

# MAHAYANA MONUMENTS IN CEYLON



By

NANDASENA MUDIYANSE

M.A. Ph. D. (Ceylon)

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# MAHAYANA MONUMENTS IN CEYLON

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By

NANDASENA MUDIYANSE, M.A., Ph. D. (Ceylon)

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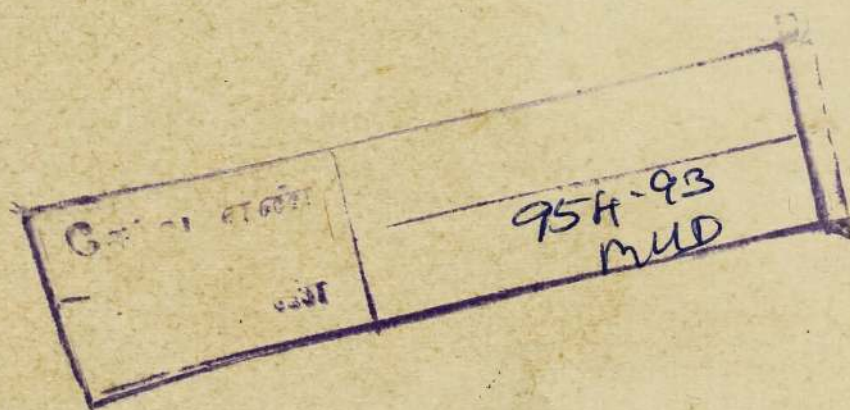


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## P R E F A C E

A study of Ceylon's Mahayana monuments was made in detail by Dr. S. Paranavitana, when Epigraphical Assistant to the Archaeological Commissioner, and published in the Ceylon Journal of Science, Section G, Volume II, in 1928. Since then a great deal of evidence has come to light and was published sporadically in different papers and by different authors.

It seemed to me that the time is opportune for a monograph on this subject of cultural and religious importance to all those interested, whether at home or abroad. In this work, therefore, I present the results of my enquiry, adapting the Thesis on which the University of Ceylon awarded me the degree of Ph.D. in Archaeology. The adaptation was not my choice but as required by my publishers who were not interested in abstruse writing for the few but were only prepared to accept a book for a larger circle. Unless I deferred to their choice, the book would have lain in cold storage.

Place names are given in the official spelling as found in the *Lists of villages* etc. Italics are not used to spell indigenous words of common occurrence e.g. Jātakas. Continuous passages of Sanskrit, Pali and Sinhalese are given in Roman and not italics, the latter being confined to single words or short phrases. Diacritical marks are not used in the spelling of proper names such as Avalokiteśvara, Tārā, Mañjuśrī etc. For the convenience of the reader, these marks have been included in the Index. There are also a few other deviations from the normal practice which the reader will understand without difficulty.

In the Introductory chapter I have treated the subject from the historical angle. For my own reasons I have here adopted the dates as given by H. W. Codrington in his "Short History of Ceylon".

Much travelling had to be done in the search for the less known relics of the Mahayanists. In this search I was successful, to a certain extent, but I never cease to have the feeling that there is much more of the unknown. That unknown is for future seekers.

I am indebted to Dr. C. E. Godakumbura, Archaeological Commissioner, for much assistance, and to Mr. C. M. Austin de Silva, Assistant in Ethnology in the Department of National Museums, for readily granting me every possible help in obtaining photographs of unpublished monuments. I am also conscious of the debt I owe Mr. D. T. Devendra. To Dr. S. Paranavitana, who, as the Professor in charge, supervised my work from the beginning and guided me in the search for the relics of Mahayana in Ceylon, I owe a deep debt of gratitude.

N. M.

Vidyalankara University,  
Kelaniya,  
Ceylon.  
1st May 1967.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- A.A. = *Artibus Asiae*
- A.A.I. = *Art and Architecture of India*, B. Rowland, 1956
- A.C.I.C. = *Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, A. K. Coomaraswamy
- A.C.S. = *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture*, L. Ashton
- Adjr. = *Advayavajrasaṅgraha*, G.O.S. No. XL, B. Bhattacharya, 1927
- A.G.B.G. = *L' Art Greco-Bouddhique du Gandhara*, A. Foucher, Tome I
- A.G.N. = *A Guide to Nālanda*, A. Ghosh, Delhi, 1939
- A.S.C.A.R. = *Archaeological Survey of [Ceylon]*, Annual Report
- A.S.I.A.R. = *Archaeological Survey of India*, Annual Report
- A.S.I.S. = *A Survey of Indian Sculpture*, S. K. Sarasvati
- A.P. = *The Art of the Pallavas*, O. C. Gangoly, Indian Sculpture Series, Vol. II
- B.C.L.M. = *B. C. Law Memorial Volume*, Part II, Poona, 1946
- B.C.M. = *Bronzes of Ceylon, chiefly in the Colombo Museum*, by A. K. Coomaraswamy, Colombo 1914
- B.I.C. = *Buddha Image and Ceylon*, D. T. Devendra, 1957
- B.R.W.W. = *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, S. Beal, London, 1906
- Cat. = Catalogue
- Ch. = Chapter
- Cv. = *Cūlavamsa* (trsl.) W. Geiger, Colombo, 1953
- C.J.S.C. = *Ceylon Journal of Science* (Sec. G)
- C.N.M.M.S.V. = Ceylon National Museums Manuscript Series Vol. IV, *Sinhala Verse (kavi)*—Ethnology, Vol. I, collected by the late Hugh Nevill, ed. P.E.P. Deraniyagala, 1954
- D.C.B.T. = *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, W. E. Soothill and L. Hodous, London, 1937.
- E.H.I. = *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Gopinatha Rao, Madras, 1914

- E.I.S.M.S. = *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture*, A.S.I. (New Imperial Series, Vol. XLVII, by R. D. Banerjea, Delhi, 1933)
- Ep. Ind. = *Epigraphia Indica*
- E.R.E. = *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Article by F. W. Thomas on *Abhiṣeka*)
- E.S.L.I.B.I. = *Etude sur L'Iconographie Bouddhique du l'inde*, A. Foucher, Paris, 1900
- E.S.I. = *Erotic Sculpture of India* (English translation), G. Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1959
- E.Z. = *Epigraphia Zeylanica*
- G.M. = *Gilgit Manuscripts*, ed. N. Dutt, Calcutta, 1954, 1959
- G.S. = *Girā-sandēśaya*, ed. T. Sugatapala, Alutgama, 1925
- H.B. = *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vols. I–III, Sir Charles Eliot, London, 1957
- H.B.T. = *History of Buddhist Thought*, Edward J. Thomas, London, 1938
- H.I.I.A. = *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, A. K. Coomaraswamy, New York, 1927
- H.F.I.C. = *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, Vincent Smith
- H.J.A.S. = *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, (Vol. VIII)
- H.O.I.A.E.A. = *A History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, J. Fergusson, (2 Vols.), London, 1910
- H.S. = *Haṃsa-sandēśaya*, ed. R. Sri Dharmarama, Colombo, 1926
- I.A. = *Indian Architecture* (Buddhist and Hindu periods), Percy Brown, Bombay, 1956
- I.B. = *Icons in Bronze*, D. R. Thapar, Bombay, 1961
- I.B.B.S.D. = *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, N. K. Bhat-tasali, Dacca, 1920
- I.B.I. = *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, B. Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1958
- I.P. = *Indische Palaeographie*, G. Buhler
- I.S.P. = *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, E. B. Havel
- J.As. = *Journal Asiatique*
- J.A.S.B. = *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*

- J.B.O.R.S. = *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*
- J.I.A.I. = *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*
- J.P.T.S. = *Journal of the Pali Text Society*
- J.R.A.S.(C.B.) = *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)*
- J.R.A.S. = *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Great Britain)*
- K.S. = *Kokila-sandēśaya*, ed. W. F. Gunawardhana, Colombo, 1924
- Ksr. = *Kāvyaśekhara*, ed. R. Sri Dharmarama, Colombo, B.E. 2458
- M.A.S.B. = *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*
- M.A.S.C. = *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon*
- M.B. = *Mahayana Buddhism*, B. L. Suzuki, London, 1959
- Mhv. = *Mahāvamsa*, (trsl.) W. Geiger, Colombo, 1950
- M.S.A. = *Medieval Sinhalese Art*, A. K. Coomaraswamy, New York, 1956
- N.S. = *Nāmāṣṭa-śatakaya*
- Nks. = *Nikāya Saṃgrahaya*, ed. P. Ariyaratna, 1951
- N.S.P. = *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, ed. B. Bhattacharya, Baroda, 1949
- P. = Pali
- Pjv. = *Pūjāvaliya*, ed. B. Sraddhatissa thera, Colombo, 1953
- P.S. = *Parevi-sandēśaya*, ed. S. de Silva, 1900
- S.B.E. = *Sacred Books of the East*
- Sdh. = *Sādhanamālā* (2 Vols.), Baroda, 1925-28
- Sdl. = *Saddharmmālarāṅkāraya*, ed. K. Gnanavimala thera, 1954
- Sdr. = *Saddharmmaratnākaraya*, ed. K. Gnanavimala thera, 1948
- Sks. = *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, (translation), C. Bendall & H. D. Rouse, London, 1922
- Ssd. = *Sasadāvata*, ed. A. Dhammapala, 1934
- S.E.I.A. = *Selected Examples of Indian Art*, A. K. Coomaraswamy

- S.H.C. = *A Short History of Ceylon*, H. W. Codrington, 1947
- S. Litt. = *Sinhalese Literature*, C. E. Godakumbura, Colombo, 1955
- S.P. = *Sessional Paper*
- S.P.P.S. = *Suwikrāntavikramipariprcchā-Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, ed. R. Hikata, Fukuoka, Japan, 1958
- Sp. Zey. = *Spolia Zeylanica*
- T.S. = *Tisara-sandēṣaya*, ed. D. B. Jayatilaka, Colombo, 1935
- T.B.C. = *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon*, published by the Tohokn Imperial University, Japan, 1934
- U.C.R. = *University of Ceylon Review*.
- U.H.C. = *University History of Ceylon* (Vol. I, Pts. 1, 2), University of Ceylon Press Board, 1959/1960
- W.H.I.L. = *History of Indian Literature*, M. Winternitz



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

ORTHODOX teachings of the Buddha are preserved in Ceylon, the home of Theravada Buddhism. In the neighbouring sub-continent, which is the land of its birth, Buddhism underwent many changes in the course of time. As a result of them, the two well marked schools of Buddhism, namely, the Mahayana and Sravakayana came into being by about the 1st century A.C.<sup>1</sup>

Mahayana is the name given to the developed doctrines. The doctrines introduced into Ceylon in the 3rd century B.C. by Mahinda-thera, son of Emperor Asoka, are regarded as the orthodox teachings of the Buddha. For nearly two centuries, these were handed down orally and in the 1st century B.C. were committed to writing.

About the 2nd century the doctrines of Mahayanism were given an authoritative form by Nagarjuna, the founder of Madhyamika school who is associated with the *Prajñāpāramitā* and the relativist philosophy named Madhyamika. He is said to have been a native of the Andhra country. His chief disciple was Aryadeva (believed to have been the son of a king of Ceylon) who is credited with the authorship of a commentary to the *Mādhyamikakārikā* of Nagarjuna. He was also the author of several other works such as the *Catuhśataka*. It is about this period that these developed doctrines are heard of in Ceylon.

#### ( I )

In the reign of Voharika-tissa (215-237), the Dhammaruci monks of the Abhayagiri monastery<sup>2</sup> put forward the Vaitulya-pitaka as the true word of the Buddha. These were examined and rejected as unorthodox by the monks of the Mahavihara. Thereupon king Voharika-tissa appointed a minister called Kapila, well versed in the sciences, to inquire into the case. The results of the inquiry having disclosed that the Vaitulya-pitaka did not contain the word of the Buddha, the texts of the heretical monks were burnt.

The chronicles of Ceylon refer to these doctrines as Vaitulya-vada. The term Vaipulya-sutra is one of the commonest names of the scriptures of the Mahayanists. A reading "Vaitulya" has been

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1. Pre-Christian years will throughout be signified B.C., the post-Christian simply by the figures.

2. *Mhv.*, ch. XXXVI, v. 41; *C.J.S.C.*, Vol. II, pp. 35-71.

found in the Kashgar manuscript<sup>1</sup> of the *Saddharmmapuṇḍarīka*. This word appears to be identical with P. Vetulla or Vetulyaka. The commentary to the *Kathāvatthu*<sup>2</sup> says that the Vetulyakas held that the Buddha really remained in the Tusita heaven and sent a phantom to represent him in the world and that it was Ananda, not the Buddha, who preached the Law. These doctrines are also to be found in such Mahayana works as the *Saddharmmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*. Since “Vaipulya” and “Vaitulya” appear to be synonymous terms, H. Kern held that the Vaitulyavadins of Ceylon were Mahayanists. N. D. Mironov has also shown that “Vaitulya” is spelt as such in manuscripts older than that of the Kashgar manuscript and that from Chinese sources it is understood that “Vaipulya” was a later term than “Vaitulya”.

A section of the Vaitulyakas were known<sup>3</sup> as Mahāsuñña (Mahā-sūnya)-vādins. The Śūnyavāda (the doctrine of Relativity) was expounded by Nagarjuna. The heretics are also referred<sup>4</sup> to as Vitaṇḍa-vādins. The last named were those who, having no view of their own to establish, were concerned in refuting the views of their opponents. The doctrines expounded by Nagarjuna and Aryadeva, i.e. the Madhyamika philosophy, appear to be identical with Vitaṇḍa-vāda. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the Vaitulyavadins of Ceylon were Mahayanists.

It was in the reign of Voharika-tissa that the Vaitulyavadins first put forward their scriptures as orthodox teachings, though the *Mahāvamsa* does not specifically say so. It is likely that they were known much earlier but that the heretical monks were not sufficiently powerful to present them.

Portions of such scriptures as the *Prajñāpāramitā* are among the earliest Mahayanist works and date from about the 1st century. About the year 170 this text was translated into Chinese. There is reason to assume that the monks of Abhayagiri monastery were in touch with current religious developments in India. Disciples of the Elder (Thera) Dhammaruci, who formed the Dhammaruci fraternity, came to Abhayagiri-vihara from Pallavārāma in India.<sup>5</sup> The 14th century *Nikāya Saṃgraha* says that he belonged to the Vajjiputra-nikāya which was one of the eighteen sects into which Buddhism was split up in India before its introduction into Ceylon. The followers of this sect admitted *pudgala*—which is at variance with *anatta*, the corner stone of Buddhist philosophy. •

- 
1. *J.R.A.S.* (1907) p. 432.
  2. *ibid.*, pp. 434–6.
  3. *Dīpavamsa*, ed. B.C. Law, 1959. xxii, 41
  4. *ibid.*, xxii, 43.
  5. *Nks.*, p. 13.

Sir Charles Eliot has defined Mahayana by attributing to it seven lines of thought or practice.<sup>1</sup> These are: (1) A belief in Bodhisattvas and in the power of human beings to follow the career of a Bodhisattva. (2) A code of altruistic ethics which teaches that every one must do good in the interest of the whole world and make over to others any merit which may be acquired by this virtue. The aim of the religious life should be to become a Bodhisattva, not to become an *arhat*. (3) A 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 (*kāyas*) and still later there is a group of five (afterwards six) Buddhas (Dhyāni). (4) Various systems of idealist metaphysics which tend to regard the Buddha essence or Nirvana much as Brahman is regarded in the Vedānta. (5) A canon composed in Sanskrit and apparently later than the Pali canon. (6) Habitual worship of images and elaboration of ritual. There is a dangerous tendency to rely on formulae and charms. (7) A special doctrine of salvation by faith in a Buddha, usually Amitabha, and invocation of his name.

( II )

About forty years after Voharika-tissa, in the reign of Gothabhaya (254-267), the Dhammaruci sect of the Abhayagiri-vihara again put forward the Vaitulyavada as the true word of the Buddha.<sup>2</sup> a monk named Ussiliyatissa heard of the calamities which befell the Vaitulyavadins in the reign of Voharika-tissa and fearing similar treatment at the hands of Gothabhaya, separated from the Dhammarucikas and took up abode at the Dakkhinagiri-vihāra. These monks formed the Sagalika sect and adopted the Jetavana (Denanaka) as their residence in the reign of Mahasena. When Gothabhaya heard of the Vaitulyavada, he assembled the monks of the Panca-Maha-Avasa (Five Great Residences) and held an inquiry to ascertain the orthodox character of the doctrines. The results of the inquiry revealed that the doctrines were those of heretics and not the true word of the Buddha. The penalties imposed upon the Vaitulyavadins were more severe in this reign. The king burnt their texts and sent them into exile, branding the bodies of sixty of the heretics.

Shortly afterwards in the same reign we hear of the arrival in Ceylon of a monk named Sanghamitra from south India. He was a disciple of one of the monks who was branded and exiled into India by Gothabhaya. He learnt of the calamities which befell the Vaitulyavadins and determined to espouse their cause. The

1. *H.B.*, Vol. II, ch. 16, p.6

2. *Mhv.*, ch. XXXVI, v. 111-117; *Nks.*, pp. 14-15.

chronicle says that this monk was versed in the teachings concerning the exorcism of spirits and magical formulae. He obtained the favour of Gothabhaya and became tutor to his two sons, Jetthatissa and Mahasena. The former was not tractable and when that prince ascended the throne, Sanghamitra returned to India. When Mahasena (277-304) became king, he arrived in Ceylon for the second time and commenced his activities.<sup>1</sup> It appeared as if the Vaitulyavadins had gained ground.

Even the consecration of Mahasena, says the chronicle, was conducted in the manner as desired by Sanghamitra. The king was soon persuaded that Vaitulyavada was the true doctrine and that the monks of the Mahavihara did not teach the true Vinaya. The Abhayagiri-vasins, who were Sanghamitra's followers, were recognised as the expounders of the true doctrines. The monks of the Mahavihara were ordered by Mahasena to accept the Vaitulyavada. On declining to do so they were subjected to penalties such as by a decree that alms be not given to them. Thus, being deprived of the means of livelihood, the monks of Mahavihara and Mihintale left for the Rohana and the hill country. It is probably Mahasena's edict (on a tablet) proclaiming his religious policy, found at Jetavanarama and now preserved in the Colombo Museum (in a mutilated condition).

The Dhammarucikas took possession of the monastery at Mihintale and for nine years the Mahavihara was desolate. Its buildings were pulled down; with the material, the Abhayagiri monastery was embellished. The land on which the Mahavihara buildings stood was ploughed, and peas sown. The Brazen Palace (Lohapāsāda) was also razed to the ground. In these matters the minister Sona collaborated with Sanghamitra. The oath taken by the latter was thus redeemed and the cruelties suffered by his master were avenged.

In the course of time public opinion expressed itself in favour of the Mahavihara and the country was on the verge of civil war. The minister Meghavarnna Abhaya actively intervened and the king, who was his friend, agreed to change his religious policy. One of the king's favourite wives who was well disposed towards the monks of the Mahavihara got a carpenter to assassinate Sanghamitra. The texts of the Vaitulyavada were burnt and Sona was also put to death. It appears as if Mahasena himself was acutely conscious of public opinion, to which he yielded. The tide now turned in favour of the Mahavihara. Orders were given for the reconstruction of that monastery and the monks who had left it returned. They were given the fourfold requisites and soon conditions returned to normal.

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1. *Mhv.*, ch. XXXVII, v. 1-39; *Nks.*, pp. 15-17.

It will be noticed that Sanghamitra's activities in Ceylon synchronise with some of the major developments of Mahayana Buddhism in India. It is roughly the period assigned to Vasubandhu and Asanga. The latter was the founder of the Yogacara school. To him is ascribed the introduction of magical practices and Tantrism. Sanghamitra, as noted above, was well versed in the teachings concerning the exorcism of spirits and magical practices. It is likely that he was influenced considerably by the teachings of the Yogacara school.

In spite of the fact that Vaitulyavada was suppressed, information picked up at random points to the continued existence of certain Mahayanist beliefs and practices immediately after the reign of Mahasena. Jetthatissa II (332-341), at his father's request, made a beautiful, charming figure representing the Bodhisattva, as well as a chair of state with a back, an umbrella, a *maṇḍapa* with jewels.<sup>1</sup> This description of the image with an umbrella above the head recalls to mind certain Mahayanist sculptures of the Buddha and of Bodhisattvas of a later date. The *Cūlavamsa* states that this image was made at the request of the king's father, who, (if W. Geiger's assumption be accepted) was Sirimeghavanna (304-332). The latter was permitted by the Indian Emperor Samudragupta to erect monasteries at Nalanda and Bodh<sup>2</sup>Gaya. Dhatusena (463-479) also installed Bodhisattva figures and caused to be constructed a Bodhisattva temple (*Bodhisattaghara*).<sup>3</sup>

From a study of these events it will become clear that although Mahayanism was suppressed, the doctrines introduced by the adherents of that school continued to prevail in Ceylon especially after the reign of Mahasena. Sanghamitra's activities lasted for nine years and it is likely that during this period some of the Mahayanist doctrines, such as Bodhisattva worship, were absorbed into the popular religion. A study of the relics of the Mahayana in Ceylon confirms this likelihood.

### ( III )

The chronicles do not record the existence of heretical schools for nearly two and a half centuries from the time of Mahasena. In the reign of Mahanama (412-434) the famous commentator Buddhaghosa arrived in Ceylon and translated into Pali the commentaries, which had been up to that time in Sinhalese. This event appears noteworthy if we examine this need to translate the commentaries into a dead language. It was mainly in the

1. *Cv.*, xxxvii, 1-39.

2. *U.H.C.*, p. 288; *H.B.*, Vol. II, p. 87.

3. *Cv.*, xxxviii, 65-69.

interpretation of the word of the Buddha that there was likely to be division of opinion. Words of a living language could acquire secondary meanings in the course of time and pave the way for controversies in the future. In the case of a dead language, such changes of meanings of words were unlikely. Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that the monks of the Theravada school extended their patronage to Buddhaghosa in the task of translation in order to avoid future controversies and also to preserve intact the word of the Master. Of Buddhaghosa's work the *Cūlavamsa* says, "For beings of all tongues this (rendering) became a blessing and all the teachers of the Theravada accepted it as the original text".<sup>1</sup> Hitherto only the text of the canon was in Pali but now that the commentaries were also translated into the same language, they could be of benefit to those of Theravada persuasion in other lands as well.

( IV )

The reign of Silakala (526-539) witnessed the next event in the history of Vaitulyavada. In the twelfth year of this king, the Dhammadhātu was brought to Ceylon by a merchant<sup>2</sup> from India and presented to the king. The latter, in consultation with the monks of Abhayagiri, placed it in Dena-vehera and commanded that honours be accorded to it. The Sagalikas of Dakkhinagiri-vihara, who had taken up abode at Jetavana, were at first not in favour of honouring it but were persuaded by the monks of Abhayagiri to follow suit. It is also stated that the Sagaliyas of Jetavana adopted the Vaitulyavada in the reign of this king. The *Nikāya Saṃgraha* states that the inmates of Mahavihara and the intelligent folk of Anuradhapura did not pay respects to the Dhammadhātu and that the doctrines introduced by the merchant from India prevailed among the less intelligent folk from the date of Silakala. On earlier occasions the texts were burnt but in this instance such a calamity did not befall and it is very likely that in the course of time, slowly but steadily the heresies spread.

Silakala was also called Amba-sāmaṇera. His youth was spent as a novice at the monastery of Bodh-Gaya and therefore there is no doubt that he came into contact with Mahayanist doctrines which were then gaining ground in north India. When he returned, he brought with him the Hair Relic. This relic was preserved in a precious casket of crystal and housed in a beautiful building. In this shrine there was also an image of Buddha Dipankāra whose cult may be taken as a sign of Mahayanist influence.<sup>3</sup>

It was noted earlier that the Dhammadhātu was brought to Ceylon in the reign of Silakala. The *Nikāya-saṃgraha* refers to

1. *Cv.* Ch. xxxvii, v. 243-246.

2. *ibid.*, Ch. xli, v. 37-40.

3. *ibid.*, Ch. xxxix, v. 59.



a text of the Vaitulyavada brought to Ceylon by the merchant named Purna. Both the Sinhalese words Daham-daya and Daham-da, being synonymous with (P.) Dhammadhātu, are met with in inscriptions discovered at Puliyankulama.<sup>1</sup> The *Saddharmaratnākara* (15th cent.) informs us that king Kassapa (which of the one who bore that name is not stated) deposited the Dhammadhātu within the Abhayagiri-stupa. This work also states that *dharmacetiya* may be included among the five different classes of stupas.<sup>2</sup> From a study of the foregoing references it becomes clear that Dhammadhātu was an object of much honour.

( V )

Vaitulyavada doctrines introduced in the reign of Silakala appear to have flourished till the time of Aggabodhi I (564-598), in whose reign<sup>3</sup> the Elder Jotipala from India is said to have defeated the heretics in a public disputation. Therefore the monks of Abhayagiri resorted to other ways of propagating the heresies since their followers began to dwindle. Through a courtier they managed to influence the king and expounded the Vaitulyavada to him. The *Nikāya-saṅgraha* does not specifically state that the king was converted to their views but the *Cūlavamsa* states that he extended protection to Jotipala. It is, therefore, likely that the king was not favourably disposed towards the heretical doctrines.

In the mainland, too, the sixth century was an era of great literary activity. The Buddhists of this period were concerned with the study of logic. Eminent logicians named Dinnaga and Dharmakīrti flourished about this time.<sup>4</sup> These two belonged to the school of Asanga and as a result of their labours, Buddhist logic spread widely. Several schools of commentators followed them. From the records of Hsuan Tsang we learn that public religious disputations were very common in India about this time.<sup>5</sup> The Chinese pilgrim, who heard of the brethren of Abhayagiri-vihara, says that they studied both vehicles and widely diffused the Tripitaka. "The priests attended to the moral rules and were distinguished for their power of abstraction and their true wisdom. Their correct conduct was an example for subsequent ages; their manners were grave and imposing".<sup>6</sup> The *Cūlavamsa*, however, gives quite a different picture of Abhayagiri-vihara-vasins. In the reign of Silameghavarnna (614-623) a young monk named Bodhi who dwelt at Abhayagiri-vihara was so disgusted with the undisciplined conduct of the brethren that with the aid of the king, he carried out a reformation. The young reformer was murdered secretly and the reformation came to an abrupt end.

1. See ch. 4. pp. 82-83.

2. *Sdr.*, p. 333 and 298.

3. *Cv.*, xlii, 35 and *Nks.*, p. 19.

4. *H.B.T.*, p. 245.

5. *B.R.W.W.*, Vol. I, pp. 80-81

6. *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 247.

About this time we learn of the visits of Mahayana teachers to Ceylon from India on their way to the Far East.<sup>1</sup> Gunavarman, a member of the royal family of Kashmir who had become a Buddhist monk, arrived and stayed in the island for some time. He is said to have converted the king of Cho-p'o (Java or Sumatra) to Buddhism and propagated the religion there. Another, Vajrabodhi, was also an eminent Mahayana teacher. He had stayed for some time at the Pallava court, paid a visit to Ceylon and then went to China. About the close of the seventh century he was a guest of Abhayagiri-vihara. He is said to have preached Mahayana doctrines to the ruler of Rohana. In the reign of Sri Silamegha or Sri-Sila (Chi-li-chi-lo) he paid a second visit to Ceylon. Amoghavajra, Vajrabodhi's pupil, was a native of Ceylon. Aggabodhi VI (741-781) sent him in 746 as an envoy to China. It is likely that the inscriptions at Tiriyay and Mihintale (engraved in Pallava Grantha characters) were due to the influence of these Mahayanist teachers.

From about the sixth or seventh century onwards, Mahayanism appears to have gained a strong foothold, as may be noted from a study of the monuments of this period. Statuettes of Avalokitesvara and Manjusri were made, as the examples from Boston Museum and Elahera testify. These Bodhisattvas were also eulogised in inscriptions, e.g. at Tiriyay. The Trikāyastava at Mihintale is but further proof of the steady progress of Mahayanist activities in Ceylon about this period.

( VI )

For nearly two and a half centuries from the time of Aggabodhi I the chronicles do not refer to any heretical sect or the Vaitulyavada. But a study of the monuments of the period reveals that the heretical doctrines were flourishing side by side with those of the orthodox. The *Nikāya-saṃgraha* records the next event as having occurred in the reign of Matvalasen (Sena I, 846-866).<sup>2</sup> This time a heretical doctrine called the Vājiriya-vāda was introduced to Ceylon by an ascetic of the Vajraparvata-nikāya of India who had taken up his abode at the Virāṅkura monastery. The heresy introduced by him received royal sanction and the king himself accepted the teachings. The ascetic had been introduced to the king by the cook of the royal household (whom he had bribed). These doctrines are referred to as secret teachings or confidential discourses and the king (as the *Nikāya-saṃgraha* says) who was not a man of learning, abandoned the orthodox teachings and accepted the heresies. The Vājiriyavāda thus introduced appears to be identical with Vajrayanism, a school that was flourishing in eastern India

1. *U.H.C.*, Vol. I, Pt. 1, p. 383.

2. *Nks.* p. 20

at that time. The Vajrayanists were exponents of the worst phases of Tantrism. About this time, says the *Nikāya-saṃgraha*, the Ratnakūṭa-sūtras and other writings of the Mahayanists were also introduced to Ceylon. A Ratnakūṭa-sūtra appears as No. 45 in the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. A section of the Mahayana sutras of the Chinese Canon is also referred to as Ratnakūṭa. Copper plaques on which were inscribed extracts from Mahayanist texts have been discovered in Ceylon, and in one of these mention is made of the Ratnakūṭa-sūtra referred to in the *Nikāya-saṃgraha*. The reference to Vājirīya-vāda and the esoteric doctrines thus introduced recalls to mind scriptures like the *Guhya-samāja-tantra* of the Vajrayanists. The author of the *Nikāya-saṃgraha* refers by name to 25 texts known to him which were composed by the Vajraparvata-vasins. One of these is *Samāja-tantra*. The latter is probably identical with *Guhya-samāja-tantra*.

Another heretical sect referred to in the *Nikāya-saṃgraha* is the Nīla-paṭa-darśana which appears to have been introduced about this time. The *Nks.* gives further details regarding its origin and history. The followers of this sect, it may be assumed, wore dark coloured robes (*nīla-paṭa*) and practised extreme forms of Tantrism. The *Nikāya-saṃgraha* also quotes a stanza from the text named Nīla-paṭa-darśana which preaches of indulgence in women, wine and love. Nil-sādhana, it seems,<sup>1</sup> was a name for Tantric practices.

( VII )

From the time of Sena II (866–901) up to the Cola conquest of Ceylon in 1017, the chronicles do not make mention of Vaitulya or heretical doctrines. However a study of the monuments of this period and literary, sculptural and epigraphical evidence point to a vigorous activity among the heretical schools of Buddhism who were flourishing side by side with those of the Theravada school. Tantric goddesses, such as Tara, were known and images were made for her worship. Mahayanist scriptures were also known and worshipped and extracts from such texts were engraved on copper tablets and enshrined in stupas of a distinctly Mahayanist character. *Dhāraṇīs* were also known and chanted. Some of these, engraved on stone tablets in north-east Indian Nagari have been brought to light. Words such as *rati-pūjā*, *guhya-pūjā* in these are evidence of it. On the basement of Nalanda-gedige, a shrine devoted to Tantric worship, *rati-pūjā* is shown in bas-relief.

Buddhism had degenerated in contemporary India. It was the period of Vajrayana or Mantrayana Buddhism which had got absorbed with Saktism (also called Tantrism). The austere and

1. *H.B.*, Vol. III, p. 40, note 1.

ethical teachings of the Buddha were thus combined with the most fantastic forms of Hinduism, i.e. forms of magic and erotic mysticism. The influences of the major revolutionary movements in the sphere of religious thought in India had been at work in Ceylon too and have left their relics for posterity.

( VIII )

With the expulsion of the Colas, Vijayabahu I (1056-1111) ascended the throne. Buddhism was then at such a low ebb that this king had to invite properly ordained monks from Burma to continue the line of sacerdotal succession. It appears, however, that the heretical doctrines introduced earlier were still prevailing at the time of Parakramabahu I (1153-1186), who caused a purging of the *saṅgha*, which had, up to that time remained divided.<sup>1</sup> The *Nks.* specifically states that, in addition to the fraternity of the Mahavihara, the sects called Dhammaruci, Sagaliya and Vaitulyavadi existed at the time.<sup>2</sup> The king, with the assistance of the Elder Maha-Kasyapa, held a convocation of the *saṅgha* and brought about the unification which no previous king had been capable of effectively carrying out. With this unification, the monks of the Abhayagiri sect ceased to exist as a separate community. But it appears that some of the colleges of that institution such as Uturoḷmuḷa and Mahanet survived till the 15th century. The celebrated scholar Sri Rahula of Totagamu-vihara who flourished in the reign of Parakramabahu VI (1415-1467) belonged to the Uttaramuḷa (Uturoḷmuḷa) fraternity and, (as we shall see in ch. 2) he was a follower of Tantric magical practices and a devotee of Natha (Avalokitesvara). Contemporary literature refers to an image of that Bodhisattva as existing in the shrine of Totagamu-vihara, where the scholar lived and taught. As attested by the inscription at the site, this Bodhisattva appears to have also been worshipped in the vihara at Pepiliyana built by Parakramabahu VI of Kotte.<sup>3</sup>

It may however be noted that after the Cola conquest, no new schools of Buddhism were introduced to Ceylon from India as, at that time, Buddhism was following a downward course even in that sub-continent. The 12th century was the last phase of Indian Buddhism. The death blow was dealt and the end was brought about by the invading Muslim armies. It was about this period that Parakramabahu I cleansed the *saṅgha* of its undesirable elements and brought about the unification of the Buddhist church.

1. *Cv.*, ch. 73, v. 11-12 and Ch. 78, v. 1-30.

2. *Nks.* p. 24.

3. *C. J. S. C.*, Vol. II, p. 56.

It is possible to learn of the existence of Mahayanist beliefs and practices in the succeeding centuries, but these appear to be relics of the cults introduced earlier. As an instance may be quoted the reference to Natha (Avalokitesvara) in the *Cūlavamsa* in the reigns of Parakramabahu II (1234–1269) and Kirti Sri Rajasimha (1747–1782).<sup>1</sup> Natha-devale (Kandy) and Lokesvara-Natha-devale (Wegiriya) are also shrines which are devoted to the worship of this deity even at the present day.<sup>2</sup> From the 12th century onwards we find the influence of Hinduism on the faith of the masses of Ceylon and Hindu deities such as Visnu have since been absorbed into the popular religion of the Sinhalese people. Of the doctrines which the rivals of the orthodox monks had preached, some like the theory of perfections (*pāramitā*), the belief in Bodhisattvas and the emphasis on devotion (*bhakti*), had been accepted by the Mahavihara and incorporated into the Theravada. It should be noted that these doctrines are mostly Mahayanist in character.

This history of Mahayanism in Ceylon with special reference to the developments in Indian Buddhism which were affecting the course of events in this island, having thus been sketched it is now proper to examine what has been left here to us by the Mahayanists, who, for nearly eight centuries had waged a struggle for the recognition of their doctrines and their propagation. In doing so, due place will be given to the references to Mahayanist beliefs and practices in Sinhalese literature and also to examining their sculptural and epigraphical monuments.

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1. *Cv.*, ch. 87, v.3 and ch. 100, v. 248. *Nātha Metteyya devādi devānaṃ ca mahiddhinaṃ* and *Metteyya Bodhisattassa Nātha deva varassa ca*. Geiger identifies Natha with Visnu.
  2. *C.J.S.C. Sec. G. Vol. 11*, pp. 57–59.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERARY

It is now pertinent to bring together all the references to Mahayanistic beliefs and practices (occurring in literary works of Ceylon) in order to estimate the influence of the school. The references may be mostly incidental but they throw considerable light on the Buddhist practices in ancient Ceylon.

The material has been brought together in the following order: References to (a) Avalokitesvara, in Sinhalese poetical works (b) Bodhisattva cult (c) Sanskrit Buddhist writings known in Ceylon (d) other traces of Mahayanist influence in literary works.

#### ( I )

Of the numerous Bodhisattvas of the Mahayanists, Natha (Avalokitesvara) and his spouse Tara alone are mentioned in the message poems (*sandēśa*). These works are of the 14th and 15th centuries. The *Tisara Sandēśaya* (14th cent.) refers to the shrine of Natha at Dorawaka in the Kegalla district.<sup>1</sup> Tara, the consort of this Bodhisattva, has been mentioned and eulogised immediately after the description of Natha. A translation of these stanzas has been quoted in ch. 3, but it may be mentioned that in it is the only instance known to the author where Tara is mentioned in a literary work in Ceylon. She is referred to as "queen" (*bisō*), the title of the wives of gods occurring in Sinhalese literature. The consort of Lokesvara-Natha at Wegiri-devale is also commonly called *Bisō-Baṇḍāra*.

In the fifteenth century, the cult of Natha (Avalokitesvara) seems to have been very popular in Ceylon, the centre of the cult being Totagamuwa (near Hikkaduwa, Galle district), the famous seat of learning presided over by Sri Rahula, poet and grammarian. The *Girā Sandēśaya* is addressed to this Bodhisattva at Totagamuwa.<sup>2</sup> In stanza No. 11 of this poem, Totagamu-vihara is compared to the city of Kuvera (*Alakā*), shining by means of the rays issuing from Mount Kailāsa which is white in colour. The comparison has been made because Natha is also white in colour and rays emanating from his body are as white as those of the moon. In stanza No. 198, the noise of the waves breaking on the sea-shore at Totagamuwa has become the subject of poetic thought.

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1. *T.S.*, v. 126, 127.

2. *G.S.*, ed. T. Sugatapala, *Alutgama* (1925).

The ocean which has been deprived of its most precious jewel by Visnu complains to Natha in much grief, making a great noise. In this instance the poet suggests that Visnu himself is inferior in rank to Natha to whom a complaint could be made against that god. The word *puvaḷa* which means 'great' is used to describe Natha, who, it is assumed, entertains the complaint.

Natha is again mentioned in the same poem in a description of the shrine at Totagamuwa (No. 230). As this description follows immediately after that of the Buddha images in the shrine, it is probable that the reference is to the image of the Bodhisattva which would have been undoubtedly placed in a chamber set apart for itself. The stanza deals more with the spiritual aspects of the Bodhisattva than with the physical as in the *Tisara Sandeśa*. "Behold the Lord Natha (Natiṅdun) who is beautiful, who is famous in the world and who continuously fulfils the functions of a Bodhisattva with the aim of bringing to Nirvana all sentient beings who are merged in the great ocean of *saṃsāra*". It should be noted that in the corresponding description of this Bodhisattva in the *Tisara Sandeśa*, the emphasis is more on physical beauty than on spiritual attainments.

The purpose of the poem is to beseech Sri Rahula, the incumbent of Totagamu-vihara, to pray to the Bodhisattva to protect Lanka and the king (Parakramabahu VI—1415—1467). In stanza No. 251 this message is delivered to the celebrated scholar with a eulogy of the Bodhisattva and the king. The former is referred to as possessing divine eyes and as one who is compassionate. The prayer is that all dangers, including those from enemies, poison, disease and evil spirits may be removed and that victory and prosperity to the king and the country be increased. By such an action, it is mentioned that the qualities of the Bodhisattva would be made known to the world. The next stanza eulogises the Bodhisattva and calls him the famous protector of the Buddhist church of Ceylon till the passing away of 5,000 years from the date of the death of the Buddha. Avalokitesvara is regarded as the most compassionate one who surveys the world from above. This is precisely the idea contained in stanza No. 251 quoted above.

The *Kōkila Sandeśaya* of the 15th century also mentions Totagamuwa as a place where Natha was worshipped.<sup>1</sup> In stanza No. 78, allusion is made to the shining nature of the body of Natha. The image of the Bodhisattva which was placed by the side of the Buddha image is described as being white in colour like Mount Kailasa enveloped in moonlight. The god is mentioned as beautiful in appearance and as a future Buddha.

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1. ed. W.F. Gunawardhana, Colombo (1924).

This poem also refers to a shrine of Natha in the vicinity of the lake named Malvila in the Northern Province.<sup>1</sup> This shrine was lofty and the (image of the) Bodhisattva (Natisuru) in it was pure and comparable to the colour of the peak of Mount Kailasa. Natha is also described as having many (good) qualities (No. 239). A shrine of Natha in the Northern Province, then or now, is otherwise unknown. Nevertheless the reference to one in this literary work proves that Natha was then very popular a deity.

