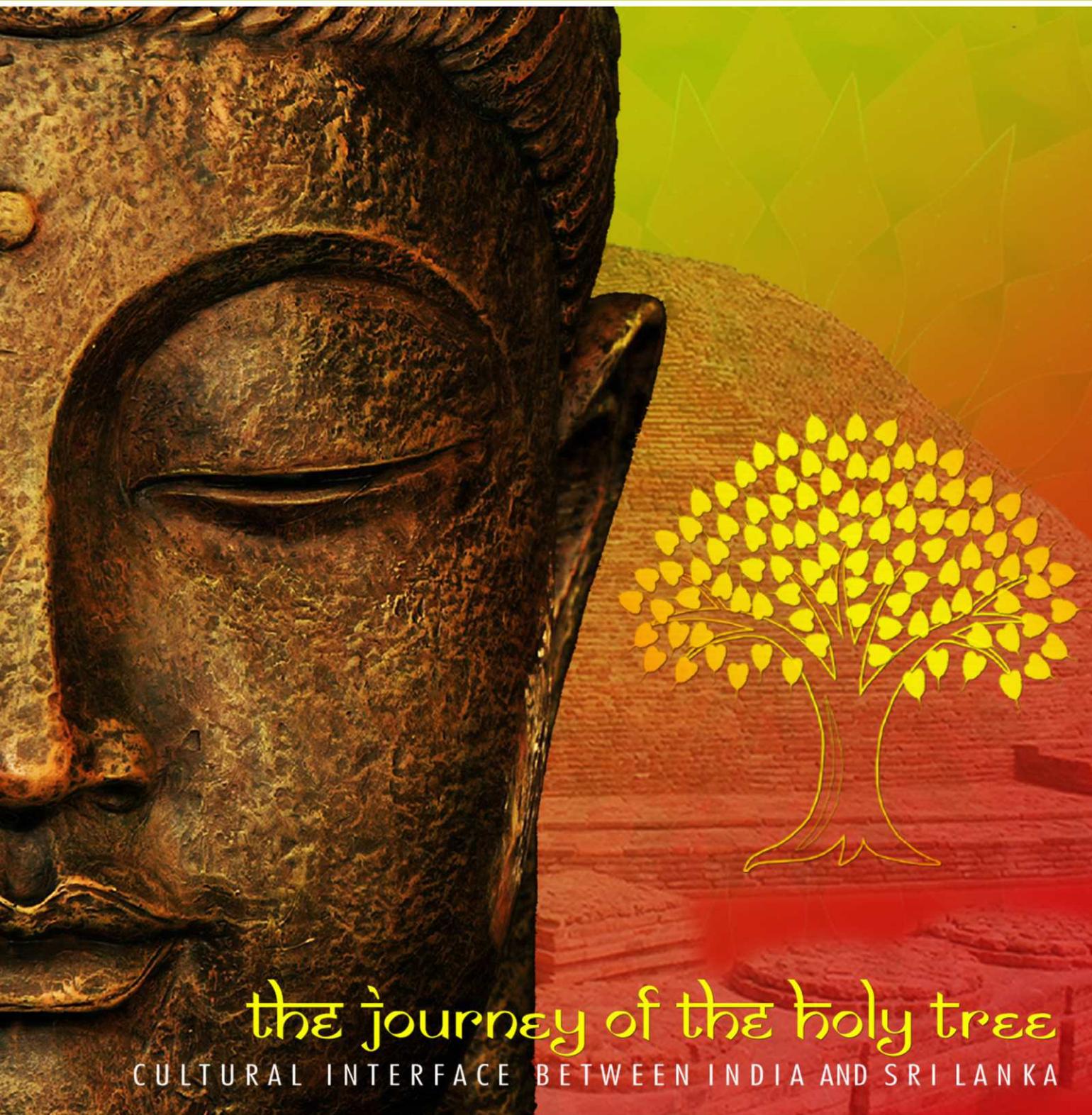


International Buddhist Conference

20th & 21st March, 2011 || Pallekele, Kandy, Sri Lanka



the journey of the holy tree

CULTURAL INTERFACE BETWEEN INDIA AND SRI LANKA

ORGANIZED BY



The Indian Council for
Cultural Relations (ICCR)

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Ministry of External Affairs

Ministry of Buddhasasana & Religious Affairs

Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA)

University of Peradeniya



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University of Peradeniya



Message by His Excellency the President of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



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இலங்கை சனாதிபதி
President of Sri Lanka

Message

I am indeed privileged to send this message to the valued publication - "Journey of the Holy Tree", comprising the proceedings of the International Buddhist Conference held in Kandy, Sri Lanka in March 2012, which is launched during the exposition of the Sacred Kapilavastu Relics in Sri Lanka.

The exposition of these much venerated relics of the Buddha is part of the joint activities between Sri Lanka and India to commemorate the Sambuddhathva Jayanthi - the 2600th anniversary of the Enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama - the Buddha. On behalf of the Buddhists of Sri Lanka, I express my immense gratitude to Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and the Government of India for the exposition of these relics for veneration in Sri Lanka, during this period of historic significance for both our countries.

This second exposition of the Sacred Kapilavastu Relics in Sri Lanka, since its discovery in 1898 in Kapilavastu, the ancient land of the Sakyas, and now housed under the greatest care and attention in the National Museum of India, is a further renewal of the strong links between Sri Lanka and India based on the teachings and culture of Buddhism. From the time of the arrival here of the Arahata Mahinda, son of the Emperor Asoka, more than 2300 years ago with the great message of Buddhism, relations between our two countries have flourished, based on this common heritage; with its emphasis on tolerance, compassion, and understanding.



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Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

This publication of the proceedings of the recent International Buddhist Conference held in Kandy, Sri Lanka, which brings together the contributions by Buddhist scholars from Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Nepal, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Sri Lanka, on the theme "Cultural Interface between India and Sri Lanka, based on Buddhist History, Art, Literature and Philosophy", is another milestone in bringing together current thinking on the universal values and philosophy propounded by the Buddha. It further underscores the cultural interaction between India and Sri Lanka in a vast range of social, religious, intellectual and cultural activities. It is a rich thread of interaction woven in the mosaic of good relations between our two countries that have lasted the test of time.

I commend the work of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations that organized this timely conference in partnership with the Sri Lanka's Ministry of External Affairs, and Ministry of Buddhasasana and Religious Affairs, the Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy and the University of Peradeniya - Sri Lanka, for the success of this conference; seen by the quality of presentations compiled in this excellent volume on Buddhist history, current thinking and practice.

I send my felicitations to those associated with this publication and the exposition of the Sacred Kapilavastu Relics in Sri Lanka.

May you be blessed by the Noble Triple Gem !


Mahinda Rajapaksa

August 7, 2012



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Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



Message from His Excellency the Prime Minister of India



प्रधान मंत्री

Prime Minister

MESSAGE

I am happy to note that a Souvenir titled 'Journey of the Holy Tree', summarizing the proceedings of the International Buddhist Conference held in Kandy in March 2011, is being brought out on the auspicious occasion of the second exposition of the Kapilavastu Relics in Sri Lanka. We were honoured to have been associated with this Conference, which was part of a series of events organized to commemorate the 2600th anniversary of the Sambuddhatva Jayanti.

Since Prince Arhat Mahinda's travel from India to Anuradhapura in the 3rd Century BC, which heralded the arrival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Buddhism continues to be one of the common threads binding India and Sri Lanka together. The spread of Buddhism from the land of its birth to Sri Lanka and other parts of world was not on the strength of the sword but due to its compelling philosophy of universal love, compassion and non-violence. That message of tolerance, brotherhood and mutual understanding remains as relevant today as it was in the past.

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The exposition will provide an opportunity to the people of Sri Lanka to pay homage to the Kapilavastu Relics. It will also reinforce the common cultural heritage shared between India and Sri Lanka and will strengthen the multi-faceted relationship between our countries.

I would like to compliment all those who have been associated with the publication and the organization of the exposition. I am confident that with the blessings of Lord Buddha, their efforts will meet with success.

New Delhi
17 August, 2012

Manmohan Singh
(Manmohan Singh)



16 ft. Idol of Lord Buddha in Sarnath style, gifted by India, at the entrance of International Buddhist Museum complex in Sri Dalada Maligawa, Kandy



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CULTURAL INTERFACE BETWEEN INDIA AND SRI LANKA BASED ON BUDDHIST HISTORY, ART, LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), in association with the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Buddhasasana and Religious Affairs of Sri Lanka organised an International Buddhist Conference on the theme "Cultural Interface between India and Sri Lanka - based on Buddhist History, Art, Literature and Philosophy", at Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA), Kandy. The University of Peradeniya and SIBA were the partnering institutes. It is rightly said that history and culture are interdependent. They cannot exist and prosper in isolation. Metaphorically speaking, they are two essential parts of a tree, history is the root and culture is the fruit. Culture without history has no root, whereas history without culture bears no fruit. A nation is like a tree. If it has no history, it will never survive and grow harmoniously, and if it has no culture, it will never develop and progress in totality. A nation with history and culture alone is a long living and flourishing tree that can weather any storm and withstand any climate. Philosophy, art, literature, folk-art and music, etc., are important elements of culture. Both India and Sri Lanka have age old history sustained culture and historical and cultural interflow since the time of Asoka the Great based on Buddhism, which alone nurtured and fulfilled its aim and thereby helped in strengthening the eternal friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

The history of the two countries tells us of the great bond of mutual friendship and cooperation between the two countries that was laid by the Enlightened One and for that both the countries must pay respect to Lord Buddha, the Great Master, who showed, preached and taught to the suffering humanity the Middle Path of Compassion, Peace, Harmony and all round Happiness. This path, Universal in character, is based on Sila (Morality), Samaddhi (concentration) and Palifid (wisdom). It was this which the Buddha preached at Sarnath in the famous Deer Park and is the essence of his teaching, that is, the Eight-fold Path, popularly known as Middle Path (majjhima patipada).

It is a proven fact that the teachings of the Buddha were introduced in Sri Lanka around 250 BC by the son of King Asoka, Mahinda Thera. The historic Third Buddhist Council (dhamma sangiti) was convened at the behest of King Asoka. After the Council, an important decision was taken to send emissaries (dhamma-duta) to different places to disseminate and establish the Dhamma. As a result, emissaries were sent in nine different directions, including that of Sri Lanka. Asoka sent his son Mahinda in the companionship of theras Itthiya, Uttiya, Sambala and Bhaddasala, Samanera Suman and lay-disciple Bhanduka. It seems Asoka gave importance to Sri Lanka and therefore, sent in addition to his son, Mahinda, other theras and relatives of the royal family and, later, even his daughter, Sanghamitta who had become a nun by that

time, along with the sapling from the sacred bodhi tree under which the Buddha had attained enlightenment. The same was planted in the Mahamegha garden of Anuradhapura with a great celebration where it was tended with honour and care. It still flourishes as one of the most sacred objects of veneration and worship for millions of Buddhists. The planting of the bodhi tree was symbolic of the establishment of Buddhism and Buddhist culture in the island. Cultural links between India and Sri Lanka were further strengthened when Asoka sent the alms bowl of the Buddha.

Buddhism soon became the national religion of the Sinhalese people. King Asoka, Mahinda Thera and King Devanamapiya Tissa, the king in Sri Lanka at that time, were responsible for firmly establishing saddhamma, the true Dhamma, in the land of Sri Lanka. Although 250 BC may be regarded as the time when Buddhism was formally introduced to Sri Lanka, word of the great activities of the mighty King Asoka must have reached the Island earlier. Mention is made in the Pali texts of the Mahavamsa and Dipavamsa, also known as the old chronicles, that the Buddha himself visited Sri Lanka three times during his lifetime. It was mainly because of its universal teaching that Buddhism has been successful at various times in its history. It was because of this that it enjoyed royal patronage of kings and dynasties, not only at the time of the Buddha, but also later on, both in India and Sri Lanka and also elsewhere. Similarly, people of all walks of society accepted Buddhism whether King, or business community or the intellectuals or even the common and the down trodden, etc.

Right from early history, we know that the spread of Buddhism from the land of its birth to Sri Lanka or elsewhere was not through bloodshed or war, but with its encompassing philosophy of universal love, non-violence and compassion. At the time of its dissemination, Buddhism had assimilated the nature, faith and practices from the place where Buddhism had reached. It slowly developed and spread in Sri Lanka and as a result Buddhist history, art-architecture, literature and philosophy also developed all along.

The scholars of Sri Lanka especially provided a solid ground for Pali and Buddhist studies in India by preserving Pali scriptures and adding new dimensions to Pali literature by comparing books on Grammar, Abhidhamma and Poetry etc. Sri Lanka has witnessed the golden era of Pali literature, which is unique in the world. The new generations of India and Sri Lanka are dedicated to search cultural tools from all walks of our culture to make a broad pathway for rapid dialogue between the two societies for tomorrow.

This Conference was organised in order to further nurture the mutual bond of friendship between India and Sri Lanka.

International Buddhist Conference

Overview



The President, Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs of Sri Lanka at the inauguration of the International Buddhist Conference in Kandy, together with the High Commissioner of India and the Director General of ICCR.

His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka inaugurated the International Buddhist Conference organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) at Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy in Kandy on 20th March 2011. The Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Buddhasasna and Religious Affairs of Sri Lanka, together with the Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy and the University of Peradeniya were the Partner Institutes for the Conference, which was organized as part of the joint commemoration by India and Sri Lanka of the 2600th anniversary of the attainment of enlightenment by Lord Buddha. The inauguration of the Conference was also graced by the presence of Hon'ble D.M. Jayaratne, Prime Minister, Prof. G. L. Peiris, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India and Mr. Suresh K. Goel, Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The Governor of the Central Province, a number of senior Cabinet Ministers, the Attorney

General of Sri Lanka, Deputy Ministers, Members of Parliament, Provincial Ministers, Members of the Central Provincial Council and senior officials of the Government of Sri Lanka also attended the inauguration ceremony.

Scholars from Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam participated in the Conference on the theme "Cultural Interface between India and Sri Lanka based on Buddhist History, Art, Literature and Philosophy".

Addressing the august gathering, High Commissioner Kantha emphasized the continuing relevance of the fundamental and universal values and philosophies that Lord Buddha propounded. He underlined that cultural interaction between India and Sri Lanka had been marked by constant cross fertilization in the spheres of art, literature and philosophy and the journey of the Holy Tree from India to Sri Lanka demonstrated this amply. High Commissioner also

highlighted the other activities being undertaken by India to commemorate the Sambuddhiva Jayanthi. These include an exposition of the Kapilvastu Relics in Sri Lanka later this year, setting up of an Indian gallery at the International Buddhist Museum in Kandy and installation of a specially crafted idol of Lord Buddha in Sarnath style from the Gupta period at the entrance of the International Buddhist Museum complex in Sri Dalada Maligawa. He also announced that Indian Railways was planning to launch a special Buddhist Train DAMBA DIWA VANDANA later this year from Chennai catering to Sri Lankan pilgrims, adding that all these initiatives were reflective of India's desire to strengthen her cultural and people-to-people linkages with Sri Lanka, with which India shared deep historical bonds.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Mr. Suresh K. Goel, Director General, ICCR emphasized the important role of cultural communication and dialogue in increasing mutual understanding and highlighted the key role being played by ICCR in this regard. He reiterated the commitment of ICCR to strengthening the cultural relationship between India and Sri Lanka through activities such as exchange of cultural

troupes, exhibitions, distinguished visitors and scholarships.

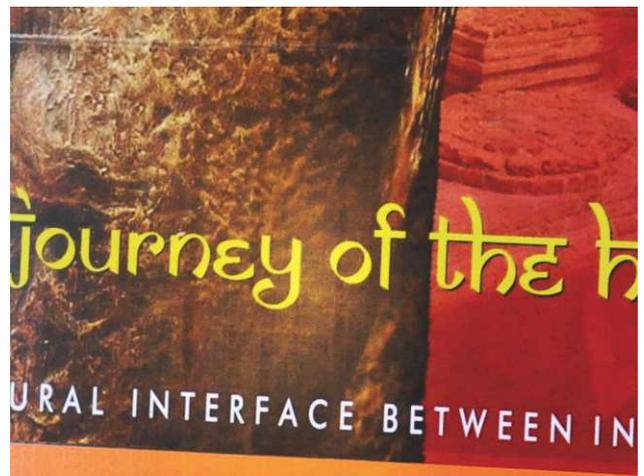
Prof. G. L. Peiris, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs of Sri Lanka, also addressed the gathering, highlighting the foundation of many modern-day precepts in Buddhist thought and philosophy. Following his address, the Diyawadane Nilame of Sri Dalada Maligawa presented the first issue of the academic journal of SIBA, "Sri Lanka International Journal of Buddhist Studies", to President Rajapaksa. The ceremony ended with a vote of thanks by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya. President Mahinda Rajapaksa also visited the exhibition of photographs by Benoy Behl of Buddhist sites and artefacts in India and Sri Lanka. The academic sessions of the conference were held on 20-21 March 2011.

The Conference organized in Kandy was the third such conference on Buddhism sponsored by ICCR, following similar events in Singapore and Cambodia.

The publication is compilation of the papers presented at the Conference.



President Mahinda Rajapaksa visiting the exhibition of photographs by Benoy Behl of Buddhist sites and artefacts in India and Sri Lanka; with him are the High Commissioner of India, Shri Ashok K. Kantha and the Director General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Shri Suresh K. Goel

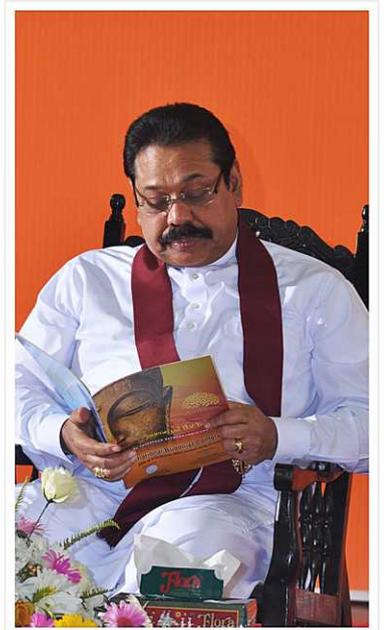


Lighting of the traditional lamp by the dignitaries



The President and High Commissioner of India at the inauguration of the International Buddhist Conference in Kandy.









Remarks by the High Commissioner of
India, H.E. Mr. Ashok K. Kantha,
at the Inauguration of the International
Buddhist Conference Kandy,
20-21 March 2011

Venerable members of Maha Sangha and religious teachers, Your Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Hon. Prime Minister D.M. Jayaratne, Hon. Minister of External Affairs Prof. G.L. Peiris, Hon'ble Governor Tikiri Kobbekaduwa, Hon'ble Ministers, Director General of Indian Council for Cultural Relations Mr. Suresh K. Goel, Diyawadane Nilame of Sri Dalada Maligawa, Secretary, Ministry of Buddha Sasana and Religious Affairs Mr. Cashian Herath, Vice Chancellor of Peradeniya University Prof. Sarath Abeykoon, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to sincerely thank His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka for gracing the inauguration of the International Buddhist Conference. This Conference was first envisaged in the Joint Declaration issued during His Excellency's visit to India in June 2010, when he and the Prime Minister of India decided that the two countries would jointly commemorate the 2600th year of Attainment of Enlightenment by Lord Buddha. This Conference will add great substance to the important activities that form part of that joint commemoration. We are privileged, Sir, that you could find it possible to join us for this event.

We are also honored by the presence of Hon. Prime Minister D.M. Jayaratne, Hon. Minister of External Affairs Prof. G.L. Peiris, Hon'ble Governor Tikiri Kobbekaduwa, other Ministers, and all other distinguished guests this morning. I also welcome the Director General of the Indian Council of Cultural Affairs, Mr. Suresh K. Goel, who has travelled from India to take part in the Conference.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the learned scholars from Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam and India who have come to Kandy for this Conference. Their erudite presentations will add international perspectives and insights on the cultural

interface between India and Sri Lanka based on Buddhism.

Let me take this opportunity to thank our partners in organizing the International Buddhist Conference. The Conference is supported by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Buddha Sasana and Religious Affairs of Sri Lanka. We are privileged to collaborate with Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy and the University of Peradeniya for this event.

Buddhism is one of the world's oldest religions and has endured dynamically through the ages, spreading and flourishing in different parts of the world. This is not an accident of history. This is the natural outcome of the fundamental and universal values and philosophies that Lord Buddha propounded. The basic truths about the soul that he realized under the Mahabodhi Tree are relevant for us to this day.

Lord Buddha preached the supreme messages of love and brotherhood, of peace, goodwill and social equality. Today, two thousand and six hundred years later, as the world struggles through unprecedented traumatic events, we look to his teachings for succor and guidance. The spread of Buddhism from the land of its birth to other parts of the world was never through violence and bloodshed; rather, in the manner of its underlying philosophy, it embraced devotees through its message of love, non-violence and compassion for fellow human beings.

Gautam Buddha's articulation of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path is profound in its simplicity. Beginning from India, these ideas have resonated over large parts of Asia. Even though in later years, many Asian nations diverged from Buddhism as a religion, much of the Asian identity is based on the common language of Buddhism.

Today, as the world celebrates 2600 years of the Enlightenment of the Buddha, we seek to reinforce this shared heritage and value system.

Through these twenty-six centuries, Buddhism has transcended religion and philosophy to permeate all walks of life, including art and architecture, literature and cultural practices. This Conference will deliberate on the multidimensional aspects of Buddhism that bind India and Sri Lanka and indeed countries of the region.

The cultural interaction between India and Sri Lanka has been intense, resulting in constant cross-fertilization in the spheres of art, literature, culture and philosophy. These exchanges continue to flourish under the stellar role played by Anagarika Dharmapala and others who enriched and revitalized these links in recent years. The journey of the Holy Tree from India to Sri Lanka and back, nurtured by the soil of both lands and sustained through caring hands of Indians and Sri Lankans, symbolizes this exchange of ethos.

Your Excellency, distinguished guests, I am pleased to inform this august gathering that India is undertaking a number of special events to commemorate the Sambuddhatva Jayanthi. These will include an exposition of the Kapilavastu relics in Sri Lanka, setting up of an Indian Gallery at the International Buddhist Museum in Kandy and installation of a specially-crafted idol of Lord Buddha in the Sarnath style from the Gupta Period, at the entrance of the International Buddhist Museum complex in Sri Dalada Maligawa.

Further, Indian Railways are planning to launch a special Buddhist train “Damba Diwa Vandana” from Chennai later this year, catering to Sri Lankan pilgrims. The train will touch about a dozen Buddhist centres in India, including Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Kapilavastu, Sanchi and Kushi Nagar. I am happy that special provisions will be made on the train for Sri Lankan cuisine!

Finally, the resumption of the ferry service between Colombo and Tuticorin shortly and between Talaimannar-Rameshwaram as part of implementation of the Joint Declaration that was issued during the visit of His Excellency the President to India in June last year will also facilitate the travel of Buddhist pilgrims from Sri Lanka to sites in India. We are also assisting the pilgrims by providing *gratis* visas for travelling to India.

All these initiatives reflect India’s desire to strengthen its cultural and people-to-people linkages with Sri Lanka with which we share deep historical and civilizational bonds.

In the end, I would like to once again thank His Excellency the President and the Government of Sri Lanka for the extraordinary cooperation rendered in the organization of the Conference. I would also like to thank ICCR, SIBA and the University of Peradeniya for their valuable contributions towards making this Conference a success.

Thank you.





Remarks by Shri Suresh K. Goel, Director
General (ICCR)
at the Inauguration of the International
Buddhist Conference
Kandy, 20-21 March 2011

Venerable Members of the Maha Sandha, Your Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Hon. Excellency D.M. Jayaratne, Hon. Minister of External Affairs Prof. G.L. Peiris, Hon'ble Governor Tikiri Kobbeaduwa, Hon'ble Ministers, Diyawadane Nilami of SDM, Mr. Dela Bandara Secretary, Buddhasasna Mr. Cashian Herath, Vice Chancellor of Peradeniya University Prof. Sarath Abeykoon High Commissioner of India, Shri Ashok K. Kantha most importantly the scholars who have come from India and several other countries along with the scholars from Sri Lanka who are going to contribute to this Conference and distinguished participants and the audience.

I am delighted to be present on this important and unique platform to discuss amongst scholars from India, Sri Lanka and the regions mainly Nepal, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar, the cultural interface between India and Sri Lanka which is prominently visible in our common Buddhist linkages, not only between each other but equally significantly also with other countries in the region particularly in South East Asia. I must underline at this stage that this cultural interface between our two countries is equally manifest in other aspects of our common heritage such as linguistics, arts, philosophy, family values and traditions, civilizational and society structures etc.

The presence of the Hon'ble President of Sri Lanka His Excellency is both significant and a singular honour since it symbolizes our mutual desire and efforts to find common ground in our quest for strong understandings and friendship between our two peoples and nations.

Culture and civilization are important contributors to the development of dialogue and communications between two societies and therefore, by corollary between two sovereign nations. The understanding of thinking processes,

sensitivities and subconsciously ingrained valued from the subtext of this dialogue as well as enhance its value and strength. The cultural communications and dialogue, in what is now becoming known as cultural diplomacy, therefore, have increasingly evolved as a durable basis for understanding each other, particularly, perhaps, in more sensitive and critical areas such as economic and commercial partnerships, political and strategic relations.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations established in 1950 by the first Education Minister of India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad for stands for the communion of Indian culture with diverse Indian cultures, and dialogue between a variety of ideas and thoughts through a large resource of instruments available to it. The process has all the elements of the interfaith dialogue and cultural conversations, becoming now a popular element in international diplomacy, which is almost now becoming cliché.

Starting with the exchanges of performing groups, both in music and dance, and both through international festivals and single group visits, ICCR has begun to play an eminent and key role in promoting academic collaboration through almost 3000 scholarships for studies in India on an annual basis, organization of seminars and conferences on cultural and civilizational themes, such as this establishment of Indian Chairs in universities abroad the number of which is going soon to reach a century, exchange of exhibitions of a diverse media and many many more things.

Coming to Sri Lanka Theravada Buddhism which is the common legacy between India and Sri Lanka is shared not just between the two of us, but it is the legacy which has been imparted as a gift of India and Sri Lanka to South East Asia and the globe and the whole world. This Buddhism

infact, is said to have travelled from India to Sri Lanka and then to South-East Asia, although in Sri Lanka, it has become now almost a part of daily culture.

This Conference clearly illustrates the higher priority being attached by India to intellectual collaboration with its key partners such as Sri Lanka because of its enduring nature. The subject which relates to the common religious and cultural paths, India and Sri Lanka have travelled for almost two millennia, and have been instrumental in its propagation to farther reaches of the world and this provides an important context for this Conference for this effort on a very broad basis. That also explains the invitation to the Scholars from the countries of the region to participate in the Conference. ICCR would also be celebrating internationally, the 150th anniversary of Tagore this year in which Sri Lanka will be an important partner.

This Conference in Kandy is particularly important since it is

a result of this common legacy between India and Sri Lanka in the South Asian region. The two countries being multi-ethnic, multi-lingual with a number of religious being practiced by their citizens, this legacy is reflected in rich Sinhalese and Tamil cultural traditions and texts, their history and the common origin of many practices in the two countries.

The cultural dialogue between India and Sri Lanka aims at building on this common legacy and our common aspirations for social and economic upliftment of their peoples. ICCR remains committed to fully support this process in collaboration with the Government of Sri Lanka.

I hope this Conference will make a valuable contribution to this process. I wish success to all the participants in this project.

Thank you.





Remarks by Prof G.L. Peiris, Hon'ble
Minister of External Affairs, Government of
Sri Lanka at the inauguration of the
International Buddhist Conference at
Kandy on 20th March 2011

His Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Anunayaka of the Malwatte Chapter, Venerable Members of the Maha Sangha, Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Minister of Buddhasasana, Governor of the Central Province, Your Excellencies, Hon'ble Ministers, the High Commissioner of India, Director General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Secretary to the President, Attorney General, Distinguished delegates from the eight countries represented here, Ladies and Gentlemen :

I consider it a great privilege to be invited to share a few thoughts with you on this occasion. My theme will be, as we commemorate the 2600th anniversary of the enlightenment of the Buddha, I think it is befitting to remind ourselves that the vast reservoir of wisdom contained in the teachings of Gautama Buddha is not confined to any particular age or civilization; it straddles the entire world and it is as relevant today in the troubled times in which we live as it was 2600 years ago. I would like to give you a few illustrations of this. Because I think this is a very appropriate forum to focus on this theme.

When I was engaged in research in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge on comparative Public Law dealing with concepts like natural justice and procedural fairness, I found that many of these concepts are not only foreshadowed, not only outlined, but developed in great detail in the Buddha Dhamma. For example, in the Vinaya Pitaka, there is a very detailed analysis of the manner in which justice should be done within a temple, within the Maha Sangha. If there is a complaint, how is that complaint to be investigated in order to ensure that justice is done. All the elements which are developed in the Western legal systems are to be found with exemplary clarity in the Vinaya Pitaka. That there must be a charge, the charge must be

formulated in a manner that is understood by the accused, the accused must have every opportunity for presenting his case, the Judge must be totally impartial, both sides have to be given a hearing, the aggrieved party is entitled to the right of appeal. All of this is spelt out in a crystal clear manner in the Vinaya Pitaka.

There is also another matter particularly relevant to the present age which I would like to comment on. This is to do with the concept of accountability - Accountability, Responsibility and Justice. The point I wish to make is that there is no panacea; there is no particular interpretation of the accountability and responsibility that is common to all civilizations. In the Western legal systems, accountability has an element of retribution. If a wrong has been done, then society collectively exerts vengeance on the wrong doer. There is a retributive function of the criminal law. It is to be found in the Roman Law for example, in the concept of talion, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. That is not the Buddhist concept of responsibility and accountability. In the Dhamma Pada, the famous words of the Buddha - Na hi verena verani – that hatred is never conquered by hatred but by love. The Buddha is preaching that doctrine from a particular point of departure. He is saying that when you punish, when you exert pain, it leads to further bitterness and acrimony. What you need to do is to put these things behind you – the pain and anguish of the past, consign it to the past... move on, pick up the pieces and see how best you can get on with your life. Do not be obsessed and captured by the past. That is very much pith and substance of the doctrine enunciated by the Buddha in those celebrated words Na hi verena verani.

Now, we find that this is amply substantiated by other texts in the Buddha Dhamma. Buddha, addressing the literary brothers, also spoke of the manner in which conflicts among

people, among communities, among families, at a place of work - how does one resolve these conflicts. That was the message of the Buddha to the literary princes... he said – gather in peace, discuss in peace and at the end of your discussions, disperse in peace. In other words, the essence of the Buddhist doctrine with regard to the resolution of conflict is a search for consensus. Let us find common ground, things that we can agree upon so that there is a foundation to be built upon and consolidated. That is very different from the Western concept of retributive justice. Now one country, as we emerge from the painful era of terrorism and as we open a new chapter in our contemporary political and social history what is suitable for us is not the retributive concept of justice but the restorative concept of justice.

Venerable Anunayaka of the Malwatte chapter would be aware of the famous work by Dr. F A Hayley, King's Counsel, on the laws and customs of the Kandyan Sinhalese and Dr Hayley commenting on the customs of the Sinhala people during the British period, emphasizes the collectivity of the Sinhala organization. If there was bereavement, if there was an illness, if there was misfortune, the collective community was a source of strength and comfort. That is very much the ethos of the Buddhist doctrine. And this is reflected in Sinhala customs relating to the tenure of land. The Viharagams and the Devalagams – whoever owned land had a reciprocal obligation to render service. This is a long tradition in our culture. It goes back to the Gam Sabhas and the Rata Sabhas. In our culture, the relationship between employer and employee is not adversarial. It is not confrontational. The employer is looked upon as the father of a family. The point I am making is that the concept of compassion, of understanding, of empathy and restorative justice is very different from the Western concept of retributive justice. I think we need to bear this in mind as we address controversies relating to accountability and there is much to be learnt from the doctrine of Gautama Buddha, 2600 years after his enlightenment. Also, the entire network of rights and obligations, I think deserves some comment. In the Western systems, rights are absolute. This again is fundamentally different in the Buddhist culture. In the Western systems again, if we take the Roman law as an example - that is the foundation of Western legal and cultural systems, ownership is absolute.

The Emperor Justinian in his Institutes says, that whoever owns the land, the soil, owns everything above right up to the skies and down to the bowels of the earth. In the Roman Law, ownership entails the right to use, to enjoy and to destroy – *jus utendi fruendi abutendi* – absolute; no restrictions.

That is very different from the Buddhist teaching. In the Sigalovada Sutta, the Buddha refers to rights and obligations - the ruler and the ruled; husband and wife; parent and child; teacher and student; employer and employed. These are two sides of a coin. Whoever has a right also has an obligation. This goes to the very root of Buddhist teaching.

One of the clearest examples of that is to be found in the words uttered by Arahata Mahinda, the son of the Emperor Ashoka when he brought Buddhism to this Island. In Mihintale, addressing King Devanampiyatissa, Arahata Mahinda said “O King, mighty as you are, you are not the sole owner of the assets of nature – the rivers, the valleys, the oceans, the atmosphere, the beasts of the jungle all of these are not owned by you. You are but the trustee!” Now, Western systems have gone to great lengths to develop the concept of trusteeship but trusteeship has its roots in the Buddhist doctrine. In other words, you have legal title, you have legal ownership but there are obligations which fasten upon the conscience. Therefore, Arahata Mahinda told King Devanampiyatissa “King, you have the obligation to hand over to posterity all these assets of nature substantially in the form in which you have inherited these assets from those who were born before you. Again, a very valuable doctrine for the age in which we live.

The final point I wish to make is with regard to distributive justice. One of the great works published by the University of Oxford is entitled “Distributive Justice” - it is authored by Prof John Rawls. Now, distributive justice again is one of the cornerstones of our culture. In the last sermon which the Buddha preached, the Mahaparinirvana sutra, Gautama the Buddha said that the moral quality of any society can be judged by reference to the manner in which that society treats the weak, the infirm, the old and the infants.

Now, I want to say that this is encapsulated in our time by the “Mahinda Chintana” which represents the conceptual underpinnings of the policy of the Government of Sri Lanka. Delegates from abroad, I am sure, will be interested to learn that we are probably the only country that not only provides education free from kindergarten to university but we have gone much further. We provide the student throughout the period with everything that he or she needs. Be it school books, be it allowances, board and lodging. Everything is paid for by the State. There cannot be a better example of distributive justice. The achievement of the Government of Sri Lanka is not only with regard to achieving a growth rate of more than 8% amidst singularly adverse global circumstances but to my mind, and I saw this myself in the deep south in the recent past during the last two or three days, what is really appreciated by the people of this Island is the fact that these benefits have percolated down to the grassroots level and life is better, richer and more meaningful for the vast mass of humanity. Sri Lanka has signal achievements to its credit with regard to infant mortality and infant morbidity.

Government of Sri Lanka has been prepared to sacrifice revenue to the Treasury derived from taxes on alcohol and tobacco – it is one of the largest sources of revenue – but the Government of Sri Lanka has been prepared to forsake that in the interests of upholding ethical and moral values which were absolutely essential for the health of Sri Lankan society. Distributive justice according to the Buddha Dharma as expounded in the Mahaparinirvana sutra, means equality of opportunity. Government of Sri Lanka has

placed the highest priority on that the rural child today has access to opportunity. Through the nenasalas, Computer Training, Information Technology is no longer confined to the urban areas of the Island but is available in the rural hinterland. The Divi Neguma programme gives pride and dignity to all families focusing on the quality of their nourishment and their ability to earn supplementary income from agricultural and other activity that is carried out at the home.

As far as sports facilities are concerned, the Suriyawewa sports complex in the deep south of Sri Lanka provides students from the rural schools with facilities that are in no way inferior to the facilities that are enjoyed by students attending the most privileged schools in and around Colombo. So all of this is a concrete manifestation of commitment to distributive justice as referred to in the Mahaparinirvana Sutra.

It has been recognised by both countries that Sri Lanka and India are bound together by vital common interests which straddle the entire spectrum of public policy. This is a reality in terms of geography, economy and security. The origin of the relationship between the people of the two countries is lost in the mists of antiquity.

Interlocking interests continue to be a feature of the contemporary bilateral relationship. India is Sri Lanka's largest trading partner, while the quantum of Indian investment in Sri Lanka's economy is substantial. It is a matter for particular satisfaction that there is reciprocity today

with regard to investment. Sri Lankan corporate leaders, by virtue of their investments and trading activity, are making a significant contribution to the Indian economy. This is especially apparent in sectors like apparel, tourism and services. It is also noteworthy that the largest number of tourists visiting Sri Lanka at the present time come from India. People to people contact is steadily increasing in strength in such fields as education and culture.

The challenge today is to explore new vistas of opportunity and new avenues for further consolidating an inherently robust relationship as Sri Lanka enters upon a new era in its political and social history.

I would like, Your Excellencies, Members of the Maha Sangha, Distinguished delegates, to conclude on this note. Professor Arnold Toynbee in his monumental work, the twelve volume work, The Study of History, says that each civilization throughout the history of mankind has certain unique characteristics. We are proud heirs of the Buddhist tradition and have every reason to be proud of our heritage. We have developed a body of doctrine and a body of social practices which are absolutely indispensable for the troubled time in which we live. So may I, on this occasion, draw attention to the fact that the learning, the wisdom, the sagacity that is embodied in the doctrine of the Buddha is a beacon light which can illuminate the world 2600 years after the enlightenment of Gautama the Buddha. Thank you very much.



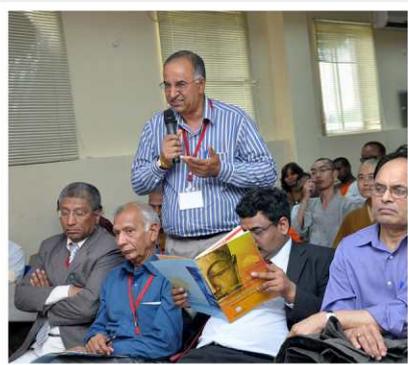


CONTRIBUTORS



- 1** Dr. R.K. Rana
Associate Professor, Department of Buddhist Studies,
University of Delhi
- 2** Dr. Dipankar Lama
Head, Department of Buddhist Studies,
Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda
- 3** Dr. Milan Ratna Shakya
Head, Central Department of Buddhist Studies,
Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal
- 4** Prof. Hari Shankar Prasad
University of Delhi
- 5** Birender Singh,
Counsellor (Press, Information & Culture),
High Commission of India
- 6** Prof. H.M.D.R. Herath
Department of Sociology,
University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
- 7** Prof. G. A. Somaratne
Rector, SIBA, Sri Lanka
- 8** Prof. Mahesh Deokar
Department of Pali,
University of Pune

- 9** Dr. Pathompong Bodhiprasiddhinand
Director of International Programme in Buddhist Studies,
Mohidol University, Thailand
 - 10** Prof. Asanga Thilakarathne
Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
 - 11** Dr. H. M. Mahinda Herath
Deputy Director, SIBA, Sri Lanka
 - 12** R. K. Misra
Assistant High Commissioner, AHC, Kandy
 - 13** Dr. (Ms.) Quynh Ngoc Nguyen
Institute of Religious Studies, Academy of
Social Sciences, Vietnam
 - 14** Dr. Yojana Bhagat
Department of Pali,
Mumbai University
 - 15** Dr. U.S. Vyas
Former Director,
Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda
 - 16** Rev. (Dr.) Muwaetagama Gnananda Thero
University of Peradeniya
 - 17** Dr. Ashin pannasihalankara
Pro-Rector of Sitagu International Buddhist
Academy, Myanmar
 - 18** Y.M. Suhu Bhadra Ruci
Monk of Mahayana School, Indonesia
- Prof. P.D. Premasiri
Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies,
University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
- Prof. M. Somathilake
Department of History,
University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka



Contemporary Indian Interpretations of Buddhism Interpreted

Asanga Tilakaratne



Prof. Asanga Tilakaratne

Prof. Asanga Tilakaratne graduated from Peradeniya University, Sri Lanka, with First Class Honours, specializing in Buddhist Philosophy and offering Pali and Sanskrit as his subsidiary subjects. Prior to this, he received a first degree from Buddhavrakka University of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka completing a five year course in Tripitaka, Pali, Sanskrit, Sinhala and related subjects. He received East West Center Fellowship and studied Western Philosophy at University of Hawai'i at Manoa and received a Masters. He completed his Doctorate at the same university in Comparative Philosophy writing his thesis on "the Problem of Ineffability of Religious Experience". From 1992 to 2007, he taught at Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya. In 1997 he was promoted to Professor and in 2006 to Senior Professor. In the academic year 1999-2000, he was a Senior Commonwealth Fellow and was affiliated to Oriental Institute, Oxford University and a Fellow of Wolfson College. During 2003-2006 he served as the Director of the Postgraduate Institute where he has been the Head of Department of Buddhist Philosophy from 1992. In the academic year 2007-08 he taught as the Visiting Professor at the Department of Sociology, Yonsei University, Korea. In January 2009 he was appointed the Professor of Pali and Buddhist Studies at University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. He has published, both in Sinhala and English, on Buddhist philosophy, philosophy of language and philosophy of religion, practical ethics and contemporary social and political issues and Buddhist epistemology and logic. In 2004, with a group of academics and professionals, he formed Damrivi Foundation, a Buddhist organization for spiritual, social and economic development, and functions as the Chairman of its Board of Trustees.

Introduction

Indian Interpreters of Buddhism are as old as Buddhism itself. Staring from the time of the Buddha, there have been interpreters of Buddhism, both critics and admirers, till the end of the middle period of the Indian history of religion. With some discontinuity just before the dawn of the modern period the critical traditions have continued up to date. The classical Indian debates on Buddhism have been a fertile soil for polemics. Buddhism was one of those systems that the Brahmanic thinkers in particular loved to hate. Now that the classical ages are gone, the old debates do not

continue exactly in the same manner or with the same vigour and heat. Debates nonetheless are not non-existent.

Recent beginnings of Buddhism in India do not go beyond the second half of the 19th century. Until the mass conversion of Ambedkar and his followers in the 1950s, Buddhism was only an academic subject and relic of the past. The Indian intellectual interest in Buddhism is only a relatively recent phenomenon confined to a small group of academics and the elite. The popular interest in Buddhism is still largely confined to the followers of Ambedkar and their descendents. In order to understand the dynamics of this phenomenon it is necessary that one does a comprehensive sociological study. The present paper does not aim to undertake this task. A somewhat different task, however, is to examine the sources of the contemporary Indian understanding of Buddhism. For this purpose one needs to study the views on Buddhism expressed by modern scholars, philosophers, and thinkers. However to study all the relevant sources will be a far too large a task for the present project.

In this paper, therefore, I propose to examine the interpretations of Buddhism developed by some selected modern Indian religious, philosophical and social thinkers. This initial examination will be focused only on two, namely, S. Radhakrishnan, and TRV Murti. As a prelude to the discussion First I will study some historical instances of how Buddhism was understood by those in the classical ages. I will conclude the discussion with an assessment of the philosophical, ideological and social implications of these interpretations.

Two levels of critique

Basically the present essay is concerned with the critique of religion. A critique can be either partial or total. A partial critique affects only partly to a particular religion whereas the total critique questions the very basis or the basic assumptions, of a given religion.

Certain critiques can be concerning only the individual issues; these are partial critiques applicable only to particular aspects of the teaching. Some relevant examples are: the so-called unanswered questions raised by the disciple of the Buddha named Malunkyaputta, and the wrong view held by another monastic disciple named Arittha on the 'harmful phenomena' (anatarayika dhamma). The former involves the ten (fourteen in the later tradition) questions that were not answered by the Buddha (Culamalunkyaputta-sutta, *Majjhima-nikaya* 63). Malunkyaputta was of the view that the ten issues should have been answered by the Buddha in a definitive manner and the fact that the Buddha did not answer them was a weakness of the teaching. Although Malunkyaputta does not describe this non-answering as a weakness of the teaching that is what he means when he threatens the Buddha that he will leave the Sangha if the answers were not given to him. In the second example Arittha was of the view that whatever the phenomena described by the Buddha as 'harmful' (anatarayika) are not really so (Alagaddupama-sutta, *Majjhima-nikaya* 22). In these cases, the misunderstandings involved do not seem to affect the entire system. They refer only to partial

misunderstandings although the questioner himself may not have felt so.

The second category is different. There can be certain critiques applicable to the totality of the teaching. Such critiques if valid could affect the entire system. The almost standard accusation of the atmavadins that the Buddha was a nihilist and Bhikkhu Sati's view that consciousness continues unchanged are two examples of this category. In the Alagaddupama-sutta referred to above the Buddha describes in the following words the accusation leveled against him by those who believed in the atma: "Bhikkhus, I have been baselessly, vainly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented by some recluses and Brahmins thus: "The recluse Gotama is one who leads astray; he teaches the annihilation, the destruction, the extermination of an existing being" (Nanamoli & Bodhi. P.234) And the Buddha clarifies his position vis-à-vis the criticism: "Bhikkhus, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering" (ibid). Similarly, Sati's view on the unchanging character of vinnana ("It is this same consciousness that runs and wanders through the round of rebirths, not another": Maha-tanhasankhaya-sutta, *Majjhima-nikaya* 38) also amounts to attributing some form of atmavada to the Buddha. These two criticisms are concerned with the very unique character of the teaching of the Buddha. If the Buddha believed in an atma of any kind, there would not be any difference between what the Buddha taught and the mainstream beliefs of atma-vada. A criticism of this nature will have implications on the entire teaching of the Buddha, and therefore may be considered as a total criticism. In this discussion we will focus on some interpretations which encompass the entirety of the teaching of the Buddha.

Two attitudes toward Buddhism: rejection and reduction

When Buddhism arose as a sramana movement it was clearly rejected by Brahmins as well as the other sramana traditions. Of the instances referred to above, the one based on the claim that the Buddha was a nihilist who accepted the destruction of a truly living being is an example of such rejection. Based on the understanding that Buddhism rejected the atma-vada accepted by them, the Brahmins included the teaching of the Buddha among the 'nastika' (nihilist) systems whereas the systems that accepted the reality of atma were classified among the 'astika' (positive) ones. On account of its anatma-vada (no-soul view) Buddhism was grouped with materialism of Carvaka which during the time of the Buddha represented in the teachings of Ajita Kesakambali, one among the six religious teachers mentioned in the Samannaphala-sutta of the *Digha-nikaya*.

Reduction is clearly not rejection. It allows some kind of co-existence to a system along with the system which is taken as the point of reference. In this case it is Hinduism. What usually happens is to reinterpret the religion in question, Buddhism in this particular case, to suit to one's own system. As we will see below this is not confined to Hinduism alone; many contemporary philosophers of religion seem to adopt a similar reductionist approach toward other religions. This approach of contemporary philosophers of religion is largely a result of their relativist and post-modernist standpoints which tend to reject an exclusive true/false distinction and accept in its place some form of pluralism. For example, John Hick, whom I will discuss in somewhat detail later, concedes that 'the world is religiously ambiguous'. He comes to this conclusion faced with the multiplicity of the explanations of the world advanced by religions. What we will see below are not outright rejection, but instances of reductionism.

S. Radhakrishnan's Upanishadic Interpretation

Radhakrishnan is known in the field of Buddhist studies for asserting a very close relationship between Buddhism and Hinduism. He has gone to such an extent in his claim that the popular view attributed to him says that Buddhism is an off-shoot of Brahmanism. In his introduction to the *Dhammapada* Radhakrishnan has a long discussion on the affinity between the Upanisads and the teaching of the Buddha. Highlighting these affinities Radhakrishnan says:

The Upanisads from which the Buddha's teaching is derived, holds that the world we know, whether outward or inward, does not possess intrinsic reality. Intrinsic reality belongs to the knower, the Atman, the self of all selves. Brahman and Atman are one. Knowledge of this supreme truth, realization of the identity of the self of man and the spirit of the universe, is salvation. ... The Buddha accepts the propositions that the empirical universe is not real, that the empirical individual is not permanent, but both these are subject to changes which are governed by law and that it is the duty of the individual to transcend this world of succession and time and attain nirvana (*The Dhammapada* p.29).

In this statement Radhakrishnan correctly says that Buddhism does not allow us to believe in an intrinsic reality. But right away he asserts that such an intrinsic reality is the domain of the knower, namely, the Atman. There is no doubt that the belief in atma belongs to Hinduism, and therefore it is true for that system. The difficulty with this assertion is that it leaves the reader with an uncertainty whether or not Buddhism accepts the concept of atma that the author refers to. The concept of anatta, a salient feature of the teaching of the Buddha, clearly rejects the concept of atma in any metaphysical sense. As we observed at the beginning of this discussion, the contemporaries of the Buddha did not have any problems of seeing this, namely, the rejection of the concept of soul, and due to that very reason they called the Buddha a 'nihilist' and described his teaching as a type of nihilism of the character of Carvaka (materialist) philosophy. Accordingly they rejected the Buddha as a nihilist (venayika).

Radhakrishnan's approach is different. He thinks that the Buddha accepted atma in an ultimate sense. In affirming his view, Radhakrishnan says that "the Buddha pointed out the reality of nirvana, of an absolute self and of an absolute reality which he chose to call *dharma* (*The Dhammapada* p.55). In addition to his assertion on atma, the other two assertions Radhakrishnan makes (in the above quoted statement) on nirvana and dharma are quite controversial. The issue of the reality (bhaava) of nirvana has been a matter of debate among the Buddhists themselves. For instance, Buddhaghosa has a long discussion on this issue in the Pannabhumi-niddesa of the *Visuddhimagga*, and therein he concludes that nirvana is real. However, it is Nagarjuna who cleverly demonstrated that both bhaava and abhaava (existence and non-existence) are extremes to be avoided in discussing nirvana (Nirvana-pariksa).

In order to support his claim, Radhakrishnan refers to the Nagara-sutta of the *Samyutta-nikaya* (II. P.105-6) where the Buddha compares his Dhamma to a forgotten path and nirvana to an ancient buried city. Radhakrishnan seems to understand the Buddha's

¹ Prahaanam caabravicehaasta - bhavasya vibhavasya ca tasmaannabhaavo naabhaavo - nirvaanamiti yujyate (Mulamadhyamakakarika 25: 10)

comparison as an indication of the possibility that the Buddha considered his teaching as a rediscovery of the ancient brahmanic tradition. In this context he approvingly quotes Max Muller who said that Buddhism is “the highest Brahmanism popularized...” In fact the Buddha has not denied the historically rootedness of his teaching; he has clarified his position regarding important issues with reference to his contemporary religious milieu. In the Sangarava-sutta (*Majjhima-nikaya* 100) the Buddha refers to three types of religious teachers in so far as their view on the means of knowledge is concerned, namely, those who believed in the textual tradition (anussavika); those who relied on logical reasoning (takki vimamsi) and those who relied on their own higher knowledge (sayam abhinna sacchikatva...), and includes himself within the third group. K.N. Jayatilleke has described them as traditionalists, rationalists and experientialists respectively, and has shown that some middle Upanisadic thinkers also belonged in this last category. This evidence (including that of the Nagara-sutta), however, cannot be interpreted as the Buddha's teaching in its all respects as a re-emergence of the Upanisadic thinking. In the Nagara-sutta itself the Buddha refers to the eightfold path as 'the ancient path followed and practiced by the ancient Buddhas' (puraanamaggo puraanajaso pubbakehi sammasambuddhehi anuyaato... *Samyutta-nikaya* II p. 106). The context makes clear that what the Buddha meant by 'ancient path' is nothing other than the eightfold path which is ancient only in the sense that it was followed by the ancient Buddhas. There are other instances where the Buddha identifies these ancient Buddhas by name. For instance, as the very same Nidana-samyutta (of the Samyutta-nikaya) bears evidence, the Buddha refers to the six past Buddhas, namely, Vipassi, Sikhi, Vessabhu, Kakusandha, Konagamana and Kassapa, and says that all of them comprehended the same doctrine of dependent origination (paticca-samuppada) as he himself did (*Samyutta-nikaya* II pp.7-9). There is a well known statement of the Buddha in which he refers to the idea of paticca-samuppada as an aspect of the nature of things in the world which exists whether or not the Buddhas were to appear (*Samyutta-nikaya* II p.25). This statement seems to describe the paticca-samuppada as an eternal reality. But it is clear that it does not refer to any 'eternal' dharma as Radhakrishnan wishes us to believe.

There are two other interconnected claims Radhakrishnan makes in connection with his overall thesis of Upanisadic Buddhism, namely, the silence of the Buddha and the ineffability of nirvana. Radhakrishnan produces five arguments in support of his claim that “the Buddha's reasons for his silence are quite intelligible”. The arguments are as follows: (1) the Buddha gave more emphasis to facts than to theories for there were many theories rampant during the time of the Buddha, and it was hard to distinguish between ignorance caused by superstitions and sophistication caused by learnedness; (2) it is not doctrinal disputes but the personal effort that would lead one to the realization of truth; (3) the Buddha's mission was not only for intellectuals but also for the ordinary people; so he laid more emphasis on the practice of virtues than on theoretical speculations; (4) the affirmative theology reduces the absolute into the relative; (5) the nature of the absolute is beyond logical categories and conceptual articulation (*The Dhammapada* pp.54-7). Based on these arguments Radhakrishnan concludes that nirvana is ineffable. He says:

The liberated soul apart from the mortal constituents is something real but ineffable. Nirvana is not extinction but is the unconditioned life of the spirit. ... It is capable only of negative description. The expressions of negative theology, the divine dark, the infinite God, the shoreless ocean, the vast desert, occur again and again. It is not being in the ordinary sense and yet a positive reality of which thought has no idea,

for which language has no expression. (*The Dhammapada* p.49-50)

Radhakrishnan further supports his portrayal of Buddhist nirvana as ineffable with a discussion of the beyond-the-word nature of the atma frequently occurring in the major Upanisads. As we will see in our discussion of Murti, the subsequent scholars have picked up the idea of the silence of the Buddha in order to support their transcendental interpretations of the ultimate Buddhist religious experience or nirvana. It is assumed that the so-called silence of the Buddha is a result of the alleged ineffable character of nirvana. Radhakrishnan's Upanisadic reading of Buddhism does not allow him to see the uniquely different character of nirvana. Since I have dealt with both these ideas, silence of the Buddha and ineffability of Buddhist nirvana in more detail previously I will not repeat those arguments here. I will only refer the reader to my earlier work *Nirvana and Ineffability: A Study of the Buddhist Theory of Reality and Language* (Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Colombo, 1993). The negative theology, the divine dark, the infinite God, shoreless ocean, the vast desert etc. which Radhakrishnan refers to are metaphors frequent in the theistic religious literature but surely not in the Buddha's discourses

TRV Murti's response to Radhakrishnan:

TRV Murti who became renowned for his comparative work on Nagarjuna and Kant (*The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (CPB), originally published in 1955) is a student of Radhakrishnan. Murti acknowledged his intellectual debt to his teacher in his CPB. Nevertheless he differs from Radhakrishnan in rejecting the view that Buddhism is an offshoot of Upanisads. Even though Murti does not refer to his teacher directly, it is clear that he was rejecting Radhakrishnan's view when he wrote the following:

“Since the opening of the Buddhist scriptures to the Western world it has become almost a stereotyped opinion among orientalist to regard the Buddha as carrying on the work of the Upanisadic seers. Indian philosophy is interpreted as having evolved out of one single tradition - the Upanisadic. Buddhism and Jainism are treated as deviations rather than as radical departures from the Upanisadic tradition (atamavada) (TRV Murti 1955/1998 p. 14).

Displacing Upanisads as the sole fountain of the entire Indian philosophy, Murti maintained that there are two streams in Indian philosophy. Accordingly he concluded that “Indian philosophy must be interpreted as the flow of these two vital streams – one having its source in atma doctrine of the Upanisads and the other in the anatmavada of the Buddha (CPB p.12). Although Murti allowed this independence to Buddhism his own interpretation of it seems to follow very much the line of interpretation adopted by Radhakrishnan.

A good way to demonstrate Murti's line of interpretation will be to examine his analysis of the 'silence' of the Buddha. Murti has a whole chapter on the issue of the Buddha's silence. After discussing at length, Murti dismisses all the leading interpretations of the Buddha's silence such as agnosticism, nihilism etc. Then he concludes that the silence is due to the Buddha's awareness that the absolute is beyond empirical characterization. Murti summarizes his conclusion in the following words:

2 Jayatilleke, K.N. (1980; originally published in 1963 by George Allen and Unwin, London) *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass).

The Buddha did not doubt the reality of Nirvana (Absolute); only he would not allow us to characterize and clothe it in empirical terms as being, non-being etc. His silence can only be interpreted as meaning the consciousness of the indescribable nature of the Unconditioned Reality (CPB p.48).

Murti refers to Radhakrishnan (*Indian Philosophy* vol. I pp.682-3) in support of his interpretation and further refers to the *via negativa* of the Upanisads articulated by 'neti, neti.' In describing the Buddhist concept of nirvana in these absolutist and transcendentalist lines Murti is essentially following the foot prints of his teacher, Radhakrishnan. Therefore the response to Radhakrishnan as outlined above should equally be applicable to Murti.

The position jointly held by Radhakrishnan and Murti is that Buddhism ultimately upholds an absolute which is transcendental and hence ineffable. The thesis behind this claim is a universal claim, namely, that all religions are ultimately forms of absolutism. Radhakrishnan says: "The Absolute is apprehended by us in numberless ways. Each religion selects some one aspect of it and makes it the centre to which others are referred to" (*The Dhammapada*, p.41). This is not a new position for it has been voiced in the early Vedic literature in the following words: "*ekam hi sat vipra bahudha vadanti*": - the real is one; sages describe it differently. More recently another well known philosopher of Religion, John Hick has held almost an identical position (*An Interpretation of Religion*, New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1999) regarding religious experience in general. Hick undertakes to study the ultimate realities mentioned in all the major religions, and finds that these realities have been described in those religions either in personal terms or in impersonal terms. Hick calls the former 'personae' and the latter 'impersonae' of religious experience. Yahweh, Allah, Krishna etc. are the personae of the religious experience whereas Brahman, Tathata, Satori etc. are the examples of the impersonae. Hick claims that these differences are only the matters of naming the identical religious experience which is one, they are different only in terms. The difference therefore is only apparent and not real. Ultimately all these various terms refer to the same transcendental ultimate reality which Hick calls 'the Real' or 'the Transcendental.' Hick's position is a mere restatement of the ancient Vedic position mentioned above. The difference is that his application covers much wider area including both theistic and non-theistic religions.

Conclusion

The contemporary Indian interpretations of Buddhism we just discussed are different from their ancient counterparts in that whereas the latter are unanimous in their dismissal of the teaching of the Buddha as a form of nihilism the former seem to adopt an assimilative approach. Under this new interpretation Buddhism is not nihilist but transcendentalist and absolutist like any other religion, in particular like Upanisadic religion. Although this is not an outright rejection, it is a kind of reductionism in which Buddhism is made to appear yet another articulation of the age-old Upanisadic tradition. What we have outlined as Radhakrishnan-Murti interpretation of Buddhism has become almost the received view of Buddhism among the Indian scholars who came after them. Consequently Indian scholars (not all) have failed to appreciate Buddhism as a religious teaching of its own right, losing in the process the sight of Buddhism as having its own epistemological, moral and soteriological dimensions

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Buddha's Dhamma as the Foundation of Intercultural Dialogue Between India and Sri Lanka

Hari Shankar Prasad



Prof. (Dr.) Hari Shankar Prasad

Dr. Hari Shankar Prasad is Professor and Head of Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi. He is also Dean of Faculty of Arts, University of Delhi and Chairman of Board of Research Studies (Humanities), University of Delhi. He is M.Phil. and M.Tech from Banaras Hindu University and did his doctorate (Ph.D.) from Australia National University. His area of specialization is Indian philosophy and Buddhist philosophy. Around 24 students got their M.Phil and Ph.D degrees under his guidance/supervision. He has written about 7 books on philosophy and his 3 research papers and more than 30 articles have been published in various journals. He is the member of 'International Association for the History of Religion' and General Secretary of 'Indian Association for the Study of Religion'. He has presented papers in numerous conferences and seminars and delivered lectures on various Indian philosophical themes in many universities in India, Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, New Castle, La Trobe, Bamberg, Bonn, Koln, Bremen, Hamburg, Berlin, Utrecht, Vienna, UNESCO (Paris), Kyoto, Tokyo, Taisho, Virginia, Bali, Mauritius, etc. He was also Professor at Bamerg University (Germany), Mangala Vihar (Buddhist & Pali College) Singapore, Technical University, Berlin and UNESCO Expert on the Philosophy of Interculturality and got German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Fellowship from Bamberg University, Germany.

In the present article I propose to discuss the very definition, presuppositions, conditions, and criteria of interfaith or intercultural dialogue such as the one between the cultures of two neighbours, Sri Lanka and India. I firmly believe that Buddha's *Dhamma* provides the very foundation for such a dialogue as it believes in universal humanity and aims at ethicizing the human self, behaviour, society, and the entire universe through its teachings of and emphasis on practice of the universal ethical principles contained in its doctrines (*dhamma*) of *pancasila*, *dasasila*, *brhamaviharas*, *astangamarga*, *karuna*, *prajna*, *paramitas*, and *sunyata*. Its primary focus, as we know, is on the purification of human mind, which is the foundation of developing a common humanity, rational and moral self, holistic society, harmony, peace, and happiness. These are the reasons that Asoka the Great adopted Buddhism and made a concerted effort to spread and promote the Buddha's teachings (*Dhamma*), which contain

universalizable ethical principles, without being grounded in any God, Holy Scripture or substantialist soul, in the neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka through his emissaries. It is important to note that Sri Lanka not only adopted Buddhism as a state religion but also promoted and practiced it throughout its history since Asoka's period.

However, it is an irony that Buddhism in India could not flourish as a national religion under the mighty Vedic (or so-called Hindu) religion, culture, and political system, which assimilated Buddhist doctrines and techniques into their vast growth and overpowered it by means of various metaphysical doctrines, religious beliefs, myths, rituals, and non-ethical practices, which suited the lazy minded people. This was a conspiracy played jointly by the priestly and political classes. Besides, the physical assaults on the Buddhist monks and institutions by the Muslim rulers in India proved to be a death blow to Buddhism. Thus Buddhism of course could not survive in India but not without transforming the intellectual and cultural traditions of India. In many south and south-east Asian countries Buddhism is either a state religion or a dominant religion. Today it is one of the most respected and fast growing religions of the world. In India too now it is acquiring its ancient glory because of its international respectability.

The Sri Lankan society, which is primarily dominated by Buddhist ideas and practices, shares ancient Indian values in general. This provides a strong natural foundation for interfaith and intercultural dialogue, which is the best way of mutual understanding, appreciation, adjustment, enrichment, and above all embarking on mutual goal of international peace and prosperity. Since both the countries are socially and culturally pluralistic and have democratic system of governance founded on robust ethical principles, the task of jointly working on all issues of national and international interests becomes easier.

