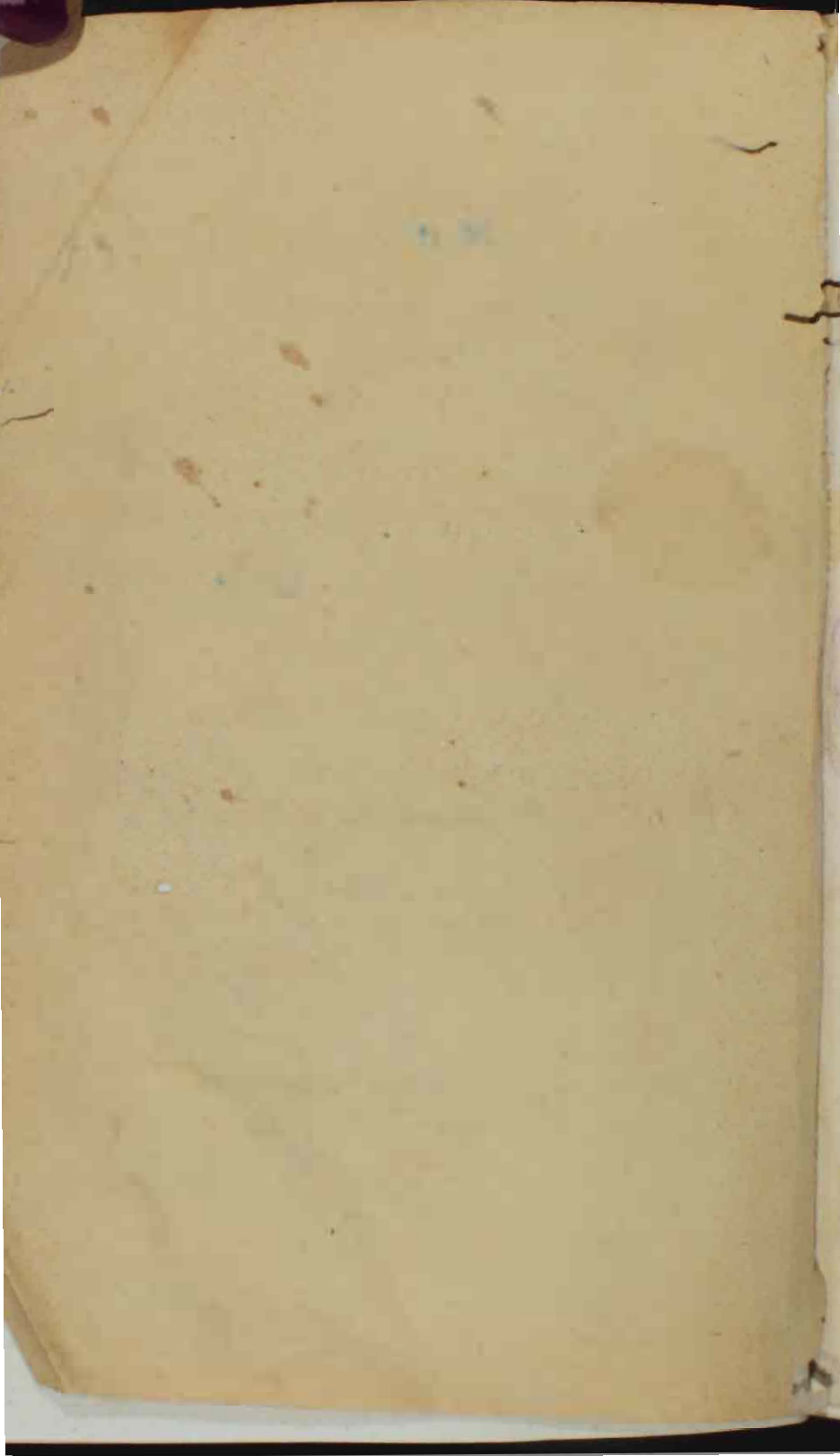






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HISTORY OF CEYLON FOR SCHOOLS

BY

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Revised and Enlarged.

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NOTE TO THE NINTH EDITION.

Not in Europe only, but here in Ceylon also, the prevailing estimates of men and events are being re-examined and revised. The researches and discussions now going on are to be welcomed as leading to a sufficiently accurate knowledge of the course of Ceylon History.

I am indebted in this edition to Mr. E. H. van der Wall for his studies of the Dutch period, and to Mr. S. Paranavitane for the revised Polonnaruva date.

L. E. B.

Colombo, January 1934.

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A HISTORY OF CEYLON

CHAPTER I.

Introductory

THE object of this little book is to tell in simple language the story of Ceylon :—of its fame in early times, and of the people who, so far as we know, then lived in it ; of its conquest by the Sinhalese, the Portuguese, and the Dutch, in turn ; and of how it came to be, as it is now, under British rule. It is necessary that we should have some knowledge of these matters, for Ceylon is the land in which we live, and to nearly all of us it is our native country. No one can be a lover of his country who does not know something of its peoples, and how they came into it.

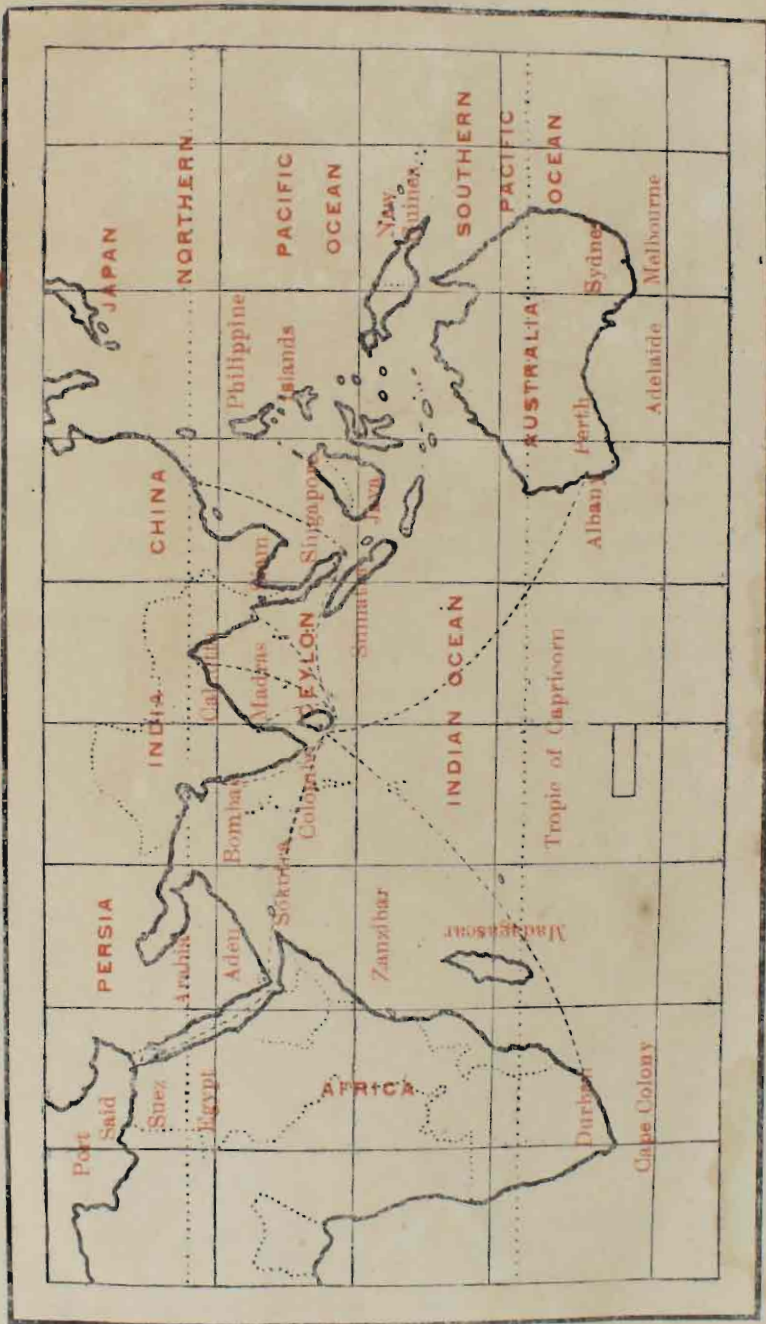
But even apart from this, the history of Ceylon is full of interest. No island in the world has been so long famous, and famous among so many different nations. It is the sacred land of three religions. The Hindus reverence it as the place where Rama, once honoured as one of their princes, and then worshipped as one of their gods, fought to get back his bride who had been cruelly carried away from her home in India. The Muhammadans declare that when Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, Ceylon was given to them to console them for their loss. The Buddhists regard it as the centre of their faith, the land which the Buddha loved, which

