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The Dwelling of the War God: the Art and Architecture of Embekke *Devāle* in Medieval and Early Modern Sri Lanka

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Art History

by

Lakshika Senarath Gamage

2018

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2018

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Dwelling of the War God: the Art and Architecture of Embekke *Devāle*

in Medieval and Early Modern Sri Lanka

by

Lakshika Senarath Gamage

Doctor of Philosophy in Art History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor Robert L. Brown, Chair

Embekke *devāle* (house of god) is a Hindu temple dated to the fourteenth to eighteenth century of the Gampola and Kandy periods. Located in Embekke village in central Sri Lanka, the temple is dedicated to god Skandha, the god of war and victory. The central paradox of Embekke *devāle* is that it is a Hindu temple within a predominantly Sinhala Buddhist community with unusual woodcarvings in its *Digg-ge* (pillared hallway). The carvings are neither exclusively Hindu nor Buddhist and their purpose remains an ambiguity. By analyzing the historical shifts of the Gampola and Kandy periods, when the *devāle* was built and perhaps renovated, I propose that the fluidity of religious and social identities resulted in the eclectic collection of art and architecture in Embekke *devāle* and its contemporaneous temples, the Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka temples. I also argue that rather than being an example of Sri Lankan art that lacks a

prototype, the iconography of Embekke woodcarvings draws from designs and motifs that are prevalent within the broader scope of South Asian art. Instead of isolating the woodcarvings as a collection that is specific to Sri Lanka, I place Embekke *devāle* in a more cosmopolitan historical setting where exchange of art and iconography took place frequently between sites and kingdoms. I propose that the appropriation of the pillars from a royal audience hall into a Hindu shrine has re-articulated the *Digg-ge's* architectural space; the variety of seemingly secular and non-secular mythical motifs in the woodcarvings create a visual transitionary point for the devotees as they move from the mundane to the sacred. Instead of compartmentalizing the historical narrative, I address the significant South Indian presence in Gampola and Kandy that is underscored by exchanges with South India and migrant artisans of the Viśvakarma caste. In conclusion, I argue that as a visual testament to the cultural syncretism during the diverse period between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, Embekke *devāle* along with its two neighboring temples reflects the continuation of both Sri Lankan and South Indian architectural designs in Medieval and Early Modern central Sri Lanka.

The dissertation of Lakshika Senarath Gamage is approved.

Saloni Mathur

Dell Upton

Alka Patel

Robert L. Brown, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2018

To my Amma and Thaththa,

Sriyani and Leslie Senarath Gamage

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures viii

Acknowledgements xiv

Vita xviii

Chapter 1 Introduction Embekke *devāle* and intersection of Skandha worship and Buddhist practice in Sri Lanka 1

I. The abode of a "foreign" god 1

II. Methodology 5

III. Academic thoughts and approaches 7

IV. Chapter summaries 9

Chapter 2 Religious and cultural shifts within the Gampola and Kandy periods 12

I. Embekke *devāle* 14

II. Historical developments of the Gampola period and its significance to Embekke *devāle* 17

III. The founding of Embekke *devāle* and the rise of Skandha in Gampola and Kandy 23

IV. Religious Syncretism within Gampola and Kandy 27

V. Connections between South India and Sri Lanka during the Gampola and Kandy periods 34

Chapter 3 Analysis of the art and architecture of Embekke *devāle's Digg-ge* 43

I. History of the *Digg-ge* 44

II. The layout of Embekke *devāle* 46

III. Possible origins of Embekke *devāle's Digg-ge* 50

IV. The woodcarvings on the pillars of the *Digg-ge* 52

V. Human figures 54

VI. Mythical animal and vegetal motifs of Embekke and the conflation of Kandyan Sinhalese design motifs 57

VII. Decorations on roof beams and pillar capitals 70

VIII. Wish-fulfillment and the carvings of the *Digg-ge* 73

Chapter 4 Exchange of art and iconography among Gampola, Kandy, and South India 76

I. Architecture and roofs of Gampola period monuments 82

II. Nayakkar kings and the efflorescence of Kandy and its peripheries 88

III. Temple pillars from Gampola, Kandy, and South India 101

IV. Kerala temples and Gampola and Kandy period temple architecture 105

V. Buddhist architecture and Kerala temples 111

VI. The role of Viśvakarmas in the Gampola and Kandy kingdoms 114

Chapter 5 Conclusion 120

Figures 127

Words with diacritics 237

Bibliography 242

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Embekke *Devāle*, Embekke, Sri Lanka 127

Figure 1.2 Map of Sri Lanka with Embekke, Gampola, and Kandy 128
(https://www.google.com/maps/place/Embekka+Dewalaya/@7.2197648,78.3254695,7z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x3ae36ef317bb65e5:0x6787aeef212af953!8m2!3d7.217936!4d80.5677146)

Figure 2.1 Embekke *Devāle* 129

Figure 2.2 Embekke *Ambalama* 130

Figure 2.3 Lankātilaka Temple 131

Figure 2.4 Gadaladeniya Temple 132

Figure 3.1 Layout of Embekke *devāle* from the *Vāhalkada* 133

Figure 3.2 *Vāhalkada* of Embekke *devāle* 134

Figure 3.3 *Vāhalkada* of Embekke *devāle* 135

Figure 3.4 *Digg-ge* of Embekke *devāle* 136

Figure 3.5 *Digg-ge* of Embekke *devāle* looking towards the doorway into the *Sandun Kūdama* 137

Figure 3.6 Entrance to the *Sandun Kūdama* 138

Figure 3.7 Inside the *Sandun Kūdama* 139

Figure 3.8 Inside the *Sandun Kūdama* 140

Figure 3.9 Inside the *Sandun Kūdama* 141

Figure 3.10 *Digg-ge* of Embekke *devāle* 142

Figure 3.11 Ground plan of Embekke *devāle* 143

Figure 3.12 Orientation of Embekke *devāle* with Magnetic North 144
(Direction of Embekke *devāle* is in red)

Figure 3.13 Orientation of Embekke *devāle* with True (Map) North 145
(Direction of Embekke *devāle* is in red and Dalada Maligawa in Kandy is in white.)

Figure 3.14 Annexed storerooms and the Buddhist shrine room 146

Figure 3.15 Annexed storerooms and the Buddhist shrine room 147

Figure 3.16 Dēvata Bandara shrine 148

Figure 3.17 Granary 149

Figure 3.18 The kitchen behind the granary 150

Figure 3.19 Photos by Henry Cave 151
(Cave, Henry W. *The Book of Ceylon.* (London, Paris, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, Cassell And Company, Limited, 1908) 328 and 331).

Figure 3.20 *Digg-ge's* pillars 152

Figure 3.21 *Āsana-kadaya* and *Liya-pota* before the octagonal part of the pillars 153

Figure 3.22 Carvings in the center framed by *Arimbuwa* designs, octagonal 154
part of the pillar and *Nāga-bandha* before the square that meets the upturned *Pēkada*

Figure 3.23 Roof of Embekke *devāle* 155

Figure 3.24 Floor plan of Embekke *devāle Digg-ge* 156

Figure 3.25 Three female figures from pillars, 2, 25, and 31 157

Figure 3.26 The Horseman 158

Figure 3.27 The Two Wrestlers 159

Figure 3.28 Woman—damaged carving 160

Figure 3.29 Anthropomorphic carvings of the Embekke *Digg-ge* 161
(Gurula Pillar 20, Kinnari Pillar 25, Nārilatha Pillar 25, and Kinnari Pillar 31)

Figure 3.30 Goddess from Embekke *Digg-ge* Pillar 20 162

Figure 3.31 Goddess in the *Vāhalkada* 163

Figure 3.32 *Nārilatha* from the *Ambalama* 164

Figure 3.33 Gurula from the *Vāhalkada* 165

Figure 3.34 *Hamsas* in the *Digg-ge* (Pillar 2, 8, and 14) 166

Figure 3.35 *Hamsas* in the *Digg-ge* (Pillar 20 and 28) 167

Figure 3.36 *Hamsas* at the *Ambalama* 168

Figure 3.37 *Hamsas* at the *Vāhalkada* 169

Figure 3.38 Query *Hamsa* but most likely a Peacock from the *Digg-ge* 170

Figure 3.39 Peacock from the *Vāhalkada* 171

Figure 3.40 *Bhērunda Pakshiya* from the *Digg-ge* (Pillar 7, 28, 8, and 22) 172

Figure 3.41 *Bhērunda Pakshiya* of the *Vāhalkada* 173

Figure 3.42 *Bhērunda Pakshiya* of the *Ambalama* 174

Figure 3.43 *Et-kanda-lihiniya* in the *Digg-ge* 175

Figure 3.44 *Et-kanda-lihiniya* in the *Vāhalkada* 176

Figure 3.45 *Et-kanda-lihiniya* in the *Ambalama* 177

Figure 3.46 *Serapendiya* in the *Digg-ge* (Pillar 8, 12, and 16) 178

Figure 3.47 *Kēsara-Sinha* of the *Digg-ge* (Pillar 15 and 27) 179

Figure 3.48 *Gaja-Sinha* of the *Digg-ge* (Pillar 10 and 26) 180

Figure 3.49 *Gaja-Sinha* of the *Vāhalkada* 181

Figure 3.50 *Kibihi-Mūna* from the *Digg-ge* 182

Figure 3.51 *Kibihi-Mūna* from the *Ambalama* 183

Figure 3.52 Lion attacking an elephant at the *Digg-ge* 184

Figure 3.53 *Wrushabha kuñjara* from the *Digg-ge* 185

Figure 3.54 Lotuses from pillar 11 of *Digg-ge* 186

Figure 3.55 Lotus from pillar 22 of the *Digg-ge* 187

Figure 3.56 Lotuses from the *Vāhalkada* 188

Figure 3.57 Foliage motifs from *Digg-ge* 189

Figure 3.58 Foliage motifs from the *Ambalama* 190

Figure 3.59 Rope designs (Pillar 20 of *Digg*-ge and *Vāhalkada*) 191

Figure 3.60 Roof beams 192

Figure 3.61 Roof beams 193

Figure 3.62 *Hamsa* 194

Figure 3.63 *Hamsa* 195

Figure 3.64 *Hamsa-pūttu* 196

Figure 3.65 Female Dancer 197

Figure 3.66 *Serapendiyas* 198

Figure 3.67 Single *Serapendiya* 199

Figure 3.68 Dancing women 200

Figure 3.69 Female Dancer 201

Figure 3.70 Drummers on vertical supporting beams 202

Figure 4.1 Gadaladeniya Temple 203

Figure 4.2 Lankātilaka Temple 204

Figure 4.3 Nātha *devāle*, Kandy 205

Figure 4.4 *Magul Maduwa*, Kandy 206

Figure 4.5 Lankātilaka Temple side view 207

Figure 4.6 Lankātilaka Temple side view 208

Figure 4.7 Gadaladeniya Temple 209

Figure 4.8 Embekke *devāle's* exterior walls 210

Figure 4.9 *Makara-torana* above the main seated Buddha, Lankātilaka Temple 211

Figure 4.10 Central dome, Gadaladeniya Temple 212

Figure 4.11 Subsidiary dome, Gadaladeniya Temple 213

Figure 4.12 Lankātilaka Temple roof 214

Figure 4.13 Lankātilaka Temple roof 215

Figure 4.14 Lankātilaka Temple, Henry Cave 1908 216
(Cave, Henry W. *The Book of Ceylon.* (London, Paris, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, Cassell And Company, Limited, 1908), 339.

Figure 4.15 Gadaladeniya Temple, Henry Cave 1908 217
(Cave, Henry W. *The Book of Ceylon.* (London, Paris, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, Cassell And Company, Limited, 1908), 340, 343 and 347.

Figure 4.16 Lankātilaka Temple paintings, Twenty Four previous Buddhas 218

Figure 4.17 Lankātilaka Temple paintings, Twenty Four previous Buddhas 219

Figure 4.18 Arhats and exposed underpainting, Lankātilaka Temple 220

Figure 4.19 Elephant painting, Lankātilaka Temple 221

Figure 4.20 *Liya-wela* and *Nārilatha* in Lankātilaka Temple 222

Figure 4.21 Kinnara sculpture in Lankātilaka temple 223

Figure 4.22 Central Buddha, Gadaladeniya Temple 224

Figure 4.23 Inscription on pillar, Embekke *devāle* 225

Figure 4.24 Inscription on pillar, Embekke *devāle* 226

Figure 4.25 Entrance porch, Gadaladeniya Temple 227

Figure 4.26 *Yālis* as handrails, Gadaladeniya Temple 228

Figure 4.27 Left column, Gadaladeniya Temple 229

Figure 4.28 Right column, Gadaladeniya Temple 230

Figure 4.29 Pillars from Gampola and Kandy periods (Embekke *devāle Vāhalkada,* Nātha *devāle*, and *Ambalama*) 231

Figure 4.30 Stone pillars from Mīnakshi Nāyakkar *Mandapam*, Madurai 232

Figure 4.31 Stone pillars from Mīnakshi Nāyakkar *Mandapam*, Madurai 233

Figure 4.32 Karanathil Śiva shrine, Triprangode Śiva Temple in Malappuram 234

Figure 4.33 Koothambalam of the Thiruvegppura Mahadeva temple, Palakkad 235

Figure 4.34 Attanagalla Rājamaha *Vihara*, Attanagalla, Sri Lanka 236

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey I started in 2012 at the Department of Art History at the University of California, Los Angeles, to fulfill a Ph.D. in South Asian art history is a collaborative effort that came to fruition with the guidance of my professors and the unyielding support of my friends and family. Professor Robert Brown, my guru and committee chair, has been a constant source of guidance throughout my time at UCLA. While challenging me to explore new topics of research during graduate seminars and mentoring me in curatorial projects at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Professor Brown never forgot to inquire about my general well-being as I balanced the rigors of academia and family. I am indebted to him for accepting me into the Ph.D. program and for giving me access to a solid academic and professional foundation in art history; I consider it a privilege to be his student. Professor Saloni Mathur, who was my mentor for Museum Studies, advised me to be strategic in formulating key questions that helped shape this dissertation. Professor Dell Upton's suggestions on critically analyzing the architecture of Embekke *devāle* were invaluable in establishing the possible provenance of the temple. Professor Alka Patel motivated me to seek the historical development of Skandha in Embekke in conjunction with his initial appearances in South Asian art.

To say that I am grateful for the support I received from the Department of Art History so that I could devote my time for research while developing the experience in college-level teaching is an understatement. Specifically, and in no particular order, the following are the opportunities afforded to me by the Department that helped me achieve this milestone. After working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for several art history courses, I was given the

opportunity to develop my pedagogy by designing and teaching my own upper division art history summer course on Later Indian Art as a Teaching Fellow for the department. In addition to two years of the Dickson Fellowship (2012 and 2017), the Department granted me several awards and scholarships that helped me continue my language training and archival research. With the Ruth Nagle Watkins Scholarship (2013), I was able to pursue a summer study in French translation. The UCLA Art History Travel Grant (2014) allowed me to visit the British Library archives in search of Sinhala language manuscripts written on Embekke *devāle*. With the Ralph C. Altman Award (2014) from the Fowler Museum and the Dissertation Planning Grant from the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies (2015), I conducted my fieldwork in Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. With the guidance of Professor Sharon Gerstel, I was awarded two years of Graduate Research assistantships at the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies that secured two years of tuition, as well as providing me with a myriad of professional research skills that I was able to transfer to my own dissertation research. This funding allowed me more time to delve into fieldwork and archival research without the worry and distraction of how to pay my tuition fees and funding. The graduate seminar with Professor Steven Nelson and Professor Miwon Kwon on curatorial practices prompted me to raise new questions on how the art of Sri Lanka is perceived through different national and political lenses within museum settings.

Upon entering the UCLA Department of Art History, I met a group of genuinely supportive friends. Thank you, Alessandra Amin, Jamin An, Meg Bernstein, Tracy Bonfitto, Mya Chau, Yve Chavez, Aparna Kumar, Mark Pawlowski, Elizabeth Searcy, and Lauren Taylor for being a constant source of support, camaraderie, and for sharing much laughter in our

beloved ‘Grounge’ of Dodd Hall. Also within UCLA, I thank the librarians at the Young Research Library Interlibrary Loan division who managed to acquire for me various rare books and manuscripts on Sri Lankan history. Some of these manuscripts were not even available in Sri Lankan archives, but the UCLA ILL staff managed to hunt them down from the most obscure repositories.

Throughout my trans-continental research, I have met many helpful souls and I am grateful for their support. While I can mention many of them by name, there are also individuals who assisted me in passing and yet, created a lasting impact on my dissertation research. I am grateful for the information provided by Mr. Sudantha Senanayake, the former *Basnāyaka Nilame* of Embekke *devāle* and its current *Kapu-mahattaya*, Mr. Brahmanaralalage Dissanayake. With their help, I was able to conduct fieldwork without any hindrance. In Kandy, Dr. Chandani Udalagama and Dr. Chandrika Pamunuwa, colleagues and two of my mother’s closest friends warmly welcomed me into their homes as I conducted research in Kandy and Embekke. The British Library staff in the archival section also deserve to be mentioned for patiently delivering all the manuscripts that I requested. I fondly remember the attendant at the library of the Department of Archaeology in Colombo who, despite not knowing the material I was searching for, brought books to my desk with a true intention of helping my research. While in Kerala, I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Binumol Tom, who imparted her knowledge on Malayalam texts on temple building practices and architecture. I owe much gratitude to Dr. Crispin Branfoot who shared with me his expertise on Tamil Hindu architecture and further shed light on cultivating a cross-cultural dialog on religious architecture of South India and Sri Lanka. Increasing my desire to further investigate South Indian and Sri Lankan Hindu temple architecture, Dr. Anila Verghese

provided me with temple photographs from South India. With these photos, I was able to begin the comparative visual analysis for temple pillars from South India and Gampola.

My undergraduate dream of attending UCLA to study art history with Professor Brown was further reinforced and later realized due to the wise counsel from my undergraduate and graduate school professors. I mention with much gratitude Dr. John Cort, Professor Lauren Eisen, and Dr. Sita Ranchod-Nilsson who were my academic advisors at Denison University, along with Dr. Catherine Raymond at my graduate school, Northern Illinois University. Dr. Don Stadtner, who has now become a dear friend of our family, has also continued to be a source of encouragement.

On the home front, I thank my husband, William Hewson for proof-reading my graduate seminar papers, providing feedback to my conference presentations, and even cleaning makeup spills off my dress and calming me as I prepared for my candidacy exam. The birth of our daughter, Asoka Senarath Gamage, three weeks before I file the dissertation, has been a joyous and life-changing event. Even in her prenatal days, Asoka was a companion for me as I spent long nights writing dissertation chapters and teaching my summer course. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my Amma and Thaththa, Sriyani and Leslie Senarath Gamage. Without their love, nurturing, and guidance, none of this would ever be possible and I have no words to fully express my love and gratitude. I owe all my academic and professional successes to them.

VITA

Education and Degrees Awarded

M.A. 2010 Art History (South & Southeast Asia), Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

B.A. (Cum Laude) 2006 International Studies and Studio Art, Denison University, Granville, OH

Teaching and Professional Experience

2016, 2017, and 2018
Teaching Fellow, Department of Art History Art History, UCLA (Course: Later Indian Art (10th-18th centuries C.E.)

2018- June-December
UCLA/ LACMA Research Fellow, South and Southeast Asian Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

2016 December
Curatorial Intern for 'Encountering the Buddha: Art and Practice Across Asia', Freer Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution

2013-2015, and 2017
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Art History, UCLA (Courses: Medieval and Byzantine art, African art, upper division Modern and Contemporary South Asian art, and South and Southeast Asian art.)

2015-2017
Graduate Research Assistant, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, UCLA

2015 Summer
Lenart Intern, South and Southeast Asian Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

2014
Summer Fellow, UCLA Art History Practicum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

2011-2012
Visiting Lecturer, Academy of Design, Sri Lanka

2004-2005
Art Department Fellow, Denison University Museum

Publications

Brown, R.L, Stadtner, D., Gude, T.B. Senarath Gamage, L. (2018). *The Jeweled Isle: Art from Sri Lanka,* Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, U.S.A.

Grants and Awards

Edward A. Dickson Fellowship, UCLA 2012 & 2017
American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies, Dissertation Planning Grant, Summer 2015
Ralph C. Altman Award, Fowler Museum, UCLA 2014
UCLA Art History Travel Grant 2014
Ruth Nagle Watkins Scholarship, UCLA 2013
Jeanne Vail Scholarship for Fine Arts, Denison University 2006
Senior Research Grant, Denison University 2006
Robert F. Marion Scholarship, Denison University 2005
John and Mary Alford Scholarship, Denison University 2004
Caroline Woodrow Deckman Scholarship for Studio Art, Denison University 2004
Summer Scholar, Denison University 2003 and 2005

Selected Papers Presented

"The Dwelling of the War God: the Art and Architecture of Embekke *Devāle* in Medieval Sri Lanka and its possible artistic exchanges with Kerala, South India." Presented at the Association of Asian Studies Conference, Seattle, March 31st, 2016.

"From Mundane to Nirvana: the Organization of the *jātaka* paintings of the Sapugaskanda *Rājamahāvihāra*." Presented at the California Buddhist Studies Graduate Student Conference at Stanford University, April, 23rd, 2016.

"The art of M. Sarlis (1880-1955): Enchanting the public through romanticized Buddhist prints." Presented at the College Art Association Conference, Los Angeles, February, 21st, 2018.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Embekke *devāle* and intersection of Skandha worship and Buddhist practice in Sri Lanka

I. The abode of a "foreign" god

The primary goal of my dissertation is to study the art and architecture of Embekke *devāle* (Fig. 1.1), a fourteenth to eighteenth century Hindu shrine that is located in central Sri Lanka (Fig. 1.2). I investigate the woodcarvings of the shrine and analyze its architecture framed within the histories of the two royal capitals of Gampola (1341-1410) and Kandy (1473-1815), both of which oversaw the founding and the development of the Embekke *devāle*. The unusual arrangement of the *devāle's* architecture and ground plan is further reinforced by the juxtaposition of the main sacred space dedicated to Skandha, a Hindu deity of South Indian origin, and a Buddhist shrine that is annexed to the side of the Hindu shrine. I analyze the shrine and its art to explain their possible sources with other temples in Sri Lanka. In particular, I focus on two temples founded during the Gampola period and their artistic exchanges with South India during the Gampola and Kandy periods in order to investigate the art of this time period. The fact that Embekke *devāle's* main god is a "foreigner" of a non-Buddhist background is certainly a component that I considered when studying the art and architecture of the shrine as well as those of the Gampola period temples. Skandha's complete acceptance into the Sri Lankan Buddhist pantheon is an issue to consider when analyzing the placement of the shrine in proximity to two prominent former royal capitals. Skandha holds a prominent place within the mindset of the Buddhist public as a fierce deity who offers protection to his followers, both Hindu and

Buddhist. Iconographically within the art and architecture of Sri Lanka, Skandha assumes the place of a Hindu god who displays his multivalence and his South Indian origins that are frequently highlighted in oral history and textual sources and are often seen accentuated with his two wives.

The presence of Hinduism in the predominantly Sinhala Buddhist island and the continuous adoption of Hindu worship by Buddhists has experienced mixed reaction within the Buddhist community. Hinduism is at times accepted harmoniously by the Buddhists who engage in Hindu customs within subsidiary Hindu shrines and *devālas*. At times, Hindu ceremonies are seen as fraught with tension and face the resistance of the Buddhists. One example is the conflict that erupted in 2013 between the Buddhists of the area and the Hindu temple in Munneswaram in the Chilaw district regarding the annual animal sacrifice that takes place within the temple premises. On the other hand, Hindu temples, such as the main Skandha temple in Kataragama and the Embekke *devāle* have been managed by Sinhala Buddhists for a significant part of their history and function as sites of religious plurality.

Although Hindu Brahminical gods, such as Vishnu, Skandha (Kataragama), and Pattini, are propitiated by many Buddhists and are absorbed into the Buddhist pantheon as protectors of the Buddhist faith and of Sri Lanka, their Hindu origins do not go unnoticed. Perhaps, highlighting their otherness is more prominent today than in any previous historical time period in Sri Lanka. One of the current popular trends propagated by some Sinhala Buddhists in Sri Lanka today is to avoid worshipping of Brahminical Hindu gods. The monks who promote this idea take a stern stand and instruct the lay followers to refrain from any Hindu forms of

worship.[1] These monks maintain that refined Thēravada convention should avoid the popular practice of offering *pūja vatti* (trays that include fruit and incense) to various gods in *devāles* that are built to house both Hindu and local tutelary gods within or near Buddhist temple sites. Likewise, they ask the Buddhists to avoid *kōvils*, which are exclusively Hindu shrines. Perhaps, we are seeing the continuation of a type of Buddhist practice that several scholars have identified over the past few decades. Gananath Obeysekere and Richard Gombrich coined the term "Protestant Buddhism"[2] to identify the ways in which Thēravada Buddhist practices have manifested within the island forming parallels with Protestant Christian beliefs, particularly with the rise of the laity over the *Sangha*. As John Holt noted, contemporary Buddhist practice in Sri Lanka had further been altered as a tool with more nationalist and political motivations.[3] Contemporary Buddhist practice in Sri Lanka continues to change in a variety of ways according to the prevalent social and political movements.

However, the practicality of refraining from Hindu forms of worship can be questioned when considering the crowds of Buddhist worshippers who still gather inside the *devāles* that are located within the premises of Buddhist temples and some of which are located physically separate and yet within the purview of a neighboring Buddhist temple. Seeking protection and help from Hindu and tutelary gods for mundane activities seem to be enmeshed with the daily lives of many Buddhists in the island. Therefore, separating all Buddhists from Hindu practices is a predicament of significant proportions. The art and architecture of Buddhist sites in Sri

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[1] Kiribathgoda Gnānanada Thero, *Andura Vinivida Eliya Dakinnata*, (Colombo: Dayawansa Jayakody Publishers, 2004), 68-70.

[2] Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeysekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1990), 202-240.

[3] Holt, John Clifford, "Minister of Defense? The Politics of Deification in Contemporary Sri Lanka," In T*he Buddhist Visnu*, 331-350. New York: Colombia University Press, 2004.

Lanka beginning from the early Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa temple sites until the modern murals of the Southwestern coastal temples indicate both Buddhist and Hindu iconography, style, and subject matter that are inseparable according to different religious ideologies. The boundaries between the two religions have consistently been merged throughout the island's history and consequently, the art and architecture of Sri Lanka depict both Buddhist and Hindu elements.

During the Gampola and Kandy periods in particular, the art and architecture of Buddhist temples become increasingly dynamic, employing features seen in both Sri Lanka and India. The artisans have looked towards Hindu temple architecture from South India, as well as Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa temple architecture to create stylistically diverse late medieval and early modern Sri Lankan temples. A significant characteristic of the art shared during Gampola and Kandy is the lack of standardization within Buddhist art and architecture. Perhaps, we can argue that the interconnectedness of Buddhist and Hindu worship and practice has created a multifaceted form of art and architecture where ethnic, racial, and geographical boundaries have merged almost to the point where Buddhist and Hindu art in Sri Lanka cannot be separated or compartmentalized. The cohesion of styles and the merging of iconography is an indispensable feature of Sri Lankan art that has continued from the earliest extant examples from Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa.[4] Consequently, the iconography and the subject matter of most Sri Lankan art in the Gampola and Kandy period are neither purely Buddhist nor Hindu, nor are they only Sinhala, Tamil, or South Indian; the art and architecture of Gampola and Kandy is a

[4] Bandaranayake, Senake. "Chapter Eight Substructure and Superstructure," In *S*inhalese Monastic Architecture. 311-378. Leiden: Brill, 1974. The author discusses the architecture of Thūpārāma in detail to assess the ways in which the architects of Gampola and Kandy period may have been inspired by the temples of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa.

coalescence of several religious ideologies and is deeply impacted by the art of several different geographical locations.

Perhaps, the incessant need to craft a 'pure' form of Thēravada Buddhist practices arises from the fear of losing religious and cultural identity crafted by the ideals of the neo-nationalist movement mirroring the second Buddhist revival against Christian missionary activity in the pre-independence era. What is at stake here is the erasure of customs and practices of *devāles* along with the art and architecture that documents the hybridity between Buddhism and Hinduism. Art and architecture cannot be compromised to fit a singular message of conservative religious ideology when in fact, Buddhism in Sri Lanka has helped sustain diversity of beliefs, customs, and the creative freedom of artisans where both Buddhist and Hindu patrons and artisans worked in harmony to create some of the most monumental temple sites of Gampola and Kandy periods.

II. Methodology

As a Hindu shrine located in central Sri Lanka, Embekke *devāle* is clearly placed within the intersection of a religious and artistic repository that espouses Hindu and Buddhist practice along with elements of the "spirit religion"[5] often seen within and outside the parameters of Buddhist practice in the island. While the *devāle* itself is dedicated to Skandha, the Buddhist shrine is annexed to it and the Dēvata Bandara shrine is built to the left side of the main shrine. Therefore, in this study I approach the art and architecture of Embekke *devāle* in multiple directions, from the perspective of a lay follower who is visually confronted with an array of

[5] According to Gombrich and Obeysekere who coined this term to identify the different local traditions, there is no "unifying label" within the Sri Lankan Buddhist culture to gather all these practices and rituals. (Gombrich and Gananath Obeysekere, 3.)

Hindu, Buddhist, and secular iconography, by interviewing the custodians who hold the keys to the oral historical record of the shrine, and by juxtaposing the art and architecture of the shrine with neighboring Buddhist temples.

Through my fieldwork in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, I attempt to bridge perhaps, one of the most damaging and glaring gaps in Sri Lankan art history. In addition to the lack of a comprehensive text on Sri Lankan art history, there is no text that specifically analyzes the art historical exchanges with South India, the foremost counterpart and the closest geographical landmass to Sri Lanka. The historical relations between Sri Lanka and South India are often neglected in the primary historical narrative that is based on the *Mahāvamsa* and the Cūlavamsa. Perhaps, due to this historical tensions and most recent civil war, this topic is avoided due to its sensitive nature. Consequently, the art historical exchange between the two regions is vaguely analyzed in terms of patronage, exchange of artistry, and possible collaborations of migrant artisans from Sri Lanka and India. As an attempt to bridge this gap with regard to art historical exchange and pedagogy, I trace the threads of exchanges that occurred between Gampola and Kandy period with Hindu temple building, South Indian migrant artisans, and patrons who were not exclusively Sinhala Buddhists but belonged to a more cosmopolitan and homogeneous society. The lack of texts and scholarly observations was a significant drawback for this portion of my dissertation. Attempting to research on an area of Sri Lankan art that has for the most part been in the footnotes and had been eclipsed by the predominant discussion of Sri Lankan Sinhala Buddhist art of Anuradhapura to Kandy was a challenging task with its own drawbacks. The examples of temples from Gampola and Kandy present a strong case for exchange with South India, as I have explained in this dissertation, and requires further research.

III. Academic thoughts and approaches

The course of academic thought that has been carved by stalwarts such as Senarat Paranavitana, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Senake Bandaranayake, Anuradha Seneviratna among others veers towards highlighting the art of the majority, the Sinhala Buddhists. In this attempt, it reinforces the popular view of a Sinhala-centric civilization that originated with Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa as the cornerstones of Sri Lankan art history. Perhaps accentuated by the fervor of the 1956 political transformation, the writings of these scholars echo through the popular strain of thought among the Sri Lankan academic circles and seep into the public mindset. Due to the sensitive nature of this topic that touches upon the fraught relationship between the Sinhala and Tamil communities, the absence or the lack of South Indian artistic exchange is not fully addressed by most scholars. Although Bandaranayake mentions the visual similarities with Kerala Hindu temples and central Kandyan architectural patterns, he does not fully articulate the migrations and exchanges that took place between Sri Lanka and South India. Among the few scholars who discuss the South Indian exchange are Obeysekere, S. Pathmanathan, Holt and Lorna Dewaraja. Obeysekere addresses the multiplicity of Buddhist practice within the island that is intertwined with animism and the evolution of spiritual practices and secondary forms of worship where Buddhism, Hinduism, and local and personal beliefs have converged. Pathmanathan and Holt mention the extensive South Indian presence in Gampola while Dewaraja discusses the South Indian control within Kandy. These scholarly views, however, are yet to be fully addressed and absorbed into the central dialog. Along with the South Indian exchange between Sri Lanka, these voices seem to be in the periphery as the central discussion focuses on Sinhala art and the Sinhala artisan. I do not negate the importance of the Sinhala

craftsmen or the art of the Sinhalese. What I emphasize is that in order to fully articulate the craftsmanship of Sri Lankan artists along with the rich array of iconography and temple architecture, specifically that are found in the art and architecture of Gampola and Kandy, the exchange that occurred with Tamil Nadu and Kerala must be incorporated into the central discussion. This exchange not only validates the work of the local artisans who collaborated with their South Indian counterparts, but emphasizes the role of Gampola and Kandy period art that was nourished by regional exchange. In my dissertation, the foremost attempt I make is to address this void in Sri Lankan art history and to point out that future careful research will be able to further our current understanding. Among areas in which research will benefit scholarship is comparison studies of art and architecture in Sri Lanka and South India, a topic that I explore in the dissertation but will require detailed and extensive study, carried out by more than a single scholar, possibly with a multi-disciplinary approach.