To understand properly the Sri Lankan culture and society it is imperative that we explore its history and cultural beliefs and practices since the inception of Buddhism into Sri Lanka by Mahendra, the son of Asoka whose following messages and doctrines (as inscribed in the *Rock and Pillar Edicts*) are still alive and practiced by the Buddhists:

- ⌚ According to the Buddha's *Dhamma*, everybody is equal.
- ⌚ Imparting the knowledge of the *Dhamma* (*Dhammadana*) is the best form of charity which results in mutual respect and friendship.
- ⌚ He advised people to maintain restraint in consumption of food and possession of wealth.
- ⌚ He remained accessible to public twenty-four hours a day to attend their grievances.
- ⌚ He worked for the benefit of every sentient being. He thought he owed to them a lot.
- ⌚ He described the *Dhamma* as goodness, reduced passion, aimed at welfare, sympathetic, charity, truth, purity of action, etc.
- ⌚ He promulgated moral rules like non-violence and

emphasized contemplation on the *Dhamma*.

- ① He valued life, respected people's dignity, declared amnesties twenty five times, and administered justice based on equality.
- ① He was not biased to any particular Buddhist sect.
- ① He respected all religions, allowed their followers to practice their religions anywhere in his kingdom, gave charity to them, and appointed ministers to look after their affairs.

With these brief remarks I would now like to discuss the nature and conditions of interfaith or intercultural dialogue, which are required to be kept in mind for any successful creative cultural encounters between the two neighbours.

Now our task is to explore the ability of Buddhism to contribute to and strengthen the interfaith or intercultural dialogue in order to overcome the actual or possible interfaith or intercultural conflicts in various parts of the world so that creative harmony and peace can be established. Interfaith or intercultural dialogue in general values interdependence over independence, pluralism over absolutism, mutual respect and adjustment over hegemony, and difference over identity. The Buddha's Dhamma has all these things. The entire Buddhism has developed along these lines. This is amply clear from the study of the Buddhist manner of thinking toward human issues and problems, along with its basic structures and tenets, the Buddhist response to interfaith dialogue and its ability to strengthen it, its dealing with the contemporary social and political issues like equality, justice, liberty, and human rights, and its attitude toward other religions and cultures and engagement with conflict resolution.

Interfaith or intercultural dialogue between two religious or cultural groups, despite being external to each other but never totally incommensurable, presupposes that each one is committed to positive socio-political action and has the basic understanding of the internal structure of other's religious and cultural truth claims and tenets in proper contexts, and then try to judge them both internally and externally in such a way that its positive and suitable aspects are projected for the present purpose. Remember that the motive is always social harmony and peace, which are the foundational values. What is important about interfaith or intercultural dialogue is to see how different religious and cultural claims promote these values. This involves both transcendence and development of certain doctrinal beliefs within the internal structure in order to join hands with the external religion or culture to address common concern. Every religion or culture has divine sanction for such attempts, although they may be required to be explored and emphasized. Without this there cannot be a true religion, or culture, or civilization. With this plan at hand, a religion or culture is then subjected to objective evaluation.

The real test of an interfaith/intercultural dialogue is in a concrete conflict situation. In such a situation, it is of utmost importance that the participants properly understand the internal structures of both one's own and other's religion/culture and identify their hierarchical leadership structures as well. The practical tool for further action is to approach the leadership of both the parties to realize the necessity of addressing the issues of common concern for the sake of peaceful coexistence which necessarily requires interdependence

Since interfaith/intercultural dialogue is a very sensitive normative issue, the proper and sympathetic understanding of the other's religious/cultural claims and its rational application to the dialogue demand utmost care. The whole exercise includes openness and

mutual respect, a passionate humanitarian religious spirit to work together without any prejudice and without invoking other differences, and a recognition of the limitation of one's own religion/culture and so the need to involve other religions/cultures. With this background, now we can say that the stage is ready to identify the universal common humanitarian concern and to prepare a common action plan. Note that this is a continuous process through which interfaith/intercultural dialogue matures and becomes more and more effective at every level of its development. A serious participation in an interfaith/intercultural dialogue is an act of transformed consciousness, a higher level of consciousness, which deconstructs one's narrow sectarian selfhood and sees the entire humanity as the field of action. This is the true worldly goal of every religion/culture linked with its eschatological goal as well. This realization gives rise to a sense of religious/cultural responsibility toward humanity without fear of the loss of religious/cultural identity. This fear has so far not only created violent conflicts but also prevented the people from developing their innermost nature, a state of being oneself, which appropriates the "others" for its own sake. This radical transformation takes care of the troubled humanity and sets a highly normative agenda.

Buddhism is extremely cautious about the above sensitive issues and so it emphasizes ethicization and humanization of the world. It believes that these are the two processes which can be carried out only by human effort irrespective of the fact whether one is a theist or not. The central or pivotal doctrine of Buddhism is called the doctrine of interdependence or dependent arising (*pratityasamutpada*) which defines the very manner of any existence, functioning, or organization, be it epistemological, ontological, conceptual, ethical, social, or political. This is also called the middle path which avoids any extreme position. Despite its denial of the existence of God and soul, it is a religion and culture because of its emphasis on ethicization and humanization of the world and its attempt to equate it with eschatological and soteriological goals.

What is Interfaith Dialogue?

Interfaith intercultural dialogue is today's necessity for creative peace, harmony, tolerance, and prosperity in the world. Religious/cultural pluralism is a historical fact and interfaith/cultural dialogue not only presupposes this fact but also recognizes it as an opportunity for the development of a religion or culture. A religion/culture is a great living force, a powerful worldview with faith and praxis, a set of doctrines, myths, rituals, and customs. Besides, it has varied dimensions – anthropological, historical, geographical, sociological, cultural, political, and soteriological – which have given birth to innumerable religions/culture. Needless to say, these religions/cultures have tremendously affected the human life throughout the world at all times. In their history, they have been instrumental in organizing the humanity in the realms of their influence for the benefits of their followers, but it is also a truth that inter- and intra-religious/cultural clashes have killed millions of people and proved to be ghastly atrocious in many other ways. In the name of religion/culture we have seen throughout the world in the past, and even today, people have suffered from superstition, self-mortification, intolerance, violence, hatred, bigotry, slavery, exploitation, and so on and so forth. It is an irony that even the non-religious and anti-religious worldviews like scientism and Marxism have not been less atrocious. According to Buddhism, any ideology, whether religious, cultural, political, national, or racial, is an intoxicant (*dithiraga*), which is a serious hindrance in the process of ethicization and humanization of the world. That is

why it recommends deconstruction of ideologies and identities (*sunyata*).

The situation today is very complex. Many major religions like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism crossed their regions of birth long ago and are still expanding. Their new denominations have emerged for different reasons – doctrinal differences, migration, encounters with other religions, and needs of time and situation. Many traditional values and customs have changed and many others are under threat from scientific development, industrialization, communism, secularism, democratization, materialism, and consumerism. In many parts of the world, fundamentalism and regimentation, and political ideology and religion are combined. The result is there to see. In other parts, exclusive individualism is threatening the institutions of family, society, and religion. All these create a very gloomy picture of the world today. Interfaith dialogue addresses most of these issues and tries to find amicable solutions to them.

What is interfaith dialogue? It is a creative encounter, an interface, an attempt to understand each other, accommodate and enrich each other between two or more systems of religions or existential worldviews which have competing truth-claims, doctrines, faiths, Godheads, customs, goals, and in general conflicting perspectives. This means each worldview has to face many opposite worldviews and the challenges posed by them. The objective of interfaith dialogue is to create mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance, to unitedly work for peace and prosperity of the humanity and the world at large without harming the identity of any religion. It is believed that every religion has some universalizable values as common ground. A simple desire or openness to understand the other is a necessary and good condition for initiating a dialogue. Other issues are taken up gradually, for example, the necessity to redefine, reorient, and enlarge some of the key concepts of a religious system. How to go about the whole scheme is the next step. Here are some of the important points as prerequisites¹ for consideration:

- ① To realize that religious pluralism is not only a hard fact but also a necessity to maintain the dynamism and growth of a religious worldview.
- ① To properly understand any other religion is to understand its internal structure, i.e. the phenomenology of that religion from an authentic representative of that religion. It is to be remembered that every religion has both deep and surface structures.
- ① To recognize that other religions also have some unique concepts of truth, which have united a section of the humanity for a long time.
- ① Every religion has a humanization and ethicization programme.
- ① Every religion has an idea of Golden Rule of treating both self and the other in equal terms.
- ① To recognize the fact that there are not any two worldviews which are either totally incommensurable or totally commensurable. Instead they have many common grounds and interests.
- ① The unity of the two worldviews does not mean uniformity; it aims at formulating a common minimum programme.
- ① To realize that the desired truth, i.e. the new truth, will emerge in the process of dialogue itself.
- ① Exclusivism, inclusivism, absolutism, and relativism are detrimental to the interfaith dialogue.

- ① Varied appeals to their respective mysticism or prophetic experiences or Holy Scriptures by different participating parties have the potentiality of sabotaging the spirit of interfaith dialogue.
- ① The thesis that “truth is one but approaches to it are many” won't hold either as it would be impossible to determine the absolute nature and contents of that 'One Truth' given the various conflicting conceptual frameworks. Also because all approaches have to be taken equally valid. This means the possibility of interreligious conflict and so interfaith dialogue are ruled out. This goes against the ground reality.
- ① Every religion represents only a segment of the humanity despite the claim that it is universal in character. This failure has to be looked into.
- ① There is not an automatic descent of religious truth on the earth universally available and effective to the entire humanity.
- ① The emphasis should be more on learning each other's religion and mutual accommodation, rather than validating one's religion and conversion of others.
- ① The finality-claim of truth has to be suspended by the partners in the dialogue. At the same time at some stage some criteria of truth have to be found in search of a common ground and a mechanism has to be devised to eliminate unsound and ungrounded truth-claims, which is a daunting task.

The Interfaith Criteria of Truth

A serious attempt is imperative to look for some criteria of truth² which can appeal to all participants in the interfaith dialogue. The following ones are worth considering:

- ① *Criterion of Experience*: It involves direct experience of the religious truth whose contents have to be shown meaningful and made liable to be a subject of public discourse.
- ① *Criterion of Rationality*: It demands that the experienced truth should stand to sound rational evaluation.
- ① *Criterion of Public Morality*: It emphasizes the point that the truth must be inseparable from universal public morality.
- ① *Criterion of Humanization*: It emphasizes a shift from the surface structure to the deep structure of a religion and utilizes the latter to embark on a humanization programme to create a world of human concern without neglecting the ecological concern.
- ① *Criterion of Transcendence*: It seeks transcendence of personal salvific interest to global altruism and reorientation of key concepts of a religion.
- ① *Criterion of Reinterpretation*: It advocates the necessity of reinterpretation of religious doctrines and faith to bridge the gap between divinity and humanity on the one hand and between humanity and Nature on the other. In this context, the corresponding action plan needs the human effort to implement it.
- ① *Criterion of Transformation*: It highlights the power of a religion as an instrument to transform its followers to create a peaceful and harmonious humane world.

Divergent Responses on the Interfaith Dialogue

There have been divergent responses to the proposal of interfaith dialogue. Diana Eck³ finds three such responses: (i) *Exclusivism*: It

is a chauvinistic tendency of a religion, which claims to have exclusive claim about truth and so looks down upon other religions as false or imperfect. (ii) *Inclusivism*: It is a mind set according to which a religion advocates one universal religion and considers itself as the perfect and so comprehensive that all religions can be merged into it. And (iii) *Pluralism*: It recognizes the autonomy of every religion and considers the religious pluralism as the necessary condition for interfaith dialogue which aims at consensus, common good, united action plan, highlighting the positive points in others' religions, and mutual enrichment and adjustment. "By pluralism," writes Raimundo Panikkar, "I mean the awareness of the legitimate coexistence of systems of thought, life, and action which, on the other hand, are judged incompatible among themselves." Besides, there are two other responses: (iv) *Relativism*, according to which every religion is right in its own way. This denies the very necessity of interfaith dialogue. It is a self-stultifying way of thinking. (v) "One Truth Many Approaches": Its simple theory is that various truth-claims lead to One Ultimate Truth. This in disguise admits the simultaneous validity of all approaches. The mystics maintain so. This is obviously untenable. Except pluralism, the remaining ones do not have a rational theory of other's perspectives, i.e. the recognition of the other as other.

Quotes on Interfaith Dialogue

I am giving here some selected quotes on the subject under consideration by great thinkers and interfaith organizations of our time:

- ① "If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not the exclusive possession of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart." – Swami Vivekananda.⁴
- ① The Golden Rule: "There is a principle which is found and has persisted in many religious and ethical traditions of humankind for thousands of years: What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others. Or in positive terms: What you wish done to yourself, do to others! This should be the irrevocable, unconditional norm for all area of life, for families and communities, for races, nations, and religions." – The Declaration Toward a Global Ethics.⁵
- ① "[B]ring religions and spiritual traditions to a common table, where, respecting each other's distinctness, they may seek the common ground necessary to make peace among themselves and to work together, in dialogue with local, national, and international organizations, to create a sustainable future for all people on the earth." – Bishop Williams Swing.⁶
- ① "The *dialogical dialogue* is, in my opinion, indispensable as the only, or at least as the most promising, chance for a fruitful encounter. . . . In the dialogical dialogue I am open to the other in such a way that my partner can discover my myths, my subjacent assumption – and vice versa, of course. The authentic dialogue exists neither in what I say, nor in what my partner adds, but in that which takes place in the dialogue itself. Neither of us knows what is going to happen beforehand, nor have we any power over it during the process. Only when we stand under the spell

of the words happening between us can we understand each other. We both listen." (Raimundo Panikkar)⁷

Buddhist Response to Interfaith Dialogue

The discussion of Buddhism above has made it amply clear that it is a radical religion in many ways. Its founder the Buddha goes against the prevailing religious beliefs and practices. In my opinion, Buddhism meets all the requirements needed for interfaith dialogue:

- ① The Buddha considers himself a worldly person who is enlightened through his own insight developed by himself and asks his disciples to experience himself the truth of life.
- ① Buddhism holds a naturalistic view of man who is a sociable being whose suffering is to be redeemed. He is a cluster of mind, body, desire, will, motive, intention, inclination, emotion, and reason.
- ① Man is liable to ethical and spiritual transformation without any external intervention or grace and without any gender distinction. For Buddhism, humanity is one whole.
- ① The Buddha suggests experiential and rational examination of his *Dharma* and asks his followers not to spare him out of sheer reverence to him.
- ① He maintains that his *Dhamma* consists of the ethical principles which have intrinsic value and are also equated to nirvana, the ultimate religious good.
- ① He does not believe in personality cult and advocates the primacy of the *Dhamma* over his own identity as the Buddha, a spiritual teacher. He tells his favourite disciple, Ananda, "Dwell making yourselves your island (support), making yourselves, not anyone else, your refuge; making the *Dhamma* your island (support), the *Dhamma* your refuge, nothing else your refuge."⁸ Further, he says, "Whether Tathagata [=the Buddha] do or not arise (or appear), . . . that fixed sequence of dhamma (or its regulative principle, . . .) is firmly established."⁹
- ① He restructures humanity according to the ethical and spiritual development of man, not on the basis of cult, caste, faith, race, gender, colour, nationality, or any other non-ethical identity.
- ① Buddhism thinks that God-centric religions are bound to hamper ethical development of men and create interreligious conflicts, so human effort assisted by the cultivated mind is the only way to overcome such problems and many others.
- ① The Buddha draws our attention to the urgency of immediate concern of life and so he asks us to shift the focus from the pernicious speculative and conventional views to the burning ethical concerns. His parable of arrow¹⁰ makes this point very clear. If a person is struck by an arrow in his chest and is in excruciating pain, his immediate priority should be to get medical aid. But if he does not focus on the immediate concern of how to remove the arrow and cure the wound, his curiosity knowing about such irrelevant things - the size and stuff of the arrow, who hit it, what is his caste, and where did it come from and so on – would prove to be suicidal. In the similar vein, when he was asked speculative questions about the origin of the universe, metaphysical self, and other dogmas, he maintained deliberate silence because they were ethically useless, irrelevant, pernicious, and unanswerable.

- ① The Buddhist ultimate goal is to do good to others, as much as possible, out of compassion which is an ethical concern – “For the welfare of many, for the happiness of many, out of compassion for the entire world.”¹¹ And this is possible only through global ethicization and humanization of the action plan.
- ① The Buddha realizes that grasping at their own views and competing truth-claims by the followers of different religions hijack the deep structures of their own religions and trivialize them by reducing the deep structures to surface structures. To maintain the dynamism and development of a religion, the Buddha rejects the absolute truth-claim – “This alone is Truth, and everything else is false.”¹² He further says, “To be attached to one thing (to a certain view) and to look down upon other things (views) as inferior – this the wise men call a fetter.”¹³ His raft simile¹⁴ applied to his *Dhamma* makes a significant point that there should be no grasping at *Dhamma* which is actually manifested only in the ethical and spiritual development of man. Just as a raft is useful in crossing over a river, the *Dhamma* is useful in redeeming the human suffering and bringing lasting peace and freedom. But just as it would be foolish and harmful to carry on the raft on the shoulder simply because it helped cross over the river, likewise it would be foolish and harmful to hold on to the *Dhamma*, or any other religious view.
- ① The Buddha is averse to the idea of conversion to any foreign faith. He believes in ethical and spiritual transformation of man not just conversion to any other faith. When a Jaina householder Upali approached him to convert him into his religion, the Buddha asked him to seriously reconsider his decision and to continue to respect and practice his own religion. In another context, when a person called Malunkyaputta, expressed his desire to accept the Buddha as his religious leader, the latter asked him, “Did I ever tell you Malunkyaputta, “Come, Malunkyaputta, lead the holy life under me . . .”¹⁵ What he wants to say is that a religious identity is meaningless rather harmful, if we do not develop ourselves ethically and spiritually.
- ① The Buddha emphasizes on moral question and training, cultivation of mind, and moral sensitization.
- ① Since ethical and spiritual transformation requires continuous effort and development which implies change, there is an endless possibility and necessity too to maintain the dynamism of religion.
- ① Buddhism, in letter and spirit, respects other religions. In the *Rock Edict XII*, Asoka says:

One should not honour only one's own religion and condemn the religions of the others, but one should honour others' religions for this or that reason. So doing, one helps one's own religion to grow and render service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise one digs the grave of one's own religion and also does harm to other religions. Whosoever honours his own religion and condemns other religions, does so indeed through devotion to his own religion, thinking “I will glorify my own religion”. But on the contrary, in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely. So concord is good: Let all listen, and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others.¹⁶

- ① War and peace have been hot issues in every age and society. Buddhism would never justify war at any cost in principle. Aggressive war is unthinkable in it. It locates the origin of both war and peace in the human mind

which gets reflected in implicit or explicit behaviour. According to it, “Grasping at wrong view” is the most dangerous factor which is creating all sorts of conflicts at personal, social, and global levels. The Buddha faces a peculiar situation of conflicts. His emphasis on immediate ethical concern and advice to neglect other unethical matters discomforts other religionists, who sometimes fiercely oppose the Buddha's enterprise. In this vein, he says, “I am not in dispute with the world, rather the world is in dispute with me. A *dhamma*-follower never disputes with the world.”¹⁷

Buddhism on Equality, Justice, Liberty, and Human Rights

Equality, Justice, Liberty, and Human Rights are four key values of today's free democratic world. Strictly speaking, they fall under social and political philosophy, but religious responses to them are not a new thing. In ancient times in India, they were not discussed as separate issues in detail, but as part of the holistic worldview. This means reconstruction and reinterpretation of some of the key passages in the ancient literature are required so that we can have some idea about the hidden Indian theories of these concepts.

As to equality, there are different kinds of equality, such as metaphysical, ethical, natural, social, economic, political, and gender. Moreover, if humanity is one united whole, i.e. if each human being is an instantiation of humanity and is interdependent and kinly related to other human beings, whether because of God's creation or natural creation, all human beings are equal in terms of biological constitution, feeling, reason, desire, disposition of sociability, aspirations, and so on. Equality does not mean that everybody is equal in every sense like physical fitness and strength, intelligence and temperament, and conditions and needs. Equality in a simple term means recognition of each individual as a dignified subject in himself/herself, availability of opportunity and resources to each one, and equal in the eyes of law without any distinction in terms of social status, caste, creed, race, faith, religion, gender, etc. Most of the inequalities are man-made. Hindu caste-system is an example of this. The principle of justice, along with the principles of liberty and human rights, is derived from the principle of equality. This means equality is the foundation or operating field of these principles. Once equality is in force, justice, liberty, human rights, social change, personal development, peace, harmony, and prosperity are on the fast track. On the contrary, man-made inequality is the source of injustice, exploitation, atrocities, violence, social unrest, and disharmony. The *Dhamma*, since it is not any religion-centric, can be a rallying point in the interfaith dialogue, for the reason that it is an eternal, natural, and ethical principle encompassing all sentient beings of all times and in all places. It is an ethical truth as against a hollow sectarian metaphysical truth. If universal human goal is the need of today, then *Dhamma* is the solution as it bridges the gap between faith and praxis, between ideal and real. Socially engaged Buddhism takes care of the contemporary issues like equality, justice, liberty, human rights, and other social goods.

The Buddhist principle of interdependence (*paticcasamuppada*) recognizes the mutual necessity of self and other. This means each self is the source of other's good and vice versa. Self-transcendence is not only self-development but also self-fulfillment which requires the other as a necessary condition. In Buddhism, suffering is considered a universal problem, so there should be a universal solution and perfect universal ethical practice is that solution, which in the theistic religions is the disposition of God. It is not confined to any age or place. In is the only interreligious ground.

The five precepts, noble eightfold path, four social emotions (or four sublime states of Brahma), Bodhisattva ideal, and ten perfections collectively provide the ethical paradigm for interpersonal relationship. It aims at perfecting the moral agent who has to imbibe and practice such values as equality, justice, liberty, and human rights. For Buddhism, these are dynamic ethical concepts. The Buddhist ethical paradigm first generates the moral and social rectitude which in action combines these values. It is a continuous historical process in which religious, social, political, and educational institutions are actively involved. It is actually a progressive ethicization and humanization programme, which, according to the needs and situations, goes for reinterpretation and reorientation of the traditional concepts.

The Buddhist concept of universal equality is based on its treating humanity as a community of sufferers as against the Vedic concept of humanity with its divine structure into fourfold hierarchical division, which is the permanent source of inequality and injustice, and thus the source of various social evils. The Buddha takes humanity as one species, and restructures it in terms of ethical development of human beings under full liberty from the bondage of the unexamined existing tradition and beliefs. He argues that man is endowed with the cognitive faculty to experience for himself and with the faculty of reason which enable him to distinguish between good and evil, and right and wrong. The function of a teacher, a family, a society, and a religious or political institution is to recognize these faculties as natural gifts which have great values not only for the individual but also for the society, and to create conducive conditions – such as economic, educational, social, and political - for their cultivation.

Economic Condition

The Buddha is aware of the economic disparity and poverty as the main source of social evils and immorality. He greatly values the ideal and practice of 'giving' (*dana*) to the poor and needy by wealthy ones and the State as the remedy of such social evils. 'Giving' here also involves distributive justice. But the rightful acquisition of wealth without greed, its enjoyment with contentment and renunciation, and not taking what is not due to one as parts of the Buddhist way of living are strongly emphasized. The Buddha sees a chain of moral and social problems leading to social disharmony if 'giving' is not valued and practiced seriously:

Thus, from the not giving of property to the needy, poverty became rife, from the growth of poverty, the taking of what was not given increased, from the increase of theft, the use of weapon increased, from the increased use of weapon, the taking of life increased – and from the taking of life, people's life-span decreased, their beauty decreased.¹⁸

Educational Condition

The Buddha and Buddhism advocates for the basic necessity of education which involves acquisition of right knowledge, sound reasoning, cultivation of mindfulness, development of moral rectitude, perfection of virtues, etc. which make a person a good autonomous moral agent. Education instills wholesome values – such as equality, justice, liberty, and human rights – in him.

Social and Political Conditions

These conditions are of utmost importance, because they ensure the protection and promotion of the above values so that a

harmonious and peaceful society is established. The Buddha talks of an ideal ruler who takes care of the needs and welfare of his subject according to the *Dhamma*. Nagarjuna, a great Buddhist thinker (second century A.D.), has a long list of advice for King Udaya in this regard:

Cause the blind, the sick, the lowly, the protectorless, the wretched/
And the crippled equally to attain food and drink without interruption//
Always care compassionately for the sick, the unprotected, those stricken/
With suffering, the lowly and the poor and take special care to nourish them//
Provide extensive care for the persecuted, the victims (of disaster)/
The stricken and diseased, and for worldly beings in conquered areas//
Provide stricken farmers with seeds and sustenance/
Eliminate high taxes by reducing their rate//
Eliminate thieves and robbers in your own and others' countries/
Please set prices fairly and keep profits level (when things are scarce)//¹⁹

Human Rights

In the Buddhist worldview, a person enjoys equality, liberty, justice, dignity, and respect for life. According to it, human right issues are primarily ethical and only secondarily political and legal. All the above values reinforce each other, but the value of equality has primacy over others because it fulfills the basic necessity of the natural law (*Dhamma*) to entitle a human being to be a dignified member of the universal humanity which is the community of sufferers. The principles of the *Dhamma* covers both natural law and the natural rights, which fight against the narrow and unjust conventional laws to be broader and universal. The *Dhamma* principles are independent of any cultural and social contexts. Social values like justice are judged in the light of these principles. Inada succinctly explains the Buddhist approach to the issues of the human rights:

Human rights is indeed an important issue, but the Buddhist position is that it is ancillary to the larger or more basic issue of human nature. It can be asserted that the Buddhist sees the concept of human rights as a legal extension of human nature. It is a crystallization, indeed a formalization, of the mutual respect and concern of all persons, stemming from human nature. Thus, human nature is the ultimate source, the basis from which all other attributes or characteristics are to be delineated. They all have their respective *raison d'etre* in it. They are reflections and even byproducts of it. The reason for assigning human nature the basic position is very simple. It is to give human relations a firm grounding in the truly existential nature of things: that is, the concrete and dynamic relational nature of persons in contact with each other, that which [sic] avoids being caught up in rhetorical or legalistic tangles.²⁰

It is by now clear that Buddhism aims at the universal ethicization and humanization programme. The Buddha's most fundamental realization is the common problem of the universal humanity whose members are equally governed by natural laws and rights. The whole effort of the Buddha and Buddhism is to execute this

programme by ethically transforming every human being through self-effort. To resolve the interreligious/intercultural conflicts it is necessary that we hold an interreligious/intercultural dialogue by suspending our sectarian beliefs and truth-claims, but at the same time devise a way how to go about the universal ethicization and humanization programme. Each religion or culture has this programme but sadly it is neglected and overpowered by its sectarian and dogmatic elements. In the case of Sri Lanka and India all conditions are present for a fruitful interface between the two cultures. What is now required is a sincere desire followed by conceptual clarity, appropriate planning, focus on the purpose, and commitment on the part of the people involved in this enterprise be they politicians, diplomats, intellectuals, religious leaders, and general public to work together to translate the possibility into actuality.

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- ¹ See articles in Dean.
- ² Ibid.; Fisher, chapter 13.
- ³ Fisher, p. 469.
- ⁴ Ibid., pp. 476-472.
- ⁵ Ibid., p. 472.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ See Dean, p. 41.
- ⁸ Rahula, p. 61.
- ⁹ Conze, p. 93.
- ¹⁰ Rahula, p. 14.
- ¹¹ Ibid., p. 46.
- ¹² Ibid., p. 10.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 13; also see pp. 4 & 8.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁷ *Samyuttanikaya*, III, p. 138.

¹⁸ Harvey, p. 197.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 199.

²⁰ Quoted in Keown, p. 67.

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Buddhist Central Value System and Sri Lankan Society

H. M. D. R. Herath



Dr H.M.D.R. Herath

Dr H.M.D.R. Herath is Professor of Sociology in University of Peradeniya. He is Master of Arts in Sociology from University of Delhi and did his Ph.D. from University of Peradeniya on the topic Indigenous Classification of Flora in the North Central Province: An Ethno-botanical Study. He has been awarded a fellowship by UNESCO Regional Office Bangkok, Thailand; fellowship by USAID for Health and Social Science Workshop in Antwerp, Belgium, Special National Award of the Sarvodaya Trust Fund for the Advancement of Humanity, Development and Peace (Sri Lanka), a fellowship by the UNESCO Chair Programme, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts International Conference on "Culture, Education and Ecology," fellowship by the "UNESCO for Culture and Agriculture", Bangkok, Thailand, fellowship by the UNESCO Chair Programme, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, International Conference on "Exploring India's Charted Narratives", New Delhi, India, addressed, at the 3rd IFOAM ASIA Conference Organized by IFOAM ASIA in association with the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, India. He has written a book 'Kinship' (Social and Social Anthropological Study on Kinship Marriage and Family). He has written numerous articles and presented research papers in national as well as international seminars/conferences.

Introduction

Values are emerging from assumptions, largely unconscious of what is right and important, some set of values form the core of every culture. Social order depends on this existence of general shared values which are regarded as legitimate and binding and act as a standard by means of which the ends of action are selected.

In Sri Lankan society 70% of the population is Sinhalese and Buddhists. Other religious groups also have in one way or another has been inspired by Buddhist values. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to analyze Central Value System associated characteristics of Sri Lankan Buddhist society with special reference to nature, agriculture, life cycle ceremonies, national symbols, personality development, domestic life, so on and so forth. The author do not include architecture, dance, music and other aspects because other aspects covered by another paper. The methodology is based on field research findings, Buddhist chronicles, and historical documents and through library research.

In the third century B.C, after arrival of Arhath Mahinda with the new religion it introduced a new Buddhist Central Value System to the island. That value system provided a unique mode of thought of the nation which in turn produced a code of conduct in the Sri Lankan society.

Just after the first meeting of Arhath Mahinda and king Devanampiyatissa, the first question and the answer was directly connected to Buddhist relativism. Secondly, Arhath Mahinda started with his Dhamma mission with Chullahasthipadopama sutta (how to approach wisdom / noble truth) then the critical order ends up with thirteen steps achieving noble truth in Dhammacapawththa sutta.

Kingship and Central Value System

This is the starting point of new organized state in the island. There was no inscriptional evidence connected to common religion emerged before the 3rd century B.C. The only religion was Buddhism. Up to the 3rd Century B.C Sri Lankans introduced ruler as "gamani" and after introduction of Buddhism, first time in our history ruler was introduced as "raja". The word "raja" that we have taken from Deeganikaya that implies (janam ranjethithi raja) the king who satisfy citizens that is the meaning. Then Buddhism had given new values on how to rule the country, some inscriptions disclose "Dhamma Rakkha" or "Dama ratha" in Pali "Dhamma Raja" in Sanskrit "Dharmaraja" the word is assigned to the kingship which includes some values or quality of the country leadership. Within a hundred years of time Buddhism became a part of the kingship. The ruler who tried to include Buddhist values in to organized administrative system in egalitarian society. Later on the concept of "Dasarajadhamma" was assimilated into the kingship in Sri Lanka. That new value system was followed by the king of the country.

National Symbol and the Value System

Before the organized central state, Sri Lankans belonged to different local totemic group who had been organized themselves under different totemic emblems such as lion, goat, crow, peacock, fork-tailed hyena etc. and different social groups Yaksas, Nagas, Raksas, and Devas enjoyed different emblems. After introduction of new religion, the national level symbolic structure of Lion and its qualities and characteristics introduced by Arhath Mahinda. The structure of Mahavihara establishment planned according to Buddhist ethics and the most powerful symbolic meaning given to the nation. When the king ask how to establish this sacred city premises and the mahavihara complex, Mahinda thero replied and gave instructions to "the lion who standing in a very strong position its head, legs and the front portion should allocated for the Ruwanweli dagaba side including number of temples and rear portion including two legs and the tail should be connected to Srimaha bodi locating area and number of other sacred places".

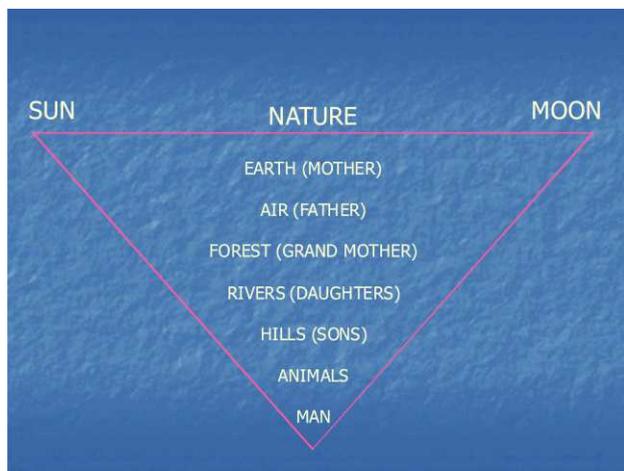
After this interpretation of lion became the state emblem of the country. All other totemic emblems disappeared one united nations

national symbol became the lion. Then all sculptures in Mihintale and the main city, one way or another way depicted the lion symbol very clearly. In addition to the lion symbol, later on the mythical hybrid symbol emerged which included lion and the tuskers head together “gajasingha” became a symbol of the North Central Province. The concept hashti (naga in Pali) very predominant in Buddhist culture and art: the hashti upama always equivalent to the Buddha dasabala, pragna, wisdom, and the capability of exploration skills and unshivering behavior. The hashti upama is directly connected to the first introductory sutta to Sri Lankan people by Arhath Mahinda (chullahasthipadopams sutta). Since then all over the country all Buddhist religious places hashti prakara became compulsory Buddhist Value System feature and it symbolizes the part of the central value system of the nation.

Nature and the Buddhist Value System

At the meeting when Arhath Mahinda replying to king Devanampiyatissa “king you are not a ruler of this land, flying birds, moving reptiles, as well as other animals and human beings under your custody, you are not a ruler but you are the guardian of the land” this statement says how significant the human beings are as well as the other creatures. According to the new doctrine man is part of the nature. Now you can see the nature associated new value system introduced by Arhath Mahinda.

Nature and the Buddhist Value System



NATURE Cont..

SYMBOLS

EARTH	MOTHER	LOVE/KIND MERCY
AIR/MEGHA	FATHER	SHELTER/BREATHE
HILLS	SONS	ENERGY
RIVERS	DAUGHTERS	FERTILITY
FOREST	GRAND-MOTHER	PROTECTION

In this order, either side of the top of triangle the sun and the moon located. The next step of the hierarchy the Earth (maheekanthawamother) located, in the next, Air (Meegha-father), then forest (grand mother) Rivers (daughters) Hills (sons) then animals (eththo-relatives) of human beings, finally man is the guardian of

the nature. According to the above classification nature is not a creation of the god, but the nature is considered as the god by the people as well as the kings. So that, existence of every creature is limited up to the existence of the sun and the moon. The sun and the moon are regarded as excellent gods. In the past Sinhalese kings did not forget to mention “until the existence of the sun and the moon in the inscriptional grants when they transfer their properties to others”. Since the world is created by the nature leading to sun and the moon the wider area of the triangle is represented. These two factors the sun and the moon, have become an exclusive factors for the existence of all the creatures, human beings and the earth. Hence, the people tend to worship them. Specially, in Agricultural rituals the sun and the moon have very exclusive position, blaming abusing or swearing to the sun and the moon is considered as a very mean dangerous unacceptable according to the Sinhalese Buddhist people.

Agricultural Activities and the Buddhist Value System

In Sri Lanka, all cultivation activities directly assimilated into Buddhist values; even in the four poya days people do not engage in cultivation activities because the reason is to refrain from killing creatures such as earth worms; even uneducated rural mothers they do not put firewood, coconut husks or any other fire items in to the hearth without cleaning the material, because the innocent small creature such as white ants or ants can be inside of the firewood. Even after boiling paddy, mothers do not put hot water into the earth because they wish to protect creatures in the soil. These values taken from the Buddhist “panchaseela principal” human beings should refrain from parapana neseema or the pranagatha and protect other creatures life. Even today, chena cultivators after slashing down the chena forest keep five to six days for the drying purpose. The end of the period before they set fire, they pray and three rounds go around the dried chena asking all creatures to go away including very small insect to big animals from the chena and saying purposely and consciously that they do not burn the insects and the main purpose of chena cultivation is for survival of the family members.

All the above mentioned ethics taken from the Buddhist value system existing in the rural areas. Specially, in Anuradhapura irrigation society all cultivation fields, two portions cultivate either side of the field for birds that they introduced as “kurulupaluwa” birds come and enjoy with that portion. In the agricultural cycle all activities start from the stanza “sabbapapassa akeranam kusallassa upasmpada...” Also, the end of the harvesting activities the super portion is reserved for the Buddha pooja, before they consume the harvest. All cereals and grain cultivated in the Sri Lankan soil introduced as “bava boga” those bava boga devoted to the lord Buddha are called “Buddha boga” they perpetuate seed and protect for the next generation.

Life Cycle Ceremonies and the Buddhist Value System

In each and every society, birth, puberty, marriage and death are major events of the life cycle. Sri Lankan society, traditionally all aspects of life cycle connect to the Buddhist value system. Even mothers in a pregnant stage elders do not allow certain actions such as boiling eggs, cleaning cob webs, destroying pottery flies house, etc. its indicate do not destroy others lives (pranagatha), at the seventh month of the pregnant stage husband and relatives organize Angullimala pariththa. This is the protective mechanism for the baby and the mother. Mother has to be in peaceful manner and she has to attend religious activities often that are the

expectation of the relatives. When she approach the last stage of the confinement husband or relatives consult the Buddhist monk and bring the sacred thread and tied up her upper part of the hand. Three months after the child birth the child is brought to the Buddhist religious place and keep the baby at the door step of the shrine room. In Anuradhapura people visit to Jayasrimaha bodi and baby is offered to the Buddha. In Kandy within three months periods of time baby bring into Daladhamaligava (the Temple of the tooth) and at the sacred tooth relic temple door step and baby is offered to the Buddha and get the blessing from the Buddhist monks.

At the second stage of the life cycle, specially, girls who attain puberty family members bring the sacred thread from village temple and tied up her upper portion of hand just after the bathing ceremony parents bring first food potion to the temple. Then get the blessing from the Buddhist monks. The third life cycle is marriage ceremony. The complete functions of marriage ceremony organize according to the Buddhist values. In Sri Lanka, Buddhist marriage function associated stanzas, display Bodhisattva's lay life up to marriage with princess Yasodara. Further, at poruwa charithra which display wedding ceremony of prince Siddhartha and Yasodara, the king Suprabudda who handed over his daughter to prince Siddhartha tying up fingers with sacred thread and putting sacred water as a symbol of Sarana mangalla. Then girls singing jayamangala songs which include special incidents of Buddhist life and adding wishes to the newly wedded couple. Finally, before come down from the wedding stage both bride and groom handing over sacred white cloth to the bride's mother as a symbol of sacrifice her life to the bride as breast feeding which call "kirikadahelaya". The total story is connected to the king okkaka's story who lived in India that reminding the mother's role in Indian Buddhist tradition. The last event of the life cycle is death ceremony. Again those also, all over the country completely organize according to the Buddhist value system. Mourning period is seven days, before you cremate or buried the body by the closest relatives and friends get together and offer pansakula chiwara for Buddhist monks who visited to the function. And relatives offer merits using water, monks say "yatha vary vahapure paripurethusagara.." Further, give merits to death spirit to good rebirth. Then they organize seventh day, three months, and one year religious ceremonies for the death spirit. Above explanation shows how life cycle ceremonies of Sri Lankan Buddhists organized according to their central value system.

Personality Development and Buddhist Value System

From the very beginning after Arhath Mahinda's visit to Sri Lanka, the Buddhist mission try to develop new personalities in the new society. New belief system introduced that based on karma and rebirth. The Vimanawththu and Pethawaththu provided essential details connected to the human activities in this world as well as the other world. All Suttas and Bana preaching immensely internalized the new ideology to the new nation in Sri Lanka. Secondly, after the Sangamiththa theranies arrival with the sacred Bo sapling with new Bodhi culture spread in the island very fast.

The Buddhist monks who started Dhamma propaganda movement that they themselves used art, music, painting and other avenues to approach indoctrinate people in the island. For this purpose Buddhist monks used paintings in their respective temples. Those paintings included Jathaka stories, Buddhist history, and bodhisattva characters. Mothers who carries babies into the new temple premises and they explained values display in paintings and those were internalized by children in the society. As a result of that

Buddhist literature became a part of their day to day life. Five hundred and fifty jathaka stories were embraced by kings as well as general masses of the society. Since then monthly, people get together at the temple they enjoyed with Buddhist monks and their rituals. They avoided evil activities. This social morality provided by the Buddhist value system. Even before 4th century A.D tank building was collective effort of the villages. They build tanks benefit for all.

The samanthapasadika a commentary written to vinayapitaka in the 5th century A.D. which says community based reservoirs and its water equally distributed among the people. The word used by them "sabbasadarana". In a country normally citizens as well as rulers who ruled in the country did not build gigantic palaces. They only built big community centers including massive irrigation schemes without their names or signs. There were about 177 kings had ruled the island there was no single sign board or birth places or cremation sites discovered. There was a very significant event disclosed in history and the value system of the country was king Elara's cremation site established by the king Dutugamunu. Why Buddhist kings did not build their personal properties all these were belongs to "anicca" concept. When king Datusena's son Kassapa who was inquiring about a hidden treasure from his father, the father accompanied him to Kalawewa tank and shown the Kalawewa "this is my treasure, that I have earned and given to the nation", these stories show that how citizens as well as kings personalities moulded by the Buddhist value system.

Domestic life and the Buddhist Value System

Domestic lives of the Sri Lankan Buddhists are governed by the value system of the Buddhism. Any special events or occasions emerges they remind "bless of triple gem" ninety nine percent of rural children daily worship their parents, the reason is not like other religions, in Buddhism there is no creator. Father and mother are the house gods, they procreate children and they teach every thing as "poorvacharyas" at the family.

Even illiterate mothers in the society know Indian Buddhist history, Buddhist literature and they are enjoying with those literature tradition. In any funeral house or any sorrowful occasion they read Vessanthara Jathakaya or Thunsaranaya or Yasodarawatha. When they accompany any pilgrim like travel to Sripada they sing those religious songs and poems according to their tradition.

In addition to that most of the domestic folk tails, folks stories and poems are based on Jathaka stories and Buddhist character. Further, how folks conscious is connected to the Buddhist value system, all temple names in the island are Indian names such as, Jethavanaramaya, Veluvanaramaya, Asokaramaya, Neegrodaramaya, etc. And all leading schools names are Ananda, Nalanda, Dharmaraja, Dharmapala, Mahinda, Asoka, Thakshila, Sanghamiththa, Sujatha, Mahamaya, Yasodhara, Seevali, Swarnamali, Gothemi, Visaka, etc in addition to that Individual names of the Sri Lankan Buddhist society call Upatissa, Ananda, Piyatissa, Udeni, Mangala, Mahinda etc. thousands of people used different personal names which were taken from the Buddhist history and literature. Most of them daily follow and worship to Buddhist statues observe panchaseela as well as Poya days they observe Astanga seela, annually they celebrates Vesak or Buddha poornima festival. In the vesak festival day even very poor people donate food and other consumable commodities as Dana or Damsal free of charge meals for others. They enjoy with this type of merit earning activities according to the Buddhist values. Even in the day to day to day life before they go to bed they sing, in Sinhala,

“Watha deranatha nohera dakva akanita bamba lowa patan
 Bootha yak sen wesena pisanun mesi manduru kuru kuhubuwan
 Saththa hithathuru medahathungen hithmithuruguna yahaluwan
 Mage guruwara demeupiya saha siyalu neyo ganu mepin”

This the wish of the peaceful nation “Through out this environment, up to the further most world, all forms of living things the spirits, demons, gods and small creatures such as mosquitoes and flies as well as all our loved ones and enemies and my teachers and parents and every one else are offered these merits.”

Conclusion

Buddhism is a philosophy rather than a religion. After introduction of Buddhism by Arhath Mahida in the 3rd Century B.C. it carried very special messages to the Sri Lankan people who were having as scatted groups in the island with different totemic emblems. These messages included ten suttas, Pethawaththu, Wimanawaththu, and Sachcha Samuththa. The structure of Arhath Mahinda’s Dhamma messages provided the Buddhist Relativism to how to approach to the noble truth. This Dhamma programme given base for integration of Sri Lankan society into one national state with a single national symbol.

In addition to that, national leadership associated kingship, Sinhalese language, religion, and a new culture with the Central Value System provided a holistic heritage. From time to time these values were assimilated to a code of conduct by the country’s

citizens. Up to Europeans intervention in the 16th century, Sri Lankans maintained those values in their culture. However, with the changes imposed by the Europeans that affected a minority, still the majority of Sri Lankans protect their Buddhist values in spite of being a small nation in the world.

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Cultural Interflow of Buddhism between India and Sri Lanka: the gateway of Indianisation in South East Asia (Indonesia)

Y. M. Suhu Bhadra Ruci



Y.M. Suhu Bhadra Ruci (Indonesia)

Y.M. Suhu Bhadra Ruci is a monk of Mahayana School (an Indonesian of Chinese origin) and is Abbot of a Tibetan Tantrayana Temple. He has studied in India (Karnataka) for 3 years. He is Head of Dhammaniyoga Commission of Great Conference of Indonesia Sangha (KASI), Deputy Nayaka of Sangha Agung Indonesia (SAGIN) in Education Division and member of the Team of Expert of Indonesia World Heritage Youth Network (IndoWYN). He was trainer in training of creative Promotion of Borobudur Cultural Values and was Guest participant in Seminar on Sriwijaya Civilization (Jakarta, 2008), and in Cross-sectoral Workshop of Transportation Ministry and Cultural & Tourism Ministry: Rethinking of Borobudur (Jakarta, 2008). He has written an article: A Glance of Swarndwipa Dharmakirti and Atisa Dipankara Sri Jnana in Sriwijaya in 2008.

Abstract

The year of 250 BC is marked with the global spread of Buddhism with a motivation that Buddhism can be beneficial for all sentient beings. The mission was done in a mutual manner, a distinct approach at that time with a profound impact comparable only to that Helenism in Middle Sea region (Groslier, 1961). The spread of Buddhism is nevertheless indianisation, the historical spread of Indian civilization outside India. It was infamous not only from their authenticity of approach, non-violence, adaptive not destructive but also their everlasting heritage even until the present day. As stated by Cœdès (1964), that in regions which natives interacted intensely with the Indian culture, their heritage can't be underestimated; the heritage is ranging widely from literature, art, social arrangement, etc.

Furthermore, our attention are to the neighboring Sri Lanka whose Buddhism was greatly influenced (even originated from) by India. The spreading was brought into Sri Lanka by the emissaries of Indian Buddhist kingdom under the kingship of Great King Ashoka. They are worth to be noted not only because they were greatly influenced but also has been greatly influencing the Indianisation itself specially the one that covers the South-East Asia region.

This paper will describe how Sri Lanka has been greatly

influencing. The facts show that Sri Lanka has become some kind of transit or gateway for much of Indianisation mission toward South East Asia. It was justified through journey records which directly stated Sri Lanka as prior destination before heading toward Nusantara. And also from archaeological evidences, Amarawati style Buddha sculptures, which were found in Sri Lanka and Nusantara (Palembang). The South-East Asia will be represented by Nusantara (Indonesia in the modern day) which are not just chosen for the sake of scoping instead considering Nusantara role as the most glorious Buddhist state, and kingdom as well through the infamous Sriwijaya, during that time of analysis in the South-East Asia. Further justification of this grandeur was stated by I-tsing who discovered that in the lower Sumatran port center of Sriwijaya was in that day an important center of Buddhist studies little inferior to Nalanda itself³.

To conclude, Indianisation is indeed profound and massive. Yet, it wasn't by itself to perform in such way. Sri Lanka somehow played a unique role of gateway for Indianisation throughout South-East Asia. Therefore a tribute to Indianisation can't be done without attributing Sri Lanka.

Keyword: *Buddhism, India-Sri Lanka, cultural interflow, Indonesia, gateway or transit*

Introduction

The spread of Indian civilization “to the eastern region and archipelago was at the same time with the Chinese civilization expansion⁴”, and is the most importance in the world history for it has become one of major aspect that affects the lives of many. India has been the place that gives birth to wisdom, shares its knowledge to the neighboring countries which later spread it to the entire world. As the place that spreads (concept of) god/goddess, religions, doctrines, and art to almost three quarters of Asian continent. In other words, its literatures, social arrangement, were brought to Nusantara (ancient Indonesia archipelago) until the known limit of the world, they also went through Madagascar, probably until the Africa continent which route, an ancient one though currently disappearing, is now followed by the current Indian people going to Africa⁵.

From the cultural aspect, even now in backside India⁶ still can be found the trace of indianisation which are sometimes profound, for example: the importance of Sanskrit language for its vocabularies, Indian origin letters which are still used or not anymore, agreement regarding Hinduism traditions, including the region which embrace Islam or Sri Lanka Buddhism, the existence of ancient shrines which correlated in its architecture and sculpture, and gives meaning for inscriptions in Sanskrit language.

The past geographical condition of Nusantara and Indochina countries which affected by Indian civilization was within the area

³ Cady, 1976, p.35

⁴ Lévi, 1938, p.136

⁵ Ditto, p.30

⁶ Consist of ancient Indonesia archipelago excluding Philippine, Indochina, Malay peninsula and Burma (Cœdès, 1964, p.19)

of China political influence. Most of them would be affected by major political dynamics which happened in China and India. Samudragupta assault in Gangga Valley dan South India in 400 C.E., political expansion of Maharajas from Cola dynasty of Thanjavur in 1100 C.E., gave result in the eastern side of Benggala strait

In a clearer sense, what is happening in China would affected Indian history. People of China would never at ease to see the establishment of powerful countries in the southern sea and it was worth to be considered that the golden-age of *Fu-nan*, Cambodia, Java and Sumatra Kingdoms were equal with the degeneration time of major dynasties in China.

In addition, Indian civilized countries were bonded with each other geographically and economically, and for each revolution in one of the countries would bring certain results for others as well: the disintegration of Fu-Nan kingdom, the occurrence of Sriwijaya in Sumatera, Anawratha government in Pagan or Suryavarman II in Angkor, Thai Kingdom establishment in Sukhothai. All of those significant events were related with the geographical position of Sri Lanka as the anchor of South Asia who held great importance. For example the attack to Sriwijaya by Cola kingdom was done through Sri Lanka harbor.

The Cultural Flow: The Distinct and Profound

To what extent did Hindu-Buddhist civilization absorbed into the lives of Indochina and Nusantara people? Historians agree that under the Hindu-Buddhist civilization, people would still have their indigenous characteristic. At least that what's N.J. Krom said about Java. While Bali, according to W.F. Stutterheim, "Hinduism since the start until present day would always be the culture of elites, but would never be the culture of the masses which are bounded with Nusantara animism and worship to ancestors"⁷.

Hinduism from the specific aspect of king worship as they were in backside India are aristocratic religion by nature and never meant for masses. This explain why it is very easy and fast for people to accept Sri Lanka Buddhism and Islam to grow in the community, right at the time India got shocked by the conquest of Mongol and Islam attack. The cultural influence of India was so great to the extent their heritages can't be underestimated; we can see the heritages are ranging from letters, most of the vocabularies, dating according to lunar and sun system, kosmogini myths which hardly never change, main stories in the Mahabarata and Ramayana and Purana scriptures, several art formula, administrative and juridiction framework, the importance of social hierarchy which is inherited from the caste system⁸.

People are tend to wonder that in the regions very close with China, and have been engaged in trade and diplomatic relations for centuries, the China cultural influence means almost nothing, while in the Tongkin gulf and northern Vietnam the influence was very strong. People are so impressed with the fundamental differences in result which occurred in far eastern countries by the Chinasisation and Indianisation.

The cause lay on the radical difference of colonialism methods which were used by the Chinese and Indian. Chinese act by conquest and seizure: soldiers conquer the country and their official spread Chinese civilization. The entrance of Hindu-Buddhist civilization in most of the time always done in peaceful manner and never to be followed by any destruction, like for example Mongolian assault or America conquest by the Spanish⁹.

The Natives were absolutely not being harmed or wiped out by the conquerors, instead they acquire from the Hindu-Buddhist civilization which were tapped and conformed, a framework in which people themselves could assimilated and developed. In the other hand, Chinese always ask "the southern barbarian", for the sake of their sovereignty, To be acknowledged through regular tax payment. Therefore, as the result Of this distinct approach at that time, Indianisation produced a profound impact comparable only to that Helenism in Middle Sea region¹⁰.

The Spread of Buddhism Civilization in Indochina and Nusantara

The spread of Buddhism to Sri Lanka in the year of 300 B.C. was due to the main role of King Asoka's son who brought along the relic of Buddha Gotama. He was welcomed by King Devanampiya Tissa (250-207 B.C.) who later on built Thuparama Dagoba for honoring Buddha's relic. Since then, Sri Lanka Buddhism took a great role in the development of Indianisation and the the spread of Buddhism in South-East Asia.

Until now, archaeological remains and Chinese sources point out that the spread of Hindu-Buddhist civilization in Nusantara is as old as in Malay Peninsula. In the first period of 5th century, according to Mulawarman inscription in Kalimantan and from Purnawarman in Java¹¹, which was described by *Fa-Hien* after ninety days journey in the sea from Sri Lanka, and along with the progression of diplomatic relation with China, an increase of indianisation occurred which could be considered if not because the spread of immigrant, at least it was due to the influence of cultural aspects, which from the available clues were probably originated from Eastern or Southern India. The later is considered as the main influence¹² but the role of Sri Lanka is not less importance too¹³.

A record about the increase of indianisation in Java in 423 C.E. was describing the role of Monk from Kashmir, Gunavarman, a royal family originated¹⁴. He came to Java from Sri Lanka, propagated Hinayana Buddhism and became the prime actor in converting King Vadhaka of the Java kingdom to Buddhism and consequently his kingdom thus making Buddhism as the religion for the whole kingdom. in other words, he convert Java itself to Buddhism into a Buddhist state. One time, King Vadhaka strongly aspired to become monk thus renounce his kingship. A predictable respond of protest from his ministers and subjects made him halt the radical decision yet with conditions which must be followed:

1. That the venerable Gunavarman should be respected and obeyed throughout the length and breadth of his kingdom;
2. That no living creatures should be killed throughout the kingdom and this condition should be followed by all the subjects in his kingdom;
3. That the wealth kept in the royal treasury should be distributed in charity among the sick, the poor and the destitute.

⁷ Stutterheim, 1929, p.7

⁸ Cœdès, 1964, 64-5

⁹ Stated by S.K Chatterji (1936, p.87-96) and K.A Nilakanta Sastri (1946, p.18)

¹⁰ Groslier, 1961

¹¹ It was stated by Fa-Hien in 414 C.E., he landed in an island called Ya-Wa-di after his boat struck by storm. In his records, in the land of Ya-Wa-di no Buddhist followers could be found and there were only Brahmin priests

¹² Stutterheim, 1929

¹³ Dupont, 1959a, p.631; 1959b, p.164-7; Casparis, 1961, p.241

¹⁴ Lal Hazra, 2007, p.844

The Javanese people of course accepted all the conditions prescribed by the king.

The work of Monk Gunvarman was probably the first introduction of Hinayana Buddhism in the island of Java and since then continued to develop until the close of the 7th century¹⁵, which end, more proper to be called as transition to Mahayana, was marked with the record of Kalinga kingdom. An interesting event of the kingdom was in 674 C.E., the people of this kingdom accepted a lady ruler¹⁶.

More evidences were the Buddhist pilgrimage and emissaries journey by sea which gotten more frequent along the time between China and southern countries. Therefore, it is inescapable because all of that the south-east coast of Sumatera had an authentic importance value. It has the same distance with the Sunda and Malaka Strait, which were two big doors built from natural landscape of Indochina and Nusantara. Other than that, the coast was a common transit location for ships from China which utilized the north-east wind. The fall of *Fu-Nan* in 7th century, which has been a powerful conqueror in southern seas for five centuries, gave freedom for developments due to the ownership of river bank and the southern seas which were importance for controlling the trade between India and China. For these reasons, during the 8th century, Sriwijaya kingdom rise very quickly.



Figure Buddha Sculpture (left) & Avalokitesvara sculpture (right) in Siguntang Hill

In many ways Buddhism has actually started making a way for the spread of Indian culture: Buddha sculptures found in Thailand, Vietnam, and in Sumatera throughout Java and Sulawesi marked until the farthest limit of regions which have been affected by indianisation from the beginning. In Siguntang Hill, a big-sized Buddha sculpture in Amarawati style was found¹⁷ and sculptures found from the river had a style originated from Gupta period. These archaeological findings were later being related with statement from I-Tsing, from his journal which documented the spread of Hindu-Buddhist in Nusantara, which stated that in Sriwijaya kingdom there was only *Mulasarwastiwadanikaya* tradition, a vinaya tradition of Hinayana. In the closing statement about religions in the southern sea countries, he said that, “the majority of religions held in this country is Hinayana, except in the Malay countries. In this country, Mahayana followers are only a few.” Historical records documented a visit from a high priest in 717 C.E. from Sri Lanka, Wajrabodhi, he stopped by in Sriwijaya along with 35 others ship destined to China¹⁸.

Conclusion

It should be worth to take notes about Sri Lanka role in Indianisation, in which most of the journey records of Nusantara destination from India often talked about the transit role of Sri

Lanka. Of course they weren't just mere transit; Indianisation had occurred and profoundly impacted Sri Lanka civilization too, i.e. Hinayana Buddhism is obviously has taken its root there and also the Amarawati art style has influenced them greatly¹⁹. Thus, makes them as the nation with the longest continuous history of Buddhism from any Buddhist nation.

The infamous spread of Indian civilization, as profound as helenism and distinctly authentic for its non-violence and high conformity with local ingenuity, specifically toward the South-East Asia can't be happening without the role of Sri Lanka as its gateway of Indianisation.

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¹⁵ Ditto, p.845-6

¹⁶ Ditto, p.847

¹⁷ Le May, 1962, p.86

¹⁸ Muljana, 2006, p.124

¹⁹ Nagarjuna Institute: *Buddhist Himalaya Vol12 1999-2005 (Combined Issue)*



Influence of Buddhism on Sri Lankan Culture

Dipankar Lama



Prof. (Dr.) Dipankar Lama

Dr. Dipankar Lama is Assistant Professor & In-charge of the Department of Buddhist Studies in Nava Nalanda Mahavihara (Deemed University), Nalanda. He is M.A. in Ancient Indian and Asian Studies, from Magadha University, Bodha Gaya. He also did M.A. in Pali from Magadha University, Bodha Gaya. He is doctorate in Buddhism. He is the author of two books on Buddhism and his more than 15 research papers on different aspects of Buddhism were published in different research journals of India. He has participated in several seminars and conferences related to Buddhism.

India is known as the birth place of Buddhism, a highly spiritual religion founded by more than 2550 years ago by prince Siddhartha and whole world came to know him by enlightened name Buddha. According to latest sources, nearly 18 countries are more or less Buddhist countries and every fourth person of the world is Buddhist¹ by faith. Buddhism crossed all geographical boundaries, acknowledge as one of the world religion.

It is evident from the chronicles relating the early history of Sri Lanka that before the introduction of Buddhism in the reign of King Devānāmpiya Tissa (250-210 BCE) there was no single religion which was widely accepted as the national religion of the country. Nevertheless, there was a wide range of religious beliefs and practices, different from one another, and each individual seems to have freely observed his religion according to his belief.

It was this dissenting element that led to the holding of the third Buddhist Council under the patronage of King Aśoka in order to purify the Buddhist religion (Sāsana). It was at this Council held by a thousand theras (elders) under the leadership of Moggaliputta Tissa, at Pātaliputta, that the Pali Canon of the Theravāda, as it exists today, was finally redacted.² At this Council was also taken the important decision of sending missionaries to different regions to preach Buddhism and establish the Sāsana there. Thus the theras Moggaliputta Tissa deputed Majjhantika Thera to Kashmir-Gāndhāra, Mahādeva Thera to Mahisamandala, Rakkhita Thera to Vanavāsi, Yona-Dhammarakkhita Thera to Aparāntaka, Dhammarakkhita Thera to Mahārattha, Mahāraakkhita Thera to Yona Loka, Majjhima Thera to Himavanta, theras Sona and Uttara to Suvannabhūmi, and Mahinda Thera with theras Itthiya, Uttiya,

Sambala and Bhaddasāla to Sri Lanka,³ saying unto the five theras: "Establish ye in the delightful land of Lanka the delightful religion of the Vanquisher."

Buddhism in Sri Lanka is primarily of the Theravada school, and constitutes the religious faith of about 70% of the population. According to traditional Sri Lankan chronicles (such as the Dīpavamsa), Buddhism was introduced into Sri Lanka in the 3rd century BC by Venerable Mahinda, the son of the Emperor Aśoka, during the reign of Sri Lanka's King Devānāmpiya Tissa. Emperor Aśoka decided on sending a token of the Great and Enlightened One to the land of Sri Lanka and prepared a branch of the Sacred Bodhi Tree under which the Lord attained enlightenment. He planted the branch in a golden vessel and, when it had taken root, conveyed it to the ship, depositing it in the ship. He also sent a large number of attendants to accompany the tree. The chronicles mention that these were selected from the brahmins, nobles and householders and consisted of 64 families. Sanghamitta Theri and her attendants embarked on the same ship as well as the ambassadors and messengers who came from Lanka.

The Prime Minister, Arittha, who was the king's nephew and the king's younger brother, Mattābhaya, obtained the king's permission to enter the Order of monks, did so with five hundred other men and all became arahants. With the ordination of Anulā and the other women both the Bhikkhu-sāsana and the Bhikkhuni-sāsana were established in the Island. Separate residences for monks and nuns were built by the king.

The Tooth Relic of the Buddha, the sacred Throat, the Forehead, the Hair Relic and the Begging Bowl were also brought in, and the Sacred Bodhi Tree was planted for the devotion of the laity. Except the Tooth Relic, all other relics were enshrined in the thua in various parts of the country. A particular type of architecture was designed to house the sacred Tooth Relic in successive capital of the country.⁴ When these acts of religious devotion were accomplished, the king asked Mahinda Thera whether the Sāsana had been firmly established in the Island, to which the latter replied that it had only been planted but would take firm root when a person born in Sri Lanka, of Sinhalese parents, studied the Vinaya in Sri Lanka and expounded it in Sri Lanka. Arittha Thera had by this time become noted for his piety and his learning and on an appointed day, at a specially constructed preaching hall, in the presence of numerous theras, the king and the chiefs, Arittha Thera was invited to give a discourse on the Vinaya in the presence of the Thera Mahinda. And his exposition was so correct and pleasing that there was great rejoicing as the condition required for the firm establishment of the Sāsana was fulfilled by him.

