

## Historical importance of Natha Devalaya in kandy.

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Abstract

NathaDevalaya is situated in Kandy or senkadagala, the capital city of the last Sinhalese kingdom in the central hills of Sri Lanka, surrounded by Mahaveli River from the south and west. NathaDevalaya could be identified as the oldest remaining structure in Kandy.

NathaDevalaya is located in the terrace situated in front of the sacred temple of the tooth and the kings palatial building and its origin dates back to the era of Gampola kingdom. It is believed that NathaDevalaya had been constructed by king Vikramabayu III who was ruling the Gampola kingdom. The features of Avaloketheswara figure could be identified easily from the statue of Amithabhaya Buddha on the top of the matted hair. Although the statues of AvaloketheshvaraBodhisatwa were discovered from various parts of the island in the early stages, the name God of Natha was attributed to it only from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

In the examining the architectural characteristics of NathaDevalaya it could be observed that it resembles the image house features of crowing roof Gedige tradition which was popular during the medieval ages. The pavilion antechamber and the adytum which could be seen in Devalas of south India are also visible here. A coronation chaori constructed to select a prince eligible as heir to wall inscription of the Devalaya creates an immense assistance in building up the history of Kandyan kingdom.

NathaDevalaya is bound with traditional rituals maintained from the ages of ancient kings. Accordingly, the objective of this research is to investigate into the historical significance of NathaDevalaya Kandy with an emphasis on the origin and evolution of the Devalaya with its architectural characteristics and rituals while exploring the value of this historical premises making use of primary and secondary data.

*Key words - NathaDevalaya, AvaloketheshvaraBodhisatwa, Kandy, kingdom, architecture*

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