feathers, elephant tusks, snake tail, monkey ears, and tortoise back.





Monastery at Gadaladeniya



Monastery at Abhayagiri



Bo Tree



Monastery at Thuparama

Moonstone

The moonstones, balustrades, and guardstones that adorn the doorstep of ancient monastic buildings are important pieces of sculptural art.

The moonstone which is called Sandakada pahana in Sinhalese is a semi-circular slab of stone at the beginning of a flight of steps which

lead to the ancient monuments and in particular to the religious buildings.

Moonstones are stone doormats of Sri Lanka temples. They always reflect cosmic symbolism. The outside ring depicts a flame, symbolising desire. The next ring is a frieze of animals symbolizing vitality. They walk from left to right, the direction of good omen. The Anuradhapura moonstones include bull, horse, elephant and lion, whereas those found in Polonnaruwa, which is later than Anuradhapura, omits the bull out of respect for Hindus.

After the animals are twisting creepers. They represent the life force. According to Buddhism, once you are able to overcome craving, you can choose good over evil. The next stage, symbolizing the search for the truth, is represented by the goose, or *Hamsa*. Next is a scroll of ornamental lotus flowers, the symbol of purity, and finally in the middle, is plainness, symbolizing *Nirvana*, or enlightenment.

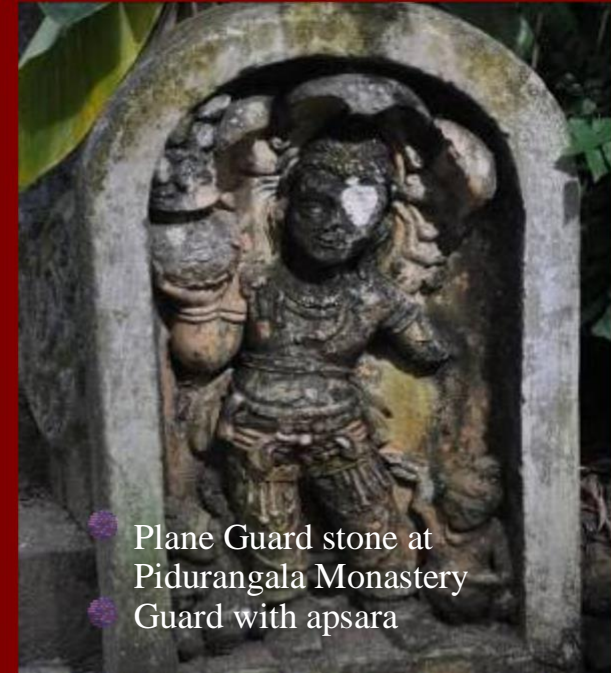
Types of moon stone

1. Decoration: plain and simply ornamented and highly ornate
 2. Shape Shallow arc and semi circular and elongated arc
 3. Shape Rounded arc and flattened arc
 4. Shape Simple without cyma curve, with cyma curve at either end, with cyma curve at either end or top.
- Ornamented moonstone from VI century AD



Moon stone represents the essence of Buddhist philosophy. Six layers represent different levels of world: physical world to the ultimate nibbana. Different animals in each circle represent different aspects of astral existence.





Plane Guard stone at
Pidurangala Monastery
Guard with apsara

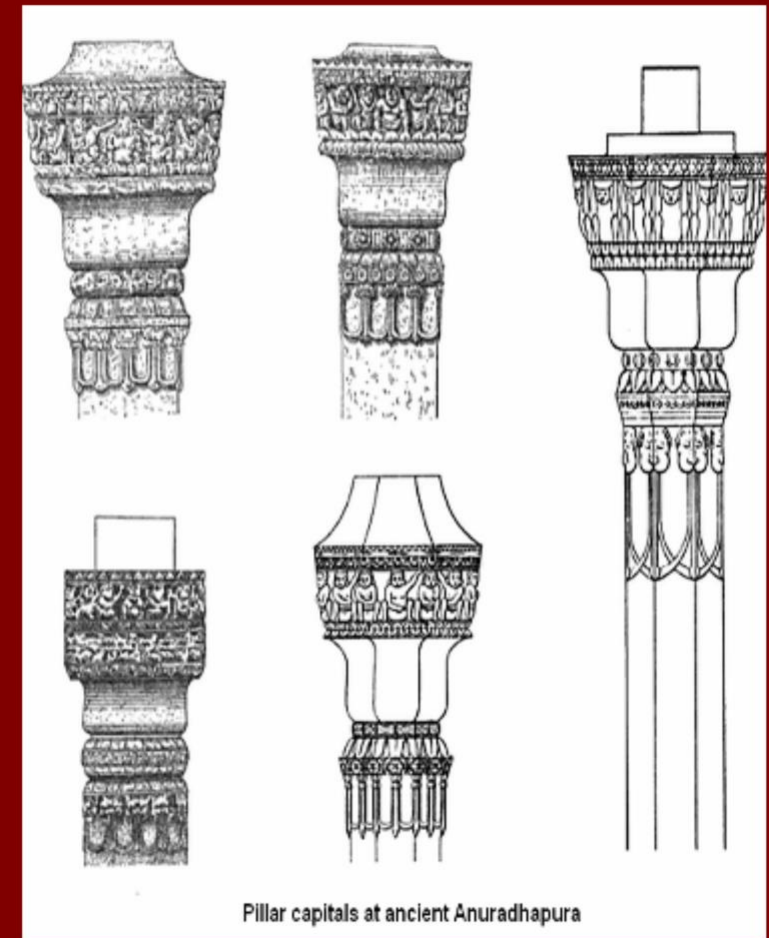


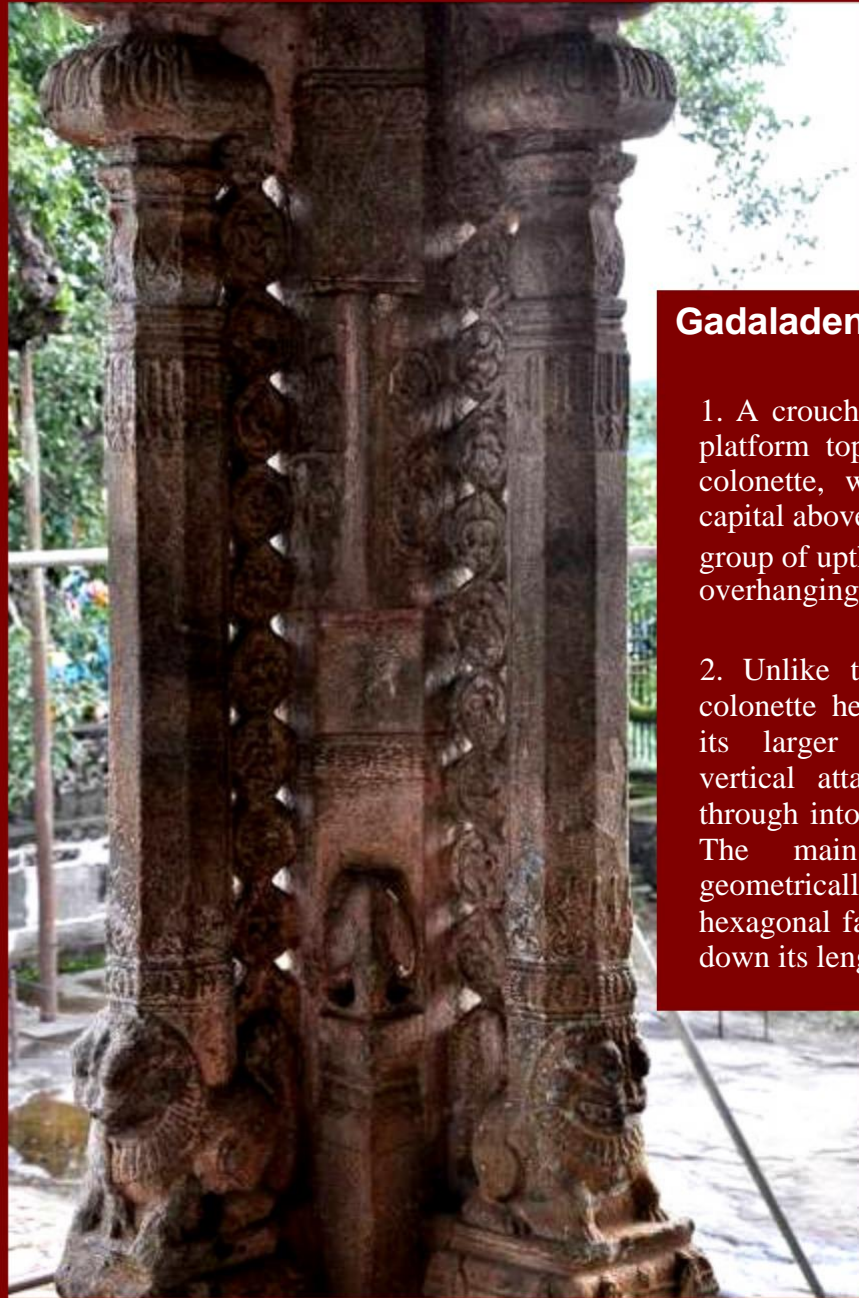
Guard Stones

Pillars

The pillars are faceted. Rounded pillars are not found in Sri Lanka. Latha mandap at Pollunaruwa has rounded and decorated pillars.

10th Century onwards pillars adopted the South Indian style in term of animal and floral decorations.

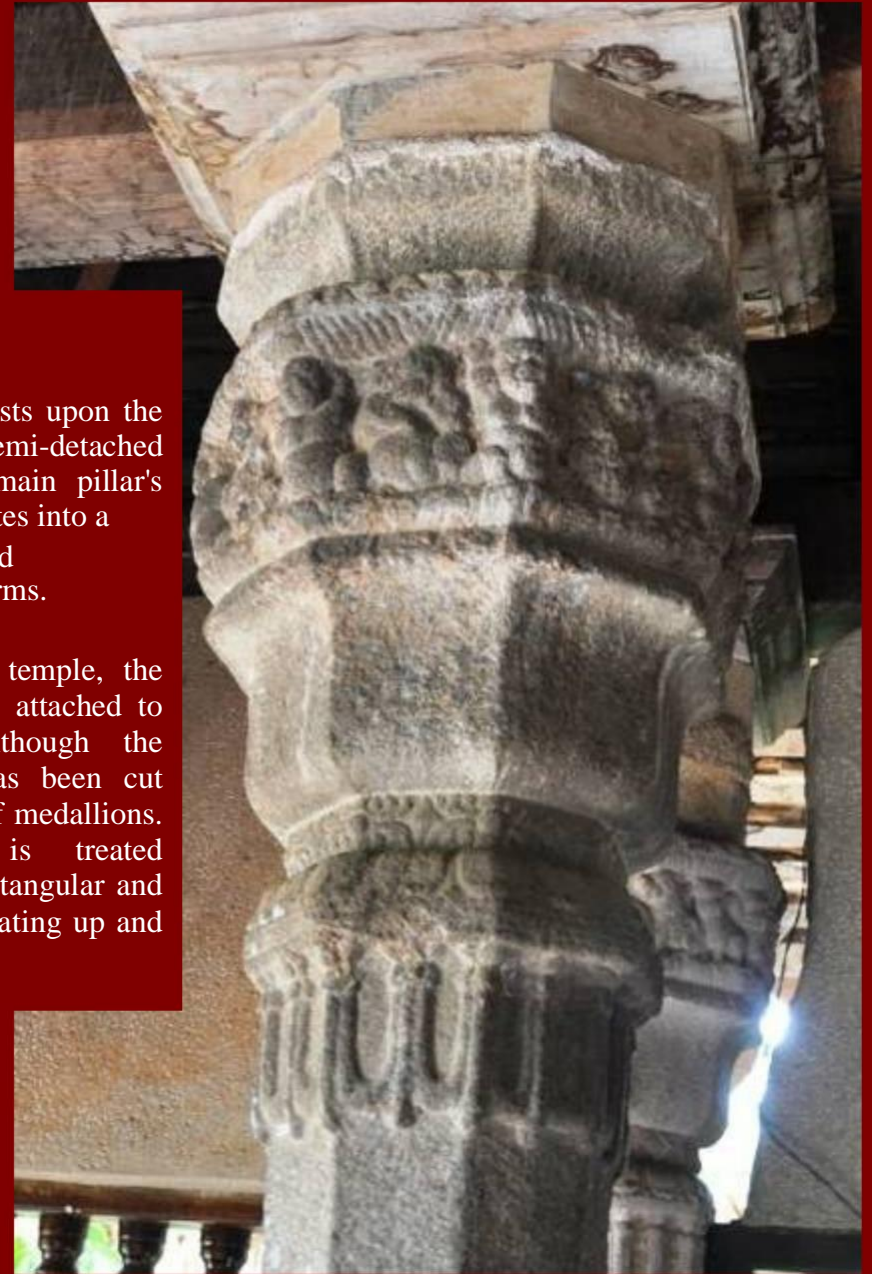




Gadaladeniaya

1. A crouching lion rests upon the platform top of the semi-detached colonette, while the main pillar's capital above it elaborates into a group of upthrusting and overhanging vegetal forms.