Devānāmpiya Tissa ruled in Sri Lanka for forty years. It was in the first year of his reign that Buddhism was introduced and from that time the king worked for the progress of the new faith with great zeal. Apart from the Mahāvihāra, the Thūpārāma and the Sacred Bodhi Tree, he established numerous other monasteries and several Buddhist monuments. The chronicles mention that he built monasteries a yojana from one another. Among these monuments the Isurumuni-vihāra and the Vessagiri-vihāra are important centers of worship to this day.⁵ He is also credited with the

construction of the Pathamaka-cetiya, the Jambukola-vihāra and the Hatthālhaka-vihāra, and the refectory.

In the South of Sri Lanka many such monasteries with significant architecture emerged simultaneously. Tissamahārāma and Cittalappabata are two to name. Dāmbullā in the Central Province is the main centre of ancient Buddhist paintings and sculptures. In the North Nāgadīpa, in the East Dīghavapi and in the West Kelaniya are important cultural sites.⁶

The Pali Canon, having previously been preserved as an oral tradition, was first committed to writing in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has the longest continuous history of Buddhism of any Buddhist nation, with the Samgha having existed in a largely unbroken lineage since its introduction in the 3rd century BC.

Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka in 236 BCE (cir. 250 BCE) and became the national religion of the Sinhalese from that date. It is, however, necessary for a proper study of the history of Buddhism in the Island to consider the condition of the Island and its social and political developments and the culture and character of the people immediately preceding this period. This will enable us to get a clear understanding of the manner in which such a far-reaching revolution in the beliefs, manners, customs and character of a people was affected by the introduction of this new religion and the progress in literature, art and culture that has been manifested through its influence.

The Buddhist temples played a very important role in the land of Island to influence Sri Lankan culture. The then Sri Lanka king Devānāmpiya Tissa, erected suitable monasteries for his nephew monk and his companions with required appurtenance in Anurādhapur and Mihintale at the initial stage. This is the beginning of the Buddhist architecture, which form greater part of art and culture of Sri Lanka in the years come. After Buddhism became state religion, as the brotherhood of Samgha increased in number many monasteries came into existence in many parts of the country. Such temples and Vihāras are not only places of worship and religious activities, but centre of learning and culture as well. In every temple there is a school, where Buddhist monks teach the

students. Such as the Mahavihara and the Abhayagiri at Anurādhapura were great centre of learning. The Buddhist monks taught religion as well as the arts, sciences, languages, history, medicine, painting, sculpture, architecture etc. The Buddhist temples are the centre of the village life. The monks are the friends, philosopher and guide of the village people.⁷ We do not know about any literary works in Sri Lanka before the introduction of Buddhism. Its earliest written records belong to about the 3rd or 2nd Century B.C.: some short of inscriptions, carved under the dripledges of caves occupied by Buddhist monks as their cells, to celebrate the names of those who donated those caves to the Samgha.⁸

It is well known fact that art and architecture also journey along with Buddhism from India to the neighboring country. In Sri Lanka also Buddhist monks makes their vihāras beautiful. They use to make scenes of Buddha life, Jātaka stories etc. on the Vihāra's wall. In addition to these religious paintings and sculptures, vihāras and stūpas have always been adorned with decorative art of diverse form in every period of history up to the present day.⁹

Thus, Sri Lanka has an unbroken history of Buddhist Culture ever since the empire Aśoka introduced it to the Island in the 3rd century B.C. His son and daughter, the Thera Mahinda and Thera Sanghamitta respectively introduced not only Buddhism but also a whole civilization than at the zenith of its glory in the Indian sub continent to Sri Lanka.

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Indo-Sri Lankan Literary Ties

Mahesh A. Deokar



Prof. (Dr.) Ashok Mahesh Deokar

Prof. Ashok Mahesh Deokar is M.A. in Pali and also in Sanskrit (Grammar) and did his doctorate (Ph.D.) in Pali from University of Pune. He is Professor and Head of Department of Pali, University of Pune (India). He worked as Visiting Professor of Pali at Kanazawa University from 2006-2008. He has taught at American Institute of Indian Studies. He has taught at Salisbury University, USA, under the Study Abroad Programme. He has written dozens of articles in various newspapers and magazines and also written many books on Buddhism. He has attended 12 international and 13 national seminars. He was invited for talks by Kanazawa University, Japan and Tokyo University. He chaired Workshop on Buddhist Philosophy and Modern Science, Nalanda. Prof. Deokar was instrumental in initiating the MoU with the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda, the Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, and the Goettingen University, Germany.

It is generally believed that the early migrants from the North and East Indian regions of Bengal, Magadha and Kāliṅga founded the Sinhalese nation. According to some, the migrants came from the western part of India, from the modern state of Gujarat. They brought with them their respective languages of Indo-Aryan origin, from which the Sinhalese language is said to have originated. The migrants also brought with them the Brāhmī script, from which the modern Sinhalese script developed. The early Sri Lankan inscriptions are written in Brāhmī. Thus, the beginning of Indo-Sri Lankan literary ties is marked by the introduction of Indian languages and script to the island.

The present paper is an attempt to bring out strong literary ties between India and Sri Lanka that continued to flourish for many centuries together. The paper will be divided into five main sections. Section one focuses on Pali literature. The second section deals with Sri Lankan Pali literature inspired by Sanskrit. Section three will bring out Sri Lanka's contribution to Sanskrit literature. Section four will discuss the Indian Influence on Sinhalese Language and Literature. Section five will discuss the modern scenario emerging in the 20th century. It will be followed by concluding remarks highlighting the Indo-Sri Lankan literary relation.

Pali Literature

Sri Lanka received Buddhism from India through an Aśokan mission led by his son Venerable Mahā Mahinda in the third century BCE. It is believed that along with a group of monks accompanying him he also brought to the island the Pali Canon along with some commentaries. Since then began a golden era of Indo-Sri Lankan literary ties which of course had the Buddha Dhamma at its centre.

In order to understand the Pali canon the Sinhalese monks produced a number of works in the native Sinhalese language. There are said to be twenty-eight works now lost which would have been used by Buddhaghosa, many in Sinhalese such as: Sīhalaṭṭhakathā Mahāvaiṃsa, Mahā Paccāriya Aṭṭhakathā, Sīhala Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, a Sinhalese treatise on medicine, etc. However, once the Mahāvihāra tradition took the stand that Māgadhī i.e. Pali is the official language of the Theravāda, the Sinhalese commentaries were forgotten by the Sri Lankans themselves. Thus, Pali became the literary language of the scholarly Sri Lankan Buddhists at the cost of Sinhalese. As a result, the Sinhalese literature could hardly develop before ninth century CE.

What Sri Lanka received from India in terms of the Pali Canon was returned by her in multiple in terms of a vast treasure of commentaries, sub-commentaries and sub-sub-commentaries. The historical as well as the literary evidence confirms the scholarly exchange between the two countries. Indian scholars such as Buddhaghosa and Buddhadatta visited Sri Lanka and rendered the Sinhalese commentaries in to Pali for the benefit of the Indians. Apart from the commentaries, Buddhaghosa also wrote independent work called the *Visuddhimaggo*. Buddhadatta is also credited with the authorship of two Abhidhamma manuals: the *Abhidhammāvatāra* and the *Rūpārūpavibhāga* along with two summaries of the *Vinayapiṭaka* i.e. the *Vinayavinicchaya* and the *Uttaravinicchaya*. The other notable commentators were: Upasena (5th century CE), Dhammapāla (6th century CE), and Mahānāma (6th century CE).

The Pali Aṭṭhakathās written by these great teachers were further glossed and translated by Sri Lankan monks, which were later translated in to Pali in the form of *ṭīkā* (further-commentary). Writing of *ṭīkā*s had its golden age in the reign of king Parākramabāhu I of Polonnaruwa (1153-1186 CE). Vajirabuddhi (11-12th century CE), Buddhānāga (12th century CE), Sāriputta Mahāthera of Dimbulagala (12th century CE) and Ānanda Vanaratana Tissa (12th century CE) were the prominent *ṭīkā* writers of this period.

Along with commentaries and sub-commentaries, a mention should also be made of the Abhidhamma manuals produced in Sri Lanka. The elder Anuruddha (10th century CE) wrote three

²⁰ Paper presented at the International Conference on Indo-Sri Lankan Cultural Interface, Kandy, Sri Lanka, 20-21 March 2011 organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Research, Delhi and Indian High Commission, Sri Lanka in collaboration with the ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ministry of Buddhasāsana, Government of Sri Lanka.

important manuals: the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, the *Nāmarūpaparicheda* and the *Paramatthavinichaya*. Another monk of the same period named Khema composed the *Nāmarūpasamāsa*, which is also known as the *Khemappakaraṇa*. In the 13th century, a Sri Lankan monk Ānanda Mahāthera composed a text called the *Upāsakajinālaṅkāra*, which is a manual of Dhamma for lay-followers.

Besides this, Sri Lankan scholarship also produced a series of chronicles, which stands today as an important historic literary document encompassing the entire gamut of Indo-Sri Lankan ties from historic and cultural point of view. These include: the *Dīpavaṁsa* (4th century CE), the *Mahāvaṁsa* by Mahānāma (6th century CE), and the *Cūlavāṁsa* by various authors. Apart from these, there are other chronicles such as: the *Mahābodhivaṁsa* by Upatissa (11th century CE) which gives an account of the great Bodhi tree of Anurādhapura in Sri Lanka, the *Thūpavaṁsa* by Vācissara (12th century CE) an account of the great Stūpa at Anurādhapura, the *Dāṭṭhavaṁsa* by Dhammakitti (13th century CE) a story of the tooth relic, the *Samantakūṭavaṇṇanā* by Vedehathera (13th century CE) a story of Adam's peak, the *Hatthavanagallavīhāraṁsa* by an unknown author (13th century CE) a story of the Buddhist king Sirisaṅghabodhi (247-249 CE) of Anurādhapura. Out of these Pali works, the works such as the *Thūpavaṁsa*, the *Dāṭṭhavaṁsa* and the *Mahābodhivaṁsa* had been translated into Sinhalese. Thus, *Vāṁsa* as a literary genre, though born in India, was developed by Sri Lankan scholars.

The Sri Lankan Pali scholars also inspired their Indian counterparts. The scholars like Dhammapāla (7th century CE) and Mahākassapa (12th century CE) of Cola country are among those Indian Buddhists, who kept the lamp of Theravāda Buddhism burning in south India. Dhammapāla wrote an Abhidhamma manual entitled the *Saccasaṁkhepa*. Mahākassapa composed a commentary on the *Vinayaṭīkā* by the name *Vimativinodanī*. He also composed the *Anāgatavaṁsa*, a chronicle of the future Buddha Maitreya. An Abhidhamma manual, the *Mohavicchedinī* is also ascribed to him.

It is evident that, many of the early Sinhalese prose works were intended as accessories for comprehensive Pali works. However, there are certain Sinhalese works, which gave rise to Pali compositions. The *Sihalaṭṭhakathā* is believed to be the main source of the Pali chronicle the *Mahāvaṁsa*. The *Kathāvatthu*, a Sinhalese text, which is now lost, is said to be the source of the *Rasavāhinī*, a collection of popular tales in Pali compiled by Vedeha Thera.

Sri Lankan Pali Literature Inspired by Sanskrit

In addition to the literature in Pali, Sri Lanka also received a glorious treasure of Sanskrit literature from India. This includes various genres of Sanskrit literature such as poetry, drama, poetics, grammar, lexicon, medicine etc. The study of Sanskrit language and the various genres of its literature formed an essential part of Sri Lankan monastic education. This created a batch of excellent scholars who were well-versed in Sanskrit as well as Pali. After the 10th century these scholars inspired by Sanskrit literary tradition created in Pali parallel literary forms such as the *Mahākāvya*s (Epic) and *Śatakāvya*s (a text comprising 100 verses). Works such as the *Jinālaṅkāra* by Buddhārakkhita (12th century CE), the *Jinacarita* by Medhaṅkara (13th century CE), etc. are instances of the *Kāvya* type whereas the *Telakaṭṭhagāthā* by an unknown author and the *Pajjamadhu* by Buddhapiya Dīpaṅkara (13th century CE) are examples of the *śataka* type. By using the model of

Sanskrit texts, they composed texts on Pali rhetoric and prosody. The *Subodhālaṅkāra* and the *Vuttodaya* of Saṅgharakkhita Thera (13th century CE) are good testimonies of the same. The *Subodhālaṅkāra* has close affinity with the *Kāvyaḍarśa* whereas the *Vuttodaya* is akin to the works of Piṅgala and others.

The large corpus of Pali grammatical literature produced in Sri Lanka is a result of similar effort. The *Kaccāyananyāsa* or the *Mukhamattadīpanī* of Vajirabuddhi or Vimalabuddhi (10th century CE) is modeled after Durgasiṁha's *Vṛtti* and *Ṭikā* on the Kātantra Vyākaraṇa, and Patañjali's *Vyākaraṇamahābhāṣya*, and the *Kāśikāvṛtti* of Vāmana and Jayāditya. The *Moggallānavyākaraṇa* by Moggallāna Thera of the Thūpārāma monastery in Anurādhapura is modeled after the *Cāndravyākaraṇa*. Besides this, a number of grammatical treatises in the form of commentaries and sub-commentaries also display great influence of Sanskrit grammatical tradition. Notable among these are: the Rūpasiddhi by Buddhapiya Dīpaṅkara (11th century CE), the Kārikā by Dhammasenāpati (12th century CE), the Payogasiddhi of Vanaratana Medhaṅkara (13th century CE), the Bālāvātāra of Dhammakitti (14th century CE), the Padasādhana of Piyadassi, the Padasādhanaṭīkā of Śrī Rāhūla (15th century CE), the Moggallānapañcīkāpradīpa and the Buddhīpasādaniṭīkā of Rāhūla Vācissara (1457 CE) etc.

One may add to this list composition of the Pali lexicon called the *Abhidhānappadīpikā* by Cūlamoggallāna in the 12th century, which follows the *Amarakośa* of Amarasīṁha. There is a text on medicine known as the *Bhesajjamāñjūsā* by an unknown elder composed in 1183 CE, which is close to the *Aṣṭāṅghaṭṭaya* of Vāgbhaṭa.

Sri Lanka's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature

This in no way means that the influence of Sanskrit language and literature was confined to the creation of parallel literary forms in Pali. Sri Lankan scholars, like Pali also produced works in Sanskrit adding to its glory. King Buddhādāsa, who ascended the throne about 398 CE, composed the first known Sanskrit work called the *Sārārthasaṅgraha* on the science of medicine. Kumārādāsa (513 - 522 CE) produced a literary masterpiece named the *Jānakīharaṇa*. An important text of *śataka* type (comprising hundred verses) called the *Anuruddhaśataka* in praise of the Buddha was composed by Anuruddha Sthavira about 11th century CE, who was also the author of the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*. Around the first half of the 12th century CE, texts such as the *Nāmāṣṭaśataka* another hymn in praise of the Buddha, the eulogies of the Buddha viz. the *Buddhagadya*, and the *Sakaskada* were written by anonymous authors. In the second half of the same century, two grammatical works viz. the *Bālāvabodhana* and the *Pātrīkaraṇaṭīkā* were composed by Mahākāśyapa Sthavira and Buddhanāga Sthavira respectively. The *Daivajñakāmadhenu*, a text on astrology, was written by Anavamadarśin Saṅgharāja in about 1235 CE. Apart from these, there are texts such as the *Narendrasahajāṣṭaka* (1779 CE) and the king Georg *aṣṭaka* (1815-1820) of Karatoṭa Śrī Dharmārāma, the *Saṁskṛtapraveśa* of Śrī Ratnasāra about 1914, the *Śikṣāsaṅgraha* of Śrī Dharmārāma about 1915, the *Vaidyottaṁsa* of Rājasundara, a text on medicine about 1919. In addition to these, there are several Sanskrit inscriptions in Sri Lanka scattered over a long span of time. According to D Pannāsāra "The contribution of the Sinhalese people to Sanskrit may be considered quite considerable and consistent with their cultural prestige."

Indian Influence on Sinhalese Language and Literature

The Indian literary influence is visible not only on the Pali and Sanskrit literature of Sri Lanka but also on the Sinhalese language and literature. Geiger classifies the Sinhalese of the 2nd century BCE up to the 5th century CE under the Prakrit age. During this period, Pali seems to have exerted great influence on the Sinhalese language. The language during the 8th – 13th century CE is called the Medieval Sinhalese. The tenth century marks a phase of using mixed Sinhalese. During this period, Sinhalese “was enriched and improved by the addition of Sanskrit words.” (Pannāsāra 1958: 243) Around this period, a new script based on the Grantha script of south India was introduced to Sri Lanka.

The influence of Sanskrit and Pali on Sinhalese of the Anurādhapura period is quite evident. The old Sinhalese poetry and scholarly works like Sinhalese glosses on Pali and Sanskrit works along with the traditional texts of Sinhalese grammar exhibit this influence quite clearly. A glossarial commentary on the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* called the *Dhampiya-ātuvā-gatapadaya* composed by Kassapa V (913-923 CE) is a telling example of how both derivative and pure Pali forms are used along with the Sinhalese. Some times Pali forms are even used with Sinhalese terminations.

Scholars believe that the lyrical and poetical portions of Pali literature might have encouraged early Sinhalese authors to compose in Sinhalese. These early works were written on Buddhist themes and in narrative style. The Sinhalese translations of the Pali Suttas called *Sītra-sannaya* provided basis for many Sinhalese works. The most popular among them is the *Amavathura* (lit. a flood of nectar) by Gurulugomi. The other important Sinhalese prose works of this type are: the *Dharmapradīpikava* “the lamp of the good doctrine”, a commentary to the *Mahābodhivaṃsa* by the same author, the *Buḥsaraṇa* “Refuge in the Buddha” an eulogy in praise of the Buddha by Vidyācakravartī, the *Pūjāvāliya* “Garland of offerings”, a collection of Buddhist tales by Mayūrāpāda Buddhaputra, the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* “Garland of the jewels of the good doctrine” a collection of stories meant for the edification of the Buddhist laity by a monk named Dharmasena, the *Saddharmālaṅkāraya* “ornament of the good law” by Jayabāhu Dharmakīrti.

The collections of stories written in Sinhalese or in Pali that developed in Sri Lanka are inspired by the *Jātaka* tales or other moral stories related to monks, nuns, gods and demons, which were told by the Indian Buddhist teachers to the local people. The popular *Jātaka* tales instigated Sinhalese prose and poetry. Sasadavata, based on the *Sasajātaka* is the first such poem. Kavsilumina “crest gem of poetry”, which is based on the *Kusajātaka*, is written by King Parākramabāhu II of Dambadeniya (1236-1270). The *Siyabaslakara*, a work on prosody is the earliest extant poem in the Sinhalese language. It is said to have been composed by Sena I or Sena II in the second half of the ninth century. It closely follows the *Kāvyaḍarsa* of Daṇḍin.

A popular genre of *Sandēśakāvya* or *Dūtakāvya* triggered a number of *sandēśa* poems in Sinhalese. The Meghadūta, a great *Sandēśakāvya* by Kālidāsa, both in original Sanskrit and in its Sinhalese translation became the source of inspiration for many Sinhalese authors. However, with the introduction of other types of poetry, the writing of *sandēśa* poems gradually disappeared. Some of the most prominent *sandēśas* were:

1. The Swan's Message sent to Parākramabāhu of Dedigama (1344-1359)
2. Peacock's Message sent to God Upulvan from Gampola, the seat of Buwanekabahu V (1372-1408)
3. Dove's Message written by Sri Rahula Thera to the same god during the reign of Sri Parākramabāhu of Kotte (1412-1467)
4. Cuckoo's Message during the reign of the same king (the longest *sandēśa*)
5. Starling's Message also by Sri Rahula Thera addressed to God Vibhishana of Kelaniya in 1450 (the shortest, but considered one of the best)
6. Goose Message sent from Kotte to Vanaratana Mahāthera at Keragala during Sri Parākramabāhu's reign
7. Parrot's Message sent to Sri Rahula Thera
8. Oriole's Message
9. Hornbill's Message
10. Black Swan's Message
11. Lapwing's Message
12. Valle *Sandēśaya* (Beach Journey, which takes its name from the route and not the messenger)

Following the example laid down by Sanskrit poets, Sinhalese poets also used a lot of didactic (laying down instructions) sayings in their compositions. The *Subhāsītaya* by Alagiyavanna, the *Lovedasangarava* by Vidagama Thera and the *Lokopākāraya* are some of the best known examples of this type. The ancient Sinhalese grammar called the *Sidatsangarā*, which was composed by Anavamadarśin in the first half of the 13th century CE in the reign of Parākramabāhu II, shows close affinity with Sanskrit grammatical treatises.

Apart from literature, Sanskrit had influenced the sciences and arts of the Sinhalese people such as metrical science, rhetoric, law, logic, grammar, astrology, medicine, music and dancing. Thus, as mentioned by D. Pannāsāra (1958: 3) “The study of the history of the Sinhalese language, its growth, and its development is apt to leave an indelible impression upon the student's mind that Sanskrit has largely shaped its evolution.”

Modern Scenario

During the colonial period from 16th century onwards, Sanskrit study received great setback in Sri Lanka. By the end of the 19th century, however, the study of Sanskrit got a new life in form of two prominent educational institutions of Oriental learning viz. the Vidyodaya Piriveṇa of Colombo established by Sri Sumaṅgala and the Vidyālaṅkāra Piriveṇa of Kelaniya by Sri Dharmārāma. With its revival Sanskrit once again started playing an active role in Sinhalese intellectual life.

Sinhalese scholars thought it fit to adopt the Sanskrit language to fill the perceived shortcomings of the Sinhalese language, especially in connection with technical terminology. As a result, many Sanskrit terms have entered Sinhalese language during the past hundred years or so. They are said to have been influenced by the lexicons compiled by Prof. Raghu Vira who coined technical terms for Indian scholarship based on Sanskrit, an ancient Indo-European speech. Although there is a common acceptance of these loans among Sinhalese people, there is also a feeling that “Sanskritic terms very often tend to be employed unnecessarily even where there exist alternative Helu or pure Sinhala terms

²¹ WWW.verfuallibrary - Sri Lanka

which convey the meaning as much as or even better than their Sanskrit equivalents.” (Asiff Hussein)²¹ There are linguistic puritan movements like 'Hela Havula', which advocate the purging of all Sanskrit loans from Sinhalese. However, there are scholars who feel that “the campaign against Sanskrit should not be taken to a point where it could impoverish the Sinhala language.” (Asiff Hussein) According to them, although there is a need for employing more Helu-based terms in education and academia, even to the extent of coining new ones, due consideration should be given to the brevity and euphony of those Sanskrit terms marked for supersession. Striking a balance between the two is perhaps the best alternative.

Sri Lanka and the Revival of Buddhism in India

Anāgārika Dharmapāla, a Sri Lankan Buddhist missionary, founded the Maha Bodhi Society first in Sri Lanka in 1891 and then in India. One of the prime objectives of the Society was to publish Buddhist literature in English and Indian languages. In 1892, he started a journal called *The Maha Bodhi and the United Buddhist World* following an International Buddhist Conference to bring to the notice of the Buddhist world the miserable state of affairs of the Maha Bodhi temple at Bodh Gaya. The Maha Bodhi Society through its activities such as building *vihāras*, schools, libraries, free dispensaries, and teachers' training colleges played an important role in introducing Buddhism to the Indian society.

Iyothee Thass or Pandit C. Ayodhya Das (1845-1914) a Tamil Siddha physician and an untouchable, who was the pioneer of the Tamil Buddhist movement, led a delegation of prominent Dalits to Henry Steel Olcott and sought his help in the reestablishment of Tamil Buddhism. Olcott helped Thass to visit Sri Lanka, where in 1897 he received initiation from Bhikkhu Sumangala Nayake. After returning to India, Thass with P. L. Narasu established the *Sakya Buddhist Society* in Madras with branches in many places including Karnataka. Thass established a weekly magazine called *Oru Paisa Tamizhan* (One Paisa Tamilian) in Chennai in 1907. It served as a newsletter linking all the new branches of the Sakya Buddhist Society. The magazine discussed traditions and practices of Tamil Buddhism, new developments in the Buddhist world, and the Indian subcontinent's history from the Buddhist point of view.

P. L. Narasu, “a Buddhist and a writer and a missionary in the cause of Buddhism” (E. Zelliott 1979: 395) wrote an important book *The Essence of Buddhism* in 1907 with an introduction by Anāgārika Dharmapāla. The book has a clear emphasis on the social aspect of Buddhism. P. L. Narasu's writing inspired many untouchables to convert into Buddhism. His thoughts proved quite influential in the Buddhist movement of the oppressed classes.

Another Indian, Acharya Ishvardatt Medharthi (1900-1971) of Kanpur, supported the cause of the Dalits. He was initiated into Buddhism by Gyanketu (1906-1984) and Lokanath in 1937 in Sri Lanka. In the same year, Lokanath published a pamphlet *Buddhism Will Make You Free*, dedicated to the Depressed Classes of India from his press in Ceylon. These initial contacts with the Sri Lankan Buddhists were responsible to a certain extent to the resurgence of Buddhism in India.

Besides the above-mentioned personal contacts, the Sri Lankan academic institutions also had their role to play in this regard. The Vidyodaya Piriveṇa and the Vidyālaṅkāra Piriveṇa have played a great role not only in a Sri Lankan context, but also Indian. The four main pillars of the Indian Buddhist revival movement namely, Acharya Dharmaranda Kosambi, Mahāpaṇḍita Rahula

Sankrityayana, Bhadanta Ananda Kausalyayana and Bhikshu Jagdish Kashyap spent important years of their life studying in these institutions. They studied Pali scriptures and taught Sanskrit there. Mahāpaṇḍita Rahula Sankrityayana and Bhikshu Jagdish Kashyap even received the degree of Tripiṭakācārya. After coming back from Sri Lanka, these four did pioneering work in the field of Buddhism by way of translations and editions of Buddhist texts, establishments of academic institutions, independent writing on Buddhism, teaching and propagation. It is on this solid academic and literary foundation that the later Buddhist resurgence movement in India was established.

After the mass conversion of the oppressed classes to Buddhism in October 1956 under the visionary leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who himself belonged to the oppressed class, a serious need for the Buddhist form of religious practice was felt. In order to fulfill this need, Dr. Ambedkar sought help from Sri Lanka. He collected Pali material, which was being used in Sri Lanka for daily religious practice and presented it in the form of a booklet called the *Bauddha Pūjā Pāṭha* to the newly converted masses. He also promised to publish another booklet detailing life cycle rituals, which he, however, could not fulfill during his lifetime. Later in 1968, a booklet called the *Bauddha Saṁskāra Pāṭha* describing Buddhist life cycle rituals based on material collected from the Theravāda countries like Sri Lanka was published by the Buddhist Society of India. Thus, the ties of present day Buddhist rituals in India are linked with Sri Lanka more than any other Buddhist country in Asia.

Concluding Remarks

Thus, the story of Indo-Sri Lankan ties with respect to language and literature reveals that it's a continuous relation that developed and matured over the period of time. Sri Lanka not only preserved but also nurtured the small sapling of Indian literature, which it received from its neighbor. Although India being an advanced partner had been more influential, Sri Lanka also at times inspired literary activities in India. This relation has exhibited its strength during its hard times and is making new and more inspiring promises for the future. The Sri Lankan religious leaders and academicians can play a great role in the modern resurgence of Buddhism in India. The modern Buddhist community in India is eager to learn more about Buddhist values and practices. Indian academicians working in the field of Buddhist studies are also keen to absorb traditional wisdom of its Buddhist neighbor. At the same time, Sri Lankan Buddhism also has to learn a lot from a modern, secular, scientific and hard-core rationalist form of Buddhism advocated by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. This new socially engaged form of Buddhism in India can give vital insights to Sri Lankan Buddhism. To conclude, the linguistic and the literary history cannot but reveal that the Indian civilization and the culture of the Sinhalese nation are indissolubly bound together.

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The Connection between Sri Lankan Literature and Indian Literature based on Buddhism (Pali Literature)

H. M. Mahinda Herath



Dr. H.M. Mahinda Herath

Dr. Mahinda Herath is Deputy Director at the Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA). He has done BA(Hons) in Pali from University of Peradeniya and MA in Sanskrit from Buddhist and Pali University. He has done his PhD. in Pali from University of Peradeniya. He has been Secretary/President of the English Association of Buddhist Monks and has published a number of research articles, papers and publications.

On the full-moon day of the month of Jeṅṅha in the year 236 b.e. (i.e., 250 BCE) Mahinda and his companions, departing from Vedisagiri, rose up in the air and alighted on the Silakāta of the pleasant Missaka hill, presently Mihintale, eight miles east of Anurādhapura. The Thera alighted here for he had perceived that he would meet the king there on that day. In Sri Lanka as in most other countries, the evolution of literature is related to religion. In case of Sri Lanka the literary writing evolved to record many important events such as the arrival of Mahinda Thera, building of the Mahāvihāra and Mahathāpa and the arrival of the Sri Mahā Bodhi and the Sacred Tooth Relic.

The accounts of these events were further expanded as writing techniques developed by many Sinhala poets of the day, who chose to write on Buddhist subjects. Some of these works were meant to be read out at special occasions and so were written in a narrative style. Aññakathā are the commentaries which were brought by Arhat Maha Mahinda with Buddhism from India in 3rd Century and Ven. Buddhaghosa translated into Pali in 5th Century in Sri Lanka.

The compilation of the Pali Aññakathā (commentaries) by Buddhaghosa Thera is another important event in the annals of Sri Lanka, which marks the progress of Buddhism. As has already been stated, the Piñakas or the teachings of the Buddha which were being handed down orally were committed to writing in 397 B.E. (89 BCE) and the commentaries on these, composed in Sinhalese, were also committed to writing at this time. Since this period very more exegetical works in Sinhalese was added from time to time to the existing store and during the next five hundred years literary activity progressed considerably. By about 896 B.E. (410 A.C.E.), when King Mahānāma reigned at Anurādhapura, the fame of Buddhist literature in Sri Lanka was well recognized throughout

India and the tradition mentions Sinhalese Buddhist monks visiting India, China and other countries and introducing the literature produced in Sri Lanka. Monks from India and China also visited Anurādhapura during this time to obtain Buddhist books.

Buddhaghosa Thera proceeded to Sri Lanka and stayed at the Mahāpadhānaghara of the Mahāvihāra. He then asked the monks at Anurādhapura for access to books for the compilation of commentaries. The learned Theras at Anurādhapura tested his knowledge and ability by setting him a thesis on which he compiled the well-known Visuddhimagga. They were so pleased with this work that he was given facilities for his projected work and books were placed at his disposal for the preparation of Pali commentaries.

The old Sinhalese commentaries from which Buddhaghosa drew material for the compilation of his Pali commentaries are occasionally named in his works. The *Mahā* (or *Muula*) *Aññakathā* occupied the foremost position among them while the *Mahāa-paccari Aññakathā* and the *Kurundi Aññakathā* were also important. These three major works probably contained exegetical material on all the three *Piñakas*. Apart from these there were other works like the *Sankhepaññakathā*, *Vinayaññakathā*, *Abhidhammaññakathā* and separate commentaries on the four *āgamas* or *Nikāyas*, namely, the *Dgāhanikāyaññakathā*, *Majjhimanikāyaññakathā*, *Samyuttanikāyaññakathā*, and the *Anguttaranikāyaññakathā*. References to numerous other sources like the *Andhakaññakathā*, the *ācariyā* (or Teachers), and the *Porānā* (or Ancient Masters) are also found in Buddhaghosa's works.

Buddhaghosa compiled his Pali commentaries including all authoritative decisions, sometimes giving his own views but leaving out unnecessary details and repetitions as well as irrelevant matter. The first of such commentaries was the *Samantapaasādikā* on the *Vinayapiñaka*. The *Kankhāvitaraṇā* on the *Pātimokkha* of the *Vinayapitaka* was compiled later. These books were followed by the commentaries on the four *Nikāyas*, the *Sumangalavilāsinā* on the *Dāghanikāya*, the *Papañcasādanā* on the *Majjhimanikāya*, the *Sāratthappakāsinā* on the *Samyuttanikāya*, and the *Manorathapāraṇā* on the *Anguttaranikāya*. The *Dhammapadaññakathā* on the *Dhammapada*, the *Jātakaññakathā* on the *Jātaka*, and the *Paramatthajotikā* on the *Khuddakanikāya*, are also ascribed to him. On the books of the *Abhidhammapiñaka*, Buddhaghosa compiled the *Atthasālinā* on the *Dhammasaṅganā*, the *Sammohavinodanā* on the *Vibhanga*, and the *Pañcappakaranaññakathā* on the other five books.

The voluminous literature which Buddhaghosa produced exists to this day and is the basis for the explanation of many crucial points of Buddhist philosophy without which they would have been unintelligible. His commentaries become all the more important since the old Sinhalese commentaries gradually went out of vogue and were completely lost after the tenth century. Buddhaghosa's activities gave an impetus to the learning of Pali in Sri Lanka which resulted in the production of many other Pali commentaries and other literary works, and also established the pre-eminence of Sri Lanka as the home of Theravāda

Some time before and after the compilation of the Pali commentaries by Buddhaghosa two important literary works of a different type were produced in Sri Lanka. They are the Diipavaūsa and the Mahāvaūsa, described in the foregoing pages either as the Sri Lanka chronicles or the Pali chronicles. These two works are the earliest extant literary records giving a continuous history of the activities of the kings of Sri Lanka from pre-Buddhist times up to the end of the reign of King Mahāsena. Both works are composed in Pali metrical verses.

The Dāpavaūsa is the earlier of these two chronicles. It is not a compilation of one individual author but is the outcome of several previous works to which additions have been made from time to time, taking its present form about the fourth century a.c. The chronicle does not name any particular author but it has been held by some scholars, from the abundant material it contains about nuns, that the Diipavaūsa is a work compiled and continued by nuns from time to time.

The Diipavaūsa consists of 22 chapters. They contain accounts of the three visits of the Buddha to Sri Lanka, the ancestry of the Buddha, the three Buddhist councils and the different Buddhist schools which arose after the Second Council, the activities of King Asoka, the colonization of Sri Lanka by Vijaya, his successors, the introduction of Buddhism in the reign of King Devānampiyatissa and the activities of his successors, especially Duññhagāmani, Vaññhagāmani and Mahāsena. The narrative ends with the reign of Mahāsena (276-303).

The Dāpavaūsa has obtained its material from different sources of which the Sinhala Mahāvamsaṅghakathā (also called the Sāhalaṅghakathā or Porānaṅghakathā or merely *Aññhakathā*) was pre-eminent. Besides this there were several other sources like the Uttaravihāra Mahaava.msa, Vinayaṅghakathā and the Dipavaūsaṅghakathā. By these names were known the records collected and preserved in the Mahāvihāra and the other monasteries.

The Mahāvaūsa, which is the better work in its comprehensiveness, arrangement of facts and high literary standard, was compiled by a Thera named Mahānāma either in the late fifth century or the early sixth century A.E. It also covers the same period of history and its material is drawn from the same sources as the Dāpavaūsa, but it contains much more additional material presented in a better form. The Mahaavaūsa contains 37 chapters in all. They deal mainly with the same events as those of the Dāpavaūsa, but there are much longer accounts and greater details of the activities of several kings such as Pandukābhaya and Dutthagāmani and events like the establishment of Buddhism and the rise of new schools.

These two chronicles contain many myths and legends. Yet they are among the primary sources for the reconstruction of the early history of Sri Lanka for they contain a great deal of historical facts, especially in the narratives dealing with the period after the 2nd century BCE, corroborated by epigraphical, archaeological and other evidence.

The Buddhavaūsa, Khuddakanikāya and Anāgatavaūsa influenced Sri Lanka Pali and Sinhala vaūsa literature which evolved over this period. Mahaviharavansa, the chronicle of the Mahavihara, developed later into become the history of ancient kings, as Mahāvaūsa and Chulavansa, and replaced the earlier 'History of the Island', Dāpavaūsa. Although hasn't certain parts of it are missing, they survive in the Dhātuvaūsa. The Buddhavaūsa,

Khuddakanikāya and Anāgatavaūsa are other examples of the vaūsa literature which evolved over this period. There are many books composed by Sri Lankan authors under the many themes. Such as; Aāgatavaūsa, Elu Attanagaluvasa, Thāpavaūsa, Sinhala Daladavaūsa, Sinhala Bodhivaūsa, Dalada Pājvaliya and Daladasirita. There are several books included in the Pali vaūsa literature; Dāpavaūsa, Mahavaūsa, Chāēavaūsa, Chālavaūsa, Bodhivaūsa, Dānhavaūsa, Anāgatavaūsa, Laēānhadhātuvaūsa and Hatthavanagallavivāvaūsa.

Sinhala Poetry Literature is based on Pāli Jātaka. The Buddhist teachers who came from India had a range of stories which they recited to locals. These included jātaka tales on the Bodhisatva's past lives, stories which explain the moral sayings in scripts. As literature developed, these stories came to be written down, either in Sinhala or in a form of Pali which evolved here.

The first recorded translation of the Pali sutta texts goes back to King Buddhadasa's period (340-368AD). This paved the way for the important Sinhala texts known as Sutra-sanna; sutras which began early in Sinhala writing presented the material for both prose and later, verse writers. One of the most well-known prose works, Amāvathura by Gurulugomi, is almost entirely dependent on sutra translations.

The jātaka stories provided rich fodder (material) for the early Sinhala poets. The earliest of these were in the blank verse style called *gi* or in rhythmic prose called *vrttagandhi*. The story was enhanced with descriptions of events, people etc. Sasadāvata, based on the Sasa Jātaka (which is about the Bodhisatva's past life as a hare) is the first *gi* poem. It was written during the reign of Queen Lilavati. Kavsilumina (crest gem of poetry), written by King Parakramabahu II of Dambadeniya (1236-1270), is a grand work which can rival any Sanskrit poem. It is based on the Kusa Jātaka, about the Bodhisatva's past life as King Kusa.

The Kusa Jataka was a popular subject for many Sinhala poets, with Alagiavanna, an early 17th century poet, also using the story. His Kusa Jātaka-Kāvya, written in a mixture of ancient classical style and the popular style that was then developing, was more popular with the masses and was even used later in schools. The Kāvya-sekharaya (the crown of poetry), written by Thotagamuwe Sri Rahula Thera in 1449, is another noted work. The story was based on the little known *Sattubhastha Jātakaya*, which speaks about the Bodhisatva's wisdom even before attaining Buddhahood. It was written on the invitation of a princess in Kotte and so contains an eulogy (words of praise) of her and her father, King Parakramabahu VI (1412-1467), as was the custom of the day. The Guttillaya written in the 15th century, *Asadisa-Jātaka-Kāvya* by King Rajadhirajasingha of Kandy (1780-1798) and Sandakinduru Jātakaya were other notable poetic works of the country. The *Vessantara Jātakaya* was also popular among local poets.

One of the greatest *Sandesa* (message in Sanskrit) works is Meghadātha by the great Sanskrit poet Kālidasa, which describes the route taken by the messenger, the cloud, to deliver the message. Such *Sandesa* poems were popular with Sinhala writers of the early poetry writing era, and even old Sinhalese translations of the Meghadātha had existed. *Sandesa* poems start with the showering of blessings and praise on the messenger, followed by a brief indication of the message. The most prominent *sandesas* are Mayura Sandesa, Selalihini Sandesa, Parevi Sandesa, Haūsa Sandesa, Savul Sandesa, Keñākiri Sandesa, Kirala Sandesa, Nilakoba Sandesa, Kokila Sandesa and Tisara Sandesa.

A large number of Sinhalese works on religious subjects too

belongs to this period. The Saddharmaratnāvalā, which narrates the stories of the Pali Dhammapadatthakathā in Sinhalese, the *Pājavalī* which relates the honour and offerings received by the Buddha, the Pansiya-panas-jātaka based on the Pali Jātaka commentary, the Sinhala *Bodhivaūsa* on the history of the Bodhi Tree, the Elu-Attanagaluvaūsa which is a translation of the Pali work, the Saddharmaalankāra, based on the Pali Rasavāhinā, the Guttilakāvya based on the Guttila Jātaka, the Kāvyaśekhara, based on the *Sattubhatta Jātaka*, the Buduguōa-alankāra, which narrates the dispelling of the calamity in Vesaali by the Buddha, and the Loveda-sangarāva, containing religious instructions for the laity, are the standard works among them.

It is a very significant fact that this revival of Buddhism in the twentieth century gathered momentum towards the middle of that century as a result of the Sinhalese Buddhist leaders of the time gaining control of the reins of government. Ultimately in 1948 Sri Lanka regained its independence after a period of British rule of 133 years. The Buddhist leaders who worked indefatigably for the cause of Buddhism were also the Sinhalese national leaders who led the struggle for liberation from foreign rule. It was therefore to be expected that when these leaders gained national freedom and took over the reins of government from the British rulers, they were mindful of their national faith and its culture and therefore took the necessary steps to set things right so that Buddhism would once more receive its rightful place.

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NAGARJUNAKONDA: THE SITE OF INTERFACE BETWEEN INDIA AND SRILANKA [2ND- 4TH CE]

YOJANA BHAGAT



Dr. Yojana Charandas Bhagat

Dr. Yojana Charandas Bhagat is the Coordinator & Lecturer in Department of Pali, University of Mumbai (India). She has presented research papers at more than 15 international and national conferences. More than 10 Research Papers on Buddhist Art and Architecture and Pali Language had been published. She has written newspaper articles and conducted workshops for propagation of Pali. She is B. Arch. (Bachelor of Architecture) and M.A. in three different subjects namely, Ancient Indian Culture, Philosophy, and Pali. She has done Ph.D on the topic 'Impact of Vipassana Meditation on Buddhist Architecture' and pursuing another doctorate degree in Pali on the topic 'Mnemonics in Pali Literature'. She has very good command in English, Hindi, Marathi and Pali.

The cultural interface between India and Srilanka began in the 3rd BCE when thera Mahinda alongwith Ittiya, Muttiya, Sambalam, Bhaddasala, Sumana samanera and Bhanduka landed on the Missakapabbata²² and Sanghamittatheri alongwith the Mahabodhi and elean khinasava bhikkhunis landed at Jambukolha²³.

The architectural splendours constructed in Srilanka within years are very well noted in the Mahavamsa where the work of the king Devanampiyatissa is described in the gathas.

Mahāvihāraṃ paṭhamaṃ, dutiyaṃ cetiyavhayaṃ;
thūpārāmaṃ tu tatiyaṃ, thūpapubbaṅgamaṃ subhaṃ.
Catutthaṃ tu mahābodhi-patiṭṭhāpanameva ca;
thūpaṭhānīyabhūtaṃ, pañcamaṃ pana sādhuṃ.
Mahācetiyaṭhānamhi, silāthūpassa cārūno;
sambuddhagivādhātussa, patiṭṭhāpanameva ca.
Issarasamaṇaṃ chaṭṭhaṃ, tissavāpintusattamaṃ;
aṭṭhamaṃ paṭhamaṃ thūpaṃ, navamaṃ vassagirivhayaṃ.

The above gatha gives the architectural structures constructed like the Mahavihara, Chetiya, Thuparama, Thupa, Mahachetiya, Mahabodhi, Vapi and so on. This tradition of architectural construction was carried forward in the reign of kings like Duttagamini, Saddhatissa, Vattagamini, Voharika tissa, Mahanama and so on. The history carefully notes the constructions done in Srilanka from 3rd BCE and fortunately Sri Lanka also has few of those archaeological remains.

It is to be understood that the interaction between India and Srilanka was not oneway. Monks from Srilanka flocked to India for pilgrimages and study and literature sometimes mention the numbers of monks coming to India.

Unfortunately India donot have any literature which could tell us about the students or monks who had come to India for study or constructed any vihara. Except for the inscriptions at Bodhgaya which talks about the monastery built for the sake of the monks from Sinhala in the reign of King Samudragupta²⁵ no archaeological evidence of the sites from Sinhala is found. Thus the history is silent especially when it comes to the flow from Srilanka to India.

In such scenario the remains in the valley of Nagarjunakonda are very important. They are not only few of the remains of the proof of the architectural interaction between two countries but also has inscriptions which further adds to our knowledge of prevalent Schools of Buddhism and their architectural preferences at that period. For in the Nagarjunakonda valley the remains of the Culadhammagiri vihara of the Tampannidipa of the 2nd to 4th CE is found.

This paper is an attempt to study the site of Nagarjunakonda and find out more about the architectural practices of the said period in India and Srilanka. The paper is divided into two sections, the first section talks about Nagarjunakonda today and in 2nd -4th CE, its architectural splendor and importance. Most of the information in this section is the earlier work done on Nagarjunakonda by different scholars²⁶; it has been just compiled together to give an idea about Nagarjunakonda. The second section is about the Sinhala vihara at Nagarjunakonda, its architectural and inscriptional aspect along with the architecture prevalent in the Deccan in that period. Finally few observations and questions are put forth. It is to be noted that in this paper we are only concentrating on the architectural aspect and are not taking into consideration the sculptural art seen at Nagarjunakonda which is an independent entity altogether.

Nagarjunakonda and its importance in the history of Buddhist architecture:

the archaeological remains of the Nagarjunakonda valley brought into light the glorious past of the Indian history and architecture. This valley along with the remains of Buddhist monastic units,

²² Mahavamsa XIII-20, Mahavamsa and Mahavamsatika, Nalanda Edition 1971, pg. 286

²³ Mahavamsa IX-23, Mahavamsa and Mahavamsatika, Nalanda Edition 1971, pg 362

²⁴ Mahavamsa XX-17-20, , Mahavamsa and Mahavamsatika, Nalanda Edition 1971, pg 375

²⁵ Glimpses of Srilankan Buddhism, Ahir D C, Sri Satguru Publ.,2000- pg. 204

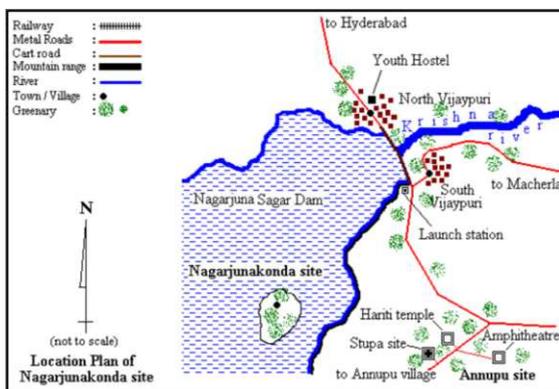
²⁶ H Sarkar, Elizabeth Rosen Stone, K Rama.

Brahmanical temples and site of Ashvamedha had the huge bathing ghat and very unique amphitheatre clearly indicating the close trading relation of the valley with the outside world specially the Greek and Roman Empires. The remains of almost 33 monastic units at the Nagarjunakonda²⁷ valley also provide an important landmark in the history of Buddhist architecture in India. It is noted that several Schools of different ideologies existed simultaneously in the valley preserving their own architecture but the fact is, the valley developed its own architectural forms which are not seen anywhere in the country in that period.

Architectural peculiarities seen at Nagarjunakonda,

- Stupas: Wheel based stupas with ayaka platforms and ayaka pillars along with rubble stupas.
- Chetiyagharas: The structural apsidal planned chetiyagharas with the image of the Buddha
- Monastic units: Only at Nagarjunakonda valley is seen the cluster of many different independent architectural units or monasteries. Surprisingly these units are classified into different Schools of Buddhism according to their architectural elements and this feature is again unique in India, for until now we have not been able to do such classification at any other sites.
- Inscriptions: The structural remains have adequate inscriptions which not only give us the entire skeleton of the dynasty of the Ikshavaku dynasty who ruled this valley, but also their religious trends. They also provide us with the information about the architectural peculiarities prevalent in the valley at the time.
- Donations: It is noted that all the kings or the male members of the dynasty donated to the Brahmanical temples, while all the female members were the great donatories of the Buddhist Sangha.
- Dynasty: only one dynasty is seen ruling the valley for about 100 years and that is the Ikshvākus. The dynasty probably rose after the fall of the Satavahanas.

Nagarjunakonda²⁸ today (lat.16 31' N: long 79 14'E) is situated on the right bank of the river Krishna in the Palnad taluka of Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh-India. It is about 166.0 kms to the south-east of Hyderabad and about 147.0 kms from Guntur town.



Nagarjunakonda before its submersion was a secluded valley of about 23 square kms in area in the Palnad taluka of the Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh. It was surrounded on three sides by



group of hills, which were offshoots of the Nallamalai range. In the northwest it was bounded by the Krishna River, thus providing it with both natural fortification and easy access to other areas along the Krishna River.

Discovery and Documentation²⁹ : On the 21st of February 1920, an Andhra schoolteacher with the help of local villagers found the way into the remote jungle ridden valley of Nagarjunakonda.

In March 1926 Shri Rangaswami Saraswati discovered that the site has several brick mounds.

In July 1926 Prof. G Jouveau Dubreuil of Pondicherry conducted a brief excavation at Nagarjunakonda.

Few months after him, Mr Hamid Kuraishi surveyed the site as the deputy of A H Longhurst, then a superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India. He then worked at Nagarjunakonda from 1927 to 1931. The summary of the finds was published by him in the Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India.

The site was then re-excavated in 1938 by T N Ramchandran. Consequently the dam of Nagarjunasagar was to be built which would submerge the archaeological site. Then the Archaeological Survey of India created a special project to salvage some of the monuments before their submersion. As a result, between 1954 and 1960 the entire valley of Nagarjunakonda was excavated under the supervision of Dr. Subrahmaniam.

With the knowledge of the coming submersion of the valley, small-scale models of each of the architectural sites were prepared. Several of the structures were actually removed from the valley and transplanted on the nearby hillsides.

History of Nagarjunakonda:

The historical period principally of the 3rd-4th centuries CE under the Ikshvāku Dynasty were the major patron at Nagarjunakonda. One inscription mentions the name of the Satavahana king Vijaya Satakarni (201-207 CE) which has led to the speculation that it was Vijaya who founded the ancient city of Vijayapuri before the coming of the Ikshvākus.³⁰

Ikshvāku Dynasty³¹

- Cāmtāmūlā I. (A.D.225 - C.A.D.240-250).
- Virapūrūsadatta (A.D.240-250 – C.A.D. 265-275).
- Ehuvāla Cāmtāmūlā (A.D.265-275 – C.A.D. 290-300).
- Rudrapurushadatta. (A.D. 290-300 – C.A.D. 315-325).

Buddhist Architecture of Nagarjunakonda:

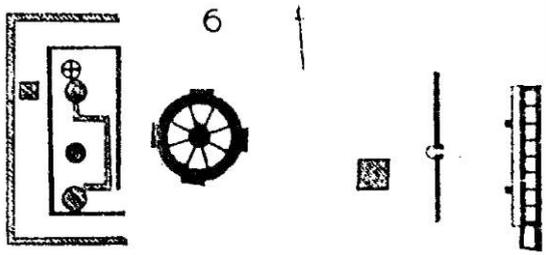
More than 30 Buddhist establishments came up in the valley within a short span of 100 years. The almost 33 Buddhist sites are actually different monastic units belonging to the different Sects and Schools of Buddhism as can be deduced from the inscriptions and they are named by the scholars as Site-1, Site-2 and so on. Each site generally consists of a stupa built on a square platform, viharas with the courtyard in the centre and chetiyagharas, sometimes one, but mostly two facing each other- one with the stupa inside and the other with the image of the Buddha.

Inscriptions have provided the names of at least four Buddhist sects inhabiting the valley and they are the Aparamahāvinaseliyas (Sites 1&9), Bahusrutiyaś, (Site-5), Mahisāsaka (Site 7-8) and the Mahāvihāra-vāsin (Site 38). There might have been other sects or sub-sects inhabiting the valley, but their names are not available. Scholars have classified the monastic units very intellectually with the help of architecture and inscriptions.

Classification of the monastic units:

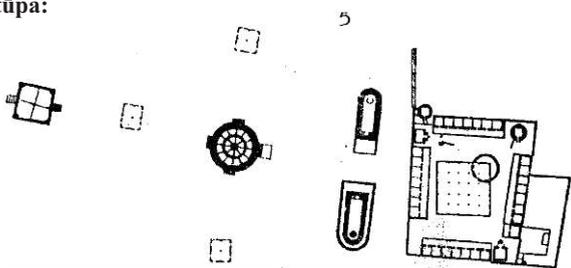
broadly speaking the Buddhist establishments of Nagarjunakonda may be divided into following five groups³².

1-Unit consisting of Stūpa and Chetiyaghara :



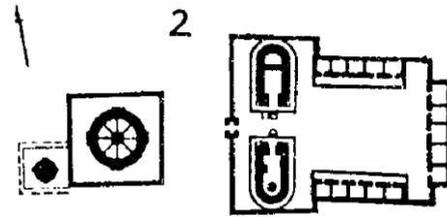
The Sites under this group, Sites 6, 7-8, 14, 15, 20, 21, 27, 30, 32A, 32B, 54 and 86. They may be further divided into two sub-groups of monasteries, those having a stūpa with āyakā-platforms [Site-6, 7-8, 14, 20, 21, 30, 32A, 54 and 86] and those having a stūpa without āyakā-platforms [Site 15, 27, and 32B].

2-Unit consisting of Stūpa, Vihara and chetiyaghara with Stūpa:



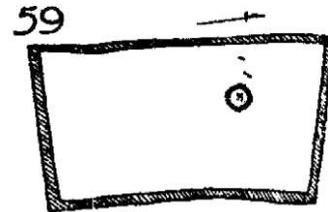
This group is represented by only eight establishments, Sites-1 (later phase), 5, 23, 26, 28, 43(later phase) and 108. The Sites-5 and 26 had each two chetiyagharas.

3-Unit consisting of Stūpa, Vihara and Chetiyaghara with Buddha-image: There are eight monasteries under this group, Sites-2, 3, 4, 9, 38(later phase), 85, 105 and 106. Of them Site 85 had a double shrine for the image, whereas in other cases only one



of the two chetiyagharas enshrined the Buddha icon, the other being meant for a stūpa.

4-Unit consisting of Vihara and Chetiyaghara:



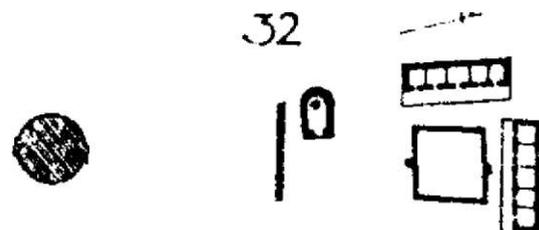
There is only one structure under this group, Site-5, which had no stūpa. This site revealed a well-preserved chetiyaghara enshrining a stūpa.

5-Isolated Stūpas:

Five examples of stūpas, Sites 15A, 16, 22, 52 and 59, possibly Uddesika in nature, unconnected with any monastery, have come to light at Nagarjunakonda. All save Site-15A had āyakā-platforms in four directions.

Further analysis of the units is done according to the architectural elements like the Stupa, Chetiyaghara and the Vihara.

Stupas at Nagarjunakonda:

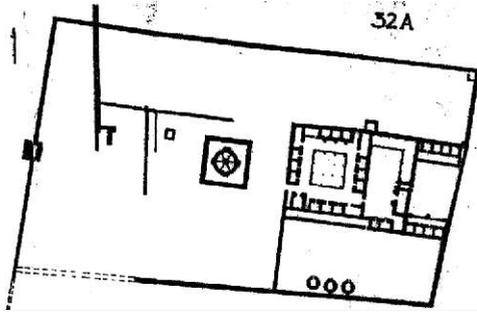


About thirty-two stūpas have been unearthed in the Nagarjunakonda valley. They can be broadly classified into wheel-based and rubble stūpas. Good number of stūpas at Nagarjunakonda is wheel based, with four āyakā platforms in the four cardinal directions with five ayaka khambas [pillars] on each platform. These features are considered to be typical of the Andhra stūpa architecture. Almost 22 stupas are wheel-based and three stupas are with swastika inside. Rest all the stupas are rubble base. Ideologically, they belonged to three important Buddhist Schools- Theravada³³, Aparaseliyas (Mahāsanghikās) and Bahusrutiyaś.

Theravāda Stūpas³⁴:

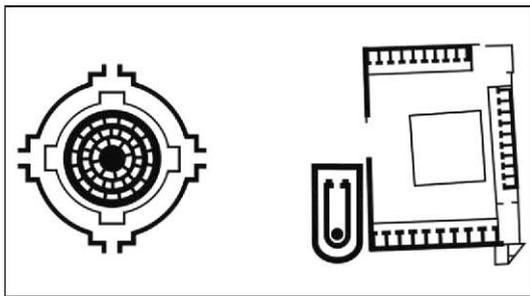
About nine Buddhist monastic units may be attributed to the Theravādins in the Nagarjunakonda valley. Out of the nine, three units are supported by inscriptional evidences and the rest six may be identified as belonging to the Theravādins, on the basis of their architectural features. They are Sihalavihāra- Site 43, Mahāvāsini or Mahāvihāravāsins- Site 38, Mahisāsaka -Site 7&8, Site 15, Site 20, Site 23, Site 27, Site 32, Site 32B and Site 24.

The Stūpas of Bahusrutiyaś:



The Bahusrutiyaś are the second most popular sect in the valley and three establishments of Nagarjunakonda belong to the Bahusrutiyaś. They are Site 5, the largest in Nagarjunakonda, Site 32 A and Site 26.

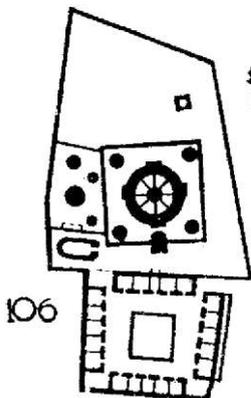
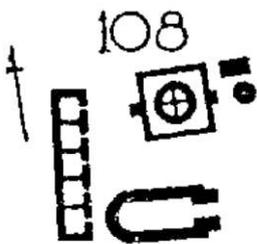
Apārāmahāvīnaseliyaś Stūpas:



As indicated by the inscriptional evidences the Aparasailas are the most significant of the Buddhist sects of Nagarjunakonda valley. There are about five establishments, which can be definitely being attributed to them. They are Site 1, the Mahāchaitya, Site 2, Site 3, Site 4 and Site 9.

Stūpas with Swastikā Inset at Nagarjunakonda:

There are three stūpas at Nagarjunakonda valley with swastikā inset. Swastikās are arranged in these stūpas with bricks, below the foundations, more or less on the ground level. These swastikās being in the centre of the base are not visible from outside. Since such arrangements cannot have any architectural significance, it was definitely done on ideological considerations. The sites with Swastikā inset stūpas are Site 20, Site 59 and Site 108. Interestingly all the above sites are arranged side by side in a row.



Votive stūpas at Nagarjunakonda:
Several votive stūpas are unearthed at the valley of Nagarjunakonda. All the votive stūpas at Nagarjunakonda are made of solid core and without āyakā- platforms, with the exception of votive stūpa at Site-2. The sites having votive stūpas are Site 2, Site 6, Site 9, Site 15, Site 23, Site 38, Site 106, Site 108.

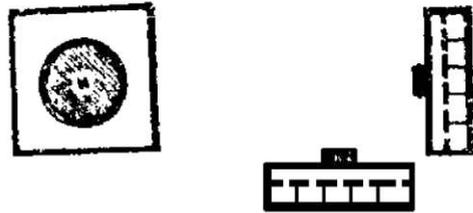
Chetiyagharaś at Nagarjunakonda:

In the Nagarjunakonda valley more than twenty chetiyagharaś have been brought to light. They are mostly apsidal with two or three exception which is circular in plan. Chetiyagharaś at Nagarjunakonda can also be analyzed as per the existence of chetiyagharaś in the monastic units, as done by H Sarkar like

- Unit with no chetiyaghara
- Unit with chetiyaghara with stūpa inside
- Unit with both, chetiyaghara with stūpa and chetiyaghara with image inside.
- Unit with chetiyaghara with image inside.

Unit with no chetiyaghara:

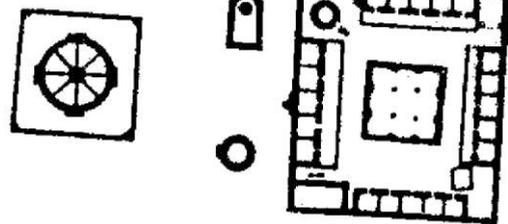
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usually the monastic unit at Nagarjunakonda consists of a stūpa, chetiyaghara and vihāra. But there are sites where no chetiyaghara is seen and sometimes in the early phase of the Site, absence of the chetiyaghara is marked. Such Sites are: Site-6, Site-7 & 8, Site-14, Site-15, Site-20, Site-21, Site-27, Site-30, Site-32A, Site-32B, Site-54, Site-86 and early phase of Site-1, Site-38 and Site-43.

Unit with chetiyaghara with stūpa inside:

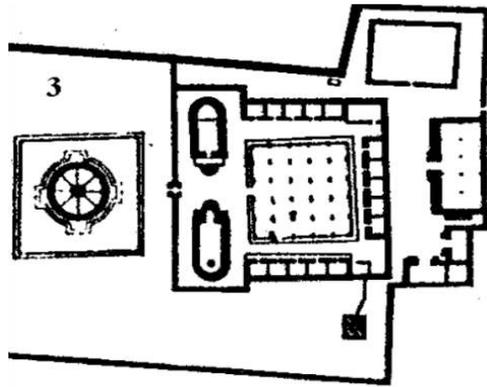
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Of all the monasteries in the valley the sites, which had only the apsidal chetiyagharaś with stūpa inside, are: Site-1[late phase], Site-5, Site 23, Site 24, Site 26, Site 28, Site 32, Site 43, Site 51 and Site 108. Site-5 and Site-26 both had two chetiyagharaś with stūpa inside and belong to the Bahusrutiyaś sect. They are connected with another peculiar architectural feature in the form of a structure, which are externally circular and internally square. Site-32A also has this feature and is also attributed to the sect of Bahusrutiyaś.

Site-1 belonged to the Apārāmahāvīnaseliyaś. Site-43 (late phase), Site-32 and Site-23, with the apsidal chetiyaghara inside vihāra complex belonged to the Theravādins. Site-24 had one apsidal chetiyaghara for stūpa and two circular chetiyaghara for images, though no images are found at the valley. Site-51 is the only site with chetiyaghara with stūpa and vihāra with no stūpa, though the chetiyaghara is well preserved. Site-108 also has a very dominating chetiyaghara, but it also has the vihāra and stūpa in the unit.