The dissertation focuses on a single temple, the Embekke *devāle*, that spans both the Gampola and Kandy periods. I use Embekke *devāle* as a springboard for comparisons with art and architecture in both Sri Lanka and India. The Embekke *devāle* is not an obscure temple, but one of the most famous temples in Sri Lanka, yet it is a temple to a Hindu deity, to the god Skandha. However, its worshippers are overwhelmingly Buddhist. The reason for Embekke *devāle's* fame is largely due to its spectacular wood carvings that is considered in the scholarly literature as unique. In short, the Embekke *devāle* is an ideal monument in its complexity, fame, and ambiguity to explore many of the art historical issues that interest me in this dissertation.

IV. Chapter summaries

I begin Chapter 2 to emphasize the dynamic political and religious events that took place within and outside of the royal court. Despite the popular belief that Gampola was a capital that indicated the dark ages of Sri Lankan history with weak kings, I highlight the points that indicate the economic strengths and artistic capabilities of individuals. Patronage for Buddhism and the arts has changed significantly in comparison to the previous Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa periods. Therefore, it is necessary to address the merits of the Gampola kingdom for their role in creating a religious and artistic atmosphere that was unique unto itself. The research methodology I used for this chapter consists of a variety of secondary sources and fieldwork on site in Embekke. In particular, I use Kenneth R. Hall's theoretical framework on trade networks based on shared cultural ideals to explain the prolific commercial acumen of Gampola.

In Chapter 3, I address the woodcarvings of Embekke *devāle* in order to analyze its provenance, artistry, and function. While the founding of the Embekke *devāle* is dated to the Gampola period, I argue that the carvings are mostly replicated at a later time in the Kandyan period. Through a visual analysis, I juxtapose the various vegetal and animal motifs of the Embekke *devāle's* pillared hallway, the Embekke stone *Ambalama*, and those scattered within Kandy and in a few that are not seen elsewhere in Sri Lanka but are located South India.

I juxtapose the architecture of Embekke *devāle* with the two neighboring temples, the Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya in Chapter 4. In order to conduct a comparative visual analysis I address the diverse art and architecture of Gampola and Kandy, I address the murals of the Lankātilaka and Embekke *devāle*, the specific pillar designs of Embekke *devāle* in comparison with Nayaka and Marudai pillars, as well as Lankātilaka's isolated pillars and similar South

Indian pillars from the Virupaksha temple. With a comparative analysis of the three Sri Lankan temples and those that I studied in Kerala, I address in detail the form and function of the monsoon architecture of these shrines. I formulate this portion of the chapter by basing on an idea proposed by Senaka Bandaranayake on the similarities between the roofings structure. Other than Bandaranayake's brief mentioning and Crispin Branfoot broaching the topic of Lankātilaka and the South Indian Gopurams, there is no detailed investigation previously done on the topic of Sri Lankan and South Indian temple architecture. As a result, the drawback for this chapter is the lack of academic texts by scholars in the field to substantiate my own visual analysis. Therefore, to strengthen my argument on the syncretism of Sri Lankan and South Indian temple architecture, I present the movement of Viśvakarma artisans into the Gampola and Kandy kingdoms. The risk of providing a theoretical framework for this chapter oscillates between two key words: architectural hybridity and syncretism. While I recognize that the limited number of historical records that document the arrival of Viśvakarmas from South India into the Sri Lankan court, I also acknowledge the lack of secondary sources on migrations of Sri Lankan artisans into South India. There is however, a brief mentioning of the Ilavars who may have inspired Buddhist temple architecture in Kerala according to Sarkar. Therefore, I apply the concept of Peter Burke's cultural hybridity to explain the possible architectural exchanges between the two regions, and in particular the unconventional architecture found in the three temples of Embekke *devāle*, Lankātilaka, and Gadaladeniya.

In conclusion, by using my own analysis and observations, I propose several avenues for further academic investigations to fulfill the gaps I have noted in the broader discourse of Sri Lankan art history. In addition to a comprehensive text on Sri Lankan art, there is a vital need to

address the artistic exchange between Sri Lanka and South India based on both Buddhism (Thēravada and Mahāyana practices) and Hinduism. Although the patronage of Kandyan Nayakkars are mentioned with regard to the sponsorship of king Kīrti Srī Rājasinha, the role of Gampola and Kotte kings and noblemen requires further probing. The *Kadaim Poth* of various districts, particularly of Matale hold repositories of information on the migratory patterns of the Viśvakarmas and how they established as Sri Lankan artisans. I also mention the need for a detailed academic dialog among scholars of Sri Lankan art who study the art and architecture of Sri Lankan and South India, with particular emphasis on exchanges with Buddhist art and architecture, and those of Jaffna, including the Northern Peninsular and the Eastern districts of Sri Lanka, and South India. I also emphasize the necessity to include other peripheral topics such as the contribution of Christian and Islamic art and architecture to the broader topic of Sri Lankan art. While this approach may be a starting point to building a comprehensive guide to Sri Lankan art history, outside of the academic realms, the broaching of these topics will perhaps be helpful for exploring solutions to the much needed reconciliation during the current post-war period in Sri Lanka.

Chapter 2

Religious and cultural shifts within the Gampola and Kandy periods

Embekke *devāle* is a temple that is primarily dedicated to god Skandha, who is popularly known as Kataragama *Deviyō.*[6] (Fig.2.1) The temple functions as the spiritual center of the Embekke village while also stimulating the economic activity of the residents of Embekke. In terms of religious, archaeological, and art historical points of view, the Embekke *devāle* is a conundrum that is fraught with dualities. Although the temple is dedicated to a Hindu Brahminical god, who assumes a significant position as one of the four guardian gods of the island, the *devāle* is a subsidiary temple in comparison to the neighboring temples in Kandy, the last royal capital. While god Skandha is the primary deity within Embekke *devāle*, a small shrine room consecrated to the Buddha—the most consequential figure within the Buddhist pantheon—is annexed to the *devāle* on the side. The founding legend of Embekke *devāle* is shrouded in mythology and folklore and dates to the early Gampola period (1341-1410), while the architecture and the woodcarvings indicate a later date in the Kandy period (1473-1815).

According to textual sources and folklore the temple was founded by king Vikramabāhu III (1356/7 C.E.) during the Gampola period.[7] As a temple that is believed to have been built during a tumultuous period in Sri Lankan history and as one that lacks any preceding examples

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[6] Godakumbura states that the shrine is dedicated to Mahasen, popularly known as Kataragama *deviyō*. C.E. Godakumbura, *Ămbăkke dēvālayē kăṭayam Embekke Devale Carvings* (Colombo: Archaeological Department, 1981), 3. A local belief states that Mahasen later became Kataragama *deviyō* or Skandha with the incorporation of Hindu deities into the Sri Lankan Buddhist pantheon during the Gampola period.

[7] Nandasena Mudiyanse, *The Art and Architecture of the Gampola Period* (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd., 1963), 6. The exact date for the founding of the Gampola kingdom remains a question in Sri Lankan history. John Holt narrates the historical events and the various ideas proposed by scholars such as Paranavitana and Nicholas and the general date given in the *Cūlavamsa* as the time period between Vijayabāhu V (1335-1341) and Buvanekabāhu IV, the first king of Gampola. John Holt, *Buddha in the Crown* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 94.

within the island, many ambiguities surround the Embekke *devāle*. Most importantly, the Embekke *devāle* lacks historical sources to determine its date and steps in construction. In this chapter, I argue that the Embekke *devāle* was founded under dynamic historical circumstances where religious and national identities were fluid and interchangeable. Locals in the hinterlands absorbed new ideas and beliefs from Hindu beliefs that had permeated the society in a variety of ways. Consequently, local Buddhist deities, and in some cases bodhisattvas, were metamorphosed to fit new religious paradigms while Hindu gods were often legitimized and accepted into collective Buddhist thought. The fluidity and the ease in which Hindu beliefs percolated through Buddhist practice in the Gampola and Kandy periods seems to differ from the comparatively more intransigent Sinhala Buddhist or the 'Protestant Buddhist'[8] identities that are often seen in contemporary Sri Lanka. Due to the rise of nationalist politics that was originally manifested as resistance to western colonial rule, we now see in recent times a predominantly Sinhala Buddhist paradigm that is contoured by ideals of nationalism.

Embekke *devāle* and its contemporaneous neighboring temples indicate a practice of Buddhism and Buddhist identity that is less capricious and more inclusive than contemporary Buddhist practice; it is questionable if the 'Sinhala Buddhist' consciousness of today would be applicable to the society of the Gampola and Kandy kingdoms. Consequently, literature on Embekke *devāle's* art and architecture that has been written during and after independence has been articulated through a predominantly modern conventional lens; art historical literature focuses on how the *devāle's* woodcarvings form a prototype for all subsequent wooden architecture and iconography, particularly as design motifs copied in temple paintings. However,

[8] Gombrich and Obeysekere, 202-240.

given the socially prolific and dynamic time period when Embekke *devāle* was built and renovated, the art and architecture of the temple necessitates a more complex analysis based on historical context, with an inquiry that ostensibly looks toward both inter and intra-regional activity and exchange of art and architecture, particularly with South India.

The primary question I attempt to answer in this chapter is how certain Hindu Brahmincial gods were articulated into the Buddhist pantheon during the Gampola period and how the art and architecture changed to suit these changes within Thēravada practice. To answer this question, I analyze the several historical shifts that occurred during the time period between and including two royal capitals of the Gampola and Kandy kingdoms during which the *devāle* was both built and perhaps, renovated. Furthermore, in order to extrapolate the meaning and function of the shrine and the seemingly secular woodcarvings of the pillared hallway that I focus on in a later chapter, I present the historical complexities and ambiguities of a significant time of the Gampola kingdom. In conclusion, I propose that the fluidity of religious and social identities resulted in the eclectic collection of art we see in Embekke *devāle* and its contemporaneous temples.

I. Embekke *devāle*

A *devāle* is the abode of a particular deity and functions as a subsidiary shrine as part of a Buddhist temple. There are some *devāles* that are constructed separately from Buddhist temples, within its own sacred grounds. Even if a *devāle* is built separately from a Buddhist temple, it still functions under the nominal jurisdiction of the Buddhist temple of a particular area. As with any

devāle, a *Kapu-mahattaya*[9] acts as the intermediary between the god and the patrons and this position is usually passed down through one family. The *kapu* family of Embekke *devāle* continues to fulfill this duty today as they have done for generations. A *Basnāyaka Nilame* is the title given to each chief lay custodian who also functions as the trustee of a *devāle* and is elected to each of the prominent *devāles* in the country. A *Basnāyaka Nilame* supervises the indentured land and property of the *devāle* and participates in the annual ceremony. A *Basnāyaka Nilame* assumes a more formal and prestigious role of supervising the *devāle's* administrative and financial activities and takes part in the annual procession as a representative of the king. As all other *devāles* in Kandy and its peripheral villages, Embekke *devāle* assumes a secondary position to the Temple of the Tooth, popularly known as the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy. Fulfilling multiple roles within the Embekke village, the *devāle* tends to the spiritual needs of its inhabitants, maintains indentured land, and employs locals in a variety of services while functioning as an economic center. Additionally, the Embekke *devāle* functions as a repository for wooden art and architecture and is an important point of attraction in central Sri Lanka to local and foreign tourists.

Embekke *devāle* is located in the central hills of Sri Lanka within a hamlet that is predominately populated by Sinhala Buddhists. Situated in Udunuwara electorate in the Kandy district, Embekke *devāle* is about ten miles to the southwest of Kandy and can be approached from the Pilimatalawe junction on the Colombo—Kandy Road. After another five mile drive along the Daulagala Road, one can take either of the two roads at Gadaladeniya Junction to

[9] A *Kapu-mahattaya*, commonly known as *kapu-rāla* is a lay priest who performs the daily rituals of the *devāle* and conducts the rituals of the annual procession including the water-cutting ceremony. In Embekke *devāle* much like in most other *devāles,* this position is patrilineal.

arrive at the Embekke *devāle*. The *devāle* is in close proximity to the Gampola town, which is located about four and a half miles to the south of the village. The temple, which is located in the hamlet that is also called Embekke is designated as a protected monument by the Archaeological Department of Sri Lanka. Surrounded by the mountains of Kandy, the temple is located on a hill in the Embekke village. The main road of the Embekke village starts at the temple and leads toward a small ceremonial hut to the northeast; this road forms the central axis of the village with most of the houses and shops located on either side.[10] At the base of this hill are lands with lush vegetation and rice fields that are accentuated by pockets of sparse residential neighborhoods.

Also at the base of the hill is the Embekke *Ambalama*, (Fig.2.2) which is the resting hall believed to have been built before Embekke *devāle*, possibly during the time of King Buvanekabāhu IV. Today, only the stone pillars that once held the roof of the resting hall can be seen in ruins on the sloping rock that is adjacent to one of the rice fields. This site has also been named as a protected site of the Archaeological Department of Sri Lanka. Other than its presence in close proximity to the Embekke *devāle*, the *Ambalama* does not function in any social or religious capacity today and is quite neglected, save for the occasional tourist who may stop for a quick glance. However, as a structure that was possibly built in the Gampola period before Embekke *devāle* and as a subsidiary and secular hall in relation to the *devāle*, the art and iconography of some of the stone pillars are addressed in a later chapter. Perhaps, this is the only existing structure that can be considered as a possible blueprint to the art of Embekke *devāle*, and

[10] Bechhoefer discusses how the main street of the Embekke village that begins from the main gate of Embekke *devāle* forms both visually and metaphorically, the central axis of activity for the village. See William Bechhoefer, "Procession and Urban Form In A Sri Lankan Village," *TDSR* 1 (1989): 39-48.

also lacks a comparative and visual analysis to study the iconography of the carvings on the stone pillars.

II. Historical developments of the Gampola period and its significance to Embekke *devāle*

The Embekke village is in close proximity to both Gampola and Kandy towns which also used to be two former royals centers of power. The village was once a part of both these kingdoms and functioned as a center of worship, a provider of crops and taxes to the court, and also as a village that formed a part of a royal workshop that directly catered to the Kandyan kings. Although there are no extant archaeological remains from the city of Gampola to indicate the presence of its royal court, there are several temples, resting halls, and temples that have been founded during the Gampola period and are scattered around the peripheries of Gampola and Kandy. Unlike most other royal capitals of Sri Lanka, the lack of archaeological remains of a city center in Gampola is often seen as a limitation to the establishing of a detailed historical narrative of the kingdom. Perhaps, the lack of archaeological remnants of a central royal court mirrors the ambiguities that surround the historical narrative of Gampola and its convoluted development of the royal line. Further problematizing the historical development are several royal figures in Gampola whose rise to power and legitimacy to rule were contested.

The historical and political unravellings of the Gampola and the Kandyan kingdoms offer possible explanations to the significance of the Embekke *devāle.* The strategic placement of Embekke *devāle* between the two royal capitals and the close proximity to the two last monumental Buddhist temples, Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya, is indicative of the significance of each patron within the royal court. The art and architecture of the *devāle*, much like the art and

architecture of the two Buddhist temples, are indicative of the ways in which their patrons orchestrated Hindu and Buddhist beliefs within one shrine. The increasing popularity of certain Hindu gods who were incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon during the Gampola period and their subsequent fluctuations during the Kandy period is also significant to the understanding of the history, art, and architecture of Embekke *devāle.* Consequently, the selection of art and architecture of the temple is both indicative of the historical changes that occurred during this time.

The history of the Gampola kingdom marks a continuation of the broader historical narrative of the island that is linked with the earlier agrarian economies of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. With the fall of Polonnaruwa in the thirteenth century the royal capitals rapidly shifted southwestward marking the end of large-scale agrarian based economies of both Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa kingdoms. The succeeding royal capitals did not gain the geographic expanse or the strong economies of the two previous capitals and lasted for very short periods of time. Until the fall of Kandy, the last royal capital, there were several small kingdoms including Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa, Kurunegala, Gampola, and Kotte. They appeared sporadically and collapsed quickly due to increasing foreign threats and internal strife within the local royal courts. The movement of these capitals to the southwestern alluvial plains indicates the path in which the sacred tooth-relic of the Buddha moved within the island. According to popular belief, the king of Lanka must possess the sacred tooth in order to become the legitimate heir of kingship. Although the sacred tooth relic was brought to Gampola from Kurunegala following this tradition, the rise of Gampola as a seat of royal power is not clearly recorded in the *Cūlavamsa.*

The history of Gampola is marred by several tumultuous events due to political unrest and strife within the court. The constant threat of possible foreign and local invasions and domestic disputes among royals and local aristocrats shortened the duration of the Gampola royal capital. Gampola only maintained its royal seat from 1341 C.E. to 1415 C.E.[11], indicating the time in which the sacred tooth was housed in the capital. Again, this short duration of the kingdom illustrates its weak and chaotic nature in comparison to the more established and powerful kingdoms such as Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, or Kandy. Soon after the death of king Vijayabāhu V of Kurunegala (another royal capital that was founded prior to Gampola), Buvanekabāhu IV became the king of Gampola in 1341. However, his lineage is not clearly established in historical sources. The Gampola kingdom was constantly threatened by the Hindu Tamil Chakravarti king of the northern Jaffna kingdom who held his own royal seat of power.[12] The Gampola kingdom consisted of central, south, and southwest parts of the island but small local chiefs called the Vanninayakas ruled the area between Gampola and Jaffna, the dry jungle areas commonly known as the Vanni.[13] Therefore, the Gampola period was not a time when the country was unified under one king; rather there were several administration divisions under different polities.

Unlike the heroic nature of the Sinhala kings in the preceding kingdoms of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruva that is often narrated in the *Mahāvamsa*, Gampola kings were seen as relatively weak rulers. They are not highlighted in the historical narratives with the vigor and legitimacy

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[11] Mudiyanse, 1.

[12] Ananda Kulasuriya, "Regional Independence and Elite Change in the Politics of 14th-Century Sri Lanka." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1976): 137.

[13] *Ibid.*

that is often accorded to the kings of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. Although the kings headed the court within the capital, they were often relegated to a nominal state; those who controlled power within the kingdom and in the outside territories were the chief ministers of the Gampola kings. These ministers had accumulated a considerable amount of wealth through maritime trade along the western and southern coasts of the island. Due to their financial power, they had superseded the power of the Gampola kings both administratively and in military strength. This is a significant change from the strong centralized power of the earlier kingdoms such as Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. Another difference is the decline in monumental architecture as buildings became smaller to suit the rugged terrain of the southwest. A few temples that are scattered in hamlets located between Kandy and Gampola include temples and *devāles* that are dated to the Gampola period but were heavily restored during the Kandyan kingdom. Due to these reasons, the time from the thirteenth century, after the fall of Polonnaruwa, to the Kandyan revival in the eighteenth century is often portrayed in scholarship as a period of decline in Sri Lankan history.

The generalized view of the time period between the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries as a socially degenerative one can, however, be strongly contested through an inquiry of the various literary and artistic processes of this time. Perhaps, it is possible to argue that the momentum gathered in the literary and artistic circles during this period, including Gampola, foregrounded the Buddhist revival of the Kandy. There was a significant amount of instability between the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries and the royal line was in disarray. Despite these struggles, the Buddhist temples and monasteries continued on a smaller scale as village temples, compared to large Buddhist universities that were patronized by the royals of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa.

The number of small-scale village temples that are ubiquitous in the Kandyan, western, and southern littoral regions and that mostly became *Rājamaha Viharas* (great royal temples) in the late Kandy period are testimony to this new phenomenon. Within these small monasteries and village temples, literature and art continued to flourish, particularly in the Gampola period.

There was a sharp increase in poetry during the Gampola period and specifically the *Sandēśa Kāvya* (messenger poems) developed significantly. The messenger poems were written with four rhymed lines in each stanza, highlighting the travels of a bird who flew over various sites on the island to deliver a message of a god to a king or vice-versa. Two such *Sandēśa Kāvyas* written during the Gampola period are: *Girā* (parrot) and *Tisara* (swan) *Sandēśaya*. Likewise, the production of art and architecture continued in different forms compared to what we see in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa periods. The large-scale *stūpas* such as Ruwanweliseya and Jetavana, stone and brick temple monastic complexes such as Jetavanaramaya and Abhayagiri are common in the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa kingdoms. The large scale sculpture during this period was also rendered in stone, as seen in the buildings of the Polonnaruwa sacred center. Instead of the massive stone sculptures and buildings of these former royal capitals, Gampola and Kandy experienced considerable shifts in both material and scale. During the Gampola and Kandy periods there is an increased production of small-scale and portable bronze sculpture. Along with the shift in the royal capitals to the Southwest, there were significant changes in temple architecture in terms of scale, material, and style. Temples were often made in wood and timber with tiled or thatched roofs in contrast to the brick and stone temples of the earlier Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa periods. Some temples in the Southwest were built on stilts, giving way to *Tempita-viharas* (temples built on stilts), perhaps to

avoid the monsoonal floods and the ground moisture that is common in the wet zone of the island.[14] Buddhist temples that were built in villages operated at a local level with the patronage of local chieftains and villagers. They also housed smaller groups of Buddhist monks compared to the highly populated Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa monasteries. Yet, the temples continued to function as centers of learning in both Gampola and Kandy kingdoms.

However, the Gampola kingdom has two Buddhist temples that differ significantly from the rest of the royal temples that were constructed in the post-Polonnaruwa period. The Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya temples that are the closest to Embekke *devāle* and were built during the Gampola period do not conform with the established architectural styles and scale of the time. In a contrast to the broader template of Buddhist architecture of the post-Polonnaruwa period of the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries, these two temples appear to be significant anomalies that do not conform to the standard style of Buddhist temples. Observing and analyzing the overall architectural styles and the patronage of the two temples help to understand not only the historical context but also the ideas of kingship and legitimation during the time in which Embekke *devāle* was built in Gampola. The unconventional styles of architecture of these two Buddhist temples further emphasize the unique social and religious makeup of the Gampola kingdom. A discussion on the architecture and patronage of these two temples provides a significant part of the historical framework for the art and architecture as well as the function of the Embekke *devāle*. In other words, studying the architecture of these two Buddhist temples provides a glimpse into the complex nature of the Gampola kingdom and further explain the multitude of religious and artistic expression that was prevalent during this time.

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[14] Embekke *devāle's* granary, which is located within the temple grounds is also built on short stone stilts, emulating this type of architecture.

III. The founding of Embekke *devāle* and the rise of Skandha in Gampola and Kandy

The date established for the Gampola kingdom is not clearly stated in historical chronicles such as the *Cūlavamsa*. Due to the lack of historical records, the date given to Embekke *devāle's* construction also remains unclear. H. W. Codrington (a British civil servant of Ceylon from 1903 to 1932) proposed the date 1371 or 1372 C.E. as the most probable date of construction. He based this assumption on a palm leaf manuscript at the Colombo National Museum. This manuscript is said to be a part of the Embekke *Varnanāva*, which is an incomplete text written by Delgahagoda Mudiyanse in the eighteenth century as a praise to the shrine and its god.[15] However, Nandsena Mudiyanse, a Sri Lankan scholar, states that there is no indication of an exact date in the manuscript and proposes the generally accepted time as the reign of king Vikramabāhu III (1359-1374) of Gampola based on the Embekke *Varnanāva.*[16] Both copies of the Embekke *Varnanāva*—the incomplete version of the text in Colombo and the complete version of at the British Library—identify Vikramabāhu III as the founder of Embekke *devāle*. Having read both copies of the Embekke *Varnanāva*, I noticed that neither manuscript gives an exact date to the founding of the Embekke *devāle*, but the copy in the British Library contains a detailed introduction to the ballad.

As per the custom with many Hindu temples both in Sri Lanka and South India, the story of Embekke *devāle's* origin is based in oral history and mythology that is often interwoven with historical developments that take place at later time periods. Analyzing the historicity of Embekke *devāle,* therefore, becomes complicated with the inclusion of a founding myth that is

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[15] Mudiyanse, 23.

[16] *Ibid.*

webbed into historical detail. There is no disagreement among scholars in assigning the original foundation of the Embekke *devāle* to king Vikramabāhu III. Nevertheless, there is no historical record of how he rose to power or his legitimacy to rule within Gampola. As stated earlier, the founding of the Gampola kingdom is also ambiguous and continues to problematize the exact date of Embekke *devāle's* founding. According to the Embekke *Varnanāva*, the original building over the sanctum used to be a three-storied structure that was supplemented by a later restoration or a reconstruction in the eighteenth century by Kandyan kings. The founding myth that lives in the imagination of the custodian and the devotees of Embekke is transmitted orally. The story is likely accepted as historical fact by the ardent devotees and is embedded within the history of Embekke *devāle*, as with most founding myths of religious sites in the island.

According to the story narrated to me by the former *Basnāyaka Nilame*, Sudantha Senanayake, there was a drummer who was suffering from an incurable skin disease who visited the main Skandha temple in Karatagama, in Southern Sri Lanka. Upon his visit, the rash was cured with the blessings of the god. In order to pay homage to Skandha, the drummer paid an annual visit to Kataragama. On one such visit, he fell asleep under a tree that was located at the future site of Embekke *devāle*. Kataragama *deviyō* (Skandha) appeared in a dream and proclaimed that the drummer would soon find a sign that would indicate where a shrine on behalf of the god is to be built. The drummer then went back to his village and one day heard about a man who had cut down a Kaduru tree in Embekke secreted red liquid instead of its usual white syrup from the tree. Thinking that this is the miraculous sign sent from Kataragama *deviyō* the drummer immediately informed the king, Vikramabāhu III. Believing the miracle of Kataragama *deviyō*, the king proceeded to build the Embekke *devāle* where the Kaduru tree was located.

Henakanda Bisō Bandara, a woman who was miraculously born from a *Beli* fruit in the village of Beligala, was an ardent devotee of Kataragama *deviyō*. At times, she is identified as the wife of Vikramabāhu III. According to popular mythology, Skandha who was enamored by her beauty and reverence strangled Henakanda Bisō Bandara and took her as his wife in her afterlife. Throughout history, the annual procession of Embekke *devāle* has been conducted in the manner of a funerary procession, unlike in any other *devāle* in the country. The procession honors the memory of Henakanda Bisō Bandara and concludes with the annual water-cutting ceremony. Within the *devāle's* inner store room is a palanquin that Henakanda Bisō Bandara is believed to have traveled in and a pair of large ivory tusks, which according to *Kapu-mahattaya's* account, was donated to the *devāle* by Vikramabāhu III.

Tracing the rise of Skandha between the Gampola and Kandy kingdoms mirrors the development and inclusion of his iconography within Sri Lankan art. Skandha first appears in the *Mahāvamsa* in the seventh century but his name comes into prominence in the fourteenth century in Gampola period inscriptions and texts and is further mentioned in fifteenth century *Sandēśa* poems.[17] According to the Lankātilaka inscription, Skandha is included in the text along with the other guardian gods and bodhisattvas.[18] Obeysekera and Gombrich accord the rise of Skandha in the island to the Kandy period where there was a significant influx of South Indian migrants, particularly with king Rājasinha II (1635-1678) who was the first Kandyan king to marry from a Nayakkar family.[19] From this time onwards, Skandha metamorphoses into a powerful deity that

[17] The authors state that Skandha is first mentioned in the seventh century. Gombrich and Obeysekere, 176.

[18] Senarat Paranavitana, "Lankātilaka Inscriptions," *University of Ceylon Review* XVIII, nos. 1&2 (1960): 5.

[19] Gombrich and Obeysekera, 176.

is both revered and feared within Kandy. South Indian migrants such as *Pantārams*[20] and *Āndis*[21] further propelled the worship of Skandha with annual pilgrimages to Kataragama, his main shrine. Although the Kataragama temple is a main center for Skandha worship, Nayakkars in Kandy successfully legitimized Skandha as a powerful deity within the kingdom and instigated his eventual status as a guardian god of the island. Skandha's importance increases in the late seventeenth century as the war god according to Obeysekere who refers to the archival biography by Robert Knox, a British prisoner in Kandy in the seventeenth century.[22] Obeysekere further notes that the importance of Skandha as the war god had been gaining momentum after the fifteenth century.[23] Skandha's blessing was sought during times of conflict between warring kingdoms such as Kotte and Kandy, as well as battles against the foreigners, the Portuguese, Dutch, and finally, the British.[24] However, the fall of Kandy in 1815 lead to a decline in Skandha's popularity.[25] According to Manukulasooriya, due to a wide-spread rebellion, a fire in 1817 destroyed the documents that belonged to the shrine.[26] Skandha's popularity may have risen again during the 90's during the civil war when politicians and military officials often visited the Kataragama shrine to seek Skandha's blessings. The Embekke *devāle* serves local devotees on a

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[20] Lorna Dewaraja, *A Study of the Political, Administrative, and Social Structure of the Kandyan Kingdom of Ceylon, 1707-1760* (Colombo: Lake House Investments, 1972), 49.

[21] Dewaraja, 179.

[22] Gananath Obeysekere, "Social Change and the Deities: Rise of the Kataragama Cult in Modern Sri Lanka." *Man* 12, no.3/4 (1977) 384.

[23] Obeysekere, 385.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] R.C.De S. Manukulasooriya, *Aesthetic and Cultural Aspects of Ambäkke Devalaya in Kandy*. (Colombo: The Royal Asiatic Society, 2003), 8.

more domestic setting in comparison to the main shrine at Kataragama or the temple in Kandy that is still headed by a South Indian *kapu-rāla* (lay priest).

IV. Religious Syncretism within Gampola and Kandy

The ascribed period for the founding of Embekke *devāle* was when the Gampola kingdom had already undergone significant changes both in the religious and social fronts. Observing and analyzing these changes helps to situate Embekke *devāle's* primary function as a Skandha temple that emerged in response to a new form of religious syncretism that was gaining momentum in the country. Perhaps, it is possible to argue that Embekke *devāle* functions as a visual testament to this new form of Hindu and Buddhist practice that emerged within the central highlands. In other words, Embekke *devāle* forms a repository for art and architecture that encapsulates the integration of Hindu and Buddhist practice during the two royal kingdoms. The influx of South Indian merchants and other individuals such as artisans and Brahmins into the Gampola and Kandy kingdoms further underscores the artistic, social, and religious exchanges between Sri Lanka and South India.

The Gampola period exemplified a significant amount of religious syncretism between Thēravada and Hindu practice. In contrast to any other period in Sri Lankan history, there are significant changes among various religious traditions, beliefs, and practices during the Gampola period. In addition to Hindu gods, localized tutelary guardian gods and lesser gods of the Buddhist pantheon also entered into mainstream practices of worship. When considering Buddhism in Sri Lanka, these shifts are often marked by the fractures between Thēravada and Mahāyana traditions. However, in the Gampola period, one of the most significant changes

seems to be the deification of Mahāyana bodhisattvas and their gradual incorporation into Thēravada practice.

The discordant relationship between Thēravada and Mahāyana traditions had already been established long before the Gampola and Kandy periods. The roots of this conflict can be traced back to the Anuradhapura period where the Abhayagiri monastery was vandalized after a dispute on *Vinaya*, the disciplinary code of conduct for the monks.[27] The common belief even leading up to the contemporary times of today is that Mahāyana Buddhism disappeared completely from the country after this incident as most Mahāyana texts at the Abhayagiri monastery were destroyed by the Thēravada center, the Mahāvihara. Sri Lanka is considered as a center for Thēravada Buddhism among social and political circles both within the clergy and the general public. It is certainly possible to argue that Mahāyana practices were significantly eclipsed with the advent of a strong doctrinal Thēravada ideology.[28] However, contrary to popular belief, there are many remnants of Mahāyana art and architecture emphasized by iconography, such as the Buddha depicted on the crown of Mahāyana bodhisattva sculptures within Thēravada temples, as for example the Buduruwagala triad in addition to the multitude of Avalokiteśvara and Tāra bronzes. While a majority of the Buddhist temples today are, in fact, of the Thēravada order, traces of Mahāyana Buddhism have not been wiped out in their entirety as a result of the religious shifts that occurred in the Gampola period. As Holt points out, the

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[27] Dohanian suggests that the division arose not only due to theological matters but due to a variety of disciplinary and ideological differences. Diran Kavork Dohanian, *The Mahāyāna Buddhist Sculpture of Ceylon* (New York & London, Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977) 7-8.

[28] As Kenneth R. Hall noted, by the 1300‘s the burgeoning ‘Thēravāda cosmopolis’ in Sri Lanka became a significant threat to Mahāyāna Buddhism in south and southeast Asia. For example, Zheng-He purposely omitted Sinhalese and used Chinese in an inscription that recorded of an endowment to a temple in Sri Lanka. This was a symbolic move to underscore China’s presence over India as a center for Mahāyāna Buddhism. Kenneth Hall, “Ports of Trade, Maritime Diasporas, and Networks of Trade and Cultural Integration in the Bay of Bengal Region of the Indian Ocean: c. 1300-1500,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53, no. 1 (2010): 116-117.

deification of Avalokiteśvara Nātha as god Nātha in to the predominantly Thēravada practice within the national level is a phenomenon that took place in the Gampola period.[29] Also during this time, Hindu deities were reconfigured within the Buddhist pantheon while creating new identities that made it easier for the Buddhist public to accept them into Buddhist realms of worship. For example, a local guardian god Upulvan, who was first mentioned in the Anuradhapura period, assimilated characteristics of Vishnu while another local god Mahasen, whose roots also go back to the Anuradhapura period, merged on occasion with that of Skandha Kumara, popularly known as god Kataragama. Some locals believe that king Mahasen later became deified as god Mahasen or later, as god Kataragama, but research on this confluence remains limited. Embekke *devāle* is at times identified as a shrine to god Mahasen where the names of Mahasen and Kataragama are transposed without much regard to context. The fluidity with which the names, identities, and iconographies of various personalities and gods were conflated to create more appealing and popular gods in the Gampola period is a testament to the co-existence of Buddhism with elements of both Thēravada and Mahāyana traditions, along with Hinduism that was increasingly making its presence felt with the influx of migrants from South India.