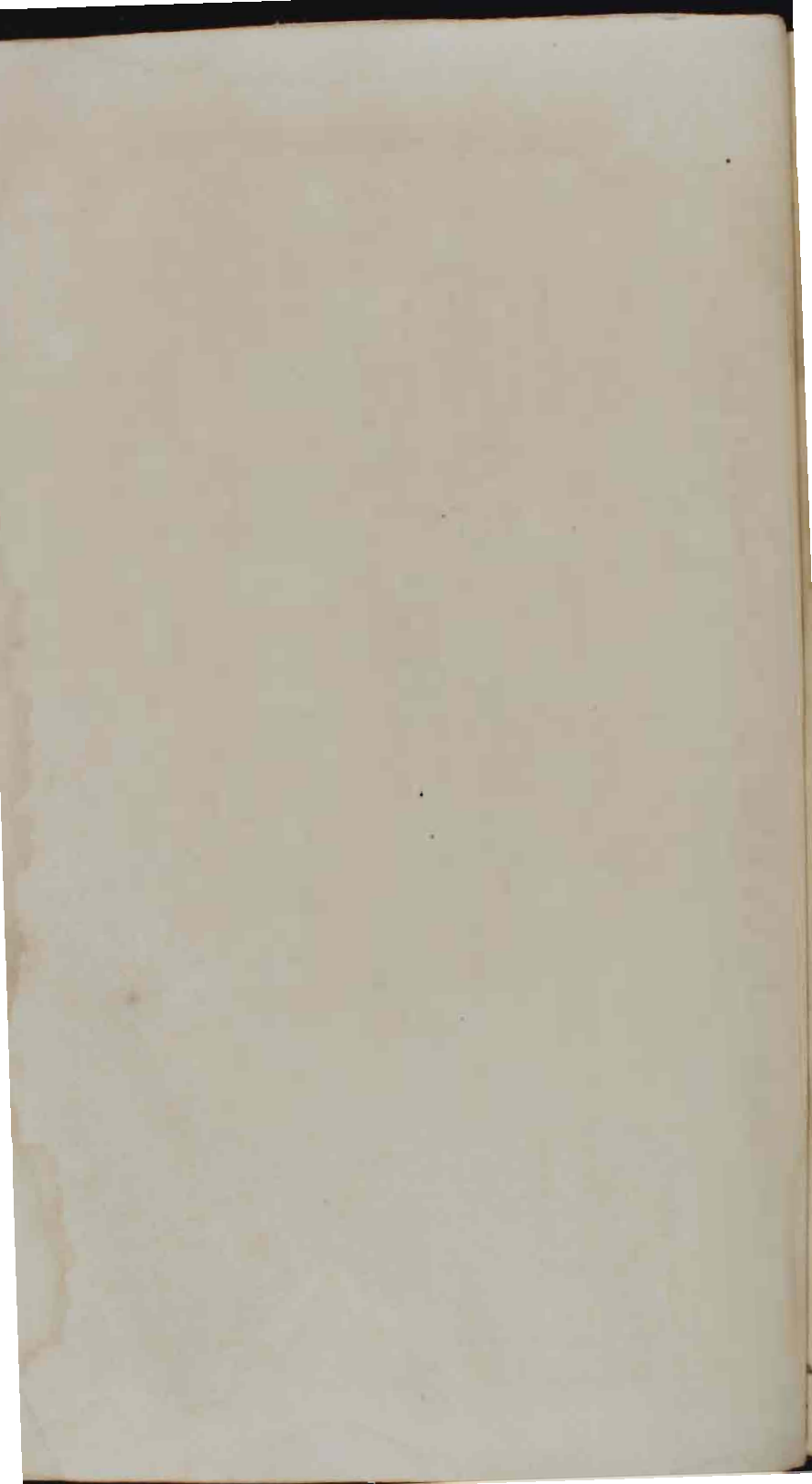
he is said to have thrice visited. The fertility of its soil, the loveliness of its scenery, its delightful climate, its valuable commercial products, the wealth that lay hidden in the heart of its mountains and in the sands of its rivers, —all these advantages united to give the land a strange, irresistible charm that was felt by every traveller who was so fortunate as to visit its shores. To the Brahman this land was *Lanka* the shining land ; to the Siamese, *Tewa Lanka* “ Lanka the divine ” ; to the Indian Buddhist, the “ pearl upon the brow of India ” ; to the Chinese, the “ island of jewels ” ; to the Greek and the Persian, the “ land of the hyacinth and the ruby ” ; to the Tamil of South India, *Plam*, the land of gold ; to the Sinhalese, the “ island of the lion-race ” ; to the modern European, the “ Eden of the Eastern Wave.”

It was first known in Europe as *Taprobane** a name which the English poet, Milton, has preserved in one of his great poems. In Arabic writings it is spoken of as *Serendib*. And this is how the island was described by an English traveller three centuries ago :—“ The heavens with their dews, the air with a pleasant wholesomeness and fragrant freshness ; the waters in their many rivers and fountains, the earth diversified in aspiring hills, lowly vales, equal and indifferent plains, filled in her inward chambers with metals and jewels, in her outward court and upper face stored with whole woods of the best cinnamon that the sun seeth :

* Pronounced *Ta—prob—a—ne*.

