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CONTENTS

THE EARLIEST GREEK NOTICES OF SRI LANKA

The notices, which are the subject of this paper, were all written during the Hellenistic or Alexandrian period of Greek literature, which extends from the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. to the commencement of the Roman principate in 27 B.C. The original works which containted the references are no longer extant, and they are known to us only as fragments quoted by later authors. Of the six writers discussed below, only Onesicritus and Megasthenes had first-hand experience of most of the regions they described. The others were men of science and scholarship, who may be taken as typical representatives of the intellectual atmosphere of the age. The fragments thus give us some idea of the impact made by Sri Lanka (or Taprobane, as the Greeks called it)[1] on educated circles of the Hellenistic world.

I

The Elder Pliny tells us that it was the age and achievements of Alexander the Great that revealed the insular nature of Taprobane, which had for a long time been thought of as the first part of another world, being called the "Land of the Antichthones".[2] The *antichthon*, or counter-earth, was originally imagined by the later Pythagoreans to be a celestial body different from the earth, but afterwards came to be regarded as part of this earth itself. However, (with the doubtful exception of a passage from Pomponius Mela, to be discussed below)

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1. A. Herrmann, "Taprobane, die Insel Ceylon" Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopaidie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaftens* vol. IV Stuttgart (1932) p. 2260-2272.

2. Plin. *N.H.* vi. 81.

Pliny is the earliest authority who connects the *antichthones* with Taprobane. He does not, however, name anyone as having held or taught this view.

Thus, as far as we can ascertain, the first Greek to write about Taprobane was Onesicritus of Astypaleia, whom Pliny describes as a commander of Alexander's fleet, and who afterwards wrote a romance history of Alexander. His book fell into discredit among the ancients owing to the manner in which he allegedly interwove fact and fiction. Modern opinion has been, on the whole, more favourable; but it is impossible to arrive at a fair judgment owing to the disappearance of his work. The fragments on Taprobane are preserved by Strabo and Pliny.

Strabo restricts his use of Onesicritus to digressions on the occasions when he diverges from the source he is following at the time. In his account of Taprobane, which is one of these digressions, he quotes Onesicritus as follows:[3]

> "Concerning Taprobane Onesicritus says that it is five thousand stades in size, without defining its length or breadth; that it is twenty days' voyage distant from the mainland; but that ships sail badly since their sailing gear is inefficient and they are built without belly bolts on both sides; that there are also other islands between it and India though that island is the southernmost; that amphibious creatures exist around it, some similar to oxen, others to horses, and others to other land animals.

Pliny quotes Onesicritus as follows:[4]

> "Taprobane, under the name of the land of the *antichthones*, was for a long time considered to be another world. The age and achievements of Alexander the Great proved clearly that it was an island. Onesicritus, a commander of his fleet,

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3. Plin. *N.H.* vi. 81.

4. Jacoby, *F.Gr.H.* no. 134, fr. 12 (Strabo xv.1.15).

wrote that bigger and more war-like elephants are produced there than in India."

Onesicritus's information concerns the size and location of Taprobane as well as the conditions of navigation and the fauna in the neighbouring waters. Strabo's quotation appears to incorporate material from mariners' accounts and disregards altogether the internal condition of the island. Pliny, on the other hand, with the notice of elephants, concentrates attention, however briefly, on the situation in the island itself, about which too Onesicritus had heard somehow.

The report of Onesicritus has been unduly discredited by some modern commentators on account of several reasons. First of all, critics have been too ready to accept the verdict of the ancients, (including Strabo himself),who considered Onesicritus as an inventor of fables, without allowing for the fact that he depended to a great extent on hearsay and was frequently at the mercy of interpreters. His personal knowledge of India extended only as far south as the Indus delta, and his inquiries concerning lands further away were doubtlessly elicited from his informers' answers,the vagueness and mysterious character of which would only have been enhanced in translation. For, the interpreters would not only have perpetuated misunderstandings but also facilitated the tendency to express unfamiliar ideas in terms of the way of thinking already familiar to the Greeks and readily understood by them. Moreover, the practice of recording marvellous details, even when one did not believe in them, was common among ancient geographers and historians, and Onesicritus would himself have found these marvels quite in place in the type of idealised romantic historiography that he practised.

Secondly, the text of Strabo's *Geography* is poorly preserved just at the point where it gives Onesicritus' fragment concerning Taprobane, and in attempting to restore this corrupt test, external ideas have been read into it and unnecessary complications introduced.

Thirdly, this earliest extant notice of Taprobane has been compared with later accounts, and the comparison has often led to confusion. Ideas which Onesicritus never intended have been imputed to him, and what has been thus imputed has generally turned out to be inferior to the information in the two genuine fragments.

Onesicritus gives the size of Taprobane as 5,000 stades. He has therefore been accused of exaggeration and of perpetuating an error which persisted till recent times. But the exaggerating may not have originated with him. For, it has been shown[5] that the ancient Indians also had exaggerated notions concerning the size of Lanka, and that these notions were apparently accepted by the Buddhist writers themselves, who accounted for the present size of the island by episodes in which the sea encroached on vast areas of the land.

According to Strabo, Onesicritus gave the size (μέγαθος) without specifying length or breadth. Strabo is thinking as a geographer and expects to know the length and breadth of the island. But what matters to a sailor is the *periplus* and it is not improbable that what Onesicritus has recorded is the circumference of the island. If this is so, the exaggeration will not appear to be much greater than the actual measurements.[6]

We must also remember that Greek navigators at this time did not have precision instruments to indicate the direction and speed of their vessels. Instead, they had to rely on the sun, stars and wind.[7] In measuring distances at sea, therefore, they were liable to make frequent mistakes. Pythias, for instance, had over-estimated the size of Britain;[8] while Herodotus, in the preceeding century, had greatly exaggerated the size of the Black Sea and under-estimated that of the Bosphorus;[9] and both these writers had some personal experience of the regions they described. Need we wonder, therefore, if Onesicritus, who

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5. J.E. Tennent, *Ceylon* 4th ed. London (1860) vol. I, p.6.

6. It may be observed in passing that the Island of the Sun, described by Iambulus, was said to be 5,000 stades in circumference (Diod. ii. 55-60). T.S. Brown, *Onesicritus: A Study In Hellenistic Historiography* U.S.A. (1949) p. 76, has noted that this is one of several points in which the account of Iambulus reminds one of the writings of Onesicritus.

7. W.W. Hyde *Ancient Greek Mariners* New York (1947) p. 317.

8. Cf. Diod. Sic. v.24.

9. Hdt. iv. 85.

did not reach Taprobane, should have exaggerated its size? Writers of succeeding generations, far from correcting his errors, increased them. These writers were mostly scholars who had no first-hand experience of the east, but merely borrowed their material from earlier sources, adapting it to their own pre-conceived geographical notions.

According to Onesicritus Taprobane was a distance of twenty days' journey from the mainland. This remark has caused some scholars to doubt the identity of Onesicritus' Taprobane with Sri Lanka. A. Herrmann[10] thinks that the description was originally intended for Iabadiu (modern Sumatra), whose central point, according to him, is actually twenty days' journey from the southern tip of India. Herrmann therefore concludes that someone, who revised Onesicritus subsequently, has transferred the description to Taprobane. We must realise, however, that there is nothing in the text of Strabo to suggest that the starting point assumed by Onesicritus was the southern end of India. It should rather be placed in the western part of northern India, probably at the Indus delta, which was the southernmost point personally reached by Onesicritus. Herrmann's suggestion is therefore unacceptable. The journey described must be from the Indus to Taprobane. The twenty days might be an exaggeration, but it must have been prompted or supported by the poor sailing conditions, which the writer goes on to describe.

It is now generally accepted that the Indians, who migrated to Sri Lanka in early times, came from the western as well as the eastern parts of north India. Those who came from the eastern parts certainly maintained regular and intimate contacts with their former land, and there can be no doubt that, at least in the earlier period, their western counterparts did the same. That mariners from Sri Lanka continued to make voyages to the western part of India is evident from the early Brahmi inscription from Maligatanna in the Kurunegala district, in which a mariner by the name of Maha-Asoka describes himself as having gone to Bhojakataka. R.A.L.H. Gunawardana aptly correlates this evidence with the report of Onesicritus, pointing out that Onesicritus had apparently noticed certain sailing vessels used on the route from

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10. A. Herrmann, *loc.cit.* The claims of Sri Lanka to be the "Taprobane" of Onesicritus have been defended by F.F. Schwarz, 'Onesikritos und Megasthenes uber Tambapannidipa' *Grazer Beitrage* vol. V (1976) p. 234-263.

Sindh to Sri Lanka.[11] On the whole there is nothing to prevent us from assuming that there was a regular intercourse between Sri Lanka and the Indus Valley, and that Onesicritus had heard of voyages between these regions as being accomplished in twenty days.

As for Sumatra, one cannot believe, in the absence of positive evidence, that there was any regular contact at this date between that land and the Indus region. We do not hear of Iabadiu in extant Greek literature before Ptolemy, who wrote during the mid second century A.D. Even the Indian notions of Suvannabhumi (usually identified with Burma or Malaya) are not earlier than the beginning of the third century B.C., and it is very unlikely that information could have reached a Greek of the time of Alexander the Great sojourning in India. In fact the ignorance that pervades all classical authors other than Ptolemy concerning regions east of India is impressive, and there appears to be no need to bring in Sumatra at this early stage of Greek knowledge concerning the East.

Another reason why Herrmann believes that this description should apply to Sumatra is that Onesicritus speaks of other islands between India and Taprobane. But such a deduction need not follow, once we allow that Onesicritus is thinking of the route beginning at the Indus. We may compare Pliny's notice several islands lying between the Indus and Taprobane. Pliny is here compiling from earlier material, and some of his information may well go back to Onesicritus himself. We may also compare the similar list of islands in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, where the author is probably speaking from personal experience, be it his own or of others.[12]

Regarding the ships employed in this journey, Onesicritus says that they sail badly, since their sailing gear is inefficient and they are built without belly-bolts on both sides (ἀλλὰ κακοπλοεῖν τὰς ναῦς, Φαύλως μὲν ἱστιοπεποιημένας, κατασκευασμένας δὲ αμΦοτέρωθεν ἐγκοιλίων μετρῶν χωρίς) This is one instance where attempts at restoration of the text have

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11. S. Paranavitana, *Inscriptions of Ceylon* vol. I Colombo (1970) p. 76; R.A.L.H. Gunawardana,'Seaways to Sieledíba: Changing Patterns of Navigation in the Indian Ocean and their Impact on Pre-Colonial Sri Lanka', Paper read at the Asian Studies Seminar, University of Peradeniya, 1985, p. 3.

12. Plin vi.80; *Periplus* 53. Cf. Schwarz, *op.cit.* p. 246, n.35.

resulted in confusion and misinterpretation. A parallel was drawn between the text of Onesicritus, as preserved by Strabo, and Pliny's account of navigation in the neighbourhood of Taprobane.[13] Pliny's words were used to interpret Strabo's supposedly obscure and disturbed text. By inserting the word πρῳραῖς after κατασκευασμένας Onesicritus was made to say that the ships navigate badly, not only because the rigging is defective, but also because they are equipped at both ends with prows.[14]

Pierre Paris,[15] who rejects the above emendation, thinks that Pliny and Strabo are referring to two different regions, and consequently to two different kinds of boat. According to him, Pliny is probably referring to the double-ended boats found on the coast of India and Sri Lanka, especially around the Gulf of Mannar. These are the canoes with a single lateral float, known in Sinhala as *oru*. Strabo, on the other hand, is talking of a different kind of boat. Paris takes the ἐγκοιλια μετρα to be the lateral floats of the boat, which are some distance from the hull and separated (χωρις). Boats of this kind, with two lateral floats, are found at present only in Indonesia; however - so argues Paris - the Indonesians had to use their own boats in migrating to Madagascar and eastern Africa, probably passing by Sri Lanka. Paris therefore assumes that we have in Onesicritus a piece of important information from which one can at least conclude that, at the time of Alexander, the seas to the south of India were frequented by boats with double outriggers.

It is, however, possible to understand this passage satisfactorily without introducing new words into the text or having recourse to a hypothesis concerning the possible presence of Indonesian type boats in the vicinity of Sri Lanka. A careful examination of the Greek text will show that the function of the

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13. Cp. Strab. xv.1.15 with Plin.vi.82

14. Müller and Dubner ed., *Strabonis Geographia*, Paris (1831) *index variae lectionis* p. 1032-3, quoted by P. Paris "Note on Two Passages of Strabo and Pliny Relating to Taprobane" (English Version) *Ceylon Historical Journal* vol. 1.4 (1951) p. 297-301.

15. Paris *op.cit.* p. 299.

two participles ἰστιοπεποιημένας and κατασκευασμένας is to be regarded as casual and not as purely descriptive. Onesicritus is not describing the boats, but giving the reason for their poor sailing. According to him, the ships sail badly for two reasons: (1) they are poorly rigged; and (2) they are built without ἐγκοίλια μέτρα i.e. "belly-bolts", presumably bolts or nails used for fastening the boat together. What we have here, I think, is an early reference to the practice of fastening boats without the use of nails.

The practice is mentioned again in a work of the late fifth century A.D. entitled *On The Nations Of India And The Brahmins* attributed to "Palladius". But in the work it is connected with the famous legend of the magnet stone which attracts and destroys ships:[16]

> "And since the magnet stone, which attracts iron, is found in those islands that are called the Maniolai, any ship that approaches with iron nails is kept there by the nature of the stone and cannot pass on. Characteristically, the ships that sail across to that great island (*sc.* Taprobane) are equipped, not with iron but with wooden pegs."

Procopius, the Byzantine historian of the sixth century A.D., also refers to this practice as being current in the Indian Ocean, but he dismisses the legend in favour of a more rational explanation:[17]

> "The ships in the Indian Ocean do not have their planks fixed together to one another by iron going straight through them. They are lashed together by nooses or ropes. The reason is not, as most people believe, that there are certain rocks there that attract iron to them, but it is a fact that the Indians or Ethiopians have neither iron nor anything suitable for this purpose."

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16. Palladius *De Gentibus Indiae Et Bragmanibus* 1.4 (ed Berghoff.)

17. Procop. *Pers.* i.19.23-5. The idea of constructing ships without iron is, of course, not peculiar to the Indian seas. Archaeology reveals examples in pre-historic Britain. Cf. also Hom. *Od.* v.28.

Among more recent descriptions we may cite the one given by Hornell of the now obsolete Sri Lankan *doni*.[18] He represents it as being of about fifty tons burden, two-masted, with single outrigger float. Iron was not employed in the construction, but planks were sewn together with coir yarn, caulked and made tight with leaves between the edges. The ends of these boats were similar, (approximating, no doubt, to what the Greeks would call a prow). These crafts worked in the west coast daily and had their outriggers always on the port side only so as to make use of the alternation of land and sea breeses - running northwards along the coast before the afternoon sea breeze and travelling south before the night land breeze. They were regularly used during the northeast monsoon, from September onwards, until the onset of the next southwest monsoon, when they were withdrawn, perforce for an annual overhaul.

Some of these details remind us strongly of Pliny's description of navigation in the vicinity of Taprobane:

> "The sea in-between is shallow, not more than six paces deep, but in certain channels so deep that no anchors touch the bottom. For this reason ships have prows at either end, so that they do not need to turn about in the narrows of the channels. Their capacity is about 3,000 amphorae. There is no observation of the stars in navigation - The Great Bear is not visible. They take birds with them, which they send out fairly frequently, and follow their path as they seek land. Their sailing season is not more than four months in the year. They chiefly avoid the hundred days from the solstice, that sea being wintry at the time."

As Gunawardana has observed,[19] Hornell was probably right in identifying the ships that Pliny described with a type of vessel closely similar to the outrigger vessels found in Sri Lanka. Could it not be that Onesicritus, in Strabo's quotation, is also describing vessels of a type used in the neighbourhood of Sri Lanka?

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18. J. Hornell, "The Fishing Craft of India and Ceylon" *Mariner's Mirror* vol. XXIX (1943) p. 43-46.

19. Gunawardana, *op.cit.* p. 4.

The statement of Onesicritus, with regard to which his account of Taprobane has been chiefly discredited, is that amphibious creatures breed around the island, some similar to bulls, others to horses and yet others to other land animals. On the one hand commentators have themselves invested this description with an air of the fabulous by taking the Greek word κήτη in the extreme sense as signifying "monsters", whereas the word could have a less frightening meaning. On the other hand this statement has been compared with a passage in Aelian's *Historia Animalium*,[20] and what Aelian said has been unduly attributed to Onesicritus. Now, although Aelian borrows frequently from earlier writers, he re-creates their information in his own manner. One cannot miss the exaggerated style of the story-teller and rhetorician. Thus he is not a reliable witness regarding the content of his sources.

> "For they assert that the sea, which surrounds the circuit of their island, breeds a multitude past numbering of fishes and monsters, and moreover,that they have the heads of lions and leopards and wolves and rams, and - even more wonderful to relate - that there are some which have the forms of satyrs with the faces of women; and these have spines attached in place of hair."

Onesicritus's assertion that bigger and more war-like elephants than those of India are produced in Taprobane,[21] appears also to have been borrowed by Aelian,[22] who expands it in his usual redundant and verbose manner when he says that "these elephants of the island are more powerful and bigger than those of the mainland, and may be judged naturally cleverer in every way."

The observation of Onesicritus regarding the size of the elephants is erroneous, and results from the ignorance prevalent

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20. Ael. *De Nat.Anim.* xvi.18; Tennent (*op.cit.* p. 528,n.3) was of the opinion that the informants of Onesicritus may have been influenced by the sea-creature known as the dugong, said to be numerous on the northwestern coast of Sri Lanka around Manner.

21. Plin. vi. 81.

22. Ael. *loc.cit.*

in the ancient world regarding the relative size of African and Indian elephants. We know that Curtius Rufus believed that the elephants of India were bigger than those of Africa,[23] and Pliny himself notes that India produced the largest elephants.[24] It was only natural to believe that the furthest places yielded the best of things - *omne ignotum pro magnifice est*, says Tacitus. Now, as Taprobane was even further than India, it would not surprise us to find Onesicritus believing that the elephants there were bigger than even those of India.

As for their skill in warfare, the indigenous tradition of subsequent periods is in complete agreement with Onesicritus. The chronicles of the island testify to many valiant deeds performed by war-elephants, and to their phenomenal strength and skill in fighting. The classic example that comes readily to mind is that of Kandula, the state and war-elephant of Dutthagamini (2nd century B.C.).[25]

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23. Curtius Rufus viii.9.17.

24. Plin. viii.21.

25. Schwarz *op.cit.* p. 248. Schwarz would also trace back to Onesicritus the statement in Strabo (ii.1.14) that "we have strong assurance Taprobane is a large island in the open sea, which lies off India to the south", as well as the same writer's statement (ii.5.32) "In this southern sea off the coast of India lies an island, Taprobane, which is not less than Britain." The insularity of Taprobane was known from the time of Alexander the Great (cf.Plin.vi.81), and one may justly assume that Onesicritus could have been responsible for revealing it to the readers of the west. But one cannot be so certain regarding the comparison with Britain; for, although Pytheas of Massalia, who made the famous voyage up the west coast of Europe to Britain, Jutland, the Orkneys and Shetlands, was a contemporary of both Alexander the Great and Onesicritus, the earliest comparison of the two islands occurs only in the Pseudo-Aristotalian treatise *De Mundo* (3933.14), which cannot be earlier than the first century B.C.

When due allowances has been made for the limitations of his age, one need have no reservations regarding the reliability of Onesicritus's information concerning Taprobane. With him there are no traces of the fabulous wealth and utopain existence that was ascribed to the island by certain later writers. In actual fact he says nothing at all about the people of the land and their way of life. But the few simple facts that he mentions lead us to conclude that at this date the island was known as such to the people of western India, that voyages were being made between it and the sub-continent, and that reasonable information, however limited, was forthcoming from it.

Onesicritus himself could have obtained this information while he was in northwestern India.[26] We know that he was sent to Taxila by Alexander the Great in order to discourse with the Indian wise men. Apart from being a well known centre of learning, Taxila was also a prosperous trading city of international renown So too was the Indus delta, whence Onesicritus and the Greeks set sail for Persia. Either of these places could have supplied him with information about Taprobane. But even though he did not reach the island, he shared with other early Greek writers a privilege enjoyed by few of their successors, namely, that of being able to gather knowledge about Taprobane in regions closely associated with it. Northern India remained firmly inside the Greek orbit, and from it Onesicritus and others learned the details which have survived.

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26. According to Tennent, (*op.cit.* p. 525, n.1), Gosselin believed that Onesicritus had visited Taprobane during a second voyage, which he was ordered to accomplish. There is no ancient authority to support what is obviously a mere assumption on Gosselin's part. It is true that Onesicritus mentions the sailing distance and the conditions of navigation, but this information could have been obtained easily without his having made the journey himself. It is also true that Solinus (53.2) represents Onesicritus as having been sent (*missus*) as admiral to the Macedonia fleet (presumably by Alexander), and as having informed us of the size, products, and life of the country, i.e. Taprobane. This might have implied the possibility of his having visited the island, had it not been known that Solinus's material is borrowed and paraphrased almost entirely from Pliny. Thus, any divergence, here as elsewhere, must be ascribed to Solinus's own misinterpretation of his source rather than to consultation of any independent material.

II

The next Greek writer to notice Taprobane was Megasthenes, whom Seleucus Nicator sent as ambassador to the Maurya emperor, Chandragupta. His book became the basis for subsequent works on India by Greek authors. Residence at Pataliputra enabled Megasthenes to get information concerning the eastern and southern parts of India, which was not available to the companions of Alexander the Great.

His fragment on Taprobane is preserved by Pliny:[27]

> "Megasthenes wrote that it is divided by a river, that the inhabitants are called Palaeogoni, and that they are more productive of gold and large pearls than the Indians."

Unlike Onesicritus, Megasthenes is interested in the interior of the island, its geography, people and products. Moreover, as with Onesicritus, the tendency is once again to make comparisons with India in the matter of products, and in both writers Sri Lanka emerges as the better producer.

His statement that Taprobane is divided by a river has been taken by some to mean that the island is separated from the mainland of India by a river.[28] But what Megasthenes meant was doubtlessly that the island was divided by a river running through it. It is now generally agreed that what we have here is an early reference to the Mahaveli Ganga (Mahā Valukā Gangā);[29] the principal river of the island, which, rising in the central province and flowing first in a northerly and then in a northeasterly direction, not only divides the land geographically, but has acted politically as the border between the principal kingdoms of Rajarata and Ruhuna. In the *Mahavamsa* it is frequently known as Mahā-Gangā or simply Gangā, i.e. "the great river" or "the river". According to the pious traditions preserved in the chronicles, it was the Buddha himself who made its valley safe and suitable for

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27. Jacoby, *F.Gr.H.* no. 715, fr. 26 (Plin. vi.81); Schwanbeck, who was the first to collect and edit the fragments of Megasthenes, included under this fragment a quotation from Solinus (53.3). This is really a garbled version of the passage from Pliny, and has been justly left out by both Müller and Jacoby, who edited the fragments subsequently.

28. See, for example, J.W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian* 2nd ed. Calcutta (1960) p.62-63.

29. Tennent, *op.cit.* p. 528; Schwarz, *op.cit.* p. 254.

human habitation after driving away the Yakkhas who once infested it. [30]

Megasthenes informs us that the inhabitants of Taprobane were called Palaeogoni (παλαιογονοί). Almost all commentators have taken this to be a Greek adaptation of some Indian term, although Liassen at first saw in it a reference to the legend that the island was originally inhabited by Rakshasas or giants who were sons of the progenitors of the world.[31]

Schwanbeck[32] disagrees with Laissen, arguing that by this unusual term Megasthenes meant to name the nation and not to describe it. He further points out that Megasthenes was not in the habit of translating names, but rather rendered them according to sound, with some degrees of paronomasia. Starting from Liassen's own derivation of Palaesimundus (*sic*) from Skt. *pāli-simanta* i.e. "head of the sacred doctrine (of Buddha)" Schwanbeck derived Palaeogoni from *Pāli-jana*, i.e. "men of the sacred doctrine". Moreover, it was to Chandragupta that Megasthenes came as envoy; and although Buddhism may have been known in Sri Lanka during Chandragupta's reign, it was not formally established until the time of Asoka. Therefore, the term Pāli-jana in this sense would not have been appropriate for the people of Sri Lanka at that time.

Laissen accepted the derivation from Pāli-janas, but preferred to explain it as "the village dwellers"[33] supporting this interpretation with the statement of Eratosthenes (see 3 below) that the island had no cities but 700 villages. But it is obvious that, in this sense, the term would not be adequately distinct to be used as the name of a nation.

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30 *Mahavamsa*, i. 20 f.

31. C. Lassen, *Dissertatio De Insula Taprobane Veteribus Cognita*, (Bonn) 1946, p.9.

32. E.A. Schwanbeck, *Megasthenia Indica*, Bonn (1846) n. *ad loc.*

33. Lassen *Indische Altertumskunde*, Leipzig and London (1858 - 1874) vol. II.i, p. 696.

Tennent saw in this term a hellenised form of *Pāli-putra*, where *Pāli*, according to him, referred to the Prasi, or inhabitants of Magada.[34] C. Rasanayagam[35] maintained that the word (which he spells as 'Palaigonoi' is a corruption of *Palai-nagoi*, from Tamil *Palaya-Nagar*, i.e. "ancient Nagas". Goldstucker, starting from Raychaudri's identification of *Pāra-samudra* in the *Artha-sastra* with the Palaesimundu of Pliny and Ptolemy, has derived Palaiogonoi from *Para-jana*, i.e. "people on the other side", "people across the sea".[36]

All these theories, with varying degrees of plausibility, derive from Oriental philology, mainly by the stretching of the imagination to absurd lengths. But there can be no doubt that *Palaiogonoi* is a Greek word. It occurs in Greek texts which refer to Athens and implies the tradition that the Athenians were autochthonous.[37] Taken in this sense, the Palaiogonoi of Megasthenes must bear some reference to the aborigines. The difficulty here is that the term would then cover only the prehistoric races of the island and not the inhabitants at the time of Megasthenes. These inhabitants, moreover, being colonists from northern India, would have hardly presented the aborigines as the inhabitants of the land. This is a problem which is still in need of clarification.

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34. Tennent, *op.cit.* p. 528.

35. C. Rasanayagam *Ancient Jaffna*, Madras (1926) p. 105.

36. Goldstucker, quoted in J.W. McCrindle *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy* 2nd ed. Calcutta (1927) p. 253.

37. The Athenian comic poet, Plato (c. 400 B.C.) wrote in his lost play *Xantriae* or *Cecropes* (fr. 90: Bolthe, p. 91) Th. Kock ed. *Comicorum Atticorum Fr.* vol. I, Lipsae (1880) p.625): "Hail, you gathering of ancient-born men, spectators wise in all things" (χαῖρε, παλαιογόνων ανδρων θεατῶν ξύλλογε παντόσοφων). An epigram in the Planudean Anthology (295 Dubner) about the birthplace of Homer says: "Nor yet was it the city of the ancient-born Cecropides, for he was not a product of the earth." (Υ̓υδὲ τὸ Κεκροπιδῶν ἄστυ παλαιογονῶν Υ̓ού γὰρ ἐφυ χθονος ἔκγονον). When Pliny (vi.81) says *incolasque palaeogonos appellari*, we are not obliged to take it as a proper name. *Appellari* (unlike *nominari*) merely gives a new predicate to the subject.

Of course, when Pliny says *incolasque palaeogones appellari* there is no imperative suggestion of a proper name. *Appellari* (unlike *nominari*) merely gives a new predicate to the subject. It could be that Megasthenes simply meant that the inhabitants of the island are of very great antiquity, a fact amply corroborated by modern archaeology and anthropology. The Greek word *palaiogonoi* (παλαιογονοί)can also mean "full of years"; and Megasthenes's use of this term might have helped to foster the tradition of longevity associated with Taprobane throughout classical antiquity, culminating in the Makrobioi[37a] with a life-span of 150 years.

Megasthenes says that Taprobane produced more gold and large pearls than India. He thus initiates the association of the island with gold, which is repeated in Ptolemy and some minor Greek geographers.[38] Pliny also speaks of the high esteem accorded to gold, although he does not speak of its production in the island, except when he quotes Megasthenes.[39] Stories about the fabulous wealth of Lanka were circulated abroad from very early times. For the historic period the chronicles testify to the immense quantities of gold and silver lavished on edifices, statues and ceremonies. Even after making allowance for the exaggerations characteristic of the epic tradition, the quantities involved must have been very large. Imported metal, including foreign coins, may have constituted part of it, but what part we do not know; and the chronicles do in fact mention instances when gold was found locally, e.g. in the neighbourhood of Acaravitthigama and other places close to Anuradhapura.[40] Thus, with regard to the ensuing period, local and foreign sources are in agreement on this matter. One can therefore assume that Megasthenes's statements about the gold in Taprobane had some basis in fact, even though his notion of its quantity, particularly in relation to that of India, must have been exaggerated.

The pearls of Taprobane, which too Megasthenes is the first to mention, are noticed again by the author of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* as well as by Pliny,[41] who says that the island was the chief pearl-producer. Oriental literature also refers to

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37a Palladius, *loc.cit.*

38. Ptol. vii.4.1.

39. Plin. vi.89.

40. *Mahavamsa* xxviii. 13-15 and 20.

41. *Periplous M.E.* 61; Plin. ix. 58.

pearls as an export of Lanka. The *Mahabharata* narrates how the king of the Sinhala sent to king Yadhistira "the best of seaborne gems and pearls"; white pearls, together with gems, figure prominently also among the presents sent by Vijaya to the king of Madura, and by Devanampiyatissa to Asoka.[42] It should be mentioned in particular that Megasthenes uses the epithet "large" for the pearls of Taprobane. Here too he is corroborated by the chronicles, which report the discovery of pearls of the size of Myrobalan fruits during the reigns of Devanampiyatissa (3rd century B.C.) and Dutthagamini (2nd century B.C.), not long after the time of Megasthenes.[43]

Bindusara, the successor of Chandragupta, is known to have extended his military power to South India, and the presence of Asoka edicts in the deep south of the sub-continent is proof that this region remained within the Maurya sphere of influence during his reign. But the notices of the Pandyas in Megasthenes indicate that Maurya interest in this region goes right back to the first emperor himself. In view of the geographical proximity and close relations between Sri Lanka and the south Indian kingdoms, it is not difficult to imagine how information about the island might have reached the Maurya court, and Megasthenes, along this route.

Moreover, there are good reasons for believing that the island also maintained close relations directly with the Mauryas at this time. Half a century later, the king of Sri Lanka sent envoys to Asoka with gifts, and received in return the royal consecration as well as the establishment of Buddhism. The account of these events preserved in the chronicles suggests that the two countries had maintained close relations over a considerable period.[44] Yet, the remaining fragments of Megasthenes's work do not show that he had heard about the island is great detail at the Maurya court. It would appear that the attention of Chandragupta, and hence of Megasthenes, was concentrated elsewhere.

