

## **In Tune with the Elements. Sri Lanka and the Art of the Environment**

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The use of rock, water and stone, is one of the distinctive features of the art and architecture of Sri Lanka. Surrounded as it was by water, as its civilization developed, the Island's culture became more and more dependent on water, which was the source of its prosperity. Combining the use of water with the tenets of the Buddhist faith, this laid the foundations for a unique approach to the environment. Inspired by this vision, the architects of ancient Lanka strove as far as possible to work within the confines of the natural world, preserving its delicate balance and beauty.

The principles of harmony, balance, restraint and control are very deeply embedded within the philosophy of Buddhism. How did these principles help create a new way of looking at the world and how did they help foster a new way of looking at the environment? By examining the art and architecture of Sri Lanka, the purpose of this paper is to examine how this way of looking at the world came into being. The paper traces its influences and how it was formed. Did it indeed create an outlook which was more sensitive to the environment, a world in tune with the elements?

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