Map of Ceylon's Surroundings





besides fruits, oranges, lemons, etc., surmounting those of Spain : fowls and beasts both tame and wild (among which is their elephant honoured by a natural acknowledgement of excellence of all other elephants in the world) ; these all have conspired and joined in common league to present unto Zeilan the chief of worldly treasures and pleasures, with a long and healthful life in the inhabitants to enjoy them."*

This, then, is the land whose history we are now to study. Its place is in the Indian Ocean, to the south-east of India (of which it was originally a part), almost midway between the Red Sea on the west and the Straits of Malacca on the east ; midway also between South Africa and Australia, though they lie far south. It lies between $5^{\circ} 53'$ and $9^{\circ} 51'$ north latitude and between $79^{\circ} 42'$ and $81^{\circ} 55'$ east longitude. A glance at the map of Asia will shew how natural it would be that ships from Arabia or Persia on the one hand, and from China or Burma on the other, should touch at Ceylon. The frequent visits of these ships for two thousand years have made the island well known to sailors, and a central market for traders in the eastern seas. Ships from the Cape of Good Hope, too, call at Galle or Colombo, and now that steamers pass to and from Australia, the trade of the island has become very important.

In size Ceylon is not large. Its area is 25,333 square miles. England is twice, and

* *Purchas*, quoted by *Tennent*. Mr. A. M. Hocart, Archaeological Commissioner, points out the remarkable continuity of tradition in Ceylon, from B.C. 250, in architecture, religion, and language. This adds to the interest of Ceylon as a study.

India sixty-one times, as large. Its greatest length from north to south is $271\frac{1}{2}$ miles; its greatest breadth, $137\frac{1}{2}$ miles; its circumference, about 760 miles.

For the earliest mention of Ceylon in old books we must turn to an Indian poem called the *Rāmāyana*, written by a poet named Valmiki. This poem is about events said to have taken place at least three thousand years ago, and cannot, of course, be considered as altogether a record of actual facts. The story* may be summed up in a few words. Rama, the eldest son of the king of Ayodhya (the country now called Oudh, in India), had won the beautiful princess Sitā for his bride; but while wandering in the forests of Central India, to which the pair had been banished, Sitā was captured and carried away to Lanka (Ceylon) by Rāvana, the demon king of this country. Rama collected a large army to get back his bride. He was assisted by the king of the vultures and the king of the monkeys; that is, as we may understand it, by various native tribes in Southern India. Hanuman, the chief general of the monkeys, is said to have built the ridge of sand now known as Adam's Bridge, to make a passage for Rama's army. After a siege of twelve years, Lanka-pura, Ravana's capital, was taken and burnt, the demon king himself was slain, and Sitā was taken back in triumph to North India. The main fact we may gather from this narrative is that ages ago Ceylon was successfully invaded by an Indian army.

* For a fuller account see "The Story of Lanka." (C.L.S.)

CHAPTER II.

Vijaya the Conqueror

THE regular history of Ceylon may be said to begin with the arrival of Vijaya in the island. According to the Sinhalese historians this event took place on the very day of the Buddha's death, and the year B.C. 543 is usually given as the date of both occurrences. But those who have looked into these matters carefully are of opinion that this date is too early, and that the Buddha's death took place about B.C. 483.

Vijaya was the eldest son of Sinha-bahu, the king of Lala, a district near Magadha (now Bihar) in Northern India. The mother of Sinha-bahu was a princess of Vanga (Bengal). She is said to have married a lion. This would mean that she married a man of lower rank, or of a different race, who was known as *Siha* or *Sinha*, i.e., *lion*. In Sinhapura, the capital of Lala, prince Vijaya became the leader of a band of lawless men who committed numberless acts of mischief and violence. The people complained of this to the king, who on two occasions severely censured his son. But when these acts of oppression still went on, the people angrily demanded that Vijaya should be put to death. The king then resolved on banishing the offenders. Vijaya and seven hundred (that is to say, a large number) of his followers were placed on board a large ship and sent adrift.

B.C. 538 Decree of Cyrus for the return of the Jews from Babylon.

„ 535—446 Pythagoras, Anacreon, Aeschylus, Pindar.

„ 480 Battles of Thermopylae and Salamis.

In another vessel the king sent away the wives of these men, and in a third vessel their children. The men, women, and children, drifting in different directions, landed and settled in different countries. Vijaya landed at first at a port on the east (but some think it was on the west) coast of India; but here, fearing lest the people of that place should be roused against him by the rash deeds of his lawless followers, he re-embarked, and sailed on till he came to Ceylon.

Vijaya's route from India to Ceylon has been a matter of much controversy. There are also doubts as to the situation of Lala, where Vijaya lived. Some authorities are of opinion that Lala was not near Bihar but was Guzerat, a district of north-west India, north of Bombay. The port Supparaka, which Vijaya is said to have touched at on his voyage from India, is believed to be the modern Sopara. There are many difficulties in the old records; but while it is interesting to try to solve these difficulties, it must not be forgotten that the whole story of Vijaya is more legend than history. There were probably several bands of invaders from India at various times, before and after Vijaya, and the old writers have tried to combine the different traditions into one narrative.

The island was at this time inhabited by a race, or races, about whom very little indeed is known. They may have been originally the same people as the hill tribes of the neighbouring coast of Southern India, but they were much less civilized and less powerful than the invaders from Northern India, who easily overcame the

feeble resistance offered to them. The Indian conquerors gave these people the names *Yakkhas* (demons) and *Nagas* (snakes), either in contempt, or because the conquered races worshipped demons and snakes, or, it may be, for both reasons. The *Yakkhas* lived in the central portions of the island, and had a capital named *Lankapura*. The *Nagas* lived in the northern and western districts, and gave the name *Nagadipa* (the Isle of Serpents) to the whole of their possessions. There was a Naga king of *Kelaniya*, and there were two other kings in *Nagadipa* who once fought for a gem-set throne, which each king claimed as belonging to himself.

