









# CEYLON *Today*

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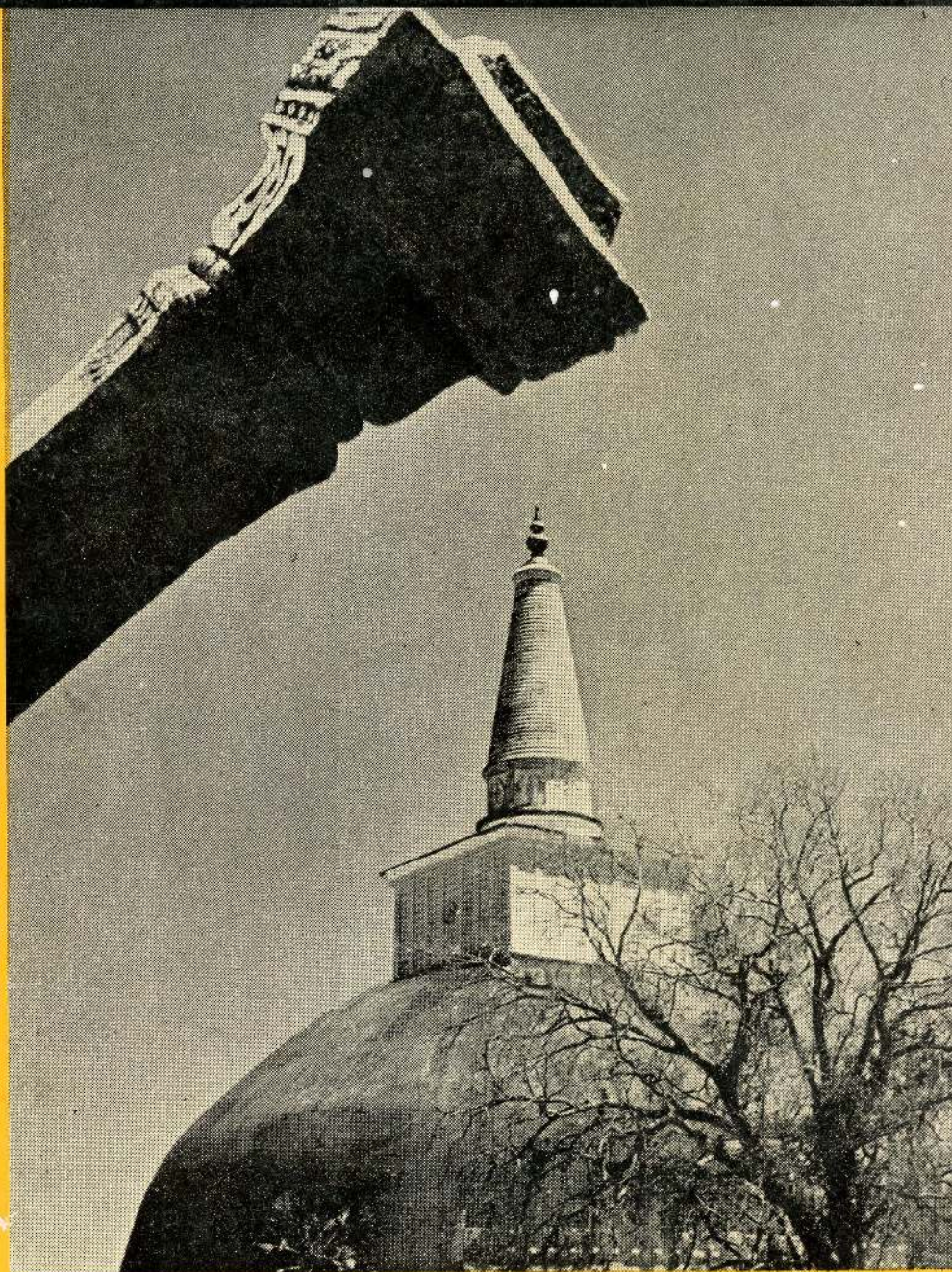
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**MAY-JUNE, 1956**



# CEYLON TODAY

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# CEYLON

# Today

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## Ceylon and the Buddha Jayanti

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NO man since the dawn of history, has by the influence of his teachings so enriched and ennobled the thoughts and lives of countless generations of humanity as the Buddha. And it is the three important events of his life, to wit, the Birth, the Enlightenment and the Parinibbana, which have been celebrated in great splendour on the full moon day of the month of Vesak, the most sacred day in the Buddhist Calendar.

In 1956, the Vesak full moon day acquires a unique significance for it marks the 2500th anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha—the beginning of the 2500th year of the Buddhist Era. It is indeed a unique event in the history of our times.

During the last 2500 years teeming multitudes of people throughout the world have come under the benign influence of the Buddha's teachings. The culture and civilisation of many countries have been moulded by their influence. In Ceylon, our art and architecture, our literature and our script—in short our heritage of which we are proud as a nation—have been to a very great extent inspired by the spread of the Message of the Master.

### The National Significance

TO us in Ceylon, the Buddha Jayanti coincides with another day of national significance, namely,

the 2500th anniversary of the birth of the nation. As the Mahavamsa, the Great Chronicle, describes,

“The Prince named Vijaya, the valiant, landed in Lanka in the region called Tambapanni on the day that the Tathagata lay down between the two twin-like sala-trees to pass into Nibbana”.

The coming of Vijaya is undoubtedly the most significant event in the annals of this island, for with it began her written history. In the course of 2500 years was built the great edifice of our nation whose mighty bond of fellow feeling, oneness of purpose and unity of effort keep the diverse races of our population together. Today we stand as a free nation with a creditable record of achievements and a reputation for political stability in spite of invasions, political upheavals and civil disorders. Therefore, it befits us Ceylonese to celebrate the twenty-fifth centenary of the birth of the nation, which occurs at a time when as a nation we have regained our Independence and are putting forth our best effort for our own economic and cultural amelioration, besides contributing, in whatever small way, towards the peace and well-being of the world.

Ceylon will be a focus of world interest during Buddha Jayanti, for this religious festival, with the participation of members of the Royal Family, Prime Ministers and Sangharajas of Asian Buddhist





Tissamaharama Dagoba



countries, will go down in world history, not merely for its rare spectacle of colour and pageantry but as the turning point of human thought towards a spiritual awakening which the renaissance of Buddhism will usher in.

May 23, 1956, on which day falls the 2500th anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha and the founding of the Sinhala race, and the year's celebrations which will follow, will go down in the annals of the history of Ceylon.

The Buddhist Council of Ceylon, or the Lanka Bauddha Mandalaya as it is better known, which was set up with the inauguration of the Buddha Jayanti celebrations on October 12, 1954, marked an epoch in the history of Buddhism in Ceylon.

The Mandalaya within a few months of its inauguration laid the foundations for a Buddhist renaissance.

Through its special committees, it proceeded to work out a long-term policy which would not merely inspire a spiritual awakening by the Buddha Jayanti but also ensure its continuance thereafter. A review of its manifold activities, which follows, affords ample evidence that the Mandalaya is fulfilling what was expected of it.

### The Spiritual Awakening

SINCE the Buddha Jayanti is expected to usher in an era of spiritual awakening, the emphasis was on religious activities. The Committee for Religious Affairs planned out a 12-point programme of work. This programme provided for—

#### (i) Propagation of the Dhamma—

- (a) To establish, with the assistance of the Buddhist monks, residents and Government Officers, Committees in each village with the Headquarters at the local temple for the purpose of ensuring the moral uplift of the people and the establishment of Buddhist temples where they are essential.
- (b) Sermons—To organise sermons, at least once a month in every village.

- (c) Pamphlets and Books—To prepare and publish rare pamphlets and books which will teach the people to adhere to a good life.
- (d) Ritual—To ensure that Buddhist rites are performed with a certain degree of uniformity.

#### (ii) Daily Life and Buddhist Environment—

- (a) To prepare and publish a time-table to regulate the life of the Buddhists on the Full Moon Poya Days.
- (b) To prepare a time-table for the other Poya Days.
- (c) To make representations to the Government to make Full Moon Poya Days public holidays.
- (d) To publish a book containing instructions to provide a Buddhist atmosphere in every home.

#### (iii) Temperance—

- (a) To make representations to the Government to take administrative steps with a view to implementing total prohibition.
- (b) To have organised temperance meetings in every district and to give publicity to the evils of drinking, through sermons, pamphlets, films, &c.
- (c) To ensure that the Government and the people holding responsible offices set an example to the people by abstaining from liquor and to seek co-operation of the Government to promote abstinence.

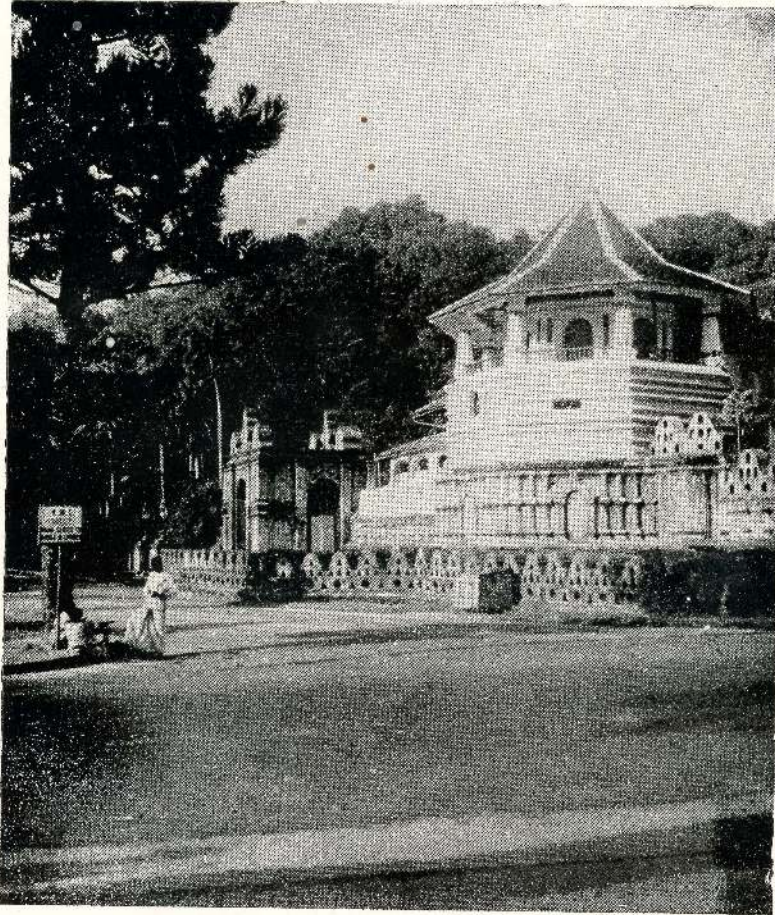
#### (iv) Slaughter of Animals—

To give publicity to the evils of killing animals and of eating meat and fish through sermons and pamphlets. To ensure that people holding important places set an example to the others by becoming vegetarians.

#### (v) Vices—

- (a) To take such steps as are necessary to abolish prostitution and also to take steps to see that women who are taken over as domestic servants are not made use of for immoral purposes.

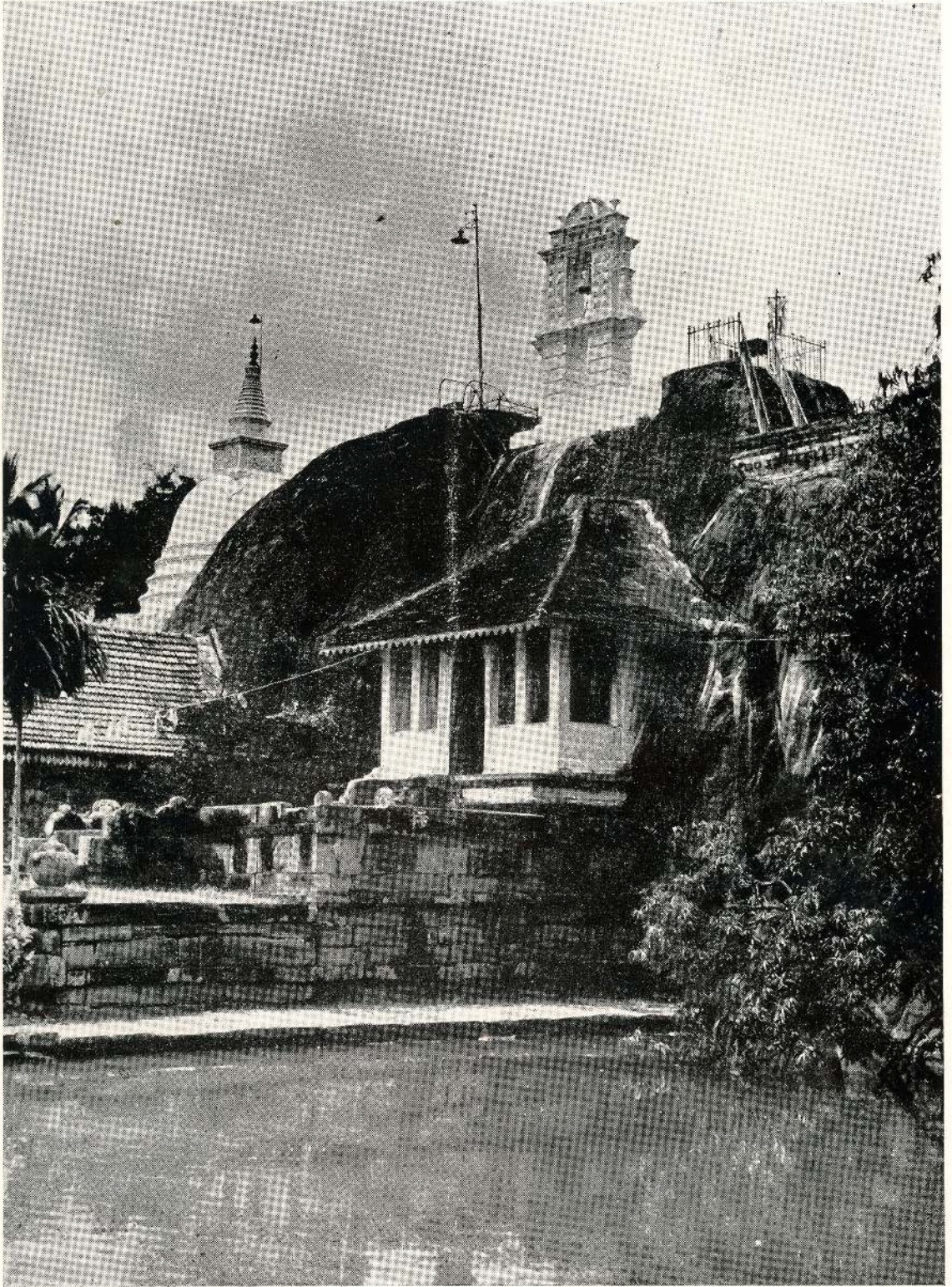




The Temple of the Tooth, Kandy

- (b) To give publicity to the evils of prostitution through sermons, pamphlets and films.
- (vi) Horse Racing and Gambling—
- (a) To make representations to the Government to abolish horse racing and gambling.
- (b) To take such steps as are necessary to prevent the publication of the results of foreign races.
- (vii) Sil Campaign—
- To organise sil campaigns and give assistance to the people to observe sil.
- (viii) Clubs and Carnivals—
- To make representations to the Government to formulate regulations controlling Night Clubs and Carnivals.
- (ix) Obscene Films and Books—
- To make representations to the Government in order to ensure that obscene films and books are not imported to Ceylon. To take such steps as are necessary to prevent the publication of the above.
- (x) National Customs—
- To encourage people to adhere to national customs.





Isurumuniya Rock Temple, Anuradhapura



## (xi) Simple Living—

- (a) To train the people to get used to a simple form of living.
- (b) To prevent the importation of luxury goods.
- (c) To encourage people to use as far as possible the articles produced in Ceylon and to give encouragement and assistance to the producers of these articles in order to improve their standard.

## (xii) Legal Reformation—

To make representations to the Government for the purpose of repealing certain rules which are not in keeping with the conditions of Ceylon. In furtherance of this programme the Mandalaya sent out Dhammaduta Missions consisting of eminent members of the Sangha to inspire the people to a spiritual awakening. Up to date, twelve missions have covered the entire Southern Province and they had been accorded rousing receptions. In vans equipped with microphones and recorders, and cinema projectors, these missions have penetrated into the remote villages and infused into its people the spirit of Jayanti.

Sil campaigns have become immensely popular and are fast becoming a regular feature on every Poya day. The Government, on representations made by the Mandalaya, is actively considering making Poya days public holidays. A campaign against obscene publications is well under way and the Police have changed the emphasis from the use of force to resorting to rehabilitative measures to check the high incidence of crime prevalent in the country. To achieve this end, they have the assistance of the District Jayanti Committees established under the auspices of the Mandalaya throughout the island.

**The Buddhist Encyclopaedia**

IN the field of Buddhist literature, some epoch-making projects have been undertaken. Prominent among them are the compilation of a Buddhist Encyclopaedia, a Sinhalese Encyclopaedia,

the translation of the Tripitaka into Sinhalese, and the Vidyalankara Sangayana, apart from numerous texts, brochures and souvenirs.

The Buddhist Encyclopaedia aims at being a comprehensive and authentic work of reference on all aspects of Buddhism from the earliest times to the present day. The Encyclopaedia will contain in addition to accounts of the Buddhist doctrine, the history of Buddhism in the various countries into which it has spread, accounts of persons and places connected with this history, the development of Buddhist civilisation in its numerous aspects—literature, art, architecture, sculpture, &c.—particulars of Buddhist rites and ceremonies and the influence exerted by Buddhism socially, politically and economically upon its followers in different countries.