Perhaps, the most plausible explanation for the confluence of South Indian and Sri Lankan cultural identities of Gampola is presented by Kenneth R. Hall's diaspora model that centers on the trade networks in the Bay of Bengal during the 1300's to 1500's. Hall explores the merchant communities of the Sub-continent and proposes that the regional trade networks created various identities that were fluid in nature; extensive migration and the exchange within

[29] Holt, 99.

the region had led to an understanding of cultural homogeneity.[30] Hall's model could be applied to both Gampola and Kandy, although they were not coastal trading posts. Colombo (Kotte), Jaffna, Mannar, and Devundara among other port cities were directly linked to Gampola and later, to Kandy. The political decisions of the central administrative cities were directly felt by the coastal cities and often times, it was the powerful minister Alagakkonara who was based in Kotte that controlled the power play of the Gampola court. The Alagakkonara and Senā-Lankadhikara families who were of South Indian origin subverted the power of the royals through the monetary wealth they amassed through trade. Their South Indian origins were not considered problematic as both families patronized Buddhist practices and monasteries. The difference between Sinhala and South Indian seems to have been marginal and quite fluid for both families.

Hall's suggestion of inter-regional trade networks that were founded upon shared ideas of culture and religion [31] provides a counter-point to both the heterarchy and Sanskrit cosmopolis[32] models, which do not discuss the maritime trade networks that led to the formation of diasporic communities within the Bay of Bengal between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.[33] Although, Hall's network models focuses on merchants and religious scholars who moved within the intricate trade networks, a group he leaves out of the discussion are the Viśvakarmas, the migrant artisans who traveled within the subcontinent and on to Southeast Asia. While the movements of the Viśvakarmas are not easily traceable as those of merchants with shipping

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[30] Hall, 114.

[31] Hall, 115.

[32] See Sheldon Pollock, The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, 300-1300: Transculturation, Vernaculalization, and the History of the Sanskrit Language, ed. J.E.M. Houben (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 197-247.

[33] Hall, 117.

records and monks with scholarly activities, the Viśvakarmas are traceable through family names, inscriptions, and historical documents. To fill in this aspect of the conversation, I discuss the migrations of artisans between South India and Sri Lanka and their specific functions within the Gampola and Kandy periods in a later chapter. As Hall acknowledges, these trade networks become an early model of globalization.[34] The Gampola and Kandy kingdoms certainly become a part of this phenomenon that is underscored by fluid identities, conflation of religious ideologies, and the blossoming of new types of art and architecture that mirror these cultural changes. Such newly formed connections and identities differentiate the Gampola and Kandy periods from the earlier agrarian civilizations of Anuradhpura and Polonnaruwa and also foreshadow further changes experienced during western colonialism. Although the Gampola period did not directly experience western colonial rule, Kotte and Kandy kingdoms, including the rule of Nayakkars are distinguishable by their fraught relations with the colonials. The archives collected by British officials, particularly travel records and photography, are useful in recounting the Kandy period modifications that were done to the Gadaladeniya and the Kandyan *dēvales*, and the *Magul Maduwa* in Kandy.

Hall's discussion of the diasporas not only relates to the merchant communities in Sri Lanka during this time but also acknowledges the major shift in the country's economy where the agrarian practices changed to maritime trade and exchange after the fall of Polonnaruwa. He points out the consolidation of Nātha's deification and Vishnu's transformation as a Sri Lankan Buddhist god while merging with Upulvan during the time of Parakramabāhu VI's time (1412-1468) as a juncture in Sri Lankan history. Hall sees Thēravada Buddhism fully articulating

[34] Hall, 138.

aspects of Mahāyāna beliefs and Hindu Brahminical practices as Sri Lanka "embracing cultural and ethnic pluralism."[35] As an example, both Hall[36] and Holt[37] explain the arrival of a Brahmin from Bengal who traveled to study the cult of Nātha in Totagamuva. Hall also describes Ibn Battuta's visit to Sri Lanka in 1344 when the trade networks were dominated by Muslim traders who had connections with the Kerala coast.[38] Hall's analysis of the historical trade networks between the Gampola and Kandy periods illustrate the various ways in which the exchange of profuse religious beliefs and practices merged with Thēravada Buddhism. From an art historical perspective, the galvanizing of various religious beliefs formed new practices of art and architecture that paved the way for newly articulated iconography to enter into Buddhist temples. Likewise, temples that visually integrated elements of both Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture were constructed, as we see with the examples in Gampola and Kandy.

The implication that culture—religious ideals, esoteric practices, art and architectural traditions—permeated from India to Sri Lanka is an idea that largely forms the foundation of the Sri Lankan historical canon. From the beginning of the historical narrative with the arrival of Vijaya, the arrival of Buddhism with Arhat Mahinda, and later the arrival of Arhat Sanghamitta try to substantiate the arrival of artisanal castes from India. Therefore, the subtext of the cosmopolis model is woven into the historical canon, particularly into the *Mahāvamsa*. However, the adherence to the cosmopolis model results in negating the local production of art and architecture including the types of indigenous religious practices, language, and worship.

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[35] Hall, 136.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] Holt, 114.

[38] Hall, 133.

Therefore, while applying the more comprehensive and democratic model of Hall, I focus on the exchange between the two regions rather than a singular one-dimensional flow of art and architecture into Sri Lanka from South India. Sri Lankan historical texts have favored the cosmopolis model and there is much less discussions based on art and architectural exchange from Sri Lanka to India. Sinhala texts such as the *Mahāvamsa* and the *Cūlavamsa* have consistently made an effort to fit into the cosmopolis model with the aim of making a historical link to the Buddha, and thereby to substantiate a predestined origin to the history of the island. This attempt, while popular with the general public, has often prompted scholars to overlook the local production of art and culture along with examples where artistic practices were exported to South India, among other regions. Within India, the demise of Buddhism has led to a near erasure of its Buddhist history in India as discussed by scholars such as Rao.[39] Therefore, while applying Hall's trade network model, finding and articulating examples of art historical exchange that formed links in both directions—between South India and Sri Lanka—is a task that I have attempted throughout this research.

[39] T.A. Gopinatha Rao, "Buddha Vestiges in Kanchipura," *The Indian Antiquary* (1915): 129.

V. Connections between South India and Sri Lanka during the Gampola and Kandy periods

As Pathmanathan states, Hinduism and Thēravada Buddhism flourished during this time due to increased maritime trade and the presence of *Brahmins*.[40] As a result, in the post-independence era, Sri Lanka has what Pathmanathan calls a 'synthetic religious tradition', where the two religious practices converged to form a new type of ritual and practice among lay and Buddhist monastic institutions.[41] For example, he notes that during this time the four guardian deities were 'articulated and developed' to be placed within the Buddhist temples.[42] Consequently, various forms of ritual and worship were incorporated from Hinduism into Buddhist temples.[43] The art and architecture of the three temples of Gampola galvanizes this new articulation of the Buddhist pantheon with Hindu and local gods. During the Gampola period, the *devāles* assumed a prominent location within the architecture of the Buddhist temple complexes as the newly configured Hindu gods gradually entered the Buddhist pantheon as seen in both Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya temples. The Lankātilaka (Fig. 2.3) and Gadaladeniya (Fig. 2.4) temples portray the Buddha as the central figure while smaller and attached shrines or *devāles* adorn the peripheries of the central shrine.

The juxtaposition of the Buddha to the Hindu and local gods in both Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya temples emphasizes the varied nature of religious practice of the Gampola period. As seen in the Lankātilaka temple, the gods are placed in a circumambulatory path to the Buddha

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[40] S. Pathmanathan, "Buddhism and Hinduism in Sri Lanka; Some Points of Contact Between Two Religious Traditions circa A.D. 1300-1600." *Kalyāni; Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Kelaniya* 6 (1986): 81.

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] Pathmanathan, 82.

[43] *Ibid.*

who is in the center of the temple. The niches that form the individual *devāles* are dedicated to gods, such as Kataragama, Vishnu, Ganesha, Saman, Vibhīshana (who is the tutelary guardian god of the western coast of the country), and Kalu Kumara, a lower guardian figure of the local pantheon. The *devāles* are built within the large niches that surround the seated central Buddha figure who is flanked by two standing Buddhas. The particular juxtaposition of the Buddhas and the Hindu and local gods provides a visual interpretation of the organization of the Buddhist pantheon of the Gampola period. Hans-Dieter Evers further discusses the rituals that take place within the temple on a daily basis with the central focus being the *dāna* to the Buddha[44], further emphasizing the multifaceted religious fabric of the Gampola period. In Gadaladeniya, as Holt explains, Hindu gods such as Kataragama (Skandha), Vishnu, Vibhīshana, and Saman[45] once assumed the niches around the central *stūpa*.[46] As the *stūpa* symbolizes the body of the Buddha or the body of his teachings through the corporeal relics that are placed within, the gods were placed in very close proximity to that of the Buddha. Although the gods are no longer in these shrines, they would have assumed a secondary status to that of the Buddha as the shrines are built radiating outwards from the central *stūpa*, facing the four cardinal directions. In both temples, the *makara-toranas* that frame the central Buddhas consist of many of these gods, such as Saman, Vishnu, Sakra, (the king of gods in the Buddhist pantheon), and Ganesha among a

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[44]See Hans-Dieter Evers. *Buddha and the Seven Gods: The Dual Organization of a Temple in Central Ceylon*, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 27 no.3 (1968): 541–550 for a detailed account of the dual nature of Buddhist temples and monastic organization during the Gampola period.

[45] For the Buddhist public, god Saman is the tutelary deity of the Ratnapura district and is also a protector of country. He is also considered as a guardian figure of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Although having protective gods to Buddhism can be seen as a dichotomy by some Buddhists, the general belief is that both Saman and Vishnu are protective gods that maintain Buddhism in the island. Saman is often seen as a bodhisattva on his way to becoming a future Buddha as well.

[46] Holt, 100.

host of other smaller tutelary guardian figures. Therefore, both Buddhist temples of the Gampola period consist of a dual arrangement of Buddhist and Hindu figures in addition to local gods, further articulating the new and syncretic form of religious worship and practice within the Gampola period. As seen with these two temples, *devāles* were built to house individual Hindu gods as they assumed their new positions within the Buddhist pantheon. However, Embekke *devāle* is built as a shrine predominantly dedicated to Skanda, a Hindu deity that began to gain popularity during this time. As addressed in a later chapter, Buddhist shrine and a separate *devāle* for a tutelary god is added to the complex, somewhat inverting the hierarchical placement seen in Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya. Collectively, the presence of these three sites assert the multivalence of religious and social practices of the Gampola period. Perhaps, the uniqueness of the Gampola period lies in the lack of uniformity in its social and political fabric that is mirrored in the art and architecture. The convergence of Buddhist, Hindu, and prevailing local practices (that perhaps stem from local practices that existed prior to the arrival of Buddhism in the country) merge together to create a more inclusive and heterogenous period in Gampola that led to the founding of these three distinctive shrines.

The rituals and practice within these temples underscore the social and political arrangement of Gampola and Kandy periods. The formation of kingship in Gampola and Kandy and the significant influx of South Indians into the royal court created a new system of service. The transactional nature often associated with Buddhist sites can still be seen in both Buddhist sites and to a certain extent, in Embekke *devāle.* Within this framework, *dāna* (patronage from the general public) sustained the site and monks bestowed the knowledge of the *dhamma* (the Buddhist teachings) to their patrons in return. However, during the Gampola period, there

emerges a new service-based system that is quite unconventional when compared to the traditional Buddhist *dhamma-dāna* based system. As Pathmanathan notes, the new service sector was formed on land tenure or *rāja-kāriya* and was seen in both Buddhist and Hindu temples.[47] The land belonged to the king and portions of land were dedicated to Buddhist and Hindu temples within the confines of the kingdom. People from neighboring villages were allowed to work on these lands and a portion of their harvest was given to the temple. They were also assigned to perform various tasks, such as drumming, flute-playing, cooking the daily meals, security, and, gardening among others.

Buddhist temples and Hindu *devāles* function as centers of economic activity in addition to their primary function as centers of spiritual activity. The land that belongs to the Embekke *devāle* is divided among its workers based on a tenured system as with almost all other Buddhist temples and Hindu *devāles.* As Pathmanathan states, this tenured system mimicked the role of South Indian Hindu temples that developed their own micro-economies through land tenure and a feudal hierarchy. According to Kulke who summarizes the work of G.W.Spencer, the Chōlas developed their bases of power around social establishments that were not politically charged.[48] He states, "These pre-existing institutions were e.g. village assemblies, craft guilds "and above all temples and their ritual communities."[49] Hindu temple complexes based around 'non-political and pre-existing institutions such as village assemblies, craft guilds and ritual communities'. According to Pathmanathan, these new arrangements also resulted in the formation of *devāles*

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[47] Pathmanathan, 82. He also explains how royal land grants issued during this time referred to both the *tri-ratna* and the Hindu gods. This explains the extent to which Hindu beliefs seeped into the Sri Lankan royal court.

[48] Hermann Kulke, "A Passage to India": Temples, Merchants and the Ocean." *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 36 no. 2 (1993): 164.

[49] *Ibid.*

where Hindu gods were placed in close proximity to the central Buddha inside Buddhist temple complexes.[50] He further notes that *devāles* prominently featured South Indian architectural styles that were specific to Hindu temples. The Nayakkar kings of the Vijayanagara empire built their stronghold within the region as temple land leaseholders[51]. Both these examples demonstrate the complex nature of the royal service agreement and the importance of land tenure for religious institutions. Also as seen in Sri Lanka, specifically in the Gampola period, we can infer that these modes of service and grants paved the way to an organized social hierarchy due to the influence of South Indian Hindu ideals. The Lankātilaka temple and Embekke *devāle* are both examples of such organizations in the Gampola period leading up to the present day.

Although the agrarian economy of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa had already declined by the time Gampola rose to power, the time between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries saw a significant increase in maritime trade with South India. Most of the maritime trade during the Gampola period took place with the Malabar (present-day Kerala) coast and the rest of Vijayanagara Empire.[52] The western and southern coastal towns in Sri Lanka were centers of trade, commodity, and exchange that also consisted of a significant amount of local inhabitants and foreign settlers.[53] Also, merchants who had amassed a significant amount of wealth and maintained connections with the royal court were instrumental in bringing *Brahmins*, builders, artisans, and craftsmen from South India into the Gampola kingdom through the Southern coastal

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[50] Pathmanathan, 82.

[51] Kulke, 157.

[52] Pathmanathan, 83.

[53] *Ibid.*

towns of Sri Lanka.[54] Therefore, looking into some of the prominent individuals in the Gampola court who were responsible for the building the Lankātilaka temple, which is one of the closest in proximity to the Embekke *devāle* and is dated to the same time period provides a deeper insight to the possible religious and artistic exchanges of this time.

The Lankātilaka inscription identifies Senā-Lankadhikara as the individual who constructed the Lankātilaka temple. Although the inscription contains entries by both Buvanekabāhu IV and Vikramabāhu III, Senā-Lankadhikara is honored as the individual who was in charge of building the temple. Senā-Lankadhikara was a descendent of Kerala warriors from Kanchipuram who married into local families and settled in the southwestern parts of the island.[55] He was the chief minister of Vikramabāhu III, (who commissioned Embekke *devāle)* and of Parākramabahu V. Pathmanathan identifies Senā-Lankadhikara who belonged to the Mehenavara lineage as a descendant of a Kerala family.[56] Senā-Lankadhikara commissioned the Lankātilaka temple in 1340 and it was built by Stāpati Rāyar, a south Indian architect and his team of artisans.[57] Sinhala and Tamil guards were stationed to protect the Buddhist temple in which Hindu and tutelary deities were also placed in niches. Another prominent merchant family of Kerala descent in the Gampola and Kotte kingdoms, as mentioned earlier, is the Algakkonara

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[54] Pathmanathan, 84.

[55] S. Pathmanathan."*Kerala and Sri Lanka*." (presentation, Kalyana Silica, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 1992) 4.

[56] Pathmanathan. *Kerala and Sri Lanka*, 5. According to Pathmanathan, the Mehenavara family is not identified before the Gampola period. He provides an etymological explanation to the name Mehenavara to suggest its similarity to '*Mevanan*', which in Malayalam means 'minister'. He further states that until the Kotte kingdom, Senā-Lankadhikara's descendants used Tamil or Malyalam names. It seems that both Pathmanathan and Paranavitane agree that the Mehenavara family were descendants of a Malayalam family.

[57] Holt, 101.

family.[58] According to Pathmanathan, The Kitsirimevan inscription (Kitsirimevan-Kelani *Vihāra* inscription) of 1344 states that Nissanka Alagakkonara, the patriarch of the Alagakkonara family of Malayalam origin is from Vāñcī in Kerala[59], which is also known as Vanchi Muthur, the capital of the Chera kingdom. The Kitsirimevan inscription further identified the particular Alagakkonara who was the tenth in succession to Nissanka Alagakkonara and mentioned his restoration work of the Kelaniya *Vihara*.[60]

After Senā-Lankadhikara, an Alagakkonara became the chief minister of Vikramabāhu III in 1369.[61] By then, the two families had intermarried and had formed strong ties with the Gampola court.[62] The strength of Alagakkonara can be seen in both the political and social front as the Mädavala inscription, which is dated to the time of Vikramabāhu III documents Alagakkonara's victory over the Chakravarti king. Controlling of maritime trade and particularly, the lucrative pearl fisheries in Mannar in the northwestern coast generated much wealth for the merchant families and the Chakravarti king. The collection of profit remained a contentious point between Alagakkonara and Chakravarti. Alagakkonara successfully defeated an attack by the

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[58] Mudiyanse. *The Art and Architecture of the Gampola Period*, 8. According to Pathmanathan, the Kitsirimevan inscription further identified the particular Alagakkonara who was the tenth in succession to Nissanka Alagakkonara and mentioned his restoration work of the Kalaniya *Vihara*. Pathmanathan. *Kerala and Sri Lanka*, 9.

[59] Pathmanathan, *Kerala and Sri Lanka*, 9.

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] Mudiyanse, 9.

[62] Holt, 103.

Chakravarti king in the north that resulted from a dispute in tax collections[63]. With this victory, Alagakkonara established his dominance not only within Kotte but also by sending a clear message to the Gampola court. Alagakkonara wielded enough power to hold a *sangha* council and disrobe monks who did not conform to the code of discipline.[64] As Kulasuriya notes, the Alagakkonara family made matrimonial ties with the royal family and further established their power in the Gampola court.[65] Alagakkonara and his two brothers, Arthanāyaka and Devamantiśvara, were included in the royal family as joint husbands of princess Jayasiri, sister of Vikramabāhu III.[66] Alagakkonara himself was stationed in Peradeniya, a town between Kandy and Embekke while Vikramabāhu III ruled from Gampola[67], thereby reinforcing the power this family wielded within the Gampola court. According to Rev. Dheerananda, the Alagakkonara family preferred to be known by their affinities to their Kerala heritage and continued to carry their original name despite being married into the Gampola royal family.[68]

Due to the rebellion of 1817 that destroyed all the legal documents of the Embekke *devāle*, such as the royal grants and deeds,[69] there is no evidence of these families being involved

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[63] John C. Holt, *The Buddhist Viśnu*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 102. Also, the Mädavala inscription, which is dated to the time of Vikramabāhu III documents Alagakkonara's victory over the Chakravarti king. Kulasuriya. *Regional Independence and Elite Change in the Politics of 14th-Century Sri Lanka*, 138. This must have been a significant change to Vikramabāhu III to whom the Chakravarti king had dictated the terms of a peace treaty. However, is it also possible that the military power of Alagakkonara may have been a cause for concern to Vikramabāhu III. As Kulasuriya notes, the Alagakkonara family made matrimonial ties with the royal family and further established their power in the Gampola court while Alagakkonara himself was stationed in Peradeniya, a town between Kandy and Embekke. (Kulasuriya. 145.)

[64] Holt, *Buddha in the Crown*, 103.

[65] Kulasuriya, 145.

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] Dheerananda Kahatapitiye, *Gampoḷa Yugaya*. (Koḷamba, Ăm. Ḍī. Guṇasēna, 1965), 16.

[69] Manukulasooriya, *Aesthetic and Cultural Aspects of Ambäkke Devalaya in Kandy*., 8.

in the *devāle* proceedings. Although none of the names of these families is recorded in the literature written about Embekke *devāle,* the strong presence of these Kerala families in the Gampola kingdom and their patronage to temples, particularly to the Lankātilaka temple, offers a significant insight to the South Indian Hindu presence at the time when Embekke *devāle* was founded. Given the absence of a comprehensive historical account of Embekke *devāle*, we can infer a significant amount of detail from the history, patronage, art, and architecture of Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka temples.

The presence of descendants of Kerala families within the Gampola court, and specifically, their powerful position within Gampola and Peradeniya, emphasizes the contributions they have made in terms of art and architecture in this region. Having a significant presence in Gampola while being married into Vikramabāhu III's family further explains the composite nature of the society that existed in the Gampola period. In particular, the inclusion of non-Sinhala patrons within the royal family is significant when understanding the art and architecture of Gampola, specifically when considering the art and architecture of the three shrines. Observing the diversity within the royal court of Gampola during the time when three shrines were constructed provides a new framework into analyzing the art and architecture of these three shrines. A closer look at the art and architecture of Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya temples, and Embekke *devāle* indicates the amalgamation of local and South Indian art and architectural elements that resulted in the configuration of new and varied iconographic programs.

Chapter 3

Analysis of the art and architecture of Embekke *devāle's Digg-ge*

In this chapter, I examine the woodcarvings of the Embekke *devāle's* open pillared hallway, which is known as the *Digg-ge* in Sinhala. The *Digg-ge* assumes a central position within the *devāle* grounds both in terms of its function and for the rich collection of visual imagery it houses. (Fig.3.1) After worshippers enter the temple complex through the gateway known as the *Vāhalkada* (Fig. 3.2 & 3.3) at the main entrance to the temple grounds, they walk toward the *Digg-ge* of the central shrine. As the first component of the main shrine of Embekke *devāle*, the *Digg-ge* creates an inviting space for the worshipper with its open architectural plan and intricate artistry. (Fig.3.4 & 3.5) Following the *Digg-ge* is the entrance porch know as the *Sandun-kūdama* (Fig. 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 & 3.9) that leads to the inner sanctum. Lay devotees are not allowed to go further beyond the *Sandun-kūdama*. While most of the locals from Embekke and neighboring villages come to the temple specifically for religious purposes seeking the blessings or the protection of the god, most other visitors come to Embekke *devāle* to see its renowned woodcarving.

The art and architecture of Embekke *devāle's Digg-ge* is often seen as the oldest of its kind in Sri Lanka.[70] (Fig.3.10) Given the unusual form of the art and architecture, the *Digg-ge* is seen as a prototype to the other audience halls that were built later in the Kandy period.[71] The iconography and the various decorative symbols of the woodcarving is often seen in Kandyan

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[70] D.T. Devendra, "The Pillared Pride of Embekke," Ceylon, The Department of Information, (1955): 1

[71] *Ibid.*

temple paintings, often giving the impression that they were copied from the woodcarvings onto the temple murals. However, what I see as problematic is categorizing of the art and architecture of Embekke *devāle's Digg*-ge as one that is isolated in terms of its collection of iconography and design motifs, particularly considering that there are no archaeological examples of buildings from the Gampola court. I agree that the arrangement of the carvings and the wooden architecture of the *Digg-ge* in Embekke is distinctive to Sri Lankan art. However, I reframe this idea through a visual analysis of the carvings and propose that rather than simply as an example for only Sri Lankan art that lacks a prototype, the iconography of the woodcarving of Embekke *Digg-ge* draws from designs and motifs that are prevalent within the broader scope of South Asian art. Consequently, I place Embekke *devāle* in a cosmopolitan historical setting where exchange of art and iconography took place ubiquitously. I conclude this chapter by proposing that the appropriation of the pillars from a royal audience hall into a Hindu shrine has re-articulated the *Digg-ge's* architectural space; the variety of seemingly secular and non-secular mythical motifs in the woodcarvings create a visual transitionary point for the devotees as they move from the mundane to the sacred.

I. History of the *Digg-ge*

Due to the lack of historical records on Embekke *devāle*, the *Digg-ge* is surrounded by several ambiguities in terms of the possible time period of its construction.[72] There is uncertainty on the exact date in which the *Digg-ge* was constructed. Since the founding of Embekke *devāle*

[72] R.C.De S. Manukulasooriya, *Aesthetic and Cultural Aspects of Ambäkke Devalaya in Kandy*. (Colombo: The Royal Asiatic Society, 2003), 8. Therefore, as previous scholars have done, I base the founding myth of the shrine and oral history gathered by the *Kapu-mahattaya* and the former *Basnayake Nilame* along with archival texts, local inscriptions, *Sandēśa kāvyas*, and ballads.

is attributed to King Vikramabāhu III in Gampola, who most likely ascended the throne in 1356 or 1357 C.E.[73], the construction of the *Digg-ge* is also tied to this time period. The attribution of Embekke *devāle* to Vikramabāhu is primarily based on the *Embekke Varnanava*, a ballad believed to have been written in the eighteenth century by Delgahagoda Mudiyanse[74]. Based on this ballad, Codrington states that king Vikramabāhu III built the Embekke *devāle* in 1371-1372 C.E.[75] Although the Embekke *Varnanava* was written at a later date than the Gampola period, the general consensus among scholars is that the pillars were mostly likely brought to Embekke from a royal audience hall in the Gampola court by Vikramabāhu III[76]. This idea allows for further research on how court art and architecture may have been repurposed to function within a religious setting where the seemingly eclectic collection of woodcarvings has been appropriated for a Hindu shrine. In doing so, the Embekke *devāle's Digg-ge* functions as an architectural space that provides a transitionary space from the mundane to the sacred. The devotees who enter through the gateway into the main temple complex first enter and walk through the *Digg-ge* before entering the compartment where they are in contact with the deity.

In this chapter, I address several topics to better articulate the art and iconography of the *Digg-ge*. First, I describe the layout of the ground plan of the Embekke *devāle* complex and the

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[73] Vikramabāhu III of Gampola appears to be a conundrum is the local historical narrative. Based on the historical account of K. M. De Silva, the Niyamgampaya inscription is dated to the seventeenth year of Vikramabāhu III.—-K.M. De Silva, *History of Ceylon: From the earliest times to 1505* (Ceylon: Ceylon University Press, 1960) 643.

[74] Manukulasooriya, 10.

[75] H.W Codrington, "The Gampola Period of Ceylon History," *Journal of R.A.S.* (Ceylon) XXXII no.85 (1933): 273. Having visited the museum and obtained a copy of the Embekke Alankaraya in Colombo, I noticed that there is no specific date given in the manuscript to indicate the founding of the shrine. I visited the British Library which holds a more complete version of the *Embekke Alankaraya* with a more detailed introduction than the one in Colombo. However, the particular date that Codrington mentioned was not included in the British Library. Although the particular year that Codrington proposes is debatable, scholars who have worked on Embekke *devāle* agree that the shrine was founded during the time of Vikramabāhu III based on oral history and the founding myth of the shrine.

[76] L.J.B. Turner, "The Town of Kandy About The Year 1815 A.D.," *The Ceylon Antiquary* IV part 2 (1918): 78

function of each building. Then I present a detailed description and a visual analysis of the woodcarvings while juxtaposing them with the broader context of South Asian art and iconography. Consequently, I question some uncertainties within the oral history of Embekke *devāle* and some of the current literature in order to evaluate the changes of the woodcarvings over time. Through this critique, I propose how to better articulate the iconography within the Gampola and Kandyan periods while framing them within the broader context of South Asian art.

II. The layout of Embekke *devāle*

The Embekke *devāle* is located on a hill and assumes the central position within the Emebkke village. The main road in the village leads from the entrance of the Embekke *devāle* towards the northeast. At the northeastern end of the street is another building that belongs to Embekke *devāle*. The Embekke *devāle* grounds that houses several buildings including the main shrine with the *Digg-ge* is bound by a parapet wall on all sides. Residential and commercial buildings are located to the northeast and southwest of the boundary wall. Since Embekke *devāle* is located on a small hill within the Embekke village, the southeastern side of the *devāle* grounds consists of a steep slope and a road that provides one of the access points to Embekke *devāle*.

Upon entering Embekke *devāle* complex (Fig.3.11) through the *Vāhalkada* located to the northeast of the *devāle* grounds, a visitor faces a path that leads up to the main shrine of Skandha. An observation I made during my fieldwork is that the entire complex is not built to align with the cardinal directions. The *Vāhalkada* does not align with the main Skandha shrine and for a visitor who stands inside the *Vāhalkada* and faces the temple grounds, the main shrine

is positioned in a slightly southwesterly direction. (Fig. 3.12 & 3.13) The main shrine of Skandha faces the northeast. An observation I made regarding the orientation of Embekke *devāle* is that when considering True North, the central shrine faces a northeasterly direction. However, when calculated according to Magnetic North, the shrine faces east. Also, according to the orientation indicated in maps (Figs. 3.12 and 3.13), Embekke *devāle* does not directly face the direction of either the Kataragama *devāle* or the Temple of the Tooth Relic, Dalada Maligawa in Kandy. Therefore, the *Vāhalkada* and the main shrine are not aligned with one another, nor are they oriented to face cardinal directions. Similarly, the deity is not facing the East as per the custom of Hindu temple organization, unless we consider Magnetic North to calculate the directions.

The long rectangular central shrine is oriented in a northeastern to southwestern axis. On the left side of the main shrine is a separate building that consists of three rooms that open onto a pillared verandah and faces the northeast, in the same direction as the main shrine. A visitor can approach this building along the side of the main shrine or through a set of steps from the pillared verandah that leads into the temple grounds. (Fig. 3.14 & 3.15) The first small room that is closest to the main shrine is a storeroom, while the room in the center houses the wooden peacock, the vehicle of Skandha. This room is kept locked and is not accessible to lay visitors. On the northern most corner of this building is the Buddhist shrine room that consists of a sculpture of a seated Buddha flanked by two standing Buddhas. Directly across the temple grounds towards the south is the shrine of *Dēvata Bandara*, (Fig.3.16) a local tutelary god and a minister of god Skandha. Adjacent to the main shrine, further towards the southeast corner of the temple grounds, are two separate buildings. Upon entering the grounds through the *Vāhalkada* a visitor can see the first of these two building to the left hand side. The first building is the

granary (Fig.3.17) that consists of two fully enclosed rooms with an open passage in the center. The entire structure is built on stone stilts and functions as a repository for the harvest that is brought to Embekke *devāle*. There is no doorway to enter the granary except for a ladder that reaches the roof level. The closed building on stone stilts is designed to protect the paddy harvest from ground moisture and humidity. Behind the granary is a smaller separate building that functions as the kitchen, (Fig.3.18) located in the corner of the temple grounds. The open passageway between the granary provides access to the main entrance of the kitchen. The daily offerings which include several meals for both the god and the Buddha are prepared in this kitchen.

The main shrine of Skandha consists of several components. A visitor first enters the long *Digg-ge* through the entrance located to the northeast corner of the shrine. As mentioned earlier, visitors take the time to observe the woodcarving and architecture while the worshippers walk directly across the hallway into the next section of the shrine, the *Sandun Kūdama*. The *Digg-ge* and the *Sandun Kūdama* are separated by a lime-washed wall and a doorway that is framed by a *Kāla Makara Torana.* The *Torana* is flanked by two lion sculptures in bas-relief on this wall. The *Sandun Kūdama* is a narrow hallway with two arched stone doorways on either side that open to the outside. In the center of the *Sandun Kūdama* is a cloth hanging that depicts god Skandha and his two consorts seated on a peacock, his vehicle. These decorative and hand-painted hangings are made as offerings by local patrons. The lay worshippers do not go further into the shrine beyond the cloth hanging of the *Sandun Kūdama*. The *Kapu-mahattaya* meets with the worshippers by the cloth hanging to listen to their grievances and to collect the offerings after each temple *pūja*. There are three daily *pūjas* offered; the morning and noon *pūjas* include

food offerings to the Buddha first and then to the god while the evening *pūja* consists of liquid offerings to the Buddha and food to the god.

Behind the cloth curtain of Skandha is a large spacious hall known as the *Antarālaya.*[77] There are several items that are stored in this room including a palanquin believed to be of Henakanda Bisō Bandara, drums, metal umbrellas, a large oil lamp, hanging bells, lamps, and a pair of tusks that are believed to have been donated to the temple by Vikramabāhu III. The *Antarālaya* has an entrance into the section of the building where the deity resides and is marked by another decorative cloth hanging that depicts Skandha on a peacock. The doorway behind the cloth hanging opens into two separate inner rooms within the long rectangular shrine. According to *Kapu-mahattaya's* account, the *Antarālaya* opens into a small room that is known as the *Pirith*-ge in which the Buddhist monks chant annually. Following the *Pirith-ge* is the *Garbha-griha*[78] also known as the *Vedahitina Māligawa* that houses the image of Skandha. According to the *Kapu-mahattaya* the *Garbha* can only be approached through the roof level as there is no doorway that opens into the chamber. Only the *Kapu-mahattaya* is allowed to go into the *Garbha-gruha*. Through my discussions with the *Kapu-mahattaya*, I learnt that there are more wooden pillars beyond the Antarālaya. Although he acknowledged that these pillars also have carvings, it is difficult to know if the iconography and the style of carvings on these pillars bear any resemblance to those of the *Digg-ge*. As only the *Kapu-ahattaya* and a few others are privy to access the space beyond this hallway, it is not possible to comment on the art or the interior architecture of the remainder of the shrine. The *Kapu-mahattaya* also noted that

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[77] (55.7 x 23.7 feet) Nandasena Mudiyanse, *Embekke Varnanava saha venath lipi*, (Kolamba: Gadage, 2002) 16.