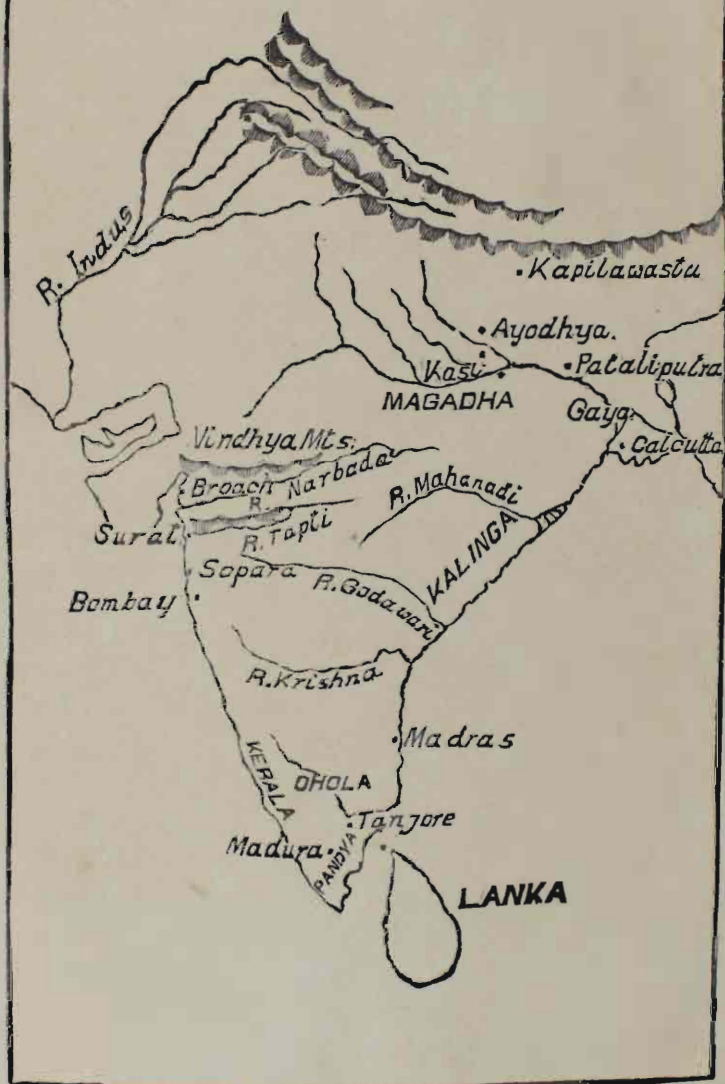
Among these people *Vijaya* and his seven hundred followers, believed to be Aryans by race, descended. They landed at a point on the north-western coast, near to where *Puttalam* now stands.* Weary and faint after their long voyage they came out of their ship, and threw themselves on the welcome beach. There is a story that when they rose from the ground they found that the palms of their hands were stained by the red-brown soil on which they had rested: and that therefore they gave the name *Tambapanni* (copper-coloured) to the place. This name, whether it was so derived or not, was afterwards given to the whole island, and from it is derived the name *Taprobane* used by Greek writers.

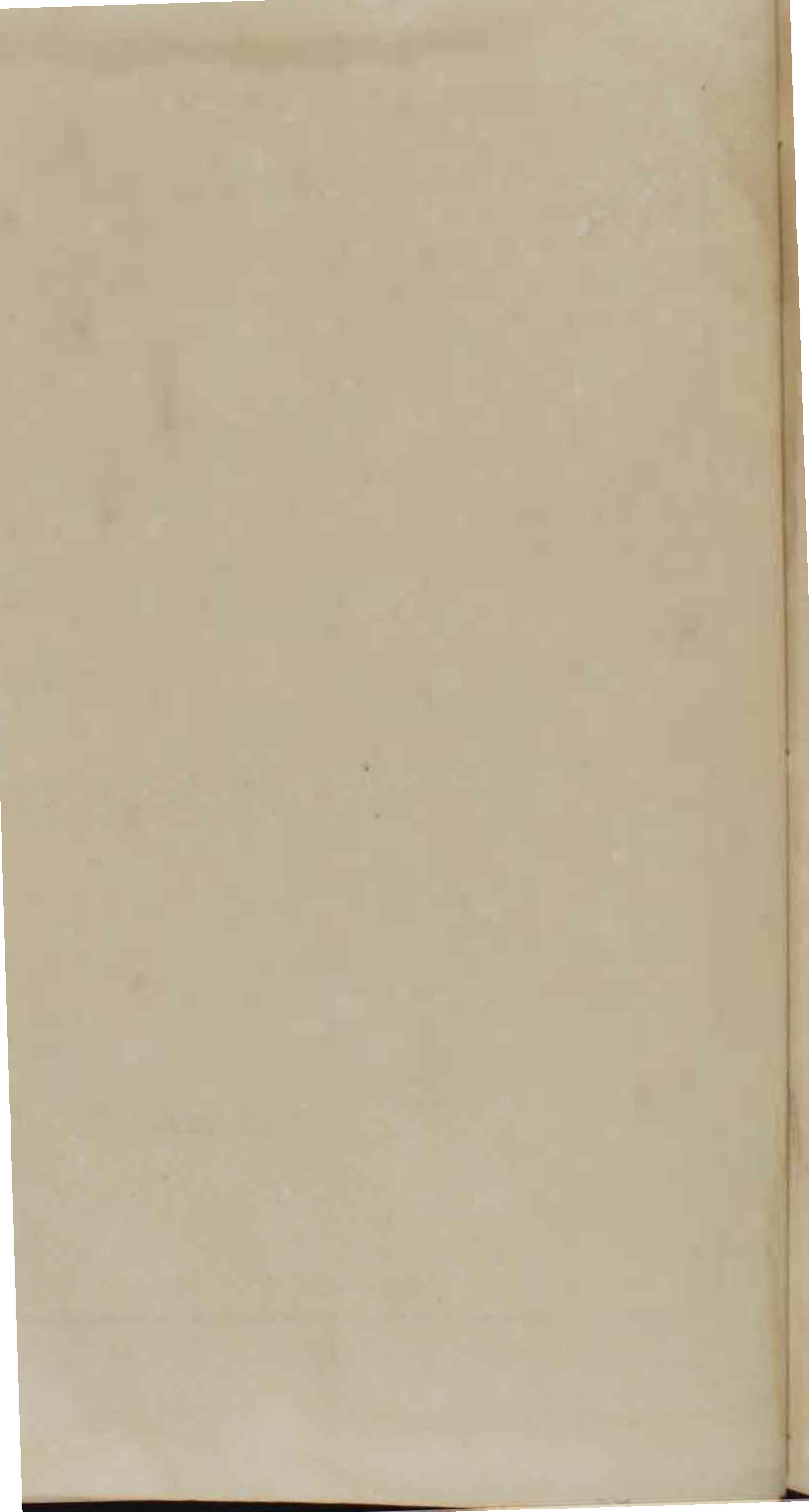
* Opinion is divided as to the place of landing: *Tamanakaduwa* and a port on the south coast have also been suggested. But several "invasions" or settlements might have taken place.

Shortly after the invaders landed, one of them saw a dog and followed it into the country. "Where there are dogs," he argued, "there must be a village also." Instead of a village however, the dog led him to a tank near which what appeared to be a devotee (a very religious person) was seated spinning thread. Seeing a human being, as he took her to be, he was encouraged to bathe in the tank and to collect for food some of the roots that grew in it. But while he was thus occupied, the devotee (who was really a Yakkha princess, named Kuveni) started up, seized the astonished man, and flung him into a cave. One by one the followers of Vijaya were in this way imprisoned, and at last Vijaya himself came to the place. Seeing that all the footprints led into the tank and none out of it, he suspected that the Yakkhini had imprisoned the men there. In his rage he caught her by the neck, and would have killed her but that she instantly submitted, and restored his followers to him, feeding them on the rice taken from ships which had been wrecked on the coast. Vijaya afterwards took Kuveni for his wife, and with her aid gradually became master of the country round about. The neighbouring Yakkha chiefs were subdued, and a capital, named Tammana Nuwara was built a few miles east of Puttalam.