The Encyclopaedia will be in about ten volumes consisting of 7,500 to 10,000 pages. It would be in English. Topics pertaining to the Theravada will be decided upon by the Editorial staff in Ceylon with the aid of Regional Editors. Regional Editors have been appointed to be in charge of the sections dealing with Chinese Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism and Indian Buddhist Civilization. The following scholars have been invited to function as Regional Editors :—

Prof. G. Tucci of Rome,  
 Prof. L. M. Nagai of Japan,  
 Prof. Jean Filliozat of France,  
 Prof. P. V. Bapat of India, and  
 Dr. S. Paranavitana of Ceylon.

Ven. Dilowa Hutuktu and Mr. Latmore of U. S. A. Southern Buddhism will assist the Editor-in-chief, Dr. G. P. Malalasekera, Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Ceylon.

Dr. Malalasekera is making every effort to publish a fascicule of the Encyclopaedia of at least a 100 pages during the Jayanti Year 1956-57.

The Sinhalese Encyclopaedia will be in about five volumes comprising 7,500 pages. Its Editor-in-Chief is Dr. D. E. Hettiaratchi, Professor of Sinhalese, University of Ceylon.



The material will fall into two categories—

- (a) Matters pertaining to the Sinhalese and Sinhalese Culture.
- (b) General information regarding the world.

### The Translation of the Tripitaka

THE translation of the Tripitaka into Sinhalese, the language of the people, marks an epoch in the history of Sinhalese literature.

Sixteen out of the forty-four Maha Theros who were entrusted with this task, returned their completed translations to the Prime Minister at a special ceremony at the Aluvihare, which centuries ago had been the scene of the Tripitaka being reduced to writing by a Council of 500 Elders. The Prime Minister, in keeping with the traditions of ancient Sinhalese kings, presented "Guru Panduru" to the Maha Theros. Thus the Tripitaka which had hitherto been inaccessible to the masses as it was in Pali, will now afford facilities for learning the Dhamma which will ensure and usher in a spiritual awakening for the Buddha Jayanti. The following form the Editorial Board—

Ven. Pandit Weliwitiye Sorata Nayaka Thero,  
 Ven. Dr. Parawahera Vajiragnana Thero,  
 Ven. Agga Mahapandita Polwatte Buddhadatta Anunayaka Thero,  
 Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maithriya Thero,  
 Ven. Haldanduwana Dhammarakkhita Thero,  
 Ven. Pandit Weliwitiye Punnasara Thero,  
 Ven. Pandit Ambalangoda Dhammkusala Thero,  
 Ven. Pandit Kadawedduwe Sri Nivasa Thero,  
 Ven. Pandit Kosgoda Dhammavamsa Thero,  
 Prof. G. P. Malalasekera, and  
 Dr. S. Paranavitana—Archaeological Commissioner.

### The Vidyalkara Sangayana

THE Vidyalkara Sangayana is a part of the programme of the Vidyalkara Pirivena to revise thoroughly the Tripitaka in Pali and prepare a critical edition. About 500 Buddhist monks are expected to participate in the Sangayana which will continue for about six years with four sessions of two weeks each year. A special

session of the Sangayana will be held to coincide with the International Buddhist Conference which will be held in January, 1957.

### Literature

APART from these monumental projects, the Mandalaya will publish a series of text books. This series will include a historical work on Buddhist civilisation of Asia, a book on the lay life as laid in Buddhism, a catalogue of ancient Sinhalese manuscripts and reprints of a number of important works on Ceylon.

Besides these, the Mandalaya will bring out a Buddha Jayanti Souvenir in Sinhalese, Tamil and English, each about a 100 pages. It will also publish a National Souvenir in Sinhalese, Tamil and English of an even number of pages. The Mandalaya will also compile a brochure in Sinhalese, Tamil and English on the Life and the Teachings of the Buddha and the History of Buddhism.

### Education

IN the sphere of education, the Bauddha Mandalaya has decided—

- (a) to establish religious schools in all villages where no such schools exist in order to teach the children their religion ;
- (b) to make representations to the Government regarding religious education ;
- (c) to establish a Buddha Jayanti College with classes from Junior School Certificate upwards.

The Ministry and the Department of Education have now instructed all schools to have compulsory periods for religious instruction daily. They have also intimated to all schools, that they must have a separate shrine room.

### Memorial Buildings

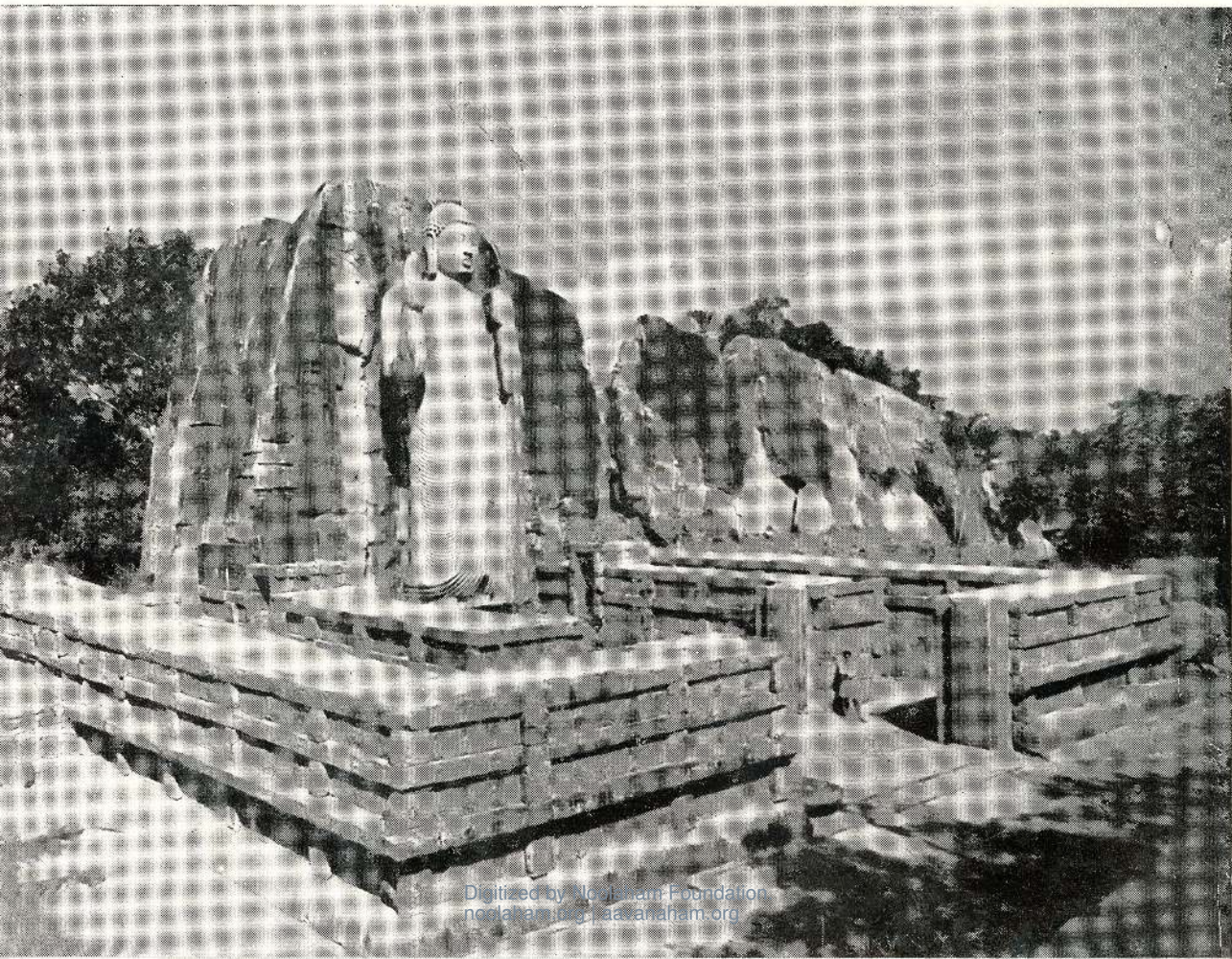
THE Buddha Jayanti will be marked not only by a spiritual awakening but also by landmarks which the Mandalaya is putting up in the form of memorials.



The Mandalaya has decided to put up a stone inscription describing the Buddha Jayanti celebrations at a cost of Rs. 10,000. A further sum of Rs. 600,000 has also been allocated for putting up thirty-three other memorials. They are as follows :—

1. A shrine-room in memory of Migettuwatte Gunananda at Mohottiwatte, Balapitiya.
2. A building in memory of the Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda to be erected at the spot in Panadura where the famous controversy took place.
3. A life-size statue of Walisinha Harischandra to be erected at Anuradhapura.
4. A life-size statue of Anagarika Dharmapala to be erected in Colombo.
5. A life-size statue of Sir Baron Jayatilaka to be erected in Colombo.
6. A memorial Hall and Library at Tilakaramaya, Hikkaduwa, in memory of the Ven. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala.
7. A museum at the Pulinatalaramaya, Kalutara, to house the books and other articles that belonged to the Ven. Weligama Sri Sumangala.
8. A museum at the Abhinavaramaya, Waskaduwa, to house the books, documents and other articles that belonged to the Ven. Waskaduwe Sri Subhuti.
9. A building in memory of Col. Olcott at Ananda College, Colombo.
10. A memorial with inscription at Weliwita, the birthplace of Weliwita Sangharaja.

Buddha Statue at Avukana





11. A museum at Suriyagoda Viharaya to house the books and other articles used by Weliwita Sangharaja.
12. The Sangharaja Pirivena Hall and Library in Kandy in memory of Weliwita Sangharaja.
13. A Jayanti image-house and shrine-room at the Fort premises of the Young Men's Buddhist Association.
14. A library at Sanchi in memory of Arahat Mahinda.
15. A memorial at Wariyapola to the Ven. Wariyapola Sri Sumangala.
16. A library at Aluvihara as a memorial to the Great Sangayana where the Tripitaka was reduced to writing.
17. The building of the colossal Buddha statue at Veherahena, Matara.
18. A vihara on an old site at Amparai.
19. Contribution to the work at Lumbini to be undertaken by the Nepal Government and the Dharmodaya Sabha.
20. Installation of electric lights and drainage at Biyagama Upasikaramaya.
21. A memorial to Ven. Walane Sri Siddhartha at Ratmalana.
22. The Renovation of the old Ambarukkarama at Balapitiya.
23. A statue of Vihara Maha Devi.
24. A memorial to the Ven. Ratmalane Dhammaloka and the Ven. Ratmalane Dharmarama.
25. A museum to house the valuable articles that belonged to Tibottuwawe Sri Siddhartha Buddhakshita Maha Nayaka Thero.
26. Memorial to King Siri Sangabo at Attanagalla.
27. A museum at Dharmagupta Pirivena, Paiyagala, to house the books and other articles there.
28. The restoration of the Gedige at the Adahana Maluwa, Kandy, and the tombs of Ven. Upali and King Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe.

29. A library at Pelmadulla.
30. A Jayanti Memorial at Jaffna.
31. A life-size statue of Mr. W. A. de Silva to be erected in Colombo.
32. Restoration work at Seruwawila.
33. Training College for Bhikkhus at Ratmalana.

### **A Buddhist University**

TO further higher education in Buddhism, preparations are afoot for the establishment of a Buddhist Institute of University standard at Anuradhapura by June 1957. It will be run by a Board of Management and will be open to both the Sangha and the laity.

The Institute will be non-professional in character and devoted to the pursuit of humanistic studies and study of languages.

### **A Buddhist Library**

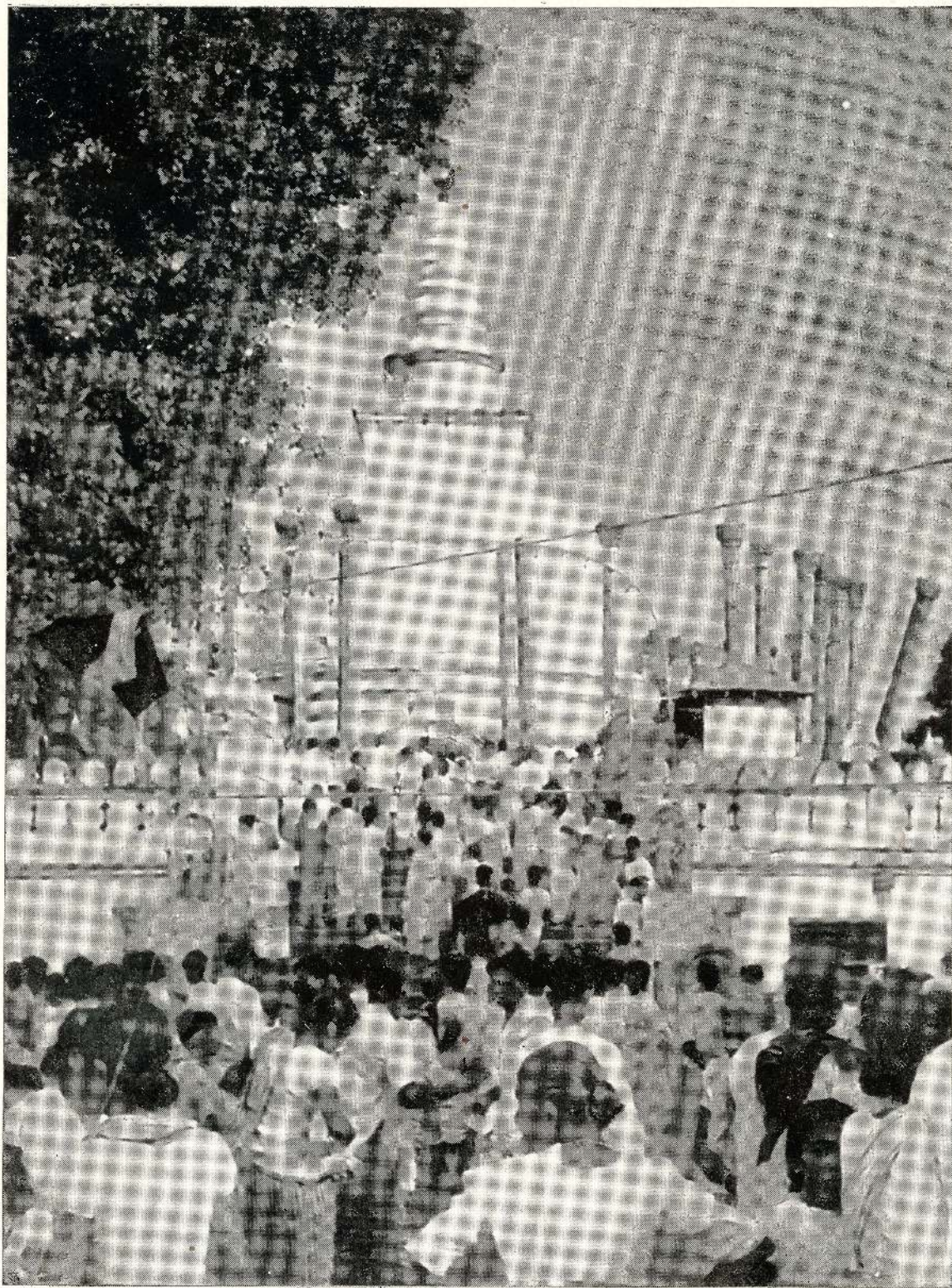
THE Mandalaya has also decided to establish a Buddhist Library, where books on Buddhism written in all languages will be available. It has been tentatively decided to have it as a separate section of the University Library at Peradeniya.

### **International Exhibition of Buddhist Art**

IN order to foster and promote Buddhist Arts and Crafts, the Mandalaya has decided to hold an International Buddhist Exhibition in February, 1957.

The Exhibition will depict the important events of Buddhist history and the influence of Buddhism on the arts of various countries in the world. It will also represent sermons, pageants and processions, and there will be staged plays, ballets, &c., depicting Buddhist teachings, customs and ways of life. The Exhibition ground will be spanned by a "Panorama of Fame" which will consist of a pandal with statues of Buddhist leaders, both monks and laymen down the ages. There will also be a model of the Tivanka Pilimage and





Thuparama Dagoba, Anuradhapura



the Vatadage of Polonnaruwa which will be open for worship and a Theatre Hall for pageants and plays.

### Arts and Crafts Exhibition, Kandy

MEANWHILE, in the hill capital of Kandy, preparations are afoot to hold a Jayanti Arts and Crafts Exhibition during the Esala Perahera, 1956.

A special committee of the Kandy District Buddha Jayanti Mandalaya has been appointed to organise the exhibition which is intended to raise funds for several Buddhist purposes and to revive national art, music and drama.

Special features of this exhibition will be (1) a Giant Makara Thorana entrance, (2) a replica of the Maligawa Octagon, in which will be exhibited an illuminated statue of the Buddha, (3) a Hall of Fame which will include portraits of eminent Buddhists of the past, (4) an Open Air Theatre, for Kandyan dancing, folk dancing, &c.—it is intended to organise a competition to encourage and attract artists from all parts of the island, (5) a propaganda stall for various departments like Health, Cottage Industries, Rural Development and Agriculture, (6) and a theatre for staging ballets and Jataka stories.