[78] (28 x 23.7 feet) *Ibid.*

photography is barred from any point beyond the *Sandun Kūdama*. The few wooden pillars in the *Antarālaya*, however, did not consist of any carvings. Therefore, my study of woodcarvings of Embekke *devāle* is solely based on those of the *Digg-ge,* while incorporating the woodcarvings from the *Vāhalkada* and the stone carvings of the Embekke *Ambalama*, the resting hall from the Gampola period. With this comparative analysis of the *devāle's* two buildings and the stone *Ambalama*, I intend to further underscore the continuation of shared iconography and symbolism within the Gampola and Kandy periods.

III. Possible origins of Embekke *devāle's Digg-ge*

The *Digg-ge*[79] is also known as the drumming hall or *Hevisi-mandapaya* as the ritual drumming takes place in this hall three times a day. Often, the *Digg-ge* is called the audience hall due to it being the prototype for the royal audience hall in Kandy Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Tooth), the *Digg-ge* in Nātha *devāle* of Kandy, both of which functions as audience halls. Also, the popular belief in Embekke is that the wooden pillars were brought from Vikramabāhu III's audience hall in Gampola, to Embekke *devāle*. While the king used the pillars to decorate his audience hall to meet with his subjects, today the Embekke *devāle Digg-ge* is a space where the worshippers gather to meet the priest in order to receive the blessing of the deity.

Despite the lack of inscriptional evidence on the founding of Embekke *devāle*, there are several details regarding the *Digg-ge* and its carvings that I gathered through interviews. I conducted interviews both on site with the *Kapu-mahattaya* and by meeting the former *Basnāyaka Nilame*, Sudantha Senanayake. According to the interview I had with the *Kapu-*

[79] (52.10 X 25.9) Mudiyanse, 17.

mahattaya, the wooden pillars, ceiling beams, and the carvings in the *Digg-ge* are the originals from the time the *devāle* was founded by king Vikramabāhu III. Both individuals narrated the same founding myth of Embekke *devāle.* Senanayake's account of the *Digg*-ge, however, was based on oral history and Lawrie's Gazetteer. He acknowledged that nineteen out of the thirty-two pillars and the *Madol-kurupāwa* (a wooden peg that projects from the ceiling to which the ceiling rafters appear to radiate out in a circle) have all been replaced by conservation conducted by Senarat Paranavitana in 1948. I located the older *Madol-kurupāwa* and several *Pēkada* (upturned lotus brackets that connect the pillars to the ceiling rafters) at the Raja Wasala Museum of Kandy. All these wooden elements had signs of significant deterioration, perhaps explained in the *Report on the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon for 1940-45*[80] that notes the Embekke wooden pillars were possibly affected by a white ant infestation. During the conservation process, Paranavitana has included a concrete base at each of the wooden pillars to prevent any future white ant attacks. Although the department of Archaeology has produced a report after this conservation project, the location of this unpublished report remains unknown. However, the 1948 Archaeological Commissioner's Report includes one paragraph that attests to the completion of the conservation project.[81] The report confirms that some of the pillars and woodcarvings of the *Digg-ge* we see today are not originals from the Gampola period. Through my search to find the earliest surviving visuals of Embekke, I located photos taken by Henry

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[80] S. Paranavitana, "Report on the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon 1940-45 (Part IV Education, Science and Art (1) Colombo, 1947) I 13.

[81] "The work of reconstruction and the conservation of what remained of the old wood-work of the *maṇḍapa* of the *Ambāke dēvāle* was completed during the year. A full photographic record was made of the carvings on the pillars and other architectural members and casts were prepared of some of the more important carvings. The reconstruction of the *dēvāle* has furnished the department with much valuable information regarding the techniques of the master carpenters (*mahācarya*) of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries." Senarat Paranavitana, "Report of the Archaeological Commissioner for the year 1948," *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1949 XXXVII parts 3&4 (1949):141.

Cave in 1908.[82] (Fig. 3.19) These photos indicate how the *Digg-ge* appeared prior to the conservation in 1948 with a short wall and a wooden railing around the perimeter of the building. The short wall encompasses the outer row of wooden pillars[83] forming a closed *mandapa*. This wall may have been removed during the conservation of 1948 when Paranavitana decided to include a concrete layer at the base of the pillars, according to the *Basnāyaka Nilame's* account.

IV. The woodcarvings on the pillars of the *Digg-ge*

Coomaraswamy's description of standard Kandyan wooden pillars in Medieval Sinhalese Art gives a general idea of the construction and layout of the *Digg-ge's* thirty-two pillars. (Fig. 3.20) The Embekke pillars exhibit the variations in their shafts that Coomaraswamy describes. Each pillar is about 11 feet tall. Approximately three feet from the base of each pillar are four *Āsana-kadaya*, a horizontal stepped incision[84] on the four corners of the pillar. Above the *Āsana-kadaya* is a *Liya-pota*[85], (Fig.3.21) a leaf design marking the transition of the square pillar into an octagonal form. After about a foot from the top of the base that is also rectangular in shape, there are four *Nāga-bandha*[86] shapes mimicking small cobra heads. Underneath the *Nāga-bandha*

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[82] Henry W. Cave, *The Book of Ceylon*, (London, Paris, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, Cassell And Company, Limited, 1908), 330.

[83] Cave, 328 and 331

[84] Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, (Pantheon Books, 1956) 129.

[85] *Ibid.* The *Liya-pota* (*pata*) decoration, according to Coomaraswamy, is one of the first studies undertaken by novice craftsmen (Coomaraswamy, 100.) When considering the composition and the types of carvings, this is an interesting observation as each column consists of four *Liya-pota* with a total of one hundred and twenty-eight. Although the identity of the craftsmen are not known in Embekke, extensive use of such a teaching tool suggests the presence of more than one artisan. According to Coomaraswamy, the same decorative motif is seen in the tails of birds and other mythical animals (Ibid.) and is addressed with regard to the carvings on the decorative designs and animals in this chapter. As he further notes, the *Liya-pota* is commonly seen in South Indian temples, Anuradhapura, etc (Ibid.) further indicating that the iconography of the *Liya-pata* is not specific to Kandy despite its proliferation in wooden architecture.

[86] Coomaraswamy, 129.

shapes, the column transitions from a square to an octagon. (Fig.3.22) In the center of the octagonal form is a cube that protrudes outwards from shaft of the column. The four sides of this cube are framed by two or three concentric borders consisting of *Arimbuwa* designs. At the center of each side of the cube is a carving that depicts a different animal or a flower motif. As seen in the *Digg-ge*, each carving on the cube is different from one another and consists of one hundred and twenty-eight carvings.

The roof of the *Digg-ge* rests on the thirty-two pillars each of which holds two superimposed wooden beams. The top of each pillar is affixed to upturned lotus capitals knows as *Pēkada*. (Fig.3.22) The lower beam that is adorned with woodcarvings is joined to the three *Pēkada* of each pillar. The top beam of each superimposed double beam holds a rafter that extends across the *Digg-ge* onto the double beam that is held by two more pillars in the same fashion. (Fig.3.23) There are forty-one ceiling rafters that are supported by these beams and twenty-six of these rafters are fixed to the *Modaol-kurupāwa* radiate outwards over the entrance of the *Digg-ge*.[87]

From the entrance to the *Sandun-kūdama* towards the main entrance of the *Digg-ge*, the pillars are arranged in six rows with four in each row. (Fig.3.24) A wide aisle, which is about fourteen feet wide in the center of the *Digg-ge*, creates a path for the visitors to enter the *Digg-ge* and to walk towards the *Sandun-kūdama*. The seventh row that is the closest row of pillars to the main entrance is positioned differently from the rest of the six rows. Six pillars are placed within the wide aisle in the center of the *Digg-ge* with two of the pillars slightly forward towards the

[87] According to the former *Basnāyaka Nilame's* description, the radiating rafters at the entrance visually symbolizes the fan of a peacock, the vehicle of god Skandha while the its body is represented by the long *Digg-ge* and the inner sacred rooms. The head of the peacock is formed by the two-storied structure over the G*arbha*.

opening at the entrance. The other four pillars are located in a single row with two more pillars located along the outer perimeter, aligned with the pillars of the six rows. The crowding of the pillars closer to the entrance visually makes the entrance seem smaller allowing space for the visitors to enter the *Digg-ge* between them. Once a visitor moves though the smaller opening between the first row of pillars, the aisle widens, presenting the devotee a direct view of the *Sandun-kūdama* and the large door-hanging of Skandha.

Although the temple is dedicated to god Skandha, there are no images of him carved on the wooden pillars or beams within the *Digg-ge*. Also absent are any carvings of his consorts, Thevani and Valli. Among the total of five hundred and fourteen woodcarvings in the *Digg-ge* there seem to be no carvings that indicate distinctive Hindu or Buddhist religious iconography. On each of the thirty-two pillars, there are four carvings on each side above eye-level. Each of these one hundred and twenty-eight carvings are contained within geometric designs that fill the wooden frames. Among the one hundred and twenty-eight carvings, there are twenty-eight carvings of animals and birds. Seven carvings depict human figures while five contain anthropomorphic or divine figures. The rest of the ninety carvings on the framed rectangular frames on the pillars are of vegetal motifs and a few rope designs.

V. Human figures

Apart from one figure of a female dancer, all six other human figures on the pillars are located closer to the main entrance and the central aisle. The human figures consist of three female dancers (pillars 2, 25, and 31) (Fig.3.25), who assume a similar pose but are rendered with different decorative motifs in each background. On pillar 10, there are two male figures; one

of a horseman and the other a soldier with a shield. (Fig.3.26) The horseman is rendered with western clothing and wears a hat while holding what may be a whip in his raised right hand. His left hand is over the reins, indicating depth within the frame while the saddle is rendered two dimensionally with a lack of perspective. The accouterments in this carving indicate a western horsemen. Given that the first western colonizers to arrive in Sri Lanka were the Portuguese in 1505 C.E., there are several possibilities that surface with regard to this particular carving. The image could have been created after the arrival of the western colonizers in Sri Lanka, perhaps as an addition during the Kandy period, or it could have been done by an artisan who was already aware of the dress and accouterments of the soldiers during the Gampola period. Although later temple paintings from the Kandy period include images of western soldiers and individuals, the carving of the soldier in Embekke is one of the first instances where a western figure is depicted within a shrine where it is attributed to the pre-Kandyan period.

On the same column but facing the south is a carving of a soldier who appears to be holding a shield and a sword. He is wearing a cloth that is gathered at the waist with an arm band on each arm and an oblong hat that is worn over long hair. The figure is likely of a local or South Indian mercenary as indicated by his clothing and bare chest. If in fact the pillars were transported from Gampola, the artisan has made an attempt to include two different soldiers he may have witnessed in the Gampola court. Within the Embekke *devāle* the two soldiers function as decorative motifs, and perhaps also as two guardian figures that visually impart a sense of protection and might.

Similarly, the carving of the two wrestlers (pillar 31) (Fig.3.27) has no prototype within Sri Lanka but depicts a scene of A*ngam-pora*, which is a type of martial arts that included single

combat wrestling and was practiced in Sri Lanka. The exact date of commencement of *Angam-pora* remains unknown, but it was prohibited during British rule. In this carving, the artisan has depicted two humans whose limbs are intertwined in battle. They are both wearing cloth that is gathered at the waist in ruffles in decorative waist-bands.The background also consists of motifs of foliage, further adding to the visual balance within the composition. As with the two previous human figures, the particular appearance of the wrestlers within the audience hall's carvings remains unclear. However, the artisan may have included this scene as a social commentary of the highly specialized A*ngam-pora* that was also a shared practice within Kerala. According to Raghavan, Kerala and Sri Lankan wrestling shared the same name for single combat[88] and had historical exchanges, particularly between Malabar and the Kandyan court. Therefore, it is likely that the artisan who was privy to such wrestling scenes included the carving on the pillars of Emebkke. A figure of a single woman (pillar 15) (Fig. 3.28) is placed on the right side of the rectangular frame, but due to its damaged state, it is difficult to assume what image would have occupied empty space between the motifs of foliage on the left.

[88] M.D. Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History Society and Culture*, (Bombay; New York: Asia Publishing House, 1969), 133.

VI. Mythical animal and vegetal motifs of Embekke and the conflation of 'Kandyan Sinhalese design'[89] motifs.

The Embekke *Ambalama*, the resting hall below the Embekke *devāle* hill, and the *Vāhalkada*, the gateway into Embekke *devāle,* are the two closest sites with wooden and stone pillars that consists of similar carvings to those of the Embekke *Digg-ge* pillars. The *Ambalama* is the site which the Department of Archaeology of Sri Lanka has clearly attributed to the Gampola period. Therefore, the inclusion of the carvings of the Embekke *Ambalama* and the *Vāhalkada* is critical to discussing and understanding the woodcarvings of the *Digg-ge*. Similarly, the Embekke *Digg-ge's* carvings can be placed within the traditional milieu of Sri Lankan decorative symbols and motifs as an immediate precursor to those of the Kandy period, both in terms of geographical proximity and time. With the visual analysis of the *Digg-ge's* carvings, I discuss the art and architecture of the above mentioned sites to present a comparative visual analysis and to better understand the scope of the Digg-ge's designs and possible functions.

In *Medieval Sinhalese Art*, while relying on the *Rūpavaliya* to discern various mythical and vegetal motifs, Coomaraswamy draws comparisons with South Indian, Southeast Asian, and even Russian and European symbols to further identify the Sinhalese motifs. I use his analysis as a source for my own observations in order to identify some of the woodcarvings in the *Digg-ge*. By juxtaposing the identifications of Coomaraswamy with the carvings of the Embekke *Digg-ge*, *Vāhalkada*, and the *Ambalama*, I further underscore the importance of placing the carvings of the Embekke *Digg-ge* within a broader historical context, that include both Sri Lankan and South

[89] Coomaraswamy, 80.

Asian iconography. Coomaraswamy's *Medieval Sinhalese Art* functions as the guidebook to a variety of topics related to decorative art and symbolism within Sri Lankan arts and crafts. I use the categorizations and identifications proposed by Coomaraswamy to distinguish the various motifs carved on the Embekke *Digg-ge* pillars. Coomaraswamy identifies the mythical animal and vegetal motifs categorically as Kandyan Sinhalese decorative designs[90]. The decorative designs became ubiquitous in Kandyan style temple paintings in central and peripheral Kandyan temples and within southwestern coastal temples.

The *Digg-ge* pillars depict five anthropomorphic figures that include: *Gurula* (pillar 20), *Nārilatha* and Kinnari (pillar 25), and another Kinnari (pillar 31). (Fig. 3.29) Manukulasooriya has listed the image of the female goddess (pillar 20) under the category of *Nārilatha*, which is often a misconception due to the similarity in the two figures. As seen in the carvings of Embekke, the only difference between the *Nārilatha* and the female goddess can be seen in the lower body. The folded feet are depicted underneath the female goddess while *Nārilatha* lacks feet altogether. As Coomaraswamy notes [91], the lower body of the *Nārilatha* metamorphoses into foliage, underscoring the composite nature of the figure where the upper body of a female is merged with foliage. The goddess' feet in the *Digg-ge's* carving (pillar 20) (Fig. 3.30) are clearly folded beneath her body. As Coomaraswamy further notes [92] a female goddess such as Lakshmi would be depicted as holding branches of leaves or foliage similar to the figure depicted in this carving. Given that the carvings were once part of a royal audience hall in Gampola, it is possible that goddess Lakshmi was included among the carvings as a deity that symbolizes

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[90] *Ibid.*

[91] Coomaraswamy, 92.

[92] *Ibid.*

prosperity and wealth. The motif of Lakshmi however, is not a new addition to the repertoire of Sri Lankan iconography as there are similar motifs seen for example, at the sides of the Stone Book in the Polonnaruwa quadrangle.

The *Vāhalkada* also consists of a seated female figure whose feet are folded underneath her body and holds a branch in either hand, perhaps depicting another carving of Lakshmi. (Fig. 3.31) Although the two female goddesses carved in the *Digg-ge* and the *Vāhalkada* share the same iconography and posture, the figure carved on the *Vāhalkada* appears to be more complete. The goddess figure in the *Vāhalkada* consists of more decorative detail and is rendered with balanced proportions. The headdress consists of more decorative elements and the folds of the cloth mark the contours of the body. The background indicates the spray that the figure holds in each hand, similar to that of the carving of the *Digg-ge* but has more flowers and leaves that complete the picture plane within its thick frame. The foliage follows the contours of the body and the headdress, creating an organic and yet balanced composition. The goddess image of the *Vāhalkada* is seated on a lotus petal motif known as *Palā-peti* and is ubiquitously seen on Kandyan temple wall paintings.

The question I raise with this comparison is if the carvings of the female figures of the *Vāhalkada* and the *Digg-ge* are contemporaneous or if they were added at some point during the Kandy period. Even if they were added later in the Kandy period, what is the possible source of inspiration for the artisans? The possible answer lies within the Embekke *Ambalama*. The *Ambalama* has a stone carving of what is most likely of a *Nārilatha* despite its features being exposed to weathering over time. (Fig. 3.32) The decorative elements of the frame as well as within the image have left outlines to indicate a clear identification of the image so far. The legs

seem to morph into organic shapes beneath the body, in a similar fashion to that of the *Nārilatha* cavings of the *Digg-ge*. Between the torso, the foliage spreads in both the wood and the stone carvings to form a similar opening within the leaves and the creepers. The tiered headdresses of both carvings are framed by the foliage that extend from the *Nārilathas*' hands. The frame also consists of similar geometric *Arimbuwa* designs that form three consecutive bands around the figure. The stone and wood carving indicate strong similarities both in terms of the rendering of the figure and decoration. With this comparison, I propose that the artisans of Embekke *Digg-ge* and the *Vāhalkada* (even if they were redone in the Kandy period) looked towards the stone carvings of the *Ambalama* from the Gampola period for inspiration.

A similar mythical figure that Manukulasooriya identifies as a '*Gurula*'[93], the mythical bird with a human face is seen in the *Digg-ge* (pillar 20). This is the same figure as the mythological *Garundha*[94] from Hindu literature and art that symbolizes the vehicle of god Vishnu. The pillars at both the *Digg-ge* (pillar 20) and the *Vāhalkada* have a carving of a *Gurula*. (Fig. 3.33) The *Gurula* on the *Vāhalkada* appears to have finer and more decorative details than that of the *Digg-ge*. The feathers on the body of the *Gurula* in the *Vāhalkada* have been carved with more precision while the background is filled with foliage that is more organic and compliments the figure to complete the composition. As the Embekke *devāle* has no association with Vishnu, the inclusion of *Gurula* seems arbitrary within a shrine to Skandha. The other two mythical figures are the two *Kinnari*[95] in the *Digg-ge*. They are both elaborately carved with the

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[93] Manukulasooriya, 95.

[94] Manukulasooriya, 88.

[95] As Ward states, the Kinnara appears in Buddha's past life story, the Canda Kinnara Jātaka. William Ward, "Selected Bubbhist Symbols in Sinhalese Decorative Art," *Artibus Asiae* 13 no.4 (1950): 291. Perhaps, this Jātaka provides the context of the Kinnara for a Sri Lankan Buddhist visitor who enters Embekke's *Digg-ge*. The Dalada Maligawa in Kandy has a variety of Kinnaras painted on its ceiling at the lower level of the Weda-hitinia Maligawa.

upper body of a female and the lower body of a mythical bird with plumes of feathers that are arranged in curvilinear patterns. Although they look identical at first glance, the two *Kinnaras* are not completely the same and exhibit slight variations within the carvings. They may evoke the association with Buddhist J*ātakas* for the worshippers who visit the shrine.

There are twenty-six carvings of various animals and birds on the pillars of the *Digg-ge.* Among these are creatures are highly decorative and mythical animals and birds, some of which are joined with two or more animals to form composite creatures. There are six individual bird motifs that Manukulasooriya labels as *Hamsas*[96]. As Coomaraswamy describes, the *Hamsa* is an auspicious[97] bird that is commonly drawn in many Buddhist sites in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the carvings of *Hamsa* in Embekke is not a novel addition. According to popular belief, the *Hamsa* possesses the skill to separate milk from a mixture of water and milk. The carvings on the *Digg-ge* pillars indicate several different *Hamsa* motifs. The *Hamsa* on pillars 2, 8, and 14 (Fig. 3.34) are rendered with more decorative detail than those on pillars 20 and 28. (Fig. 3.35) Although each of the *Hamsas* is different from one another, the birds on pillars 20 and 28 indicate less stylization and certainly less curvilinear lines that form the large unopened plume of feathers on the *Hamsa's* tail, perhaps alluding to several different artisans with varying skill levels working on the carvings. There are four *Hamsa-pūttu* decorations, which depict two intertwined *Hamsas* on the pillars of the *Digg-ge.* The two *Hamsas* face each other while their necks twist around each other for the beaks to meet in the center of the picture plane. A creeper that begins from the beak continues to spread onto the background, giving the composition a stronger sense of

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[96] Manukulasooriya, 90 and 93.

[97] Coomaraswamy, 86.

balance. The *Hamsas* and the *Hamsa-pūttu* on the *Vāhalkada* however, are more decorative and show a certain finesse in their carving when compared to the *Hamsa* motifs in the *Digg-ge*. Although most of the carvings of the *Ambalama* are almost at a point of complete ruin, there are several *Hamsa* motifs (Fig. 3.36) that are similar to the *Hamsas* of both the *Vāhalkada* (Fig. 3.37) and the *Digg-ge*. Although Manukulasooriya has listed the bird motif on pillar 7 as a *Hamsa*, (Fig. 3.38) the iconography of this bird is different to that of the standard *Hamsa*. The same carving of the bird is found in the *Vāhalkada* that indicate the features of a peacock. (Fig. 3.39)

There are four carvings (pillars 7, 8, 22, and 28) of *Bhērunda Pakshiya*, the double-headed eagle that is commonly seen in Kandyan metalwork such as brass plates and jewelry. (Fig. 3.40) Except for the *Bhērunda* motif on pillar 22, the other three have vegetal motifs on the background to complete the composition. The *Bhērunda* on pillar 22 is devoid of any decoration or carving within the motif and the frame is also not well defined, indicating some restoration done due to the poor state of the wooden pillar. However, all the *Bhērunda* motifs indicate the same iconography of two birds that share one body. The two heads face either side of the picture plane. The same motif is seen in the *Vāhalkada* (Fig. 3.41) and among the stone carvings of the *Ambalama* (Fig. 3.42) and share the same geometric frame design. While the stone carving does not indicate any foliage in the background, the *Bhērunda* in the *Vāhalkada* consists of some curved motifs along the inner corners of the frame within the picture plane. *Bhērunda's* inclusion in Sri Lankan art and iconography has not been clearly identified thus far.[98] As we do not see the *Bhērundha* motif in Sri Lanka prior to the carvings of Embekke, it is possible that the design

[98] Coomaraswamy, agreeing with the writings of T. Wilson, traces the history of *Bhērunda* to Eastern Europe and to the Mahabharata. Coomaraswamy, 85.

became popular with artisans in Southern India and Sri Lanka due to its proliferation in the Vijayanagara and Nāyaka periods in India, as suggested by Naidu.[99]

The *Et-kanda-lihiniya*, the composite elephant headed bird is depicted on pillar 6 of the *Digg-ge*. (Fig. 3.43) According to Coomaraswamy's description, the *Et-kanda-lihiniya* has a reputation of a terrifying mythical bird that seizes elephants for prey.[100] The same motif is seen in both the *Vāhalkada* (Fig. 3.44) and the *Ambalama* (Fig. 3.45). The stone carving of the *Ambalama* is quite similar to that of the *Vāhalkada* where the elephants' craniums are more pronounced and the trunks are undulating towards the inner edge of the frame. The feathers in both bodies are carved individually while the wings are spread out and touch the borders of the frame. In the wood carving of the *Digg-ge*, the *Et-kanda-lihiniya* is less detailed and the elephant's head does not indicate the naturalistic depiction seen in the *Vāhalkada* and *Ambalama* carvings and the lines that mark the decorations on the wings seem more rigid in comparison.

The *Serapendiya*[101], the composite creature with the head of what is like a lion and the body of a bird that resembles a *Hamsa* is seen in three carvings of the *Digg-ge* (pillars 8, 12, and 16). (Fig. 3.46) Although Manukulasooriya lists one of the *Serapendiyas* (pillar 8) as a *Makara*[102], a *Makara* represents a composite creature whose head looks more like a crocodile[103]. As Coomaswamy says, the snout of the *Makara* resembles the trunk of an elephant, but it is

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[99] Naidu gives a more comprehensive history that traces the history of *Bhērunda* to western Asia and Scythian art and contends that the motif arrived in Sri Lanka through the Vijayanagara artisans. P.N. Naidu, "Depiction of Gandabhērunda Motif in Vijayanagara Art", *Proceedings of the Indian History of* Congress 58 (1997): 882.

[100] Coomaraswamy, 84.

[101] Coomaraswamy, 83. The difference between Serapendiya and Sarabha remains ambiguous. William E. Ward only describes the Serapendiya briefly in Selected Buddhist Symbols in Sinhalese Decorative Art. William Ward, "Selected Buddhist Symbols in Sinhalese Decorative Art," *Artibus Asiae* 13 no.4 (1950): 292.

[102] Manukulasooriya, 92.

[103] Coomaraswamy, 84.

shorter and curls up to form a knot.[104] The confusion in the iconography in this case is acceptable as Manukulasooriya lists a possible *Serapendiya* as a *Makara* on pillar 8 due to the slight variation in each of the *Serapendiya's* heads in the three pillars. The *Vāhalkada* also consists of a *Serapendiya* whose tail curls downwards, marking a difference with the *Serapendiyas* of the *Digg-ge*. There is no extant example of a *Serapendiya* at the *Ambalama* to be compared with these motifs in wood. As most of the stone pillars have been restored over time, the carvings within those rectangular frames have been erased. However, I have not located an equivalent of the *Serapendiya* amongst South Indian iconography. The scholars I have consulted, including Crispin Branfoot, Anila Verghese, and Anna Dallappiccola, have confirmed this information. However, there is always possibility that the *Serapendiya* or its equivalent may be located somewhere within South Indian art, but at present I suggest the conclusion that the *Serapendiya* is distinctive to (possibly Gampola and) Kandyan iconography.

There are two different types of lions depicted in the *Digg-ge*. One is what Manukulasooriya calls the *Kēsara-Sinha*[105] depicted on pillar 15. (Fig.3.47) According to Coomaraswamy, the *Kēsara-Sinha* is the 'lion proper' [106] and as seen on pillar 15, has an elaborately layered mane and is depicted in profile view. On pillar 27 is another carving of a *Kēsara-Sinha* in profile with his head turned back towards the center of the picture plane[107]. A creeper begins from his open mouth and extends towards the center of the composition. In the

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[104] *Ibid.*

[105] Manukulasooriya, 92.

[106] Coomaraswamy, 86.

[107] Manukulasooriya has mislabeled this *Kēsara-Sinha* as a *Gaja-Sinha*. Manukulasooriya, 91.

Vāhalkada, the carving of the *Kēsara-Sinha* depicts the foliage moving downwards from the mouth of the lion while the front paw is holding a part of the creeper.

The second type of a lion variation in the *Digg-ge* is the composite *Gaja-Sinha*[108], which has the head of an elephant and the body of a lion. (Fig. 3.48) There are two such *Gaja-Sinha* motifs carved on pillars 10 and 26. (Fig. 3.48) The lion head is turned towards the center of the picture plane while the figure is depicted in profile. The trunk in both carvings are curled underneath the tusks that extends upwards to the tail of the lion that forms a twist. However, the *Gaja-Sinha* carving of the *Vāhalkada* (Fig. 3.49) shows some variations from its counterparts in the *Digg-ge*. The trunk of the *Gaja-Sinha* in the *Vāhalkada* extends a little further towards the back of its body while the tusks are less prominent. On pillar 26 of the *Digg-ge*, the *Sinha's* head is ambiguous; while the head shows a beak or a long upper lip, it is not a trunk of an elephant nor the mouth of a lion. The ears look somewhat pointed and possibly due to this ambiguity, Manukulasooriya has labeled it as a *Gaja-Sinha*[109] and is somewhat similar to a *Vyāla*. Another variation of a lion image is the *Kibihi-Mūna*[110] (Fig.3.50) seen on pillar 5 and as Coomaraswamy notes, the extension of foliage from the *Kēsara-Sinha* is standard to the iconography of Kandyan design.[111] A similar *Kibihi-Mūna* can be seen among the stone pillars of the *Ambalama* (Fig.

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[108] In Embekke and Kandyan decorative designs, the name Gaja-Sinha is used to identity the composite creature with the head of an elephant and the body of a lion. Van der Geer describes how the Gaja-Sinha motif developed within the subcontinent as a decorative and hybrid motif consequently of the lion-elephant attack motif. (Alexandra Van der Geer, *Animals in Stone*, (Leiden; Boston, Brill, 2008) 221.

[109] Manukulasooriya, 91.

[110] In Kandyan temples, a *Makara-torana* that is built over doorways and the sculptures of the central Buddha consist of a Kibihi-Mūna at the center. From the month of this *Kibihi-Mūna*, the foliage extends towards either side, architecturally framing the central sculpture or the doorway.

[111] Coomaraswamy, 86.

3.51). The *Kibihi-Mūna* is often known as a *Kīrti-Mukha* in Indian and Southeast Asian art and is a common feature in Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka.

Although the motifs of the composite animals described so far have been repeated on one or more pillar within the *Digg-ge* and sometimes carved on the pillars of the *Vāhalkada* and the *Ambalama* stone pillars, the *Digg-ge* consists of several motifs that are not repeated. On pillar 10 is a motif of a lion attacking an elephant that is not seen in either the carvings of the *Vāhalkada* or within the stone carvings of the *Ambalama*. (Fig. 3.52) Carved within a very narrow frame, a *Kēsara-Sinha* who seems to stand on its hind legs is depicted biting the head of an elephant that is kneeling in front. In comparison to the other motifs in the *Digg-ge*, both animals in this scene are carved with more attention to detail. The elephant's trunk is carved with dots perhaps to indicate the natural pigmentation on its skin and lines around the edges to indicate volume. The folds of the skin are also carved in with fine lines along with the nails on its legs. The lion is carved according to the traditional iconography of a *Kēsara-Sinha* with a layered mane. The lines that make his limbs are fluid and organic, indicating the muscle volume of the beast. Another similar carving, that is not repeated elsewhere, is the *Usamba kuñjara* [112] or popularly known in Sinhala as *Wrushabha kuñjara*. (Fig. 3.53) In this carving, the bull and the elephant share one head. The tusks of the elephant are also the horns of the bull. There is no record of this motif appearing in wood or stone prior to the Embekke *devāle* carving elsewhere in the country. The *Ambalama* may have had the carving depicted on a stone pillar, but due to its condition today, and the lack of vital records, there is no indication of the *Usamba kuñjara* in stone. The *Usamba kuñjara* is also the only instance where a bull is depicted in the carvings in Embekke *devāle*.

[112] Coomaraswamy, 90.

Perhaps, we can turn towards South Indian iconography for comparisons given that one of the most popular *Usamba kuñjara* in India is located in the balustrade of the Airavatesvara temple in Darasuram, Tamil Nadu that is dated to the Chola period tenth century C.E. The possibility I propose is the presence of migrant artisans who traveled between the two regions who may have been privy to the earlier carving of *Usamba kuñjara* in Tamil Nadu.

The rest of the carvings of the pillars of the *Digg-ge* consist of carvings of lotus and other floral motifs, rope designs, and foliage. Some lotus motifs stand alone within the frame while on other pillars, small lotuses are embedded within the foliage. As Manukulasooriya notes, although the lotuses may resemble one another, none of the flowers is identical.[113] Instead of categorizing the motifs and creating lists of the various lotuses and foliage patterns as Manukulasooriya has already done, I analyze the visual similarities between the various cavings in the *Digg-ge*, the *Vāhalkada*, and the *Ambalama*. Therefore, to juxtapose the craftsmanship and iconography within the carvings of the *Digg-ge*, the *Vāhalkada*, and the *Ambalama*, I have picked lotus and floral medallions that share certain visual characteristics.