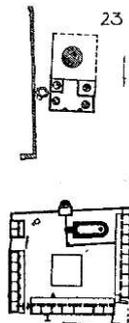
Unit with both, chetiyaghara with stūpa and chetiyaghara with image inside:



there are four sites under this group and all four sites belong to the Apārāmahāvīnāśeyas. This sect is the one who first yielded to the new ideology of image worship. So far as the epigraphical evidences goes, the earliest monastery having a chetiyaghara with Buddha image is dated in the eighth regnal year of Ehuvalā Chamtamula and it was an Apārāmahāvīnāśeyiya monastery, Site-9. Site-2, Site-3, Site-4 and Site-9 are compact and well planned units, the chetiyaghara with Buddha image invariably facing the chetiyaghara with the stūpa inside.

Unit with chetiyaghara with image:

there are only four sites having chetiyagharas for the images of Buddha and most of them are later additions. The sites are Site-8, Site-5, Site-105 and Site-106. Out of the four the Site-85 and Site-105 had a double shrine for images, one apsidal and other oblong. This site was renovated in the reign of Ehuvalā Chamtamula. Site-38, Site-105 and Site-106 were later accretions. Site-38 has an apsidal plan for the chetiyaghara and is within the vihāra complex.



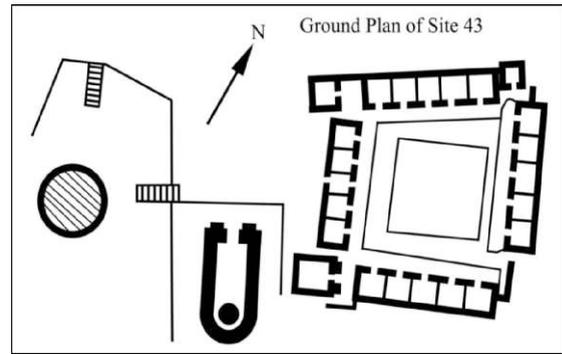
Vihāras at Nagarjunakonda:

It is from the extensive Buddhist site in the Nagarjunakonda valley, we get glimpse of the vihāra architecture as developed by the different schools or sects of Buddhists of Andhra. In the words of Ramachandran “each monastic establishment was complete in it and contained as the unit a vihāra for the monks to dwell, an apsidal chaitya or two for a prayer and a stūpa for worship and circumambulation. On the plan the vihāra is a rectangular courtyard enclosed by a brick wall. In the centre was a stone paved hall with a roof supported by stone pillars. All around the enclosure abutting the outer walls was a row of cells for the monks often with a verandah in front. Some of the cells were used as store rooms, a few as shrines and there was usually a large room which served as refectory...”

The above information gives us an idea of what Nagarjunakonda architecture is all about. With this information let us come to the second section of the paper and that is the Sinhala vihara at the Nagarjunakonda valley.

Sinhala Monastic unit at Nagarjunakonda, Site-43:

Site 43 is the Sihalavihara on Chula-Dhammagiri. It is a big complex with a Stupa, Vihara and a Chetiyaghara. The Chetiyaghara has a long donatory inscription³⁵ which gives us the details regarding the monastery.



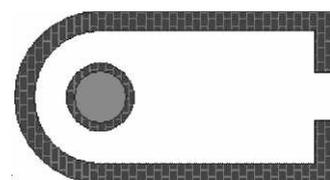
Chetiyaghara: the apsidal planned chetiyaghara is the first of its kind built in the valley has stupa inside. No second chetiyaghara with the image is seen at the site.

Stupa: Stupa is the structural type rubble cored stupa with rims of bricks surrounding it. Absence of ayaka platforms with ayaka pillars and the wheel base plan indicates either its ideology or its ancientness due to the technology.

Vihara: the vihara is the four-winged vihara with the courtyard in the centre. No stone pillars are seen in the courtyard.

Inscription: An inscription dated in the fourth regnal year of the King Virapurushadatta, the second king of the dynasty, records the donation of chetiyaghara at the site by a female lay worshipper named Bodhisiri. Bodhisiri doesn't seem to have been connected with the Iksvakus royal family. The chetiyaghara was dedicated “for the welfare and happiness of the assembly of monks and for that of the whole world”.

Architectural details: today at the reconstructed site only the apsidal planned chetiyaghara is done by the Department of Archaeology and not the entire complex with vihara and stupa.



Apsidal chaityagraha at Sihalavihara
Chula-Dhammagiri site 43
Nagarjunakonda
(not to scale) facing south-east

Chetiyaghara: The 32'2" long chetiyaghara is 10'4" wide with the brick wall enclosing it of 2'3" thick. The stupa inside the apse is 6'9" in diameter, with the circumambulatory path of average 1'9" around the stupa. The stupa is veneered with cuddapah stone and stands to the total height of 7'3", with the medhi of 3'11" and the anda of 3'4". No harmika or groove for the yasti is seen on the top of the anda. The stupa is 22'7" from the entrance door, which is 4'3" wide and no moonstone step is seen at the entrance .

Study of the Site-43:

The Site 43 is studied with the help of architecture, architectural features and Inscriptions. The Stupa, the Chetiyaghara and the Vihara architecture of the site is compared with other units at Nagarjunakonda and also with the rock-cut architecture of

³⁵ Epigraphia Indica XX 1929-30 pg22-23

³⁶ The dimensions are taken by the author directly on the reconstructed site at Nagarjunakonda.

Maharashtra of the same period. The information from the inscriptions is analyzed and certain observations are put forth. They are

Stupa architecture: Site-43 has the masonry stupa or the rubble based stupa, which is believed to be earlier architecturally than the wheel based stupa. The absence of the ayaka pillar with platforms could also be the indication of its being old. The wheel based stupa with ayaka platform and pillar at the Site-1, the Mahastupa is said to be earliest stupa in the valley according to the inscriptions. Therefore Scholars think that there is a possibility that the Sinhala vihara with the rubble base stupa could be the earliest establishment in the valley.

Apsidal Chetiyaghara with stupa inside: Site 43 has the earliest apsidal planned chetiyaghara built by an upasika Bodhisiri for the [tambapanni dipa pasadakanam theriyanam tambapanakam suparigahe] monks of Sinhala.

The architectural importance of the apsidal planned vaulted roofed chetiyaghara has been proved by the author in the Doctoral Thesis³⁷ -that the existence of such architectural feature is for the practice of Vipassana meditation. This apsidal plan is seen developing in the rock-cut architecture of Maharashtra in the early 2nd century BCE and it is almost lost in the Deccan in the 2nd century CE when surprisingly it is seen being adopted in the structural architecture of Nagarjunakonda. And most surprising is that for the first time this feature is adopted by the Sinhala monastery from Sri Lanka and then the Aparaseliya monastery Site-1 is seen to be making the Chetiyaghara immediately after 7 years.

Vihara architecture: the architectural plan of the vihara is similar to the earlier phase in the Deccan and not seen undergone changes. While at the same time in the Deccan a new feature of Chetiyaghara+vihara is seen emerged.

Architecturally we can say that the Site-43 belonged to that School of architecture which followed the teachings of the Buddha in the traditional way. They are not keen on adopting the technological advancement of the time like the material saving design of the stupa like the wheel based one.

What is surprising in this is that this Site-43 suddenly emerges as the trend setter and adopts the chetiyaghara with the stupa inside, which is a kind of revival of the apsidal planned chetiyaghara with the stupa inside. For it has been almost lost in the Deccan in that period and the rectangle chetiyaghara has taken over the architecture.

Study of the inscription at the Sinhala Vihara:



In this Sinhala vihara there is found one large inscription which not only describes the 31 relatives of the donor upasika Bodhisiri who

asks for the merits for all her relatives but she has mentioned many things other than the names of the relatives. The highlights from the inscriptions are

The inscription of Upasika Bodhisiri inside the Chetiyaghara of Site-43 the Sinhala vihara [some portion]

The first part of the inscription describes the qualities of the Buddha homage is paid to him. [*Sidham namo bhagavato Ikhakura-rajapavara-risi-sata-pabhava-vamsa-sambhava deva-manusa-sava-sata-hita-sukha-maga-desikasa.....*]

Secondly the ruling king along with the year is given [*ramño M[ātha]riputasa.....10[+*]4 hemamta-pakham chhatham 6 divasam teram 10[+*]3.....*]

Thirdly comes the donatory note – it is said that the donation is given for the monks of Tambapana who have converted the Kashmir, Gandhara and so on... [*Ta[rā]-jāchariyānam Kasmira-Gandhara- China- Chilāta- Tosali- Avaramta-Vamga- Vanavāsi-Yava[na-] Da [mila-pa]lura Tambapanni- dīpa-pas[ā]dakānam theriyanam Tambapa[m]nakānam suparigahe*]

The location of the Sinhala vihara also known as the Culadhammagiri vihara is given in the next line. It says that the monastery is on the Sriparvata on the east of Vijaypuri along with the things donated. [*Siripavate Vijayapuriya-puva-disā-bhāge vihāre Chule-Dhammagiriya chetiya-gharam sapata-samtharam sachetiya sava-niyutam karitam*]

The name of the donor along with her 31 relatives are given along with their relations to each other [*uvasikaya Bodhisiriya apano bhatuno....*]

Then the most important part of the inscription is- the names of the other places around the site in the valley itself to which the donor also has donated is listed down. In that the donor talks about architectural elements donated. This information furnish us with the knowledge of the other sites existent at that period along with their names and sometimes even Schools as well as their constructional details. They are

Kulaha-vihāre chetiya-gharam
[Chetiyaghara in the Kulaha vihara]
Sīhala-vihāre bodhi-ukha-pāsādo
[Bodhi rukkha pasado in the Sinhala vihara]
Mahā-Dhammagiriya ovarako 1
[One cell in the Maha-Dhammagiri]
mahavi[hā]re mamdava-khambho*
[Pillar of the mandava (open hall) in the Mahavihara]

Devagiriya padhāna-sālā
[Main Hall in the Devagiri]
Puvasele talākam a[lam]dā-ma[m]davo cha* [a tank, verandah and mandava (open hall) in Purvasela]

Kamtakasele mahachetiya puva-dāre sela-mamdavo [The stone mandava (open hall) at the eastern gate in the Mahachetiya in the Kantakasele]

Hirumuthuve ovarakā timni [three cells at Hirumu Thupa,]
Papilāya ovarakā sata 7 [Seven cells at Papila]

Puphagiriya[m] sela-mamdavo [, a stone mandava (open hall) at Puphagiri]

³⁵ Epigraphia Indica XX 1929-30 pg22-23

³⁶ The dimensions are taken by the author directly on the reconstructed site at Nagarjunakonda.

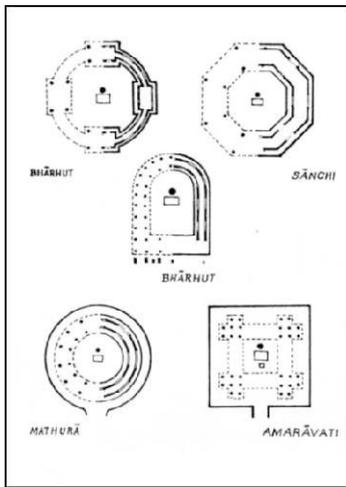
Dham....vihāre sela-ma[m]davo [a stone mandava (open hall) at the Vihāra.]

Upasika Bodhisiri after naming all the donations says that it is all given for the benefit of the world. [*sā]dhu-vagasa achamta-hita-sukhaya thavitam sava[sa] cha lokasa]*

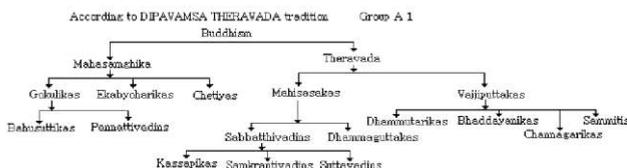
Finally the mentions of the three monk superintendents of work [*navakammakehi*] namely the Chandamukha thera, the Dhammanandi thera and the Naga thera. And the stone mason [*sela vadhika*] vidhika is also given. [*imam navakammam timhi navaka[m]mikehi kāritam chamdamukha-therena cha Dhammanamdi-therena cha Nāga-therena cha sela-vadhakisa Vidhikasa kammam ti*]

Observations:

after studying the inscription we get some information



- Regarding the names of the places in the inscription: it has been observed that some of the names of the places given are the places where the monks are sent by thera Mogalliputtatissa after the third Buddhist councils for the propagation of the *dhamma*. Some names are new and are still not identified. How these places were converted by the acariyas from the *Tambapanna* is not understood.
- Regarding the *Bodhi rukkha pasado*: no architectural remains have been excavated from the site which can be said to be the *bodhi rukkha pasado* as seen at the sites of Sanchi, Barhut and

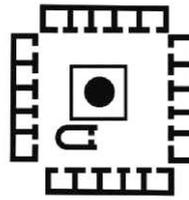


so on. But this architectural feature seems to be an integral part of the vihara complex of the Sinhala.

[Plans of the Bodhi rukkha pasado]

- Regarding different Schools of Buddhism: The mention of the two Seliya Schools the *Pubbaseliya* and the *Kantakaseliya* are clearly seen in this inscription. The names of the viharas are given but we are unable to find out whether they are just the names or the names indicate the different schools. There is mention of many viharas with the suffix 'giri' which possibly could be related to each other like the Mahadhammagiri, Puhagiri, Devagiri and so on.

If the other inscriptions of Nagarjunakonda are considered then the



Site 38

architectural features to solve the problems of the different Schools of Buddhism.

names of the Schools like the Aparaveniseliyas, Bahusrutiya, Mahisasaka are also seen along with Mahaviharavasin which could be a School from Srilanka as believed by the Scholars. Mention has to be done of H Sarkar who has not only solved many riddles at Nagarjunakonda but has used the

- Regarding the existence of other monastic unit from Sri Lanka in the valley: the study of the architecture of the valley points out towards Site-38 as another unit similar to Site-43. The existence of the Foot print slab inscription and its content indicates its affinity to the Sinhala vihara in many ways.

Text of the Footprint inscription

Siddham [] achariyanam theriyam vibhaja-vadanam kasmira-gandhara-yavana-vanavasa-tambapannidipa-pasadakanam Mahaviharavasinam navanga-sathu-sasana-atha-vyanjana-vinicchaya-visaradanam ariyavamsa paveni-dharanam Vihare bhagavato pada-samghada nipatithapito sava-satanam hita-sukh athanayati*

Translation

Let there be success! The pair of feet of the lord Buddha has been installed, with the prayer for the welfare and happiness of all beings, in the monastery of the teachers who are theriya that is theravadins and vibhajjavadins, who caused delight to [converted to the Buddhist doctrine of kasmira, gandhara, yavana, vanavasa and tampaparni dipa who are the residents of the Great monastery, who are the experts in the determination of the meaning and implication of the nine fold teaching and implication of the nine-fold teaching of the Buddha who know the tradition of the four classes of the Buddhist recluse by heart.

Study of the Footprint inscription:

This inscription seems to be talking about the monks who are the Vibhajjavadins, who had caused delight to the places mentioned in the inscriptions. They are the monks who are the residents of Mahavihara, who are expert in the teachings of the Buddha like the navangasatthusasana and so on. They have donated the footprint slab of the Buddha in the monastery [whose name they do not mention] for the benefit of others.

FOOTPRINT SLAB INSCRIPTION FROM NAGARJUNKONDA



Scale : Two-thirds

Salient features of the inscription: when the inscription is studied independently then we come across new information like the

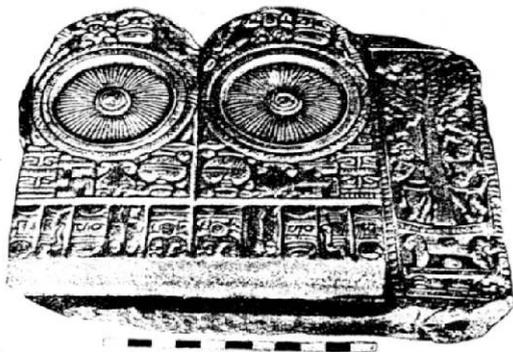
Footprint slab: this feature is new in the architecture of India as is the Bodhi-rukkha pasado. Both these features were seen in the earliest symbolic architecture where the image of the Buddha was not used directly for the worship. But these features are not seen inside the chetiyaghara or inside the vihara. They were seen always on the huge structural stupas like the stupa of Sanchi or Barhut and

not as an independent object of worship.

Mahavihara: here we are not sure what Mahavihara the inscription is talking about. There are two possibilities, that the Mahavihara could be the one from Sri Lanka or it could be the Mahavihara of Nagarjunakonda. The other inscription mentions another Mahavihara at Nagarjunakonda. [Today the archaeological department calls the Site-1 the Mahastupa for it had the relics of the Buddha while there is a mention of Mahacetiya of the Kantakaseliya in the other inscription which is supposedly at the Nagarjunakonda itself.]

Theras: in this inscription the monks talk about themselves and describe themselves as the Vibhajjavadins, which reminds us of the term with reference to the third Buddhist council where the monks who were Vibhajjavadins as the Buddha, were kept in the Sangha and the others were thrown out. The monks who refer themselves as the Vibhajjavadins probably belonged to that original Sangha which was retained or probably belonged to that School of thought who took the teachings to the different parts of the country as mentioned in the Mahavamsa. There is a possibility that they belong to Sinhala country. They also refer to their qualities as the experts in navangasatthusasana, who could explain the terms with meanings, analysis and so on

Name of the countries: the inscription is talking about the places which are mentioned in the third Buddhist council where the different thera-s are sent to different places by thera Mogalliputtatissa like the Majjhantika thera to Kasmir Gandhara, Mahinda thera to Tambapanidipa and so on. These names of the places are also seen in the inscription-1 but in this inscription-2 only four places are mentioned while in the other many names are given.



Footprint inscriptions in comparison to the Sinhala vihara inscriptions:

The inscription from Site 43 and the inscription from Site 38 are compared with the understanding that they have similarities in them regarding the contents and mode of writing. There is a great possibility that both these inscriptions could belong to the same School of Sinhala. The similarities in the inscriptions can be stated as

Name of Places: both the inscriptions talk about the similar places, whereas in the inscription 1 the number of places is more and half of them are not identified, while in the inscription 2 there is a mention of only four places which are the same as seen in the Mahavamsa with reference to the Third Buddhist council. The similarity about the inscriptions regarding the places is that- in both the inscriptions the monks take the names of the places as they [Sinhala monks] have converted or made these places Buddhist. This is different than the historical fact seen in the Mahavamsa, where the places are made Buddhist or converted into, by the

Indian monks sent by the Mogalliputtatissa thera. This brings the writers closer and we can say that they could be from the Sinhala country.

Regarding the [pada-samghada] footprint slab and Boddhi-rukkha pasado: both these features were long lost in India and when we come across these features in the late 2nd-4th CE in the valley and that too only at two places then the possibilities is that they belong to non-Indian School and the possibility is that they could be Sinhala.

A comparative study of architecture: the rock-cut architecture of Maharashtra and the architecture of Nagarjunakonda:

The period 2nd -4th CE is a low phase of excavation in the rock-cut architecture of Maharashtra, the reason could be the political unrest after the almost five centuries of Satavahana rule. On the other hand the period of 2nd -4th CE is the peak period of structural architecture in the valley under the patronage of the Ishvakus.

Architecturally, in the rock-cut excavations, the chetiaghara had undergone change and the rectangular chetiaghars had come up and the apsidal chetiaghara was almost lost. The concept of Chetiaghara+vihara has taken root and this was a very big architectural change in the vihara architecture. At the valley we see the revival of the structural apsidal planned chetiaghara with the stupa inside and also with the image of the Buddha inside. The image of the Buddha was being introduced all over the country and new architecture was developing for it.

In installing image of the Buddha the valley was ahead of the rock-cut architecture because we donot find any images of the Buddha in the chetiaghara in the 2nd- 3rd CE. Infact the rock-cut architecture donot have the feature of chetiaghara with image of Buddha inside. This feature is a specialty of Nagarjunakonda, while in the 5th century CE we have at Ajanta and Ellora a kind of revival of apsidal planned vaulted roofed chetiaghara with the stupa inside with the image of the Buddha carved on the stupa itself.

Architecture and Schools of Buddhism: There existed apsidal planned vaulted roofed chetiaghars in the western India or the Deccan since the 2nd BCE. Infact the largest chetiaghara in the Jambudipa is excavated for the Mahasanghikas at Karle in the 1st century CE. Still when we see the introduction of the structural stupa in the valley which was initially probably founded by the Satavahana only not until the 3rd CE and that too in the Sinhala vihara is little surprising. We also see the offshoots of the Mahasanghikas like the Aparamahavinasiyas dominating the valley, but they adopted the apsidal plan 7 years after the Sinhala vihara. There is also mention of Pubbaseliya and Kantakaseliya, probable names of the Schools of Buddhism in the inscriptions, but no architectural details are found.

Therefore this phase in Nagarjunakonda is very important and surprisingly very informative about the questions we have in mind. This is a period of about 100-150 years secluded in the valley of Krishna so far away from the immediate world yet so near to the trading community. In all this uniqueness we are concentrating on the Sinhala Sangha who had established in the valley and had left its footprints in the form of the Culadhammagiri vihara- Site 43 and Site 38.

- It has the solid rubble stupa which is architecturally prior to the wheel based stupa.
- It has the one of the earliest apsidal planned chetiaghara with

the stupa inside, which is afterwards adopted by most of the units in the valley.

- It does not have the chetiyaghara with the image of Buddha.
- It has the Bodhi tree pasado which is not seen or mentioned in any other monastic units in the valley.
- It has the inscription which states that the chetiyaghara is the donation from an upasika Bodhisiri. Surprisingly it is not the donation of the royal female member of the Ishavaku dynasty, since almost all other donatory inscriptions to the Buddhist Sangha are from the royal Ishavaku female members.
- Site-43 shares the architectural characteristics with Site-38. The similarity is again established with the help of inscription and the existence of the Bodhi rukkha pasado and the Buddhapada in the units.

Taking into consideration all the above observations regarding the study of the Site-43 and Site-38, these are some of the questions arisen

- Is Sinhala vihara one of the earliest monastic units in the valley?
- Is Sinhala vihara the only monastic unit from Srilanka in the valley?
- If Sinhala vihara is the unit which took the initiative to adopt the apsidal planned chetiyaghara in the valley, then why there is no apsidal planned chetiyagharas seen in the architecture of Srilanka of that period?

Thus in conclusion observation, we can say that Nagarjunakonda is the only one site known to us, where the interface between India and Sri Lanka is seen taken place in the 2nd-4th CE.

Though the valley was secluded and had its own peculiarities it was in a way –way ahead of the other architectural features of India and in a way far behind of the general trend.

Here the Sinhala vihara continued with their features of boddhirukkha pasado and Buddhapada samghada and also adopted the first ever apsidal chetiyaghara with the stupa inside which is not the traditional architectural feature of Sri Lanka. But unfortunately we do not see the Sri Lankans continuing the apsidal planned chetiyaghara with the stupa inside, in Srilanka in the future.

Scholars termed the Sinhala Sangha as Theravadins and traditionalists on the basis of the absence of chetiyaghara for the Buddha image. They are probably the Mahaviharavasin of Srilanka settled at Nagarjunakonda.

The Sinhala monks who are the delighters of the different places came and settled down in the valley and started a monastic unit which is copied and multiplied. They were traditionalists and still worshiped the Buddha in the stupa form, in the Bodhi tree form or in the Buddhapada form. They were yet not in the mindset to adopt the image of the Buddha for worship, but probably they did it in the end.

As the scholars are of the opinion that here at Nagarjunakonda we see the transition from the Theravada to the Mahayana phase which according to our observation is not completely correct. The valley was totally traditionalist and followed the Theravada tradition even the offshoots of the Mahasanghikas- the Aparamahavina-seliya alongwith the image of the Buddha.

The reason to say this is -the architecture in the valley of

Nagarjunakonda is the apsidal planned chetiyaghara, stupa and traditional four-winged vihara. This is the architecture seen in the Deccan in the early phase. The apsidal planned chetiyaghara represents the practice of the vipassana meditation and its influence. Therefore we can say that the architecture of Nagarjunakonda is representing the early Buddhism and not tending towards Mahayana.

Presence of image of Buddha in the chetiyaghara cannot make the architecture Mahayana, as it has been observed that the Theravadins or the traditionalists also adopted the image of the Buddha.

The architecture in the 2nd CE in the Deccan has undergone considerable changes. The Chetiyaghara has changed from apsidal to rectangular with flat roof, the vihara is changed and a new concept with Chetiyaghara+vihara has been adopted. These are the changes which indicate the trend towards Mahayana which is absent in the Nagarjunakonda.

Thus we can say that there is a possibility of the Sinhala vihara to be the first in the valley with the traditional construction techniques. The other schools adopted the architectural technology of the wheel based stupa or swastika based stupa. Sinhala vihara being a traditionalist understood the importance of the meditation and vipassana and adopted the chetiyaghara and sort of revived the Buddhist architecture at that time. This revival helped the Theravadas and the other schools went ahead and adopted the Buddha image instead of the Boddhirukkha or the Buddhapada but all they were traditionalist never the less.

Thus we can say that the Nagarjunakonda played a significant role in the revival of Theravada Buddhism in India and the key role was played by the Sinhala vihara of Tambapanna.

Bhavatu sabba mangalam



Reconstructed Chetiyaghara donated by Upasika Bodhisiri- Site 43



Reconstructed Chetiyaghara donated by Queen Chantasiri-Site-1



Stupa inside the chetiaghara-Site 43 Stupa inside the chetiaghara Site-1



Buddha image inside the apsidal chetiaghara- Site 4



Mahastupa of the Mahavihara Site-1



Swastika stupa- Site 59



Buddhist Philosophy

Ven. Sok Bunthoeun



Ven. Sok Bunthoeun (Cambodia)

Ven. Sok Bunthoeun is a monk and Chief Abbot of Wat Nunda Munny (Cambodia), Secretary to Samdech Preah Thormilikheth Lors Lay, member of Buddhist Leadership Initiatives (BLI) in Cambodia, and Honorable Grade of Rajjaghanak in Cambodia. He is Certificate Holder in Behaviour Change Communication Strategies from Dhurakijpundit University, Bangkok, Bachelor of Art in Educational Science & Information from Buddhist University of Preah Sihanouk Rajja, and Bachelor of Art in International Relations & Master of Laws in Law (MLL) from Pannasastra University of Cambodia, (PUC). Presently he is pursuing Doctoral in Law. He has attended various multilateral conferences.

1-Brief Background of Buddhism

The history of Buddhism appeared since sixth century B.C to the present, starting with the birth of Buddha Siddhartha Gautama in ancient India in what is now Lumbini, Nepal.

He was born in the family of Sakya in 563 B.C. After becoming an ascetic and sitting in meditation, he discovered the path of moderation away from the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification.

Siddhartha Gautama attained the enlightenment under Bothi Tree, now known as Budha Gayā in India. Through his enlightenment, he was known as Saṃmāsārabuddho or Buddha meaning that "The perfectly Self-Awakened one".

After his enlightenment, Buddha received the patronage of the emperor Bimbisāra. King Bimbisāra accepted Buddhism as his personal faith and allowed the establishment of many temples as Buddhist heritages, especially in the state of Bihār.

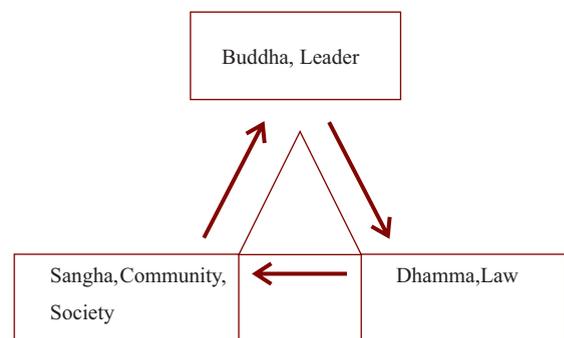
At the Isipatanamikhadāya Vana (Deer Park) near Vārāṇasī in northern India, the Lord-Buddha preached Dhamma Cakkappavatana Sutta (the Wheel of Dharma) by delivering his first sermon to a group of five companions. Thus, the Triple Gem was formed (Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha).

The Triple Gems (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) represent Buddhism. They are closely interrelated with each other.

Buddha, the greatest man in this world, has three kinds of qualities, Wisdom, Purification and Compassion. He is the spiritual leader and performs services for humankind regardless of race, social strata, religious and political tendencies and so on. He was the founder of Buddhism.

Dhamma was enlightened by Lord Buddha as the wheel of law for liberation of human's suffering.

The Sangha community was also formed to symbolize Buddhism and help to propagate his teachings to the world. The Triple Gems have been recognized and applied as the triangle for social development and good governance. Buddha represents individual leader, Dhamma as law or Sangha orders, and Sangha as community or society.



For the remaining times of his life, the Buddha traveled in the Gangetic Plain of North eastern India and other regions to promote his teachings. When he was 80 years old, he attained Parinirvāṇa in the abandoned jungles of Kuśināraā, what is now known Kusiṅgā.

Just before Buddha passed away, he advised his followers that thereafter the Dharma-vinaya would be their teachers. After attaining Nirvanir, the Dharma-vinaya was not recorded yet. The versions of the canon were preserved in Pāli, Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan are crystallized during three centuries of oral transmission.

It was reflected that Buddhism is an old religion among the others, but his sublime teachings are ageless, timeless to be devoted to service for humankind in all occasions, circumstances and mix with human society without any conflict.

2-Buddhism in India under Asoka Emperor

Asoka was a follower of Brahmanism like his father (Bindusāra) and grandfather (Candragupta). According to the Sri Lanka chronicle, Asoka was converted to become the Buddhist follower by a young novice named Nigrodha.

In the year 218 of Buddhist era (268 B.C), after his conversion, Buddhism gained the great ascendancy under the Asoka's patronage. Under his patronage, the third council was held. The objectives of the council are: (1) to purify the Buddhist teachings, (2) to send missionaries to different regions.

According to the inscriptions said that, Asoka sent his religious missionaries to promote Buddhist teachings to different countries, such as, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and the countries in Central Asia and Southeast Asia. Thus, the Moggaliputta Tissa Thera deputed Majjhantika Thera to Kaasmira-Gandhaara, Mahaadeva Thera to Mahisamandala, Rakkhita Thera to Vanavaasi, Yona-Dhammarakkhita Thera to Aparantaka, Dhammarakkhita Thera to Mahaarattha, Mahaarakkhita Thera to Yonaloka, Majjhima Thera to Himavanta, Sona Thera and Uttara Thera to Suvannabhumi, and Mahinda Thera with Theras Itthiya, Uttiya, Sambala and Bhaddasaala to Lanka, saying unto the five Theras: "Establish ye in the delightful land of Lanka the delightful religion of the Vanquisher."

That stage was the first development of Buddhism and the promotion of Buddhist messages in India and other countries. By starting to promote from the Northeast of Indian peninsula, Buddhism spread rapidly to the Central Asia, Eastern Asia and Southeast Asia.

Besides, the Buddhist faith was propagated throughout the Hellenistic and western worlds and the countries near Mediterranean Ocean.

3. The Mission to Sri Lanka and Arrival of Mahinda

India was not only the birthplace of the Greatest Man (Buddha), but also the country which produced the wisdom and propagated the light of wisdom (Dhamma) to the world. The messages or gift of Dhamma was flourished and propagated to other countries by peaceful means. Many countries received Buddhist teachings as their refuges and heritages. In this sense, Buddhist teachings were interwoven with the host cultures and recognized as invaluable heritages.

Sri Lanka was one of the countries, ruled by King Devanampiya Tissa at that time, proselytized by Asoka's Prah Mahā Mahinda Thera (Asoka's son) and six companions during the 3rd century BC. In addition, Aśoka's daughter, Saṅghamitrā Therī also established the Bhikkhunī (order for nuns) in Sri Lanka, also bringing with her a sapling of the sacred Bodhi tree that was subsequently planted in Anuradhapura³⁸. From that day up to the present, the Buddhists in Sri Lanka have paid and are paying the utmost reverence to this branch of the Bodhi Tree under the shade of which the Master achieved Enlightenment.

Since then Buddhism has flourished and Sri Lankan monks and expatriate lay people have been prominent in spreading Theravada Buddhism in Asia, the West and even in Africa. This is when the Mahāvihāra monastery, a center of Sinhalese orthodoxy, was built. The Pāli canon was written down in Sri Lanka during the reign of King Vattagamani (29–17 BC), and the Theravāda tradition flourished there. Later some great commentators worked there, such as Buddhaghosā (4th–5th century) and Dhammapāla (5th–6th century), and they systemized the traditional commentaries that had been handed down. Although Mahāyāna Buddhism gained

some influence in Sri Lanka at that time, the Theravāda ultimately prevailed and Sri Lanka turned out to be the last stronghold of it. Theravāda Buddhism has played important roles and strongly influenced in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka also had close relationships with other Theravāda Buddhist countries. From there it would expand again to South-East Asia from time to time. In this reason, Cambodia (Former Sovannabhumi-golden peninsula) has also been converted to Buddhism from the 3rd century BC under the proselytizing of the Indian Emperor Aśoka. From that time, the Indian and Sri Lankan cultures influenced and mixed with Cambodian literature, culture and lived with peaceful co-existence.

Based on the historical record, the son of King Jayavarman VII, Tamilinda, was sent to Sri Lanka to be ordained and studied Theravada Buddhism. He studied at the Mahavihara Monastery in Sri Lanka (1180-1190). For 10 years, Tamilinda returned to Cambodia and promoted the Theravada Buddhism in the territory of Cambodia.

Theravada Buddhism became the state religion in Cambodia in the 13th century and after. In 14th century, Buddhism still continued to get progress due to King Jayavarman VII and Tamilinda (King's son) tried to keep and promoted for Cambodian society.

Jayavarman VII was already an elderly man, perhaps 60, when he ascended the throne. Before becoming king, he had devoted his long life to meditation. He performed his works in "saving" the Khmer people and establishing a Buddhist empire.

Jayavarman VII (1181-1215) was the greatest of all Khmer Buddhist kings. Jayavarman VII worked tirelessly to establish Buddhism as the state religion of Angkor. Khmer People recognised him as a living Buddha, or bodhisattva to save his people from suffering. He built numerous public works to serve the people, including waterworks, hospitals, temples, hospices for travelers.

Stone inscriptions say "it is the public grief that makes a king's grief." Another inscription reads: "Filled with a deep sympathy for the good of the world, the king swore this oath; 'All beings who are plunged in the ocean of existence, may I draw them out by virtue of this good work and may the kings of Cambodia who come after me, attached to goodness in their minds.'"

If we examine deeply, we understand that the form of Theravāda Buddhist teachings and its practice in Sri Lanka is the same with Theravāda Buddhism in Cambodia. In addition, Theravāda Buddhism in Cambodia and Sri Lanka used to face the competition from the western influences (Christianity influence), but Theravada Buddhism for both countries proved surprisingly resistant to foreign attempts³⁹.

4. Cultural Heritages between India and Sri Lanka

Culture is the most basic element of society and that its importance must be revered. It is the common bond that ties the people of nation, community or region together. Cross-Culture has been faced by many countries in the world. No country can be isolated from that cross-culture. Cultural Heritages between India and Sri Lanka has been seen for a long time. The ancestors of both countries reserved the paramount cultural heritages both material and spiritual ones for their descendants. Today, those invaluable cultural heritages become the world heritages and human properties. In this context, what do the cultural heritages mean?

³⁸ When the original Bodhi Tree at Buddha Gayā died, a cutting from Bodhi tree in Sri Lanka was brought and planted in Buddha Gayā as a return. This shows the relationship of Buddhist-influence, political and cultural cooperation between India and Sri Lanka.

The cultural heritages are the tangible and intangible properties that are the heritages of human beings to reveal the proof of human achievements and are very important to the values of archaeologies, histories, arts, science, religions, anthropologies..., etc. In this sense, cultural heritages are divided into two categories, a tangible and an intangible cultural heritage.

1. **The tangible cultural heritage** is the human achievements which are the properties

can be seen, touched, being understandable and having historical values, arts, religions, such as temples, castles, sculptures, paintings, inscriptions.

2. **The intangible cultural heritages** is also human achievements transferring from

one generation to other generations through speaking, imitating and continual practice that can't be seen, touched and being difficult to understand such as languages, arts, religions, beliefs, customs, and traditions.

Through the two kinds of cultural heritages, both countries have exchanged with each other for a long time until to the present and continue to the future. For example, a sapling of the sacred Bodhi tree and Buddhist teachings was sent to Sri Lanka. Then, it was sent back to India when the original Bodhi tree died. Many Buddhist temples were built in India by Sri Lankan monks to reflect cross cultural heritages for both countries. Moreover, the invaluable heritages are Buddhist teachings.

5. Basic Buddhist teachings:

Buddha's teachings represent Buddhism based on the Four Noble Truths, the suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and path leading to the cessation of suffering.⁴⁰ These teachings have the comprehensive prosperities, religious and philosophical systems, the ways of life, the truths and the ways of peace and liberations. Lord-Buddha taught both the theory and the practice. His teachings revealed the nature of life and the nature of the world, how they are. Moreover, these teachings are the ways to eradicate the ignorance and upgrade the world civilizations. They became the excellent forces of civilizations spreading to other countries' cultures and civilizations and the driving forces to fulfill all aspects of life, such as social works, educations, literatures, arts, psychologies, architectures, cultures and philosophies of moralities. For centuries, a number of social institutions were established in many countries to consecrate to the Buddha's teachings. Buddhist beliefs and practices became the ways of life with consciousness, scientific characteristics to develop spiritual forces.

Dhamma-vinaya (Doctrine and Discipline) represents Buddhism. Doctrine and Discipline means doctrine of reality or truth. It is the way for liberations of sufferings which was enlightened by Lord-Buddha. Lord-Buddha passed away, but his sublime teachings are still dead-less and timeless messages for liberation.

³⁹ For Cambodia, in the 16th century, Portuguese Christianity missionary named Gaspar de Cruz spent about a year in Cambodia. He tried to convert Cambodian Buddhist people to believe in Christianity, but his efforts were failed. While, Sri Lanka in the 19th also faced as the same and Sri Lankan Buddhist people and Buddhist scholars persisted and stabilized Buddhism.

⁴⁰ See below at the Buddhist Philosophy on metaphysics

⁴¹ A small village in Sri Lanka, about 24 miles from Kandy. It is a sacred stone-temple and a place of Buddhist pilgrims.

Even his teachings were not recorded in writing during the Buddha's lifetime, but his followers kept orally and transferred from one generation to the other.

After Buddha attained Nirvana for 3 months under the 8th reign of King Acheatasattu, 500 noble monks (Arahants) summoned the first council to verify the Buddha's teachings. Prah Mahā Ānanda was responsible for answering the Sutta Pitaka (conventional teachings), Prah Mahā Upāli was selected to answer and verify Vinaya Pitaka (the discipline). Therefore, the first council was to form the Tripitaka to symbolize the Buddha's sublime teachings.

By 100 and 236 thereafter, the second council was held at Pataliputta to verify and purify the Buddha's teachings due to there was an attempt to defame the dignity of Sublime Buddhist teachings.

About 83 B.C during the reign of King Vataghāmini Aphaya, the council of Arahants (Noble monks) held and Tripitaka was recorded in writing at Aluvihāra⁴¹, Sri Lanka. By their efforts, they (Arahants) maintained the Buddha's original teachings that no one could criticized.

Therefore, the pure teachings in Tripitaka symbolize Buddhism. Tripitaka means thing for collecting Dhamma-vinaya. It is classified into three kinds. They are: Sutta Pitaka, Vinaya Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka.

5.1. Sutta Pitaka:

Sutta Pitaka is the prestigious Pāli Canon of Buddhist scripture delivered by Buddha and his followers. It states about the exact principles of the Buddhist way of life. This Pitaka is divided into five Nikāya. They are:

1. Digha Nikāya (Collection of Long Discourses)
2. Majjhima Nikāya (Collection of Middle-Length Discourses)
3. Sīṅyutta Nikāya (Collection of Kindred Sayings)
4. Anguttara Nikāya (Collection of Discourses arranged in accordance with number)
5. Khuddaka Nikāya (Smaller Collection).

5.2. Vinaya Pitaka:

Vinaya Pitaka comprises of set of rules stressed by Buddha, which is meant to be followed by Buddhist people. It deals with the rules and regulations of the orders of monks and nuns. This Pitaka consists of the five following books:-

1. Parājika Pāli: (Major Offences)
2. Pācittiya Pāli: (Minor Offences)
3. Mahāvagga Pāli: (Greater Section)
4. Cullavagga Pāli: (Smaller Section)
5. Parivāra Pāli: (Epitome of the Vinaya)

These five books cover all rules for physical and verbal regulations in orders in Sangha community. It is considered as the foundation for maintaining Buddhism in order and progress.

5.3. Abhidhamma Pitaka:

Abhidhamma contains the profound philosophy of the Buddha's teachings. It talks about the four ultimate things (Paramattha).

They are Citta (Consciousness), Cetasika (Mental Concomitants), Rupa (Matter) and Nirvana⁴². Abhidhamma Pitaka is composed of the seven books. They are:

1. Dhamma-Sangani(Enumeration of Phenomena)
2. Vibhanga (The book of the Treaties)
3. Kathā-Vatthu(Point of Controversy)
4. Puggala Paññatti(Description of Individuals)
5. Dhātu Kathā(Discussion with reference to Elements)
6. Yamaka (The book of Pairs)
7. Patthāna (The book of Relations)

Traditionally, Abhidhamma is recognized as the absolute teaching of the Lord-Buddha. The Buddha is known to have conceptualized this Pitaka just after his enlightenment, later delivering it to one of his chief disciples.

The Tripitaka contains 84000 aggregates of Dhamma of the Lord-Buddha. So, all teachings in Tripitaka are Buddhist philosophy for leading human beings to get prosperous life both this life and the next.

6. Buddhist philosophy

Philosophy and Buddhism are two terms which have been misunderstood and misinterpreted by their meanings. Some people argued that these two terms have the same meanings. But, when we analyzed closely, then we realized that, these two terms are not the same. Philosophy is only a small part of Buddhist teachings. Moreover, if we compare philosopher and Buddha, then we realized that, philosopher is only the person who studied and has a particular knowledge of any particular thing or field; whereas Buddha is called *Sammā Sambuddho*, which means that a fully Enlightened One. He is the Giver of purest love, the profoundest wisdom, and the highest truth.

In addition, Philosophy is only the love of wisdom. Buddhism may approximate to a philosophy, but it is very much more comprehensive. Philosophy deals with knowledge and is not concerned with practice; whereas Buddhism lays special emphasis on practice and realization.

Buddhism is the philosophy of awakening. Buddhist philosophy deals broadly with problems associated with and foundation, master-mold of metaphysics, ethics, phenomenology and epistemology. All teachings have the comprehensive prosperities, moral, religious and philosophical systems, the ways of life, the truths and the ways of peace and liberations.

It is regarded as the most advanced of the philosophical systems of India. Ethics, science and philosophy are interwoven into a system which is divorced from mythology and which attempts to unravel the real nature of life. There is no Buddha-Dharma which does not stem from the logical and rational foundations of philosophy. In this sense, Buddhist teachings have been recognized as the foundation or father of philosophy.

From the ancient time to the present, Buddhism has utilized its philosophy as the means to illuminate the truth and can attract thousands of millions of people to be the Buddhists. In this sense, Buddhism may be recognized as a religion, a philosophy, a way of life, or all three; here we will deal mainly with Buddhism as a philosophical system. Moreover, Buddhist teachings can be

applied in all aspects of life. Therefore, I would like to reveal some of Buddhist philosophy towards some aspects as the following:

6.1. Buddhist Philosophy on metaphysics

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that examines the true nature of reality, whether visible or invisible. Metaphysics includes the relationship between mind and matter, substance and attribute, and, fact and value. Basically, metaphysics is the philosophical study of being and knowing. It is very closely related to spirituality. In this sense, Buddhism is the master-mold of metaphysics.

6.1.1. Abhidhamma:

The profound philosophy of the Buddha's teachings related to the four ultimate things (Paramattha), Citta (Consciousness), Cetasika (Mental Concomitants), Rūpa (Matter) and Nirvana.

Citta: According to Abhidhamma, Citta is that which is aware of an object. From this standpoint, Citta may be defined as the awareness of an object, since there is no agent like a soul.

Cetasika: Mental things which are bound up with the simultaneously arising consciousness and conditioned by its presence. In the Abhidhamma, there are 52 Cetasikas (Mental things), Vedanā(feeling), Saññā(perception) and Sankhā (50 mental formations).

Rūpa : It connotes both fundamental units of matter and material changes as well. There are 28 species of matter, four great Essentials and 24 material qualities derived from them⁴³.

Nibbāna: It is the Supra-mundane (Lokuttara). It is the only absolute reality, which is the ultimate happiness of Buddhism. It is gained after practicing Lokuttara-Dhamma.

These four ultimate truths embrace everything that is mundane or supra- mundane. They are the indispensable guides and intellectual treats for those who wish to increase their wisdom and lead the ideal Buddhist lives. They are also important both form of philosophy and ethical standpoint. A philosophy and an ethical system have been developed on these lines. Based on the philosophy, an ethical system has been evolved to realize the ultimate goal, **Nibbāna**.

6.1.2. PATICCASAMUPPĀDA

The theory of PATICCASAMUPPĀDA (Dependent Origination) is also the kind of metaphysics in Buddhism. It is related to causal relation. Term "PAṬICCASAMUPPĀDA" is the doctrine of the

⁴³ Four Great Essentials are: (1) the element of extension, (2) element of cohesion, (3) element of heat, (4) element of motion. The 24 material qualities derived from Four Great Essentials are: Pasāda-Rūpa(Pasāda-Rūpas are the sensitive parts of the five organ-eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body), Gocara- Rūpa (Gocara- Rūpa means sense-fields which serve as support for the sense-cognitions to arise. There are four kinds of Gocara- Rūpa, form, sound, smell, and tongue), Sabhāva-Rūpa (material qualities of sex, there are two kinds of material qualities, they are femininity and masculinity), Hadayavathu (It is the seat or basis of consciousness), Jivita-Rūpa or Jivitindriya (There is vitality both in mind and in matter. Psychic life, which is one of the fifty-two mental states and physical life, which is one of the twenty-eight Rūpas, are essential characteristics of this so-called being), Āhāra- Rūpa (It is the nutritive essence or condition which sustains the physical body) , Paricheda-Rūpa(It is the air space appears between Rūpa and Rūpa), Viññāti-Rūpa(It is that by means of which one communicates one's ideas to another and one understand another situation. It is done both by action and speech-Kāyaviññāti and Vaciviññāti), Vikāra- Rūpa (Changeability of Rūpa, Lahutā denotes physical health, and is comparable to an, iron-rod heated throguout the day, Mudutā is the comparable to a well beaten hide, Kammaññatā is opposed to the stiffness of the body, and is comparable to well hammered gold.), Lakkhana-Rūpa(So called because they assume distinguishable characteristics at different stages such as arising (Upāda), static (ḥiti) and dissolution(bhaṅga). There are four kinds of Lakkhana-Rūpa. They are: Uchchaya-Rūpa, Santati- Rūpa, Jaratā- Rūpa, Aniccatā- Rūpa.

⁴² For these four ultimate truths, see at the Buddhist Philosophy on metaphysics below.

conditionality of all physical and psychical phenomena. Paṭicca means "dependent upon" + Samuppāda means "arising or origination".

PATICCASAMUPPĀDA shows the conditionality and dependent nature of that uninterrupted flux of manifold physical and psychical phenomena of existence conventionally called the Ego, or Man, or Animal etc. Both living-things and non-living things in this world are conditioned, nothing exists independently.

For example, life is formed by mind and matter⁴⁴ (Nama-rūpa). When mind and matter are combined, then life existed. If mind is not dependent upon matter and matter does not depend upon mind, then there is no existence of life. This world has no independent events, because of A arises B. Because of B arises C. When there is no A, then there is no B. In this sense, PAṬICCASAMUPPĀDA is the chain of causality. This causality is spoken of as a circular linking of twelve different factors; if the chain of causality can be broken, existence is ended and liberation attained. It deals with the cause of rebirth, suffering, death and the ultimate liberation of all creatures from the pain of existence and its way of liberation of suffering.

When Buddha sat under the Bodhi-tree in the day of his enlightenment, Buddha analyzed that about the cause of Death or decay. How were they originated? What is the cause of suffering? And how could suffering, death be liberated and ended? The formulas of Dependent origination of the cause of birth, suffering, death and the ways leading to liberation runs as the follow:

- **Avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā**-through the ignorance is conditioned the rebirth-producing volition-Saṅkhāras. Dependent on the ignorance arise conditioning activities (Saṅkhārā). Ignorance is the deep delusion and not-knowingness of things as they truly are. When ignorance is destroyed and turned into knowingness, all Karma-formations are shattered or ended.

- **Saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇaṃ**-through the Karma-formation (in the past life) is conditioned Consciousness (in the present life). Dependent on the Saṅkhārā arise conditioning viññāṇa. The term Saṅkhārā signifies Akusala (immoral), Kusala (moral) and Āneṅja Cetanā (unshakable volitions), which constitute Kamma that produce rebirth. In order to end the rebirth or the cycle of life is to end the Saṅkhārā or Kamma.

- **Viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṃ**-through Consciousness is conditioned the mental and physical phenomena (nāma-rūpa) existed (individual existence). In order to end the mental and physical phenomena is to end the Consciousness.

- **Nāma-rūpa-paccayā salāyatanaṃ**-through the mental and physical phenomena are conditioned the 6 Bases (5 physical sense-organs and consciousness). In order to end 6 Bases is to end mental and physical phenomena.

- **Salāyatana-paccayā Phasso**-through the six bases is conditioned the Impression. In order to end the Impression (sensorial mental) is to end the six bases.

- **Phassa-paccayā Vedanā**-through the Impression is conditioned Feeling. In order to end the impression is to end feeling is to end the impression.

- **Vedanā-paccaya taṇhā**-through Feeling is conditioned the Craving. In order to end the craving is end the feeling.

- **Taṇhā paccayā upādānaṃ**-through Craving is conditioned Clinging or attachment. In order to end the attachment is to the Craving.

- **Upādāna paccayā Bhavo**-through attachment is conditioned the process of Becoming. In order to end the process of becoming is end the attachment.

- **Bhava-paccayā Jāti**-through the process of Becoming is conditioned the Rebirth. In order to end the Rebirth is to end the process of Becoming.

- **Jāti-paccayā Jarāmaranaṃ**-through the Rebirth is conditioned Old age and Death. In order to end Old age and Death is to end Rebirth or Cycle of life.

6.1.3. The Wheel of Dhamma:

Dhammachakkapawattana Sutra (discourse of the Wheel of Dhamma, Law) was the first sermon, given by the Buddha at Issipatana Park more than 2,500 years ago. In this Sutra, there are four main themes called the Four Noble Truths, (1) Dukkha-sacca (the truth of suffering), (2) Samudaya-sacca (the truth of the cause of suffering), (3) Nirodha-sacca (the truth of the cessation of suffering) and (4) Magga-sacca (the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering). These noble truths have no in other religions. They have only in Buddhism. They talk about the relationship between cause and effect. Suffering is the effect or result of its cause (greed, anger and delusion). The truth of the cessation of suffering is the effect or result of its cause (Sila, Samāthi and Paññā).

🕒 **Dukkha-sacca** is the first of the four insights. It is variously translated as suffering, pain, unsatisfactory quality of life. When human beings oversee what they are experienced or look at what is around them, then they realize that life is really full of suffering. The suffering is classified into two types. They are physical and mental sufferings.

A-Physical suffering: It is categorized into four kinds. These categories are (1) suffering of birth, (2) suffering of old age; (3) suffering caused by illness and (4) the agony of death. Life is formed by Nāmma-Ruppa (Mind and Matter). When life existed, then it must face all sufferings above. From the reincarnation to the childbirth and death, life is under control of the three characteristics: Anicca (impermanence), Dukkha(suffering) and Anattā (No-soul). Body changes gradually from time to time. Nothing stays the same and no one can escape from those sufferings.

B-Mental sufferings: Besides the physical suffering, there is another suffering within human's mind. One faces worry, fear, anxiety, and mental disturbance due to disappearance of the beloved relatives or wanting everything to be static.

🕒 **Samudaya-sacca** is the second noble truth mentions about the cause of suffering. It teaches that the pain of life or suffering is caused by Tanhā (passion, wish, desire, craving...). In Buddhism, Tanhā is divided into three kinds or categories. They are Kāma-Tanhā (craving for sexuality or craving for Sensuous Existence or Kārma-Bhava, the five senses, forms, sound, odour,

⁴⁴ Matter (Rūpa), according to Buddhism, means elements. There are four fundamental material elements. They are: Paṭhavi(element of extension), Āpo(element of cohesion), Tejo(element of heat) and Vāyo(element of motion).

taste, touch), Bhava- Tanhā (craving for rebirth in Fine-material Existence, Rūpa-Bhava or Rūpalokas), and Vibhava-Tanhā (craving for rebirth in Immaterial Existence, Arūpa-Bhava or AArūpalokas⁴⁵).

- ⊙ **-sacca** is the third noble truth. It is a complete release from craving, attachment, selfish grasping, and liberation from pain and rebirth.
- ⊙ **Magga-sacca** is the fourth noble truth. It tells how to attain the liberation and describes the Noble Eightfold Path leading to Nirvana, the utter extinction of the pain of existence.

6.2. Buddhist Philosophy on the Way of Life

To many, Buddhism is considered as the way of life because Buddhist philosophy provides the Buddhist path can be summed up as:

- (1) To lead a moral life,
- (2) To be mindful and aware of thoughts and actions, and
- (3) To develop wisdom and understanding.

The Buddha intended his philosophy to be a practical one, aimed at the happiness of all creatures. To achieve this, however, requires a disciplined life and a clear commitment to liberation; the Buddha laid out a clear path to the goal and also observations on how to live life wisely. The core of this teaching is contained in the Noble Eightfold Path. It entails Sammā-Diṭṭhi (Right Understanding), Sammā-Saṅkappa (Right Thought), Sammā-Vācā (Right Speech), Sammā-Kammanta (Right Action), Sammā-Ājiva (Right Livelihood), Sammā-Vāyāma (Right Effort), Sammā-Sati (Right Mindfulness) and Sammā-Samāthi (Right Concentration). The Noble Eightfold Path is divided into the three essential areas of Buddhist practice: ethical conduct, mental discipline ('concentration; or 'meditation'), and wisdom.

6.2.1. Ethical Conduct (Sila):

It is based on love and compassion. Sila is included three factors of the Noble Eightfold Path: namely, Right Speech, Right Action and Right livelihood.

Sammā-Vācā refers to good speech which means abstention from (1) telling lies, (2) backbiting and slander and talk that may bring about hatred, enmity, disunity, and disharmony among individuals or group of people, (3) idle, useless and foolish babble and gossip.

Sammā-Kammanta refers to good physical actions which mean abstention from (1) killing, (2) stealing, and (3) sexual misconduct illicit sexual indulgence.

Sammā-Ājiva refers to the way of living without harming and suffering the others. It is the abstention from the five wrong trafficking, (1) in arms and weapons, (2) in animals for slaughter, (3) in human beings, (4) in intoxicating drinks or drugs and (5) poisons.

6.2.2. Mental Discipline (Samāthi):

It is the way to train or cultivate human's mind to be calm. Mental Discipline covers the three factors of the Eightfold Path: namely

Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

Sammā-Vāyāma: It is a good effort. It perseveres endeavor (1) to prevent the arising of evil and unwholesome things, (2) to discard such evil things already arisen, (3) to produce and develop wholesome things not yet arisen, and (4) to promote and maintain the good things already present.

Sammā-Sati: It is to be diligently aware, mindful and attentive with regard to activities of the body (Kāyā-nupassanā), sensations or feelings (Vedanā-nupassanā), the activities of the mind (Cittā-nupassanā), ideas, thoughts, conceptions and things (Dhammā-nupassanā).

Sammā-Samāthi: It is the way to train the mind to be calm called (Samāthi). Samāthi (meditation) is the best way in Buddhism. When mind is trained, then mind produces the wholesome things and generate paramount benefits for individual and society.

In this reason, mind is trained and disciplined and developed through Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

6.2.3. Wisdom (Pañña):

The remaining two factors of the Noble Eightfold Path namely, Right Understanding, and Right Thought go to constitute Wisdom.

Sammā-Diṭṭhi: It is the understanding of things as they are. It is the highest understanding about the Ultimate reality. In this sense, Sammā-Diṭṭhi is the understanding about the Four Noble Truths (Suffering, cause of suffering, cessation of suffering and way leading to cessation).

Sammā-Saṅkappa: It is the thought of renunciation (Nekkhamma-Saṅkappa), good will (Avyāpāda-Saṅkappa) and of compassion or non-harm (Avihiṃsā-Saṅkappa). These thoughts are to be cultivated and extended towards all living beings regardless of race, caste, clan, or creed.

6.3. Buddhist philosophy on the right to life

Pānātipātā veramani is the Buddhist precept related the right to life. It is the most basic principle for protecting human beings from violence. These principles interrelate and support each other's.

Pānātipātā veramani offers traditional and in-depth realizations in the world culture. In contrast, right to life could be seen as a modern principle guarantees world citizens from maltreatment and physical abuses. These philosophies are crucial to mankind. They provide a solid foundation to help people toward prosperous life.

The foundation of education in Buddhism is based on *Sila* or moral conduct. *Sila* is a principle of human behavior which includes three factors of the eightfold Path: namely, right speech, right action and right livelihood.

Pañña sila (Five precepts) of Buddhism, namely (1) Pānātipātā veramani (abstaining from killing), (2) Atinnādānā veramani (abstaining from taking possession of anything that has not been given by its owner), (3) Kāmesumecchācārā veramani (abstaining from sexual misconducts), (4) Musāvādā veramani (abstaining

⁴⁵ Arūpa-Bhava or Arūpalokas are immaterial planes where those who have developed the Arūpa Jhānas (Absorptions or Ecstasies) are born.

⁴⁶ See at the Buddhist Philosophy toward the Way of Life, page above, in order to understand more about the classification of the Eightfold path into Sila, Samāthi and Pañña.

⁴⁷ Dhammananda, K. Sri (1996). The purpose of life, vol.13, p.231.

from lying or evil speech) and(5) Surāmeraya Majjappamā Dathānā veramani (abstaining from intoxicating drinks), are the ways of practice of human beings in society. These precepts are considered as the moral conducts of human beings.

Pānātipātā veramani, the first precept of the Pañca sila, is the principle of prohibition against taking of another's life and harming another's limb and body. It is the foundation of Karunā (compassion) for everybody to practice in daily life. Karunā represents love, charity, kindness, tolerance and such noble qualities on the emotional side and qualities of heart. It is regarded as the way of life and the noble righteous, cultured and religious life which should be respected by everybody⁴⁷. Pānātipātā veramani is the way of respecting and recognizing the right to life, that is, no one can deprive of another's life.

The right to life is seen and cited in this precept which Buddhist followers should respect. If one violates this precept, it means that he or she abuses Buddhist teaching. The Pānātipātā or deprivation of another's life is an act of taking someone's life which is a sinful act in Buddhism. In other words, it is contrary to Buddhist principle on Pānātipātā veramani and the violators will inevitably receive both moral and criminal responsibilities. The moral responsibility is a rational law of Karma that operates automatically and speaks in terms of cause and effect instead of reward and punishment. In this sense, the performer of killing receives brevity of life, constant grief and fear, getting vindictiveness and born in the dissatisfactory realm. While, criminal responsibility is a conviction of perpetrator who committed that offense is prescribed by law and all elements of the offense are proven by the persecution beyond reasonable doubt.

In addition, both in the religious and philosophical aspects of Buddhism always begin with deepest understanding about taking care of life, freedom from torture, abolishing all forms of ill-treatments and living without fear and worry.

Philosophy on loving-kindness and non-violence is the universal declaration of Buddhism pertaining right to life of everyone on the earth without interfering, suffering and harming from the others. These theories are considered as the principles and ways of peaceful coexistences in society.

Buddhist philosophy on Pānātipātā veramani and right to life are both moral and social rules which are stated in the United Nation's charter (Art.3 of UDHR) for promotion of compassion, tolerance, culture of peace, social order and stability in the purposes of human right's respect, especially right to life and common interests.

6. 4. Buddhist Philosophy on Social Development

Buddhism is the social thread, foundation of social fabric, collection of morality and wisdom. This religion teaches all human beings about self-help, mutual compassion and common development for all happiness. Common happiness really originates from common development. The common development literally means development for all and with equity in human society. Human society is the group of people involved with social status, roles and networks and humans are the real resources of the nations. In order to develop the nation, to be foremost, we must develop human or individual.

The progress of a nation depends on the progress of individual,

human or people Development. When people are developed, then societies are the like. Social development is involved with socio-economic and cultural developments such as economic growth, educational progress, social welfare, rules of law, harmonization, moral, spiritual and wisdom developments and so on. Social progress refers to the harmonious unification and peaceful co-existence for people.

In this sense, Buddhism focuses on the four factors of development, physical, moral, mental and wisdom developments.

6.4.1. Physical development:

It refers to material development, such as infrastructure, economic growth, production, instruments and food, especially four requisites (dress, food, shelter and medicine) for sustaining our lives to the existence. Buddhism not only teaches the ways to create the economic growth, but also the ways to maintain what are the results of economic progress. To this sense, there is Buddhist four ways to develop and maintain what are the developed results. They are:

A-Utthāna Sampadā: to be full of efforts. The efforts and patience to the works are the primary mold of development. It is contrary to laziness. The laziness is the source of decline, poorness for individual, family and society.

If the individual, family and society are lazy, then, that individual, family and society have nothing. Thus, to reduce decline, poorness, Buddhism urges, motivates and guides people to be active, effortful, and patient to all circumstances.

Buddhism does not teach people to wait for rewards from Gods yet. But, it guides people to have the recourse to self-help in advance. If the individual, family and society only sleep and wait for rewards from the other and gods, that individual, family and society can't find out the light of happiness and it is considered as social diseases and sins.

From the point of view of cause and effect, people must work hard, efforts to works in the present time. The efforts to works are the vessel of a sustainable development. This concept has been used by the developed countries. They invest in concepts or opinions.

B-Ārakkha Sampadā: to be full of protection or taking care of what are the created-results. The efforts always create the results. If the results or consequences are developed, and then there is no properly protection, the results will disappear. The creation or development is the difficult task, but the more difficult is the protection or maintaining what are developed. Therefore, the protection is the second phase for maintaining the results of development.

C- Kallayān Mittatā: being a person who good friends. Good friends here refer to those to make benefits for friends, not only for themselves. In the international relations between one country to the others, friend refers to those countries have good relationships with equity and fair competition. These kinds of friends, individual or country should make relationships for social progress in all fields and happiness.

D-Sama Chivitā: being a person who lives with equity. Living with equity refers to division of economic income with equity. There is no gap between the poor and the rich.

⁴⁷ Dhammananda, K. Sri (1996). The purpose of life, vol.13, p.231.