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42. *Mahabharata* Sabha-parva, p. 146 (tr. Prathap Chandra Roy); *Mahavamsa* vii. 49, xi. 16.

43. *Mahavamsa*, vii. 49, xi. 14-15 and xviii.33.

44.. Cf. especially *Mahavamsa* xi. 19.

III

Both Onesicritus and Megasthenes had personal experience of at least part of India. But the Hellanistic writers who followed them were chiefly men of science and letters without firsthand knowledge of the East. They depended on earlier writers, mostly the companions of Alexander the Great, and also Megasthenes, whose works were now on the way to becoming "classics" on the subject of India. Accordingly, the notices of Taprobane found in these later writers are largely derivative and possess little of independent value.

The one exception is Eratosthenes of Cyrene (267-196 B.C.), the Alexandrian scholar, among whose geographical fragments there are notices of Taprobane containing some fresh information. The fragments are preserved by Strabo and Pliny.

Strabo writes as follows:[45]

> "They say that Taprobane is an island in the ocean seven days' sail distant towards the south from the southernmost portions of India around the Koniakoi; that its length is about eight-thousand stades in the direction of Aethiopia; and that it has elephants too. Such then are the statements of Eratosthenes".

Pliny informs us[46] that

> "Eratosthenes also gave the measurement(*sc.* of Taprobane) as 7,000 stades in length, 5000 in breadth, and said that it has no cities but 700 villages".

The same information is repeated by Aelian[47] without mentioning Eratosthenes by name. But Aelian gives the number of villages as 750.

As with Onesicritus, so too with Eratosthenes we notice a difference of spirit between the two fragments. Not only are they mutually exclusive, but they also disagree on the dimentions of the island. The quotation from Strabo has a maritime ring about it, in this case too, while Pliny's quotation is more geographical.

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45. Strab. xv.1.14.

46. Plin. vi.81.

47. *loc.cit.* On the strength of this passage C. Mayhoff in his Teubner edition of Pliny emends dcc to dccl.

Already in Eratosthenes one can see the beginnings of these errors or misconceptions, which were to permeate almost all Greek and Roman accounts of Taprobane. He placed the island too far to the south by assuming that it was seven days sail distant from the southernmost part of India. He appears to have been followed in this by Hipparchus,[48] who made the last parallel of the inhabited world run past the southern extremity of Taprobane. Even Ptolemy, who was better informed about the island in other respects, made it extend for two degrees beyond the equator.

Eratosthenes also over-estimated the size of the island and, moreover, represented it as extending in the direction of Aethiopia. This last error is repeated even by a writer with navigational experience such as the author of the *Periplous Maris Erythraei*, who says that the southern part of Taprobane extended westwards and almost touched the opposite shore of Azania.[49]

Eratosthenes represents the island as lying in an east-west direction. This error too was repeated by subsequent writers such as Artemidorus and Pliny, and found visual expression in the Peutinger Table. It was finally corrected by Ptolemy.

When Pliny, in the continuation of the above passage, refers to the distance from the Prasian nation (i.e. Prachya Desa or Magada) to Taprobane as having been reduced from twenty days to seven, some have seen here an application of information from Eratosthenes to update a statement of Onesicritus. But it must be remembered that, whereas Onesicritus' point of departure must be sought somewhere in north-western India, and that of Eratosthenes in the south, neither author refers to the Prasii. Moreover, Pliny does not mean that the journey was actually made in seven days, but rather that it was re-estimated at seven days according to the speed of Roman ships, considering that the original distance of twenty days applied to reed boats of the type used on the Nile. The identity of the figures must therefore be the result of a coincidence.

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48. *Periplous M.E.* 61.

49. Thuc. i.5.

Eratosthenes makes only a passing reference to the elephants of Taprobane, but he was evidently more interested in the social organization within the island. Pliny represents him as saying that there are no cities in Taprobane but 700 villages. Pliny, as well as Aelian, who repeats the statement, here apply a fundamental distinction of Roman social organization and local administration. For the Romans, a village (*vicus*) was a civilian habitation, which had not yet developed to the urban stage. In Caesar it is the recognized pattern of habitation for northern barbarians. Aelian's Greek equivalent, *kome* (κωμή), signifies an unwalled village as opposed to a fortified city *polis* (πόλις). Thus, in Thucydides[50] we hear of cities that were unwalled and settled in scattered villages. What is meant here is a city in the form of scattered villages. As an example from historic times we may cite Mantinaea with its four villages. Our problem is whether a similar distinction between city and village was maintained in early Sri Lanka. A negative answer would have explained Eratosthenes's observation sufficiently.

W. Rahula has pointed out that, although the Pali canonical texts maintain a clear distinction between *gama* (village) and *nagara* (town), these terms are used indiscriminately in the *Mahavamsa* for village, city, or town.[51] Thus *Vijitam nagaram* is included among the villages founded by the ministers of Vijaya, while Kalahanagara is called a village (*gama*).[52] The principal city of the Rohana kingdom was always known as Mahagama, and as late as the second century A.D. Ptolemy, who described the king's residence as a *polis*, still transcribed its name as *Anourogrammon*.[53] Similarly, Upatissagama was sometimes called Upatissanagara.[54]

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50. Thuc. i.5.

51. W. Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon* Colombo (1956) p.14 f., quoting the *Digha Nikaya* (ii.p.53) "At that time two chief ministers of Magadha were building a city (*nagaram*) in the Patali village (*Pataligame*).

52. *Mahavamsa* vii. 31-35 and x.42.

53. Ptol.vii.4.10.

54. Cp. *Mahavamsa* vii.44 with *Dipavamsa* ix. 36.

However, in general the word *gāma* was used for "village". This form of settlement, usually associated with irigation tanks and administered by a headman (*gamika*) and village council, was typical of the historic period of ancient Sri Lanka; but the chronicles attribute great antiquity to it. Thus in the *Mahavamsa* we read:

> "Ten years after his consecration did Pandukabhaya, the ruler of Lanka, establish the village boundaries of the whole of the island of Lanka."

Had the informants of Eratasthenes transferred to Taprobane the organizational structure familiar to them in Egypt, when they spoke of the 700 villages of Taprobane, or were they familiar with the actual situation? After all, the *Mahavamsa* says that this same Pandukabhaya set apart a section of Anuradhapura for the dwelling place of the Yonas. It is conceivable that during his reign (377-307 B.C.) Greeks from northwestern India might have made their way to Sri Lanka is some numbers. But there is some dispute concerning the received text. Some mss. of the commentary give a variant reading, which, if adopted, would only indicate that Pandukabhaya "fixed the common ground". Thus, the reference to the Yonas, which at first appears conclusive, is more open to question. However, if one retains the manuscript reading, (which appears stronger than the variant), then the establishment of a foreign quarter in the capital at this early date implies a very prompt reaction on the part of Sri Lanka to the new conditions brought about by Greek penetration into northwestern India after Alexander the Great, and an equally prompt penetration by these Greeks into regions further afield.

At Alexandria, Eratosthenes no doubt had access to the writings of the companions of Alexander the Great and of the various Greek envoys to India such as Deimachus, Dionysius and Megasthenes. However, during his lifetime (267-196 B.C.) the explorations of the Ptolemies were largely restricted to the Red Sea and the Ethiopian regions to the west and south. Thus his chances of

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55. *Mahavamsa* x. 103.

obtaining current reports about India or Sri Lanka from contemporary explorers was small. If Strabo is correct,[56] it was not until the reign of Euergetes II (after 146 B.C.) that a Greek named Eudoxus succeeded in reaching India by sea.

However, it would not be unreasonable to assume that Eratosthenes benefited from the improved communications between East and West, which resulted from the internal unity and external prestige achieved by the Maurya empire. From its inception this empire was in touch with the Greek kingdoms of the west. Seleucus was represented by Megasthenes, Antiochus I by Deimachus of Plataea, and Ptolemy Philadelphus by Dionysius; and all these envoys committed their experiences to writing.

The second and thirteenth Rock Edicts of Asoka reveal that he was in touch with the Greek kingdoms of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia and Cyrene; and the mention of their rulers by name proves beyond doubt that, at this date, the term Yona signified "Greek". The edicts testify to the presence of Greeks even within Asoka's own empire, a fact confirmed by the discovery of two inscriptions from Kandahara in 1958 and 1964.[57] The first of these is an edict in Aramaic and Greek, while the second is a Greek version of the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th, possibly a fragment of a complete Greek version of the fourteen edicts probably engraved on a wall. These inscriptions present Asoka's doctrine in the current style of the Greek language, employing the vocabularly of the literary tradition, particularly of philosophy, religion, and ethics. The style of composition and even the lettering conform to the usage current throughout the Hellenistic world. There are no marks of degeneracy, isolation or barbarization. The inscriptions reveal the unity of Greek civilization in the Hellenistic period reaching its furthest geographical limits in the east. The public of Kandahar, for whom they were intended, must have included cultured and intelligent Greeks, familiar with the Greek philosophical and literary language and thought of the time. The discovery at Al-Khanoum of a copy of the Delphic Maxims brought thither by one Kineas, having gone to Delphi for this purpose, proves that these Greeks of the East

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56. Strab. ii. 3.4.

57. D. Schlumberger and L. Robert, and A. Dupont-Sommer 'Une bilingue Greco-Arameen d'Asoka', *Journal Asiatique* vol. CCXLVI (1958) p. 1-48; E. Benveniste, "Edit d'Asoka en traduction Grecque" *Journal Asiatique* vol. CCLII (1964) p. 137-157.

were in touch with the main centres of Greek civilization.[58]

Thus Eratosthenes, who was a contemporary of Asoka, must have been in a position to augment his knowledge of the East with aural or written reports of those who travelled between East and West as merchants, envoys, or missionaries. Through these sources he must have also heard about Sri Lanka, which figured so prominently in the missionary activities of Asoka.

The opinion of Hipparchus of Bithynia (c.190 - c. 126 B.C.) regarding Taprobane appears to be preserved in the geographical work of Pomponius Mela:[59]

> "Taprobane is either a very big island or, as is said by Hipparchus, the first part of another world; and since it is inhabited and no one is reported to have sailed around it, he is probably right."

The text of this passage is in poor condition, and even after restoration gives rise to ambiguities in interpretation. In particular, it is doubtful whether one should attribute both alternatives to Hipparchus, or else, only the second opinion. Moreover, if one were to accept the reading *id percius dicitur* suggested by Ranstrand, it would leave out the name of Hipparchus altogether, and make both alternatives those of Mela himself.

D.R. Dicks,[60] attributing both alternatives to Hipparchus, observes: "It would seem that Hipparchus did not feel justified in basing a definite decision on the vague and contradictory evidence that was available, and so left the question open."

However, a careful consideration of Mela's text, as we have it, leads us to conclude the Hipparchus concentrated simply upon the "other world" theory, and that Mela himself is responsible for contrasting it with the alternative theory which regarded Taprobane as an island. He approved of Hipparchus's opinion, citing the known fact that Taprobane was inhabited and that there was no

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58. P. Bernard, "Ai-chanum on the Oxus: a Hellenistic city in Central Asia", *P.B.A.* LIII (1967) p. 71-95.

59. *Taprobane aut grandis admodum insula aut prima pars orbis alterius,ut Hipparcho dicitur, et quia habitatur nequisquam circum eam isse traditur, prope verum est.* Mela iii.7,70.

60. D.R. Dicks, *The Geographical Fragments of Hipparchus*, London (1960) p.115-116.

record of its having been circumnavigated. Mela, in his disbelief of the insularity of Taprobane, appears to be an odd-man-out in his time, (early first century A.D.), since this fact was believed by writers of even earlier times, including Onesicritus, Eratosthenes, Artemidorus, Strabo and Ovid. In fact the insularity of Taprobane should have been known to Hipparchus himself, since, as Pliny informs us, it was established as a fact by the age and exploits of Alexander the Great.

Pliny's text might lead us to assume that the view that Taprobane was another world dates back to a time before Alexander the Great. But Schwarz 61 has pointed out that the *Antichthones* were identified with the inhabitants of the southern hemisphere only in late Hellenistic times and that Pliny in fact seeks to correct the late Hellenistic view that Taprobane was part of another hemisphere with the earlier and more accurate knowledge that it was an island, citing facts which were made known during and after the campaigns of Alexander.

Even so, it is difficult to see how Hipparchus could have thought of Taprobane as part of a different world, since, according to Strabo,[62] the most southerly of Hipparchus's parallels passed through Taprobane, thus placing it on the same latitude as the Cinnamon Country, i.e. Somaliland.

The geographer Artemidorus of Ephesus (fl. 104 B.C.) also mentioned Taprobane in his writings, and evidently described it in some detail. Pliny records his description in the following manner:[63]

> "Artemidorus says that in the island of Taprobane people live a very long life without any bodily weakness."

Here we have the earliest definite association of Taprobane with the ideal conditions of utopian life in the Golden Age, and, in particular, with the concept of longevity. Perhaps this concept was already implied by the term *Palaeogoni* (παλαιογονοι),

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61. Schwarz, *op.cit.* p. 247.

62. Strab. ii. 5.35.

63. Plin. vii.2.30.

which Megasthenes applied to the inhabitants of the country. This association was to be repeated frequently by Greek and Latin writers.[64] The Hellenistic ideas of Utopia are not only implicit here, but also receive a definite location, anticipating the vague generalities of the Christian Paradise.

Artemidorus's figures for the size of the island are quoted by the lexicographer Stephanus of Byzantium as 7,000 stades' sailing distance in length and 5,000 in breadth.[65] The text of Stephanus gives 500 for the breadth. This is obviously a mistake, and Forbiger has emended it to 5,000 in order to bring the account into line with the accepted tradition, since the figures, when thus restored, would correspond to those given by Pliny as the dimensions of the island according to Eratosthenes. Artemidorus apparently decided to follow Eratosthenes in this matter.

A fellow townsman of Artemidorus also noticed Taprobane in his writings. This was Alexander of Ephesus, who was nicknamed Lychnus. He too lived during the first century B.C., and, following the prevailing tradition in the Hellenistic age, wrote poems on astronomy and geography. Cicero mentions him in two letters to Atticus, both belonging to 59 B.C.,[66] describing him as a negligent fellow and not a good poet but, in spite of all that, one who knows something and is not altogether useless. It may be thus assumed that through him Taprobane was brought once more to the notice of educated Romans. His poems were also known to Dionysius Periegetes.

His fragments on Taprobane are preserved by Stephanus of Byzantium and Eustathius. In fact, they are two versions of the same fragment. Stephanus quotes it in its original verse form:[67]

> "A four-sided island, sea-crowned Taprobane, rearer of beasts, is full of fine-nosed elephants."

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64. Plin. vi.91; Agathem. ii.25 (Muller); Palladius, *loc.cit.*

65. Steph.Byz. s.v. "Taprobane".

66. Cic. *Ad Atticum* ii.18.7 and 20.6.

67. Steph. Byz. *loc.cit.*

Eustathius, the 12th century bishop of Thessalonica, gives a prose paraphrase of the same lines in his commentary on the *Periegesis* of Dionysius.[68]

> "Taprobane ... is four-sided, rearer of beasts, full of fine-nosed elephants, as Alexander, nicknamed Lychnus, says."

Alexander has only a vague notion about the island. He is either misinformed here about its shape, or he has adapted it so that it could be accommodated in the form of his verse. His interest is concentrated mainly on the elephants of Taprobane, which seem to have become a commonplace by this time. His knowledge about them probably derives, in the last resort, from Onesicritus. To the same source, perhaps, must be traced the notice of wild beasts. These creatures seem to derive from the amphibians of Onesicritus rather than from any independent source.

The extant writings on Taprobane, which mostly belong to the Roman period, reveal the influence of two traditions working side by side - that of the theoretical geographer on the one hand, and that of the didactic moralist on the other. The two Ephesian writers just mentioned exemplify these influences from an even earlier age. However, neither of them adds very much to the basic knowledge coming from the age of discovery and embodied in Onesicritus, Megasthenes, and Eratosthenes. The literary tradition had already diverged from the practical by the time of Eratosthenes, so that he marks the culmination of Hellenistic knowledge on the subject. Taprobane had to be "re-discovered" by the Romans.

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68. Eustath. *Comm. in Dion. Perieg.* 591.

V.S. NAIPAUL AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS

> And then somehow, without any discussion that I remember, it seemed to be settled, in my mind as well as my father's, that I was to be a writer.[1]

Settled, like the devolution of an inheritance. Seepersad Naipaul had just got his book of stories into print and Vidia had been drawn into the excitement, as earlier his father had drawn him into the creative process, reading the stories to him. He was still only eleven and had "given no sign of talent"; but he "was to be a writer".

In his most recent book, *Finding the Centre*, Naipaul seeks to admit the reader to the "process of writing" as he has experienced it. It is about his "literary beginnings" and current procedure; it gives us the "imaginative promptings" of his "many-sided background" and the mature writer "adding to his knowledge of the world".[2]

Even when Naipaul came down from Oxford to freelance for the B.B.C. the talent had not yet appeared - there was only the determination. And then late one afternoon a voice from the past launched him on his creative career:

> ... late one afternoon, without having any idea where I was going, and not perhaps intending to type to the end of the page, I wrote:
> *Every morning when he got up Hat would sit on the banister of his back verandah and shout across, what happening there, Bogart?*[3]

That sentence, says Naipaul, was true; the next was invention, and together they had "done something extraordinary"[4] to him as a writer. They created a world, not a mere representation

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1. V.S. Naipaul, *Finding the Centre, Two Narratives*, London, 1984, p. 43-44.
2. *ibid.* p.9.
3. *ibid.* p.18.
4. *ibid.* p.22.

of remembered life on a remembered Miguel Street but memories "simplified and transformed".[5]

It was a kind of luck - or talent, a given. Looking back, Naipaul says "the ways of my fantasy, the process of creation, remained mysterious to me ... True, and saving, knowledge of my subject ... always seemed to come during the writing". The attempt at narrative gave "value to an experience which might otherwise evaporate away".[6]

Naipaul underscores the magic and the creative transformation, illustrating this with the growth of the Bogart story and with the composition of *Finding the Centre*, beginning and (provisional) end expertly interlocked, and orchestrated with vignettes from the manysided background, its "imaginative promptings" juxtaposed with reflections on himself and his past.

The "impulse" to write what became Prologue to an Autobiography, the first of the two narratives that make up *Finding the Centre*, had actually come to him in 1967, "early one morning ... in a second-class Bombay hotel".[7] But he "needed a story", and none proffered itself for years. A false beginning in 1972 ran into the sands, and it was only in 1981 that his encounter as a mature writer with the Bogart who became the protagonist of his first story came back to him and he "saw it as the centre" of the narrative he had set aside eight years earlier. "The present piece", he says, "represents my full intention. As a story of discovery and growing knowledge, it goes beyond the impulse felt all those years ago in Bombay".[8]

With these intimations, and with the careful preparation for the Bogart-in-1975 sequence - Naipaul sounds the theme twice before actually giving us the episode in the middle of 'Prologue', making it a centre in that sense, too - one reads the Bogart sequence with special intentness. And one wonders. It turns out to be an

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5. *ibid.*
6. *ibid.* p. 31.
7. *ibid.* p. 9.
8. *ibid.* p. 10.

undistinguished tale of a drab meeting with an unremarkable man. Life imitates art - or improves on it. The episode ends with a touch that is more O. Henry than the self-conscious O.Henry ending of the story in *Miguel Street*. "Finding the centre", waiting fourteen years; what could Naipaul have meant when he wrote, "I saw it as the centre?"

It became the centre because it threw Naipaul back to his first day as a writer; it remains in the centre because it defines the creative transformation that produced the fictional character, cross lights from personal and family history adding perspective - we are admitted to the process. We see the young writer eagerly, anxiously, achieving the Bogart story after the serendipity of the first two sentences, passing the three sheets of B.B.C. non-rustle paper, typed close to resemble print, around among the other freelances, pressing on to the end of the book. This literary beginning is evoked in fine novelistic detail, down to the unusual typing posture:

> My shoulders were thrown back as far as they could go; my spine was arched. My knees were drawn right up; my shoes rested on the top-most struts of the chair, left side and right side. So, with my legs wide apart, I sat at the typewriter with something like a monkey crouch.[9]

We see the anxiety of the author dictating the form and the speed of the first story: "I wanted above all to take the story to the end".[10] Then, "over the next few days the street grew. Memory provided the material".[11] A narrator defined himself and grew with the stories, the street; 'found' items from the London present were thrown in. Till one day "I had come to the end of what I could do with the street, in that particular way".[12]

"What I could do". Looking for a new subject for another book, Naipaul reports, he was as "uncertain" as "pretending to be a writer"[13] as when he had started. But the reader who

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9. *ibid.* p. 25.
10. *ibid.* p. 24.
11. *ibid.* p. 28.
12. *ibid.* p. 29.
13. *ibid.* p. 30.

remembers the Bogart of Miguel Street can relate what was done there to what he now discovers of the real Bogart, both as remembered by the author and as encountered in Venezuela in 1977. He sees the transformation of the placid, detached, undemonstrative man, without conversation and without "pronounced character", who lived in the room in the Naipaul yard and came and went a few times, into the enigma seen by Miguel Street as "sensual, lazy, cool",[14] more Humphrey Bogart like after each disappearance, becoming a boaster and one of the more colourful characters on the street - to be punctured by the ending.

The Bogart sequence of 'Prologue' is preceded and followed by vignettes from the past, both as remembered by Naipaul and as recovered from later encounters, conversations, research. (Here again we see the genuine artist's combination of work and gift; we see what he has sought, and what he was 'given' because he was receptive). Beautifully done; with Naipaul, beauty resides in structure, unpredictable nuances of characterization, incidents caught with economy and grace and a mature control over arrangement; not the order of sequent narrative but an imaginative order of juxtapositions, linked episodes, paradoxes and illuminations. One would not lightly want to lose the old grand-aunt dying, "very small, very light, like an object carefully placed, on her spring mattress" in a bright death chamber full of chatter and movement ("she had always been a humorist in a gathering") yet intensely serious about caste and blood.[15] Or the uncle, crying for his youth on eight cents a day,[16] or the episode of Naipaul's father and the sacrificial goat.[17] And Naipaul himself - the child discovering his father's "bookcase-and-desk", the young freelance watching his story being read: "when he finished reading the story he folded the sheets carefully; with a gesture as of acceptance he put the sheets in his inner jacket pocket"; one sees the reader, and one 'sees' Naipaul watching him; one is touched to learn that the manuscript has been preserved - it "still has his foldmarks and wine stains"[18] and by the young writer's anxiety: "I never with my own hand typed or wrote my name.

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14. *ibid.* p. 24.
15. *ibid.* p. 64.
16. *ibid.* p. 67.
17. *ibid.* p. 73, 80-82.
18. *ibid.* p. 28.

I always asked someone else to do that for me".[19] It's that kind of vignette and detail that arrests, as the creatively complex structure, making free with time, place and persons, absorbs; the Naipaul style is not marked by notable verbal felicities.

There are, of course, the hallmarks one has come to recognise. There is the deadpan repetition of key words and phrases: "going back" and "to become a writer" and their variants in 'Prologue'; the "two worlds" of The Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro' – the second of the book's two narratives.There is the sudden, vivid, placing of bald, assertive words in a general context of subtle half-tone; there is the presentation of something provisional as final, unqualified statement - to be qualified, or contradicted, later by other statements with a great effect of spontaneity, at times of drama. Permeating everything is the Naipaul tone (called "even-handed disenchantment" by a *TLS* reviewer) making sarcasm look like fastidiousness, but also able to convey personal shortcoming without prevarication or excuse: "I should have done something for them, gone back to them. But without having become a writer I couldn't go back."[20]

Subtle and various, the whole masterly performance, encompassing as it does the simple transformations of reality of *Bogart* and its naively imitative end (perhaps an inheritance from his father who was a great admirer of O·Henry), yields us a triple view of "process": the beginnings, the present state of the art, and the writer's modes of arriving at his material.

But, it is interesting that what Naipaul calls the centre is the narrative spine - "it needed a story" - when one would expect, rather, some moral centre, some clarifying insight, some vision. None such was available to the young writer hurrying to the end of his first story, to the end of the book - this is what is clarified. The mature writer's account points to the lack, but not in terms of a later-achieved human centrality. The sense is rather of limitations being overcome, which might easily have

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19. *ibid.* p. 31.

20. *ibid.* p. 85.

crippled, and which did destroy Naipaul's father. To be a colonial was "to live in an intellectually restricted world", denied "mature social experience",[21] where "the English or French writer of his age had grown up in a world that was more or less explained. He wrote against a background of knowledge".[22] For his father the pressures of such a life and the "fear of extinction" brought breakdown: "He looked in the mirror one day and couldn't see himself. And he began to scream".[23]

The mature writer understands that he had inherited the hysteria:

> That fear became mine as well. It was linked with the idea of vocation: the fear could be combated only by the exercise of the vocation.[24]

It had surged up at the time of leaving Trinidad, so that he couldn't look back at his father, and so did not carry away with him "some picture of him on that day" that he "might still possess".[25] Seepersad Naipaul died "miserably" three years later. When Naipaul had come down from Oxford and was trying to write in London, there was a recurrence of the hysteria:

> Our family was in distress. I should have done something for them, gone back to them. But without having become a writer I couldn't go back.[26]

The hysteria could have been one more limitation, but he was saved by encountering a subject-matter. Beginning only with the determination and "that fear, a panic about failing" to be what he should be "rather than simple ambition"[27] He went back through Bogart to Miguel Street.

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21. *ibid.* p. 12.
22. *ibid.* p. 32.
23. *ibid.* p. 82.
24. *ibid.* p. 84.
25. *ibid.* p. 46.
26. *ibid.* q.v.
27. *ibid.* p. 84.

This, too, he might have inherited. He had read his father's stories of Trinidad Indian life as "memorials of a heroic time"; the longest became his "private epic",[28] he tells us. And also "This way of looking from being my father's, became mine: my father's early stories created my background for me".[29]

To become a writer, "that noble thing", he had "thought it necessary to leave". But "actually to write, it was necessary to go back. It was the beginning of self-knowledge".[30] The process had continued: "So step by step, book by book, though seeking each time only to write another book, I eased myself into knowledge. To write was to learn". With each book he is surprised by what he learns about himself; he sees himself as a man gaining, through writing, knowledge "both about himself and the writing career that had been his ambition since childhood".[30a]

But if going back, and his very colonial "particularity" gave him a subject and increasing knowledge of himself and of writing, it failed to give him a positively "deepening knowledge of a society" and of values and ideals internalised in that society. In five novels after *Miguel Street*, two books of non-fiction and various essays like 'The Killings in Trinidad', in which he explored the West Indian material, he moved from laughter through tragi-comedy to repudiation, so that in *Guerrillas* he is so totally alienated that it is as much an absurdist novel as a realisation of the foreboding expressed in *The Mimic Men* that people in such territories were "born to disorder".[31]

There is the interesting paradox that, as his readers became increasingly familiar with a Trinidad-like territory, Naipaul's "point of view" became increasingly emigré. In the last novel to date, *A Bend in the River*, he moved right out of that territory, but again to project alienation and hopelessness, with a protagonist who is essentially an exploiter and an action that ends in midflight and in images of futility.

'Prologue to an Autobiography' is what its title says, about beginnings, and we do not of course know how Naipaul will

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28. *ibid.* p. 43.

29. Naipaul's Foreward to Seepersad Naipaul's *The Adventures of Gurudeva and Other Stories* p. 15.

30. *ibid.* p. 47. 30a. *Ibid.* p. 33.

31. *The Mimic Men*, London 1967, p. 141.

treat the years that lay ahead. If Naipaul now sees that panic drove him in the beginning, the reader conversant with his work knows that alienation and "hysteria" continued to appear - and wonders how Naipaul himself perceives his experience: he says he "eased himself into knowledge". Exploration of the Caribbean issued in the stridency of his dismissal of "West Indian futility".[32] But the nightmare that falling asleep in a London bedsitter he might wake up in Trinidad was revealed almost at the same time as when he wrote "the barrenness of my life in London ... after eight years here I have, without effort, arrived at the Buddhist ideal of non-attachment".[33] The attempt to come to terms with his Hindu ancestry, which yielded two books on India, confirmed for him that he was "without a past, without ancestors".[34]

And so travel, which began with a brief, has become a necessity. Being of "no other nation but the diaspora itself"[35] experienced in homelessness, Naipaul finds travel a "necessary stimulus"; it is the "substitute for ... mature social experience", it gives him material - and life, a life as art. "I live, as it were, in a novel of my own making, moving from not knowing to knowing, with person interweaving with person and incident opening out into incident", he writes in 'The Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro', the second narrative in *Finding the Centre*. The process is complex and bracing:

> To arrive at a place without knowing anyone there, and sometimes without an introduction; to learn how to move among strangers for the short time one could afford to be among them; to hold oneself in constant readiness for adventure or revelation; to allow oneself to be carried along, up to a point, by accidents; and consciously to follow up other impulses - that could be as creative and imaginative a procedure as the writing that came after.[36]

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32. *The Middle Passage* New York 1963, p. 28, 29.

33. *The Overcrowded Barracoon* London 1972, p. 16.

34. *An Area of Darkness*, London 1964, p. 266.

35. Peter Scharen, *History in the Work of V.S. Naipaul* Diaspora, Myth, Recurrence and Leadership in the Third World. Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the History Honours Degree, Univ. of New South Wales, 1980 (unpubd.), p. 5.

36. *Finding the Centre*, p. 12.

Life and art nourish each other in a peculiar interaction - Naipaul approaches experience as a writer approaches material, giving himself a life as novels but with a special immediacy - it's much more than a "procedure" or a performance:

> Travel of this sort became an intense experience for me. It used all the sides of my personality; I was always wound up.[37]

But at the same time he is living to give himself novels - or books, anyway.

Consequently, the results are highly subjective, impressionistic. He gives himself only a "short time" and when "the intellectual adventure is over" he "becomes anxious to leave" [38] He takes, he gains from or utilizes the experience, but unlike a writer centred in a culture, he has nothing to give. Significantly in the Ivory Coast, the setting of The Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro; the "people (he) was attracted to" were "not unlike" himself[39] and were "expatriates white and black".[40]

The Ivorians tend to be singular exhibits: Djédjé, rocking back and forth, his eyes going red, "wild"; Professor Niangoran-Bouah, who is the world authority on Drummologie, having invented the discipline himself; the only exception is Mr. Bony, the ex-Minister - who is an outsider, out of favour, and who sounds very much like any westernised ex-colonial intellectual. They are singular, or just "Africans": one would be hard put to distinguish the people of *In A Free State* from those of *A Bend in the River* from those of 'Crocodiles', though these books derive from experiences in widely separated territories: Kenya, Zaire and the Ivory Coast.