There are several full lotuses that appear in both the *Digg-ge* and the *Vāhalkada*. Pillar 11 has two full lotuses that are carved within the rectangular frame. (Fig. 3.54) On the inner corners of each frame are four leaves and four cropped parts of a lotus flower. .Four decorative leaves are carved into the four inner corners of the frame. On pillar 22 of the *Digg-ge* is a lotus that is carved in two concentric layers of petals and the center of each petal in the outer circle is marked with two concentric lines to indicate the depth of each petal. (Fig. 3.55) Similarly, lotuses on the *Vāhalkada* is rendered in the same design along with four leaves on each inner corner of the

[113] Manukulasooriya, 143.

frame. (Fig. 3.56) For example, two foliage motifs of creepers on pillars 1 and 19 (Fig. 3.57) of the *Digg-ge* are visually similar to the creeper designs in two pillars of the *Vāhalkada* (Fig. 3.56). Both carvings of the creepers on pillars 1 and 19 are visually similar to that of the stone carving on the *Ambalama*. (Fig.3.58) Another similarity is the rope design on pillar 20 of the *Digg-ge* and the same design in the *Vāhalkada*. (Fig. 3.59)

The shared iconography among the three sites, the *Digg-ge*, the *Vāhalkda*, and the *Ambalama* is unmistakable. Other designs on the pillars further attest to the shared iconography among the three sites. What I emphasize with the above comparison is that despite slight variations, there are many designs that are shared among the pillars of the *Digg-ge*, *Vāhalkada*, and the *Ambalama*. For example, the rope design on pillar 20 of the *Digg-ge* is identical to that of a rope design in the *Vāhalkada*. Some rope designs on *Digg-ge's* pillars are similar to a rope design woven into a textile from the Kandy period as mentioned in Medieval Sinhalese Art Plate XXVIII No.4.[114] A rope design on the *Vāhalkada* can also be seen in this Kandyan textile. Although Coomaraswamy describes the various knots in Kandyan designs, he does not mention the same designs on the *Digg-ge's* pillars or those on the *Vāhalkada* carvings.

Furthermore, Coomaraswamy mentions the *Kundirikkan*[115] pattern, which forms part of the geometric design on wood and ivory carvings in his discussion of Sinhalese Kandyan design elements. He discusses the inclusion of the *Arimbuwa*[116] pattern that is often combined with *Kundirikkan*. The *Arimbuwa* usually forms a line of dots between two parallel lines. Both the *Kundirikkan* and *Arimbuwa* designs are used in almost all the pillars of the *Digg-ge*, *Vāhalkada*,

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[114] Coomaraswamy, Plate XXVIII No. 4

[115] Coomaraswamy, 107.

[116] Coomaraswamy, 107.

and the *Ambalama* to frame the rectangular or square carvings on the pillars. Coomaraswamy mentions these two border designs and provides examples of ivory and wood carvings from the Kandy period. The iconography of the utilitarian objects such as ivory combs, areca-nut slicers, and jewelry, among other objects that Coomaraswamy has included as specimens from the Kandy period, further reinforce that motifs from Embekke *Digg-ge*, *Vāhalkada*, and the *Ambalama* were precursors to Kandyan art and design. Furthermore, these decorative designs are also prevalent on both Kandyan and Southwestern temple wall paintings, thereby alluding to the shared iconography and artistry of both Gampola and Kandy periods. Given the possible time period of Embekke and its association with the Gampola period prior to the revival of Kandy, it is worth mentioning that the textile designs may have been possibly influenced by the iconography and design that transferred from the wood carvings of Gampola.

How these design elements were incorporated into the pillars of the royal audience hall in Gampola and tracing their historical progression are a complicated issue. In discussing this history of mythical animal motifs in India, authors Iyer and Naidu mention that the *Bhērunda* motif came to Sri Lanka through South India, specifically from Vijayanagara.[117] Iyer mentions a human figure with a double bird head that came to Sri Lanka from India, although the sources or the locations of where this motif can be seen are not mentioned. Naidu traces the history of *Ganda Bhērunda* from Hittite sculptures to Taxila to Vijayanagara and Ceylon.[118] However, he does not mention the sources that indicate how the motif transferred to Ceylon. Earlier examples of mythical creatures such as *Makara*, *Kīrti Mukha*, and *Vyāla* as well as the highly idealized lion

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[117] Bharatha Iyer, *Animals in Indian Sculpture*, (Bombay: Tapaporevala, 1977), 54.

[118] P.N Naidu. "Depiction of Gandabhērunda Motif in Vijayanagara Art," *Proceedings of the Indian History of* Congress 58 (1997): 882.

that are rendered in stone can be seen in various sites prior to the Gampola period, such as in Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, and Yapahuwa. Therefore, I refrain from stating that iconography only transferred from India to Sri Lanka in one-direction. The proliferation of the variety of composite creatures and foliage with highly decorative and idealized wood carvings has no prototype other than the carvings seen in Embekke. Although the carvings of Embekke may have been subjected to some changes during the Kandyan kingdom and as a result of conservation in 1948, the existence of the Embekke *Ambalama* carvings reinforces the continuation of iconography from the fourteenth century.

VII. Decorations on roof beams and pillar capitals

The heavy wooden beams that are held by the pillars support the roof of the *Digg-ge* and a majority of the woodcarvings is located on these roof beams and the pillar capitals. According to Manukulasooriya, roof beams are rare within Kandyan architecture.[119] The decorations on the roof beams however, are not as conspicuous as the carvings on the pillars that consist of a variety of mythical animals and foliage. The carvings on the beams are mostly of foliage and flowers with a few birds, animals, rope designs, and human figures.

Between each pair of pillars, joining the pillar capitals are a pair of superimposed roof beams. Each lower beam of the two superimposed roof beams is carved in a hexagonal form. (Fig.3.60 & 3.61) When standing at ground level, a visitor can see the five sides of the lower beam as the second roof beam is placed over the lower beam. Out of the five sides that are visible, the two sides that are between the pillar capitals consists of a variety of carvings. The

[119] Manukulasooriya, 128.

underside of the beam that faces the ground is slightly chafed to create three different sides. Two *Nāga-bandha* designs are placed in each corner of the underside where the pillar is chafed to form an angled surface and an *Arimbuwa* design frames the angled side with the *Nāga-bandha*. Between the two angled surfaces of the beam and directly facing the ground is a square that is protruding on to the two sides of the chafed sections of the beam. This portion consists of a decoration that is shared with the *Ariumbuwa* design.

Of each pair of superimposed roof beams between the pillar capitals of the *Digg-ge*, the lower roof beams include foliage, lotus and other flower medallions that form a majority of the designs. Other motifs include rope designs, *Hamsa* (Fig. 3.62 & 3.63), *Hamsa-pūttu* (Fig. 3.64), a female dancer (Fig.3.65), a pair of *Serapendiyas* (Fig.3.66), and a single *Serapendiya* (Fig. 3.67). Iconographically and stylistically, these motifs are similar to the carvings on the pillars but still maintain their individuality. Although similar in ornamentation, none of the designs are repeated again. On the left corner of the *Digg-ge* where the dividing wall with the lion sculptures is located, the lower roof beam on the outer pillar consists of a row of dancing women (Fig.3.68). On the wall is another supporting beam with a carving of a single female dancer (Fig. 3.69). There are two supporting beams that connect the horizontal roof beams that run across the width of the *Digg-ge* to the central roof beam to which all the rafters are connected to. On these beams are two carvings of drummers (Fig.3.70). I propose that the carvings of dancers provide a social commentary of the time period in which the carvings were made by adding a social custom in to the collection of motifs of the *Digg-ge.*

Manukulasooriya has identified and labeled some of the lotus patterns and single motifs and aptly calls the Embekke's array of lotuses a 'Nelumbian Fantasy'.[120] What I emphasize here is how the lotuses and other foliage visually form a canopy between the pillars and rafters, combined with other divine and mythical creatures. The capitals of the pillars consist of upturned lotus capitals and a few rope designs. The overwhelming majority of the capitals are lotuses that are carved in a variety of designs. Among the capitals, pillars, and the roof beams, there are close to one hundred and fifty lotus motifs. Some lotuses are carved as single motifs while some lotuses are combined with foliage, making the process of categorization of lotus designs complicated. The saturation of lotuses is a common visual trope in Kandyan temples where upturned lotus capitals are juxtaposed with a variety of lotuses depicted on the walls and the ceiling. As Coomaraswamy notes, one of the primary uses of the lotus is to fill the space.[121] However, I propose that the artisans of Embekke included a variety of lotuses with more than just the intention to fill up empty space. The infinite number of lotus designs within Kandyan paintings that are similar to that lotuses of Embekke are a testimony to the variations in artistic expression of the artisans. The variety of carvings and flowers also indicates the strong possibility of a group of artisans, perhaps headed by a chief artist working at Embekke. The tradition of including lotuses in temples and building architecture has continued from the early Anuradhapura and Polounnaruwa periods, although the types of lotus designs have multiplied exponentially in Embekke. Coomaraswamy states that the naturalism of the lotus designs in Anuradhapura are absent in the Kandyan lotuses.[122] Although the Embekke artisans have not

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[120] Manukulasooriya, 143.

[121] Coomaraswam, 95.

[122] *Ibid.*

adhered to the naturalism exemplified by the artisans of earlier kingdoms, the variation of lotus designs within the *Digg-ge* exemplifies their creativity and artistry. While the lotus and foliage designs on the capitals are visible to the visitors to the *Digg-ge*, some of the designs on the roof beams cannot be seen at first glance. Some of the upturned lotus capitals of the *Vāhalkada* are replacements made in recent times and the designs indicate stylistically similar lotus designs to that of the *Digg-ge*. There are no existing examples of the capitals of the pillars of the Embekke *Ambalama*. In this regard, the *Digg-ge* is perhaps the repository of the highest number and variety of lotus designs that stands testimony to both the Gampola and Kandy period art within the island.

VIII. Wish-fulfillment and the carvings of the *Digg-ge*

Collectively, the woodcarvings of the Embekke *Digg-ge* incorporate symbols that are common to both Buddhist and Hindu iconography. While some of these motifs are more prominent in Buddhist art and architecture, others are commonly seen in Hindu temples. In other words, the art of the Embekke *Digg-ge* shares various artistic elements that are seen in art and iconography of both Sri Lanka and South India. The lotus, as mentioned earlier, is the most ubiquitous design in the *Digg-ge* and provides a visual testimony to the changes in Kandyan lotus designs in comparison to the more naturalistic examples from Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa carvings. The Embekke *devāle's* carvings express a sense of decorative abstractionism where the artisans focus on individual expression. I discuss further visual similarities with South Indian temple architecture, iconography, and *Mandapa* pillars in the following chapter to further reinforce the shared artistry between South India and Embekke. In

concluding this chapter, I propose that the art and iconography of pillars of the *Digg-ge* that were once part of a royal audience hall has now been appropriated to form a transitionary architectural space for worshippers and visitors of Embekke *devāle*.

The carvings on the pillars depict a variety of designs common to Hindu and Buddhist iconography that indicates auspicious motifs. A carving in the *Digg-ge* on pillar 1 depicts what resembles a *Kalpa-latha*, a wish-fulfilling creeper often seen in Buddhist temples from Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa period stone carvings, particularly in *Vāhalkada* of *stūpas* and in Kandy period paintings. When the worshipper enters the *Digg-ge*, the carvings present a very vivid impression of the various symbols of prosperity and protection. Certain carvings, such as the wrestlers, horseman, and the lions stand as apotropaic symbols that offer protection to the site and to the worshippers. Lakshmi's carvings that symbolized wealth and prosperity within the royal audience hall in Gampola, now present the same idea to the worshippers of the Embekke *devāle*. The multiple carvings of *Bhērunda* invoke the reincarnation of Vishnu. Consequently, the worshipper who enters the *Digg-ge* is met with a variety of symbols that are both shared in Hindu and Buddhist art as auspicious symbols of wish-fulfillment and protection. The architectural space of the *Digg-ge* that facilitates for unrestricted movement around the pillars visually create a transitionary space that is overwhelmingly filled with mythical creatures and lotuses. In other words, the *Digg-ge* presents a visual impression of a celestial realm that is inhabited by both divine and semi-divine protective figures, grotesque hybrid animals such as the *Et-kanda-lihiniya*, and is suspended by a canopy of lotus columns and foliage that are not seen in the natural environment.

The carvings of the pillars when juxtaposed with the decorative designs on the capital and the ceiling beams do not form any particular pattern or hierarchy. The carvings are made on the pillars arbitrarily, perhaps as a result of the pillars being transported from Gampola and later being rebuilt in the Kandy period. The lack of a didactic theme or a cohesive articulation of a religious message through the woodcarvings of the *Digg-ge* is evident when looking at the collection of images. Perhaps, the most formidable explanation for the collection of the woodcarvings can be explained by the argument that Robert Brown proposes with regard to the function of the detailed and nuanced *Jātaka* paintings in Southeast Asian temples.[123] According to Brown, the visual imagery of the Jātaka tales, some of which are located far above the vantage point of the worshipper, act as a part of the Buddha's biography and is juxtaposed with the architecture to form a cohesive and relatable idea for the presence or the manifestation of the Buddha within the shrine.[124] Likewise, I propose that the carvings of the *Digg-ge* are not meant to be read as text and nor do they fulfill a didactic purpose. Instead, it is the arbitrariness of the arrangement of the carvings and the eclectic nature of the collection that create the visually transformative architectural space for the worshipper. Subsequently, the art of the *Digg-ge* highlight the blending of Buddhist and Hindu iconography in formulating a canon for Gampola and Kandyan designs. As a temple founded and developed between the Gampola and Kandy periods, Embekke *devāle's* carvings stand testimony to the shared nature of Sri Lankan and South Asian art and iconography while telling a story of the skill and artistic imagination of its artisans.

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[123] Brown, Robert L, "Narrative as Icon: The Jātaka Stories in Ancient Indian and Southeast Asian Architecture," in *Sacred Biography int he Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, ed. Juliane Schober. (Honolulu: University of Haiwai´i Press, 1997), 64.

[124] *Ibid.*

Chapter 4

Exchange of art and iconography among Gampola, Kandy, and South India

The lack of textual evidence limits a comprehensive analysis and an articulation of Embekke *dēvale's* existing art and architecture. Perhaps, this is a reason why previous scholars, such as D.T. Devendra,[125] suggest the lack of a prototype for Embekke *devāle,* asserting the uniqueness of its architecture as a novel invention of Sinhala artists. Although the *devāle's* founding is dated to the fourteenth century of the Gampola period, the current temple building is most likely constructed at a later period, perhaps after the fire of 1817 as suggested by Mudiyanse[126]. While Embekke *devāle* was likely built and modified by local artists, the historical development and composition of the overall architecture can be better articulated once it is foregrounded within the time periods in which the *devāle* was founded and later modified. Instead of compartmentalizing the historical narrative, I aim to see the different processes that took place in Gampola and Kandy to crate a new social and religious fabric that also helped to crate the sacred spaces within Embekke *devāle*, the Lankātilaka, and Gadaladeniya temples. Therefore, the primary question I raise in this chapter is what approaches can this study take to better understand the architecture of Embekke *devāle*, Lankātilaka, and Gadaladeniya? I use three analytical approaches to answer this question (1) to analyze temples that were built during the Gampola period and test the visual analysis in comparison with the architectural components of Embekke *devāle*; (2) to investigate the cultural dialog between Gampola and Kandyan art and

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[125] D.T. Devendra, "The Pillared Pride of Embekke," Ceylon, The Department of Information, (1955): 1

[126] R.C.De S. Manukulasooriya, *Aesthetic and Cultural Aspects of Ambäkke Devalaya in Kandy*. (Colombo: The Royal Asiatic Society, 2003), 8.

architecture with South India that is reinforced by the art and architecture of South Indian temples; and (3) to investigate patronage and temple building practices between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries that are underscored by the significant South Indian presence in Gampola and Kandy, both through exchanges with South India and the migrating artisans of the Viśvakarma caste. Consequently, I argue that the three temples, the Embekke *devāle* (in its present state), the Lankātilaka temple, and the Gadaladeniya temple are a visual testament to the cultural syncretism during a dynamic period between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries and indicate the continuous development of architectural design in both Sri Lanka and South India.

For the comparative visual analysis of the Embekke *devāle*, I have primarily chosen the Gadaladeniya (Fig.4.1) and Lankātilaka temples, (Fig.4.2) which are located close to Embekke *devāle*. For a secondary analysis based on colonial archival photos and the role of artisans, I have chosen the Nātha *devāle* (Fig. 4.3) and the *Magul Maduwa* (Figure 4.4) that are in Kandy. The Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka temples form the three temple loop with Embekke *devāle* and are predominantly Buddhist temples with certain Hindu elements seen in the architecture. Both temples belong to the Gampola period and unlike Embekke *devāle,* continue to maintain most of their original structures that are predominantly built in stone and brick. The Gadaladeniya temple was built in 1344 during the time of king Buvanekabāhu IV, who is believed to be the founding king of the Gampola kingdom.[127] The chief monk who undertook the task of building the temple is Ven. Seelavansa Dharmakeerti.[128] The Lankātilaka temple was also built in the same year

[127] H.M.S. Tundeniya, *Gadaladeniya Rajamaha Vihāraya*, (Colombo, S. Godage Brothers, 2002), 14.

[128] *Ibid.* According to Tundeniya, this information is inscribed on the stone inscription located within the temple premises.

during the reign of Buvanekabāhu IV.[129] The patron of Lankātilaka, however is Buvanekabāhu's chief minister, Senā-Lankadhikara[130], a member of the royal court who wielded as much power as the king himself. The Nātha *devāle* in Kandy, within close proximity to the Dalada Maligawa, also known as the Royal Temple of the Sacred Tooth, is believed to have been constructed by Vikramabāhu III, the founder of Embekke *devāle*.[131] The Royal Audience hall, known as the Magul Maduwa, was built in 1783 by Kandyan king Rājādhi Rājasingha.[132] The historical details that pertain to the construction of these sites and later additions that were made to the architecture help articulate the various changes that were made according to the religious climate of the Gampola and Kandy kingdoms and the subsequent adaptations within the broader discourse of Sri Lankan temple architecture.

The construction of Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka temples do not fit the traditional pattern of a royal patron providing support for local temples; both temples were constructed by non-royal patrons indicating the weakening power of the Gampola kings. The Gadaladeniya temple was constructed by a South Indian architect under the advice of Seelavamsa Dharmakeerti *Thera*.[133] During the time of Buvanekabāhu IV, Seelavamsa Dharmakeerti *Thera* was a chief prelate who was considered to be a well-traveled erudite monk. According to

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[129] Nandasena Mudiyanse, *The Art and Architecture of the Gampola Period* (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd., 1963) 29.

[130] *Ibid.*

[131] L.J.B. Turner, "The Town of Kandy About The Year 1815 A.D.," *The Ceylon Antiquary* IV part 2 (1918): 76. Turner states that Kandy was first marked and established to be the royal capital by King Vikramabahu IV whose capital at the time was Gampola. The mentioning of Vikrama Báhu IV is problematic. He further states that once Gampola was abandoned by this king in favor of the newly founded Kandy, the material from the royal place and town of Gampola was used to build Embekke *devāle.* (Turner, 78).

[132] Turner, 80.

[133] Mudiyanse, 11.

Mudiyanse, who gives a detailed account of the life of Seelavamsa *Thera*, he was educated under the guidance of a Chola *Thera*[134]. Afterwards, he proceeded to Dhānyakataka, Amarāvati.[135] Once Buvanekabāhu IV moved to Gampola, Seelavamsa *Thera* who had then assumed the name Seelavamsa Dharmakeerti built the Gadaladeniya temple with a group of Indian architects, headed by Ganeśvarāchārī.[136] Seelavamsa Dharmakeerti *Thera* also held a *Sangha* council in 1369 in collaboration with the minister Alagakkonara, who was of Malayalam descent, to purge the *Sangha* lineage and to establish Buddhism within the kingdom.[137] What this account illustrates is the power which a chief monk and a minister wielded within the court, more so than king Buvanekabāhu IV himself. As I have mentioned earlier, the Lankātilaka inscription identifies Stāpati Rayar, a South Indian, as its chief architect under the patronage of minister Senā Lankādikara, who was a descendant of the South Indian merchant family. Although the ministers had assimilated into the local culture, they still identified with their South Indian roots. This historical background offers a plausible explanation to the Hindu characteristics seen in Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka temple architecture. Likewise, the syncretism seen in the religious front where Hindu gods merged into the Buddhist pantheon is visually articulated in the juxtaposition of elements of Hindu temple architecture with Buddhist temples of Gampola.

The inclusion of subsidiary Hindu shrines of worship in Galadadeniya and Lankātilaka underscore the multivalency of Buddhist and Hindu practice in the Gampola period. The deities placed within the shrines also indicate the changes that were taking place in the Buddhist

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[134] Mudiyanse, 11.

[135] Mudiyanse, 12.

[136] *Ibid.*

[137] *Ibid.*

pantheon during this time. Tundeniya states that the subsidiary shrine within the main Gadaladeniya temple was dedicated to god Upulvan and that it was built as an apotropaic element for the temple.[138] He further states that the stone inscription of Ven. Seelavansa Dharmakeerti explicitly stated that the side shrine was built to house Upulvan although today, it is used as a shrine for god Vishnu.[139] Therefore, between the Gampola and Kandy periods, an ideological shift had taken place to merge Upulvan with Vishnu.[140] A similar placement can be noted with the architecture of Lankātilaka when considering the inclusion of subsidiary shrines around the central Buddhist vihara. The Nātha *devāle*, which is believed to have been built by king Vikramabāhu III, is dedicated to god Nātha. According to Guruge and Holt, between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Avalokiteśvara Nātha[141] and Samantabhadra[142], two Mahāyana Buddhist bodhisattvas, were deified as gods Nātha and Saman. Although the historical records do not clearly indicate if the Nātha *devāle* was built to venerate the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara

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[138] Tundeniya, 18.

[139] *Ibid.*

[140] John Holt's *Buddhist Viśnu* discusses this phenomenon when iconography was substituted and how the image of Upulvan was rearticulated with Vishnu coming into prominence within the Buddhist pantheon.

The depiction of the Buddhist pantheon in royal temples in Sri Lanka is also similar to the manner in which the Nayakkars painted various images of the Hindu pantheon. However, most of the Kandyan temples consist of ceilings that have lotus medallions painted on them. With the strong Nayakkar presence in Kandy, Hinduism seeped into the social fabric of the region as well. This was also not a new phenomenon as Hinduism was strongly established during the Polonnaruwa period as well. However in Kandy, some local tutelary deities such as Upulvan shared iconographic elements with Vishnu. As a result, Vishnu also became a 'Buddhist' deity that was patronized by Buddhists. Although this analysis may be questioned, it is possible that paintings of the Hindu pantheon were later emulated by the Sri Lankan artisans. In the southern and western coastal temples of late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there are many depictions of the Buddhist pantheon and they are rendered very similarly to the paintings of the Hindu pantheon seen in Nayakkar and later Hindu paintings. For example the painting of the multiple avatars of Vishnu, drawn on parchment paper is very similar to the ceiling panels of the Sri Lankan royal temples that depict the zodiac. (A.L. Dallapiccola, S*outh Indian Paintings A Catalogue of the British Museum* Collection (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 263. and Marie Gatellier, P*eintures murales du Sri Lanka: École Kandyenne XVIII^{e}-XIX^{e} siècles* (Paris: Publications de L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1991), 133.

[141] Holt, *Buddha in the Crown*, 108.

[142] Ananda Guruge. *Buddhism Today and Aesthetic Creativity* (United States of America: Lulu, 2010), 259.

Nātha or, his deified form god Nātha, the presence of the *devāle* is a testament to the multiplicity of religious practice and beliefs between the fourteenth to eighteenth century. Similarly, a shrine for god Saman is included in the Lankātilaka temple which indicates that between the said time period, the deified form of bodhisattva Samantabhadra has been accepted into the pantheon and consequently into the Gampola and Kandy periods. Unlike these three sites, the *Magul Maduwa* of Kandy has no religious purpose and instead primarily functioned as a royal audience hall that was modeled after the *Digg-ge* of Embekke *devāle*. I mention the *Magul Maduwa* in this chapter to highlight the workmanship of local artisans who are from local craft-guilds and their connections to migrant artisan families. The interchanges that happen within the Gampola and Kandy period are undoubtedly more varied and multi-faceted that can be highlighted in this study. However, I address several architectural features of each of these sites in juxtaposition with archival material and in relation to several Hindu temple sites in South India that have not been addressed previously in scholarly research to underscore the religious syncretism of Gampola and Kandy period and to contextualize the composition and the art of Embekke *devāle*.

One of the most plausible theoretical frameworks for the analysis I present with regard to the blending of Gampola, Kandyan, and South Indian art and architecture is discussed in Peter Burke's *Cultural Hybridity*.[143] By addressing a variety of cultural exchanges, Burke recognizes that hybridity has its own pitfalls where a particular group can be marginalized or oppressed due to the cultural superiority of another.[144] Likewise, he acknowledges that hybridity for offering a false image of consonance between groups and also broadens his discussion to both pre and post-

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[143] See Burke, Peter. *Cultural Hybridity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009.

[144] Burke, 16.

colonial phenomenon.[145] In terms of hybrid artifacts and images, Burke provides a variety of examples for material culture that was produced by foreign artists or in a foreign land for the consumption of another culture. He states, "Conversely, in fifteenth-century India, mosques were sometimes built by Hindu craftsmen who made use of decorative formulae that they had learned in the process of constructing their own temples."[146] The architecture of the Embekke *devāle*, the Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya temples, as I discuss later in this chapter, exemplify a strong sense of architectural syncretism and hybridity.

I. Architecture and roofs of Gampola period monuments

The exterior architecture of Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka temples, in comparison to Embekke *devāle*, presents several similarities and differences to traditional Drāvidian temple architecture in their overall compositions. I use standard Drāvida architectural terminology to identify these comparative architectural components in each temple. I also stress here that the three temples in Sri Lanka are not copies of Drāvida or Kerala Hindu temples. According to Branfoot, although the "Tamil-Drāvida language" has been used to demarcate the various architectural forms in the Gampola period, the temples do not adhere to the form and style of the thirteenth century Hindu temples in South India.[147] He attributes this difference to the differing practices of Buddhism where the temples were created as an architectural space specifically to accommodate Buddhist worshippers and to facilitate Buddhist ritual.[148] While they share many

[145] Burke, 14

[146] Burke, 23.

[147] Crispin Branfoot, "The Tamil Gopura From Temple Gateway to Global Icon," *ARS Orientalis* 45 (2015): 11.

[148] Branfoot, 12.

elements with temples in South India, the Sri Lankan temples stand on their own, with individual characteristics that specifically accommodate Buddhist worship, acknowledge local Buddhist gods, as well as Hindu Brahminical gods.

All three temples (Embekke *devāle*, Gadaladeniya, and Lankātilaka) are built on a solid stone foundations with clearly identifiable *Upapītha* and *Adhisthāna*. (Fig. 4.5 & 4.6) The Lankātilaka temple walls of the *Pādavarga* protrude to highlight the decorative single and clustered colonettes in bas-relief. Between some of the colonettes are heads of tuskers that seem to function as weight-bearing and apotropaic figures particularly, flaking the entrances to the doorways of the niches that house the various gods. The Gadaladeniya temple on the other hand, does not depict as much variation in depth and instead, the colonettes that create the illusion of fake doorways protrude slightly from the surface of the walls. (Fig. 4.7) In comparison to the wall space between the colonettes that protrude significantly in Lankātilaka, the Gadaladeniya temple wall shows less variation in depth. Visually, the interplay between the receding spaces and the juxtaposition of elephant heads in Lankātilaka create a more intricate view to the visitor. Embekke *devāle's* exterior walls of the *Pādavarga*, in comparison to the other two temples, consist of the most basic form devoid of any complex decorative details except for the thin ridges that mimic the form of columns on the exterior walls of the G*arbha*. (Fig. 4.8) There are no other decorations on the exterior walls of the Embekke *devāle*. In contrast to both Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya, Embekke *devāle's Pādavarga* directly connects to the sharply angled roof on three sides and the long tiled roof that connects the *Garbha* to the enclosed hallway. The *Prastāra* of the Lankātilaka temple depicts alternating *Makara* faces and an abstract *bodhi*-leaf or a flower petal motif bordering the second row of shorter colonettes that mirror the longer colonettes on

the *Pādavarga*. The roof begins after the *Prastāra*. The *Prastāra* of the Gadaladenya temple also employs a visual trope with a frieze of moving animals. In the center of the frieze is a small *Gana*. Above this frieze is the *Kaṅtha* which seems to have been reconstructed at a later date and is rendered with geometric fake doorways. The *Śikara* (which is still intact despite seepage of rainwater, is covered with a tin roof held by scaffoldings) reinforces the standard Drāvida form of temple architecture.

The Lankātilaka stone inscription suggests that the shrine consisted of four stories, each containing a different set of Buddhist and Hindu visual imagery.[149] Paranavitana's translation of the inscription also attests that by the time of the construction, bodhisattvas, Buddhist gods, and Brahminical gods such as Skandha were incorporated into the iconographic program of the temple. While the primary position has been assumed by the Buddha, the gods have been relegated according to their hierarchy within the Buddhist pantheon. The inscription provides no further record of the architecture or the presence of a dome. There is no indication of a dome when observing the roof over the *Makara-torana* above the main seated Buddha statues of the central vihara. (Fig. 4.9) However, Hocart indicates the presence of a dome in his drawings but it is unclear how he came to this conclusion and Bandaranayake[150] is skeptical of Hocart's

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[149] Senarat Paranavitana, "Lankatilka Inscriptions," *University of Ceylon Review* XVIII nos. 1&2 (1960): 10. According to the inscription by Buvanekabāhu IV, "the fourth level consisted of "twenty-eight principal images and a thousand other images, the third story which was caused to be constructed complete with Its Lordship the Principal Image and five other images, the second storey which is completed with (the representation of) the twenty-eight Trees of Wisdom (Bodhi) and the twenty-four Predictions caused to be constructed conjointly by all the chiefs (mudali) and the army, and the lowermost story which is complete with images of Buddha and gods, to wit, Its Lordship the Principal Image seated on the Diamond Throne (vajrāsanaya) with back to Its Lordship the illustrious great Bodhi-tree, which (Image) has been made by having installed within it a relic image containing two hundred and sixty-five Lordships of relics, with thousand Lordships of painted images (including the images of) the Lord Mairtī Bohdisattva, Lord Lokeśvara Nātha, the forms of the divinities beginning with Suyāma, Santusita, Śakra, Brahma, Visnu and Maheśvara, the images of the divine consorts of all these aforesaid personages, the images of the Lord, the divine king Kihireli Upulvan, who has taken (upon himself) the protection of Lamkā, and the divine kings Sumana, Vibhīsana, Ganapati, Kandakumāra and others and their consorts."

[150] Senake Bandaranayake, *Sinhalese Monastic Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 371.

drawings as there are no known sources that indicate a domed roof inside the three tiered roof of the Lankātilaka temple. Although the presence of a dome in Lankātilaka is arguable, both the Nātha *devāle* in Kandy and the Ādāhana Maluwa temple consist of similar G*edige* architecture with edifices rendered in stone with domed roofs. The Gadaladeniya temple is distinctive when comparing the G*edige* style architecture of Nātha *devāle*. While the Nātha *devāle* only has one dome, the Gadaladeniya has two domes; the main dome is over the *vihara* that is dedicated to the Buddha while the subsidiary dome is over the *devāle*. (Fig. 4.10 and 4.11) Although the Nātha *devāle* is pertinent to my comparative analysis with the two temples of Gampola, the Ādāhana Maluwa Gedige temple does not align with the Gampola period. The Ādāhana Maluwa Gedige temple is believed to have been built by Sēnā Sammatha Vikramabāhu of Kandy[151], but this assumption is primarily based on oral history. The Nātha *devāle* still maintains its *Gedige* style roof while the stone roof of Gadaladeniya is in a state of dilapidation despite conservation efforts by the Department of Archaeology.

The types of roofs in Gampola temple architecture and the various alterations that have taken place until the early 1900s illustrate the response of the artisans to the prevailing religious and cultural architectural practices and trends. Bandaranayake states that the Lankātilaka roof depicts a "distinctive Sinhalese architecture"[152] and likens its overall architecture to a derivative of Polonnaruwa period buildings, specifically the Thūparamaya. The Kandyan roof, according to Bandaranayake's classification, has a distinctive look that includes "the double pitch or double

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[151] The two names of the two Vikramabāhu kings are often used interchangeably leading to confusion among the readers. It is important to note the while Vikramabāhu III of Gampola is believed to be the founding king of Kandy, at times there are references made to a Vikramabāhu IV but there is no record of such a king in this period. Sēnā Sammatha Vikramabāhu is believed to be the first king of Kandy but he did not have autonomous rule; during this time Kandy was under a co-regent with the Kotte kingdom.

[152] Bandaranayake, 371.

angle which is applied in various combinations of hipped, gabled and multiple, superimposed forms."[153] The Lankātilaka roof exhibits these characteristics with three tiers and gradually sloping long eaves that are covered with clay tiles. (Fig.4.12 & 4.13) The main entrance has a gabled and pitched roof. Although this roof aligns with the pitched roof that covered the circumambulatory niches with the deities, the two roofs are not connected. Two decorative roofs on the sides of the building are held by pillars. At the very center of the structure is a roof that is also pitched and tapered along the sides and is aligned with a smaller pitched roof that is superimposed over the roof of the main entrance. The multi-tiered and superimposed roof segments create a cohesive composition that indicate a traditional Kandyan style roof over Lankātilaka.

