

Understanding Social Anthropological Aspects of 17th and 19th Centuries Sri Lanka through the Tampita Vihara Arty-Crafty (North Central Province)

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Abstract

Tampita Vihara, Temple on Pillars, is a distinctly unique type of image Shrine house found in some ancient Buddhist temples all over Sri Lanka during the colonial period of 17th-19th centuries. There are more than two hundred identified Temple shrines on pillars at present. Most of these Temples on Pillars are found in South, North West, Western Province, Sabaragamuwa, Central, and North Central Provinces. This Research confines its exploration around the North Central Province. There are fifteen Tampita Viharas out of which ten Viharas have been newly founded in the above area. Exploring about these Tampita Viharas will pave a good way to understand the ancient Sri Lankan Art and Architecture, Social Cultural Anthropology and technological and creativity status of our ancestors and various other aspects of the colonial period of 17th to 19th centuries. This study exposes qualitative and quantitative; analysis of Social Anthropological data is used in this study. The study can be considered as survey research which uses the selected Tampita Viharas in NCP for socio-anthropological and ancient technological findings. Therefore, the mixed research method was used as the research methodology for this research. There, interviews were conducted with Chief Reverend in Tampita Viharas in NCP, traditional Architectures, and contemporary Leaders of the Villagers for data collection. Also, data was collected to confirm the originality of the research by following the observation method through the videos included on the Published Books, Research Papers, internet websites related to the Tampita Vihara. There are so many proofs to prove that craftsmen of this period had an advanced technology. In the Ancient Buddhist society existed at the time, the ancestral craftsmen created various types of visionary creations about art. They created high-end advanced architectures. In my opinion, we can understand their knowledge through the art and cultural expressions contained in Tampita Vihara. In these Tampita Vihara ancient creations, a very special image of Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka is presented: a building which possesses wooden platforms and walls supporting a timber framed roof perched on raised stone pillars or stumps. As per the recorded data, the origin of these temples on pillars started with the Madawala Tampita Viharaya which is the oldest in the central province. (Madawala Vihara Tamba Sannasa). This research study will enhance knowledge and provide information of ancient Sri Lankan architectural technology, style, tradition, arty-crafty

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form and socio- cultural aspects to interested parties such as architects, painters, archaeologists, explorers of social and cultural facts and entrepreneurs of technology.

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