Vijaya was now in fact, if not in name, the chief ruler of the island. We may therefore now begin to speak of him and his followers as the *Sinhalese*, the lion-race; for it will be remembered that Vijaya's father was Sinhabahu, the lion-arm. The island itself afterwards

ANCIENT INDIA





took the conqueror's name. It was called *Sinhala-dipa*, the Island of the Sinhalese. From this were formed the various names *Serendiva*, *Serendib*, *Ceilao*, *Zeilan*, *Ceylan*, and lastly *Ceylon*, though to the Sinhalese people it is always *Lanka*.

It took many years before the native Yakkhas and Nagas were finally subdued, and we shall sometimes find them mentioned in our history as having separate chiefs, cities, and armies of their own. Vijaya's followers established themselves in various parts of the country, forming petty chieftaincies over which they ruled. One of them went north and settled where Anuradhapura now stands. Another went farther north and founded the settlement of Upatissa. A third founded Vijitapura on the east. Then these chiefs decided that it was time their leader took upon himself the rank and office of a king. But Vijaya refused to do this until he could marry a queen of his own rank. Thereupon the chiefs sent an embassy to Madura (the capital of the kingdom of Pandya* in South India) to ask for the king's daughter to be Vijaya's queen. The request was readily granted, and seven hundred daughters of the principal nobles of Madura came with the princess to Ceylon. The princess married king Vijaya, whose "inauguration," or coronation, was then celebrated with great splendour, while the seven

* See, map p. 8. The kingdom of Pandya extended southward from about Point Calimere to Cape Comorin. It had the kingdom of Chola on its north, and the Chera or Kerala kingdom on its west.

hundred other ladies were bestowed on the king's ministers, "according to their grades or castes" This is the first time castes are mentioned in Sinhalese history, though the caste system must have been previously brought by Vijaya to Ceylon. Workmen of various sorts, such as goldsmiths, carpenters, etc., came also at this time.

But what of Kuveni—the Yakkha princess who had been Vijaya's wife till now, who had borne him two children (a son and a daughter), and with whose assistance he had made himself master of the country? She was put away by Vijaya, and he made a strange excuse for doing so. "A king's daughter," said he, meaning the Indian princess who was now his queen, "is a timid being. Thou must therefore leave thy children, and go from my house." "But whither can I go?" pleaded Kuveni; "On thy account I fought against and killed mine own people. I dread their revenge; and now thou too turnest me away. Whither shall I go?" Vijaya offered to provide a shelter for her within his own dominions; but the proud, broken-hearted woman indignantly refused the offer, and with her children sought to rejoin her tribe. They, of course, remembering the wrong she had done, put her to death, and the children saved themselves by flight. They fled to the neighbourhood of Adam's Peak, and under the protection of the king founded a numerous race. The people called Veddas are supposed to be their descendants. There is little doubt,

however, that the Veddas represent the aborigines, or earliest inhabitants of the island.

For thirty-eight years (B.C. 543-505) Vijaya reigned at Tammana Nuwara (Tambapanni) over Ceylon. Nothing of importance took place after his coronation. He is believed to have visited Jaffna; but towards the end of his reign, he was troubled with anxiety as to who should succeed him, for his Indian queen bore him no son. He resolved to invite Sumitta, one of his brothers, from Sinhapura. A letter was accordingly sent to Northern India; but long before the letter reached its destination, Vijaya departed this life and "went to the world of the devas."

CHAPTER III.

From Vijaya's Death to Mutasiva

UPATISSA, the leading chief among the Sinhalese, now took up the government, and acted as king for one year, during which he made his own city, Upatissa Nuwara, the capital. When Vijaya's letter reached Sinhapura, Sumitta had already succeeded his father as king of that country. As he himself was thus prevented from coming, he sent **Panduvasu-deva**, the youngest of his three sons, to rule over the new kingdom that Vijaya had won; and on his arrival at Upatissa Nuwara the government was at once given over to him.

Panduvasu-deva's reign was not uneventful. Like his uncle, Vijaya, he married an Indian

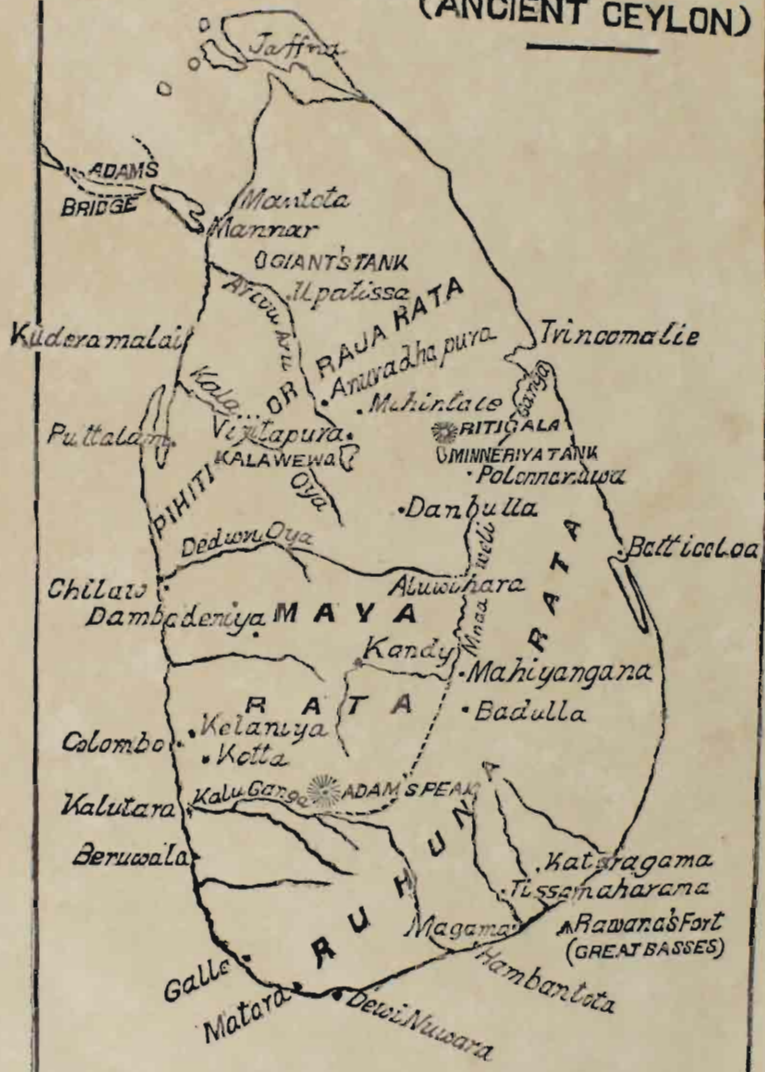
princess, and she was a relative of Gautama Buddha. Six of her brothers afterwards came to Ceylon, and distributed themselves over the country, forming settlements from which they took, or to which they gave, their names. Thus we find *Ramagona Ruhuna*, *Dighayu*, *Uruvela*, *Anuradha*, and *Vijitagama*.* Anuradha in his settlement caused a great tank to be built, the first about which there is any record in the old books. About this time also the island was divided into three great provinces, the names and boundaries of which were roughly:—

- I. *Pihiti Rata or Raja Rata*—all the country north of the Mahaveli Ganga and the Deduru Oya; bounded on the west, north, and east by the sea. Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa were its chief cities in later years. It may be presumed that Sinhalese influence was strongest here.
- II. *Maya Rata*—bounded on the north by the Deduru Oya; east by the Mahaveli Ganga; south by the Kalu Ganga; west by the sea.
- III. *Ruhuna Rata*—All the country south of the Mahaveli Ganga and the Kalu Ganga. *Malaya* was the central mountain region of Ceylon.