The *Parevi Sandeśa* refers to Nātha at Totagamu-vihara.<sup>2</sup> In this poem the god is referred to as Divayuru-siya, ('kinsman of the Sun'). Since contemporary literary works refer to this Bodhisattva as one shining in splendour, it is probable that the poet used a metaphor identifying him with a likeness of the sun. Kinsman of the sun (Ādiccabandhu) was also an epithet of the Buddha.

The *Kāvyaśekhara* of Sri Rahula<sup>3</sup> mentions Natha whose glory and fame is comparable to that of the sun and the moon respectively and says that he will become a Buddha. It is evident that Sri Rahula himself was a devotee of this Bodhisattva.

The *Āmbākke Varṇanāva*, a short poem belonging to the Kandy period, in its opening stanzas,<sup>4</sup> has an adoration of Natha. The *Vadan-kavi-pota*, a short tract<sup>5</sup> (used as a text book in temple schools) which is attributed to the late Kandy period, contains two stanzas (Nos. 56 and 70) invoking Natha. "The Lord Natha, who is as virtuous as the husband of Sita (Rama), who removes the fears of people and who always wards off dangers—may he protect me always" (No. 56). "O Natha! King of gods, thou who abidest, meditating on the Dhamma in the temple of Totagamuwa in the low-country, who, in the countless *koṭis* of aeons past hast set thy mind on the Buddhahood and hast received the prediction from former Buddhas, who hast destroyed passions and art endowed with miraculous powers and who dost lengthen the life of those devoted, to thee, I bow down with the two hands placed on my brow. May thou grant me wisdom". (No. 70). This text also mentions a Bodhisattva named Senkaḍagala Suriṇḍun (Natha of Senkaḍagala) who is referred to as a future Buddha. In the *Kāvyaśekhara*, Natha of Totagamu-vihara is also called a future Buddha.<sup>6</sup> 'Senkaḍagala Suriṇḍun', who is perhaps the same personage as 'Senkaḍagala Nātha Sāmi' of the Sagama rock inscription, appears to be identical with Natha (Avalokitesvara).<sup>7</sup>

1. *K.S.*, v. 239.

2. *P.S.*, S. De Silva, ed, v. 76,

3. *Ksr.*, Ch. XV, v. 24.

4. Colombo Museum ola manuscript marked A.J. 15, v. No. 2.

5. v. 56, 57, 70.

6. Ch. XV, v. 15.

7. *E.Z.* Vol IV, No. 38, pp. 296-311.



Among the manuscripts collected by the late Hugh Nevill, there is one which contains a poem named *Nātha-devi-puvata*. It takes the Natha-deva as its theme. In this poem, Natha, who is mentioned as a Bodhisattva, is invoked to descend to a flower throne from Tusita heaven. He is referred to as the patron of Totagamuwa and is said to counteract sorcery. He is also described as help of the help-seeker, and a rider on the goose.<sup>1</sup> Nevill translates one of the stanzas as follows:

By the good Natha help was announced,  
Good help in misfortunes.  
So for the bright Natha  
Lord, the goose vahana.

In Nevill's catalogue (which has now been published by the Colombo Museum), this manuscript is marked No. 100. It is said to contain 111 verses, most of which are in Sinhalese and a few in corrupt Sanskrit with explanations added in Sinhalese. In the opinion of Nevill, the manuscript could be attributed to the 16th century. He says that the author of the poem could have been a man from Totagamuwa. Taking into consideration the data furnished by the verses quoted by him, Natha-deva referred to in this poem may be identified with Avalokitesvara.

( II )

The author of the *Pūjāvāliya* (13th cent.), appears to have been influenced by the ideal of the Bodhisattvas. This ideal is extolled in ch. 1 of this work. The story of the hermit Sumedha (of the time of Buddha Dipankara), in which the Bodhisattva being honoured by handfuls of flowers by that Buddha, is a theme in this text. That Buddhahood is the noblest path to Nirvana is emphasised. Numerous jātika-stories are referred to glorify the activities of the Bodhisattva.

The Vyāghri-jātaka is related in the *Suvarṇṇaprabhāsa* and the *Jātika-mālā*.<sup>2</sup> It is quoted in the *Sasadāvata* (12th cent.) and the *Saddharmamālamkāraya* (14th cent.).<sup>3</sup> The Hasti-jātaka of the *Jātakamālā* is quoted in the *Sasadāvata*.<sup>4</sup> The former is a work held in high esteem by the Mahayanists.

\* Even in *sandēśa* poems, a reference to a jātika-story is some-times made<sup>5</sup> with a view to extolling the virtues of the Bodhisattva.

1. *C.N.M.M.S.V.*, Vol. I, p. 115.

2. *WHIL*, pp. 340-341; *Jātakamālā*, No. 2.

3. *Ssd.*, v. 275; *Sdl.*, pp. 46-47; *WHIL*, p. 271.

4. *ibid.* v. 276.

5. *H.S.*, v. 5. Mahā-harṁsa-jātaka is referred to.

The *Haṃsa-sandēśa* (15th cen.) refers to King Parakramabahu VI as manifesting the virtues of the Bodhisattva.<sup>1</sup> The honorific title Bosat (P. Bodhisatta) appears to have been used by the ancient kings of Ceylon (particularly in the 15th cent.), up to very late times.<sup>2</sup> King Vimaladharmasūrya (1591–1604) is shown as wearing his crown with the figure of a dhyāni-Buddha in it.<sup>3</sup>

The *Dasa-bodhisatt-uppatti-kathā* (stories of the births of the ten Bodhisattvas) is a Pali work dealing with the ten Buddhas who will succeed Gautama Buddha.<sup>4</sup> It gives the past and future careers of these Bodhisattvas and the manner in which they met the Gautama Buddha is related. These ten Buddhas are named as follows: (1) Maitreya (2) Rama (3) Dhammaraja (4) Dhammasami (5) Narada (6) Ramsimuni (7) Devadeva (8) Narasiha (9) Tissa (10) Sumangala. This work is not part of the Pali canon but it has been mentioned as a *sutta* delivered by the Buddha. Of the Bodhisattvas mentioned in the text, Maitreya is common to both Mahayana and Sravakayana. Others, like King Kosala, the elephants Parileyya and Nalagiri (Dhanapala) and Todeyya Brahmana are mentioned in Pali scriptures. The author is unaware whether they have been referred to as Bodhisattvas in any Sinhalese literary work. The origin of the text is probably in Mahayanist influence. But in the introduction of new Bodhisattvas into the Theravada, an attempt to counteract the heretical teachings of the Mahayanists is discernible. Prof. Minayeff mentions a Burmese manuscript in which occur names of ten Bodhisattvas who will succeed Gautama Buddha.<sup>5</sup> An old Siamese inscription also contains names of ten Bodhisattvas headed by Metteyya and Sir Chalres Eliot cites it as an instance of Mahayanist influence on the Buddhism of Siam.<sup>6</sup>

### ( III )

The discovery of copper plaques at Indikatusaya and Vijayarama stupas inscribed with extracts from Sanskrit texts points to a knowledge of Sanskrit Buddhist writings in ancient Ceylon. Certain Buddhist sects in Ceylon have regarded these as so sacred as to deserve enshrinement in stupas. The author of the *Nikāya Saṅgrahaya* seems to have known a number of Buddhist Sanskrit Mahayanist or Tantric works. He gives<sup>7</sup> a list of the titles of 34 of these and adds that “ the different methods adopted in these several works are too many to permit of recital ”. The titles of these works are:

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|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>ibid.</i> v. 30 and 35.                 | 5. <i>J.P.T.S.</i> , 1886, 33 ff. |
| 2. <i>U.H.C.</i> , pp. 367–368 and p, 730.    | 6. <i>H.B.</i> , Vol. III, p. 84. |
| 3. <i>M.S.A.</i> , p. 330 and Plate XXII.     | 7. <i>Nks.</i> , pp. 9–10.        |
| 4. Published by D.R.Perera, Ambatenne (1926). |                                   |

(1) *Varnṇapīṭaka* of the Hemavatas (2) *Aṅgulimālapīṭaka* of the Rājagirikas (3) *Gūḍha Vessantara* of the Siddhārthakas (4) *Rāṣṭrapālāgarjḡita* of the Pūrvvaśailīyas (5) *Ālavaka garjḡita* of the Aparāśailīyas (6) *Gūḍhavinaya* (7) *Māyājālatantra* (8) *Samāja-tantra* (9) *Mahāsamayātattvatantra* (10) *Tattvasaṅgrahatantra* (11) *Bhūtaḍāmara-tantra* (12) *Vajrāmṛtatantra* (13) *Cakrasaṅvaratantra* (14) *Dvādaśacakra-tantra* (15) *Herukādbhūtatantra* (16) *Mahāmāyātantra* (17) *Padanikṣepa-tantra* (18) *Catuspīṣṭa tantra* (19) *Parāmarḍa tantra* (20) *Mārīcudbhava tantra* (21) *Sarvabuddha tantra* (22) *Sarvaguhya tantra* (23) *Samuccaya tantra* (24) *Mārīcī kalpa* (25) *Herambha kalpa* (26) *Trisamaya kalpa* (27) *Rājakaḷpa* (28) *Vajragandhāraḷpa* (29) *Mārīcīguhya kalpa* (30) *Śuddhasamuccaya kalpa* (31) *Māyāmārīcī kalpa* (Nos. 6-31 were all composed by the Vajraparvatavasins, i.e. the Vajrayanists) (32) *Vaitulya-pīṭaka* of the Vaitulyavadins (33) *Ratnakūṭa sūtras* of the Āndhrakas and (34) *Akṣarasāriya sūtra* of the Mahāsaṅghikas.

Some of the above are available in Tibetan and Chinese translations. The results of our attempts to identify the texts named and of our investigation<sup>1</sup> are as follows:

(1) *Varnṇasūtra* of Candragomin, No. 4271 listed in A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon (T.B.C.) published by Tohoku Imperial University, Japan (1934). (2) *Aṅgulimālika* quoted in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and the text named in (2) above may be *Ārya-Aṅgulimāliya*, T.B.C., No. 213. (4) *Rāṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā* published by L. Finot in the Bibliotheca Buddhica Series. See also T.B.C., No. 62. (7) *Māyājāla* and the *Māyājālatantrarājapañjikā*, T.B.C., Nos. 288 and 2514. (8) *Samājatantra* may perhaps be the *Guhyasamājatantra* (G.O.S., Vol. LIII, ed. B. Bhattacharya). Compare also *Samājaparamārthasarva-karmmodaya-uttaratantrarāja*, T.B.C., No. 449. (9) *Śrī-mahāsamaya-tantrarāja*, T.B.C., No. 390. (10) The *Tattvasaṅgraha* by Santaraksita is a large philosophical work of the 8th century. It is a criticism of numerous other philosophical systems, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, from the standpoint of the Svatantrika Yogacara School. *Tattvasaṅgraha-kārikā* and *Tattvasaṅgrahapañjikā*, T.B.C., Nos. 4266 and 4267, are probably commentaries to the philosophical treatise named. (11) *Bhūtaḍāmara*, T.B.C., No. 747. It has other recensions such as the *Bhūtaḍāmaramaṅḍalavidhi* (Nos. 2677 and 2905), *Bhūtaḍāmara-saṅkṣipta-sādhana* (Nos. 3302 and 3641), *Bhūtaḍāmarasādhana* (Nos. 3303 and 3642), all of the T.B.C. Rāhula Sankrityayana refers<sup>2</sup> to an incomplete text of the *Bhūtaḍāmara-tantra* by Viryasridatta written in Vartula script and found by him among the Sanskrit palm leaf manuscripts in Tibet. (12) *Vajrāmṛtatantra*, a complete text by Acarya Buddhadasa and written in Vartula script is referred to by

1. T.B.C., and J.B.O.R.S., Vol XXI, Pt. 1, (Mar. 1935), pp. 21-43.

2. J.B.O.R.S., Vol. XXI, pt. 1, (March 1935), pp. 21-43.

Rahula Sankrityayana. The same text is included as No. 435 in the T.B.C. (13) *Śrī-cakrasaṃvaratantrarāja-adbhūtaśma-sānālamkāra* and *Śrī-cakrasaṃvara-guhyacintya-tantrarāja*, T.B.C. Nos. 413 and 385 are probably commentaries to the *Cakrasaṃvaratantrarāja*, ascribed in the Tibetan Tangyur to Indrabhuti, the founder of the Vajrayana school. Rahula Sankrityayana mentions a text named *Cakrasaṃvaravivṛti* by Maitreyanatha and written in the Kutila script. (14) The T.B.C. mentions a text named *Dvādaśākāranāma-nyāya-stotra*, (No. 2135, which may be compared with the text named *Dvādaśacakra-tantra*. (15) *Śrī-Herukādbhūtanāma-maṇḍala-vidhi*, T.B.C., No. 1261. Heruka is the name of a Mahayanist deity appearing in Nepalese writings. In Rahula Sankrityayana's list there appears a text named *Herukasādhana*. (16) *Śrī-mahāmāyā-tantrarāja* T.B.C., No. 425, may also be compared with *Mahāmāyā-sādhana*, ascribed in the Tibetan Tangyur to Indrabhuti. (18) *Catuspīṭhatīkā* and *Catuspīṭhavikhyātatantrarāja*, T.B.C., Nos. 1608 and 430. The first named is probably a commentary to the original text. (19) *Śrī-paramādya (-mādi) nāma-mahāyāna-kalparāja*, T.B.C., No. 487. (20) *Mārīcisādhana*, T.B.C., Nos. 3226, 3227, 3229, 3230, 3232, 3233, 3535, 3662, may be compared with the text named in the *Nikāya Saṃgrahaya* (22) *Śrī-guhyasarvachhinda-tantrarāja*, T.B.C., No. 384. (23) Samuccaya is the name of a Mahayanist deity, appearing in Nepalese writings. *Samuccayakramapañjikātripada*, T.B.C., No. 1836, may be compared with the *Samuccaya-tantra*. (24) *Mārīcīdevīsādhana* and *Mārīcīpicupāsādhana*, T.B.C., Nos. 3660 and 3534. Mārīcī is the name of a Tantric goddess. (26) *Trisamayarājasādhana* and *Trisamaya-samayasādhana* T.B.C., Nos. 3144 and 3147 may be compared with the *Trisamayarāja* quoted by Santideva. (27) *Rājadeśa*, T.B.C., Nos. 214, 215 may be compared with the *Rājakaḷpa*, (28) *Vajragandhārī sādhana*, T.B.C., Nos. 3260, 3385, 3594, 3595. There is also a dhāraṇī-charm called Vajragandhārī. (29) *Mārīcī-maṇḍalavidhimārīcījātadvādaśa-sahasrād uddhṛtakalpa hr̥daya sapta śata*, T.B.C., No. 566. (31) *Māyāmārīcījātatantrād uddhṛtakalparāja*, T.B.C., No. 565. (32) The Vaitulya-piṭaka is often referred to (see Ch. I). The Samādhirājasūtra is also called a Vaipulya-sūtra and reasons for naming it as such are enumerated at the concluding part of that text. (33) Ratnakūṭa means 'heap of jewels'. It constitutes a large section both of the Chinese Tripitaka and of the Tibetan Kanjur. In these works it is a collection of 49 sutras, including among others, the long Sukhāvati-vyūha, Kāśyāpaparivarta and many *paripṛccās* ("questions" with the corresponding answers). The *Ārya-mahā-ratnakūṭa-dharmmaparyāya-śatasahasrika-granthe-trisaṃvaranirdeśaparivartanāma-mahāyānasūtra*, T.B.C., No. 45 is probably one such text. T.B.C., No. 118 is a text named *Ārya-ratnakoti*. (34) *Akṣaradvikopadeśa*, *Akṣaraśataka* and *Akṣaraśatakanāma-vṛtti*, T.B.C., Nos. 2390, 3834 and 3835 may be compared with the *Akṣarasāriya-sūtra*. Besides the *tantras*, the Mahayana charms

called *dhāraṇīs* were known in Ceylon. Eight stone tablets with *dhāraṇīs* inscribed on them have been discovered at a spot to the south east of Abhayagiri-dagaba at Anuradhapura.

Stanza No. 12 of the *Nāmāṣṭa-śatakaya* venerates<sup>1</sup> Amitabha who is one of the Buddhas recognised by the Mahayanists. Stanza No. 13 refers to the Buddha Sarthavaha or to the Buddha who is a "sārthavāha" (leader of a caravan). In the Indikatusaya copper plaques occurs "Pratthavāha", a name of a Bodhisattva. These names, though they are similar to those of the Mahayanists, were used as words of praise for the Sakyasimha (the Buddha Gautama). But it is likely that the author was familiar with Mahayanist texts.

There are numerous references to and quotations from Buddhist Sanskrit authors scattered throughout in classical Sinhalese literature. Subject-matter has been borrowed from Sanskrit texts or allusions made. In the use of proper names, the Sanskritisation of terms especially with regard to Abhidhamma and in allusions to doctrines peculiar to Mahayanists, one may notice traces of the influence of Buddhist Sanskrit texts.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. C. E. Godakumbura has traced references to Buddhist Sanskrit writers in Sinhalese literature.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that Sanskrit was the language used by the Mahayanists in the propagation of their doctrines, but in many of these references there is hardly anything directly Mahayanistic.

A quotation, a *stotra*, from a Sanskrit text has been included in the *Dharmma-pradīpikā*, a Sinhalese text of the 12th century.<sup>4</sup> It comments on the advantages of *Maitri*. The stanza is in the *śragdharā* metre. Its language and metre may be compared with the *Trikayastava*<sup>5</sup> at Mihintale. The contents of the verse may also be compared with the accounts of *Maitri* in the *Muvadevdāvata* (vv. 155, 160-161) and the *Sasadāvata* (v. 234-236).

The *Māhātmya*-granthas which were written extolling the virtues of the Buddha were mostly works of the Mahayanists.<sup>6</sup> *Buddha-gadyaya*, *Anuruddha-śataka*, *Bhakti-śataka* and *Āṇavum Sakaskaḍa* may be compared with the above. The *Pādapaṅkajastava* appears to have been a Buddhist Sanskrit work eulogising the Buddha. This text has not been traced and its author remains unknown. A stanza has been quoted in the *Amāvatura*, (12th cent.).<sup>7</sup> A Buddha-stotra occurs also in the *Daham-saraṇa*, (about the 12th cent.)<sup>8</sup>. The *stotra* is in the form of an address to the Buddha Narada by the Bodhisattva.

1. *N.S.*, v. 12, 13.

2. *S.Litt.*, pp. 43-45.

3. *U.C.R.*, Vol I, No. 1, pp. 86-93.

4. 1915 edition p. 159.

5. *E.Z.* Vol. IV, pp. 242-246.

6. *WHIL*, p. 375.

7. ed. R.de Silva, (1922), p. 212.

8. 1929 edition, p. 62.

There is extant a 15th century work *Vṛttaratnākarapañcikā*, containing four verses praising the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.<sup>1</sup> *Vṛttaratnākara* is a well known work on Sanskrit prosody, widely studied in India as well as in Ceylon. In the reign of Parakramabahu VI, a commentary (*pañcikā*) to this work was written by Ramachandra, a Brahmin who came to Ceylon from Bengal. He studied Buddhist scriptures under Sri Rahula. Ramacandra was also the author of *Bhakti-śataka* (also called *Bauddha-śataka*), a collection of hundred stanzas in Sanskrit, containing eulogies on the Buddha and his doctrine. It is said that the king was pleased with this work of Ramacandra and in order to honour him, conferred the title 'Bauddhāgama Cakravartin' on him. Sri Rahula spent most of his life at Totagamuwa, the famous seat of Natha. It is likely that Ramacandra also spent part of his life at this place and that he, too, became a devotee of this Bodhisattva.

Dr. S. Paranavitana quotes these four stanzas and gives their translations. They have been composed to illustrate the metres named in that text. Those eulogising Avalokitesvara have been composed for the purpose of illustrating the Upasthita, Ekarūpa, Pramadānana and (a variety of) Daṇḍaka metres.

“ May Avalokitesvara, the Refuge of the virtuous and the Ocean of Compassion, remove my suffering—he who endeavours, day and night, to deliver beings plunged in the midst of the great sea of *samsāra*. ”

“ May this Avalokitesvara, who has compassion for the lowly and the poor folk, protect thee—Avalokitesvara by whose lustre, equal to the radiance of millions of autumnal moons, the three worlds appeared like the Ocean of Milk. ”

“ I now worship Avalokitesvara, the Lord of Prosperity, who is as beautiful as the autumnal moon, or the jasmine flower, or snow, or the garland of pearls, or the lance, or quicksilver, who holds in his hands a rosary and a jewel lotus, who wishes well to the whole world, who has, as his crown, a figure of the Conqueror (i.e. Buddha), who is the foremost teacher, and who is adorned with ornaments like the *jatā-makūṭa* etc. ”

“ The all knowing and the incomparable Lord Avalokitesvara, assuming that this action affords protection to the world, daily removes fear; hence, having known that he is compassionate towards the lowly and the poor, I go for refuge to that Lord, who is the abode of my rejoicing, and who is indeed the foremost among Bodhisattvas. May you and all people who desire heaven and final beatitude go at once for the accomplishment of your aims to that Teacher. May it be well ! ”

1. *B.C.L.M.*, pt. II, pp. 15–18.

This is one of the few instances where Avalokitesvara is mentioned by his best known name in a Ceylon document. In most inscriptions and literary works, he is referred to as Natha. These references to Avalokitesvara in the *Vṛtta-ratnākara-pañcikā* show that in fifteenth century Ceylon, Avalokitesvara was known in very much the same way as he was in the period when Mahayanism was a living force. His distinctive characteristics were also ascribed to him in the fifteenth century by Ceylon Buddhists.

In the chapter containing *dhyānas* of different deities in the *Śāriputra*, a Sanskrit work<sup>1</sup> on iconometry used by the image makers of Ceylon, Natha is described as follows:—

“Victory to the honoured and worshipful Natha, bestower of wisdom; who holds a beautiful lotus in the hand; who is white in colour like the lily flower and camphor; whose crest is adorned with heavenly ornaments (?) . . . . . who bears on his head (the figure of) a Buddha and who is compassionate towards the helpless and the indigent”.

It will be noticed that here the general characteristics of Avalokitesvara have been ascribed to Natha.

Eight different forms of Natha are mentioned in this manuscript: (1) Siva Natha (2) Brahma Natha (3) Visnu Natha (4) Gauri Natha (5) Matsyendra Natha (6) Bhadra Natha (7) Bauddha Natha and (8) Gana Natha. These names show the extent to which Hinduism had influenced Buddhist beliefs and practices in Ceylon. Each aspect has been described. Parānavitana has already given translations of the Sanskrit stanzas. Sculptures answering to the descriptions have not been so far identified in Ceylon.

In India, Avalokitesvara was given 108 different forms. It will be seen that in Ceylon, he has been given only eight aspects identifying him with the Hindu Trinity, i.e. Siva, Brahma and Visnu. Gauri is the spouse of Siva and Gana (Ganesa) is their son. The cult of Matsyendra Natha is very popular among the Buddhists of Nepal who consider him to be the guardian deity of that country. His worship is not prevalent in any other country. Parānavitana quotes a verse from a Nepalese inscription of 1672 A.C. in which Avalokitesvara is identified with Gauri, the *śakti* (female energy) of Siva, the supreme Brahma and Matsyendra Natha. The latter is considered to be the patron of a class of ascetics who practise the mystic meditation called the Haṭhayoga. In the opinion of Parānavitana, the knowledge of Matsyendra Natha in Ceylon was due to the Vajrayanists, the Vajiriyavadins of Ceylon writings.

1. *C.J.S.C.*, Sec. G. Vol. II, pp. 60–64.

The description of Bhadra Natha given here agrees fairly well with the characteristics of Skanda, son of Siva, who commands much popularity as Kataragama-deviyo. The latter has the peacock as his vehicle and the figure of the cock in his standard. The description of Bauddha Natha as given in the manuscript has very little in common with any of the members of the Hindu Trinity. On the other hand, it agrees fairly well with the descriptions of Natha-Bodhisattva in the *sandēśa* poems. The *Tisara Sandēśaya* describes him as having dark matted hair on his shining head, blue eyelashes, white hands, blue rosary, lotus-like feet and shining nails. There is hardly anything in the description of Bauddha Natha contrary to the *Tisara Sandēśa* description. Hence it may be assumed that while six forms of Natha are attempts to identify him with members of the Hindu pantheon, his aspect of Bauddha Natha is the original Buddhist form of the deity.

#### ( IV )

The Mora-paritta used in Ceylon is similar to the Mahā-mayūrī-dhāraṇī of the Mahayanists.<sup>1</sup> The latter is used as a protection against infectious diseases and serpents. It is one of the five protective charms (*dhāraṇīs*) of the Mahayanists. The text of the Gini-pirita, which is used in present day Ceylon and is included in the *Pirit-pota*, is much like a *dhāraṇī* of the Mahayanists. The word “dhāraṇī” occurs twice in the text. Jinapañjaraya, Jaya-pirita, Sīvalī-yantraya and Ratana-yantraya which also occur in the *Pirit-pota* have been probably composed as a result of the influence of Tantric Buddhists. In the Jinapañjaraya occur the words “etthantare aṭṭhanāthā bhavanti”. Aṭṭha-nāthā are the eight Nathas who may be the same eight forms of Natha quoted in the *Śārīputra*. The practice of chanting the Ratana-sutta a hundred thousand times to invoke gods is referred to in *Harisa-sandēśa*.<sup>2</sup> The prevalence of such practices may perhaps be due to the influence of Tantric Buddhism.

The *Saddharmmaratnākaraya*, refers<sup>3</sup> to the Buddha as having a fourfold body (lit. aspects), i.e. Rūpa-kāya, Dharmma-kāya, Nimitta-kāya and Śūnya-kāya. The author further proceeds to explain these fourfold bodies. Rūpa-kāya is said to be the human form of the Buddha which could be seen by all persons having the faculty of sight. From the description of the Dharmma-kāya as given in this text, it may be conjectured that the reference is to the inner enlightened body or the Dhamma of the Buddha. The

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1. *Piruvānā-pot-vahansē*. See further Mora-Jātaka (No. 159); also *W.H.I.L.*, pp. 385-386.
  2. *H.S.*, v. 198.
  3. *Sdr.*, ed. K. Gnanawimala, (1948), pp. 14-16.



text says that to the ignorant it is formless, but to those who understand it, it has form. *Nimitta-kāya* is referred to as the state of *sopādisesa-nibbāṇa-dhātu*, which is visible only to the clairvoyant. It may be understood as the state of the Buddha enjoying the bliss of Nirvana in his living form. *Śūnya-kāya* is described as his state in *anupādisesa-nibbāṇa-dhātu* i.e. bliss of Nirvana after his passing away. It will be seen that the author was familiar with the doctrine of *Tri-kāya* of the Mahayanists. *Rūpa-kāya* of this description appears to be identical with their *Nirmāṇa-kāya*. The Mahayanist theory of *Dharmma-kāya* may be compared with the description of *Dharmma-kāya* as given in this text. The remaining two *kāyas* seem to be an elaboration of the theory of *Sambhoga-kāya*.

Professor D. T. Suzuki says<sup>1</sup> that the *Sambhoga-kāya* has two aspects, the first for the self-enjoyment, the second for the teaching of the *Bodhisattva*. "The *Sambhoga-kāya* is visible to the *Bodhisattva*. It is a symbol of transcendental perfection and personifies wisdom. It is the Buddha ideal". Upon the foregoing data, we conclude that Mahayanist doctrines were known to the author of *Saddharmmaratnākaraya* and that he drew inspiration, to a certain extent, from his knowledge of such texts.

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1. *M.B.*, pp. 40-42.

## CHAPTER III

### SCULPTURAL

MAHAYANIST sculptures discovered in Ceylon could be a source of great interest to the student of archaeology since they are of a complex and varied nature. Of these a few are in the British Museum and a few more in the Boston Museum. The Mahayanist bronzes in the British Museum, which belong to the Nevill Collection, are of importance in a study connected with not only iconography but also religious developments in Ceylon. Of the stone sculptures that are found in Ceylon, some are in the round while some are carved out of the rock in high relief. A few heads of Bodhisattvas and sculptured slabs of a Mahayanist character have also been found. Bronzes of male as well as female deities will form a large section of this chapter.

Images of Avalokitesvara, Vajrapani, Vajrasattva, Manjusri, Jambhala, Tara and Cunda were created by the Mahayanists in Ceylon. Many of these deities were known and worshipped and cults associated with them were in vogue about the close of the Anuradhapura period. Images of Maitreya are also found but since this Bodhisattva is worshipped by both orthodox and Mahayana Buddhists, such sculptures have been left out of our study. Of the monuments of the Mahayanists, the sculptures form our greater part. Their creations, beginning from about the seventh century, lasted up to and including the first quarter of the eleventh century and survived in the form of locally developed cults till about the 15th century.

In the *Cūlavamsa* there are a number of references to images of Bodhisattvas. The *Mahāvamsa* mentions images of the Buddha as having been created even in the time of Devanampiyatissa (307-267 B.C.) and also to numerous others in succeeding reigns. The chronicle, however, is silent about those of the Bodhisattvas.<sup>1</sup> The first reference to an image of a Bodhisattva occurs in the *Cūlavamsa* in the reign of Jetthatissa II (332-341), an expert in ivory carving.<sup>2</sup> He made a beautiful charming figure representing the Bodhisatta, as beautiful as if it had been produced by miraculous power, as well as a *pallaṅka* with a support (chair of state?), an umbrella, a *maṇḍapa* with jewels. The chronicle does not specifically state the name of the Bodhisattva but the reference to the icon is in the 4th century and it is therefore possible that it was Mahayanist. The *pallaṅka*, umbrella and *maṇḍapa* referred

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1. Ch. 36, v. 128.

2. Ch. 37, v. 102-3.

to, were most probably for this image. As it is said that this king caused to be executed all kinds of work in ivory, it is likely that this image, too, was carved out of that material.

At the time of Fa-Hsien's arrival in Ceylon about the year 400 there were images of the Buddha and of Bodhisattvas in Ceylon. He mentions the existence of an image of Maitreya Bodhisattva<sup>1</sup> but it is not possible for us to say whether it was a work of the Mahayanists or otherwise.

The *Cūlavamsa* records<sup>2</sup> the erection of Bodhisattva figures in the image house (*paṭimāgāra*) of the Bahumangala-cetiya in the reign of Dhatuseṇa (463-479). We know that in the reign of Jetṭhatissa II a figure of a Bodhisattva was carved and placed in a *maṇḍapa* specially built for the purpose. In the reign of Dhatuseṇa, which was more than a century after that of Jetṭhatissa II, a number of Bodhisattvas (whose names are not mentioned) were installed in a *paṭimāgāra*. Since Theravada recognises only Maitreya as a Bodhisattva, it is likely that these figures were Mahayanist. The setting up of these figures in an image-house shows the slow but steady progress of Mahayanist activities. Furthermore, on the left side of the Bodhi tree was erected a Bodhisatta temple (Bodhisattaghara).<sup>3</sup> This was near the Mahavihara, in which, according to the *Cūlavamsa*,<sup>4</sup> Dhammarucika-bhikkhus dwelt at that time. It is not stated for whose worship it was intended. As it seems likely that worship of Bodhisattvas was not practised by orthodox Buddhists at that time, it may be taken as one devoted to the worship of a Mahayanist deity. There is no doubt that it contained one or more images of Bodhisattvas.

At times the *Cūlavamsa* refers<sup>5</sup> to a Buddha image described as "Abhiṣeka". Dhatuseṇa is credited with having made an ornament for one such. Migara, the Commander-in-Chief in the reign of Kassapa I (479-497), built a house for it and even sought permission to hold a consecration festival even greater than that for the stone image of the Buddha (*silā-sambuddha*). The monarch refused him permission but the persistent general had his desire satisfied in the succeeding reign of Moggallāna I (497-515). The word "abhiṣeka" is suggestive of Mahayanist practices as may be inferred from the *Advayaṅgraha*, a Mahayanist work, in which a whole chapter (*Sekatānvayasamgraha*) is devoted for the purpose of explaining the practices connected with "abhiṣeka".<sup>6</sup>

Mahinda II (787-807), who built the Ratana-pāsāda like a second Vejayanta at a cost of three hundred thousand *kaḥāpaṇas*

1. *B.R.W.W.*, Vol I, p. lxxviii.

2. *Cv.*, ch. 38, v. 65.

3. *Cv.* ch. 38, v. 67.

4. *ibid.*, v. 75.

5. *ibid.*, ch. 38, v. 67; ch. 39, v. 6, 40.

6. *Adjr.*, ch. 7.

and donated it to the Abhayagiri community, is also credited with having caused to be made a splendid Bodhisattva image of silver.<sup>1</sup> It is a matter deserving of thought that the chronicle, which makes special mention of images of Maitreya Bodhisattva, does not refer by name to other images of Bodhisattvas caused to be made by kings who were favourably disposed towards *bhikkhus* who entertained unorthodox views. It is said that Mahinda II caused this beautiful silver image to be placed in the Silamegha nunnery. It is possible that the nuns of this convent worshipped this Bodhisattva.

From a study of the monuments of the period, it may be noted that the latter half of the ninth century witnessed the flowering of Mahayanist culture. As the *Nikāyasamgraha* informs us, Sena I (846–866) accepted the teachings of the Vajrayanists.<sup>2</sup> The *Cūlavamsa* refers to him as one whose aspiration was directed towards Buddhahood (*buddhabhūmigatāsayo*).<sup>3</sup> He is not credited with any Mahayanist icons but it is likely that he installed such figures in the Pubbarama monastery, for the erection or rebuilding of which he and his queen are given credit.<sup>4</sup>

The succeeding reign of Sena II (866–901) has been referred to by the *Nikāya-samgraha* as one favourable to the orthodox church.<sup>5</sup> The *Cūlavamsa* which gives a somewhat different picture of the trend of events, records the installation of Bodhisattva figures in the Manimekhala-pāsāda.<sup>6</sup> The affiliation of either the latter or the ruined temple of the stone statue with that of the Bodhisatta has also been recorded in the chronicle. W. Geiger says that the text of the passage which speaks of this affiliation of temples is not very clear.<sup>7</sup> What is meant by affiliation is that within the *paṭimāgāra* under the same roof, a separate shrine room was set apart for the installation of the image of the Bodhisattva. A common wall separated the two shrine rooms. We have noted above that in the reign of Dhatusena, images of Bodhisattvas were installed in a *paṭimāgāra*. In the reign of Sena II, the affiliation of a temple of a Bodhisattva with that of the Buddha is referred to. Even in modern Buddhist temples in Ceylon, a *devālē* devoted to the worship of Hindu deities such as Visnu is very common, i.e. *paṭimāgāra* at Gadaladeniya.<sup>8</sup> From the description given in the *Tisara-sandēśa*, it will be seen that at Doravaka-devālē, within the shrine which housed an image of the Buddha, an image of Natha (Avalokitesvara) was also installed under the same roof but sepa-

1. *Cv.*, ch. 48, v. 136, 139.

2. *Nks.*, p. 20.

3. *Cv.*, ch., 50, v. 65–66,  
See also note 4 by Geiger.

4. *Cv.*, ch. 50, v. 69–70.

5. *Nks.* pp. 20-21.

6. *Cv.*, ch. 51, v. 77–79.

7. *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 155, note 1.

8. *U.H.C.*, Vol. I, pt. II, p. 785.

rated by a common wall.<sup>1</sup> At Wegiri-devālē, an image of the Buddha and of Lokeshvara Natha have been installed in a manner which may be compared with the description given in the *Tisara-sandēsa*.

In enumerating the numerous works of religious devotion of Parakramabhu I (1153-1186), the *Cūlvamsa* also records his activities in the Rohana region. He is said to have erected three statues of Maitreya Bodhisattva but the chronicle does not give details.<sup>2</sup> This monarch was the champion of ecclesiastical unity and bore the epithet Durlabdhi-mathana.<sup>3</sup> It is, therefore, doubtful whether the statues of Maitreya erected by him were Mahayanist. Kirtti Sri Rajasimha (1747-1782) is also said to have erected images of this Bodhisattva as an attendant on the Buddha images.<sup>4</sup> It will be seen that the tradition of erecting Bodhisattva images, which had become common, by about the 11th century, was continued down to very late times and is in vogue even at the present day. These later images could not have been Mahayanistic in the exact sense of the word, but they were relics of a tradition which had come down from the early centuries of the Christian era.

It is unfortunate that these sculptures are lost. An occasional example, coming to light, baffles identification. So far as we know the first Bodhisattva image was made in the first half of the fourth century A.C. (Jetthatissa II). This was at a time when Mahayanism had already made its appearance in Ceylon. In the fifth century (in the reign of Kassapa I), icons of Bodhisattvas are heard of once again, and from the latter half of the eighth century onwards these become more numerous. It is purely on grounds of style that the sculptures we refer to have been dated. An investigation of the history of the period of Mahayanist activity in Ceylon confirms the conclusions thus arrived at on grounds of style.

The material which forms our study of sculptures has been arranged as follows:

- (1) Buddhas (i) Buduruvegala (ii) Seruvila and Mahiyangana (iii) *Pralambapāda* image from Ambalantota (iv) Bronze seated Buddha illustrated by Coomaraswamy (v) Bronze Buddha at Gadaladeniya (vi) Hero stone from Wilpattu (vii) Sculptured slab from Kandy illustrated by J. Ph. Vogel (viii) Sculptured slabs from Panduvasnuvara and Dedigama (ix) Sculptured slab from Mahiyangana-dagaba.
- (2) Avalokitesvara (i) Buduruvegala (ii) Weligama—Kustarajagala (iii) Dambulla (iv) Situlpavva (v) Head from Ambalantota (vi) Wegiriya (vii) Buduruvegala—metal

1. *T.S.*, v. 126, 127.

2. *Cv.*, ch. 79, v. 75-76.

3. *Nks.*, p. 24.

4. *Cv.*, ch. 100, v. 248 and 258-259.

- (viii) Sailatalaramaya—Kurunegala district (ix) Boston museum—bronze (x) British museum—bronze (xi) British museum—bronze—Avalokita on Mount Potalaka (xii) British museum—metal—inscribed image (xiii) Padmanarttesvara—Colombo museum.
- (3) Tara (i) Buduruvegala (ii) Wegiriya (iii) British museum—so called Pattini—originally from a spot between Trincomalee and Batticaloa (iv) Gan-aramaya-vihara (v) New Town—Anuradhapura (vi) Tara from Mannar (vii) Janguli from Colombo museum (viii) Arya Tara—British museum (ix) Caturbhujasitatara (x) Gandhatara—British museum.
- (4) (i) Vajrapani—Buduruvegala (ii) Vajrapani—Boston museum.  
(iii) Vajrasattva—Medirigiriya (iv) Manjusri—Elahera.
- (5) Cunda—British museum—3 bronzes.
- (6) Jambhala or Kuvera (i) Boston museum (ii) Osmund de Silva collection (iii) Nalanda-gedige.
- (7) Erotic sculpture at Nalanda-gedige.
- (8) (i) Ubhayavarahanana—Colombo museum (ii) Vasudhara—British museum.
- (9) Vijayarama bas-reliefs.
- (10) Mahayanist paintings.

## ( I )

**Buduruvegala**

The seven standing sculptures in relief at Buduruvegala are remarkable for their height and proportions.<sup>1</sup> They consist of a Buddha in the centre with attendant Bodhisattvas on either side. To the proper right of the Buddha is Avalokitesvara who himself is attended by Sudhanakumara and Tara on either side of him. To the left is Vajrapani with an attendant Bodhisattva on either side of him.

Of the colossal Buddha images in relief, found in Ceylon, the one at Buduruvegala is the most remarkable as regards height and characteristics.<sup>2</sup> This figure is about 50 feet in height and is the only Mahayana Buddha image found in relief in Ceylon.<sup>3</sup> It is placed between two groups of Bodhisattvas—to its right is Avalokitesvara attended on either side by two deities, and to its left is Vajrapani Bodhisattva with two similar attendants.

1. *C.F.S.C.*, Sec. G, Vol. II, Plates XXXIV and XXXV.