But the Kandy Esala Perahera will perhaps be the most colourful spectacle in the Buddha Jayanti celebrations this year. The perahera itself will be much bigger and conducted on a grander scale than in previous years. It is intended to add certain features to it in keeping with traditions and to revive some of the ancient aspects which had been given up in recent times. The entire route of the perahera will be floodlit and all dissawas and nilames are to participate in the perahera. It will be filmed in colour so that it could be shown as a documentary both in Ceylon and abroad.

### International Buddhist Conference

THE activities of the Buddha Mandalaya have, however, not been entirely confined to Ceylon. The Mandalaya will hold an International Buddhist Conference in or about January, 1957. It is proposed to invite 250 delegates. This conference

will enable the Mandalaya to keep in touch with the Buddhist activities of other countries and to ensure the co-operation of all nations in the celebration of the Buddha Jayanti. This will be an opportunity for the Buddhist scholars of the world to meet together and discuss their common problems.

One of the most historic undertakings in the Buddha Jayanti year will be the restoration of the Dalada Maligawa, the sacred shrine of Buddhists the world over.

The wings which were planned a number of years ago, but could not be built owing to many difficulties, will now, with the State grant of over a million rupees, be completed.

According to the plans, two wings will be built to the north and south of the Relic Chamber, which will improve the artistic view of the Dalada Maligawa. Other additions and alterations will be made to the existing buildings with a view to making the Dalada Maligawa a symbol of our highest concept of Art and Architecture—in fact an architectural gem which will no doubt draw many millions of pilgrims and tourists to Ceylon.

### Special Grants

*The Mahiyangana Stupa.*—This Stupa which stands on the spot visited by the Buddha during his first visit to Ceylon is being restored by the Mahiyangana Restoration Society. A grant of Rs. 500,000 was given by the Mandalaya.

*University Sangharama and Vihara.*—A grant of Rs. 305,000 was given to the University Sangharama and Vihara Trust which is building a Hall of Residence for Buddhist monks at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.

*Other Grants.*—The Mandalaya is now considering a proposal to give financial assistance to Tissamaharamaya, Mutiyangana and Kirivehera.

### Vipassana Bhavana Centre, Mihintale

ANOTHER of the very important projects which the Mandalaya has undertaken in connection with the Buddha Jayanti is the establishment of a Vipassana Bhavana Centre at Mihintale,



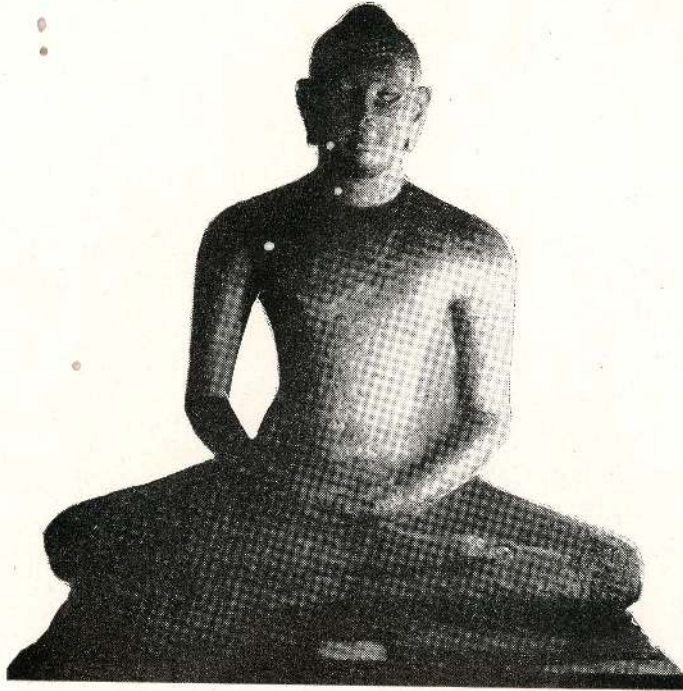


Fig. 1. The Toluville Buddha  $\times 1/12$  actual size

## Some Aspects of Art in Ceylon

(With 5 figures)

P. E. P. DERANIYAGALA

THESE few aspects of Ceylon's art dating from the earliest known stone age cave drawings down to the close of the 19th century provide only a very incomplete insight into the work of the artist in the strict sense and of the artisan. Those desiring further information should refer to the papers listed in the References to Literature, while the proposal by the National Museums Department to publish an Atlas of Antiquities will provide a complete account.

The art of Ceylon can be divided into three eras, namely :

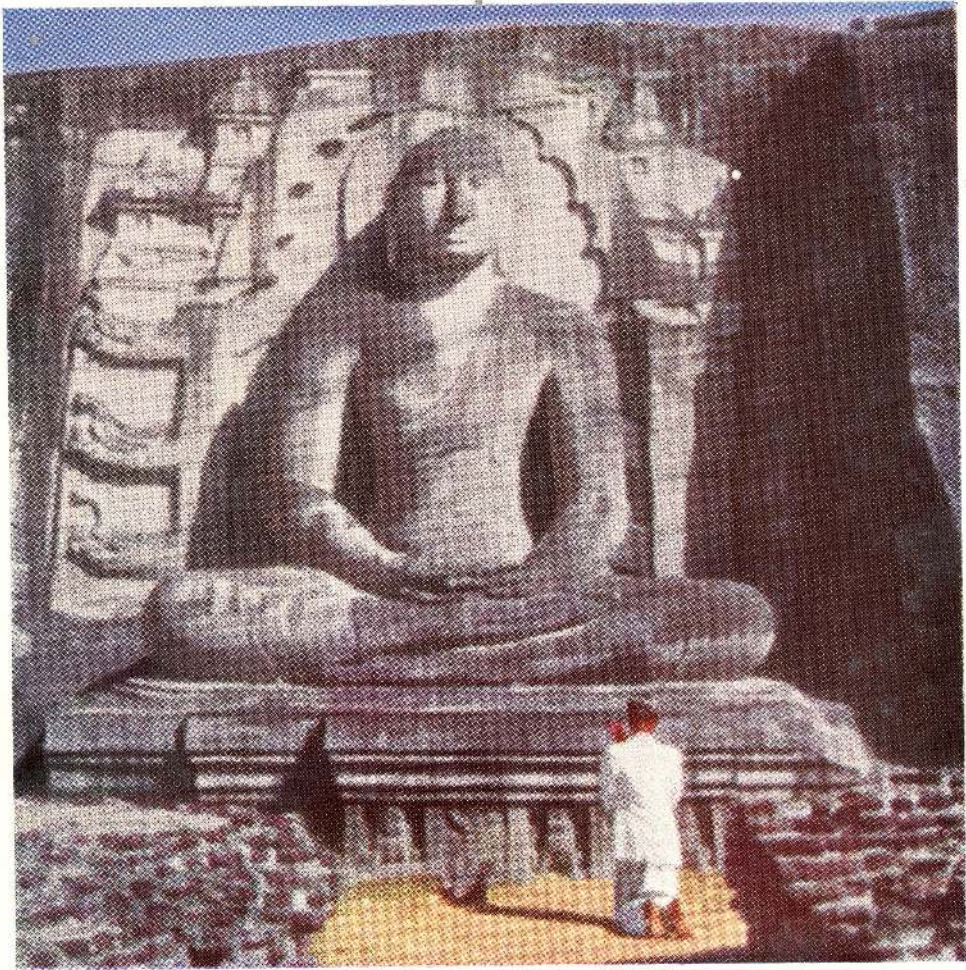
(1) the New Stone Age or Balangoda culture ;

(2) the Ferrolithic with its Tabbova-Maradam maduva culture ; and

(3) the Historic.

The Balangoda is represented by paintings as well as by engravings on rock. Its representations of human figures resemble the work of stone age man in other countries, a man being generally represented by a straight line passing through a semi-circle opening downwards which indicates the arms while the legs are two vertical lines. Animals are less stylized, although elephants show some resemblance to those depicted in North Africa where sometimes a conical posterior





Seated Buddha—Galvihara, Polonnaruwa







overhangs the hind limbs (Deraniyagala 1955 ; Plate 44). This type of painting survived among the so-called Vaddhas who are the mixed descendants of stone age and modern metal using races.

The Ferrolithic period has not yielded any paintings as such, but painted pottery and red terracotta statuettes akin to those of Harappa and from the Cairns in the Nilgris of India, are known. Some of these might date back to 2500 B.C., but others might be considerably younger.

The Historic period of Ceylon, defined by the advent of script, commenced under Hindu culture, but after the 3rd century A.C. the serene and more static poses of Buddhist art were dominant. Towards the 5th century A.C. the frescoes revealed figures spaced apart but in the more recent periods there was considerable overcrowding and the addition of trees and landscapes. It is possible that the strong cultural contacts with China about 400 A.C. were responsible for the former type of spaced out figures.

After the 10th century, Sinhala paintings generally depicted continuous narrative, but towards the 16th, attention was often focused upon single events. The artist was first trained in the use of the *Vaka deka* or double curve resembling the Sinhala letter “*o*” and much of his later work shows this elaborated into highly complex effects. Models do not appear to have been used, the artist drawing largely from memory and from a series of conventions which he dared not contravene: for example, certain colors and the attitude indicated the mood or nature of the person. Two or more human figures were also skilfully combined into motifs representing the outlines of a palanquin, a vase, a wheel or a dagaba. Although the drawing of the body was so regulated, portraiture existed and was expressed in the face and dress of the subject. Examples are the faces at Sihagiri and the representations of various chiefs frescoed upon temple walls during the last century.

Paintings on cloth were once common in temples, but few have survived the ravages of time. The *Salalihini Sandesaya* mentions that they also adorned the houses of nobles during the 16th

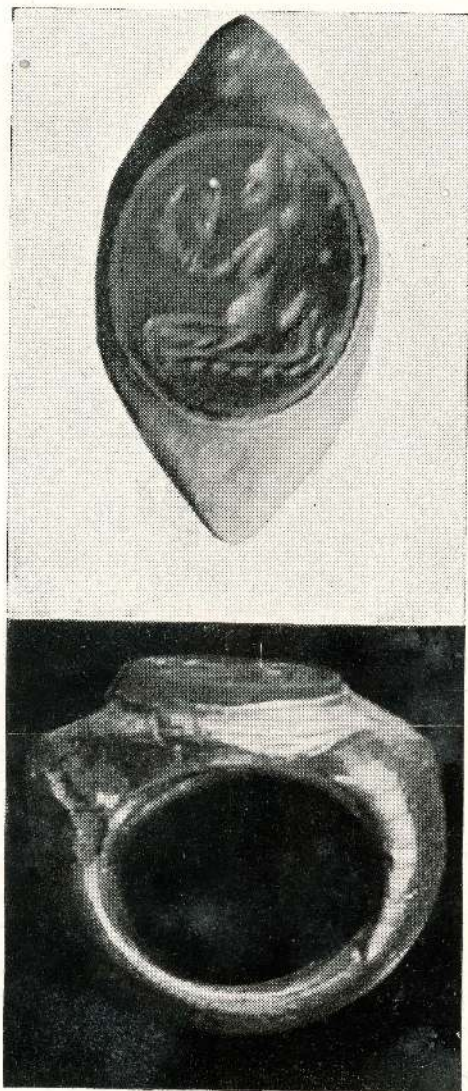


Fig. 2. A golden intaglio ring from a gem pit at Kuttapitiya owned by Mr. W. M. Punchi Mahatmaya. The engraved intaglio is shown on top

century. In some of the 17th century temple cloths termed “*Vian redi*” or “*Deva angam redi*”, the figure of the Buddha occupies the





Fig. 3. The portrait statue of King Parakrama Bahu the Great  $\times 1/12$  actual size



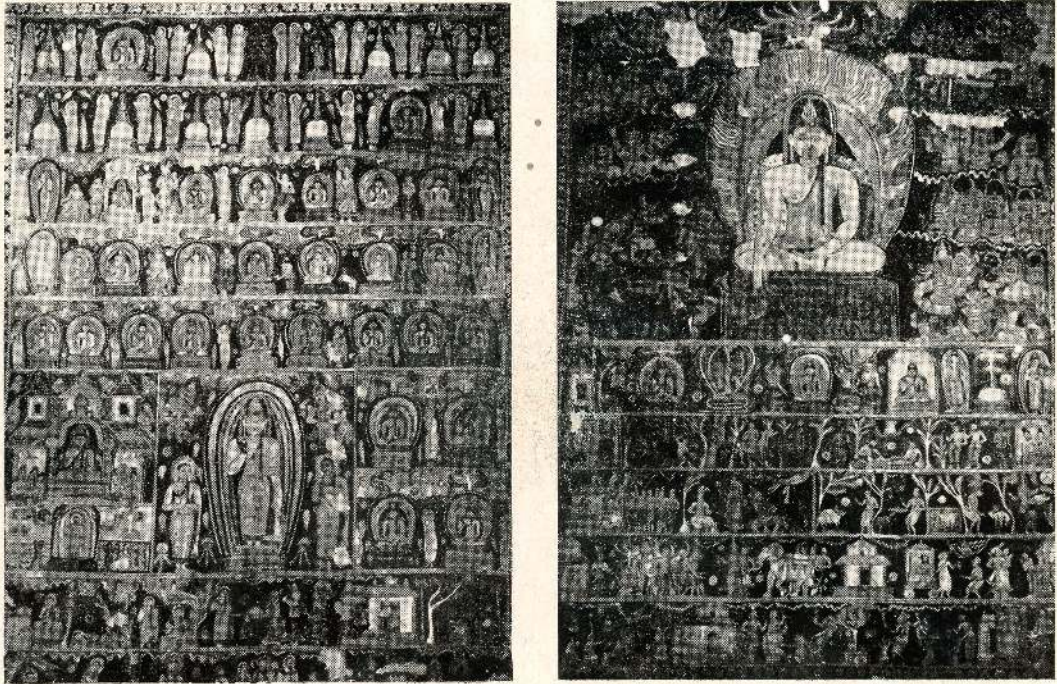


Fig 4. Two painted temple cloths from the Central Province, late 17th and early 18th centuries  $\times \frac{1}{16}$  its actual size

central position, while forming a zig-zag pattern full of action above and below him are panels depicting the Jataka Stories (fig. 4). Some of the cloths of the 18th century display considerable over-crowding, while their elephants somewhat resemble those frescoed at Degaldoruva.

Sculpture, also controlled by canons set forth in stanzas, reached a high standard (fig. 1) and two specimens of Sinhala work rank among the world's masterpieces of portrait sculpture. One of them is the statue of King Gamunu at Anuradhapura ; the other representing King Parakrama Bahu, is at Polonnaruva. Both show a considerable degree of stylization which adds to their dignity (fig. 3).

Bronze statues are many and varied, for Sinhala conventional types were influenced considerably by South Indian Chola art during the 11th and 12th centuries. Images of Hindu gods were made

by two schools during this period : one imitated the South Indian without retaining the Sinhala traditional methods, the other did. The latter figures are readily identifiable in being proportionately longer from the hip to the soles of the feet than the South Indian ones, in possessing thinner lips, wider and blunter noses and rounder faces. An example is the statue of Sundara Murti in the Colombo Museum (fig. 5).

Engraving upon precious and semi-precious stones set in rings as intaglios was mainly executed with a cutting disc (fig. 2). Grouping and balance of several human figures within so small a compass as the gem stone of a ring calls for much skill, and some of these intaglios might be as old as the Indus valley civilization. While the earlier figures hold nothing in their hands, generally the women of the later period, e.g., the 6th century A.C., carry a four-petalled flower.



The material so carved might be carnelian, amethyst, sapphire, ruby, jasper, lapis lazuli, rock crystal, &c. A 6th century golden intaglio ring is shown in fig. 2.



Fig 5. Sundara Murti, a bronze statue  $\times \frac{1}{3}$  actual size

Wood-carving is known only from the more recent work since humidity and insect and rodent pests have destroyed the earlier. There are two main types of carving: (a) where the sculptor has incised the wood deeply and (b) where the incision is more superficial. The

former type is bolder and more massive in style, whereas the latter is frequently of extreme delicacy but often conveys the impression of over-crowding.

Ivory carving was probably one of the most advanced schools in the whole of South-east Asia, and at certain periods displayed an affinity to those of Travancore and Mysore, but always possessed its own distinguishing features. At times the ivory was softened by immersion in pineapple juice or in a solution of raw turmeric and the juice of pounded leaves of *Moringa oleifera* prior to carving; thereafter it was hardened in a solution of alum and polished with the spathe of either the breadfruit or jak tree, and finally finished off with a cloth dipped in the oil of *Bassia longifolia*.

These are a few of the numerous aspects of the art of the Sinhala race that have died out and the others can only be resuscitated if their truly creative artists are selected and given the patronage they enjoyed in the 18th century.

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About six miles out of Colombo is situated the famous Buddhist temple at Kelaniya whose wall paintings are well known. This wall painting shows the Buddha placing his footprint on the summit of Sri Pada (Adam's Peak)

## Ceylon's Debt to Buddhism

WILFRED M. GUNASEKARA

BUDDHISM stands pre-eminent in the cultural development of this Island. About 1200 A.D., Buddhism in India showed signs of extinction; but it remained and still remains the national religion of the Sinhalese. The *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvamsa*, which have been composed by monks, naturally gave a vivid description of the "historia sacra" of this Island.

The *Mahāvamsa* gives a description of the advent of the Apostle Mahinda, a prince of Magadha and a lineal descendant of Chandragupta, and of the introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon. Having come to Ceylon by air, he converted the royal

family and, under his preaching, the people became devout Buddhists.

