

**THE GRAND AND THE LITTLE TRADITION:
TRACING THE LINKS OF TWO VERNACULAR BUILDING TYPES OF SRI LANKA**

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It is accepted that there is a strong link between the vernacular architecture and the grand architecture traditions. The relationship between the two is studied and analyzed in different ways.

The present day architecture/architects often acknowledge the influence of vernacular on the contemporary building designs; the "Little tradition" guiding the "Grand".

On the other hand we see the inspiration of grand architecture paving the path for the emergence of unique vernacular built forms.

This paper will examine the evolution of two significant vernacular building types of Sri Lanka; "Stupa houses" and "Image houses on Stone pillars" and their linkages to built forms of grand architecture. The relationship would be explained with reference to the basic ingredients of architecture; "function", "technology" and "aesthetics".

The Stupa houses of the Kandyan period (15th to 18th century) has a strong connection with the classical architecture of "Watadage buildings" constructed during 7th to 11th century. The former has a simplified the built form avoiding the circular plan form and associated intricate construction technology.

The image houses on stone pillars are considered as one of the finest examples of Sri Lankan vernacular architecture. The technology and aesthetics of the building has

a strong connection with the two tooth relic shrines at Polonnaruwa. The latter belong to the grand style. The both building types have adopted the raised floor construction for different reasons. It protected the murals and other elements of "image houses on stone pillars" from rising dampness & insect attacks. In the case of tooth relic shrines the approach enhanced the significance of the main shrine. The paper would also attempt to understand the relationship of the architecture of the "Stupa houses" and "Image houses on Stone pillars" with the buildings belong to the folk architectural tradition of the island.

Keywords:

Stupa houses, Image houses, Grand tradition, ••turtle tradition