In 'Crocodiles' Naipaul admits us to his process, and so we realize that we are actually getting a kind of novel, watching Naipaul at work, living his novel, the writer "in his latest development, going about one side of his business: travelling, adding

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37. *ibid.* p. 12.

38. *ibid.* p. 103.

39. *ibid.* p. 10.

40. *ibid.* p. 104.

to his knowledge of the world, exposing himself to new people and new relationships".[41]

West Indians have been furious about *The Middle Passage*, Indians irritated by *An Area of Darkness* and *India, A Wounded Civilization*, and not only Muslims take objection to many things in *Among the Believers*. Perhaps we have been wrong all along, challenging these works as reports, when they were all novels of a kind? Yes and no - Naipaul does appear in the guise of commentator, saying things like "nothing was created in the West Indies" or "the Prophet, who would settle everything - but who had ceased to exist"[42] and even "I really do hope that by the most brutal sort of analysis one is possibly opening up the situation to some sort of action".[43] But he is actually moving to a rhythm of his own, pausing and leaping, pushing and provoking, rather than seeking the rhythms of a people or culture; he is *generating* interesting episodes and conversations.

Thus 'Crocodiles' is fascinating on those terms; but what it conveys of interpretation is the rather trite observation that "Africans" live in two worlds, "two ideas of reality", and in fact the whole narrative is built on the duality. The "new world" of white men is real, and Africans want to enter it, or "to integrate Africa into the new world".[44] But at the same time there is an "African Africa... in its own eyes complete, achieved, bursting with its own powers".[45]

A doubleness common, almost normal, in any people confronted with the new - modern, progressive, attractive in its amenities - but also conscious of their own history, of inherited values, places with memories, myths. Naipaul himself provides us with many examples. In *The Return of Eva Peron* Borges talks of a real

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41. *ibid.* p. 10.

42. *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* London (Penguin) 1982, p. 331.

43. Michael, Thorpe, *V. S. Naipaul*, London 1976, p. 35.

44. *Finding the Centre*, p. 188.

45. *ibid.* p. 92.

nation with a past, while all around him is the macho-ridden waste of new dictatorship. In 'Prologue' we have the maternal grandfather who went back to India: "Trinidad was the interlude, the illusion. My grandfather had done well in Trinidad ... But he was willing, while he was still an active man, to turn his back on this and return home, to the real place".[46] In the Indian books Naipaul is enraged by Indian self-sufficiency and by Gandhi's India of the spirit, but he also gives us the woman "crazy phor phoreign", and Jamshyd becomes Jimmy among the smart young executives who keep the mills rolling. There were Caribbean slaves, who were kings by night, borne in palanquins, or sorcerers. To take an example from outside Naipaul's work, a Government advertisement in a local paper read:

> IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR KINGS...
> Our forbears endowed with a rich irrigation culture transformed the undulating lowlands into smiling paddies...
>
> Today, following on the footsteps of our ancient tank building kings, we have launched the Accelerated programme of Mahaweli Development...[47]

Any South Asian would probably know dozens of unimportant clerks who rejoice in their pedigrees - and are respected for them.

No irony is intended - one notes, simply, that our pasts are as real to us as the present. Naipaul feels no such past in his bones - "A literature can only grow out of a strong framework of social convention. And the only convention the West Indian knows is his involvement with the white world".[48] It is significant that his English is remarkably without echoes, just as he has repudiated nearly every important writer of the last two hundred years from Jane Austen to Henry James and "nearly every contemporary French novelist".[49] Now, as if at a climacteric, there is a changed perception at least of the immediate

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46. *ibid.* p. 60.

47. *The Ceylon Daily News*, Apr. 21, 1984, p. 11.

48. *The Middle Passage* p. 70.

49. 'The Little More', London *Times*, July 13, 1961.

past, of his own early experiences and the tales of his family and their effect for good or ill. Thus he recognizes the duality of his inheritance from his father: the anxiety and hysteria as well as the interest in Trinidad Indian life - he had earlier revealed something of this awareness in the introduction he wrote in 1976 to his edition of his father's stories. (q.v.)

It could also be that sustained reflection on his processes in the role of writer as traveller has moved him towards a more objective, almost acceptant, understanding of ways of seeing different from his own. This wasn't much in evidence even in his last book, *Among the Believers* : "such effort, such organisation, to duplicate the village atmosphere, to teach villagers to be villagers!"[50] or, say, in *A New King for the Congo* : "the African sense of the void" - the essay was sub-titled 'The Nihilism of Africa'[51] In 'The Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro' there is a new perception of the African right to an African vision, though not entirely without irony in the total detachment with which he presents Africans (he is perceptibly closer to some of the expatriates) and in such things as the exaggerated amazement of "I was so taken aback by what Mr. Niangoran-Bouah said that I asked for a sheet of paper to write down his words".[52] The words were:

> The world of white men is real. But, but. We black Africans, we have all that they have... we have all of that in the world of night, the world of darkness.

But the substance of those words is affirmed in the last word, which is given to a black expatriate woman (from the West Indies), who says of a clutch of black female evangelists newly arrived from Harlem:

> They bring their own psychic sickness to Africa. They should come instead to be converted by Africa. They are mad. *Ils sont fous.*[53]

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50, *Among the Believers* p. 318.

51. *The Return of Eva Peron and Other Essays*, London (Penguin)1981, p. 196.

52. *Finding the Centre* p. 174.

53. *ibid.* p. 189.

THE LENINGRAD MANUSCRIPT OF THE MAṆICŪḌĀVADĀNA

In the introduction to the prose text of the *Maṇicūḍāvadāna* (*MA* hereafter) I published in 1967, I pointed out that I was not able to collate manuscript No. 291 mentioned in Mironov's *Catalogue des manuscrits Indiens de la Bibliothèque publique de Russie*, Petrograd 1918.[1] A recent publication by G. Bongard-Levin and A. Vigasin made reference to this manuscript as being one of the manuscripts in the M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library in Leningrad.[2] It has now been possible to get a photocopy of this manuscript through the help of several scholars.[3] This copy received in Sri Lanka at the end of August 1986 is now kept in the reference section of the University Library at Peradeniya.[4] It consists of 107 pages, presumably the copies of 54 leaves of the manuscript which do not appear to have been numbered. There are six lines on each page. The script used is Newari. The manuscript does not contain a colophon.

On collating this Leningrad manuscript (*L* hereafter) of the *Maṇicūḍāvadāna* with the text printed in 1967, I have the following observations to make. *L* contains the 'common errors' of the seven manuscripts *A*,*B*,*C*,*D*,*E*,*F* and *G*, which were used in establishing the text of *MA*. I tabulated these 'errors' alongside the

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1. Handurukande, Ratna (1967): *Maṇicūḍāvadāna*. Being a translation and edition. And (*Lokānanda*. A transliteration and synopsis. London. (Sacred Books of the Buddhists. vol. xxiv).

2. G. Bongard-Levin and A. Vigasin (1984): *The Image of India. The Study of Ancient Indian Civilisation in the U.S.S.R.* Moscow, Progress PUblishers. p. 238-240.

3. I acknowledge with thanks the help of Professor R.A.L.H. Gunawardana of the University of Peradeniya for giving me the addresses of Dr. G. Bongard-Levin and Dr. Nina Krasnodembskaya who in turn informed me of the procedure of acquiring a copy of the manuscript; the Director and staff of the M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library in Leningrad; and the Librarian and staff of the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

4. R.Skt. 294.3 Accession No. 397371.

emended readings in the introduction to the text and suggested that the manuscripts were copies of a common archetype which contained these errors.[5] *L* which has the identical errors can therefore be postulated as being related to this archetype. The readings of *L* are also corrupt in the instances where *A,B,C,D,E,F* and *G* had corrupt readings,[6] which fact strengthens the supposition of it belonging to the common archetype postulated for them. Five manuscripts of the prose *MA* kept in the Tokyo and Kyoto University Libraries in Japan, designated by me as *J1,J2,J3,J4* and *J5* to facilitate reference to them, had the 'common errors' of *A,B,C,D,E,F* and *G* as pointed out in my publication of 1976, entitled *'The Maṇicuḍa Study*. Here, I listed more instances where all the manuscripts, *A-G* and *J1-J5*, had the same erroneous readings in place of the emended text of the *MA* that was printed in 1967.[7] *L* agrees with the manuscripts in these instances as well.

The variant readings of *L* are identical with, or correspond closely, in many instances, to those of *A,B,C,D* and *F*,[8] as opposed to those of *E* and *G* for which I postulated a separate hyparchetype in the stemma on Plate I of my publication of 1967.[9] Another series of correspondences that *L* has with *A,B* and *F*[10] suggests that *L* is more closely related to these than to *C* and *D* for which also a separate hyparchetype was postulated in the stemma referred to above. It was also noted that *F* appeared to be independent of *A,B,C,D,E* and *G*, in the introduction to *MA*.[11] The instances

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5. Handurukande (1967) *op.cit.* p. xvi-xvii.

6. *ibid.* p. xvii. n. 122.

7. Handurukande, Ratna (1976): *The Maṇicūḍa Study* in *Buddhist Studies (Bukkyo Kenkyu)*, Vol. V (p. 309-168) see p. 303,302.

8. e.g. as at *MA* §§ 3ns. 5 and 18; 5 n. 30; 8 ns. 25,45; 46, n68.

9. Handurukande (1967) *op.cit.* p. xx.

10. e.g. as at *MA* §§ 27 n. 70; 35 n. 10; 40 n. 14; 45 n. 71; 46 n. 10; 59 n. 10; 64 n. 10; 72 n. 29; 75 n.1.

11. Handurukande (1967) *op.cit.* p. xviii.

where *L* agrees with all the manuscripts except *F*[12] confirms this observation. The variant readings, which *L* has in common with *A* and *B* only,[13] suggests that it is related to the hyparchetype postulated for them. Finally *L*, like the manuscript *B*,[14] begins with a formula of adoration to the Dhyani Buddha Vajrasattva viz. *Oṃ namaḥ Śrīvajrasattvaya* and shares many variant readings with it alone. This very close relationship of *L* and *B* prompts one to suggest that either one of them is a copy of the other, or that both are copies of a common manuscript. However some independent readings of *L* are noted at the end of this paper.

L has the following interpolations.

1. A part of a sentence viz. *Punar api sa Maṇicūḍo rāja Gautamo nama maharṣeḥ sakāśaṃ gatva nissaṅgaparityaga-vrataṃ dhṛtva maharṣiṇa saha.*[15] This has been included in the middle of a description of King Maṇicūḍa's virtues in *MA*,[16] at the beginning of the sentence: *Abhīkṣṇam ca sattvān daśasu kuśaleṣu karmapatheṣu sanniyojayati.* This interpolation is found at the same point in the *MA*. text which was interspersed in the *Somavaśivratamaṇicūḍamahat-myanirdeśavarṇana*, the seventeenth chapter of a *Kapiśāva-dana* manuscript (No. 75) in the Tokyo University Library. It was noted and discussed in my publication, *The Maṇicūḍa Study* of 1976.[17] There, this interpolation was marked *C* to facilitate reference to it.

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12. e.g. as at *MA* 8 n. 61; 11 n.15; 14 n.44; 19 ns. 47,61; 20 n.31; 23 n.18; 24 n.41; 26 n.36; 29 n.103; 30 n.10; 31 n.2; 49 n.4; 54 n.1; 59 ns. 34, 35; 75 n.19.

13. e.g. as at *MA* 2 n.11; 3 n.28; 6 ns. 17,19; 7 n.44; 9 n.40; 13 n.57; 24 n.10; 48 n.15; 50 ns. 37, 38; 63 n.28; 69 n.40.

14. Compare Handurukande (1967) *op.cit.* p.1 n.2.

15. Page 10 lines 3,4 of the Peradeniya University Library copy of *L*=?leaf 5b lines 3,4 of the manuscript. Ms *Maharṣayasya sakāśaṃ* and *marhaṣayo saha.*

16. § 10.

17. Handurukande (1976) *op.cit.* p. 283, 277, 276.

2. The second interpolation in L,[18] a fairly long prose passage with verses interspersed, is the same as that marked *D* in the *Kapiśavadāna* printed in the study referred to above,[19] except that the first sentence of *D* is missing in *L*. The omission of this sentence appears to be the result of carelessness on the part of the scribe who interpolated the passage in *L*. He seems to have made yet another mistake in introducing the passage at the end of the third sentence in paragraph 12 of *MA*. and not after the first as in the *Kapiśavadāna*, which is an appropriate place for this interpolation. The point at which the *MA*. text is resumed after the interpolation in *L* and the *Kapiśavadāna* is the same. The text of the interpolation in *L* is very corrupt and I can make only a few suggestions based on it for improving the text printed as *D* in the *Kapiśavadāna* insertion. The page numbers refer to my publication of 1976.

p. 283: read *Tata ṛddhyānubhāvena* for *Tata (ṛṣiḥ) ṛṣyanubhāvena; abhirupa darśaniya prasadika* for *abhirupa prasadika; atulyaś ca sundaraḥ* for *atulyaṃ ca sundaraḥ;*

p. 282: *vismitā punar uvāca* for .....*punar uvāca; atulyas triṣu lokeṣu* for *atratra triṣu lokeṣu;*

p. 281: *Śarīropataptasamaye* for *śarīropataptasamayaṃ;*

p. 280: *Na hi mahārāja* for *atra hi mahārāja;*

p. 279: *jīvadānaṃdadaḥ* for *jīvoddhāraṃdadaḥ; draṣṭum* for *deṣṭum.*

3. The third interpolation in L is a short passage,[20] the

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18. P. 11 line 2 - p. 20 line 3 of the Peradeniya University Library copy =? leaves 6a2 - 10b3 of the manuscript.

19. Handurukande (1976) *op.cit.* p. 283 - 278.

20. P. 20 line 5 - p. 21 line 2 of the Peradeniya University Library copy =? 10b5 - 11a2 of the manuscript.

same as that marked E in the *MA*. quoted in the *Kapiśavadāna*,[21] and is introduced at the same place in the text.[22]

The events narrated in the second and third interpolations referred to above, relating to the marriage of Maṇicūḍa, the bodhisattva, to a maiden called Padmāvatī, were outlined and discussed in relation to other versions of the Maṇicūḍa legend in my study of 1976.[23] These events appear to be part of a longer recension of the Maṇicūḍa legend, which Michael Hahn called Rezension A or the Long Version in his edition and translation of the Tibetan version of Candragomin's *Lokānandanāṭaka*,[24] a drama, the theme of which is the Maṇicūḍa legend. Hahn discussed this Long Version in a subsequent publication based on the same study.[25]

I also noted a few readings in *L*, which are different from the printed *MA*. and the manuscripts used in establishing that text. They are as follows:

i) *'parena kālena samayena* for *'parena samayena* of *MA* § 3;

ii) *sarvālaṃkāravibhūṣitā* for *sarvālaṃkārabhūṣitā* of § 6;

iii) *puṇḍarīkamāndāravamahāmāndāravāṇi* for *puṇḍarīkamāndāravāṇi* of § 9;

iv) *samaṇināḷavāḷavyañjanaṃ* for *samaṇināḷavyañjanaṃ* of § 9;

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21. Handurukande (1976) *op.cit.* p. 278.

22. *MA* § 12 after the sentence: *Maharṣe na hi puṇyam apuṇyaṃ vā parasaṃtānaṃ saṃkrāmati.*

23. p. 276-273.

24. Hahn, Michael. (1974) Candragomin's *Lokānandanāṭaka* Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz. (*Asiatische Forschungen* Band 39) p. 19-24.

25. Hahn, Michael. (1979). The play *Lokānandanāṭaka* by Candragomin. *Kailash. A Journal of Himalayan Studies*. vol. vii. no. 1 p. 53-55.

v) *rājā dvadaśavarsāsa(ṃ)panne caturdvāreṣu*[26] for *rājā caturṣu nagaradvāreṣu* of § 10;

vi) *Śakro devānām indro* for *Śakro devendro* of § 28;

vii) *pṛthivīprakampo* for *pṛthivīkampo* of § 32;

viii) *abhisaṃrādhya bodhisattvasya mātāpiṭarau (cā)mantrya*[27] *tatraivā°* for *abhisaṃrādhya tatraivantarhitaḥ* of § 33;

ix) *Vahiko nāma maharṣir* for *Vāhīko maharṣir* of § 36;

x) *Mārīcir nāmarṣir*[28] for *Mārīcir nāma* of § 36;

xi) *caturaṃgabalakāyaṃ*[29] for *balakāyaṃ* of § 41;

xii) *paraṃ vismayaṃ mohaṃ upagatāḥ*[30] for *paraṃ saṃmoham upagataḥ* of § 65;

xiii) *saṃhṛṣṭaromakūpajātas*[31] for *saṃhṛṣṭaromakūpas* of § 66.

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26. The *MA* of *Kapiśāvadāna* had this reading. See Handurukande (1976) *op.cit.* p. 187 n. 23.

27. Compare *ibid.* p. 182 n. 177 for a similar reading in the *MA* of *Kapiśavadana* viz. *bodhisattvasya matapitṛbhyaṃ camantrya.*

28. Compare *ibid.* for the reading *nāmarṣi* in the *MA* of *Kapiśāvadāna.*

29. Compare *ibid.* for the same reading in the *MA* of *Kapiśāvadāna.*

30. Compare *ibid.* n. 178 for the reading *Vismayamoham* of the *MA* of *Kapiśavadāna.*

31. Compare *ibid.* p. 181, n. 178 for the reading *saṃhṛṣṭaromakupajata* of the *MA* of *Kapiśavadāna.*

Some of these variants of *L* (e.g. ii, iii, vii) could be changes introduced by an individual scribe. But the incidence of the *MA* inserted in the *Kapīśāvadāna* having the identical or similar readings as noted in the respective instances suggests the possible influence of the longer recension of the legend as in the case of the interpolations.

RATNA HANDURUKANDE

SOME NEW LIGHT ON THE FIRST SINHALA NOVEL

This paper presents some hitherto unknown, recently-discovered documentary evidence regarding the publication of Piyadasa Sirisena's first novel, *Vasanavanta Vivahaya Hevat Jayatissa Saha Roslin.*[1] This important evidence, it is proposed, necessitates a revision in the chronology of the Sinhala novel as hitherto established and accepted. For, the change of date of publication of the novel referred to bears upon two related problems which are of crucial importance in the history of the Sinhala novel, viz., How far is it possible and justifiable to continue to call A. Simon de Silva 'the first Sinhala novelist', and, accordingly, how far is it possible and justifiable to continue to call his novel *Meena* 'the first Sinhala novel'? — or, as Prof. Sarathchandra first expressed it over 40 years ago, "the first original piece of writing in Sinhalese that could be called a novel proper"?[2]

In addition to proposing a change in the date of publication of *Vasanavanta Vivahaya* based on certain new evidence recently brought to light, the paper raises and discusses a problem of considerable general interest in scholarly research, especially research in literary history. I refer of course to the determination of the date of publication of a literary work, a part of which has already been published serially prior to its formal publication as a book, and its chronological placement in relation to other works in the same *genre*.

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1. Piyadasa Sirisena (1875-1946) was the author of a total of twenty Sinhala novels, published during a writing career of over 40 years, from 1904 to 1946. His last novel, *Debara Kella*, was published in 1946, the year of his death. Sirisena was also a prominent poet, and published the following volumes of verse: *Kumara Kav Maldama*, *Neetivemba*, *Hasun Malava*, *Jatyalaya* and *Swarnamali Maha Kavya*. He was the editor of the Sinhala periodical, *Sinhala Jatiya*, which commenced publication in February, 1903. For more details regarding Sirisena's life and works, see Kalukondayawe Pragnasekera Thero, *Sinhala Puvatpat Sangara Ithihasaya*, vol. III (1901-1907) Colombo (1967) p. 139-57.

2. E.R. Sarathchandra *The Sinhalese Novel* Colombo (1950) p. 83.

Part I of the present paper is therefore an exercise in chronological documentation from the point of view of the literary historian, while Part II indicates the modifications in the chronology of the Sinhala novel necessitated by the evidence marshalled in Part I.

Part I

Ever since the publication of Prof. Sarathchandra's seminal book on the history and criticism of the Sinhala novel in the early 1940s,[3] Alutgamage Simon de Silva's first novel, *Meena* (1905) has been accorded the highly enviable distinction of having been 'the first Sinhala novel', with the inevitable consequence that its author has been acknowledged the first Sinhala novelist. However, research conducted by the present writer on the beginnings and the early development of Sinhala fiction[4] has brought to light factual evidence which establishes conclusively that Piyadasa Sirisena's *Vasanavanta Vivahaya* began publication in serial form as early as 1904 in a contemporary newspaper, and that nearly half of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* had been serialised before *Meena* was first published in mid-1906.

Both versions (English and Sinhala) of Prof. Sarathchandra's book on modern Sinhala fiction[5] contained the following categorical statement: "The first original piece of writing in Sinhalese that could be called a novel proper is A. Simon de Silva's *Mīna*. It appeared in 1905, *that is, one year before the publication of Roslin*

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3. Prof. Sarathchandra's earliest critical work on Sinhala fiction was published in English under the title *Modern Sinhalese Fiction* in 1943. According to the author, it was "a brief survey of the Sinhalese novel and the circumstances of its growth", and was reprinted "without any noteworthy alterations, in 1945." The book bearing the title, *The Sinhalese Novel*, published in 1950, was "a completely revised and re-written version of the 1943 edition." See Sarathchandra, *op.cit.* p. 5.

4. The research referred to herein has been embodied in my *The Sinhalese Prose Narrative and the Emergence of the Novel, 1860-1910*. Thesis submitted for the Ph.D. degree, University of Sri Lanka (1975); unpublished.

5. E.R. Sarathchandra, *The Sinhalese Novel* (1950) in English and *Sinhala Navakatha:Ithihasaya Ha Vicharaya*, Colombo (1951) in Sinhala.

and Jayatissa."[6] In the chapter on Piyadasa Sirisena, it was stated: "Piyadasa Sirisena's first novel was *Jayatissa Saha Roslin or Happy Marriage* published in 1906."[7] The numerous editions and reprints of the Sinhala version of Prof. Sarathchandra's book[8] have continued to carry both the above statements to the present day, indicating clearly that Prof. Sarathchandra and all later critics of the Sinhala novel (including the present writer) had been unaware of the publication of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* in serial form. The statement that *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* followed *Meena* in date of publication has consequently been accepted and repeated in numerous books and articles dealing directly, sometimes remotely, with Sinhala fiction.[9]

In the light of the evidence to be presented in this part of the present paper, the statement dating from 1943 (that *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* was published after *Meena*) now appears to require drastic modification, if not complete change. The statement is misleading, because although it may be technically accurate with reference to the publication of the two novels in *book form*, it suppresses the very important fact that *Vasanavanta Vivahaya* had started publication seven or eight months before *Meena*, and therefore presumably had been written before *Meena* too, although for extraneous reasons like serialisation in a newspaper, with its slow pace of publication, its conclusion was delayed till as late as 1906.

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6. Sarathchandra *The Sinhalese Novel* p. 83; *Sinhala Navakatha* 3rd ed. (1960) p. 47.

7. Sarathchandra *The Sinhalese Novel* p. 95; *Sinhala Navakatha* p. 60.

8. Up to 1968, i.e., during a period of 16 years, the Sinhala version of Prof. Sarathchandra's book had gone through six editions.

9. See, for example, two of the most important critical histories of modern Sinhala literature, P.B. Sannasgala *Sinhala Sahitya Vansaya*, Colombo (1961) p. 619-20, and K.D.P. Wickramasinghe *Nutana Sinhala Sahityaya* Gunasena & Co. Ltd., Colombo (1965) p. 414, 436.

Alutgamage Simon de Silva's *Meena* was published, according to official records, at the Sri Lankodaya Press in July, 1905.[10] It is not known at present whether *Meena* was serialised before this date.

Piyadasa Sirisena's *Vasanavantha Vivāhaya* first appeared in print when it began to be published in instalments commencing December 1904 in the columns of a Sinhala newspaper, the *Sarasavi Sandaresa*.[11] Unfortunately, the very first instalment is missing in the *Sarasavi Sandaresa* file at the Sri Lanka Government Archives, but the *second* instalment, which was printed in the issue of 3rd January 1905, is available for perusal. This (second) instalment is preceded by a note to the effect that it is "a continuation of (the story) published on the previous Tuesday",[12] the date of publication of the first part being, therefore, 27th December, 1904, the date which has to be accepted as marking the beginning of publication of *Vasanavantha Vivāhaya*.

A perusal of the *Sarasavi Sandaresa* files for 1904 has yielded another pertinent fact. This is that at least one substantial section of approximately 10 pages of the novel had appeared in print even before December 1904,[13] in the form of an essay entitled "Ashta

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10. *Register of Books Printed in Ceylon and Registered Under Ordinance No. 1 of 1885, Part VI (1901-1905)* Govt. Press, Colombo, p. 136.

11. The *Sarasavi Sandaresa* was a Sinhala newspaper which became the organ of the Buddhist Theosophical Society (BTS), inaugurated by Col. H.S.Olcott in 1880. It commenced publication on 3rd December, 1880. The paper was started by a group of Buddhist leaders, including Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thero, Migettuwatte Gunananda Thero, Batuwantudawe Devarakshita and Thomas Karunaratne. The first editor was the well-known Oriental scholar, Weragama Punchibandara. In 1882, after the death of Weragama Punchibandara, the paper was edited by Thomas Karunaratne, another Oriental scholar and one of the earliest translators of the *Arabian Nights* into Sinhala. For further details regarding the publication and contents (including the first editorial) of the paper, see Kalukondayawe Pragnasekera Thero, *op.cit.* vol. I (1832-1887) p. 332-57.

12. "Jayatissa Saha Roslin (continued from last Tuesday)", *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, January 3, 1905.

13. *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, 28th June, 1904.

Loka Dharmaya", which, in the printed text of the novel in book-form, appears as the concluding part of chapter 14.[14] It is a matter for conjecture whether this essay-like section was excerpted from the manuscript of the novel and published in advance, or whether it had been written and published independently as an essay and later incorporated into the printed version of the novel. However this may have been, *Vasanavantha Vivāhaya* indisputably commenced publication in December 1904, that is, more than six months *before* the publication of *Meena*.

From December 1904 *Vasanavantha Vivāhaya* was published, sometimes regularly, more often quite irregularly, and in instalments of varying length. Some instalments were inordinately short, and others of medium length, giving the strong impression that the instalments of the novel were being used by the editor or his assistants as a convenient "filler" to fill in gaps in the type-setting of the newspaper's columns; in many issues, moreover, no instalment of the novel appears, confirming the impression referred to above. The serialisation dragged on in this desultory fashion throughout 1905 and early 1906, when the book was issued in complete book form and serialisation discontinued. At this stage the novel had been serialised upto the first quarter of Chapter 12 (i.e. up to page 141).[15] Thus, between 27th December 1904 and 24th April 1906, the first 141 pages of *Vasanavantha Vivāhaya*, out of a total of 180 pages, in other words, well over 75% or three-fourths of the novel, had been serialised in the columns of the *Sarasavi Sandaresa*. No documentary evidence is available for the exact date or month of final publication as a single volume; however, a favourable "book review" of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* was published in August 1906,[16] and an advertisement offering the novel for sale appeared in the same paper towards the end of August,[17] which indicates a publication date in July 1906.

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14. Piyadasa Sirisena, *Vasanavantha Vivāhaya* Colombo (1961 ed.) p. 167-177. All page references hereafter are to this edition.

15. The last instalment I was able to trace was published in the issue of 24th April and dealt with the section of the story from the first paragraph of p. 135 to the end of the first paragraph of p. 141 in the book.

16. *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, 10th August, 1906.

17. *ibid.*, 28th August, 1906.

On the basis of the documentary and factual evidence presented so far, the year of publication of Piyadasa Sirisena's *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* should be altered from "1906" (as has been the practice so far) to "1904-1906". In spite of the fact that the story was not serialised in full in the *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, the novel should, it is proposed, be treated as a case of serial publication, the last instalment (i.e., the part not serialised in the newspaper) being deemed, for purposes of literary history and chronology, to have been published in a separate "place", i.e., the novel in book form. In the case of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya*, therefore, the standard practice adopted in English and other Western literatures should be followed - that is, the date of publication should be marked by a compound date, indicating both the beginning as well as the completion of serialisation, as in the case of the publication of most of the novels of Charles Dickens and W.M. Thackeray.[18] In most histories of English literature, the novels of Dickens and Thackeray are dated as follows: *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-37); *Oliver Twist* (1837-38); *Dombey and Son* (1846-48); *Vanity Fair* (1847-48) *The History of Pendennis* (1848-50).

Part II

On the basis of the evidence presented above, we have in Piyadasa Sirisena's *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* a unique instance of publication, raising important problems of literary chronology (a case probably unparallelled even in any other modern literature known to us). For here we are confronted with a novel published in a highly unconventional, rare manner; it commenced as a serial in a newspaper, and was published in that medium for more than three-quarters of its entire length, and then completed in the more familiar mode of publication as a one-volume book. This fact in itself would probably have been of little or no significance, had it not happened that in this particular instance we are dealing with the crucial years of the beginnings of the Sinhala novel.

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18. See, for example, E. Legouis and L. Cazamian *A History of English Literature*, London (1948) p. 1130 n., 1201 n.; George Saintsbury *A Short History of English Literature* London (1925) p. 741, 745; A.C. Ward *English Literature: Chaucer to Bernard Shaw* London (1958) p. 659; Andrew Lang *History of English Literature from Beowulf to Swinburne* London (1921) p. 615; D. Daiches, *A Critical History of English Literature* vol. II, London (1960) p. 1053, 1056, 1060.

As already shown in Part I, it is no longer possible to accept 1906 as the year of publication of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya*. The revision and correction of the chronology in this respect, while helping the literary historian in one way, ironically places him in an unenviable position in another; it presents him with the dilemma, "Which novel, *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* or *Meena*, should be considered to have been published first, and as such should be designated "The First Sinhala Novel"? (with its inevitable corollary, "Who was the first Sinhala novelist?")

As shown in Part I, the two novels were published so close to each other, and with a considerable amount of overlapping, that neither Piyadasa Sirisena nor Simon de Silva had the other's work *in its entirety* before him to be read and digested and "to be influenced by" before he started composing his own novel. Piyadasa Sirisena had no opportunity, for example, of reading *a single word* of *Meena* before he went into print in December 1904, for *Meena* was to be published only six months later, in July 1905. On the other hand, Simon de Silva had the opportunity of reading *approximately 75 pages* of Sirisena's *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* before his own (de Silva's) novel *Meena* emerged from the press.