2. See Plate No. 1

3. In his *Classical Sinhalese Sculpture* (fig. 77) D. T. Devendra has given the height as 42ft. 8in.

Ancient Buddha images of colossal size yet extant in Ceylon are not many. Those at Avukana and Sesseruva are in relief and may be compared with the Buduruvegala Buddha with regard to proportions. The Avukana figure is in very high relief, almost free-standing. The left hand of the Buduruvegala figure is in *abhaya mudrā* and the right held up towards the shoulders with the fingers bent inwards, touching the folds of the robe. The sculpture itself has not been so well modelled as is clear from a comparison with the flanking images. The folds of the drapery are not clear. Traces of pigment at the left waist and below indicate that the image had been painted.

### Seruvila and Mahiyangana Buddha Images

In the shrine at Seruvila, on the eastern coast and south of Trincomalee there is a small piece of stone sculpture (3-3/4 ins. high).<sup>1</sup> It represents the Buddha in *bhūmi-sparśa mudrā*, seated on a *padmāsana*, with the back to the Bodhi tree. It has the *uṣṇīṣa*. The halo round the head which expands to a diameter of 2-3/4 ins., has ring patterns on its outer bands. The height from the *padmāsana* is 3 inches, the former alone being 3/4 ins. high. On the back there is an inscription in three lines in the north-east Indian Nagari script found in the documents of the Pala dynasty of Bengal and attributed to about the 9th century A.C. The inscription contains the Sanskrit stanza *Ye dharmmā hetu prabhavā*, etc. usually referred to as the Buddhist creed.

This piece of sculpture is said to have been bought from a treasure-hunter of Kantalai (Eastern Province) and is now with the incumbent of the shrine. An examination shows that the sculpture was a product of the Pala school of art which influenced the monuments of the Mahayana in Ceylon to a considerable extent. In the Indian Museum there is a sculpture depicting the Buddha Gautama on *vajrāsana* attended by Lokesvara and Maitreya on either side.<sup>2</sup> These two Bodhisattvas are not represented in this piece of sculpture, but the attitude of the Buddha and the representation of the Bodhi branch above the head may be compared.

A Buddha image from Mahiyangana-stupa also comes into this category.<sup>3</sup> It was found within the stupa, is 5 inches high and carved in relief on a plaque of black basalt. The Buddha is shown seated on a lotus pedestal with its back rest having a flowered design on its border. The figure is shown seated in *vajrāsana*, with its right hand in *bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā*. On the back is the

1. See Plate No. 2.

2. *I.B.I.*, fig. 46.

3. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1951, p. 17 and pp. 51-52. See Plate No. 3.

Buddhist creed in Nagari (Pāla period). It is therefore clear that this sculpture and the other had found their way to Ceylon from north-eastern India.

### Bronze Buddha in Pralambapāda

A metal figure of a sedent Buddha with feet placed in *pralambapāda* pose has been recently brought to light from Ambalantota in south Ceylon.<sup>1</sup> (The height of image with pedestal is 10 ins.). The Buddha is seated on a combined *padmāsana* and *siṃhāsana* pedestal of a type commonly met with in sculptures from Nalanda, Pagan and Malaysia (Compare, for example, Figs. 232, 233, 315 and 363 in Coomaraswamy's *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*). Similar pedestals have been discovered in Ceylon itself and will be referred to. On either side of the Buddha figure is a stupa springing from the pedestal and fixed on to the haloed background. It is surmounted by a *chattrā* capped by a knob. A similar canopy is seen in a sculpture from Pagan in Burma.<sup>2</sup> The back of the Buddha is placed against the halo, the outer rim of which has been elaborately designed and carved. The *karṇṇikā* of the lotus forming the seat is elevated above the petals, allowing the figure to be seated in European fashion i.e. legs down, and the knee caps touch each other. In some examples of *pralambapāda* Buddhas the legs are placed in a position of ease. (Compare, for example, the Buddha from Candi Mendut (8th cent.) in Java, Fig. 357, *H.I.I.A.*). The pedestal on which the two lions are placed compare favourably with those from Java.<sup>3</sup> A comparison of the image itself, may be made with an example from Nepal (now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) in which the treatment of the drapery and the *uṣṇīṣa* find striking resemblance.<sup>4</sup> The robes cling to the body as in the case of Gupta sculptures and in both examples the treatment of the hair is similar. The *mudrā* of the hands of our image is *dharmmacakra*, as in the Nepalese example. The type of pediment and pedestal, so common in Mahayana sculptures, could have been originally conceived in north-eastern India—most likely in Nalanda—but before long spread over in south-east Asia.

According to the Mahayanists, the last seven Buddhas beginning with Vipasyin are called Mānuṣī (Mortal) Buddhas. Gautama the last of the seven, was also called Śakyasiṃha, and conceived in another form which was named Durgatipariśodhana.<sup>5</sup> The *Niṣpannayōgāvalī* of Abhayakara Gupta describes this particular form of Sakyasiṃha as being seated on the centre of the wheel on a lion placed on a double lotus and displaying the *dharmmacakramudrā*.<sup>6</sup>

1. *Itihāsaya* (Vidyodaya University), Vol. II (Dec. 1960). See also Plate No. 4.

2. *H.I.I.A.*, fig. 315. 4. *ibid.*, fig. 278.

3. *ibid.*, fig. 363. 5. *I.B.I.*, p. 78. 6. *I.B.I.*, p. 78 and *N.S.P.*, p. 66.



The Nepalese Buddha at the Boston Museum shows ear lobes curved outwards at the ends<sup>1</sup> and this feature may be compared with that in our image. Coomaraswamy does not date his Nepalese example but, on grounds of style, we may place it some time between 8-10th centuries A.C. The Buddha in *pralambapāda* from Candi Mendut, has been assigned to the late 8th century by Coomaraswamy.<sup>2</sup> It may be compared with our example. Taking into consideration the workmanship and the foreign influences at work in its making, it may not be wrong to assume that our sculpture is an importation from abroad—most likely the north-eastern region of India. A bronze Buddha illustrated by Coomaraswamy, to be dealt with below, has been assumed to be a Mahayanist work.<sup>3</sup> The pedestal of the Buddha image in *pralambapāda* may be compared with the above-mentioned example and those with which it is related. The similarities to be noticed in these instances are suggestive of its Mahayanistic origin. In assigning a date to the sculpture, we should be guided by similar examples which have already been dated and these correspond with the period of intense Mahayanist activity in Ceylon. The period 8-10th centuries may be roughly regarded as the date of this image.

### **Bronze Seated Buddha Illustrated by Coomaraswamy**

Ananda Coomaraswamy has published the photograph of a bronze Buddha having the right hand in *bhūmisparśamudrā* and seated on a pedestal consisting of *padmāsana* and *siṃhāsana*.<sup>4</sup> The pediment of the pedestal may be compared with that of Avalokitesvara.<sup>5</sup> Where this image now is not known; it is believed to have been stolen. With regard to the pediment referred to, Coomaraswamy says, "This type of pediment seems to be quite independent of the form of the throne and appears to mark a local school of which the date is fairly closely fixed by the inscription on another example in the British Museum".<sup>6</sup> The Sanskrit inscription referred to is assignable to about the first half of the 9th century A.C.

Coomaraswamy, purely on grounds of style considered this bronze figure to be a work of the Mahayanists. The combined *siṃhāsana* and *padmāsana* pedestal is not, as supposed by the distinguished scholar, the product of a local school of art. It appears to be derived from a well-known school which flourished in N.E.

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1. *H.I.I.A.*, fig. 278.
  2. *ibid.*, fig. 357.
  3. *B.C.M.*, fig. 177 and *J.R.A.S.*, Apr. 1909, Plate II, fig. 2.
  4. *ibid.*, fig. 177; *ibid.*, Plate II, fig. 2.
  5. *ibid.*, fig. 176. and *ibid.*, Plate I, fig. 2
  6. *J.R.A.S.*, Apr. 1909, pp. 283-297.

India about the same period as that already assigned to this bronze image by him. Compare, for instance, the combined *śirhāsana* and *padmāsana* pedestal of the Buddha in *bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā* from Kurkikhar (in the Gaya district of Bihar) assigned to the 10th century.<sup>1</sup>

In our image the left hand is open and placed on the lap, while the right is in the earth-touching attitude. The robe clings to the body and the hair is prominently shown as forming a knot on the head. The serenity of expression is most marked. In all other respects, too, the icon agrees fairly well with the canons of Pala art.

### Gadaladeniya Bronze Buddha

The standing Buddha of bronze now preserved at Gadaladeni-vihara, and traditionally believed to have been imported to Ceylon by the hierarch Dharmmakirti, the founder of the shrine, is also of the same category of bronzes usually met with at Nalanda and other sites of N.E. India.<sup>2</sup> The image (2 ft 6 ins. high) is placed on a lotus pedestal, the petals of which are shown as elongated—a very unusual feature among local sculptures. The robe, while clinging to the body, is shown loosely spreading out and hanging below from behind the shoulders right down to the ankles. *Abhaya* and *varada mudrās* are shown by the right and left hands respectively, a feature very rare in Ceylon Buddha images. The *ketumālā* rising above snail-like hair, is of the same form as the main sedent Buddha image at the vihara. The manner in which the robe is worn and the *abhaya* and *varada mudrās* indicated by the right and left hands, respectively, may be compared with similar features in the bronze Buddha No. 1-532 at the Nalanda Museum, a sculpture described as one of the finest of the Nalanda bronzes.<sup>3</sup> Taking into consideration the art traditions of Nalanda which influenced the religious art of Further India, and Indonesia and south-east Asia in general, it may not be wrong to identify the sculpture as one belonging to a school of sculptors of N.E. India. Paranavitana assumes that it is possible that this image could have come even from Further India.<sup>4</sup>

### Wilpattu Hero Stone

A stone slab from Velana-damana in the Wilpattu (North Western Province) bearing a bas relief sculpture, discovered by Archaeological Commissioner, H. C. P. Bell in 1896, was removed

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1. *I.B.*, Plate XXX.
  2. *U.H.C.*, Vol. I, Pt. II, p. 789 and see below Plate No. 5.
  3. *A.G.N.*, Plate IVa.
  4. *Ceylon and Malaysia*, p. 201 f.

in 1947 to Anuradhapura where it is now preserved in the Archaeological Museum.<sup>1</sup> The slab measures 7 ft. 3 ins. in height, 2 ft. 6 ins. in breadth and 8 inches in thickness. It contains two panels, one above the other. While the upper section contains the figure of a Dhyāni-Buddha fanned by a female chowrie-bearer on either side, the lower one shows a battle scene. A warrior armed with a sword and a shield is aided by a spearman in the kneeling attitude. They fight with four enemies armed with bows and arrows. Three of them are either dying or dead. The warrior or the imposing central figure is himself wounded by two arrows but has virtually disembowelled one foe. H. C. P. Bell assumed that the carving represented the prowess of Nandimitta or some other paladin of King Dutthagamani.

Paranavitana, a later successor in office, has interpreted the scene in a different way.<sup>2</sup> He has proposed that the sculpture was Mahayanistic, adducing grounds to identify the seated figure in the upper panel as the Dhyani-Buddha Aksobhya. Death in battle, according to *Varahamihira*, produces such instantaneous results as being rewarded with birth in heaven.

It appears that this concept was acceptable to the Buddhists of Ceylon, too, as attested by the references to such events in the classical literature of Ceylon. According to the Mahayanists, Dhyani-Buddha Aksobhya represents consciousness (*viññāna*) and his *mudrā* is *bhū-sparśa*. The five Dhyani-Buddhas represent the five *skandas* and *viññāna* which Aksobhya represents is *ātman* (soul), in non-Buddhist idiom. Paranavitana explains the relationship between the upper and the lower panels as the soul (*viññāna*) attaining heaven as a reward for death in the battlefield. On the paleographical evidence of an inscription on the slab in Sinhalese (now illegible) he dates the slab 10-12th cent. A.C.

### **Kandy Sculptured Slab** (NOW WITH LORD CARMICHAEL)

Dr. J. Ph. Vogel has published an article dealing with a Buddhist sculpture from Kandy<sup>3</sup> in the possession of Lord Carmichael and which had come into the hands of a British officer at the capture of Kandy in 1815 A.C. In height it is about 6-1/4 inches and is elaborately carved. Nothing is known of its previous history. As will be shown, it appears to have been an important piece of sculpture, probably brought by pilgrims from N.E. India.

The slab shows the figure of the Buddha centrally placed in the *bhūmi-sparśa mudrā* and seated cross legged on a *padmāsana*. The stalk of the lotus is also clearly shown and the weight of the

1. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1896, p. 7 and *S.H.C.*, fig. 3, p. 19. See below Plate No. 10.
2. *A.A.*, XXII 1/2, pp. 153-158.
3. *J.A.S.B.*, New Series, Vol. XI (1915), pp. 297-303 and Plate XX.

*āsana* is borne from below by two beings (probably *nāgas* and *yakṣas*). On either side of the Buddha are the Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara and Maitreya. Over their heads rise two tiers of miniature figures partly mounted on animals. The tiers rise in the form of an arch over the head of the Buddha. The apex is formed by the foliage of the Bodhi-tree. These figurines (of unprepossessing appearance) indicate the army of Mara. Beneath the *padmāsana* and on either side are two figurines. Vogel has identified the one to the Buddha's right as Vasundhara, the Earth-goddess. The corresponding figurine on the left was left unidentified. According to the *Sādhanamālā*, she may be Vasumatisri, who, together with Srivasundhara, is a companion of Vasudhara, the consort of Jambhala.<sup>1</sup> Vasumatisri stands on the left side of Vasudhara.

Seven smaller panels representing scenes from the Buddha's life have been arranged around the group—three each on the two sides and one above. The birth is indicated by the scene nearest the right hand of the Buddha. Queen Mahamaya, is seen holding the branch of a *śāla* tree, while an attendant is shown to her left.<sup>2</sup> The newly born prince is shown twice on the right.

The next important event is the Turning-of-the-Wheel-of-the-Law (*dharmmacakra-ppravarttana*) at the Deer Park. We find this event sculptured in the usual fashion above the nativity scene. The hands of the Master are shown in the *Dharmmacakra-mudrā*. On the pedestal are carved the deer and the wheel as a further elucidation of the event. The five miniature figures on either side of the Buddha represent the first five disciples of the Buddha, i.e. Anna-Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama and Assaji.

The scene above the last mentioned refers to the taming of the elephant Nalagiri, let loose in a state of intoxication by Devadatta in order to kill the Buddha. The elephant is shown twice, once lifting its trunk and the next kneeling down in submission.

The scene on the top right hand corner indicates the Buddha's descent from Trayastrimsa heaven after delivering a discourse on Abhidhamma to the dwellers of that heavenly abode (including his mother, who had been born there as a god), one week after his birth. The Buddha is said to have descended to the earth by means of a triple ladder, at a spot called Sankasya which is indicated beneath the lotus on which he is standing. He is attended by Brahma to his right and Indra to his left. The latter holds a parasol over the Buddha's head. The figurine kneeling at the Master's feet has been taken to be the nun Utpalavarnna by Vogel on the ground that she was the first to go to receive him on his return from heaven.

1. *I.B.I.*, p. 203.

2. Sk. *śālah*, P. *sāla*, Sinh. *sal*. Botanical name: *shorea robusta*.

According to traditions current in Ceylon and literary evidence, it was Sariputra the chief disciple who honoured the Buddha by being the first to receive him.<sup>1</sup>

Below the scene is shown the Twin Miracle performed by the Buddha at Sravasti. On this occasion, the Buddha was seen preaching at the same moment in more than one place. This is indicated by the triple figure of the Master in the attitude of preaching. The main figure resembles the corresponding one at the left but the two Buddhas on either side are creations of the Master at the moment of performing the *yamaka-mahā-prātihārya* (twin miracle) at the *gaṇḍamba-rukkha-mūla* at Sravasti. There are two *nāga* figures supporting the *padmāsana*.

The lowest scene to the left shows the Buddha in the *pralamba-pāda* position. This refers to the Buddha's sojourn at the Parileyya forest where he was offered a honeycomb by a monkey. Though Vogel refers to an offering of a pot of toddy such a story is not recorded in the traditional accounts current in Ceylon. The monkey is shown here four times. He is said to have either fallen accidentally, or committed suicide by jumping into a well, and then reborn as a god. In minute carving is shown several acts, climbing a tree, approaching the Master with a bowl, jumping into a well and, finally, rising in divine form. There is also a small elephant in the scene. This is no other than Parileyya (Parileyyaka), said to have dwelt in the selfsame wood and attended on the Buddha during his sojourn in the forest.

On top is the last scene in the life of the Buddha—his passing away into Nirvana at Kusinagara under a tree in the garden of the Malla Kings. The dying Buddha is lying between the twin *śāla* trees on his right side with his head resting on his hand. It is not possible to identify all the mourners. At the extreme end below the Buddha's head with his right hand resting on the breast, is probably the representation of Ananda, the chief attendant-disciple. Vogel has surmised that the one occupying the centre in front of the couch is Subhadra, the last convert, and that the one kneeling at the feet is Mahakasyapa. The tradition current in Ceylon is that the latter was away at the time of *parinirvāṇa* and that he arrived only when the funeral pyre was about to be lit. Tree spirits are shown as emerging from the foliage of the twin *śāla* trees.

This sculpture, therefore, represents eight principal events in the Buddha's life. The most important among these are the Nativity, Enlightenment, Turning of the Wheel of the Law and the Passing Away. The enlightenment or the attainment of omniscience is the most important event in the life of the Buddha—hence it is shown

1. *Pju.*, p. 504.

in the panel in the centre. The figures of the two Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara and Maitreya flanking the Buddha on *padmāsana* attest the Mahayanistic origin of this sculpture. Vogel has suggested 1000–1200 as the probable date. His view is that the sculpture is a memento brought home by a pilgrim visiting the holy places in India and that it originated in Bodh-Gaya in the Magadha region.

### Sculptures from Panduvasnuvara and Dedigama Museum

A sculpture (height 3-1/4 inches and breadth 2-1/4 inches) similar to the one described above is in the possession of the incumbent of the Rajamaha-vihara at Panduvasnuvara, North Western Province.<sup>1</sup> It was accidentally found buried within the temple premises. As in the Carmichael sculpture there are eight scenes from the life of the Buddha. Prominence has been given to the scene of the Enlightenment which, as usual, shows the Buddha in the *bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā*. The foliage of the Bodhi-tree is shown, but instead of the tiers of miniature figures forming the host of the Mara arranged to indicate an arch, this sculpture shows a miniature *toraṇa* placed against the back of the Buddha. A similar sculpture now preserved at the Nalanda museum shows the back of the *āsana* against the shoulders of the Buddha.<sup>2</sup> Compare also the *toraṇa* in a similar example from Pagan, Burma.<sup>3</sup>

In the Panduvasnuvara sculpture, the spaces below the *padmāsana* have been elaborately carved with creeper designs terminating in the heads of serpents as in the example from Pagan. In the Nalanda museum example, the space is carved by the figures of lively females, dancers and musicians in the act of paying homage. In the sculpture from Panduvasnuvara, the following scenes from the life of the Buddha are represented (beginning with the scene nearest the right hand of the Buddha): (i) Nativity (ii) Turning of the Wheel of the Law (iii) Princess Yasodhara and Prince Rahula (iv) top —Passing Away; (below the Passing Away scene, to the proper left of the Buddha) (v) Taming of the elephant Nalagiri (vi) Delivering a discourse to the consorts of Alavaka, the demon-king (vii) Buddha in *pralambapāda*, with the alms-bowl placed on the lap.

It will be noticed that the scenes representing the descent from Trayastrimsa heaven and the performance of the Twin Miracle which are noticed in the Carmichael sculpture have been replaced by (iii) and (vi), noted above. No. (iii) represents the visit of the Buddha to Kapilavastu for the first time after his enlightenment. On this occasion Yasodhara is said to have shown to her seven year old son Rahula, his father who had become the Buddha

1. See below, Plate No. 7.

2. *A.G.N.*, Plate IVb.

3. *J.A.S.B.*, New Series, Vol. XI, 1915, Plate XXIV.

and who was moving slowly along the streets of Kapilavastu. No. (vi) is the scene representing the taming of the demon-king Alavaka. The Buddha visited Alavaka's abode in his absence and was delivering a discourse to his consorts when Alavaka himself appeared. In this scene, the Buddha is shown in the attitude of delivering the discourse. The two females on either side of him may be *yakṣanīs*, the consorts of Alavaka.

The Passing Away scene in this sculpture is solemn and peaceful. Above the scene are carved the figures of two mourners and also that of a stupa. The latter feature is absent in the Kandy example but is found more elaborately carved in the specimen at the Nalanda museum. In the sculpture from Amaravati containing only four scenes (Renunciation, Enlightenment, Turning of the Wheel of the Law and Passing Away),<sup>1</sup> the Passing Away scene is replaced by a stupa of a type found at Sanchi and Bharhut.

It would now have been seen that the two examples from Ceylon and the ones at Nalanda and Pagan (Burma) museums are similar in more ways than one. These sculptures therefore could have had a common origin. The Kandy example is undoubtedly Mahayanistic, as shown by the two Bodhisattvas flanking the Buddha. The Panduvasnuvara example indicates a stage more developed than the Kandy example in the carving of details. The Pagan example is probably the closest in date to this sculpture. Relying on the Kandy example, which is decidedly Mahayanistic, its fellow at Panduvasnuvara may also be taken as a sculpture of the Mahayanists. The latter probably was a work of the Tantric Buddhists who flourished in north-eastern India during the period 9-10th centuries, A.C.

The stone plaque from Dedigama Museum is much worn out but some of the details are clear<sup>2</sup>. It appears to bear similarities with the sculpture from Panduvasnuvara, referred to above.

### **Mahiyangana-stupa Stone Plaque**

A carved stone plaque (4-1/2 inches in height, 2-1/4 inches in width and about 1/2 inch in thickness) was found buried in the Mahiyangana-stupa when excavations were undertaken by the Archaeological Department in 1950.<sup>3</sup> The principal scene represented is the figure of the Buddha seated on a *padmāsana* under an arch and attended by two chowrie-bearers on either side. The latter may be compared with those in the Carmichael sculpture, identified by Vogel as Avalokitesvara and Maitreya. The scene of the passing away is represented on top. There are 26 miniature Buddha figures arranged in rows immediately below the greater part of the plaque. The arch under which the central figure is

1. *J.A.S.B.*, New Series, Vol. XI, 1915, Plates XXI & XXIII.

2. See below Plate No. 9.

3. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1950, p. 25 See also below Plate No. 8.

seated is supported by two fluted pillars and is surmounted by a *kīrttimukha* of exquisite design. Instead of the usual *makara* heads at the end of the arch there are two flowers, one of seven and the other of eight petals. Represented on the lowermost scene are five figures, the centre one being in the attitude of *namaskāra mudrā*; on either side are two attendant figures. Decorative designs are inserted on the side formed by the thickness of the plaque.

The stone of the plaque is said to be of a kind foreign to Ceylon. Hence it is likely that it was another memento brought to the island by a pilgrim from India. The two attendants on the Buddha in the principal scene may be Bodhisattvas and if the identification made in respect of the two corresponding figures in the Carmichael sculpture be held valid in respect of these two figures as well, it may be taken as a sculpture of the Mahayanists. On grounds of style, the date suggested for the last named sculpture may be also assigned to this example.

( II )

### **Buduruvegala Avalokitesvara**

Of all the images of Avalokitesvara found in Ceylon, the most remarkable one is at Buduruvegala.<sup>1</sup> Some of the details in all the sculptures have been finished in stucco. The feet and the pedestals have been separately carved and fixed to the main figure. There are indications that the figures were originally painted as some traces of the original coating are still noticeable.<sup>2</sup>

Avalokitesvara is attended by Tara on his left and Sudhanakumara on the right. There is hardly any doubt regarding the sculpture being a representation of Avalokitesvara since he wears the figure of Dhyani-Buddha Amitabha in the head-dress. According to Tantric works his consort is Tara and she is represented as standing on his left. The identity of the deity on his right can also be determined as, according to the texts, he is either attended by Sudhanakumara or Hayagriva. One of the distinguishing features of latter is the horse's head, which is not shown here. Therefore the figure may be a representation of Sudhanakumara.

The exact height of the Avalokitesvara figure is not on record. The eyes appear to be half closed and the ear lobes hang down up to the shoulders. Both hands are in the attitude described as *kaṭaka-hasta*. The upper part of the body is bare. Round the waist is a series of ribbons from which hangs down a fold of the cloth. Fastened to the body by the ribbons is the garment, depicted as no more than a cloth showing flounces. The girdle hangs down from the belt

1. C.J.S.C., Vol. II, Plate XXXV, and see below Plate No. 11

2. Images of Avalokitesvara are available at the *devālē* of the Toṭagamuvihāra as well as at the Kalyāṇivārṇsikārāma-vihāra, Makola. The former appears to have been recently renovated. The latter was erected about 25 years ago. See *Kalā Saṅgarāva* (Arts Council of Ceylon) Vol-22, March 1966, pp. 25-27.



up to the edge of the cloth at the ankles. The modelling has not been as skilfully executed as in the case of Vajrapani at the north end of the rock. Yet the face of the deity shows a certain degree of serenity. In conformity with the texts, the deity has been given a coating of white plaster in order to give him his colour which is white.

Avalokitesvara is so popular among the Mahayanists that he has been given as many as 108 different forms. His colour is white and his symbol is the lotus. According to the *Niṣpannayōgāvalī* he displays the *varada mudrā* in the right hand and in his left holds the lotus. In the *Sādhanamālā* there are 38 *sādhanas* describing the deity and from these it may be possible to determine about 15 different forms. These have been described and illustrated by B. Bhattacharya but our image tallies with none of them. It has been said that his forms are too numerous—some giving him more than one face and two arms. The *Mahāvastu Avadāna* of the Mahasanghikas refers to him with devotion.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, evident that the conception of Avalokitesvara is very old. His images, dating from the Gupta period onwards, are found in large numbers in India and Nepal.

To the right of the deity is possibly Sudhanakumara, who is usually attending on him.<sup>2</sup> Tara, Bhrkuti and Hayagriva are also said to be his companions but the last mentioned two are not represented here. According to the *Sādhanamālā*, Sudhanakumara stands on his right, exactly as represented here. This text, which gives a description of this deity, says that his two hands are joined (*añjali*), his colour is golden, he has the appearance of a prince, carries the book under his left arm pit and is decked in all ornaments. This description does not tally with our sculpture. Instead of *añjali-hasta*, the deity is depicted in *kaṭaka-hasta-mudrā*. He wears no ornaments and carries no book. Princely deportment and an air of austerity are most clearly marked. Whether the original colour had been golden or otherwise it is not possible to identify at present, the coating of paint having long since disappeared leaving only occasional traces. The image of Tara, standing on the left side will be dealt with below.

### Kustarajagala Sculpture

The rock sculpture in sunk relief at Weligama (Southern Province) is of colossal size and is decidedly Mahayanist.<sup>3</sup> It carries the popular name<sup>4</sup> Kustaraja (king-with-the-skin-disease.) The figure is draped in royal costume and the rock surface has light

1. Senart., *Le Mahavastu*, Vol. II, p. 294.

2. Manidhara is also said to be a companion of Sadaksari Lokesvara, an aspect of Avalokitesvara. See *I.B.I.*, p. 125.

3. *C. J. S. C.*, Vol. II, Plate XLIX, and see below Plate No. 12.

4. The following stanza in *Vadan-kavi-ṭota* probably refers to this sculpture.

Mūdu e-salbaḍa siṭinā e-nuvarakī  
Isa bāndi oṭunnen sādunē raja-ruvaki  
Depā piyum peti surataṭa ranen vākī  
Āṅdina gosin vaṅdu dev-raja mē lesakī (v. 60).

patches—hence the local tradition that the representation is of a foreign king who was cured of leprosy by a local physician on a diet of coconuts. There are four miniature representations of the Dhyani-Buddha Amitabha in the head-dress. It has to be assumed that there should be one at the back. This evidence is sufficient to identify the figure as a representation of Avalokitesvara.<sup>1</sup> In the *Sādhanamālā*, four *sādhanas* are devoted to the worship of Avalokitesvara in his aspect as Simhanada-Lokesvara, who, according to the Mahayanists, is the curer of all diseases.<sup>2</sup> This is also referred to as a representation of Natha. The latter is but another name of Avalokitesvara and in the Sinhalese literary works of the fourteenth century he goes by the name Natha. Maitreya is also referred to as Natha by the modern Sinhalese Buddhists but this is due to a confusion between the two deities Avalokitesvara and Maitreya.

The figure is heavily decked with drapery and ornaments. The head-dress is very elaborate and figures of Dhyani-Buddhas (four in all) have been carved on the three sides (i.e. two in front and one on each of the sides, left and right). On the front side of the head-dress are two niches, one above the other in circular form and on its right and left sides are also found a similar niche in each, all carved with figures of Dhyani-Buddhas. Since the Dhyani-Buddhas are all in *samādhi* posture they may be identified as representations of Amitabha, the most ancient of all the Dhyani-Buddhas and the spiritual teacher of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. According to the *Sukhāvātī-vyūha*, he is the presiding deity of the Sukhavati heaven and is believed to have brought forth Avalokitesvara into existence. This text calls the latter the Buddha's son. In other images of Avalokitesvara, there is only one figure of the Dhyani-Buddha, whereas in this sculpture there are four to be seen.

The deity wears an upper garment, the borders of which are prominent below the neck, above the waist and at the sleeves. Ear-rings, necklaces, armlets and anklets are also worn. The ear rings having been made in the form of miniature lions, appear to be fairly heavy and are made to rest on the shoulders. The lower garment with its elaborate tassels flaring high at the sides, come down from the waist up to the ankles. As in other images, the drapery has been fastened by a series of three belts from which a girdle is made to hang down vertically from its centre. It is flanked on either side by two chains hanging up to a point a little above the knee cap. On either side of the belt in the centre, the edges of four ornamental chain-strips have been tied, two resting on the lap the other two carried towards the tassels spreading on

1. J. E. Van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw in *Paranavitana Felicitation volume*, pp. 253-261, attempts to identify the figure as a representation of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.
2. *S.B.E.*, Vol. XLIX, p. 48.

either side. The right hand depicts the *vyākhyāna-mudrā* and the left hand the *kaṭaka-hasta* as in the case of Buduruvegala sculptures. The feet are kept slightly apart, indicating that the deity is standing relaxed.

There is austerity about the face, the majestic deportment of a king or god, and the modelling of the limbs of the body suggests the influence of the late Gupta or Pala school of sculptors. The stiffness of the limbs is not so marked as in the sculpture of man and horse at Isurumuniya and shows a stage of development current in India about the close of the Gupta tradition. On grounds of style it would be justifiable to date it between 7-8th centuries.

### **Dambulla Avalokitesvara**

In a Dambulla cave shrine there are three standing figures consisting of the Buddha in the centre flanked by two Bodhisattvas. To the right of the Buddha is Avalokitesvara carved out of granite.<sup>1</sup> This figure is about ten feet in height. Tradition refers to it as that of Natha. On the head-dress is the figure of Dhyani-Buddha Amitabha. This settles any doubt as to its identity. The deity wears the attire of a prince. From his ear lobes hangs an ornament named *siraha-mukha*, so named because it resembles the head of a lion. Other ornaments, such as anklets, armlets, wristlets etc., are also worn. The right hand is in *vitarka mudrā* while the left hand depicts the *kaṭaka-hasta*. The *samapadabhaṅga* pose given to the figure, as in the case of Surya at the Tiruttanesvara temple, makes an imposing figure of Avalokitesvara.<sup>2</sup>

The sculpture has been given a coating of paint but in a manner not to obscure the original features. The niche in the head-dress containing the figure of the Dhyani Buddha too has been painted at some unknown time, but there is no doubt that it was originally intended for such a figure.

The circumstances which brought about the influence of Mahayanism into this region is a matter for conjecture. The discovery of a statuette of Manjusri at Elahera, Matale and the existence of a shrine of Tantric worship at Nalanda, speak of the spread of Mahayanist ideas into this part of the Central Province sometime about the 8th century.

### **Situlpavva Bodhisattva**

The Bodhisattva statue from Situlpavva has been described by Parānavitana as one of the most remarkable pieces of sculpture so far found in this island.<sup>3</sup> It is of granite and about six feet in

1. See Plate No. 13.  
2. *A.P.*, Vol. II

3. *A.S.C.A.R.* 1934, p. 20 and  
*B.I.C.*, Plates XX and XXVI.  
See also Plate No. 14 below

height. Both arms have fallen away—otherwise it is in an excellent state of preservation. The head-dress, which is proportionately high, contains the figure of a Dhyani Buddha. The crown of the *jatāmakuta* may be compared with that of Maitreya Bodhisattva in the Colombo museum.<sup>1</sup>

The upper part of the body is bare but from the waist below the navel is a belt fastening the lower garment (only a cloth) to the body. The cloth spreads up to the ankles and clings on to the body as in the sculpture at Weligama. There is also the girdle round the waist folded twice round. It is unfortunate that both arms have fallen away. The stiffness of pose and the elongated limbs point to the influence of the Pallava school of sculpture. The modelling is superb; Indian art tradition in its mature stage is reflected in this work of art. We date it between the 7-8th centuries.

### Ambalantota Head

A very interesting head of a Bodhisattva in a local variety of limestone is seen at Girihandu-vehera, Ambalantota (Southern Province).<sup>2</sup> Together with the head-dress it measures 24-1/2 inches in height. It has an elaborate *jatāmakuta* in which is the figure of Dhyani-Buddha Amitabha. This head-dress is 11 inches high and except for the Dhyani-Buddha figure it is in many respects similar to that of Maitreya illustrated by Ananda Coomaraswamy.<sup>3</sup> It may also be compared with the head of Bodhisattva from Seruvila, now in the Colombo National Museum, which shows neither stupa nor a Dhyani-Buddha.<sup>4</sup>

The Dhyani-Buddha Amitabha here is in the *samādhi* posture. Of the fifteen different forms of Avalokitesvara, fourteen bear the likeness of the same Dhyani-Buddha but these do not tally with the details of our subject. Vajraraga is said to bear it on his tongue and Dharmmadhatu Vagisvara, who is four-faced and eight-armed on the *jatāmakuta*.<sup>5</sup> Thus the head may not be identified as that of the Bodhisattva Manjusri in his aspects of Vajraraga or Dharmmadhatu Vagisvara. Mahabala and Sapta-satika Hayagriva are also male deities who bear Amitabha on the crown,<sup>6</sup> but their descriptions cannot be compared with the details of this Bodhisattva head. The only other deity acceptable is Avalokitesvara who in fourteen out of his fifteen aspects bears the figure of this Dhyani-Buddha on the crown.<sup>7</sup> It is unfortunate that we have only this head intact. In the original form the whole sculpture must have been a remarkable piece representing Avalokitesvara, as aesthetically comparable to the Situlpavva example.

1. *H.I.I.A.* fig. 290.

2. See below, Plate No. 15.

3. *H.I.I.A.*, fig. No. 290.

4. *B.I.C.*, Plate No. XXVIII.

5. *I.B.I.*, pp. 103-104.

6. *ibid.* pp. 145-147.

7. *ibid.* p. 125.

A torso lies prone close to the head, but the two pieces do not fit in, and the incumbent of the temple agrees likewise. The piece shows the eyes open. Even as it is, it is very artistic. Originally it must have been a finely modelled sculpture worthy of the high praise from art critics.

### Wegiriya Stucco Image

In the Lokeshvara-Natha-devale at Wegiriya (Central Province) there are two images of stucco, one of Lokeshvara Natha and the other of his consort Biso-Bandara. As proved by the rock inscription the shrine was existing in the 14th century<sup>1</sup>. The inscription refers to the Lord Lokeshvara Natha of Wegiri-devale and records the donations made by several fourteenth century rulers for the upkeep of the institution. There is no doubt therefore that the deity referred to is Avalokitesvara who is also called Lokeshvara Natha.<sup>2</sup>

It has not been possible to obtain photographs of the images, the doors of the cella being closed and hardly any one being admitted. The author was, however, shown special consideration and was allowed to remain for a short while. The image is 6 feet in height, either of clay or stucco, painted white and seated on an *āsana* (2 feet high). The deity is in *mahārājāḷā* (royal) or *lalitāsana* (relaxed) pose. His left foot is firmly placed on the ground and the right leg hangs down from the *āsana*. The left hand is firmly placed on the *āsana* as in the bronze figure at the Boston Museum (see below). The right hand displays the *vyākhyāna mudrā*. Bracelets and armlets are shown and an *upavīta* has been carried from the right side of the waist and over the left shoulder. The garment worn below the waist resembles those on the stucco images of deities at the Lankatilaka-vihara (Central Province).

The resemblances in the drapery being most striking as in the case of the standing images of Upulvan and Vibhisana at the last mentioned shrine, here we shall briefly describe their drapery. The Wegiriya figure has the *upavīta* while the Lankatilaka ones do not have it. The costumes and ornaments are the same in all. Above the waist the body is bare except for necklaces and other ornaments. The cloth is held fast to the body by a series of ribbons. The hem is allowed to fall over the lap to resemble a lotus petal. A girdle hangs down from the waist down to the ankles. A cloth is worn but the outlines of the legs are clearly visible. This is so probably because the hem of the cloth has been carried upwards and tied from behind in the likeness of a loin cloth. The folds of the drapery covering the legs are shown by a number of ridges.

1. *J.R.A.S.*, Vol. XXII, No. 65, p. 362.

2. cf. W. Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times*, chiefly p. 171.

The head-dress of the Wegiriya image is elaborate. It is conical but shows no Dhyani-Buddha. The modelling has been executed by a talented sculptor who knew the canonical iconometrical proportions of the human body. Local tradition in the fourteenth century was perhaps not in favour of a Dhyani-Buddha in the head-dress—for by this time in Ceylon, Avalokitesvara had lost his Mahayanist character and become absorbed into the popular religion. The contemporary *Tisara Sandēśa* refers to an image of Natha at Doravaka-devale (now non-existent) and the description of the deity as given in this text may be compared with our image, too. The following is a translation of the relevant passage:<sup>1</sup>

“ His beautiful head with matted hair is like unto a rain cloud with lightning attached to it. The eyelashes surpassed the hue of the blue lily and the sapphire. What are the two hands, like the trunks of white elephants, comparable to? (They) exhibited the splendour of a pair of streams flowing down the sides of a white mountain. The charming rosary hanging down his nectar like body assumed the splendour of a line of blue geese—if there exist such—in the celestial river. With his feet and the shining nails, the brilliance of an evening cloud with stars strewn about it was shown; and the pride of a dew-strewn lotus contracting by the rays of the moon was set aside. Lord Natha, distinguished with such marks of beauty, abides resplendent in that Buddha shrine. Bow down gladly to him, and pray him to fulfil thy heart's desire ”.

The description is, of course, in poetical imagery. It is not possible to test the accuracy of this description, the very foundations of the shrine being obliterated and with only a few columns of stone surviving. We, nevertheless, suggest the following. The hair was matted; eyebrows were painted blue; the overall colour was white, and the arms were slenderly modelled. A blue rosary hung from the body.

By the side of the sanctum of the shrine there was an image-house of the Buddha.

We find that much of the details given in this description agreeing with those in our image. The matted look of the hair may not be distinguished since the deity wears a head-dress and it is probably the *jaṭāmakūṭa* which is here referred to as matted hair. Though the eyebrows do not show traces of blue it is likely that they were so coloured. The present coating of white paint may date from the Kandy period, during which time there was some kind of restoration, as attested by the wooden *pēkaḍa* (bracket capitals) on the

1. *C. J. S. C.*, Vol. II, p. 53.

pillars now supporting the roof. The cord hanging down from the shoulder is the *upavīta*. Just as at Doravaka, there is here a cella for the Buddha image. It will now be seen that the Doravaka image of the deity was in most respects in agreement with the one at Wegiriya. The evidence of the rock inscription at Wegiriya naming the deity Lokeshvara-Natha, coupled with the details of the image at Wegiriya which agree with the description of Natha at Doravaka, gives further support for the identification of Natha with Avalokitesvara. It is possible that the image at Doravaka was also in stucco or clay though not a trace remains.