2. Unlike the Indian temple, the colonette here remains attached to its larger pillar, although the vertical attachment has been cut through into a series of medallions. The main pillar is treated geometrically, with rectangular and hexagonal facets alternating up and down its length.







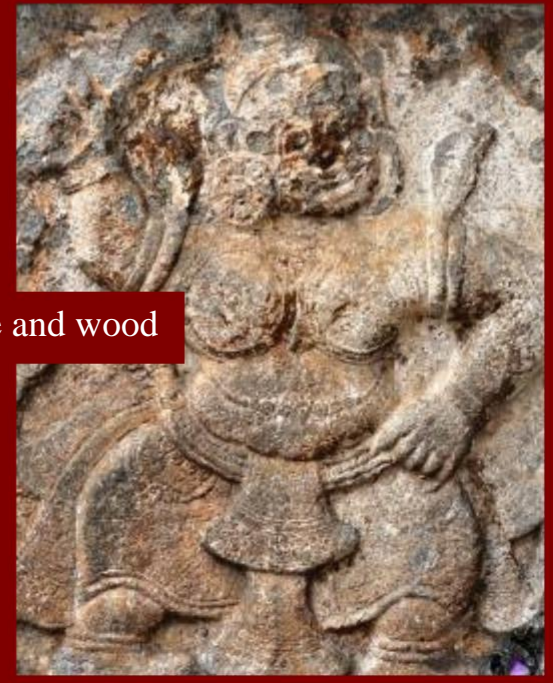
Kanaka Chetiya, Mihintale



Latha mandap, Pollunaruwa



Fine carvings in stone and wood





Vatade

It is circular house with stupa at the center with four Buddhas on four directions.

Traces of Vajrayana Buddhism can be found in the base architecture of Vatade.

In Vajrayana Buddhism the Adi Buddha, who has attained sunyata, gave rise to four conquering Buddhas representing four directions.

1. Akshobya on the East
2. Ratnasambhava on the South
3. Amitabha on the West, and
4. Amoghasiddhi on the North

The monument had a roof supported by pillars.



Vatade

Vahalkada

The frontispieces of the Stupas

Among the earliest sculptural art are those which adorn the stelae of the Vahalkadas or frontispieces of the large size stupas of the early period.

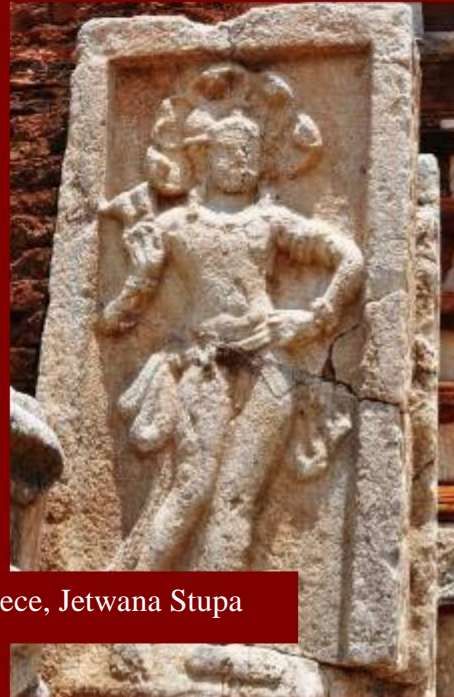
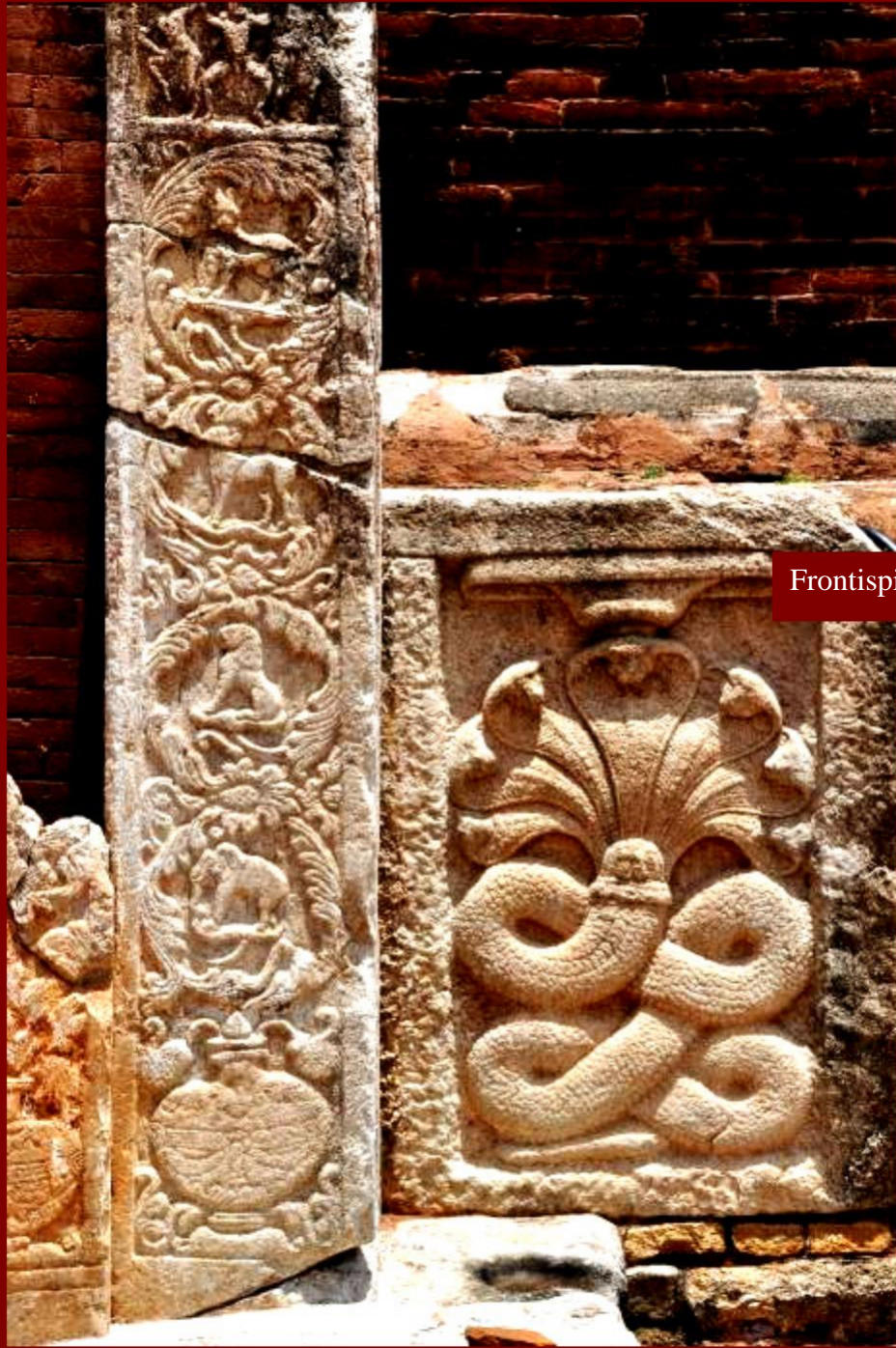
The material used for these sculptures is limestone of a coarse-grained variety which is not very durable.

The Vahalkadas are of brick construction. However, the lower portion of the faces are of limestone.

Examples for these are found in places like Kantaka Cetiya at Mihintale, Dakkhina Stupa, Ruwanvalisaya, Mirisavatiya (now collapsed and re-built), Abhayagiriya and Jetavana Stupa at Anuradhapura



