

The Historical Evolution and the Present Usage of the Guard Stone in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The guard stone is an essential feature found on either side of the entrance to the religious or royal buildings in ancient Sri Lanka. Other important features are the "Moonstone" and the "Wing stone".

During the first phase of history of the guard stone it was simply a plain slab of stone and later on it was developed and made more beautiful by making fine carvings to these stones. Among those carving a prominent place was given to the figure of male the name guard stone. Other types of the carved guard stone are the full pot, human figures, devotees, dwarfs and the king cobra etc.

The objective of this research paper is to identify and examine the historical evolution of the guard stone place at the entrance to the religious and royal building belongs to the Anuradhapura era of the ancient Sri Lanka and also their present types of usages. In this aspect a special attention has been given to the two dwarf guard stone named "Sanka" and "Padma" which found in the historical *AbhayagiriyaVihara* Complex which belongs to the ancient Anuradhapura era.

The methodology of this research was mainly based on the usage of primary sources and field study of the archaeological excavation of the *AbhayagiriyaViharaya*.

Among the findings of this research one is under the concept of "*kuvera*" the two dwarfs who guarded the treasure of *Kuvera* have received the devoting by the people and even at present it was among the religious beliefs and practices among certain people. This has become clear by using these guard stones as places of swearing in affirming by some people.

Key words: Guard Stone, Dwarf, AbhayagiriyaViharaya

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