The exact date of the present roof of Lankātilaka is ambiguous but can be dated approximately to the Kandy period. As Bandaranayake further notes, the roof does show the marking of a recent construction; it is difficult to assume that a wooden roof with clay tiles from the Gampola period would have been preserved until now. As the available archival photograph[154] (Fig.4.14) from the early twentieth century shows either the same roof or with some conservation, there is no evidence to suggest the exact style of the original roof from the Gampola period. The Gadaladeniya temple, however, seems to have multi-tiered gradually sloping roofs with clay tiles added over its stone domes at a later time. According to the earliest

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[153] Senake Bandaranakaye, "Sri Lanka and Monsoon Asia: Pattern of Local and Regional Development and the Problem of the Traditional Sri Lankan Roof," in Senarat Paranavitana Commemoration Volume, ed. J.E. van Lohuzien-de Leeuw (Leiden, 1978), 43.

[154] Henry Cave, *The Book of Ceylon* (London, Paris, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, Cassell And Company, Limited, 1908) 339. (Pl 460. Lankātilaka Temple)

photos of the Gadaladeniya temple by Henry Cave in 1908[155], (Fig. 4.15) both the central dome and the subsidiary dome are covered and the front porch of the temple, that consist of composite stone columns, has an upper level made with brick and mortar columns. The tiered roofs and the upper level over the front porch do not exist today. Cave states that Kandyans fervently added sloping roofs that "peaked"[156] at the top to Kandyan *devāles* and temples.[157] He states that such a roof was added to the Lankātilaka temple about sixty years ago (about 1846) to cover its stone vaulted roof of the Buddhist vihara and the subsidiary Hindu shrines.[158] The tiered roofs at Gadaladeniya, according to Cave, has been added about one hundred and twenty five years ago (1781).[159] However, he does not provide a source for this claim. Upon observing these archival photos and analyzing the architecture, I suggest that the upper porch, with the brick and mortar columns were also a much later addition that do not form a part of the original stone architecture. Details of the upper porch are not mentioned in any of the literature I consulted. Agreeing with Cave's description, C. E. Godakumbura states that both the domed roof Gadaladeniya and the vaulted roof of Lankātilaka temples were covered with timber roofs and tiles after one hundred years of the completion of the two temples.[160] Particularly when observing the early *Gedige* style architecture that is constructed with a relatively flat roof, it is certain that sometime between the Gampola and Kandy periods that tiered roofs were added to these two temples. The most

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[155] Cave, Pl 461 and Pl 462 Gadaládeniya Temple, 340. Cave, Pl 463 Gadaládeniya Temple, 343. Cave, Pl 466 and Gadaládeniya Temple, 347.

[156] Cave, 345.

[157] *Ibid.*

[158] *Ibid.*

[159] *Ibid.*

[160] C.E. Godakumbura, *Architecture of Sri Lanka* (Sri Lanka: Department of Cultural Affairs, 1976), 19.

plausible explanation for adding a roof to stone *Gedige* temples would be to protect the structure from the heavy monsoon rainfall in the central hills.

Cave suggests that the addition of tiered roofs may have been an attempt to make the buildings look more 'Kandyan' in style.[161] As the architecture of the Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka temples resembled South Indian Hindu temple architecture and Polonnaruwa temples, such as Thūparamaya as Bandaranayake suggests, adding a distinctive Kandyan roof would have been an attempt to make the buildings more appropriate for the Kandyan kingdom. Traditional Kandyan roofs are seen in Embekke *devāle*, the annexed Buddhist shrine, and in the Dēvata Bandara shine. By observing the time period in which these roofs were constructed in Embekke and the cultural shifts that were taking place in Kandy, I propose that the reconstruction of Embekke *devāle,* its subsidiary shrines with Kandyan roofs was a part of the broader Buddhist revival that was taking place in Kandy and its peripheries. In a similar sense, the Kandyan kings were legitimizing their rule within Kandy by giving a more local Kandyan facelift to earlier monuments, such as Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka, while patronizing subsidiary shrines such as Embekke *devāle*.

II. Nayakkar kings and the efflorescence of Kandy and its peripheries

The patronage given by Kandyan kings to Gampola period temples is remarkable when observing various *Sannas* (royal grants), inscriptions, and oral history. According to oral history, Rājadhi Rajasingha has granted thirty *amunu* land to Embekke *devāle* during the time of

[161] Cave, 345.

Basnayaka Nilame Batupitiye.[162] The adjacent Dēvata Bandara shrine had been built during the same time.[163] The Lankātilaka Copper plate inscriptions that are located in the Lankātilaka monk's residence has details about the *Sannas* that were granted by king Kīrti Srī Rājasinha (1747-1780) and by his brother, Rājadhi Rājasinha.[164] The copper plate inscriptions that are dated to the eighteenth century, illustrate the patronage given by both kings to the Lankātilaka temple. As Mudiyanse has argued, the village of Godavela has been granted to the Lankātilaka temple by Kīrti Sri Rājasinha in 1767 while the village of Rambegamuwa has been given to the temple in 1787 by Rājadhi Rājasinha.[165] Furthermore, the Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya temples both consist of Kandyan style painting that were painted in the eighteenth century. According to Bandaranayake, both temples exemplify how prolific temple renovations and painting of the eighteenth century has also led to erasing or overpainting of murals that existed prior to the Kandyan period.[166] The revival of the eighteenth century, also known as the Buddhist renaissance of Kandy, was foregrounded by the Kandyan kings and its chief architect is believed to be Kīrti Srī Rājasinha. After Kīrti Srī's demise, Rājadhi Rājasinha continued with the royal patronage that was extensively accorded by his predecessor. Perhaps the most intriguing factor here is that these

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[162] Archibald Lawrie, "A Gazetteer of the Central Province of Ceylon" (Government Printer Ceylon, Colombo, 1896), 219. Lawrie further notes that a Buddhist temple located in Embekke, known as the Daranda Vihara, was built in 1856. An older vihara has been present until 1928 and has been replaced by the new vihara building that is seen today. The land for this vihara is supposedly donated by king Rājadhi Rajasingha (1781-1798) through a Sannasa (royal deed).

[163] *Ibid.*

[164] Mudiyanse, 119.

[165] Mudiyanse, 120.

[166] Senake Bandaranayake, *Rock and Wall Paintings of Sri Lanka*, (Colombo: Lake House Bookshop, 1986), 15.

two kings were not Sinhala Buddhist kings but Hindu Saivite Nayakkars from Madurai, South India[167].

The artistic exchanges between the Nayakkars and the Kandyan court becomes further evident when considering the unique nature of the social and political developments in the Sri Lankan capital during the eighteenth century. According to Subhramanyam, Nayakkars in South India are divided into several sub groups depending on the region of their rule, such as: Vijayanagara Nayakkars and Tanjavur Nayakkars.[168] The Nayakkars in Sri Lanka are identified as Madurai Nayakkars as Wijetunga establishes the origin of the Kandyan Nayakkars to the Madurai district.[169] With the marriage of Narendrasinha (1707-1739), who is considered as the last Sinhala king of Sri Lanka, there was an influx of Nayakkars into Kandy.[170] After his demise, kingship was passed down to his wife's family who were Madurai Nayakkars. As a result of power shift within the Kandyan kingdom, the Nayakkar kings ventured to promote themselves as ideal Sinhala Buddhist kings to establish their authority among the predominantly Sinhala Buddhist public.

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[167] Dewaraja discusses some of the early connections that South Indians had made with Kandy at a time when Kandy was co-ruling with Kotte. " It was with the *vadugas* (Telugu speakers who migrated to the south and adopted Tamil) or *badagas* that the kings of Kandy established connections. First they sought (Dewaraja, 23.) military assistance from these "terrible brigands" against a common foe, the Portuguese. Vimala Dharma Suriya I (1592-1604) obtained help from the Tanjore-Madura area, and the continents who came over, called *badagas*, were according to Queyroze, the best fighting men in India. In 1602, the Portuguese were patrolling the eastern waters of Ceylon, so as to prevent Vimala Dharma Suriya receiving reinforcements of *vadug*a troops from the Nayakas of South India. The next king, Senarat, and also Sankili king of Jaffna, received military aid from the *vadugas*. Perhaps, the military assistance paved the way for matrimonial alliances, for soon after this, in the reign of Senarat's successor, Rajasimha II, we see the beginning of a series of inter-marriages between the members of the royal family at Kandy and the *vaduga* Nayaks of Madura. The Sinhalese sources always speak of South Indian brides who came to the Kandyan court, as belonging to the *Vadigakula* of Madurapura. Evidently, the *badagas* of the Portuguese, the *baddegas* of the Dutch and the *vadugas* of *vadigas* of the Sinhalese sources, all refer to the body of Telugu speaking people who followed the Nayak governors to the South and settled in the Tanjore Madura area, and many of whom adopted the name of Nayak." Lorna Dewaraja, *A Study of the Political, Administrative, and Social Structure of the Kandyan Kingdom of Ceylon, 1707-1760 (Colombo*: Lake House Investments, 1972), 24.

[168] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Penumbral Visions: Making Polities in Early Modern South India*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 230.

[169] M.W.K. Wijetunga, "The Backgrounds of the Nayakkars of Kandy," *University of Ceylon Review* XVI 3.4 (1958): 128.

[170] Wijetunga, *The Backgrounds of the Nayakkars of Kandy*, 129.

Although Kīrti Srī converted to Buddhism, it was speculated that he remained a practicing Saivite on a personal level. Having ascended the throne at sixteen years of age, his ethnicity was not contested by either the Sinhala nobles or the clergy after he established himself as the harbinger of the Buddhist renaissance. By emulating the ideals of a Buddhist king, Kīrti Srī established his rule within a predominantly Sinhala Buddhist kingdom by gaining the support of the lay and monastic communities.

The paintings that had been done in Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya in the eighteenth century attest to the Buddhist revival of the Kandy period and to the Nayakkar presence and artistic exchanges with Madurai. Kandyan paintings are a continuation of the broader Sri Lankan painting tradition that has its early roots in twelfth century Polonnaruwa period narrative paintings and other examples, such as the Hindagala temple paintings. Kandy period paintings also share distinctive connections with the Vijayanagara and Nayaka period paintings in South India. Much like the Nayaka paintings, Kandyan paintings are also drawn in predominantly red backgrounds with stylized human figures. The paintings of Lankātilaka temple depict the twenty-four previous Buddhas drawn in superimposed registers with the future Buddha Gautama depicted in various forms, accepting the declaration with reverence. (Fig. 4.16 and 4.17) Underneath each register that is marked by a floral border and between the Buddhas is a Sinhala inscription that identified the name of the Buddha issuing the proclamation and the name of the receiver. Adhering to the standard Kandyan style paintings of the eighteenth century, the backgrounds consist of celestial flowers and lotus motifs. The tree accorded to each past Buddha is also drawn in profile view. As the figures assume hierarchic scale, the frontally drawn Buddhas are larger in scale to the smaller figures that are drawn in profile kneeling beside them.

The smaller figures consists of lay persons, sages, gods, royals, and noblemen and is also identifiable by the standard Kandyan clothing that consists of accoutrements such as the *Tuppottiya*, which is worn by Kandyan nobles. The gods are depicted in more elaborate regalia and taller headdresses while some figures include a lion, a demon, and a snake. Other paintings within the Lankātilaka temple consist of pervious Buddhas and *Arhats* depicted in superimposed registers as is revealed in one scene where there is evidence of an exposed underpainting. (Fig. 4.18) This is an example of how extensive renovation in the Kandy period covered examples of older paintings, such as those from the Gampola period. The elephant on a side column also attests to this claim as we can see fragments of plaster over the painting. (Fig. 4.19) The borders of the walls are painted and sculpted with traditional motifs such as *Gal-binduwa*, *Liya-wela*, *Nārilatha*, and *Kinnara* motifs, reminiscing the wood carvings from Embekke *devāle*. (Fig. 4.20 & 4.21)

Both Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka depict a myriad of figures from the Hindu pantheon and Mahāyana Buddhism juxtaposed with local Kandyan paintings. The selection of various deities and bodhisattvas indicate the extent to which Hinduism and Buddhism has synchronized within the Buddhist temples. The devotees who enter the image houses would be visually engaged with the sculptures and paintings and be able to identify at least the most prominent Hindu gods, such as Vishnu and Ganesha, while worshipping the central Buddha. With *devāles* being articulated into the architecture of both temples during the Gampola period, the Kandy period inclusion of Hindu and Mahāyana figures further emphasizes the religious syncretism that was being experienced in Kandy and its peripheral temples.

While the Hindu and local tutelary gods were in close proximity within the niches of the walls of Lankātilaka and the adjacent shrine of Gadaladeniya, they seem to have entered the main Buddha shrine in the Kandy period. The gods and celestial beings are placed above the central Buddha in the *Makara-torana* in direct view of the worshippers who enter the shrine. In Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka, the central shrines have a triad of Buddhas sculpted in the traditional Kandyan style with broad shoulder, robust limbs, and fully open eyes. (Fig. 4.9 & 4.22) The prominently placed *ushnisha* and the finely carved zig-zag pattern of the saffron robes further suggest the addition of Kandyan stylistic features. Although the Buddha statues may have been originally made in the Gampola period, they may have been re-adorned in the Kandyan style as both temples underwent considerable re-building between the Gampola and Kandy period. Flanked by two standing Buddhas on either side, the central Buddhas in both temples are seated in a meditative posture under a *Makara-torana* that depicts Brahminical gods such as Sakka, Vishnu, and Ganesha. Although in the Kandyan *Makara-torana* the standard practice is to depict Vishnu and Saman, on the Lankātilaka *Makara-torana* I noticed a third-eye on the forehead of the yellow colored god, who would usually be a depiction of Saman. However, his other attributes such as a sword does not identify him as Shiva. According to Holt, *Makara-torana* at Gadaladeniya include Brahminical gods such as "Brahma, Sakka, Suyāma, and Santusita" as well as "Buddhist bodhisattvas such as Nātha and Maithreya"[171]. The foliage jutting out of the *Kīrti-mukha* from the center of the *torana* is connected to a composite *Makara* figure at each end, creating a framing device for the centra Buddha. While two weight-bearing *Ganas* are moulded underneath the *Makara-torana* in Gadaladeniya, (Fig. 4.22) the Lankātilaka

[171] John Holt, 100.

temple *Makara-torana* depicts two mythical lions and two *Kinnaras*. (Fig. 4.21) The paintings in the Buddhist shrine at Embekke *devāle* follows the same juxtaposition of sculpture and paintings of a Kandyan *vihara*, but as its stylistic variation indicates, the paintings and sculptures exhibit characteristics of the nineteenth century, much like the paintings seen within the four small viharas that radiate from the Gadaladeniya *stūpa*.

Kandyan paintings in Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya temples assume a set of distinctive characteristics that include a standardized color palette, figuration, and abstract stylization and composition. There are also undeniable stylistic and compositional characteristics they share with South Indian temple wall paintings. As the Nayakas in South India were transitioning from being subservients of the Vijayanagara kings to formulating their own royal kingdoms in Tanjore and Madurai, they also incorporated Vijayanagara art and sculpture in their new temples while infusing a style that was specific to the Nayakas. Art and architecture developed significantly during the Vijayanagara empire as the kings extensively focused on depicting both religious and non-religious paintings and sculptures within the temples they created.[172] After establishing their own kingdoms, the Nayakas continued the artistic practices of the Vijayanagara rulers. The Nayaka period accounts for most of the remaining mural paintings of South India.[173] Narrative paintings within Hindu temple architecture was also a highlight of both the Vijayanagara and Nayakkar dynasties. The content of the plots depicted range from Hindu mythology to epics such

[172] R. Champalakshmi, *Religion, Tradition, and Ideology: Pre-Colonial South India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 583.

[173] Dallapiccola, 15.

as the Ramayana.[174] Despite the volume of artistic production in Vijayanagara, it is the Nayakkar period that accounts for most of the narrative paintings in South India.

Both the South Indian mural tradition from the Nayakkars and Kandyan paintings did not follow strict guidelines or a canon that specified modes of figuration and design. Rather, it was a collective effort among several artisans, sometimes belonging to one family by a chief artist or a Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka. One unmistakable similarity between mural painting from the two regions is the bright color palette. According to Dallapiccola and some of the examples listed in her catalogue, many murals in South India were painted with bright pigments on red backgrounds.[175] Similarly, the most significant element in all eighteenth century Kandyan temple paintings is the red background as seen in Lankātilaka paintings. The particular shade of red may vary slightly from lake red to brick red, or perhaps, maroon. The other colors used during the Nayakkar period were primarily brown, yellow, and white for the figures, and green for the trees. Some green has also been used to color the figures while blue is rarely seen in any of the paintings in Kandy and green is sparsely used to indicate elements of nature. All figures are rendered two dimensionally and paint has been applied evenly. The absence in shading highlights the flatness of the paintings and this is a shared feature seen in eighteenth century Kandyan style. The protagonists in both Hindu and Buddhist narratives are painted in golden yellow or light brown. Murals of Nayakas and Kandyan

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[174] Dallapiccola, 225. Also, an analytical study on textile paintings would be provide an interesting insight to the paintings tradition of this period. There is no literature yet published on this subject, particularly on any Sri Lankan material. For example, Dallapiccola lists the details of a cloth hanging from Tamil Nadu and found in the Sri Lanka (collected by Hugh Nevill and later purchased by the British Museum). The cloth is 225x87 cm and consists of red and indigo pigment. (Dallapiccola, 235.) Gatellier mentions a *Pethikada*, a temple cloth hanging found in the eighteenth century royal temple, Arattana Vihara, in Hanguranketa, Sri Lanka. (Gatellier, 33.)

[175] Dallapiccola, 15.

temple were also drawn with black outlines that were carefully drawn with a thin utensil to separate the figures from the background.The artisans have given special attention to the rendering of thin lines to highlight various figures. Decorations within the figures are also drawn in black or dark brown. Line-work seems to have been an important skill that was perfected by both South Indian and Sri Lankan painters. The compositions were also placed on horizontal registers along the temple walls as the various Hindu and Buddhist stories were placed in episodic narratives; the plots move swiftly with the images of building or elements of nature such as rivers or trees marked the ending of one scene and the beginning of the next.

In contrast to traditional Kandyan paintings, the Nayakkar murals are filled with various decorative motifs, architecture, and elements of nature. In fact, the background is almost covered by these decorative motifs. All the figures, clothes, jewelry, animals, weapons, and architecture in the Nayakkar paintings are covered in decorative designs consisting of floral and geometric patterns. The only free space without decoration is the background. In contrast, Kandyan paintings have more red background space that is devoid of any decoration. Sometimes, the Kandyan artisans included lotus medallions and other celestial flowers in the background between the figures. Also the backgrounds in both Nayakkar and Kandyan paintings do not indicate any references to perspective as there is no delineation of depth within the scenes. As a result, all natural features such as ponds, rivers, and fields are drawn vertically, as though they are hanging on the picture plane. Whether these features demonstrated the knowledge of the artisans or their lack of

skill is a much debated issue. However, this technique exhibits a significant similarity between the two styles.

Another similarity in temple paintings of both regions is the rendering of hierarchical scale of the characters where importance is given to the protagonist. A common feature in both styles is that the main character is given prominence with a larger scale and a frontal view. Although the torsos are always drawn in a frontal position, the feet are placed sideways along the bottom of the register. Enlarging the main character helps the viewers to easily identify the character and also heightens his importance within the plot. Therefore, when considering the general rendering between South Indian paintings of the Nayaka period and the Kandyan paintings, it is evident that artists in both regions followed a similar technique. It is possible that artistic practices were shared between the two regions and the prevailing political connections between Kandy and the Nayaka dynasty may have been further conducive for such artistic exchange.[176]

There are several possible reasons for these similarities mentioned with regard to style. When looking at the historical developments in the Kandyan kingdom during the early eighteenth century, it is possible that the South Indian Nayakas were directly involved with the exchange or art between the two regions. Art in both regions was a communal effort and families belonging to the painter's caste were responsible for creating the paintings. Rarely are the artisans identified by their name and those who funded the paintings, mainly local chieftains and kings of the different dynasties, were

[176] Dallapiccola, 263 and Gatellier, 133.

credited in temple inscriptions. Although there are no references to Sri Lankan artists having visited South India, Deraniyagala notes that two Sri Lankan kings, specifically Narandrasinha and Kīrti Srī Rājasinha, brought Telugu artists to work in the temples they built and renovated.[177] According to Holt, there may have been a close group of artisans who worked for Kīrti Srī. The paintings in several Kandyan temples depict similarities in style. Degaldoruwa, Gangaramaya, Ridi Viharaya, Suriyagoda, Medawala, and Dambulla paintings consist of a similar style and figuration.[178] However, more research is required on information of the artisans that Kīrti Srī brought from India.

The dynamic of the patron and the chief merit-maker has a long history within Buddhist art and architectural practices of Sri Lanka. The names of individual painters are not mentioned because they are remunerated for the work and such a transaction eliminates the accumulation of merit. Therefore, the patron who sponsors the work by providing the funding is a merit-maker and is mentioned in the *Sannas* and in some cases, donor portraits are painted within the image houses. Within the Embekke *devāle Dig-ge*, I located two inscriptions on pillars that have neither been previously published nor addressed in scholarly literature. The letters indicate an older form of the Sinhala language that was written with joined letters and records the only date and written text that is inscribed within the *Dig-ge* or any space that is visible to the worshippers. Both inscriptions are above eye-level on the pillars, located right below where the pillars meet the roof beam. Both inscriptions have considerable cracks on the wood and one pillar

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[177] Paulus Deraniyagala. "The Human and Animal Motif in Sinhala Art." *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic* Society 4 no. 1 (1955): 7.

[178] John Holt, *The Religious World of Kirti Sri: Buddhism, Art, and Politics in Late Medieval Sri Lanka* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 51.

indicates the conservation efforts that were done to repair a deep crack, possibly in 1948. Given the obscure location of where the inscriptions have been carved into the pillars, they can quite easily be missed by a visitor. Due to their condition, certain letters in the inscriptions are unclear. As the only inscription within the *Dig-ge*, the writings underscore that the pillars were used to record a donation given to the Embekke *devāle* by a lay chief and that the labor was supplied by a local man. (Fig. 4.23 & 4.24)

The Sinhala inscription reads:

මෙ දෙවා ලෙ ඉ දිරිපිට

දවා හද තියෙන කරු

පහ පා නබොකෙකබ න්

ඩා රදඩබුලත්ගමරටෙ

දිසා මහත්මයොවිසින් ක්‍රි

-නව-1856න කවු අවුරුදෙ-

උඩබු ලත්ග මකෙ

වා හෙලෙන් අදදවා

දු තනාඇත වැඩ—

ක ලබවට උ පාස ක

ගෙදරකිරිහා මි

Transliteration:

Me devā le i diripasa

dawā hada thiyena karu

paha Pā nabokkeba n

dā raudabulathgamarate

disā mahathmayovisin kri

-thewa-1856tha kawu awurude-

udabu lathga make

wa helen addawa

du nnaetha weda-

k labawata u pasa ka

gedarakirihā mi

English Translation:

The five supportive poles that are fixed in front of this devāle were brought from the valley of Udabulathgama by Panabokke Bandara Rate Mahatmaya of Udabulathgama, in 1856 Cristian Era. Work done by Upāsaka Gedara Kirihami.

In addition to the royal patronage that Embekke *devāle* has received, this inscription indicates the patronage the site has received from local noblemen such as Panabokke Bandara who carried the feudal title of *Ratē Mahatmaya*. Another significant detail of this inscription is that it mentions the name of the local man who undertook the labor. The Sinhala text indicates

that he made this inscription on the two pillars on behalf of Panabokke Bandara also as a witness to the deed. There is a possibility that the inscription was done by an individual who was literate enough to inscribe Sinhala text including numbers, rather than the worker, Kirihami.

The recording of the donation of the supportive poles, which are not seen today, highlight the reciprocal nature of the Buddhist practice of *Dāna* and Karma, despite Embekke *devāle* being a predominantly Hindu site. Although the same concept of good Karma reciprocating for donations made to religious sites applies to Hindu temples, the two names indicate that they are both from the majority, Sinhala and Buddhist. Upasaka Gedara Kirihami's name certainly indicates his religious affiliation as a Buddhist. I include this obscure inscription to demonstrate the conflation of Hindu and Buddhist practice within the Embekke *devāle*.

III. Temple pillars from Gampola, Kandy, and South India

The form of the pillars in Embekke *devāle*, which are similar in form to the wooden pillars of the Embekke *Vāhalkada* and the stone pillars of the Embekke *Ambalama,* along with the two stone pillars of the Gadaladeniya temple porch, tell an interesting story of the amalgamation of Hindu South Indian, Gampola, and Kandyan architecture. Additionally, comparing archival photos that depict the Nātha *devāle* pillars and the historical details of the Magul Maduwa in Kandy also add to this narrative to better illustrate the role of artisans in the Kandy period.

The Gadaladeniya temple porch has two stone pillars on a stone base that is decorated with two stone elephants and a set of steps that are also carved with dancing figures at their base and two *Yālis* as handrails. (Fig. 4.25 & 4.26) While the carvings on the steps and the pillars

have been discussed by several scholars, what I question is the form, iconography, and the possible provenance of these two unusual composite columns. (Fig. 4.27 & 4.28) The bottom, top and center of each pillar are square while two octagonal portions form the rest of the pillars. On two sides of each pillar are two octagonal shafts that are connected to each central pillar. All four small pillars rest on the heads of stone lions and are topped with another lion who sits on a lotus pedestal. However, these two pillars are not identical; despite being composite pillars that look similar at first glance, the decorative designs and the overall compositions differ significantly. As Holt notes, the right column indicates Hindu iconography while the left column depicts aniconic Buddhist iconography.[179] The right column has prominent Hindu iconography such as Shiva Nataraja and Krishna while the left column has lotus motifs and foliage designs. Although the main column on the left does not depict anthropomorphic figures, rows of disks with dancing figures connect the two subsidiary columns to the central column. The dancers mirror the ones that are carved underneath the main steps between the *Yālis* and around the stone base of the entrance porch. The lions on the two pillars consist of different decorative designs on their manes and the capitals of the four subsidiary columns are also not identical.

While the conflation of Hindu and Pan-Asian motifs provide a view into the dual nature of the two columns, I raise several questions regarding their provenance and development in Gampola. Due to the absence of similar composite columns extant in Sri Lankan temples, I turn to South India to look for possible prototypes. As pointed out to me by Anila Verghese, the Virupaksha temple in Hampi has columns that are visually similar in form to those of Gadaladeniya. The side aisles of the *Maha rangamandapa* at Virupaksha temple consist of

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[179] John Holt, T*he Buddhist Viśnu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 193.

composite pillars with detached columns, a seated lion base, sharp *Pushpapotika* (*Pēkada*) motifs, prominent *Nāga-bandha* motifs, bulbous lotus *Pushpapotikas* of the detached pillars, and lotus medallions carved on the pillars. Although the composition of the central pillar differs from the alternating square-octagon-square form, the iconography and the detached pillars show a strong visual similarity with the Gadaladeniya pillars. The *Yālis* and the miniature carvings on the base of the *Mandapa* also reinforce this comparative visual analysis.

Surveying the temple pillars of South India and comparing them to temple pillars of Sri Lanka would be a monumental undertaking that should perhaps be done by a team of scholars in both regions, given the sheer number of temples and the complexities of the columns. Therefore, my attempt in addressing the similarities of Gadaladeniya and the Virupaksha pillars is to see how the conflation of form and iconography of the pillars may have taken place between two different geographical locations of Gampola and Hampi. The composite columns are a hallmark of Vijayanagara artisans who mass-produced them to be incorporated into temple pillared hallways and *Mandapas*. Branfoot places the beginnings of the basic composite columns in Tamil Nadu,[180] where they later developed into a "square-octagon-sqaure-octagon-square"[181] pattern, which is the same format we see in the Gadaladeniya columns. The Tamil composite column developed further within the Deccan temples and manifested into more ornate composite columns with additional architectural sculpture in the Vijayanagara period. There is a possibility that the Gadaladeniya pillars were a later addition that was made after the initial fourteenth century date of its construction as suggested by Tundeniya, but this claim lacks substantial

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[180] Crispin Branfoot, "Expanding Form: The Architectural Sculpture of the South Indian Temple, ca. 1500-1700," *Artibus Asiae* 62 no.2 (2002) 193.

[181] Branfoot, 192.

evidence. The other possibility is local or South Indian migrant artisans carving the two pillars and the accompanying stone porch for the temple in Gampola. Given the close relationship with Nayaka kings of Kandy with Madurai and their extensive patronage to Buddhist temples, it is also possible for the pillars to have been commissioned by the kings at a later date, possibly during the Kandyan period. The pillars of the Virupaksha date to the time of Krishnadevaraya (1509-1510 C.E.),[182] when they were mass-produced in workshops with often repeated and standardized motifs.[183] However, unlike the Hindu temple *Mandapas*, there are only two pillars in the Gadaladneiya temple, givings the possibility that the pillars were custom made for Gadaladeniya or that they were transported from a different temple. Another distant, yet a possible answer to the provenance of the Gadaladeniya pillars, would be the temple pillars of the Jaffna kingdom that also maintained connections with Vijayanagara and other South Indian kingdoms. However, given the traumas of the recently ended civil war, archaeological remains of Hindu temples in the northern region remain minimal. When considering all these possibilities, it is safe to assume that the pillars were installed during the Gampola or Kandy periods.

The wooden columns of the Kandy period are significantly standardized and can be seen in Embekke *devāle*, *Vāhalkada*, *Ambalama*, and in the Nātha *devāle* in Kandy. (Fig. 4.29) To address the form and composition of these pillars, I once again turn to South India. The Mīnakshi Śiva temple in Madurai consists of the Thousand Pillared Hall also known as the Mīnakshi Nāyakkar *Mandapam* built in1559 by Ariyanātha Mudliyar. He was prime minister to Viswantha Nayaka (1559-1600), the first Nayaka ruler in Madurai. Among the multitude of single,

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[182] Anila Verghese, "Temple Pillars: their evolution and art during the Vijayanagara period," in Sangama: A Confluence of Art and Culture, ed. Nalini Rao (New Delhi: D.K. Publishers, 2006), 41.

[183] Verghese, 40.

composite and sculptural pillars, the northwestern corner of the hall consists of a cluster of columns that are very similar in form to the pillars in Embekke. (Fig.4.30 & 4.31) The pillars are carved in stone but follow the square-octagonal-square-octagonal-square form with decorative carvings on the center square. The *Nagā-bandha* is prominently carved in the stone pillars in Madurai while in the wooden pillars in Embekke and in the stone pillars of the *Ambalama*, the *Nāga-bandha* is carved within a cube, representing more of a foliage pattern. The center square of the stone columns consists of a mostly repetitive floral design that is also seen in Embekke *devāle* pillars, indicating the possibility of their mass-production within one workshop. In the recently modernized Thousand Pillared Hall, the cluster of stone pillars I mention do not consist of upturned *Pushpapotikas* (*Pēkadas*) but has square blocks of stone that are devoid of decoration. However, the *Pushpapotikas* are a decorative motif that is ubiquitously seen in South Indian M*andapas* in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Vijayanagara similar to those in Embekke and Kandy period temples. Arguably, the most identifiable 'Kandyan' feature of wooden pillars in almost all Kandy period temples is the upturned and drooping lotus *Pēkada*.

IV. Kerala temples and Gampola and Kandy period temple architecture

The overall architectural composition of the Lankātilaka temple and the present-day main shrine in Embekke *devāle* present several avenues for comparative analysis with South Indian temple architecture from Kerala. While I do not suggest that either culture was directly influenced by the other, I highlight the cultural and architectural transactions that have taken place between Sri Lanka and Kerala, suggesting the strong possibility of an architectural exchange over time. Bandaranayake, who observes the similarities of gabled rectilinear roof of

the Lankātilaka temple and Kerala temples, states: "Of all the buildings of India with predominantly rectilinear roofs it is those of Kerala which can best be compared with the classic architecture of Ceylon. Not only is this western coastal plain one of the areas of India which is geographically closes to Ceylon, but, in addition, its climate and vegetation resemble that of a large part of the island, more so than any other subcontinental region."[184] There are several Kerala temple components that align with the architecture of Embekke *devāle* and Lankātilaka. Much like the ambiguous historical record of Embekke *devāle*, where the founding of the temple is linked to the mythology of Skandha, most temples in Kerala also lack a written history. The founding myth is usually associated with the arrival, birth, and marriage of the patron god. Several obstacles occur when conducting research on Kerala temples as they are mostly restricted to Hindus and photography is strictly prohibited. In a few temples, I was able to photograph the subsidiary shrines and *Mandapas* outside of the sacred precinct with the permission of the temple priest.

Further observation on the art and architecture of Kerala helps to analyze the art and architecture of the Gampola period. Sarkar categorizes the three distinct phases of Kerala temple architecture as: early (800-1000A.D.), middle (1001-1300A.D.), and late (1301-1800A.D.).[185] The time period during which Embekke devāle was founded and later reconstructed, along with the founding of Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya temples, align with the late period (1301-1800) of temple building in Kerala. This time period also covers the advent of the Vijayanagara power in South India. The Vijayanagara empire covered both Madurai in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and

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[184] Senake Bandaranayake, *Sinhalese Monastic Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 372.