### METAL IMAGES

The Colombo Museum preserves a metal seated image of Avalokitesvara (Cat. No. 36.70.23B) said to have been found in a treasure trove near Buduruvegala.<sup>1</sup> The figure measures 3-1/2 inches in height with the *āsana* and is 1-1/2 inches wide across the shoulders. The head-dress is elaborate but is slightly worn. In it is the figure of Dhyanī Buddha Amitabha. The right hand is in *varada mudrā*, the left is placed on the *āsana*. The left leg rests at ease on the *āsana* while the right leg stoops down and is placed below the pedestal. The eyes are half closed, indicating that the deity is looking down from high. Placed vertically on level with the left arm is a lotus stalk with traces of having been broken off at the top. Doubtless it was the stalk of a lotus though the flower itself is now missing. (Compare, for instance, the figure of Avalokitesvara in the British Museum for a similar lotus stalk.)<sup>2</sup> We therefore, conclude that the lotus, the symbol of the deity, has been represented here. The upper and lower garments and the usual ornaments are shown and the pedestal, which is a double lotus, is proportionately high.

Of the numerous forms of Avalokitesvara our image shows similarity most with that of Khasarpana, to whom has been devoted a number of *sādhanas* in the *Sādhanamālā*.<sup>3</sup> Since the figure does not have the usual companions it may not be in exact keeping with the description given in the *sādhanas*, but with the presence of lotus stalk, it may be assumed that it is in close agreement with the Khasarpana form of Avalokitesvara. On the analogy of the British Museum example referred to above we would date the image to 8-9th centuries.

A bronze statuette of Avalokitesvara (said to be originally from Sailatalaramaya-Purana-Vihara, Polpitiya, Udupala, Dambadeni Hatpattu, Kurunegala District) has been described in the *Spolia*

1. See below. Plate No. 17.

2. *B.C.M.*, Plate XXVI, fig. 176.

3. *I.B.I.*, pp. 128-129 and *Sdh.*, pp. 39-41.

*Zeylanica*.<sup>1</sup> It is about 6.16 inches (15.4 cm.) in height and cast solid. The pose is *mahārājāḷā* or *lalitāsana*. The *jaṭāmakūṭa* is elaborate and contains an empty niche in which was probably the figure of a Dhyani Buddha. At the back of the head is a rosette. The nose and mouth are now disfigured. The artist appears to have been skilful in the work of modelling since the proportions of the human figure have been accurately represented. The left arm is firmly placed on the ground. The right arm rests on the right thigh and the palm faces down holding a semi-circular object. The *yajñopavīta* (rosary) is prominently shown but some of the usual ornaments seen in other images are absent. There are no armlets and ear-rings but the anklets and the girdle are shown. Parts of the image have been damaged probably in a fire. The lump of bronze on the face seems to be due to defective casting. Hence it is very likely that this statuette is a local product since an imperfectly cast one is not likely to be imported into Ceylon. A comparison with similar bronzes will reveal that this figure is a representation of Avalokitesvara. The pose displayed is not in accord with the forms enumerated by Bhattacharya—hence it has to be surmised that Avalokitesvara as depicted here is a local form, raised by the worship of the deity, with the peculiarities such developments would lead to. On grounds of style, the image may be assigned a date between the 7-10th centuries, most probably the ninth century. It is unfortunate that the whereabouts of this statuette are not known.

Coomaraswamy has published the photograph of a bronze statuette of his own collection (now at the Boston Museum) and gives it high praise as one of the finest examples of bronzes from Ceylon.<sup>2</sup> It is a representation of Avalokitesvara seated in *mahārājāḷā* attitude. The statuette measures 3-5/8 inches in height and has been dated in the 8th century. The actual find spot is not known but the piece has often been illustrated.

The deity is seated on an *āsana* which is fairly high in proportion to the dimensions of the body—the *padmāsana* being here dispensed with. The right hand displays the *vitarka mudrā* while the left is placed on the *āsana* giving support to the partially inclined body. The *yajñopavīta* is shown across the breast. The right leg is bent and placed on the seat while the left hangs down touching the ground. The lower garment extending only up to the knee cap is shown, the girdle having been tied below the navel. On the back of the head is the detail of the head-dress, a rosette. The presence of the Dhyani Buddha Amitabha in the *jaṭā-makūṭa*

1. Vol. 29, Pt. II, pp. 289-290 and Plates.

2. *J.R.A.S.* (Apr. 1909), Plate 1, fig 1; *H.I.I.A.*, fig. 297; *B.C.M.*, figs. 172, 173 and p. 7; *F.A.I.C.*, fig. 195; *I.S.P.*, Plate XI; *A.C.I.C.*, fig. 28.

See also Plate No. 16 below.



leaves no room for doubt as to the identity of the deity as Avalokitesvara. The limbs are slender and the proportions of the body are in keeping with the canons of iconometry. The deity is shown as looking down from high—his eyes are bent towards the ground as if he is keeping watch over the suffering masses. The *Śārīputra*, a *śilpa-śāstra* work extant in Ceylon, describes this god as *hīna-dīnānukampī* (compassionate towards the helpless and the indigent).<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the image-maker who seems to have had in his mind these aspects of Avalokitesvara, was to display this divine ideal to the satisfaction of the beholder in addition to the skills shown in modelling the human figure.

Coomaraswamy says that the image exhibits all the fine qualities which belong to the classic Indian art of the eighth century. "It is, to judge from the perfection and abstraction of the style, as old as the 6th or 7th century A.C. In this figure which may be compared with the Siva of the 'Ravana under Kailasa' composition at Elura, the divine ideal is fully realised both in expression and in physical form; and the breadth of generalisation, the elimination of all that does not directly contribute to express 'the passion of the figure', are most impressive".<sup>2</sup>

A bronze statuette 3-1/2 inches (8.7 cm.) high from Ceylon belonging to the Nevill Collection at the British Museum has been illustrated by Coomaraswamy and dated in the 8th century.<sup>3</sup> The find spot has not been recorded. In treatment and feeling it may be compared with the one described immediately above. The coiffure is elaborate and high and contains an empty niche in which was probably placed the figure of Dhyani Buddha Amitabha. The *āsana* is low—hence the left leg is bent and placed on it. The pose is *lalitāsana* and the right hand displays the *vitarka mudrā*. The fine workmanship so very marked in the example in the Boston Museum is absent here.

Avalokitesvara on Mount Potalaka has been represented in an example from Ceylon in the British Museum (Nevill Collection).<sup>4</sup> Its height is 5-1/2 inches (13.75 cm.). The workmanship is coarser than in the foregoing examples. There is a Dhyani-Buddha in the head-dress, the right hand is in *varada mudrā* and the left hand holds a lotus. The deity is seated on a *padmāsana* on a rocky pediment representing Mount Potalaka. On grounds of style Coomaraswamy has dated it between 9-10th century. Avalokitesvara has here been represented as a mountain-god and is therefore

1. *C. J. S. C.*, Sec. G. Vol. II, p. 60.

2. *J. R. A. S.* (Apr. 1909), p. 283.

3. *B. C. M.*, fig. 174 and *J. R. A. S.* (Apr. 1909), Plate II, fig. 3.

4. *J. R. A. S.* (Apr. 1909), Plate 2, fig. 1.

of special interest to the students of Mahayana Buddhist art. Hsuan Tsang refers to this mount as the special abode of this god and locates it in the southern Deccan.<sup>1</sup> Samuel Beal has suggested that in the cult of this Bodhisattva as a mountain-god could be found some trace of an older worship of hill gods.<sup>2</sup>

This example is practically unique, such a representation of the deity on a mountain being very rare. The Khasarpana form of Avalokitesvara has been described in the *śādhnamālā* in terms similar to this figure. "He resides in the womb of Mount Potalaka, looks beautiful with compassion, is full of the sentiment of *śṛṅgāra* (amour), is extremely peaceful and is endowed with various auspicious marks."<sup>3</sup>

A similar rocky background is indicated in several miniature paintings of Avalokitesvara and Tara in Nepalese manuscripts now in Cambridge, of which one has been labelled as 'Śrī Potalakē Lokanāthah'.<sup>4</sup> The workmanship of this statuette may be compared with that of Cunda (to be mentioned below).<sup>5</sup> In the treatment of details (i.e. eyes, eyebrows, ringlets) there seems to be some measure of agreement with the figures of Vajrapani<sup>6</sup> and Avalokitesvara from Sarnath.<sup>7</sup>

The deity represented sits in *mahārājāḷā*, left leg bent and placed on the *āsana* and the right leg hanging down from the pedestal. An auspicious mark (*tilaka*) has been placed between the eyebrows. As obvious from the carvings on the legs and the pedestal, greater attention has been paid to details than to form. The breast is well developed when compared with other images of the type and there is also noticeable a certain corpulence. The nose and the mouth, too, do not speak of skill in workmanship.

In the Nevill collection there is another metal image of Avalokitesvara with an inscription on the pediment of the pedestal enabling us to date it to the 8-9th centuries, on palaeographical grounds.<sup>8</sup> The inscription, in the north-eastern Nagari characters reads *saṃgha dattah* (gift of the *saṃgha*—which is also the donor's name). The height of the figure is about 4 inches (9.6 cm.). The figure of a Dhyani Buddha is in the head-dress, which is comparatively low; the tassels issuing from it are shown behind the ears. The deity is decked in ornaments and the ear-rings falling

1. *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, ii, 233.

2. *ibid.* i, 60, n; 214, n; 225, n.

3. *I.B.I.*, p. 129 and *Sdh.*, p. 39-41.

4. *B.C.M.*, p. 7.

5. *ibid.* fig. 178.

6. *ibid.* fig. 185.

7. *J.R.A.S.*, 1908, p. 1008 and Plate II, fig. 3.

8. *ibid.* Apr. 1909, Plate I, Fig. 2 and *B.C.M.*, Fig. 176.

over the shoulders may be compared with that of Vajrapani (see below).<sup>1</sup> The right hand is in *varada mudrā* and the left holds a lotus as in the Colombo Museum example (Cat. No. 36.70.23B).<sup>2</sup> The stalk is placed vertically with the left arm, the flower being shown behind the left shoulder.

The *padmāsana*, the deity's seat in *mahārājatīlā*, is placed on a pediment of a type usually met with in similar bronze statuettes brought to light in north-eastern India, more precisely Nalanda. Compare, for instance, those from Nalanda and elsewhere illustrated by A. Ghosh and S. K. Sarasvati.<sup>3</sup> The contention of Coomaraswamy that this type of pediment marks a local school may now be rejected in view of the findings given above. The *tilaka* on the forehead is particularly marked here but the chief difference is that this is not the deity 'who looketh down'. He sits, decked in ornaments, and confers boons on supplicants. The sincerity and vitality of style so remarkably felt in the figure of his counterpart in the Boston Museum are maintained but to a lesser degree.<sup>4</sup>

We have already seen that north-eastern India during the Pala and Sena dynasties was a centre of Mahayanist activity maintaining cultural contacts with all the lands of south-east Asia. In discussing Avalokitesvara on Mount Potalaka, it was suggested that the aspect of the deity could be that of Khasarpana. The same may be held as valid for this image. On grounds of style too, the bronze may be dated about 9th century.

### Padmanarttesvara

Coomaraswamy has published the photograph of a seated figure dancing in *ardhaparyāṅka* (now in the Colombo Museum) found at the Alms Hall, near the old Rest House, (Anuradhapura) (Cat. No. 13.170.295).<sup>5</sup> It is 3-1/2 inches high and 1-1/3 inches wide across the shoulders. He had not settled the identity of the figure on account of the scantiness of the data.

The figure is represented as dancing in *ardhaparyāṅka* in which attitude the deity is shown as inclining to his left. The wrist of the right hand is placed on the right thigh but the hand holds the body of a snake which has coiled round the left knee cap. Its head is shown peeping out from behind the left ear of the deity. The snake has been used as the sacred thread (*sarṣayajñopavīta*). The left arm (minus the hand) is held parallel to the shoulder. It is unfortunate that the whole hand is now no more. The elbow is bent at

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1. *B.C.M.*, fig. 185 and *J.R.A.S.* (Apr. 1909), Pl. 1, figs. 3 and 5.
  2. See below. Plate No. 17.
  3. *A.G.N.*, Plates V. VII. VIII and *A.S.I.S.*, figs. 124, 136, 155 etc.
  4. *B.C.M.*, fig. 172.
  5. *ibid.*, fig. 97. and see below Plate No. 18.

right angles and the position of the hand would have been in keeping with the attitude of the dance. The head-dress, flat at the top and containing a rosette, is unusual being hitherto unnoticed in Ceylon examples. The ear-rings are unusually large and the right eye is shown bulging out. A necklace is also worn. There is a half-smile in the face. The artist has accomplished a fairly difficult task in striving to preserve the individual characteristics of the deity as described in the texts.

One of the forms of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara is that of Padmanarttesvara. His features have been described<sup>1</sup> in the *Sādhanamālā* in three *sādhanas*, which differ in details from one another. In these *sādhanas* the number of his arms varies from two to eighteen. The eight-armed aspect should depict the dance in *ardhaparyāṅka* and the sacred thread of the snake. The description given in the *Sādhanamālā* of Padmanarttesvara agrees with two of the characteristics obtaining in our image, i.e. dance in *ardhaparyāṅka* and the *sarpayajñopavīta*. It is, therefore, reasonable for us tentatively to identify it as being a representation of this aspect of Avalokitesvara.

The figure was discovered in Anuradhapura and it is therefore possible for us to date it with greater certainty than before. The representation being that of a Tantric deity, we know from the historical survey that Tantric Buddhism was at its highest stage of development about the 10th century to which century we may place it.

( III )

### Tara-Buduruvegala

In Buddhist iconography Avalokitesvara is usually attended by Tara on one side and Sudhanakumara or Hayagriva on the other side. The sculptures at Buduruvegala contain a representation of Tara as an attendant of Avalokitesvara.<sup>2</sup> This is by far the most colossal image of this goddess so far brought to light in Ceylon. The exact height has not been ascertained but it is only of slightly lesser height to that of Avalokitesvara on her right side.<sup>3</sup> The goddess wears a tall head-dress and her eyes are open. The right hand displays the *varada mudrā* and the left, which hangs down, holds an unblown lotus. The left leg which is firmly placed on the ground appears to bear the burden of her weight and the waist is inclined to her right. The right leg is shown comparatively at ease. The lower garment only is shown and the breasts are those of an elderly female. The image is in fair relief and cannot be called a work of great artistic merit.

1. *I.B.I.*, pp. 133-134.

2. *C.J.S.C.*, Vol. II, Plate No. XXXV. See also below. Plate No. 19.

3. D. T. Devendra has given them in his *Classical Sinhalese Sculpture* (fig. 80).

The *Sādhanamālā* thus describes Tara as a companion to Khasarpana (an aspect of Avalokitesvara): "Tara is green. She causes to blossom with her right hand the lotus flower with a stem held in her left. She has many ornaments and her breasts are oppressively heavy due to adolescence."<sup>1</sup> *Sādhana* No. 98 in the *Sādhanamālā* describes Aryatara as one faced, two armed, of deep green complexion, fully decked in all ornaments, of youthful appearance, clad in celestial garments, holding on her crown the miniature figure of the parental Dhyani Buddha Amoghasiddhi, sitting in *ardhaparyāṅka* attitude, displaying the *varada mudrā* by the right hand and carrying a full-blown lotus in the left hand.<sup>2</sup> The Padmanarttesvara form of Avalokitesvara is described as sitting on a lotus. On a petal of this lotus sits Tara of green colour holding the *palāśa* and the lotus flower.<sup>3</sup> When Avalokitesvara assumes the Lokanatha aspect, Tara is described as being on his right, having a peaceful appearance, exhibiting the *varada mudrā* and carrying the lotus.<sup>4</sup> Several female deities are also described as emanating from the Dhyani Buddha Amoghasiddhi and are called Taras.<sup>5</sup> Not one of these descriptions fits into the image at Buduruvegala, which is standing and two-armed. It appears that the *Sādhanamālā* describes later local developments in Buddhist iconography in India which did not reach Ceylon. Hence we are led to conclude that, in Ceylon, the iconographic features of Mahayanist deities are different and had remained static without reacting to the changes that were taking place in India. It is not possible for us to say that the figure of Tara at Buduruvegala was painted green. Every indication points to the figure having been covered with a coating of white lime plaster, as in the case of Tara at Wegiriya to be discussed next.

Bhattacharya says that Tara is the common name applied to a large number of feminine deities in the Buddhist pantheon. Janguli, Parnasabari, Mahacinatara, Ekajata and many others are called Taras in the *Sādhanamālā*. To this list should be added Khadiravani who is endowed with two hands, showing the *varada mudrā* in the right and the *utpala* in the left.<sup>6</sup> In dealing with the images of Tara found in Ceylon, the goddess has been taken to be the companion of Avalokitesvara in accordance with literary evidence.

### Tara—Wegiriya

The stucco (or clay) image of Tara at Wegiri-devale is the most beautiful specimen of its kind noticed by the writer. Popularly called Biso-Bandara, she sits in *lalitāsana* pose to the right of Lokesvara-Natha, displaying the *abhaya mudrā* by the right hand

1. *I.B.I.*, p. 129.

2. *ibid.*, p. 22.

3. *ibid.*, p. 135

4. *ibid.* p. 131

5. *ibid.* pp. 226-232.

6. *ibid.*, pp. 226-227.

and keeping the left hand on the left leg. Her head-dress is elaborate and made up of four stages, almost conical in shape. As in the image of Lokesvara-Natha, there is no figure of a Dhyani Buddha in the head-dress. The right leg is placed on the ground and the left, which is bent and kept on the *āsana*, protrudes out of it at the ankles. The *āsana* is of the same type as in the case of Lokesvara-Natha but of slightly lesser height. The two *āsanas* are at a distance of about one foot from each other. The height of the figure is proportionately less when compared with that of Lokesvara-Natha. The combined height of the pedestal and the image is six feet—the image alone measuring 4-1/2 feet in height. Below the head-dress is a tiara. The eyes are open, and the face is pleasant with the trace of a smile as if the deity is appearing to bestow protection to supplicants. Instead of ear-rings she wears flowers and round her neck is a necklace. The upper part of the body is bare and the breasts, which are not heavy as at Buduruvegala, are not pendulous. The nipples may be compared with those on the figure from Gan-Aramaya-vihara (Colombo Museum) which we shall describe.<sup>1</sup> The lower part of the body from the waist below is draped in a rich attire comparable to a pair of trousers of European fashion, the girdle in three courses at the waist being only the ornament of ancient character. The drapery is not loose but clings to the body and is indicated by means of a series of circular folds from the ankles upwards. A similar attire below the waist is worn by the female deities (i.e. consorts of Upulvan, Saman and Vibhisana) at the Lankatilaka-devale, Handessa (Central Province).

The only reference to Tara in Sinhalese literature occurs in the 14th century, in the *Tisara Sandeśa*, where, immediately after eulogising the deity Natha at Doravaka-devale, the author speaks in less poetic terms of the beauty of his consort Tara within the same sanctum.<sup>2</sup>

“Depart thou hence, without tarrying, after worshipping the Queen Tara, who has adorned the magnificent mansion of Sri Lanka, with the multicoloured canopy of (her) fame; who has eschewed vice and is adorned with virtue as if with jewels; and who unfailingly bestows like the Divine Cow, whatever is desired of riches”.

According to Tantric texts, she is the consort of Avalokitesvara. The above quotation does not refer to this goddess expressly as the consort of the god but it is implied by the appellation *biso* and by referring to her immediately after Natha. Her image was in the same shrine, most likely as at Wegiriya, and we can guess the effect on the poet of beauty in an image which led him to describe her

1. *Spolia Zeylanica*, Vol. 26, Pt. 2, p. 267. See below Plate No. 21.  
2. *C.J.S.C.*, Vol. II, pp. 53-54.

in superlative terms. Hsuan Tsang (7th century) observed a similar shrine in Magadha wherein was installed an image of the Buddha attended by Avalokitesvara and Tara.<sup>1</sup> Although the shrine at Doravaka is no more, the devale at Wegiriya similarly constituted but almost unknown even at the present day, furnishes sufficient data for any likely reconstruction work connected at that site. The poet's description deals more with the spiritual aspects of the goddess than the physical. As she is compared to the Wish-Conferring-Cow who gives unfailingly, one may surmise that one of the hands of the image displayed the *varada mudrā* as opposed to the attitude of conferring protection (*abhaya mudrā*) of the Wegiriya goddess.

### (So called) Pattini—British Museum

Ananda Coomaraswamy has illustrated the figure of a goddess (identifying the figure as a representation of Pattini) which was found somewhere between Trincomalee and Batticaloa and is now in the British Museum. It is a bronze standing figure 4 feet 9-1/2 inches (143.75 cm.) in height which has been often illustrated and is known to every student of Eastern art and archaeology.<sup>2</sup> In an article<sup>3</sup> contributed to the J.R.A.S. in 1909, Coomaraswamy treated this bronze as Mahayanist but subsequently in 1914 he identified it as a representation of Pattini.<sup>4</sup> He was not very happy about his identification of the image as that of Pattini. He has described it as a striking work; the face strong and thoughtful, and the modelling of the body and limbs most admirable, though the narrowing of the waist is carried beyond modern preferences. On grounds of style he has assigned it to the 7th or 8th century.<sup>5</sup> The workmanship is fine and ranks only next to the image of Avalokitesvara in the Boston Museum.<sup>6</sup> It may not be wrong to suggest that both sculptures were products of one and the same school. The workmanship is dignified and beautiful.

The figure wears a tall conical head-dress and contains a socket now empty but which once contained probably the figure of a Dhyani Buddha. The latter could be Amoghasiddhi if the identification of the figure as a representation of Tara is held valid. The ear-lobes are bored but do not extend up to the shoulders as in the numerous examples of Avalokiteswara. The right hand displays the *varada mudrā* while the left is in *vitarka*. The breasts

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1. C.J.S.C., Vol. II, pp. 53-54.
  2. B.C.M., fig. 171; J.R.A.S. (Apr. 1909), Plate 3, fig. 3; F.A.I.C., Plate No. L; H.I.I.A., fig. 300; A.S.C.A.R. (1955), Plate IV; S.E.I.A., Plate XXXIII.
  3. J.R.A.S. (Apr. 1909), Plate 3, fig. 3.
  4. B.C.M., fig. 171.
  5. *ibid.*, p. 12.
  6. H.I.I.A., fig 297.

are high and the nipples are bent upwards—a feature rather unusual and noticed also in another example from the Nevill collection in the British Museum.<sup>1</sup>

It has already been noted that at Buduruvegala, the female deity is shown as bearing the burden of the body with the right leg, which appears to have been firmly placed on the ground, while the left is resting at ease. Her waist too is shown as projecting more towards the right. It is remarkable that a similar feature is also noticeable in our bronze figure. The drapery too is similar except for the grooves shown in the bronze image. As in the case of Indian sculptures executed under the patronage of the Gupta dynasty, the drapery clings to the body. Simplicity is most marked since there are hardly any ornaments worn on the body. Compare also the frequently illustrated representation of Avalokitesvara in the Boston Museum which is without ornament. Coomaraswamy assigned a date earlier by two centuries for the latter and fixed the 10th century for the figure now being dealt with.

### Tara—Gan-Aramaya-Vihara

The bronze seated image of Tara from Gan-Aramaya-Vihara in the Kurunegala District (North Western Province), now in the Colombo Museum has been illustrated with photographs by P.E.P. Deraniyagala in the *Spolia Zeylanica*.<sup>2</sup> It is nearly 8 inches (195 mm.) in height and is in the attitude known as *dhyāna-mudrā*. Except for the elaborate coiffure no ornaments are worn. The head-dress, hair and costume are gilt but the flesh is silver coated. The head-dress is conical and arranged in a stage of three tiers. It is necessary to describe briefly the designs appearing on the head-dress.

Three full blown lotus flowers are surmounted by two *makara* heads facing opposite directions and joined at their necks. The latter support a triangular floral ornament of stylised bo-leaves so designed as to encircle a quadrilateral niche, now empty. Behind the head is a *śikhā-cakra* or a double rosette. The ear-lobes are perforated but without ornaments and do not extend up to the shoulders. The eyes of the deity are partly closed and directed towards the ground indicating the attitude of *dhyāna*. The face is oval in shape and recalls to mind Chinese or Tibetan sculptures. The eyebrows are high and the nose straight and elevated. The lips too with curvilinear edges may not be called realistic, nor is it foreign to the local tradition. The upper part of the body is bare up to the waist, the breasts are fully developed but do not indicate

1. *B.C.M.*, fig. 184.

2. *Spolia Zeylanica*, Vol. 26, Pt. 2, pp. 267–269 and Plate I. See also Plate No. 21.



the heaviness of adolescence. The nipples are turned upwards, particularly the left one. The latter feature has also been noticed in the earlier example of Tara from the British Museum cited above. The thinness of the waist, though not so marked as in the British Museum example, has not been effected in keeping with the artistic sense of values. Here is absent that lissomness and, indeed, our example exhibits more of masculine traits than feminine. There is a girdle or *rasanādāma* tied into a bow-knot below the navel and around the top of the dhoti cloth. This lower garment covers the body below the waist and shows the folds. The garment covering the calf of the leg has assumed the pattern of a trouser as in the case of the Wegiriya example and shows four folds and three narrow ones at the margin. The right leg rests on the left; the hands in *dhyāna mudrā* as in the other.

Hindu images of female divinities in *dhyāna mudrā* are very rare. A comparative study of similar images suggests the Buddhist character of the present example which is decidedly Mahayanist. The *Sādhanamālā* does not mention any female deity in this attitude but, as mentioned earlier, this text embodies developments in India which did not reach Ceylon. As Tara was known and worshipped in Ceylon and as some of the features noticeable in this figure tally with other images of that deity noticed above, tentatively it may be taken as a representation of the consort of Avalokitesvara. The modelling of the breasts, compared with the former example in the British Museum, is not quite natural and the masculine traits of the body, in the author's opinion, does not entitle the sculptor to the high praise given by P. E. P. Deraniyagala. On grounds of style it is later in date than the British Museum example. We would place it in the latter half of the tenth century or the early decades of the 11th century.

Bhattacharya describes many forms of Tara but does not allude to a single instance where she is represented in *dhyāna mudrā*.<sup>1</sup> Mahattari Tara who is single-faced and two-armed may be distinguished by the *vajraparyāṅka* attitude in which she sits but displays the *varada mudrā* by the right hand and therefore does not tally with our image. According to the *Niṣpannayōgāvalī* the Dhyana Paramita is a goddess of the Mahayana pantheon, two-armed and having the colour of the sky.<sup>2</sup> Her symbol is the white lotus in the left hand and as such does not answer the description of our image. In the absence of any Indian or foreign prototype similar to the present one, it has to be concluded that Mahayanist iconography in Ceylon has developed on lines distinct from those current in the mainland and other Buddhist lands in Asia.

1. *I.B.I.*, pp. 306-309.

2. *ibid.*, p. 326 and *N.S.P.*, p. 56.

### Tara from the New Town, Anuradhapura

A bronze statuette of Tara (height 2.5 inches) seated in *lalitāsana* attitude, found in the new town of Anuradhapura and handed over to the Anuradhapura Museum (Cat. No. G40), may be mentioned as one of the most remarkable images of the type so far found in this island.<sup>1</sup> The figure recalls to mind the Wegiriya goddess, so beautifully modelled it is and of high artistic merit. The representation is that of a maiden, without ornaments. Her breasts are high and the nipples are turned upwards. The waist is slender as in the British Museum example but carried to a degree in proportion to the dimensions of the body, that the former example ranks but next in merit. The conical head-dress is of the usual type, and contains an empty socket. She is seated on *padmāsana* with the left hand firmly placed on it. The right arm rests on the right thigh which is raised. The right hand has fallen off. Vertically placed by the left arm is part of a lotus stalk. The symbol of the deity, the lotus, probably once rested on this stalk. Since the deity sits alone, she may be identified with Aryatara who has been described as sitting in the *ardhaparyāṅka* attitude.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to date and provenance, it may be said that it is definitely a work of the Anuradhapura period since it was found within the new town of Anuradhapura. Roughly it may be dated the 9th century. Judging on grounds of style, it has to be assigned to the same class as the image of Avalokitesvara in the Boston Museum.<sup>3</sup> The fine workmanship reflects the art traditions of the post-Gupta age. Hence we may be safe in assigning it to the 7-9th centuries as the most probable date.

### Tara from Mannar

A metal image (2 inches high and 1-1/2 inches in width) believed to be that of Tara was found in Mannar and published by the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon.<sup>4</sup> The figure is that of a goddess dancing in *ardhaparyāṅka*, holding a snake with both arms in the manner of a cord. The attitude of dance is shown by the figure being inclined to the left in a gay mood. The head-dress is conical but shows tassels behind the ears. The breasts are those of a grown up female and the usual ornaments are shown. The upper part of the body appears to be bare.

One form of Green Tara is known as Janguli emanating from the Dhyani Buddha Aksobhya. She is described as four-armed, three

1. See below Plate No. 20. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1951, p.9.

2. *I.B.I.*, p. 307.

3. *H.I.I.A.*, fig. 297

4. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1957, p. 13. Plate VI, fig. 1.

of which hold a serpent, the fourth displaying the *abhaya mudrā*.<sup>1</sup> Our figure may not be an exact representation of the goddess Janguli as described in the *Sādhanamālā* according to which she may have any of the three colours, white, yellow or green and possess four arms. The sculpture appears to represent one of the earlier forms of Janguli in which iconographic features are not fully developed.

Janguli is popular among the Buddhists as a goddess who cures snake bite. She is said to be as early as the Buddha himself and the secret of Janguli and the *mantra* for her worship are said to have been imparted to Ananda by the Buddha himself. The *Sādhanamālā* enumerates three entirely different varieties of the goddess, the arms varying from four to six.<sup>2</sup> In two of these she is described as having one face only.

On the head-dress is most probably the figure of a Dhyani Buddha with hand placed on the lap. The photograph is not very clear but it is possible that the representation is of Aksobhya.<sup>3</sup> Emanations from the Dhyani Buddha Aksobhya are, as a rule, terrible in appearance and awe inspiring.<sup>4</sup> Our figure cannot be described as awe inspiring in form but the facial expression cannot be called pleasant.

The exact findspot is said to be the lighthouse premises of Mannar, the ancient linking passage between India and Ceylon. It may not be wrong to assume that the figure is an imported one and that Tantrism was rampant in this district in the closing years of the Anuradhapura regime—the period to which this image may be assigned, provisionally, on grounds of style.

### Janguli from Colombo Museum

There are two metal images in the Leslie de Saram collection of the Colombo Museum labelled as Pattini. One of these is a standing figure with a cobra hood behind the head (Cat. No. 11.197.265).<sup>5</sup> It is of copper and 9 inches (22.5 cm.) in height. Coomaraswamy has dated it (provisionally) to the 9–10th centuries. The deity is elaborately dressed and either depicts the *kaṭaka-hasta* or holds an unidentified object with the right hand. The left arm is preserved but the hand has fallen off. Drapery below the waist is artistic and is worn in such a way as to expose only one leg.

The seated image is also of copper (Cat. No. 11.198.265) and 13.3 cm. (about 5-2/5 inches) in height.<sup>6</sup> Coomaraswamy has assigned it provisionally to the 9-10th centuries. The expanded

1. *I.B.I.*, pp. 307–308.

2. *Sdh.*, p. 248 and 253.

3. *I.B.I.*, p. 154.

4. *I.B.I.*, p. 154 and 189.

5. *B.C.M.*, fig. 43. See also Plate No 23 below.

6. *B.C.M.*, fig. 42. See also Plate No 24 below.

hood of the cobra is in the background and the head-dress is almost similar. The left hand bestows protection while the right displays the *kaṭaka-hasta-mudrā*. The deity sits cross-legged and wears drapery similar to the other. There is thus no doubt that both are representations of one and the same deity.

The *Sādhanamālā* describes three varieties of Janguli, two with one face and four arms and one with three faces and six arms.<sup>1</sup> It appears that one common distinctive mark of this goddess is the serpent. The expanded hood of the serpent above the head (*sphītaphaṇāmaṇḍalaśirasthāri*) is referred to in one of the *sādhanas*, while another refers to an ornament of the white serpent (*śuklasarpairvibhūṣitāri*). The deity is said to depict the *abhaya mudrā* with one of the hands and to hold an attribute in each of the other hands. In the case of the standing image, it is not possible to ascertain the *mudrā* depicted or the attribute held by the left hand, this being now no more, but the expanded hood of the serpent is clear in the background. The seated image is in a better state of preservation and the serpent symbol and the *mudrā* are clearly noticeable. It is, therefore, very likely that these two figures are representations of Arya-Janguli, whose cult, as we have noticed earlier, appears to have been prevalent in Ceylon (most likely among the Tantric Buddhists) some time about the 9-10th centuries, the period assigned for both sculptures by Ananda Coomaraswamy.

### Aryatara—British Museum

In the Nevill collection is a small seated image from Ceylon of a female divinity (height 16.4 cm.—6-3/5 inches) labelled Pattini.<sup>2</sup> It has been illustrated by Ananda Coomaraswamy who assigned it to the 10th century. The goddess is seated in *lalitāsana* pose and depicts the *varada mudrā* with the right hand. The left hand is placed on the *āsana* and it acts as a support to the body, which inclines to the right. The right leg hangs down at ease while the left is bent and placed on the *āsana*. The breasts are shown but the nipples point upwards as in our other examples of Tara. Of the ear-rings only the one to the left is remaining. Bangles are shown but anklets are not worn. The body above the waist is bare except for a string of pearls. Below the waist up to the ankles is a garment, probably a cloth as in the large standing image of Tara in the British Museum. The head-dress is conical but rounded at the top and contains in a socket an object which is not clear. In both examples the treatment of drapery is similar. The limbs are represented as visible through the transparent drapery. Physical features appear to be the same in both. The upward tilt of the nipples in

1. *I.B.I.*, pp. 191-3.

2. *B.C.M.*, Fig. 184; *J.R.A.S.*, Apr. 1909, Plate III, fig. 2.

both examples may also be noted. The slender waist is more gracefully proportioned unlike in the larger example and appeals equally well to both Western and Eastern tastes.

The figure has many features in common with that from the figure from New Town, Anuradhapura which has already been compared with the Wegiri-devālē Tara image. On stylistic grounds therefore, the image may be taken as a representation of Aryatara (present) (also called Vasyatara) who has been described as seated in the *bhadrāsana* attitude and depicting the *varada mudrā* with the right hand. The symbol of the deity is said to be the lotus, her colour green. Neither are these characteristics shown in our image nor is it possible for us to ascertain whether they originally existed. Artistically, it ranks with the Anuradhapura, New Town figure, assigned to 7-9th centuries. We may not be wrong if we assign the same date here.

### **Caturbhuja-sitatara**

There is an unpublished bronze figure (6-1/2 in. high) of a four-armed standing female deity belonging to the Nevill collection (Reg. No. 1898-7-2, No. 140).<sup>1</sup> It was apparently a four-armed one but there are only traces of the two upper arms. To all appearances the figure is Mahayanistic and has been so labelled. It appears to be considerably worn out, some details of the drapery and the head-dress being obscured. The right hand holds a jewel (*cintāmaṇi*), the left is in *varada mudrā*. It is unfortunate that the second pair of arms has disappeared and makes the identification difficult. Of the numerous Mahayanist female deities enumerated by Bhattacharya, the figure has affinities with only that of Caturbhuja-sitatara, a form of Tara emanating from the Dhyani Buddha Amoghasiddhi.<sup>2</sup> It does not conform to all the requirements of the *sādhana* as in many of the others. Images of this deity are found in Tibet and China. Indian examples are rare. On stylistic grounds, the date of the 9th century may be assigned.

### **Gandhatara**

The *Sādhanamālā* describes Vajratara as an emanation of the Dhyani Buddha Ratnasambhava.<sup>3</sup> She is visualised by the worshipper in the midst of a circle of Eight Mothers which forms the *maṇḍala*. Of these eight, Gandhatara is given the northern cardinal point and has been described as having red complexion and carrying in her hands the conch of scents.<sup>4</sup>

1. See below Plate No. 25.

2. *I.B.I.*, p. 308.

3. *I.B.I.*, pp. 240-3.

4. *ibid.* p. 241.

A bronze figure of a two-armed standing female deity on a flat pedestal (height 5-3/4 inches) is found in the Nevill collection.<sup>1</sup> It carries no registration number and remains unidentified. It has not been published in any work known to the author who therefore, attempted to identify it by comparing it with all known forms of female deities of the Mahayana pantheon. The British Museum authorities have referred to the bronze as Mahayanist, of which there is no doubt since it is unlike any Hindu image. The deity holds in her left hand, part of her waist band and in her right, a round object which has now fallen away. It may be assumed that it was a representation of a jewel. The deity is richly attired and is decked in ornaments. The head-dress shows a socket as in other examples but the object placed therein is not clear. No provenance being known of the Nevill bronzes the identification of his figure is all the more difficult.

If it is assumed that the object in the hand was a conch, the description of the deity tallies with that of Gandhatara described above. The bronze appears to have borne a coat of paint (probably red) of which there are only traces. Perhaps the image was placed in a shrine of Vajratara together with other deities constituting the *maṇḍala* but these other images might have got dispersed in course of time.

The sculpture appears to bear characteristics of a later stage of workmanship. The fingers of the left hand holding part of the waist band, the highly elaborate costume and ornaments and the unequal proportions of the body (i.e. the toes and the waist) do not show skilled workmanship and suggest a late date such as the latter half of the 10th century. The figure thus appears to be a relic belonging to a decadent tradition of plastic art.

#### ( IV )

### **Vajrapani—Buduruvegala**

Flanking the colossal Buddha at Buduruvegala are the two Bodhisattvas, Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani.<sup>2</sup> The latter stands to the left of the Buddha image and is himself attended by two other Bodhisattvas, i.e. one on each side. As Avalokitesvara is normally shown flanking the Buddha with Maitreya Bodhisattva, one may be tempted to regard this sculpture as a representation of the latter. It will however be noticed that the stupa which is the distinguishing mark of this Bodhisattva, is not shown in the *jaṭāmakuta* of this image. Hence it is likely that it is a representation of a Bodhisattva other than Maitreya.

1. See below Plate No. 26

2. See below Fig. No. 27.

See also S. Paranavitane, *Ceylon and Malaysia*, p. 198

The deity stands, eyes half closed and attended by a Bodhisattva on either side of him. His hands exhibit a *mudrā* which is open to conjecture. According to Gopinatha Rao, this is the *kaṭaka-hastamudrā*.<sup>1</sup> There are many variations of this pose but generally it is the attitude in which the tips of the fingers lightly touch the thumb to form a ring to hold a flower. D. R. Thaper has illustrated this attitude by giving a drawing of it and has added that it is seen in the images of female deities holding fresh flowers for daily worship.<sup>2</sup>

The Bodhisattva wears a *makūṭa* or head-dress. The upper part of his body is bare but round the waist are bands from which a girdle hangs down. There is some austerity in the face as befitting a Bodhisattva and a future Buddha. Compared with the Buddha image, the sculptor has shown better skill in modelling the figure.

Since the deity does not hold an attribute in his hands, his identification is confronted with difficulties. The only clue with which identification can be made with some measure of satisfaction is the *viśva-vajra* (double thunderbolt) held in the right hand of the attendant deity standing to the right.

Vajrapani is one of the eight principal Bodhisattvas enumerated in the *Sādhanamālā* in *sādhana* No. 18 for Lokanatha. According to this text, Vajrapani is of white colour, carries the *vajra* in one hand and displays the *abhaya-mudrā* in the other. In the sculpture at Buduruvagala, *abhaya-mudrā* is replaced by *kaṭaka-hasta*, but the presence of the symbol *vajra* may be taken as sufficient evidence for the identification of the sculpture as a representation of Vajrapani. Attendant deities of this Bodhisattva have not been named by Bhattacharya or in any work known to the author—hence in the present state of our knowledge, they remain unidentified.

### Vajrapani—Boston Museum

A copper image of Vajrapani from Ceylon in the Coomaraswamy collection in the Boston Museum (height 11.1 cm.—4-3/4 inches) has been illustrated and discussed by Coomaraswamy and dated by him in the 9th century.<sup>3</sup> (In the plate reproduced in the *Memoirs of the Colombo Museum*, the left hand holds the *vajra*, while that in the *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* shows it in the right hand, obviously because the photograph has been printed from the different faces of the negative).

1. *E.H.I.*, p. 16.

2. *I.I.B.*, fig. 9, p. 29.

3. *B.C.M.*, fig. 185; *H.I.I.A.*, fig. 299; *J.R.A.S.*, Apr. 1909, Plate I, figs. 3 and 5.