Frontispiece at Jetwana Stupa



Frontispiece, Jetwana Stupa



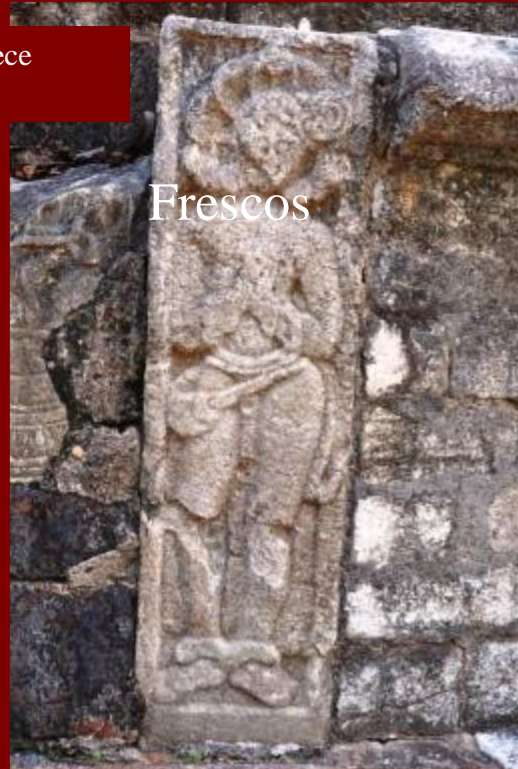
Intricate carvings
in Marble



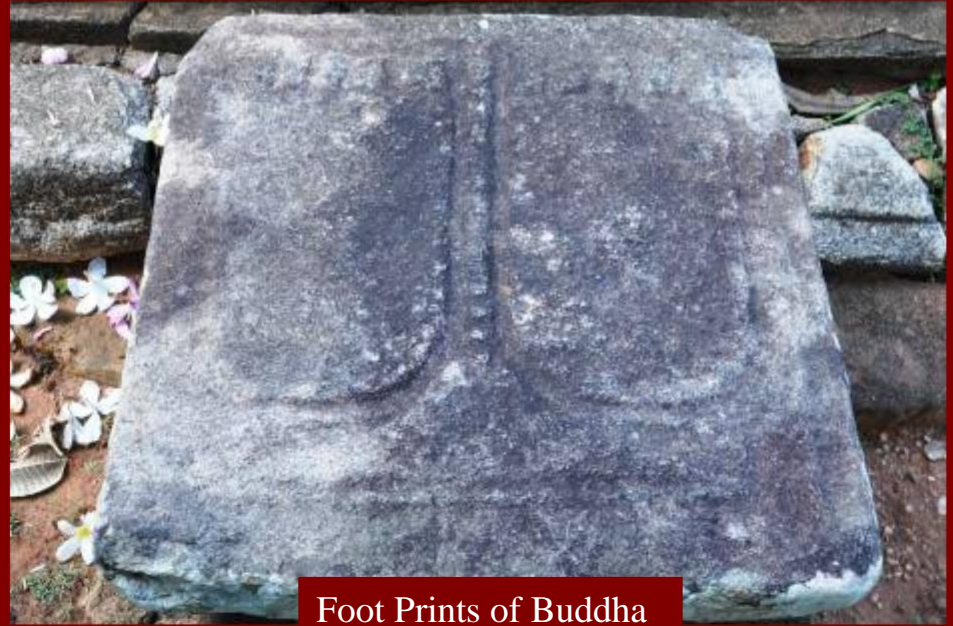
Frontispiece, Vahalkada, Mihintale



Intricate carvings Frontispiece
Vahalkada, Mihintale



Frescos



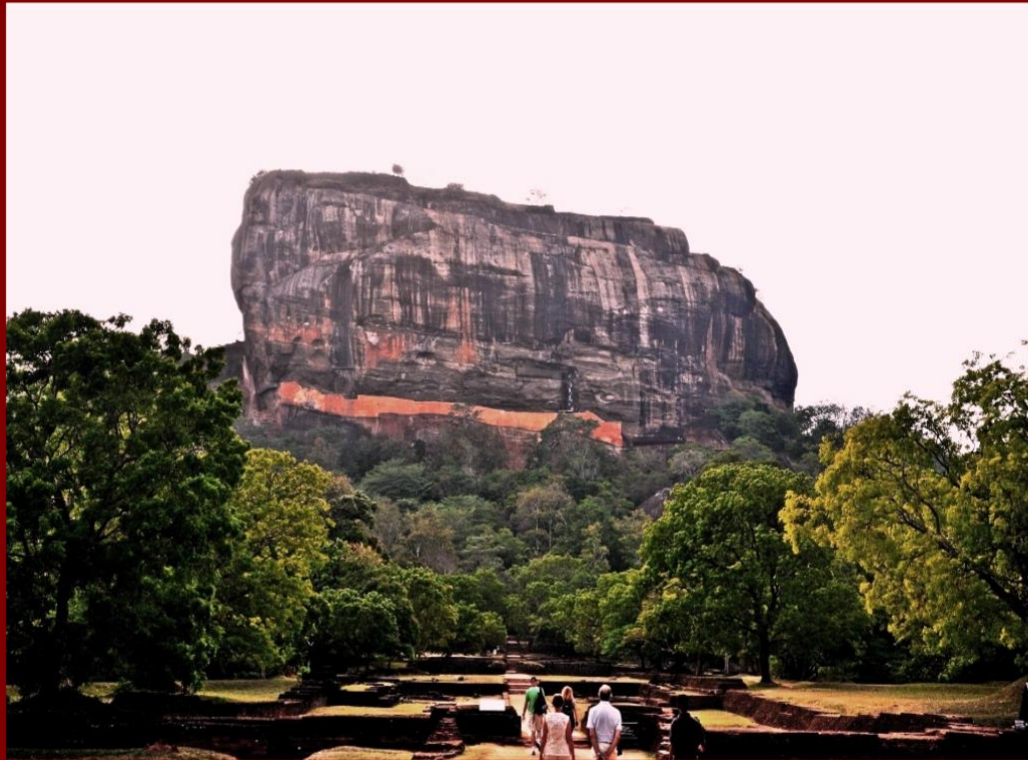
Foot Prints of Buddha

Frescos

Frescos are common expressions of art. These are works of art made in common available vegetable or mineral colors..

Frescos are found in Several monuments. Basically, classified as frescos at Sigiriya, Dambulla, Kandy.

Frescos are also found at other places, importantly at Mihintale and Pidurangala

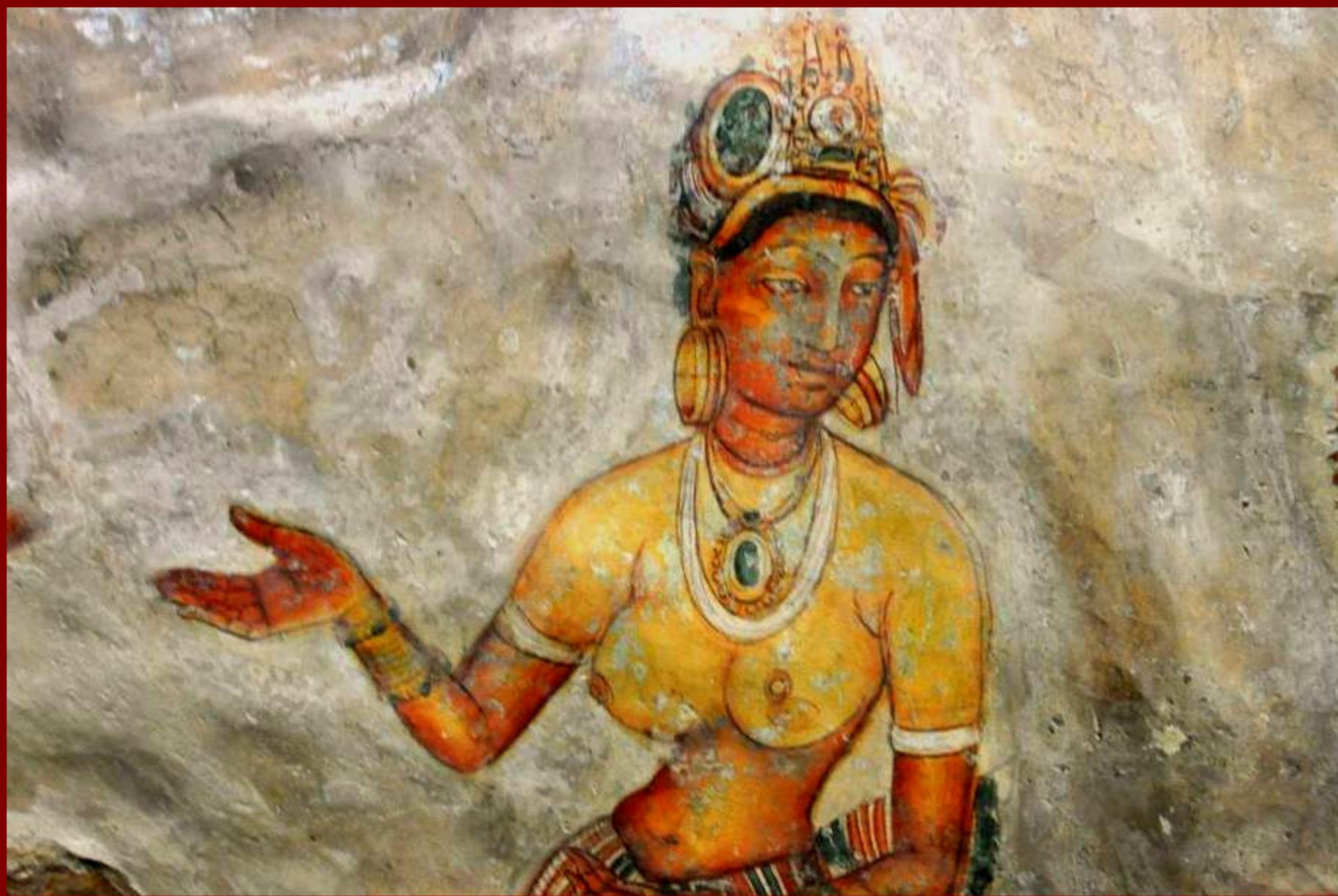


Sigiriya

1. Appearing in profile and wearing an elaborate headdress, she contemplates a lotus bud, held delicately upright between her right thumb and index finger. Her left hand holds a bouquet of lotus flowers.

2. The green flesh tone in these paintings is an underlayer, that has been uncovered by deterioration and loss of the overlying pigments over time.

3. This pair of ladies has been interpreted as a high-ranking court lady and her attendant. The attendant, right, carries a platter of flowers and wears a cloth top with chest bands; the noble lady, left, wears a distinctive headdress and contemplates a thick-stemmed lotus. There is also a difference in individual expression between the two.











Frescos at Sigiriya caves at base



Frescos at Vahalkada, Mihintale

Frescos at Mihintale Dambulla Vahalkada





Frescos at Kandy



Mudras



Abhaya Mudra: It is the gesture of the Buddha after attaining enlightenment. The Mudra indicates the appeasement of the senses, absence of fear; and it confers such absence of fear on others, which is a liberating factor.



Vitaraka Mudra: It is teaching gesture.



Dharma Chakra Mudra: Gesture of 'Turning the Wheel of the Law'. It symbolizes preaching and sermon of



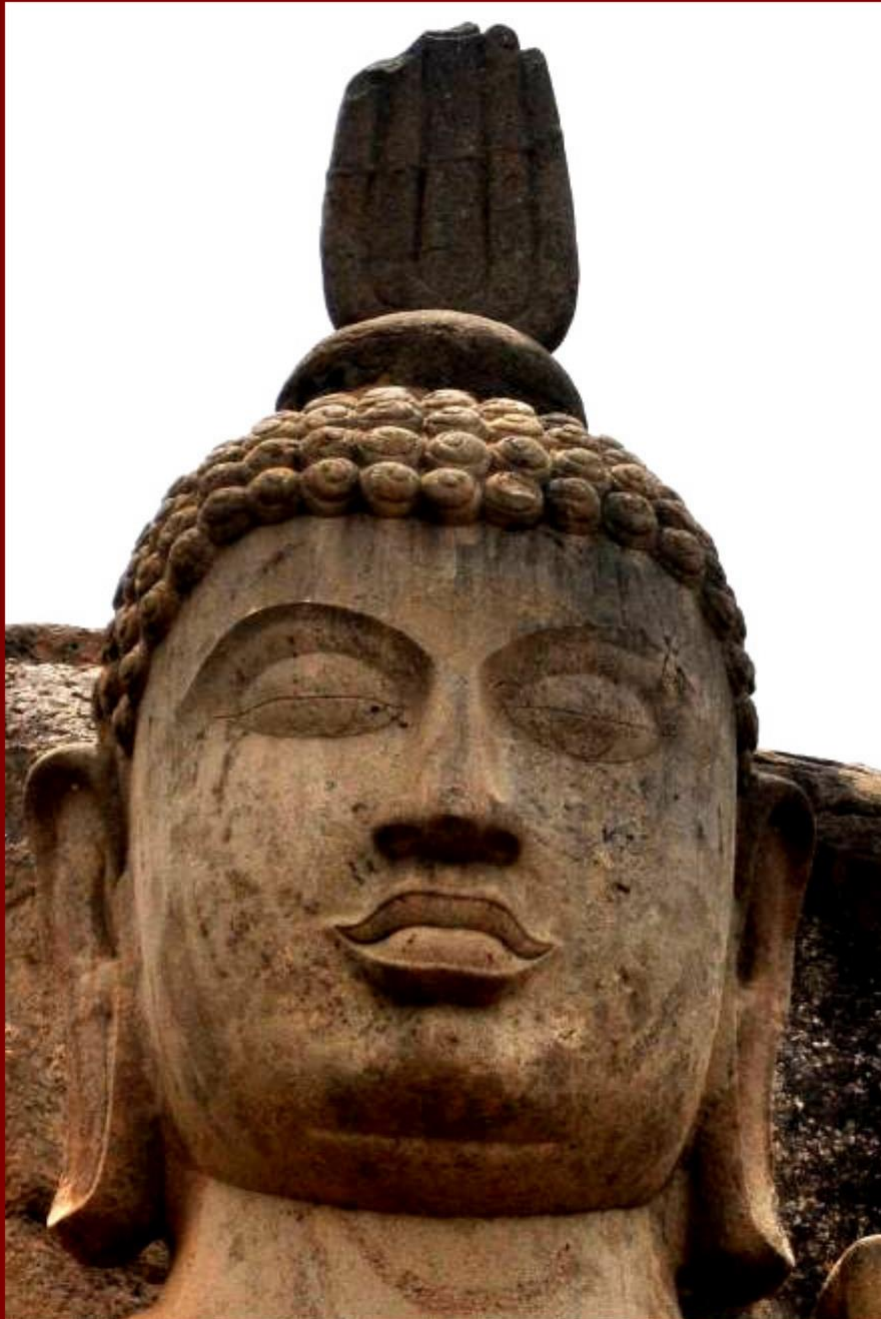
Varada Mudra: The charity of the Buddha is indicated by this mudra, as it is the gesture of dispensing favors.



