

Eco Friendly Approach of Ancient Monastic Architectural Landscape with Special Reference to the Construction Measures of Vessagiriya.

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In the ancient monastic architectural landscape of Sri Lanka, an environmentally friendly approach has been the key to the sustainability of the ancient construction. Broad strategies were adopted to synergize the built environment with the rest of the landscape, including rock formations, land, soil, flora, and fauna. Vessagiriya which belongs to the period from the 3rd century B.C. to the 10th century A.D. in the southern division of ancient Anuradhapura, is examined in this study as it is a paradigmatic example of converting the natural landscape into a cultural landscape in an eco-friendly manner. Numerous technologies adopted in Vessagiriya monastic construction across distinct archeological periods can be identified. Basically there are two types of monastic sites can be classified under two main folds; “open sites” and “caves”. Caves can be further subdivided into many different types such as natural caves, manmade caves, caves with walls, caves without walls, enlarged caves, non-enlarged caves, caves with paintings, caves without paintings, isolated caves and cave clusters. Open site monastic constructions had been practiced on flat lands, filled lands, rocky landscapes and top of rocks with filled soil.

Staircases for different monastic constructions are also identical. The three main types of staircases are steps on natural rock, steps that are storied, and artificial steps. In addition, the plumbing system of Vessagiriya is also perfectly engineered. Most of the technical specifications observed in Vessagiriya bear a close resemblance to the construction measures of Sigiriya, which belongs to the period from the 5th century to 8th century A.D. Further, the *Mahāvamsa* proclaims that King Kasyapa the First who founded Sigiriya also renovated and developed Isurumuniya (presently known as Vessagiriya). The technical measures adopted at Vessagiriya display the sustainability of ancient construction technologies. The impressive relationship that existed between the environment, i. e. natural environment, built environment and cultural environment, and the ancient technological measures are worth noting.

Key Words: Landscape, Monastic architecture, Sustainability, Technological measures, Vessagiriya