6.4.2. Moral conduct development

Man is the social animal that can build the character of man for making relation with society. Good society, developed society must start from the developed individual or moral development.

Moral conduct is the principle of behavior of human. It is self-discipline. We must learn to live with peaceful mind and not harming the others. If everybody follows this principle, it is the foundation of peace building, happiness, progress, achievement, and the good ways of life. In Buddhism, there are a lot of precepts need to be practiced, but the primary precepts mention here are five precepts that are foundations of common development are:

1-Pānātipātā veramani: abstaining from killing. This precept is the universal declaration of Buddhism pertaining right to life of everybody on the earth without interfering, suffering and harming from the other. It's also considered as the principles and ways of peaceful co-existences in society.

2-Atinnādānā veramani: abstaining from taking possession of anything that has not been given by its own. It is related to the non-violation of possession's rights.

3-Kāmesumecchācārā veramani: abstaining from sexual misconducts.

4-Musāvādā veramani: abstaining from lying or evil speech.

5-Surāmeraya Majjappamā Dathānā verami: abstaining from intoxicating drinks.

These precepts are the ways of practice of human beings in society and are considered as the moral conducts of human beings should be practiced to promote the common development.

6.4.3. Mental development:

Samadhi is the second principle for cultivation of the mind to experience peace and calmness by focusing the mind on one particular object. The minds of those who have no such experience are very weak. The reason why their minds are very weak is due to the fear that disturbs them. We have feelings of insecurity and suspicion within us because of that weakness. Every minute we dissipate our mental energy unprofitably through our five senses that can do nothing.

These five channels extract our mental energy and use that energy to attract external objects which cause suspicion, fear and worry. They collect defilements from outside through the senses and confuse our mind. Thus the mind has no time to relax and becomes weak because of this wastage of energy. In order to reduce confuses and strengthen the power of minds, Buddhism teaches us about how to cultivate mind called Bhāvanā. Term "Bhāvanā" means cultivation of mind, which is the collection of energy, disappeared to put at the former places. When mind is developed, it becomes the potential powers to reduce defilements the bad things out of mind. Thus, cultivation of mind is the precondition of mind-strengthening through methods of meditation and peaceful mind for common interests and sustainable progress.

6.4.4. Wisdom development:

Wisdom is classified into two kinds, Lokiya Panna (mundane wisdom) and Lokuttara Panna (supra-mundane wisdom).

Lokiya Panna refers to simple knowledge used in this world such as knowledge of business, history, geography, mathematics and law and so on.

Lokuttara Panna refers to wisdom used in Dhamma sense for liberation of suffering. It is the right understanding of the world in the light of its transience, suffering and insubstantiality.

These wisdoms are the third and last stage of the path for material and spiritual developments. After undertaking the observance of morality and the mind is well-concentrated, then, he is able to understand the true nature of things. Wisdom and Brightness are appeared in mind.

When illusion, ignorance and evil thoughts disappear from the mind, brightness appears in their place. That brightness is enlightenment. We have to learn how to open the mind. When the mind is fully opened, then development takes place, which is inner development.

Thus, Sila, Samadhi, Panna are the three main religious principles in Buddhism for the development of human life. Further development of Sila or precepts for the attainment of sainthood is called Adhi Sila. Calmness or tranquility of the consciousness is called Adhi Citta (Samadhi). Gaining higher wisdom through the development of insight -Vipassana is called Adhi Panna. These therefore are the three Buddhist principles for training the human mind and social-development.

6. Conclusion:

In short, India is the founder-country of Buddhism and propagated its teachings to other countries in the world. During his lifetime, Lord-Buddha wandered from one place to the other to advice people to understand his teachings about the way of life for practice to gain happiness in the lifetime and liberation. After he passed away, his teachings became the master or teacher instead of his to teach human beings from the past to the present and continue to the future.

In the reign of the Asoka, Buddhism gained great ascendancy under his patronage. The messages or gift of Dhamma was flourished and propagated to other countries. Many countries received Buddhist teaching as their refuges and heritages, especially Sri Lanka and Cambodia.

Cultural heritages of Sri Lanka are fulfilled by Indian Culture, especially Theravāda Buddhist philosophy. Theravāda Buddhist philosophy has played important roles and strongly influenced for both countries. While, Lankan Culture, arts, literature..., are also mixed and lived with Indian Culture as return. Many Buddhist temples were built in the territory of India, such as in Sarnath from the past to the present day.

Moreover, India and Sri Lanka has also had close relationships with other Theravāda Buddhist countries. From there it would expand again to South-East Asia from time to time. Cambodia (Former Suvannabhumi) has also been converted to Buddhism from the 3rd Buddhist century under the proselytizing of the Indian Emperor Aśoka. From that time, the Indian culture influenced and mixed with Cambodian literature, culture and peaceful co-existence.

Buddha's teachings were recorded in Tripitaka, having 84000 aggregates of Dhamma, represent Buddhism. These teachings have the comprehensive prosperities, the ways of life, the truths, the ways of peace and liberations and the religious and philosophical systems. Through its philosophy, Buddhism attracted millions of people to be its adherents or followers in the world. Those philosophies deal broadly with problems associated with metaphysics, the ways of life, respect of right to life, ethics, phenomenology and epistemology that can be applied in all aspects of life.

Buddhist philosophy on metaphysics contains the profound philosophy of the Buddha's teachings, Citta (Consciousness), Cetasika (Mental Concomitants), Rupa (Matter) and Nirvana and the Four Noble Truths, (1) the truth of suffering, (2) the truth of the cause of suffering, (3) the truth of the cessation of suffering and (4) the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Buddhist philosophy on Sila, Samāthi and Paññā are the practical principles, aimed at the happiness of all creatures, peaceful living, co-existence and prosperous life for leading (1) a moral life, (2) to be mindful and aware of thoughts and actions, and (3) to develop wisdom and understanding.

Buddhist philosophy on right to life, such as compassion, tolerance, non-violence and principle of five precepts, is the most basic principles for protecting human beings from violence. It offers traditional and in-depth realizations in the world culture for guaranteeing the world citizens from maltreatment and physical abuses and respecting the right to life to help people toward prosperous life and living without fear and worry.

Therefore, Buddhist teachings are the theories of cause and effect and recognized as the father of philosophical system in the world which can be applied toward all aspects of life aiming at gaining happiness and liberation.

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CULTURAL INTERFACE BETWEEN INDIA AND SRILANKA BASED ON BUDDHIST ART

Milan Ratna Shakya



Dr. Milan Ratna Shakya (Nepal)

Dr. Milan Ratna Shakya is Associate Professor and Head of the Central Department of Buddhist Studies, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu (Nepal). He has done M.A. with distinction in Nepalese History, Culture & Archaeology and doctorate in Culture on the topic of "The Concept, Art Forms and Aestheticity of Ganesa during Malla Period" from Tribhuvan University. He is the Subject Committee Member of Painting in Fine Art Campus (Kathmandu), Member of Standing Committee of Buddhist Studies Central Department, Member of Subject Committee of Nepalese History, Culture & Archaeology Central Department, Tribhuvan University and Member of Subject Committee in Philosophy of Nepal Academy. He attended Global Youth Forum in India in 1993, worked as Visiting Lecturer in Helsinki University, delivered lectures in various universities in Finland and at Yonsei University and Cyber University of South Korea.

BACKGROUND

Buddhist art begins with Buddha's posthumous memorial of Stupa used to venerate his remains, to embody Buddha as celestial teacher of transient, impermanence and Soullessness. His realization became out of reach to ordinary after his elite illustration. But he had shown the way to excel the noble enlightenment to the competent one. Thus Bodhisattva's conception emerged as savior potent with the compassion to protect the precision of four sublime states (*Catur-Brahmavihār*) viz., Amity (*Maitri*) by softening of heart, Compassion (*Karuṇā*) for loving kindness, Extrication (*Muditā*) to practice with sympathetic joy for abolition of jealousy and Equanimity (*Upekṣā*) to behave fairness. This idealism of compassion to all pleasure to all (*Bahujana-hitāya bahujana sukhāya*) became the standard to manifest the Buddhist images of wisdom and compassion. Buddha's optimism of wisdom perfection (*Samyak-sam-Buddha*) was inherited from his skillful perfection of the wisdom as Bodhi-Enlightenment, while the spirit of compassion embodied by him to excel all these became the admirable aims of Bodhisattvas for the continuance of his vow for becoming the Buddha. These two distinct principles formed the Buddhist idealisms as inspiration for the exploration to the artistic imagination of a Sage's guise of the Buddha's image and a noble king's semblance to Bodhisattvas in Gandhara and Mathura tradition of the early Christian eras. It was embodied with ethnic essence to partake with the essence of enlightenment as means of perfection by mythical inclusions of

goblins (*Yakṣa-Yakṣini*) as benign motifs with celestial snakes (*Nāgas*), heavenly musicians (*Gandharvas*), nymphs (*Apsarās*), bacchanalian characters (*Aśuras*), were explored as celebrities of Bodhisattva and the attributes of Buddhist monasticism. Those celestial beings were represented in various banners and edifices of monastic arts of historic motifs for the Buddhist embellishments, later on.

CULTURAL INTERFACE

Art was commoner's profession, which effects to reflect the sentiments of humanity to attract with the commoner's mind in aesthetic delights. Thus, it is the interface of sensual and susceptible desires that reflected into human sentiments as expression. It plausibly obliges to reveal those unseen and complicated expressions into visuals by transformation and imitation. It is effective to allure with commons but its attractiveness is senseless to the novice of rumination. Thus, it could be impediment (*Māra*) in their meditation. Hence, the notions of its prohibition were apt for neophyte monks of the early Buddhist monasticism. Moreover, this could be one of the reasons for lacking of sculptural or painted remains from the Śākyamuni Buddha's archaeological sites of sixth century BC.

Art was spiritual idiom as universal flair of ethics (*Śīla*), to embrace as skills (*Sippa* or *Silpa*) of Buddhist perfections in rumination (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*Prajñā*). Artisans were inert in iconic representation of Buddha; monastic influence and their literal eulogies are admitting this as spiritual practice of subsequent episode. It was incredibly implemented as Buddha's perfected action (*caryā*), later. Otherwise, in common tradition art existed as profession but not admitted by monasticism for titivation of their complexes, if so, we need not have to linger for its looming from the future excavations. Archaeology incorporates with those artifacts, which entirely approves the historicity. Its chronological sequence edifies with the human cultural progression of the perfected skillfulness.

Buddhism integrates with the series of amended thoughts in practice and esteem through the ages. Accordingly, the series of Buddhist council meets were required to establish their revisions as coherent procedures of their mundane perfection, while the spirituality was confined into the deep meditation. Buddhist ingenuity truly enriched the tradition of meditation (*Samādhi*) and wisdom (*Prajñā*) for perfection. Devotional mind-set of Buddhist pilgrimage was recommended and promulgated by Śākyamuni himself in his death-bed (*Mahāparinirvāna*) for the traumatized monks and followers in Kuśinagara. This spiritual instinct has not only stirred with the sacred devotions but also endorsed with the literary superfluities of Buddhist spiritual art. Buddha was configured as historical in the early works but later gradually became philosophical and titivation of the monastic stream. His life story was depicted as Buddha's accomplishment with his previous lives of different eons as Bodhisattva's action (*Caryā*) in Jatakas, which incarnates in a human form.⁴⁸ Such impression was envisaged in producing Buddha's icon as the object of spiritual veneration. The first humanoid Buddha was idealized into sculptural forms in Hellenistic (Gandhara) and Indian (Mathura)

schools of alien and Indigenous traditions from the early first second century CE.

Buddha's image was still symbolic and executed with Bodhisattva's spirit of animals in Aśokan monolithic pillars for motif of capitals. Those were exemplary by Elephant, Lotus, Bull, Horse and Gate as for representative of the events of Nativity of Buddha in Lumbini and his flight from Kapilavastu. These symbolic emblems have replaced those olden statue making trends of sovereign as Yakṣa from Parkham depicting the *Kunika* (Ajātaśatru) but begins with spiritual motifs in Mauryan arts. Since, Buddhist monasticism emerged after Buddha's extinction. It departed gradually from Buddha's philosophy into the clerical practice and laity for keeping his deliverance safe for those literally abandoned populace to enter the order. Although, monks, nuns, and their followers of male and females categories are measured as the four cardinals of Buddhism, except the monastic order remained severe enough to realize art its own tradition. Instead they commissioned professional artisans to beautify their Stupas of Sāncī and Bharhut in Śunga age. Thus, those remained unchallenged master-pieces of Buddhist art through the ages.

While, some monks were skillful to make Buddha's statues in north India and Ajanta caves and its pergolas are speculated as monastic ateliers of anonymous artisans belonging to later Kuṣāṇa and Gupta arts. But the aesthetic vestiges of Śunga art remained nostalgic forever in Buddhist arts. The embellishment of Yakṣa-Yakṣiṇī prototypes of semi-nude figures in their stupas remained evocative for aesthetic delights of Indian arts to the posterity. Those remained idyllic for the divinity of maternity in Buddhist art as Hārati and Pāncika-Yakṣa to travel from Gandhara, Nepal to the Asian island of Śrilanka. The aestheticism of semi-nudity remained unchanged norms of divinity or celestial icon to the posterior tradition of iconographic arts for depicting as mother-goddess of Māyādevi or Tārā. Their beautification defuses in architectural components as struts to support the pagoda roofs with the affluence of mythical inclusion. The semi-nudes idealism of Yakṣiṇī transforms into Śālabhañjikā for protecting and consoling the weight of structure or tree in iconic model of Mayadevi for the depiction of Buddha's nativity, forever. It pervades the artistic imagination for motherly nature to lean with aesthetic culture of Hārati-Ajimā as fostering maternity⁵⁰ in Buddhist Nepal. Those prototypes were sacredly deified as pantheon images of *Aju-Ajima* by devotional aestheticism of tantricism in Nepal mandala. Early model of Yakṣa-Yakṣiṇī sculptures were noticed from Hādīgāon in Kathmandu. Those were analogous to the minder icons of Buddhism, which gradually transformed into Demi-god's spirit in iconographic arts of tantra viz., as the rudiments of Bhairava and Kālī.

Kashmir Buddhism met Kaniska (c.78-101CE) to admit householders' dedication for the excellent practice of perfection (*Upāya-Kausalya*). It was incorporated by indigenous spirit to space out with the Indo-Bactrian Hellenistic art of Gandhara from Mathura arts in Northern India. Those early practices of Mauryan and Śungas were discriminated by Hellenistic sentiments of Greco-roman arts of northwestern regions includes Pakistan and Afghanistan. Nepal was serenely observing the pre-Kuṣāṇa norm of Yakṣa-Yakṣiṇī cult of Mathura art style for executing the Hārati (*Śitalā*) in stones. Its aestheticism was naive to ingenious influence of Hellenistic idealism. The grey-sandstone torso of Yakṣa-Bodhisattva from Hādīgāon, now preserved in National Museum of Kathmandu, suggests the unscathed serenity of sentinel image of the pre-Licchavī valley. This Bodhisattva prototype crucially identifies the majestic effigy of Jayavermma (dated 185 CE) as idyllic king's portrait bent in Yakṣa-Bodhisattva's minder optimism. Yakṣa as the Buddhist guardian is trendy from Hindu

myths as the noble lord of wealth from northern direction viz., *Kuvera* or *Vaiśravaṇa*, in Gandhara. He was legendary from Hindu epic as once the lord of Lanka isle of the south but expelled by Rāvaṇa towards the north. Thenceforth, he remains the guardian of that direction. Images of *Pāncika-Yakṣa* and Hārati are accepted as caring spirits of demigod's character in Buddhist myths and arts of Mathurā and Gandhara.

Northern schools of Śunga-Kuṣāṇa and Gupta arts of Mathura were gradually stylized by symbolic experiments for Buddha's character to achieve the humanoid idealism. Gandhara art experiments Buddha icons with the prototype of Sage (*Parivrājaka*) and Bodhisattvas (*Rājaṣṭī-Bheṣa*) in majestic pretext. The category of Mathurā and Sārnath arts were home-grown whereas Gandhara arts of Indian north-western frontier, Pakistan and Afghanistan, were fashioned in alien Indo-Greek (Hellenism) trends and attitude. The Amravati school of Nagarjunakonda however, exhibits the magnificence of Vengi works, inscribed in *Bhatti-pollu* script, the third phase of Aśokan Dhamma (Brāhmī) script, to transpire with iconographic dedication of Pādūkā worship. The remnants and archaeological vestiges of Amravati stupas and monasteries revealed with symbolic representation of Buddhist arts as depicted in architectural embodiments with the symbols of eight-spoked wheel (*Dhamma-cakra*) and *Swastika* motifs, once those motifs were popular imprints made on rectangle coins with Punch-marks from Buddhist age in north India. Lotus and creeper symbols remained nostalgic of this region for depiction of Buddha's perfection and as pedestal to his foot-print mark, which insinuated with the veneration of the iconic form of Buddha in future. The figure of Buddha that appeared from this region of subsequent age goes with the aesthetic norm of Northern Srilankan sentiments to fit as their prototypes for the colossal images of Buddha and his Sangha, fellow monks. It inspired the early Sinhalese sacred architectural edifices for the embellishment with Buddhist spiritual tang under which they developed with their own in future. Those Indian motifs were gradually filtered with their indigenous additions of symbols and titivation of islander's aesthetic as Michael Ridley rightly observes, these Indian sculptural and architectural ideas which penetrated the island were slightly modified and re-exported⁵¹. The Sculptural affinity of Amravati apparently reveals the cultural and aesthetic affinities with the late Andhra to configure with the earliest Buddha icon from the second to third century CE that lasted until thirteenth century CE. Its initial period goes contemporaneous with the Jayavermma's statue in Nepal. Srilankan art of Anuradhapura, the first capital, was incur by Tamils of South India in eighth century and Polonnaruwa, the second capital by the thirteenth century. However, Buddhist art of Therevada spirit remained vibrant and enliven with the cultural intact of philosophical and artistic perfection of the classical age of Srilanka.

However, Mathura style remains trendy as sheer works in Nepal that was apparent as the southern trend to Srilankan Island arts.

Buddhism of Srilanka is as old as Aśokan legend of Nepal, in promotion of the mission headed by his own son Mahinda during the reign of Devanapiya Tissa (c. 247-207 BC). He converts the

⁴⁸ Michael Ridley. *The Art of World Religion: Buddhism*. (New Delhi: Heritage Publisher, 1978), p.53.

⁴⁹ Milan Ratna Shakya, *Symbolic Representation in Buddhist Art*. Tri-Bodhi. Vol.3. No.3. A Buddhist Studies Journal's of Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. Also vide.

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(b) -----, Re-print. Ed. Mulk Raj Anand, (New Delhi: Arnold Publishers, 1994), p.38.

⁵⁰ -----, *The Cultural Aestheticism of motherly Icons of Durgā in Nepal*. (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 2011) (U.P.) in Press.

⁵¹ M.Ridley. op.cit. (e.n.1.), p.84.

Sinhalese king into Buddhism and thereby the island. Later Theri Sunghamitta, Mahinda's sister, brought with her a sapling of Bodhi-tree from Bodhi-Gaya, under which Sakyamuni had obtained Enlightenment, to implant in the first capital of Anuradhapura and established a nunnery on this island. This tree is still alive in there, as the oldest historical tree in this world. Its artistic representation is full of myths for illustrative arts of Buddhist world to symbolize the enlightenment of Buddha as the tradition of Sāncī and Amravati arts. This very tree is significant in Buddhist art as his birth, rumination, enlightenment, first great sermon of Dharmacakra-pravartana, and series of discourses which were able to produce the holy scriptures of *Tripitaka* later, and his great annihilation was performed under the shadow of trees. In this regards the sapling of Bodhi-tree remains everlasting symbol in Buddhist art world. It is said, when the original sapling of Bodhi-Gaya began to die, a sapling from Anuradhapura was planted to insure the continuance of the unbroken chain of Bodhi tree. Another sapling of the Anuradhapura Tree has been planted at Sarnath⁵². This historic exchange has impulse with the artistic corroboration went on significant with the symbolism of lotus as sacred seat and pedestal of Buddha image. The moon stone of Anuradhapura i.e., seventh century CE, gives an impression of the Buddhist symbolic representation of Sinhalese art motifs that links with Buddhist spirituality. The early Sinhalese architectures were significant with the Indian prototypes with common features of those of Indo-Chinese Buddhist arts. Sinhalese sculptural configuration of Buddha image from second to third century CE closely affinities with the late Andhra sculptural tints of Amravati art. Buddha's wavy drapery and scaffoldings with semi-translucent iconic feature as prototype and the rounded and broadened nostril with acute ear lobes that touches to the shoulder of the image remains the distinct ethnic forte of this island imagery. The stranding Buddha figure in bronze from Medawachchiya in Srilanka dates back to the fourth century as contemporary of Indian Gupta image of Sarnath, with plain drapery fixed with bodily anatomy of Buddha which provides the impression of wet-Buddha due to devoid of wavy lines like that of Srilanka image. This is genuinely corroborated by Nepali Licchavī stone images of standing Buddhas from Bangemudha and Chabahila (stolen image) in Kathmandu dated fourth century CE.

The comparative study of the Medawachchiya and Sarnath images produce the aesthetic and iconic ambiance of protective pose (*Abhaya*) in hand gesture, while the stance of Kathmandu images are somewhat *tribhanga* in footing with stretching arm down to reveal the boon-bestowing (*Varada*) pose. But the upward bended left hands of these images are analogously holds the folding of his clothing.

The classical stone images of second to sixth century AD are fairly transpired with such aesthetic prototypes of Gupta flair. Both signify the Indian influences that lasted until the eleventh century. Their aestheticism was spirited with the philosophy of early Buddhism and Mahayanic teachings of Wisdom (Mañjuśrī) and Compassion (Avalokiteśvara's) in iconographic arts.

In Srilanka, Theravada remains significant as vibrant and living religion; though its classical age belongs to the Anuradhapura period of second to sixth century AD. Likewise, Nepalese classicism was simultaneous from the Licchavī's fifth to the eighth century AD, while, North Indian Gupta was constant from third to sixth century AD. However, Sinhalese chronicles mentions the earliest Buddha figures owes their brainwave to Mathura rather than Amravati Schooling of India. The comparison of Sinhalese with Amravati Buddha reveals the statuesque style, though Anuradhapuram work offers the hieratic notion of eminence with massive proportions in rigid pose of Mathuran master-pieces. The

“moonstone” from the entrance of the “Queens Palace” at Anuradhapura circa seventh century can be compared with the nimbus of Sarnath Buddha. Its animal decoration offers the archaic link with Aśokan pillar motifs. This tradition was established with symbolism and anthropomorphic depiction of Buddha's arts.

The conformist string of missionary arts blends with iconographic image that is noticed from the seated silver and brass image of Tara from Kurunagala dated fifth century AD. It links with aesthetic trends of Sigiriya fresco in styles of Ajanta from Gupta art (c.477-495 AD). The 45 feet long reclined Buddha's Nirvana sculpture of Gal-Vihara discrete with the attending 23 feet tall Ananda's image in serene manner of execution. It differs from the similar reclined sculpture of Kusinagara belonging to Gupta style. The former one is more melancholic to depict the grave situation while the later one is more mythical in approach. But, Nepal, the land of Buddha's birth remains unoccupied by ancient Nirvana images instead the nativity icons remains its momentous uniqueness.

Buddhist images of ancient Nepal are radically exhibiting the eminence of Sarnath style, perhaps to tribute the birth-places of three Buddhas, Krakuchanda, Kankamuni and Śākyamuni for their motherland.

The meditative images of Dhyani type correspond to the late period with dissimilar gestures (*Mudrās*) of Buddhas, to represent the symbolic and spiritual embodiments (*Dharmakāya*) of philosophic importance of the images. The group of five Buddha's is distinctive as resultant of the five aggregates viz., Visual-appearance (*Rupa*), Sensation (*Vedanā*), Cognition (*Samjñā*), Conditioning activities (*Samskāra*) and Consciousness (*Vijñāna*). These norms are iconize as *Vairocana*, *Akṣobhya*, *Ratnasambhava*, *Amitabha* and *Amoghasiddhi* for meditative Buddhas with their new symbolisms viz., Lion, Elephant, Horse, Peacock and Garuḍa, as vehicle motifs in art forms. These elements were philosophically corresponds to five perfect wisdoms viz., Idealism (*Ādarśa*), Pure-conscience (*Śubhīśuddha-Dharmadhātu*), Equity (*Samatā*), Reflective (*Pratyaveskaṇa*) and Action (*Kriyā-musthāna*). These are also symbolizing at the liturgical motifs in arts viz., a disc (*Cakra*), Vajra, bunch of jewels (*Ratna*), lotus (*Padma*) and double-vehicles Vajra (*Viśvavajra*). Likewise, these five consciousnesses are geometrically transforming into circular, void shape of a point, a square, a triangle and the half-circular form of “D” shape. These forms are emblematic for geomorphic visualization of the Water, the Ether, the Earth, the Fire and the Air in the Mandala arts of Tantra.

The evolution of Vajrayanic arts was ripened with iconographic devotions of late Guptas to the early-medieval Nepal through Nalanda. The early schools of Mathura and Sarnath were shifted in Magadha and Bengal to embellish with Tantric norms of intrinsic arts. Thence, those cultural icons blend with liturgy to embody as Mandalic circuits for iconic and symbolic cosmos. The explicit rules imposed then by the tantric texts were practiced in arts (*Sādhanā*). Hence, those works were inculcated by ritualistic practice of Duty (*Kriyā*), Devotional trials (Caryā), Rumination (*Yoga*), Esoteric practice (*Anuttara-yoga*) and the extreme practice (*Ati-yoga*) to attain the state of god-realization through the severe rumination (*Samādhi*). Accordingly, divine icons, were tuned with dances (Caryā) to proceed with rituals of singing mystic songs of sonata (*Dohā*) to embrace the esoteric Yoga as the part of tantricism. It was made-up with the primordial icons of Buddha fashioned in Mathura idealism. Thus, those tantric icons were virtual as transportable (*Cala*), fixed (*Acala*), and movable-unmovable (*Calācala*) in aesthetic practice of divinity culture.

⁵² Ibid, p.82.

It was regulated by Vajrayanic tint of liturgics images for sacraments. It gradually diffuses the exoteric norm of Mahāyānic Bodhisattva's Wisdom and Compassion, into the esoteric pursuit for the passion of power (Śakti). It was meant for attaining the state of supreme-bliss through the five 'M's' i.e., *Matsya* (fish), *Madya* (wine), *Māmsa* (flesh), *Mudra* (woman) and *Maithuna* (copulation). It radically initiates the esoteric arts to visualize the symbolism of Mantra, Mudrā and Maṇḍala as obscure appliances for the sacred recital of iconographic art. Thus, the fixed (*Acala*) icons were enshrined as image and Yantra, in the tabulated form to symbolize the mutable shrine. Thus, the cultural practices of chariot-festivals (*Rathayātra*) became the part of iconic and living god's adoration. It was pragmatic since the establishment of Matsyendranāth's chariot festivals of Patan and Kathmandu as ancient Licchavī habit handing down to the contemporary Newar tradition.

The movable installation art is exemplified by the Dipankar's reponse image of *Samay-dyoh*, believed as *Lāmākhwāh-Āju*, the ancestral deity to the Shakya communities of *Kirtipunya-vajradhātu-Mahāvihāra* at Lagan Bahal in Kathmandu⁵³. This group of Shakya is legendary as linked with ancient Koliya's of Licchavī inscription of Yengālhiti, for the reference of the city of *Dakṣiṇa-koliya-grāma-dranga*. This group is believed as migrated from ancient Devadaha to escape with the Shakyas massacre of Kapilavastu caused by Bidudabha. Nepali chronicle mentions Śākyamuni Buddha's arrival in this valley during the seventh Kirati rule of Jitedasti⁵⁴. This could be symbolically linked with the visit of Ananda to explore his natives of Koliyas and Shakyas relinquished from Devadaha and Kapilavastu to ancient Nepal. This story was mentioned by the ancient text of *Mulasarvāsthivada-Vinaya-Sangraha*.

According to this speculation, these new flock have introduced with cultivation of land of Kirāta, the nomadic tribe for agricultural occupation of rice-planting. In course of time, when the early expertise of the low-land rice farming went deficient to the valley, by the time of Licchavī Narendradeva, he set with Buddhist priest for Kāmarūpa of Assam to bring the advance skill of rice plantation with the symbolic image of Padmapani into this valley. Since then, Karuṇāmaya became the epitome of agricultural god to herald the rain with profusion of crops for *Lokanātha*, as the lord of populace. To commemorate the establishment of rice-eating culture in ancient valley of Nepal, Buddhist annually celebrates the *Pañca-dāna*, donation of cereals to Lord Buddha, *Karuṇāmaya* and *Dipankara* images along with the Shakyas and priests for their effort of rice making with pompous rituals in Nepal. This tradition is still observed as the day of donations of five kinds of grains or the pure rice viz., *Puṇya-jā-dāna*. It set with the new culture of Newars for adoring with the new crop of rice, paddy and wheat offering to *Vasundharā*, as mother earth, while Hindus offer it to Mahā-Lakṣmī for celebration of new rice. They are accustomed with the feast of *Kūchi-bhoya*, meaning a measure full of beaten rice taking during the Daśain festival.⁵⁵ As well as, Newars celebrate the New Year during the month of October as the promising month after the storing of new rice in the granary by worshipping the lord of wealth, Lakṣmī along with Kuvera, the Yakṣa and goblins called *Khyāk* as the sentinels.

It might be one of the reasons for selection of living-goddess Kumārī, as deity of stately plethora (*Rajya-lakṣmī*) for country's enrichment with celebrated guardians like Gaṇeśa and Bhairava, as living divinity chosen from the Shakya community. The extensive research in this field will yields the stipulation of Buddhism with its impact on ancient economy of Nepal.

The annual chariot festival of Living goddess Kumārī begins with

the Buddhist ritual but significantly blending with the Śākta trend of *Aṣṭamātrikā-gaṇa* in Kathmandu. The icon of *Kumārī* is set with a peacock as her vehicle that also reveals the celestial state of virginity. Her arms gesticulates the voidness as essence (*Vindupātra-mudrā*) to attribute sword (*Khadga*) and shield (*Khetaka*). Kumārī is the feminine aspect of Kumāra, the Hindu war-god, trendy as principle deity of early Licchavīs from Vaiśālī and celebrated icon of *Sithi-dyoh* among the Newars of this valley. This deity is transforms into spinster as *Bātuka*, for his everlasting youthfulness. *Bātuka-Bhairava*⁵⁶ is escorting Gaṇeśa⁵⁷ since medieval time in Nepal. Kumārī as living-goddess is conceived of movable-unmovable in human form to symbolize the virginity as living gods of Bhairava and Gaṇeśa escorts her energetic (Rajo) spirit with pure (Sattva), and gallant (Tamo) excellence.

Conclusion:

Art in Buddhism is not only profession but the medium of devotion since its inception for depiction of Buddha image in to the idealism of Śākyamuni's life-story, his pre-birth stories of Jataka, were explored in to animal motifs as symbolism in arts by Asoka in third century BC. It was Iconize later by different indigenous and alien art schools of Mathura and Gandhara according to their cultural spirits and aesthetic perception for illustrating the Buddha image. This image became the role model for depicting his teaching and philosophical embodiments of the Bodhisattva and Buddha's imaginations. Hence, the Mahayana introduces the Bodhisattva idealism with regal postures in arts, with admission of the Yaṣka types. These images were incorporated with the different ethnic identities as Gandharva, Naga, Asuras etc. Mahayana embrace them as the guardians and the idealism of four noble sentinels were come into light as Noble kings as protectors of the Dharma.

The Licchavī art was chiefly based with mythical inheritance which merges with the early none mythical and folk spirits into the new trend of iconic adoration. Buddhist art was significant with the mythical embodiment from that period for its inception from neighboring region. However, the setting of the true religion in Nepal is conventional as Vajrayanic effort for the establishments of the iconographic images of tantric influence that persists as tradition to date.



⁵³ Milan Ratna Shakya. A Cultural Study of Kirtipunya-Mahavihara (Lagan Bahal). (U.p.) an M.A. Thesis in Nepalese, History, Culture and Archaeology submitted to T.U. Controllers' Office in 1987.

⁵⁴ Daniel Wright. History of Nepal. (Patna: Sushil and co.1958).P.57

⁵⁵ Milan Ratna Shakya. op.cit.(e.n. 3).

⁵⁶ Milan Ratna Shakya. The Cult of Bhairava in Nepal. (New Delhi: Rupa & Co, 2008).

⁵⁷ -----, Ganesa in Medieval Nepal. (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2006).

VIETNAMESE WOMEN AND BUDDHISM

Nguyen Ngoc Quynh



Dr. (Ms.) Nguyen Ngoc Quynh (Vietnam)

Dr. (Ms.) Nguyen Ngoc Quynh is the Deputy Head of Buddhism Studies Division, Institute of Religious Studies of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. She is Master of Arts from University of Social Sciences & Humanities and has completed Doctorate in Philosophy (Ph.D) from Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Religious studies. She was also chosen as the excellent student in scientific research by University of Social Sciences & Humanities and awarded by Ministry of Education & Training of Vietnam for excellent student in scientific research. Her research paper also published in Journal of Historical Studies (Sept-Oct, 2003 Issue, Vol. 5, page 63-69) on the topic "The habit of post observance (cung hau) and setting up post observance stela in our history.

1- Traces of worship of Mother goddesses in the Vietnamese Buddhism

After entering into Vietnam, Buddhism was combined with the faith of the cult of Mother Goddesses thus the worship of goddesses has been noticeable phenomenon in religious system of Vietnam. Some people put that this is a feminine characteristic of the Vietnamese Buddhism. But it can also be the combination of Buddhism with the faith of an agricultural country under the strong influence of matriarchy and fecundity. The agricultural goddesses of cloud, rain, thunder and lightning were symbols of ancient Vietnamese beliefs. In Red River Delta, when combined with Buddhism, they became Four Dharmas (Cloud, Rain, Thunder and Lightning). Four Dharmas were first agricultural goddesses to be included onto the Vietnamese Buddhist pantheon.

When entering in Vietnam, the image of Avalokitesvara (Goddess of Mercy) was totally changed into the image of a female god. Vietnamese believe that Avalokitesvara is a benevolent goddess. There are many types of Avalokitesvara statues in Vietnam temples. The statues of Avalokitesvara holding a baby, called "*Quan Âm tống tử*". Another type of Avalokitesvara in Vietnam temple is that of multi-arm Avalokitesvara called "*Quan Âm chuẩn đê - Cundi-Avalokitesvara*"... In the process of historical changes there were some Avalokitesvaras who had Vietnamese characteristics as *Pháp Vân* Avalokitesvara (in the second century); *Hương Tích* Avalokitesvara (in the 18th century). These

Avalokitesvaras were believed to be born in Vietnam and defended the holy rights of nation⁵⁸.

The worship of Mother Goddesses has become universally in the Northern Buddhist temples. According to Nguyễn Duy Hinh, the worship of Mother Goddesses originated from Taoism and was introduced into the country since the Lý-Trần dynasties. Now the altar of Mother Goddesses has been intergrated into Buddhist temples. Sometimes, the worship of Mother Goddess encroaches Buddhism rituals⁵⁹.

In the past, the worship of Mother Goddesses was limited in temples and shrines. Later, the altar of Mother Goddesses has been placed right in the front hall of Buddhist temple, or in a separated building.

It is necessary to mention Buddhism of the Chinese-Vietnamese who built up temples to worship Thiên Hậu (the Heavenly Queen). Thiên Hậu has been considered a Goddess of River or the Sea. She has been worshipped by Chinese residents in various locations in the South of the country.

It may be the influence of the worship of Quan Âm Nam Hải (Avalokitesvara of the South Sea) of the Chinese that there exist Buddhist temples in the South where a large- sized statue of Avalokitesvara can be found. In recent years, the worship of Quán Âm Nam Hải has occurred in Northern Buddhist temples.

1. The gender issue and the sexual equality of Vietnamese Buddhism

For Vietnamese women in villages as well as in cities, Buddhism is a familiar religion. Women would come to a Buddhist temple for religious activities or community activities. In the 1st or 15th day of a lunar month, they would come to a Buddhist temple to take part in the significant ceremonies.

Besides, women also have noticeable contributions to building and repairing material facilities of Buddhism. They may contribute money, properties or labour for Buddhist temples which is called *hậu* donation. In return, their names would be craved in steles placed in those temples and the temple or the village would take care of their souls in the after-life. This happened since the 19th century⁶⁰. Vietnamese women play an important role in Buddhist activities as well as in the economic, cultural and social activities both in villages and cities. This can be explained if we examine how Vietnamese women have been influenced from way of life and daily activities of the Vietnamese people. Women are supposed to have responsibilities to their families. When they were young they helped their mothers to do small jobs at home. When grown up, they have to take care of their households and educate their children. Traditionally, Vietnamese men must have

⁵⁸ Giác Dũng Vietnamese Buddhism.

⁵⁹ See Nguyễn Duy Hinh Some thinks on Buddhism in our country (reference materials), p18

⁶⁰ See Nguyễn Ngoc Quỳnh Hậu worship and Hậu stela in our history. Religious Studies Review, 5/ 2003 P. 63-69

responsibilities to society; they go to the army or serve as coolies. Any man who chooses examination tries his best to pass an examination so his family and village become famous. All family affairs, however, depend on wives. There are Vietnamese proverbs such as: “*Children would enjoy good time at home, the olds would enjoy good time at Buddhist temples*”; “*Men take pleasure in the party in the communal house. Women take pleasure in reading Buddhist books of praying in Buddhist temples*”.

Under the Trần dynasty, the theology of equality of women and men was showed clearly in *Khóa Hư Lục* written by Trần Thái Tông (1225- 1258): “Regardless monks or nuns who are at home or at Buddhist temple, the importance is their heart. It is not important if a person is male or female. Thus lagna laksana (form) is not of concern”⁶¹.

The equality between men and women is also showed in various activities of the whole system of Vietnamese Buddhism. Vietnamese Buddhism early had its own system of Bhiksu and Bhiksuni. This seems to be different to peoples from Tibet or Mongolia who follow Mahayana or from Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma who follow Theravada. In there, there are not women who leave their home to become nuns⁶². If a woman wants to become a Bhiksuni, she has to join Buddhism in other countries. When comes back, she is not allowed to carry out any religious rituals⁶³.

2. Famous nuns in history of Vietnamese Buddhism

The first recorded Vietnamese woman who became a nun was Diệu Nhân (1041- 1113). She was the eldest daughter of King Phụng Càn. She followed Vinitaruci (a Zen sect in Vietnam). She was also the first poetess in Vietnamese literature. In the middle of 14th century, nun Tuệ Thông was recorded. She observed commandments diligently and her face looked like a Araham. In Long Thành district (Đồng Nai province), nun Lượng built Vân Tĩnh small pagoda for leading a religious life. But this pagoda is now in ruin⁶⁴.

Under Nguyễn regime (1558- 1802) there were many princesses and imperial concubines who were pious Buddhist adherents. They made significant contributions to the expansion of Buddhism in the country. Distinguish princesses were Ngọc Tu and Ngọc Huyen.

In the late 19th century and early 20th century, the Northern school of Buddhist nuns began to develop. There appeared high nuns of virtue such as Diên Trường, Diệu Tịnh, Diệu Không and Như Thanh. The Mendicant Monk Congregation had famous nuns as Huỳnh Liên, Bạch Liên, Tạng Liên. They established the Mendicant Nun Congregation for propagation of Saddharma (the truly Buddhist doctrine) and for saving of all sentiment beings. Now the Mendicant Nun Congregation has some ten thousand nuns⁶⁵.

During the modern resistant wars, there had been nuns who stood up and fought for the national liberation. Famous and influential nuns were Huỳnh Liên and Diệu Quang in the South, Đàm Tiến, Đàm Đăng, Đàm Nghi, Đàm Luận, Đàm Đạt and Đàm Vân in the North.

At present, in Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha, the number of nuns is almost equal to the number of monks. There are total 44.498 monks and nuns. Northern school attracts 32.25 monks and nuns; the Southern school has 8.919 monks and nuns; The Mendicant

Monk Congregation has 2.954 nuns and monks. Among them there are some ten thousands Bhiksunis. Many young nuns attend graduate and post-graduate courses in institutes at home and abroad. Many young nuns achieve high degrees. They have been serving actively for the Buddhist Management Boards in cities and local regions. They take part in many activities as information, communication, propagation of Buddhist faith, education, rituals and charity works.

Conclusion

Vietnamese women from regions to cities have significant contributions to Buddhist activities. They not only play important roles in building Buddhist facilities but also enrich all kinds of Buddhist religious and social activities.

The worship of Mother Goddesses has remarkable traces in Vietnamese Buddhism. In Vietnamese Buddhist temples, there are statues of Goddesses as Avalokitesvara holding her baby and Avalokitesvara of the South sea, four Dharma Goddesses of Cloud, of Rain, of Thunder and Lightning. Interestingly, the worship of Mother Goddesses is observable developing in Buddhist temples at present.

The equality between men and women appeared early in the ideology and in the organizational system of Vietnamese Buddhism.

Since the establishment of Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha (1981) Vietnamese nuns have been present in the communities of Sangha. However, they have not yet showed clearly a dynamic role within the Sangha. On January 1st 2009 the *Department of Nuns' work* was established. This important event will surely enable Vietnamese nuns to actively and further contribute to the continual development of the Sangha. Consequently, Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha will develop in the spirit of truly equality and progressiveness.



⁶¹ See Buddhism in our time, Religion Publishing House, 2005 p. 13

⁶² See Buddhism in our time, Religion Publishing House, 2005 p. 10-15

⁶³ Kristana Raksachom” The origin of Bhiksunis in Thailand”. The speech in the Conference of World Buddhist women

⁶⁴ See Nguyễn Hiến Đức The Buddhist history in the South

⁶⁵ The speech in the first Conference of World Nuns

THE SYSTEM IN BUDDHISM

Ashin Pannasihalankara



Dr. Ashin Pannasihalankara (Myanmar)

Dr. Ashin Pannasihalankara is a Pro-rector at the Sitagu International Buddhist Missionary Centre, Yangon, giving lecture on Buddhism (vinaya, suttanta and abhidhamma) as well as English language to the students. He also provides to the students on-line education. At the age of 15 years, with kind favour of Ven. Sucitta as his preceptor, he joined the Buddhist Order Asanovice at Maharthidaryon Monastery in Mandalay. At the age of 20, he was ordained as a monk. He studied monastic education and received certificates of Preliminary Level (88), Primary Level (89), Secondary Level (92), Higher Level (93), Sasanadhaja-Dhammacariya(98), Vinaya-vidu(93), Anguttaranikaya-vidu(95), and Dighanikaya-vidu (98). He did his B.A. in Buddhism from Sitagu International Buddhist Academy(SIBA), Sagaing Hills, Sagaing and did M.A. in Philosophy from University of Hyderabad. He did his Ph.D from University of Pune on the thesis entitled "TheControlling System in Buddhism (Sikkha) based on Cannon Pali Literatures". During his Ph.D, he also visited U.S.A. Nashville, Tennessee, for teaching of medication and meditation.

The Buddha described his message in simple terms that life is suffering, suffering is caused by attachment, freedom from attachment is the cure for suffering, and the way out of suffering is through eight pursuits; namely, right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

To live is to suffer. Life is accompanied by inevitable pains, sickness, disappointment, disillusion, decay and death. This world we live in is characterized by inevitable and unavoidable dissatisfaction, disappointment, rejection, failure, pain, yearning, decrepitude, and loss. "Suffering" in Buddhism refers not only to physical pain, aging, sickness, and death, but to emotional pain like fear, loss, jealousy, disappointment, and unrequited love, but also to the existential sense that, somehow, deep down, life is permanently out of joint. Everything is touched by the shadow of dissatisfaction, imperfection, disappointment. Suffering, in the Buddhist sense, is a pervasive condition. No one escapes it. Even enlightened teachers grow old, suffer the pains of decay, and die.

Suffering arises because everything changes, everything is impermanent. Everything is in process, all the time. Whenever we

hope to find any lasting happiness by means of something that is changing, suffering results. This means that nothing in the realm of ordinary human experience can provide lasting happiness, and trying to force things to stand still and make us happy is itself the main source of misery.

In Buddhism, three concepts are said to characterize all things:

- *Anicca* - Nothing is permanent. Everything changes.
- *Dukkha* - To cling to anything or anyone, expecting it to be enduring, whole, and a self, is to create and amplify suffering.
- *Anatta* (in Sanskrit *anatman*) - There is no separate self. What appears separate or enduring turns out to be changeable and composite. What we experience as identity turns out to be a changing constellation of varying influences.

Naturally, these concepts have been interpreted in many ways by many thoughtful people that the ordinary self is a non-self, but we can awake. The most pervasive form of self-centered suffering takes place as we project upon everyday experience a huge burden of extraneous interpretations, associations, fantasies, emotions, painful memories, and diversions. We act then with the big three problems: greed, aversion, and delusion. Greed sucks things in to our purposes, violating their natures as necessary. Aversion shoves or pushes roughly things away, denies, distorts, destroys them, again violating their natures. In the state of delusion, we float, confused, not seeing, not knowing, and insulated from the pain and salvation of deep experience.

Instead of seeing each moment as it is, we react to each moment from our past pain and frustration; then we react to the pain and frustration; then we react to that reaction; and so on and on. In this way a special form of mental torment is created that consists of seemingly endless layers of pain, negative emotion, self-doubt and self-justification.

If we could be released from attachment, we would be released from suffering. And our primary attachment is to the concept of a separate, isolated self from which we derive all other attachments and experience all other sufferings.

When we fully face, accept, and lighten the self-amplified sufferings of our lives; when we begin to experience life beyond our delusions and confusions, beyond self, beyond culture, beyond knowledge - what we find is not a meaningless universe of alien forces, but the truth of *nibbana* (total release of self-sustained suffering).

When people begin to feel released from their self-sustained sufferings, they experience life more fully; they become more cheerful and compassionate. Enlightened people do not cease to experience the pain of existence. They only stop creating illusions that amplify that pain and cause new suffering. The rest of people

might try to stop making things worse than they are, to stop creating unnecessary suffering, and, by accepting life as it is, accept also the depth and vibrancy of experience.

The Buddha taught a method to lead away from self-sustained suffering toward a more enlightened and compassionate life - through the pursuit of morality (*sila-sikkha*), concentration (*samadhi-sikkha*), and wisdom (*panna-sikkha*). Because it avoids the two extremes: self-mortification, which is painful, unworthy and unprofitable; and self-indulgence of sense-pleasures, which is low, common, the way of ordinary people, unworthy and unprofitable. This method is well-known to the world as the "Middle Way."

The *sila-sikkha* (morality) is founded on three pursuits of right speech, right action and right livelihood, and *samadhi-sikkha* (concentration) is on the other three pursuits of right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration, and *panna-sikkha* (wisdom) is on the last two pursuits of right understanding and right thought.

To achieve the supreme result which is *nibbana*, mind development is necessary to be completely done through *sila-sikkha* (morality), *samadhi-sikkha* (concentration) and *panna-*

sikkha (wisdom). Because these three *sikkhas* can make free the mind from the three levels of defilements; the level of transgression (*vitikkama kilesa*) - such as killing, cheating, stealing, robbing, engaging in sexual misbehavior, raping, causing troubled and broken families, telling lies, back-biting, uttering harsh words, and talking nonsense, taking intoxicants or other kinds of harmful drugs, etc., the level of manifestation (*pariyutthana kilesa*) - such as craving for others' property, harbouring the harmful thought, holding wrong views, etc., and the level of latent tendency (*anusaya-kilesa*) - greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), lying dormant in the mental continuum.

Accordingly, these three systems (*sikkhas*) become a vital role in Buddhism. Therefore, this paper on *sikkha* would throw light on today-modern world which is full of stress and full of complicated problems and also could show the aim of life of a person, which is the highest and lasting peace of *nibbana*, which is free from all defilements.



CULTURAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ANCIENT INDIA & SRI LANKA

Mahinda Somathilake

It is an accepted fact that geologically and palaeoecologically the island of Sri Lanka is essentially a detached piece of the Deccan, the Jaffna peninsula of northern part of the island lying within twenty miles of Cape Cormorin across the shallow Palk Strait. This is particularly evident by the fact that the Sri Lankan island of Mannar off the northwest coast almost joins the mainland by a chain of sandy islets of Adam's bridge.⁶⁶ In addition, the occurrence of submerged river channels, cutting across the continental shelf which separates north-west Sri Lanka from India, when considered in conjunction with the close similarity between the fresh water fish of the two countries also suggests that the island had been connected to India probably in Holocene times.⁶⁷ The faunal evidence including both extinct and present-day animal species as well as evidence from geology of both Sri Lanka and India on the other hand suggests that the island was first separated from India during the Miocene epoch.⁶⁸ This happened in the very early period⁶⁹ that has been termed the Ratnapura phase in Sri Lankan prehistory and was probably contemporary with one or more of the Himalayan glaciations, which were in all probability, accompanied by a general drop in temperature and of the mean sea level. Hence, most probably this first separation occurred in the Miocene when the sea invaded the mainland between the regions of present-day Madras and Puttalam, thus severing the southeast extremity of the peninsula and making of it a continental island⁷⁰. This disjunction was in fact momentary because of land fluctuation that was the primary influential factor in the geography of the region.

However, given this geographical proximity of Sri Lanka and India and their long historical association, cultural links are in the natural order of things. This is evident by the fact that any major upheaval in India, whether political, religious or cultural was bound to generate repercussions in Sri Lanka eventually. Consequently, it is obvious that Sri Lanka is both an island and a part of the Indian sub-continent. The interplay of these two factors has been important in forming its character. Therefore, scholars of history, culture, art, religion, language and human biology of the island are frequently asked to assess the nature and extent of bio cultural relationships between Sri Lanka's ancient and modern peoples and their contemporaries in India. Unfortunately, both these questions and their answers have been interpreted in the light of political theories, nationalism and an ethnocentric basis, even sometimes by persons belonging to the academic and research oriented disciplines.

It is hence apparent that there has been a great deal of historical writing on the subject of Indo-Sri Lankan relationship in the ancient period. But, it is significant that a majority of scholars have emphasised Indian political impact on Sri Lanka, while some have focused attention on the cultural relations of the two countries. In almost all these writings, relevant details on the subject, particularly on the cultural relations of the two countries, have been discussed according to information obtained from the ancient Sri Lankan and Indian literary texts and very little attention has been given to the archaeological evidence, especially that revealed by recent archaeological excavations. It is obvious that the story is incomplete without focus on the evidence revealed by such excavations, since there are many apparent imperfections in the

descriptions given in these literary sources and sometimes even in the epigraphical evidence too. It is to be noted at this point that these literal interpretations of early texts were compiled centuries after the events they report and personal memory has difficulty with intervals of time and the sequence of happenings.⁷¹

Nevertheless, it should also not be forgotten that a chronologically detailed and coherent history of cultural interactions of the two countries cannot be presented with the help of archaeological evidence alone. Hence, a synthesis of both the literary and archaeological sources is being attempted. In contrast, it is significant that not only the descriptions given in the ancient literary works but also in recent scholarly interpretations, the cultural relations between the two countries have often been presented as an one way movement in the direction of Sri Lanka⁷². On the contrary, quite a different picture has been demonstrated by the recent archaeological findings. Therefore, it is appropriate to



⁶⁶ Kenneth AR Kennedy, "Palaeodemography of Sri Lanka and peninsular India: A cross-regional survey," *Perspectives in archaeology*: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.29.

⁶⁷ S Deraniyagala, "Prehistoric Ceylon: A summary in 1968," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.1, January 1971, p.23.

⁶⁸ HS Gunaratna, *Rocks and minerals of Ceylon*, The Department of National Museums, Colombo, 1967, pp.2-3.

⁶⁹ The faunal evidence suggests that this last separation had occurred about 25,000 years ago. *Ibid*, pp.2-3.

⁷⁰ Kenneth AR Kennedy, "Palaeodemography of Sri Lanka and peninsular India: A cross-regional survey," *Perspectives in archaeology*: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.29.

start this analysis with an introduction of early historical settings of the island, as revealed by recent archaeological excavations.

Prehistoric Period:

Apart from the various interpretations of historians, archaeologists and anthropologists on ancient Sri Lanka, it is evident that recent archaeological excavations in the island have provided a reliable radiometric chronology of the prehistoric age of the country based on several radiocarbon dates on charcoal from the caves of Fa-Hien, Kitulgala, and Batadombalena all in the lowland or wet zone. Of these, the Fa-Hien cave has yielded a series of three dates ca. 34,000-31,000 BP; and another three for the upper contexts ca. 7900-5400 BP⁷³. Human remains were found at least in the context dated to ca. 31,000 BP and could well represent one of the earliest assemblages of anatomically modern man known to science⁷⁴.

The Kitulgala Belilena comprises 25 dates, from older than 27,000 up to ca. 3400 BP⁷⁵. It was reported that an excellent series of human skeletal remains was found from there dated to ca. 13,000 BP⁷⁶. Batadombalena has provided a series of ten dates from ca. 28,500 to 12,500 BP for the earlier range at Kitulgala⁷⁷. The occurrence of bone points throughout the sequence is noteworthy and the beads (on shell) from ca. 28,500-16,000 BP constitute some of the earliest specimens of bone points and beads known from anywhere in the world⁷⁸. Besides, a very satisfactory sample of human remains was also found in the cave and one assemblage-dated ca. 28,500 BP represents the oldest anatomically modern humans (*Homo Sapiens*) known from south Asia.⁸⁰ In addition, in the lower most levels of the caves were found geometric microliths, the earliest occurrence of this type of tools in south Asia. Interestingly enough in India, charcoal from microlithiferous deposits has yielded a radiocarbon date of 10,645-9654 years BP at Baghor II in the Son valley of north-central India,⁸¹ though Todd had recognised the similarity of Sri Lankan microliths to those of peninsular India nearly fifty years ago.⁸²

In contrast, it is clear that all these three caves of Fa-hien, Kitulgala and Batadombalena are exceptional in south Asia in having yielded large quantities of organic remains from the upper Pleistocene and much can be expected from their interpretation. Of such

explanations, probably the most fascinating interpretation is that there is no doubt that technologically the Mesolithic assemblages date back at least to ca. 28,500 BP in the island although the date of original settlement is unknown⁸³. But, it is interesting to note that quite a different story is told in the ancient literary sources of Sri Lanka. These suggest that the earliest habitation of the island was at Anuradhapura in the dry zone, under the leadership of Vijaya, a North Indian prince and his followers somewhere in the sixth century BC as will be discussed later. Hence, at this point it is necessary to examine the chronology and the specific features of the early habitations of Anuradhapura region (certainly, where the earliest centre of power of the island was) as revealed by the recent archaeological explorations.

Interestingly enough archaeologists suggest that about six or seven thousand years ago Anuradhapura was inhabited by Mesolithic Balangoda man, the ancestor of the present day Vedda aborigine,⁸⁴ instead of this so-called first Indian colonisation of the island in the sixth century BC. This has been confirmed by the fact that the artefacts from phase one of Gedige of the citadel of Anuradhapura are assignable to the Mesolithic Balangoda culture, which has been dated to ca. 4500 BC⁸⁵. In addition, it is noteworthy that according to Deraniyagala's interpretation, the periodisation of history of Anuradhapura region and the conspicuous characteristics based on calibrated dates obtained from the five sites of Gedige (1986) Dingiribandagewatta (1987/88) Salgahawatta (1988) Mahapali Hall (1988) and Sanghamitta Mawata (1989)⁸⁶, all located in the ancient citadel of Anuradhapura is as follows:

The earliest phase: Ca. 3900 BC, Mesolithic with geometric microliths⁸⁷; in certain respects, the Sri Lankan Mesolithic was comparatively more highly developed than its mainland counterparts and Allchin interprets this as evidence of a long period of relatively uninterrupted cultural development.⁸⁸ However, the absence of rapid cultural modifications taking place in Sri Lanka, as was the case in South India after 2,500 BC, till the fifth century BC, led many scholars writing in the 40s and 50s to regard the island as a cultural backwater whose inhabitants lacked initiative in cultural progress because of withdrawal of competitive factors.⁸⁹

The second period: Undated Mesolithic and Iron age transition⁹⁰; it is noteworthy since the stone tools found in association with Iron

⁷³ Diane E Greenway, "Dates in history: Chronology and memory," *Historical research*, Vol.LXXII, No 178, June 1999, pp.127-139.

⁷⁴ See W.H. Siddiqui, "Some aspects of architecture in South Asia," *Cultural interactions in South Asia: A historical perspective*, ed., S.A.I Tirmizi, Hamdard Institute of Historical Research, New Delhi, 1993, p.57.

⁷⁵ S. Deraniyagala, "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.VI, No.12, 1990, p.215; "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," *Perspectives in archaeology: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990*, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.3; Kenneth KR Kennedy and Joanne L Zahorsky, "Trends in prehistoric technology and biological adaptations: New evidence from Pleistocene deposits at Fahien cave, Sri Lanka," *South Asian Archaeology 1995*, Proceedings of the 13th conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, Cambridge 5-9 July 1995, ed. Raymond Allchin and Bridget Allchin, The ancient India and Iran trust, Cambridge, Oxford, IBH Publishing co, New Delhi, Vol.II, 1997, pp.839-840.

⁷⁶ KAR. Kennedy, SU Deraniyagala W.J. Roertjen, J. Chiment and T.Disotell, "Upper Pleistocene fossil hominids from Sri Lanka," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, Vol.LXXII, 1987, pp. 441-461; See also KAR. Kennedy and SU Deraniyagala, "Fossil remains of 28000-year-old hominids from Sri Lanka," *Current Anthropology*, Vol.XXX, No.3, 1989, pp.394-8; Kenneth KR Kennedy and Joanne L Zahorsky, "Trends in prehistoric technology and biological adaptations: New evidence from Pleistocene deposits at Fahien cave, Sri Lanka," *South Asian Archaeology 1995*, Proceedings of the 13th conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, Cambridge 5-9 July 1995, ed. Raymond Allchin and Bridget Allchin, The ancient India and Iran trust, Cambridge, Oxford, IBH Publishing co, New Delhi, Vol.II, 1997, p.840.

⁷⁷ S. Deraniyagala, "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.VI, No.12, p.215.

⁷⁸ KAR. Kennedy, T. Disotell, W.J. Roertjen, J. Chiment and J Sherry, "Biological anthropology of upper Pleistocene hominids from Sri Lanka: Batadombalena and Belilena caves," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.VI, pp.67-168; KAR. Kennedy, SU Deraniyagala W.J. Roertjen, J. Chiment and T. Disotell, "Upper Pleistocene fossil hominids from Sri Lanka," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, Vol.LXXII, 1987, pp.441-461.

⁷⁹ See Kenneth KR Kennedy and Joanne L Zahorsky, "Trends in prehistoric technology and biological adaptations: New evidence from Pleistocene deposits at Fahien cave, Sri Lanka," *South Asian Archaeology 1995*, Proceedings of the 13th conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, Cambridge 5-9 July 1995, ed. Raymond Allchin and Bridget Allchin, The ancient India and Iran trust, Cambridge, Oxford, IBH Publishing co, New Delhi, Vol.II, 1997, p.840.

⁷⁸ S. Deraniyagala, "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.VI, No.12, p.215.

⁷⁹ KAR. Kennedy and S. Deraniyagala, "Fossil remains of 28,000-year old hominids from Sri Lanka," *Current Anthropology*, Vol.XXX, No.3, 1989, pp.394-399.

⁸⁰ SU Deraniyagala, "Mesolithic stone tool technology at 28000 BC in Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.V, pp.105-108.

⁸¹ Kenneth AR Kennedy, "Palaeodemography of Sri Lanka and peninsular India: A cross-regional survey," *Perspectives in archaeology: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990*, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.30.

⁸² KRU Todd, "A Microlithic industry in eastern Mysore," *Man*, Vol. XLVIII, 1948, pp.28-30.

⁸³ SU Deraniyagala, "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.VI, No.12, 1990, pp.215-216; "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," *Perspectives in archaeology: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990*, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.3.

⁸⁴ S Deraniyagala, "The citadel of Anuradhapura 1969: Excavation in the Gedige area," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.II, 1972, p.50.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p.159. In fact, the Balangoda culture comprises the Mesolithic and Neolithic phases of Sri Lanka's stone age. The two C14 dates obtained for the culture are suggesting that Balangoda man had survived well into the historic period, which commenced ca. 500 BC. S Deraniyagala, "Prehistoric Ceylon: A summary in 1968," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.1, January 1971, p.25.

⁸⁶ S. Deraniyagala, "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.VI, No.12, 1990, p.215; "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," *Perspectives in archaeology: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990*, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.20; S. Deraniyagala, "The proto and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, 1990, Appendix, p.276.

⁸⁷ S. Deraniyagala, "The proto and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.VII, pp.268-9. The most recent date available is for the site of Matota at ca. 1800 BC. *Ibid*, p.252.

⁸⁸ B Allchin, "The late stone age of Ceylon," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol.LXXXVIII, No.2, 1959, p.201.

⁸⁹ PEP Deraniyagala, "The stone age and cave men of Ceylon," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)*, Vol.XXXIV, No.92, 1940, p.361; MR Sahni, *Man in evolution*, Oriental Longmans, Calcutta, 1952, p.185; 1956, p.48.