Dhyana Mudra: This is the mudra of meditation, of concentration on the Good Law, of the attainment of spiritual perfection, of bodhi, or awakening.



Bhumisparsha Mudra: (Gesture of Touching the Earth) The mudra portrays the Buddha taking the earth as witness to his right to the



Physical characters of Buddha

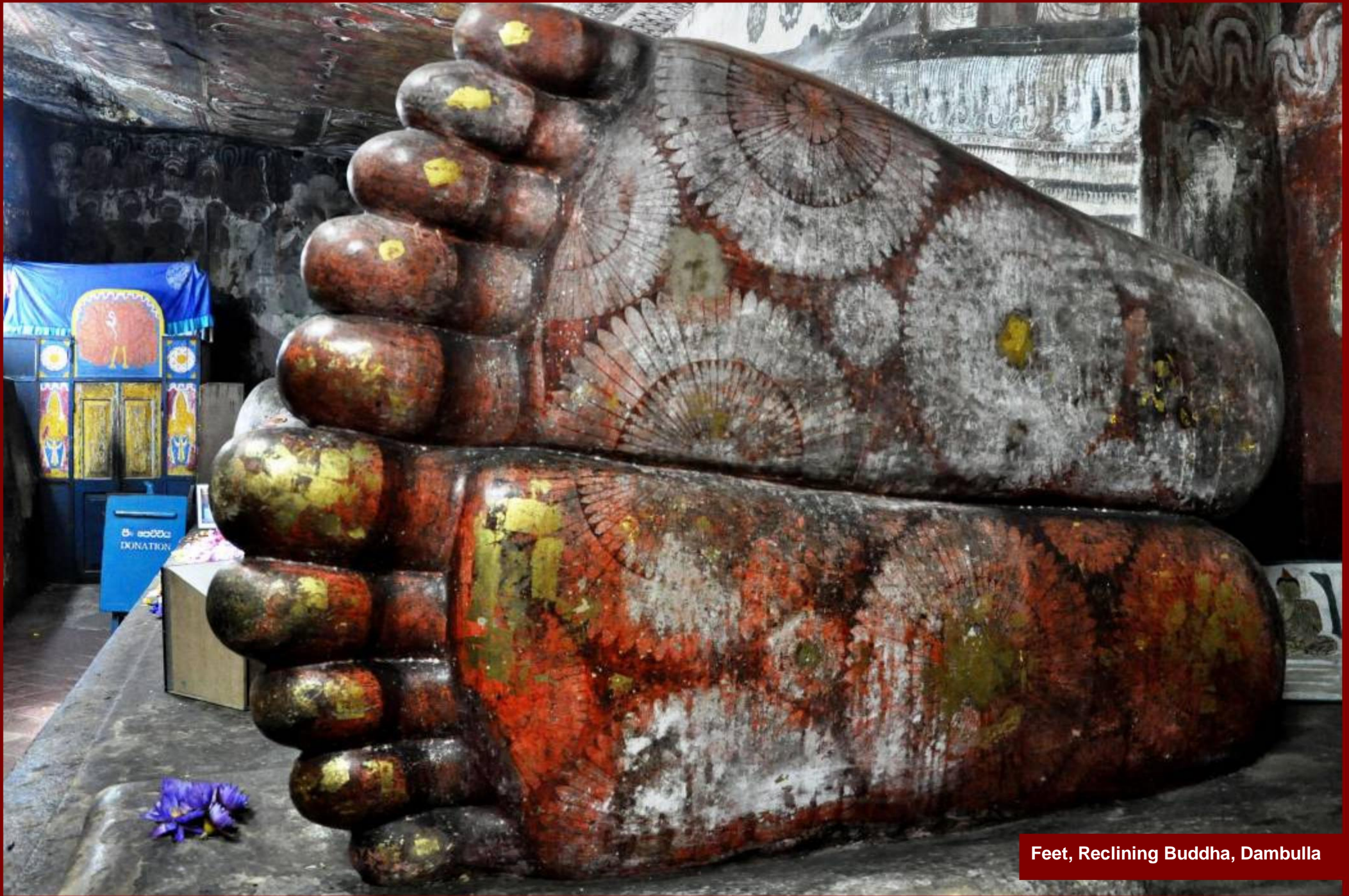
- ❑ Nose like the beak of a parrot,
- ❑ Chin like a mango,
- ❑ Mole between the eyebrows (urna),
- ❑ Elongated ear-lobes,
- ❑ Protuberance on the head (ushnisa) like a royal turban. with a flame or a jewel issuing from it, and
- ❑ Clockwise direction of the curls of the hair
- ❑ Flame of wisdom - the Sukhothai (Thailand) interpretation
- ❑ The feet of Buddha have thirty two marks including chakra, swastika, and lotus.

Reclining Buddha rests on the right side with arm under the head and feet together. There is a variation in the feet posture.

Both large toes together is the case of maharapinirvana and toes together unequally, is smadhi Buddha, yoganidra. Both these postures can be found in Sri lanka.

Reclining Buddha (Aluvihare)





Feet, Reclining Buddha, Dambulla

Reclining Buddha (Pollunaruwa)

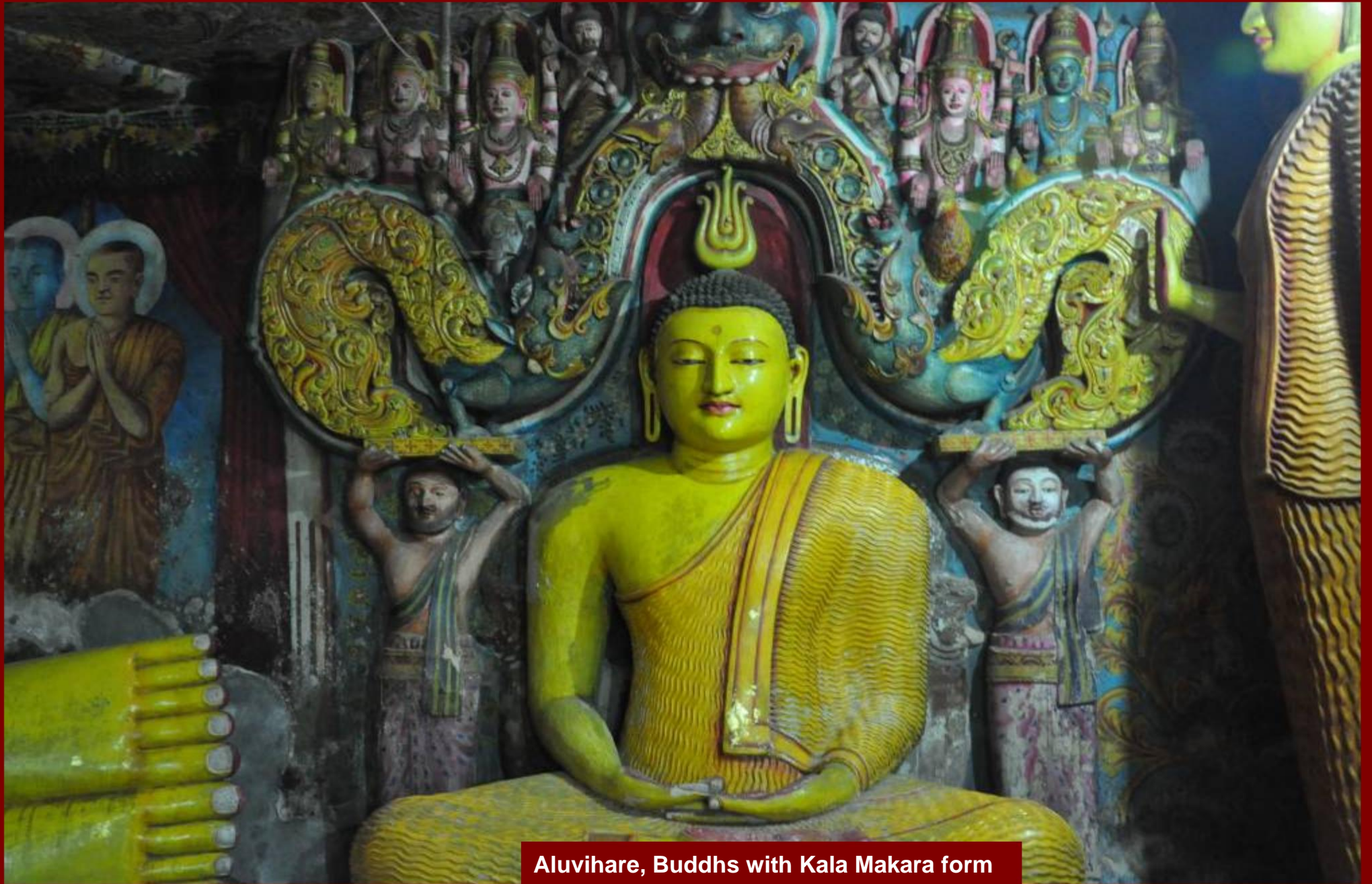


Reclining Buddha (Dambulla)



Buddha in *Dhyana Mudra* (Pollunaruwa)





Aluvihare, Buddhs with Kala Makara form

Reclining Buddha (Pidurangala)





Unequal toes, Reclining Buddha, Dambulla



Directional Buddha,(Vajrayana), Vatade, Pollunaruwa



Buddha at Lanka Tilaka



Reclining Buddha, Aluvihare



Marble Buddha, Pollunaruwa



Quartz Buddha, Pollunaruwa



Gadaladeniya, Raja Vihara

Monasteries: Viharas

With the introduction of Buddhism large monastic complexes came to be built in Anuradhapura. Some of these were seats of learning where monks learned in apprenticeship under very learned teacher monks.

Such Such complexes accommodating several hundred monks needed more buildings of refectories, assembly halls, dwelling houses, toilet facilities and even hospitals and infirmaries.

Cave monasteries

Caves for the residence of Bhikkhus who visited Sri Lanka as well as for Bhikkhus who entered the Buddha Sasana were found on the mountains of Mihintale, east of Anuradhapura. These were built on the advice of Elder Mahinda.

Kantaka Cetiya at Mihintale are considered to be the earliest examples of Buddhist architecture of Sri Lanka.

The artificial improvements made to the caves were mainly a drip-line cut along the brow. This was to prevent rainwater flowing into the cave. Some caves were provided with an outer wall in front and covered by a lean roof in order to protect it from rain and sun. A window and a door were also fixed to the cave in order to create a simple abode.