Another significant piece of evidence which has a crucial bearing on the problem under discussion, which too has so far escaped the eye of any critic of Sinhala fiction, should be recorded here. This evidence was contained in the author's preface to Piyadasa Sirisena's *Tharuniyakage Premaya* (The Love of a Maiden), first published in 1910. In this preface, Sirisena had made the following comment, *inter alia*, on his first novel, *Vasanavantha Vivahaya*: "The benefits that have accrued to the Sinhala nation from my first novel *Vasanavantha Vivahaya*, *which was written in 1904*, have been demonstrated clearly by the fact that it has had to be reprinted four times (by 1910)."[19] Now, this statement, coming directly from the mouth of the author himself, and taken in conjunction with the incontrovertible documentary evidence already presented to show that at least the first 75 pages of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* had appeared in print in the *Sarasavi Sandaresa* before *Meena* made its appearance in

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19. Piyadasa Sirisena, *Tharuniyakage Premaya*, Colombo, (revised ed. 1957) preface.

print, is sufficient to establish the fact that *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* had been planned and written in full like any ordinary novel before it began serialisation in the *Sarasavi Sandaresa*. However, it should be noted that this does not totally exclude the possibility that, after July 1905, having read *Meena*, Piyadasa Sirisena *could*, if he so wished, have made changes or modifications in his own completed manuscript - though this is extremely unlikely (especially owing to the circumstances to be discussed below).

Of course, on the basis of the material available at present and used in the present paper, the strong probability that Piyadasa Sirisena had completed the composition of the entire novel now titled *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* before he went into print (as is usually done in the case of novel writing and publication, and as stated by Sirisena himself in the Author's Preface to *Tharuniyakage Premaya* quoted in the preceding paragraph) remains a conjecture which could be confirmed or contradicted categorically only on the basis of the findings of further future research. Sirisena, for example, could conceivably have drawn up a rough or 'skeleton' plan or outline of the story of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* at the outset, and proceeded to develop and enlarge it part by part as he published each instalment in the *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, instead of writing the novel in full (i.e., as now published). However, until compelling evidence (say, Piyadasa Sirisena's personal diaries for the relevant years, or other similar personal papers and documents, which probably survive in the Sirisena family, awaiting discovery by future researchers) becomes available, Piyadasa Sirisena's own definite statement (which has also the virtue of being the most likely) that the novel was written (that is, presumably, in full) in 1904, has to be accepted in favour of other wild (and less probable) conjectures, as has been done in the present paper.

One striking feature that emerges from a detailed comparison of the plot structures of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* and *Meena* is the presence in both of a similar incident — the abduction of Roslin by the villain of the novel, Vincent, in Sirisena's novel,[20] and the double abduction of Meena in de Silva's novel.[21] However, a detailed

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20. *Vasanavantha Vivāhaya*, ch. x, p. 128.

21. A. Simon de Silva *Meena*, 2nd ed. Matara (1969) ch. ii, p. 8; and ch. x, p. 97-98.

study of the three abductions shows that the abduction of Roslin is closer in detail to the abduction of Sita in *The Ramayana* than to either of the abductions described in *Meena*. In both the *Ramayana* and *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* the abduction of the girl is made possible by the luring away of the husband or lover by a fawn through divine intervention; in both, the girl actually *requests* her lover to capture the fawn for her. The abductions of *Meena*, on the other hand, are more realistic, and quite different in detail from the abductions in the *Ramayana* and *Vasanavantha Vivahaya*. There is little doubt that in this respect *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* was influenced by the *Ramayana*, and that the plot of *Meena* (i.e., the concluding parts) exerted no influence at all on the abduction of Roslin in Sirisena's novel. Indeed, as early as 1950, Prof. Sarathchandra pointed out that both *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* and *Meena* could have been, and probably were, influenced by incidents and other plot elements from the *Ramayana* as well as certain other works of narrative prose in translation, which were very popular around the period when these two novels were being written — viz., the *Arabian Nights* and the *Ummagga Jātakaya*. The neo-classical romances too, which were written by Bentota Albert de Silva[22] and which were themselves to a great extent modelled on works like the *Ramayana*, the *Jātaka* stories and the *Arabian Nights*, clearly influenced the plot structures of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* and *Meena*.

While the superficial parallels between the plots of the two novels we are concerned with do not imply any "influence" of *Meena* on *Vasanavantha Vivahaya*, or *vice versa*, the *differences* between the two novels with regard to theme, intention, and narrative technique are quite striking, once again negating the possibility of one novel having influenced the other before publication. Both *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* and *Meena*, therefore, have to be considered to be independent original creations of their respective authors.

Vasanavantha Vivahaya was no imitation of any local or foreign model, but an original creation — and this accounts for much of its defects and short-comings, both in plot structure as well as in

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22. For a detailed analysis of the novels of Bentota Albert de Silva and his contribution to the evolution of the Sinhala novel, see Sarathchandra Wickramasuriya *Sinhala Navakathavata Maga Paedeema* Kandy (1970).

other aspects of fictional technique. It was, in particular, a direct product of the contemporary socio-cultural conditions; it was written during the heyday of British imperialism in Sri Lanka, when Sinhalese language and culture and Buddhist religion were undergoing deterioration and suppression, a period when the Sinhala-Buddhist majority found in Anagarika Dharmapala their religious spokesman, and in Piyadasa Sirisena and John de Silva (the dramatist) their literary spokesmen. As such, Piyadasa Sirisena's basic intention was to construct a fictitious story which would enable him to express his (and the Sinhala-Buddhist readers') nationalistic and religious identity, and to demonstrate to the Sinhalese Buddhists at a time when many of them were being converted to Christianity, the superiority of Sinhala culture over Western culture and the dangers of indiscriminate westernisation on the one hand, and the greatness of Buddhism as a religion on the other.

Simon de Silva's *Meena*, however, far from having arisen from the current socio-cultural ethos, shows surprisingly little awareness of the momentous upheavals taking place in contemporary Sri Lanka. It is probably for this very important reason that Piyadasa Sirisena's novels were immensely more popular than Simon de Silva's — Sirisena's novels were far more 'topical' than de Silva's, and in close touch with the life and sentiments of the vast majority of his fellowmen in a way that de Silva's were not. Indeed, Simon de Silva himself tacitly acknowledged this fact when he abandoned the kind of novel that he had initiated in *Meena* and himself became Piyadasa Sirisena's faithful disciple in writing his second novel, *Theresa* (1907), adopting the very same theme of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* i.e., the basic satirico-comical portrayal and denunciation of westernisation and anglicisation from which the contemporary Sinhalese people were suffering.

An important point to be noted with regard to the publication of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* and *Meena* is that, especially in a case like the present one, where the first and original use of a new literary *genre* is involved, *beginning first* should obviously be counted to be more important and a greater contribution to the evolution of the particular literary form than *ending first*. On this account, too, it is *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* rather than *Meena* which ought to be considered the first Sinhala novel, for it marked the inauguration of the novelistic form in Sinhala, unlike *Meena*, which followed it seven months later. Moreover, it should be remembered that the delay in the publication of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* could

with great probability be attributed not to a delay in composition, but to certain extraneous circumstances which were outside the author's control, as already indicated.[23]

As pointed out earlier, most probably owing to editorial policy, as well as because of the low reputation enjoyed by works of 'fiction' (which were equated in status with the *Ramayana* and the *Arabian Nights*, and therefore categorised as *sampappralaapa*,[24] and denounced by orthodox Buddhists), the *Sarasavi Sandaresa* appears to have meted out step-motherly treatment to Piyadasa Sirisena's first novel in its columns. Since Piyadasa Sirisena was at this time (1904-06) himself the editor of a periodical called the *Sinhala Jatiya* (The Sinhala Nation) the possible existence of rivalry and jealousy between editors of two contemporaneous periodicals cannot be ruled out. Whatever the cause or causes, inordinate delays in the serialisation of *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* characterised the publication of the instalments of the novel in the *Sarasavi Sandaresa*.

Thus, everything considered, according to the present state of our knowledge, it would now be appropriate to say that the Sinhala novel proper began with Piyadasa Sirisena and not with Alutgamage Simon de Silva, together with its corollary that *Vasanavantha Vivahaya* rather than *Meena* should be designated the first Sinhala novel.

SARATHCHANDRA WICKRAMASURIYA

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23. See p. 50 above.

24. That is, *sam* (prefix meaning 'with', 'together') + *palāpa* 'frivolous or idle talk', 'nonsense', 'prattle'.

THE PRINCESS IN THE BOAT

(Of Viharadevi and Danae)

In an article titled *Of Perseus and Pandukabhāya*, which I published in the preceding issue of this journal,[1] I discussed what appeared to me evidence of the exploitation of a motif from Greek mythology by the author of the *Mahāvamsa* at this point to give romantic background to the birth of one of the early kings of Sri Lanka, viz. Pandukābhaya.[2]

This is the myth of Danae, of whom it had been prophesied that if a son were born to her, he would kill his grandfather, Acrisius, king of Argos. For this reason Acrisius (it will be recalled) had the princess locked up in a brazen tower to protect her from men. But even so a man got to her - as some say, Zeus himself metamorphosed into a shower of gold, or as others, her uncle Proteus - as a result of which she conceived the hero Perseus, who lived to fulfil the dreaded oracle by killing Acrisius.

The *Mahāvamsa* makes use of this motif, deriving it through the *Ghata Jātaka*.[3] But it is also remarkable that, while in some of its details the chronicle may be approximating to what was palpably factual in the island's history, in some others it appears to reflect more closely the motif of the original Greek myth so as to suggest an independent acquaintance with it. The hall-mark of this motif continues to remain, however, the seclusion of the fateful princess in some kind of tower-like edifice to protect her from being made pregnant by a man, viz. the πύργος or *turris* of Danae, the *ekatthambha pasada* of Devagabbha (the *Ghata Jātaka* princess), or the *ekathunike gehe* or, more popularly, the එක් ඇවි ගේ of Ummadacitta. So, for this reason I shall continue to refer to this motif as that of the Princess-in-the-Tower.

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1. *Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* vol. IX, nos. 1 and 2 (1983) p. 34-66.

2. *Mhv.* ix. 1-18.

3. No. 454.

Readers familiar with the story of the birth of king Pandukābhaya in the *Mahāvamsa* will recall that when his own mother, Citta, was born to King Panduvāsudeva and Queen Baddhakaccana as their youngest child and only daughter, it was foretold of her that "for the sake of sovereignty will her son slay his uncles" (*rajjahetu suto assa ghatayissati matule*). So, in due time her brothers lodged her in a chamber, an architectural curiosity having but one pillar, and within it they placed a serving-woman, and without, a hundred soldiers. But notwithstanding these precautions a man got to her - her cousin, Dighagāmani - and in consequence of their sexual congress on that occasion she gave birth to Pandukabhaya, a son, who went on to fulfil the dreaded prophesy made over Citta by killing her brothers and taking over the kingdom.

If in the manner of a *samodhana* popular in the Jātakas, we were to effect an equation of characters between the Sri Lankan historical anecdote of Ummadacittā and the more ancient Greek myth of Danae, Citta would be Danae, the princess protected from men in a tower because of a similar prophesy that a son born to her would kill his grandfather (or uncles, as the case may be), who ruled the land. Panduvāsudeva (and *in loco parentis* Abhaya *et al.*, as a concession to history and perhaps also in deference to the Jātaka source) is Acrisius, the kinsman threatened by the birth of a son to his daughter. Likewise Dighagāmani is our Proteus (an easy substitution of cousin for uncle), who made the princess pregnant in her tower, coming to her by stealth and cohabiting with her. And of course Pandukabhaya is Perseus, the son born of that union, who went on to fulfil the prophesy by killing the royal kinsman (or kinsmen), who was fated to die at his hands, and taking over the kingdom.[4] But the most remarkable

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4. At the time I made the study, I had difficulty getting at the account of the myth as given by Pherecydes of Athens, the genealogist (c. 456 B.C.), whom Schol. on Apoll. Rhod. iv. 1091 cites. Now that I have traced it (F. Jacoby *F.Gr.Hist.* vol. I (A) Berlin (1957) p. 61. fr. 10) I find mention there of a serving-woman (τροφός) placed to look after Danae, like the *dasi* who was kept with Citta. When Acrisius found his daughter had a child, he killed this woman. According to Pherecydes Perseus was three to four years old by the time Acrisius learnt the fact - he heard the boy's voice (contd.)

of the parallels remains the unique edifice in which the *Mahavamsa* says Citta was confined, a tower of sorts, which reared from the ground upon a single pillar. For, as I have shown, it substitutes as a close equivalent for the πύργος in which the lovely Danae was reputed to have been confined.

The Princess-in-the-Tower motif does not, however, exhaust the motifs drawn into the *Mahavamsa* from the saga of the Greek hero, Perseus, to embellish the history of the island's early kings. For, two other motifs will be found taken from the same source and run into each other to weave the remarkable circumstances which led to the birth of yet another of the hero-kings of ancient Sri Lanka - this time none other than the redoubtable Dutthagamani.[5]

I refer of course to the involvement of the queen of King Kelanitissa in an affair which led to the inundation of the land by the sea, the offer of his daughter, Devi, as an apeacement to the angered sea-deities, her launching upon the waters in a boat-of-sorts by the king, her drifting to another realm (Rohana), where the vessel was brought ashore, her encountering there the king of the land, who finds she is a princess and consecrates her his queen. (Prince Gamani-Abhaya (popularly Dutthagamani), born to them in due course, was to fight many a historic battle with the Tamils and regain the territories which had come under their sway).

Even on a superficial reading of this apparently historical anecdote in the *Mahavamsa* the two motifs which constitute it - (a) the committing of a princess to the waves of the sea by a king to assuage the wrath of the sea-deities, against whom an offence (directly or indirectly involving the queen) had been

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as he played. The *Extended Mahavamsa* (ed. G.P. Malalasekera vol. II, Colombo (1937) ix. 5 says Citta's nurse was a hunchback (*dasim khujjakam*) - a detail found nowhere else. The story had apparently made its way along the Silk Route as well, for it was narrated around Tashkurgan of a soldier, that he was detailed to escort a princess from China to Persia as a bride for a king, but encountering a war, guarded her in a tower. Afterwards, when he went in to fetch her, he found her pregnant. The explanation was that a god had come down to her. The son born to her later became a famous hero.

5. *Mhv.* xxii. 12-22.

committed, and (b) the floating of a princess in a vessel upon the waters of the sea by a king (her father), who is brought ashore in a different land, there to be consecrated queen of the king of that land - will not fail to recall respectively the fates of Andromeda, sacrificed to an irate sea by her father, Cepheus, and of Danaë, set adrift in a box by her father, Acrisius, in the mythology of the Greeks, just as surely as the seclusion of Citta in her එක් මැදි ගේ by her brothers (in lieu of father) would have called to mind, for all who were acquainted with it, the imprisonment of that same princess, Danae, in her tower of bronze by that same father of hers, Acrisius.

In this article, which is the sequel to my study of the motif of the Princess-in-the-Tower, I propose therefore to draw closer attention to what I would, for convenience as for their consanguinity, call the motif of the Princess-in-the-Boat, and to show how in the *Mahāvaṃsa* it is constituted of elements derived from the myths of both Andromeda and Danae, the former being exploited to provide *the reason for the Sri Lankan princess (Viharadevi) being set afloat upon the sea*, and the latter, *the event itself and its consequence*, viz. her marriage to King Kavannatissa and her mothering of the hero, Dutthagamani.

Tradition obviously had no independent interest in King Kelanitissa outside of the episode which led to his providing his daughter to be the mother of the paladin of Buddhism and Sinhala nationalism in the island. Neither is the origin of the family that ruled in Kelani nor any other noteworthy deed or achievement of this king recorded in the *Mahāvaṃsa* or any other chronicle; he is not mentioned before this and is forgotten soon afterwards. Indeed his name itself has a fictitious ring - the ready-at-hand 'Tissa' tagged on to the name of the city of his rule - and were it not for the fact that it has been found in a fragmentary Brāhmi inscription at an ancient site in the south-eastern part of the island, along with evidence of a practice of nicknaming kings, may have given grounds for suspecting that, even if a king did exist to whom this name has been assigned in tradition, this was not his actual name.[6] Observe that the reverse is recorded with respect

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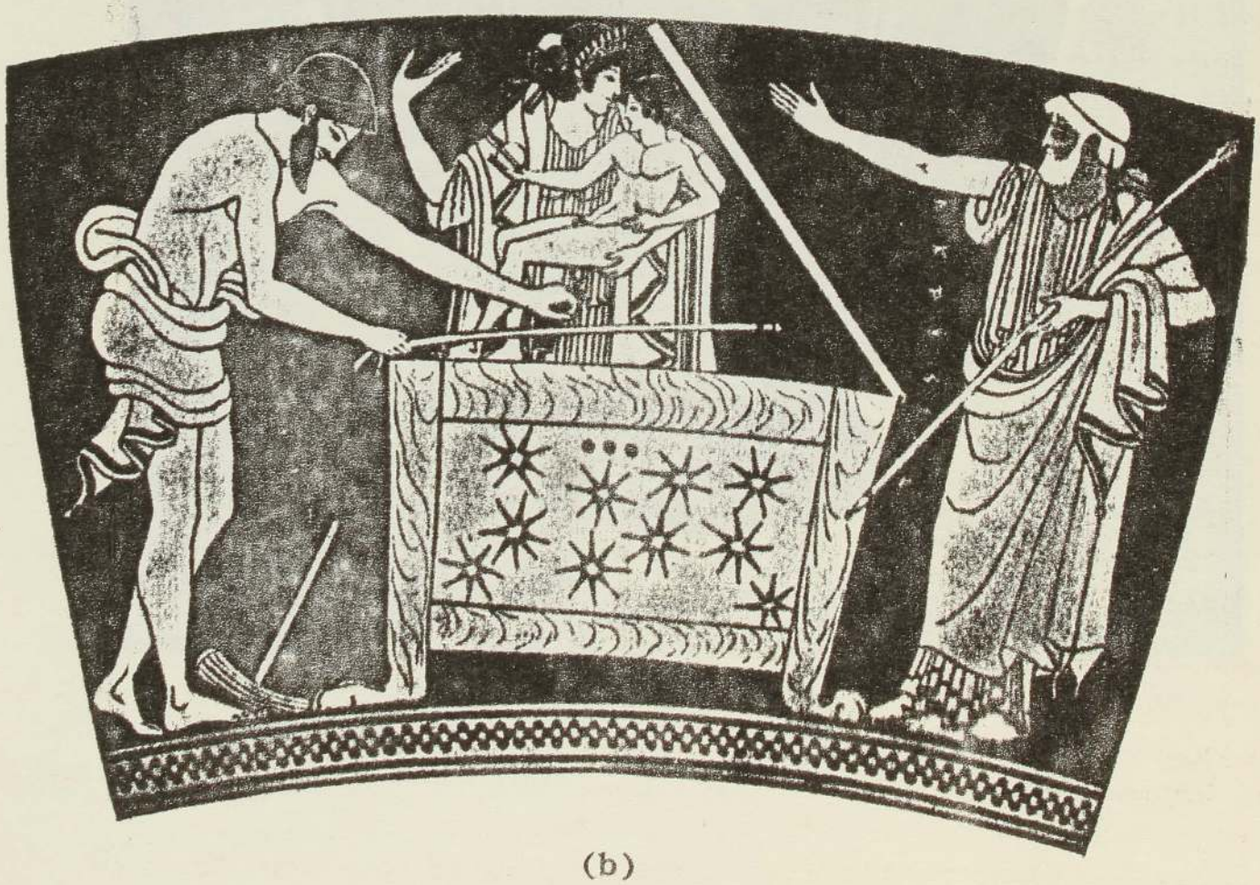
6. *Ext. Mhv.* xii 36 f. calls him 'Piyatissa'. Epithets like 'Gotha' (Short) and 'Kakavanna' (Crow-coloured) were surely nicknames, which may not have been used officially when the kings who bore them were alive. See *UCHC* vol. I, pt. I, p. 147. 'Vihara' of Viharadevi is itself another example - though not one to be resented.

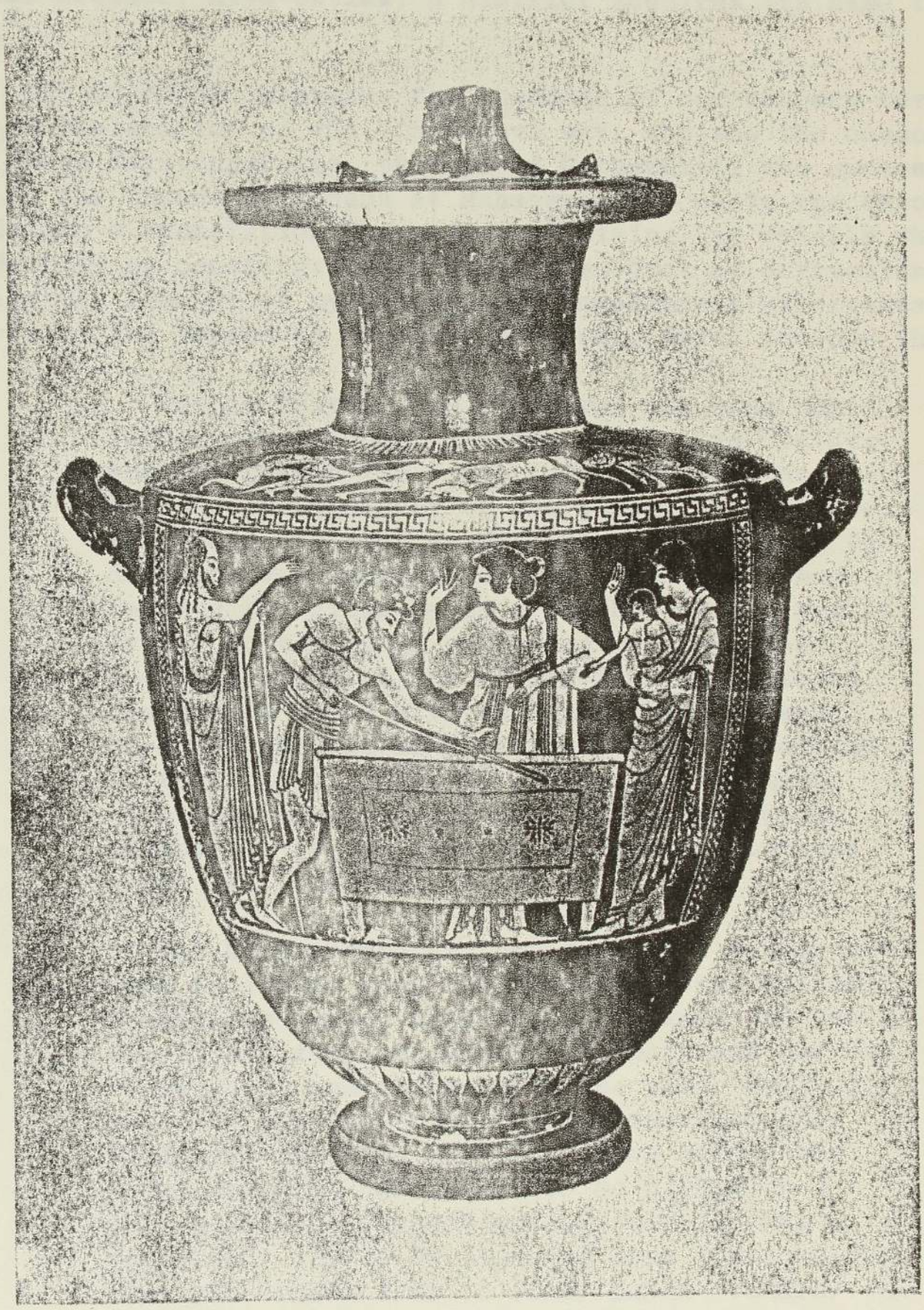
PLATE I

(a)



(b)

PLATE II



to his brother, Ayya-Uttika; a district acquires its name from him.[7]

The *Mahāvaṃsa* narrates the anecdote of our concern here by way of explanation of who Vihāradevi was, who was the consort of the pious Kākavaṇṇatissa, the son of Gothabhaya, who succeeded him to the throne of Rohana at Mahāgama.[8] I quote the chronicle in Geiger's translation thereof, italicizing the details which I identify as constituting the motifs suspect of derivation ultimately from Greek mythology, and immediately afterwards supplying the verses of the Pali original, which include them.

> Now in Kalyani the ruler was the king named Tissa. His younger brother named Ayya-Uttika, who had roused the wrath (of Tissa) in that he was the guilty lover of the queen, fled thence from fear and took up his abode elsewhere. The district was named after him. He sent a man wearing the disguise of a bikkhu, with a secret letter to the queen. This man went thither, took his stand at the king's door and entered the king's house with an arahant who always used to take his meal at the palace, unnoticed by that thera. When he had eaten in company with the thera, as the king was going forth, he let the letter fall to the ground when the queen was looking.
>
> The king turned at the (rustling) sound, and when he looked down and discovered the written message he raged, unthinking, against the thera, and in his fury he caused the thera and the man to be slain and thrown into the sea. *Wrath at this the sea-gods made the sea overflow the land; but the king with all speed caused his pious daughter named Devi to be placed in a golden vessel, whereon was written "a king's daughter", and to be launched upon the same sea. When she landed near to (the) Lanka (vihara) the king Kakavanna consecrated her as queen.* Therefore she received the epithet Vihara.

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7. *Mhv.* xxii. 14.

8. *Mhv.* xxii. 11-12.

18. *Saddena tena rājā taṃ nivattitvā vilokayaṃ*
ñatvāna lekhasandesaṃ kuddho therassa dummati

19. *theraṃ taṃ purisaṃ tañ ca marapetvāna kodhasā*
samuddasmiṃ khipāpesi: kujjhitvā tena devatā

20. *samudden'ottharāpesuṃ taṃ desaṃ, so tu bhūpati*
attano dhītaraṃ suddhaṃ Deviṃ nama surupiniṃ

21. *likhitvā "rājadhīta" ti sovannukkhaliyā lahuṃ*
nisīdāpiya tatth'eva samuddasmiṃ visajjayi.

22. *Okkantaṃ taṃ tato Laṅke Kākavaṇṇo mahīpati*
abhiṣecayi, ten'āsi Viharopapadavhaya.

The *Dīpavamsa* makes no mention of Viharadevi or of the circumstances which led her to marry the king of Rohana Mahāgāma, Kakavannatissa. But it would be unwise to argue *ex silentio* from a work like the *Dīpavamsa* that it did not known the story nor found it in the *Attakatha*, to which it too had recourse like the *Mahavamsa*. There is evidence that it knew a great deal more than it cared to narrate, but the brevity and terseness it has adopted has no place for much romantic elaboration. Indeed, it devotes no more than thirteen couplets to Dutthagamani, where the *Mahavamsa* has assigned as much as eleven whole chapters (from the 22nd to the 32nd) and has the amplitude to bring in such material.[9]

Even so, it must be admitted that the *Mahāvamsa* presents the story with remarkable brevity, if also clarity. And in doing so, even in this earliest form in which the anecdote makes its appearance, it has on the one hand preserved for us a detail in its proper significance, which the later tradition is in danger of dissipating, on the other, has omited mention of a detail

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9. See W. Geiger *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik* vol. vii, no. 2. p. 259. He suggests that this was because the story of Duttagamani originally came from a different source from that which dealt with the other parts of the *Mhv.* and thinks its birthplace was Ruhuna. But see G.P. Malalasekera (ed. *Vamsatthappakasini* vol. I, London (1935) p. xcv. f), who points out that the *Dpv.* obviously knew the episode, because in the few verses dedicated to him the main features of the story are mentioned. Malalasekera agrees, however, that it may have formed the theme of a special saga, which came to be attached ultimately to the *Attakatha*.

(perhaps taking it for granted) that is made explicit in the later tradition, and would have, even if in a small way, strengthened the parallel we have been observing between the anecdote and the Greek material. The resurgence of the latter as much as the disorientation of the former, together with much else that is possibly both old and new, constitute the tradition by the time it makes its way to such later works as the *Thupavamsa*, the *Saddharmalankaraya* and the *Rajavaliya*.

The first of these (that which the *Mahāvamsa* preserves in its true form but suffers distortion in the later tradition) concerns the inundation of the land by the sea - a phenomenon which all versions of the story, however, agree took place on account of King Kelanitissa's crime against the innocent arahant. The *Mahavamsa* author attributes this to the anger of the deities, implying (as Geiger rightly translates *devatā*) "the sea-deities". For the king kills arahant and imposter (the manner is of no importance still) *and throws their bodies into the sea*, thus implicating these gods in his foul deed. The nature of the catastrophe is also apt in the case of deities of the sea - an inundation (*samudden'ottharapesuṃ taṃ desaṃ*), and relates punishment to crime with 'poetic justice', just as afterwards the manner of the recompence - the sacrifice of the offending king's daughter to the sea. Thus offence, retribution, recompence, all involve the sea and are interwoven by it - or if you like, the gods of the sea.

First evidence of a misconception of who the gods were, who were angered by the killing of the thera, comes from the commentator of the *Vamsatthappakasini*, the *Mahavamsa Tika*, even when he has nothing to add to the manner in which the holy man and the imposter were killed and disposed of. For he explains the *devatā* of the chronicle as *tasmiṃ dese adhivatthā devatā*, i.e. "the resident gods of that locality".[10] This fault of interpretation is immediately avoided by the compiler of the *Extended Mahavamsa*, a work younger than the Tika and tentatively dated by Malalasekara to the 9th or 10th century,[11] even when he qualifies the word

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10. *Vamsat.* p. 432.

11. *Ext. Mhv.* p. lii.

devatā of the *Mahāvaṃsa* with the *Tikā's* explanatory *adhivatthā*; for he avoids *tasmiṃ dese* and makes *adhivattha* look back to *sāgare*, the 'sea', into which thera and imposter were killed and thrown, and thus restores the connection between the sea (or sea-gods), the crime and the punishment.[12]

In none of these works is there any inkling of the manner in which the thera and the imposter were done to death. But it must be the fact that they were already dead before being thrown into the sea that lay opportunity open for development of the story at this juncture with the now popular account of the boiling of the thera in a cauldron of oil. I find it difficult to believe that, if the tradition of the cruel manner in which the thera was killed was an old one, it would have passed without a hint in the works mentioned. To all purposes it appears to be a subsequent monkish elaboration, which at the same time emphasises the Buddhist admonishing (exemplified, for instance, in the *Kāka* and *Kapi Jātaka*)[13] that kings should not act rashly, and certainly never against the sangha. It may have been imagined some time round the 9th century, to judge from the evidence. Reference to a shrine erected at the spot where the thera was said to have been boiled in oil is found in the *Salalihini Sandesaya* (15th century)[14] and the Kelani Vihara Inscription of Dhammaparakrama-bahu IX (c. 1491-1513)[15] also makes mention of a ගෙඳේ නවර ගෙය, or

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12. *Ext. Mhv.* xxii. 54-56.

13. Nos. 140 and 404. Consider also the *Mahā-Paduma Jātaka* (No. 427), in which a young prince (the Bodhisatta) is rashly condemned to death by the king, his father, over a matter involving the queen. This jātaka clearly emulates the plot of Euripides' *Hippolytus* plays. In the extant *H. Kaluptomenos* a letter too figures prominently in the innocent youth's death, resulting from the king's rashness. I cannot say whether the story of the thera was in any way inspired by the *Hippolytus* motif, as the *Mahā-Paduma* certainly was.