Compared with other Mahayana bronzes, the treatment of the face is coarse. The head-dress, the ringlets and the jewellery are finely executed. Coomaraswamy says that, in this instance, the attempt of the artist has been to model the physical ideal of the Indian hero. The ear-ring on the left ear is similar<sup>1</sup> to that of Avalokitesvara but the right ear has merely a roll of palm leaf making the opening circular. The *padmāsana* on which the deity is seated is placed on a base or pediment similar to that of the Buddha and Avalokitesvara referred to above.<sup>2</sup>

The deity sits up, chest forward, in the attitude known as *mahārājalīlā*. The right leg hangs down from the *padmāsana* on which is placed the left. The left elbow is held at an angle as in the early Kusana images and rests on the left thigh while the right holds a thunderbolt, the symbol of Vajrapani (said to represent the ultimate reality, Śūnya). A similar figure of Vajrapani from Nalanda has been reproduced by Bhattacharya; except for minor details, it could be compared with our image.<sup>3</sup>

Vajrapani is a Bodhisattva blue in colour. He is the spiritual son of the Dhyani Buddha Aksobhya who is the progenitor of the *vajra* family. His spiritual mother is Mamaki.<sup>4</sup> In the plates reproduced by Bhattacharya, Vajrapani either stands or sits and carries a *vajra* in one of his hands.<sup>5</sup> According to the *sādhanas* this Bodhisattva is white in colour, carries the thunderbolt in one hand and displays the *abhaya mudrā* in the other.<sup>6</sup> He is regarded as one of the eight principal Bodhisattvas although the *Niṣpannayōgāvalī* omits his name from its three lists.<sup>7</sup> He has also been given a place in the Lokanatha-Mandala as a companion of Lokanatha, which is one aspect of Avalokitesvara.<sup>8</sup> Our image may be taken as a representation of Vajrapani without question since his well known symbol the *vajra* is shown. The exact find spot is not known, Coomaraswamy listing it as merely one coming from Ceylon. His date, the 9th century, may be accepted on grounds of style.

### Vajrasattva

A seated metal image of Vajrasattva (height 6-1/4 inches) has been found at Medirigiriya and has been dated in the 5th century.<sup>9</sup> It is now preserved in the Anuradhapura Museum (Cat. No. 1). Vajrasattva has been regarded as the sixth Dhyani-Buddha and belongs to the Vajrayana pantheon. Images of Vajrasattva have been found in the village called Vajrayogini in the region named

1. *B.C.M.*, fig. 176

2. *ibid.* figs. 176 and 177.

3. *I.B.I.*, fig. 27

4. *I.B.I.*, p. 53

5. *ibid.* figs. 25, 26, 27.

6. *Sdh.*, p. 49.

7. *I.B.I.*, p. 98

8. *ibid.* p. 130

9. *B.I.C.*, Plate XXVII

See also our Plate No. 6.



Pargana Vikrampur (East Bengal).<sup>1</sup> Some images of Vajrasattva are preserved in the Sarnath Museum.<sup>2</sup> Vajrasattva has been described as being a regular development of the Bodhisattva Vajrapani emanating from the Dhyani Buddha Aksobhya. The conception of Vajradhara and Vajrasattva is sometimes involved.<sup>3</sup> As the sixth Dhyani Buddha, Vajrasattva is regarded as the priest of the five Dhyani Buddhas.

He holds the *vajra* and the *ghaṇṭā* representing *śūnya* and *prajñā*, respectively. He is an embodiment of the five *skandhas* collectively and is a later addition to the pantheon of the Northern Buddhists.<sup>4</sup> His colour is said to be white and he is regarded by the Buddhists of Nepal as the priest of the five Dhyani Buddhas. (Separate shrines are dedicated to him where his worship is performed in secret, those not initiated into the mysteries not being admitted). He is decked in ornaments, is richly dressed and wears a crown in contrast to the other Dhyani Buddhas who wear the *tricīvara*. All Dhyani Buddhas normally sit in the meditative pose but Vajrasattva carries a *vajra* and a *ghaṇṭā*. The *Advayavajrasaṅgraha* gives him a second name called Dharmmadhātu.<sup>5</sup> He is sometimes represented with his *śakti* and when alone he may be exhibited in public. His consort or *śakti* is called Vajrasattvatmika. Vajrasattva and his consort claim Ghantapani as their Bodhisattva.<sup>6</sup> It has been said that as his colour is white his spiritual sire is Vairocana of white colour. Though his position among the Dhyani Buddhas is anomalous, he is widely represented in Tibet and China.<sup>7</sup>

The figure from Medirigiriya holds the *viśvavajra* (double thunderbolt) in the right hand but displays no bell. The left hand is placed on the lap with the palms open. The representation is that of a Buddha seated cross legged (*vajraparyāṅka*) with the soles of the feet turned upwards. His ornaments are numerous—especially noteworthy are those around the neck and waist and above the waist. Armlets, and also bands around the wrist, are shown. The head-dress is arranged in five stages of tiers and is conical in shape. The double thunderbolt is held in the middle with its lower part touching the knee cap. Ear-rings are worn but these are sufficiently heavy that they are shown as resting on the shoulders. The eyes are open but bent more towards the ground as if looking down from high. The indication of a broad smile on the face suggests that the Dhyani Buddha is in a benign mood. The upper part of the body seems bare except for the ornaments but the lower part below the waist is draped in an attire of which only faint indications are noticeable.

1. *I.B.I.*, pp. 16–17.

2. *ibid.* p. 38.

3. *ibid.*, p. 43.

4. *ibid.*, p. 48.

5. *I.B.I.*, p. 75

6. *ibid.* p. 76.

7. *ibid.* p. 75.

According to Bhattacharya, there is no special *mudrā* in which he is depicted.<sup>1</sup> It will be noticed that the open left palm on the lap suggests that he is a Dhyani Buddha. In some images from Nepal, he is shown in close embrace with his consort Vajrasattvatmika.<sup>2</sup> To the best of the author's knowledge, the figure from Medirigiriya is the only image of this Dhyani Buddha so far found in Ceylon.

## Manjusri

A standing bronze statuette of Manjusri Bodhisattva (height 2 inches) was found at Elahera (Matale district) and is now preserved in the Anuradhapura Museum (Cat. No. G44).<sup>3</sup> It is of small proportions and the details are not very clear. Images of this deity are not rare in India but only a few has been found in Ceylon.

Manjusri is fairly early as a Mahayanist deity and is mentioned in the smaller recension of the *Sukhāvatī-vyūha* (translated into Chinese between 384-417). The first mention is in the *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* and the next in the *Guyha-samāja-tantra* (300 A.C.). Fa-Hsien (394-414), Hsuan Tsang (629-645), I-Tsing (671-695) and Santideva (695-730) mention him in their works. There are images of the deity in the Sarnath Museum. It is said in the *Svayambhū-Purāṇa* that Adibuddha first manifested himself in Nepal in the form of a flame of fire and Manjusri erected a temple over it in order to preserve the flame. The temple is known as Svayambhū-Caitya. The place assigned to this deity in the Mahayana pantheon is of the utmost importance, since he has been regarded as one of the greatest of the Bodhisattvas.

Being a popular deity, Manjusri was worshipped by the Mahayanists in various forms and ways. In the *sādhanas* he is sometimes an offspring of Amitabha, and at times of Aksobhya. Forty-one *sādhanas* describe the various aspects of the deity and stress has been laid on *mantras*. Bhattacharya has comprehensively marshalled all the available evidence pertaining to the Bodhisattva. It is our purpose to find out the nature of his influence on the iconography of Sinhalese Buddhism.

The figure from Elahera, Matale, shows Manjusri in his simplest form with the sword raised in the right hand, the left hand resting on the waist with the arm bent at the elbow. He wears a conical head-dress. The drapery below the waist shows elaborate flounces at the sides as in the sculpture of Avalokitesvara (Kustarajagala) at Weligama. The upper part of the body appears to be bare. Ornaments, though indistinct now, seem to have been worn.

1. *I.B.I.*, p. 75.

2. *ibid.* figs. 43, 44.

3. *Kalā Saṅgarāva* published by the Arts Council of Ceylon, No. 20, 1965 September, Fig. No. 2.

The point of the sword is placed so as to touch the head-dress. In his simplest form Manjusri carries the sword in his right hand and the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript in his left. Our image does not show the manuscript but the other symbol, the sword, is sufficient proof to identify it as a representation of Manjusri. With regard to date, it has been suggested that it could be of as early workmanship as the 4th or 5th century.

We have already noticed that the deity finds mention in Indian literature about the year 300. Mahayanism was known in Ceylon about this time but it did not wield such a great influence as in the last three centuries of the Anuradhapura period. Several images of the deity have been found in India and have been illustrated by Bhattacharya.<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that many of these figures are shown as seated. It is not possible to identify our figure with any of the known aspects of Manjusri such as Manjuvajra, Manjughosa, Dharmmadhatuvagisvara, and so forth. The figure may be regarded as one of the simplest representations of this important Mahayanist deity and therefore belonging to a period before the iconographic type was elaborated into sub-divisions.

( V )

### Cunda

In the Nevill collection is a bronze seated image of a female divinity from Ceylon and assigned by Coomaraswamy to the 9-10th centuries.<sup>2</sup> The deity is four-armed, with rosary, bowl and lotus and also nectar vessel or stupa in the head-dress. Coomaraswamy has identified the figure as being a representation of Cunda, the spiritual daughter of the Dhyani Buddha Vairocana.

The first mention of the deity is in *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (dated 200). Santideva (695-730) in his *Śikṣāsamuccaya* mentions this deity. She is probably the embodiment of the Buddhist Dhāriṇī called Cundādhāriṇī to which a reference is made by Santideva.<sup>3</sup> There are three *sādhana*s describing the deity in one form only. She is four-armed, one-faced and of white complexion. She displays the *varada mudrā* in the right hand and holds a book on a lotus in the left. Two other hands hold the bowl. She is decked in all ornaments.<sup>4</sup> An image of Cunda answering to this description is at present in the Freer Gallery of Art (Washington).<sup>5</sup> Cunda is a Dhāriṇī deity of whose origin very little is known.

1. *I.B.I.*, figs. 74-95.

2. *B.C.M.*, fig. 178

3. *I. B. I.* p. 220 and *NSP.* p. 57.

4. *ibid.* p. 221 & *Sdh.*, p. 271.

5. *ibid.*, p. 221. & fig. 161.

Just as with the scripture *Prajñāpāramitā*, so Cundādhāriṇī was deified and given a physical form which we now notice scattered about the world in a few museums. The Tantric texts give her a number of arms, ranging from two to twenty six. In the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript (No. Add 1643) at the Cambridge University Library there is a painting of the sixteen-armed goddess with a label in old Newari characters; this enables one to identify her. Numerous other images of Cunda are to be seen in the Indian Museums.

Our image is four-armed and holds a bowl on the lap with the open palms of the two lower hands.<sup>1</sup> The attitude is that of *dhyānamudrā*. The upper right hand holds a rosary and the left an unbloomed lotus. She is seated on a *padmāsana* and is bedecked with jewellery and other ornaments. In the head-dress is a stupa or a nectar vessel. The object in the upper left hand may be provisionally identified as a lotus, but it could be a nectar vessel, chank or a book such as the *Prajñāpāramitā* scripture, too. The chank is not mentioned as an object held by this deity even in her twenty-six armed aspect although from a glance at the photograph one might take it to be one. The goddess is open-eyed and fixes her gaze on the beholder.

There is another image of Cunda in the Nevill collection in which the two lower hands hold a book and a bowl in the right and left, respectively.<sup>2</sup> The upper right arm displays a *mudrā* which is not readily recognisable. The thumb and the last two fingers are shown as holding some object while the two remaining fingers are open. The object referred to is round and could be a fruit—possibly the citron (*bījapūrāṇi*) referred to in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* as held by the deity in her twenty-six armed form. The upper left arm holds a chank-like object which could be the lotus, another distinguishing feature of the goddess. In this and the earlier example the lotus (if indeed it is) is in the unbloomed form. She wears a head-dress which contains the figure of Dhyani Buddha Vairocana.

The *āsana* is *paryāṅka* (cross-legged with the soles of the feet open) in both instances. The upward tilt of the nipples of the breasts is most remarkable and may be compared with those of Tara noted above. Heavily bedecked with jewellery, the deity sits with eyes half closed and bent towards the ground. As remarked by Coomaraswamy this figure is decidedly superior in execution to that first described. It is rather unfortunate that nothing is known of the provenance and original association of both the images. The date assigned by him, on grounds of style, is the 9th century but since he is not very happy for he adds that they could be of a somewhat later date.

1. *B.C.M.*, fig. 178.

2. *B.C.M.*, fig. 179; *J.R.A.S.*, Apr. 1909, Plate III, fig. 1.

### Cunda—British Museum (unpublished)

In the Nevill collection there is a third bronze (Regd. No. 1898-7-2. No. 131) of Cunda, 4-5/8 inches high, four-armed and seated.<sup>1</sup> It has not yet been published in any work known to the author who was kindly furnished with a photograph by the authorities of the British Museum. It is similar to Fig. 179 published in the *Memoirs of the Colombo Museum* but the attributes in the first pair of hands are in reverse positions. The alms bowl is held on the lap by the right hand and the book by the left. As in Fig. 179 (*B.C.M.*), a socket in the head-dress contains the figure of Dhyani Buddha Vairocana. Of the three bronzes of Cunda, this example appears to be the best modelled. In facial expression, it may be compared with that of Tara from New Town, Anuradhapura. In view of these and other similarities, it appears to be of a date earlier to the two already published bronzes. The period 8-9th centuries may be suggested as its date.

### ( VI )

### Jambhala (Kuvera)

A copper seated image of Jambhala (Kuvera) from Ceylon, now in the Boston Museum has been illustrated and described by Coomaraswamy.<sup>2</sup> It is 3-1/8 inches (7.8cm.) in height and has been assigned to the 8th century. The right hand holds a citron and in the left is a mongoose (*nakula*) vomiting coins which fall into a pot. Under the right foot is an overturned pot with more coins.

Before proceeding with iconographic and other details, it is necessary to deal with the history and antiquity of this important deity.<sup>3</sup> In Buddhism as well as Hinduism, Kuvera or Vaisravana (Pali: Vessavana) is one of the Dikpalas (Guardians of the Quarters) or Lokapalas (Protectors of the World). He is regarded as the protector of the northern quarter and as the ruler of demi-gods (named *yakṣas*) who are said to be the guardians of treasures. In the course of time Kuvera appears as the God of Riches and Giver of Wealth.

He is represented at Bharhut, one of the earliest Buddhist monuments and his images are known to the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhara,<sup>4</sup> and have been found in lands where Buddhism penetrated. At the time of the colonisation of Ceylon by a north Indian

1. See below Plate No. 29

2. *B.C.M.*, figs. 182, 183; *J.R.A.S.*, Apr. 1909, Plate 1, fig. 4; *F.A.I.C.*, fig. 196; *H.I.I.A.*, fig. 298; *A.C.I.C.*, fig. 29. Also see below, Plate No. 30.

3. S. Paranavitana, "Sigiri, Abode of a God-King", *J.R.A.S. (C.B.)*, New Series, Vol. I.

4. *A.G.B.G.*, Tome I, pp. 192

people, it appears that the cult of Kuvera was prevalent in India. It may be assumed that he was a popular deity among the mercantile classes of India. Among them there were many converts to early Buddhism, and the class played a leading role in the propagation of Buddhism in India and abroad. The prominence of Kuvera, as an honoured deity among Buddhist communities, may thus be explained.

In the Mahayanist Sanskrit text, *Mahāmayūri*, Kuvera is referred to as Dhanesvara and as the Lord of Wealth among the Simhalas.<sup>1</sup> 'Pot-belly' (Kalasodara) was the name of a *yakṣa* (most likely Kuvera) who was honoured in Ceylon.<sup>2</sup> His half-brother Vibhisana was worshipped in Ceylon and a shrine of that deity exists even at the present day at Kelaniya (Western Province) as well as at Lankatilaka-vihara (Central Province). The Sanskrit text referred to above alludes to the cult of Kuvera as existing in this island in ancient times. The *Mahāvamsa* says that the banyan tree shrine of Vaisravana (Kuvera) was established for his worship at Anuradhapura by King Pankukabhaya (437-367 B.C.)<sup>3</sup> A bas-relief representation of this deity may be noticed on a stele at the Dakkhina-Thupa, Anuradhapura. The memory of him is still prevalent in Ceylon when demonolatry is resorted to, the average Sinhalese villager referring to him as Vesamuni-raja.

Eight lords of *yakṣas* are described briefly in the Dharmmadhatuvagisvara-mandala of the *Niṣpannayōgāvalī*. The greatest among the *yakṣas* is said to be Kubera (Kuvera). According to Hindu mythology, he lives with *yakṣa* hordes in the city Alakapuri in the north adjacent to Mount Kailasa in the Himalayan region. The *Niṣpannayōgāvalī* says that the *yakṣa* kings hold the *bījapura* (citron) and the *nakula* (mongoose) in the right and left hands respectively.<sup>4</sup>

Jambhala is the Buddhist god of wealth. He is of the *yakṣa* group and his attributes are the citron and the mongoose. These *yakṣas* are a semi-mythical class of beings who are supposed to preside over wealth and shower riches on mankind when invoked. Except Jambhala, these *yakṣas* are rarely represented.

According to the *Niṣpannayōgāvalī* the colour of Kubera is yellow; he is two-armed. He is said to be residing in the north and has a man as his vehicle. This text says that he holds in his two hands the *gadā* (mace) and the goad.<sup>5</sup>

1. *J.As.* (1915), p. 40.

2. *J.R.A.S. (C.B.)*, Vol. 31, p. 302; *U.H.C.*, Vol. I, Pt. 1, pp. 296-7.

3. Ch. X, v. 89.

4. *N.S.P.*, p. 63.

5. *I.B.I.*, p. 361.

Jambhala is again described as an emanation from the Dhyani Buddha Ratnasambhava. There was a division of opinion among the Northern Buddhists as to the sire of Jambhala, the followers of the Aksobhaya cult holding him as originating from Aksobhya.<sup>1</sup> Ratnasambhava means 'jewel-born' and it is very likely that the sire of Jambhala was Ratnasambhava. Vasudhara is said to be the consort of Jambhala and both were known before the Dhyani Buddhas.

The god of wealth must have been assigned to Ratnasambhava at a late period. According to the *Sādhanamālā*, Jambhala could emanate either from Aksobhya or from Ratnasambhava. In the former aspect he is three-faced, six-armed and shown with his consort.<sup>2</sup> In his aspect as an emanation from Ratnasambhava, he carries the mongoose in his right hand and the citron in the left.<sup>3</sup> When single, Jambhala is of golden complexion and carries the mongoose in the left hand and the citron in the right.<sup>4</sup> This is exactly the position in the bronze from Ceylon in the Coomaraswamy collection in the Boston Museum.

Several images of the deity have been found in India and have been illustrated by Bhattacharya.<sup>5</sup> One of the finest products from the medieval art of Bengal is reproduced as Fig. 177 in Bhattacharya's work. It is from Vikrampur (Eastern Bengal) and shows the pot-bellied deity in the *lalita* attitude.

In the Boston Museum example from Ceylon there is a frank realism, which is its principal artistic interest. In this instance, a fat trader who is awaiting his customers is represented, this deity being worshipped by the Buddhists for material benefit. Compared with the head-dress of Avalokitesvara the present figure shows a similarity of arrangement.<sup>6</sup> On grounds of style, therefore, Coomaraswamy assigned the 6th or 7th century as the most probable date. He was, however, prepared to concede 8th century as the lowest age limit in view of its resemblance to 'Simhavadvīpe Jambalah' of miniature 18 in the Cambridge Ms. 1643.<sup>7</sup> From the vessel which is overturned by the right foot issues a hoard of coins represented by a ribbon-like band. It may at first be suggested that the ribbons represent snakes but, as Coomaraswamy has rightly pointed out, the artist who was a skilled craftsman could certainly have made his snakes more convincing if the intention was such. In some examples of Jambhala from other countries, the attributes of the deity vary. Either a purse or a

1. *I.B.I.*, p. 237

2. *ibid.* p.178.

3. *ibid.* p.237.

4. *ibid.*, p. 238.

5. *ibid.* figs. 176-178.

6. *J.R.A.S.* (Apr. 1909)

Plate 1, fig. 1 & *B.C.M.*, fig. 172.

7. *B.C.M.*, p. 8.

mongoose or both are sometimes shown. The original idea seems to have been the purse from which riches are poured out. As suggested by Foucher the mongoose is probably a later development of the purse symbol.<sup>1</sup>

### Jambhala—Osmund de Silva Collection

A similar bronze from the Osmund de Silva collection shows Jambhala in the *lalita* attitude on a *padmāsana*. There is a plaster cast of this image at the Anuradhapura Museum and it shows the similar attributes.<sup>2</sup> The head-dress is smaller when compared with the former but generally the resemblance between the two are great. It may be of the same age as the Boston Museum example—the lowest age limit being the 8th century.

### Kuvera—Nalanda Gedige

Another example of this deity is noticeable on the tympanum of the *gedigē* at Nalanda.<sup>3</sup> In the centre of it sits a deity who has been identified as Kuvera (Vaisravana) by H. C. P. Bell. His right foot rests on the cornice of the third storey below. The left is crossed in front on a cushion. His right hand with open palm is held in front of his belly. The left hand which holds an attribute rests on his leg. It may be surmised that the attribute is a purse. The *upavīta* is shown across his chest and stomach, so, too, armlets and a necklace. Above the head is an umbrella (*chatra*).

On either side of the deity is a bracket pilaster, above each of which is a flying *vidyādhara*. The right hand of the deity is depicted in *varada mudrā*. The citron and the mongoose are absent in this instance but the purse is shown. H. C. P. Bell assumed that it could be a closed fan but was doubtful about his identification. From the study of similar examples noticed above it will be seen that an attribute answering to such a description has to be a purse.

The facial expression is austere and the limbs of the body are elongated. These are characteristic features noticeable in sculptures executed under the patronage of the Pallavas. We suggest the 8th century as the most likely date of the construction of the Nalanda-gedige. In respect of certain architectural details also the influence of the Pallava school of art and architecture is noticeable here.

As Mahayana Buddhism was affected by the absorption of Tantric practices, several Hindu gods and goddesses were given independent forms as Buddhist deities. They were also given

1. *J.I.A.I.* No. 63, (July 1898).

2. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1960/61, p. G 40 and see below. Plate No. 31.

3. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1910/11, pp. 42/50.



sometimes despised roles to be trodden upon by angry Buddhist gods. The *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, and especially the Dharmmadhātu-vāgīśvara-maṇḍala, shows how this process of absorption has taken place by assigning them to a Dhyani Buddha family. Unless the religious practices performed at Nalanda-gedige were of a Tantric character, the presence of some erotic sculptures cannot otherwise be explained.

## ( VII )

**Erotic Sculpture**

H. C. P. Bell refers to two sculptured panels at Nalanda-gedige (one on a pillar, the other on the stereobate), of which, he says, *propter bonos mores* the less said the better.<sup>1</sup> Of these two panels, the one on the stereobate is still seen but the other has eluded the author, in spite of a search. It is probably on one of the pillars which has fallen face down.

The panel on the stereobate (10.4 inches x 7.5 inches) is an erotic sculpture and contains a scene where human beings are shown in physical union. It may be sufficient to compare it with the figures on the *jagamohan* at Konarak, Orissa (13th cent.).<sup>2</sup> A similar scene occurs also at the Kandariya temple at Khajuraho (11th cent.), occurring as a detail in a frieze.<sup>3</sup>

The Indian examples are later in date. The Nalanda example, on grounds of style, may be dated in the 8th cent. The sculpture on the stereobate establishes the Tantric character of the shrine. Dhāraṇī-stones from Abhayagiriya area (Ch. 4) contain the words “rati pūjā pravarttaya hūm” and “guhya pūjā pravarttaya hūm”. Epigraphical and sculptural evidence thus furnished points to the existence of the worst forms of Tantric Buddhist practices in Ceylon about the 8th century. “Rati-pūjā” in the inscriptions is sculptured in stone at Nalanda-gedige.

## ( VIII )

**Ubhayavarahanana**

In the Colombo Museum there is preserved a sculptured stone slab (Cat. No. 24-57-61-12) 2 feet 10 inches in height and about 1 foot 7 ins. in width.<sup>4</sup> Although it is partly mutilated and badly weathered the outlines of the sculptures are still sufficiently preserved to show that there is a representation of a standing figure inclined to the left and with both arms akimbo. The left elbow touches a club placed slanting against the left leg. The figure is

1. A.S.C.A.R., 1910/11, pp. 42-50.

2. E.S.I., p. 60, Panel No. 1

3. E.S.I., p. 74.

4. See below Plate No. 33

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one-faced but on either side of the head are two boar faces with snouts distinctly visible. Although the breasts are not evident, judging from the ear-rings and the head-dress, the figure appears to be that of a female.

The consort of Dhyani Buddha Vairocana is Marici who is always represented standing in the *ālīḍha* attitude. Sixteen *sādhanas* in the *Sādhanamālā* describe six distinct forms of Marici. Accordingly she could have six faces and twelve arms at the most. She could be easily recognised too because of her particular animal face. Sculptures answering to this description have been commonly found in India and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Six forms of her are referred to, and one is that of Ubhayavarahanana whose distinctive mark is the double animal faces.<sup>2</sup>

Our sculpture does not tally with all the characteristics attributed in the *sādhanas* and is thus unlike the case of the majority of Mahayanist sculptures from Ceylon. It appears that Marici was known in Ceylon. In two Mahayanist paintings in a Nepalese manuscript (now in Cambridge and to be referred to) there are two representations of Avalokitesvara attended on either side by two females, one of whom has been assumed by A. Foucher to be Marici. Inscriptions on the paintings refer to these deities as *Siṃhaladvīpē* (of *Siṃhaladvīpa*, i.e. Ceylon).

Since our sculpture does not tally completely with the details given in the *sādhanas*, it is assumed by us to be a representation of Marici—an earlier form of Ubhayavarahanana. Little is known of the date and provenance except that it is said to have been found in Anuradhapura. On grounds of style the sculpture may be assigned to the early 11th century at the latest.

### Vasudhara

In the Nevill collection there is a unique sculpture of a standing bronze figure of a double-faced female deity (Reg. No. 1898-7-2, No. 121), 13-3/4 inches high.<sup>3</sup> It is of a female in her adolescence who holds with her right hand a citron placed on a staff. Her left hand hangs down holding a basket on which rests a bird. She stands on a lotus pedestal with the left leg firmly placed on it, the right remaining at ease. The drapery extends from the waist down to the knee cap. The rest of the body is bare except for the head-dress and the heavy jewellery.

The sculpture has been referred to by the British Museum authorities as a Mahayanist bronze. It has not been published in any work known to the author who studied it from a photograph. Since nothing is known of the history the identification was by

1. *I.B.I.*, p. 208.

2. *ibid.* p. 212.

3. See below Plate No. 32.

no means easy. In his *Buddhist Iconography* Bhattacharya does not mention a double-faced, two-armed female deity answering to this description and no other example is known to exist. Hence the identification is conjectural.

The attribute held in the right hand, we assume to be a citron. This suggests the association of the deity with Jambhala. Relying on this, the figure would represent Vasudhara, the consort of Jambhala. The description in the *Sādhanamālā* is that she is one-faced, but here a double face is shown. Perhaps Vasudhara had several other aspects not specifically mentioned in the *Sādhanamālā*, which is a composition of a later date.

Vasudhara is said to carry in her left hand ears of corn on a vessel showering gems.<sup>1</sup> In this figure there is a basket shown in the left hand, on which rests a bird—either a parrot or a pigeon, birds associated with ears of corn. The *Sādhanamālā* describes the deity as being of yellow complexion, in the prime of youth and decked in all sorts of ornaments and garments. We do not know the original complexion. The breasts are those of a maiden. She is decked in ornaments and jewellery and above her waist the body is bare. None of the *sādhanas* mentions the *āsana* so that she may be represented in any attitude.

Bhattacharya illustrates a Nepalese drawing of the deity standing,<sup>2</sup> but it does not conform to the *sādhanas*. The sculptured examples from Nepal and Baroda depict the deity as six-armed and seated in *lalita* attitude. These too do not accord with the directions in the *sādhanas* which refer to the goddess as two-armed. Bhattacharya also says that images of Vasudhara are not generally met with in sculpture.

In the absence of any specific data our image has to be dated on grounds of style. Taking into consideration also the skill in modelling, we would assign the 8th century.

( IX )

### Vijayarama Bas-Reliefs

The most important sculptures in bas-relief in the Vijayarama monastery are in the so called 'Hall'.<sup>3</sup> Numbering 12, these have been described by H. C. P. Bell as carvings in a series of "cameos". The numbering is in the series A to L, beginning from the South (front wall: A, B), then west wall (C, D, E, F), and north (back wall: G, H) and finally east wall (I, J, K, L).

1. *I.B.I.*, p. 245.

2. *ibid.* p. 290.

3. *A.S.C. 6th Progress Report*, S.P. XII of 1896, Plates I to X.

See also below, Plate No. 34.

The carvings are in sunk relief within arched niches. Each cameo consists of at least one main figure carved within. Above the niches are *makara toraṇas* in relief. These vary in detail but generally conform to one uniform pattern. Each *torāṇa* consists of two *makara* heads carrying a dwarf rider whose feet rest on the pilasters. The leafy tails of the *makaras* are artistic. Pairs of animals, such as deer and lions, as well as human figures issue from the mouths.

A single figure has been carved in eight cameos and the remaining four (D, I, K, L) have two figures in each. In those carvings which are numbered B, C, E, F, G, H, J there is a representation of a single standing figure of the *dvārapāla* (janitor) type as seen on the guardstones flanking the steps giving admission to shrines at Anuradhapura. In the opinion of Bell these are anthropomorphic *nāgas*. Some of the figures have a five-hooded snake nimbus behind their heads. All the figures conform to one general type with regard to the pose of the body. The right hand rests on the hip and the left holds a lotus stalk across the left shoulder. Above the waist the body is bare of clothing but below the navel there is a garment extending up to the ankles. The *upavīta*, heavy ear-rings, necklace, armlets, bracelets and a high *jaṭā-makuṭa* are to be noticed. The figure in cameo A may also be classed with this group but for the absence of the cobra hood behind the head and the lotus stalk in the hand.

Bell classed these figures as *nāga-dvārapālas*. But they are not placed in the same position as of a janitor. The arched niche in which the deity is placed suggests that the person installed within its frame is no mean personage but one of importance. These bas-reliefs are within panels on the plinth of the building named as the 'Hall' in the Vijayarama monastery. Thus, it is likely that they are representations of Bodhisattvas.

In carvings numbered B, C, E, F, G, H, J there is a single standing figure in each niche and these have been described. It may at first be assumed that these are representations of Avalokitesvara because of the lotus stalk held in one of the hands, but there are other Bodhisattvas who have the same symbol. Mahayanist deities with their hands placed on the hip are also numerous. We propose to examine whether there is any deity who satisfactorily answers to this description.

The Bodhisattva Amoghadarsin, who is yellow in colour, is described as holding the lotus with its central core in the right hand and having the clenched left resting on the hip. In these instances the clenched right rests on the hip.<sup>1</sup> Such instances of

1. *I.B.I.*, p. 97.

reversed position of hands are not unknown in Mahayanist sculptures, i.e. unpublished bronze figure of Cunda (British museum). The name of Bodhisattva Amoghadarsin appears in the third list of Bodhisattvas headed by Maitreya in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*. There is only one description of him and that too is briefly worded. In the Vajradhātumaṇḍala of this text, it is said that his spiritual sire is the Dhyani Buddha Aksobhya of blue colour.<sup>1</sup> Emanations from the latter are generally awe-inspiring. The snake nimbus behind the head of each figure may thus be explained. In the absence of any other evidence for a different viewpoint, it may be suggested that these seven figures are representations of Bodhisattva Amoghadarsin.

The figure in cameo A is similar to the others mentioned above but for the absence of the cobra hood behind and the flower stalk in the hand. The right hand is placed on the lap and the left shows a clenched fist. It is likely that he is also a Bodhisattva whose identity is now obscure.

The double figured carving in cameo K is much worn out, only the outlines being visible. It appears that there are two figures facing each other. The left arm is on the hip and the right is raised high and one knee of either is advanced. It is unfortunate that there is hardly any clue to identify them.

Carving L consists of a male and a female figure. The male is four armed. The two upper arms are raised with the fore-arm bent towards the head. The lower right hand depicts the *varada mudrā* and the lower left encircles the neck of the female. The latter appears terrified and has her hands clasped across her breast. The attitude of the male suggests excitement. In the left bottom corner is a dwarf with uplifted hands. The deity does not hold any attribute in his hands. The attitude of beneficence (*varada mudrā*) depicted by one of the hands gives a clue to the identification. The dwarf below has his hands uplifted evidently to receive the ambrosia which flows from the fingers of the deity. It appears that the Khasarpana aspect of Avalokitesvara described in the *sādhana*s agrees with the details noticeable in this figure. The *sādhana* says "He is an expert in distributing the stream of nectar which flows from his hand and Sucimukha who stands below with an uplifted face, a protruding belly and very pale in appearance receives the same".<sup>2</sup> Thus it appears reasonable to identify the figure as a representation of Avalokitesvara (in his aspect as Khasarpana) and the female by his side with his consort Tara. Copper plaques inscribed with invocations to Tara have been found within the stupa at the site and the identification therefore seems justified.

1. *I.B.I.*, p. 99.

2. *I.B.I.*, p. 129.

Carvings D, I, are in a better state of preservation. These form the centre pieces on the side walls. In both the same two figures as in carving L are represented. There is little or no change in the attitude of the male. The female in I is taller and presents no frightened appearance. Her right hand is by her side and the left forearm thrown outwards at right angles to the body. There are three dwarf figures placed at the feet of the deities and the one on the right is a woman. The same dwarf figure with arm uplifted is shown in D. As in carving L, in both these instances, a hand of the male is shown as encircling the neck of the female. This feature may be taken as another clue for the identification of these deities as Avalokitesvara and Tara for the reason that three *sādhana*s describing the Halahala (aspect of Avalokitesvara) speak of the male as having one of his left hands touching the breast of his consort.<sup>1</sup> A somewhat similar attitude is depicted in these carvings and that may be taken as a reason to assume that these figures referred to are representations of Avalokitesvara and Tara.

With regard to the identification of these double figures, Bell has put forward the hypothesis that they could represent Siva or Visnu and their respective consorts Parvati and Laksmi. The absence of any apparent attribute in their hands has led to the suggestion that the omission was deliberate, allowing the sectaries of either deity to regard the carvings as representing their own godhead. The worship of Siva or Visnu is essentially Hinduistic and, as the cultural history of this island shows, was popularised with the advent of the Colas in the early decades of the 11th century. Vijayarama was devoted to the cult of Vajrayana and, although some of the Hindu deities were absorbed into the pantheon in the course of time, the cult of the Bodhisattva remained in the forefront. The plaques discovered at the stupa show unmistakable signs of Tantric worship in this monastery. Hence we are led to reject Bell's suggestion.

( X )

### Mahayanist Paintings

There are no known examples of Mahayanistic paintings existing in Ceylon. But a study of the history of Mahayanism, as may be gleaned from the chronicles, gives room to assume that paintings were not unknown. As will be shown later, the Buddha Dipankara was associated with Mahayanistic paintings in Nepal. There is a reference in the *Cūlavamsa* to a picture of Buddha Dipankara or his city in a beautiful building which housed the Hair relic of the Buddha.<sup>2</sup> The text of the *Cūlavamsa* (i.e. *Dīpaṅkara*

1. *I.B.I.*, p. 133.

2. Ch. 39, v. 51. Also *ibid.* p. 48 (ft. nt. 8) f.

*nāthassa/nagarassa paṭimāya ghare vare*) indicates that it was a picture rather than an icon. Geiger translates the phrase as 'a picture of Dipankara's city'. The reference is to the reign of Moggallana I (497-515 A.C.) in which the building referred to was erected and a great sacrificial festival held in honour of the Hair relic. The latter was brought to Ceylon from India by Silakala (Ambaherana-salamevan) who in the course of time became king of Ceylon. If the reference above made was to a painting, it is tempting to recognise it as Mahayanist.

The Buddhists of northern India appear to have known about Mahayanist images in Ceylon. In two Nepalese manuscripts (written in Bengali script of the 11th century) now in Cambridge, there are miniature paintings of Mahayanist deities with inscriptions giving their names and titles. These have been utilised by Foucher in his researches on Buddhist iconography.<sup>1</sup> Among these are included the following from Ceylon:—

- (i) *Siṃhaladvīpe Dīpaṅkara ārisaṣṭhana* (The Buddha Dīpaṅkara of Ceylon). The Buddha is attended on the right by Avalokitesvara of white colour, and on the left by Vajrapani of green colour holding the thunderbolt. Since these two Bodhisattvas are painted, it may be safe to assume the icon as Mahayanist. The Javanese Dipankara is said to be attended by Avalokitesvara on the left and Manjusri on the right.
- (ii) *Siṃhaladvīpe Dīpaṅkara Abhayahasta* (Buddha Dīpaṅkara of Ceylon with hand in the *abhaya mudrā*). To the right of the Buddha are two high stupas and a palm tree. To the left is Bodhisattva Vajrapani of green colour, standing and legs crossed, holding the thunderbolt in the right hand and a blue lotus in the left. The presence of this Bodhisattva in the painting speaks of the Mahayanist character of the icon.
- (iii) *Siṃhaladvīpe Jambhālah* (The god Jambhala, i.e. Kuvera of Ceylon). The appearance of the deity is awe-inspiring. He is of yellow colour and is seated in the Indian fashion with the right leg hanging down. The right hand holds a citron and also depicts the *varada mudrā*. A mongoose is held in the left hand. He is accompanied by two other deities, on his right by one of yellow colour and on his left by one of white colour. On the background is a mountain and a forest.
- (iv) *Siṃhaladvīpe Jambhala-Bhaṭṭaraka* (Jambhala-Bhaṭṭaraka or Kuvera from Ceylon). As in the former instance, appearance of the deity is awe-inspiring. He is yellowish in colour

1. *E.S.L.I.B.I.*, pp. 189, 192, 193, 209, 211, 212.

and is seated under a tree. The right leg is folded but the left is at ease. The right hand which is extended towards the chest holds a citron. The left hand is on the knee with a mongoose on it. On the left side of the deity is a companion of yellowish colour holding in his left hand an object which appears like a purse.

- (v) *Sinhaladvīpe ārogyacālā Lokeśvaraḥ* (Lokesvara, i.e. Avalokitesvara of the hospital in Ceylon). The Bodhisattva is white in colour and is seated in the Indian fashion. The right leg hangs down. The right hand depicts either *abhaya* or *vitarka mudrā*. With the left hand he holds a lotus on the knee. The companions on either side of the deity are females. One of them who is of green colour holds a blue lotus. She is Tara. The other is of awe-inspiring appearance, has rough hair and holds a club in her hands. It may be conjectured that she is Marici.
- (vi) *Sinhaladvīpe ārogyacālā Lokanāthaḥ* (The Lokanatha, i.e. Avalokitesvara of the hospital in Ceylon). The attitude of the hands and legs is same as above. The deity is attended by two females as before. One of them who holds the blue lotus is Tara. The other is terrible looking and is red in colour. It may be assumed that she is Marici.

These paintings are from northern India and as such have no bearing on our study. Even so, they refer to these deities as belonging to Ceylon. Therefore it may be assumed that they are reproductions of Mahayanist icons from Ceylon, whose fame had spread as far as northern India.

Since two Mahayanist paintings portray Buddha Dipankara from Ceylon, it is logical to assume that the picture of this Buddha painted in the reign of Moggallana I was also Mahayanist. The Buddha's association with Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani cannot otherwise be explained. From the foregoing, one may conclude that not only paintings, but even sculptures of this Buddha, flanked by Bodhisattvas were also known in Ceylon.



## CHAPTER IV

### EPIGRAPHICAL

THERE are a number of epigraphs in Ceylon containing Mahayanist ideas. There are also some documents which indirectly refer to such doctrines. Many of these inscriptions are in the Sanskrit language, the script either Sinhalese or Nagari. They first appear about the period 7th century. More numerous are those assigned to 9th and 10th centuries. A study of the history of the last two centuries of the Anuradhapura kingdom will reveal that during this period there was hardly any obstruction for the growth of religious factions in the island. Some of the sovereigns of the land were much in favour of these heretic doctrines and were in fact patrons of such cults. After the fall of the Anuradhapura kingdom, there are no Mahayanist records worthy of serious consideration and the references to any Mahayanist beliefs are but incidental.