Monastic components : the necessity to provide the Aramas, the monasteries, Sannipatasalas the Assembly Halls, Uposathagharas,

Other facilities at these sites included meditation halls, ponds and spouts for bathing and paved paths and stairways. The development of the site as a monastery park was for providing the serenity and quiet required by a monk for study and meditation. Besides the large complexes, the villages, temple was a part of every village and also had the basic requirements for worship and teaching of the Dhamma.

Maha viharas developed over the years to become Tampita Vihara or temple on stone pillars. [Dalada Maligawa]

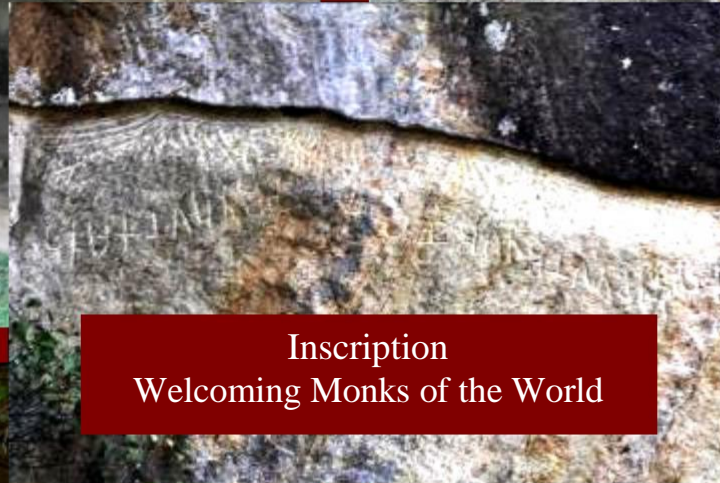
the chapter houses, Vedahal, the hospitals, Jantagharas, the bath houses and ponds also became imperative.

Prasadas for monks: Besides caves, comfortable dwellings were among the kind of dwellings avowed by the Buddha for the use of the Bhikkhus. The Prasada, the abode built by the Commander Dighasanda for the use of Elder Mahinda at Anuradhapura, was such an abode. A Prasada, according to Mahavamsa was a building raised high on the ground with a stone railing and well-built walls.

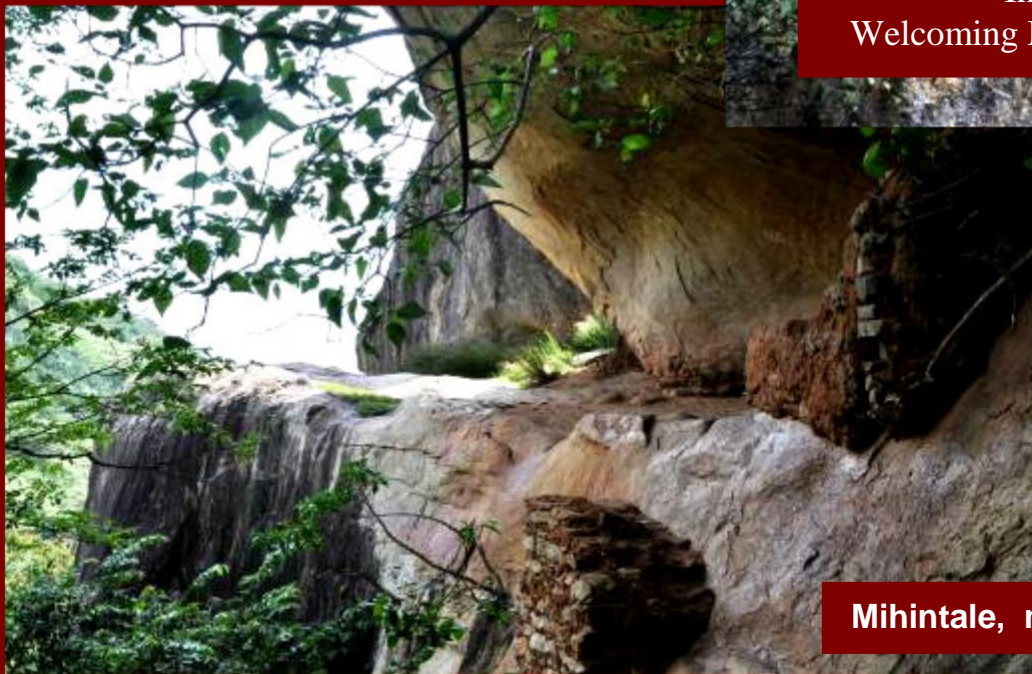
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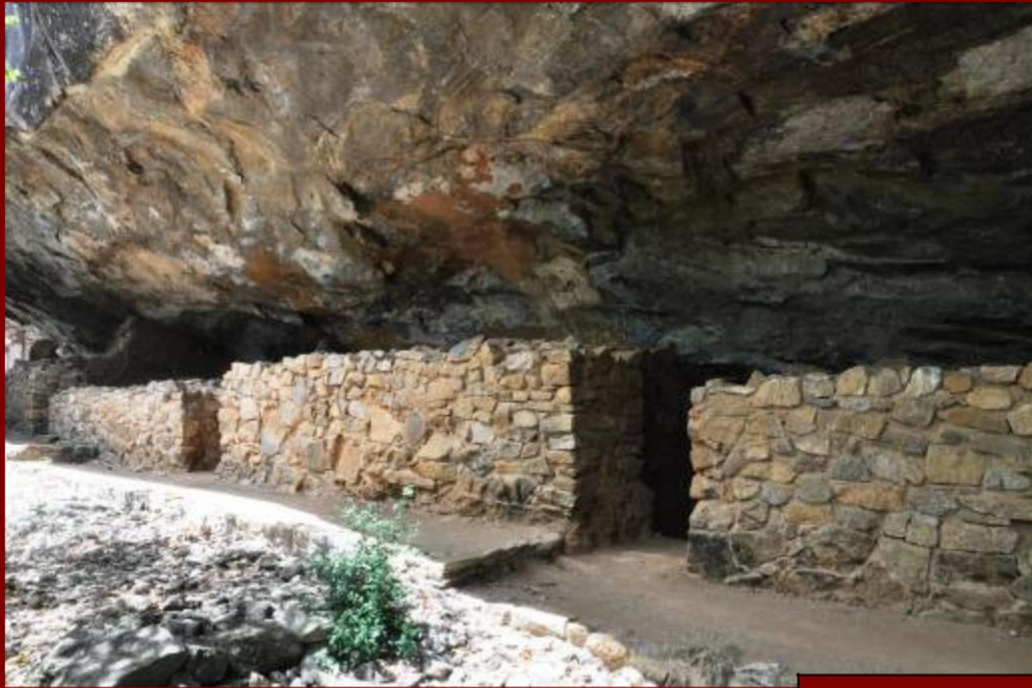
Monastic Caves



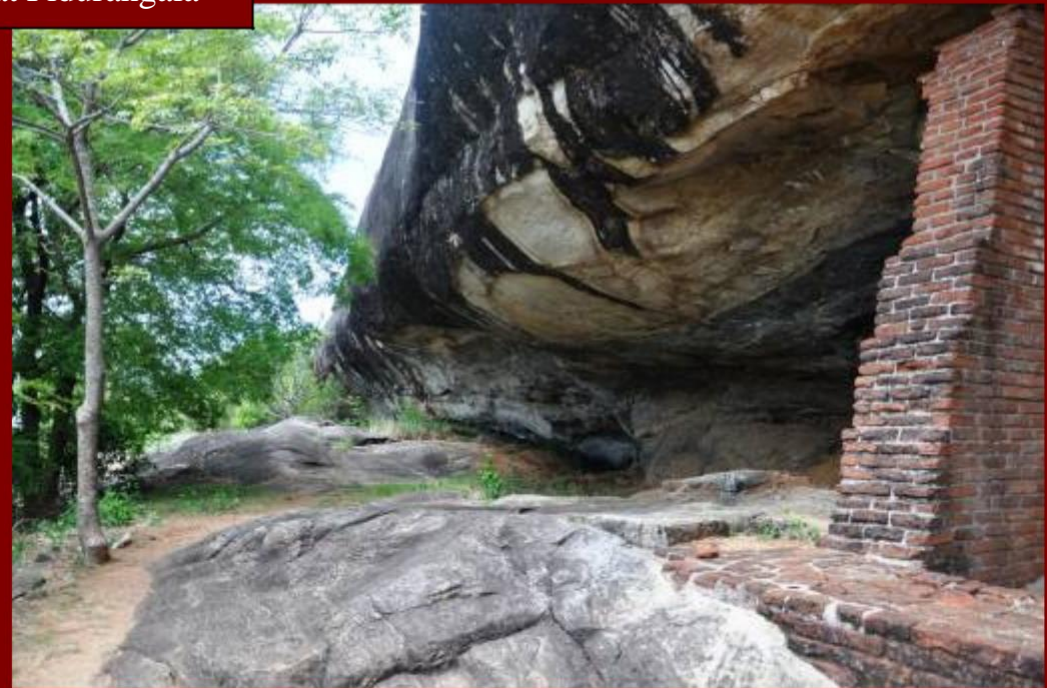
Inscription
Welcoming Monks of the World

