

### **The Ancient Temples on Pillars in the 'Deduru Oya' Valley**

C. R. Withanachchi<sup>1</sup>

Among the Buddhist architectural creations of Sri Lanka, the image house receives a very important place. The archaeological evidences on the image house, that were built under different tradition, over a period more than 2000 years, can be found in many parts of the island. Image houses for Lord Buddha have been created in various forms and plans. The image house as a temple on pillars occupies a unique position in the image house building tradition of Sri Lanka. In this paper it is intended to present the nature of the Buddhist heritage of the medieval Sri Lankan society by discussing the temples on pillars in the Deduru Oya valley.

Temple on pillars is an excellent traditional temple technology. In this system, first, tall stone pillars are erected on the floor and the house frame is made, using wooden beams, on the pillars. On the frame, wooden boards are fixed as the house floor. Then, the shrine room is designed on that wooden floor. There are identified evidences that these temples on pillars were existed since Anuradhapura period itself and according to the remaining examples found in various places in the island, it can be inferred that, this technique has been rapidly developed, in the 17-18 centuries A. D. Evidences are found that many temples of this type had been made, relating the Deduru Oya valley in Sri Lanka.

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<sup>1</sup> Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Archaeology & Heritage Management, Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

There are different shaped temples on pillars seen at nearby places of Budumuthawa, paduwasnuwara, Bingiriya, Naavinna, Amunukolay, Kolambagama, Saragama, Naagahagodella, Bayawa, Netiya, Usgala, Katagamuwa, Pahala Baladora, Dorabaawila, Danvila, Mugunuwatawana, and Kubukwewa, and out of them, the temple on pillars of Bingiriya Devagiri Viharaya can be identified as the biggest one of Sri Lanka.

For construction of temples on pillars, in the inter-valley zone, relating Deduru Oya which is the main water way, flowing through inter-zone of Sri Lanka, can be identified that, in addition to political and social factors, the environment factors also had been affected. It is clear that, the reason for constructing, temples on pillars, basing the temples, nearby Deduru Oya, to protect them in the conditions such as over flowing of the Deduru Oya. On the other hand, it seems that in the places, where the soil type is weak for building usual temples on the valley, these temples on pillars were constructed. Protecting them from the pests also was another reason for that. A good example of proper resource management is, making these temples on pillars.

However, the challenges for the preservation of these temples on pillars are very high. The natural factors and also the human activities are identified among them. By this research paper, I wish to submit an illustration of the details found out by me about the temples on pillars on the Deduru Oya valley and hope. There by, to forward the details not only about the kinds of temples on pillars, but also their architectural plans and the artistic value. In addition to this, it is declared by this research paper, the attention to be paid on the challenges affected for the existence of these temples on pillars.

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