After a reign of thirty years Panduvasu died, and was succeeded by **Abhaya**, the eldest of his ten sons. Abhaya appears to have been

* cf. p. 9.

LANKA (ANCIENT CEYLON)





a weak and indulgent ruler, and his reign is noted only for a rebellion caused by his nephew Pandukabhaya. It had been foretold that Pandukabhaya would kill his uncles and take the kingdom. His uncles therefore sought to put him to death, but he escaped, and lived with a wealthy Brahman who taught him every accomplishment necessary for a king, and in the end provided him with money and troops to fight for his kingdom. Getting together a large force he took up a strong position near the Mahaveli Ganga, and for some years resisted all the efforts of his uncles to dislodge him. When king Abhaya heard of his nephew's success, he sent a letter to the prince secretly conferring on him the rule of all the country south of the river. This was really sharing the sovereignty of Ceylon with Pandukabhaya. The king's brothers were naturally very angry when they heard of this. They dethroned Abhaya (who had already reigned twenty years) and set up **Tissa**, one of themselves, to rule in his place.

There was now no king in Ceylon acknowledged by all the Sinhalese as supreme. For seventeen years (B.C. 454—437) the war lasted between Pandukabhaya and his eight uncles—for, of the ten, Abhaya and another were on his side. Pandukabhaya at last called in the aid of the Yakkhas whom he had fought and brought under his rule, and many more of

B. C.—437—427 Plato.

B. C. 384—322 Aristotle and Demosthenes.

his own people began to join him. With this larger army he occupied the Arittha mountain (Ritigala, about midway between Anuradhapura and Polonnaruva) and when his eight uncles came up, he fell upon them vigorously, slew them, and dispersed their forces.

Pandukabhaya was thirty-seven years old when he gained possession of the throne. He spared the lives of the two uncles who had befriended him. To them, and to the son of the Brahman who had sheltered him in his youth, he gave offices of great trust and responsibility, Abhaya being appointed ruler of the city during the night, with the title *Nagara-guttika*, guardian of the city. The Yakkhas who had fought for him were treated with great consideration, and were assigned quarters in and about the capital. He even ordered that offerings should be provided annually for the gods worshipped by the Yakkhas. Indeed, the king was very indulgent in matters of religion; he "provided a residence for five hundred persons of various foreign faiths."

Up to this time Upatissa Nuwara had been the capital of the Sinhalese kings. Pandukabhaya preferred Anuradhapura, removed to that place, and made the city worthy of a king's capital, which it continued to be for more than a thousand years afterwards. Two great tanks, the *Jaya-veva* and the *Abhaya-veva*, were made by the king's orders. Four suburbs were added to the city, a cemetery and "a place of execution and torture" were constructed, and arrangements were made for

keeping the city clean and healthy by wise sanitary measures. In the twelfth year of his reign (*i.e.*, B.C. 425) the king "fixed the boundaries of the villages in all parts of Lanka." His entire reign extended to seventy years, and it is interesting to note how much progress was made in establishing a settled rule in the new Sinhalese kingdom.

Mutasiva, the son of Pandukabhaya, succeeded to the throne, and is said to have reigned for sixty years.* His reign was one of unbroken peace, and the only act recorded of him is that he built the famous pleasure-garden at Anuradhapura. It was named *Mahamegha* (the great cloud), from a heavy fall of rain which took place unexpectedly when the garden was being laid out. We shall hear of this garden again presently.

The king died B.C. 307 [B.C. 247] and was succeeded by his son Tissa, afterwards known as **Devanampiya Tissa**, in whose reign a great change was made in the religion of the people.

* According to the Sinhalese historians Pandukabhaya must have been 107 years old when he died; for he was 37 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 70 years. Mutasiva succeeds and reigns 60 years. There is a difficulty in allowing two such long reigns in succession. One writer suggests that there was a reign between the two reigns in question, thus:—

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| Pandukabhaya | ... | ... | ... | 70 years. |
| Ganatissa (son of Pandukabhaya) | ... | ... | ... | 18 .. |
| Mutasiva (son of Ganatissa) | ... | ... | ... | 47 .. |

A later theory is that reigns of Pandukabhaya and Mutasiva are said to be longer than they really were in order that the day of Vijaya's arrival might be made to agree with the day of the Buddha's death.

CHAPTER IV

Buddha and Buddhism

SOME years before the landing of Vijaya in Ceylon, a king of an Aryan people called the Sakyas reigned at Kapilavastu, a town in North India,—in Oudh, or in Nepal. This king had a son named Siddartha, a youth of a quiet and reserved disposition. He was brought up in all princely accomplishments and was happily married. In his twenty-ninth year, however, he renounced all pleasures, comforts, and worldly honours, and gave himself up entirely to religious meditation. What troubled the prince most was that there existed around him so much pain and suffering which could not be relieved. For six years he wandered from place to place and sought in various ways to find a remedy by which man could overcome pain and suffering. He followed the directions of priests and religious teachers, he studied different religions, he lived a hermit's life of loneliness and self-denial, he suffered penances, but all in vain. He had now come near to the city of Gaya (in Bihar), and sat under a bo-tree, meditating on the problems for which he sought a solution, and fighting against the temptations which crowded into his mind. At last it seemed to him that he had found the remedy. It was the mind of man which had to be taught and trained. Pain was caused by unsatisfied desire; every man should therefore seek to get rid of desire. When desire is extinguished, there will be deliverance from

suffering. This was the chief teaching of the new religion, and round it clustered other teachings, all collectively known as the teaching of *Buddhism*.

Gautama—the prince Siddartha is often so named from the tribe or clan to which he belonged—had now become the *Buddha*, or the enlightened one. For forty-five years he preached his doctrines, and a great part of Northern India adopted the new Buddhist creed.

During these years the Buddha is said to have visited Ceylon three times, knowing that “Lanka would be the place where his religion would be most glorified.” His first appearance was at Bintenne, in the present Province of Uva, on a great plain where the Yakkhas were accustomed to meet. He terrified them with rains and darkness, and drove them to the hills. The Mahiyangana dagaba was afterwards built on this plain. The second visit was in the fifth year of his Buddhahood, when he came to Naga-dipa (the northern, or north-western, portion of Ceylon) to settle a dispute regarding a gem-set throne which two Naga kings claimed. The third visit was three years later. The Naga king of Kelaniya, near Colombo, invited him to come over and preach Buddhism. It was during this visit that the Buddha is said to have left the impression of his foot on Adam’s Peak, and to have visited the place now called Anuradhapura.