[185] H. Sarkar, *An Architectural Survey of Temples of Kerala* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1978), 97.

despite being two different states today, they were both considered as one region under Vijayanagara rule. Therefore, Drāvidian architectural characteristics are not exclusive from the Kerala style. Certain features that align with both styles can be seen in Embekke *devāle*, Lankātilaka, and Gadaladeniya. Among the multitude of temples in Kerala, some of the temples that I have chosen for this analysis show significant similarities with Embekke *devāle* and Lankātilaka. I fully recognize that given the extensive scope and sheer number of temples in Kerala that my research does not comprehensively include all the other temples within the state, let alone the rest of South India. What I aim in this study is to highlight some of the unmistakable architectural similarities between some Kerala temples and those of Embekke *devāle* and Lankātilaka, which have not been previously addressed in academic research.

To observe and analyze the architecture of Kerala temples, I visited several sites, including Karanathil Śiva shrine on grounds of Triprangode Śiva Temple, Malappuram (tenth century), Sankaranarayana shrine of the Thiruvegppura Mahadeva temple, Palakkad (fourteenth century), Guruvayur Sri Krishna temple, Guruvayur, Thirunakkara Mahadeva Temple, Kottayam, and the Vadakkunnatha temple in Thrissur. Both the Sankaranarayana shrine and the Karanathil Śiva shrines are subsidiary shrines, which are similar to the subsidiary position of Embekke devāle within the Gampola kingdom. Due to the restrictions in photography in each temple, I was only allowed to take photographs of the subsidiary shrines, the Karanathil Śiva shrine at the Triprangode Śiva Temple, the *Koothambalam* (dance hall) located outside the *Naalambalam* at the Thiruvegppura Mahadeva temple, Palakkad, the rectangular wall that contains the sacred shrines within, and the western Gopuram (gateway) of the Vadakkunnatha temple in Thissur. Photography is completely prohibited inside the gates of Vadakkunnatha temple, Sri Krishna

Temple Guruvayur, and the Thirunakkara Mahadeva temple. Although there are many shrines that could be analyzed in comparison to Embekke *devāle* and Lankātilaka, photography and documentation within the *Naalambalams* of several temples was prohibited. Therefore, I include the Karanathil Śiva shrine and the western Gopuram of Vadakkunnatha temple, which I was allowed to photograph from the outside as examples for a comparative study.

The Triprangode Śiva Temple in Malappuram is dated to the Chera dynasty of the tenth century, but presumably the temple buildings were constructed subsequently at later times. The Karanathil Śiva shrine (Fig. 4.32) within this temple complex, that is dedicated to its namesake deity, is a subsidiary temple located within a cluster of other small shrines. The reason for choosing this shrine for a comparison with the *Garbha* of Embekke *devāle* is completely based on a visual analysis due to the lack of published historical details of the Triprangode Śiva Temple. Both the Karanathil Śiva shrine and the Embekke *devāle* are built on a square *Upapitha* and *Adhisthana.* The *Pādavarga* is divided into sections where scenes from Hindu mythology are painted on the walls of the Karanathil Śiva shrine. Roofs of both shrines are *Dvī-thala* (two levels) and the Karanathil Śiva shrine has an undulating roof, while the Embekke *devāle* consists of a sharply angled roof covered with clay tiles. The same pattern applies to the top tiers of the two roofs. The wall space in between that marks upper level of the *Vimana* consists of decorative masonry work on the Karanathil Śiva, while the Embekke *devāle's* walls consists of one painting on the front facing wall. Copper finials of two different styles and designs mark the central axis of both shrines. The basic architectural layout of these two temples serves as a primary visual analysis to indicate the close similarities between the two structures, particularly given that Embekke *devāle* lacks a clear prototype within Sri Lanka.

Embekke *devāle's Dig-ge* draws parallels with two features of Hindu temples in South India. A similar architectural component in Kerala temples developed during the last phase in the form of composite shrines within the main temple complex and one such structure is known as the *Koothambalam*. With its primary function as a theater hall, the *Koothambalam* is specific to the Kerala temples[186]. This structure created a space for traditional Kerala theater and the also for other cultural performance and social activities of the temple[187]. The *Koothambalam* is a large pillared hall enclosed by a small wooden wall and a high roof. The architectural layout to *Koothambalams* is conducive to the various acoustic performances that take place within them. According to Tom, the *Koothambalam* at Vadakkunnatha temple in Thrissur is one of the largest of its kind in Kerala where all the wooden beams and carved pillars are fixed together without the support of metal nails[188]. According to the *Basnayake Nilame* and the *Kapu-mahattaya* metal has not been utilized in any part of the *Digg*-ge, including the interlocking wooden pillars and beams hold the weight of the roof. As a living temple, there are limitations to testing for metal within the interlocking ceiling pillars of the Embekke *devāle*; but the general consensus is that metal has not been used in its construction. However, in terms of size, the massive roof of the *Koothambalam* is different from the one at Embekke *devāle* but both the *Koothambalam* and the *Digg-ge* of Embekke *devāle* function in a similar way, focusing on social interaction, veneration of the deity through recitals accompanied by music, group worship, and individual

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[186] Binumol Tom, "The Physicality and Spirituality of the Hindu Temples of Kerala," *Creative Spaces* 1.2 (2014) 185.

[187] *Ibid.*

[188] Tom, 186. Non-Hindus are not allowed within the temple premises and this is a signifiant drawback for my research.

contemplation. The only Koothambalam that I was allowed to photograph is the *Koothambalam* at the Thiruvegppura Mahadeva temple, Palakkad. (Fig. 4.33)

Similar to the *Koothambalam* that is a specific form of a structure that was built for performances, the *Mandapa* is another feature that is seen in both Kerala and Madurai temples. Drāvida style pillared *Mandapas* with architectural sculpture are a significant addition made by Nayakas in the Vijayanagara empire in the sixteenth century. Most *Mandapas* in Kerala have a square base, while there are also rectangular *Mandapas* in Madurai. In Kerala temples, the *Mandapa* is located before the entrance to the *Srikovil* and is used by devotees for meditation, reading, and worship while facing the image of the deity placed within the *Srikovil*[189]. The significant feature of the Kerala *Mandapa* is that it is detached from the *Srikovil*[190]. After the 1300's, Kerala temple *Mandapas* were also connected to the main shrine[191]. A distinctive feature of the temples in the Vijayanagara-Nayaka period in Madurai is the construction of the *Mandapas* that were used for ceremonial functions and festivals within the temple complexes during the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries[192]. Given that the Kerala temples share many similarities with the Madurai temples and considering both Kerala and Madurai features belong to the same *Drāvida* architectural language, it is possible to note characteristics of both these South Indian elements of temple architecture within Embekke *devāle*. In this regard, the Embekke *devāle's Digg-ge* encompasses significant features of both the Kerala *Koothambalams*, as well as those of the *Mandapas* in Drāvida temples in Madurai. The Madurai characteristics are

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[189] William Noble, "The Architecture and Organization of Kerala Style Hindu Temples." *Anthropos* 76 no. 1/2 (1981):11.

[190] *Ibid.*

[191] *Ibid.*

[192] Branfoot, 191-192.

a significant possibility due to the Nayakkar kings of Kandy having a hand in renovating the Embekke *devāle* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Tamil Nadu *Mandapas* and architectural components within Kerala temples express the dynamism within South Indian temple architecture; they evolved in many different ways exchanging ideas within regional styles while maintaining provincial identities. Therefore, the exchanges and similarities with Embekke *devāle* need to be considered in conjunction with both Kerala and Drāvida styles as they evolved over time. When observing the various juxtapositions of stylistic features in Kerala and in Sri Lanka, notably in the Embekke *devāle*, there seems to be a clear exchange of architectural styles and decorative elements between Kerala and Sri Lanka from very early on. Although there may be variations in terms of the scale of roofs, that are significantly larger in Kerala, and the diversity of *Koothambalam* and *Mandapas*, the similarities that the two regions share seem to be of significant value when considering the artistic and architectural exchanges.

V. Buddhist architecture and Kerala temples

As with any South Indian Hindu temple, the *Srikovil* is the most significant structure in Kerala temples, both architecturally and conceptually. Also known as the *Garbhagriha* (the womb chamber) the *Srikovil* houses the image of the deity[193]. Given that Hindu shrines, much like the Buddhist *Viharās* and *Stūpas*, align themselves with the image of the deity as the central axis and along the cardinal points, the *Srikovil* articulates the plan of the cosmos within the temple complex. This form of architecture allows the devotees to circumambulate within the paths that are demarcated outside the structure. According to William A. Noble, the *Srikovils* in

[193] Noble, 12.

Kerala temples consist of a "round base with a single conical roof or a square base with a single pyramidal roof"[194]. The round base *Srikovils* that are specific to the Kerala region indicate a stronger connection to Buddhist architecture and are also a prime example for the interchange of architectural styles between Sri Lanka and Kerala. As Sarkar notes, the Kerala temples of the middle phase (1001-1300A.D.) consist of both the Kerala and Drāvida styles that were mentioned earlier[195]. He further states that from the outside, these temples had larger circular or apsidal structures that enclosed a small Drāvida style shrine that was built inside[196]. The Drāvida shrine was surrounded by a row of supporting columns and an inner wall that demarcated a double circumambulatory path within the larger circular shrine[197]. Although this style or temple architecture could be seen in early Buddhist rock temples in India, by the middle phase of Kerala temple historiography, Buddhism in India had died down significantly.

In Sri Lanka, however, circular Buddhist temples within an enclosed circular shrine known as the *Vatadāge* had significantly developed since the Anuradhapura period (fourth- fifth century C.E.). While the Thūpārama *Vatadāge* is an example from the Anuradhapura period is in partial ruins today, one of the best preserved *Vatadāges* can be seen in the Attanagalla Rājamaha *Vihara* (Fig.4.34) that visually and structurally show similarities to the round *Srikovils* in Kerala. As Sarkar[198] suggests, this form of architecture was possibly introduced to Kerala form Sri Lanka although it is a style that existed in India much earlier as seen in the examples of rock-cut

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[194] Noble, 12.

[195] Sarkar, 71.

[196] *Ibid.*

[197] *Ibid.*

[198] *Ibid.*

Buddhist architecture. The Īlavars, who were a group of migrants from Sri Lanka that was skilled in architecture may have introduced this architectural style to Kerala[199]. As the author further suggests, this migration possibly took place before the Kulaśēkara dynasty and early inscriptions indicate the presence of the Īlavars within higher administrative positions[200]. Further strengthening the architectural dialog between Sri Lanka and India, the author points out the discovery of a Buddha statue from the Anuradhapura period from Marudukulangarai in Trivandrum in addition to several other Buddha statues that were found from south Kerala[201]. Tom states that the Vadakkunnatha temple is also believed to have been a Buddhist site.[202] Two *Srikovils* at this temple, the Vadakkunnatha *Srikovil* and the Sankaranarayana *Srikovil* are both round shaped with circumambulatory paths and conical roofs, mimicking the plan of the Vatadāges in Sri Lanka. While Buddhism survived in Kerala until the middle of the eleventh century[203], the unusual concentration of circular temples within Kerala could indicate the presence of the Sri Lankan migrants in the region.[204] Today, there are no extant Buddhist temples in Kerala, most likely due to these temples sites being converted to Hindu temples.

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[199] *Ibid.*

[200] Sarkar, 50.

[201] *Ibid.*

[202] Tom, 178.

[203] Sarkar, 51.

[204] Although the exact details of the migration of the Īlavas (Iravas) is not clearly known, A. Aiyappan also proposes several hypotheses that allude to the presence of Sri Lankan migrants in Kerala supporting Sarkar's claim. A. Aiyappan, A. *Social Revolution in a Kerala Village* (New York: Asia Publishing House,1963), 120.

VI. The role of Viśvakarmas in the Gampola and Kandy kingdoms

There is significant evidence to suggest that Viśvakarma craftsmen migrated from Kerala and other South Indian artists into Gampola and Kandy. The Embekke *Varnanāva* identifies the chief artist of Embekke *devāle* as Delmada Mūlāchārī but there is no information about him beyond his name. However, the name indicates that he was an *Āchārī*, who is a master craftsmen that belonged to the Viśvakarma lineage that traces its origins to India. Viśvakarma is the divine architect of the Hindu pantheon and in medieval South India, there were five castes that belonged to the Viśvakarma lineage[205] and they were: goldsmiths, brass smiths, blacksmiths, carpenters, and masons. Therefore, presence of the Viśvakarma caste and the division of labor was a shared idea in both South India and Sri Lanka. As identified by the Lankātilaka inscription, the temple was built by Stāpati Rāyar and Stāpati is a title that is given to architects who also belonged to the Viśvakarma caste. Therefore, the Lankātilaka inscription indicates the presence of Viśvakarmas from South India in Gampola. Coomaraswamy attached a drawing of the deity Viśvakarma done by Dēvasurendra Muhandirama, a local artist from Embekke in his 'Mediæval Sinhalese Art'. The name Dēvasurendra indicates that the artist belonged to the *Dēva* caste that, according to the Sri Lankan tradition, was a caste that specialized is craft and by extension belonged to the Viśvakarma lineage. The presence of Dēvasurendra Muhandirama is an indication that suggests the presence the Viśvakarma craftsmen in Embekke at the turn of the century.

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[205] Vijaya Ramaswamy, "Vishwakarma Craftsmen in Early Medieval Peninsular India." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47 no. 4 (2004): 549.

While Coomaraswamy describes the presence of royal artisans and workshops in the Kandy period, the details of the Viśvakarma's prior to the Kandy period remain scattered. Referring to the description of the *Tisara Sandēśaya*, Holt states that Senā-Lankadhikara built a *devāle* consecrated to Upulvan in Devinuwara in the Southern coast of the island.[206] Devinuwara or Devundara seems to have been a center for South Indian migrants prior to the Gampola period as the Devundara inscription by Parākramabahu II dated to the Dambadeniya kingdom mentions the *Brahmin* settlement in Devundara as a center of Hindu and Vedic learning.[207] Referring to the *Matale Maha Disāva Kadaim Potha*, (a book consisting of Government register of events and land boundaries before 1815), Jayawardena states that most artisan families that migrated in the Gampola and Kandy period made an effort to hide their caste status in later times.[208] Furthermore, he states that the early members of the Dēvendra family were responsible for the tasks within the Devundara *devāle*.[209] J.B. Dissanayake agrees with the information and states that the Dēvendra family that migrated from South India later mixed with local artisan families.[210] A descendent of this family, the popular artisan Dēvendra Mūlachāri worked for Rājadhi Rājasinha and was the chief architect of the *Magul Maduwa* (the Royal Audience Hall) in Kandy.[211] The *Magul Maduwa*wa was built by using the Embekke *devāle* as a

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[206] Holt, Buddha in the Crown, 99.

[207] S. Pathmanathan, "Buddhism and Hinduism in Sri Lanka; Some Points of Contact Between Two Religious Traditions circa A.D. 1300-1600." *Kalyāni; Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Kelaniya* 6 (1986): 97.

[208] S. Jayawardena, Nīlagama Siththara Parapura Dewara Gampala Silvat Tena Hā Dēvendra Mūlāchārī, (Koḷamba : Ăs. Goḍagē Saha Sahōdarayō, 2017), 14. Jayawardana has collected this information from The *Matale Maha Disāva Kadaim Potha* ed by H. D.L.W.M. Goonathileka, Moratuwa, 1932.

[209] *Ibid.*

[210] J.B. Dissanayake, Degaldoruwa, (Koḷamba : Ăs. Goḍagē Saha Sahōdarayō, 1996), 8.

[211] H.W. Codrington, "The Kandyan Navandannó," *The Journal of hte Ceylon Branch of hte Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & IrelandI* 21 no. 62(1909): 240.

prototype. Dēvendra Mūlachāri is known to have worked on carvings in the Embekke *devāle* with his son.[212] Additionally, Codrington refers to popular oral history and the founding myth of the Embekke *devāle* and states that after executing Tennakón Mudiyansé of Arattana, for abusing Henakanda Bisō Bandara, Rājasinha distributed portions of the village of Arattana to artisans from other locations such as Devundara.[213] Gananath Obeysekere discusses the arrival of Brahmins from India to Sri Lanka while referencing the *Kadaim Poth* and *Vitti Poth* particularly, in relation to the Matale Kadaim Potha.[214] Although the Gampola period is not mentioned in this text there is a significant amount of detail on how the Indian Brahmins merged with the Goyigama caste of the Sinhalese. He mentions several Brahmins whose last name included Brahmana-rāla.[215] Interestingly, the *Kapu-mahattaya* of Embekke *devāle* has the family name of Brahmana-rālala-ge. Upon interviewing him, the *Kapu-mahattaya* explained that he has heard from his older family members that their ancestors are from India but does not know the exact details of migration.

The Embekke *devāle*, Lankātilaka temple, and Gadaladeniya temple present three distinctive building types that illustrates the temple practices, royal patronage, and the role of artisans during the Gampola and Kandy periods. Most importantly, the three temples present a testimony to the conflation of Buddhist and Hindu practices during these two kingdoms that is different from any other time period in Sri Lanka history. The parallels that I have identified between art and architecture of these three temples and some examples from South Indian

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[212] Jayawardena, 72.

[213] *Ibid.*

[214] Gananath Obeysekere, "The Coming of Brahmin Migrants: The Śudra Fate of an Indian Elite in Sri Lanka," *Society and Culture in South Asia* 1 no.1 (2015): 6.

[215] *Ibid.*

temples juxtapose the close cultural and interaction between the two regions. I notice that the synthesis of the temple building practices that connects early Sri Lanka, South Indian, Kandy, and Gampola period architecture lack an architectural language that can adequately address the components of each shrine and their functions. While the Kerala artisans rely on the *Tantra Samucchaya*, Sri Lankan artisans used tests such as the *Rūpavaliya*, *Sāriputra*, *Māyamataya*, and the *Vaijayanta tantraya*. Tamil Nadu and Vijayanagara artisans, among the myriad of *Shilpasastra* texts, give precedence to the *Vāstushastra*. What I propose is a study to see how these texts were shared and incorporated into creating distinctive Gampola period temples. This research necessitates a new architectural language where the *Drāvida*-Kerala-Vijayanagara art and architectural terms are paired against the terms used in Sri Lankan Hindu and Buddhist temples, particularly from the Gampola period.

The early connections between South India and Sri Lanka remain a topic that is yet to be comprehensively explored, particularly with Kanchipuram. As Gopinatha Rao[216] suggests, the city was a center of Buddhist learning and produced numerous Buddha statues in the 7th c. C.E. According to Kulasuriya, who refers to the *Saddharma Ratnākaraya*, Senā-Lankadhikara (which is only a title) who is identified as Senevirat Mantriyana provided pearls and precious stones to Kānchi in order to build a stone image house.[217] Given that the Senā-Lankadhikara family originated in Kanchipuram and the city being a center for Buddhist learning and practice, this patronage seems a logical choice. However, there are no known remains of this image house today as most Buddhist sites have been converted to Hindu temples or have been destroyed by

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[216] T.A. Gopinatha Rao, "Buddha Vestiges in Kanchipura," *The Indian Antiquary* (1915): 127.

[217] Ananda Kulasuriya, "Regional Independence and Élite Change in the Politics of 14th-Century Sri Lanka," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1976): 142.

Muslim invasions, particularly after the fall of Vijayanagara. Similarly, Pathmanathan provides a detailed description of Buddhism in South India, particularly in port centers such as *Vāñcī* and Kanchipuram prior to the seventh century when many Sri Lankan monks lived in South India.[218] According to his assessment of the *Manimekalai*, Buddhist practice remained within the urban centers through merchants and trade networks but hardly permeated into the rural settings.[219] While there is ample information provided by Pathmanathan on Buddhist exchange between South India and Sri Lanka prior to the 8th-9th centuries, the information ceases after soon after the decline of Buddhism in India, indicating the ceasing of such religious and scholastic exchange between the two regions.

The Gampola and Kandy period connections based on art and architecture are comparatively more accessible given the limited number of inscriptions in Gampola temples, *Sannas*, and other official documents of the Nayakkars. According to these examples, there are various compositional and iconographical similarities between South India and Gampola period temples. Given the lack of prototypes from earlier Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa architecture, there can be formed a misleading concept that the art and architecture originated in South India and later spread to Sri Lanka—paving the way for the much debated argument of 'Indianization' within the sub-continent. This idea is not fully substantiated when considering the aspects of temple building practices and the creating of art within Buddhist image houses by the hands of local artisans. However, there is certainly evidence of local artisans working with migrant artisans from South India in temples such as Gadaladeniya and Lankātilaka. So instead of

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[218] S. Pathmanathan, "Buddhism in Sri Lanka and South Asia Interaction Among Monastic Centers" (presentation, Fourth Vesak Commemoration Lecture, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, May 14, 2006), 10.

[219] *Ibid.*

focusing solely on a Tamil-centric point of view, I propose the idea of multiple centers of development of art and architecture within South Indian and Sri Lanka, considering the nature of the Viśvakarma artisans who often migrated within Vijayanagara, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Sri Lanka and the collaborative efforts with Sri Lankan artisans and patronage. When considering the multiple possibilities that I have addressed regarding the possible provenance of temples and the various artistic and architectural components such as roof designs, pillars, and accompanying carvings provide a testament to the conflation of iconography and a substantial cultural dialog between Gampola and Tamil Southern India.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Emebkke *devāle* remains open for all visitors and worshippers including Buddhists, Hindus, and foreign visitors. Despite some Thēravada Buddhists avoiding *devāles* and rejecting the blessing of Hindu and local gods, a majority of the worshippers who come in supplication of Skandha at Embekke *devāle* continues to be Sinhala Buddhists.The officials and the servicemen who conduct the ceremonies and everyday functions of the *devāle* are also Sinhala Buddhists, as per tradition. Daily offerings to the Buddha and the god are made by the temple workers with unquestioned reverence as they have done so for generations. Buddhist monks visit the *devāle's* inner sanctum to chant *Pirith* before the start of the annual procession. The neighboring Lankātlaka and Gadaladeniya temples continue to perform the daily and annual *Pūjas* for the gods who share the same sacred space with the central Buddha figures. Perhaps, the neo-Buddhist approaches that are promoted by a certain segment of the Buddhist public are not strong enough to percolate into the Buddhist culture that is strongly interwoven with Hinduism. In other words, Buddhism and Hinduism have created a hybrid form of worship and customs along with art and architecture that visually manifests the interdependence of the two religions. When observing the architecture of Embekke *devāle* and its two neighboring temples, we see a merging of Gampola, Kandy, and South Indian visual and material culture.

To further analyze the Gampola period (1341-1410) and the Kandy period (1473-1815), I sketched their political, geographical, and religious characteristics in Chapter 2. This is an extended time period, some 450 years, and cultural change and differences are certainly to be

expected. Even so, the period presents many challenges to identifying and tracing these changes, and then to propose their causes. The major challenge is simply the lack of textual sources for Embekke *devāle*, complicated by the loss of artistic and architectural evidence.

I therefore have used two Buddhist temples, the Lankātlaka and Gadaladeniya that were built during these two periods along with Embekke *devāle,* on which to focus my discussion. The chapter introduces the historical context of Embekke *devāle*, that will be the major temple on which I base my dissertation. In a later chapter, I demonstrate that these three temples are in fact highly individualized, each being very different from the other in terms of their basic architectural program. Due to the lack of consistency in architecture, they in fact reflect the apparent chaotic political nature of the period. As a result, it is difficult to build broad cultural and artistic themes on which to frame the art and architecture of Gampola and Kandy.

In terms of historical developments, I look at how Skanda, a Hindu deity, and the major deity worshipped at Embekke *devāle,* became popular during this period. The discussion on Skandha opens up the complicated issue of identifying certain deities as either Buddhist or Hindu. While I find that during this period the two categories for identifying deities is often not clearly delineated, or even recognized by the worshippers, this does not mean their Buddhist or Hindu natures are lost. For example, Skandha is noted for his Hindu origins but is also comfortably placed within the historical narrative and folk history of Embekke *devāle*. The differences of the Hindu gods are clear when viewed in contemporary Sri Lankan politics, for example, and indeed in art historical scholarship, such as John Holt's controversial work.

This chapter suggests that a window on the art and architecture of the Gampola and Kandy periods is available through the comparison of the art of Sri Lanka with that of South India, a

topic further explored in the final dissertation chapter. Again, the topic is particularly complicated as it has hardly been undertaken given its extent and lack of scholars qualified to work on the topic. My point in the dissertation is to show how suggestive such a comparison can be by looking at some features of Embekke *devāle* in relation to South Indian material.

To further study the art and architecture of Embekke *devāle,* I rely above all on careful art historical comparisons. Chapter 3 focused on a detailed art historical analysis of wood and stone relief carvings associated with Embekke *devāle*. The figures, designs, and patterns were identified using terms found in textual and scholarly sources, particularly determining Sri Lankan terms for the images. In addition, comparative images from Sri Lankan and Indian sculpture were used in order to discuss the similarities and differences found in the Sri Lankan examples.

Among my conclusions is that the 514 carvings found at Embekke *devāle* cannot be labeled as either Hindu or Buddhist. Rather, they share a rich and complicated iconography that can be called visually auspicious and able to produce a positive and fruitful environment. The figures and designs create a site for wish-fulfillment and protection and thus help the worshippers to reach their desires and goals.

I also argue that the wood carvings in the Embekke are not unique but can be related to stone carvings at the *Ambalama*. Furthermore, the wood pillars may have been carved in the Gampola period for a now lost building from the royal court and moved to the Embekke during the Kandy period. If so, their arrangement in the Embekke *devāle* would likely be arbitrary in terms of their original layout. They would also provide a valuable link between the Gampola and Kandy artistic periods. Likewise, I identify some similar carvings seen in South India and further

question their distinctiveness within Sri Lanka. Although Embekke *devāle's* carvings are often seen as a prototype for Sri Lankan carvings and iconography, I propose that they share similar motifs and designs with South Indian counterparts as seen in the *Usamba kuñjara* at the Airavateshvara temple and the ubiquitous double-headed *Bhērundha*.

Chapter 4 considers the three temples, the Embekke *devāle*, Lankātilaka and Gadaladeniya. My aim here is to address the shared artistry between Sri Lankan and South Indian temple architecture. Consequently, I demonstrate that Sri Lankan art and architecture as interrelating both among themselves but also with concurrent art and architecture in South India. The nature of the relationship is found in the movement of various different people in this geographical area. The assumption is that there is nothing new in this interchange; that people have been moving back and forth throughout the extensive geographical and cultural area from earliest history and we see a continuation during the Gampola and Kandy periods as well. The identification of the movement of people specifically in the Gampola and Kandy periods includes interchanges of merchants, families, rulers, and artists.

The art and architecture of the temples in Sri Lanka and India can be taken apart and examined to include comparisons of columns, pillars, roofs, shrines, and wall paintings. The artistic material in India itself can be divided into Tamil-Drāvida architecture from Tamil Nadu and examples from Kerala architecture. The analysis in this chapter is the beginning of sorting out the complex relationships this vast amount of material can produce. It is only a beginning on a project that remains little explored in terms of scholarship.

Despite the modern resistance to Hindu practice and aversion to link Sri Lankan history with South Indian history, the strong linkage between Buddhism and Hinduism continues within

temples and *devāles* of Sri Lanka. Skandha may have lost his appeal since the Kandy period and later, since the end of the civil war, but he still remains a popular deity among the local Buddhists and Hindus. In my dissertation, I mentioned the three temples that define the hybrid nature of the Gampola kingdom and visually exemplify the syncretism of its art and architecture. However, among the plethora of sites that are yet to be fully addressed within Sri Lankan, there are many other temples and art historical sites that are yet to be fully analyzed.

One such Buddhist site is the Galmaduwa temple located close to Kandy and is believed to have been built by king Kīrti Sri during the Kandy kingdom. The temple architecture displays characteristics of a hybrid architecture, perhaps a style that has never been seen before in Sri Lankan temples. The arched doors that line the circumambulatory verandah consist of stone walls and mimic a style that is more Islamic or South Indian than Sri Lankan. The central *Vimana* is seven tiered and resembles more of a South Indian Hindu temple than that of a Sri Lankan Buddhist temple. As stated earlier, this temples remains understudied and unpublished in terms of its art and architectural characteristics.

Another such site is a Hindu temple located in Nallur, Jaffna. Popularly known as the Nallur temple, the Nallur Kandasamy temple is dedicated to Skandha. The temple site was developed by Buvanekabāhu VII of Kotte kingdom (1412-1597) and was then supervised by a Hindu Prince Sapumal, popularly known as Sapumal Kumāraya in Sinhala or as Chempaka Perumal in Tamil. Sapumal conquered the Jaffna kingdom that was placed under the aegis of Kotte. The Nallur temple was founded during the same time when the Gampola kingdom was experiencing an influx of migrants and was open to external trade. The Nallur temple was later destroyed by the Portuguese and was rebuilt in the Kandy period in the eighteenth century.

Therefore, as a site that existed and developed simultaneously as the Gampola and Kotte period temples, the Nallur temple deserves to be analyzed within an art historical framework that is not only specific to Gampola but also to Kotte. As I have pointed out previously, there is evidence of Gampola kings making connections with the Jaffna kingdom. There needs to be a further analysis on the types of artistic and political exchanges that occurred between the two kingdoms and any relationship the Jaffna kings, who were also Hindus, had with the Nayakkars of Kandy. The provenance of the pillars of Lankātilaka temple that still remains ambiguous may have similar examples located within the Jaffna Hindu temples or perhaps, textual information regarding relationships between the Vijayanagara empire and Jaffna.

I also recognize that the civil war has destroyed much of the temples in the North and the East, except for a few remaining sites that have been revitalized after the war, such as an Nagadeepa temple, the Nallur temple, and the Madhu church. Another site that has often been relegated to a peripheral site is the Kadurugoda temple in Jaffna. The Buddhist site located close to Jaffna may also hold keys to linkages with South Indian Buddhist centers. What I emphasize here is that there are many undocumented and under-studied sites within Gampola, Kandy, and Jaffna including other royal capitals that need to be analyzed in detail to better understand the art of Sri Lanka.

Finally, I would like to point out a significant drawback within the broader discourse of Sri Lankan art history and pedagogy. The absence of a dialog between Sri Lankan scholars of the North and the East (i.e. Jaffna University) with those of the South (i.e. Colombo and Peradeniya Universities) has created a significant void in academia. Similarly, there is a lack of discussion between Sri Lankan scholars and their counterparts in South India regarding art and temple

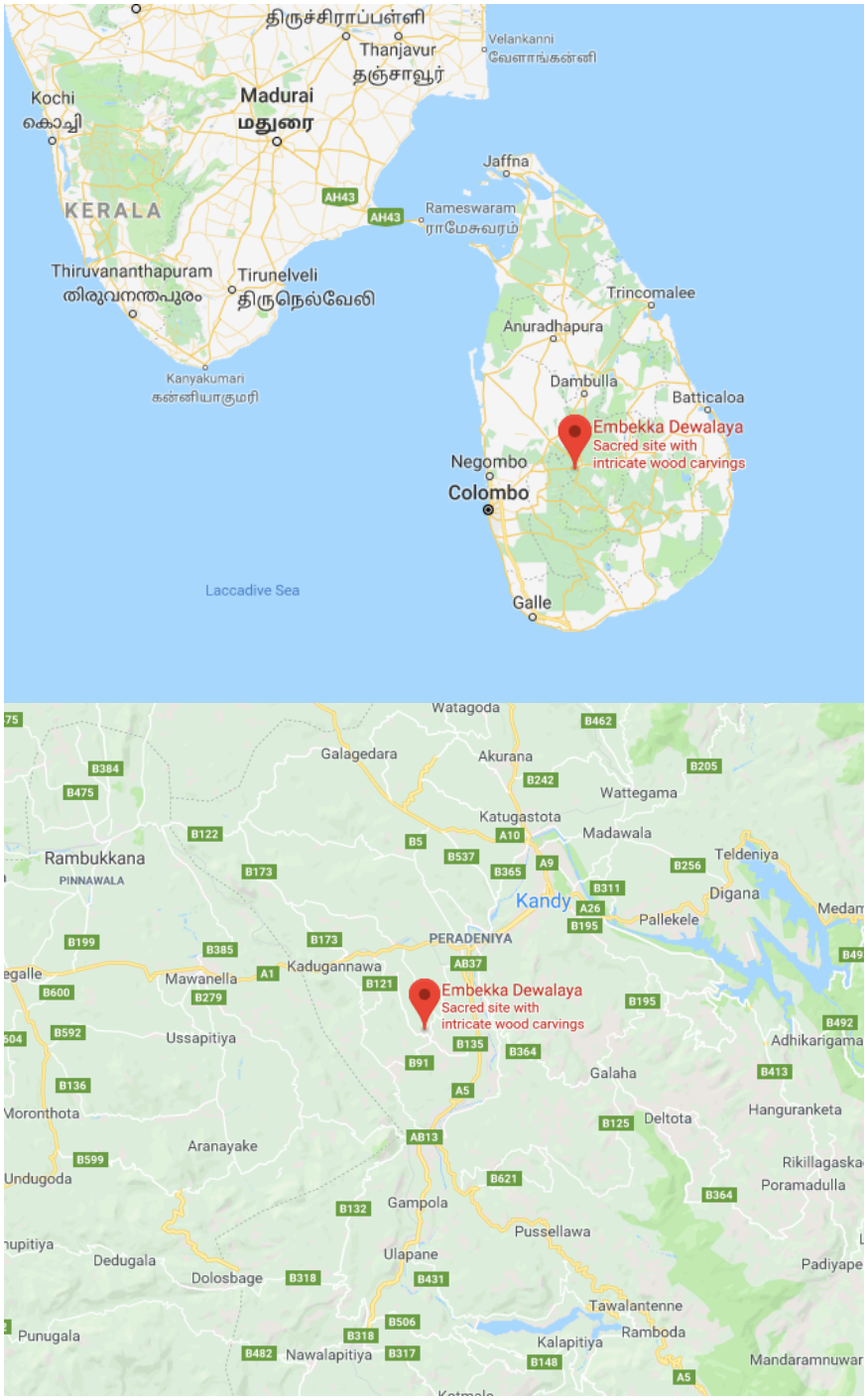
architecture. As I discussed previously in the dissertation, the lack of an architectural language based on Tamil and Sinhala is a significant drawback to the analyzing the temples of Sri Lanka. Such a dialog between scholars across geographical regions would be a possible approach to begin transposing the terminology to suite the various architectural components in these temples. Once such academic dialog percolates into the social milieu, the general public would be open to accepting the multivalence and exchange of art and architecture among geographical regions thereby transcending ethnic, religious, and national boundaries.