The story how the king went to chase the elk Mahinda bears a resemblance to the legend of St. Hubert and the stag in the forest of Ardennes and to that of St. Eustace who, when hunting was led by a deer of singular beauty towards a rock, where it displayed to him the crucifix upon its forehead.

### Religious Building

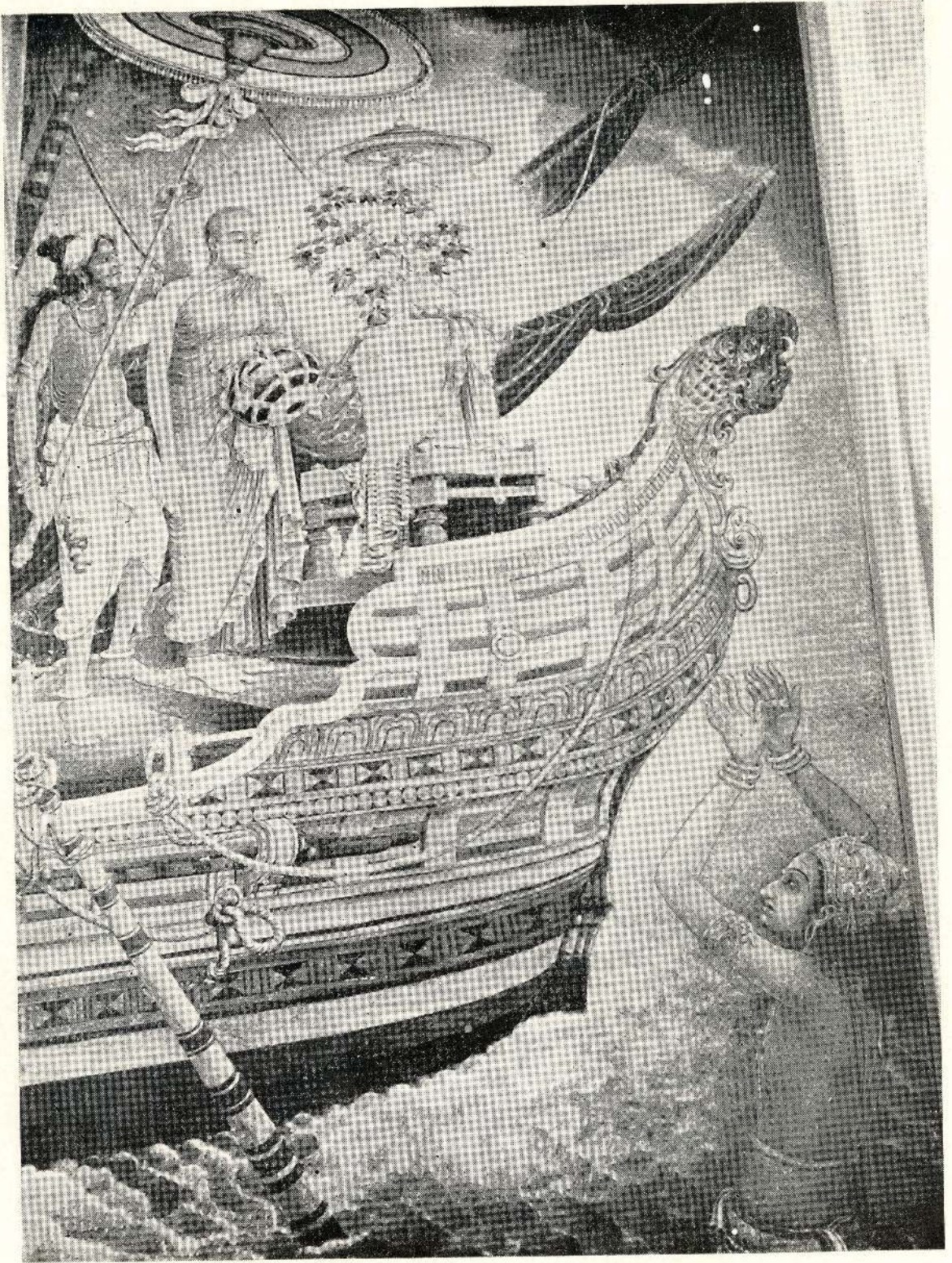
FOLLOWING the establishment of Hinduism in Ceylon there commenced the erection of those





Another wall painting at Kelaniya showing Prince Danta and Princess Hemamala bringing the Sacred Tooth Relic





Yet another wall painting at Kelaniya showing Arahant Bhikkuni Sangamitta bringing to Ceylon a branch of the Sacred Bo-tree



stupendous religious structures, the number and magnitude of whose remains form a remarkable characteristic of the historical remains of this Island.

These edifices were constructed in the Indian style and the pillars, tanks, railings and frescoes of Ceylon suggest an Indian influence.

These structures which arose at a time when Buddhism was in the zenith of its glory provide an instructive chapter to the archaeologist and the historian. It has thus afforded a different science in a different setting. Hence Buddhism in this country has influenced its Archaeology, Epigraphy and Sculpture.

The cultural affinity of an Indian influence in Ceylon was thus pictured in these religious edifices. It may be assumed, therefore, that the altars or chapels (Sinh. *Vahalkaḍas*) of the Ceylon Dagobas served a purpose similar to those *Mahachétiyas* of *Amarāvati* and *Nagarjunikoṇḍa*. The type of stupa that could be seen at Anuradhapura is similar to that of the Kistna Valley in India.

The Sigiriya frescoes are a fresh facet in the development of Buddhist Art. It is surprising that this art at its inception created monuments of such perfect beauty. "It is greatly to be deplored that in the difficult problem of preservation and restoration, religious zeal has not always been guided by good taste." But so much is certain that obedient and faithful observation of fundamental aspects of Buddhism gave the first impetus to the cultural development of Ceylon.

The reclamation of lands and the extension of cultivation communicated an impulse in the diffusion of Buddhism. It also gave an impetus to the progress of horticulture in Ceylon. Buddhist ceremonials which necessitated the introduction of flowers and garlands in observing these rites rendered horticulture a special study.

The architectural history of India dates from the 3rd century B.C. and, to the same period may be assigned the earliest monuments of Ceylon.

### Ceylon's debt

CEYLON owes a deep debt of gratitude to the earliest members of the great Dynasty, who were

responsible for the rudiments of civilisation, arts, agriculture and for a system of national worship. "But neither the piety of the kings nor their munificence sufficed to conciliate the personal attachment such as would have fortified its occupant against the fatalities incident to despotism.

It may be considered, therefore, that the attitude of Buddhism demanded from the people a special and spiritual interest. It became a support to the fine arts.

Besides Buddhist Art, in Ceylon we have the Sinhala Art which is of a Buddhistic intention. Even if this is essentially Indian, it has been accepted by authorities to be more truly Hindu in character.

"Medieval Sinhalese Art was the Art of a people for whom husbandry was the most honourable of all occupations. It was a religious art, and so a popular art. It was also essentially a national art, the craftsmen, forming an integral part of the Civil Service, were rewarded with grants of State land," says Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy in his Foreword.

Literary activity grew more intense with the great spiritual movements organised after the conversion of Ceylon. Tradition states that Mahinda introduced to Ceylon the canonical scriptures of the Buddhists, the Pāli Tripiṭaka and its commentaries. It flourished from the 4th century A.D. and received a new impulse through the great commentator Buddhaghōṣa.

Having taken up his residence in the isolated Ganthakara Vihara at Anuradhapura, he translated the whole of the Sinhala *Aṭṭhakathās* ("talks about the contents, meanings, or purpose of various parts of the doctrine") which represented traditional interpretation of the teachings of Buddha.

We should not go behind the fact that the literature of a country is bound with the life of its people and the literary productivity of this Island has been mainly due to the extra bounteousness of our Sinhala kings. By the advancement of Buddhist culture rose its literature, arts and sciences which have a special bearing on the cultural development of Ceylon.





Kelaniya Temple









Buddha Statues from Medirigiriya

## The Buddha Image in Ceylon

D. T. DEVENDRA

THE likeness of the Buddha draws the devotee with a veneration that cannot be expressed in material terms. In the beginning the Ceylon Buddhist cared, however, only for those images in which Buddha Relics had been enshrined and these were probably of handy size. As years passed the meaning was forgotten, so that adoration came to be offered before the image itself.

This background is necessary to understand that what may be a monstrosity to the aesthete

is a holy treasure to the pious whose vision transcends the picture before him. If some of the art of today with its utter disregard of the real can evoke praise and be called daringly original, who dare tax the taste of the enwrapped worshipper whose spirit, crossing material bounds, takes flight into a radiance beyond? The lump of clay which, as some think, should be a caricature of the Buddha is, nevertheless, a symbol of loveliness to him who sees within a shining light reflected by the flame of his adoration.





Seated Buddha, Outer Circular Road, Anuradhapura



Except, however, in the little shrine of a homely *avasa*, or in a rude shelter underneath some Bo-tree at the crossways, the likeness of the Blessed One called forth very special efforts from our little land. We have striven to create and we succeeded then, as we succeed now. For, we must remember that the great stone Buddha in the northern environs of the ancient Abhayagiri Vihara in Anuradhapura brought peace to Jawaharlal Nehru behind prison bars in Dehra Dun. And yet in his own land, in his very home which is replete with the tradition of Gandhara culture, there are countless images which students of Buddhist art—who care naught for the works in little Lanka, India's spiritual daughter—would place in the front rank of Buddhist artistic achievement. We should fix in our memories that fifteen hundred and fifty years ago it was from Ceylon that to China was borne 'a jade-stone image of Buddha, exhibiting every colour in purity and richness, in workmanship unique, and appearing beyond human art'. That forty years later five of our own *bhikkhus* travelled to this same land of Han, headed by the monk-sculptor Nan-te (Nanda) taking a "three-fold image of Buddha" as a gift to the Emperor of the Celestial Empire.

### Masterpieces in Ceylon

AND had this skill been obliterated with alien invasions? See the masterpieces in Polonnaruwa alone for an answer to the question. Read also of how a Sinhala image was taken to Siam a century afterwards and became the model for Buddha statuary in that country. Or, come close down to our own times to a modern temple in Dehiwala and listen to P. D. Ouspensky on its recumbent Buddha.

"I do not know of any work in Christian art which stands on the same level as the Buddha with the Sapphire eyes, that is to say, I know of no work which expresses in itself so completely the idea of Christianity as the face of this Buddha expresses

the idea of Buddhism. To understand this face is to understand Buddhism."

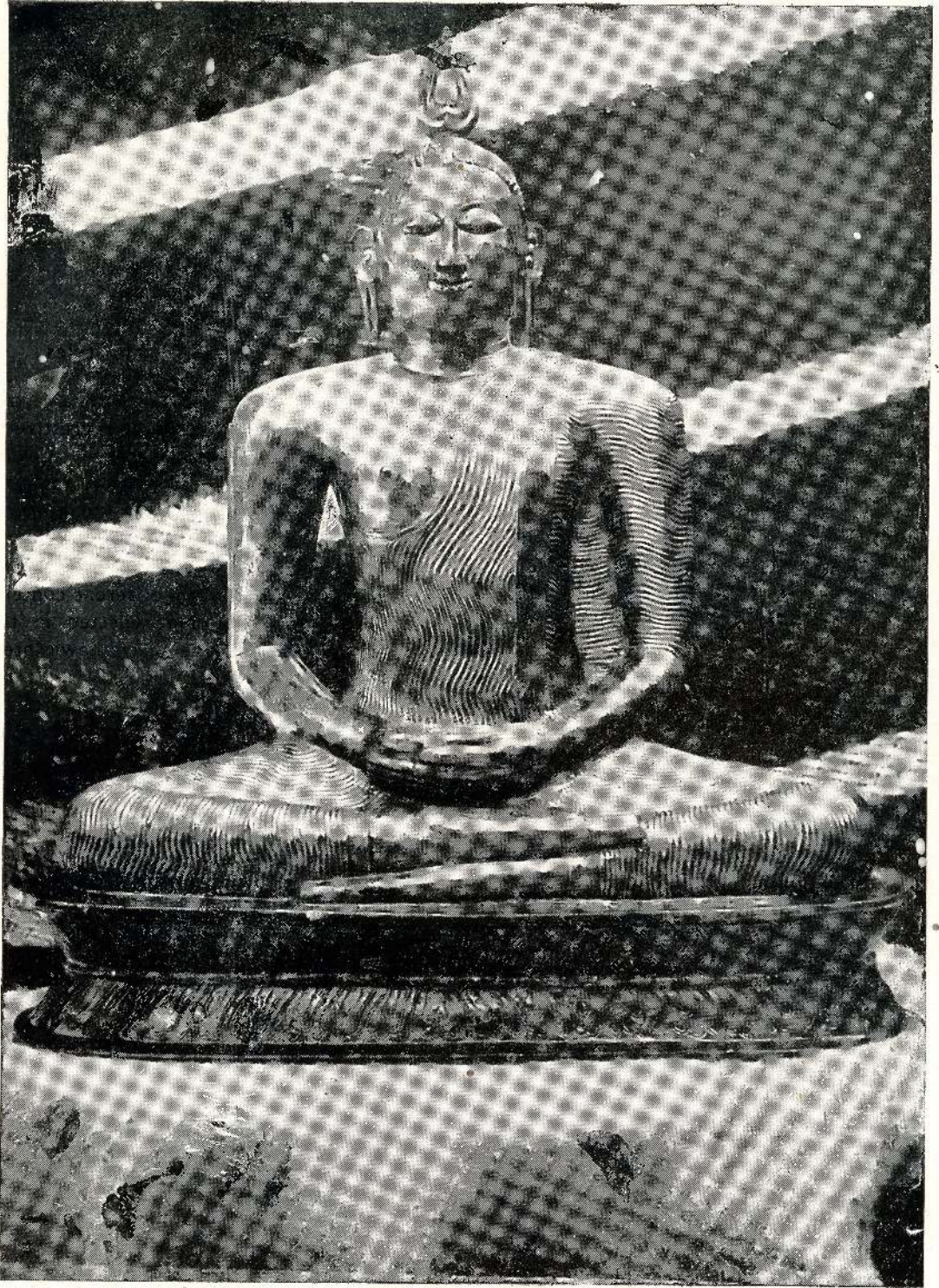
And now let us get back to the beginning, when the men of Lanka fashioned the likeness of the Sakyana Sage, in the idiom of the Buddha Dhamma taught to their king Devanampiya Tissa twenty-three centuries ago by Mahinda, the Holy One. It is said in the Great Chronicle (*Mahavamsa*) that king Jettha Tissa found in the Thuparama "the great and beautiful stone image that was placed of old by Devanampiya Tissa in the Thuparama". Whether the image had, in fact, been the work of Lanka's first Buddhist king, or a contemporary (fifth-century) belief to that effect, we have no means of knowing for certain. If the chronicler's statement is accepted, Ceylon should be given the honour of having created the Buddha image. Is there any reason that the honour should not come to it equally as it may go elsewhere? Buddhism was accepted from Mahinda by the king and his subjects with unprecedented joy and unanimity, after which, to this day, they came to consider themselves as the custodians of the pure religion.

### Indian Representation Different

IN India the earliest known representation of the Buddha was by means of a symbol, a vacant seat *Swastika*, umbrella, a "pillar of fire", foot-prints, the wheel or Dhamma Cakka, the Bodhi Tree, the Tri-Ratna symbol, and so on. The Buddha had transcended the phenomenal world and, to the Indian mind, it seemed a sacrilege to depict him in human form. But why, in Ceylon, do we never come across the contemporary use of a single one of these devices in the same fashion? That is a question to ponder. To my knowledge only one of these symbols is found in our most archaic art, that is, the Tri-Ratna. It is to be seen in Kantaka Cetiya, Mihintale, which dates from pre-Christian times. But the sign is never used to represent the Buddha; it is merely decorative.

If, pursuing these thoughts, one should ask in turn: Why did not Indian art borrow, then, the





Buddha Statue



idea from Ceylon of fashioning the Master in human form? The obvious answer lies in an examination of the religio-philosophical beliefs among the two sets of people and their mental attitudes to the image. Even in Ceylon of the time, we should remember that images were not objects of veneration *qua* images. If, as already stated, an image contained a Relic, then it was a *Cetiya* and differently viewed. As a matter of fact, an ordinary image is the least important of the three types of *Cetiyas*: Saririka, Paribhogika, Uddesika, and belongs to the last category which is of the least consequence. Therefore the creation of a Buddha image did not, in the early days, constitute an act of special significance.

### Significant Buddha Images

THE *Mahavamsa* has a later (textually, earlier) reference to Buddha images, that is, in the enshrining of the Relics in Ruvanveliseya in the second century B.C. In the first century of the Christian era, there is a reference to images by King Vasabha. If we can accept the well-known inscribed image by Friar Bala of early Buddhist India, is it false modesty which makes a Ceylon man deny just honour to his own kith and kin? Apart from the outstanding achievements in Ceylon art earlier mentioned, one has only to consider the many first-rate specimens to be seen today: Avukana Buddha, Isurumuniya Lovers, Naga Guard-stones, Bodhisattva from Situlpavuva, Man (with Horse) in Isurumuniya, torsos in the Anuradhapura Archæological Museum, besides many others where the human form has been rendered exceedingly well. In the early books we are told the story of a *bhikkhuni* whose emotions were so deeply stirred by the beautiful and life-like guard-stone figures in Situlpavuva that she was consumed by a passion which led to her death. The story may have its moral, but the extant examples surely bear out that art has reached worthy heights in Lanka?