After Gautama Buddha’s death three great Councils were held in India. The first was

at Rajagaha, the capital of Magadha (Bihar), in the year after the Buddha's death. But the spread of Buddhism brought with it unavoidable difficulties. A number of sects sprang up, and teachings different from those preached by the Buddha were widely taught. To settle the points in dispute, to decide clearly what were true Buddhist teachings, and what were not, the second Council was called. It was held about one hundred years after the first, about year B.C. 443 [B.C. 383.]

Meanwhile, the great emperor of India known sometimes as *Asoka* (the sorrowless), and sometimes as *Piyadāsa* (the beholder of delight), and referred to in the Sinhalese writings as *Dharmasoka* (Asoka the righteous), became a convert to Buddhism. He was the ruler of Magadha, but in a short time he had extended his empire throughout the whole of India, except a small portion of the south. He ruled also over Afghanistan and Beluchistan. His chief city was Pataliputra (Patna). Asoka is chiefly known by his *Edicts*, which are thirty or more inscriptions on stone pillars or rocks. They are found in the most distant parts of his empire, and they are valuable records of Buddhist teaching and of historical facts. He was a devoted follower of the Buddha, a zealous believer, anxious to spread the faith everywhere. Buddhism became the State religion, and "Jambudipa [India] glittered

with yellow robes." In the seventeenth year of his reign, and in the third century after the Buddha's death, a third Council was held [B. C. 247] for the same purpose as the second, to settle disputed doctrines. But the third Council did something more; it decided to send preachers of Buddhism to foreign countries, and one country chosen for this purpose was Lanka. For Lanka, indeed, one of the greatest of Buddhist teachers was set apart,—Mahinda, the son (though some take him to be the younger brother) of Asoka. Mahinda had already founded a Buddhist monastery in the Tanjore district, then known as the kingdom of Chola; and now he and other four leading disciples were waiting for a suitable opportunity to take Buddhism into Ceylon.

CHAPTER V

Devanampiya Tissa

WE must return to the kings of Ceylon. When Tissa became king great wonders are said to have occurred. Precious metals and gems that had long lain buried in the earth rose to the surface. Treasures from ships which had been wrecked round the coast, and pearls from the depths of the sea, came up and cast themselves upon the shore. Near Anuradhapura three large graceful necklaces appeared. One, shining like silver, had on it beautiful creepers which gleamed like gold. Another was bright with full-blown flowers of various hues. The third shewed birds and beasts of divers colours.

The priests who wrote Tissa's history said all this in Tissa's praise, because the king became the friend and patron of the Buddhist priesthood. Indeed, the king is spoken of by them as *Devanampiya Tissa*, "Tissa the delight of the gods."

In some way or other, Tissa and the great Asoka of India, though the two kings never met, were friends of long standing. Tissa resolved to strengthen this friendship by sending an embassy with rich presents to Asoka. The presents included "the three kinds of gems, the three chariot-like necklaces, a chank with the whorls to the right, [i.e. winding to the right] and the eight descriptions of pearls." We must bear in mind that the Sinhalese were at this time followers of the Brahman or Hindu religion; and at the head of Tissa's embassy went the king's nephew, Maha Arittha.

It is possible that the embassy was suggested not only by friendship but also by rumours which had come to Ceylon already of the new religion. From Anuradhapura the embassy went northwards, embarked at a port near where Jaffna now stands, disembarked at Tamalitti (now Tamluk), then at the mouth of the Ganges, and in seven days more reached Pataliputra (Patna), where they delivered their presents to Asoka. That monarch was very pleased with the rich gifts brought to him. He conferred high honours on the leaders of the embassy, and sent them back accompanied by ambassadors from himself, bearing valuable gifts. Among these gifts were water from the Ganges and

other articles necessary for the anointing and consecration of a king. Nor did Asoka miss this opportunity of advancing the religion which he himself followed so earnestly. A "gift of pious advice" was added to the sword and crown and other substantial presents sent to Tissa. "I," said Asoka to the king of Lanka, "I have taken refuge in Buddha, his religion, and his priesthood.* Ruler of men, turn thou thy mind to belief in these supreme blessings, and with true faith do thou also seek refuge in this salvation."

Now Tissa had been already "consecrated." or crowned king, and he is always spoken of as Asoka's equal in rank, not his inferior. But Asoka claimed to be king of Ceylon as well as of vast regions in India; and if Ceylon adopted Buddhism, the island would, in a certain sense, be subject to him. Tissa accepted the advice sent by the Indian monarch. He favoured the introduction of the new religion, and was duly consecrated a second time.

Mahinda, the royal missionary appointed for Ceylon, arrived in the island about the year B.C. 307, [B.C. 246] His first interview with king Tissa took place on a mountain near Anuradhapura which was known afterwards as Mahinda's mountain, or, as it is now called, Mihintale. He was welcomed gladly and received with great reverence. The king soon became a convert to Buddhism, and the people

* Alluding to the threefold formula—

"I take refuge in the Buddha.

I take refuge in the Law.

I take refuge in the Order (of priests)."

followed his example in large numbers; for the sermons of the new preacher, as well as his fame and the austerity of his life, drew crowds to him wherever he went, and made a deep impression on those who listened. Buddhism was established at the capital, and the royal garden, Mahamega, was given over to Mahinda and the priests.

It seemed as if the king could not do too much for the new religion. His time, his energies, his treasures, were all freely spent in schemes for the comfort and advantage of the priests. He marked out and set apart for the service of Buddhism a large tract of ground which included the capital itself. Within this he built a vihara, or monastery, known since then as the Maha Vihara, which grew into "a great seat of learning and the home of great men." He built numerous other viharas too, and among them one with thirty-two cells cut out of the rock on the Mihintale mountain. Observing that there were no relics of the Buddha in the island, Mahinda advised that a request should be made to Asoka for the right collar-bone of the great teacher. This, it is said, was immediately sent, and with it the alms-bowl which had been used by the Buddha, and a number of other relics, which were all reverently deposited in a shrine on the mountain. which was therefore called the Cetiya (*Shrine*) mountain. Over the collar-bone was erected in Anuradhapura the Thuparama dagaba, the first dagaba built in Ceylon (B.C. 306) [B.C. 245].

Women also were converted to Buddhism through Mahinda's preaching, and the princess Anula, the wife of the king's younger brother, with five hundred ladies of her company, asked for admission into the priesthood. Mahinda said that the rules of Buddhism did not allow him to ordain females; they might, however, apply to Asoka to send Sanghamitta (Mahinda's younger sister), who had become a priestess and was renowned for her learning, to Ceylon for this purpose. At the same time they were to ask for a branch of the sacred bo-tree under the shade of which Gautama had found Buddhahood.