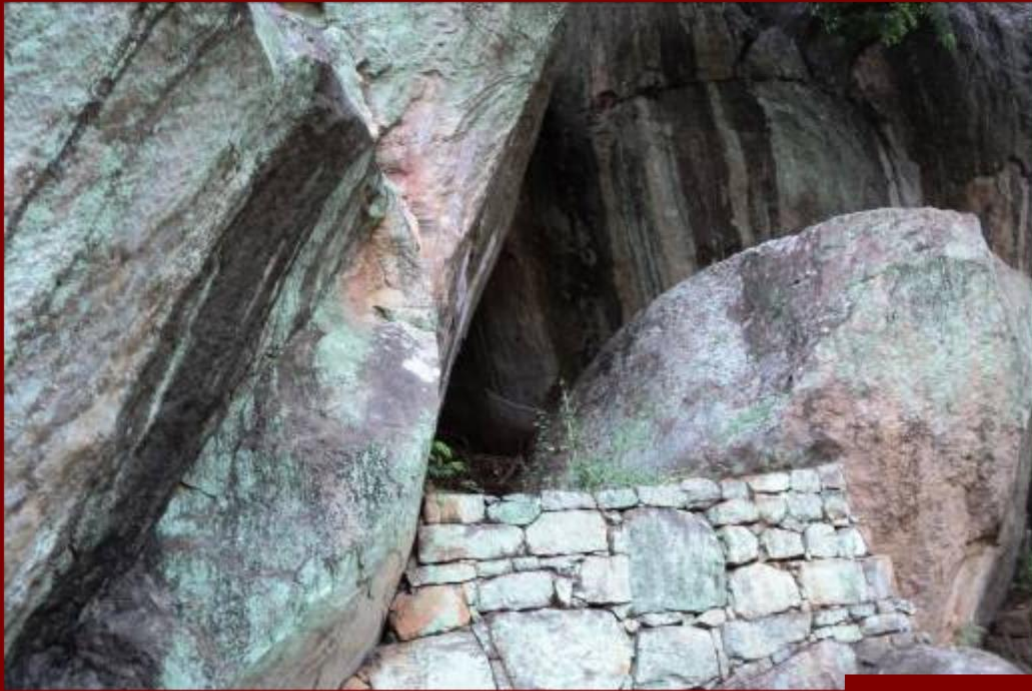


Mihintale, monastic caves

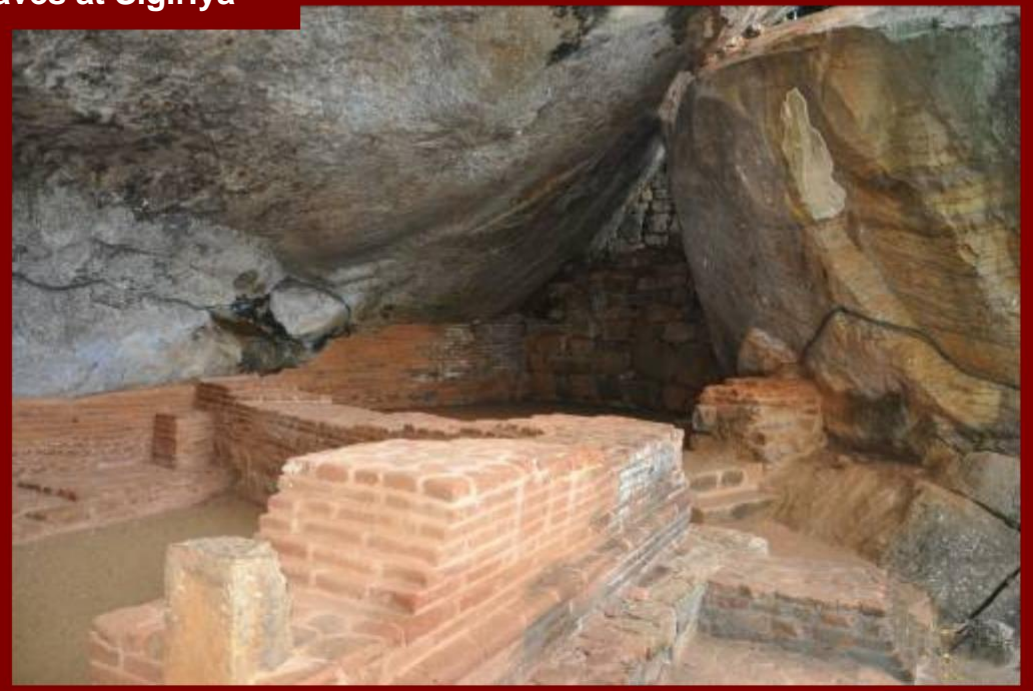
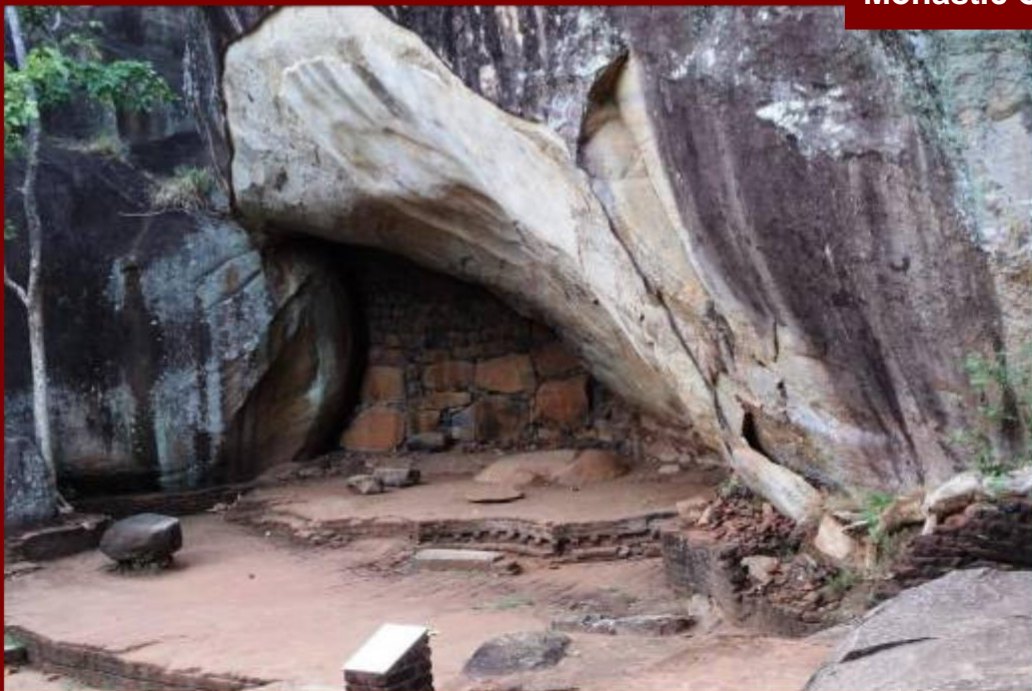


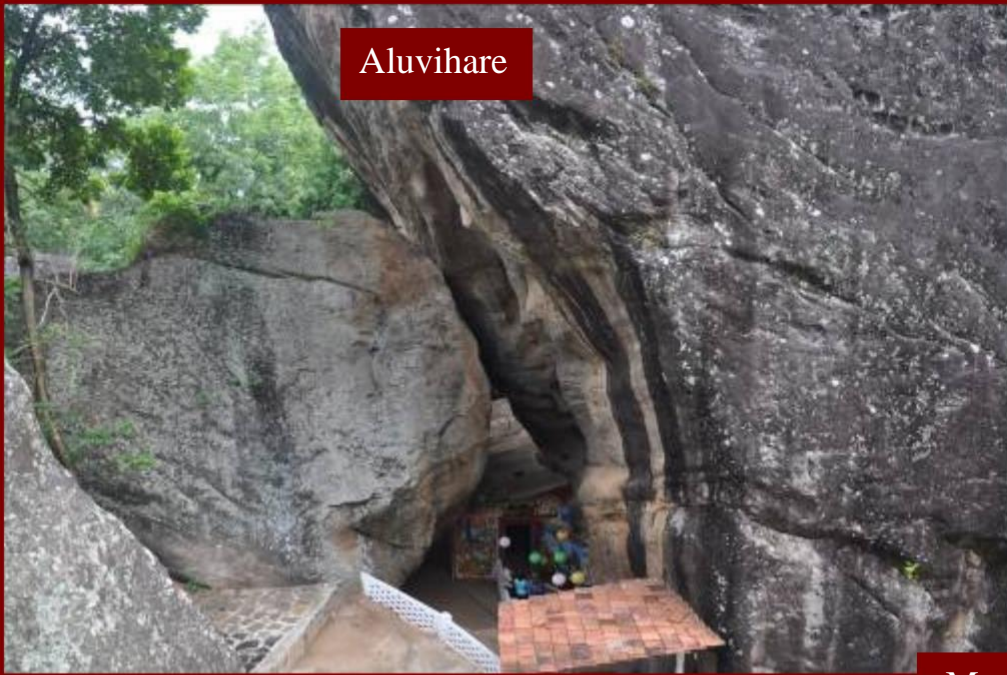
Monastic Caves at Pidurangala





Monastic Caves at Sigiriya



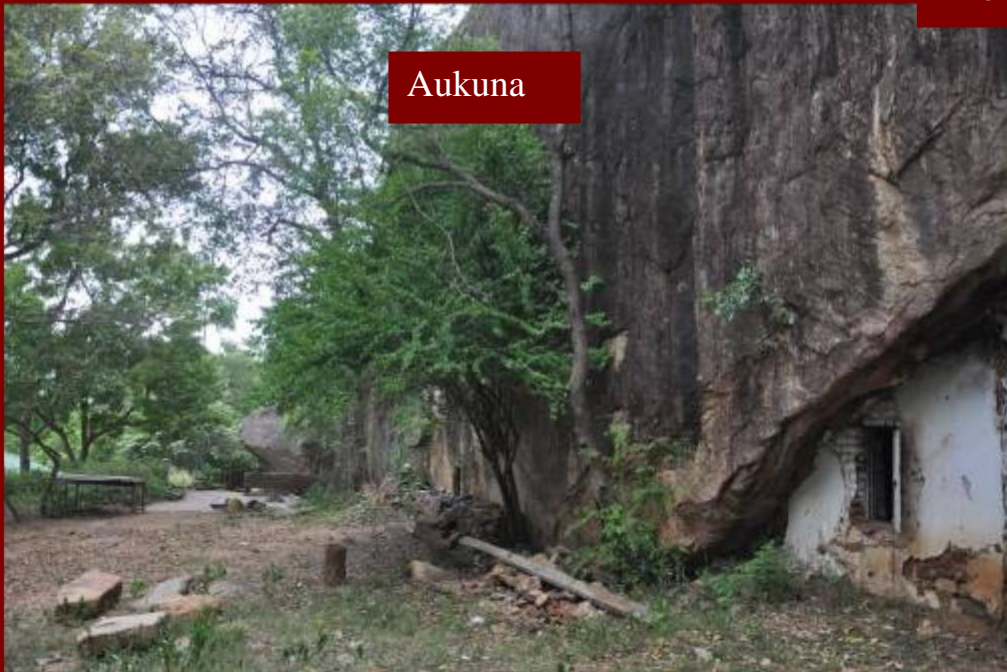


Aluvihare

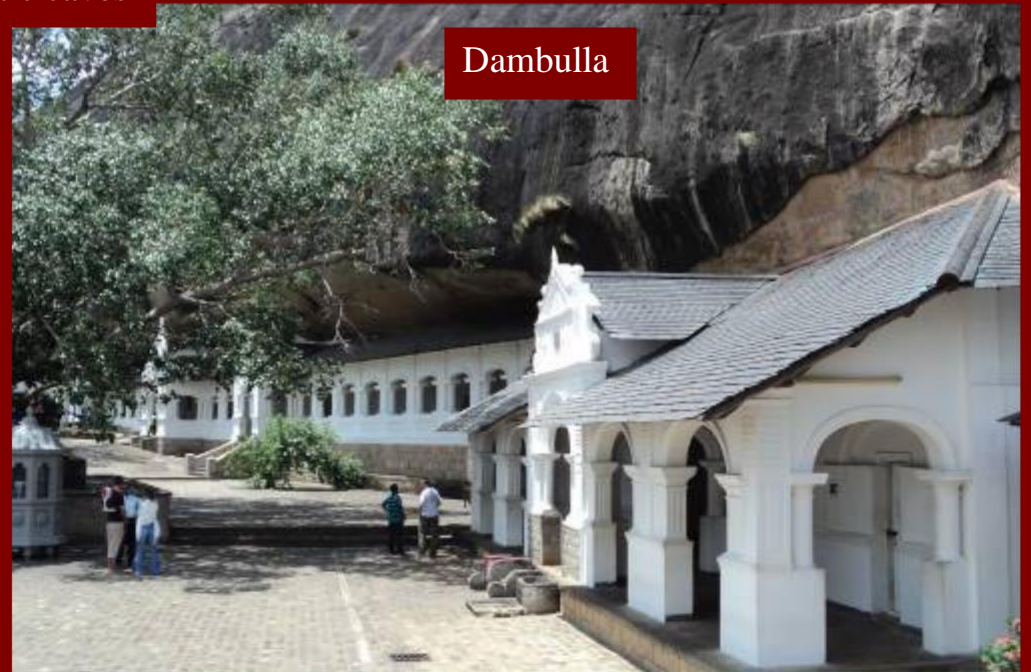


Isrumuniya

Monastic caves



Aukuna



Dambulla

Ritigala

Ritigala : library, monastic hospital

About 70 caves, once used by Buddhist monks, are splattered over the slopes of the Ritigala Mountain. Brahmi inscriptions herein date the site from the third & second centuries BC.

extraordinary stone structures named double-platforms, which are characteristic of Ritigala Ritigala has none of the traditional icons of Buddhist temples: no bodhi tree, no stupas. Extreme austerity at Ritigala Monastery

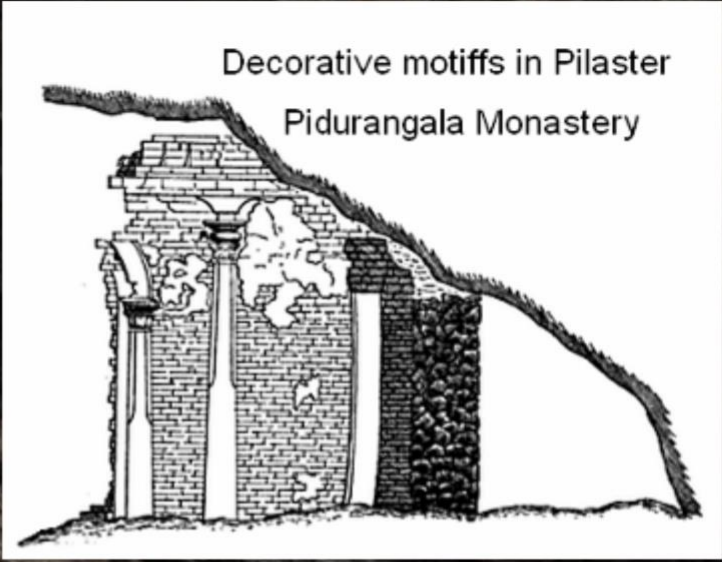
With the exception of few broken granite Buddha statues in a number of caves, Ritigala has none of the traditional icons of Buddhist temples: no bodhi tree, no stupas. The first Lanka Vihare (temple) was founded near Ritigala at the foot of the mountain in the second century BC.