Reverting to the art of the image, one has to take special note of certain features by which the

Ceylon artist expressed his attitude. In the first place we have not found a single Buddha image disfigured by any record as to authorship. This, as mentioned in the case of the Indian Friar Bala, is different from the Indian attitude. And yet we have a stone effigy of an early king in the courtyard of Ruvanveliseya which bears an explanatory record.

### Characteristics of Two Different Styles

IN general, the pure Indian type carries a certain smoothly soft youthfulness, rather suggestive of effeminacy. The effect of the purely Ceylon type is rather strength of body, rigid vigour and maturity of face. For here we tended to interpret the subject as having withdrawn from external passions into passionless-ness, to an inner calm known only to those in *dhyana*, or serene contemplation with balance of mind reflected in the balanced body. The legs are never shown interlocked as in the northern Indian type *padmasana* so popular in the yogic pose. Nagapattinam (Negapatam), too, shows numerous examples akin to Ceylon, but there is in them a disproportionate ratio between the width of face across the centre, and the narrowing ends towards head and chin, which easily stamp them as aesthetically inferior. This may be verified from the several exhibits in the Colombo Museum and occurs patently in the largest stone example known to me, which is in the Sailabimbarama at Dodanduwa where it was transported early in the last century from a deserted Buddhist site in South India. In our favoured *dhyani mudra*, the image is set on the Adamantine Seat (*vajrasana*) but the legs, which are gently laid one upon the other, do not convey the impression of weight, although the straight body indicates firmness to express the attitude. The hands are placed lightly one on the other, but not always so, for one of the best known of these ancient images in Anuradhapura has hands slightly cupped in front. A variation is to be found at Hindagala (7th century) where the Second Buddha has





Avukana Buddha





Tivanka Buddha image, Northern Temple, Polonnaruwa



his hands placed together and well open as if to accept an offering.



BODHISATTVA AVALOKITESVARA from Situlpavuwa, showing superb modelling of the human body

"The legs of this figure are placed unconventionally in an intermediate position between the traditional Indian interlocked *padmasana* and the Ceylon easy style. That is to say, the right leg goes underneath the left, the left taken over the right instep and folded fairly parallel to the other. This position is distinctly suggestive of relaxation and is the least formal of all the known positions, in so far as it gives not a hint of symbolic interpretation. Even in such an easy style as in some of the Indian cave sculptures where the Buddha is seated in a position reminiscent of the European, with both feet well planted on the floor. He is invariably shown in some symbolic attitude like *dhamma-cakka mudra*."

#### Buddha Representation Elsewhere in Asia

GESTURES of the hand were freely used in other Buddhist lands, but never so freely in Ceylon, which confined itself mainly to *dhyani*, and to *abhaya* (Blessing) in a subsidiary way, and almost wholly rejected the rest. The *dhamma cakka* which signifies the First Sermon is hardly found. Discourse is traditionally indicated by *vitarka mudra* more particularly with a raised open hand with two middle fingers bent towards the centre of the palm. Of this latter I can recall not one instance here, discoursing being expressed by thumb and forefinger forming nearly a circle. Examples are the big bronze from Badulla in the Colombo Museum and a mural or two from Tivankage, Polonnaruwa. There is no instance of *bhumisparsa mudra* to the best of my recollection. An example was found in Anuradhapura (Archæological Survey of Ceylon, Memoir I) but it looks suspiciously an importation. What approximates to this earth-touching gesture is found in the Tivankage murals, but as the meaningful gesture is in *vitarka* and the left hand hangs limply towards the earth (in the *mudra* proper, it should be the right), one cannot concede that *bhumisparsa mudra* has been employed in local symbolism. There is no instance either of *varada mudra* (Boon-granting). In my article in the Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation





Bronze Buddha from Badulla, Colombo Museum



Volume, I have held that the standing figure at the Galvihara, Polonnaruva, is not one of the Buddha; therefore, I reject its hand position in a discussion on *mudras* in Buddha images.

Ceylon was averse to showing the Blessed One in body movement and so the graceful Walking Buddha of Siam is rather a wonderment. There is, of course, an occasional example like the Sankissa Ladder Scene at Tivankage. Restraint was the ideal, but the body never becomes "wooden" as in the Indian Jina statuary. The nearest to this Indian type is the huge brick-and-plaster Lankatilaka (Polonnaruva) damaged figure, but it is practically a sole example. Some liveliness is indicated in the three-flexioned (*tivanka*) Buddha of Polonnaruva. The damage to its upper portion, however, shows to great advantage something better, that is, the exquisite modelling of lower body and limbs with the rhythm of movement.

### Most Popular Attitudes of the Buddha

OF the three attitudes of sitting, reclining and standing, the first two were the most favoured. But we have seen how the artist has introduced variations so as not to be a slave to style. Apart from the peculiarities in drapery and its arrangement, or deviations in the conventionalized flame (*usnisa*), the proportions of body—I know of an exquisite Colombo Museum Buddha which conforms to the well-known Gandhara ratio of body to head—there are what one may call nuances, which single out a Ceylon work from its closest Indian example. This is the vernacular idiom which art critics should study. Too frequently has stress been laid on style, which can mislead woefully.

Ceylon is also distinguished by the monumental, from the Indian which adopted the colossal in exceptional instances. This love led to the transporting of colossi to far distances. The great stone image of Devanampiya Tissa was transported by Jettha Tissa to Pacina-tissa Pabbata (opposite Nuwara-wewa) and thence by his brother Mahasena to the Abhayagiri precincts.

Images were taken from Anuradhapura to Polonnaruva; I have already mentioned the Dodanduwa image; some sixty years ago, an image was, with the concurrence of Archaeological Commissioner H. C. P. Bell, transported from a site on the Kurunegala-Anuradhapura road to the Sri Maha Bodhi temple in the Sacred City. The most staggering example of a colossus would be available in our own times when the 120 ft. seated giant should be completed at Veherahena near Matara. It has been constructed from below, block by block, a little way above the hips.

### Conclusion

I close these notes with a very curious stone seated Buddha in the Moragoda ruins at Padaviya. It has two features which I have never seen elsewhere. Somewhat below the line of the breast runs round a broad shallow groove as if for a band. Obviously it was not chiselled out to fix a rope for hauling, which would be a clumsy device at any time. The other inexplicable "ornamentation" is a dressing along the lower edge of the waist which clearly shows the petals of a flower—rather stiffly, it is true, but flower-petals without any doubt. What do these two peculiarities signify?



## The Sacred Relics of Sanchi

M. D. RAGHAVAN

AMONG the earliest deeds of free India has been the recovery of the sacred relics of the chief disciples of the Buddha, Sariputta and Maha Moggallana, from the British Museum, where they have been resting ever after their discovery by Sir Alexander Cunningham in 1887 at Sanchi. In this eventful chapter in the story of Buddhism, India's ally, Ceylon, played a leading role in negotiations resulting in the return of the relics to India by way of Ceylon. The name of Daya Hewavitarane will ever be remembered for his unremitting efforts both in securing the return of the relics to India as in getting a share of the relics to Ceylon. The relics on their first arrival in Ceylon were conducted in a gorgeous procession to the Colombo National Museum, where they received the homage and veneration of millions of the Buddhists of Ceylon. The relics continued to be in Ceylon until the summer of 1950, when they were ceremoniously handed over to Sri Chakravarthi, the Director-General of Archaeology in India, who was deputed by the Government of India to conduct them to India.

The scene shifts to an evening in the month of March, 1954, at the Colombo Fort Railway Station awaiting the special train bringing a share of the relics gifted by India to Ceylon. In many ways it recalled the animated scenes on the first arrival of the relics from England by sea. The overland railway journey of March, 1954, bringing over Ceylon's share of the relics, was marked by ceremonials and joyous demonstrations at the stations *en route* from India to Ceylon. At the Colombo Fort Railway Station, the reception prepared by the Maha Bodhi Society was solemn and impressive. As the gathering assembled, and the time drew near for the arrival of the train, the tranquil calm gave place to a decided change in the weather—rain clouds overcast the sky, and it blew a strong gale. A downpour of rain seemed imminent. It was at this moment of expectancy

that the train steamed in, in all its majesty. A few gentle drops of rain fell and all was calm again. I could not help feeling at the time that Nature's reception dwarfed, in its splendour, the man-made reception. The Premier, the Rt. Honourable Sir John Kotelawala, received the relics in all solemnity. The ceremonials concluded, the procession started on its way to the Maha Bodhi Society's headquarters. The procession had hardly formed, when Nature again blew a blast. It all but rained. The procession wended its way, nor did it rain until the procession reached its haven of rest. The rain which had been holding off, came down in torrents—a welcome shower giving the much needed rain.

### Third Scene

THE third scene in the Indo-Ceylon sacred relations was witnessed on a day in February of this year. The occasion was the opening of the exhibition, at New Delhi, of the relics of Moggalliputta Tissa Thera and other Buddhist saints, which formed part of the discoveries at Sanchi by Sir Alexander Cunningham and now returned by the British Government—"a striking illustration of the friendly relations between Britain, India and the Buddhist world". The event evoked the warm tribute paid by the Ceylon High Commissioner in India, Sir Edwin Wijeyaratne, to Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, hailed as "another great daughter of India who has become, like Princess Sanghamitta of old, an instrument to revive Buddhism in Asia". The reliquary containing the relics of Moggalliputta Tissa was generously set apart for Ceylon. Arriving on the eve of the Buddha Jayanti, these relics have a remarkable value to Ceylon, as it was at the Third Buddhist Council at Pataliputra in 307 B.C., presided over by Tissa Moggalliputta Thera, that



the decision was taken to send a Buddhist mission to "bear Buddhism beyond the borders of its narrower home"—a resolve which led to the adoption of Buddhism as the religion of Ceylon.

In accepting the relics, Sir Edwin Wijeyaratne spoke of India's magnificent gesture, expressing that the presentation of the relics to Ceylon would cement friendship and foster greater understanding between India and Ceylon.

The message of Sanchi cannot be better expressed than in the words of Sri Nelvin at the ceremonial reception at Pallam Air Port on receiving the relics. "In this auspicious year, we have had the fortune to be able to bring back these sacred relics to their old home. Their home really is not a particular place, but rather wherever they are honoured—in the hearts of the people who honour the message they convey. I hope that the real message they convey will become vital to our minds and hearts, and, wherever they are, they will bring good fortune and well-being to the people."

### Taken to Burma

THE relics of Moggalliputta Thera were first taken to Burma for veneration and exhibition at the Ceylon Session of the Chattha Sangayana, after which they were brought back to Ceylon by the Honourable Jayaweera Kuruppu, and received

by the Prime Minister, the Honourable S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, and members of the Cabinet at the Ratmalana Air Port. Receiving the relics contained in a silver casket, the Prime Minister placed the same in the waiting *ransivige*; they were then conducted in procession to the Independence Hall. After the conclusion of the public meeting there, they were conducted to the Colombo National Museum for ceremonial exposition and veneration by the Buddhists of Ceylon. After the period of exposition at the Museum, the relics were conducted to the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy.

His Excellency Sri B. N. Chakravarti, the High Commissioner for India in Ceylon, in the course of his address at the public meeting at the Independence Hall, traced the history of the relics, observing that Moggalliputta Tissa was the power behind the mission of Mahinda to Ceylon to spread Buddhism, which has ever since influenced the mode of thought and the way of life in Ceylon.

"We in India, like you, are celebrating Buddha Jayanti this year, and it augurs well that these sacred relics have now been restored to the Buddhist world on the eve of the Jayanti celebrations. Let us offer our humble obeisance to the great saint Moggalliputta Tissa who guided no less a person than Asoka in the path of virtue preached by the Buddha", were the concluding remarks of India's High Commissioner, Sri B. N. Chakravarti.



## Early Inscriptions of Ceylon and Buddhist Monastic Establishments

W. S. KARUNARATNE

THE earliest inscriptions of Ceylon belong to the three centuries immediately preceding the commencement of the Christian Era and their script is similar to that of Asokan Inscriptions. This establishes the fact that the Art of Writing was developed in this country with the introduction of Buddhism. Dedication of caves to the Buddhist monks formed the subject matter of these inscriptions.

The Mahavamsa, which is an excellent source-book for the construction of our history, begins its account of the colonisation of the island with the arrival of Vijaya, which took place in the 6th century before Christ. According to it, the Parinirvana or the demise of the Buddha was contemporaneous with the landing of Vijaya. The Indian Emperor Asoka who ascended the throne 236 years after the Parinirvana laid the foundations of a Buddhist culture in the island through the missionaries he despatched to the court of Devanampiya Tissa. This event which has been confirmed by Indian inscriptions marks the beginning of Ceylon's historical era. The critical student takes this synchronism with Indian history as the starting point of Ceylon's recorded history, and not the landing of Vijaya. The fact that our inscriptions begin from this period supports this view, and no inscription has so far been found which could be ascribed to a king prior to Devanampiya Tissa.

The early Brahmi Inscriptions—they are so called, because they are written in Brahmi letters—tell us of cave-dwelling monks, and the donation of caves to them by all sections of the community. From this it should not be inferred that the Buddhist monks of the time lived exclusively in caves. There is evidence from the inscriptions themselves that the kings built large monasteries.

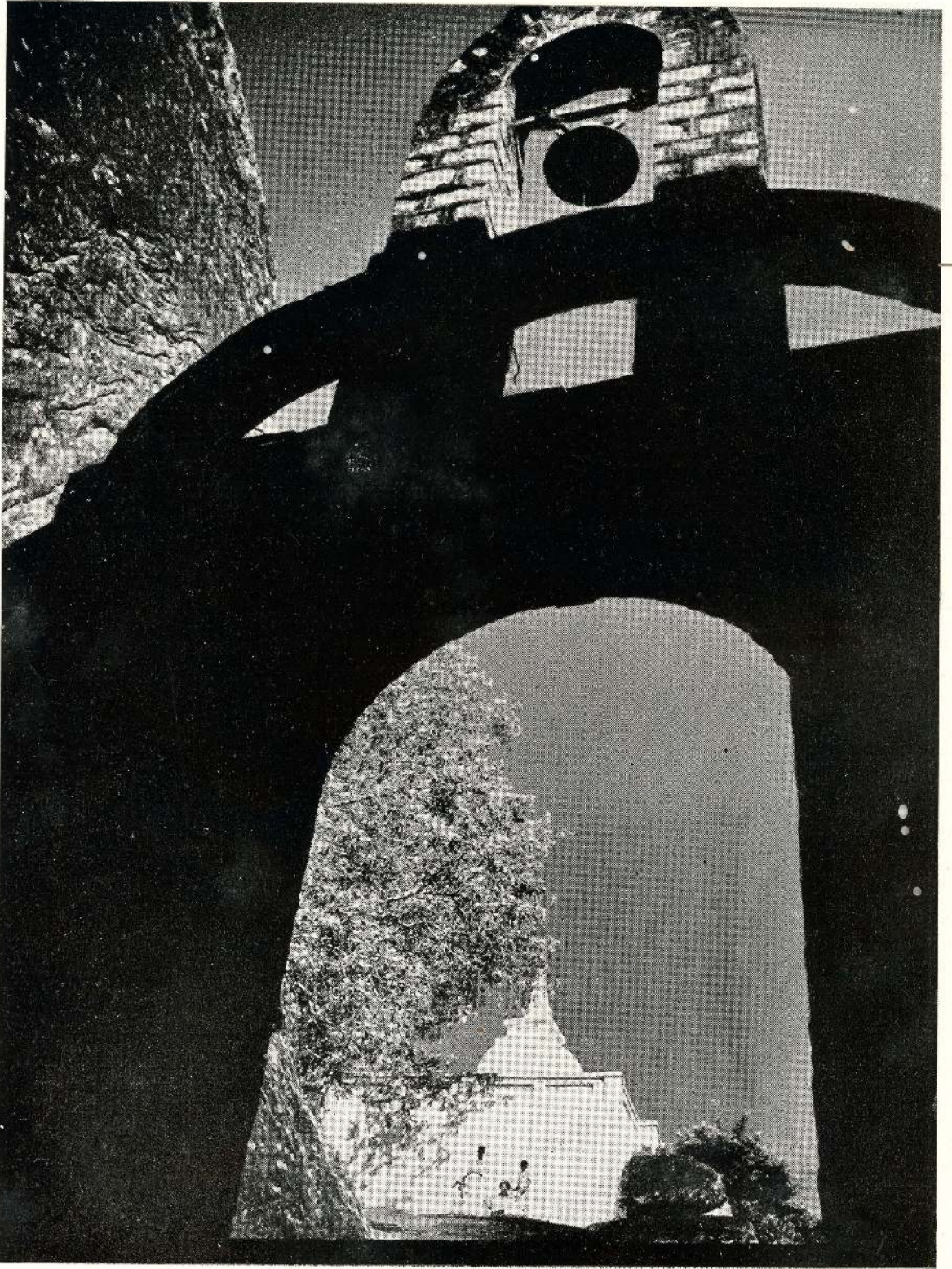
According to the existing records we can say that one of the following monarchs reigned in

the island at the starting point of the Christian Era :—Mahaculi Mahatissa, Coranaga Tissa, Anula, Kutakanna Tissa, Bhatikabhaya and Mahadathika Mahanaga. Out of these Mahaculi Mahatissa is mentioned as Devanapiya-putikana Gamini Abhaya or else as Pudukana, Abaya, Mahadathika Mahanaga as Devanapiya Naka Maharaja. Some of these names are given in the Molahitiya-Vele-Gala and Maharatmale rock inscriptions. In the Molahitiya-Vele-Gala Rock Inscriptions, the names of King Bhatikabhaya's father and great grand father are given. Several kings are thus mentioned in one record, in order to show their relationship. One fact which should be specially borne in mind is that the relationship and the succession of kings mentioned in the Mahavamsa exactly correspond to those given in the inscriptions. In the Inscription mentioned just now, king Bhatikabhaya is said to have donated a canal or the income accruing from it to the monks of the Pilipavata monastery. The record ends with the words "Bikusagaya sovana koturuni niyate" which means "dedicated to the Sangha after pouring water from a golden vessel". This shows that the social custom of pouring water on the hand, when something is given over, existed even at this time.