The request was made, and, though Asoka did all he could to discourage her, Sanghamitta at once decided to leave her home for Ceylon. When the king pleaded that he would be left comfortless and alone in his old age, she replied that her brother's appeal must not be disregarded, since those in Ceylon who wished to be ordained were many. So, taking a branch of the sacred bo-tree given to her by the king, she came to this island accompanied by eleven other priestesses. The branch was planted with great ceremony in the Mahamega garden, and large numbers of women—Anula among them—were ordained priestesses by Sanghamitta. For her the king built a separate vihara in a cool and secluded place where, with her community of nuns, she spent the remainder of her life.

When Tissa died, after a long and eventful reign of forty years, he left his kingdom converted to the religion of "the vanquisher."

CHAPTER VI

The First Tamil Invasion

Uttiya, the younger brother of Tissa, succeeded to the throne. In the eighth year of his reign [B.C. 199] the priest Mahinda died. The funeral of the noble Buddhist preacher was attended with every mark of honour. The rich coffin in which his remains lay embalmed was taken with solemn ceremonies to the Maha Vihara, and after seven days, during which frequent offerings were made, it was placed on the funeral pile, to which king Uttiya himself applied the torch. Sanghamitta died in the year following, and her body was burned with similar honours.

Mahinda and Sanghamitta well deserved the respect paid to their memory. They lived useful and unselfish lives, giving up the comforts and privileges of their royal home at Magadha to live among strangers, and to teach the highest truths they knew. They did not weary of their task; they sought no temporal reward; and they died in a strange land in the midst of their labours.

Mahasiva, the younger brother and successor of Uttiya, did nothing more noteworthy than build a fine vihara for a priest who happened to please him. But in the reign of the next king, **Sura Tissa** (a brother of the three previous kings) we come upon the

beginnings of a new trouble from which the Sinhalese were to suffer for many centuries. In their anxiety to extend the Buddhist religion, and to gain "merit" for themselves after death by the building of innumerable viharas and dagabas, the kings of Ceylon failed to take proper measures for the protection of the country, both from foreign invasion and from the revolts of their own ambitious chiefs. The king's army was neglected, and the Sinhalese people were setting down as peaceful tillers of the soil. Many of them were employed on the various buildings which the kings had in hand. These buildings were chiefly in the northern part of the island, especially near Anuradhapura, the capital. But all the time the Sinhalese chieftains were forming settlements of their own in the southern and western districts—settlements which gradually became more and more independent of the king's authority. Two Tamils, named **Sena** and **Guttaka**, sons of a Malabar trader in horses, soon discovered the weak state of the country, and resolved to rule over it themselves. They brought over a Tamil army, treacherously murdered the king, and kept the government in their hands for no fewer than twenty-two years, when they were defeated and put to death by **Asela**, who is said to be the ninth of Mutasiva's ten sons, though this is improbable.

Asela's reign lasted ten years. But the Tamils in India had by this time found out how easy it was to take possession of the island, and in B.C. 205 [B.C. 145] the first

noteworthy Tamil invasion occurred. The Tamils were led by **Elara**, a prince of the kingdom of Chola* in South India. He landed on the east coast at the mouth of the Mahaveli Ganga, and marched victoriously to Anuradhapura where he defeated and slew Asela. All Ceylon north of the Great River he brought wholly under his rule ; and though the chiefs of Maya-rata and Ruhuna-rata were allowed to govern their own provinces, they were compelled to acknowledge Elāra's supremacy and to pay him tribute. Of Ruhuna we shall hear again presently.

Elāra built thirty-two forts to make himself secure in his new kingdom. Mantota, a village near Mannar, where in after times new bands of Tamil invaders landed, is said to have been founded by him. His justice and impartiality are noted by the historian, and the people seem to have been satisfied, or at any rate patient, under his rule. He caused a bell with a long rope to be hung over the head of his bed so that anyone who thought himself injured was able to bring his complaint to the king himself. Though a Hindu, the king gained the favour of the Buddhist priests by offering them his protection and by supporting their institutions. There are some, however, who assert that Elāra, was a violent

* See map, p. 6. The kingdom of Chola or *Sola*, extended from Nellore on the north to Pudukattai, or a little below Point Calimere, where it met the kingdom of Pandya. On the west it reached to Coorg. Tanjore was its capital, but there was an older capital, Uraiyar, near Trichinopoly. The name *Coromandel* is a corruption of *Chola-mandalam*, the country of the Cholas.

enemy of Buddhism, that he pulled down the viharas, and sought to force his own religion on the Sinhalese. This cannot be altogether true, though it is probable that in the capital, and in the northern part of the island, Buddhism did suffer to some extent, while the Hindu religion made great progress.

CHAPTER VII

The Kings of Ruhuna

THUS Elara the Tamil continued to reign for forty-four years. But south of the great river the native chiefs ruled undisturbed, and Buddhism still prevailed. In Ruhuna the sovereign power was held by a member of the Vijaya family, and to this southern province we must now give some attention.

When Devanampiya Tissa was king of Lanka, Mahanaga, his younger brother, held the office of "sub-king." The queen of Tissa was afraid that this Mahanaga would, on his brother's death, take the kingdom, as Tissa's son was but a child; she tried to kill him. While Mahanaga was engaged in the building of a tank she sent him a jar of mangoes in which the uppermost mango contained poison. Tissa's son, who was with Mahanaga at the time, happened to eat this fruit and died. Upon this, afraid of what might follow, Mahanaga fled from Anuradhapura to Ruhuna, and there established himself, making Mahagama (now Magama, east of Hambantota) his capital, and building viharas and dagabas for the Buddhist

religion. He was succeeded by his son, Yatthala Tissa, who made Kelaniya his capital, and built there the Kelaniya dagaba, on the spot where the Buddha is said to have visited the Naga king. The story goes that Kelaniya was then sixteen miles distant from the sea. King Tissa mistakenly suspecting the high priest of the dagaba of a crime, ordered him and others to be killed and their bodies to be flung into the sea. To avenge this wrong, the gods caused the sea to overflow the land, and were scarcely pacified when the king's daughter was sacrificed to them. This "pious and beautiful daughter," named Devi was placed in a richly-furnished boat and sent adrift on the sea. The winds and currents brought her to Mahagama near the Mudu vihara at Kirinde, built by Mahanaga. Hence she was known as *Vihara-Devi*.

When Elāra reigned at Anuradhapura, the king of Ruhuna was Yatthala Tissa's grandson, named Kavan Tissa. His wife was Vihara Devi, the gentle and pious princess of Kelaniya. She bore him two sons—Gemunu and Tissa—who were carefully brought up in the Buddhist faith. But Gemunu, the elder son, was from his youth vexed at the usurpation of the Tamils, and eager to drive them out of the island. He made no secret of his intention to expel them as soon as he was able. On one occasion when Gemunu was twelve and Tissa ten years old, the king placed three portions of boiled rice before them. "Eat this portion," said he, pointing to the first, "vowing you will never do injury