Age burials at Pomparippu have been interpreted as being in secondary contexts⁹¹. The suppression of stone tool technology with that of iron appears to have been a rapid process, thereby leaving few discernible vestiges of this transition in the archaeological record.⁹²

The third period: Protohistoric Iron Age ca. 900–600 BC; is distinguished by the appearance of iron technology, wheel made pottery, horse and domestic cattle and paddy cultivation.⁹³ It is interesting to note that the excavations in the citadel of Anuradhapura since 1984 have vindicated the assertion that there was indeed a town, if not a city, in Anuradhapura by 700-600 BC during the protohistoric Iron Age. The sondages have revealed substantive evidence of an area of at least fifty hectares being encompassed by the citadel at this date.⁹⁴

The fourth period: The dawn of the historical period ca. 600-500 BC was marked by the use of an early Brahmi script in Anuradhapura region, which will be discussed later in detail. In addition, two ceramic traits also occur for the first time. Consequently, it is hypothesised that the occurrence of the Brahmi script and these ceramic traits are linked in some manner to a nonessential cultural impulse which reached the island during this period and it is tempting to see a connection with the legend of Vijaya or the so-called first colonisation of the island, an event attributed to the sixth century BC.⁹⁵

The fifth period: Lower early historic ca.500-250 BC; No specimens of scripts have been recorded from this period at any site of Anuradhapura, though the Brahmi script found on a seal at Anaikkodai could be of this period.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, contact with the Ganga valley is evidenced by the occurrence of Northern Black Polished ware in this period. Although the cultural interactions of the two regions are not obvious, it is to be noted that the early historic sites in Southern India have radiocarbon dates which fall within the range of this period at Anuradhapura: e.g. Kanchipuram at ca. 500 BC and Amaravati at 400 BC.⁹⁷

The sixth period: Mid early historical period ca. 250 BC to 100 AD: Historically this period is relatively well documented both by literary and epigraphical records with extensive evidence of close cultural interaction with the Mauryan Empire.⁹⁸

The seventh period: Upper early historic age ca. 100-300 AD was when burnt brick achieved prominence, at least in the citadel of

Anuradhapura. Coins also tended to be rather numerous in this era. In addition, this upper early historic period indicates the use of Red Polished Ware, Sassanian blue glazed roof-tiles and evidence of trans-oceanic contact as in frequent finds of Roman and Indo-Roman coins.⁹⁹

The eighth period: Middle historical ca. 300-1250 witnessed the commencement of the final devolution of the civilisation of ancient Sri Lanka.¹⁰⁰

In contrast, it is clear that particularly Sri Lanka's prehistory, most recently investigated in comprehensive studies, differs significantly from that of the heartlands of continental Asia. For instance, Sri Lankan archaeological record shows no evidence of occupation by early man or other hominids from a period earlier than the late Pleistocene and lacks the typical chopper or hand-axe cultures associated with earlier phases of the prehistory of the subcontinent. Similarly, in later phases, Sri Lanka shows no clear indication at present of a pre-iron age development of agriculture or of the existence of a specific stone tool assemblage associated with such a transition. Instead, we find an apparently rapid and scarcely investigated transition from a monolithic or late stone age hunter-gatherer culture to iron age farming, with no intervening stage of 'Neolithic' 'Chalcolithic' or 'Bronze age' developments.¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, it is obvious that conventional historical writing has often asserted that the initial colonisation of Sri Lanka by civilised man was effected by Aryan speakers from Northern India and that contact was subsequently established with the south¹⁰² somewhere in the sixth century BC, which will be discussed later in detail. But, the archaeological evidence presented above clearly indicates that this was not the case and these stories of first colonisation of the island provide us with a series of problems arising from their interpretation for historical and archaeological works though it is obvious that the archaeological record so far throws very little light on these processes. According to these investigations, it is however, certain that human habitation in Sri Lanka dates to at least 31,000 BP with increasing evidence of internal complexity and cultural developments. In addition, the data obtained from pioneering excavations such as those at the Anuradhapura Gedige¹⁰³, Kantarodei¹⁰⁴ and Pomparippu¹⁰⁵ and research on the megalithic burial complexes¹⁰⁶ and pottery sequences of the protohistoric and early historic period¹⁰⁷, give us an insight into similarities and differences between the Sri Lankan and the

⁹⁰ SU Deraniyagala, (Reprinted from) *The prehistory of Sri Lanka: An ecological perspective; Addendum III, Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka, 1992, pp.740-741; "Radiocarbon dating of early Brahmi script in Sri Lanka 600-500 BC," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.V, No.11, 1990, pp.150-151.*

⁹¹ VJR. Begley, Lukacs and KAR Kennedy, "Excavations of iron age burials at Pomparippu," *Ancient Ceylon, Vol.IV, 1981, pp.51-132.*

⁹² S. Deraniyagala, "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon, Vol.VI, No.12, 1990, p.253.*

⁹³ SU Deraniyagala, (Reprinted from) *The prehistory of Sri Lanka: An ecological perspective; Addendum III, Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka, 1992, p.744; "Radiocarbon dating of early Brahmi script in Sri Lanka 600-500 BC," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.V, No.11, 1990, pp.149-171; "The proto and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.VII, 1990, pp.253-254.*

⁹⁴ SU Deraniyagala, (Reprinted from) *The prehistory of Sri Lanka: An ecological perspective; Addendum III, Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka, 1992, p.744; "Radiocarbon dating of early Brahmi script in Sri Lanka 600-500 BC," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.V, No.11, 1990, pp.149-171. See also S. Deraniyagala, "The proto and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.VII, 1990, p.260; "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.VI, No.12, 1990, p.215; "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," Perspectives in archaeology: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.20.*

⁹⁵ S. Deraniyagala, "The proto and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon, Vol.VII, 1990, pp.255-6; The prehistory of Sri Lanka: An ecological perspective; Addendum III, Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka, 1992, p.744; "Radiocarbon dating of early Brahmi script in Sri Lanka 600-500 BC," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.V, No.11, 1990, pp.149-171.*

⁹⁶ S. Deraniyagala, "The proto and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon, Vol.VII, 1990, pp.256-7; The prehistory of Sri Lanka: An ecological perspective; Addendum III, Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka, 1992, p.744; "Radiocarbon dating of early Brahmi script in Sri Lanka 600-500 BC," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.V, No.11, 1990, pp.149-171.*

⁹⁷ S. Senaviratna, "The archaeology of the megalithic black and red ware complex in Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon, Vol.V, 1984, pp.237-303.*

⁹⁸ S. Deraniyagala, "The proto and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon, Vol.VII, 1990, pp.257-258. It is noteworthy that the chronology of Anuradhapura that has been calculated by Deraniyagala himself particularly based on the information revealed by the excavation of Gedige site of Anuradhapura is somewhat different. Accordingly, ca. 3900 BC Mesolithic period, ca. 800-500 BC. Protohistoric Iron Age period, ca. 500 BC transition between the prehistoric Iron Age and the lower early historic period. Ca. 500-250 BC lower early historic period and ca. 250 BC-100 AD mid early historic period. See SU Deraniyagala, "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.VI, No.12, 1990, p.215; "The prehistoric chronology of Sri Lanka," Perspectives in archaeology: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.15.*

⁹⁹ SU Deraniyagala, (Reprinted from) *The prehistory of Sri Lanka: An ecological perspective; Addendum III, Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka, 1992, pp.740-741; "Radiocarbon dating of early Brahmi script in Sri Lanka 600-500 BC," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.V, No.11, 1990, pp.150-151.*

¹⁰⁰ S. Deraniyagala, "The proto and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon, Vol.VII, 1990, pp.258-259.*

¹⁰¹ Senaka Bandaranayake, "The periodisation of Sri Lankan history and some related historical and archaeological problems," *Asian panorama: Essays in Asian history, past and present, ed. KM De Silva and others, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990, p.9.*

¹⁰² S Paranavitana, "Aryan settlements: The Sinhalese," *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, pp.82-97; CW Nicholas and S Paranavitana, A concise history of Ceylon, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, 1961, p.22.*

¹⁰³ SU Deraniyagala, "The citadel of Anuradhapura 1969: Excavation in the Gedige area," *Ancient Ceylon, Vol.II, 1972, pp.48-169.*

¹⁰⁴ V Begley, "Archaeological exploration in northern Ceylon," *Expedition, Vol.IX, No.4, 1969, pp.20-29; "Prehistoric material from Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and Indian contacts," Ecological backgrounds of South Asian prehistory, ed. KAR Kennedy and GL Posehl, Cornell University South Asia Programme, 1976, pp.191-196.*

subcontinental developments, in the second half of the first millennium BC, though these do not go very far in solving the major problems of Sri Lankan protohistory.

However, it is to be admitted at this point that if the early man of the island originally migrated from India, then it is natural to expect contemporaneous Indian and Sri Lanka prehistoric people to possess striking points of similarity. Interestingly enough, it becomes immediately apparent to any researcher of the Mesolithic and Iron Age archaeology of Sri Lanka and peninsular India that similarities in form and function of tool manufacture are shared across the region¹⁰⁸. The same degree of similarity is reflected in the ceramic artefacts of the megalithic and early historic periods, a black and red ware being predominant in association with megalithic deposits in both countries.¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless, it is to be noted that particularly the megalithic burial complex and the Iron Age cannot be separated in the context of peninsular India. In fact, most of our knowledge about the Iron Age comes from burial sites.¹¹⁰ The dating of the Iron Age also hinges upon the dating of the burial complex, which is quite widespread over south India. However, a recent study, which has evaluated carefully all the accumulated evidence, puts the beginning of the Megalithic culture to c 1200 BC and the terminal date around 300 BC after which there occurs the Brahmi writing¹¹¹. But, it is noteworthy that in most of the sites, potsherds with Brahmi writing appear very early in the cultural deposits, if not from the beginning itself. In addition it is evident that the Tamil literature of early centuries AD is also quite familiar with the megalithic and urn burials¹¹². These facts obviously raise a problem regarding the dating of the megalithic burials.¹¹³

However, it is evident that the Prakrit names, though not many, have parallels in Sri Lankan rock inscriptions of the contemporary centuries. Hence, some have concluded that this would suggest that Kodumanal, an active industrial settlement for semi-precious stone bead making and also for iron working was involved in long distance trade.¹¹⁴ Interestingly enough some archaeologists have also suggested that most of the beads found at the megalithic sites like Ibbankatuva of Sri Lanka (ca. 770-350 BC) were imported from India.¹¹⁵ In addition, it is believed that the Pomparippu burial ware and the ceramics of Gedige of Anuradhapura generally

adhere to the forms and shapes of the early Iron Age ware in Peninsular India, though the quality of production and the range of the Megalithic ware in Sri Lanka cannot parallel the standard of its counterpart in the peninsula.¹¹⁶

Thus, it is evident that as far as megalith burials of peninsular India and Sri Lanka are concerned, these seem to belong to a common cultural tradition, sharing almost all the cultural traits including the chronological span.¹¹⁷ Due to all these facts, it is presumed that the megalithic monuments of Sri Lanka can be understood only in the light of their archaeological parallels on the Indian mainland since a single megalithic zone is apparent to many scholars.¹¹⁸ Consequently, some scholars have suggested that it is fairly certain that the burial culture of northwest Sri Lanka received its impetus from the urn-cairn burial complex in the Vaigai-Tambapanni plains of South India and it is also quite likely that the cist burials in north central Sri Lanka may have received its impetus from the primary cist burial complex extending from Pudukkottai in Tamilnadu to the Chittor area in south Andhra Pradesh.¹¹⁹

Accordingly, the most pertinent question to raise at this point is are the Iron Age people of the island indigenous or are they derived primarily from iron using people coming from the mainland of India. Besides the remains of material culture of the period, the information revealed by the investigations on the skeletal remains at Pomparippu and Bellanbandipalassa is also very important in this regard, since it has been revealed that the Iron Age people of Pomparippu of Sri Lanka possessed some biological features establishing their probable affinities to south Indian community.¹²⁰ Similarly, some level of biological affinity between the Stone Age people of Bellanbandipalassa and the Iron Age people under consideration is especially noted with respect to genetically determined morphological traits.¹²¹ But, it should also not be forgotten that in comparing the skeletal remains of Balangoda man with those of people of Sinhalese, Tamil and Vedda descent, as well as with a number of specimens from India, namely tribal, rural and urban populations, it becomes apparent that most of the biological similarities that were found in the prehistoric Bellanbandipalassa specimens occurred in highest frequency among the tribal people of the island the Veddas.¹²²

However, according to all these evidences it is certain that some of

¹⁰⁵ V Begley, JR Lukacs and KAR Kennedy, "Excavations of Iron Age burials at Pomparippu 1970," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.IV, 1981.

¹⁰⁶ Though etymologically the word Megalithic is composed of two Greek words Megalithos, meaning huge and Lithoi meaning stone, neither all megaliths are built of huge stones; nor can all structures built of enormous-sized stones be called megalith. Megaliths are indeed built of stones, but their prime characteristic is that they are sepulchral in nature. See KR Srinivasan and NR Banerjee, "Survey of south Indian Megaliths," *Ancient India*, No.9, Special Jubilee Number, 1953, p.108. It is noteworthy that though the megaliths do not follow the same pattern even at the same site and are marked by structural differences, they have definite common features, which make all of them representative of one common culture, i.e. the megalithic culture. The common feature consists of the use of iron implements, which at least at one site, viz. Brahmagiri in India, was an intrusion into the earlier stone axe culture which it ultimately supplanted, the wheel-turned black and red ware and post-exhumation fragmentary and collective burials. *Ibid.* p.115.

¹⁰⁷ Sudarshan Senaviratna, "The archaeology of the megalithic black and red ware complex in Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.V, 1984, pp.237-307.

¹⁰⁸ ND Wijesekera, "Prehistoric age," *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.79; Kenneth AR Kennedy, "Palaeodemography of Sri Lanka and peninsular India: A cross-regional survey," *Perspectives in archaeology: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990*, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.34.

¹⁰⁹ V Begley, "Prehistoric material from Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and Indian contacts," *Ecological backgrounds of South Asian prehistory*, ed. KAR Kennedy and GL Posehl, Cornell University South Asia Programme, 1976, pp.191-196; P Ragupathy, *Early settlements in Jaffna: An archaeological survey*, Suddarsan Graphics, Madras, 1987; S Deraniyagala, "The citadel of Anuradhapura 1969: Excavation in the Gedige area," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.II, 1972, p.159.

¹¹⁰ Y Subbarayalu, *Trends in archaeology of Tamil Nadu*, Presidential Address, Association for the Study of History and Archaeology, Third session, Calcutta, February 26-28, 1999, p.5.

¹¹¹ Udayaravi S Moorti, *Megalithic culture of south India: Socio-economic perspectives*, Ganga Kaveri Publishing House, Varanasi, 1994.

¹¹² KR Srinivasan, "The megalithic burials and urn-fields of south India in the light of Tamil literature and tradition," *Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No.2, July 1946, (reprinted) 1970, Sec. pp.1-9.

¹¹³ Y Subbarayalu, *Trends in archaeology of Tamil Nadu*, Presidential Address, Association

for the study of history and archaeology, Third session, Calcutta, February 26-28, 1999, p.5.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p.7.

¹¹⁵ Osmund Bopparachi, "Seafaring in the Indian ocean: Archaeological evidence from Sri Lanka," *Tradition and Archaeology: Early maritime contacts in the Indian ocean*, Proceedings of the International seminar Techno-Archaeological perspectives of seafaring in the Indian ocean, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean-francois Salles, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1996, pp.59-77.

¹¹⁶ S Deraniyagala, "The citadel of Anuradhapura 1969: Excavation in the Gedige area," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.II, 1972, pp.120-122 and V Begley, "Excavations of Iron Age burials at Pomparippu 1970," *Ancient Ceylon*, No.4, 1981, p.85.

¹¹⁷ BK. Thapar, "Archaeology of South Asia: A perspective in interrelationship," *Cultural interaction in South Asia: A historical perspective*, ed. SAI Tirmizi, Hamdard Institute of Historical Research, New Delhi, 1993, p.1; Kenneth AR Kennedy, "Palaeodemography of Sri Lanka and peninsular India: A cross-regional survey," *Perspectives in archaeology: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990*, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.34.

¹¹⁸ KAR Kennedy, *The physical anthropology of the megalith-builders of south India and Sri Lanka*, Australian National Museum, Canberra, 1975; Kenneth AR Kennedy, "Palaeodemography of Sri Lanka and peninsular India: A cross-regional survey," *Perspectives in archaeology: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990*, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.34; SK Sitampalam, "Survey of pre-and protohistory in Sri Lanka," *Bulletin of the Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute*, Vol.XLVI, 1987, pp.137-149; RL Kirk, "The legend of prince Vijaya - a study of Sinhalese origins," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, Vol.XLV, 1976, pp.91-100; GC Mendis, "The Vijaya legend," *Paranavitana felicitation volume*, ed. NA Jayawickrama, Colombo, 1965, pp.263-279.

¹¹⁹ Sudarshan Senaviratna, "The archaeology of the megalithic-black and red ware complex in Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, No.5, 1984, pp.282-3.

¹²⁰ JR Lukacs and AR Kennedy, "Biological anthropology of human remains from Pomparippu," *Ancient Ceylon*, No. IV, 1981, pp.106-107.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* pp.106-107.

¹²² KAR Kennedy, "Human skeletal material from Ceylon, with an analysis of the island's prehistoric and contemporary populations," *British Museum Geological (Palaeontological) Series*, Vol.II, No.4, 1965; S Deraniyagala and KAR Kennedy, "Bellanbandipalassa 1970: A Mesolithic burial site in Ceylon," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.II, 1972, p.44.

the cultural features of the Iron Age India can be seen even in the contemporary Sri Lanka to a certain extent although it is not clear whether these people primarily migrated from contemporary India or they belong to an indigenous source. But, it is important to note at this point that megalithic structures closely similar to some of those of the Indian Peninsula have been found even in other parts of Asia, Africa and Europe too. The possibility of an integral unity of ideas and expression over a large part of the earth's surface from 2,000 to 4,000 years ago lends to the enquiry an unusual potential importance¹²³. Hence, it is interesting to note that apart from neighbouring India, the material from the earlier historic sites in Sri Lanka, such as Bellanbandipalassa does show an intriguing resemblance to the materials from Hoabinhian sites in Southeast Asia also¹²⁴, though the results of archaeological investigations of the possible presence and influence of Southeast Asian peoples in Sri Lanka during the prehistoric and early historic times was largely negative.¹²⁵

However, in contrast, it seems that at least the cultural associations between the inhabitants of Sri Lanka and India are very ancient and have been continuous since prehistoric times, the geomorphology of the region permitting a relatively free flow of peoples and their cultures¹²⁶. Consequently, the general view is that a society of advanced, socially differentiated, literate, iron using, farmers was superimposed upon an earlier population of microlithic using stone age hunter gatherers of the island and that this took place mostly through processes of migration and implantation rather than through internal development. But, in fact, we do not know exactly when and how the development of the earliest food production took place and who were the people responsible for it. The main question that we cannot answer yet is whether the first agriculturists were longstanding inhabitants of the island or one or more waves of migrants or some combination of the former and the later. The one thing that is certain is that they were the ancestors of the present day Sri Lankans and that they had passed through early phases and perhaps some incipient aspects of later phase sometime before the third century BC¹²⁷. Accordingly, whether these cultural attributes were all introduced together following the so-called early colonisation of the island, as described by the early historical records of Sri Lanka or derived from the more gradual separate transference of the technologies of these individual cultural attributes awaits further intensive archaeological investigation and scientific chronological refinement.

It is, however, evident that some of the cultural developments had close parallels with those taking place on the Indian mainland at least from the early historical period onwards. For example, the sixth period of the Citadel of Anuradhapura mentioned above represents a cultural efflorescence, characterised by the introduction of coinage and use of Brahmi scripts, which has been ascribed to Mauryan influence commencing ca. 250 BC. It is also evident that there was an apparent transformation in the social

organisation, which was marked by the formal introduction of Buddhism. Similarly, there was substantial urban growth at Anuradhapura, based on tank irrigation, monumental architecture with burnt brick and a stratified society¹²⁸. In addition, major developments in technology, in methods of using iron, food production and a general efflorescence in the entire cultural assemblage appear in the archaeological record, although the available data and its interpretation are still scanty.

Historic periods:

It is thus evident that the clearest and the most dramatic developments in early Sri Lankan history are those of the first phase of the historical period, from ca. third century BC to first century AD and not the sixth century BC, as suggested in traditional writings for the so-called first Indian colonisation of the island. Nevertheless, the information provided by the excavation at Mahapali Hall of Anuradhapura (1988) is quite discordant with this decision since some archaeologists have concluded that the discovery of writing in Brahmi script¹²⁹ on five sherds (belonging to five different pots) is significant for the periodisation of the sub-continent¹³⁰ and these have been dated to a very early period than the generally accepted dates. Since the use of an alphabet in association with a language is unquestionably an indication of an important change in any society, this discovery of the Brahmi script has to be discussed in detail.

So far it was generally accepted that the earliest Brahmi stone inscription found in Sri Lanka that can be dated with certainty, was discovered at Mihintale very close to Anuradhapura where the earliest centre of administration of the island was located. The king Gamani Uti appearing in this inscription can be definitely identified as king Uttiya, the successor of Devanampiyatissa (250-210 BC) who was a contemporary of Emperor Asoka.¹³¹ Many Brahmi inscriptions have been recorded during the subsequent periods and these earliest writings in Sri Lanka record grants of caves to the Buddhist monks by pious individuals. It is conspicuous that these earliest Brahmi scripts are, on the whole, palaeographically similar to that of the edicts of Asoka;¹³² records found on the railings at Bharhut and Sanchi; and some of the other early Prakrit inscriptions discovered in northern India¹³³. Hence some have suggested that the art of writing and a readymade alphabet came from Mauryan India with the Buddhist missionaries to the island in the third century BC¹³⁴. In addition, although the earliest written records existing in Sri Lanka cannot be assigned to a period earlier than the third century BC, some scholars believe that it is quite probable that when the first Aryan speaking people migrated to the island from North India about six century BC, they brought with them the knowledge of the writing¹³⁵. Similarly, some others believe that the Brahmi alphabet had several centuries of development behind it in the time of Asoka, since the literary sources indicate that writing, probably at its inception, was known

¹²³ KR Srinivasan, "The megalithic burials and urn-fields of south India in the light of Tamil literature and tradition," Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey of India, No.2, July 1946, (reprinted) 1970, p.9.

¹²⁴ Wilhelm G Solheim, "Archaeological Survey to investigate Southeast Asia prehistoric presence in Ceylon," Ancient Ceylon, No.1, August 1972, p.1.

¹²⁵ For instance, the typical known tools of the Southeast Asian extensionist period (about 8000 to 1 BC) are ground and polished stone adzes, but nothing like these tools was seen in Sri Lanka. Certainly, only two or three polished stone tools are known from Sri Lanka and these are also not at all similar to Southeast Asian tools. Wilhelm G Solheim, "Archaeological Survey to investigate Southeast Asia prehistoric presence in Ceylon," Ancient Ceylon, No.1, August 1972, p.7.

¹²⁶ Kenneth AR Kennedy, "Palaeodemography of Sri Lanka and peninsular India: A cross-regional survey," Perspectives in archaeology: Leelananda Prematilake Festschrift 1990, ed. S. Senaviratna and others, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, 1990, p.34.

¹²⁷ Senaka Bandaranayake, "The periodisation of Sri Lankan history and some related historical and archaeological problems," Asian panorama: Essays in Asian history, past and present, ed. KM De Silva and others, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990, p.10.

¹²⁸ Senaka Bandaranayake, "The periodisation of Sri Lankan history and some related historical and archaeological problems," Asian panorama: Essays in Asian history, past

and present, ed. KM De Silva and others, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990, pp.11-12; Sudarshan Senaviratna, "Iron technology in Sri Lanka: A preliminary study of source use and production techniques during the early Iron Age," Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol. XI, Nos1&2, 1985, pp.129-178.

¹²⁹ These belong to the above-mentioned fourth period.

¹³⁰ S. Deraniyagala, "The proto and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.VII, 1990, Appendix, p.271.

¹³¹ S. Paranavitana, Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Annual Report, 1933, p.14; PEE Fernando, "The beginnings of Sinhala alphabet," Education in Ceylon: A centenary volume, Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka, 1969, p.20.

¹³² PEE Fernando, "Palaeographical development of the Brahmi script in Ceylon from third century BC to seventh century AD," University of Ceylon Review, Vol.VII, No.2, 1949, p.283; David Diringer, The alphabet, Hutchinson, London, Vol.I, 3rd ed, 1968, p.305.

¹³³ S. Paranavitana, Inscriptions of Ceylon, Department of Archaeology, Colombo, Vol.I, 1970, p.xvii; Wilhelm Geiger, "The linguistic character of Sinhalese," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, (Ceylon Branch), Vol.XXXIV, No.90, 1937, p.20; CW Nicholas and S. Paranavitana, A concise history of Ceylon, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, 1961, second chapter; See also SR Goyal, "Brahmi- an invention of the early Mauryan period," The origin of Brahmi script, ed. SP Gupta and KS Ramachandran, DK Publications, Delhi, 1979, pp.1-53.

by the Vedic Aryans in India ca. 1000 BC¹³⁶.

In this context, the statements by Deraniyagala are important since his chronology on the early Sri Lankan script is quite different from that of the others. According to the findings of the Brahmi script on pottery at the excavation site at Mahapali hall of Anuradhapura he concludes that the associated cultural assemblage indicates unequivocally that the use of the script dates to the transition from the Protohistoric to the early historic period and hence these assignable to the basal early historic i.e. pre-Asokan period¹³⁷. He further concludes in this regard that it is highly unlikely that five such specimens derived from five different vessels could have been found in such close association unless there was a functional relationship between these artefacts and their matrix. The latter appeared homogeneous enough so as to preclude the possibility of the sherds intruding en bloc from an overlying context¹³⁸. It is hence tempting to see a connection between this archaeological evidence and the legend of Vijaya and his followers as enunciated in the **Mahavamsa** an event attributed to the sixth century BC¹³⁹. Thus, it is hypothesised that the co-evality in the first occurrence of Brahmi, and the two ceramic traits is linked in some manner to an extraneous cultural impulse that reached Sri Lanka during this period.

It is remarkable that the finds of Sri Lanka-British excavation team also confirms the usage of Brahmi script in this pre-Asokan period in the island. According to the information revealed by the excavation at the site of Salgahawatta in the citadel of Anuradhapura, the early historic period (this has been termed as period J) represents 450- 350 BC¹⁴⁰ and from this stratum, they have found four potsherds scratched with portions of Brahmi inscriptions cut in ill formed but nonetheless convincing letters¹⁴¹. As they have reported, the earliest indication comes from the first phase of this period, but it is only a single letter; other examples come from later phases; while the first fragment of a full inscription occurs in the uppermost fourth and fifth phases. This would indicate that the use of writing began some two centuries earlier than the first datable inscriptions of south Asia¹⁴². Hence, it can be reasonably concluded that the Brahmi script began to be used in Sri Lanka at least a century or two before the rise of the Mauryan empire and perhaps as early as three centuries before the traditional date for the introduction of Buddhism into the island.

Certainly, as its earliest manifestations indicate, Brahmi shows some variations from the Brahmi script of the Mauryan period, not least in the comparative irregularity, not to say ungainliness of some of its letters. However, the language of these early inscriptions is perhaps, unexpectedly in this setting, a typical North Indian Prakrit.¹⁴³

Thus, although the history of Brahmi script of Sri Lanka goes at least as far back as the sixth or fifth century BC, it is evident that these few Brahmi letters on potsherds and even Brahmi inscriptions of the early historical period of Sri Lanka which belong to the third century BC do not contain much information on the cultural history or the interactions of the two countries, since their epigraphic style is nearly always the same; some inscriptions contain only three words of the cave of so and so, others contain also the title of the donor and of his father and a dedication to the priesthood¹⁴⁴. Nevertheless, taken along with the Sri Lankan Chronicles these early Brahmi inscriptions of the island provide valuable confirmation of information recorded in literature and sometimes even supply new information on them. In addition, particularly on some aspects of cultural history of the island they fill gaps left by the chroniclers and they have the further advantage that they are contemporary records to the events¹⁴⁵.

According to the descriptions given in ancient literature, there was a quite different, but rather close intercourse between India and Sri Lanka from very early periods. Although this is mentioned by Sri Lankan literary sources, hardly any Indian treatise has left an account of this connection. Thus, incidental references are to be found in some works such as the **Ramayana**, **Lankavatara Sutra**, **Divyavadana**, **Rajatarangani**, **Jatakas** and in the Tamil treatises of South India such as the **Silappadikaram**, **Manimekalei**, **Pattinappalai** and the **Padirrupattu** etc¹⁴⁶ of the various periods. It is noteworthy that aside from these literary sources, with the rise of the first Pandyan Empire in South India and gradual entanglement of Sri Lanka in the politics of the South Indian region, few epigraphical records of the Pandyas and the Cholas also contain references to the political fortunes of the island. Hence, it is clear that even in these epigraphical sources of South India were also mainly focussed on political events than cultural affairs of the two countries. Besides, a few inscriptions such as at Bodh Gaya and Nagarjunakonda that will be discussed

¹³⁴ See S. Paranavitana, *Inscriptions of Ceylon*, Government Press, Colombo, Vol.I, 1970; PEE Fernando, "Palaeographical development of the Brahmi script in Ceylon from third century BC to seventh century AD," *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol.VII, No.2, 1949, pp.282-301; GS Gai, *Introduction to Indian epigraphy*, Occasional Monograph Series No.32, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, 1986, pp.15-16 and 43. In addition, there are a few inscriptions of pre-Asokan period is also available in India. For instance, Mahastan stone plaque inscription, Piprava Buddhist vase inscription (483 BC), Badhi inscription (443 BC) etc. See TV Mahalingam, *Early south Indian palaeography*, University of Madras, 1967, pp.105-106. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that at least during the subsequent period a parallel to the early Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka is offered by some Brahmi records discovered in South India also, occurring in a series of caves found in Trichinopoly, Madurai and Tinnavelly all in the Pandyan country. For the accounts of these inscriptions please refer to Progress Report of the Assistant Archaeological Superintendent for Epigraphs, Southern Circle, 1907, p.46; 1911-12, p.57; 1928, p.1. For further details of the similarity please refer to PEE Fernando, "Palaeographical development of the Brahmi script in Ceylon from third century BC to seventh century AD," *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol.VII, No.2, 1949, pp.282-301. It is generally believe that in the third or second century BC, the Brahmi syllabary was introduced into Tamil Nadu area. See A descriptive catalogue of palm leaf manuscripts in Tamil, Institute of Asian Studies, Madras, Vol.I, Part I, 1990, Introduction, p.x. Accordingly, though it is debatable some have suggested that the early Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka confirm the existence of cultural influences not only from North Indian region but also from South India during the early historical period. Sudarshan Senaviratna, "The archaeology of the megalithic black and red ware complex in Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.V, 1984, pp.237-307.

¹³⁵ PEE Fernando, "The beginnings of Sinhala alphabet," *Education in Ceylon: A centenary volume*, Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka, 1969, p.20; G. Buhler, *Indian palaeography*, Second edition, Calcutta, 1962, p.33.

¹³⁶ RB Pandey, *Indian palaeography*, Benaras, 1952, pp.6-14; S Paranavitana, *Inscriptions of Ceylon*, Department of Archaeology, Colombo, Vol.I, 1970, p.xxii; KV Saundararajan, "Pre-Asokan writing in India," *The origin of Brahmi script*, ed. SP Gupta and KS Ramchandran, DK Publishers, Delhi, 1979, pp.54-66.

¹³⁷ S. Deraniyagala, "The proto and early historic radiocarbon chronology of Sri Lanka," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.VII, 1990, Appendix, pp.271-272.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.272. For the plates of these Brahmi scripts please refer to p.290.

¹³⁹ SU Deraniyagala, (Reprinted from) *The prehistory of Sri Lanka: An ecological perspective*; Addendum III, Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka, 1992, p.745;

"Radiocarbon dating of early Brahmi script in Sri Lanka 600-500 BC," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.V, No.11, 1990, pp.149-171.

¹⁴⁰ They have presented these details thoroughly following the names of periods and the numbers employed by Deraniyagala in 1990. RAE Coningham and FR Allchin, "The rise of cities in Sri Lanka," *The archaeology of early historic South Asia: The emergence of cities and states*, FR Allchin, Cambridge University Press, London, 1995, pp.162-163.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.162-163. See p.62 also.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p.176. The inscriptions are found on sherds of local pottery, being throughout scratched with a sharp point after firing and as such almost all are incomplete. Further, they are also regrettably short. None of those discovered in Salgahawatta to date is of more than six syllables and many consist of only one or two syllables. There can however be little doubt that these single or double letters or symbols are parts of an inscription and are not to be confused with a second series of signs that are less certainly letters. The script in all cases appears to be an early stage of the Indian Brahmi alphabet. With one or two problematic exceptions the language where enough letters are present to make identification possible, appears to be Prakrit that is an early middle Indo-Aryan language rather than a Dravidian or other language. RAE Coningham and FR Allchin, "The rise of cities in Sri Lanka," *The archaeology of early historic South Asia: The emergence of cities and states*, FR Allchin, Cambridge University Press, London, 1995, pp.176-178. However, it is noteworthy that contemporary inscriptions on potsherds are known from Indian subcontinent too. See SU Deraniyagala, "Radiocarbon dating of early Brahmi script in Sri Lanka 600-500 BC," *Ancient Ceylon*, Vol.V, No.11, 1990, p.159.

¹⁴³ FR Allchin, *The archaeology of early historic South Asia: The emergence of cities and states*, FR Allchin, Cambridge University Press, London, 1995, p.336. It is to be noted that despite this appearance of Brahmi inscription, the remaining features of the material culture stay on largely as in the previous period. *Ibid.*, pp.162-163. See also p.62.

¹⁴⁴ David Deringer, *The alphabet*, Hutchinson, London, Vol.I, 3rd ed, 1968, p.304.

¹⁴⁵ It is to be noted at this point that judging by these standards, the literary sources have obvious limitations as a source for the earliest period of Sri Lankan history – that covered by the Brahmi inscriptions. In fact, it shares almost all the weaknesses of a literary source.

¹⁴⁶ LS Perera, "The sources of Ceylon history," *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.65

later are important to this study since these are basically religious in character.

On account of this apparent scarcity of information from India, it is clear that more attention has to be given to the details supplied by the Sri Lankan chroniclers when examining the cultural interactions of the two countries during the ancient period. When considering these historical writings of early Sri Lanka, it has to be realised at first that these have been entirely the works of Buddhist monks. Among such works the three early Pali treatises, the **Dipavamsa**, the **Mahavamsa** and the introduction to the **Samantapasadika**, the commentary to the **Vinaya Pitaka** of the Pali canon are the main sources of history of the island during the earliest period¹⁴⁷. In fact, these are not the earliest records of the history of Sri Lanka, nor can these be understood apart from the traditions that lie behind them and the other works based upon them. In this context, it is evident that these were for a long time handed down by word of mouth. As Geiger correctly pointed out, these works were in addition closely related to one another, drew upon a source, now lost, which has been termed variously as **Poranattakatha**, **Sihalattakatha** or simply **Porana**.¹⁴⁸ The various references suggest an earlier source, thought to be an historical introduction that was part of the old Sinhalese commentaries to the Buddhist canonical works.¹⁴⁹

Of these literary works, the earliest remaining record of the historical tradition of the island is the **Dipavamsa**¹⁵⁰ compiled by an unknown author or authors and completed about the middle of the fourth century AD¹⁵¹. It is conspicuous that being unused to the language, they wrote in inelegant, halting Pali verses. The so-called “memory verses” the double versions of some events and the numerous repetitions clearly show that it is very close to the original source though containing some legends. According to the chronological order, the next document is the introduction of the **Samantapasadika**, which was compiled by the famous Buddhist commentator Buddhaghosa¹⁵². It is believed that this was written in the twenty-first reigning year of Sirinivasa and he has been identified from the inscriptional and other evidence as king Mahanama of the **Mahavamsa** (406-428 AD)¹⁵³. The descriptions given in the introduction of the **Samantapasadika** deal only with

the history of the island's Buddha Sasana from the beginning upto the event of the death of Mahinda *thero* sometime in the third century BC. Its main aim was to establish the authority of the *Vinaya* and therefore it does not deal with the subsequent history of the island in detail.¹⁵⁴

According to general acceptance, the most important literary work is the **Mahavamsa** by Mahanama¹⁵⁵. No doubt portions of the treatise that deal with the ancient period may be important as an example of ancient historiography.¹⁵⁶ Although scholars like Geiger¹⁵⁷, Malalasekara¹⁵⁸, Adikaram¹⁵⁹ and Mendis¹⁶⁰ have studied the chronology, authorship and the sources of the Mahavamsa in detail, neither they nor the others have had the last word regarding the date and authorship of the Mahavamsa¹⁶¹. Nevertheless, Paranavitana identifies *thera* Mahanama as the author of the **Mahavamsa**, who received from Moggallana I the temple founded by the latter at Sigiriya¹⁶². It has been generally assigned to the period of sixth century AD¹⁶³, but it can be argued that it is an even later work¹⁶⁴. However, it is certain that this was not compiled all at once, for it exists in four recognisable sections. Of them, only the first two compilations that cover the period of ancient history of the country are relevant to this study. The first part that consists of the first thirty-seven chapters is commonly known as the **Mahavamsa** and the rest of the chronicle is usually referred to as the **Culavamsa**¹⁶⁵. According to the references given in the **Vamsattappakasini**, the commentary on the **Mahavamsa**, also written in Pali not earlier than the end of seventh century AD and dated as being compiled between the eighth and the twelfth centuries¹⁶⁶, the text is a translation into elegant Pali of the historical material in the **Poranattakata** or ancient commentaries of the dwellers of the Mahavihara in Anuradhapura¹⁶⁷. Thus, it is clear that there existed an older **Mahavamsa** in Sinhalese prose, which was referred to as **Sihalattakatha Mahavamsa** and was included in the commentary variously referred to as **Attakatha**, **Porana** and **Poranattakatha**¹⁶⁸. It is believed that this early version of older **Mahavamsa** was placed on record very probably in the reign of Vattagamini Abhaya (103 and 89-77 BC) when the hitherto oral tradition of the Sinhalese commentaries was put to writing.¹⁶⁹

However, it is evident that the author of the **Mahavamsa** makes use of various literary devices such as puns and alliterations, and

147 See GC Mendis, “The Pali chronicles of Ceylon: An examination of the opinions expressed about them since 1879,” University of Ceylon Review, ed. JLC Rodrigo and OH de A Wijesekera, October Vol.IV, No.1, 1946, p.1; LS Perera, “The sources of Ceylon history,” University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.50.

148 Mahavamsa, ed. Wilhelm Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1908, Introduction, p.10; Vamsattappakasini, ed. GP Malalasekara, Pali Text Society, London, 1935, Introduction.

149 Lakshman S Perera, “The Brahmi inscriptions as a source for the study of the early history of Ceylon,” Ceylon Historical Journal, Vol.I, No.1, 1951, pp. 78-95.

150 The Dipavamsa, ed. Hermann Oldenberg, London, 1879.

151 LS Perera, “The sources of Ceylon history,” University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.48.

152 Samantapasadika, ed. J. Takakusu, Pali Text Society, London, 1924.

153 LS Perera, “The sources of Ceylon history,” University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.49.

154 Ibid, p.49.

155 Mahavamsa, ed. Wilhelm Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1908. Geiger no doubt felt that there was ample scope for a deeper investigation and even before he brought out his edition of the Mahavamsa, he published a small treatise, which forms a critical evaluation of the Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa with special reference to their sources. See W Geiger, The Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa, tr. EM Coomaraswamy, Government Printer, Colombo, 1908. Although Geiger once changed his stance regarding the sources of the Mahavamsa (See Culavamsa, ed. Wilhelm Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, Vol.I, p.11), his conclusion was that the two early chronicles go back to a common source (See W Geiger, Culture of Ceylon in medieval times, ed. Heinz Bechert, Wiesbaden, 1960, p.72), a view that has still not been seriously refuted. S Kiribamune, “Geiger and the history of Sri Lanka,” Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, Vol.VII, No.1, 1977, p.55.

156 Lakshman S Perera, “The Brahmi inscriptions as a source for the study of the early history of Ceylon,” Ceylon Historical Journal, Vol.I, No.1, 1951, p.82.

157 W Geiger, The Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa, tr. EM Coomaraswamy, Government Printer, Colombo, 1908.

158 Vamsattappakasini, ed. GP Malalasekara, Pali Text Society, London, 1935.

159 EW Adikaram, Early history of Buddhism in Ceylon, Gunasena, Colombo, Second impression, 1953.

160 GC Mendis, “Pali Chronicles of Ceylon,” University of Ceylon Review, Vol.IV, 1946.

161 S Kiribamune, “Geiger and the history of Sri Lanka,” Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, Vol.VII, No.1, 1977, p.55.

162 S Paranavitana, “Civilisation of the period: Religion, literature and art,” University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.392.

163 W Geiger, Mahavamsa (ed.), Pali Text Society, London, 1912, p.xii.

164 RALH Gunawardana, “The people of the lion: The Sinhala identity and ideology in history and historiography,” The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol.V, No.1 & 2, 1979, p.4.

165 Since the author of the Culavamsa has started his work with the last verse of the Mahavamsa, it is obvious that the former is continued the later that stopped at the end of the reigning period of Mahasena of the fourth century AD. This continued up to the reign of Parakramabahu I of the twelfth century AD and it is conspicuous that with the sixty-second chapter, the author introduces a new method, and dealt with king Parakramabahu I in the manner in which Indian writers dealt with epic heroes, and reminiscent of the style in which the author of the Mahavamsa dealt with Duttagamini. LS Perera, “The sources of Ceylon history,” University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.52. It is an established fact that a Buddhist monk named Dhammakitti wrote this chronicle (Wilhelm Geiger, Culavamsa, ed. Pali Text Society, London, Vol.I, Introduction, p.iii) although some have attributed this to Moggallana who also wrote the Abhidanappadipika and lived during the reign of King Parakramabahu I. Yagiral Pannananda, Mahavamsa: The third part, Colombo, 1935, Introduction.

166 Vamsattappakasini, ed. GP Malalasekara, Pali Text Society, London, 1935, pp.civ-cix.

167 It is noteworthy that the Mahavihara was the seat of the orthodox, Hinayana doctrine, but after the foundation in 89 BC of the Abhayagiriya temple, which became the centre of the heterodox, tended to be Mahayana doctrine, its supremacy was often challenged.

168 Ibid, Introduction. It is to be noted at this point that the Attakatha or commentaries was a compilation maintained through the centuries till it took its final form containing historical material up to the time of Mahasena of the fourth century AD. It is evident that the Attakatha was available to the great Indian commentator Buddhaghosa when he visited Sri Lanka in the fifth century AD and to the author of the Vamsattappakasini. It may be concluded that the sources of the present Mahavamsa and the Attakatha, were compiled almost contemporaneous with most of the events they relate and handed down orally in the Mahavihara until the first century BC when these oral traditions were placed on record. Ibid, Introduction.

169 Ibid, Introduction.

presents his material as a well-balanced whole.¹⁷⁰ But, it is significant that the **Mahavamsa** is religious in its outlook even when describing secular matters. As a result, the strong didactic purpose running through it is summarised in the phrase that ends each chapter, “compiled for the serene joy and emotion of the pious.” Thus, parts of it were no doubt read for the edification of the faithful. It is also obvious that this chronicle represents fourth and fifth century claims about Buddhists and the history of Anuradhapura region¹⁷¹. Consequently, it reveals that the Buddhist connection is the major preoccupation of the early historiography of the island as far as an Indian cultural relation is concerned. This link is evident in attempts to show that not only is the last Buddha made to visit Sri Lanka, but three other previous Buddhas are also said to have sanctified the island with their presence, having come over from India¹⁷². Accordingly, Sri Lanka's affinity to the Buddha is emphasised so much that it even includes a family connection between the Sakyan royal dynasty to which the Buddha belonged and the royal family of the island, a subject which has been dealt with in depth by some scholars.¹⁷³ Consequently, it is significant that the history of Sri Lanka mentioned in these Pali works came to be closely linked with the history of Buddhism in the island too. For the fulfilment of this amalgamation, the history of Sri Lanka from its earliest times upto the reigning period of Devanampiyatissa was added.¹⁷⁴

It is evident that an examination of the reigning periods of the early kings of the island from the time of Vijaya's period shows that these were artificial creations. For instance, the nine kings of the earliest twelve are allotted round numbers. Of them, Pandukabhaya and Mutasiva are given impossible reigning periods, seventy and sixty years respectively. Besides, Pandukabhaya is born just before the death of his father Panduvasudeva. He ascends the throne at 37 and rules for 70 years until he is 107. His son Mutasiva is born of Suvannapali whom he married before he was twenty. Nevertheless, he, who must have been advanced in years at his accession, reigns for another sixty years. His second son Devanampiyatissa, who too must have been old at his accession, reigns for another thirty years and fourth brother reigns for another ten years after Sena and Guttika. Thus, it is clear that no value can be attached to the chronology of Sri Lankan kings at least from the period of Vijaya to Elara's time. The reigning periods seem to have been artificially fixed to fill the gap between the death of Buddha and the reign of Duttagamini.¹⁷⁵ It is further evident that materials

were gathered from whatever traditions, legends or myths that were current to fulfilling the aspiration of the author.¹⁷⁶ Ultimately, it is obvious that these Pali chronicles of Sri Lanka without doubt, added the descriptions reign by reign, so that no section can be said to actually date from the given period.

Thus, although certain imperfections can be noted among the descriptions given in these chronicles, it is noteworthy that a majority of these have been confirmed by the epigraphical records at least from the period of third century BC onwards when Brahmi inscriptions are available abundantly. But it is to be noted that according to the descriptions given in these ancient chronicles, the unbroken and detailed history of the island runs at least as far back as the incident of landing of Vijaya, a North Indian prince and his followers sometime in the sixth century BC¹⁷⁷. But, some of the early historians Mendis, for instance, strongly suggested that it was a synthetic account, a product of the mind¹⁷⁸ and dating not earlier than the first century BC. Certainly, a detailed examination of the Vijaya legend at least reveals that it was a creation after the introduction of Buddhism and was fashioned by adapting stories from the Jatakas and further embellishing them with details from others¹⁷⁹. Besides, the story of next three kings, Panduvasudeva, Abhaya and Pandukabhaya also seem to have been adopted mainly from the Jatakas and they have been further transformed with the object of connecting the royal dynasty of Sri Lanka on the one hand with the Pandavas, the heroes of the **Mahabharata** and on the other with the Sakyas, the clan of the Buddha¹⁸⁰. It is interesting to note at this point that the Vijaya story contains some elements that are discordant with the other stories given in the same chronicle too. For instance, during the first visit to the island, Buddha is said to have expelled the inhabitants, the Yakkhas of the island to the Giridipa though subsequently Vijaya and his followers find their kingdom in the island¹⁸¹.

But it is to be noted that some scholars did not reject these traditional tales completely as non-history. Geiger, for instance, states that if we bear in mind the tenacity in the east of the traditions connected with certain localities, we cannot merely ignore such traditions, but should try to discover the kernel of historical truth that they contain¹⁸². Beyond these limits, it is interesting that as for the Vijayan hypothesis, the so-called first colonisation of the island to popular and semi-scholarly belief, few more modern historians would disagree with the notion that the story is legendary,¹⁸³ a myth

170 LS Perera, “The sources of Ceylon history,” University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.50.

171 Jonathan S Walter, The Mahayana origins of the Theravada, Discussion paper of the Ceylon Studies Seminar, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, 1997, p.2.

172 See the first chapter of Mahavamsa, ed. Wilhelm Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1908.

173 RALH Gunawardana, “The kinsmen of the Buddha: Myth as political charter in the ancient and early medieval kingdoms of Sri Lanka,” The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol.II, No.1, 1976, pp.53-62.

174 GC Mendis, “The chronology of the early Pali Chronicles of Ceylon,” University of Ceylon Review, Vol.V, pp.39-54. It should be noted at this point that there are two schools of thought, one following that there was an approximately 218 years' interval between the death of Buddha and the consecration of Asoka which took place 268 BC and the other chronology placing the interval between these two events about 100-110 years. See H. Bechert, “The date of the Buddha reconsidered,” Indologia Jaurineasia, Vol.X, 1982, pp.29-36.

175 GC Mendis, “The chronology of the early Pali Chronicles of Ceylon,” University of Ceylon Review, Vol.V, pp.39-54.

176 LS Perera, “The sources of Ceylon history,” University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.47.

177 Mahavamsa, tr. W. Geiger, Pali Text Society, 1912, chap. 6; 37- 47vv. According to this story given in the Mahavamsa in detail, the daughter of the king of Vanga runs away from the palace and joins a caravan heading for Magadha territory. Nevertheless, on the way, in the Lala country, the caravan is attacked by a lion and abducts this princess. Ultimately, from the union of the princess with the lion are born a son and a daughter named Sihabahu and Sihasiwali. However, when the children grow up, they flee with their mother from the lion's den and reach the frontier region of their grandfather's kingdom. Here a relative who rules the frontier province befriends them. The lion ravages villages in his search for his offspring. Consequently, the son Sihabahu kills the further the lion. Ultimately, on the death of his grandfather, he is offered the kingdom of Vanga, but he prefers to found a kingdom with a new capital city, Sihapura where he reigns with his sister as his queen. They have sixteen pairs of twins. Vijaya, the eldest, is of violent disposition. He and his seven hundred followers harass the people. When the enraged people demand the Vijaya be put to death, the

king exiles him, together with his followers. Their ship touches at Supparaka, but because of their misconduct, they are driven away again and finally they land in Sri Lanka. On the day of their arrival in Sri Lanka, the Buddha lay dying, but his thoughts were on the satiety of Vijaya and his followers. The Buddha assigns god Sakra to protect them and the letter sends the God Uppalavanna to the island. Ibid, chap. 6; 37-47vv. Although the Dipavamsa also gives the same story in short (See. The Dipavamsa, ed. Hermann Oldenberg, London, 1879, chap.9, 1-8 vv), Mahavamsa added an extra note to the story i.e. the marriages of Vijaya to indigenous Kuveni and daughter of Pandyan princess of Madura etc. The story further says that the other women who accompanied the princess were married to the followers of Vijaya and consequently colonised the various parts of the island. (For the critical analysis of Vijaya story of Mahavamsa, refer to GC Mendis, “The Vijaya legend,” Paranavitana felicitation volume, ed. NA Jayawickrama, Colombo, 1965). Nevertheless, it is very interesting to note that this story was not the only description of the so-called first colonisation of the island of Sri Lanka, since Divyavadana presented another story, (Divyavadana, ed. E.B. Cowel and R.A. Neil, Cambridge, 1886, pp.523-529) and Hiuen Tsang described still another two stories almost different from the Vijaya legend given in the Sri Lankan chronicles. (S. Beal, Travels of Hiuen T'sang, Calcutta, Vol.IV, 1958, pp.435-442). However, it is interesting to note that this first so-called colonisation of “Merchant Simhala” to Sri Lanka given the “Simhala Avadana” is pictorially represented among the paintings of cave no 17 at Ajanta. J. Griffiths, The paintings in the Buddhist cave temples of Ajanta Khandesh, London, Vol.I, 1896, see p.38. This story is believed to be the landing of Vijaya. See DB Dhanapala, The story of Sinhalese painting, Saman Press, Maharagama, 1957, p.42).

178 GC Mendis, “The Vijaya legend,” Paranavitana felicitation Volume ed. NA Jayawickrama, Colombo, 1965, pp.263-279; Problems of Ceylon history, Apothecaries, Colombo, (n.d).

179 GC Mendis, “The Mahabharata legends in the Mahavamsa,” Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch), New Series, 1956, p.81.

180 Ibid, p.81.

181 See. Mahavamsa, tr. W. Geiger, Pali Text Society, 1912, chap. 6.

182 W Geiger, Culture of Ceylon in medieval times, ed. Heinz Bechert, Wiesbaden, 1960, p.22.

of origin or charter of legitimisation. In addition, it is noteworthy that on the basis of Sri Lankan chronicles, the early Brahmi inscriptions and certain linguistic characteristics of the island, some other scholars believed that the credit of beginning the earliest civilised habitations has to be given to a group that arrived from northwest and east India.¹⁸⁴

It is interesting to note that though some recent historians have pointed out that the use of legend given in the chronicles was a political charter,¹⁸⁵ some other contemporary historians believe that these can also be seen as a reflection of the cultural identities of the people, realistic or imaginary as the case may be. Accordingly, it is implicit in the legend of Vijaya who peopled the island is the belief that Sri Lankan culture¹⁸⁶ owes its origins to Indian culture. The belief is the same when considering the recent works of archaeologists. For example, the above-mentioned earliest Brahmi scripts found on pottery at the excavation site of Mahapali hall of Anuradhapura has been assigned to the so-called first colonisation of the island by Deraniyagala.¹⁸⁷

Thus, it is clear that some of the historians as well as archaeologists still tend to accept the basic premise that civilisation in Sri Lanka had its origins in groups or waves of migrants from North India settling down in the island somewhere during the first millennium BC an amalgam of their Indo-Aryan dialects producing the early Sinhalese language.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that, in addition to the North Indian role, South India is also credited with playing an equal role in this so-called 'first colonisation' of the island since the story mentions the connection of a Pandyan princess¹⁸⁹. It is interesting to note that some archaeologists also believe that it is fairly certain that some cultural and political elements of protohistoric and early historic periods of Sri Lanka, particularly the megalithic culture received its impetus from South India¹⁹⁰, as we have already discussed above. But, in contrast, it is obvious that the descriptions given in these Chronicles, particularly as regards the earliest phase of the island, quite discordant with the information revealed by the recent archaeological explorations.

However, it is noteworthy that in addition to this so-called colonisation and other close cultural contacts, various references have been made in Sri Lankan literature in relation to the ancient trade connections between the two countries, which have been examined by various scholars in detail¹⁹¹. Besides these references in Sri Lankan literature, both Eastern and Western historical records also recount the role of Sri Lanka as an important centre in the long distance trade of the Indian Ocean at least from the beginning of the Christian era¹⁹². In this process, it is evident that Sri Lankan products like precious stones, pearls, chanks, turtle shell and cloth were in demand from a very early time. Apart from such luxury goods, it appears that Sri Lanka provided certain essential facilities for mariners of the Indian Ocean too. For instance, besides food and pure drinking water, a wide variety of timber used for making frames, planking, masts, spars and oars of boats and ships was available in Sri Lanka, particularly in the south-western parts of the island.

It is certain that in this trade pattern, Sri Lanka's earliest and closest trading partner was neighbouring India. Consequently, several early records describe Sri Lankan mariners who engaged in western part of India as early as the fourth century BC and the Sri Lankan ships coming to India¹⁹⁴. In addition, it is quite clear that the Sri Lankan polity was concerned about the hold of the Indian merchants as intermediaries and was trying to gain access to the western Indian Ocean trade¹⁹⁵. It is also evident that their involvement in foreign trade persisted even at the end of the twelfth century AD and in the beginning of thirteenth century AD. For instance, in one of the inscriptions of queen Lilavati, who ruled intermittently from 1197 to 1212, she refers to the presence of the South Indian trading guild in her kingdom¹⁹⁶. The record is particularly significant since it directs our attention to the continuing prominence of South Indian merchants in the island long after the termination of the Cola occupation.¹⁹⁷

Apart from the evidence of literary sources and also the rare epigraphical records, the archaeological excavations done at Mahatittha, the main port of ancient Sri Lanka also shows evidence of far-flung Indian Ocean trade from the last few centuries before

¹⁸³ CR de Silva, Sri Lanka: A history, New Delhi, 1987, pp.19-21; KM de Silva, A history of Sri Lanka, New Delhi, 1981, p.3.

¹⁸⁴ See PEE Fernando, "Palaeographical development of the Brahmi script in Ceylon from third century BC to seventh century AD," University of Ceylon Review, Vol.VII, No.2, 1949, pp.282-301; See also David Diringer, The alphabet, Hutchinson, London, Vol.I, 3rd ed, 1968, pp.303-304.

¹⁸⁵ See RALH Gunawardana, "The kinsmen of the Buddha: Myth as political charter in the ancient and early medieval kingdoms of Sri Lanka," The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol.II, No.1, 1976, pp.53-62.

¹⁸⁶ Sirima Kiribamune, "Buddhist historiography: Sri Lankan perception," Cultural interaction in South Asia: A historical perspective, ed. SAI Tirmizi, Hamdard Institute of Historical Research, New Delhi, 1993, p.9.

¹⁸⁷ U Deraniyagala, (Reprinted from) The prehistory of Sri Lanka: An ecological perspective; Addendum III, Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka, 1992, p.745; "Radiocarbon dating of early Brahmi script in Sri Lanka 600-500 BC," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.V, No.11, 1990, pp.149-171.

¹⁸⁸ Senaka Bandaranayake, "The periodisation of Sri Lankan history and some related historical and archaeological problems," Asian panorama: Essays in Asian history, past and present, ed. KM De Silva and others, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990, p.10; See also David Diringer, The alphabet, Hutchinson, London, Vol.I, 3rd ed, 1968, pp.303-304.

¹⁸⁹ Sirima Kiribamune, "Buddhist historiography: Sri Lankan perception," Cultural interaction in South Asia: A historical perspective, ed. SAI Tirmizi, Hamdard Institute of Historical Research, New Delhi, 1993, p.10.

¹⁹⁰ Sudarshan Seanaviratna, "The archaeology of the megalithic black and red ware complex in Sri Lanka," Ancient Ceylon, Vol.V, 1984, pp.237-303, particularly, pp.282-283; "Pre-state chieftains and servants of state: A case study of Parumaka," Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol.XV, Nos 1 & 2, 1989, pp.99-132.

¹⁹¹ For instance see BJ Perera, "The foreign trade and commerce of ancient Ceylon," (4 pt.) Ceylon Historical Journal, Vol. 1, 1952, January pp.109-119, pp.192-204, April pp.301-320, July-August pp.14-22; M Prickett, "Sri Lanka's foreign trade before AD 600: Archaeological evidence," Asian panorama: Essays in ancient history, past and present, ed. KM de Silva, S Kiribamune and CR de Silva, 1990, pp.151-190; "Durable good: The archaeological evidence of Sri Lanka's role in the Indian ocean trade," Asian panorama: Essays in ancient history, past and present, ed. KM de Silva, S Kiribamune and CR de Silva, 1990, pp.61-85; "Mantai-Mahatittha: The great port and entrepot in Indian trade," Asian panorama: Essays in ancient history, past and present, ed. KM de Silva, S Kiribamune and CR de Silva, 1990, pp.115-122; WI Siriweera, "Pre-colonial Sri Lanka's maritime commerce with special reference to its ports," Sri Lanka and the silk road of the sea, ed. S. Bandaranayake and others, The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO and the Central Cultural Fund, Colombo, 1990, pp.125-133; RALH Gunawardana, "Seaways to Siedlediba: Changing patterns of navigation in the

Indian ocean and their impact on pre-colonial Sri Lanka," Sri Lanka and the silk road of the sea, ed. S. Bandaranayake and others, The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO and the Central Cultural Fund, Colombo, 1990; Osmund Bopearachchi, "Seafaring in the Indian ocean: Archaeological evidence from Sri Lanka," Tradition and Archaeology: Early maritime contacts in the Indian ocean, Proceedings of the International seminar Techno-Archaeological perspectives of seafaring in the Indian ocean, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean-francois Salles, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1996, pp.59-77.

¹⁹² See DPM Weerakkody, "The foreign relations and trade of ancient Sri Lanka from Greek and Latin sources," Silver Jubilee commemorative volume of the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, ed. SGM Weerasinghe and others, Kalaniya, 1986, pp.447-463.

¹⁹³ RALH Gunawardana, "Seaways to Siedlediba: Changing patterns of navigation in the Indian ocean and their impact on pre-colonial Sri Lanka," Sri Lanka and the silk road of the sea, ed. S. Bandaranayake and others, The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO and the Central Cultural Fund, Colombo, 1990, p.31.

¹⁹⁴ For the details of these references please refer to DPM Weerakkody, Taprobane: Ancient Sri Lanka as known to Greeks and Romans, Brepols, 1997 and Osmund Bopearachchi, "Seafaring in the Indian ocean: Archaeological evidence from Sri Lanka," Tradition and Archaeology: Early maritime contacts in the Indian ocean, Proceedings of the International seminar Techno-Archaeological perspectives of seafaring in the Indian ocean, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean-francois Salles, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1996, pp.59-77.

¹⁹⁵ RALH Gunawardana, "Seaways to Siedlediba: Changing patterns of navigation in the Indian ocean and their impact on pre-colonial Sri Lanka," Sri Lanka and the silk road of the sea, ed. S. Bandaranayake and others, The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO and the Central Cultural Fund, Colombo, 1990, p.38.

¹⁹⁶ DM de Z Wickramasinghe, "The slab inscription marked of queen Lilavati," Epigraphia Zeylanica, ed. DM de Z Wickramasinghe, Oxford University Press, Vol.I, 1912, epigraph no.14, p.180.

¹⁹⁷ RALH Gunawardana, "Seaways to Siedlediba: Changing patterns of navigation in the Indian ocean and their impact on pre-colonial Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka and the silk road of the sea, ed. S. Bandaranayake and others, The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO and the Central Cultural Fund, Colombo, 1990, p.36.

¹⁹⁸ See Moira Tampoe, "The spice island route: Sri Lanka's participation in maritime trade and the archaeological evidence from Mantai and Galle harbour," Sesquicentennial commemorative volume of the Royal Asiatic society of Sri Lanka 1845-1995, ed. GPHS de Silva and CG Urugoda, Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, Colombo, 1995, pp.167-168.

¹⁹⁹ As quoted by JW McCrindle, Ancient India as described in classical literature, Archibald Constable, Westminster, 1901, p.xv.1.15; Pliny, Natural history, ed. H Rackam, WHS Jones and De Eichelz, Cambridge University Press, Vol.VI, 1940-1958, p.81.

the Christian era up to the end of tenth, eleventh century, with a very diminished trade continuing until the thirteenth century AD when the port functioned more as a military and naval base.¹⁹⁸ In this context, it is noteworthy that the port of Mahatitta was strategically placed for the exchange of goods between the Eastern and Western blocks of the Indian Ocean, as well as the north-south exchange between the Indian mainland and Sri Lanka. Located in the shallow seas on the eastern side of the underwater reef-barrier, Adam's bridge, the small Mantai channel particularly allowed goods to be transhipped to the emporium, a fact remarked upon by Eratosthenese in the third century BC. He mentions that the seas between India and Sri Lanka were very shallow, but that there were channels through which ships could navigate with two bows, so that they need not turn around.¹⁹⁹

It is to be noted that the excavations at the site, have enabled the identification of four archaeological periods defined by bone and shell material, radiocarbon dates on carbon and chronologically

diagnostic artefacts, mainly imported ceramics, glass, coins and other datable artefacts. Accordingly, in the Mesolithic period; the site was a marine-resource oriented camp-settlement in the middle of the second millennium BC. In the early historic period; there are indications of South Indian trade connections with rouletted ware and black and red ware. This period is broadly dated from the second century BC to second century AD. During the third phase there are no distinctive imports other than Indian Red Polished Ware, including some sherds with moulded scenes from the Buddhist Jataka tales. This period is dated from the late second century to mid eighth century AD. In the next period, the five or six phases coincide with intensive occupation of all areas of the site, with Chinese and Islamic glazed wares occurring in nearly equal quantities in all phases.²⁰⁰ In this context, the archaeological evidence, such as minor objects that have been found during excavations, ceramics and beads, for example, provide information relating to contemporary trade connections of the two countries. Thus, the following objects have been discovered in other recent archaeological excavations in various parts of Sri Lanka and have further revealed that the ancient Indo- Sri Lankan trade pattern was close.