The Maharatmale Rock Inscription mentions a gift to the Sangha made by Maha-dathika Mahanaga, younger brother of Bhatikabhaya. Among the things given to the Sangha, are gruel, rice, and garments for the rainy season. They are described in the phrase, "Yaku ca bata ca vasavasika hatikaca"—It is clear from this that gruel (or kanji as we call it) formed an important item in the diet of the people.

The king named Saba is mentioned in the Pahala Kayinattama and Viharagala Inscriptions. There is evidence to prove that this Saba is the king called Subha in the Mahavamsa. Subha was the





Aluvihara Rock Temple



body-guard, or the gatewatchman of the king Yasalalaka Tissa, whose jest cost him his life and the throne. The story is described thus in the Mahavamsa. "Now a son of Datta, the gate-watchman, named Subha, who was himself a gate-watchman bore a close likeness to the King. And this palace-guard Subha did the king Yasalalaka, in jest, bedeck with the royal ornaments and place upon the throne, and binding the guard's turban about his own head, and taking himself his place, staff in hand, at the gate, he made merry over the ministers as they paid homage to Subha, sitting on the throne. Thus was he wont to do, from time to time. Now, one day, the guard cried out to the king, who was laughing 'Why does this guard laugh in my presence?' And Subha, the guard ordered to slay the king, and he himself reigned here six years under the name Subha rāja."

### Rock Inscription

A rock inscription belonging to Vasabha, who wrested the kingdom from Subha is found at Perumeyankulam, near Anuradhapura. A water tax is mentioned in this record as "dakapati". It is also stated that the royal order was proclaimed throughout the city, as is evident from the words "bera paharavaya dini".

A gold-plate belonging to this king was found at Vallipuram near Jaffna. I shall quote this short inscription in full so that you may gain some idea of the language of this period, that is, the 2nd century A.D. "Siddha Maha raja vahayaha rajehi amete Isi-giraye naka diva bujamani badakara-atanehi Piyaguka Tisa vihare karite". Its meaning is as follows:—"Hail! during the reign of Vasabha, when his minister called Isigiraya was governing the province of Nagadipa, Piyagukatisa constructed a vihara at a place named Badakara Atana". The ancient name of the Jaffna Peninsula was Nagadipa, and it had been a centre of Buddhism.

The Mahavamsa records that at the death of Vasabha his son Vankanasika Tissa succeeded to the throne, and after him, Gaja-bahu I. The

inscriptions at Palu Makiccava, Thuparamaya and Viharegala amply confirm this statement of the Mahavamsa. The Viharegala Inscription records that the Uppaladonika tank gifted to the Sangha by King Saba, was regranted by Gaja Bahu about fifty years later. As Saba, Vasabha, and Gaja-bahu are mentioned together, in two inscriptions of the same place, one referring to the other, Saba is clearly identifiable as Subha.

The Habassa Rock Inscription is an important record, belonging to the latter half of the second century. It brings to light certain facts which have been omitted by the author of the Mahavamsa. It mentions the Viceroy named Naga, who was a son of King Uttara, who in turn was a son of Vasabha. Therefore it appears that king Gajabahu and the Viceroy Naga were both grandsons of Vasabha and that they were contemporaries. The name of King Uttara is not found in any of the historical records of the island.

Next we come to the inscriptions of the third century. A slab inscription found near Abhayagiri Dagaba belongs to King Malutisa, who is evidently Kanitthatissa. In it are mentioned Abhayagiri and Utaramaha ceta. According to the Mahavamsa, Abhayuttara Mahacetiya belongs to the Abhayagiri Vihara. This fact helped to identify the site correctly as Abhayagiri. For a long time this place was known as the Jetavana. The inscription of Kanitthatissa says that the king repaired the cetiya and provided the Abhayagiri monks with food and other requisites. Here the Sinhalese word "kumbura" meaning a "field" is given as "kubara". In the inscriptions prior to this period, this same word is found as "ubara". From this the etymology of the Sinhalese word is clear to us. The Vedic Sanskrit word "Urvara" changed into "uvara", "ubara", "kubara", "kubura", and finally into "kumbura".

### Inscription of third Century

WHILE clearing away the debris at the base of the monument popularly known as Elara's tomb, the Archaeological Department came across a number





Stele from Dakkhina Thupa, Anuradhapura

of stone slabs which contain an inscription of the third century A.D. The very first slab which was cleaned and examined contained the name "dakini

vihara", and this helped to settle the identity of the monument. Dr. Paranavitana in his Administration Report for 1948 (page l. 9) graphically describes this remarkable find.

"Bell, it may be recalled, expressed the opinion about half a century ago that this mound concealed the remains of the *stupa* of the Dakkhina Vihara, and not of the Tomb of Elara as popularly held. Bell's reasons for this view, given in his Report, for 1898, p. 5, were not universally accepted. People are not over anxious to revise the views and beliefs in which they have been brought up. A slender thread of evidence—or what is taken to be evidence—is quite sufficient to sustain a view which is already in occupation of the field. The generality of people, therefore, continued to call this mound the Tomb of Elara and even scholars searched for evidence to justify it. The discovery of this inscription, on a part of the monument itself, labelling it as it were, finally sets at rest all doubt with regard to Bell's identification and it is a source of peculiar satisfaction to the present writer that, in this matter, he has been able to justify the sagacity of one of his predecessors in office—the pioneer of Ceylon archaeology."

"(The inscription) contains a list of lands dedicated to the Tissamahacetiya of the Dakkhina Vihara by various individuals, among whom are a number of important personages of the time, including royalty."

"The name Dakini Vahara occurs in more than a dozen places in the legible part of the document. In one place, the shrine to which the lands were donated is referred to as the Tisa-maha-ceta (P. Tissa-maha-cetiya) of the Daddhina Vihara founded in the reign of Pita-maharaja. According to the *Mahavamsa* (Chapter XXXIII, v. 36) "Piti raja" (Pita-maha-raja of the inscription) was the name of Vattagamani Abhaya (in Sinhalese Valagam Aba, circa 89-77 B.C.). He was known by that epithet because he stood in the place of father to his brother's son Mahaculi Mahatissa. The Dakkhina Vihara, according to the chronicle (Chapter



XXXIII, v. 88), was founded by General Uttiya in the reign of Vattagamani Abhaya."

"Apart from its value of settling the identity of the monument, the epigraph affords yet another striking testimony to the remarkable accuracy of the historical tradition embodied in the Mahavamsa."

Another record belonging to the third century is the Vessagiriya Rock Inscription of Sirinaga II. This is one of the earliest inscriptions in which the day, month and the year of engraving is clearly stated. The month is given as "Bagucada", which corresponds to "Bak" or April. In the Tibirivava Inscription of Gothabhaya, which belongs to the 4th century, the month is given as "Vapacada", which is "Vap" or November. These two records teach us an important fact not found elsewhere. In the Mahavamsa we are not told, who the father of Gothabhaya was. The Timbirivava Inscription says that the father of king Mekavana Abhaya was Siri Naka. An examination of the inscription of this time enable us to identify Mekavana Abhaya as Gothabhaya and Siri Naka Maharaja as King Sirinaga II.

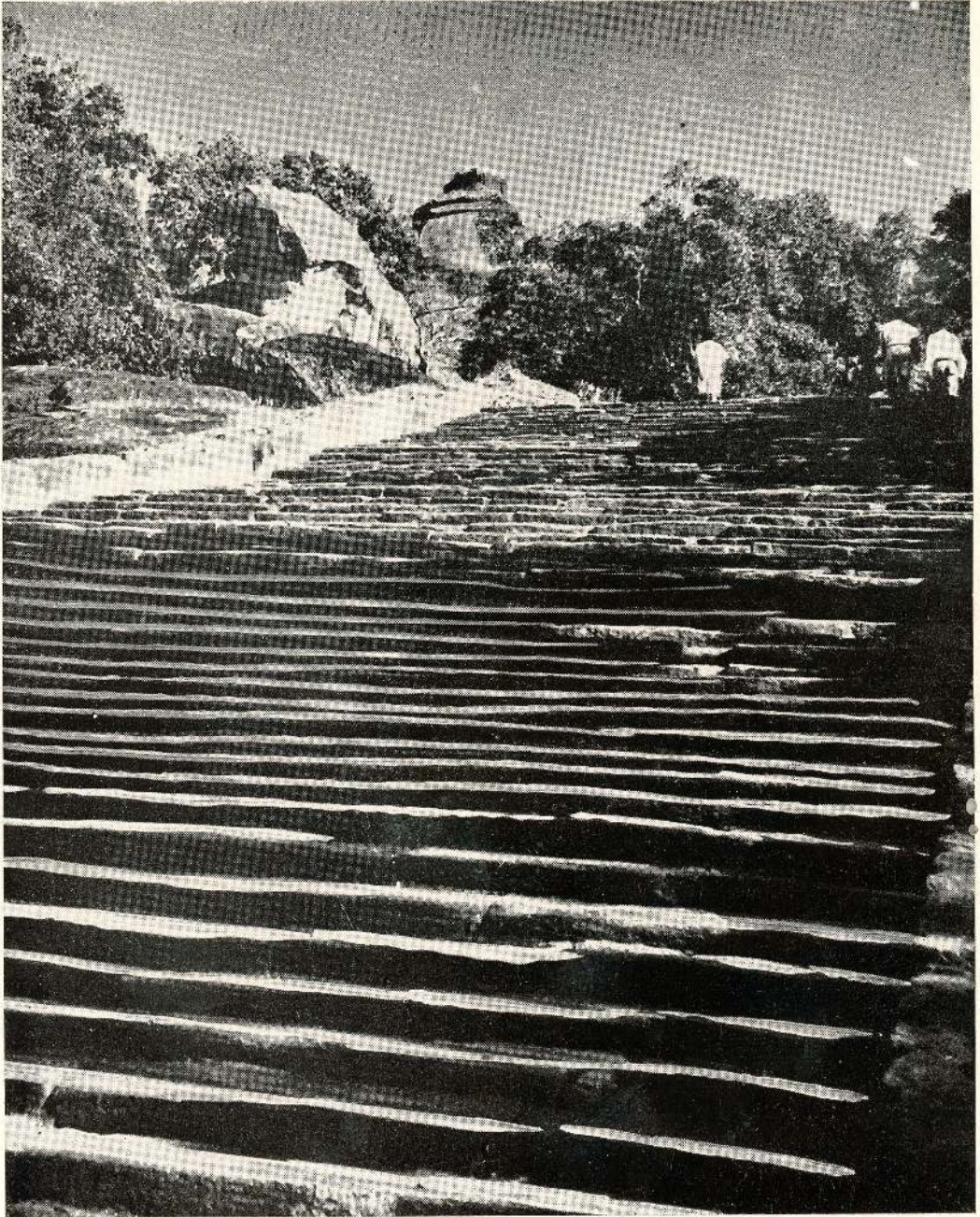
The fragmentary inscription belonging to the middle of the 4th century, which is now in the Colombo Museum, is ascribed to King Mahasena. The appearance at this time of the Vaitulya heresy or Mahayanism, is reflected in this inscription. During the reign of Gothabhaya, father of Mahasena, Mahayanism is supposed to have made its inroads into Ceylon. King Gothabhaya according to the Nikaya Sangraha branded sixty of the unorthodox monks and banished them to Kaveri Pattana. An elder named Sanghamitra, who was a pupil of one of these monks returned to

Ceylon during the time of Mahasena, and with the aid of the king, attempted to teach the Vaitulya doctrines to the monks of the five great monasteries. In this inscription Vaitulyism is mentioned as "Vayatudala", and the five great monasteries as "paca maha avasa". Unfortunately, it is not possible to make a complete reading of this inscription as a portion of it is missing. But from what is available to us, there is conclusive evidence that it belonged to the reign of Mahasena, and that it describes something concerning Vaitulyan monks.

The inscriptions which were dealt with by us today came up to the end of the reign of Mahasena, or approximately 362 A.D. All these inscriptions have been written in the script known as the Brahmi. Though the letters of the pre-Christian inscriptions correspond to those of the Indian Emperor Asoka, the script of these inscriptions is gradually forming into one peculiar to Ceylon. The language of the inscriptions is the earliest form of Sinhalese slightly more developed than that of the pre-Christian inscriptions. The contents deal with grants made by the kings to monastic establishments. In the inscriptions ascribed to Mahasena even doctrinal matters seem to be mentioned.

With the death of Mahasena, the Mahavamsa proper comes to an end. The latter part of the Mahavamsa is called the Culavamsa, though sometimes the whole book is generally referred to as Mahavamsa. According to the author of the Mahavamsa, this was not an arbitrary division, but it marks the turning point of the country's history. The great dynasty has ended, and the new era of heresy and decline begins.





Steps leading to Mihintale, Anuradhapura



## Mihintale, the Sacred Hill

ESME RANKINE

'MIHINTALE,' wrote Emerson Tennant almost exactly a hundred years ago, 'is undoubtedly the most ancient scene of mountain worship in Ceylon. Venerated by the Sinhalese . . . its highest point was known in the sacred legends as the Cliff of Ambatthalo on which Mahindo alighted when arriving in Ceylon to establish the religion of Buddha . . . Sigiri is a hill scarped into a fortress; Mihintale, a mountain carved into a temple . . .'

Every traveller who has written of Ceylon has written of Mihintale, mighty even in ruin. Its tremendous stairway whose steps have never been accurately counted, graded in charity to the old, the feeble, and the very young; the number of its dagabas; the exquisite sculpturing of the stone Lion-Bath, fed through an underground terra cotta pipe 'still in position after a thousand years'; the Nagasondi with its five-hooded guardian, whose carved coils go down they say thirty feet below the surface of the water, given a 'permanent water supply' by King Aggabodhi I (571-604 A.D.), from whose bed was recovered a quantity of pottery, 'each piece bearing 1, 2, 3, and 4 nagas (cobras) on it in raised pattern'; the Kaludiya Pokuna, fitly re-named—its ancient name forgotten; the architectural dignity of the Convocation Terrace, its most interesting feature the recently conserved retaining wall; nearby the granite slabs inscribed by a 10th century king, with their minute provision 'for the orderly and beautiful keeping of the venerated locality'; the Kantaka Cetiya, 'the most perfect example', says Dr. Paranavitana, of the early stupas of Ceylon, whose limestone stelae contain 'the oldest specimens of the plastic art of Ceylon so far known': architectural and artistic accomplishments 'composed equally for the delight and affliction of righteous men.'

Mahinda came to Ceylon in 246 B. C., when Devanampiyatissa, 'whose name contains the words Beloved of the Gods', was king. His

appearance was accompanied with appropriate portent. A deity who took the semblance of an elk; a hunting king who 'deemed it unseemly to kill an unheeding creature', so that he 'made a sound' with his bowstring and the fleeing animal led him to the stranger, yellow-robed, miraculously alighted on the topmost crag, who called the king by name; a questionnaire concerning mango-trees, another concerning kinship: the *thera*, satisfied that the king was wise, permitted 'the others who had come with him' to become visible. On the mountain top the first sermon on Buddhism was preached. The king and all his company were converted.

The *thera* repeated his miraculous powers once more, refusing the royal chariot and 'going through the air' to the capital. Thereafter he observed the austerities of the priesthood, journeying daily to the city on foot, and choosing for his bed a slab of granite, with the rock for pillow, and overlooking a terrifying drop into the valley hundreds of feet below. Here he lived for forty-eight years, and in the 'rain season' of the eighth year of King Uttiya's reign he died.

*'When King Uttiya heard this he went thither, stricken by the dart of sorrow, and when he had paid homage to the theras and oft and greatly had lamented (over him) he caused the dead body of the theras to be laid forthwith in a golden chest sprinkled with fragrant oil, and the well closed lid to be laid upon a golden, adorned bier; . . . commanding solemn ceremonies, he caused it to be escorted by a great multitude of people, that had come together from this place and that, and by a great levy of troops . . . on the adorned street to the variously adorned capital and brought through the city in procession by the royal highway to the Mahavihara.*

*'When the monarch had caused the bier to be placed here for a week in the Panhambamalaka . . . and . . . commanded divers offerings throughout*



the week he built up, turned towards the east . . . . a funeral pyre of sweet smelling wood . . . . he carried out the rites of the dead.

'And here did he build a *cetiya* when he had caused the relics to be gathered together. Taking the half of the relics the monarch caused *thupas* to be built on the *Cetiya-mountain* and in all the *viharas*.'