In this chapter it is proposed to classify the epigraphs into two categories namely (a) Sinhalese and (b) Sanskrit. The latter, as we shall later see, are the more numerous. Many of these are engraved in Sinhalese characters of the Pallava Grantha type and some in Nagari. They are interesting, since they show the extent to which Mahayanist beliefs and practices influenced the religion of the land. These inscriptions are thus listed in the chronological order.

#### Sinhalese Inscriptions

1. Fragmentary slab from Jetavanarama	...	circa	4th c.
2. Buddhanhela Pillar inscription	...	...	10th c.
3. Puliyankulama slab inscriptions	...	...	10th c.
4. Bronze label in Colombo Museum	...	...	10th c.
5. Sagama rock inscription	...	...	14th c.
6. Wegiriya rock inscription	...	...	15th c.
7. Pepiliyana, Asgiri-vihara, Lankatilaka and Gadaladeniya inscriptions	...	...	14-15th c.

#### Sanskrit Inscriptions

1. Kuccavelly Rock inscription	...	...	circa 7th c.
2. Tiriyay rock inscription	...	...	7th c.
3. Mihintale rock inscription— <i>Triṅkayastava</i>	...	...	7-8th c.
4. Iṅḍikaṅṅsāya copper plaques	...	...	8-9th c.
5. Vijayārāma copper plaques	...	...	9th c.
6. Mihintale Kaṅṅsāya—gold sheet	...	...	9th c.

7.	Polonnaruva—Copper plaque—Pabalu-vehera	10th c.
8.	Anuradhapura—Slab from Abhayagiriya ...	9th c.
9.	Anuradhapura—Copper plaque from Abhaya- giriya ... .. .	10th c.
10.	Mihintale—Rajagirilenakanda inscription ...	9th c.
11.	Anuradhapura copper plate now in Colombo Museum ... .. .	9th c.
12.	Clay votive tablets ... .. .	9-10th c.
13.	Inscriptions on the Buddha images from Seru- vila and Mahiyangana ... .. .	9-10th c.
14.	Dhāraṇī-stones from Abhayagiriya ...	9th c.

These epigraphs will be dealt with below in the above order one by one with reference to their language and subject matter noting down the incidental or direct references to Mahayanist doctrines, beliefs and practices.

( I )

### Fragmentary Slab from Jetavanarama

The fragmentary slab inscription from Jetavanarama (now in the Colombo Museum) was edited by Paranavitana in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*.<sup>1</sup> It is important for our study from a historical point of view and not so much as a document containing Mahayanist doctrines. The stone on which the inscription was engraved is not of a local variety and is assumed to have been imported from the Andhra region. The script itself, compared with contemporary documents in Ceylon, shows signs of having been influenced by the script of the Ikshvaku kings of the Andhra country. We propose to follow the importance of the inscription from the angle of the historian.

The fragmentary information on the slab points to the time of Mahasena (277-304 A.C.) in whose reign the Mahayanists asserted themselves over the orthodox monks. The record supplies the following information:- (a) the edict issued in the first year of a king (b) doctrines of certain monks were unsettled (c) five great residences (d) Vaitulyavada (e) committing the texts to writing (f) persons of unruly conduct (g) exhortation to future kings to do likewise (h) Abhayagiri maha-vihara.

It will be noticed that the reference is to a very dark chapter in the history of Theravada Buddhism in Ceylon, when the accession of Mahasena brought about evil days upon the orthodox monks of the Maha-vihara. Sanghamitra, the champion of Mahayanism

1. *E.Z.*, Vol. IV, pp. 275-285.

in Ceylon, obtained royal sanction for the persecution of the Theravada and for some time it appeared as if the rivals of the latter were victorious. The *Mahāvamsa* and the *Nikāya Saṃgraha* refer to the events and the facts detailed above fit in with the statements in the chronicles.<sup>1</sup>

The five great residences (c) were the monastic establishments of the Maha-vihara which resisted all heresies introduced to the island from time to time. Since one part of the record is missing, it is not possible to determine conclusively that it is the edict of Mahasena proclaiming his religious policy but the data point to it.

### Buddhannehela Pillar Inscription

A pillar inscription of the reign of Abha Salamevan (Udaya I? — 901–912) from Buddhannehela has been edited and published by D. M. de Z. Wickremasinghe.<sup>2</sup> The revered teacher Buddhmitra has been described in the record as an anointed son of the revered teacher Harsa (“Harṣeyen vahanse vālaṅḍu anantarāyen mekunvahanse abhiṣekāyēn daru Buddhmittra ācāryyayan vahanse”). This expression (‘son by sacred sprinkling’) has been understood by Wickremasinghe as implying the prevalence of certain Brahmanic (or Mahayanist) rites not acceptable to the Theravadins.

The *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (D.C.B.T.) informs us that among the Chinese, *abhiṣeka* (a ceremonial sprinkling of the head) is a mode employed in the investiture of certain high officials of Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> According to the Vinaya, the preceptor (*upajjhāya*) should consider his pupil (*sadhivihārika*) as his son.<sup>4</sup> There are formal acts performed in connection with the initiation. These are prevalent in modern Buddhist temples and the author is not aware whether such ceremonials are of local origin. Admission to the lower order of a novice (*sāmaṇera*) or to the higher order of ordained monk (*upasampadā*) is governed by certain traditional rites observed in the Buddhist temples.<sup>5</sup>

1. *Mhv.*, ch. XXXVII *Nks.*, pp. 15–18.

2. *E. Z.* Vol. I, pp. 191–200.

3. p. 250.

4. *Mahavagga* I, 25, 6.

5. *E.R.E.*, article on *abhiṣeka* by F. W. Thomas & C. J. S. C. II, p. 45. One such rite is the application of cow-dung on the body of the novice and thereafter bathing him in water. The purpose behind this practice, it is said, is to cleanse him of the ‘stink of a layman’ (*gihi-gaṅḍa*). It is not known to the author whether such is the practice observed in all Buddhist temples but it has been heard of in a number of places. It appears that there is some remote connection with this practice and *abhiṣeka* of the Mahayanists. The ten precepts to be observed by a novice are taught to him for the first time by the senior monk, normally under an auspicious asterism. Such formalities as are observed now are probably developments which have taken place in the course of the evolution of the Buddhist church in response to local needs. Today, in the Buddhist temples of Ceylon, initiation ceremonies last for a day or two. This is said to be the case among the Mahayanists also and the rites (one of which is *udaka-abhiṣeka*) last for three days.

The pillar inscription from Buddhanehela refers to such rites as were current in the 10th century. It will be noticed that the two names Buddhmitra and Harsa occur in the record in Sanskrit form, perhaps an indication of their Indian origin. The *Advaya-vajrasaṅgraha* speaks of impregnation through water-pot, mysticism, knowledge and again through true knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The water-pot initiation includes initiation with a tiara, thunderbolt, dominion, name and teacher. It describes also under the major heads initiation into the secret of Bodhicitta and two sorts of Prajñājñāna. It will be seen that this text, which is a work of a Mahayanist writer, gives an important place to initiation ceremonies. The ceremonial connected with such rites as initiation referred to in our inscription could not have been simple local developments, this being the period when Buddhism in the mainland itself had undergone many vicissitudes which wholly changed its old character. As Wickremasinghe and Paranavitana have both assumed, the allusion to the initiation ceremony could refer to Mahayanist practices of the 10th century.

### Puliyankulama Slab Inscriptions

The plan of the Puliyankulama monastery (ancient Pubbarama) to the east of Anuradhapura, was except for certain modifications almost the same as that of the Vijayarama. The sculptures carved on the walls of the Vijayarama Hall and the copper plaque inscriptions discovered within the stupa have established beyond doubt the Mahayanist character of Vijayarama. The ruins of Puliyankulama monastery have brought to light no such carvings or copper plaques. But two weathered slabs with inscriptions on them and dated in the reign of Abha Salamevan, who may be either Kassapa V (929-939) or Dappula V (940-952), have been discovered.<sup>2</sup>

One of these registers a benefaction made (among other things) for the daily supply of rice to a person who had to perform daily something connected with the Dhammadhātu (Sinh. *daham-daya*). Since the inscriptions are weathered, the text is incompletely preserved. The other record also contains the word *daham-daya* but the text has been found to be more fragmentary than the first. The term "Dhammadhātu" has been taken to mean a scripture of the Mahayanists (See ch. I, Section IV).

"Dharmmadhātu" is but another name of the sixth Dhyani-Buddha Vajrasattva, one of whose images has been discovered in Ceylon (see ch. 3).<sup>3</sup> According to the Chinese Buddhists, Vairocana is the whole world, which is divided into *garbha-dhātu* (material) and *vajra-dhātu* (indestructible), the two together forming

1. *Adjr.*, ch. 7.

2. *C. J. S. C.*, II, pp. 45-46.

3. *I. B. I.*, p. 75

dharmma-dhātu.<sup>1</sup> “Dharmma-dhātu” has again been explained as the unifying spiritual reality regarded as the ground or cause of all things, the Absolute from which all proceeds. Dharmmadhātu-palace is the shrine of Vairocana in the *garbha-dhātu*. Dharmma-dhātu-Buddha could mean the Dharmma-kāya or the Universal Buddha or the Buddha of a Buddha realm.<sup>2</sup>

On the above explanations the original viewpoint that “Dharmma-dhātu” could only mean a text has to be modified to accommodate the new material. The *Nikāya Saṃgraha* refers to a text but not the Dharmma-dhātu. On the other hand the *Cūlavamsa* does not specifically mention a text or a *paṭimā* (image) but an object of much honour which was first placed in the royal palace and next in the Jetavana monastery. The Mahayanists were in the habit of worshipping sacred texts, which (to them) was as good as worshipping images. The *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* was an object of much honour, and an anthropomorphised image (female deity) was found in Java. The Sinhalese Buddhists of today also worship texts but usually where images are normally kept, other objects of religious worship are also kept.

The definition of “Dharmma-dhātu” given above has, however, to be considered. It could mean a text or any other object of worship as the *Cūlavamsa* refers to it. If it is to be assumed that Purnna the merchant arrived in Ceylon from India with not only a text but also an image of either Vajrasattva or Vairocana (the former more likely since an image has already been discovered), the difficulty is largely overcome.

However there is no doubt that Dharmmadhātu was an object of much honour as may be understood from the description of honours paid to it. The term dharmma-dhātu is more Mahayanist and as far as the author is aware, it was known to the orthodox Buddhists in the sense “eternal truth”. Puliyankulama (Pubbārāma) has to be taken on architectural grounds as a monument of the Mahayanists and the reference to Dharmmadhātu, which was an object of worship in the vihara of the monastery, gives epigraphical support to our identification.

### **Bronze Label in the Colombo Museum**

The bronze label inscription in the Colombo museum refers to daham-da (Dharmma-dhātu) which is exactly the term occurring in the Puliyankulama inscriptions.<sup>3</sup> The two words which follow “de-patek” have been interpreted by Parānavitana as meaning ‘two leaves’ and the whole phrase as “two leaves from the (sacred text) Dharmma-dhātu”. The inscription is in Sinhalese characters

1. *D.C.B.T.*, p. 90.

2. *ibid.* p. 271

3. *C.J.S.C.*, Vol. II, p. 46.

*Sp. Zey.*, Vol. VI, p. 74,

of the 10th century and was found at Anuradhapura. The Sinhalese word "de-patek" is written twice over, once in Sinhalese characters and once in North-Eastern Indian Nagari characters. The association of the Nagari script with the Mahayanists was no doubt known to the engraver, who himself was probably a follower of that sect.

### **Sagama and Wegiriya Rock Inscriptions**

The Sagama rock inscription of Bhuvanaikabahu V (1372/3—1405/6) registers a donation of lands in the village of Saputala, Sagama, by the two dignitaries Alakesvara and Devamantrisvara.<sup>1</sup> The record is worded in such a way as to indicate that the two last named were second in importance only to the king. The donation was made to the gods Natha of Senkadagala (Kandy) and of the Na-tree (of unspecified location) for having crowned with success the efforts of the two above mentioned to stabilize the affairs of the church and the state.

Senkadagala as the capital of a kingdom rose into importance in the reign of its first founder Senasammata Vikramabahu (1474/5—1510/11), but from the contents of the record it becomes clear that long before the city gained political importance, it was reputed as a seat of the god Natha for whose worship was erected a temple. Up to the present day it remains one of the prominent Buddhist centres in the hill capital.

It has already been established that Natha is but another name of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva.<sup>2</sup> The mention of this deity in a fourteenth century document testifies to the prevalence of a cult associated with him at a time when Mahayanism was itself no living force.

The rock inscription at Wegiri-devale (circa 1415) refers to benefactions made to "Lokesvara-Nathayan-vahanse of Wegiri-devale"<sup>3</sup> (see ch. 3). Lokesvara-Natha being but another name of Avalokitesvara, the contents of this record furnish additional proof of the popularity of this deity in the fifteenth century. At this time, however, the original character of Lokesvara had been forgotten.

### **Lankatilaka, Gadaladeniya, Pepiliyana and Asgiri-vihara Wall Inscriptions**

The Lankatilaka rock inscription of Bhuvanaikabahu IV (1344 or Saka 1266) contains the phrase "Maitri Bodhisattvayan-vahanset Lokesvara Nāthayan-vahanset" (The Lord Maitri

1. *E.Z.*, Vol. IV, p. 307.

2. *C.F.S.C.*, Vol. II, pp. 52-64.

3. *J.R.A.S. (C.B.)*, Vol. XXII, No. 65, p. 366.

Bodhisattva and the Lord Lokesvara Natha) and the very late Asgiri-vihara wall inscription of Sri Vikrama goes, “ Maitri Nātha Lokeśvara Nātha rūpa dekakut ” (two images of Maitri Natha and Lokeśvara Nātha). The Pepiliyana inscription of Parakramabahu VI also mentions Natha and Maitreya Bodhisattva. A fragmentary record at Gadaladeniya (14th cent.) mentions Natha and Maitreya together.<sup>1</sup> These references are incidental, but they provide further testimony to the persistence of Mahayanist beliefs into late times.

( II )

### Kuccavely Rock Inscription

The eastern sea-board, particularly north of Trincomalee, appears to have been much under Mahayana influence as attested by the archaeological finds in that part of the island. There is considerable evidence to point to a prevalence of Mahayanist beliefs and practices particularly in this region. The rock inscription at Kuccavely (21 miles to the north of Trincomalee) which consists of eight lines of writing, has been indited by the side of a sculpture containing carvings in low relief of representations of sixteen votive stupas. The epigraph, which is excellently preserved, is also one of the best executed among the many epigraphical documents of the early period.<sup>2</sup>

The script is Sinhalese of about the 7th century but characters therein appear to be of a variety not known from other documents. They seem to have some comparison with the early Grantha alphabet of south India, though by no means identical with any other known south Indian alphabet. Parnavitana states that the closest parallel to the script of the present record is found in the votive inscriptions on the pavement slabs at Yatala-dagaba at Tissamaharama.

The document contains two Sanskrit stanzas one in *upajāti* and the other in *vasantatilakā* metre. These express the pious wish of their author that by the merit he has gained (obviously by carving the stupas on the rock) he may become a Buddha in the future, for the deliverance of suffering humanity. One of the main differences between the Mahayana and the Sravakayana is the importance attached to the Bodhisattva ideal by the former. In the Sravakayana, deliverance from suffering is obtained by becoming a Buddha, Pratyeka Buddha or an Arhat. The Mahayanists endorse this view but they attach greater importance to the Buddhahood and advise their followers to aim for the noblest

1. *U.C.R.*, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 1 & 2 (Jan-Apr. 1960), p. 5; *C.J.S.C.*, Vol. II, pp. 52-56.

2. *E.Ā.*, Vol. III, pp. 158 ff.

ideal. It will be noted that in the numerous lithic records assignable to the 6-7th centuries, most individuals who recorded some act of charity declared the wish that all beings should become Buddhas.<sup>1</sup> This is the period of extensive Mahayanist activity and the lithic records throw some light on the general trend of religious thought of the period.

The present record which is one of the earliest known inscriptions in Sanskrit, extols the Bodhisattva ideal. The author appears to have been a Mahayanist. Says he, “. . . . . and having attained to that supreme state of Buddhahood, may I, with my hand of great compassion, deliver suffering humanity from the extensive quagmire of *saṃsāra*”. The word “*karuṇā-karena*” (which may be translated as “hand of great compassion”) is evocative of Avalokitesvara by *dhvani* (suggestion).

### Tiriyay Rock Inscription

Our next epigraph is the one on a rock about 200 feet to the south of the Tiriyay *vata-dā-gē* (about 30 mls. north of Trincomalee). It is a document of the Mahayanists and contains references to Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, extolling the sanctity of Girikaṇḍika-caitya. Parnavitana has edited this inscription and dealt with the importance attached to it in a study of the palaeography and religious history of this island. Dr. B. Ch. Chabra subsequently pointed out that this record is in verse (See also Parnavitana's later comments).<sup>2</sup>

The presence in Ceylon of inscriptions, written in Pallava Grantha and containing Mahayanist ideas such as those at Tiriyay and Mihintale, could have been due to the arrival in Ceylon of Mahayanist teachers from the Pallava country. It is said that three Indian monks named Gunavarman, Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra visited Ceylon on their way to the Far East.<sup>3</sup> Vajrabodhi had stayed for a considerable time at the court of the Pallava kings before he went to China. Towards the close of the seventh century he was an honoured guest at the Abhayagiri-vihara. He paid visits to a number of holy shrines in the island and expounded the Mahayana doctrines to the ruler of Rohana whose leaning was towards the orthodox sect. A second visit to Ceylon by Vajrabodhi occurred at a time when the reigning king was called Chi-li-chi-lo (Sri Sila or probably Sri Silamegha). According to some accounts Vajrabodhi's pupil Amoghavajra was a native of Ceylon. The latter, a Mahayana teacher of great repute, was sent as an emissary to China by Aggabodhi VI in 746. In discussing the contents of the short Sanskrit inscription at Tiriyay of the reign of Aggabodhi

1. *E.Z.*, Vol. IV, pp. 128-150.

2. *ibid.* pp. 151-160 and 312-319.

3. *U.H.C.*, Vol. I., Pt. 1, p. 383.



VI, Paronavitana says that if these Mahayanist documents are not due to Vajrabodhi or Amoghavajra, they must have been set up by Sinhalese monks who came under the influence of these noted propagandists of the Mahayana.<sup>1</sup>

The script of the Tiriya inscription is interesting since it is the Pallava Grantha of south India of about the 7th century. This script has also been used for engraving some of the Sanskrit inscriptions of this period. The short Sanskrit inscription at Tiriya is in the same script. Paronavitana assigned the record which is dated in the twenty-third year of a king named Silamegha, to the reign of Aggabodhi VI (741-781). It contains nothing Mahayanistic but it perhaps refers to other inscriptions. The Kuccavely rock inscription, which is also in Sanskrit, has been engraved in characters which are somewhat earlier in date than those of the present document.

Paronavitana states that the Kuram plates of the Pallava king Paramesvaravarmman I (660-680) are the closest in resemblance to the script of the Tiriya inscription, but was of the opinion that it is not quite identical with any found in south India.<sup>2</sup>

The language is Sanskrit, the form verse, and the author of the piece appears to have been proficient in the language. Stanzas 1-10 are in Nardataka metre, No. 11 is in Upajati. Except for the words "sulaḷita" and "siṅghaḷendra" the orthography is accurate. The record is fragmentary and some letters have weathered away, but on the whole the purport of the document is clear. An account is first introduced of a company of sea-faring merchants. This is followed by a eulogistic account of the shrine named Girikaṇḍika-caitya and the wish of the author that by the merit acquired by eulogising the shrine, the world be freed from the miseries of existence. The traditional story that Girikaṇḍika-caitya (Sinh. Girihaṅḍu-sāya) was founded by the guilds of merchants named Trapussaka and Vallika is also recorded and the document is then concluded with the Buddhist formula about the transitoriness of things mundane.

The account of the sea-faring merchants Tapassu and Bhalluka has been referred to in the Pali *Mahāvagga* as well as in the Sanskrit *Lalitavistara*.<sup>3</sup> These two merchants are said to have founded a *caitya* over the hair relics of the Buddha. Paronavitana has analysed all the evidence at his disposal to identify Tiriya-vaṭa-dā-gē with Girikaṇḍika-caitya and the two merchants Trapussaka and Vallika of this record with Tapassu and Bhalluka of the religious

1. *E. Z.*, Vol. V, pp. 175-176.

2. *I. P.*, Plate XVI.

3. For the references see footnotes in *E. Z.*, Vol. IV, No. 18.

literature of the Buddhists. There are several traditions with regard to the actual spot where the two merchants founded the stupa. Sites in northern India and Burma as well as several spots in Ceylon have been mentioned. The Sinhalese name "Girihaṅḍu" occurring in the *Pūjāvalī* is etymologically connected with Skt. "Girikaṇḍika" of this record and has been equated as such in the *Visuddhi-magga-sanne* of the thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Thus the identity of Girikaṇḍi with Girihaṅḍu is conclusively proved. The inscription most certainly records a local tradition which prevailed in Ceylon in the 7th century and which, according to later literature, persisted down to the 13th century.

Of greater interest to our study is the statement that this stupa was an abode of Avalokitesvara. This is the only inscription (known to the present author) where this deity has been mentioned by his name best known in the Mahayana texts. As attested by the references to him, his worship was (and is) widely prevalent in Ceylon. In the seventh century (which is the earliest known date when he finds mention in Ceylon) he was called Avalokitesvara. The wish expressed in the document that the merit gained by its author should be for the salvation of the whole world is a concept of the Mahayanists. Dr. B. Ch. Chhabra has pointed out that the word "bimbadhara" (stanza No. 5) is a well known epithet of Avalokitesvara: 'who carries in his *makuṭa* a shining image of the Buddha'. The same stanza refers to Avalokitesvara as having his abode in the premises of this stupa, that is, his image was placed here.

Our interest in the document is increased by the reference to Mañjuvāk (Manjusri) in stanza No. 6, since he is also an important Bodhisattva of the Mahayanists. His images found in Ceylon have already been referred to. The mention of the triad, the Buddha Sakyasimha, Avalokitesvara and Manjusri, in one and the same document gives us a glimpse of the Mahayanist forms of worship in the seventh century. Normally, the third place is occupied by Maitreya. It is significant that he is not mentioned. The stanza describes the physical appearance of Manjusri in glowing terms, i.e. the sage who is the burning poison of mental transgression, of delicate body and who attains indeed a splendour of body heightened by the brightness of golden ornaments. In the premises of the *vatā-dā-gē* it is very likely that there was an image of Manjusri, too, the aesthetic qualities of which enraptured the poet to such degree.

The Mahayanists seem to have attached much sanctity to the stupa as evidenced by the eulogistic account. The Mahayanist *Śikṣāsamuccaya* of Santideva (695-730), refers to the merits

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1. See footnotes in *E.Z.*, Vol. IV, No. 18.

gained by the adoration of stupas.<sup>1</sup> Ch. 33 of the *Samādhi-rāja-sūtra*, also a text of the same school, speaks of Ksemadatta Bodhisattva performing the worship of a stupa in order to engender a better and stronger faith in peoples' minds.<sup>2</sup> The stupa is regarded as the embodiment of the Buddhist universe with all the heavens as conceived in Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> The Dhyani-Buddhas are shown on the four sides of a stupa, generally at the base, facing the four cardinal points.<sup>4</sup> The palace of Vairocana, the third Dhyani-Buddha, is in the sanctum of the stupa where he is the master of the whole temple and its contents so that, normally he is not represented outside the stupa.<sup>5</sup> The words "Girikaṇḍi-gatam Sugatam-aham-api pūjayāmi" refer to the Buddha image within the shrine. The presence of a hair relic could also be interpreted as the presence of the sage himself.

The merit gained by such a simple act as a eulogy of a stupa would in the opinion of this poet be sufficient to relieve the world of the miseries of existence. Of course, this ambition could be realised by attaining Buddhahood only, although this is not mentioned in the record. The suggestion is to such a state of mind and it is more Mahayanistic than otherwise.

### Mihintale—Triḱāyastava

An inscription engraved on a rock to the north of the Ambasthala-dāgāba at Mihintale contains, in lines 16-19, the *Triḱāyastava*.<sup>6</sup> Much of the inscription being effaced, lines 1-16 have not been deciphered. The remainder has been found to be identical with the three verses of the *Triḱāyastava* restored from the Chinese by Sylvan Levi and edited by Baron A von Stael Holstein. The whole epigraph is in Sanskrit verse but, being fragmentary, a connected reading of lines 1-16 has not been possible.

The script has affinities with the Pallava Grantha of south India and the Tiriya rock inscription.<sup>7</sup> Hence the date assigned is the same as the last named i.e. 7-8 centuries.

The Triḱāya is a developed Mahayana doctrine relating to the three bodies of the Buddha, i.e. Dharmmakāya, Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya. It is comparable to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Dharmmakāya (the body of the Law) is the essence of all the Buddhas and is described as the one permanent reality underlying all phenomena. Sambhogakāya (the body of bliss) is the radiant and superhuman form in which the Buddhas appear

1. Ch. 4, pp. 94-95.

2. *G.M.*, Vol. II, pt. III, ch. 33

3. *I.B.I.*, p. 32.

4. *ibid.* p. 48.

5. *ibid.* p. 53.

6. *E.Ḷ.*, Vol. IV, pp. 242-246 and  
*C.Ḷ.S.C.*, Vol. II, pp. 42-43.

7. *E.Ḷ.*, IV., pp. 151-160.

in their paradises, or when otherwise manifesting themselves in celestial splendour. The *Nirmāṇakāya* (the body of the transformation) is the human form of Sakyamuni. *Dharmmakāya* may perhaps be equivalent to *Dharmmadhātu* and, if so, it is not unknown in the Pali literature in the sense of the 'eternal truth',<sup>1</sup> but the other two terms are decidedly Mahayanist in the sense in which they are used. Lines 16–19 of this record consist of the *Trikāyastava* (i.e., eulogy on the three *kāyas* of the Buddha) in three Sanskrit stanzas in the Śragdharā metre. The Chinese and Tibetan texts of this hymn have helped this part of the record to be deciphered.

The text has been found to be more in accord with the Tibetan manuscript than with the Chinese, except with regard to orthography regarding which the inscription is more reliable. The Chinese text contains four verses, the Tibetan manuscript and the inscription only three.

Before the record comes to the *Trikāyastava* it is also in Sanskrit verse (most probably a religious hymn) but no connected reading could be made out. The end of the 19th line and the last line contain some stanzas of the *śloka* metre which probably refer to the author of the record ("Bodhisattva guṇākarah", mine of Bodhisattva virtues). It will be noted that the ideal of the Bodhisattva has been extolled and that it seems to refer also to his religious aspirations. We have shown that some of the epigraphs referred to by us end in the usual way of transferring the merit gained to all sentient beings in order that they be relieved of the miseries of existence. The author appears to have been a Buddhist monk who aspired to Buddhahood (reading of *Paranavitana*: *bhikṣurb-Bodhisattva-guṇākarah*). It will thus be noted that (a) the ideal of the Bodhisattva has been extolled (b) *Trikāya* of the Buddha is eulogised (c) the language used is Sanskrit. Thus the conclusion is that the author subscribed to the Mahayanist creed.

### Mihintale—Iṅdikaṭusāya Copper Plaques

These plaques were found scattered among the loose bricks at the time of conserving Iṅdikaṭusāya in 1923. They number ninety-one and contain extracts from Sanskrit Mahayanist Buddhist texts.<sup>2</sup>

Forty-five of these are short, agreeing with corresponding passages in the *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* with some variations in reading, due to variant readings of manuscripts of the same work and copyists' errors. The divergences are greater when

1. *Dīgha Nikāya*, Vol. II; p. 8 and *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 396.

2. *E.Z.*, Vol. III, pp. 199–212; and Vol. IV, pp. 238–242.

compared with the longer version of the *Prajñāpāramitā* called the *Śatasāhasrikā*. At times the agreement is greater with the longer version of this text than with the shorter *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā*. Some names of the Bodhisattvas appearing in these fragments are known to occur in the *Saddharmmapuṇḍarīka* as well as in the longer version of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Hence it has been assumed that the corresponding forms in the shorter version of the text which occur with divergences are due to copyists' errors. In summing up, Paranavitana has concluded that the texts of these inscriptions were taken from a redaction shorter than the *Śatasāhasrikā* and that in general they agree with the version named *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā*.

The inscriptions contain names of Bodhisattvas, i.e. Prathavāha Naradatta, Subhagupta, Indradatta, Suvikrāntavikramin, Nityodyukta and the Buddhas (Tathāgatas) Ratnākara, Śākyamuni and Aśokaśrī and the relevant passages in the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript have been identified. The other passages such as "dhūpa gandha-mālya-vilepana-cūrṇa" etc. have no bearing on our study except for the fact that they are extracts from the Mahayanist text.

Sixteen of the plaques bear inscriptions containing extracts from the Mahayana scripture called the *Kāśyapa-parivarta*. The records were compared with the text of this scripture edited by Baron A. von Stael Holstein from a manuscript found near Khotan. This text embodies a discourse delivered by the Buddha to Kasyapa, one of his chief disciples. The Khotan manuscript and our plaques are full of errors which Paranavitana discussed in the introductory remarks.

It has been found that the extracts from the Mahayanist text are from passages far removed from each other, while those identical with the *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* were drawn from a number of contiguous passages. It has not been the intention of the builders of the stupa to enshrine a complete text engraved on copper. Just as a small particle of bone from the funeral pyre of the Buddha would represent his *Nirmāṇa-kāya* (*Rūpa-kāya*); thus small fragments of the texts inscribed on plaques would have the same relationship to his *Dharmma-kāya*.

The fact that these plaques were found deposited within a stupa of the Mahayanists proves that in the eighth or ninth century, the texts *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and *Kāśyapa-parivartta* were held in high esteem by the Buddhists of that sect. Within the stupa itself were found fragments of bones—most likely body relics of the Buddha—and other objects such as coins, gold wire, beads of cornelian and a copper ear-ring. The practice of enshrining inscribed plaques was evident at the Mahayanist Vijayarama-

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stupa. While those found at Iṅḍikaṭusāya are extracts from Mahayana texts, the plaques from Vijayarama were inscribed with *mantras* addressed to Mahayanist deities. It has been suggested that such copper tablets may be the same as the Dharmmadhātu mentioned in the 15th century *Saddharmmaratnākara*.<sup>1</sup> The text *Prajñāpāramitā* itself endorses the practice of substituting Dharmmadhātu for *śārīrika-dhātu* (body relics of the Master) as an act conferring greater merit. In ch. 3 of the *Aṣṭa-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* occurs a dialogue between the Buddha and Sakra, wherein it has been agreed that the Buddhahood itself is attained by training in the *Prajñāpāramitā* and that more merit is acquired by honouring the written word of this text than by the worshipping of the body relics of the Master.

### Vijayarama Copper Plaques

In the course of excavating the stupa at the Vijayarama monastery, Bell came across 13 copper plaques with inscriptions<sup>2</sup> on them. These were found in the debris which filled the relic chamber of the stupa and were left by the treasure-hunters who had despoiled the chamber of its valuables, the plaques being thrown into the debris as they were of no value to them. One of these plaques contains the Buddhist creed *Ye dharmmā hetu prabhavā* etc. and the rest are *mantras* addressed to Dhyani-Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and to the Tantric goddess Tara.

These plaques are of copper and contain excellently preserved inscriptions in Sinhalese characters of about the 9th century which have been published by Bell (together with plates). It is from the evidence furnished by the script of these (independent of a study of art and architecture) that the age and character of the Vijayarama monastery was fixed with a certain exactness. Nos. 1-9 measure 2-1/16 ins. (length) by 1-7/8 ins. (breadth) by 1/32 ins. (thickness). Each of Nos. 10-13 similarly measures 2-1/8 ins. by 1 inch by 1/32 ins.

The script resembles closely that of the pillar and slab inscriptions of the 9th century. The language is mostly ungrammatical Sanskrit mixed up with mystic syllables so often found in Tantric works such as the *Sādhanamālā*. Plaque No. 1 alone, which contains the Buddhist creed *Ye dharmmā hetu prabhavā*, etc., is in Pali, and the reason for the preference of this language which is decidedly the language of the scriptures of the Sravakayana

1. *C.J.S.C.*, Vol. II, p. 44; *Sdr.*, p. 333.

2. *A.S.C.*, 6th Progress Report, Plates XX and XXI.

See also below Plates numbered 35 and 36.

requires examination. Bell was not quite confident about his readings of the texts or the translations and added that these could be revised. His text is given below:—

**Plaque No. 1**

Ye dhamma hetuppa-  
bhavā tesam̐ hetum̐ tathā-  
gata āha tassa ca  
yo nirodho evam̐  
vādī mahā samaṇoti

**Plaque No. 4**

Namo Gagana Buddhhe  
tathāgatāyārha(te)  
samyaksambuddhāya (ta)-  
-dyathā Buddhhe Buddhhe  
Buddhe (nirmala svāhā)

**Plaque No. 6**

Pratama Ākāśa  
garbbhāya bo-  
dhisatvāya ma-  
-hāsātvaṃ ma-  
-hā kāruṇika

**Plaque No. 8**

Kiliki dhiri dhi-  
-ri huru huru Vai-  
rocana garbbha sa-  
-ñcitāgasthāryākā-  
-sa garbbha mahā ka-  
(-ruṇika)

**Plaques Nos. 10 & 11**

Santi dharmmā santi  
dharmmāṇam̐ maharahāḥ

**Plaques Nos. 2 & 3**

Namaśśikhine tathā-  
gatāyārha te samya-  
ksambuddhāya tadyathā  
Śikhi Śikhi Śikhi  
nirmala svāhā

**Plaque No. 5**

Ākāśagarbbha  
mahā kāruṇi(ka)  
rairaya agtam̐ mama  
Buddha viṣaya cara  
cari ciri (ti)ri svāhā

**Plaque No. 7**

Marmā caraṇāni sa-  
-rvva cāyāsa  
sarvva dukkhāna  
panaya nraṭa nraṭa  
dhrāṭa dhrāṭa taṭa

**Plaque No. 9**

Huru huru Vairo-  
-canagarbbha sañcitā--  
-gasthāryākāśa-  
-garbbha mahā  
kāruṇikā ha

**Plaques Nos. 12 & 13**

Om̐ Tāre tuntā-  
-re ture svāhā

The texts in Nos. 10 and 11 are identical and there is nothing particularly Mahayanistic in them. No. 3 has been addressed to the Buddha Sikhin and is concluded with the usual syllable “svāhā”. No. 4 is an invocation to Gagana-Buddha Tathagata. Gaganagañja is a Bodhisattva who has been described in Tantric works, and the Gagana-Buddha to whom plaque No. 4 is addressed was probably a Buddha who was held in deep veneration by the

Vajrayana sect of the Mahayanists. "Gagana" is the same as "ākāśa" (sky). The *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* notes that Gaganagarbha is synonymous with Ākāśagarbha, the central Bodhisattva in the court of space in the *garbhadhātu* group.<sup>1</sup> He is the guardian of the treasury of all wisdom and achievement; his powers extend to the five directions of space; five forms of him are portrayed under different names; he is also identified with the dawn (Aruṇa i.e. Venus) and Vairocana is the body which fills space. Bell conjectured that the reference was to the Buddha Kanakamuni, the one but the last who preceded Gautama Buddha. Nos. 5, 6, 8, 9 were addressed to the Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha. The mystic syllables *cara, cari, ciri, tiri, nraṭa, dhraṭa, taṭa, kili, dhiri* and *huru* which are found in *dhāraṇīs* (mystic incantations) recorded in Tantric literature, are also to be found in these plaques.

Of these five invocations, only one (plaque No. 5) ends with the syllables "svāhā". Plaques (Nos. 12 and 13) contain an invocation to Tara (Om̐ Tāre tuntāre ture svāhā) and is one which is common in such Tantric works as the *Sādhanamālā*. It is also said to be a household prayer in such countries like Tibet and Nepal.

*Ye dharmmā hetu prabhavā* etc. is common to both Mahayana and Sravakayana but is more often used by the Mahayanists and is also the concluding stanza in one of the most venerated of the Mahayana texts — the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.<sup>2</sup> Invocations to Buddhas Sikhin and Gagana may be referred to as a tendency of the Mahayanists and an analysis of the phraseology of the two inscriptions ending in "svāhā" may confirm this conjecture. Sikhin is one of the seven mortal Buddhas (mānuṣī-Buddhas) of the Mahayanists and Gagana Buddha is unknown to the Theravada.<sup>3</sup>

Numerous are the Bodhisattvas of the Mahayanists but of these Ākāśagarbha (Womb of Ether), who is not so popular, finds mention in these inscriptions. Of the five plaques numbered 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, the name occurs in four. It is possible that No. 7 is also a continuation of the invocation in plaque No. 6. Ākāśagarbha is also known by the name Khagarbha ("kha" and "ākāśa" being synonymous) and the Bodhisattva is referred to as living in the womb of the sky. The *Niṣpannayogāvalī* and the *Sādhanamālā* both describe him.<sup>4</sup> Of the 108 forms of Avalokitesvara, the 49th aspect is referred to as Ākāśagarbha-Lokeśvara.

The inscription on plaque No. 8 refers to the deity as being associated with the Dhyani-Buddha Vairocana, regarded (by the Buddhists of Nepal) as the oldest and the first of the Dhyani-

1. p. 390 a.

2. *S.P.P.S.*, p. 129

3. *I.B.I.*, p. 76.

4. *N.S.P.*, p. 58; *Sdh.*, p. 49.



Buddhas, with his residence in the sanctum of a stupa.<sup>1</sup> Neither the *Sādhnamālā* nor the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* makes any reference to an association of Ākāśagarbha with Vairocana, but since many of the Tantric works are now lost, it is not possible to be certain that it was not so and thus exclude the possibility of such a relationship.

Goddess Tara, invoked in plaques (Nos. 12 and 13) and who has gained much popularity among the Mahayanists, was known in Ceylon in the 8-9th centuries. Her worship was surviving in Ceylon in the 14th century.<sup>2</sup> This is the earliest known instance where Tara is mentioned in a document so far brought to light in Ceylon.

It is not possible to determine whether these inscriptions (with the exception of Nos. 1, 10-13) are extracts from Mahayanist texts.

### **Mihintale—Gold Sheet from Kaṭusāya**

In excavating the ruined stupa near the Iṅdikaṭusāya (generally referred to as Kaṭusāya) A. H. Longhurst discovered a thin gold scroll (5-1/2 ins. x 5/8 ins.) with an inscription containing four lines of writing in Sinhalese characters of the 9th century.<sup>3</sup> The well-known Pali verse (with certain Sanskriticisms) “Ye dhammā hetuppa-bhavā” etc. was found inscribed on it. It is followed by a commentary to the verse in corrupt Sanskrit and the donor’s wish embodied (in Sinhalese) that he may be enabled to save all sentient beings.

It was discovered within a Mahayanist stupa. Hence there is reason for regarding it as a document belonging to that school.

### **Copper Plaque from Pabalu-Vehera, Polonnaruva**

At the excavations at Pabalu-vehera, Polonnaruva, there was discovered a small copper plaque (measuring 1-5/8 ins. x 11/16 ins.) containing two lines of writing in Sinhalese script of the 9th or 10th century.<sup>4</sup> The writing is weathered but has been read as (1) *Om maṇipa* (2) *(dme) sv(o)sti*.

From the phraseology it will be noticed that this is a spell, a variant form of one of the most well known *mantras* of Tantric Buddhists. It is known that Buddhists in Tibet and Nepal chant it daily as “Om Maṇi-padme hūm”. The *bījākṣara* ‘hūm’ has been substituted by the auspicious word “svasti”. There are many interpretations given to the meaning and character of this spell but the generally accepted conclusion is that it is an invocation addressed to the Tantric goddess Tara (Maṇipadma), whose cult was known in Ceylon about the 9th or 10th century.<sup>5</sup>

1. *I.B.I.*, p. 53.

2. *T.S.*, v. 127.

3. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1937, p. 11 and 1938, p. 6.

4. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1937, p. 11.

5. *J.R.A.S.*, 1897.

## Anuradhapura—Slab from Abhayagiriya

The slab from the Northern-dāgāba area is written in Magadha Nagari of about the 9th century.<sup>1</sup> The record, which is in Sanskrit contains rules regarding the administration of a Buddhist monastery, and there is nothing particularly Mahayanistic in them. The introductory part, which was on a different slab, is missing and it is therefore not possible to ascertain the Mahayanistic character of the document.