The Aritta Vihare was founded a century afterwards. Royals proved generous patrons. In the ninth century AD, King Sena made endowment of the monastery, a larger complex higher up the slope for a group of Buddhist ascetics called the Pansukulikas (rag robes) monks who devoted themselves to extreme austerity in search of supreme enlightenment.

Such was the detachment of these wilderness bound Buddhist ascetics from the traditional life of Buddhist monks at village temples, their robes were simply cleaned, washed and repaired rags, mostly shrouds picked up from cemeteries, in line with one of the thirteen ascetic practices (Dhutanga) outlined in Buddhism.

Decorated urinals: symbolic act of dissociation with ritualistic excesses

The only example of representational carving to be found at Ritigala is in the form of decorated urinals that consist of urine cup, drain hole and foot supports. It is believed that these decorated stones were meant to depict the architectural and ritualistic excesses of the orthodox monastic chapters to which the Pamsukulikaa (monks devoted to extreme austerity) were opposed. It is also argued that the act of urination on decorated urinal stones was for them a symbolic act of dissociation.



Lankan architecture displays simple use of decorative motifs in pilasters. Pilastered pillars, capital and facades are found in the wall face of Pidurangala Monastery. These are common with Anuradhapura as seen also at Abhayagiri and Pollunaruwa.



Lion Bath at Mihintale Monastery
The bass relief motifs of dancing and singing apsaras is too uncommon for a II Century BC, Monastery in Sri Lanka



Trough for the Monks

Refectory at Mihintale Monastery has this trough for villagers to offer food. The Monks would stand on either side of the trough and eat.

This allowed 1000 monks at the monastery to have lunch in a short span of time. After the midday hour, monks shun solid food.





Monastery at Minhintale
Simple and least ornate at
entrance and base moldings

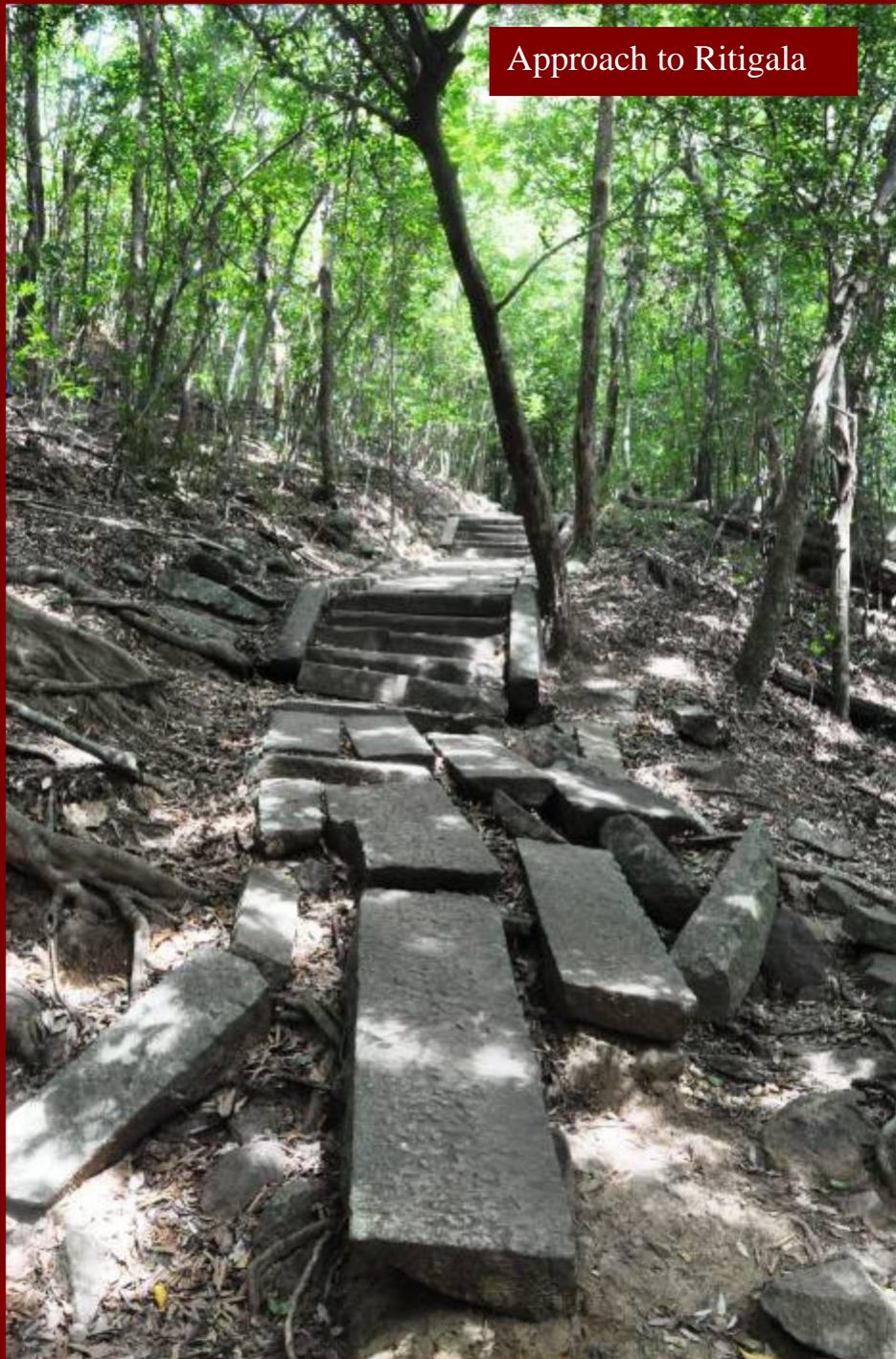
Conference Hall for Monks at Ritigala Monastic Hospital





Implements at Monastic Hospital : Ritigala





Approach to Ritigala



Oil Lamp at Library : Ritigala



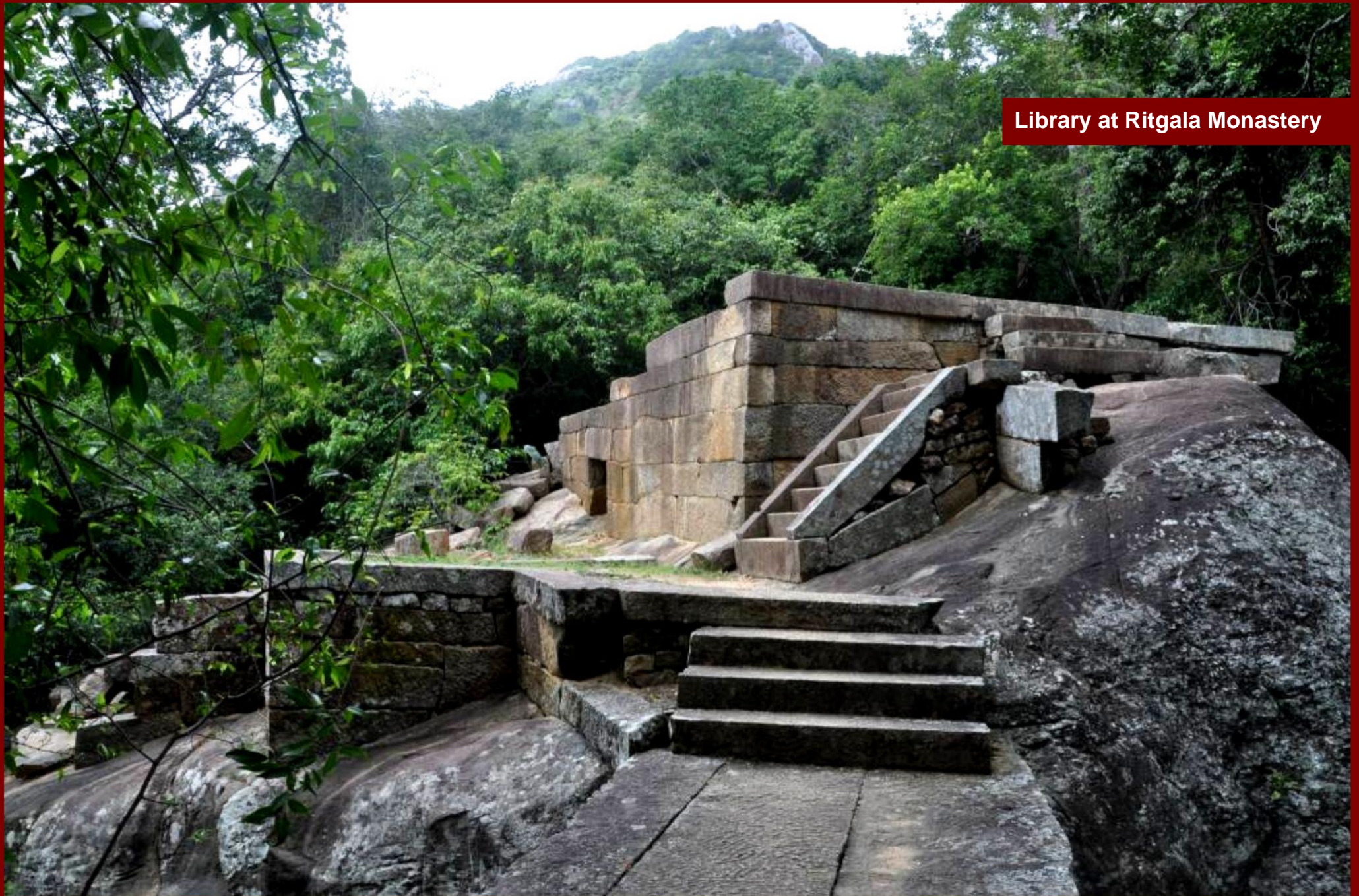
Decorated Urinals: Ritigala

Double platform structures connected by a bridge: Ritigala



Monastic Hospital at Ritigala





Library at Ritgala Monastery

Monuments



Bo Tree, Anuradhapura



Jetwana Stupa

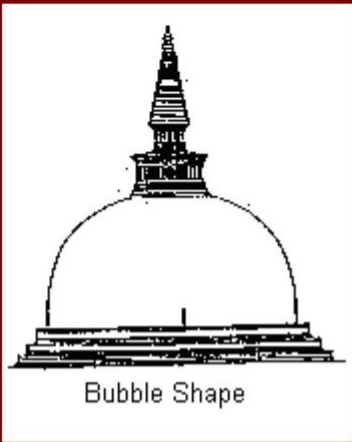


Jetvana Stupa

Jetavana Dagoba in Anuradhapura is the tallest stupa in Sri Lanka.