### Many Names

THE mountain had many names. It is traditionally identified with *Missaka-pabbata*, called afterwards *Cetiya-pabbata* (*Sinhalese* *Seygiri* or *Sagiri*), becoming later *Mihindutala* and *Mihintale*. Thirteen centuries of *Sinhalese* history are sprinkled with improvements, additions, and repairs to the sacred buildings with which the hill was covered. Fa Tsien put the number of its monks at two thousand. An estimate of the number of *thupas* on the *Cetiya-mountain* may be made from the statement in the *Culavamsa* that King *Parakrama Bahu I* (1153-1186 A.D.) 'had 64 *thupas* rebuilt (on the *Cetiya-giri*) and had restored on the old buildings whatever was damaged or had fallen in.' Inscriptions from the 3rd century B.C. have been found in the *Mihintale* caves.

And in a forgotten *thupa* on the crest of the hill, discovered by the Archaeological Department about five years ago and conclusively claimed by Dr. *Paranavitana* as the shrine of *Mahinda's* remains, was found perfectly preserved 'the most important specimen of ceramic art found in Ceylon, also the oldest.' It is described in the Departmental Report as 'a relic casket of polished black earthenware of a type hitherto unknown, either in Ceylon or in India. The casket is cylindrical in shape, is 5 3/8 inches in height and 2 7/8 in diameter at the base. It is formed of three pieces fitting one to the other, the uppermost to serve as the lid and the other two forming two separate compartments. In the upper compartment was found a reliquary of thin gold foil 1 3/4 inches in height and 1 9/16 in diameter at the base, made in a shape of a miniature *stupa* of the

oldest type known in India or Ceylon. The dome is bubble shaped . . . . Inside the reliquary were found, in addition to beads and trinkets, minute fragments of bone and a small quantity of ash.'

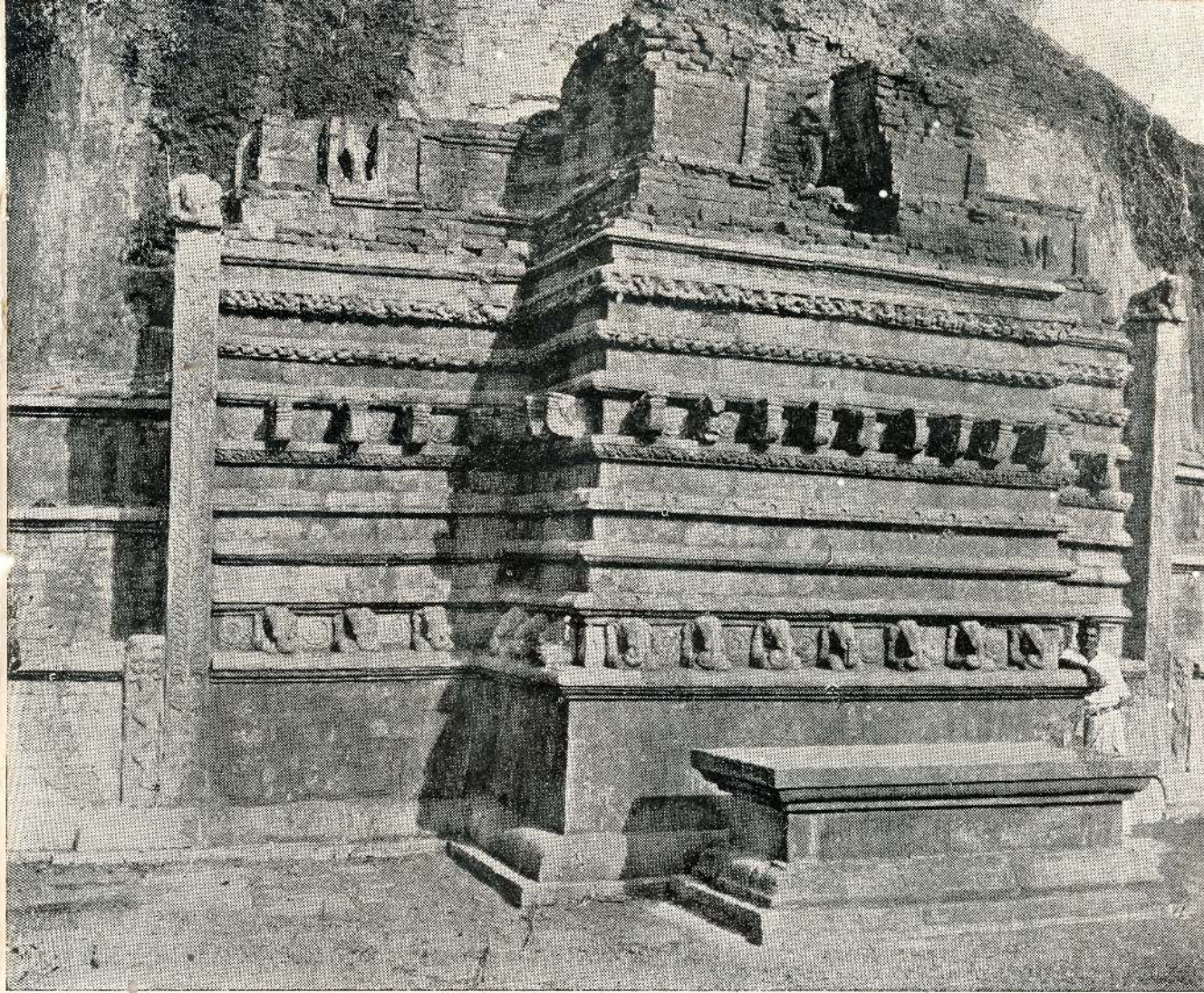
The Archaeological Report for 1951 has this entry: 'Crowning the rocky spur of the hill at *Mihintale* to the left as one ascends the main flight of steps there stood in ancient times a *stupa* of considerable size which, together with the majestic *Kantaka Cetiya* on the right, would have appeared to the pilgrims of old as two giant sentinels guarding the approach to the sacred shrines on the summit. The very name of this once impressive monument has been forgotten.' The diameter is given as 88 feet. Excavation revealed two chambers, an upper relic chamber and, at a depth of about 8 feet from its floor, a lower chamber considerably damaged by water that had collected in it. The walls of both chambers were covered with paintings. In the upper chamber the remains of 28 figures were clearly recognisable. The pigments used were red, yellow and green.

### Kantaka Cetiya

WHAT must be one of the oldest Buddhist buildings in Ceylon is the *Kantaka Cetiya*, small, exquisitely beautiful, standing alone on a sharply-rising spur that gives a panoramic outlook over the valley and to the skyline miles away. A tumbled mound with trees growing out of it twenty years ago, the skill with which it has been conserved reveals it as a peculiarly graceful example of *Sinhalese* architecture at its best.

It is reached by a separate stairway at right angles to the landing at the head of the first main flight; reached also from the south from the direction of the *Kaludiya Pokuna* by a similar stairway turning from the great stone-paved road whose configuration suggests that it was the way reserved for the king, coming in royal procession to the preaching hall of the monks. The *Chronicles* give no mention of the date of its



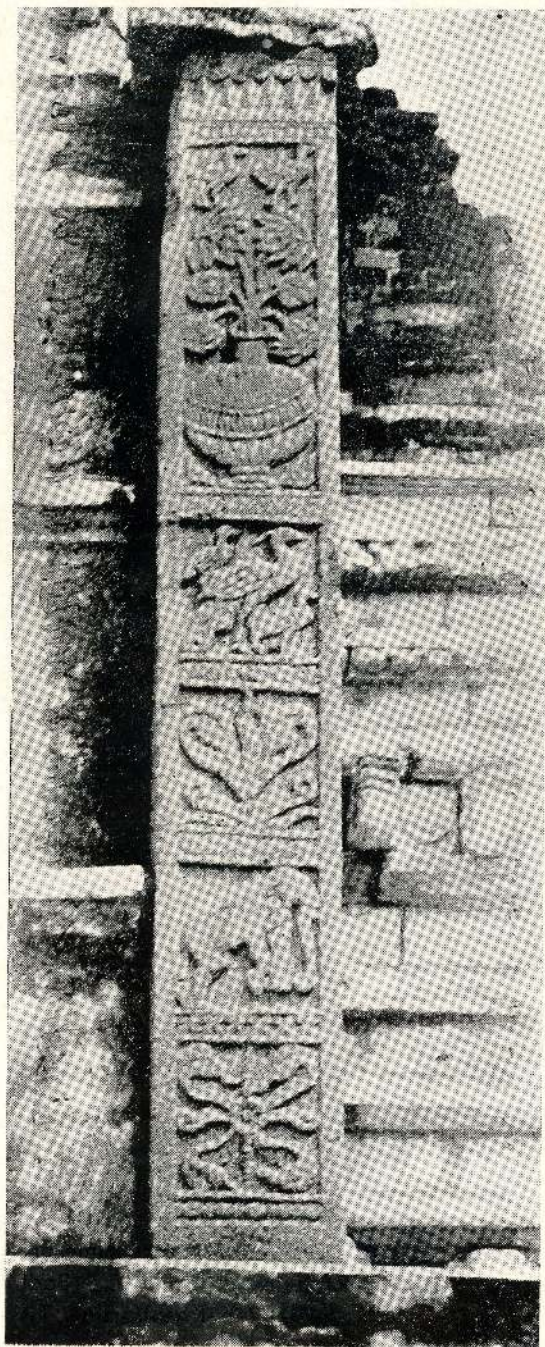


Vahalkada, Kantaka Cetiya, Mihintale

building, or by whom it was built ; but King Lanja Tissa, who reigned in the middle of the 1st century B.C. (59-50) ' had a mantling made of stone ' for it. On this and its own archaeological evidence it is presumed that its original foundation must have been a century or so earlier. It was known also as ' Giribandha ' (Pali) and ' Kiribadapavu ' (Sinhalese.) There is an elaborate description of the ' great Giribandha-offering ' made by King Mahadathika Mahanaga (7-19 A.D.) ' intent on works of merit of many kinds '. The *Mahawamsa* records the laying of carpets, ' that the people might go with clean feet ' the eight caparisoned miles from the

capital ; ' four bejewelled arches ' at the four entrances and a ' beautiful road round about the mountain ', lined on both sides with ' traders ' shops ' ; to be fastened to the cetiya ' he spent a cover (for it) of red stuff with golden balls thereto and festoons of pearls '—' the gods themselves might hold a festival assembly there with dance and music. ' Eight centuries later the Queen of Dappula II ' restored the vihara Giribandha as it had been formerly and granted maintenance villages to the bikkhus living there '. She had ' all the great trees on the Cetiya-mountain clipped ', and ' made out of the poor maintenance





Stele, Kantaka Cetiya

village of Ussanavithi a rich one'. Villages which 'had been sold she redeemed, by giving the

(necessary) money to the vihara and granting the villages to the vihara in question.' The Queen's pious works included a 'home for bikkhunis called Silamegha', to replace the 'former home' of the same name, presumably fallen to decay.

King Mahadathika Mahanaga also built the Ambatthala Dagaba, 'named after the mango-tree of the *thera*', to mark the place where Mahinda spoke with his royal convert; and on the summit the Maha Seya, presently under conservation. There is a tradition that the *Urna-Roma*, 'the Hair that grows between the eyebrows' of the Buddha, is enshrined in the Maha Seya.

Partly restored in 1905 by Bell, inscriptions of about the 1st century A.D. found on a rock near the *stupa* recording grants to the 'Kataka Ceta' led to the re-identification of the mound and excavation was re-started by the Department in 1934. The Commissioner reports: 'The *vahalkadas* (altars at the cardinal points) are flanked by stelae, the front and side faces of which are sculptured with various floral motives, figures of men, beasts, and birds. Some of these stelae appear to have belonged to structures earlier than the *vahalkadas* in which they are now found and the sculptures on them are of an archaic type of great importance for a study of the plastic arts of this island.' In another more detailed description of these sculptures, Dr. Paranavitane says: 'These decorative designs resemble those on stelae already found at the Anuradhapura *stupas*, but the stelae of the eastern frontispieces are decorated in a manner quite different from anything yet found elsewhere in Ceylon.

'The whole surface of the broader side of the stele is divided into four rectangular panels, which, starting from the bottom, are occupied by a foliage pattern, an elephant, a second foliage pattern, a peacock with young, and a decorated vase from which spring leaves and flowers with birds sporting among them. The narrow sides of the stele are decorated with a tapering stem springing from a vase, with conventionally treated leaves spreading on either side. Besides these, *naga* figures in human form are found on some of





Ruins of an ancient temple

the stelae. The style of the sculpture is very archaic, and they should date, at the very latest, from the first or second century.'

### The Convocation Terrace

AT the foot of the eminence on which stands the Kantaka Cetiya, and to which the 'elephant-road' of the king's ceremonial procession leads, is the Convocation Terrace, over against it the remains of a vihara, its doorway flanked by the twin slabs of Mahinda IV (956-972), framed and beaded and measuring 7 ft. 9 ins. in height and 5ft. 3 ins. wide, carrying the royal edicts defining the 'duties expected from the priests of the establishment, the manner in which the revenues are to be disposed of, and the treatment to which the tenants and the servants of the temple are

to be subject': a significant record of the administrative structure of a well-ordered religious community in Ceylon a millenium and more ago. (A complete translation of the inscription is given in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. I)

King Kutakanna Tissa (44-22 B.C.) 'when he had slain the wicked Anula . . . built upon the Cetiya mountain a great building for the *uposatha* festival and to the east of this building he raised a *thupa* of stone, and in the same place on the Cetiya mountain he planted a Bodhi-Tree.' Half a century later Khanirajanu Tissa 'settled a case' that had arisen in the *uposatha* hall of the Cetiya-giri Vihara and 'forcibly seizing the 60 wicked priests who were engaged in a conspiracy against the king, imprisoned them in the caves called Kanira in the Cetiya mountain.'



About the 3rd century the monastery was given in charge of the Dhammaruci brethren, seceders from the orthodox school of the Maha vihara. Mihintale became a stronghold of Mahayanism. Fifth century King Dhatusena 'after he had built the Ambatthala Dagaba on the Cetiya pabbata wished to hand it over to the adherents of the Thera School, but being entreated by the Dhammarucikas the monarch accordingly made it also over to them'. Sena, Commander-in-Chief of Kassapa IV (898-914) 'built on the Cetiya mountain the *parivena* called Hadayuna and made it over to the Dhammaruci brethren.' Also Mayanistic in origin is the group adjoining the approach road to the Mihintale hill, known locally as the Indikatusaya. What Hocart posed on grounds of style has since been confirmed by Paranavitana, assisted by the discovery during excavation in 1923-24 of 31 inscribed votive plaques made of copper found in the joints of the brickwork. More of these plaques were discovered later. Epigraphical and architectural evidence fixes the date of the dagaba as between the 8th and 9th centuries.

### Ancient Hospital

BUT the most interesting of the ruins by the road is the block, close to the turn-off, identified as the remains of an ancient hospital. In the north-east chamber of the quadrangle was found buried one of the only three 'sarcophagi' so far found in Ceylon, now known to have been used for medicinal baths. An inscription on one of the guardstones testifies to its purpose. In translation it begins: 'For the benefit of the hospital', and ends: 'Anyone who takes by force what has been provided for this hospital will become a goat-slaying rakshasa'. A vicious threat, and hardly in keeping with the beneficent purpose that inspired the building!

On the hillside to the right and some way beyond the Indikatusaya is a group of rock-caves, for long years the habitation of bears and at present in a most broken condition, but whose profusion of inscriptions suggests a once populated

hermitage. Of these inscriptions one was recognised by Dr. Paranavitana as written in the *Nagari* script of the 9th century, but it was too much effaced to be fully deciphered.

'Thus a rocky hill became a monastery,' wrote John Still: 'a collection of irregularly shaped rock caves. As time proceeded the ground facing the caves was generally terraced, and broad flat spaces formed which gave men room to build dagabas, shrines, hospitals and halls and to plant Bo-trees and gardens. Ponds were dug, steps were built; tanks, fields, and channels assigned to the priesthood. Relics were enshrined, priests and high priests died and were cremated, their ashes being preserved in little dagabas; and the simple rock-cell monasteries of the early days became huge establishments of wide renown and with great influence and resources.'

So for a millenium and a half. And then again the jungle crept and the brave edifices of a prosperous monastery slowly crumbled; till in the beginning of this century archaeological interest awakened ancient memories. But, like the Bo-Tree at Anuradhapura and the print on Adam's Peak, to the humble pilgrim the hill has kept its sanctity.

In its religious significance Mihintale has few rivals. It is a direct link with Devanampiya Tissa and Mahinda. It is contemporary with Asoka himself. The ghosts of twenty centuries haunt this place. For more than twenty centuries men have worshipped here, from kings in ceremonial procession to solitary peasants taking their simple offerings to the gaunt monoliths at the crest. Mihintale's glory came and went again, and perhaps it will come once more; it is a link that has held: but it has held, not through the splendour of its buildings, for these have crumbled; but in the scattered flowers and tallow-drips of simple faith.

Note.—The chronology followed is according to the table published by Dr. Paranavitana in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. V, Pt. I, pp. 109-111.

The Photographs are by C. W. Nicholas.



## A Buddhist Sculpture from Kandy Unique work of Art now Lost to Ceylon

JOHN M. SENAVERATNA

THIS beautiful Sculpture from Kandy—it is described as measuring not more than  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches or 16 cm. in height, and the carving is said to be “of exquisite fineness—is today in the possession of Lord Carmichael of Scotland.

It formed the subject of a very interesting Paper, by Dr. J. Ph. Vogal, in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 41 years ago, i.e., in 1915.

In the course of that Paper, it was stated that the Sculpture “came first into the possession of a British Officer at the capture of Kandy in 1815, but of its previous history nothing is known”.

### My Enquiries and the Result

NOW, it was obviously unsatisfactory to leave the matter there.