The findspot, identified as Kapārārāma, has yielded another Sanskrit inscription which has been assigned by Paranavitana to the latter half of the tenth century. The inmates of this monastery appear to have held views different from those of the orthodox sect, as suggested by the use of the Nagari script and the Sanskrit language in their epigraphs. Lines 10-11 of the 9th century inscription set down that this monastery may be taken up as the abode by those monks who were ordained at other monasteries but who had given up association with such institutions. Line No. 13 says that those monks who maintain friendly relations with other viharas are debarred from residence in it. The rule has also been laid down in line No. 33 that the monastery was for the residence of 100 monks of the four *nikāyas*, every twenty-five of whom should be from each of the four *nikāyas*. Therefore it appears that it was a home of refuge for dissenting monks. |

The Maha-vihara, Abhayagiri-vihara (with Jetavana as its headquarters) and Dakkhina-vihara (Sagaliya school) formed the three sects into which the Buddhist ecclesiastical set-up in Ceylon was divided up to the 12th century. The fourth sect referred to in this inscription appears to have been different from the three mentioned above. It is likely that the inmates of the Kapārārāma monastery, attached importance to the Bodhisattva cult, for in the Sanskrit inscription of Saṃghanadin-sthavira of the 10th century, an allusion has been made to this ideal.<sup>2</sup> The language and script used by these monks are not in accord with the established traditions of the Mahavihara. Hence the epigraph may be regarded as a document of a school which differed from the Theravada tradition.

## Copper Plate from Abhayagiri-Dagaba

The Pali verse from the Vaṭṭaka-jātaka inscribed<sup>3</sup> on a copper plate and found at the Abhayagiri-dāgāba (the real Jetavana) is in the North-Eastern Nagari of about the second half of the 10th

1. *E.Ā.*, Vol. I, pp. 1-9.

2. *E.Ā.*, Vol. V, p. 169, n.4.

3. *ibid.* Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 39-40; Vol. III, No. 16, pp. 169-171; *C.Ā.S.C.*, p. 46.

century. This verse was also found inscribed in Sinhalese characters of about the 12th century on the underside of a covering slab within the *garbha* of the Dedigama-dāgāba. The script in the copper plate resembles that of the Badal pillar inscription of Narayanapala.<sup>1</sup> It could be a votive offering of a Buddhist pilgrim or charm against fire. There is nothing particularly Mahayanistic about the contents of the document but the script was the one favoured by the Mahayanists. Hence it may be taken as a document belonging to that school.

### Mihintale—Rajagirilenakanda Inscription

An epigraph from Rajagirilenakanda, Mihintale, also written in Nagari of the 9th century, has defied all attempts at decipherment.<sup>2</sup> Parānavitana has identified the concluding part of the record as embodying ‘Ye dharmmā hetu prabhavā’ etc. In the 9th and 10th centuries, Mihintale was much under Mahayanist influence, as attested by the monuments at the spot, both architectural and epigraphical. It may, therefore, not be unreasonable to assume that this inscription was also a Mahayanist record.

### Anuradhapura Copper Plate (now in Colombo Museum)

Parānavitana refers to a copper-plate inscription from Anuradhapura (now in the Colombo Museum) containing an inscription in Nagari characters of about the 9th century.<sup>3</sup> The reading tentatively offered by him is “Om vajratikṣa (?) raṁ” and a footnote has been added that “vajratikṣa” could also be read as “vajranikṣa”.

An inscription on a Nepalese *vajra*, published by Poussin and F. W. Thomas, is addressed to a Tantric deity named Vajratikṣṇa.<sup>4</sup> The text is as follows:—

(a)

Om vajratikṣṇa dukkhacheda prajñājñāna-mūrtaye jñānakāya  
vāgīśvara Arapacanāya te namah

(b)

Except for the omission of the cerebral ‘ṅ’ in our inscription, both names appear to be identical. In the Nepalese inscription Vajratikṣṇa is used as an adjective qualifying Arapacana, a well known epithet of Manjusri. On this analogy, there is reason to assume that our inscription was also addressed to this Bodhisattva.

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II, No. 10.

2. *C. J. S. C.*, Vol. II, p. 47.

3. *C. J. S. C.*, Vol. II, pp. 46-47.

4. *J. R. A. S.* (1916), p. 1233.

The *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* informs us that Vajrayakṣa is a form emanating from the Dhyani-Buddha Amoghasiddhi.<sup>1</sup> Vajrayakṣa has again been described as the fierce guardian of the north in the region of Amoghasiddhi or Sakyamuni and is also styled the Bodhisattva with fangs.<sup>2</sup> Assuming that Vajratikṣa or Vajranikṣa here is a scribal error for Vajrayakṣa (who probably was a Tantric deity as his name suggests), there is also reason to suppose that it was Vajrayakṣa who was thus addressed by a *mantra*.

### Clay Votive Tablets

There are a number of clay votive tablets found in different localities preserved in the Museums at Colombo and Kandy.<sup>3</sup> It is known that there are quite a number of these with private collectors. It is said that some tablets from Ceylon are exhibited at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. Those in the Colombo Museum were collected from Moneragala, Tangalla and Dumbara in the Uva, Southern and Central Provinces respectively. These contain inscriptions written in Nagari about the 9-10th centuries. Parnavitana has identified "Ye dharmmā" etc. in seven of these tablets and the words (1) "Namo bhagavate" (2) "ha pa ya para para svāhā" in three of them. The latter are the concluding words of a Tantric charm.

Others bear longer inscriptions but owing to the minuteness of the letters and the wearing away, they have escaped decipherment. One of these is fairly well preserved. It contains a figure of the Buddha in the *vajrāsana* attitude within an arched shrine with a high pinnacle. Twenty-four miniature stupas are arranged around this shrine. *Ye dharmmā* etc. is inscribed in Nagari in three lines below the throne of the Buddha. This tablet may be compared with that reproduced by Cunningham in his Report for 1871-72. In our tablet the number of stupas is smaller and no bodhi-tree is shown. It has already been noticed in ch. 3 that the sculptures from Panduvasnuvara, Seruvila and Mahiyangana-dāgāba etc. depict the Buddha in *vajrāsana*. On the back of the last two named sculptures is the Buddhist creed inscribed in Nagari. An interesting point about the clay votive tablet is that it contains an inscription in Sinhalese characters of the 9th century.

Parnavitana himself admits that his reading conveys no sense. The inscriptions were engraved before the tablets were fired. The Sinhalese characters referred to attest to their local origin. The opinion expressed by Foucher is that these tablets were mementoes brought by pilgrims to the chief centres of worship in India.<sup>4</sup> As most of them are alike, it is possible that they are

1. p. 120.  
2. *ibid*, p. 281.

3. *C. J. S. C.*, Vol. II, pp. 47-48.  
4. *C. J. S. C.*, Vol. II, pp. 47-48.

to be picked up on all Buddhist sites including the Far East. Pilgrims to Buddha-Gaya and other sacred Buddhist sites in India were probably responsible for introducing them into Ceylon, but as Sinhalese inscriptions have also been noticed on them, it is likely that in course of time they were produced locally as well. Moulds could have been either imported or locally manufactured. The Nagari characters on them are of the North-Eastern variety and the mystic syllables "svāhā" are common in Tantric works. As such it appears reasonable to conclude that these too are relics bequeathed to us by the Mahayanists of Ceylon.

### **Dhāraṇī Stones from Abhayagiriya**

Eight granite tablets (placed on a rectangular platform) were found buried at a spot to the south east of the Northern Dagoba (ancient Abhayagiriya) and these contain Tantric mystic formulas inscribed on them in North-Eastern Nagari of about the 9th century.<sup>1</sup> The texts not having been published an attempt is made to read them from estampages and by checking with the tablets, now preserved in the Anuradhapura Museum.

The script agrees closely with the inscriptions of the Palas of Bengal of about the 9th century. Compare, for instance, the characters of Visnupad inscription and the Indian Museum image inscription of Narayanapala.<sup>2</sup> It is precisely this script which has been found on the clay votive tablets and the Seruvila sculpture previously mentioned. The region which formed the famous medieval university of Nalanda came under the dominion of the Pala dynasty which rose into prominence about the last half of the 8th century with the accession of Dharmmapala, the empire builder of the dynasty. These kings were patrons of Buddhism as it then prevailed in north-eastern India. A study of the monuments of the period has revealed that about this time Buddhism in Bengal was mixed with Brahmanic and Tantric ritual. The use of the Pala script in clay votive tablets and in these stone tablets points to cultural contacts with this part of India and Ceylon about the 9th century.

Dhāraṇīs (Skt. *dhṛ-dhara* meaning maintaining, preserving) are spells chiefly for personal use, as compared with *mantra* which are associated with religious services. Dhāraṇīs have again been described as magic formulas or mystic forms of prayer or spells of Tantric order, and often in Sanskrit. These were found in China as early as 3rd century. They form a portion of the dhāraṇī-piṭaka, made popular chiefly through the Yogacara (esoteric) school of

1. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1940-45, p. 41.

2. *M.A.S.B.*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Plates XXIV and XXXI.

Asanga.<sup>1</sup> In China, the latter school is represented by the Shingon sect and Vairocana is the chief figure of worship.<sup>2</sup> Amoghavajra (circa 733) became the effective propagator of the Yogacara school in China.

The 21st chapter of the *Saddharmmapuṇḍarīka* is devoted to the *dhāraṇīs* which have been described as spells to be committed to memory by those learning that text in order to avert dangers from demons, etc. This text is believed to be of very early origin and has been dated (circa) 1st cent. A.C. An example of a *dhāraṇī* occurring in the chapter is<sup>3</sup> “aṭṭe taṭṭe naṭṭe vanatṭe anade naḍi kunāḍi svāhā”. These may be compared with the *parittas* of the followers of the Sravakayana which are considered as bestowing protection. The *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* was later abridged to form a *dhāraṇī* called *Alpākṣaraprajñāpāramitā*. The Buddha is said to have taught *dhāraṇīs* to the Bodhisattvas as narrated in the *Mahāsannipāta-Ratnaketu-Dhāraṇī-sūtra*<sup>4</sup>. The *Ekādaśamukham*, a small tract<sup>5</sup> in Sanskrit, contains eight *dhāraṇīs*. According to the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*, the Bodhisattvas have been exhorted to commit to memory the *dhāraṇīs*.<sup>6</sup> A Bodhisattva who studies the particular *sūtra* is said to obtain unlimited *dhāraṇī* knowledge<sup>7</sup>. These formulas normally begin with the mystic syllable “Om”, end with “svāhā” and contain mystic syllables which cannot be translated.

The eight *dhāraṇī* inscriptions discovered near the Northern-dāgāba seem to have been composed by the Vajrayanists who, as attested by a study of the monuments of the 8-10th centuries, appear to have commanded a considerable following in Ceylon. These, it appears, were addressed to the stupa in which were deposited the body relics of the Buddha. The words “stūpa, tathāgata dhātu, dhāraṇī, dharmmacakra-pravarttana, Vajrabodhi” are to be met with and such terms indicate the character of the inscriptions. These are as usual in Sanskrit but mostly ungrammatical.

( i )

The tablet measures 6-1/2 ins. by 4-1/2 ins. and is 3 ins in thickness. The letters are boldly engraved and are quite clear except for one or two at the beginning. The inscription runs into five lines of writing<sup>8</sup>.

1. *D.C.B.T.*, p. 284.
2. *ibid.* p. 335.
3. *S.B.E.*, Vol. XXI, ch. 21.
4. *G.M.*, Vol. IV, pp. 114-116.
5. *ibid.* Vol. I, pp. 39-40.
6. *ibid.* Vol. II, pt. II, ch. 25.
7. *ibid.* ch. 31.
8. See below Plate No. 37 (e).

**Text**

1. hūṃ svāhā // Samayādhiṣṭhite
2. svāhā // Sarvva Tathāgata hrda-
3. -ya dhātu mudre svāhā // Supratiṣṭhi-
4. -ta stūpe sarvva Tathāgatādhiṣṭhite
5. huru huru hūṃ hūṃ svāhā // Om sarvva

( ii )

The tablet contains eight lines of writing and the letters are boldly engraved.<sup>1</sup> The first four characters of the first line are not well preserved but on the whole the reading is satisfactory. The tablet measures 10 ins. in length, 8 ins. in breadth and is 2-3/4 ins. in thickness.

**Text**

1. me sarvvāvaraṇāni sarvva pāpa vigate hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ  
huru huru sphu-
2. -ru sphuru sarvva śoka vigate sarvva Tathāgata hrdaya  
vajriṇi
3. sambhara sambha\* sarvva Tathāgatāguhya dhāraṇi mudre  
Buddhe subu-
4. -ddhe sarvva Tathāgatādhiṣṭhite dhātu mudre svāhā //  
Samayādhiṣṭhi-
5. -te svāhā // Sarvva Tathāgata hrdaya dhātu mudre svāhā //  
Supratiṣṭhita
6. stūpe sarvva Tathāgatādhiṣṭhite huru huru hūṃ hūṃ svāhā //  
Om sarvva Ta-
7. -thāgatoṣṇiṣa dhātu mudre sarvva Tathāgata dhātu bhūṣitā-
8. -dhiṣṭhite svāhā // Hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ phaṭ svāhā //

( iii )

The tablet is 11-1/4 ins. in length, 8 ins. in breadth and 2-1/2 ins. in thickness. The inscription, which runs into eight lines<sup>2</sup> of writing, has the last line badly worn out.

**Text**

1. śarvva śoke † vigate sarvva Tathāgata hrdaya vajri-
2. -ṇi sambhara sambhara sarvva Tathāgatā guhya dhāraṇi
3. mudre Buddhe subuddhe sarvva Tathāgatādhiṣṭhita dhātu  
garbbhe svā-

\* Read "sambhara".

1. See below Plate No. 38 (b)

2. " " " " 38 (a)

+ Read śoka

4. -hā // Samayādhiṣṭhite svāhā // Sarvva Tathāgata hr̥daya dhā-
5. -tu mudre svāhā // Supratiṣṭhita stūpe sarvva Tathāgatādhiṣṭhite
6. huru huru hūm hūm svāhā // Om̐ sarvva Tathāgatoṣṇīṣa dhātu mu-
7. -dre sarvva Tathāgata dhātu bhūṣitādhiṣṭhite svāhā // Hūm hūm
8. (huru huru) phaṭ phaṭ svāhā // ... ..

( iv )

The tablet which is fairly large in comparison with the others measures 15 ins. in length, 7-1/2 ins. in breadth and is 3-1/2 ins. in thickness. It contains seven lines of writing<sup>1</sup> and is one of the best preserved. The first letter of the first line is not very clear. The inscription forms the first part of a *dhāraṇī* which is continued in the next tablet given below.

### Text

1. ...Namas=traiyadhvikānām sarvva Tathāgatānām om̐ bhuvibhuvana dhare dadha...
2. cala cala dhara dhara sarvva Tathāgata dhātu dhare padmam=bhavatu jaya dhare
3. vimale smara smara sarvva Tathāgata dharmmacakra-pravarttana vajrabodhi
4. maṇḍālankārālam̐kr̥te sarvva Tathāgatādhiṣṭhite bodhaya bodha-
5. -ni bodhani budhya budhya sambodhani sambodhani cala cala cala-
6. -ntu me sarvv=āvaraṇāni sarvva pāpa vigate hūm hūm hūm hūm huru
7. huru sphuru sphuru sarvva stoka\* vigate sarvva Tathāgata hr̥-

( v )

This tablet is the largest and measures 16 ins. in length, 7 ins. in breadth and is 3-1/2 ins. in thickness. The writing which is clear and on the whole very satisfactorily preserved<sup>2</sup> is a continuation of the *dhāraṇī* (No. iv). These two tablets therefore contain one complete *dhāraṇī*.

\*Read "śoka".

1. See below Plate No. 38(c).
2. ,, ,, ,, ,, 39(a).



**Text**

1. -daya vajriṇi sambhara sambhara sarvva Tathāgataguhyadhāraṇī mudre Buddhē subuddhe sa-
2. -rvva Tathāgatādhiṣṭhitadhātu mudre svāhā // Samayādhiṣṭhite svāhā // Sarvva Tathāgata
3. hrdayadhātu mudre svāhā // Supratiṣṭhita stūpe sarvva Tathāgatādhiṣṭhite huru hu-
4. -ru hūm hūm svāhā // Om sarvva Tathāgatoṣṇīṣa dhātu mudre sarvva Tathāga-
5. -tadhātubhūṣitādhiṣṭhite svāhā // Hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ svāhā //

( vi )

The tablet is 7 ins. long, 4-1/2 ins. wide and 3-1/2 ins. in thickness and the letters are incised on both sides. One side is effaced but the writing on the other side is clear<sup>1</sup>.

**Obverse—Text**

1. hūm // Om vajra guhya pūjābhiṣeka
2. pūjā samaye sarvva pūjā pravarttaya
3. hūm // Om vajra guhya pāna pūjā samaye
4. sarvva pūjā pravarttaya hūm // Om vajra guhya nr-
5. -tya pūjā samaye sarvva pūjā pravarttaya
6. hūm // Śrī // Om vajra dhūpa hūm // Om vajra puṣpa

**Reverse—Text**

1. hūm // Om vajra dīpa hūm // Om vajra gandha hūm //
2. Om vajra ... .. hūm // Om vajra ... hūm //
3. Om vajra ... .. hūm // Om vajra ... hūm //
4. ... ..

( vii )

The tablet measures 15 ins. in length, 7-1/2 ins. in breadth and 3 ins. in thickness. Compared with other tablets, the writing is not very clear but a connected reading of lines 1-5 is possible<sup>2</sup>. Line 6 is partly clear but the last line is totally obliterated. From the text it is possible to learn that it is a formula used by the Vajrayanists.

1. See plate No. 37 (a) and 37 (b).
2. See plate No. 38 (d).

## Text

1. Om guhya sarvva vajri hūm // Om guhya ratna vajri hūm //  
Om guhya dharmma vajri hūm // Om gu-
2. -hya dharmma vajri hūm // Om vajra guhya rati pūjā  
samaye sarvva pūjā pravarttaya hūm // Om
3. vajra guhya pūjābhiṣeka pūjā samaye sarvva pūjā pravarttaya  
hūm // Om vajra guhya dhā-
4. -tu pūjā samaye sarvva pūjā pravarttaya hūm // Om vajra  
guhya nr̥tya pūjā samaye sarvva pūjā
5. pravarttaya hūm // Śrī // Om vajra dhūpa hūm // Om vajra  
puṣpa hūm // Om vajra dīpa hūm // Om vajra ga-
6. -ndha hūm // Om vajra taila hūm // Om vajra ... hūm //  
Om vajra ... hūm //
7. ... ..

( viii )

This tablet measures 15 ins. by 7-1/2 ins. in length and breadth and is 3 ins. in thickness. It contains five lines of writing, the writing on its left part badly worn away<sup>1</sup>. The contents refer to the *uṣṇīṣa* relic of the Buddha. The last two lines contain “Ye dharmmā hetu prabhavā” etc. as found elsewhere besides being the concluding stanza in the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.<sup>2</sup>

## Text

1. ... .. svāhā // Om sarvva Tathāgatoṣṇīṣa dhātu mudre sa-
2. (-rvva Tathāgata dhātu) bhūṣitādhiṣṭhite sarvva sattvānām=  
āsā pāri pū-
3. (ri) ... .. hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ sarvva sattvānām=bhavantu
4. ... .. (Ye dharmmā) hetu prabhavā hetum teṣām Tathā-  
gatohyavadat
5. (Teṣām ca yo nirodhaḥ) evam vādī mahā śramaṇaḥ //

( ix )

On the narrow sides of some of these tablets have been engraved similar inscriptions but they are mostly fragmentary and weathered away. Of what is readable, the texts are given below. Some of these agree with certain lines in the texts of the inscriptions given above, i.e. the inscriptions in plate 37(c) and 37(h) are identical with corresponding passages in lines 1-3 in inscription on plate 38(a).<sup>3</sup> Some

1. See below Plate No. 39 (b).
2. *S.P.P.S.*, p. 129.
3. See text in tablet numbered (iii) above.

of the words in the inscription on plate 37(d) may be compared with the text of inscription on plate 38(d).<sup>1</sup> Inscriptions on plates numbered 37(f) and 37(g) are mostly effaced and no satisfactory reading is possible.

**Plate No. 37(c)—Text**

1. ... hṛdaya vajriṇi sambhara sa-
2. -mbhara sarvva Tathāgata guhya dhāraṇī
3. mudre Buddhe subuddhe sarvva Tathāgatā-
4. -dhiṣṭhita dhātu ga ... ..

**Plate No. 37(d)—Text**

1. hūṃ // Sarvva vajri hūṃ // Om guhya
2. -rma vajri hūṃ // Om guhya ...
3. hūṃ // rati pūja samaye
4. ... ..

**Plates No. 37(f) and 37(g)**

... ..

**Plates No. 37(h)—Text**

1. -gata hṛdaya vajriṇi sambhara sa-
2. -mbhara sarvva Tathāgata guhya dhāraṇī
3. mudre Buddhe subuddhe sarvva Tathāgatā-
4. -dhiṣṭhita dhātu ga ... ..

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1. See text in tablet numbered (vii) above.



## APPENDIX A

### TANTRIC INFLUENCE AT GAL-VIHARA, POLONNARUVA

Dr. P. E. E. FERNANDO of the University of Ceylon, in an article published in "University of Ceylon Review" (Vol. XVIII, Nos. 1 & 2, Jan. - Apr. 1960, pp. 50-66) has drawn attention to the peculiar iconographic characteristics in the sculptures at Gal-vihara (named Uttarārāma in the *Cv*), Polonnaruva. He has proposed that these sculptures as well as the monuments at Tantrimalai, suggest the influence of Tantric Buddhism in this island in the 12th century. In addition to iconographic aspects, he has attempted to prove by means of other literary and archaeological data that Tantrism was a living force in the reign of Parakramabahu I (1153-1186).

Our own investigation has led us into different conclusions. We shall first deal with the peculiar iconographic features in the sculptures at Gal-vihara and then analyse the evidence in the form of literary and archaeological data in the light in which we see them and make an attempt to see whether Tantric Buddhism existed in the period noted.

The sculptures at Gal-vihara are four in number. They consist of (a) a colossal image of Buddha seated on a *vajrāsana* in the *dhyāna mudrā* (b) sedent image of Buddha in the same pose and attended by two figures on either side (c) statue in standing position (believed by some scholars to be of Ananda, the chief attendant disciple of the Buddha) (d) gigantic recumbent statue of the Buddha.

In the opinion of Dr. Fernando the facial types in (b) and (c) recall to mind certain sculptures from Bihar and Bengal. He cites three examples<sup>1</sup> (i) standing Buddha dated in the third year of Surapala. In this instance the facial type appears to be quite different from (c) but it shows a remote resemblance to (b). The sculpture shows no folds in the drapery and on the whole it appears to be different from both our examples. (ii) Sculptured slab from Nalanda district. (This may be compared with the example from Panduvasnuvara) (ch.3). It appears that the facial type is not exactly similar to both our examples. The differences are greater when compared with that of (c) which shows a more flabby face. (iii) Buddha in *dharmma-cackra-mudrā*. The facial type here, too, is not quite similar. Robe and *uṣṇīṣa* show differences in details. With difficulty a remote resemblance to (b) may be sought for.

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1. *E.I.S.M.S.*, Plates II (c), XXIV (e) and XXVI (b).

With regard to the facial types in (a) and (d) Dr. Fernando refers also to three Chinese sculptures<sup>1</sup>. (i) Bodhisattva figure in stone. It appears that this facial type is typically Chinese. It has been dated in the middle of the 6th cent. It is not reasonable to call the types occurring in Gal-vihara sculptures as distinctly Chinese merely for the reason that some resemblances with Chinese varieties are noticeable. About this period, cultural contacts with Burma have been recorded in the chronicles<sup>2</sup>. It appears that there are Burmese influences in these facial types rather than Chinese. (ii) Stone reliefs indicating the Western Paradise. A seated Buddha is shown with right hand in *abhaya mudrā* and left hand placed on the lap. This figure may be compared with the Sarnath Buddha of the Gupta period.<sup>3</sup> (iii) Stone figure of Avalokitesvara of the T'ang dynasty (7th century). In this instance the face appears to be of a kind foreign to China. It is probable that north Indian influences had been at work here.

The examples quoted by Dr. Fernando are to support his contention that Chinese and Pala schools of art have influenced the execution of Galvihara sculptures. It appears however that they bear few similarities which may be identified with confidence. His aim in quoting these examples was to trace Tantric influence in the sculptures at Gal-vihara. We fail to notice how such a theory can be put forward from the examples he quotes. Remote resemblances there are, but these are due to the fact that a number of skilled craftsmen (as the *Cv.* records) were employed in this task<sup>4</sup>. They were probably drawn from various regions and their association with foreign traditions brought about these differences in details.

The technique of indicating the folds of the robe or other dress by ridges set off by the incision of two parallel grooves on the stone which found favour with the sculptors of the Gal-vihara sculptures and of the Polonnaruva period, has been cited as occurring in Pala sculptures of Bihar and Bengal of about the 8th century.

A study of the Buddha image in Ceylon would convince the student that this technique is found in various stages of development. Examples from Ruvanvālisāya, Anuradhapura, Medirigiriya and Colombo Museum show that the technique was known in Ceylon before the Gal-vihara sculptures were set up.<sup>5</sup> The Buddha image appeared in Ceylon at a very early date. Of the surviving examples, the standing Buddha from Maha-Iluppallama is probably the oldest.<sup>6</sup> In connection with our discussion it may be interesting to

1. *A.C.S.*, Plates XVII, XXII (Fig. 2) and XXX (Fig. 2).

2. *U.H.C.*, Vol. I, pt. II, p. 563.

3. *H.F.I.C.*, Plate 60 No. A.

4. Ch. 78, v. 76.

5. *A.A.I.*, Plate 137A; *B.I.C.*, Plate XII; *ibid.* Plate XVIII.

6. *U.H.C.*, Vol. I, pt. 1, Plate XI (b).

note the device designed to indicate the folds of the robe. Dr. Fernando himself admits that traces of the technique noticed in Gal-vihara sculptures, are noticeable in some of the early sculptures of Ceylon. He does not say how such a device appeared in Ceylon at so early a date. As to its employment in the 12th century, he speaks of Tantric influences being at work from the 8th century onwards. Such a conjecture does not lend itself to conviction.

### The seated Buddha statue

Dr. Fernando states that the larger sedent image in *dhyana-mudrā* at Gal-vihara indicates certain features which are not met with in sculptures earlier to it in date. These are as follows:—

1. The *viśva-vajra* has been carved in the centre of the dado of the *āsana*. Dr. Fernando cites a similar example from the Dacca Museum, namely the Buddha from Ujani<sup>1</sup>. In this instance the symbol is placed horizontally and it is a typical thunderbolt. In the Gal-vihara examples this appears as a symbol placed vertically and one might mistake it to be a flame like emblem or an ornamental device rather than a thunderbolt. The Indian icon differs considerably from this one. The former is a representation of the Buddha in the earth-touching attitude. Our example depicts the *dhyāna-mudra*. The *Sādhanamālā* says that the *vajra* should appear on the double lotus placed on the main *āsana*.<sup>2</sup> The example quoted is that found at Kurkihar in Bihar.<sup>3</sup> The *Sādhanamālā* contains developments in Buddhist iconography current in India about the 12th cent. Our sculptures are almost contemporaneous with this work and it is a matter for conjecture why some measure of agreement with the *sādhanas* is not found in the Polonnaruva examples, if the artist who executed them was influenced by Tantric iconography.

2. The *makara-toraṇa*, as admitted by Dr. Fernando, is not connected with east Indian forms. In his opinion it resembles a Jaina *makara-toraṇa* employed by sculptors of Mathura in an earlier period. There is therefore no Tantric influence with regard to that feature.

3. The highly decorative halo around the head of the Buddha has been compared with Pala motifs. Four examples (bearing similarities) are quoted. i.e. (i) Maitreya Bodhisattva—here the halo is decorative but it is unlike any found in Ceylon (ii) Lokanatha - part of a halo is shown (other part having disappeared in course of time) but it is very simple in form. Only three concentric lines have been

1. *I.B.B.S.D.*, Plate VIII.

2. *Sdh.*, Vol. I, p. 20.

3. *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1903/4. (Calcutta 1906), p. 216 and Plate LXII.

employed to indicate it (iii) stela at Jagdispur, near Nalanda, showing the Buddha in the earth touching attitude. The halo is simple and is shown by two concentric major bands. The outer one shows an ornamental pattern (iv) a sculptured slab showing the Buddha in the earth touching attitude. The halo is indicated by two concentric bands or semi-circles. The outer one contains a flame-like design<sup>1</sup>. A comparative study of these sculptures will reveal to the student that their resemblances with the Polonnaruva examples are remote.

4. The over-all pseudo-arch is referred to as having been influenced by Pala sculpture. Three similar examples are quoted.<sup>2</sup> (i) Lokesvara- a cursory glance will show that a decorative arch such as at Polonnaruva was not intended in this instance. Three large cusps are shown. It appears that in working out the details on stone such a feature had to be included for aesthetic purposes. Compare, for instance, a similar feature in a relief from Kanheri caves<sup>3</sup>. (ii) Khasarpana from Vikrampur - The same outline of the arch (as above) occurs here. (iii) Buddha in the attitude of delivering the first sermon after enlightenment. The number of cusps is greater but they open outwards. On the whole it appears to be similar to the Polonnaruva example but there are a number of differences with regard to details. It is therefore not safe to aver that east Indian influences have been at work in this instance.

5. Dr. Fernando states that the arrangement of *vimānas*, each containing a miniature Dhyani-Buddha around the head of the Buddha, is suggestive of Tantric practices. It is well known that Mahayanist Bodhisattvas normally carry an effigy of a Dhyani-Buddha in the head-dress. In the representation of Avalokitesvara at Weligama, four such effigies are to be noticed<sup>4</sup>. A Bodhisattva of the Mahayanist pantheon is normally assigned to a Dhyani-Buddha from whom the particular Bodhisattva is believed to emanate. A Buddha is above a Bodhisattva in rank and position and Buddhahood is the highest ideal of a Mahayanist. It is thus difficult to imagine that a Buddha should have around his head representations of the five Dhyani-Buddhas. As far as we are aware a sculpture containing such a feature has not been noticed elsewhere and the *Sādhanamālā* does not mention that the figure of a Buddha should have such characteristics.

Dr. Fernando's other conjectures are based on assumptions. In the Pudukottai Museum is a bronze sculpture of a Jain Tirthankara (standing) with a number of other figures in *dhyāna-mudrā*

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1. *E.I.S.M.S.*, Plates X (a), XI (b), XX, (a) XXII (b).
  2. *E.I.S.M.S.*, Plates XV (d), XXVI (d), XXXIX(d).
  3. *H.F.I.C.*, Plate 66.
  4. *C.7.S.C.*, Vol. II, Plate XXXIII. See also p. 60 above, ft.nt. 3.



ranged round him.<sup>1</sup> The sculpture is of the Chalukyan period and has been assigned to the 9-10th cent. The purpose of including such additional figures was perhaps to heighten the religious sentiments of the beholding pilgrim. In a relief at Ajanta, one notices a seated Buddha and ranged round him are a number of other Buddhas, some seated and some standing.<sup>2</sup> The sculpture is dated in the 6th cent. It is likely, that the intention of the sculptor was, the intensification of devotional feelings in the pilgrim. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the sculptors of Gal-vihara had a like aim.

6. Representations of the stupa in the sculpture have been compared with those discovered at Nagapattinam. Such a feature has also been noticed in stelae used by Tantrists of Bihar and Bengal.<sup>3</sup> It is well known that the stupa was (and is, even now) an object of worship among the Buddhists of both schools of Buddhism. Representations of the stupa on the head-dress of Boddhisattva Maitreya have been noticed in Ceylon as well as in other Buddhist countries. In a metal sculpture from Sirpur, Central India (9th cent), a stupa occurs on the canopy above the head of the Buddha, the purpose being to make the whole sculpture appear more holy.<sup>4</sup>

Cultural relations between Nagapattinam and Ceylon have been alluded to. This was the period of decadence of Buddhism in India. No new influences from north India had any effect on Ceylon Buddhism after the reign of Vijayabahu I<sup>5</sup> and the Buddhists of Ceylon began more and more to turn towards Further India in religious matters. There were considerable Buddhist communities at Kanchi and Nagapattinam in South India and frequent intercourse between the Buddhists of Ceylon and their co-religionists at these two places. The question to be asked is whether those Buddhists who emigrated to Ceylon in the reign of Parakramabahu I were Tantrists. In the 8th cent. Tantrism was a living force in Ceylon and about this time the Vajrayanist teacher, Vajrabodhi, arrived from the Pallava country on his way to China. We learn from the chronicles that Parakramabahu I was responsible for the unification of the Buddhist church and the elimination of undesirables from the Order. As such it is unlikely that the south Indian monks who arrived in Ceylon in his reign were Tantrists.

7&8. The base with mouldings surmounting the back slab in the centre and the shape of the back slab have been referred to as features occurring in Tantric stelae of the Pala period. The figure

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1. *H.F.I.C.*, Plate 139A.

2. *ibid.* Plate 68B.

3. *E.I.S.M.S.*, Plates II (c), III (c), V (a), VIII (c).

4. *H.F.I.C.*, Plate 112.

5. *U.H.C.*, Vol. I, Pt. II, p. 565.

of a Dhyani-Buddha has already been commented upon. With regard to the shape of the back slab, an example (bearing a similarity) from the Indian Museum, Calcutta has been referred to.<sup>1</sup> Since that sculpture does not conform to any of the known *sādhanas* it may be premature to say anything conclusively about it. The sculpture referred to is that of a Bodhisattva but our sculpture depicts the Buddha in *dhyāna-mudrā*. A similarity which one might notice in the shape of the back slab may be accidental. A similar shape in the slab is noticeable in a sculpture from Gandhara in which the Buddha is depicted among his disciples<sup>2</sup>. On such insignificant details it is untenable to trace Gandhara influences in Polonnaruva sculptures at so late a period as the 12th century. Furthermore it has been shown above that by this period, north Indian influences on Ceylon Buddhism had ceased.

By way of summarising, it may be noted that in the iconographic features present in this sculpture, Dr. Fernando has attempted to prove the influence of (a) Pala school of art in Bihar and Bengal (b) south Indian traditions current at Nagapattinam and (c) Jaina sculpture at Mathura. It also should be noted that the sculpture does not faithfully represent any particular *sādhana* given in the *Sādhanamālā*. The latter is almost contemporaneous with the Gal-vihara sculptures. (The earliest manuscript is dated in the Newari Era 285, which is equivalent to 1165 A.C., but the text embodies *sādhanas* which were already in vogue among the Tantric Buddhists.)<sup>3</sup> In the sculpture under discussion there are agreements, (to a certain extent) and disagreements with Tantric stelae. Hence the argument that the whole sculpture was meant to be a Tantric-maṇḍala needs caution.

Taking into consideration the foregoing, it will be clear that the aim of the Gal-vihara sculptors was not to create Tantric sculptures. There was no need for such a step since about this time Tantrism had ceased to be a living force in Ceylon. This will be clear in our discussion of the events of the reign of Parakramabahu I.

### Sculptures in Vijjadhara-guha

Vijjādharma-guhā is an excavated cave. The chief sculptured figure in it is a Buddha in *dhyāna-mudrā* as in the foregoing instance. The dado of the *āsana* contains figures of the *vajra* alternating with that of the lion. On the background is a *makara-toraṇa* with only one *makara* head on each side flanked by figures of *vyālas*. There is an oval shaped plain halo behind the head of the main figure. An underside of a *chatra* is carved above the head.

1. *E.I.S.M.S.*, Plate XV (d).
2. *A.S.I.S.*, Plate XIV, No. 60.
3. *I.B.I.*, p. 16.

On either side of the halo are two divine beings whose bodies are shown from the waist above. On either side of the main figure is a recessed pediment containing the figure of a standing fly-whisk bearer. The dressed back slab is semi-circular at the top. The *āsana* projects considerably, in contrast to those in Indian examples.

With regard to the four Māras, Dr. Fernando, relying on Bell's identification, assumes that the two figures on either side of the halo are representations of Brahma and Visnu.<sup>1</sup> If this identification is to be accepted, the question may be asked as to why the other two Māras (i.e. Siva and Indra) have not been represented. It must also be examined whether the identification already made by Bell is acceptable.

The *NSP* describes<sup>2</sup> Brahma as follows:— “On a swan appears Brahma of yellow colour with four arms. With the two principal hands carrying the rosary and the lotus, he displays the *añjali-mudrā*, and the two other hands carry the staff and the Kamaṇḍulu.” In this sculpture, the figure to the right of the Buddha has been taken to be Brahma. His two front hands are clasped in the attitude of worship. In the rear left hand is a lotus but the object in the rear right hand cannot be identified. The *NSP* describes Visnu as follows:— “On a Garuḍa there is Visnu with four arms. with the two principal hands carrying the *cakra* and the conch he displays the *añjali* on his head. With the two others he holds the *gadā* (mace) and the bow.”<sup>3</sup> Bell thought that the figure to the left of the halo is Visnu. The figure carries a conch and a *cakra* in the rear hands and the front hands are in the attitude of worship. In view of the foregoing, it will be noticed that there are difficulties in accepting Bell's identification.

The two flanking Bodhisattvas (as required by the *sādhanas*) have been replaced by fly-whisk bearers. Though they are invested with characteristics associated with Bodhisattvas such as the *upavīta*, they do not carry on their head-dresses their well-known identification symbols. Thus it will be seen that on the whole there is hardly anything distinctly Tantric about the sculpture and that it is in keeping with Theravada traditions.

### Tantrism in Ceylon

In the way of summarising his findings, Dr. Fernando writes further on the existence of Tantrism in Ceylon about the period 12th cent., when these sculptures were executed at the Gal-vihara. There is no doubt that Tantrism was introduced into Ceylon

1. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1907, p. 12.
2. *I.B.I.*, p. 363.
3. *ibid.*

about the 8th century during the reign of Sena I or Matvala-Sena and there is evidence to show that Tantrism existed in Ceylon even before, for Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, visited Ceylon early in the 8th century on their way to China and the latter had contributed towards the propagation of Tantrism in China, as Chinese documents inform us. In Ceylon he met a teacher named Samantabhadra who was probably a Tantrist and received instruction from him in Tantric rites.<sup>1</sup> He is also said to have sought and obtained scriptures of these esoteric doctrines. The visits of these Indian teachers to Ceylon and their studies in Tantric practices are sufficient evidence that Tantric schools of Buddhism flourished in Ceylon but this was during the closing stages of the Anuradhapura period.

The sculptures at Gal-vihara were set up in the reign of Parakramabahu I but whether he favoured the esoteric doctrines which were contrary to Theravada Buddhism is a matter requiring examination. The *Cv.* states that he caused a purification of the Order of Buddhist monks which had fallen into decay and united the three fraternities, the Mahavihara, Abhayagiri and Jetavana.<sup>2</sup> The chronicle also narrates the nature of the *saṅgha* at the time of the purification. Monks were in the habit of maintaining wives and children in the villages belonging to the community, a task which they considered as their one and only duty. Shamelessness had passed all bounds and the schism had lasted a long time. Monks of Abhayagiri and Jetavana, says the chronicle, gave out as Buddha's word, the *Vetulya-pitaka* and the like which were no words of the Buddha, and had turned away from religious duties. The chronicle describes the building of Uttarārāma, long after mentioning the purification of the Order.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note the words of the chronicler: "By breaking down the rock not far from the great thūpa, he, bringing into play every kind of skilled work, had three grottoes made by expert craftsmen, namely the Vijjadhara-grotto, the cave with the image in sitting posture and the grotto with the recumbent image." (Geiger). The exact words are:—*sabba kammāni dassetvā vijjādhara guhampī ca—iccevam tīṇi leṇāni kāresi dakkhatāruhi* (*Cv.* ch. 78. v. 76). Expert craftsmen were employed for the purpose of executing skilled work and they were probably drawn from all available sources—foreign as well as local so that in the execution of details such intricacies and peculiarities as those detailed could be expected. There is no doubt that if foreign artists were imported, they would have brought with them the traditions current in their homelands but as we have seen above, they did not, or were not allowed, to execute a sculpture which went contrary to Theravada traditions. Their art traditions and motifs appear to have been subject to the required local traditions.