Name of the item	Place of origin	Place of findings	Chronology
Northern Black Polished Ware	North Indian	Gedige of Anuradhapura[1]	Around 250 BC
Black Hellenistic with fine incision	Greco-Indian	Same site ^[1]	200-100 BC
Black partial slip on red-to-black Hellenistic Carinated and Grooved	Greco-Indian	Anuradhapura Citadel and Kantarodei[1]	Same period
Rouletted Ware	South Indian	Anuradhapura Citadel, Jetavanarama dagoba, Kantarodei and Mantai	200 BC - 200 AD ^[1]
Indo-Sasanian fines	Indian	Anuradhapura and Jetavanarama dagoba[1]	Third century AD ^[1]
Red Polished Ware	Gujarat and Maharastra	Anuradhapura Citadel, Sigiriya, Dagobas of Jetavanarama, bhayagiri and Mantai[1]	First to seven Centuries AD[1]
Fine red painted white kaolin fabric	Indian	Anuradhapura, Abhayagiriya, Sigiriya and Mantai[1]	Fourth to Seventh centuries AD
Intaglio Seals	North-western India or Sri Lanka[1]	Anuradhapura and Citadel.[1]	Third century BC or AD
Camelion stone beads and seals	Deccan, Gujarat or Sri Lanka	Citadel and Jetavanaramaya[1]	Fifth century BC and onwards

197 RALH Gunawardana, "Seaways to Sieldiba: Changing patterns of navigation in the Indian ocean and their impact on pre-colonial Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka and the silk road of the sea, ed. S. Bandaranayake and others, The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO and the Central Cultural Fund, Colombo, 1990, p.36.

198 See Moira Tampoe, "The spice island route: Sri Lanka's participation in maritime trade and the archaeological evidence from Mantai and Galle harbour," Sesquicentennial commemorative volume of the Royal Asiatic society of Sri Lanka 1845-1995, ed. GPSH de Silva and CG Uragoda, Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, Colombo, 1995, pp.167-168.

199 As quoted by JW McCrindle, Ancient India as described in classical literature, Archibald Constable, Westminster, 1901, p.xv.1.15; Pliny, Natural history, ed. H Rackam, WHS Jones and De Eicholz, Cambridge University Press, Vol.VI, 1940-1958, p.81.

200 See Moira Tampoe, "The spice island route: Sri Lanka's participation in maritime trade and the archaeological evidence from Mantai and Galle harbour," Sesquicentennial commemorative volume of the Royal Asiatic society of Sri Lanka 1845-1995, ed. GPSH de Silva and CG Uragoda, Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, Colombo, 1995, pp.167-168.

Accordingly, it is clear that no imported Indian products were evident before ca. 250 BC except carnelian beads and seals, the origin of which is uncertain whether Sri Lankan or Indian. But, it is obvious that the first imports at least begin with the appearance of the Northern Black polished ware of North Indian origins at the end of the protohistoric period, a time of strong Mauryan influence as described by Sri Lankan chronicles. Thus, North Indian contacts are visible from the end of the protohistoric through the early historic and middle historic period onwards through the evidence of Northern Black polished ware. In addition, the Rouletted ware had primarily eastern and southern Indian contacts and exchanges.²⁰¹

Apart from these, Indian coins found in Sri Lanka also indicate that the earliest coins of Sri Lanka, the punch-marked coins were influenced by the Indian punch-marked coins. The absence on some of these coins of any symbol that can be attributed to Sri Lanka alone provides the space to further conclude that all the genuine punch-marked coins found in Sri Lanka were imported from India.²⁰² Boperechi points out that the discovery of many terracotta moulds with Karshapana imprints in the excavations at Gedige site Anuradhapura and many other places shows that some of these coins were cast in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, the moulds he could examine are identical to the ones found in Haryana in North India.²⁰³ Besides, it is conspicuous that with a few exceptions all the Indian coins that are found in Sri Lanka belong to the middle and late Mauryan period.²⁰⁴ The indications are therefore that coinage only became current around the time of Mahinda's mission to Sri Lanka and of the expansion of North Indian or more precisely Mauryan influence there.²⁰⁵ In contrast, it is apparent that although a certain number of coins belonging to the succeeding Kshatrapa and Kushana dynasties are found in the island, they are quite rare.²⁰⁶ Apart from these, it should not be forgotten that the presence of a good number of South Indian Pandya coins in the excavations at Anuradhapura and other places of the northern part of the island indicates that Sri Lanka's ancient trade activities were with South Indian region too.²⁰⁷ It is equally important to note that Sri Lankan coins were also found in South India.²⁰⁸ Undoubtedly, all these physical material evidences clearly indicate the close Indian contacts of Sri Lanka during the ancient period.

Religious interactions:

It was mentioned above that as there are certain imperfections in the accounts given in the early chronicles especially of the beginning of the history of the country,²⁰⁹ many historians had to rely on contemporary epigraphs, the history of which undoubtedly runs at least as far back as the reigning period of king

Devanampiyatissa somewhere in the third century BC²¹⁰. Consequently, it is evident that a majority of the descriptions of the **Mahavamsa** and the other early literary sources of the island have been confirmed by these epigraphical records, as very reliable narrations at least from the third century BC onwards. Based on this fact, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the "historical Sri Lanka" or the "reliable history of the island" commences from the period of king Devanampiyatissa,²¹¹ which is marked by the official introduction of Buddhism. Hence, it is certain that this reigning period marks the turning point of early Sri Lankan history.

In this context, it is noteworthy that according to the descriptions given in these ancient chronicles very close cultural and political relations prevailed between India and Sri Lanka during this period. As it was recorded, for instance, the king of Sri Lanka sent a group of envoys with large presents to India.²¹² King Asoka bestowed gifts and honours and sent back the envoys²¹³. It is interesting to note at this point that the place name of Tambapanni as taken to mean Sri Lanka is mentioned at least twice in the inscriptions of king Asoka too²¹⁴. It is also to be noted that the **Mahavamsa** itself records that at the conclusion of the third council of *Dhamma* that was held under the sponsorship of King Asoka missionaries were dispatched to various directions to spread Buddhism. Of these, one of the most fruitful missions was the one sent to Sri Lanka, which was headed by Mahinda thero, the son of Emperor Asoka²¹⁵ and historians believed that the historicity of the introduction of Buddhism in Sri Lanka is not in any doubt²¹⁶. Nevertheless, it is significant that in Asoka's own inscriptions no mention is made of his son or of the mission headed by the latter. Hence, Asoka's obvious silence regarding such an important mission headed by his own son has led scholar to express doubts regarding the **Mahavamsa** account of Mahinda's mission to Sri Lanka. But, it is to be noted that the **Mahavamsa** account of the mission to the Himalayas has received striking corroboration from archaeological evidence at Sanchi. Similarly, an inscription on a relic casket at Sanchi reads "*Sapurisa Mogaliputasa*,"²¹⁷ proving beyond doubt that Moggaliputta Tissa who according to the **Mahavamsa** was the convenor of the third council was a historical figure.

Interestingly enough, the **Mahavamsa** further states in this regard that *theri* Sanghamitta, the daughter of King Asoka also brought the sacred Bodhi sapling of Bodhagaya to the island²¹⁸. It is also said in the chronicle that many groups of people were said to have been sent to protect this Bo sapling and among them were the weavers and potters and other guilds. Nevertheless, as in the case of Mahinda's mission to Sri Lanka, some scholars have expressed doubts about the historicity of Sanghamitta and the arrival of the

201 Martha Prickett, "Sri Lanka's foreign trade before AD 600: Archaeological evidence," Asian panorama: Essays in ancient history, past and present, ed. KM de Silva, S Kiribamune and CR de Silva, 1990, p.169.

202 H.W. Codrington, Ceylon coins and currency, Memoirs of the Museum, Series A, No.3, Colombo, 1924, p.16.

203 See "Seafaring in the Indian ocean: Archaeological evidence from Sri Lanka," Tradition and Archaeology: Early maritime contacts in the Indian ocean, Proceedings of the International seminar Techno-Archaeological perspectives of seafaring in the Indian ocean, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean-francois Salles, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1996, pp.59-77, especially p.66.

204 Ibid, pp.59-77.

205 FR Allchin, The archaeology of early historic South Asia: The emergence of cities and states, FR Allchin, Cambridge University Press, London, 1995, p.179.

206 Osmund Boperechi, Seafaring in the Indian ocean: Archaeological evidence from Sri Lanka," Tradition and Archaeology: Early maritime contacts in the Indian ocean, Proceedings of the International seminar Techno-Archaeological perspectives of seafaring in the Indian ocean, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean-francois Salles, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1996, pp.59-77.

207 Ibid, pp.59-77.

208 LS Perera, "The sources of Ceylon history," University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.72

209 Please see. RALH Gunawardana, "The kinsmen of the Buddha: Myth as political charter in the ancient and early medieval kingdoms of Sri Lanka," The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol.II, No.1, 1976, pp.53-62; "The people of the lion: The Sinhala identity and ideology in history and historiography," The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol.V, No.1 and 2, 1979, pp.1-39.

210 See. S. Paranavitana Inscriptions of Ceylon, Government Press, Colombo, Vol.I, 1970;

PEE Fernando, "Palaeographical development of the Brahmi script in Ceylon from third century BC to seventh century AD," University of Ceylon Review, Vol.VII, No.2, 1949, pp.282-301.

211 Mahavamsa, tr. W. Geiger, Pali Text Society, 1912, chap. 11 (247-207BC).

212 Ibid, chap 11; 18v.

213 Ibid, chap. 11; 37v.

214 These occur in the Rock edict II amongst those lands for which he had provided for the distribution of medicine and in the edict XIII amongst the countries to which he had sent envoys. See. Second rock edicts of Girmar, Kalsi, Shahbazgarhi, Mansehra and thirteenth rock edicts of Kalsi and Shahbazgarhi. E Hultzsch, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum: Inscriptions of Asoka, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, Vol.I, (reprinted) 1991, pp. 3, 29, 51, 72, 48, 68 and 70 respectively. Though Tambapanni is one of the ancient names of the island of Sri Lanka, it is the name of a river in the Tinnevely district that was known to the author of the Ramayanaya too, Ibid, p.3; See also VV Mirashi, "Rewah stone inscription of the time of Karana," Epigraphia Indica, Vol.XXIV, No. 13, Archaeological Survey of India, (reprinted), 1984, pp.101-115, particularly p.103; KV Subrahmanya Aiyar, "Tinnevely inscription of Maravarman Sundara Pandya II," Epigraphia Indica, Vol.XXIV, No.22, pp.153-172, particularly pp. 162 and 166. Nevertheless, there is a consensus of opinion that the Tambapanni of the Asokan edicts is Sri Lanka. See R Mookerji, Asoka, Macmillan and co, London, 1928, p.132 and its footnote no.2; J. Ph. Vogel, "Prakrit inscriptions from a Buddhist site at Nagargunakonda," Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XX, 1929-30, No.1, p.36.

215 Mahavamsa, tr. W. Geiger, Pali Text Society, 1912, chap 12; 2-10vv.

216 For instance see Sirima Kiribamune, "Buddhist historiography: Sri Lankan perception," Cultural Interaction in South Asia: A historical perspective, ed. SAI Tirmizi, Hamdard Institute of Historical Research, New Delhi, 1993, p.12.

217 Mahavamsa, tr. W. Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1934, introduction, pp.xix-xx.

218 Ibid, chap 18; 6-8vv

Bodhi tree because there is no other evidence to corroborate the Sri Lankan Pali chronicles. But, Geiger who firmly upholds the tradition is of the opinion that the archaeological evidence at Sanchi, the birthplace of Mahinda and Sanghamitta, confirms it. According to him Grundwedel, has pointed out that the carvings of the lower and middle architraves of the east gate of the Sanchi stupa depict representations of this event and since the Sanchi carvings belong to the second century BC, the representation is distant from the event by roughly speaking only 100 or at most 150 years²¹⁹. In these carvings, in the middle of the lower scene is the Bodhi tree, as it stood at Gaya with Asoka's chapel, rising halfway up the tree. A procession with musicians is on both sides of it. To the right, a royal person, perhaps Asoka is getting down from his horse with the aid of a dwarf. In the upper picture, there is a small Bodhi tree in a pot and again a procession moving towards a city, perhaps Anuradhapura or perhaps Tamralipti to which the young tree was taken before it went to Sri Lanka. The decorations on either side of the lower bas-relief are peacocks, symbolic of Asoka's family, the Mauryas and lions, symbolic of Sri Lanka or the royal family of the island²²⁰. It is significant that as in the case of Geiger's assumption, Rhys Davids also concluded that the opinions may differ as to the meaning of some of the details, but there can be no doubt as to the main subject²²¹. Accordingly it seems that even the arrival of Theri Sanghamitta with the sacred Bodhi sapling cannot be dismissed as a mere legend.

According to further descriptions given in the Sri Lankan chronicles, during this period, the king and the people of the country embraced the new religion of Buddhism and its order of monks was consequently established²²². As a result, Buddhist religion became firmly established in Sri Lanka and with the adaptation of Buddhism as the religion of the state, followed by changes consequent on it in the religious and social life of the people, Indian influences began to pervade the cultural life of Sri Lanka. For instance, it is an established fact that the people of Sri Lanka during this period put up buildings of brick, began to carve in stone, learnt the art of writing and benefited from the teachings of Buddhism. Consequently, the period witnessed the first blossoming of art in the island as well. Correspondingly, the theme of these early stories is that the roots of Sri Lankan culture go back to the Buddhist ethos of the sub-continent.

Although the Indian and Sri Lankan historical records do not provide direct evidence of Buddhist intercourse of the two countries during the subsequent periods, the chronicles present some indirect information on the subject. In the second century

BC, during king Duttagamini's time (161-137 BC), for instance, it is mentioned in the **Mahavamsa** that at the inauguration ceremony of the Mahatupa, the Ruvanvalisaya in Anuradhapura, a large number of monks from the Buddhist centres of Isipatana, Rajagaha, Savatti, Vesali, Ujjeni, Kosambi, Pataliputra, Kasmira and Vindhya came to the island with gifts for the king.²²³

Besides these descriptions given in the chronicles, it is noteworthy that during the second and third centuries AD, evidence of Buddhist, intercourse between Sri Lanka and the lower Krishna valley is furnished by a Prakrit inscription discovered at the Buddhist site of Nagarjunakonda, which describes the erecting of Buddhist temples there by Sri Lankan Buddhists.²²⁴ In addition, the donative inscriptions at Nagarjunakonda and at other sites in the Vengi region further testify to the closeness of relationship that existed between the Buddhists of that region and those of Sri Lanka during the ancient period.²²⁵

Similarly, it is obvious that Sri Lankan Buddhist pilgrims, like those from other Buddhist countries, made the round of the holy places in Magadha. Of these, Bodhi Gaya, the site of the Buddha's enlightenment, was a particularly important pilgrim centre. Consequently, an Indian document mentions a communication between king Meghavanna (301-328) and king Samudragupta²²⁶ of the two countries leading to the erection of a residence particularly for Sri Lankan monks visiting Bodhi Gaya²²⁷. It is interesting that the same incident or another exactly similar²²⁸, relating to the same two sovereigns has been recorded in a Chinese document too. The story says that a king of Sri Lanka named Sri Meghavanna sent two monks to visit the monastery built by Asoka to the east of the Bodhi tree at Gaya. The said two Sri Lankan monks paid their respects to the Bodhi tree but the monastery did not offer them hospitality. Hence, the two monks reported this to the king on their return and on hearing, the complaint, Sri Meghavanna, sent envoys with gifts of precious stones to Samudragupta requesting his permission to build a Sri Lankan Monastery at Bodhi Gaya²²⁹. In this connection reference could be made to a Sanskrit inscription found at Bodhi Gaya, which records that a monk named Mahanama from Sri Lanka caused a shrine to be built at the site²³⁰. Although this well-known inscription of Mahanama *stavira* of Sri Lanka is dated in accordance with the year 588-9 AD²³¹ it is interesting to note that Sri Lankan sources do not make any reference to this activity.

In addition, there is another Sanskrit inscription of seventh or eighth century date, which records the devotion of a distinguished Sri Lankan pilgrim, *Prakhyatakirti*²³². The inscription is written in

219 See. Albert Grunwedel (tr. Agnes C Gibson), *Buddhist art in India*, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1985, See Chapter 2; *Mahavamsa*, tr. W Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1934, introduction, p.xx.

220 Albert Grunwedel (tr. Agnes C Gibson), *Buddhist art in India*, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1985, See Chapter 2.

221 Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1971, p.303.

222 *Mahavamsa*, tr. W. Geiger, Pali Text Society, 1912, see chapters 12-16.

223 *Ibid*, chap 29; 29-43vv.

224 J. Ph. Vogel, "Prakrit inscriptions from a Buddhist site at Nagargunakonda," *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XX, 1929-30, pp.1-37.

225 *Ibid*, pp.1-37, especially pp.9-10.

226 It is evident that during the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries AD, north India passed under the sway of the imperial Guptas. Of these, Samudragupta who came to the throne in the beginning of the fourth century AD was renowned for his military exploits, his cultural accomplishments and his name and fame spread far beyond the confines of his dominions. His Sri Lankan contemporary Sri Meghavanna (301-328 AD) had established friendly relations with his illustrious neighbour according to the Sri Lankan sources. Nevertheless, the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta mentions that the people of Saimhala among those who paid tribute to the Gupta emperor. See JF Fleet, "Allahabad posthumous stone pillar inscription of Samudragupta," *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol.III, Varanasi, 1963, pp.1-17, particularly pp.8 and 14. It is possible that many of the neighbouring kings including Sri Meghavanna sought to maintain close contact with the most powerful empire in the mainland and thought it politic to win the good graces of the great emperor by sending rich present or showing respect in some other way. For further details see Majumdar RC and Pushalkar AD, *The classical age: The history and culture of the Indian people*, Vol.III, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1962, pp.11-12.

227 DR Bhandarkar and B Chhabra, "Introduction," *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*,

Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, Vol.III, (reprinted) 1981, pp.1-84, particularly, pp.30-31; Vincent A Smith, *Early history of India*, fourth edition, Oxford, 1924, p.303.

228 M Sylvain Levi, "Chino-Sinhalese relations in the early and middle-ages," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (Ceylon Branch), Vol.XXIV, No.68, 1915-16, pp.74-123; *Mahavamsa*, tr. W. Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1912, introduction, p.xxxix.

229 S Beal, *Buddhist records of the western world*, New edition, Calcutta, Vol.III, 1957, pp.357-359; See also M Sylvain Levi, "Chino-Sinhalese relations in the early and middle-ages," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (Ceylon Branch), Vol.XXIV, No.68, 1915-16, pp.74-123; A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey Report*, Vol. XIX, p.60; V.A Smith, *Early history of India*, Oxford, 1924, p.303; RC Majumdar, "Foundation of Gupta imperial power in India and its relations with Ceylon," *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, p.270; B Barua, *Gaya and Buddha-Gaya*, Calcutta, Vol.I, 1934, p.195; DR Bhandarkar and B Chhabra, "Introduction," *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, *Archaeological Survey of India*, New Delhi, Vol.III, (reprinted) 1981, pp.30-31.

230 *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Reports*, 1908-9, p.153; A Cunningham, *Mahabodhi or the great Buddhist temple at Buddhagaya*, London, 1892, p.58; See also JF Fleet, "Buddh-Gaya inscription of Mahanama," *Corpus Indicarum Inscriptionum*, Vol.III, No. 71, pp.274-278.

231 *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Reports*, 1908-9, p.157; B Barua, *Gaya and Buddha-Gaya*, Calcutta, Vol.I, 1934, p.197.

232 *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Reports*, 1908-9, pp.156-157; B Barua, *Gaya and Buddha-Gaya*, Calcutta, Vol.I, 1934, p.196.

233 DM de Z Wickramasinghe, "Jetavanarama Sanskrit inscription," *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, ed. DM de Z Wickramasinghe, Oxford University Press, Vol.I, 1912, Epigraph No.1, p.2; See also Diran Kavork Dohanian, *The Mahayana Buddhist sculpture of Ceylon*, Garland and Publishing Inc, New York and London, 1977, pp.25,

Nagari characters on the coping stone of the ancient railing at the Mahabodhi temple. Besides, a votive inscription cut on the broken pedestal of a Buddha image in Nagari characters of the ninth century form at the site records the piety of the Sinhalese layman, Udayasri, who commissioned the image in order to escape from the world of woe²³³. In addition, it is noteworthy that a slab inscription, datable to the tenth or eleventh century AD, records the gift of a pious king and was written by a Sinhalese monk named Ratnasrijnana²³⁴. It is interesting to note that during the same period the **Culavamsa** also describes that king Vijayabahu I (1055-1110) on several occasions sent costly offerings to the Mahabodhi at Bodhgaya²³⁵. Meanwhile, the "*Sinhala sangha adayas*"²³⁵ has been mentioned in another Gaya inscription of the eleventh or twelfth century AD. Perhaps this indicates the income that the Mahabodhi derived from the Sinhalese pilgrims of whom evidently there was a large number²³⁷. It is to be noted at this point that based on these epigraphical sources, Barua goes to the extent of arguing that Sri Lankan monks were in control of the Mahabodhi at least up to Pala period²³⁸.

According to all these evidences, it is clear that since this was the ultimate place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists of Sri Lanka, many undertook the journey despite severe odds. No doubt that even today, this place retains its enchantment. To the average Buddhist, this is pilgrimage to the land of Buddhism. Hence, the above references would prove that there had been regular visits by pilgrims at least to the major Buddhist sites²³⁹. Obviously, these contacts further testify to the vital and continuing communications between the holy places and the monasteries of Sri Lanka too. These religious missions must have been instrumental in establishing contacts with the various schools of Buddhism that were at that time in a flourishing condition under the Pala rulers of Magadha.²⁴⁰

In addition, it is evident that Sinhalese monks and nuns had special dormitories near Vijayapuri and were present at other religious centres, such as Kaveripattinam, Kanci and some in central and north Indian regions too²⁴¹. Thus it seems that the monasteries in Sri Lanka had enjoyed close contacts with institutions in various parts of India. Of these, as Pathmanathan pointed out in detail, the connection of Sri Lanka with Buddhist centres of South India is very conspicuous²⁴². As a result, in times of trouble at home, Sri Lankan monks habitually sought sanctuary there. On the other

hand, foreigners found their way to Anuradhapura, also, for it lay on one of the southern routes travelled by pilgrims going from India to China²⁴³. In fact, Anuradhapura, by the fifth century AD, had become a chief centre for Buddhist study, as Fa-hsien was careful to point out, the early canonical texts had been committed to writing²⁴⁴. In addition, the fame of Buddhaghosa, who had come there to translate the Pali and Sinhalese books, added to the lustre of its reputation. Besides these references, Sri Lankan literature frequently mentions the coming of Indian monks²⁴⁵ to Sri Lanka and particularly the **Mahavamsa** records that the queen of Udaya I (797-801 AD) had built in Mihintale a temple, which she granted to the monks of the Tamil community.²⁴⁶

Without doubt, all these facts reveal that religious exchanges with mainland India were frequent during the ancient period. Consequently it is significant that the impact of many new ideas that developed in India was soon felt in Sri Lanka. For instance, in the reign of Voharaka Tissa (209-231 AD)²⁴⁷, Vaitulyavada, identified as Mahayana²⁴⁸, made its appearance in Sri Lanka. Paranavitana has shown that the periods when the Vaitulyas were active in Sri Lanka synchronise with the dates assigned to some significant development in Mahayanism in India²⁴⁹. The Mahayana in India first came into prominence about the beginning of the first century AD, though it is probable that its doctrines were prevalent in an under developed form even in earlier times. About the latter half of the second century AD, its doctrines were given an authoritative form by the genius of Nagarjuna who is generally believed to have been a native of the Andhra country of South India²⁵⁰. Consequently, its main centres were Amaravati, Dhanyakataka and Nagarjunakonda in the Andhra country. Interestingly enough, the Mahayana and Tantric beliefs were in fact the result of Buddhism conceding to the strength of resurgent Hinduism²⁵¹. The centre of this revolutionary doctrine in the island was the Abhayagiriya temple and king Gothabhaya (249-262 AD) had to take drastic action against 60 monks dwelling in Abhayagiriya.²⁵² Nevertheless, they were active again in the reign of Mahasena (274-301) when a monk from South India carried favour with the king and instigated him to do immense damage to the Mahavihara²⁵³.

Later, in the time of Silakala (518-531 AD) the **Dhammadatu**, a Mahayana text was brought to Sri Lanka from Varanasi by a merchant and the king housed it near the royal palace. He ordered

130.

234 R Mitra, *Buddha Gaya*, Calcutta, 1878, pp.194-197.

235 *Culavamsa*, ed. Wilhelm. Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, chap. LX, 23v.

236 Vinoda Vihari Vidyavinoda, "Two inscriptions from Bodhi-Gaya," *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XII, No. 6, pp. 27-29.

237 *Ibid.*, pp. 27-29. Thus, it is evident that the script of Nagari was the vehicle for these donative records of the Sinhalese pilgrims at Buddh Gaya. RC Majumdar, "Foundation of Gupta imperial power in India and its relations with Ceylon," *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol. I, Part I, 1959, p. 273; A Ariyappan and PR Srinivasan, *Story of Buddhism with special reference to south India*, Madras, 1960, p. 70.

238 B Barua, *Gaya and Buddha-gaya*, Calcutta, Vol. I, 1934, p. 203.

239 Himanshu Prabha Ray, "Maritime archaeology of the Indian ocean: An overview," *Tradition and Archaeology: Early maritime contacts in the Indian ocean*, Proceedings of the International seminar Techno-Archaeological perspectives of seafaring in the Indian ocean, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean-francois Salles, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1996, p. 5.

240 S Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the Polonnaruwa period: Religion, literature and art," *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol. I, Part II, 1960, pp. 564-565.

241 A historical atlas of South Asia, ed. Joseph E Schwartzberg, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1978, p. 177.

242 S Pathmanathan, *Buddhism in Sri Lanka and South India: Interactions among monastic centers*, Fourth Vesak Commemoration Lecture 2006, Sri Lanka Deputy High Commission, Chennai, 2006, pp. 31.

243 See Diran Kavork Dohanian, *The Mahayana Buddhist sculpture of Ceylon*, Garland and Publishing Inc, New York and London, 1977, p. 17.

244 S Beal, *Buddhist records of the western world*, New edition, Calcutta, Vol. III, 1957, pp. 44 and 55.

245 See Diran Kavork Dohanian, *The Mahayana Buddhist sculpture of Ceylon*, Garland and Publishing Inc, New York and London, 1977, p. 17.

246 *Mahavamsa*, tr. W. Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1934, chap. 49; 24v.

247 *Ibid.*, chap. 36; 40-41vv.

248 See S Paranavitana, "Mahayanism in Ceylon," *Ceylon Journal of Science Section G*, ed. A.M. Hocart and S. Paranavitana, Vol. II, December 1928 – February 1933, p. 35. The

spread of Buddhism far and wide and the introduction into it of various adventitious elements led to its great re-organisation, and it was near about the beginning of the Christian era the two categories of the Buddhist order were gradually evolved as the Hinayana and the Mahayana. JN Banerje, "Developments in Indian Buddhism," *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol. I, Part I, 1959, p. 194; S. Paranavitana, "Mahayanism in Ceylon," *Ceylon Journal of Science Section G*, ed. A.M. Hocart and S. Paranavitana, Vol. II, December 1928 – February 1933, p. 35. The main features of the Mahayana Buddhism are as follows. Strong belief in number of Buddhas and Bodhisattva concept and in the ability of human beings to become Bodhisattva status. Code of altruistic ethics, which teaches that every one, must do well in the interest of the whole world and make over to others any merit he may acquire by his virtue. The aim of the religious life is to become a Bodhisattva, not to become an arahat. Doctrine that Buddhas are supernatural beings distributed through infinite space and time and innumerable. In the language of later theology, a Buddha has three bodies (Kayas) and still later, there is a group of five (afterwards six) Buddhas (Dhyani). Various systems of idealist metaphysics, which tend to regard the Buddha essence or Nirvana. Canon composed in Sanskrit and apparently later than the Pali canon. Habitual worship of images and elaboration of ritual. Special doctrine of salvation by faith in a Buddha, usually Amitabha and invocation of his name. See. JN Banerje, "Developments in Indian Buddhism," *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol. I, Part I, 1959, p. 200. Mahayanism encouraged the worship of certain gods and goddesses and recommended the chanting of mantras for attaining emancipation from life as in the case of Hindu practice. See I-Tsing, *A record of the Buddhist Religion*, tr. J. Takakusu, Oxford, 1896, p. 39.

249 S Paranavitana, "Mahayanism in Ceylon," *Ceylon Journal of Science Section G*, ed. A.M. Hocart and S. Paranavitana, Vol. II, December 1928 – February 1933, p. 35.

250 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

251 See. JN Banerje, "Developments in Indian Buddhism," *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol. I, Part I, 1959, p. 200.

252 *Mahavamsa*, tr. W Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1934, chap. 36; 112v.

253 *Ibid.*, chap. 36; 1-16vv.

254 *Ibid.*, chap. 41; 37-40vv.

255 *Ibid.*, chap. 42; 35v.

that every year the Dhammadhatu be taken to the Jetavana temple where a festival was held in its honour²⁵⁴. But it is recorded that in the reign of Aggabodhi I (571-604), the Vaitulyas were humiliated in a public debate²⁵⁵. Although this was an indication of an official victory for Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana ideas had infiltrated into orthodox Buddhism and the theistic and ritualistic tendencies became popular. An eighth century fragmentary Mahayana inscription written in Sanskrit characters found at Mihintale, the cradle of Theravada Buddhism establishes this fact unmistakably²⁵⁶. It is interesting to note at this point that a number of copper plates of the same century, which contain the quotations of stanzas of famous Mahayana texts **Panchavinsati Sahasrika Pragnaparamita** and **Kassapa Parivarta**, have been found in the inner relic chamber of the Indikatusaya of Mihintale²⁵⁷. In addition, it is evident that in the ninth and the tenth centuries AD Mahayanism was particularly strong in Sri Lanka²⁵⁸. Besides, it is apparent that even the extreme form known as Vajiriyavada, which made the distinction between Buddhism and certain forms of Saivism nominal, appeared in Sri Lanka in the ninth century AD²⁵⁹. Thus, it is evident that all the principle changes in the doctrine and practice of Buddhism appeared simultaneously in India and Sri Lanka.

In this context, it is noteworthy that unlike the Mahavihara, Abhayagiriya was devoted to knowing and mastering the latest trends in a sophisticated, global Buddhist world. As a result, Abhayagiriya connected Anuradhapura with Indian universities, Chinese imperial courts, Javanese trading communities and brought Indian scholars, Chinese ambassadors and Javanese traders to Anuradhapura. Consequently, Abhayagiriya made Sri Lankan Theravada – Mahayana – Theravada - a real player in the bigger cosmopolites of the day²⁶⁰. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that Abhayagiriya so far as we know never denied the relative value of the Lesser Vehicle. They sported their own canon of the Lesser Vehicle, probably not much different from the Pali Canon except in minor details. It is evident that at least the Chinese knew that Abhayagiriya disseminated its own Lesser Vehicle canon throughout Asia²⁶¹. On the other hand, it is to be noted that though some of the Mahayana doctrines differ from Theravada Buddhism, Mahayanist monks who followed almost the same rules of discipline as the monks of the Theravada sect in Sri Lanka were able to live in the same temple and influence the monks of the Theravada sect. Consequently, Mahayana Buddhism did not replace the Theravada tradition. Indeed, it only added something to it and the only thing it did replace sometimes was the worship of local gods, for whom Bodhisattavas were substituted.²⁶²

In North India, Buddhism continued to flourish under the Pala dynasty of Bengal and Bihar till the Palas and their faith were both uprooted by the Muslim conquest of twelfth century AD²⁶³. At the same time, the victorious armies of Rajaraja Cola dealt the final blow to Anuradhapura at the beginning of the eleventh century AD

and having made Polonnaruva their capital, the Colas ruled Sri Lanka for a period of half a century during which time South Indian Hindu influence became stronger than ever before²⁶⁴. Thus, it is clear that no new influences from North India had any effect on Sri Lankan Buddhism after eleventh century AD and the island's Buddhists began more and more to turn towards the other Theravadian countries of the Buddhist world in their religious matters. In this context, it is obvious that the most important centre of the Theravada Buddhism in the eleventh and twelfth centuries AD was Southeast Asia and therefore the Buddhists of Sri Lanka had begun to turn away from India to this region.

Of these, certainly the relations with Burma are significant²⁶⁵. It is known that ever since the time of Buddhaghosa, the famous Buddhist commentator, Burmese monks were in the habit of coming over to Sri Lanka especially to the Mahavihara of Anuradhapura to imbibe the orthodox tradition and continue it in their own country²⁶⁶. But later, Sri Lankan Buddhists suffered great calamities during the Cola occupation and the extensive monasteries that flourished at Anuradhapura and other places of the island in the tenth century AD were abandoned. As a result, most of the Buddhist monks were unable to maintain themselves even in the southern part of the island and large numbers of them migrated from the island to Southeast Asian countries where Buddhism was flourishing particularly to Burma²⁶⁷. After liberation from the Cola power, it was the timely help from Burma to Sri Lanka that helped to revive the higher ordination in the time of Vijayabahu I (1055-1110)²⁶⁸. Subsequently, although Parakkramabahu's invasion of Burma²⁶⁹ (1165 or 1166) somewhat strained this relationship, the common Theravada Buddhism that closely knit the two countries was strong enough to overcome all such minor differences

However, it should not be forgotten that as in the case of the Indo-Sri Lankan association, the cultural relations of these two countries were also bilateral. One of the services provided by Sri Lanka to Burma was the help granted by Vijayabahu to establish a common authoritative Canon for both countries. Next is the interesting episode of the establishment of the *Sihala Sangha* sect in Burma²⁷⁰. It is said in this connection that in the reign of Parakkramabahu I, the elder Uttarajiva from Pagan visited the Mahavihara bringing with him one of his pupils, the novice Chappata. He received higher ordination from the Sinhalese monks of the island and lived for several years ardently studying the doctrine at the Mahavihara²⁷¹. Chappata next returned to Pagan taking with him four Sinhalese monks on a mission of orthodoxy. Thus it is evident that deeply convinced of the fact that the Mahavihara alone had kept the unbroken and legitimate line of descent and that the valid ordination could only be received in Sri Lanka he sought to form a nucleus of the orthodox tradition in Burma by establishing the *Sihala Sangha*²⁷². Consequently, it is evident that the artistic traditions of Burma were also influenced

256 S Paranavitana, "Mahayanism in Ceylon," Ceylon Journal of Science Section G, ed. A.M. Hocart and S. Paranavitana, Vol.II, December 1928 – February 1933, p.42.

257 Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Annual Report, 1929, pp.30-31.

258 See Ibid, pp. 35-71; Nandasena Mudiyanse, Mahayana monuments in Ceylon, Gunasena, Colombo, 1967.

259 S Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the period: Religion, literature and art," University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon 260 For further details please refer to Jonathan S Walter, "The Mahayana origins of the Theravada," Ceylon Studies Seminar, Discussion paper, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, 1997, p.13.

261 Ibid, p.13.

262 GC Mendis, Ceylon today and yesterday: Main currents of Ceylon History, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, Colombo, 1957, p.45.

263 S Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the Polonnaruva period: Religion, literature and art," University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part II, 1960, p.565.

264 Lorna Dewaraja, "Cultural relations between Sri Lanka and north India during the Anuradhapura period," Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences, Vol. X, Nos. 1 & 2, 1987, p.19.

265 Vincent Panditha, "Buddhism during the Polonnaruva period," The Ceylon Historical Journal, ed. SD Saparamadu, Special Number on the Polonnaruva period, Vol. IV, No.1-4, July-October 1954 and January-April, 1955, 1958, p.127.

266 Ibid, p.126.

267 S Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the Polonnaruva period: Religion, literature and art," University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part II, 1960, p.563.

268 Culavamsa, ed. Wilhelm Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, chap. LX, 4-8vv; See also "Polonnaruva: A slab inscription of Nissankamalla," Epigraphia Zeylanica, Oxford University Press, London, Vol.II, 1928, Epigraph No. 27, p.253.

269 S Paranavitana, "Devanagala rock inscription," Epigraphia Zeylanica, Oxford University Press, London, Vol.III, 1933, Epigraph No. 34, p.317.

270 Vincent Panditha, "Buddhism during the Polonnaruva period," The Ceylon Historical Journal, ed. SD Saparamadu, Special Number on the Polonnaruva period, Vol. IV, No.1-4, July-October 1954 and January-April, 1955, 1958, pp.126-7.

271 Ibid, pp.126-7.

272 Ibid, pp.126-7.

273 For further details please refer to WM Sirisena, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia: Political, religious and cultural relations from AD c.1000 to 1500, EJ Brill, Leiden, 1978, pp.58-168; Ananda Coomaraswamy, History of Indian and Indonesian art, Dover Publication, New York, 1965, p.177; Silpa Bhivarsi, The origin and evolution of Thai murals, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 1959, p.13.

274 Vincent Panditha, "Buddhism during the Polonnaruva period," The Ceylon Historical Journal, ed. SD Saparamadu, Special Number on the Polonnaruva period, Vol. IV, No.1-4, July-October 1954 and January-April, 1955, 1958, p.127.

by the Sinhalese traditions during this period²⁷³. In addition, Sri Lanka's relations with Cambodia also seem to be implicit in a few references in the chronicles and inscriptions, but whether they were of any religious character, it is difficult to determine.²⁷⁴

General acceptance and the reality:

According to the facts given above, it is clear that the geographical location of Sri Lanka in relation to India is such that any major upheaval in the mainland, whether political, cultural or religious was bound to generate repercussions in the island, eventually. Due to this close proximity of the two countries and resultant impact of India on Sri Lanka, some of the early historians of Sri Lanka and also the scholars of India have gone to the extreme limit of terming the periods upto the colonial time as the Indian period of Sri Lankan history.²⁷⁵ They have further divided this into Northern and Southern Indian periods of the island mainly based on the belief that Sri Lanka was largely influenced by North India upto the Cola conquest of 1017 and by South India from that date upto the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505. Of these, the North Indian period is further sub-divided into two: The first period begins with the reign of Devanampiya Tissa (250-210 BC) and ends with the reign of Mahasena (274-301 AD). The second period begins with the reign of Mahasena's son Kirtisri Meghavarna (301-328) and ends with the Cola conquest of Sri Lanka in the reign of Mahinda V (982-1029).²⁷⁶

This trend figures prominently in the studies of Geiger²⁷⁷, Raghavan²⁷⁸, Mendis²⁷⁹ and Ellawala²⁸⁰ etc. For example, Ellawala suggests that the social organisation of Sri Lanka in early times was modelled on that of the Indo-Aryan kingdoms of Northern India²⁸¹ and Mendis concludes that the economic, political and social background of Sri Lanka was particularly the same as that of India and the modifications, which it went through till the end of the fifteenth century AD and to a limited extent after that, were mainly due to Indian influences. Thus, he believes that till the end of the fifteenth century AD Sri Lanka was a unit of the civilisation of India²⁸². In a similar manner Geiger stated that the Sinhalese literature may be said to be a respectable offshoot of Indian literature and in his evaluation of the architectural achievements of the country he seems convinced that for the most part the architects came from India²⁸³. According to these scholars, the major reasons for this view of the Indian cultural influence on the Sri Lankan society are as follows. The main religions of the people of the island, Buddhism and Hinduism came from India. The Sinhalese and Tamil scripts and the Sinhalese and Tamil languages are also derived from the same source²⁸⁴. Of these particularly, the

Sinhalese language is closely related to the Indo-Aryan tongues of Northern India and it has descended through Pali, Prakrit from old Sanskrit. Its evolution proceeds on the same lines as that of the modern Indo-Aryan vernaculars such as Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi and Bengali etc²⁸⁵. Besides Sinhalese literature, in subject matter and style also shows itself strongly influenced by Pali and Sanskrit literature. In addition, the Sri Lankan styles of architecture and sculpture of the ancient period can also be traced to India.²⁸⁶

Nevertheless, as some of these scholars themselves admitted that in India itself owing to its vast size the culture of the people varied from area to area due to differences in the physical background, racial types, economic and social systems and religion etc. Certainly, this difference applied to Sri Lankan culture as well²⁸⁷. This would indicate that the culture of Sri Lanka was not uniform with that of India. In this context, though some critics have wrongly concluded that Sri Lanka has nevertheless made her own what she has adopted; she has stamped with her own personality all that she derived from India, and so intensive and far-reaching has been the process, that Indian origins of Sri Lankan art can scarcely be distinguished as such today²⁸⁸, it is fairly certain that Sri Lanka's development differed culturally from that of India. For instance, the most outstanding feature in Sri Lankan civilisation at least during the first ten twelve centuries is the irrigation system which alone formed the basis of the renowned hydraulic structure giving life and water to the plains which nature had condemned to lie parched and desolate is entirely the product of Sri Lankan genius owing nothing to Indian influences. Regarding Buddhism too, though it was an Indian import, it soon became indigenised. It is also to be noted that though Buddhism disappeared from India, yet Sri Lanka enshrined the faith in her bosom never to be forsaken, thus evolving culture entirely her own²⁸⁹. Therefore, it cannot be said that the whole culture of ancient Sri Lanka was a replica of Indian culture in every sense though early islanders borrowed some of the cultural elements of India, due to close interactions between the two countries that had started from very ancient times. But, it is to be noted at this point that it has often been accepted that the cultural relations of the two countries were one-sided or there was only a one-way movement in the direction of Sri Lanka. Certainly, there are not enough evidences to show how far Sri Lankan society or the people influenced Indian culture or the people except in the case of a few examples like Sri Lanka developed Buddhist Commentaries on the Pali Canon in Sinhalese that were later translated into Pali for the use of Buddhist monks in the Indian subcontinent²⁹⁰, Sri Lankan Buddhist monks have spread their faith in North India and the Deccan region²⁹¹, the Buddhist sacred places like Bodh Gaya have been controlled by the Sri Lankans throughout the ages and Sri Lankan Buddhist nuns

275 For instance see GC Mendis, *The early history of Ceylon*, YMCA Publishing House, fifth edition, Calcutta, 1948, pp.65-66; *Ceylon today and yesterday: Main currents of Ceylon History*, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, Colombo, 1957; M.D. Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese history society and culture*, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Asian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1969, especially the fourth chapter titled "The Indian period of Ceylon history."
 276 GC Mendis, *The early history of Ceylon*, YMCA Publishing House, fifth edition, Calcutta, 1948, pp.16-17.
 277 W Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in medieval times*, ed. Heinz Bechert, Wiesbaden, 1960, pp.75 and 92.
 278 M.D. Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese history society and culture*, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Asian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1969, especially the fourth chapter titled "The Indian period of Ceylon history."
 279 GC Mendis, *Ceylon today and yesterday: Main currents of Ceylon History*, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, Colombo, 1957.
 280 Hema Ellawala, *Social history of early Ceylon*, Department of Cultural Affairs, Government Printers, Colombo, 1969.
 281 *Ibid*; Nicholas's view is also the same. See CW Nicholas, "Professions and occupations in the early Sinhalese kingdom," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch) New Series*, 1956, p.70.
 282 GC Mendis, *Ceylon today and yesterday: Main currents of Ceylon History*, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, Colombo, 1957, p.29.
 283 W Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in medieval times*, ed. Heinz Bechert, Wiesbaden, 1960, pp.75 and 92.
 284 GS Gai, *Introduction to Indian Epigraphy*, Occasional Monograph Series No.32, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, 1986, pp.15-16 and 43.
 285 Wilhelm Geiger, "The linguistic character of Sinhalese," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, (Ceylon Branch)*, Vol.XXXIV, No.90, 1937, p.18; See also CE Godakumbura,

"The Dravidian element in Sinhalese," *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1946, pp.837-41; David Diringer, *The alphabet*, Hutchinson, London, Vol.I, 3rd ed, 1968, pp.303-304.

286 GC Mendis, *The early history of Ceylon and its relations with India and other foreign countries*, Asian Education Series, New Delhi, 1985, pp.9-10.

287 GC Mendis, *Ceylon today and yesterday: Main currents of Ceylon History*, The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, Colombo, 1957, p.29.

288 M.D. Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese history society and culture*, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Asian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1969, p.94.

289 Lorna Dewaraja, "Cultural relations between Sri Lanka and north India during the Anuradhapura period," *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. X, Nos. 1 & 2, 1987, p.2.

290 "It was found necessary to have the canonical literature that had till then existed in the form of Sinhala commentaries translated into Pali and treatises of exegetical nature compiled for the use of students of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and abroad. This responsible task was entrusted to a versatile scholar-monk named Buddhaghosa who came from the Tamil country" Gunapala Senadheera, "Cultural contacts between India and Sri Lanka through bhikkhus, scholars and pilgrims," *Sri Lanka and the silk road of the sea*, ed. S. Bandaranayake and others, The Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO and the Central Cultural Fund, Colombo, 1990, p.137.

291 J. Ph. Vogel, "Prakrit inscriptions from a Buddhist site at Nagargunakonda," *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XX, 1929-30, pp.1-37 & especially pp.9-10.

292 "Pasadika Jambudipe sasanena bahu jana" *The Dipavamsa*, ed. Hermann Oldenberg, London, 1879, chap.18; 31-33vv. For further details please refer to RALH Gunawardana, "Buddhist nuns in ancient and early medieval Sri Lanka and their role in the propagation of Buddhism," *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, Vol.XIV, No. 1&2, 1988, pp.1-60.

cast themselves in the role of missionaries in India²⁹². Hence it is clear that the civilisations of India and Sri Lanka followed lines of historical development, which were both interdependent and resonant though this has not been accepted by the ancient literary traditions of both countries.

Besides these ancient literary interpretations, it is significant that the early historians have also sometimes been shown to be erroneous particularly when speaking of the facts on Indo-Sri Lankan cultural relationship during the ancient period. This of course is in the natural order of things. With the increasing volume of new archaeological data and with more sophisticated techniques of historical research, earlier beliefs can become out dated. Hence, modern scholars will no doubt disagree with the early historian's above periodisation of the history of the island and the interpretations of the Indo-Sri Lankan cultural relations where the discussions follow the pattern of the early chronicles²⁹³. As a result, modern scholars are inclined to view the history of Sri Lanka from a different stance. Particularly historians today are looking more at the inner dynamism, which shaped the history and culture of the island and more importantly there is increasing evidence that the cultural horizons of Sri Lanka extended far beyond the confines of India.²⁹⁴

However, as in the case of the overall history or the cultural history of the island, it is evident that the situation is the same when considering the artistic traditions of Sri Lanka too. The descriptions given in the *Mahavamsa* are particularly important in this respect. Accordingly, king Asoka is said to have sent to Sri Lanka sixteen guilds of artisans with the sacred Bodhi tree in the third century BC²⁹⁵. Interestingly enough, this belief is recorded in some of the land grant manuscripts of the medieval and late medieval periods of Sri Lanka also. The information presented in these, particularly in relation to the Nilagama generation of painters is very important though the descriptions are legendary in nature²⁹⁶. Based on such random references it is generally believed that it was the contact with Mauryan India and the enthusiasm for the new faith of Buddhism that first inspired the Sri Lankan people to creative activity in the fields of art, architecture and sculpture. For instance, it is said that with the possible exception of a single dolmen and three groups of cists there are no structural remains so far brought to light that can be dated as pre-Buddhist remains²⁹⁷. It is also believed that the idea of using stone for building purposes and rock cave abodes for monks was also introduced from Mauryan India²⁹⁸. Interestingly enough, due to this belief it is evident that some writers have arrived at entirely wrong conclusions too. For example, though nothing has been mentioned regarding the representation of the life story of the Buddha in any source of India or Sri Lanka during this period, some writers have wrongly concluded that after Buddhism became established in Sri Lanka, artists came from India, sent by King Asoka, to depict the

life of the Buddha.²⁹⁹

At the same time, it is to be noted that many scholars have expressed the view that a very close affinity can be seen between the extinct artistic traditions of the two countries also.³⁰⁰ According to them, this close affinity is confirmed by the earliest Sri Lankan sculptures found at Kantaka cetiya in Mihintale, which are similar to the earliest school of Indian sculpture at Barhut and Sanchi³⁰¹. It is also believed that one can notice the connection with the mainland in sculptures now exhibited in the National Museum in Colombo and the archaeological museums at Anuradhapura and elsewhere in the island. Accordingly, these sculptures found in Sri Lanka are in the Amaravati style, for instance the Mahailuppallama image is in the style which is characteristic of the standing Buddha images of Anuradhapura; there is no doubt that it was fashioned in the Amaravati (Vengi) region and imported to Sri Lanka³⁰². In addition, it is said that the fragments of Buddha images in Amaravati style and in the marble distinctive of that school, have also been found at other places in the island and a number of bas-reliefs in this same marble, imported from the same source, have been found at Anuradhapura and other sites³⁰³. Besides, it is believed that the bronze Buddha statue from Badulla is also not very different from some of the metal images of Buddha of the Amaravati School³⁰⁴ and the figure of the so-called king Duttagamini from Anuradhapura too recalls contemporary Amaravati models, as does the monolithic seated Buddha³⁰⁵. It is further assumed that under the influence of the mainland, especially from the early Buddhist art of Amaravati, there are beautifully proportioned guard stones, dwarfs, snakes, with three, five or seven hoods, of exquisite workmanship at Anuradhapura.³⁰⁶

In this context, it is noteworthy that there is another belief that the Gupta imperial impulse was also as strong and enduring in its effects as the Asokan imperial impulse³⁰⁷. Consequently, it is presumed that the influence of the Indian Gupta sculpture was felt in the Isurumuniya elephant reliefs³⁰⁸ and the well-known relief of the Isurumuni lovers and other sculptures found at the same premises has the vigour and refinement of the Gupta period³⁰⁹. In addition to these artistic works of carvings and statues, it is a common assumption among scholars that this period witnessed the glory of classical Sanskrit literature too³¹⁰. Consequently, it is believed that a highly rated Sanskrit work composed in Sri Lanka by Kumaradasa known as the *Janakiharana* bears unmistakable influence of Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa*³¹¹. Besides, it is believed that carved on the face of a low cliff of granolithic boulders overhanging a partly artificial tank at the site, we may observe carvings in a 'pure Pallava style.' According to such critics, isolated in a kind of niche is a relief of the sage Kapila, seated on the plains of hell and not only are the proportions of the figure remarkably close to the work at Mamallapuram, but the suggestion of the form's emergence from the matrix of the rock is also in the same

293 W Geiger, Culture of Ceylon in medieval times, ed. Heinz Bechert, Wiesbaden, 1960, pp.xxii-xiii.

294 Senaka Bandaranayake, "The periodisation of Sri Lankan history and some related historical and archaeological problems," Asian panorama: Essays in Asian history, past and present, ed. KM De Silva and others, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990, p.5.

295 Mahavamsa, tr. W Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1934, chap.19; 1-4vv.

296 M Somathilake, An inquiry into the social status of the Buddhist mural painters of late medieval period of Sri Lanka, Paper read at Jawaharlal Nehru University, 28th August 1999, pp.2-6.

297 S Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the early period: Religion and art," University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, pt. I, 1959, p.256.

298 Andreas Nell, "The influence of Indian art in Ceylon," The influence of Indian art, ed. F.H. Andrews, The India Society, London, 1925, p.146.

299 Argns John Tresidder, Ceylon: An introduction to the resplendent land, D Van Nostrand co, Canada, 1960, p.199.

300 For further details please refer to M.D. Raghavan, India in Ceylonese history society and culture, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Asian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1969, pp.94-113; Andreas Nell, "The influence of Indian art in Ceylon" The influence of Indian Art, ed. F.H. Andrews, Delhi Printers Prakashan, Delhi, 1978.

301 S Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the early period: Religion and art," University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, pt. I, 1959, pp.264-265.

302 S Paranavitana, Sinhalayo, Lake House Investments, Colombo, 1967, p.18.

303 Ibid, p.18.

304 C Sivaramamurti, The art of India, (Translation of L'Art en Inde, 1974), Harry N Abrams Publishers, New York, 1977, p.196.

305 Ibid, p.196.

306 Mulk Raj Anand, India in colour, Themes and Hudson, London, 1958, pp.75-76.

307 Andreas Nell, "The influence of Indian art in Ceylon," The influence of Indian art, ed. F.H. Andrews, The India Society, London, 1925, pp.145-151.

308 Mulk Raj Anand, India in colour, Themes and Hudson, London, 1958, pp.75-76.

309 S Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the period: Religion, literature and art," University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, Part I, 1959, pp.393-394.

310 Ibid, pp.393-394.

311 See Lorna Dewaraja, "Cultural relations between Sri Lanka and north India during the Anuradhapura period," Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences, Vol. X, Nos. 1 & 2, 1987, p.19.

312 Benjamin Rowland, The art and architecture of India: Buddhist Hindu Jain, Penguin Books Ltd, USA, 1953, p.370.

technique.

Due to this belief, even contrary to the above assumption of the so-called Gupta influence on the Isurumuniya carvings, some others have concluded that the carvings of elephants at the site, submerged in a nearby pool of lotus-filled water, look like early Pallava carvings³¹². Similarly, though chronologically later, some have presumed that at Anuradhapura a dagoba of the first century BC has elephants as caryatids, a feature that is also found at Mahabalipuram and at Ellora belonging to the later periods³¹³. According to such critics, this close similarity between the artistic traditions of India and Sri Lanka is demonstrated not only through the stone sculpture, carving or architecture alone, but through the Buddhist wall painting tradition also³¹⁴. It is evident that in this assumption, some critics have gone to the extreme to express the

view that not only the painting tradition of ancient Sri Lanka borrowed from India, but that Sri Lankan artists were also trained by Indian artists.³¹⁵

In contrast, it seems that at least the cultural associations between the inhabitants of Sri Lanka and India are very ancient and have been continuous since prehistoric times, the geomorphology of the region permitting a relatively free flow of peoples and their cultures. It is, also evident that some of the cultural developments had close parallels with those taking place on the Indian mainland at least from the early historical period onwards. Accordingly, it is clear that the geographical location of Sri Lanka in relation to India is such that any major upheaval in the mainland, whether political, cultural or religious was bound to generate repercussions in the island, eventually.



313 C Sivaramamurti, *The art of India*, (Translation of L'Art en Inde, 1974), Harry N Abrams Publishers, New York, 1977, pp.195-196.
314 Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and architecture of India Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, Penguin Books, USA, 1953, pp.216 and 370; For further details please refer to Nandadeva Wijesekara, *Early Sinhalese paintings*, Saman Press, Maharagama, 1959, (especially second and sixth chapters); "Sinhalese art with special reference to Sigiriya," Selected writings, Tisara Press, Dehivala, 1983, pp.252-257; S Paranavitana, "Civilisation of the early period: Religion and art," University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, pt. I, 1959, pp.407-409; C.W. Nicholas & S. Paranavitana, *A concise history of Ceylon*, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, 1961; RC Majumdar, "Foundation of Gupta power in India and its relations with Ceylon," University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, ed. HC Ray and others, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, Vol.I, pt. I, 1959, p.273; M.D. Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese history society and culture*, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Asian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1969, p.94; Krishna Chaitanya, *A history of Indian painting: The mural tradition*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1976, p.51; V.A. Smith, *A history of fine arts in India and Ceylon*, D.B. Tharaporevala sons & co, Bombay, (reprinted) 1969, p.100; A Ghose, *Ajanta Murals: An album of eighty five reproductions in colour*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1967, p.17; Andreas Nell, "The influence of Indian art in Ceylon" *The influence of Indian Art*, ed. F.H. Andrews, Delhi Printers Prakashan, Delhi, 1978; GC Mendis, *The early history of Ceylon and its relations with India and other foreign countries*, Asian Education Series, New Delhi, 1985.

315 See M Somathilake, *Ancient Buddhist mural paintings of India and Sri Lanka*, Godage International Publishers, Colombo, 2002, pp.786.

Role of Sanskrit in the Cultural interface between Sri Lanka and India

Dr. Uma Shankaer Vyas



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Dr. Uma Shankar Vyas is Editor of Pali-English Dictionary in Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda. He has worked as Registrar and Director of Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda. He is M.A. in Sanskrit and also in Pali (Gold Medalist) from Banaras Hindu University (India). He is Ph.D. on the topic 'Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhism', Magadh University, Bodhgaya. He has also worked as Lecturer of Sanskrit and Pali in the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara for more than 30 years. He has also taught Buddhist Sanskrit texts to post-graduate students of Philosophy and scholars from abroad for more than 35 years. Prof. Vyas also visited Ryukoku University Kyoto, Japan, as Visiting Research Fellow in 1977, sponsored by Japan Society for the Promotion of Sciences (Ministry of Culture, Govt. of Japan). Under his supervision/guidance, more than 15 Indian 8 foreign research scholars got their Ph.D. degree from Magadh University in the Department of Pali, Sanskrit, Philosophy, and Ancient Indian & Asian Studies. He also researched on Central Asian Buddhist Manuscripts with Prof. T. Inokuchi of Ryukoku University, Kyoto (Japan). He has written three books on Buddhism and Pali language and another three books are under preparation. His more than 30 research papers on different aspects of Buddhism were published in different research journals of India.

First of all I, most humbly, would like to pay my respect and sincerely express sense of gratitude to those Mahatheras of Srilanka, who are mainly responsible for providing a solid ground for the revival of the study of Pali language and literature as well as Buddhist studies in modern India. For centuries we remained in total darkness about our own most precious national treasure of the Saddhamma and are highly indebted to the great Theriya-parapara of Srilanka, not only for faithfully preserving the earliest authentic version of the teachings of the Tathagata in the form of Pali Tipitaka but also adding new dimensions to it by composing great commentaries chronicles, compendiums, tikas, Anutikas and above all books on secular subjects like grammar, prosody, lexicon, poetics, medicine, poetry etc. and thereby enriching India's own national treasure in every respect.

Srilanka's traditional centers of Pali-learning are also the main sources even for modern-day Pali studies in India. Late Ven. Mahapandit Rahula Sakrityayana, Late Ven. Ananda Kausalyayana and Late Bhikkhu J. Kasyapa, are the three leading personalities who, after being well-equipped with the knowledge

of Pali in Srilanka, contributed immensely for the revival of Pali studies in Majjhima-desa or the Hindi-speaking heart-land of modern India. Nava Nalanda Mahavihara the institution dedicated for the revival of Pali studies was established in 1956 by the efforts of Late. Ven. Bhikkhu J. Kashyap, whose main source of inspiration was Srilanka. The publication of entire Pali Tipitaka in 42 vols. for the first time in an Indian alphabet is a natural outcome of the age-long cultural interface between Jambu-dvipa and Dhamma-dipa.

According to Oxford Dictionary interface means a point where two things meet and inter-act. In other words, every process of interface consists of reciprocal action or influence. Herein one acts in such a way as to have an effect on another. Here, it is essential to point out that the Sinhalese and Indians had close cultural ties even prior to the great historical mission of elder Mahinda. Linguistically Sinhali language was one of the member of Indo-Aryan family and ethnically Sinhelese were not different from the people of Lata-desa or majjhima-desa. Therefore, according to Prof. Malasekera, they had no problem in receiving the Dhamma of the Buddha from the mainland. "They had no difficulty in assimilating the philosophical culture of a religion, which have come into birth and attained to power in a country which they themselves claim as the motherland, they were Orasa-jata (blossom-born) children of India, their lives and minds nourished on her age-long, yet living and growing tradition".²

Elder Mahinda's visit to Srilanka was the first Cultural interface between India and Srilanka through Buddhism in which India played positive role and it had strong effect on the socio-religious culture of Srilanka. This process continued for centuries and by the end of 4th century Sinhalese were ready to pay back the debt with interest to mainland India. The compilation of Atthakathas in Pali are the living examples of this second cultural inter-action in which the Theravada tradition of Mahavihara played positive role.

It is essential to remember that when close cultural relations were strengthened during the reign of emperor Asoka and the Theravada parampara was firmly established in the land of Srilanka, after that anything against this orthodox tradition was outrightly rejected. On the other hand the traditional Theravada lost its ground in the mainland and was replaced by other Buddhist sects such as the Mahasanghikas, the Sammitiyas and the Sarvastivadins. Several doctrinal changes emerged in the Abhidhamma of these Buddhist sects. However, there are no evidences to prove any meaningful interaction between orthodox Buddhist church of Mahavihara of Srilanka and the new Buddhist schools developed in India. Xuan Zang,³ the famous Chinese traveler has given many details of the construction of Mahabodhi Sangharama at Bodhgaya by Ceylonese king Meghavanna. These details are confirmed by a copper plate inscription of the same king. From these details it is inferred that Ceylon monks (Orthodox Theravadins) were not held in high respect in India because their views were not accepted even by the Indian Buddhist Monks belonging to different sects which developed new AHIDHAMMA. The gap between Orthodox Theravada tradition and the later Buddhsit sects had grown wider and wider denying any possibility of any interaction between the two. We can see clear traces of this attitude even in Srilanka's

Theriyā Parampara represented by the Mahavihāra. “The disfavor with which Ceylon kings and monks viewed any encroachment by Vaitulya doctrines on the Theravāda Buddhism of the Island had made it impossible for much exchange of scholarship to take place between the two countries”.⁴

There are evidences to show that Vaitulya-Vāda and some form of Mahāyāna existed and become vital time to time in Ceylon, Fa-hien, the famous Chinese pilgrim, tells us that Mahavihāra monks were opposed to the Mahāyāna teachings and adhered to the teachings of Hīna-yāna. But in Abhayagiri school both vehicles were studied.⁵ Fa-hien took with him a copy of Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, Dirghagāma, Samyuttagāma and Samyutta-sāñcaya-pitaka, all written in Sanskrit.⁶ It shows that in Srilanka there existed school like Mahīśāsaka and Sanskrit was the language used by some Buddhist sects in Srilanka. According to Nikāya Sangraha, Mahādāliyatissa accepted the teachings of Dhammarucīnikāya of Vajjiputtaka sects in India and thenceforth the Abhayagiri school was known as Dhammruḥṇīnikāya.⁷

However no trace of their literature is left. Most probably the rulers of Ceylon, owing to their strong attachment to Theriyā Parampara saw to it that not a vestige of their heretical teachings should remain. There are many examples of the rigid attitude of the Theravadins against the thoughts of other Buddhist sects. In a passage of Samantapasādikā⁸ it is reported that during the reign of Srilankan king Bhatiya (38-66 A.D.) a dispute arose between the monks of the Abhayagiri and the Mahavihāra schools for a rule of the Vinaya. The king appointed a minister, the Brahmana Dīghakarāyana to decide the case. This Brahmanā was wise and versed in other languages: - “Pandito Bhasantarakusalo”.

Thus this person was not reputed for the knowledge of Vinaya rules but was proficient in languages. From this fact some scholars infer that the main reason of the differences between the monks of these two monasteries was more of a linguistic nature than of a doctrinal. The Abhayagiri Vihāra was greatly influenced by Mahāyāna in which the texts were preserved in Sanskrit, not in Pali. The choice of a Brahmana minister well versed in Sanskrit also confirms this hypothesis. There are also no traces of any impact of Srilanka’s Theriyā Parampara on the Philosophical writings of Vaibhatikas, Sautrantikas, Yogācāra and Madhyamika schools of Indian Buddhism.