14. vs. 71. See the text ed. S. Wanigasinghe, Matara (1956) p. 107. There is reference to a statue (පිළිම හිමි) of the monk, which the salalihiniya is asked to worship there.

15. For the text and translation of this inscription, see 'Kelaniya through the Ages' by Vimala in *Here is Kelaniya*, souvenir number ed. D.C. Wijewardena, Colombo (1946)(no pagination). Vimala translates, මුල් පියසරවා (at line 16) as 'thoroughly rebuilt;'thoroughly restores' would have been more accurate.

'House of the Oil Cauldron', thus suggesting that such a shrine was in existence up until the time the Portuguese sacked the place. The tradition itself is palpably much older than this reference to archaeological evidence and takes us back to the Pali *Thelakataha Gatha*, a compilation of near hundred stanzas, which the arahant was said to have recited when in his cauldron of oil. For it is evidently traceable in the early Polonnaruwa period, when gathas from it were quoted by the poet Gurulugomi (12th century) in his *Dharmapradipikava*.[16] Reference to the torture the arahant underwent also appears in the *Amavatura* (Gahapati Damana).[17]

Other elaborations upon details of the *Mahāvamsa* story of King Kelanitissa and the flood appear along with that of the manner in which the thera was put to death when the tradition resurfaces in later literature. Not the least of these are the nature of the insult offered to Ayya-Uttika, which dramatises the *Mahavamsa* detail of his departure to the district which was later to bear his name; the reason why neither the thera nor the king suspected the imposter when he came into the palace to receive alms; the basis on which the thera was implicated with the imposter on a letter written by Ayya-Uttika; the extent of the area the sea inundated, and likewise, the manner in which King Kelanitissa himself was destroyed by the waters - (indeed, his death is something not even mentioned by the chronicle).

As far as I am concerned, the later tradition is welcome to all this, provided it does not blunt the point of the story that it was the sea-deities who were directly affronted by the king's crime, which is wherefore it was the *sea* that reacted (or was caused to react) as it did, and which is why the king sacrificed his daughter *to the sea*. But there was danger of this happening, more especially with the emphasis shifting to the manner in which the thera was killed. For instance, in the *Thupavamsa* the imposter is killed and thrown into the sea, but nothing is said of the disposal of the thera's body, once the oil had done its work.[18] In the *Rajavaliya* imposter and queen are both thrown ..

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16. See the Dharmarama ed. (1938) p. 112, 116, 117, 120 and 122.

17. See *Amavatura* ed. Kodagoda Gnanathilaka. Colombo (1959) p.87.

18. See the *Sinhala Thupavamsaya* ed. Gunapala Senadheera, Colombo (1966) p. 3.

into a *river!* (ගඟට) - the former killed, the latter alive with hands tied; nothing again is said of the disposal of the thera's body upon his death in the cauldron(19). The *Saddharmalankara*, however, abides by the old tradition and persists that, even with the death of the thera caused by boiling in oil, thera as well as imposter are cast into the sea (මරවා මුදට දැමූහ).[20] Consequently all these texts talk of deities in general when it comes to the divine anger at the deed and the subsequent inundation, the *Rajavaliya* even of "the deities who preside over Lanka" (ලඟට අරක්ගත් දෙවියෝ).[21]

We may now turn to the detail which is bypassed in the *Mahāvamsa* as perhaps being unimportant and in any case assumable, but surfaces in the later tradition. I refer to the role of fishermen in the finding of the vessel in which Viharadevi was when it drifted to the coast of Rohana. In the later works cited, they are explicitly mentioned, simply as "fishermen who dwelt at the harbour-village" (*Saddh.* තොටලුගම වසන කෙවුළෝ)or more specifically as "King Kavantissa's fishermen" (*Thv.* කාවන්තිස් රජ්ජුරුවන් ගේ කෙවුළෝ) or "the fishermen who supplied King Kavantissa fish" (*Rajv.* කාවන්තිස්ස රජ්ජුරුවන්ට මස් දෙන කෙවුළෝ).

In the terseness of its account of the episode the *Mahavamsa* not only leaves out the details of the discovery of the vessel on the coast of Rohona, and by whom, but even a more valuable piece of evidence on the vessel itself in which Viharadevi had been floated; the chronicle merely say that, upon her landing close to the Lanka Vihara, King Kakavanna made her his queen. I shall advert to this missing detail when I need to bring it in.

If one reviews the details I have italicized in the *Mahāvamsa* story of King Kelanitissa and Viharadevi, two motifs will manifest themselves, which have been run together to constitute the larger motif, which I have here labelled the Princess-in-the-Boat. These

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19. *Rajavaliya* ed. A.V. Suraweera, Colombo (1976) p. 170.

20. *Saddharmalankaraya* pbl. M.D. Gunasena, Colombo (1954) p. 464.

21. At any rate, in the *Rajavamsa* (p. 171) they are the sea-deities (මුදට අරක්ගත් දෙවියෝ) who drown the king, while cloud-deities (වලාහක දෙවියෝ) and sea nymphs (මුදමනී මේඛලාවෝ)waft the vessel to Rohana. In the *Saddharm.* (p. 467) the deities to whom the princess is sacrificed are the gods of the sea (සමුද්‍ර දේවතාවන්ට බිලිනම් යයි තියා සමුද්‍රයට අලුයේය).

can be tidily pulled apart, if one repeats the princess in both sub-motifs - or, to put it differently - think of the princess in the one as overlapping the princess in the other so as to become one and the same princess, i.e. Vihāradevi of our story.

The two sub-motifs can then be identified as follows:

(a) An offence committed against the sea (and involving the queen, if you wish) causes the sea-deities to be wroth and therefore inundate the land. To placate them the king offers his own virgin daughter as a sacrifice to the sea. (With the offer the fury of the sea abates).

(b) A princess is for some reason put in a boat and set adrift on the sea by her father, the king, so that she may perish. But the vessel lands and is discovered, or is pulled ashore, by fishermen in a different land, who take her to their king. The king sees she is a princess and consecrates her his queen.

(It transpires afterwards that the destiny that saves her makes her the mother of a prince, who achieves great things by his heroism and recovers the kingdom that is his due).

As mentioned earlier, then, sub-motif 'a' provides the *Mahāvaṃsa* story with the circumstances which lead to the launching of Princess Vihāradevi upon the waters of the ocean, while sub-motif 'b' lays out the event and its consequence, which is her marriage to King Kakavanna. Together they contribute to the destiny that accompanied the princess in the role she was to play by becoming the mother of the great hero of the epic's concern here. But what is remarkable - and it is just this that I wish to remark in this article - is that our chronicler, or his source at one or more removes, has derived both these motifs from the saga of the mythical hero of another civilization, but one about which the Buddhist lands of North-west India, and through them, our own island had become increasingly acquainted. For both these motifs, just as much as the one I treated in the precursor to this article, derive from the cycle of myths which antiquity narrated of the Greek hero, Perseus.

The story of Perseus' adventure, in which he rescues Andromeda and which provides the *Mahāvaṃsa* anecdote here with the reason for the sacrifice of Vihāradevi to an angered sea, is narrated by

Apollodorus, Athenian grammarian and mythographer of the second century B.C. as follows:[22]

> Being come to Ethiopia, of which Cepheus was king, Perseus found the king's daughter, Andromeda, set out to be a prey of a sea-monster. For Cassiepeia, the wife of Cepheus, vied with the Nereids in beauty and boasted to be better than them all; hence the Nereids were angry, and Poseidon, sharing their wrath, sent a flood and a monster to invade the land. But Ammon having predicted deliverence from the calamity if Cassiepeia's daughter Andromeda were exposed as a prey to the monster, Cepheus was compelled by the Ethiopians to do it, and he bound his daughter to a rock. When Perseus beheld her, he loved her and promised Cepheus that he would kill the monster, if he would give the damsel to wife. These terms having been sworn to, Perseus withstood and slew the monster and released Andromeda.

If we for a moment disregard the sea-monster (κῆτος) and retain only the inundation (πλήμμυρα), which is the most natural manner in which a sea would express its anger, we have in this myth the clear outlines of the motif that forms part of the Kelanitissa-Viharadevi episode. For here is an offence involving a queen, for which her daughter is made to pay the price; here are sea-deities, who are angered by the offence; here is a flooding of the land by the sea, which they cause by way of revenge; here is a king, who has to save his land from the calamity and here is he doing so (as no doubt King Kelanitissa also did, on the advice of an oracle or soothsayers) by the sacrifice of his virgin daughter to the waves of the sea.

The sea-monster in the Greek myth need not distract us, even if it is true that he begins to gain prominence in the myth *even to the exclusion of the inundation*. For, the intrusion of this creature as part of the retaliation of the sea-gods into what is evidently a motif based on a primitive ritual of sacrifice of an unsullied maiden to apeace the hostility of an element (as King Agamemnon sacrificed Iphegeneia to the winds at Aulis) is necessitated by, and may indeed have accompanied, the intrusion of a hero into it, *who actually rescues the sacrificial victim!* The dramatic possibilities, which the motif thus opened up with the introduction of

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22. *Bibl.* ii. 4.3.

the Κῆτος were not lost on Sophocles and Euripides, who dealt with it as their theme in their respective tragedies, *Andromeda*,[23] and so much prominence does the sea-monster get as against the original flood (if indeed it continued to receive mention - as well it may - by such writers) that it won itself a place among the stars of the zodiac along with the chief characters of the myth.[24] Otherwise it must be believed - and this also of the story of King Kelanitissa and Viharadevi - that, with the very offer of the sacrifice of the maiden and its acceptance by the sea-gods, the sea's fury abated and its waves receded, no matter what they had in store for the maiden, who was now their property.[25]

On the other hand a discrepancy with a more positive relevance to the Sri Lankan story's parallelism with the myth exists in the manner in which the repective kings, the Ethiopian Cepheus and the Sinhalese Kelanitissa, put out their daughters to be taken by the sea. For, in our island's story Kelanitissa does not chain his daughter to a crag or stake in the sea, as Cepheus in this Greek myth did his daughter, for the sea-deities to take their sacrifice in whatever way they desired. Instead, he does so in the manner of the king of a different Greek myth, yet one which belongs to the Perseus saga and involves the same hero. And this is none other than the myth of Danae, the fore-part of which had already been exploited by the *Mahavamsa* for the story of Ummadacitta, and which we have already treated in our article, of which this present one is the sequel. In other words, sub-motif 'b' of our Princess-in-the-Boat motif emulates closely the fate of Danae following her father, Acrisius' discovery that, notwithstanding his bronze tower, Danae had become pregnant and borne a son - a son, at whose hands he was fated to die.

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23. For Sophocles' play, see Eratosth. *Kataster.* 16 (Westermann Mythogr. p. 250) Κασσιέπεια and *ibid.* 39 Κῆτος. See also A.C. Pearson *The Fragments of Sophocles* vol. I, Cambridge (1917) p. 78-86. For Euripides' play, see F.G. Wagner *Poet. Trag. Gr. Fr.* vol. II, Vratislavia (1844) p. 56. Perseus' rescue of Andromeda in this play is parodied by Aristophanes in his *Thesmophoriazusae* (990 f.).

24. Eratosth. *op.cit.* 17 and 39.

25. With the offer of the girl to the sea, says the *Saddharm.* (*loc.cit.*), the gods becalmed the waters (එතද දේවතාවෝ ඵුලඳ උප්පාතික නොතළහ.)

For, it will be remembered that when King Panduvasudeva found that a man (Dīghagāmani) had got to Citta in her එක් වැඩී ගේ and that she had conceived by him, he did not follow Acrisius and set her afloat on the sea like Danae, but (leaving such action to be made use of by King Kelanitissa, as it were, for his daughter) tamely gave Citta in marriage to the adulterer, saying, "He too must be received among us; let us give her (in marriage) to him" (*posiyo so pi amhehi, dema tasseva taṃ*).[26] The only precaution the sons took - and this they might have adopted from the first then - was to declare that, if it was a son that was born to her, they would kill him. It is a son that is born - but from here on the *Mahavamsa* story deviates from the Greek, except that in his own way the son fulfils the prophesy.

To pick up the thread of the Greek myth of Danae, however, we may turn again to Apollodorus.[27] For he continues:

> When Acrisius afterwards learned that she had got a child, Perseus, he would not believe that she had been seduced by Zeus, and putting his daughter with the child in a chest he cast it into the sea. The chest was washed ashore on Seriphus, and Dictys took up the boy and reared him. Polydectes, brother of Dictys, was then king of Seriphus, and fell in love with Danae .....

According to Apollodorus, Polydectes did not succeed in his attempt to marry Danae and harassed her until Perseus, returning from his adventures with the head of the Gorgon Medusa, flashed it at him and turned him to stone. (This is the theme of Euripides' tragedy, the *Dictys*.)[28] But equally popular is the version reflected in Hyginus,[29] which says quite definitely that, when Dictys found Danae with her infant son in the chest, he took her to King Polydectes, "who married her" (*qui eam in coniugio habuit*), sending Perseus to be brought up in the temple of Athena.

It is obvious that Vihāradēvi parallels Danae in that she was not only set adrift on the sea by the king, her father, but also (as I shall show) not intended to escape. And yet she is more

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26. *Mhv*. ix. 20; see also 21.

27. ii. 4 1-2.

28. Wagner *op.cit*. p. 164 - 173 for the fragments and commentary.

29. Fable 63.

akin to Andromeda in the role in which she is thus put out to sea - which shows the surprising ingenuity of the Sri Lankan chronicler (also found in the Jataka composers) in the rehandling of familiar motifs in a novel manner, including transposition. For, like Andromeda, Viharadevi is a sacrifical victim offered to the sea-deities as recompence for an injury offered them, which had made them inundate the land. It was for them, not for chance finders of the girl, that the inscription *rajadhita* ("the king's daughter") was affixed to her vessel.[30] Emphasis is placed in the *Mahavamsa* not only on her beauty (*surupinim*) but also on her purity (*suddham*) and later works go on to elaborate on the decking of her for the purpose. Nor have they any hesitation in describing her as a "sacrifical offering to the gods of the sea" (සමුදු දේවතාවන්ට බිලිනම් යයි කියා)[32] and again, as "the princess offered as a sacrifice to the sea" (මුදට බිලි දුන් කුමරිය)[33] etc. Thus, if she was incarcerated in her vessel (as I shall show she was) she was not unlike Danae, who was similarly treated, in so far as both were meant to die; but in so far as she was meant to die as a sacrifical victim, her incarceration is not incomparable to the chaining of Andromeda to a rock or stake for the sea-deities to take their offering.

As mentioned earlier on, it was quite the thing to expect that fishermen saw the vessel in which Viharadevi had drifted to Rohana and pulled it ashore. This detail did not appear in the *Mahavamsa*, but nearly all the later accounts of the story, including the නිදාන කථාව of the *Thelakataha Gatha* refer to them as *dramatis personae* of the episode. However, the parallel is not immediately evident with the Greek myth of Danae until one appreciates the meaning of the name of the man who invariably finds the larnax, in which Danae and Perseus had been carried to Seriphus, Dictys. For *diktuon* (δίκτυον) in the Greek means no less than a "fishing-net"; and when Dictys is found by the sea, drawing things from it, there is reason to believe that his name reflected his profession - a fisherman, who caught fish by the cast of his net. There is no need to labour the point, however, since Pherecydes of Athens, who is our earliest source for the story of Danae, says that Dictys was fishing with

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30. *Mhv.* xxii. 21.

31. *Mhv.* xxii. 20.

32. *Saddharm: loc.cit.*

33. *Rjv. loc.cit.*

his net when he drew them in (αὐτους ἐξέλκει Δίκτυς....διχτυωι ἁλιεύων), unmistakably punning on the man's name.[34] On the other hand, Hyginus, who explicitly calls Dictys a fisherman (*piscator*) simply says he found (*invenisset*) the chest with them inside, when it was carried ashore (*delata*) at Seriphus. A lost satyr-play of Aeschylus, the *Dictyoulkoi* ("net-haulers") i.e. *Fishermen*,[36] apparently dealt with the fishing of the chest from the sea and may have, quite appropriately then, had as its chorus a group of fishermen.

Two tragedies are attributed to Sophocles, the *Akrisios* and the *Danae*, which treat of the mythology involving these two characters.[37] Jacobs identified the *Akrisios* with the *Danae*, taking it to be an alternative title, and Weckler tended to agree with him, though he thought the dramatist may have reused the material for the production of a satyr play as well. Euripides also had his *Danae*, which was more famous than that of Sophocles, and of which more extensive fragments survive.[38] Brunck considered Sophocles' *Akrisios* the same as his *Larissaei* and that its subject was the accidental killing of Acrisius by Perseus with the throw of his discus. But Pearson tends to agree with Jacobs that the surviving fragments of the *Akrisios* (especially 64 and 65) are more suitable to the story of Danae.[39]

If this is right, Sophocles' *Akrisios/Danae* treated the story up to the point when Acrisius discovered the birth of Perseus and

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34. *apud* Schol. Apoll. Rhod. iv. 1091.

35. *loc.cit.*

36 Wagner *op.cit.* p. 25-26. Wagner is uncertain what the plot of this play could have been. But see Peter Levi (tr. *Pausanias: Guide to Greece* Penguin ed. vol. I (1971) p. 166 n. 94): "The fragments of Aeschylos's satyr play *Diktyoulkoi* are about the box being fished up".

37. On the plot and fragments of these plays see Pearson *op.cit.* p. 38-46 (for the *Akrisios*) and p. 115-117 (for the *Danae*).

38. Wagner *op.cit.* vol. II, p. 154-164.

39. *op.cit.* p. 38. The review of the views of the authorities cited here is from Pearson.

sent mother and child adrift on the Aegean in the chest.

The sufferings which Danae endured upon the sea through her father's cruelty (οἷα δὲ καὶ Δανάη πόντιῳ ἔνι πήματ' ἀνέτλη ,/ πατρὸς ἀτασθαλίῃσι)[40] touched the hearts of many a poet. One of the longest fragments of Simonides (c. 556-468 c.) is her beautiful lament as she lay in her vessel, cuddling the infant Perseus to her breast, while the winds wafted it over seas in the gloom of night. This fragment is the earliest reference to the vessel in which Danae floated as a *larnax*.

Ὅτε λάρνακι κειτ' ἐν δαιδαλέᾳ
ἄνεμος τέ μιν πνέῳ ἐφορεῖ
κινηθεῖσά τε λίμνα,
δεῖμα· προσεῖρπε τοτ' οὐκ ἀδιάντοισι παρειαῖς
ἀμφί τε Περσεῖ βάλεν φίλαν χέιρ' εἰπέ τ' "ὤ τόκος
οἷον ἔχω πόνον:
σὺ δ' ἀωτεῖς· γαλαθηνῷ τ'
ἤτορι κνώσσεις ἐν ἀτερπεῖ
δούρατι χαλκεογόμφῳ
νυκτὶ ἀλαμπεῖ κυανέῳ τε δνοφῳ ταθείς.

Pherecydes,[42] and afterwards Apollodorus,[43] who followed him, also call the vessel a λάρναξ. It is again a λάρναξ which is the vessel in which Apollonius Rhodius tells us Hypsipyle, queen of the Lemnian women, had floated her father, Thoas, in what could well be a story made by the inversion of the roles of Acrisius and Danae.[44]

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40. Apoll. Rhod. iv. 1091-1092.

41. See *Oxford Book of Greek Verse* p. 197, poem 206.

42. *loc.cit.*

43. *loc.cit.*

44. i. 620-626.

λάρνακι δ' εν κοίλῃ μιν ὑπερθ' ἅλὸς ἦκε φερεσθαι
αἴ κε φυγῃ.

The nature of this vessel gives us our best piece of evidence, and the most interesting at that, of the adaptation of the detail of the floating of Viharadevi from the Greek myth of Danae. For, if we allow for the degree of variation resulting from localization, if not also from the desire to disguise the adaptation - as we have already seen in the substitution, for instance, of an *ekatthambha pasada* and a *cakka (cakkrayudha?)* for the tower of Danae and the discus of Perseus respectively in the Princess-in-the-Tower motif)[45] the *sovannukhaliya*, in which Viharadevi was put to sea in our *Mahavamsa* story is in design and effect no different from the λάρναξ of Danae.

Simonides describes the λάρναξ as a contraption made of planks fitted together with bolts (δούρατι χαλκεογόμφῳ).[46] Apollonius simply calls it 'hollow' (κοίλῃ).[47] But this is no help against those who have carelessly conceived of the vessel as an open boat of sorts - even if we must reprimand ourselves too then of talking loosely of a princess in a *boat*.

Λάρναξ is used of the ark or cradle in which children were generally exposed in Greece - though such a thing would hardly have sufficed for putting mother, as well as child, to sea. On the other hand the word is used of a coffer or chest used for keeping household provisions; and it must have been in such an one that Deucalion embarked with his wife, Pyrrha, when the flood occurred in which they alone were saved.[48] An extremely exciting possibility comes up with the word in the sense of a funerary urn, in which the bones of the dead were placed for burial, for then it

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45. See my 'Of Perseus and Pandukabhaya', esp. p. 45-51 and 51-53.

46. *loc.cit.*

47. *loc.cit.*

48. Plut. ii. 968 F. Luc. Syr. D.12, Apollod. *Bibl.* i.7.2. (cf. *Anth.P.* i. 62). Apollodorus (*loc.cit*) writes, "Deucalion by the advice of Prometheus constructed a chest (λάρνακα) and having stored it with provisions he embarked in it with Pyrrha". Hyginus *loc.cit.* translates λάρναξ as Lt. *arca*, which again means a chest or box for keeping things.

would not only enhance Acrisius' action in depositing his daughter and grandson in such a thing,but might imply also that it was an earthenware vessel. For, as we shall see, it was in a large vessel, usually made of clay, a pot, that Viharadevi was herself set adrift on the ocean. And with Homer talking of a gold one in which the bones of Hector were laid (καὶ τά γε (ὀστέα) χρυσείην ἐς λάρνακα θῆκαν ἑλόντες)[49] indeed example of *sovannukkhaliya!*

Two sorts of evidence vitiate against the conception of the *larnax* of Danae as an *urna*, even a funerary urn. The first of these is the evidence that the *larnax* used for the bones of the Athenians, who were the first to die in the Peloponnesian War, were made of wood - to be precise, cypress wood (λάρνακας κυπαρισσίνας) and each of them large enough to hold the bones of the members of a single tribe, who had died.[50] The second are the pictorial representations of the λάρναξ in vase-paintings of the scenes from the myth, which show beyond doubt that what the Greeks conceived of the vessel in which Danae was set adrift on the waters of the Aegean sea was a box, not a pot.

Notable among these is a red-figure krater from Caere, the work of the 'Foundry Painter', or maybe the 'Triptolemus Painter', but in any case datable to between 490 and 470 B.C.[51] One of its panels (Plate 1a) shows Danae, seated in profile on an ornate couch, her feet on a footstool, and looking up at the stream of gold which descends from above onto her lap. Satchel and hand-mirror hanging on the wall show she is in her boudoir - but there is nothing to indicate this is in a tower. It is the reverse panel (Plate 1b) that is of relevance to the present study, however. For it shows a

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49. xxiv. 795.

50. Thuc. ii. 34.

51. In the Hermitage Museum. Stephani *Vasensamml. St. Petersburg* ii. p. 281 f. (no. 1723). See, among others, J.E. Harrison and D.S. Maccoll *Greek Vase Paintings* London (1894) p. 25, pl. 34, 1 and 2. E. Gerhard *Danae ein griechischen Vasenbild* Berlin (1854) p. 1-10. See also P. Hartwig *Die Griechischen Meisterschalen der Bluthezeit des strengen rothfigurigen Stiles* Berlin (1893) p. 395 f. J.D. Beazley *Attic Red-figure Vases in American Museums* Cambr. Mass. (1918) p. 94, and Hoppin *Red-figure Vases* i. p. 485 f. no. 17. See also Beazley *Attische Vasenmaler des rotfigurigen Stils* Tübingen (1925) p. 152 f. no. 14, p. 186. Since Danae's feet are not visible below the chest in 1b, it is perhaps suggested she is inside it already.

carpenter with a bow-drill (there is a mallet at his feet) working intently on a *larnax* - here obviously a chest, wider at the top than the bottom and having imitation lion's feet - while opposite him stands Acrisius, right hand outstretched imperiously. On the further side of the chest stands Danae, looking lovingly at an infant Perseus, whom she holds in left arm. Stars spangle the side of the chest - perhaps a stylization of the glint of gold plating. Two other red-figure paintings, one on a *stamnos*, also from Caere (Fig. 1),[52] the other on a *hydria* now at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (Plate 2)[53] show the *larnax* no differently, though Acrisius now stands behind the carpenter, and it is a nurse, who, facing them on the opposite side of the chest, carries the infant Perseus.

This unique use of a *larnax* to float the princess of the Greek myth is matched in the *Mahavamsa* by the equally unique use of a pot - *ukkhaliya*, which, considering this august role it was to play here in a sacrifice to the gods, is made of gold (*sovanna; Vamsat: suvannamayaukkhaliya*). This is carelessly rendered a boat (මරැව) by the author of the *Rajavaliya*,[54] but both *Thupavamsa*[55] and *Saddharmalankaraya*[56] (perhaps other works as well) rightly translate it as ඔබ a cooking-pot - an inordinately large one, no doubt (මඟ, according to the latter), if it was to hold a princess in it.

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52. At the Hermitage. Stephani *op.cit.* ii. 139 f, no. 1357.

53. *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* Boston (1914) xii. 6 fig. See Beazley *Attic Red-figured Vases...* p. 111. It is attributed to the Painter of the Munich Amphora, 2303. Also datable to 490-480 B.C. The nurse carrying the infant Perseus here cannot be the one who was lodged in the tower with Danae; Acrisius killed her (see n. 4 above).

54. *loc.cit.*

55. *loc.cit.*

56. *loc.cit.*

For some time I kept wondering at the nature of this strange vessel - and perhaps anyone would, who had disabused his mind of the notion that it was some kind of boat as the *Rajavaliya* author saw it. No such vessel put to such use as this is to be encountered in the Jātakas and other such literature, from where it could have been adopted by the chronicle's tradition. Considering that it replaced an equally curious vessel in Greek story, I therefore turned - or rather, returned, to the mythology and art of Greece - and there discovered the prototype of Kelanitissa's *sovannukkhaliya*. You will find it in the golden goblet (χρύσεον δέπας) in which the Sun-god, Helios, crossed the ocean every night, sailing from west to east to rise again each morning in the east. It is golden, it merits the Pali term *ukkhaliya*, and it rides upon the waters of the ocean. Apollodorus, following Pherecydes as he did in the story of Danae, tells of how Helios lent Hercules this golden goblet and how the hero, in his quest of the kine of Geryon, rode in it over the seas to Erythia.[57] Pherecydes apparently added that when Hercules was on the open sea, Oceanos, to make trial of him, caused the goblet to heave wildly on the waves. But the hero threatened to shoot him with his bow, whereupon the god of the sea became afraid and bade him give over.[58] An interesting red-figure painting from a *kylix(?)* in the British Museum (Fig. 2) shows the hero, club in one hand, bow in the other, and his head peering from between the jaws of the Nemean lion's skin, riding inside a pot-like δέμας. Wavy lines (to indicate waves), fish and sea-weed on the body of the vessel show that it is afloat on the waters of the sea.[59]

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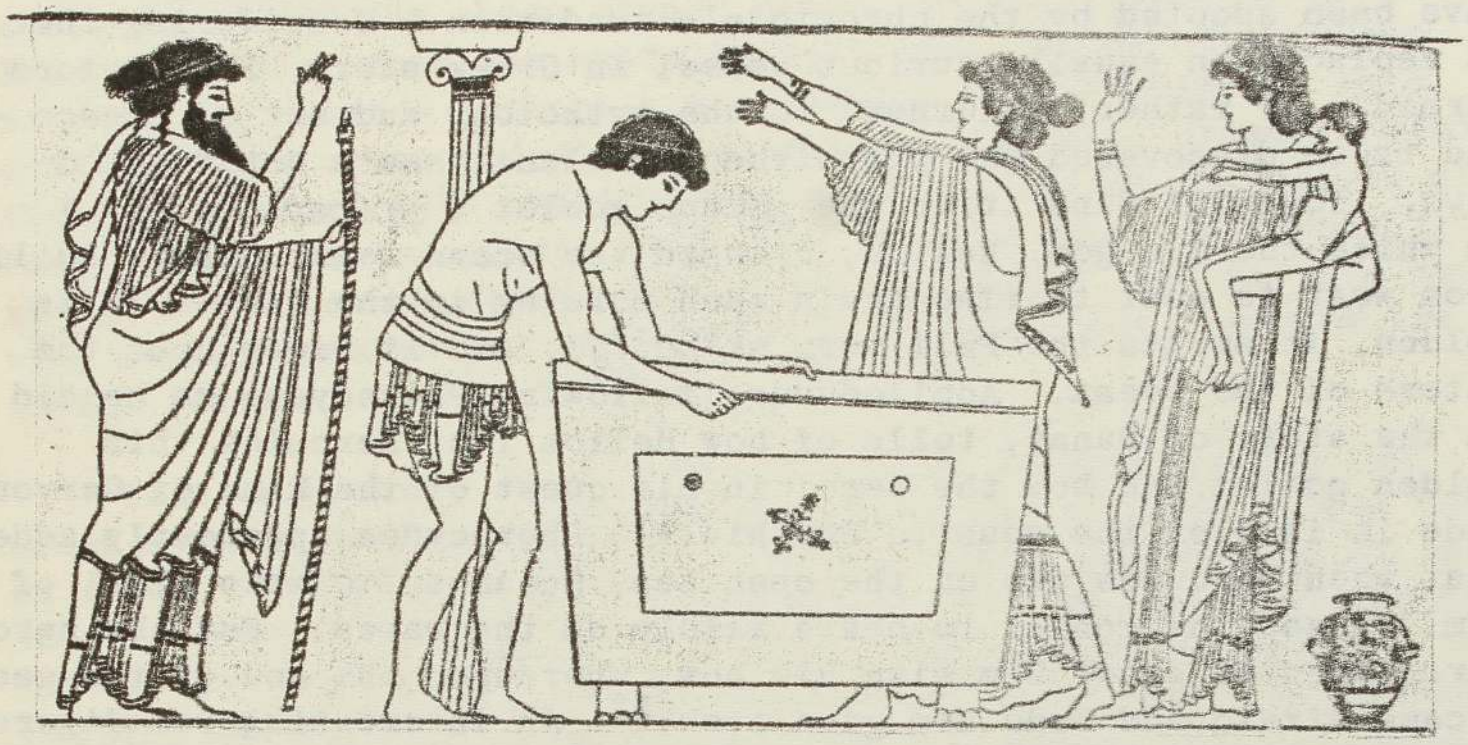
57. *op.cit.* ii. 5. 10. Stesichorus described the Sun embarking in a golden goblet so that he might cross the ocean in the darkness of the night and come to his mother, wife and children. See Athen. xi. 38. p. 468 E; compare *id.* xi. 16, p. 781 D. The voyage of Heracles in the golden goblet was narrated by the early poets, Pisander and Panyasis, in poems, both called *Heraclia*, which had as their theme the exploits of the hero. See Athen. xi. 38, p. 469 D; cf. Macrob. *Saturn*, v. 21 16 and 19.