400ft (122m) tall and stupa has a diameter of 367ft (113m). The Jetavana Dagoba is part of the 3rd century Jetavanamaya, or Jetavana Monastery, which was the residence for 3000 monks. The monastery was founded by King Mahasena (276-303AD).





30" crystal on summit



Ruwanweli

Ruwanweliseya Dagoba is the third largest stupa in Anuradhapura. In 144BC. The Ruwanweliseya Dagoba is surrounded by a wall embellished with full-size sculpted elephants.

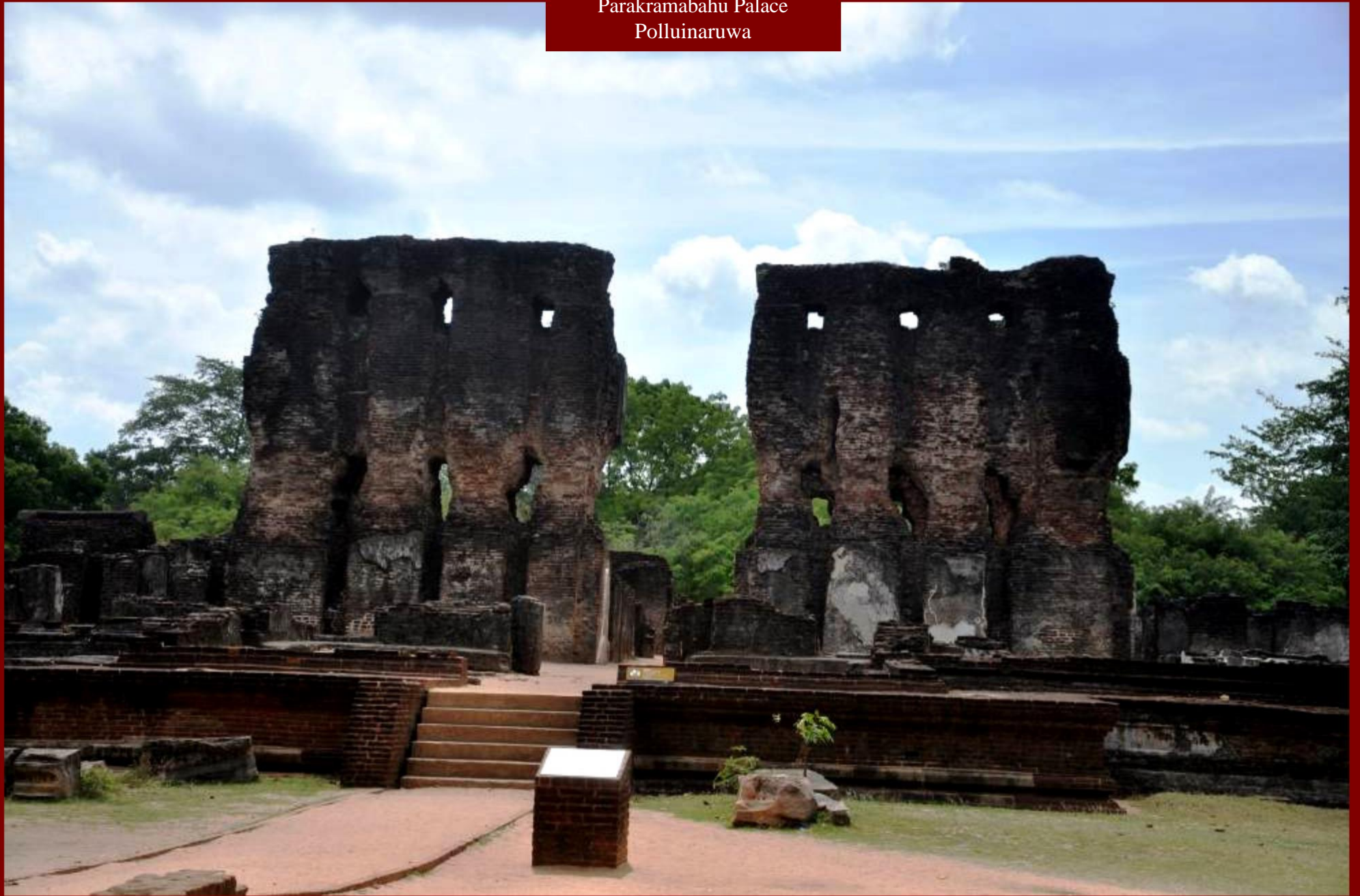




Rankot Vihara

Rankoth (Rankot) Vehera (Goldern Pinnacle) Stupa, is the 4th largest stup in the country after Ruwanveli Seya, Jetawanarama and Abhayagiriya in Anuradhapura. Built by King Nissanka Malla (1187-1196), it is 55 metres in height 185 metres in circumference. This is the largest Stupa in Polonnaruwa.

Parakramabahu Palace
Polluinaruwa



Sat Mahal Prasada

The only pyramidal structure in Pollunaruwa, inspired by Assyrian architecture. The monument seems to be a replica of Wat Kukut Lamphun, Thailand.





Gadaladeniya

The main shrine room has seated (in Vajrasana) Buddha Statue under a Makara Thorana and four standing Buddha images. was built by King Buwanekabahu IV in the year 1344. The chief architect of this temple has been a south Indian called Ganesvarachari. DSC_0023



Lanka Tilaka Raja Vihara
Hindu and Buddhist shrines, under single roof
Entrance from sides, Hindu and Buddhist deities, respectively.



Embekke, Wooden shrine

Aluvihare

Aluvihare is one of the most important cultural sites in Sri Lanka, for it was here in the 1st century BC that the Buddhist doctrines -comprising the Tripitikaya or “three baskets of the law,” along with the commentaries - were first transcribed after having been handed down orally for several centuries.

Aluvihare has many caves, too, with ancient inscriptions, comparatively modern wall and ceiling paintings of interest, and impressive images of the Buddha. The main cave, for instance, has a large reclining statue of the Buddha 10m long, together with standing and seated images. In the vestibule of another cave with a reclining statue of the Buddha there are terrifying depictions of the hellish afterlife that awaits sinners. Some of these unfortunate beings are shown having their eyes pecked out by crows, being disembowelled, dismembered and impaled on spikes.

In this reclining Buddha, there is a sweetness of expression and humanized appearance that encourages bhakti (devotion) by gently drawing the worshiper into the Buddha's ambience. The figure is draped in a gilt-cloth robe and surrounded by offerings

Seated buddh : The arch, which surmounts a seated Buddha, is fashioned in kala makara form.

Aukuna

Aukana Rajamaha Viharaya. 5th century AD.

Buddha is in asisa mudra :A gesture of blessing,
common in Sri Lanka but rare elsewhere,

in which the Buddha's palm is held upright but edge-on towards the viewer





Dambulla

7th to 3rd century BC: Early inhabitants

1st century BC: Paintings and statues

5th century AD: The *stupa* was built

Built at the base of a 150 meter rock face during a long period stretching from the first century B.C. to 1250 A.D, the Dambulla Cave Temple is comprised of five distinct caves, each of which functions as a shrine room.

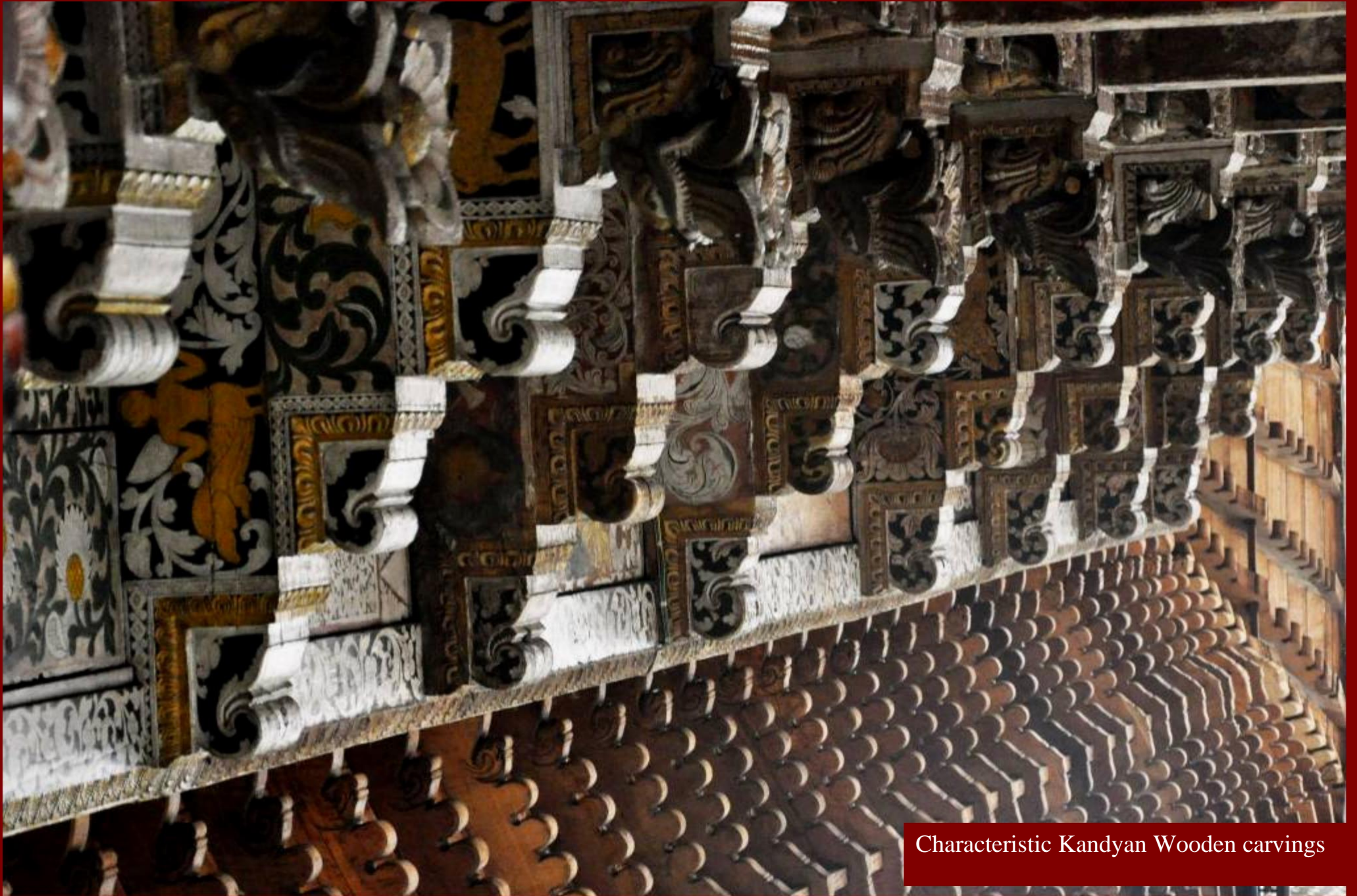


Tooth temple

Wimaladharmasurya I constructed the first temple during Kandyan empire. Wimaladharmasooriya II (1686-1706) constructed three storied temple. It faced destruction from Dutch invaders in between



Monastery at Tooth Temple



Characteristic Kandyan Wooden carvings

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