Chapter 1 Figures

Figure 1.1 Embekke *Devāle*, Embekke, Sri Lanka



Figure 1.2 Map of Sri Lanka with Embekke, Gampola, and Kandy (https://www.google.com/maps/place/Embekka+Dewalaya/@7.2197648,78.3254695,7z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x3ae36ef317bb65e5:0x6787aeef212af953!8m2!3d7.217936!4d80.5677146)



Chapter 2 Figures

Figure 2.1 Embekke *Devāle*



Figure 2.2 Embekke *Ambalama*



Figure 2.3 Lankātilaka Temple



Figure 2.4 Gadaladeniya Temple



Chapter 3 Figures

Figure 3.1 Layout of Embekke *devāle* from the *Vāhalkada*



Figure 3.2 *Vāhalkada* of Embekke *devāle*



Figure 3.3 *Vāhalkada* of Embekke *devāle*



Figure 3.4 *Digg-ge* of Embekke *devāle*



Figure 3.5 *Digg-ge* of Embekke *devāle* looking towards the doorway into the *Sandun Kūdama*



Figure 3.6 Entrance to the *Sandun Kūdama*



Figure 3.7 Inside the *Sandun Kūdama*



Figure 3.8 Inside the *Sandun Kūdama*



Figure 3.9 Inside the *Sandun Kūdama*



Figure 3.10 *Digg-ge* of Embekke *devāle*



Figure 3.11 Ground plan of Embekke *devāle* (Not to scale)

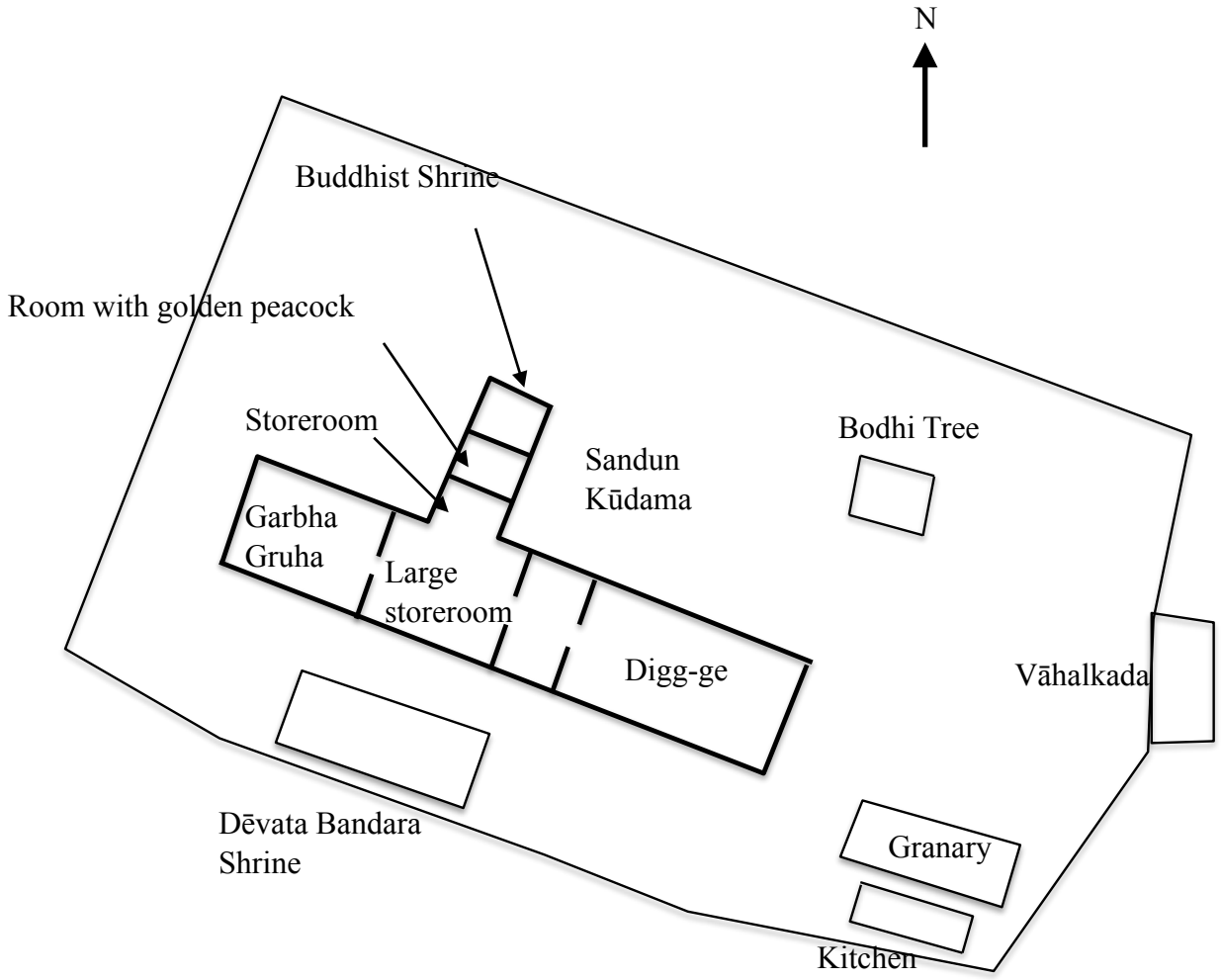


Figure 3.12 Orientation of Embekke *devāle* with Magnetic North (Direction of Embekke *devāle* is in red

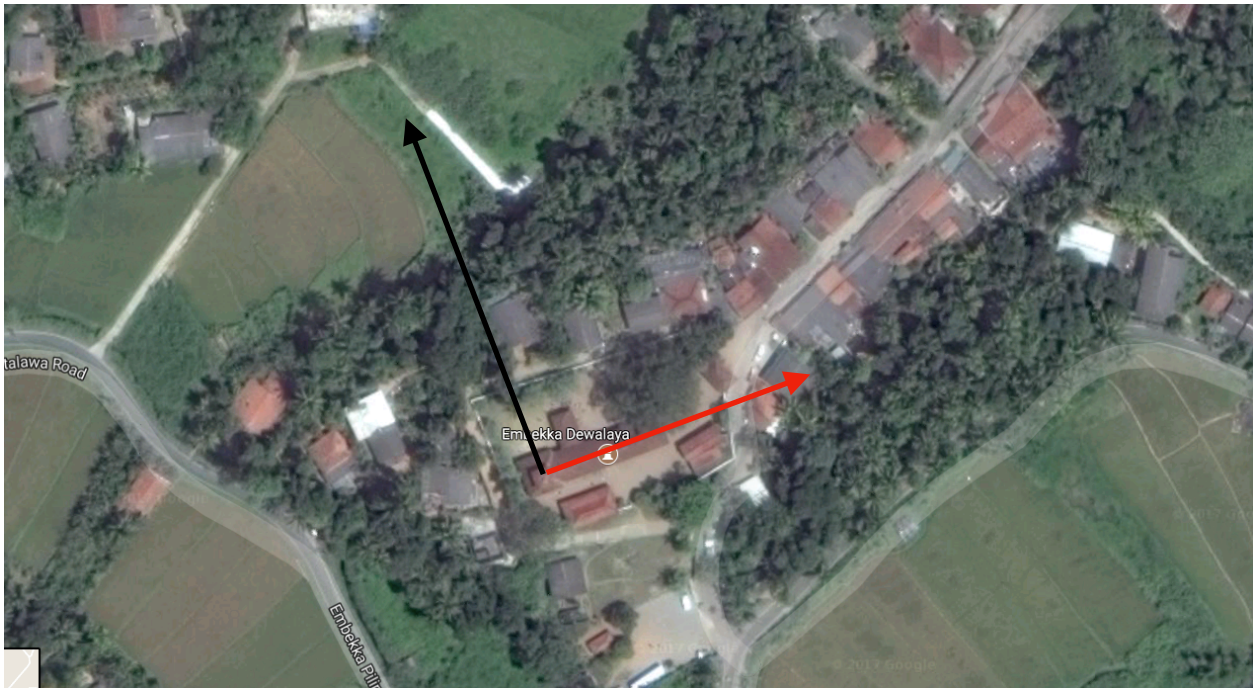


Figure 3.13 Orientation of Embekke *devāle* with True (Map) North (Direction of Embekke *devāle* is in red and Dalada Maligawa in Kandy is in white.)

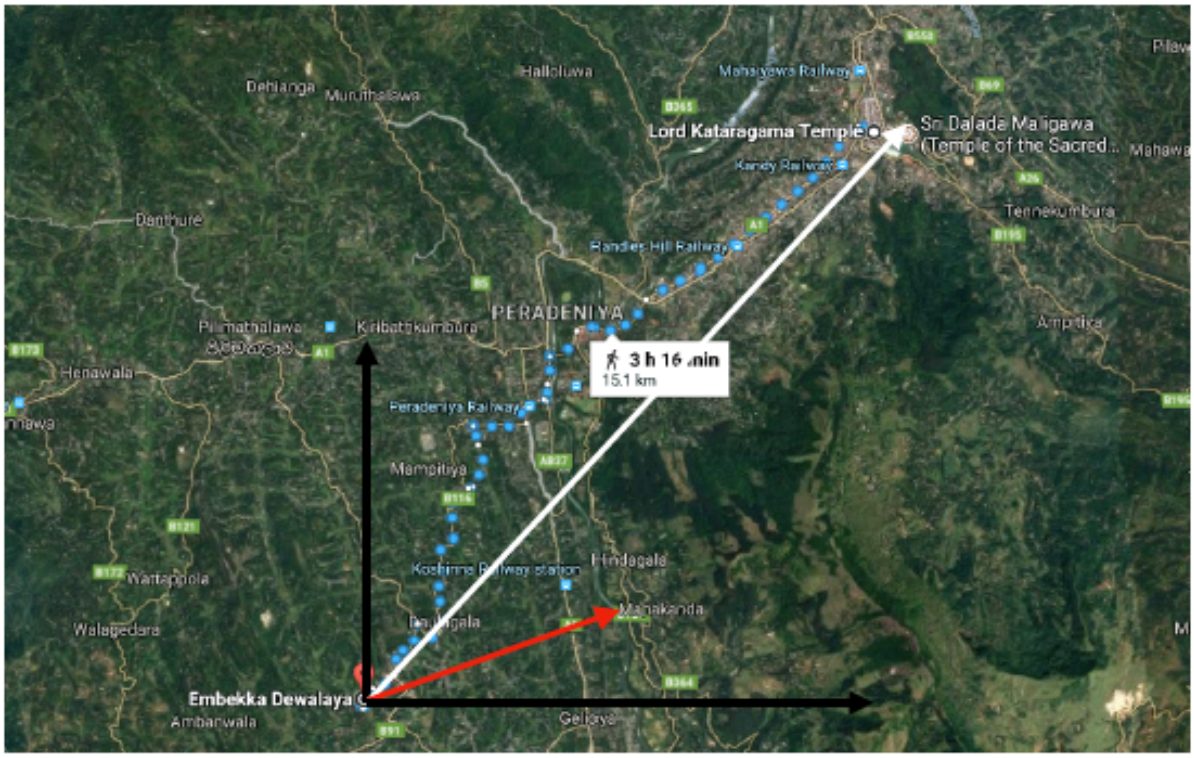


Figure 3.14 Annexed storerooms and the Buddhist shrine room



Figure 3.15 Annexed storerooms and the Buddhist shrine room



Figure 3.16 Dēvata Bandara shrine



Figure 3.17 Granary



Figure 3.18 The kitchen behind the granary



Figure 3.19 Photos by Henry Cave 1908 (Cave, Henry W. *The Book of Ceylon.* (London, Paris, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, Cassell And Company, Limited, 1908) 328 and 331).





451. PILLARS IN EMBEKKE DEWÁLE.

Figure 3.20 *Digg-ge's* pillars



Figure 3.21 *Āsana-kadaya* and *Liya-pota* before the octagonal part of the pillars





Figure 3.22 Carvings in the center framed by *Arimbuwa* designs, octagonal part of the pillar and *Nāga-bandha* before the square that meets the upturned *Pēkada*



Figure 3.23 Roof of Embekke *devāle*



Figure 3.24 Floor plan of Embekke *devāle Digg-ge*

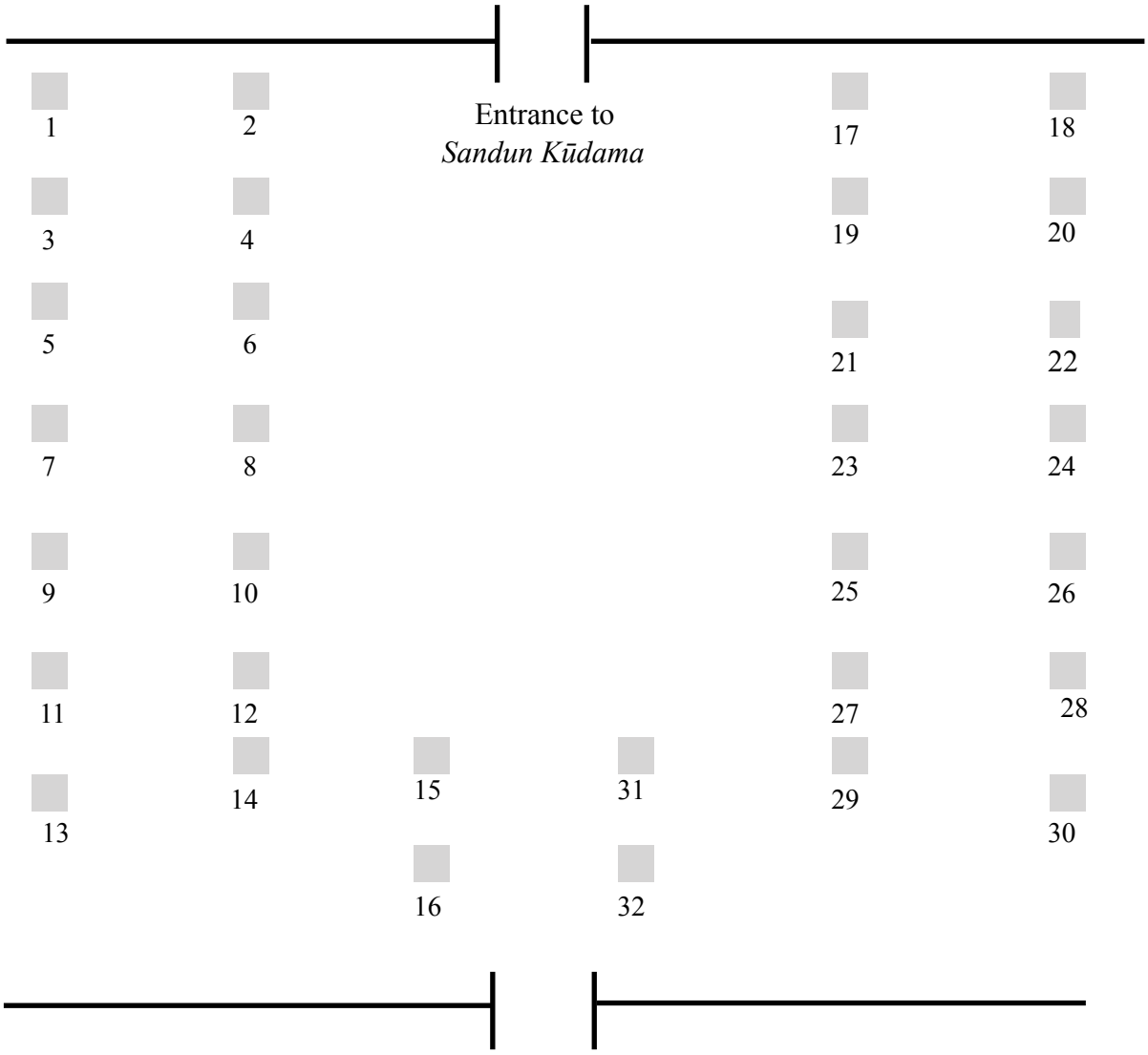


Figure 3.25 Three female figures from pillars, 2, 25, and 31



Pillar 2



Pillar 31



Pillar 25

Figure 3.26 The Horseman



Figure 3.27 The Two Wrestlers



Figure 3.28 Woman—damaged carving



Figure 3.29 Anthropomorphic carvings of the Embekke *Digg-ge*



Gurula Pillar 20



Kinnari Pillar 31



Kinnari Pillar 25



Nārilatha Pillar 25

Figure 3.30 Goddess from Embekke *Digg-ge* Pillar 20



Figure 3.31 Goddess in the *Vāhalkada*



Figure 3.32 *Nārilatha* from the *Ambalama*



Figure 3.33 Gurula from the *Vāhalkada*



Figure 3.34 *Hamsas* in the *Digg-ge*



Pillar 2



Pillar 8



Pillar 14

Figure 3.35 *Hamsas* in the *Digg-ge*



Pillar 20



Pillar 28

Figure 3.36 *Hamsas* at the *Ambalama*





Figure 3.37 *Hamsas* at the *Vāhalkada*





Figure 3.38 Query *Hamsa* but most likely a Peacock from the *Digg-ge*



Figure 3.39 Peacock from the *Vāhalkada*



Figure 3.40 *Bhērunda Pakshiya* from the *Digg-g*



Pillar 7



Pillar 28



Pillar 8



Pillar 22

Figure 3.41 *Bhērunda Pakshiya* of the *Vāhalkada*







Figure 3.42 *Bhērunda Pakshiya* of the *Ambalama*







Figure 3.43 *Et-kanda-lihiniya* in the *Digg-ge*



Figure 3.44 *Et-kanda-lihiniya* in the *Vāhalkada*



Figure 3.45 *Et-kanda-lihiniya* in the *Ambalama*



Figure 3.46 *Serapendiya* in the *Digg-ge*



Pillar 8



Pillar 12



Pillar 16

Figure 3.47 *Kēsara-Sinha* of the *Digg-ge*



Pillar 15



Pillar 27

Figure 3.48 *Gaja-Sinha* of the *Digg-ge*



Pillar 10



Pillar 26

Figure 3.49 *Gaja-Sinha* of the *Vāhalkada*



Figure 3.50 *Kibihi-Mūna* from the *Digg-ge*



Figure 3.51 *Kibihi-Mūna* from the *Ambalama*



Figure 3.52 Lion attacking an elephant at the *Digg-ge*



Figure 3.53 *Wrushabha kuñjara* from the *Digg-ge*



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Figure 3.54 Lotuses from pillar 11 of *Digg-ge*





Figure 3.55 Lotus from pillar 22 of the *Digg-ge*



Figure 3.56 Lotuses from the *Vāhalkada*





Figure 3.57 Foliage motifs from *Digg-ge* (Pillar 1 and 19)



Pillar 1



Pillar 19

Figure 3.58 Foliage motifs from the *Ambalama*



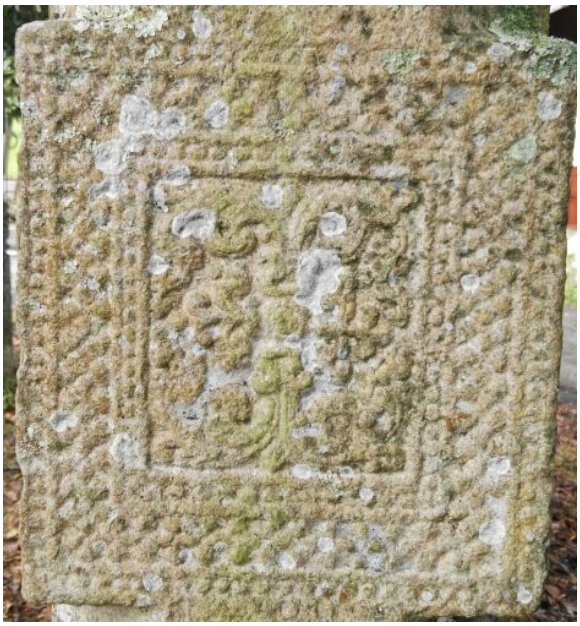


Figure 3.59 Rope designs



Pillar 20 *Digg-ge*



Vāhalkada

Figure 3.60 Roof beams



Figure 3.61 Roof beams



Figure 3.62 *Hamsa*



Figure 3.63 *Hamsa*



Figure 3.64 *Hamsa-pūttu*



Figure 3.65 Female Dancer



Figure 3.66 *Serapendiyas*



Figure 3.67 Single *Serapendiya*



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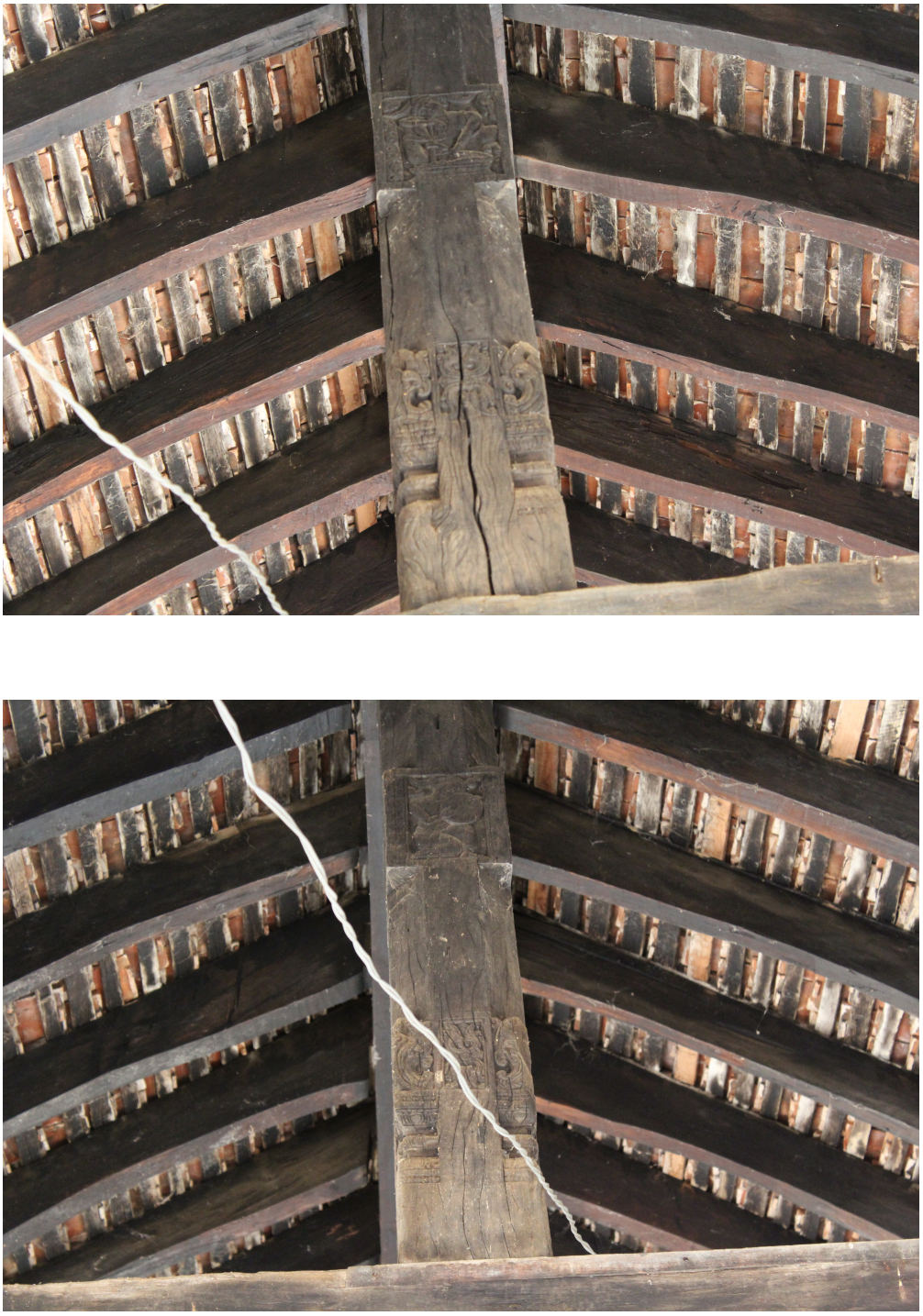
Figure 3.68 Dancing women



Figure 3.69 Female Dancer



Figure 3.70 Drummers on vertical supporting beams



Chapter 4 Figures

Figure 4.1 Gadaladeniya Temple



Figure 4.2 Lankātilaka Temple



Figure 4.3 Nātha *devāle*, Kandy



Figure 4.4 *Magul Maduwa*, Kandy



Figure 4.5 Lankātilaka Temple side view



Figure 4.6 Lankātilaka Temple side view



Figure 4.7 Gadaladeniya Temple



Figure 4.8 Embekke *devāle's* exterior walls



Figure 4.9 *Makara-torana* above the main seated Buddha, Lankātilaka Temple



Figure 4.10 Central dome, Gadaladeniya Temple



Figure 4.11 Subsidiary dome, Gadaladeniya Temple



Figure 4.12 Lankātilaka Temple roof



Figure 4.13 Lankātilaka Temple roof



Figure 4.14 Lankātilaka Temple. Henry Cave, *The Book of Ceylon* (London, Paris, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, Cassell And Company, Limited, 1908) 339.



Figure 4.15 Gadaladeniya Temple. Henry Cave, *The Book of Ceylon* (London, Paris, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, Cassell And Company, Limited, 1908) 340, 343 and 347.







Figure 4.16 Lankātilaka Temple paintings, Twenty Four previous Buddhas



Figure 4.17 Lankātilaka Temple paintings, Twenty Four previous Buddhas



Figure 4.18 Arhats and exposed underpainting, Lankātilaka Temple



Figure 4.19 Elephant painting, Lankātilaka Temple



Figure 4.20 *Liya-wela* and *Nārilatha* in Lankātilaka Temple



Figure 4.21 Kinnara sculpture in Lankātilaka temple



Figure 4.22 Central Buddha, Gadaladeniya Temple



Figure 4.23 Inscription on pillar, Embekke *devāle*



Figure 4.24 Inscription on pillar, Embekke *devāle*



Figure 4.25 Entrance porch, Gadaladeniya Temple



Figure 4.26 *Yālis* as handrails, Gadaladeniya Temple



Figure 4.27 Left column, Gadaladeniya Temple

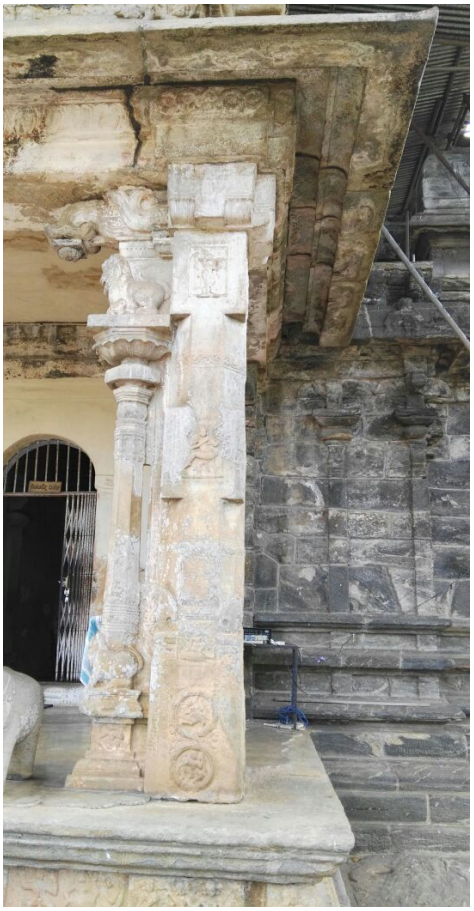
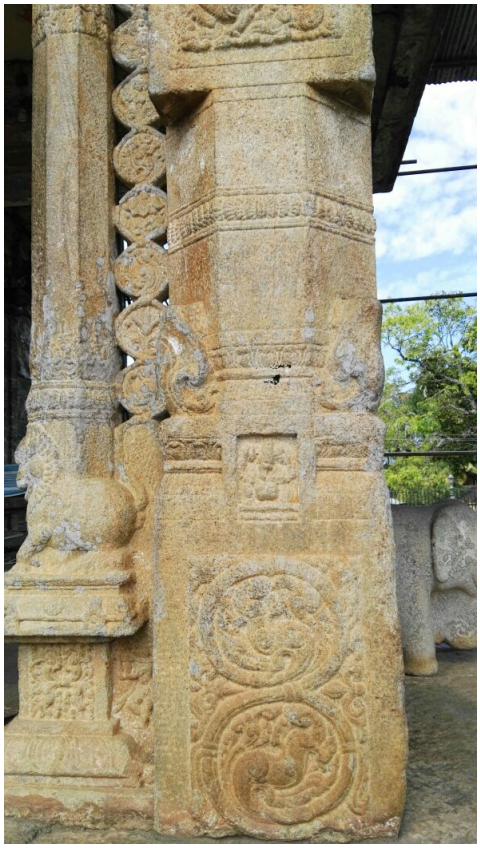






Figure 4.28 Right column, Gadaladeniya Temple





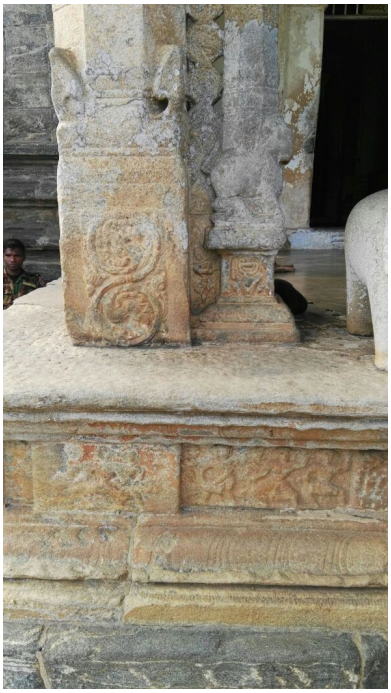


Figure 4.29 Pillars from Gampola and Kandy periods



Embekke *devāle*



Vāhalkada



Nātha *devāle*



Ambalama

Figure 4.30 Stone pillars from Mīnakshi Nāyakkar *Mandapam*, Madurai



Figure 4.31 Stone pillars from Mīnakshi Nāyakkar *Mandapam*, Madurai



Figure 4.32 Karanathil Śiva shrine, Triprangode Śiva Temple in Malappuram



Figure 4.33 Koothambalam of the Thiruvegppura Mahadeva temple, Palakkad



Figure 4.34 Attanagalla Rājamaha *Vihara*, Attanagalla, Sri Lanka



Words with diacritics

Ādāhana Maluwa Gedige

Āndis

Antarālaya

Āsana-kadaya

Avalokiteśvara

Avalokiteśvara Nātha

Basnāyaka Nilame

Bhērunda

Bhērunda Pakshiya

Brahmana-rāla

Brahmana-rālala-ge

Buvanekabāhu IV

Cūlavamsa

Dāna

Delmada Mūlāchārī

Devāles

Dēvasurendra Muhandirama

Dēvata Bandara

Dēvendra Mūlachāri

Drāvida

Drāvidian

Embekke *devāle*

Embekke *Varnanāva*

Girā

Hamsa-pūttu

Henakanda Bisō Bandara

Īlavars

Kānchi

Karanathil Śiva shrine

Kapu-rāla

Kēsara-Sinha

Kataragama *Deviyō*

Kibihi-Mūna

Kīrti Mukha

Kīrti Srī Rājasinha

Kulaśēkara dynasty

Lankātilaka

Mädavala inscription

Madol-kurupāwa

Mahāvamsa

Mahāvihara

Mahāyana

Makara-toranas

Matale Maha Disāva Kadaim Potha

Māyamataya

Mīnakshi Nāyakkar *Mandapam*

Mīnakshi Śiva temple

Nāga-bandha

Nārilatha

Pādavarga

Palā-peti

Pantārams

Parākramabahu V

P*ēkada*

Rājādhi Rājasingha

rāja-kāriya

Rājamaha Viharas

Rūpavaliya

Saddharma Ratnākaraya

Sandēśa Kāvya

Sandēśaya

Sandun-kūdama

Sāriputra

Senā-Lankadhikara

Stāpati Rāyar

Stūpa

Suyāma

Tāra

Tempita-viharas

Tennakón Mudiyansé

Thēravada

Tisara

Triprangode Śiva Temple

Tri-ratna

Usamba kuñjara

Vāhalkada

Vāñcī

Vanninãyakas

Vāstushastra

Vatadāge

Vibhīshana

Vijayabāhu V

Vikramabāhu III

Vinaya

Viśvakarmas

Vyāla

Wrushabha kuñjara

Yālis

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