Who was this British Officer ?

What was his name ?

And how came Lord Carmichael to possess the Sculpture a hundred years after its removal from Kandy ?

These were questions that required an answer, and I started enquiries nearly forty years ago.

I was editing “*The Ceylon Antiquary*” at the time, and, on February 8, 1917, I placed myself in communication with Lord Carmichael, who was then functioning as Governor of Bengal.

### Lord Carmichael's Reply

LORD Carmichael, in the course of his reply to my letter, wrote :—

“I will look up my papers and send you a Note of anything which I can find out as to how the Sculpture came into my father's possession. But none of my papers are in India,

“It came into my personal possession, after my father's death, when I succeeded him as his heir. He, I know, got it from an old Lady who was a relation of his—a Mrs. Bell—and I believe it came to her from one of her relations.

“I am afraid I cannot at the present moment say for certain what his name was, but will try to find out. I think it was Gibson.

“I have heard, I think, that he was a young Officer at the time of the taking of Kandy ; and that he got not only the stone, but also a saddle-cloth made of red velvet and embroidered with gold, and also a bell-handle made of bronze.

“The saddle-cloth I have seen when I was a boy in Mrs. Bell's house, but I don't know what has happened to it. The bell-handle Mrs. Bell left to my father, who left it to me, and it is at present in my house in Scotland.”

### Lord Carmichael's Silence

TO the above, I replied on February 22, 1917, as follows :—

“It will, I feel assured, add materially to the deep interest already evinced locally in an object which has a special and peculiar value in Buddhist eyes.

“If, on Your Excellency's return to Scotland, you come across any papers which will throw further light on the matter, I shall esteem it a very great favour indeed to be furnished with copies of, or extracts from, them, and also with any particulars (including photographs, if possible) of the saddle-cloth and bronze bell-handle Your Excellency refers to.”



My hopes, however, were doomed to disappointment. Letters which I addressed to Lord Carmichael after his return to Scotland failed to elicit a reply, and I left the matter at that for the time being.

### Governor Stubbs' Intervention

WHEN, however, Sir Edward Stubbs came as Governor of Ceylon, I took the matter a step further.

I wrote to him on July 4, 1936, placing all the facts and the correspondence I had before him, and added :—

“If the thing interests you and you happen to know Lord Carmichael or any of the members of his family, it is possible that a letter from you may help where my own failed.

“If, however, you would rather I pursued my own enquiries, I will trust to better luck this time and write again direct.”

The reply which I received four months later was as follows :—

“You wrote to His Excellency on July 4, regarding a piece of Sculpture belonging to the late Lord Carmichael who was Governor of Bengal until 1917.

“His Excellency caused enquiries to be made about this piece of Sculpture through the Minister for Education and Dr. P. E. Pieris.

“A letter has now been received from Dr. Pieris, in which he states that he has located the piece of Sculpture ; that the present owners have no information regarding the history of the article which is not contained in the copy of Lord Carmichael's letter which you forwarded.

“The owners do not know who Mrs. Bell and the Gibson referred to in that letter are. Dr. Pieris reports that *the owners have at present no intention of parting with the article.*”

After nearly forty years' vain efforts in the quest, I leave it to others to try where I have failed.

### Subject of the Sculpture

Dr. VOGEL'S examination of the subject of the Sculpture emphasised only the value of the unique piece of Art which has been lost to Ceylon.

The central figure is, of course, Gautama Buddha, seated cross-legged on a conventional lotus flower. The position of the right hand, stretched down towards the earth, indicates, according to Dr. Vogel, that he is shown here at the supreme moment of his Enlightenment or Bodhi.

Over his head is the foliage of the sacred Bodhi Tree of Buddha Gaya, seated under which he obtained supreme wisdom and Buddhahood.

The “Indian” Sculptors evidently, Dr. Vogel opined, found it impossible to express directly the mental process which brought about that all important change in the Master's life.

They, therefore, chose the event which immediately preceded it—Buddha's Temptation, or, more correctly, the assault by Mara the Evil one (*Mara-dharsana*).

It was then that the Buddha called upon the Earth Goddess to bear testimony to his good deeds, and this is indicated by the peculiar pose of the right hand. In Buddhist iconography, this posture is designated as “the attitude of touching the Earth”.

### The Earth Goddess

IN the miniature figure kneeling on a lotus-flower beneath Buddha's right hand, Dr. Vogel recognised the Earth Goddess (*Skt. Mahaprithivi* or *Vasunhara*) holding up a treasure vase with both hands.



The corresponding figurine to the left, likewise seated on a lotus-flower, Dr. Vogel was unable to identify, though the two somewhat larger figures supporting Buddha's lotus-seat were, he surmised, probably demigods—either Nagas or Yaksas.

In the scene of Buddha's "Temptation", as it is found in Sculptures of the Gupta period, we usually find Mara standing to the Buddha's right, says Dr. Vogel.

Like the Greek Eros, he carries a bow, and is moreover often distinguished by a satellite carrying a *Makara* standard. For Mara is only another name for Kama, the God of Love. Mara's three daughters, who played a prominent part in the "Temptation", are usually shown to the Buddha's left.

In the present instance, however, the Buddha is flanked by two male attendants, in whom Dr. Vogel recognised the Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara and Maitreya.

Over their heads there rise two tiers of miniature figures, partly mounted on animals, which form, as it were, an arch of which the foliage of the Bodhi Tree forms the apex. These figurines, as is evident from their demoniacal appearance, represent the host of Mara.

### The Seven Smaller Scenes

IT will be seen that, around the group, just described, seven smaller scenes are arranged—three to the left, three to the right, and one above.

In the scene nearest the right hand of the central figure, Dr. Vogel recognises the birth of the future Buddha. His mother, Maya, grasping a branch of the *Sal* tree, is supported by her sister, Prajapati, standing to her left, whilst the new-born Bodhisattva is apparently shown twice on her right.

Over the Nativity scene is Buddha's first Sermon at Benares, represented in the usual

fashion. The Buddha is seated cross-legged, in the attitude known as that of "the Wheel-of-the-Law", the two hands being held in front of the breast, with the fingers joined in the manner of a person arguing out a case.

The Wheel and the Deer on the pedestal, says Dr. Vogel, symbolise the particular subject more definitely, for it was in the Deer Park—the modern village of Sarnath, near Benares—that, after his Enlightenment, Buddha "began to turn the Wheel-of-the-Law", in other words, taught his doctrine for the first time.

The five miniature figures on both sides of the preaching Buddha are his first converts, the Pancavargiyas, or "the five of the blessed band".

The next scene relates to the must elephant, Nalagiri, which was let loose against the Buddha by his malicious cousin and rival, Devadatta. The elephant, which is very diminutive in size, is shown twice, once lifting up its trunk, and the second time kneeling down in submission.

### Descent from Heaven

THE corresponding scene on the right hand side is Buddha's descent from the Trayastrimsa Heaven after preaching the Law to his mother, Maya, who had died a week after his birth. He is attended by Brahma to his right and Indra to his left, the latter holding a parasol over the Buddha's head.

The little figure kneeling at the Master's feet must be, Dr. Vogel says, the Nun, Utpalavarna, who was the first to receive him on his return from Heaven. The triple ladder by which Buddha and his two satellites descended is indicated beneath the lotus on which he is standing.

The next scene refers to the great miracle of Sravasti, which consisted in Buddha being seen preaching at the same moment in various places. Hence the triple figure of the Buddha seated in the preaching attitude as in the corresponding scene to the left. The two Naga figures supporting Buddha's lotus seat are also a cognisance of the subject.



The next Buddha figure is seated in the European fashion. Here Dr. Vogel finds the legend of the monkey who offered Buddha a pot of toddy, and, after this meritorious act, committed suicide, to be reborn as a Deva or celestial being.

The monkey is said to be shown not less than four times—first climbing up the palmyra tree, next approaching Buddha with the bowl of toddy, then jumping into a well, and lastly rising in his divine shape. The little elephant in the corner must be, Dr. Vogel surmises, the elephant which fed Buddha in the Parileyaka forest.

### The Buddha's Nirvana

FINALLY there is, at the top of the Sculpture, the scene of the Buddha's death or Nirvana. The dying Buddha is lying on his right side, with his head resting on his right hand, in strict accordance with the sacred Text. The twin *Sal* trees of Kusinagara are shown on both sides of the couch, the true spirits emerging from among the foliage.

The mourning figures surrounding the Buddha's death-bed, Dr. Vogel finds it difficult to identify individually. But the one occupying the centre,

in front of the couch is, he thinks, perhaps Subhadrā, the Master's last convert, and the one kneeling at the Buddha's feet is possibly Maha Kasyapa.

The Sculpture, therefore, represents the Eight Principal Events of the Buddha's life, which were a favourite subject of Buddhist Art.

It might be added that the Sarnath excavations have yielded a Stele (now in the local Museum) in which these same eight scenes are carved.

Comparison with it shows how immeasurably superior—how much more chaste and more beautiful—is the work of Art representing the Sculpture from Kandy, which is now housed in Scotland.

\* \* \* \*

After a vain effort started 40 years ago and renewed, still vainly, in 1938, it remains for me only to express the sincere hope that some one with more vigour than I possess today and with more influence than I can command, will take up the "chase" and succeed, at least in this year of Buddha Jayanti, in getting back this chaste and beautiful and unique work of Sinhalese Art back to its proper home, here in Ceylon.



## Ceylon and Her Links with Burma

KENNETH J. SOMANADER

CEYLON has been participating actively in the Chattha Sngayana held in Rangoon recently. It is fitting that that should have been so for Burma and Ceylon have all along been tied by a common religious link. In fact, it is said that even today, the sacred leaves of the historic Bo-tree in Anuradhapura, Ceylon, adorn many a Burmese home.

The era of religion, called also the Nirvana era, has long been known in Burma. It is believed it began in 544 B. C. and it was devised in Ceylon. Nearly a thousand years later, in 403 A.D., the great apostle Buddhagosa took the scriptures from Ceylon to Thakon, from where copies immediately spread to the other towns.

During the middle of the 11th century A.D., Ceylon underwent one of its periodic invasions from the Indian mainland. Buddhism, consequently, suffered severely from Hindu persecution, and Vijaya Bahu I (1059-1114) sent ships to Burma asking King Anuruddha for aid. Vijaya Bahu, meanwhile, succeeded in driving out the Cholas of Madras himself.

But troubles never come single, and Vijaya Bahu, now, was up against another difficulty. There were so few monks left in the island that he could not even convene a chapter (five monks) to make valid ordinations.

In 1071, therefore, Vijaya Bahu sent a mission to Anuruddha, asking for scriptures and monks. The Burmese king gladly granted his friend's needs, and added a white elephant as a present. In return, Anuruddha asked for the Tooth Relic which Ceylon proudly possessed. Anuruddha's envoys failed to get the tooth, but Vijaya Bahu had a replica placed in a jewelled casket and taken on board ship. When the ship sailed up the Irawaddy and reached Lawkananda, the landing place, the entire Burmese countryside came out to meet it. And Anuruddha himself waded

neck-deep into the river and solemnly bore the casket on his head to the shrine.

Anuruddha, when he died, left as the chief monument to his memory the Shweigon Pagoda. It still attracts worshippers daily, it is said, because of the exceptional sanctity of the relics it houses—the Buddha's collar bone, his frontlet bone from Prome, and the tooth from Ceylon. The site for the pagoda was chosen by setting the tooth from Ceylon in a jewelled casket placed on a white elephant, and letting the animal roam: where it rested was chosen as the site.

Panthagu, son of the lord of Seinnyet, in 1167 A.D., incurred displeasure with Narathu, King of Burma. He chose Ceylon as his refuge because, he said, he found Buddhism progressing in Ceylon despite yet another Hindu persecution. Panthagu returned home only when Narapatisithu succeeded Narathu in 1173 A.D. Panthagu, on his return, was treated as primate, but being already 90 he did not live much longer.

### First Pilgrim of Ceylon

PANTHAGU'S successor as primate was the Talaing monk, Uttarajiva, who left Burma in 1180 A.D. If Panthagu's visit showed the importance of Ceylon as a religious centre, Uttarajiva's visit confirmed it, and Uttarajiva earned the title "First Pilgrim of Ceylon".

Uttarajiva sailed from Bassein with many other monks, but returned after a short stay. However, one of them, Chapata, a Talaing novice, received ordination in Ceylon and spent a decade in the island. Chapata came to be known as "Second Pilgrim of Ceylon".

When Chapata returned to Burma in 1190 A.D., he took with him four monks, who had also been ordained in Ceylon. One of them was Ananda, a native of Conjevaram, while another was a prince,



the son of the King of Cambodia. The five of them together formed a chapter, and lived in the Chapata Pagoda which they built, modelled on Sinhalese architecture.

Chapata and his colleagues regarded the existing Burmese ordination as invalid, saying it was not in accordance with canon law, and refused to conform to the practices of the Burmese clergy. In 1192, a schism or rather three schisms were set up, for even among themselves they disagreed on the precise nature of holiness. One of them, it is said, even had to be expelled for losing his heart to a dancing girl. As a result of these schisms, the original Burmese Clergy came to be known as the Former Order, and those who were ordained by the newcomers from Ceylon as the Latter Order.

A brisk seaborne trade was being carried on about this time around the southern coast of Asia, from China to as far as Egypt, and it was probably to promote Ceylon's interest in such trade that Parakrama Bahu I (1153-1186 A.D.) had a "Trade Commissioner" stationed in Burma, probably at Bassein, then the most important port. The Burmese Government, in accordance with diplomatic custom at that time, supplied him with both food and quarters.

The King of Burma at the time was Narapatisithu, the monarch who reigned for 37 years (from 1173 to 1210 A.D.) because there were no other aspirants to the throne. Narapatisithu stopped the grant of the supplies to the Ceylon ambassador, and also forbade the export of elephants to Ceylon, save at exorbitant rates. He ceased giving present of an elephant to every Ceylon ship which bore royal gifts, imprisoned Sinhalese merchants, seized their goods, put the Ceylon King's envoy into prison, drove out the Sinhalese to sea in a leaking ship, and even carried off a Sinhalese princess on her way to Cambodia.

### Friendly Relations Resumed

PARAKRAMA BAHU was a warrior little inclined to any sort of slight. He immediately despatched

an expedition to Burma but, unfortunately, it suffered from storms and shipwrecks. One ship, however, reached Crow Island, near Moulmein, and carried off the inhabitants, while five reached Bassein and others landed elsewhere. The expedition killed a governor, burnt villages and massacred inhabitants, and carried off a number as slaves. Eventually, the Burmese sent a conciliatory note to Ceylon through the monks, together with the promise of a tribute of elephants. Full redress was thus obtained, and friendly relations were resumed.

Vijaya Bahu II (1186-1187) is said to have sent to the King of Burma a letter in Pali. The letter concluded a peace treaty with Burma, as done by his grandfather, Vijaya Bahu I. In 1443 A.D., King Narapati of Burma sent offerings of gold and gems to the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy, and bought land there for the support of clergy visiting the shrine.

King Dharmacetiya (1472-1492) is well known for the religious revival he initiated in 1475 by sending a mission of 22 monks to Ceylon. The mission suffered several shipwrecks on their way to Ceylon, and some even died as castaways in their wild wanderings along the Madras coast. To the Tooth, the Foot print and the Holy Trees, the mission presented a stone alms bowl studded with sapphires, and reliquaries of gold and crystal. To the Sinhalese monks, the mission brought cloth and betel boxes of speckled lacquer. And to the King of Ceylon were brought rubies, sapphires, Chinese silks, fine mats and a letter on gold leaf. The object of the mission was to secure valid orders from the clergy of the ancient Mahavihare, the great monastery founded in 251 B.C. The monks, it is said, received their higher ordination in the Kelani river on the outskirts of Colombo.

### Magnificent Ceremony

DURING the last year of the reign of Sandathudamma (1652-1684), 40 Arakese monks visited Ceylon at the request of a mission sent with Dutch



aid. The Dutch, fearing Portuguese revival, it is said, wished to strike at Catholicism by receiving Upasampada ordination which was then on the way to becoming extinct. The request went from King Vimaladharmasuriya II (1687-1707) and the Burmese mission, when it arrived in Ceylon, admitted 33 sons of good families to the higher order, and ordained 120 sons of good families as Samaneras.

The 1802 mission was of some importance. King Kirti Sri Rajasinghe (1748-1778) had introduced a system whereby ordination was restricted to those of the agricultural caste. The lower castes became very indignant over this, and some of their novices went to Burma. There, the King Bodawpaya, listened to their story and, in a magnificent ceremony, himself presented them to the primate for ordination. They then returned to Ceylon, with a full chapter of Burmese monks, and a letter from the Burmese primate

to the Sinhalese primate. Further ordinations were thus made possible.

Since Ceylon gained independence, the relationships between Burma and Ceylon have been further strengthened. The first mission from Ceylon after Independence visited Burma in 1948. The Ceylon Government then sent a special mission which carried the relics of Sariputta and Moggallana, the two chief disciples of the Buddha. The Diyawadana Nilame, who led that mission, also took with him the original casket in which Princess Hemamali brought the Tooth Relic from India concealed in her hair-knot, an emerald image of the Buddha, and several other treasures presented to the Dalada Maligawa by the Kings of Ceylon and Buddhist missions from Burma.

This year, the 2,500th anniversary of Buddhism, Ceylon joins hands with Burma to celebrate an event in which both countries can certainly take pride.



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(To be continued)









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