58. Athen. xi. 39, p. 470 C-D.

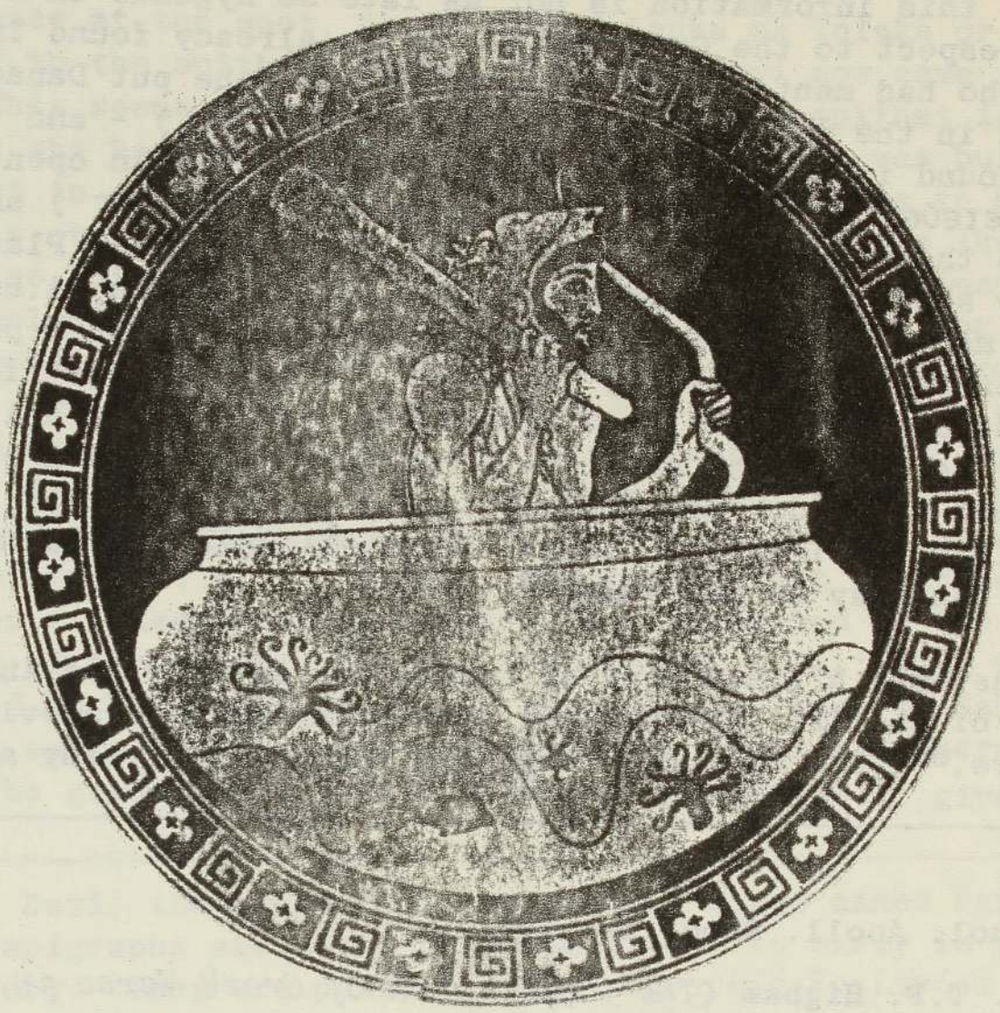
59. The use of huge earthenware jars (πίθοι) for storage of grain, olives, honey, oil etc. was usual in Greece from Minoan and Mycenaean times and more popularly than the use of larnaxes; a considerable number of them survive. Such vessels were associated with jar-burials, even if later used only as grave-markers (e.g. the Dipylon Vase). The practice of burying bones in an urn (after cremation) follows from this. (contd)



(Fig. 1)

It would seem, then, that whoever the author was of the story of the floating of Viharadevi, he has ingeniously replaced the *larnax* of the Danae myth with the *depas* of Helios from the myth of another hero, and one who was even more famous than Perseus. Here then is our *ukkhaliya*, not earthenware but gold (*sovanna*); not of average size but large enough (ඔහා) to hold a human being; and here is it used as a boat upon the ocean - even tossed about a bit, if it please you.

The festival of the *Pithoigia* ("Opening of the jars") at the Anthesteria may look back to this primitive form of burial. Mythology associates certain heroes with such vessels. Glaucus, son of Minos was found dead in a *pithos*, as certain Cretan seals show; Eurystheus hid in one, when Hercules brought the hell-hound, Cerberus, to him; it was in a *pithos*, not a tub, in which the Cynic, Diogenes, lived. One may justly wonder whether the story of the boiling of the thera in the cauldron was, on the basis of punishment and crime, inspired by the floating of the princess in one.



(Fig. 2)

One thing, however, it must concede to the role it now plays as a counterpart of Danae's *larnax*. And this is that it must be covered over, so that its inmate is 'cabined, cribbed and confined' in it, not riding it with the majesty of a Heracles.

The *Rajavaliya*, as we saw, had called the *ukkhaliya* a 'boat' (මරැව). It however makes good its carelessness about the nature of the vessel by supplying this important detail (important to imply that Viharadevi was a prisoner in the vessel), that it was covered by a lid (පියනය), and that this had to be removed (පියනය වයා තිබුවා ඇර.) to rescue the princess within.[60] For this is just the condition in which we find Danae in her *larnax*, with Hyginus quite clearly saying that when it was carried ashore at Seriphus, it had to be "broken open" (*ea effracta*) to get her (and her infant) out.

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60. *loc.cit.*

However, this information is not as late as Hyginus in surfacing with respect to the Greek myth. It is already found in Pherecydes, who had mentioned that Acrisius, when he put Danae and her child in the *larnax*, "shut them in" (κλείσας) - and that when Dictys found it, Danae (from within) "begged him to open it" (ἀνοιξαι ἱκετεύει τὴν λάρνακα); which he did (ἀνοίξας) and found out who they were.[61] The *larnax* in the painting in Plate Ib quite clearly shows a lid, which Acrisius, by his action, A.B. Cook thinks, may be directing the carpenter to close "upon a protesting mother and her unheeding child".[62] In Plate 2 the lid is evidently closed - or rather, not opened, but it is there all the same. It may have been the absolute darkness within such a coffin-like chest that Simonides makes Danae in her lament speak of as "the black gloom and lightless night" (νυκτὶ ἀλαμπεῖ κυανέῳ τε δνοφῳ) in which her babe lay in her arms.[63]

There has been a great deal of conjecture as to where in Rohana, the Seriphos of the Sri Lankan story, the princess Viharadevi was washed ashore.[64] The *Mahavamsa* suggests there was already a vihara

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61. *loc.cit.*

62. *apud* Schol. Apoll. Rhod. iv. 1091.

63. *loc.cit.* T.F. Higham (*The Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation* Oxford (1938) p. 205, poem 206; 'Danae') translates

" ..... wrapt about
With the darkness of our night
And the raven gloom without."

64. The place generally identified as where Viharadevi put ashore is Kirinde, from whence she was conducted to Tissamaharama. Of the popular alternate location, my friend, Upali Elapatha-Katugaha writes in a letter to me, "There is a lovely shrine called Magul Maha Vihara on the Badulla-Baticaloa road and *not* the more well known shrine outside the Yala park. This shrine is close to Lahugala, where we used to go often to see elephants - a real 'elephants paradise', where one could see anything from 50 to 150 elephants feeding on the rich beru grass growing in the tank. It was a Buddhist monk there who first related to us the story of a Magul Poruwa, where Kavantassa married Vihara Maha Devi. It was his view that the princess landed at Mudu Viharaya - a temple close on the coast to Potuwil.... Now. to make your own study more confounding. Two inscriptions were discovered at Magul Maha Viharaya mentioning a Vihara (contd.)

in existence at the spot, be it called Lanka or Tolaka or Kotthala, which led to the epithet 'Vihara' by which Devi now came to be known. This seems more plausible as far as the epithet is concerned than that she had to be kept waiting till a vihara was built on the spot, just to get so-called. Paranavitana, who seems to have rightly had his own doubts about the whole story and thinks the derivation of the epithet itself "can easily be taken as an instance of folk-etymology"[65] conjectures 'Vihara' to be a corruption of the name 'Savera' of a southern princess, who, with the courtesy title of 'Abi', had dedicated a number of caves at the site of an ancient monastery now called Kotadamuhela in the Yala sanctuary. Besides, the name 'Kelanika Tisa' itself has been found (as mentioned earlier on) in a fragmentary Brahmi inscription at an ancient site in the south-eastern part of the island, suggesting that the ruler of Kelani, the father of Kakavannatissa's wife, was connected to the rulers of that part of the country.[66] The *Dhatuvamsa*, a Pali work which has originated in Ruhuna and seeks to restore the image of Kakavannatissa, which has suffered diminution at the hands of the northern chroniclers to the greater glory of his son, Dutthagamani,[67] gives evidence

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Maha Devi, the consort of two brother kings named Parakramabahu; the epigraphs are dated by Paranavitana to early in the 14th century. They are published in *Epigraphia Zeylanica* vol. IV. The vihara was then known as Runu Maha Vihara .... The question is, did the monk who gave me the story know of these epigraphs mentioning a Vihara Maha Devi, and did he assume it was Kavantissa's wife? Or is it a genuine legend common in that part of Ruhuna in association with Mudu Maha Viharaya, where the first Vihara Devi is said to have landed?" I have myself viewed these ruins when District Land Officer of the Batticaloa District in 1957 and learn with pleasure that the sites are now properly protected. According to R.A.L.H. Gunawardena, Professor of History at Peradeniya, these more easterly sites are older than those in the Tissamaharama region.

65. *UCHC* vo. I. pt. II, p. 147 f.

66. *Inscription Register of the Archaeological Dept.* no. 1095.

67. See N.A. Jayawickrema foreword p. x-xiii. This view contradicts Geiger's supposition that the epic of Dutthagamani, which found its way into the *Mhv.* was composed in the south (n.9 above). Malalasekera assigns the *Dhatuvamsa* to the 10th or 11th century (*Pali Literature of Ceylon* p. 256). The Sinhala version, by Kakusandha Thera, according to the consensus of opinion of scholars, may not be earlier than the 13th century.

of further bonds made between these two royal families in order to consolidate the Sinhalese against the foreign invaders. For it says that Kakavannatissa's sister, Somadevi, married Prince Abhaya, the brother of Siva, who was ruling at Kelani, and this Siva may have been the son of Kelanitissa, who, according to the tradition (not found in the *Mahavamsa*) had lost his life in the inundation caused by his heinous crime of killing the holy thera.

What then are we to make of this story of the princess in her *ukkhaliya* except that it is romantic dressing for what may have been no more than a proposed marriage between two royal families, one from west central Sri Lanka, the other from the deep south, with perhaps a view to strengthening Sinhalese resistence against the Tamils, who were then holding large parts of the island. The ruling house at Kelani not only derived from Anuradhapura but may also have been related to the Kataragama *ksatriyas*, who were the neighbours of King Kakavannatissa, so that the marriage between our Danae and Polydectes, if we may call them these, was actually meant to unite the two rival *ksatriya* families of Rohana.

Knowledge of the Danae myth is traceable in Greece to the earliest of Greek writers, Homer and Hesiod themselves. Homer in the *Iliad* makes Zeus confess that his sexual desire for Hera in that context was even greater than it had been for, among others, "Danae of the slim ankles, Acrisius' daughter, who gave birth to Perseus, the greatest hero of his time".

ᾠδ' ὅτε περ Δανάης καλλίσφυρου Ἀκρισιώνης,
ἣ τέκε Περσῆα πάντων ἀριδείκετον ἀνδρῶν.(68)

Hesiod, in the *Aspis* refers to "the horseman, Perseus, child of the lovely-haired Danae"(ἐν δ' ἦν ἠϋκόμου Δανάης τέκος, ἱππότα Περσεύς).(69)

Taken in the context of the familiarity of the myth as shown by succeeding poets and dramatists, it must then have belonged to an antiquity which takes it well beyond the seventh century B.C.

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68. xiv. 319-320.

69. vs. 216.

The Andromeda adventure of Perseus is, however, not of the same antiquity - at least no trace of it is to be found in the literature before the fifth century B.C. - and it may be the attempt to graft this and other other adventures, independently accredited to the hero Perseus, on to the story of his sojourn in Seriphus that has led to the discrepencey in the versions concerning Danae's marriage to Polydectes. However, the Andromeda adventure appears to have been well known by the time of the Persian War (480 B.C.), if we are to rely on Herodotus when he says that the Persian king, Xerxes, claimed descent from Perses, son of Perseus and Andromeda.(70)

What then could one make of the romantic story of Vihāradēvi, reflected for the first time in literature in the *Mahāvamsa*, except that it is an admixture of fact and fiction typical of epic, the fact being drawn from the island's history, the fiction based on the motifs of two alien myths that had found their way to the island some time before the writing of the chronicle and vowen themselves into the texture of the tradition when it was still oral. The same sort of thing was found true of the Vijaya legend(71) and the birth of Pandukabhaya(72) in the researches undertaken by us before this and confirm, in their own way, the likelihood that,consequent on the presence of the Greeks in India in the centuries following the conquest of Alexander, some knowledge of Greek culture had permeated to this island as well.

What is truly exceptional about the Vihāradēvi story, however, is that nothing similar to the two motifs it engages is to be found in any earlier literature, whether Sri Lankan or Indian, and thus that it bespeaks an oral tradition that has found its way to the island, here to become literature for the first time. The story of Citta and the birth of Pandukabhaya gave us reason to think that its author knew something of the original Greek mythology independent of what was reflected of it in the *Ghata Jātaka* and, if you like, the story of the birth of Krishna. The Vijaya legend exhibits more than

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70. vii. 150. Traces of Andromeda's fetters were still being pointed out on the rocks at Joppa in the time of Josephus.

71. 'Greek Elements in the Vijaya Legend' *JRAS(SL)* vol. XXVI (1982) p. 43-66.

72. 'Of Perseus and Pandukabhaya'.

one detail that is strikingly parallel with those found in Odysseus' adventure with Circe and yet was unavailable to it from any of the Jātaka sources so far identified by scholars. But here in the Vihāradevi story we have the ultimate instance of the presence of Greek mythological material in the *Mahāvaṃsa*, of which no part is found in any earlier literary source. This is something for historians to mull over. For my part I would like to credit the intuition of Paranavitana (despite its tragic consequence) that this island in its antiquity had gained its share of acquaintance with the culture of the Classical World that was suddenly accessible to the regions of North-Western India, with which it was then closely associated in kinship and religion.

MERLIN PERIS

CISTERN SLUICES AND PISTON SLUICES

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON TYPES OF SLUICES AND METHODS OF WATER DISTRIBUTION IN PRECOLONIAL SRI LANKA

The achievements of the hydraulic civilization which flourished in Sri Lanka till about the thirteenth century represent some of the major technological feats of premodern man in his constant struggle to gain control over water. The pioneer European engineers, who came to participate in the projects of the colonial administrations to improve irrigation facilities, were the first to draw the attention of modern scholars to the need to examine in detail the technical aspects of the ancient irrigation works they found in the island. From the nineteenth century onwards, several technologists and scholars, Asian as well as European and American, have been attracted by the technological achievements of this civilization to study them and to examine the social and political implications of dependence on what was "high technology" for that early age. After a fairly long period of diminished interest, a renewal of research activity in this largely neglected but significant field of study has been witnessed during the last decade.

In a recent contribution, Professor P.E.E. Fernando has examined an inscriptional record relevant to the study of irrigation technology and water management. His paper titled "Vessagiri Slab-inscription No. 2 of Mahinda IV and the Sluice Cistern" was submitted on 28 August 1985 for publication in *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* and was duly published in Volume 9, the issue for 1983, which was, however, printed and released only in July 1986.[1] The inscription in question was edited by the late D.M. de Z. Wickremasinghe who was one of the pioneers in epigraphic studies in Sri Lanka. The only major publication seen before his time was the work of Eduard Müller which, despite the immense significance of its contribution to the development of epigraphic studies in the island, bristled with errors of decipherment as well as of translation. A fair number of the records published by Wickremasinghe were being edited and translated for the first time. The Vessagiri inscription No. 2 was in fact the

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1. P.E.E. Fernando, "Vessagiri Slab-inscription No. 2 of Mahinda IV and the Sluice Cistern", *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, vol. IX (for 1983), 1986, pp.95-107.

second record written in what may be called the early medieval form of the Sinhala language that Wickremasinghe edited. It appeared in Part I of the first volume of the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* which was published in 1904.[2]

More than two decades ago when the present writer was studying the irrigation rights of monasteries the significance of the Vessagiri record attracted his attention. However, Wickremasinghe's reading and translation of the inscription presented formidable problems. As the present writer commented at that time,

> Wickremasinghe confessed that he could not make out the meaning of the term *a(ya)saṃa(nāra)dolen* in the phrase *näsuvanaṭ a(ya)sama(nāra)dolen tabā denukoṭ*. This is, evidently, one of Wickremasinghe's initial and less careful attempts. He deciphered the passage correctly but faltered in the separation of words. If this is done correctly, the phrase would read, *näsuva naṭ a(ya) sama(na ra) dolen tabā denu koṭ*, 'the income lost should be made good (*samana* probably from *samay*, 'to settle') by the state (lit. royal palace)'.[3]

Several years later, in his study of the type of sluice which he called the cistern sluice, the present writer noted again that the Vessagiri inscription contained valuable information indicating that sluices at reservoirs were clearly fitted with mechanisms which could be opened or closed to enable the regulation of the outflow of water and that markers set up inside the reservoirs were utilised for controlling the quantity of water released from reservoirs.[4]

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2. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. I, pp.29-38.

3. R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, "The History of the Buddhist Saṅgha from the Reign of Sena I to the Invasion of Magha (833-1215 A.D.)", Ph. D. dissertation, University of London, 1965, p. 96, n. 1; R.A.L.H.Gunawardana, *Robe and Plough: Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka*, Tucson: Association of Asian Studies, 1979, p. 73, n. 130. See also *Epigraphia Zeylanica, vol. I, p. 38 n.1.*

4. R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, "Hydraulic Engineering in Ancient Sri Lanka: The Cistern Sluices" in *Senarat Paranavitana Commemoration Volume*, ed. L. Prematilleke *et al.*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978, p. 69.

A period of extended fieldwork in the Karṇṇāṭaka and Tamilnad states of South India during the latter part of the 1970s drew the attention of the present writer to another noteworthy aspect of irrigation technology in precolonial South Asia. One of the objectives of his fieldwork had been to verify whether the cistern sluice was in use outside Sri Lanka. This survey yielded one clear instance of a cistern sluice at a reservoir at Gaṅgaikoṇḍa-cōlapuram. As pointed out in a paper presented before the Seminar for Asian Studies at Peradeniya in April 1984, it was also abundantly clear that a distinct type of sluice had been as widely used in the Karṇṇāṭaka and Tamilnad states as the cistern sluice had been in Sri Lanka.[5] Future researchers may discover a few more cistern sluices in South India, but it is most likely that they would be comparatively rare and would represent instances of the penetration of the influence of Sri Lankan irrigation technology in such times as the period of rule by the Cōla dynasty.

Unlike the cistern sluices of Sri Lanka which were located on the inner face of the embankment of the reservoirs, the inlets and the regulating mechanisms of the South Indian sluice were located on the bed of the reservoir, sometimes at a considerable distance away from the embankment. The sites of the sluice mechanisms are marked by stone columns which supported a series of slabs with apertures through which a cylindrical pole, or a piston, was lowered to close the outlet of the reservoir. Hence the name "piston sluice" suggested by the present writer for these devices. Compared with the cistern sluices of Sri Lanka which handled large quantities of water, the piston sluices were clearly at a certain disadvantage. For example, the largest of all the outlet apertures of piston sluices examined by the present writer was at Ramnad and measured 410.5 square centimetres. This compares poorly with the large sluices of Sri Lankan reservoirs such as Nuvaravāva. The northern Low Level Sluice of this reservoir had outlets measuring 9000 square centimetres in area. Owing to the small water-handling capacity of the piston sluices, it was necessary to have at each South Indian irrigation reservoir a large number of sluices than would be found at a Sri Lankan reservoir of similar proportions. On the other hand, the piston sluice with

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5. R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, "Intersocietal Transfer of Hydraulic Technology in Precolonial South Asia: Some Reflections Based on a Preliminary Investigation," Peradeniya: Seminar for Asian Studies (Discussion Paper No. 14 of 4 April 1984), subsequently published in *Southeast Asian Studies*, Kyoto, vol. XXII, no. 2, 1984, pp.115-142.

its lower water-handling capacity and outlets located at a considerable distance from the embankment minimized the threat to the embankment through seepage of water. The arrangements concerning this type of sluice also meant that surreptitious operation of the sluice was more difficult for those who tried to steal irrigation water. The piston sluice clearly enjoyed wide popularity in South India before the modern sluices were introduced by the British colonial administration. Some piston sluices are still to be seen in use in certain parts of the Tamilnāḍ and Karnāṭaka states.[6]

The experience of examining the remains of several piston sluices in the field directed the present writer's attention to the significance of certain passages in the Jātaka collection of stories and its commentary:

> The Sādhīna Jātaka in the Theravāda collection of stories about the previous incarnations of the Buddha contains a mnemonic verse which includes the phrase *imaṃ nikkhaṃ sukuṇḍalaṃ*.[7] In the Theravāda canon, the term *nikkha* generally denoted "a golden ornament for the breast or neck" or "a ring" while the term *kuṇḍala* was used in the sense of "a ring" or "an earring".[8] However, the *Jātakaṭṭhakatha*, the exegetical work on the mnemonic verses in the Jātaka collection, gives a different explanation ... It is interesting to note that this commentator explains the term *nikkha* as a sluice (*udakanidhamanaṃ*) He further explains *sukuṇḍalaṃ*, the last word in the phrase from the mnemonic verse, as *musala - pavesana - kuṇḍalena samannāgataṃ*.[9] *Musala* is a common term in both Pāli and Sanskrit which denotes "pestle," and the whole phrase may be translated as "fitted with a ring (i.e. circular aperture) through which the pestle was inserted. The description leaves little doubt that the sluice the commentator

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6. The information in this paragraph is based on the paper cited in n. 5.

7. *The Jātaka*, ed. V. Fausböll, London: Pali Text Society, vol. IV, 1963, pp.358-9.

8. T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, London, 1959, pp.220, 353.

9. *The Jātaka*, vol. IV, 1963, pp.358-9.

> had in mind was of the piston-valve type. It is evident that the piston was referred to as "the pestle," and certainly the resemblance would have been striking.[10]

It seems likely that the *Jātakaṭṭakathā* was written by a monk who lived in India and that he was a contemporary of Buddhaghosa.[11] This would explain why references to the South Indian type of sluice were introduced into this work.

The *Jātakaṭṭakathā* was one of the texts preserved and carefully studied in Sri Lanka. Thus the passage in question and the reference to the piston sluice would have been known to at least the community of scholars in the island. The present writer has pointed out that the passage discussed above had received the attention of a Sri Lankan exegetist who lived in about the twelfth century.[12] In this work, "the term *rajamohol*, which literally means 'king's pestle,' was used to denote the piston." Another term, *bisōkoṭu*, which will be discussed at length later on, was used to denote the circular aperture (*kuṇḍala*) of the sluice valve.[13] One might further add that, at such a time when monks as well as merchants, migrants and soldiers travelled from South India to Sri Lanka and in the reverse direction, there would have been quite a few individuals in each area who had seen and developed an awareness of the irrigation devices in use in the other. It is, therefore, not difficult to imagine situations in which irrigation devices such as the piston sluice used in South India were introduced into Sri Lanka. Reflection on this point led to the realization of the significance of the passage in the Vessagiri inscription which had not been previously grasped:

> There is at least one inscription from the tenth century which seems to suggest that the piston sluice was something more than hearsay to Sri Lankans. The phrase *mohol naṅgä* occurs in the Vessagiri inscription where Mahinda IV specifies in detail the arrangements he instituted for the

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10. *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. IV, 1963, pp.358-9.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 132. G.P. Malalasekara was of the opinion that this work should be attributed to Buddhaghosa. *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, London: Pali Text Society, vol. II, 1960, p. 309.

12. *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. XXII, no. 2, p. 133.

13. *Musalappavesana-kuṇḍalena, mohol hena vaḷin hevat* (contd.)

> distribution of water from the Tissa reservoir at Anurādhapura.[14] The phrase is left untranslated by Wickremasinghe who published this inscription. He appears to have assumed that it was a proper name. The term *naňga* occurs in the sense of "raising" in the tenth-century work called *Dhampiyā Aṭuva Gāṭapadaya*.[15] The phrase *mohol naňgä* may be translated as "having raised the piston." ... If this interpretation is correct, it would imply that a piston-sluice was in operation at this particular reservoir in the tenth century.[16]

Professor Fernando prefers to read the word *naňgä* in the phrase *mohol naňgä* as *naňgā*.[17] It is true that the medial *a* occurs in the endings of a number of absolutives to be found in epigraphic records of this period. However, there are also quite a few instances to be seen in these inscriptions where absolutives end in the medial *ä*. Terms like *ikmä* and *genä* may be cited as examples.[18] The estam page of the Vessagiri record reproduced together with Wickremasinghe's edition could have been better, but the present writer's re-examination of it did not provide him with adequate grounds to reject Wickremasinghe's reading as faulty. Further, several verses on the Mirror Wall of the Sīgiri rock were found to contain the term *nägä*, a variant of the absolutive in question.[19] Commenting on the absolutives found in verses at Sigiri, Paranavitana observed that "all or most absolutives which ended in *-a* in the earlier period had also variants with final *-ä*."[20] The information from the graffiti at Sīgiri appears to support Wickremasinghe's reading.

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rajamohol eḷana bisōkoṭuyen. Jātaka Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya, ed. D.E. Heṭṭiāracci and M. Sri Rammaṇḍala, Colombo: University of Ceylon, Pt. II, 1960, p. 94.

14. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. I, p. 33, line 16.

15. *Dhampiyā Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya*, ed. D.B. Jayatilaka, Colombo, 1932, p. 260.

16. *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. XXII, no.2, pp.133-4.

17. Fernando, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

18. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol.I, p.48, lines 40, 42, 44.

19. S. Paranavitana, *Sigiri Graffiti, being Sinhalese Verses of the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, London: Oxford University Press, 1956, vol. II, p. 260 v. 420; p. 299 v. 485; p. 314 v. 511; p. 351 v. 569; p. 412 v. 670.

20. Paranavitana, *Sigiri Graffiti*, vol. I, p. cl.

The second point to which Fernando has devoted detailed attention is perhaps more significant since it pertains to the manner in which the distribution of water in ancient and early medieval reservoirs was regulated. As we shall see later on, a pillar (*pahaṇ*) erected at the mouth or inlet of the sluice which is described as *satara riyanak diyaṭ hinduvu diyakaṭä pahaṇ* appears to have been of crucial significance for these distributory operations. Fernando interprets the words *satara riyanak* or "four *riyan*" in this passage as indicating horizontal distance and not the height of the pillar. The height of the pillar he states, "would have been established by tradition."[21] However, vertical distance is critical in matters regarding the regulation of the distribution of water from reservoirs. It would have been most unusual if the individuals who drew up this record had not specified the height of this stone pillar which was to be so crucial for controlling the outflow of water from this reservoir. The circumstances under which this document was issued make such an omission extremely unlikely.

The inscription records the order given by Mahinda IV on the tenth day of the latter half of Binara, in the ninth year of his reign, as a result of the represertations made to him by a group of monks led by the hierarch of the Mahāvihāra *nikaya*. These representations made at the highest level were about disputes (*viyavul*) concerning the traditional rights of the Isurumenu (Isurumuni) monastery to irrigation water from the Tisa (Tissa) reservoir. The details of the disputes are not given in the inscription, but it is possible, on the basis of the arrangements made by the king, to form an idea of the main aspects of the disputes. One such aspect was related to the competing claims of the lands of the Isurumuni monastery and the fields fed by the Kolomb canal to irrigation water from this reservoir, making it imperative for the king to give a ruling as to which group of water-users should receive priority. According to C.W. Nicholas, the Kolomb canal flowed northwards from the Tissa reservoir.[22] Secondly, the royal edict specifically directs the Keeper of the Royal Park (*maṅgul maha uyankämi*) and other royal officials not to violate the stipulations laid down there, thereby implying that there had been disputes between them and the administrators of the monastery. The royal park named Ran

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21. Fernando, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

22. C.W. Nicholas, "Historical Topography of Ancient and Medieval Ceylon," *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, New Series, vol. VI, p. 158.

Masu Uyana, mentioned in the inscription, was located in close proximity to this reservoir. The level at which representations were made and the fact that the king himself issued the order providing assurances of compensation in case of future losses to the monastery suggest that serious problems had arisen and that a virtual breakdown in the traditional arrangements had taken place. Tradition had to be redefined and bolstered by royal authority.

The edict laid down that the fields of the Isurumuni monastery were to enjoy priority over the lands fed by the Kolomb canal. On the other hand, the monastery was to enjoy parity of status with the royal park. Part of the water released first from the reservoir was diverted to the royal park and its appurtenant structures, but the simultaneous flow of water to a distributory reservoir (*dānavāva*) which would later feed the monastic fields was not to be obstructed (*ḍahak nätivä*) till the top of the stone pillar mentioned above became visible. One may infer that, at the time of the complaint, the flow of water to the reservoirs of the monastery had been interrupted by royal officials who claimed priority for the royal park. It would seem that, according to the new arrangement, such interference was unwarranted. The king specified that the officials could assume that the quantity of water due to the Isurumuni monastery had been released only when the water inside the Tissa reservoir had come down to the level of the top of the pillar. Attention could be directed towards other obligations like releasing water to the Kolomb canal only at this point. It would thus be clear that the level indicated by the top of this stone pillar and, therefore, its height were of critical importance.