1. *H.J.A.S.*, Vol. VIII, 1944-5, pp. 272-307.

2. Ch. 73, v. 11-22; ch. 78, v. 1-30.

3. Ch. 78, v. 74-76.

The *Cv.* records the building of a *dhāraṇī-ghara* for the recitation of magic incantations and a *maṇḍala-mandira* for listening to the birth stories of the great sage which were related by a teacher appointed for the purpose.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Fernando believes the *dhāraṇī-ghara* to be a house where the followers of Tantrism met to recite *dhāraṇīs*. But the *Cv.* states (73.71) *Brāhmaṇehi tato santim kāretum hemamandiram, parivattanattham mantānam manuññam-dhāraṇīgharam* (for the purpose of *santikamma*, i.e. ceremonies of expiation, and recitation of *mantras* by the Brahmins (he built respectively a golden house and a *dhāraṇī-ghara*). It should be noted that in this instance Brahmins are mentioned. It was about this time that Hindu beliefs and practices became absorbed into Buddhism. It is said that the *dhāraṇī-ghara* was built for the recitation of *mantras*. The Brahmins referred to could have been followers of Hinduism. A study of Ceylon history would reveal that Brahminism prevailed in Ceylon side by side with Buddhism and Buddhist kings showed an attitude of tolerance to such cults. Brahminism, unlike Mahayanism, was rarely a cult which suffered persecution. Parakramabahu I ascended the throne less than a century after the expulsion of Colas by Vijayabahu I. The Colas were Hindus during whose occupation shrines for the worship of Hindu deities were erected. There is no doubt that their religion and its associated beliefs and rites had a hold on the populace. Hindus also formed a part of the population of Ceylon from very early times. About the time of Parakramabahu I, Hinduism in India was much given to Tantric ritual and the existence of Brahmins (Hindu priests) in Ceylon supports the argument that part of the population of this land was not Buddhist. Parakramabahu I had to satisfy the spiritual needs of such communities and show an interest in their well-being.

The *maṇḍala-mandira* said to have been built by the king for the purpose of listening to the birth-stories of the Buddha, related by a teacher appointed for the purpose, appears to have been a circular house. It is apparent that the term suggests something architectural. Dr. Fernando assumes that it was a place where Tantric rituals were performed but how can one ignore the chronicler who has definitely explained the purpose of the building? The *Nikāya Saṅgrahaya* states that Parakramabahu I bore the epithet *Durlabdhī-mathana*, which clearly testifies to his religious attitude.<sup>2</sup> The author of this text, according to the trend of events related, was particularly concerned about heterodox elements in Buddhism which asserted occasionally as a challenge to the Theravada. "Dur-labdhī" would here mean Mahayanist tendencies and not Hinduism, Jainism or any other religion, because at any time in its history in this island, no religious force other than

1. ch. 73, v. 71-72; *ibid.* ch. 73, v. 73.

2. p. 24.

Mahayanism was a serious challenge to the orthodox monks. The *Cv.* definitely states that the purpose of the building was to listen to the Jātakas (“Jātakāni nisāmetum”). Hence Dr. Fernando’s contention that *maṇḍala-mandira* suggests a house meant for Tantric worship appears to need other arguments, if he adduces any, other than those so far presented.

The term “*pañcasattati-mandira*” (House of the Seventy five, a building for the reception of the magic water and of the magic thread given to him by the yellow robed ascetics), according to Dr. Fernando, suggests the name of a Tantric text which was recited at this particular building<sup>1</sup>. It is doubtful whether a king who bore the title “*Durlabdhī-mathana*” would encourage such ceremonies in a land where orthodox Buddhism flourished and for the furtherance of which he himself took so much trouble. The king was more concerned about the purity of the *saṅgha* and its unification and he achieved a victory, unparalleled in the history of the church. The successful completion of his undertaking, a task which no earlier monarch could execute, probably earned for him this special title. The *pañcasattati-mandira* was meant for the reception (*dhāretum*) of magic water and thread (*parittodakasuttañca*) given to him by the yellow robed ascetics (*kāsāyavasanehi yatīhi*<sup>2</sup>). *Paritt=odaka-sutta* is *pirit-pān* and *pirit-nūl* in modern Sinhalese. Obviously the house was meant for these items and the recitation of *parittas* would undoubtedly have taken place within the same building from time to time. Even in modern times, when *parittas* are recited a long thread is sent round the assembly and each person holds on to it till the chanting is over. The water vessel and the ball of thread are kept in front of the monks while the chanting is in progress. At the end of the proceedings each person may obtain a piece of the thread to be tied round his hand or neck as a protective measure. The sprinkling of the chanted water on the head was also to ward off evil. These are practices which had their origin in the lifetime of the Buddha. It is said that when the Buddha visited the famine-stricken city of the Licchavis (Vesāli) the three fears (viz. of famine, illness and of evil spirits) disappeared. The *Ratana-sutta*, taught by the Buddha to Ananda, was chanted by the latter as a further protective measure. Dr. Fernando’s suggestion that “*Pañcasattati*” could mean a Tantric text appears untenable since the *Cv.* clearly states that it was a house meant for the ceremonies connected with the chanting of *parittas*.

According to Geiger, the *Dhammāgāra* built by the same king was “resplendent with a series of the pictures of the Buddhas which were painted on stuff”.<sup>3</sup> Commenting on the passage *paṭāropita sabbaññūbimbamālāvirājitaṃ*, Dr. Fernando states that the description of the paintings would suggest Chinese paintings of Tantric

1. *Cv.*, ch. 73, v. 73.

2. *Cv.*, ch. 73, v. 73.

3. *Cv.*, ch. 73, v. 77.

*maṇḍalas*. (Geiger has translated the Pali word “paṭṭa”, meaning ‘cloth’, as ‘stuff’ but Dr. Fernando prefers the alternative ‘silk’). The Pali word for ‘silk’ is “paṭṭa.” The *Cv.* states that the paintings were of the Omniscient one (*sabbaññū*). The words *bimbamālāvirājitam* have been translated by Geiger as “adorned by a series (of pictures)”. The suggestion of a Tantric-*maṇḍala* occurs nowhere and it is doubtful whether a king, whom the *Cv.* describes as *sadā dhamānuvatti* (he who ever trod the path of the *dhamma*) in the very passage describing the building named *Dhammāgāra*, would entertain the idea of painting Tantric-*maṇḍalas* in a sermon house which was without doubt meant for orthodox Buddhists. The preachers coming into this house for religious discourses would also have been drawn from among the orthodox Buddhist *saṅgha*, which was by that time cleaned of all undesirable elements. (The account of the great Convocation occurs earlier at the beginning of Ch. 73, v. 1–22.) If, immediately after the purification of the Order, Tantric elements re-appeared in the very lifetime of the purifier who himself was a powerful monarch, what was the nature of the purification and unification of which so much has been spoken of by the chronicler?

Another argument put forward by Dr. Fernando is that the name *Vijjādhara-guhā* itself is suggestive of Tantric ritual and worship. This question has been partly answered earlier but we shall repeat ourselves. From what we have said it will be obvious that *Parakramabahu I* was in no way disposed towards heterodox elements in Buddhism and that he, the author of the monument, was least likely to reintroduce those very elements which he had eliminated. The tradition is that the name *Vijjādhara-guhā* was given to the cave because of the figures of *vidyādharas* among the sculptures. We have already seen that the two *cāmara-dhārī* figures (fly-whisk bearers) cannot be positively called *Bodhisattvas* although they show some features which are normally present in the sculptures of *Bodhisattvas*. *Avalokitesvara* and *Maitreya* normally carry on their head-dresses a miniature figure of the *Dhyani-Buddha Amitabha* and of the stupa respectively. These are important characteristics but are absent here. We have seen above that there are difficulties in accepting Bell’s identification of the two divine beings on either side of the halo. For the present we have to regard them as godlings only. *Vijjādhara-guhā* was wrought by expert craftsmen (*dakkhatāruhi*) who brought into play every kind of skilled work (*sabbakammāni-dassetvā*). It is possible that their aim was to make the sculpture appear as holy as possible. Fly-whisk bearers on either side of the Buddha, and godlings above him in the attitude of worship, were additional devices employed by the artists and such devices, in their opinion, were likely to move the emotions of an approaching pilgrim.

Dr. Fernando calls the Buddha image as one in *vajrāsana* attitude, remarking also on the absence of *bhū-sparśa mudrā*. We have already noticed that vajrāsana-Buddhas noticed in the sculptured slab from Kandy and Panduvasnuvara as also the sedent Buddhas who have Nagari characters incised on the back are in the attitude of *bhū-sparśa*<sup>1</sup>. In taking into consideration all the above arguments opposed to Dr. Fernando's contention, we conclude that it is very unlikely that any kind of Tantric ritual was associated with Vijjādhara-guhā.

A similar argument has been adduced by Dr. Fernando for the monuments at Tantrimalai.<sup>2</sup> Here his grounds for argument are weaker. The *vajra* symbol is conspicuously absent. The only plausible argument in support appears to be the occurrence of the word "tantri" in the place name Tantri-malai but we know that there are other place names in vogue at the present day which contain the same word e.g. Tantiri-mulla in Panadura without any tradition connected with Tantric Buddhism. There are also ge-names, such as Tantri-ge, Hapu (Sapu) Tantiri, etc. among Sinhalese people.

There is thus hardly any valid evidence of the existence of Tantrism in Ceylon in the 12th century. Dr. Fernando refers to the stone stelae at Nalanda-gedige, possible cultural relations with north eastern India, stone stelae in Pala style found in Ceylon and stone inscriptions containing *dhāraṇīs* found near the Abhayagiri-stupa, as evidence of the existence of Tantrism in Ceylon before the reign of Parakramabahu I. There is no doubt that Vajrayana Buddhism was a living force in Ceylon from about the 7th century down to the close of the Anuradhapura period (i.e. 1017). The subject for investigation is whether Parakramabahu I fostered the growth of Tantrism. That has also been dealt with.

The only epigraphical evidence for the existence of any kind of Tantrism in the 12th century is the copper plaque discovered at Pabalu-vehera containing an inscription in Sinhalese characters of about the 9th or 10th century,<sup>3</sup> incised at a time when Tantrism was a living force in Ceylon. The inscription which reads "Om maṇipadme sv(o)sti" is a Tantric *mantra* and has already been dealt with (ch.4). It is likely that it was enshrined within the stupa by a devotee who had faith in magic formulas and who had found it preserved among his family possessions. This document, which belongs to an earlier period in date, cannot be taken as sufficient evidence for the acknowledged existence of Tantrism in the reign of Parakramabahu I.

1. See chapter III.

2. This site is described in *A.S.C.A.R.* (1896), pp. 7-8 and Plate XXXI, and *A.S.C.A.R.* (1907), p. 33.

3. See ch. 4 and *A.S.C.A.R.* (1937), p. 11



In the foregoing discussion we have held that Parakramabahu I was opposed to any heterodox element within the Buddhist church. Having brought Ceylon under one canopy, his next aim was to re-organise the *saṅgha*, unify the dissenting sects and remove undesirables from the community. The *Cv.* also states how the disrobed persons were settled in lay life.<sup>1</sup> The manner in which the Convocation was held has been related by the chronicler who lived at a time not very far removed from that of the great monarch.

In the neighbouring sub-continent this period witnessed the gradual decay of the Buddhist faith and its virtual disappearance. Thereafter no new elements in Buddhism were introduced into Ceylon. There was no occasion for any, and fresh developments thereafter were confined to local ones of the cults introduced earlier which might have lingered on in obscurity among the masses.

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1. ch. 78, v. 26 f.

## APPENDIX B

### THE LOVERS OF ISURUMUNIYA AND THEIR POSSIBLE IDENTIFICATION

Prof. P.C. Sestieri, in an article published in the *East and West*, (New Series, Vol 10, Nos 1-2, March-June 1959, pp. 94-96), has proposed that the relief at Isurumuniya (Anuradhapura) which is commonly referred to as "The Lovers", as one containing the representation of Sthiracakra, an aspect of Manjusri and of his consort, Prajna.

It is unnecessary to deal with the other interpretations which have already been made with regard to this subject. It should be sufficient to state that it has generally been accepted that this relief contains the representation of a pair of lovers.

Prof. Sestieri's theory rests chiefly on the assumption that the round object behind the right shoulder of the male figure is suggestive of a flaming halo. On this round object is a sword, and of this identification there is no difference of opinion. It has been assumed by that learned writer that the pointed edges on the rim of this round object are little flames, or rather rays, radiating from the circle or nimbus. On this assumption, he puts forward the hypothesis that the halo surrounds the sword borne by the man carved on the relief. It is said in the *Sādhanamālā* that the radiant sword, which by spreading its rays, destroys the darkness of ignorance, is the symbol of Sthiracakra, one of the aspects of Manjusri.

To accept this theory, it should first be ascertained whether the description given in the *sādhanas* has some measure of agreement with the sculpture. The description given in the *sādhanas* of Sthiracakra is as follows:— "In one of his hands he carries the sword and with the other hand he depicts the *varada* pose. His colour is white. He sits on the moon supported by a lotus and wears the *Cīrakas* which makes his body resplendent. He wears princely ornaments and displays the sentiment of passionate love. He is accompanied by his consort who is beautiful, displays the sentiment of passionate love and laughs profusely."<sup>1</sup> Images of this deity are rare. The Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parisat image is assumed to be a representation of this deity.<sup>2</sup> The special feature of this image is that the sword appears on a lotus. It should also be noticed that

1. *I.B.I.* p. 122.

2. *ibid.* p. 173, fig. 93.

the head-dress is tall and conical in shape. It may also be assumed that there is a Dhyani-Buddha in the head-dress, as indicated by the socket which is clear in the photograph.

It is difficult for a student of Mahayanist iconography in Ceylon to accept the figure of the man in the relief at Isurumuniya as a representation of a Mahayanist deity. The foregoing study of Mahayanist sculptures in Ceylon would convince one that the representation in this relief is far from the Mahayanist. In the Indian sculpture already referred to, the two distinct features (the sword and the *varada* pose) are noticeable. In our figure, the latter is absent. The sword is shown but it is in its sheath and placed behind the right shoulder. The round object is associated with the sword. It is a shield and there are pointed edges on its rim.

A halo is normally associated with the head of an individual deity rather than with an object such as a sword. If it was the intention of the sculptor to depict rays radiating from the sword of Bodhisattva Manjusri, they could have been better shown by placing that object in one of his hands. One of the prominent characteristics of this deity is that he holds the sword in one of his hands. In the example from Elahera (ch. 3) it was noticed that this object is held in the right hand, in the attitude of striking. Many of the known sculptures of this deity depict him in this pose. In this instance, the weapon is placed in its sheath behind the right shoulder and the *varada* pose is not displayed. Therefore, there is difficulty in identifying it as a representation of Sthiracakra.

In many of the sculptures of Bodhisattvas which we have dealt with the effigy of a Dhyani-Buddha on the head-dress was noticed. The figure from Elahera is far too small to have an indication of this feature on its head-dress. If it is assumed that it once contained such a feature, the passage of time would certainly have obliterated it. In the Isurumuniya figure, the head-dress is different in shape from those of Bodhisattvas and it shows no effigy of a Dhyani-Buddha in it.

The female to the left of the figure displays the *karaṇa-mudrā* with the right hand; her left hand rests on the seat. According to the *sādhanas*, the consort of Sthiracakra should be depicted in the attitude of laughing profusely. Consorts of deities are normally represented as displaying the *varada* pose with one of their hands. It will be noticed that in this bas-relief representation, the attitude of the female is a responsive one in a love scene.

It will thus be seen that the iconographic features of Sthiracakra are not here represented. The date suggested for the sculpture is 5th century. It was noticed (ch. 3) that the *Sādhanamālā* is a late work and that it contains developments which did not reach Ceylon.<sup>1</sup> This difficulty is overcome by pointing out that the sculpture shows no indication of any relationship with Mahayanist icons.

The slab containing the sculpture is not in its original position. It is likely that this bas-relief representation was intended for a secular purpose.

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1. *I.B.I.*, p. 16.

## APPENDIX C

### REFERENCES TO ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS

Among the architectural remains at Anuradhapura and elsewhere, there are a few monuments which were erected by the followers of the Mahayana creed. As there is hardly anything distinctly Mahayanistic with regard to an architectural monument, it was considered unnecessary to describe the edifices in detail. Mahayanist sculptures available at these sites have been included in Chapter 3. For the benefit of the interested reader, a list of these architectural monuments is appended below:—

(a) GEDIGE AT NALANDA

For H.C.P. Bell's reports see *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1910/11.

For Indian influences see *I.A.*, Plate Nos. LXIII, LIII (Fig. 2), LXXXIII (Fig. 1) and LXXXIV (Fig. 2).

(b) (i) VIJAYARAMA MONASTERY

*Refs.* *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1891, pp. 4-5

*A.S.C.*, 5th *Progress Report*, pp. 5-11

*A.S.C.*, 6th *Progress Report*, June-Sept., 1891.

*C.J.S.C.*, Vol. II, Plates XVII, XVIII, XXXII.

(ii) PULIYANKULAMA MONASTERY

*Refs.* *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1896, p. 3

*ibid.* 1897, pp. 4-6

*ibid.* 1898, pp. 3-4

*ibid.* 1899, pp. 3-4

*ibid.* 1900, pp. 5-6

*C.J.S.C.*, Vol. II, Plate XVII

For affinities with Indian examples see—

*I.A.*, Plate XXXIII and p. 42 and pp. 68-74

*H.O.I.A.E.A.*, Vol. I, pp. 212-213

*ibid.* p. 213, note 1

## (c) STUPAS OF MAHAYANIST CHARACTER

## (i) ĪNDIKATUŚĀYA AND KATUŚĀYA

*Refs.* *M.A.S.C.*, Vol. V, Ch. vii, p. 97

*A.S.C.A.R.*, 1911/12, p. 45

*C.Ĵ.S.C.*, Vol. I, p. 7, 44, 91 and Plates No. X and XXXIII

*A.S.C.A.R.*, 1923/24, p. 5

*ibid.* 1924/25, p. 5

*ibid.* 1938, p. 6

## (ii) STUPA AT TIRIYAY

*Refs.* *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1951, pp. 26-29 and Plate VIII

*ibid.* 1953, pp. 17-19

*ibid.* 1954, p. 25 and Plate No. 6 (Fig. 2)

## (iii) VIJAYARAMA-STUPA

*Refs.* *A.S.C.*, 5th *Progress Report*, Plates VII-IX, pp. 4-10

## (iv) PULIYANKULAMA-STUPA

*Refs.* *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1897, pp. 4-5 and Plates No. D, F, G, H, etc.

*C.Ĵ.S.C.*, Vol. II, pp. 45-46

## (d) NATHA-DEVALE, KANDY

*Refs.* *C.Ĵ.S.C.*, Vol. II, pp. 45-46

*The Art and Architecture of the Gampola Period*, N. Mudiyanse, Colombo, 1965, pp. 58-60 and plan No. 3

## (e) NATHA-DEVALE, WEGIRIYA

*Refs.* *Kalā Saṅgarāva* (Published by the Arts Council of Ceylon), Vol. 19, 1965 June, pp. 11-12 and plan No. 4

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Fig. No. 1  
Colossal Buddha - Buduruvegala



Fig. No. 2  
Buddha image from Seruvila



Fig. No. 3  
Buddha image from Mahiyangana-stupa



Fig. No. 4

Bronze Buddha in *pralambapāda* from Ambalantota



Fig. No. 5  
Bronze Buddha - Gadaladeniya

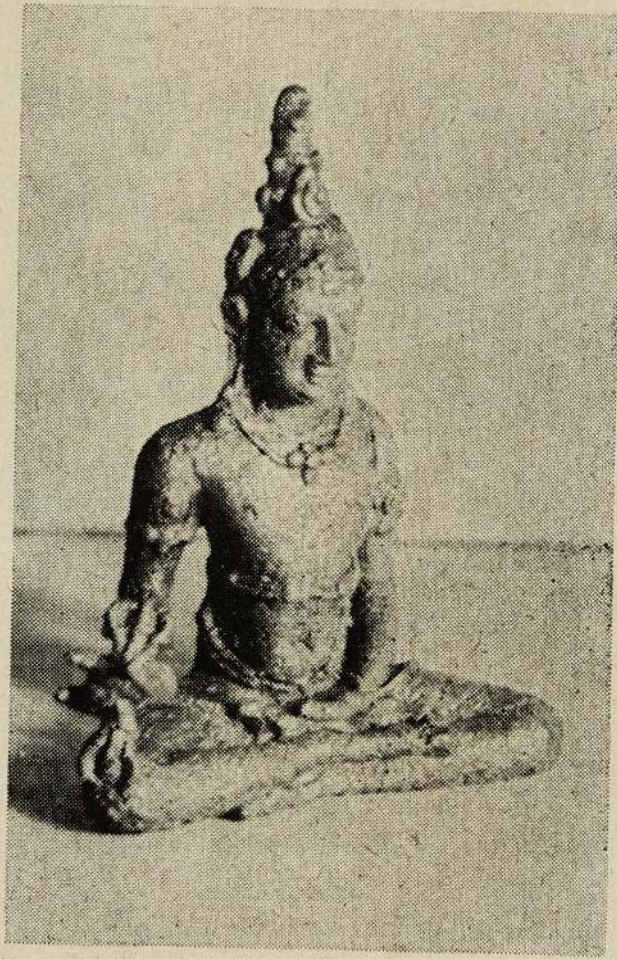


Fig. No. 6

Vajrasattva from Medirigiriya - Anuradhapura museum



Fig. No. 7

Stone plaque from Panduvasnuvara





Fig. No. 8

Stone plaque from Mahiyangana-stupa



Fig. No. 9

Stone plaque - Dedigama museum



Fig. No. 10

Stone slab from Velana-damana in the Vilpattu  
( now at the Anuradhapura museum )



Fig. No. 11

Avalokitesvara and attendants - Buduruvegala



Fig. No. 12

Avalokitesvara - Kustarajagala ( Weligama )



Fig. No. 13

Avalokitesvara - Dambulla



Fig. No. 14

Avalokitesvara from Situlpavva



Fig. No. 15

Avalokitesvara - Head from Ambalantota





Fig. No. 16

Bronze statuette of Avalokitesvara  
Ananda Coomaraswamy collection  
Boston museum

Fig. No. 17

Metal seated image of Avalokitesvara  
said to have been found in a treasure  
trove near Buduruvegala in Wellawaya  
( now in the Colombo museum ).

Cat. No. 36. 70. 23B





Fig. No. 18

Padmanarttesvara - found at the Alms Hall, near the old Rest House,  
Anuradhapura

( now preserved at the Colombo museum ).

Cat. No. 13. 170. 295



Fig. No. 19

Tara from Ceylon - British museum, London



Fig. No. 20

Tara from New Town, Anuradhapura

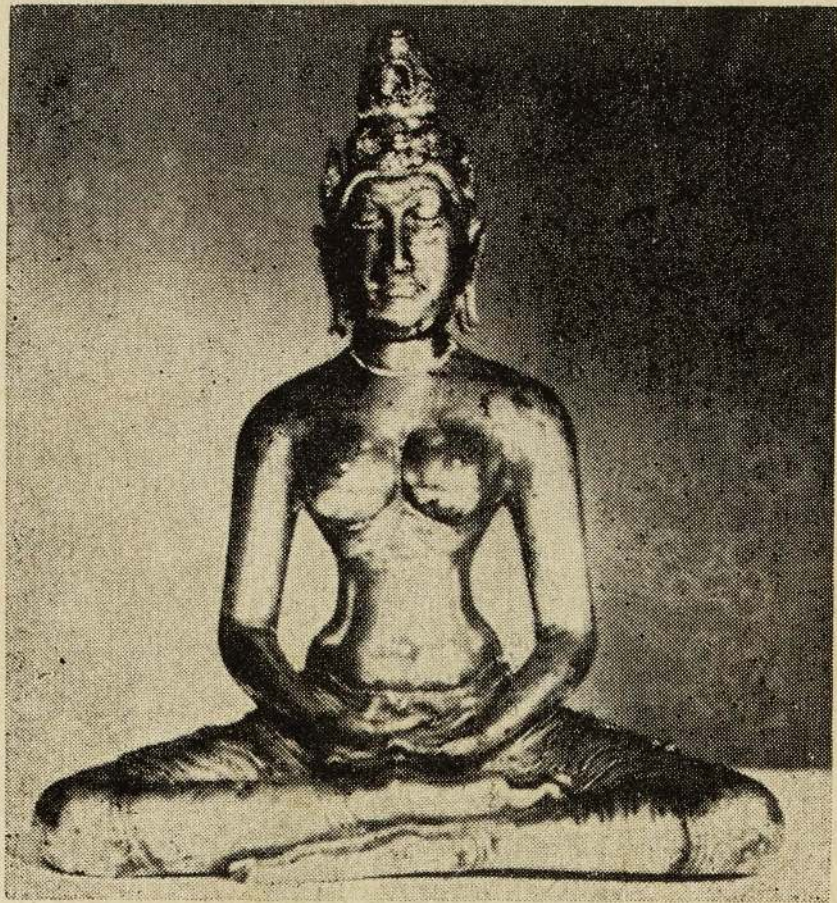


Fig. No. 21

Tara from Gan-Aramaya-vihara, Kurunegala District  
( now at the Colombo museum )



Fig. No. 22

Tara from Mannar



Fig. No. 23

Janguli ( one form of Green Tara ) - Colombo Museum  
( Cat. No. 11. 197. 265 )



Fig. No. 24

Copper seated image of Janguli ( one form of Green Tara ) from the  
Colombo Museum  
( Cat. No. 11. 198. 265 )



Fig. No. 25

Caturbhuja-sita-tara from Ceylon in the Nevill collection,  
British museum, London





Fig. No. 26

Gandhatara from Ceylon in the Nevill collection,  
British museum, London



Fig. No. 27

Vajrapani and attendants - Buduruvegala



Fig. No. 28

Vajrapani from Ceylon at the Boston museum  
( Ananda Coomaraswamy collection )



Fig. No. 29

Cunda from Ceylon in the Nevill collection, British museum, London



Fig. No. 30

Jambhala ( Kuvera ) from Ceylon  
( now at the Boston Museum )



Fig. No. 31

Jambhala ( Kuvera ) - Osmund de Silva collection



Fig. No. 32

Vasudhara from Ceylon in the Nevill collection,  
British museum, London



Fig. No. 33  
Ubhayavarahanana from  
Anuradhapura  
( Now in the Colombo Museum )



Fig. No. 34  
Bas-reliefs from Vijayarama  
( Anuradhapura )

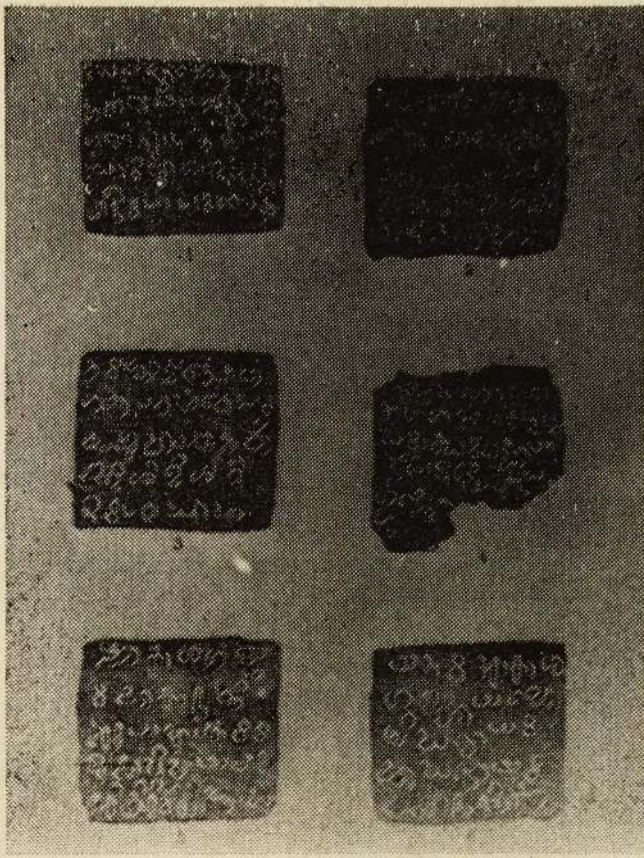


Fig. No. 35

Copper plaques from Vijayarama stupa - Anuradhapura



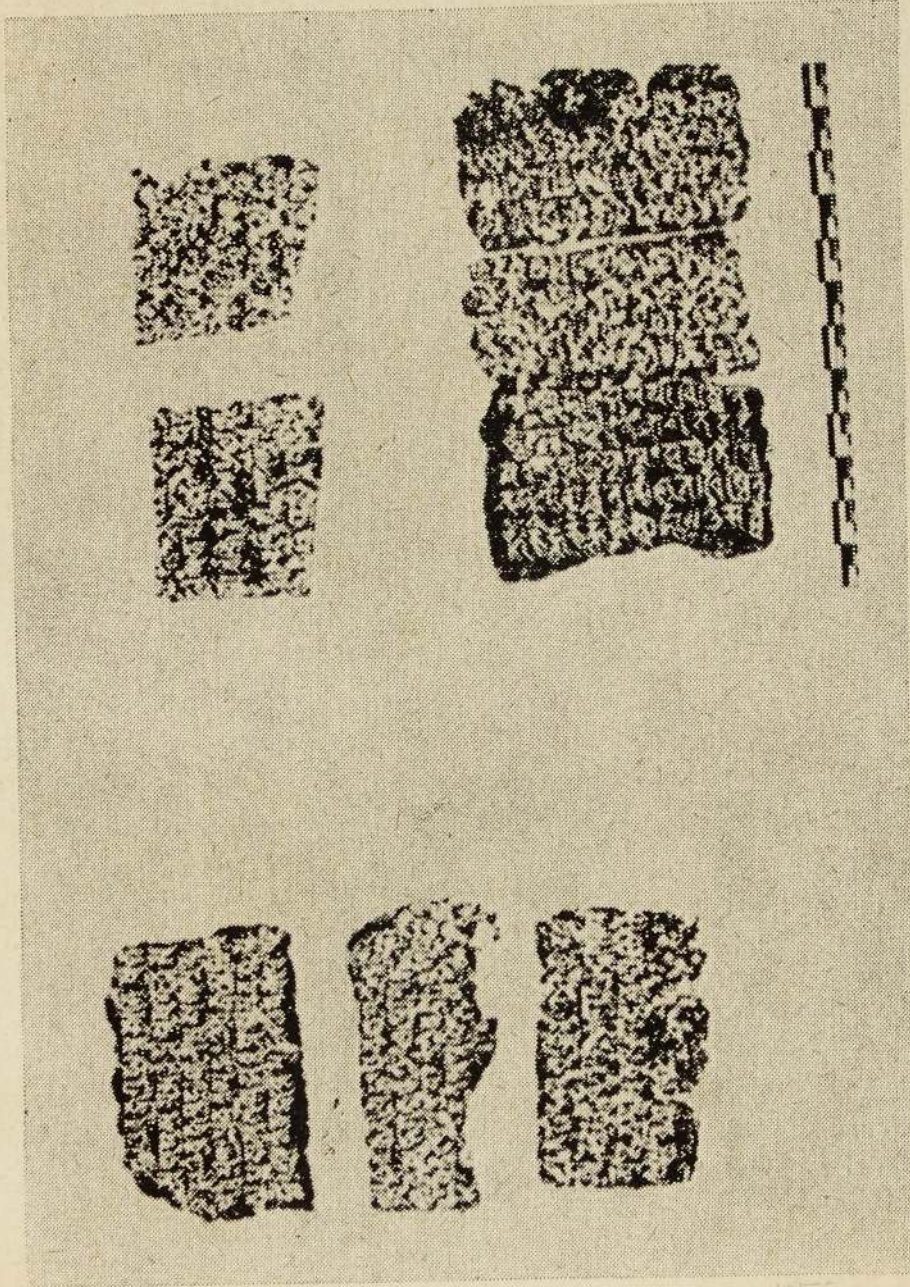
Fig. No. 36

Copper plaques from Vijayarama stupa - Anuradhapura



Fig. No. 37

Dhāraṇī inscriptions from Abhayagiriya area



No. 37 (a) — Left above  
 No. 37 (b) — Left centre  
 No. 37 (c) — Left below

No. 37 (d) — Centre above  
 No. 37 (e) — Centre below

No. 37 (f) — Inscription placed  
 between 37 (e) and  
 37 (h)  
 No. 37 (g) — Extreme right above  
 No. 37 (h) — Extreme right below

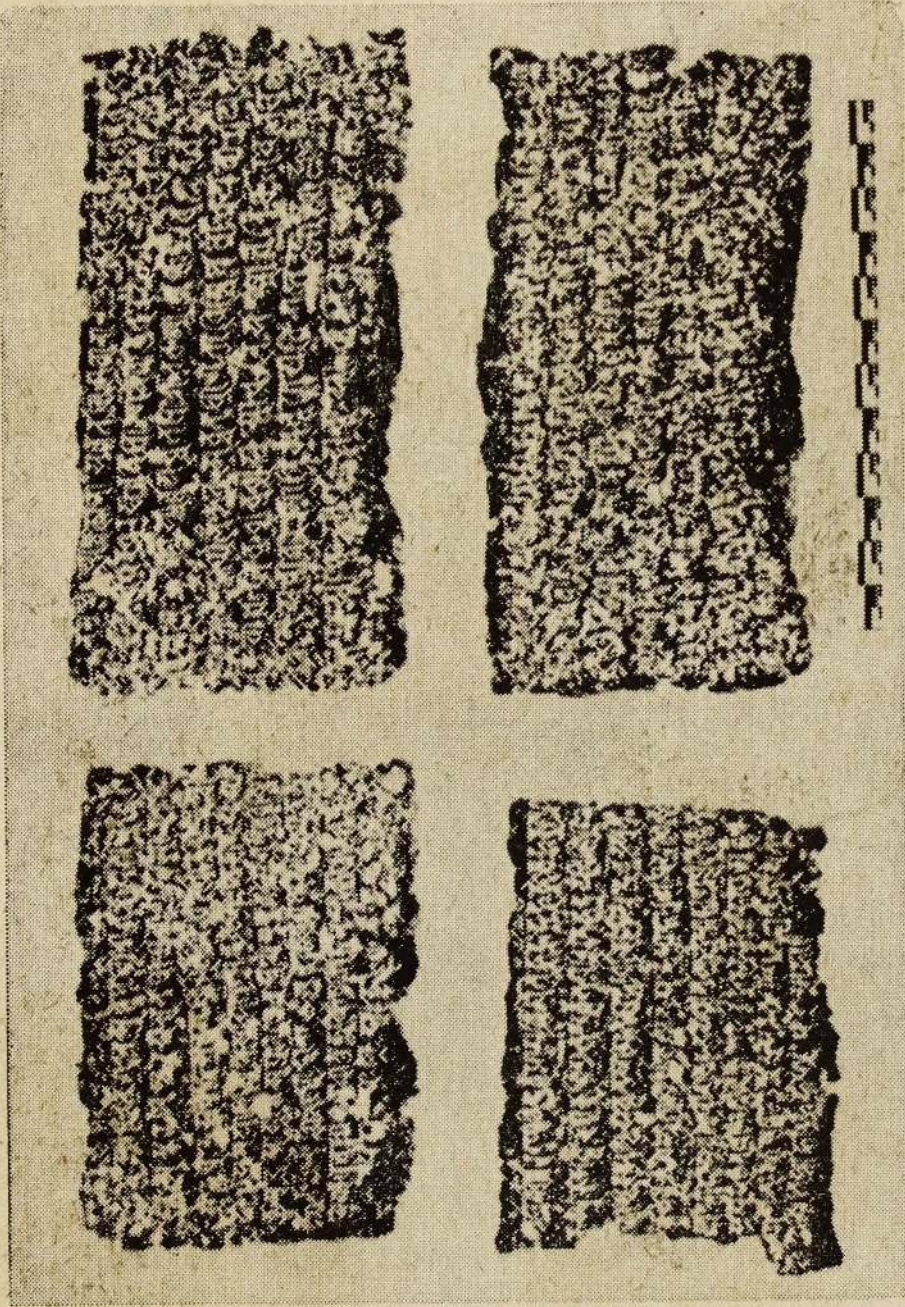


Fig. No. 38

Dhāraṇī inscriptions from Abhayagiriya area

- No. 38 (a) — Left above
- No. 38 (b) — Left below
- No. 38 (c) — Right above
- No. 38 (d) — Right below

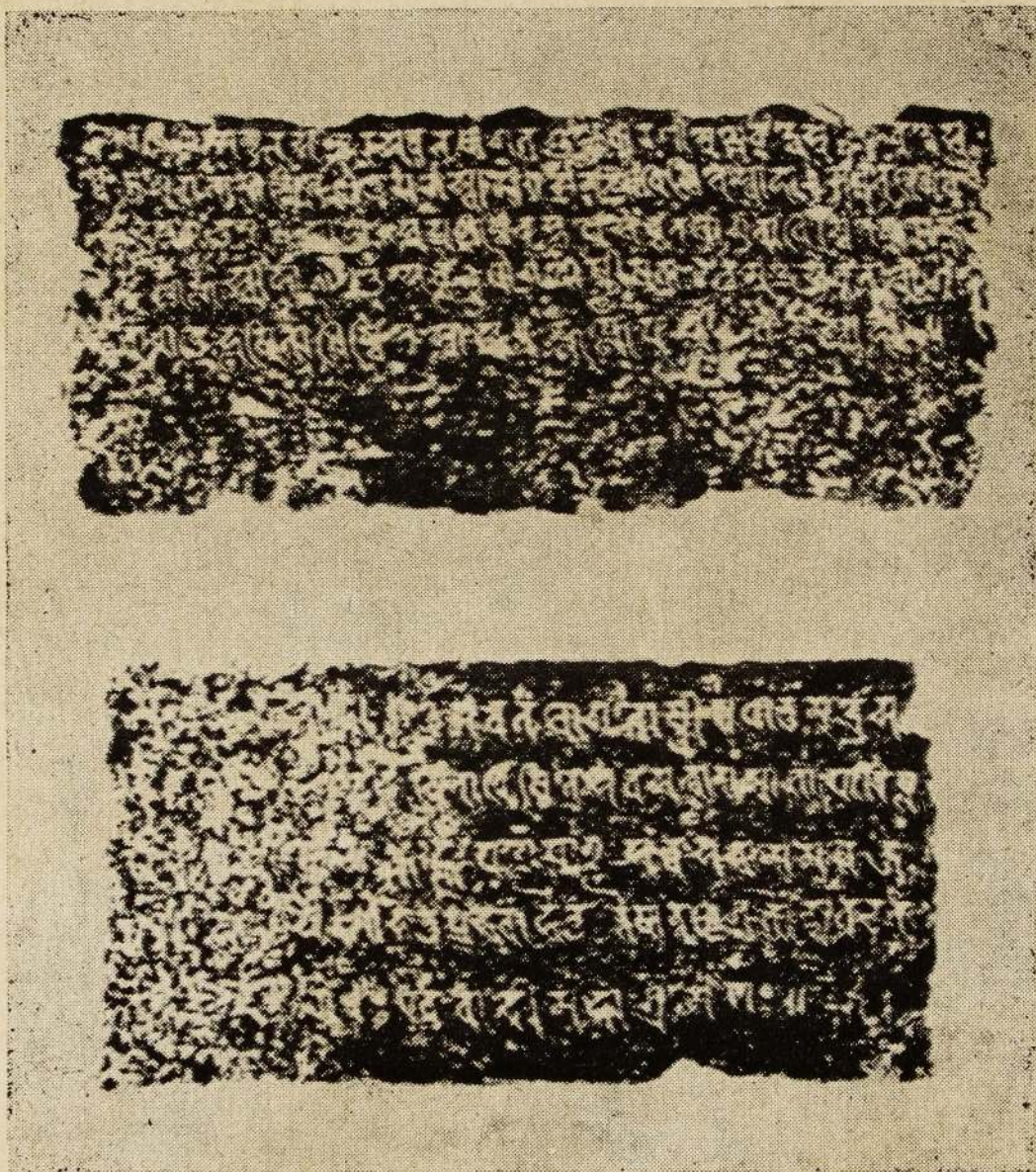


Fig. No. 39

Dhāraṇī inscriptions from Abhayagiriya area

No. 39 (a) — above

No. 39 (b) — below