It is probable that regular exchange of visits by Indian and Srilankan monks must have facilitated some sort of interaction between two nations. Although impact of these interactions are not clearly visible and is not firmly admitted by the Theravāda tradition of Srilanka, however major shift in the Atthakathas from the original position of the Tipitaka concerning the Buddhahood or Buddha-nature, the introduction of the process of cognition (citta-vithi) not discussed in the early Abhidhamma and installation of the icons of Buddha or the worship of the Buddha Pratima etc. seem to show some sort of impact of Indo-Ceylonese interface.

According to some⁹ western writers Buddhaghosa, who was acquainted with the developed Buddhist doctrines in India, has an interesting doctrine of the relations of sanna, (perception), vinnana and panna and gave idealistic interpretation of aspects of sensation and feeling which in the early writings was perceived as an interaction of material and psychic factors. The Vaibhatikas and Sautrantikas also accepted the real interaction of matter and mind in the process of knowing. It seems that Buddhaghosa accepted in effect vijñānavāda doctrine propounding that object of perception is mere subjective (ideal or reflection of mind). The concepts of Bhavātga and Citta-vithi also seem to be an outcome of the Indo-Ceylonese Cultural interface.

Age-long cultural interaction between India and Srilanka had deep impact on the linguistic aspects of Ceylonese culture. It may be seen clearly in the form of gradually increasing influence of Sanskrit Language on Sinhali and later Pali writings. In the linguistic survey of Srilanka it is clearly observed by scholars that besides Sinhali and Pali, Classical Sanskrit was gradually coming into use and rapidly became the medium for the study of scholarly secular works composed in India. It is interesting to observe that unlike Mahāyānist and Sarvastivādins of India Srilanka’s Theravadins did not replace Magadhi or Pali by Sanskrit, nor did they adopt hybrid or mixed Sanskrit which was adopted for the Mahāyāna sūtras in India. Most probably the adaptation of Sanskrit by Srilankans is not an outcome of the interaction between the Buddhists of India and Srilanka. It is assumed that intimate relations existed between the Tamils and the Sinhalese settlers from an early period of the history of Ceylon and their presence in the island might have proved helpful in attracting the intellectuals for the study of Sanskrit.

It seems probable that in the beginning Sanskrit language influenced the vocabulary and syntax of Sinhali. Soon after learning the elements of Sanskrit the Ceylonese writer introduced Sanskrit forms in their writings of high Sinhalese. Later on Sinhalese authors composed several works in pure Sanskrit. Buddhadasa a king of Srilanka, compiled his memorable work “Sarartha-sangraha in pure Sanskrit”. Candragomī vyākaraṇa pañjika and shabdārtha cīnta] these two works of Sanskrit grammar were written by Elder ratnashrijñāna also called ratnamatipada in about 11th Century A.D. Kumāra Dhātusena or Kumāradasa composed a melodious Sanskrit poem “Janakiharana.” Composition of such works in pure Sanskrit indicates that more attention began to be given to secular subjects and Sanskrit comes to be regarded as being of the first importance for that purpose.

The Ceylon Pali Writings of later periods –

Mahābodhivamsa, written in the last quarter of 10th century by a Ceylonese monk Upatissa marks the beginning of the period of Sanskritized Pali. There are distinct traces of the influences of Sanskrit on the Pali language of the book. Sometimes Pali words are used in their Sanskrit sense, sometimes we see the use of such Sanskrit words which are not found at all in the old Pali literature. Some of them are: -

- i) Udite Bhuvanasekhare¹¹
- ii) Parapata-carānapatalārage¹²

It is clear that the style of this work is different from earlier Sinhalese Pali writings. The style is artificial and the whole tone and manner of this work betray the beginning of a tendency to use a kind of Sanskritized Pali. Even the authors of such Pali works as Dāthavamsa and Saddhammopāyana make frequent use of such Pali words which were derived or phonetically transformed from Sanskrit. They turned into Pali several Sanskrit words they found either in Amarakosa or in the course of their readings of certain Sanskrit poetic compositions and used them as Pali words.

Use of words like Antarala,¹³ avadāta,¹⁴ camāpati,¹⁵ dhavala,¹⁶ Nāṭana,¹⁷ nikhīla,¹⁸ bhūwana,¹⁹ sarorūha,²⁰ dijapavara²¹ and jampati,²² etc., are the clear evidences of Sanskritization of Pali in latter Pali writings of Srilanka.

Uses of such words as samāta²³ (Sanskrit samāpta) cittañceti²⁴ instead of cittañāati, kriyācittāni²⁵ instead of kiriyā-cittāni and vuccare²⁶ in the Abhidhammatthasāngāho also indicate the same tendency.

Pali poetic compositions of Srilanka also had strong impact of ornamented Sanskrit poetry of later periods containing high-flown metaphors and ornately elaborated descriptions. In Jinalanakara of elder Buddhārakkhita we see clear traces of artificiality in construction with such poetic devices as internal rhymes and alliterations etc., For instance we see the artificiality of mere decoration of sounds in the following verse :-

*No nanino nanunani nanenani nananino
Nunanenani nunanna nananannanena*²⁷

it is clearly an imitation of the following Sanskrit verse of Kiratarjuniam: -

*nanonanunno nunnono nananananananananu
nunnoanunno nanunnenno nanena nunnanunna nuf*²⁸

According to Dhvanyaloka this is such type of poetry which has no charm of suggested element and is regarded as the lowest poetry and is called citrakavya or picture poetry: -

*rasabhavaditatparyarahitm
vya/ yarthavisheshaprakashanashnkashunyam ca kavyam kevala
vacyavacakavaicitramatrashrayenopanibaddhe
alekhyaprakhyam yadavabhasate taccitram*²⁹

Similarly Pajjamadhu of Buddhappiya Thera, is a beautiful poetic composition of Sanskritized Pali composed in ornate language. There are similar Pali compositions of Srilanka which are glaring examples of the linguistical interaction between India and Ceylon).

As a result of the deep interest in the study of Sanskrit more attention began to be given on secular subjects like prosody, poetics, grammar, lexicography, poetic compositions etc. Hitherto nothing was written on these secular subjects. Pali and Sinhalese works like Subodhalaṅkara Vuttodaya, Abhidhammappadipika, Balavatara and Siyabas-lakara were composed on the imitation of earlier Sanskrit works and can not claim to propound any original conception of the subject concerned. However being the only Pali writings on these secular subjects they are excellent contributions of the great monks-scholars of Srilanka for the enrichment of Pali

literature and the most remarkable outcome of the cultural interface between Srilanka and India.

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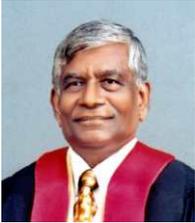
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Cultural Interface Between India And Sri Lanka Based on Buddhist History, Art, Literature And Philosophy

The Guiding Principles of Intellectual and Philosophical Thought
Introduced to Sri Lanka with Buddhism

Prof. P. D. Premasiri



Prof. P.D. Premasiri

Prof. P.D. Premasiri is Professor Emeritus of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. He did Master of Arts from the University of Cambridge, England. Later, he obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy from the University of Hawaii on the topic 'Moral Evaluation in Early Buddhism: From the Perspective of Western Philosophical Analysis. Visiting Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion, Colby College, Waterville, Maine, U.S.A. Courses Taught: (1) Buddhist Ethics, (2) Fact and Value. Commenced research on Christian Doctrinal approaches to Human Sexuality for purposes of comparison with Buddhism. He attended the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Religion held in Chicago. He also visited University of North Carolina, Asheville Campus, Austin Community College, Minnesota and University of Maine, Presque Isle Campus for lectures on Buddhist Philosophy on the Fulbright Occasional Lecture Program. He was appointed Visiting Professor, Department of Philosophy, Washington State University, U.S.A. from August 2004 to December 2004. He won the Prize for Pali subject awarded to the best student in the final degree examination, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. He got Government University Scholarship in Oriental Studies, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, East-West Center Scholarship for Post-Graduate work in Comparative Philosophy at the University of Hawaii, U.S.A., Fulbright Scholar-in-residence Fellowship attached to the Department of Philosophy and Religion, Colby College, Waterville Maine, Guest Researcher Award from the University of Bergen, Norway, and Baudhdhaloka Award for service to Buddhist learning in July 2006. He has written many books and articles on Buddhism.

There is no doubt that the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka during the reign of emperor Asoka of India marked a turning point in Sri Lankan culture. Although there is evidence to the effect that Indian culture had an impact on Sri Lankan society even before the introduction of Buddhism, it is clear that the distinctive character of Sri Lankan culture had its beginnings with the introduction of Buddhism in the third century BCE. It is possible that elements of Indian culture were present in Sri Lanka even prior to the introduction of Buddhism due to colonization that is likely to have taken place as early as the sixth or fifth centuries BCE by Indian tribes as related in the Sri Lankan chronicles in their reference to

the advent of Vijaya as marking the beginnings of the Sinhala race. However, it was after the introduction of Buddhism that a distinctively Buddhist culture with all the intellectual, philosophical, ethical, literary and aesthetic elements came to be established in the country maintaining its unbroken continuity to the present day despite the numerous vicissitudes of fortune that the country has gone through during its long recorded history. In this paper attention will be focused mainly on the intellectual and philosophical impact of Indian culture through the great religious and philosophical tradition that was introduced to Sri Lanka in the third century BCE turning Sri Lanka into the principal centre for Theravada Buddhism.

Ven. Walpola Rahula makes the observation: "Before Buddhism came to Ceylon in the third century B.C. there was evidently no national or state religion systematically organized in the Island. To use the words of Hiuen Tsiang, "the kingdom of Sinhala formerly was addicted to immoral religious worship"¹ There is evidence of the existence of primitive cults connected with spirit worship, deity worship and tree worship along with some of the more established religious groups representing the ramaa and Brhmana traditions of India.² Buddhism did not displace altogether those popular pre-Buddhist beliefs and cults that existed in Sri Lanka, but after its introduction to the country absorbed them into the popular ritualistic belief system and practices. Yet, the unique intellectual and empirical characteristics of the type of Buddhism introduced to Sri Lanka came to be preserved and deeply enriched in the continuing philosophical developments that took place in the country. Thus Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhism has a legitimate claim to have preserved and maintained the identity of the unique philosophical vision of the Buddha that originated in India and which was characterized by the founder himself as the philosophical Middle Way in order to distinguish it from other theories of reality.

When one considers the pre-Buddhist Indian religious and philosophical background Buddhism marks a clear break with the past in its intellectual and philosophical approaches. This, however, does not mean that pre-Buddhist Indian thought made no contribution to the philosophical principles that developed with the emergence of Buddhism. While recognizing the process of ideological development that took place in India even from the time of the civilizations of Mohenjodaro and Harappa the unique and distinctive contribution to world philosophy made by the Buddha cannot be ignored. A claim made by the Buddha in his very first encounter with an audience of five ascetics, who were prepared to listen to what he was intent on teaching at the deer park of Isipatana in Benares, soon after his enlightenment, was that he discovered truths that had not come down in previous authoritative and sacred traditions. He claimed that an altogether new vision, knowledge, science, and light had dawned upon him (*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapdi ñaṃ udapdi vijjā udapdi loko udapdi*).

He claimed to have become awakened to novel truths. These novel truths were considered to be subtle and comprehensible only to the wise (*nipuo paitavedanyo*).

The Buddhist historiography of Sri Lanka has reported the historic introduction of Buddhism to the Island giving special emphasis to the point that the new vision introduced to the country was considered by the very persons who introduced it as one which required intelligence and clear thinking for its proper comprehension. The Buddha, in his own words did emphasize that his teaching is for those with wisdom and not for those deficient in wisdom (*paññavato ayaṃ dhammo nyaṃ dhammo duppaññassa*).³ The Samantapsdikā giving a detailed account of the encounter between King Devnampiyatissa and Arahant Mahinda on Missaka mountain mentions that the latter introduced the group of visitors that took the king by surprise as recluses, disciples of the Dhamma Lord (*dhammarjassa savak*) who had arrived from Jambudpa for the sake of nothing else but through compassion for the king and the inhabitants of the Island. They made it clear that they had come to introduce to the land the teaching of the enlightened Buddha.

Before presenting the teaching, Arahant Mahinda is reported to have put certain questions to the king in order to test his intelligence (*atthi nu kho rañño paññiveyyattiyanti vmasanattiya*). The following passage from the Samantapsdika which gives the series of questions put to the king by Arahant Mahinda clearly illustrates the intellectual prerequisites for the understanding of an enlightened teaching as that of the Buddha's:

“Great king, what is the name of this tree?”
 ‘Sir, it is called a mango tree.’
 ‘Apart from this mango tree are there, or are there not other mango trees?’
 ‘There are Sir, many other mango trees’
 ‘Apart from this mango tree and those mango trees, are there other trees?’
 ‘There are, Sir, but they are not mango trees.’
 ‘Apart from those other mango trees and non-mango trees, is there another tree?’
 ‘Sir it is this tree.’⁴

It is clear that in this instance the king's ability to engage in clear thinking without deriving logically contradictory or invalid conclusions from given premises was tested. It could be counted as an elementary test in applied class logic. Arahant Mahinda by means of the simple test was able to be convinced that the king was able to reason validly on questions relating to class inclusion and class exclusion. The class of trees includes mango trees, but the class of mango trees excludes trees that belong to other kinds. However in whatever class or kind a tree is included it is included in the genus called trees. A particular mango tree is one member among a kind that shares similar characteristics while all trees including mangoes belong to a universal genus sharing the defining characteristics of trees. The king was able to see clearly these formal relationships proving to be a suitable recipient of the Enlightened One's teaching.

It is to be noted here that by the time Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka, the analytical method for the purpose of gaining a clear and penetrative understanding of the Buddha's teaching had already developed among the Indian Buddhist schools. This method had its beginnings with the original teachings of the Buddha himself. In the *Subha Sutta* of the *Majjhimanikya* the Buddha is questioned by the young man of *Todeyya* named Subha as to whether it is the case that only a person who has renounced the world can attain the wholesome spiritual states considered to be attainable in the Buddhist teaching or whether even people living a household life could attain them. The Buddha says here that he is

someone who does not over-generalize regarding questions put to him giving categorical answers to every question, but resolves issues approaching

them analytically (*vibhajjavdo kho ahamettha, mnava; nhamettha ekasavdo*).⁵ The Buddha is known to have responded to questions put to him in four ways (1) providing categorical answers to some questions (*ekasavykaraya*), (2) providing analytical answers to others (*vibhajjavvykaraya*), (3) providing an answer to the questioner by counter questioning him (*paipucchvykaraya*) and finally (4) putting aside the question considering the question itself as a logically confused and unfit question (*hapanya*). In the Kathvatthu Sutta of the Aguttaranikya the Buddha says that an intelligent conversation can be carried out with another person only if such a person is proficient in discriminating between these ways of dealing with an issue.⁶

According to Theravda literary sources, at the third council held primarily under the leadership of the Theravda teachers, and under the patronage of King Asoka, an attempt was made to rid the Buddhist community of persons holding heretical doctrines who had entered it for the material benefits that they anticipated by being with the Buddhist community. It is reported that the process of cleansing took place by ascertaining at the council how they conceived the Buddha's theoretical standpoint in his teachings about reality. According to this account only those who rightly affirmed from the Theravda perspective that the Buddha was an analyst (*vibhajjavdo*), were permitted to remain as members of the community.⁷ Analysis is seen as a frequently followed method by the Buddha himself in presenting his teachings. The Buddha adopted certain categories of analysis of reality that became standard modes of analysis, which were later elaborated in the Abhidhamma of the Theravda tradition with sharper and deeper analysis. There are many discourses of the Buddha, and by his immediate disciples preserved in the Suttapiaka of the Pali canon that have *vibhaga* as part of their title, indicating that their main role is the analysis of important doctrinal concepts. This feature continued as an unbroken Buddhist scholastic tradition in Sri Lanka since Buddhism was introduced to the country, in the developments of Abhidhamma analysis that occurred in the Pali commentarial literature as well as in the literature of the Abidhamma compendiums and their commentaries and sub-commentaries until Buddhist scholarship suffered due to unsettled political conditions in the country from about the

12th century. It is appropriate to call the type of Buddhism that Sri Lanka inherited from India, a religious philosophy of analysis.

An analytical and rational approach also demands the kind of intellectual outlook that seeks to gain clarity about issues through seeing the relation between ideas without falling into contradictions. This outlook also can be traced to the teachings of the Buddha himself. When the Buddha entered into discussions with some persons who came to him with the sole intention of demolishing some of the principle assertions that he made about the nature of reality, he dismissed their arguments and theses, by showing the obvious mutual contradictions in the positions that they were trying to defend.⁸ If someone directly denies or says something which implies a denial of what one formerly affirmed in a latter statement or vice versa (*na sandhyati purimena vā pacchima, pacchimena vā purima*),⁹ it is good reason to reject the thesis put forward by such a person due to the obvious inconsistency contained therein. Consistency in one's assertions was considered by the Buddha as a necessary condition of truth although it was not considered to be a sufficient condition.

The great veneration in which the Abhidhamma teachings were held in Sri Lanka Theravda Buddhism derives from this intellectual attitude which valued consistency and non-confusion of issues on the part of those who teach and study Buddhism. The Theravda commentator, Buddhaghosa in his introduction to the commentary to the Dhammasagāi, the first book of the Abhidhamma Piaka, mentions the Traditional Theravda attitude towards those who wanted to devalue the Abhidhamma teachings. It is pointed out in this context that it is in fact a person who is conversant with the Abhidhamma who can truly be an expounder of the Dhamma.¹⁰ Others, although they may attempt to expound the Dhamma are likely to confuse matters. The Abhidhamma promoted the most refined and developed standards of analytical sharpness, logical consistency, and definitional clarity regarding the Buddha's teachings. Enough examples of the above can be noted in Abhidhamma texts like the Dhtukathā and the Yamaka of the Abhidhamma Piaka.¹¹ When we reflect on the reported encounter between Arahan Mahinda and King Tissa in this light we can better

understand the purpose of the intelligence test to which the king was subjected mentioned in this context before the Buddhist teaching was introduced to him. Thus one aspect of intellectualized Buddhism is the keen awareness of the principles of formal reasoning. The keen awareness of the principles of formal reasoning was applied in the exposition and clarification of the Dhamma. It helped the Buddhist intellectual to achieve much skill in applied logic which is a necessary foundation for all rational and unconfused thinking in the search for and the establishment of truth.

Another aspect which is notable is the empirical, or in wider terms, the experiential approach promoted in Buddhism. The choice of the Cahatthipadopama Sutta as the first discourse of the Buddha to be introduced to King Devnampiyatissa by Arahan Mahinda was not arbitrary. It shows that practically relevant truth could be attained not merely by the exercise of reason. It requires in addition observation of matters of fact. Reason could help us in the formulation of consistent hypothesis, but the confirmation of hypothesis has to depend on observation and experience. The Cahatthipadopama Sutta presents a method of arriving at truth that seems very similar to the modern scientific procedure of confirming an initial hypothesis through a gradual process of finding relevant empirical evidence.¹²

The Cahatthipadopama Sutta, mentions of a Brahmin named Jussoi who came to the Buddha having heard of his reputation as an exceptionally wise teacher. Just before coming to the Buddha and entering into a discussion with him, Brahmin Jussoi had met a Paribbjaka (an itinerant recluse) named Pilotika who praised the Buddha as a person having unequalled wisdom. He says that just as a skilled wild elephant trapper who enters into a forest inhabited by elephants and observes the large foot print of an elephant would conclude that there is in the forest a huge bull elephant, having observed certain qualities of the Buddha, he had come to the conclusion that the Buddha is of unequalled wisdom. When Brahmin Jussoi reports this matter to the Buddha, the Buddha points out that Pilotika's is not an infallible way of arriving at a conclusion. The Buddha teaches here a more dependable method of establishing a hypothesis. He says that one should not rush to a conclusion based on inadequate evidence. It is possible that

the footprint one has observed is of one of the stunted she-elephants, having broad feet. If one were to follow those footprints one might find signs of branches of tall trees of the forest having been broken off. Those foot prints could be of she elephants having

tall enough feet to reach branches of high trees. Following these footprints one might proceed further and observe tree trunks having been torn off in high places. Still it could be by she elephants in the forest, having high protruding tusks. Finally, when one proceeds further and sees with one's own eyes a huge bull elephant resting under the foot of a tree one should find one's original hypothesis to be confirmed. The Buddha points out that regarding his teaching a person should go through the prescribed path and finally come to a conclusion about the Buddha's enlightenment after personally verifying the truths he declared through his enlightened vision. The characteristics of the Dhamma as described in Buddhism are its openness to immediate verification, and that it is to be personally known by the wise through direct insight (*sandihiko, paccattaṃ veditabbo viññhi*). *Anyone could be confidently invited to come and see its truth (ehipassiko)*. These obviously are characteristics of any scientific enterprise. Thus we observe that with the introduction of Buddhism in the third century B.C.E. Sri Lanka inherited an enlightened philosophy that recognized the role of critical reason and empirical observation, which are the two most significant foundations of modern scientific inquiry, several centuries prior to the emergence of such an intellectual tradition in the Western world.

One final remark needs to be made about the uniqueness of the philosophy which was introduced to Sri Lanka. It was a philosophy of the Middle Way. The Buddha in his teachings insisted that he steered clear of two philosophical extremes in his formulation of the right view about the nature of reality.¹³ There is sufficient reason to say that even to this day, apart from those who take an agnostic or skeptical attitude to philosophy, one or the other of what the Buddha described as the two extremes dominate the thinking of mankind. The first is the extreme of eternalism (*sassatavda*). The second is the extreme of materialism or nihilism (*ucchedavda*). This unique feature of the Buddha's teaching has been preserved to this day during the course of several centuries of development of Buddhist philosophy in Sri Lanka. Theravda Buddhism in Sri Lanka

consistently maintained a doctrine of no-self (anatt). It is to be noted that Buddhist traditions that developed in the Indian context after the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka veered towards the absorption of substantialist and essentialist doctrines from which the Buddha wished to dissociate himself. The Middle Way philosophy of the Buddha provided a vision of reality in terms of the notion of Dependent Arising (*paiccasamuppda*). The Buddha's concept of Dependent Arising rules out the notion of ultimate essences. The entire universe of reality is conceived as an interdependent and mutually related whole. It is to the credit of Theravda philosophy that continued to develop in Sri Lanka that it was able to preserve this uniqueness of the Buddha's vision without exposing itself to the strong influence of substantialist tendencies of other Indian schools of Buddhism. One concrete example for this is the atomic theory of matter that developed in philosophical schools of Buddhism. With regard to this, Theravda philosophy did give in neither to the idealism characteristic of those Indian schools of Buddhism that rejected material existence altogether, nor to the essentialist doctrine of Sarvstivda Buddhism that maintained the notion of ultimate material essence in its concept of *dravya paramu*. Theravda introduced the concept of material clusters, rejecting the notion of a single ultimate material essence that constitutes the material reality of existence.¹⁴ Theravda Buddhism in Sri Lanka always remained faithful to the Middle Way philosophy of the Buddha which conceived of the fluxional process of mind and matter as well as the constituent elements of mind in itself and matter in itself as rolling on in terms

of a system of dynamic mutual relationships, unexplainable by the superimposition of any substantial essences or entities.

In summing up the foregoing discussion the following fundamental characteristics of the teaching of the Enlightened One inherited from the Theravada tradition of Buddhism introduced to Sri Lanka, and consistently maintained in this country may be highlighted. First, it was a unique philosophy of the Middle Way, established on the basis of the novel vision of the Buddha into Dependent co-arising (paiccasamuppda). In the teaching and study of this new vision the highest standards in keeping to the fundamental principles of valid formal or logical reasoning have been maintained. Moreover, acute and sharp analytical skills have been used in achieving clarity about the

doctrinal concepts. The experiential approach that characterized the early teaching has always been upheld, emphasizing that the mere study of the teaching (pariyatti) is inadequate to realize the Buddhist goal but it is necessary also to put it into practice (paipatti) and directly find confirmation of it in one's life experience (paivedha).

¹ History of Buddhism in Ceylon (M.D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd. Colombo, 1956) p. 34.

² Ibid. Chapter III.

³ Aguttaranikya (Ahakanipta-Gahapativagga) 4 Samantapsdikā (Pali Text Society, London) Vol. I, p.74)

⁵ Majjhimanikya (P.T.S.) Subha Sutta

⁶ Aguttaranikya

⁷ Samantapsdikā (P.T.S. Vol. I, p.61.

⁸ Majjhimanikya (P.T.S.) vol. I, pp. 227f.

⁹ Ibid. p. 232.

¹⁰ Atthaslinī (P.T.S.) pp. 28-29.

¹¹ See Dhtukathā (PTS) P. 2 ff. for Abhidhamma explanations regarding how each aggregate, sense field and element is related in terms of inclusion and exclusion to other aggregates, sense fields and elements. See also Yakaka (P.T.S.) p. 3ff. for the application of class logic in defining the exact boundaries of Buddhist concepts. ¹² Majjhimanikya (P.T.S.) Vol. I, pp. 175f.

¹³ Sayuttanikya (P.T.S.) Vol. II, p. 17.

¹⁴ See Y. Karunadasa Theravada Abhidhamma: An Inquiry Into the Nature of Conditioned Reality (Centre of Buddhist Studies, University of Hongkong 2010) Chapter 15.



Venerable Buddhaghosa's view on Morality (*Sila*) as described in the *Visuddhimagga*

Dr. Ram Kumar Rana



Dr. Ram Kumar Rana

Dr. Ram Kumar Rana, is working as Associate Professor in the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi (India). He is associated with this Department since 1979 when he got admission to pursue his post graduation in Buddhist Studies after completion of his graduation. He has got all his higher degrees in Buddhist Studies like M. A., M. Phil., and Ph. D. from Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi. During his doctoral research period, he studied in Peoples Republic of China and got training in Chinese Language and Literature along with other aspects of Chinese Buddhism. He was appointed as Lecturer in the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi after he has returned from Peoples Republic of China in 1990. He is having teaching experience of almost 20 years. In University of Delhi, his job profile in the Department, is to teach students of post graduation and supervise those research scholars who are pursuing their M. Phil. and Ph.D courses. Apart from the teaching assignments, he is also associated with the Departmental journal named Buddhist Studies. He is Editor of one of the volume of the Departmental journal. He has presented research papers on numerous occasions on different aspects of Buddhism from time to time in many conferences of national and international repute in India and abroad.

Cultural relations between India and Sri Lanka have been traditionally close and intense, reflecting cultural and religious ties that transcend recorded history. Relating back to the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, the Pitakas or the teachings of the Buddha which were being handed down orally were committed to writing in 397 b.e. (89 BCE) and the commentaries on these, composed in Sinhalese, were also committed to writing at same time. By about 896 b.e. (410 a.c.), when King Mahanama (410-432) reigned at Anuradhapura, the fame of Buddhist literature in Sri Lanka was well recognized throughout India and tradition

mentions Sinhalese Buddhist monks visiting India, China and other countries and introducing the literature produced in Sri Lanka. Monks from India and China also visited Anuradhapura during this time to procure Buddhist books. It was about this time that Buddhaghosa Thera came to Sri Lanka in the reign of King Mahanama who succeeded to the throne 79 years after the death of King Sirimeghavanna, during whose reign the Sacred Tooth Relic was brought to Sri Lanka. The compilation of the Pali Atthakatha (commentaries) by Buddhaghosa Thera is an important event in the annals of Sri Lanka, which marks the progress of Buddhism. Buddhaghosa was a 5th century Indian Theravadin Buddhist commentator and scholar, who is best known for his work the *Visuddhimagga*, or Path of Purification, which is a comprehensive summary and analysis of the Theravada understanding of the Buddha's path to liberation. The interpretations provided by Buddhaghosa have generally constituted the orthodox understanding of Theravada scriptures since at least the 12th century CE. He is generally recognized by both Western scholars and Theravadins as the most important commentator of the Theravada.

Life story of Buddhaghosa is still a mystery. The Sri Lankan chronicle entitled the *Culavamsa* (Thirteenth century) and the biography of Buddhaghosa, the *Buddhaghosuppatti* (compiled by the Burmese monk Mahamangala during the early part of the fifteenth century), speak of Buddhaghosa as the native of Bodhagaya. Limited reliable information is available about the life of Buddhaghosa. Three primary sources of information exist: short prologues and epilogues attached to Buddhaghosa's works; details of his life recorded in the *Mahavamsa*, a Sri Lankan chronicle; and a later biographical work called the *Buddhaghosuppatti*.⁵ A few other sources discuss the life of Buddhaghosa, but do not appear to add any reliable material.⁶ The biographical excerpts attached to works attributed to Buddhaghosa reveal relatively few details of his life, but were presumably added at the time of his actual composition.⁷ Largely identical in form, these short excerpts describe Buddhaghosa as having come to Sri Lanka from India, and settled in Anuradhapura.⁸ Besides this information, they provide only short lists of teachers, supporters, and associates of Buddhaghosa, whose names are not generally to be found elsewhere for comparison.⁹ The *Mahavamsa* records that Buddhaghosa was born into a Brahmin family in the kingdom of Magadha. He is said to have been born near Bodh Gaya, and to have been a master of the Vedas, traveling through India engaging in philosophical debates.¹⁰ Only upon encountering a Buddhist monk named Revata was Buddhaghosa bested in debate, first being defeated in a dispute over the meaning of a Vedic doctrine, and then being confounded by the presentation of a teaching from the *Abhidhamma*. Impressed, Buddhaghosa became a Buddhist monk and undertook the study of the *Tipitaka* and its

¹H.R. Perera, "Buddhism in Sri Lanka: A Short History", Access to Insight, June 7, 2010, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/perera/wheel1100.html>.

²V. Hinüber, Oskar (1996), *A Handbook of Pali Literature*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., p. 103) is more specific, estimating dates for Buddhaghosa of 370–450 CE based on the *Mahavamsa* and other sources. Following the *Mahavamsa*, (Bhikkhu Nāamoli 1999, p. xxvi) places Buddhaghosa's arrival as coming during the reign of King Mahanama, between 412 and 434 CE. Also see Strong, John, 2004, "Buddhaghosa", in Buswell, Jr., Robert E., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, USA: Macmillan Reference USA, p. 75.

³Crosby, Kate (2004), "Theravada", in Buswell, Jr., Robert E., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, USA: Macmillan Reference USA, pp. 837.

⁴V. Hinüber, Oskar (1996), *A Handbook of Pali Literature*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., p. 102. Following the *Mahavamsa*, Bhikkhu Nāamoli (1999), "Introduction", in Buddhaghosa; Bhikkhu Nāamoli, trans., *Visuddhimagga: The*

Path of Purification, Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society, p. xxvi) places Buddhaghosa's arrival as coming during the reign of King Mahanama, between 412 and 434 CE. Also see (Strong, John (2004), "Buddhaghosa", in Buswell, Jr., Robert E., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, USA: Macmillan Reference USA, p. 75.

⁵ Bhikkhu Nāamoli (1999), "Introduction", in Buddhaghosa; Bhikkhu Nāamoli, trans., *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society, p. xxviii.

⁶ v. Hinüber, Oskar (1996), *A Handbook of Pali Literature*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., p. 102.

⁷ V. Hinüber, Oskar (1996), *A Handbook of Pali Literature*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.,

. 102. And Bhikkhu Nāamoli (1999), "Introduction", in Buddhaghosa; Bhikkhu Nāamoli, trans., *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society, p. xxix.

commentaries. On finding a text for which the commentary had been lost in India, Buddhaghosa determined to travel to Sri Lanka to study a Sinhalese commentary that was believed to have been preserved there.¹¹ However, Buddhaghosa's own writings indicate that he was living somewhere in South India, which is close to Nagarjunakonda, before his trip to Sri Lanka. This means that he was closely associated with the centers of Buddhist learning in south India. Consequently, he joined the Order of Buddhist monks and studied Buddhist philosophy diligently and produced a treatise on Buddhism, *Nanodaya and Atthasalini*.¹² Before composing the commentaries on the *Abhidhamma* and the *Suttas*, his teacher advised him to go to Anuradhapura where not only the Tipitaka but also the Sinhalese commentaries and various expositions of the teachings of immense value and high repute were preserved.

After his arrival in Sri Lanka, Buddhaghosa Thera, made request of access to the books and the same were placed at his disposal for the preparation of Pāli commentaries. But, before conceding to his request, the elder monks sought to first test Buddhaghosa's knowledge, by assigning him the task of elaborating the doctrine regarding two verses of the *suttas*; Buddhaghosa replied by composing the *Visuddhimagga*.¹³ His abilities were further tested when deities intervened and hid the text of his book, twice forcing him to recreate it from scratch.¹⁴ When the three texts were found to completely summarize all of the *Tripitaka* and match in every respect, the monks acceded to his request and provided Buddhaghosa with the full body of their commentaries.¹⁵ Buddhaghosa's commentaries subsequently became the standard method by which the Theravada scriptures were understood. Thus, establishing Buddhaghosa as the definitive interpreter of the Theravada doctrine.¹⁶ In Sri Lanka, Buddhaghosa began to study what was apparently a very large volume of commentarial texts that had been assembled and preserved by the monks of the Mahavihara.¹⁷ Buddhaghosa sought permission to synthesize the assembled Sinhalese-language commentaries into a comprehensive single commentary composed in the Pali language.¹⁸

In later years, Buddhaghosa's fame and influence inspired various accolades. His life story was recorded, in an expanded and likely exaggerated form, in a Pali chronicle known as the *Buddhaghosuppatti*, or "The Development of the Career of Buddhaghosa". Despite the general belief that he was Indian by birth, he later may have been claimed by the Mon people of Burma as an attempt to assert primacy over Sri Lanka in the development of Theravada tradition. Other scholars believe that the Mon records refer to another figure, but whose name and personal history are much in the mold of the Indian Buddhaghosa. Finally, Buddhaghosa's works likely played a significant role in the revival and preservation of the Pali language as the scriptural language of the Theravada, and as a lingua franca in the exchange of ideas, texts, and scholars between Sri Lanka and the Theravada countries of mainland Southeast Asia. The development of new analyses of Theravada doctrine, both in Pali and Sinhalese, seems to have dried up prior to Buddhaghosa's emergence in Sri Lanka. In India, new schools of Buddhist philosophy, such as the Mahayana, were emerging, many of them making use of classical Sanskrit both as a scriptural language and as a language of philosophical discourse. The monks of the Mahavihara may have attempted to counter the growth of such schools by re-emphasizing the study and composition in Pali, along with the study of previously disused

secondary sources that may have vanished in India, as evidenced by the Mahavamsa. Early indications of this resurgence in the use of Pali as a literary language may be visible in the composition of the *Dipavamsa* and the *Vimuttimagga*, both dating to shortly before Buddhaghosa's arrival in Sri Lanka. The addition of Buddhaghosa's works- which combined the pedigree of the oldest Sinhalese commentaries with the use of Pali, a language shared by all of the Theravada learning centers of the time- provided a significant boost to the revitalization of the Pali language and the Theravada intellectual tradition, possibly aiding the Theravada school in surviving the challenge to its position posed by emerging Buddhist schools of mainland India.

Buddhaghosa went on to write commentaries on most of the other major books of the Pali Canon, with his works becoming the definitive Theravadin interpretation of the scriptures.¹⁹ Having synthesized or translated the whole of the Sinhalese commentary preserved at the Mahavihara, Buddhaghosa reportedly returned to India, making a pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya to pay his respects to the bodhi tree.²⁰ The details of the Mahavamsa account cannot readily be verified; while it is generally regarded by Western scholars as having been embellished with legendary events, such as the hiding of Buddhaghosa's text by the gods, in the absence of contradictory evidence it is assumed to be generally accurate.²¹ While the Mahavamsa claims that Buddhaghosa was born in northern India near Bodh Gaya, the epilogues to his commentaries make reference to only one location in India as being a place of at least temporary residence: Kanci in southern India.²² Some scholars thus conclude, among them Oskar von Hinüber and A.P. Buddhadatta, that Buddhaghosa was actually born in southern India, and was relocated in later biographies to give him closer ties to the region of the Buddha.

The *Visuddhimagga* opens with the verse, based on the query of a certain deity. The *Visuddhimagga* provided special platform to Buddhaghosa for interpretation of Buddhavacana in more scientific manner, to answer the substantialist as well as essentialist standpoints of the Sarvastivadins and Sautantrikas. The Buddhaghosa has adopted the system of defining concepts with the help of fourfold definition which demonstrates Buddhaghosa's capacity to harmonize several strands of thought that had by then emerged in the Buddhist tradition. The categories that created much controversy among Buddhists are: the elaborating the doctrine regarding two verses of the *suttas*; Buddhaghosa replied by composing the *Visuddhimagga*.¹³ His abilities were further tested when deities intervened and hid the text of his book, twice forcing him to recreate it from scratch.¹⁴ When the three texts were found to completely summarize all of the *Tripitaka* and match in every respect, the monks acceded to his request and provided Buddhaghosa with the full body of their commentaries.¹⁵ Buddhaghosa's commentaries subsequently became the standard method by which the Theravada scriptures were understood. Thus, establishing Buddhaghosa as the definitive interpreter of the Theravada doctrine.¹⁶ In Sri Lanka, Buddhaghosa began to study what was apparently a very large volume of commentarial texts that had been assembled and preserved by the monks of the Mahavihara.¹⁷ Buddhaghosa sought permission to synthesize the assembled particular or the unique (*sabhava-svabhava*) and the universal or the abstract (*samanna-samanya*) are here introduced under the guise of characteristics (*lakkhana*) and came to be identified as such in later manuals. The

⁸ Bhikkhu Nāamoli (1999), "Introduction", in Buddhaghosa; Bhikkhu Nāamoli, trans., *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society, p. xxix-xxx.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. xxxiv.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² http://www.palikanon.com/english/pali_names/b/buddhagosa.htm

¹³ Strong, John, 2004, "Buddhaghosa", in Buswell, Jr., Robert E., *Macmillan Encyclopedia*

of Buddhism, USA: Macmillan Reference USA, p. 76.

¹⁴ Bhikkhu Nāamoli (1999), "Introduction", in Buddhaghosa; Bhikkhu Nāamoli, trans., *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society, p. xxxv.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Strong, John (2004), "Buddhaghosa", in Buswell, Jr., Robert E., *Macmillan Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, USA: Macmillan Reference USA*, p. 76.

¹⁷ Bhikkhu Nāamoli (1999), "Introduction", in Buddhaghosa; Bhikkhu Nāamoli, trans., *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society, p. xxxii.

second definition, in terms of quality (*rasa*), enabled Buddhaghosa to accommodate the description of an event entity or things in terms of its function. This definition was very significant even in the discourse of the Buddha. The third condition, manifestation (*paccupatthana*) is more teleological in implication. The problems created by the previous essentialist interpretation probably called for such a definition, which eventually strengthened the essentialist stand by assigning specific goals for each of the processes assumed in the second condition. The fourth condition, foundation (*Padatthana*), tightens the entire typological process by indicating definite conditions under which the event takes place. It is in some sense a counter — factual required by the first of the condition. It is the foundation that specifies the conditions necessary for an event to occur.

The above definitions may appear to be harmless so long as Buddhaghosa's endeavor was to explain the empirical constituents and conditions of morality (*sila*). The fourfold definition is intended to determine the precise meaning of morality that is to answer the various questions dealing with different aspects of morality. Just as the bamboos are entangled by the bamboo tangle, the living beings are interlaced by the tangle of craving. The solution to disentangle this networking, at the query of a certain deity was unraveled by the Buddha in the *Samyutta Nikaya* thus: "Established well in the foundation of virtue, and developed concentration and insight, an ardent and sagacious *bhikkhu*²⁴ successfully disentangles this tangle".²⁵ In other words, standing on the ground of virtue and taking up with the hand of protective-understanding exerted by the power of energy the knife of insight-understanding wellsharpened on the stone of concentration, might disentangle, cut away and demolish all the tangle of craving that had overgrown his own life's continuity.²⁶

It was based on this stanza that Buddhaghosa has compiled his best known work, the *Visuddhimagga*, the Path to purification. It is also acknowledged as a comprehensive summary and analysis of the *Theravada* understanding of the Buddha's path to liberation²⁷. By purification, it refers to nibbana, which is utterly pure, being devoid of all stains. The author has pinpointed that of the three trainings of the dispensation (*sasana*), virtue is the beginning and it is good as it brings about the special qualities of non-remorse²⁸ and so on. For this reason, the scholars have claimed that *sila*, at the psychological level, brings harmony to the mind, protection from the inner split caused by guilt and remorse over moral transgressions.²⁹ Concentration, which is the middle of the dispensation, is good because it brings about supernormal-power and so on, whereas understanding which serves as the culmination brings about equipoise with respect to the desired and the undesired.³⁰

This paper, Venerable Buddhaghosa's view on virtue will be an attempt to explore by interpreting the concept, along with its characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause while highlighting its role and benefits by cleansing and defiling, and categorizing as for the laity and the monastic. Though the training in moral discipline is listed first among the three groups of practices, it should not be regarded lightly. It is the foundation for the entire path, essential for the success of the other trainings. The Buddha himself frequently urged his disciples to adhere to the rules of discipline, "seeing danger in the slightest fault." One time, when a monk approached the Buddha and asked for the training in brief, the Buddha told him: "First establish yourself in the starting point of wholesome states, that is, in purified moral discipline and in right view. Then, when your moral discipline is purified and your view straight, you should practise the four foundations of mindfulness".³¹

Buddhaghosa has elucidated virtue as 'the states beginning with volition present in one who abstains from killing living things, etc., or in one who fulfils the practice of the duties'.³² Herein, he has quoted the *Patisambhidamagga* which classifies virtue as volition (*cetana sila*), virtue as consciousnessconcomitant (*cetāsika sila*), virtue as restraint (*samvara sila*) and virtue as non-transgression (*avittikama sila*).³³ According to Buddhaghosa, morality refers to 'volition' (*cetana*), representing seven volitions that accompany the first seven of the ten courses of action³⁴ that constitute abstaining from three bodily actions and four verbal actions.³⁵ Simply speaking, it refers to the thought of a person who abstains from killing, etc. Three other remaining mental actions consisting of non-covetousness, non-ill will and right view pertains to 'volition as consciousness concomitant'³⁶ where the author has cited the teaching from the *Digha Nikaya*, 'abandoning covetousness, he dwells with mind free from covetousness'³⁷.

Characteristic, Function, Manifestation and Proximate cause of virtue

In the exposition of virtue, the commentator has applied the same scheme of fourfold analysis: characteristics (*lakkhana*), function (*rasa*), manifestation (*paccupatthana*) and proximate cause (*padatthana*), which he has utilized in compiling the commentaries on the *Abhidhamma*, especially in discussing the mental states (*cetāsika*). According to Buddhaghosa, virtue (*sila*) has the characteristic of composing (*silana*) and upholding (*upadharana*) by serving as the foundation of profitable states.³⁸ It means the abandoning of unprofitable mental states serves as the foundation for the profitable states and concentrates it by preventing wavering.³⁹ In this sense, virtue is metaphorically referred to as head (*siras*) and cools or pacifies the mind (*sitala*).⁴⁰ Again, virtue bears the double function (nature) of 'stopping

¹⁸ Ibid. p. xxxv.

¹⁹ Crosby, Kate (2004), "Theravāda", in Buswell, Jr., Robert E., Macmillan Encyclopedia of Buddhism, USA: Macmillan Reference USA, pp. 837.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Bhikkhu Nāamoli (1999), "Introduction", in Buddhaghosa; Bhikkhu Nāamoli, trans., *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society, p. xxxiv.

²² V. Hinüber, Oskar (1996), *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., p. 102. And Bhikkhu Nāamoli (1999), "Introduction", in Buddhaghosa; Bhikkhu Nāamoli, trans., *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society, p. xxix.

²³ V. Hinüber, Oskar (1996), *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.,

p. 102. And Bhikkhu Nāamoli (1999), "Introduction", in Buddhaghosa; Bhikkhu Nāamoli, trans., *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, Seattle: Buddhist Publication Society, p. xxix.

²⁴ Herein, *bhikkhu* refers to 'a person who sees fear in the round of rebirths' (*sa'sāre bhayaē ikkhatōti bhikkhu*). So whoever is

striving for the liberation from this round of rebirths can be addressed as 'bhikkhu'.

²⁵ S. I. 13.

²⁶ Buddhaghosacarīya, Bhaddanta, *Visuddhimagga*, tr. Nānāmoli, Bhikkhu, The Path of Purification, reprinted, Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1997, para 7, p. 4. (The first translation to *Visuddhimagga* was done by Pe Maung Tin under the name of 'The Path to Purity' published for the

Pali Text Society by Oxford University Press in 1922).

²⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhaghosa>

²⁸ One who is virtuous has nothing to be remorseful about.

²⁹ The Noble Eightfold Path by Bhikkhu Bodhi, <http://www.vipassana.com/resources/8fp4.php>.

³⁰ Here, the author has quoted the teaching from the *Dhammapada*: "Just as a solid massive rock remains unshaken by the wind, so, too, in face of blame and praise, the wise remain immovable" (*Dhp. Verse 81*).

³¹ SN 47:3

³² Vsm. para 17, p. 7.

³³ Ps. I, 44.

³⁴ The 'courses of action' (*kusalakammāpātha*) constitute tenfold, comprising abstinence from three bodily actions: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct; four verbal actions: lying, slandering, harsh speech, frivolous talk and three mental actions: non-covetousness, non-ill will and right view.

³⁵ Vsm. para 17, p. 7.

³⁶ 'Consciousness-concomitants (*cetāsika*)' is a collective term for feeling, perception, and formations, variously subdivided; in other words, aspects of mentality that arise together with consciousness.

³⁷ D. I. 71.

³⁸ Vsm. para 19, p. 8.

³⁹ Ibid. para 141, p. 51.

misconduct' and 'achievement as the quality of blamelessness in virtuous men'. It is manifested, or comes to be apprehended as 'a pure state' which brings about three kinds of purity: bodily, verbal and mental.⁴¹ For the existence and endurance of virtue, conscience (*hiri*) and shame (*ottappa*) are motivating forces, thus these qualities should be regarded as it's near reason or proximate cause.⁴²

When briefly defined, the factors of moral training are usually worded negatively, in terms of abstinence. But there is more to Sila than refraining from what is wrong. Each principle embedded in the precepts, actually has two aspects: one is abstinence from the unwholesome, the other commitment to the wholesome; the former is called "avoidance" (*varitta*) and the latter "performance" (*caritta*). At the outset of training the Buddha stresses the aspect of avoidance. He does so, not because abstinence from the unwholesome is sufficient in itself, but to establish the steps of practice in proper sequence. The steps are set out in their natural order (more logical than temporal) in the famous saying of the Dhammapada: "To abstain from all evil, to cultivate the good, and to purify one's mind -- this is the teaching of the Buddhas".⁴³ The other two steps -- cultivating the good and purifying the mind -- also receive their due, but to ensure their success, a resolve to avoid the unwholesome is a necessity⁴⁴

Benefits of virtue

Regarding the benefits yielded by the virtue, Buddhaghosa has cited quite a number of Canonical texts. He has quoted the A guttara Nikaya where the Buddha has highlighted the benefits, beginning with non-remorse.⁴⁵ Moreover, the Buddha assures us that one who is endowed with virtue comes into a large fortune as a consequence of diligence. This is the first benefit. Secondly, a fair name is spread abroad. Through this perfect virtue, that person can enter the assembly of the nobles, whether of khattiyas, brahmanas, householders or ascetics, without fear or hesitation. This should be regarded as the third benefit. Most of all, that virtuous person will die unconfused which is an issue of great importance for Buddhists as the state of mind at the verge of death is one principal condition in determining the next life. Consequently, the virtuous person after death will reappear in a happy destiny, a heavenly world which is the fifth benefit expounded in the *Digha Nikaya*.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the commentator has quoted the teaching from the *Majjhima Nikaya*⁴⁷ where the Buddha has given guidance that someone who wants to be dearer and loved, held in high esteem and honoured by others, should strive for the perfection of virtue. Moreover, Buddhaghosa has composed a verse in praise of virtue. He metaphorically compared to the virtue in various ways: as the only water that can wash out the stain in living things; as the noble, supremely cool moonbeams that quell the flame; as incomparable scent that is spread against the wind, etc. and made a claim that without virtue, one cannot find footing in the dispensation.

Different Kinds of Virtue

In the words of Buddhaghosa, virtue is classified into five kinds and some of the categories such as two, three or four kind again become manifold, nonetheless since this paper attempts to present

the overview of his exposition on virtue, just a few schemes of classification will be introduced here. Virtue is one kind according to its characteristic of composing⁴⁸, as discussed above. It is of two kinds as keeping (*caritta*) and avoiding (*varitta*)⁴⁹. Herein, keeping should be understood as fulfilling the virtue, preserving and protecting it, which is accomplished by faith (*saddha*) and energy (*viriyā*). Avoiding means not doing what is prohibited in the training precept promulgated by the Buddha that can be accomplished by faith and mindfulness (*sati*).⁵⁰

Again, virtue becomes three kinds as inferior (*cula*), medium (*majjhima*) and superior (*panita*).⁵¹ According to the commentator, the degree of superiority is determined by the degree of the fourfold predominance (*adhipati*): zeal (*chanda*), consciousness (*citta*), energy (*viriyā*) and inquiry (*vimamsā*). Inferior quality is produced by inferior zeal and so is the medium and superior. Furthermore, depending on the intention of observer, virtue can be threefold: undertaking out of desire for fame (*yassa*) is inferior; that undertaken out of desire for the fruits of merit (*puñña phala*) is medium; that undertaken out of desire for the sake of noble state (*ariya bhava*) is superior. So, intention can also be a determining factor to judge the quality of the morality in yielding different results. For another noteworthy classification, the commentator has cited the *Majjhima Nikaya*. Some virtuous persons being defiled by self-praise and disparage others as 'I am possessed of virtue, but these other (*bhikkhus*) are ill-conducted and evilnature', such defiled virtue is regarded as inferior; undefiled mundane virtue is medium; supramundane is superior. The commentator has highlighted the vital role of one's attitude which can defile or cleanse one's morality.

In this regard, how Buddhaghosa's view on the defiling and cleansing of morality will be discussed here. According to him, defiling is determined through the tornness⁵², etc. of morality. Though in this section on the description of morality, the commentator has given explanation on the tornness, etc. in case of a monk, in the description of concentration (*samadhi*) and specifically on the recollection of virtue, it is discussed regarding the tornness and not of the morality of laymen or that of monks.⁵³ Thus, the same way should be applied in case of a layman as well. When a man has broken the training course at the beginning of or at the end in any instance of the seven classes of offences⁵⁴, his virtue is torn like a cloth that is cut at the edge. But when he has broken it in the middle, it is called rent, like a cloth that is rent in the middle. Whereas breaking twice or thrice in succession, is called blotched, like a cow that has black or red with a discrepant colour on the back or red. For breaking it at intervals, it is called mottled like a cow speckled all over with discrepant coloured spots at intervals. This is what is meant by tornness with the breach that has gain, etc. as its cause. On the other hand, untornness, is accomplished by the complete non-breaking of the training precepts, by making amends for those broken for which amends should be made, and by the non-arising of such evil things as anger, enmity, contempt, domineering, envy, avarice, deceit, fraud, obduracy, presumption, pride, haughtiness, conceit, and negligence⁵⁵, and by the arising of such qualities as fewness of wishes, contentment, and effacement.⁵⁶ Such untornness should be understood as 'cleansing'.⁵⁷ This cleansing comes in two ways: through seeing the

⁴⁰ Vsm. Op.cit.

⁴¹ A. I. 271.

⁴² Op. Cit. para 22, p. 9.

⁴³ Dhammapada. Verse 183.

⁴⁴ Bodhi, Ibid. A. V, 1.

⁴⁵ D. II. 86.

⁴⁶ M.I. 33.

⁴⁷ Vsm. para 25, p. 10.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid. para 26, p. 11.

⁵⁰ Op.cit. p. 10.

⁵¹ Vsm. para. 143, p. 52.

⁵² Vsm. chp. VII, para. 101-102, p. 240.

⁵³ The seven consisting of pārājika, sa'ghādiseṅga, pācittiya, pāḍidesaniya, dukkha, thullaccaya, dubbāsita (MA. ii, 33); Ibid.

⁵⁴ See M sutta 7 (Vsm. para 151, p. 53).

⁵⁵ See M. sutta 24 (Ibid.)

⁵⁶ Ibid. para. 152.

⁵⁷ Ibid. para. 153.

danger of failure in virtue, and through seeing the benefit of perfected virtue.⁵⁸ This implies by avoiding the negative traits of human behavior and adopting the positive attitude would help not only oneself toward the higher goal but also make the human relations more amicable and harmonious.

In the description of morality, just as Buddhaghosa has exalted the benefits of virtue, he did not fail to see the unvirtuousness in the failure of morality, as taught in the *Aguttara Nikaya*⁵⁹. Due to his unvirtuousness, an unvirtuous person is displeasing to deities and human beings and suffers when unvirtuousness is censured and virtuousness is praised. Being lack in morality is described by Venerable Buddhaghosa work in the harshest words he is as ugly as hemp cloth and contact with him is painful as his views bring people to long lasting suffering in the state of loss. Moreover, he is worthless as he causes no great fruits to accrue to those who give him gifts. Again, he is compared to a years old cesspit that is hard to purify. As a monk, due to his unvirtuousness, he is no more a bhikkhu but like a donkey that is following a herd of cattle. Consequently, he is always nervous like a man who is everyone's enemy⁶⁰.

On the contrary the benefits of moral conduct are praised, if the morality is pure, one will never fear the self-reproach. The deeds done for a virtuous person, though few, will bear much fruit and thus becomes a vessel of honour and renown. Above all these, the perfume virtue of a virtuous person succeed in pleasing even deities, as it is more perfect far than all other perfumes in the world. So once the virtue or morality of a person is perfected, his mind seeks no other kind but the perfection of *nibbana*, the state where utter peace prevails. In this way, the great commentator Buddhaghosa has made an analysis of virtue or morality highlighting its characteristic, etc.; classifications; cleansing of the morality and its advantages; and its defiling and disadvantages. Having understood its value, virtue should be cleansed with all care, seeing its danger and its benefits of perfecting. Without being established in virtue, one cannot develop concentration and wisdom and cannot attain purification, i.e. Nibbana, the ultimate peace. This is assured by the Venerable Buddhaghosa in his best known *Visuddhimagga*.

Ethical validity of virtue and Contemporary Issues

Sila morality is backbone for ethical explanation of Buddhist philosophy. The Buddha has examined the ethical validity of religious practices immediately after getting enlightenment. He suggested the society to avoid extremes and follow the middle path. Well developed theory of morality is found in the work of Buddhaghosa after the process of development in canonical literatures via the *Milindapañho* to the *Visuddhimaggo*. It determines the ethical activities in the world through Buddhist scriptural and practical ways. Because of moral values Buddhism got respectful position in the world Buddhism would see its attitude to society, the environment and other contemporary issues. Some of these issues have begun to be addressed in recent years. The Social scientists who have sought to apply Buddhist principles to the problems of life in the modern world Progress is therefore visible in the world, through the movements like socially engaged Buddhism. The credit goes to Buddhaghosa who has given practical shape to the Philosophy of the Buddha, because the Buddha himself counselled layman to follow the precepts he laid down in scriptures and he avoided discussion of theoretical problems. With few exceptions, this has remained the pattern.

Such a practice of avoiding the unwholesome and cultivate good was a further incentive of those who would want to remain in the household and undertake the practice of morals. This attitude would involve the well-being of not only of one self but include others too.

Therefore, the Buddha's conception of society hinges on the self-interest (*sakhara*) of both oneself and others and it is this extremely significant human interest that makes a society meaningful. As it addresses mutual self-interest. The minor virtues include the ten precepts discussed throughout the discourses. Among these, the first seven involve not merely the abstentions, that is, what is generally considered evil, the avoidance of which enables a person to build up his or her moral character, but also the more positive aspects that represent a moral person's impact on the world or the social nature of the virtuous life. These seven virtues, therefore, are embodiments of the ultimate criteria of the good, namely, the welfare of oneself (*attahita*) and the welfare of others (*parahita*).⁶¹

One who is devoted to one's own welfare and cultivates the virtues, while at the same time is devoted to the welfare of others by causing other to cultivate the virtues is called a noble person as one who is virtuous (*sappurisa*), that is, one who cultivates the virtues, and then proceeds to define one who is nobler (*sappurisenā sappurisatara*) as one who cultivates the virtues and causes other to do so.⁶²

The eightfold path advocated by the Buddha is better known as the middle way (*majjhima patpada*) between two extremes (*anta*): a life of indulgence in the pleasures of sense (*kamasukhallikanuyoga*) and indulgence in self-mortification (*attakilamathanuyoga*). A life of indulgence is rejected more for social reasons. It is low, vulgar, and individualist. It is motivated by possessive individualism. Therefore, the thought centred solely on self-interest at the cost of overlooking the interests of others can create the conditions or dissatisfaction, conflict, disharmony and various other problems of social, political and economic nature.

This world can appear in two forms: motivated by human interest and dominated by greed. The culture motivated by human interest emerges as a result of perceiving the world as being dependently arisen. Culture dominated by greed is the by-product of possessive individualism.⁶³ This is the underlying cause of the problem of rampant consumerism and blatant profit making enterprises.

Opposed to the wrong conceptions, which are dominated by thoughts of sensual pleasures (*kama*), ill will (*vyapada*), and injury (*avihimsa*), the right conceptions are thoughts dominated by renunciation, absence of ill will, and non-injury. These are no doubt virtues. Most people, including ordinary human beings, would appreciate their value as they are the only source of peaceful coexistence among humans.

The gradualness of the path thus consists in starting with the basic virtues relating to the life of social harmony and moving on the more comprehensive moral life. If the immoral life is one of passion, hatred, and confusion the moral life has to start with their restraint and conclude with their complete elimination. Thus, the moral life, whether it is at its beginning, middle, or conclusion, has to be what is conducive to one's own welfare and the welfare of others. This message in Buddhism is directed towards the well-

⁵⁸ A. III, 252.

⁵⁹ Vsm. para. 153-154, pp. 53-54.

⁶⁰ Kalupahana, David J., *Ethics in Early Buddhism*, Motolal Banarasidas, Delhi, 2008: 73.

⁶¹ A.II.217.

⁶² Kalupahana, David J., *Op. Cit.*: 78.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 137.

⁶⁴ M.II.76ff.

⁶⁵ M. VII. Bhikkhuvagga; M.I.414; M.I.420.

⁶⁶ Kalupahana, David J., *Op. Cit.*: 137.

being of the society. It is the dhamma. Anything that is detrimental to the well-being of the social group *adhamma*, or evil.

Finally, the Buddhist conception of society is not confined to humans alone. In a profound ethical sense it includes all living being (*sabbabhuta*), animals as well as lower creatures. "As a mother who protects her own child as her own life, so should one develop thoughts toward all living beings."⁶⁴ In addition to the virtues discussed earlier, which involve compassion for all forms of living beings, there are four mental states one is supposed to cultivate, these include friendliness (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), rejoicing in the happiness of other (*mudita*), and equanimity (*upekkha*), and carry a special designation as the 'noble way of life' (*brahmavihara*).⁶⁵

A rational person therefore cannot expect others in the community to respect his or her interests unless he or she is prepared to respect the interests of others. This rationality is embodied in the Buddha's conception of a just act as one that leads to the welfare of oneself and others. This view finds best expression in the Discourse to Rahula, the *Rahulovadasutta*.

If you, Rahula, reflecting thus, should find "That deed which I am desirous of doing with the body is a deed of my body that would conduce to the harm of self, to the harm of others, and to the harm of both this deed of body is unwholesome, is productive of suffering, results in suffering," – a deed of body like this, Rahula, if indeed possible (*sasakkam*), should not be done by you. (The statement is repeated with regard to deeds of speech and mind).

But if you, Rahula, while reflecting thus, should find, "That deed which I am desirous of doing with the body is a deed of my body that would conduce neither to the harm of self, nor to the harm of others, nor to the harm of both, this deed of body is wholesome, productive of happiness, results in happiness," – a deed of body like this, Rahula, may be done by you. Repeated with regard to deeds of speech and mind.⁶⁶ The Buddha's recommendation regarding the cultivation of the virtues of compassion (*amukampa*) and nonviolence (*ahimsa*) was unique in that it applied to both oneself and others.

When greed and hatred are eliminated, when the dispositions are appeased, a human is able to understand his or her life as being dependently arisen in the same way the natural environment is conditioned. The Buddha's realization that all experienced phenomena are dependently arisen prevented him from recognizing a sharp dichotomy between humanity and nature. With that realization, nature does not appear either as something to be renounced for the sake of some higher mysterious spirituality or as something available primarily for the benefit of the humans. The principle of dependence provides a philosophical basis for relating oneself to the natural world. It allows for the development of a feeling of kinship with nature.⁶⁷

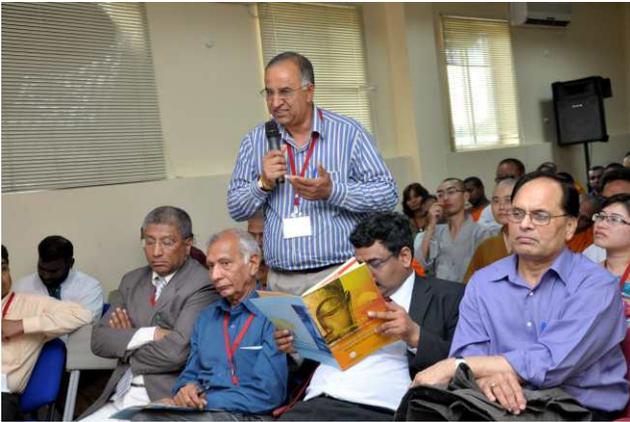
To sum up, the author has made a humble attempt on the occasion of international conference on "Cultural Interface Between India and Sri Lanka" to show that cultural relations between the two neighbouring countries started by the arrival of the Buddha's sublime Dhamma on this island nation in 250 BCE, nurtured by the exchange of ideas throughout the course of history based on the spirit of the True Dhamma. This exchange is better represented by Buddhaghosa whose contribution in the field of Theravada literature and philosophy is still unparalleled. In his all-time classical work, the *Visuddhimagga*, he chalked out the path of purification through Sila, Samadhi and Pañña. Sila (Morality) being the foundation of practice contains the possibility of leading the practitioner toward the attainment of final goal i.e. Nibbana. On the other hand, at mundane level by inculcating the moral values among the human beings for the sake of making an environment of

trust, peace, and harmonious living can solve many serious problems faced by the mankind of today. Virtuous life and rational behaviour is to avoid the harmful tendencies of greed, selfishness, and possessive individualism on the one hand and elimination of them constitutes the right way as well as the conclusion of the moral life.

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