In his comments Fernando has suggested that the phrase "four *riyan*" indicated "the limits within which the pillar had to be placed".[23] However, the qualifying term *hinduvu* in the passage in question indicates that this pillar had already been set up in place at the inlet. If the pillar had been so positioned at the mouth of the inlet, the floor of the inlet, which is usually stone-paved, would have served as an indicator of the base-level of that pillar. It will have been clear from our earlier discussion that any variation in the height of this pillar could affect the parties which had been involved in the previous disputes. Even a slight variation in the height of the pillar would affect the irrigability of a fair

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23. My emphasis. Fernando, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

extent of field. Any curtailment of the height of this stone pillar would have brought an increased share of irrigation water for the Isurumuni monastery while the fields dependent on the Kolomb canal would have been adversely affected through the reduction of their share of water. Similarly, any increase in the height of the pillar would have had the opposite effect. It was imperative for a king trying to minimize disputes in the future to clearly indicate the height of this marker. Hence it seems most likely that the phrase "four *riyan*" indicated the height of this pillar. Thus the top of the pillar indicated the level of the reservoir at four *riyan* above the floor of the inlet. This was the crucial point at which the rights of the Isurumuni monastery to water from the reservoir ended.

As Fernando has observed,[24] the water in the reservoir had to be at the same level each season at the commencement of the distribution of water in accordance with the stipulations laid down in this record. If the level of water at commencement did vary, the quantity of water diverted to the fields of the Isurumuni monastery would vary accordingly while that diverted to the Kolomb canal would remain more or less constant. It would amount to underestimating the capability of the king and his officials if we assume that they did not foresee this. However, the inscription does not specify the level of water in the reservoir at the commencement of the distributory operations. In this context it is noteworthy that the Isurumuni monastery received the first turn of water. The silence of the inscription on the level of water at the commencement of distribution is understandable if the king and the officials as well as the representatives of the Isurumuni monastery expected the reservoir to be full at this point. In addition to its own catchment area, the Tissa reservoir depended on a supplementary source of water from the Kalāvāva brought in by the Jayagaṅga canal and, hence, the assumption that the reservoir would be full was not unjustified. Unless there was an exceptionally severe drought when a totally different system of water distribution had to be introduced to meet it, the maximum level of water in the reservoir would be normally determined by the height of the spillway. The monastery would have been entitled to an uninterrupted supply of water from this point till the water in the reservoir fell to the level marked by the top of the stone pillar. The remaining quantity of water which could be discharged from the main sluice amounted to a head of four

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24. Fernando, *op.cit.*, pp.98-9.

riyan or about six feet and, evidently, this was diverted to the Kolomb canal for irrigating fields outside the area where the Isurumuni monastery and its lands were located.

On the basis of the discussion in the preceding paragraphs, it seems justifiable to suggest that the relevant portion of the Isurumuni inscription may be translated as follows:

> Having raised the piston, water should be released without obstruction until the top of the stone (pillar) erected in front of the royal sluice, at its inlet, to (indicate) the water(-level) of four *riyan* (above the floor of the inlet), becomes visible.[25]

The passage helps us to recognise three elements of the sluice at the Tissa reservoir: i. the piston (*mohol*) for the regulation of the outflow of water, ii. the inlet (*diyakaṭa*) and iii. the stone pillar (*pahaṇ*) used as a marker to help regulate the quantity of water released from the reservoir. The information we have on South Indian piston-sluices directs our attention to a fourth element which would have been essential: the receptacle with a circular aperture into which the piston was lowered to close the sluice. It was this fourth element which was referred to as *bisokoṭu* in the twelfth-century text cited earlier.

At this stage, it seems relevant to examine the meanings of two related terms used in our sources with reference to sluices. These are *sorovu* and *bisokoṭu*. Of these, the term *sorovu* (var. *sorov*, *soro*) was used in the sense of "sluice", "conduit" or "orifice". As in the inscription cited above and the Batalagoḍa inscription to be discussed later on, in the *Pujāvaliya*, too, the term *sorovu* is used in the sense of "sluice". The first and the last of these references are to piston-type sluices. While describing the manner in which the recitation of the *paritta* helped to protect the city of Visalā, ridding it of demons, the *Pujavaliya* states:

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25. *mohol naṅgä radsoro pereṭä satara riyanak diyaṭ hinduvū diyakaṭä pahaṇ munduna (pä)nenatāk ḍahak nätivä diya pavatvanu. Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. I, p. 33, lines 17-8.

> At that time the demons began to run out of the four gates like unto a flood of water rushing out of the openings of four great sluices when the pistons (lit. royal pestles) are opened.[26]

In its description of the miracles performed by the Buddha, the *Butasaraṇa* uses the term *sorov* to denote orifices in his body through which he emitted forth fire and water.[27] In some instances the term *sorov* is used as the equivalent of the Pāli *niddhamana*. The latter term has been used to denote sluices.[28] However, it has also been used in certain Pāli texts to denote drains and subterranean passages for the disposal of waste water. It is with this connotation that the term was used in the Sigāla Jātaka, and the story concerns a jackal who gained entry into a city through such a passage.[29] The Kukkura Jātaka describes an instance of hunting dogs gaining access to the palace grounds through a similar passage.[30] Sometimes it was the criminal elements who sought entry into cities through these subterranean passages. The *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* contains a story about thieves who entered a city in this manner to burgle a rich man's house.[31] In both the *Dahamsaraṇa* and

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26. *ekala amanuṣyayō rada mohoḷ hārapu maha soruvu dora satarekin namāgat diya vaturak se satara maha vāsalin piṭatata divannaṭa paṭangat-ha.* *Pūjāvaliya*, ed. Kirirälle Ñānavimala, Colombo: Gunasena, 1965, p. 443.

27. *dakuṇu kan sorovven nāmba tal kaṇda sā giṇikandek nägennaṭa vana. vam kan sorovven nāmba taḷ kaṇda sā diyakaṇdek hennaṭa vana. dakuṇu kan sorovven nāmba tal kaṇda sā diyakaṇdek nägennaṭa vana. vam kan sorovven nāmba taḷ kaṇda sā giṇikaṇdek hennaṭa vana.* *Butasaraṇa*, ed. Labugama Lankānanda, Colombo: Gunasena, 1953, p. 97.

28. See for instance, *Sāratthappakasinī*, ed. Bihalpola Devarakkhita, Colombo, 1914, p. 512.

29. *niddhamanena nagaraṃ pavisitvā.* *The Jātaka*, vol. I, 1962, p. 425.

30. *punadivase raññō ārocayiṃsu: deva niddhamanamukhena sunakhā pavisitvā rathassa cammañca nandiñca khadiṃsuti.* *The Jātaka*, vol. I, 1962, p.175.

31. *corā udaka-niddhamaneneva nagaraṃ pavisitvā ekasmiṃ aḍḍhakule ummaggaṃ bhinditvā.* *The Commentary on the Dhammapada*, ed. H.C. Norman, London: Pali Text Society, vol. II, 1911, p. 37.

the *Pansiyapanas Jātakapota*, the word *sorov* is used again as the Sinhala equivalent of the term *niddhamana* in these contexts.[32] In the *Jātaka Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya*, the term *niddhamana* is explained as "conduit for water".[33] This may indicate the sense in which the term *sorov* was used in the latter instances.

As we have noted earlier,[34] the term *bisōkoṭu* was the equivalent of the Pāli *kuṇḍala* and denoted the receptacle for the piston. The translation of the relevant passage of the Sadhina Jataka as found in the *Pansiyapanas Jātakapota* is somewhat corrupt, but it is clear that the same Sinhala term was used in this context.[35] In the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*, the sluice is described as "fitted with" a *kuṇḍala*.[36] On this analogy, it may be suggested that the term *sorov* denoted the larger unit or the sluice in a general and wide sense while the term *bisōkoṭu* was used to denote one of its structural elements. It is particularly noteworthy that, at the time the *Jātaka Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya* was written, it was an element specific to the piston-type sluice. Though the piston-type sluice would have been utilised primarily for the regulation of irrigation water, it is possible that it was used also in other types of water regulation. As noted earlier, arrangements made at fortified cities for the disposal of waste water created new problems affecting their security. Since subterranean outlets for waste water permitted the surreptitious entry into the city of unwanted elements, it is likely that these conduits were fitted with sluice mechanisms which could be closed for reasons of security. If we were to accept the reading of an inscription found by the citadel of Anuradhapura, it would seem to refer to a piston-sluice being used for such a purpose at

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32. *tava da siṅgāla jātakayehi vṛkṣa devatāva rātriyehi sorovven gamaṭa käṇahilu väda. Dahamsarana*, ed. K. Sri Dharmakirti Dhammananda, Colombo: Granthakara, 1929, p. 124; *deveni davas rajjuruvanṭa kiyanne devayan vahansa sorovven ballō ätulaṭa väda rathayehi sam hā varapaṭa kävāhuyayi kīha. Pansiyapanas Jātakapota*, ed. G.F. Munasiṃha and D.B.M. Abhayavardhana, Colombo: Jinalankara Press, 1909-1921, p. 59.

33. *udaka-niddhamana nam vāri mārgaya yä. Jātaka Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya*, p. 94.

34. See *supra* n. 13.

35. *melpalā tibena bisōkoṭu vārimārgadiya da.* It may be noted that the term *melpalā* occurs in place of the Pali *musalappavesana. Pansiyapanas Jātakapota*, p. 978.

36. *musalappavesana kuṇḍalena samannāgataṃ. The Jātaka*, vol. IV, 1963, pp.358-9.

the Eastern Gate of the citadel.[37]

The term *bisōkoṭu* has also been used to denote elements of structures which are not related to the function of regulating water. In his description of the construction of a *stūpa*, the author of the *Dhātuvaṃsa* states that the pinnacle and the *bisōkoṭuva* were given a coating of lime which made them look strikingly white.[38] Similarly, the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* uses the terms *bisōkoṭuva* and *kärälla* to refer to constituent parts of the roof of the mansion built by the guild-leader Meṇḍaka.[39] In the latter text, the second term, too, seems to denote "spire" or "pinnacle" and, hence, the other term appears to refer to an associated element.[40] Paranavitana expressed doubts as to whether the author of the second text cited above was clearly aware of the architectural terms he was rendering into Sinhala.[41] However, it does seem likely that observers would have noted a similarity between the piston sluices and the upper part of the *stūpas* of early times. As Paranavitana himself pointed out, the term *bisōkoṭuva* was used to refer to the box-like structural element on the summit of the *stūpa* which is called *satarās-koṭuva* in Sinhala and *harmikā* in Sanskrit.

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37. *pädi dora bisōkoṭuvehi*. However, it has to be noted that Godakumbure's readings of the letters *so* and *ve* in the last word are not beyond doubt. Compare the palaeographic form read as *so* with the letter *sa* as it occurs in lines A1, A6 and B1. Certainly the medial *o* is not visible. Similarly, compare what has been read as *ve* with the form which occurs in the word *sīmāvehi* in line C9. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. V, Plate 40; p. 331, lines B9 - C3.

38. *maṅgala mahā cētiyehi bisōkoṭuva da kot kärälla da candrakānti se atidhavala koṭa sunu karmanta da karavuyeya*. *Dhātuvaṃsa*, ed. D.M. Samarasiṃha, Colombo: Ratnākara, 1940, p. 73.

39. *ē maṇḍapayehi ... bisōkoṭuva hā kärälla pabaḷumuvāya*. This is a translation of the following Pāli passage: *tassa upari ... pavāḷamayasikharathūpiyā aheṣuṃ ...* *Saddharmaratnāvaliya*, ed. D.B. Jayatilaka, Colombo: Lankābhinava, p. 779; *The Commentary on the Dhammapada*, vol. III, 1912, p. 364.

40. The word *kärāḷi* occurs as the equivalent of *sikhara*. See *Dhampiyā Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya*, p. 284.

41. S. Paranavitana, *The Stupa in Ceylon*, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon*, vol. V, Colombo: Government Printer, 1946, p. 33.

A striking feature of the ancient *stūpas* was an octagonal pillar called *yupa* which was placed in such a manner that it projected upwards from the *harmika*. Remains of octagonal pillars have been found at the sites of the *stūpas* of the Abhayagiri, Mariccavaṭṭi and Mihintale monasteries.[42] Reliquaries fashioned in the form of *stūpas*, found more recently at Dälivala, Mihintale and Anuradhapura, provide a clear idea about the prominent position of the *yupa* at top of the *stūpa*. A good proportion of builders who worked on the *stūpas* would have had experience in the construction or maintenance of irrigation works and they would have been quick to note the resemblance that the pestle-like piston, poised above its receptacle, bore to the *yupa* which projected from the *harmika*. This would explain the use of the term *bisokotuva* as a synonym for the *satarās-kotuva*. It is possible that, later on, there was a further extension of the meaning of the term to include the base of the pinnacle or spire placed at the summit of roofs for decorative purposes. These instances seem to indicate a situation one would expect in a society where hydraulic structures formed a prominent feature of the landscape: the use of hydraulic terminology even in non-hydraulic contexts.

Professor Fernando has attempted to delve further into the etymology of the term *bisokoṭuva* and, on the basis that its initial element *biso* was derived from the Sanskrit term *abhiṣeka*, suggested that there was a link between this structural element and the ceremony of royal consecration. He believed that this ceremony "would have taken place in close proximity to a sluice-cistern, thus giving rise to the name *bisokoṭuva*."[43] In this context it may be remarked that, though etymological explanations could sometimes be quite useful, they could also be misleading. Any attempt to explain the meaning of a word in a particular historical context has to allow for the dynamic process of the change and expansion of the meanings of words. The contextual meaning, rather than the meaning traced etymologically, appears thus to be the more reliable basis of explanation. The most formidable objection to Fernando's explanation would be that no text

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42. Paranavitana, *op.cit.*, pp.33 - 6.

43. Fernando, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

found in Sri Lanka attests to the ceremony of consecration being held within an irrigation reservoir. The *Vaṃsatthappakāsinī*, the commentary on the *Mahāvaṃsa*, describes in detail the ceremony of consecration, giving even such information as the places from which the clay was obtained to make various vessels necessary for this ritual. This text states that the ceremony was held in a pavilion specially built for the purpose.[44] Being aware of this difficulty, Fernando has suggested that this particular way of performing the ceremony of consecration went out of vogue quite early.[45] However, the commentary on the *Mahāvaṃsa*, which bases itself on the extremely ancient Sinhala commentarial texts preserved up to that time, is clearly presenting a picture of the consecration ceremony at an initial stage of the development of kingship in the island, and it even provides information on the symbols of chiefly power, the ceremonial staffs (*yaṭṭhi*) used by political leaders before the introduction of the ceremony of consecration into Sri Lanka.[46] On the other hand, the term *bisōkoṭuva* occurs for the first time only in the early medieval period of Sri Lankan history and, hence, the possibility that the word came into use only after the introduction of piston-type sluices appears to be quite strong.

The fact that the term *bisōkoṭu* was used to denote one element of the sluice while the term *rajamohol* was used to refer to a complementary element is of special significant and has to be taken into account in any attempt to understand the meanings of the terms. We have already noted that the latter term, which may be literally translated as "king's pestle", denoted the piston of the sluice that evidently bore a remarkable resemblance to a pestle. In the very same text where these two words occur together, the term *koṭu* has been used in the sense of "a receptacle for water".[47] Hence it seems quite appropriate to translate the term *bisōkoṭu* as "queen's receptacle". The use of such terminology to refer to the piston and its receptacle or the valve-housing is strongly suggestive of a

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44. *Vaṃsatthappakāsinī*, ed. G.P. Malalasekara, London: Pali Text Society, Vol. I, 1935, pp. 305-7.

45. Fernando, *op.cit.*, p. 106.

46. *Vaṃsatthappakāsinī*, p. 406.

47. *Jātaka Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya*, ed. D.B. Jayatilaka, Colombo: Lankābhinava, 1942, p. 126.

deliberate attempt to introduce a sexual metaphor and perhaps reflects earthy peasant humour. That such type of humour was not frowned upon in court circles and even in religious contexts in early medieval times is evident from the "elephant lamp" found inside the relic chamber of the Sūtigharacetiya at Dādigama. One may further add that there was perhaps also a more serious and noteworthy significance behind the use of these terms. The movement of the piston in and out of the valve-housing regulated the outflow of irrigation water vital for the fertility of the fields. For the rice-grower, the water they received from the reservoirs was a life-giving fluid. The terminology used for the parts of the sluice may reflect that they conceptualized the operation of the sluice as a royal act of procreation and, in doing so, they were probably drawing on the prevalent ideology which emphasised the association of kingship with fertility.

It will have been evident from the preceding discussion on the term *bisokoṭu* that the piston sluice, which was in widespread use in South India, was known to the Sri Lankans not merely as a description of a device found in the neighbouring subcontinent, but from actual examples in use within the country. The sluices at the Tissa reservoir and the Ätpokuṇa bathing pond described by Fernando appear to have belonged to this category. At the same time, it is particularly important to distinguish this type of sluice from the cistern sluice which was the most popular in Sri Lanka. On the basis of information from the cistern sluice from Gaṅgaikoṇḍa-colapuram which has been remarkably well preserved, it is possible to suggest that, in place of the piston mechanism, some sluices of this type possessed a gantry arrangement with grooves enabling the insertion of two sets of slabs to close the sluice.[48] When the sluice is first opened with the reservoir at its full capacity, the topmost slabs would be removed and, as the level of water in the reservoir receded, the lower sets of slabs would be removed, one by one. If the size of each set of slabs were to be kept small, the operation of this type of regulating mechanism would not have been too cumbersome. The gantry divided the cistern into two parts. Initially, when the topmost slabs are removed, the effect would be to cause the water to cascade down from that part of the cistern which is closer to the water-

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48. *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. XXII, No. 2, 1984, pp. 125-131, 136-8.

face onto the outer part, thereby causing two miniature waterfalls inside the cistern, before flowing into the outlet conduits. This last feature is particularly noteworthy since it enables us to understand the significance of the information to be found in one of our sources.

An inscription discovered near the Batalagoḍa reservoir in the Kurunägala District provides an account of the restoration of this reservoir by a general who lived in the last phase of the Polonnaruva kingdom. This general who was called Lak Vijaya Ābo Siṅgu dated his record in the fifth regnal year of Kalyāṇavati, i.e. A.D. 1206, and stated that the reservoir had been breached in three places at the time he began its restoration. He further recorded that the *häli soro* had been destroyed. The general repaired the breaches, restored the *häli soro* and, since one sluice was inadequate, constructed a new second sluice which he named after himself.[49] Paranavitana who edited this inscription assumed that the term *häli soro* denoted "canals and sluice".[50] However, the usual term for canal was *äla*. Further, in the absence of a conjunctive between *häli* and *soro*, it would seem most likely that the first element qualifies the second and that the entire term denotes a specific type of sluice. It is particularly interesting to note that one of the most common meanings of *häli* was "cascade" or "waterfall".[51] And, if we accept this meaning, it would seem that the term *hälisoro* would be an apt description of the type of cistern sluice mentioned above. This descriptive term enables one to clearly distinguish this type of sluice from the piston sluice. Thus the sluice at the Batalagoḍa reservoir appears to have been a cistern sluice.

The cistern sluice and the piston sluice enabled the irrigation officials to carefully regulate the flow of water from the larger reservoirs, and the use of calibrated pillars set up inside

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49. *me ... väva tun kaḍekin kaḍā hälisoro sun[bun]vä nopavat [vä] tubu kalhi me ba ... hälisoro lavā pavatvā perāmä devāhi sorovak näti heyin boho ket[vat no]pavat se däkä svabuddhīn [soro]bim balā sudusu bimak däkä etänhi taman namin adhikārasorovaya yana sorovak lavā. Epigraphia Zeylanica*, vol. IV, p. 79, lines 5-9.

50. *ibid.*, p. 81.

51. Välivitiyē Sorata, *Śrī Sumaṅgala Śabdakōśaya*, Colombo: Anula Press, 1956, vol. II, p. 1121.

the reservoirs helped them to attain a certain measure of exactitude in the performance of this task. Evidently, the water requirements of an extensive area of fields were released when the sluices of a large reservoir were opened. A conservative estimate of the extent of the fields of the Isurumuni monastery for which water was released first would be about five hundred and seventy-seven acres.[52] The quantity of water needed for the cultivation of rice in these fields was stored in a smaller "distributory reservoir" from which the fields were fed as and when required. Such arrangements for releasing water from large reservoirs made it possible to decide more precisely on the quantity of water which would be allocated to each main tract of fields. Though one could suggest that storage of water in reservoirs of lower depth would have led to greater losses through evaporation, there were other economies involved in this type of distributory operation. Transport losses due to seepage were extremely high in ancient distributory systems which depended on unpaved canals, and such losses could be minimized by limiting the number of occasions on which the sluices of large reservoirs would be opened. A socially significant aspect of this system of water distribution was that the royal officials in charge of the larger reservoirs would be dealing primarily with such categories of persons as administrators of monasteries and owners of canals and smaller reservoirs who comprised an intermediate level of society rather than with the individual peasant as water-user. Except in the remoter villages where communal rights to irrigation works survived, the peasants were dependent on these intermediate groups for their supply of irrigation water and it was to these groups that they made the payments (*udakabhaga*, *dakabaka*, *dakapati*) in return.[53] While the lay intermediaries had to pay in turn for the water they received from the larger irrigation works owned by the king, the monasteries were generally exempt from such payments. These privileges that most monasteries enjoyed which ensured for them free access to sources of irrigation water were among the main factors behind the spectacular growth of monastic property during the period when hydraulic civilization flourished in Sri Lanka.

R.A.L.H. GUNAWARDANA

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52. The fields were 144 *kiri* and 1 *paya* in extent. *Epigraphiz Zeylanica*, vol. I, p.33, lines 15-6. For a discussion on the term *kiri*, see Gunawardana, *Robe and Plough*, p. 54.

53. For the significance of these terms, see L.S. Perera, "Proprietary and Tenurial Rights in Ancient Ceylon," *The Ceylon Journal of Hustorical and Social Studies*, vol. II, No. I, 1959, pp.1-36.

NEW LIGHT ON EARLY SINHALESE STŪPA ARCHITECTURE

Since the publication of S. Paranavitana's classic work on the *stupa* in Sri Lanka almost four decades ago,[1] few scholars have made any significant contribution to the study of this important aspect of ancient Buddhist monastic architecture. There is no doubt that Paranavitana had at his disposal all archaeological, historical and literary evidences that were available at the time, yet his attempt cannot claim, as he himself admits to be an exhaustive study, for he was constrained to work within certain limitations. For example, he had no opportunity to examine the interior of a ruined *stupa* of the early period. Most of the ruined *stupas* of ancient Sri Lanka, almost all of which have now been restored, had been seriously damaged by treasure-hunters. Earlier reconstruction and restoration work had also resulted in many of the important *stupas* growing in size and changing in shape. In fact there has not been a single *stupa* belonging to the early period to be seen in its original state. They have been either half destroyed or completely renovated. Paranavitana could, therefore, only conjecture about certain important details pertaining to *stupa* architecture, such as the nature and the function of the central pillar standing erect in the middle of a *stupa* (which he calls *yupa* following the Indian tradition), the location of the reliquary and the exact items deposited in it, and the nature of the early *chatradanda* which was later replaced by the spire.

The next important achievement in the annals of archaeological research on the *stupa* in Sri Lanka is the excavation of Kotavehera during the period 1947-1960. These excavations brought to light much valuable information relating to the construction of relic chambers[2]. But since Kotavehera belongs to a much later period (i.e., 12th century A.D.) than that covered by the present paper, the findings at Kotavehera are of not much help to us.

The answers to a number of questions and doubts raised by Paranavitana in his work can now be gleaned from a unique work on ancient Buddhist monastic architecture and iconography discovered some years ago and now kept in the National Archives. This pre-

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1. S. Paranavitana, *Stupa in Ceylon*, Colombo (1946).

2. *See* C.E. Godakumbura, *The Kotavehera at Dedigama*, Colombo (1969).

cious manuscript of a Sanskrit text in *śloka* metre written most probably in Sri Lanka is ascribed to Bodhisattva Mañjuśri and evidently has Mahayana associations.[3] The text is generally corrupt, sometimes hopelessly, but it furnishes a wealth of information regarding the construction of ancient monasteries together with their various edifices and provides more detailed information on Buddhist iconography and iconometry than the *Bimbamana* (popularly called *Śariputra*) itself.[4]

This work entitled *Vastuvidyāśastra* in the colophons of two of its first three chapters and *Citrakarmaśastra* in the remaining fourteen, devotes a whole chapter to *stupa* architecture. Despite the fact that the relevant section of the text is very corrupt, it has been possible to extract certain information on the subject, which has not so far come to light through any other source.

The object of the present paper is to inquire to what extent the description given in the *Vastuvidyāśastra* agrees with the actual practice as evident from the architectural remains of the ancient *stupas* and from the findings of archaeological excavations carried out by the Department of Archaeology of Sri Lanka. The fact that the work is written in Sanskirt and bears certain affinities with the extant Hindu *śilpa* texts in style and treatment has led Ruelius to believe that it is a product of South India,[5] but textual evidence heavily favours a Sri Lankan origin. While its closeness to South Indian *śilpa* texts, particularly the *Mayamata*

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3. This work is now being edited for the first time by the present writer, along with an English translation, and will be published shortly.

4. This work (in Sanskrit verse) was first published in Sinhalese characters, along with a commentary in Sinhala, by M. Sirivimala Thera. Subsequently Hans Ruelius prepared a critical edition of *Śariputra* and *Ālekhyalakṣaṇa* along with a German translation, for his Ph.D. degree of the University of Göttingen (*Śariputra and Ālekhyalankṣaṇa: Zwei Texte zur Proportionslehre in der indischen and ceylonesischen Kunst*, Göttingen, (1974).

5. Hans Ruelius, *"Mañjuśrībhāṣita-citrakarma-śāstra: a Mahayanistic Śilpaśāstra from Sri Lanka." Buddhism in Ceylon and Studies on Religious Syncretism in Buddhist Countries*, ed. By Heinz Bechert, (1978) p. 98.

and the *Kāśyapaśilpa*, written in the 10th and 11th centuries A.D. respectively, prompts us to place it about the same time or even a little later, the antiquity of the type of edifice envisaged therein suggests a much earlier date. It may be mentioned at the very outset that our text regularly uses the term *caitya* for the edifice and the terms *stupa* and *stupika* are used only in connexion with the crowning member of a structure shaped like a stupa, or the relic-casket or its container in the case of a *caitya*. Although this cannot be used as an argument for assigning a very early date to the work the architectural type of *caitya* described therein undoubtedly belongs to a date several centuries earlier than the Polonnaruva period. It should, however, be mentioned that the text concerns itself mainly with the interior of the monument and has shown scant regard for its external architectural details. The terraced base (Sk. *medhi;* Sinh. *pēsava*), the dome (Sk. *aṇḍa, udara*) and the square structure on the flattened top of the dome (Sk. *harmika;* Sinh. *sivuraskoṭuva*) the three most striking features of a *stupa*, are not discussed at all. Instead it gives a detailed account of the ceremonies connected with the different stages in the construction of the edifice and the arrangement of the inner chambers (Sk. *garbhagara*). The most startling revelation, however, is its mention of *gajastambha* or *gajapadaka*, a wooden column that stood upright through the centre of the dome in the earliest *stupas*. This enigmatic object, known as *yupa* in the Indian texts, has been found to be made of stone in all cases without exception discovered so far. It is most probable that the wooden column preceded the stone pillar, and we know for certain that the Mirisavāṭiya Dāgaba, one of the earliest *stupas* (1st century B.C.) built in Sri Lanka, had a *yupa* of stone.[6] There is no doubt that even the Ruvanvälisäya is built round a stone *yupa*.

The text also gives a description of the *chatradaṇḍa* (known as *yaṣṭi* in the Indian texts), the post or shaft which, standing above the *yupa* or *gajastambha*, supported the *chatra* (umbrella or parasol) or the pile of *chatras (chatravali)*, the symbol of dignity and supremacy. The *chatradaṇḍa* discussed in our text is made of wood and this appears to be the earliest practice, which was abandoned in favour of stone *chatradaṇḍas* as early as the Anurādhapura period. Even the *chatras* found in the compound of the Ruvanvälisäya and believed to belong to the miniature votive *stupas* that existed there are made of stone. Paranavitana concludes that the practice of erecting parasols or piles of parasols above the *stupas* was abandoned altogether around the seventh century A.D., and was supplanted by the spire, a more permanent structure serving more or less the same purpose.[7]

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6. S. Paranavitana, *op.cit.*, p. 35, plate VI b.

7. *op.cit.*, p. 39, 44.

The type of *caitya* envisaged in the *Vāstuvidyāśāstra*, however, is not of such huge dimensions as those of Ruvanvälisäya or Abhayagiri Dagaba, but of modest proportions and generally intended to be among the *pañcavasas* associated with a monastery of moderate size. But, considering the fact that even small votive *stupas* in Anuradhapura have *gajastambhas* and *chatradaṇḍas* made of stone, there is no justification for us to assume that a perishable material like wood was used in preference to stone for these two kinds of post of a small *stupa*. There is also no evidence to believe that the practice of using both wood and stone side by side came down to a considerably late period. We cannot, however, expect to find archaeological evidence of the use of wood for the purpose, for, if there were any such cases, they would not have withstood the ravages of time for more than one or two centuries. Moreover, the practice of enshrining the relics in the dome of the *caitya* was still not in vogue. There is, therefore, nothing to prevent us from assuming that the *caitya* described in our text belongs to a type that existed well before the seventh century A.D.

Let us now consider the account given in the *Vāstuvidyāśāstra* and try to relate it, wherever possible, to the actual practice as evident from the existing monuments. The chapter opens with the specifications for the bricks to be used in *caitya* construction. The measurements are given in *aṅgulas* or 1/24 of an ancient cubit (*hasta*). An *aṅgula* may roughly correspond to 1.25 inches. Seven sizes of brick are given. The smallest brick is 8 *aṅgulas* long, and each successive size is one *aṅgula* longer than the preceding one. So the largest brick is fourteen *aṅgulas* long. The width in all cases is half of the length, and the thickness half the width. Some of these lengths and widths substantially agree with the measurements given by Parker.[8] But, as can be seen from Parker's list, the thickness of the actual bricks used for the existing *stupas* was less than half the width.

