

**ARCHITECTURE OF THE BUDDHIST TEMPLES IN THE KANDYAN REGION
DURING THE SEVENTEENTH, EIGHTEENTH & NINETEENTH CENTURIES A.D.**

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The Buddhist image houses of the Kandyan region, which belong to the period concerned, can be divided into four main categories; cave temples, shrines built on pillars, small shrines of an ordinary type and two storied buildings. Of these, the cave temples have been made in such a way that the natural caves have been enlarged and the granite wall has been made smooth and flat. According to a ground plan of such a cave temple, it can be divided into three main parts: the verandah, just at the entrance of the temple, the adjoining central part and the innermost chamber where the Buddha statue is installed. For constructing all the walls of the cave temples wattle, granite and bricks have been used and after construction of the walls, they have been plastered with long-lasting materials and polished, but the length and the breadth of the walls varied.

Temples built on pillars are constructed in a different way; a number of granite pillars, which are not less than two feet in height are erected and on them, the rafts are fixed parallel to the ground and on this wooden stage, walls are constructed. But, in some places, the pillars are of a great height and therefore, to reach the temple entrance a ladder had to be used. In these two-storied temples, the lower story had been used as a preaching hall. In front of such a vihara, there is a verandah. The only entrance to the corridor and the upper verandah was a single door with a flight of steps. The temple had been enclosed around it by a short parapet wall or fence. The walls which were made of clay, they have been treated with plasters of fine sand and later they had been levelled and polished well. These pillar temples were square-shaped and they contain a top rafter in the roof. At the two corners of the roof, top two pinnacles have been fixed. The wooden canopies in all these temples afforded a better protection. This pillar temple technique may have been evolved from the tradition of the construction of ancient barns.

The ordinary image houses have been built in many instances on a flat granite foundation. Very often, roofs have been built just above the short walls of the image house. In all these instances, the roof, which is protruding out, and the adjacent portion are well discernible. But, Arattana temple has been constructed in a different manner; in front, there is a corridor, which contains the open entrance to the vihara and there are no windows fitted to the walls. The Hanguranketa temple too is quite a different structure, which contains three main parts and each part is provided with a door. In addition, there are a few other two-storied temples in this region. Very often, in these two-storied temples the lower story had been used as the preaching hall. The upper story contained the image house and adjacent verandah. However, the cave temples are numerous in Matale, Kandy and Kurunagala Districts because of the geographical background of the hill country region and the abundant existence of natural caves. The temples built on pillars are abundant in Kurunagala and Kegalle Districts and the climatic condition in these areas can be identified as the main reason for such a mode of constructing edifices. Many ordinary temples can be seen in Kandy, Kurunagala and Matale Districts though the two-storied temples are sporadic in their location.