The Caitya Types

The text goes on to enumerate five types of *caitya*, four of which are among the six types given, according to Parker, in a *śilpa* text called *Vaidyantapota*.[9] But, as there seems to be some lacuna in the

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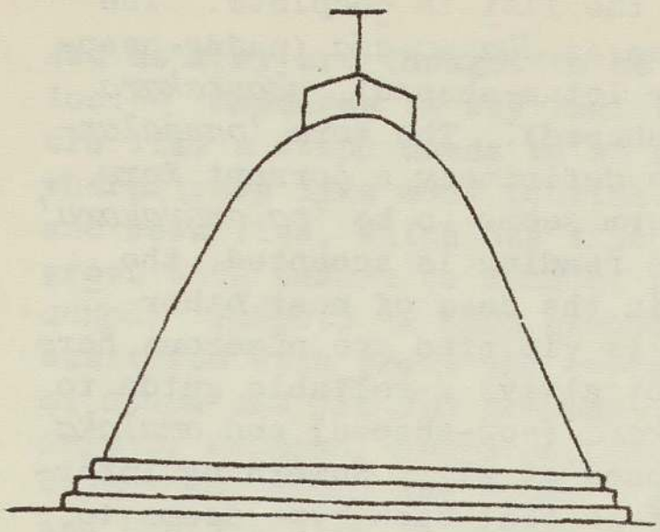
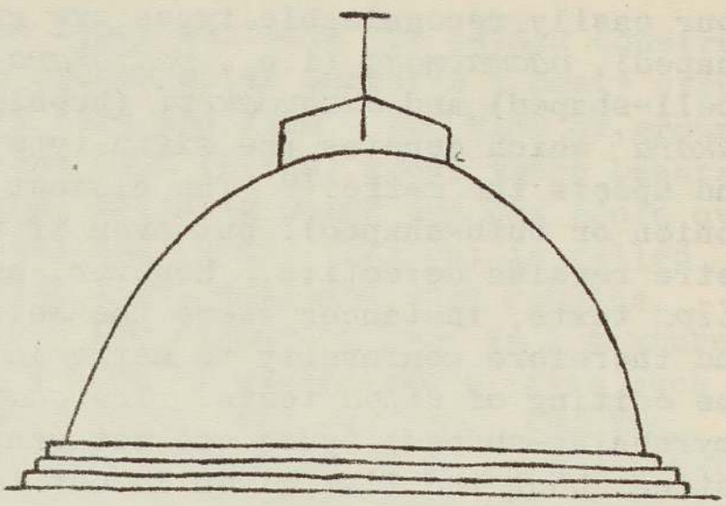
8. H. Parker, *Ancient Ceylon: an account of the Aborigines and of Part of the Early Civilization*, London (1909) p. 214.

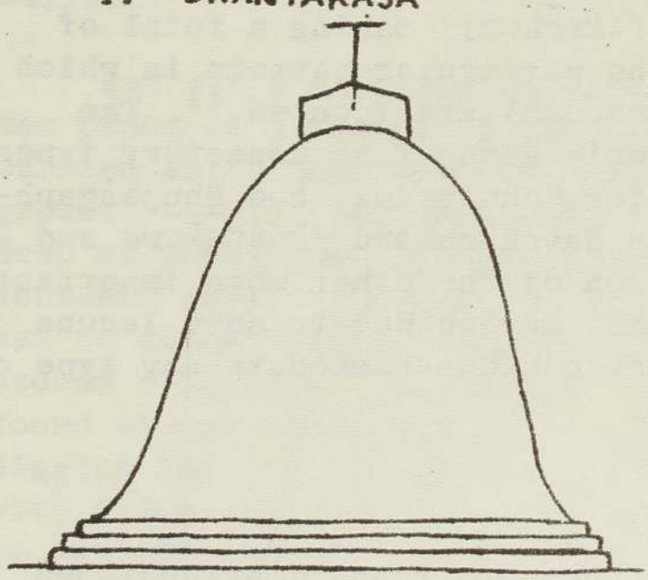
9. *op.cit.*, p. 336.



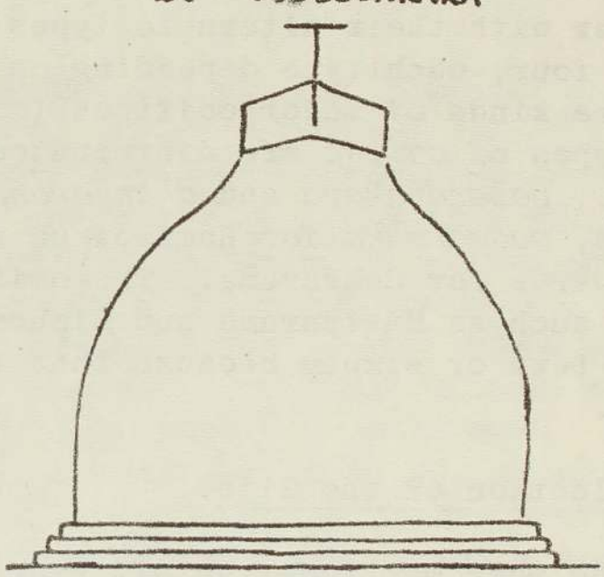
1. DHĀNYARĀŚA



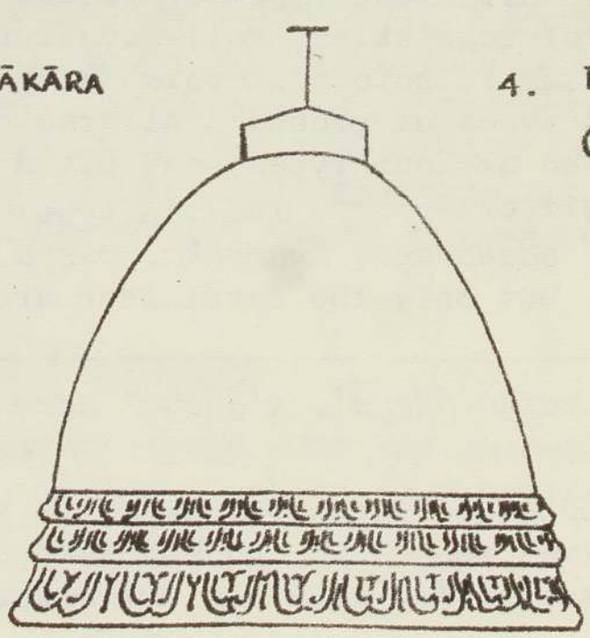
2. BUDBUDĀKĀRA



3. GHAṆṬĀKĀRA



4. PALĀṆḌVĀKĀRA
(HYPOTHETICAL)



5. PADMĀKĀRA

text, we cannot definitely say whether the list is complete. The four easily recognisable types are given as *dhanyarāśa* (paddy-heap-shaped), *padmatmaka* (i.e., *padmākara* or lotus-shaped), *ghaṇṭakara* (bell-shaped) and *budbudakṛti* (bubble-shaped). The term *'paṇḍalaṇḍakara'* which denotes the fifth type is definitely a corrupt form and upsets the metre.[10] The closest term seems to be *'palaṇḍvakara'* (onion or bulb-shaped); but even if the reading is accepted, the metre remains defective. However, as in the case of most other *śilpa* texts, instances where the metre is violated are numerous here, and therefore conformity to metre is not always a reliable guide to the editing of *śilpa* texts. The *ghaṭākara* (pot-shaped) and *amalaka* (myrobalan-shaped) types are not mentioned at all. Something interesting about the list given in our text is that each type seems to have been associated with a particular type, or types of monsatery. The work enumerates and describes in detail twelve types of monastery, together with their alternate types (*vikranta*), making a total of twenty-four, each type depending on the particular pattern in which the five kinds of major edifices (*pañcavasa*) are located.[11] The five types of *caitya* are distributed only among five monastery types, to wit., *palaṇḍvakara* and *dhanyarāśa* for Gokularama, and Bhujangaphanarama, *padmatmaka* for Hamsapakṣa and Navakara and *ghaṇṭakara* and *budbudakṛti* for Cakrarama. The omission of the other more important types, such as Hastyarama and Simharama, may be due to some lacuna in the text or simply because that they could accommodate any type of *caitya*.

The Selection of the Site.

The work mentions ten different types of ground distinguished from each other by means of vegetation, soil-structure and physical features. It is interesting to note that this is the only *śilpa* text which recognises ten types of ground. All the other works do not mention more than three or four types, and often adopt an entirely different method of classification.[12] The ten types of ground enumerated are *anūpa*, *jāngala*, *sādhāraṇa*, *dhumraka*, *purṇa*, *caima*, *bhadraka*, *padma*, *ghaṭima* and *purima*, but only the first four are briefly discus-

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10. *'paṇḍalaṇḍākāra[n] tathā jñeyā'*, (*'jñeyā'* here should be read as *'jñeyam'*).

11. The five kinds of major edifices belonging to a Buddhist monastery complex are given as *caitya*, *bodhiveśman*, *bimbālaya* (image-house), *prasada* (residential quarters for monks) and *sabha* (assembly-hall).

12. Cf. *Mayamata*, ed. by Bruno Dagens, Pondichery (1970) iii; *Śilparatna*, ed. by T. Ganapati Sastri, Trivandrum (1922) iii,3f.

sed as they are thought to be the types suitable for *caitya* construction.[13] Needless to say that the ground which supports a heavy structure like a *stupa* needs to be very hard and firm. The kind of ground where trees like *moca* (cotton?) and *puga* (areca) grow, where beasts and bees live, which has fine sand, which is moist and has pools overgrown with *kaśeru* (a kind of grass) and *utpala* (lilies) is called *anupa*. *Jaṅgala* is hard ground with light soil and tiny pebbles, scattered with trees and creepers. The *sadharaṇa* type is a mixture of *anupa* and *jaṅgala* grounds. The kind of ground where trees such as *arjuna*, *vedhana*, *priyaṅgu*, *candana*, *asana*, *timisa*, *veṇu*, *khadira*, *stambhaka*, *nimba* and *śalmali* grow, where water is dried up and beasts and hunters live is called *dhumraka*. It is clear that all these four types should have a hard crust firm enough to bear the weight of the edifice.

But the architects did not depend on external features alone for proof of firmness of the ground. After selecting the site, they carried out a more reliable test to judge the suitability of the ground. A pit, measuring one, or one and a half cubits across, and deep as much, was dug towards the centre of the site or the intended southern gate. The purpose of digging this pit was twofold. One was to check whether objects like human skulls, bones, ashes and stones (funerary?) were buried in the site. If such objects were found in the earth dug up, the site was forthwith abandoned. After digging the pit, a shed was put up towards the south and decorated with flags and banners, a canopy and an ornamental arched doorway. In the evening the pit was filled with sandal-scented water and the architect spent the night in the shed keeping vigil over the pit. The following morning the pit was examined and, if all the water had seeped through, the ground was considered unsuitable for the purpose. If there was (sufficient) water still left, the site was accepted and construction work commenced. A similar method of testing the firmness of the ground is mentioned in the *Mayamata*[14] and the *Śilparatna*[15].

The Laying of the Foundation.

The commencement of the work was preceded by an elaborate ceremony. First, a shed three or four cubits each way was erected in

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13. All these types are more fully discussed elsewhere in the text.

14. *op.cit.* iv, 10b-18a.

15. *op.cit.* iii, 16-20a.

the southeast region of the site. It was supported by four columns and its plinth raised up to a height of about one cubit. On the floor space was drawn the *pīṭha* or *upapīṭha* diagram,. the former consisting of nine squares and the latter twenty-five squares. The *pīṭha* grid of nine squares is the one preferred here. The square in the middle was dedicated to Brahmā and the eight squares around it, beginning from the northeast corner, to the eight deities Īśa, Āditya, Agni, Yama, Nirṛta, Varuṇa, Vāyu and Soma respectively. Nine pitchers filled with water (*purṇaghaṭas*) covered with white cloth were placed in the nine squares, beginning with Āditya in circumambulatory order, the Brahma pitcher being placed last. In the latter the nine kinds of gem were also deposited. This was the consecration ceremony of the site. During the course of the ceremony the four boundary lines were laid.

The First Chamber

Next commenced the construction of the first chamber. In the middle of the site an square area measuring one *hasta* a side was smeared with cowdung (as a purificatory rite) and the *pīṭha* plan of nine squares was drawn. The entire place was adorned with flags and streamers and other decorations. Oblations were offered to the nine deities and further ceremonies followed amidst musical sounds. In the middle square dedicated to Brahmā there was a heap of *śāli* rice up to a height of seven *aṅgulas*. In the remaining squares the eight kinds of auspicious symbols (*aṣṭamaṅgala*) were placed. These eight symbols, namely, the *śrīvatsa*, the two fishes, the goad, the *svastika*, the *bhadrapīṭha*, the pitcher, the chowries and the conch-shell were deposited in circumambulatory order beginning with Īśāna.[16] Early next morning, at an auspicious hour, the chief architect worshipped the deities amidst musical sounds, festivities and revelries. He next circumambulated the site and started work on the *garbhagṛha*. The walls of the chamber were built most probably with bricks.[17] Once the walls were completed, the chamber was closed with stone slabs (cap-stones) and bricks. Bricks used to cover the chamber were larger than normal, their width varying from five to fourteen *aṅgulas*, the length being twice the width, and the thickness half as much. The work of the lower part of the dome covering the first chamber must have followed next.

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16. For a detailed discussion on the *aṣṭamaṅgala see* T.B. Karunaratne, "Aṣṭamaṅgala" J.R.A.S (C.B.) N.S. vol. XV, p. 48 f.; A Unique Aṣṭamaṅgala Relief from Weligama, J.R.A.S. (C.B.), N.S. vol. XVII, p. 46 f.

17. cf. S. Paranavitana *op. cit.* p. 20 f.

The Second Chamber

Before the work on the second *garbhagṛha* commenced, the consecration of pitchers was again performed as in the case of the first. The layout of this chamber was that of *upapīṭha*, which consisted of twenty-five squares. We may, therefore, presume that an equal number of pitchers was taken for the consecration ceremony. The deities occupying the sixteen squares on the periphery are Īśa, Mahendra, Āditya, Antarikṣa, Agni, Gṛhakṣata, Yama, Mṛṣa, Pitṛ (Nirṛta), Puṣpadanta, Varuṇa, Roga, Vāyu, Bhallāṭa, Soma and Aditi. Brahmā occupied the centre, and the eight squares around it were occupied by Āpavatsa, Ārya, Savitṛi, Vivasvat, Indra, Mitra, Rudra and Bhumindra (Pṛthividhara). In this chamber, most probably in the niches on the four walls, figures of the four Divine Buddhas, Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava and Amitābha were deposited with their heads turned towards the east, north, west and south respectively. A figure of Tathāgata Amoghasiddhi was placed above that of Amitābha. The four Buddhaśaktis, Tārā, Locanā, Prajñā and Māmaki, were next placed in the four corners, beginning with Īśa. Various other items worthy of veneration were also placed and the chamber was sealed by laying the top bricks.

It is, however, very unlikely that these chambers contained any relics as such. Although the text mentions the various objects to be deposited in them, it makes no mention of any relics being deposited. Moreover, the large size of the chambers suggests that they were meant for something other than enshrining relics.

The Repository of Gems.

Above the top brick layer of the second chamber was placed the repository of gems which is an essential feature of the interior of any *caitya*. Strict specifications are given for its measurements. It had to be a perfect square measuring four to twelve *aṅgulas* a side. Its width may also be in relation to the width of the outer wall or of the inner wall of the *caitya*. It may be half, three-fourth or equal to the width of the outer wall, or half of the width of the inner wall. This clearly shows that the terraced plinth and the bell of the *caitya* were built with two concentric walls differing in thickness. We have at least two examples of this method of *caitya* construction. The outer wall of the *stupa* at Ghaṇṭaśālā in South India is thicker than the inner wall.[18] Paranavitana was not, however, able to say definitely whether the second and outer wall of the Mahāthūpa and of the Kaṇṭaka *caitya* (Mihintale) was part of the original plan

18. *op.cit.*, p. 25.

VĀYU	BHALLĀṬA	SOMA	ADITI	ĪŚĀNA
ROGA	RUDRA	BHŪ-MINDRA	ĀPAVATSA	MAHENDRA
VARUṆA	MITRA	BRAHMA	ĀRYA	ĀDITYA
PUṢPA-DANTA	INDRA	VIVASVAT	SĀVITRĪ	ANTA-RIKṢA
NIRṚTA	MṚṢA	YAMA	GṚHA-KṢATA	AGNI

1. UPAPĪṬHA PLAN

VĀYU	SOMA	ĪŚĀNA
VARUṆA	BRAHMA	ĀDITYA
NIRṚTA	YAMA	AGNI

2. PĪṬHA PLAN

or constructed later to enlarge the edifices.[19] But here we have definite proof to say that the outer wall was an integral part of a *caitya*.[20]

The repository of gems or *ratnanyāsa*, as it is technically called, was divided into nine chambers. In the outer chambers, beginning with Īśāna, were deposited the eight kinds of gems, viz., pearl, diamond, sapphire, ruby, lapis lazuli (*indranīla*), coral, emerald and cat's eye, and a topaz in a copper receptacle was placed in the centre. Oblations were offered to the receptacle before the gems were deposited in it.

The receptacle containing the gems had to be duly consecrated before it was kept in position. A nine-pillared pavilion with doorways on all four sides was constructed for this purpose on the eastern side of the site. Its interior was decorated with festoons of *darbha* grass. A golden thread was tied round the receptacle, which was wrapped in a white cloth. It was then placed in the centre of the pavilion on a plinth of grain. This was followed by the placing of pitchers (*kalaśa-sthapana*). Nine pots filled with water were wrapped with cloth. In the Brahma pitcher in the centre was placed a coconut flower. The pitchers were then worshipped with perfume and incense. A pit was made with bricks to accommodate the *ratnanyāsa*, which was firmly fixed in it. The placing of the *ratnanyāsa* was done to the accompaniment of the chanting of a *mantra*.

The foregoing description of the chambers and the *ratnanyāsa* substantially agrees with the arrangement of these in the actual *caityas* which have so far been excavated. Unfortunately no interior of a single *caitya* belonging to the earlier phase has been found to be intact. They have been either completely ransacked by treasure-hunters or considerably altered during later restoration work. However, most of the existing *caityas*, whose interiors have been examined contain three chambers. The Topāvava *dāgaba* has as many as six chambers. We may presume that the arrangement of the interior became more and more elaborate towards the later period. The general arrangement of the existing examples is that the uppermost chamber, which is the largest, is on level with the upper terrace of the plinth of the *caitya*, and the third or the lowermost, generally smaller in size, on ground level.[21] In these cases the *ratnanyāsa*, which is called

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19. *op.cit.*, p. 25.

20. *op.cit.*, p. 26.

21. See also H. Parker, *op.cit.*, pp. 286 *f*.

yantragala in Sinhala, occurs below the chamber and not above it, as mentioned in our text. This may be due to the fact that these chambers came to be used in later times for enshrining the relics, requiring the *ratnanyasa* to be located below rather than above the relics. The *ratnanyasa* under the lowermost central chamber of Kotavehera is of the *pitha* plan consisting of nine holes.[22] The Sigiri *dagaba*, Topavava *dagaba* and Pabalu *vehera* all have a nine-chamber *ratnanyasa* under the third cella.[23] The Kirivehera has it beneath the middle chamber. In the Sela *caitya* the only chamber remaining has a nine-holed *ratnanyasa*. The twenty-five-holed *ratnanyasa* under the second or middle relic chamber is found in the Sigiri *dagaba* and the Topavava *dagaba*.[24] In the Pabalu *vehera* it is right under the first or uppermost cella.[25] In all these cases the *ratnanyasa* comes just below the relic chamber and not above it. Since almost all these *caityas*, all later than the eighth century A.D., may have contained reliquaries in their chambers, the architects probably thought it fit to place them above the *ratnanyasa*. But our text does not give the slightest hint that any of the *garbhagrhas* contained any relics. According to our text, the reliquary proper was placed above all these. It was, therefore, nothing but proper that the *ratnanyasa* was placed above the uppermost chamber and close to the reliquary. This appears to have been the practice that obtained during the early period.

The Gajastambha.

The most valuable information which the *Vastuvidyasastra* provides concerns the prototype of that enigmatic stone pillar which runs through the axis of the dome and is known in India as *yupa*. The term used for this post in the present text is *gajastambha* or *gajapadaka*. The original meaning of *yupa* and *gajastambha* is the same, i.e., the post to which an elephant is tethered. As has already been mentioned, the type of *caitya* described in our text belongs to a very early period, when *gajastambhas* were made of wood. Timber used for this purpose was obtained from hard-cored trees such as *stambhaka*, *saka*, *asana*, *madhuka*, *khadira*, *arjuna*, *nimba*, *manila* and *carsa(?)*. The description of the *gajastambha* shows that it resembles the stone pillar, which later supplanted it. It had three heights, *adhama*, *madhyama* and *uttama*, measuring thirty and a half cubits, thirty-five

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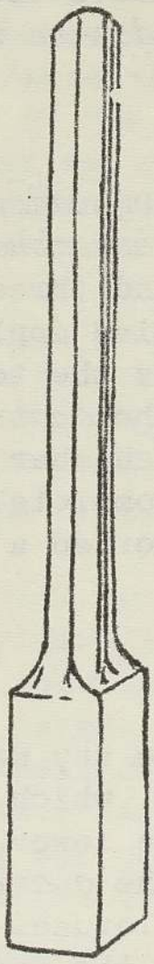
22. See Godakumbura *op.cit.*, p. 282 f.

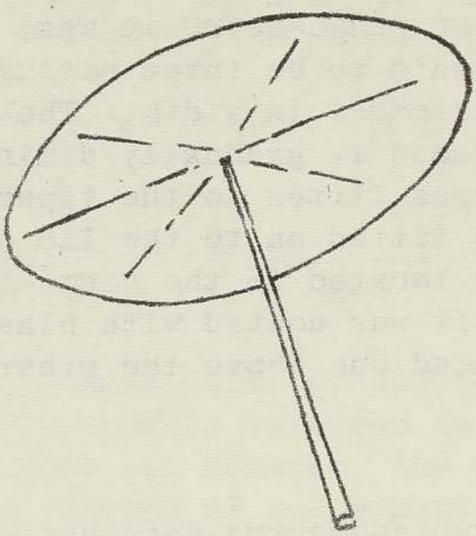
23. Paranavitana *op.cit.*, p. 22.

24. *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report 1911-12*, Colombo, (1915) p. 90.

25. *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report 1895*, Colombo, (1904) p. 2.



GAJASTAMBHA OR YŪPA



CHATRA & CHATRADANDA

and a half cubits and thirty-nine and a half cubits respectively.[26] Its width again had three sizes, i.e., twelve *aṅgulas*, eighteen *aṅgulas* and twenty-four *aṅgulas* (i.e., one *hasta*). The post was fitted on to a shaft fixed to a base placed above the receptacle of gems. The lower portion, up to a height of about two *hastas*, was four-sided. A mortise three and a half *aṅgulas* wide ran through the centre of the four-sided portion to receive the shaft. The remaining part was octagonal and had a curved top. The width at the top was one-third, one-fourth or one-fifth the width of the base. The stone pillars and their broken parts, found in the courtyards of certain *caityas*, strictly conform to this description. As seen from the miniature *stūpa* at Amaravatī, the *gajastambha* sometimes stood free, with its top projecting a few feet above the *harmika*, with one or two umbrellas supported by *chatradaṇḍas* on its sides.

The Chatradaṇḍa.

The *chatradaṇḍa* is known as *yaṣṭi* in the *divyāvadāna*.[27] According to the *Vāstuvidyāśāstra* it was, like the *gajastambha*, made of wood. It is said to be three *hastas* in length and three *aṅgulas* less than the *gajastambha* in width. The width specified applies to its base only because it gradually diminished towards the top. A copper shaft (*kīla*) was fitted to the tapering end of the *chatradaṇḍa*. Its lower end was fitted on to the lid of the relic chamber (which was most probably located in the *harmika*), sealing completely the hole in the lid. It was coated with plaster and supported a pile of umbrellas placed one above the other.

The Harmikā.

The *Vāstuvidyāśāstra* does not, however, make any mention of a *harmikā* or *hataràs koṭuva* on the top of the dome, which would have girdled the upper part of the *gajastambha* and the lower part of the *chatradaṇḍa*. But immediately after describing the *chatravalī*, it speaks of such decorative motifs as festoons of lotuses and rows of pearl and gems used on the *caitya*. Judging from the existing evidence, these appear to be the type of decorative motif generally used on the *harmika* and not on the dome or the *chatradaṇḍa*.[28] It is very diffi-

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26. Cubit or *hasta* is a unit of 24 *aṅgulas*. An *aṅgula* is generally taken to be the length of the middlemost link of the middle finger of a man of average size or of the patron or the architect.

27. *Divyāvadāna*, ed. P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga (1959) p. 151.

28. See also Paranavitana *op.cit.*, p. 29.

cult to form a clear picture of the details of these members as the text here is hoplessly corrupt. It is evident ahat the *harmika* of the earliest *stupa* did contain the relic casket. In the case of the Great Stupa at Sanchi, it consisted of a stone cylinder measuring 5'6" in diameter and 2' high.[29] It was provided with a lid, in the centre of which there was a mortise, into which the *chatradanda* was fitted.[30] This *harmika* undoubtedly contained the relics of the Master. Cunningham too believes that the relics of the Holy Teacher were always kept in some easily accessible place for the purpose of exposition on special occasions.[31] And it is very probable that the relics were enshrined immediately below the pile of umbrellas. Paranavitana, while confessing that no relics have been found in any of the chambers examined in Sri Lanka, mentions that small reliquaries of crystal have been found among the debris of ruined *stupas*.[32] This may be an indication that in those *stupas* the relics were not deposited in the so-called relic chambers mentioned above, but at some point in the superstructure, which has now fallen on talus. It is difficult to agree with Longhurst when he says that the box-like nature of the *harmika* is an indication that it served as a receptacle for valuable offerings presented to the shrine by pious worshippers,[33] for it is unlikely that any objects other than the *chatra* were pleaced above the relics.

The *harmika* was in fact the original home of the relics and therefore, originally the term *dhatu-garbha* referred to no other part of the *stupa* than the *harmika*. Later on, however, the dome in many cases became larger and larger on account of subsequent renovations and enlargements, finally enclosing the original *harmika* along with the relics, thus taking over the function of housing the relics and also claiming the name *dhatu-garbha*. Finally the whole monument came to be called *dhatugarbha* (*dagoba* or *dagaba* in Sinhala).[34]

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29. A Cunningham, *The Bhilsa Topes;* or *Buddhist Monuments of Central India* London (1854) p. 186.

30. *ibid.*

31. *op.cit.*, p. 322.

32. *op.cit.*, p. 24.

33. A.H. Longhurst *The Story of the Stupa*, Colombo (1936) p. 15.

34. Anagarika Govinda *Some Aspects of Stupa Symbolism* Allahabad (1940) p. 18.

The present-day *harmikā* or *sivuras koṭuva* is a solid mass of bricks resembling the earlier box-like structure, which was hollow inside the contained the relics.

It is now evident that the *vāstuvidyāśāstra* belongs to a period when the relics were still being enshrined, not in the so-called relic-chambers inside the dome, but at a higher point, most probably in the upper part of the *harmika*. However, the description of the reliquary comes last, giving one the impression that it was placed above the *chatravali*. But such a practice is unheard of in *stupa* architecture and it is more logical to expect the reliquary immediately below the *chatra* than above it.

The Relic Casket.

The relic casket took the form of a miniature *stūpa* and was made of metal. Bronze, silver or gold may have been used for this purpose. It contained a nine-chamber reliquary four or five *angulas* square. The nine chambers were dedicated to the nine deities (i.e., the eight *dikpālas* and Brahmā in the centre). In the eight outer squares, beginning from Īśa, were placed the eight kinds of grain, the five kinds of metal and the eight kinds of precious stones, namely, collyrium, pirites, cinnabar, orpiment, red chalk, realgar, *antarita* and lapis lazuli. The relics, if there were any, were placed in the central chamber dedicated to Brahma. A mantra, inscribed on a leaf of gold, silver or copper, was also deposited in the same chamber. The *mantra* is in the form of an appeal to the five Tathāgatas and the chamber-deities to protect the relics and other deposits from possible danger. After inscribing the *mantra*, the leaf was bathed in purified water and then smeared with sandalwood oinment. The receptacle was first inserted in the casket, which was then placed in the centre of the *harmika*.

It will now be seen that the *Vāstuvidyāsāstra*, apart from the detailed description it gives of the rites and ceremonies connected with the construction of *stupas*, furnishes for the first time a wealth of information about the interior structure of ancient *stupas*, certain details of which are still subjects of scholarly discussion. Its descriptions of the relic chambers, the gem depository, double wall of the *caitya* dome, the *gajastambha* and the *chatradaṇḍa* leave no room for speculation and definitely relate to the actual practice, which was in vogue in Sri Lanka much earlier than the twelfth century A.D. The *chatravali* has not still been replaced by the spire (Sinh. *kotkärälla*), and wooden columns by stone pillars; the relics were

still being deposited in the harmikā; and the Mahāyāna associations of the text tempts us to push its date well beyond the 7th century A.D. It should, however, be remembered that the type of *caitya* described here would hardly match the great *stupas* in proportion and may well be that recommended for monasteries of modest size. Whatever it may be, the information furnished by this unique work is invaluable and deserves more serious study by archaeologists and scholars of *śilpaśastra*.

E.W. MARASINGHE

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THE NAGARAM OF THE NĀNĀDESIS IN SRI LANKA[1] CIRCA A.D. 1000-1300

A noteworthy feature in the development of commercial activity in Sri Lanka during the period under consideration was the growth of commercial centres called *nagaram*. They were established and managed by the composite corporate commercial community of long-distance traders called Nānādesis, who were the most celebrated among the mercantile communities in the medieval kingdoms of Lower South Asia. In India they were settled in most parts of Karnataka, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, where the market centres controlled by them and their associates developed into selfgoverning towns called *nagaram*, *erivirapattinam* and *dasamādip pattinam*. The Nānādesis were alternately referred to as Ayyāvole or the 500 Svāmis of Ayyāvolepura in Karnataka and as the *Ticai-ayirattu annurruvar* in the inscriptions of the Tamil country.[2] They appear to have formed a vast confederation of many groups of merchants, warriors and commodity producers. They were conceded the privilege of incorporating in their documents a *prasasti* or inscriptional preamble recording myths and legends poetically along with historical information pertaining to their origins, affiliations and activities. Their use of the literary form *prasasti*, which was generally reserved for kings and princes, testifies to their claims to high rank and social status, which they were accorded on account of their affluence and reinforced through their support for the values and institutions of Hinduism.

The Nānādesis and their associates are described in their inscriptions as the protectors of *Vīra-Banañju dharma*, 'the law of the noble merchants', embodied in 500 *Vīra-sāsanas* or edicts of heroes obtained from kings. They had the picture of a hill

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1. The word *nagaram* is generally used as a descriptive term indiscriminately in respect of all types of towns and cities. However, in this study it is applied exclusively to denote market towns or the commercial sectors of cities established and controlled by mercantile communities.

2. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, 'The Chalukyas of Kalyāni and the Kalachuris of Kalyāni', *The Early History of the Deccan*, pts. I-VI, G. Yazdani, London, 1960, p. 433.

on their flag and were noted for their valour and spirit of adventure. They travelled by both land routes and water routes, penetrating all countries 'of the six continents'., They are said to have traded in 'magnificient elephants', 'horses of the finest breeds', large sapphires, moonstones, pearls, rubies, diamonds, lapis-lazuli, onyx, topaz, carbuncles, emeralds and other precious articles; and in cardamoms, cloves, bdellium, sandalwood, camphor, musk, saffron, *malegaja*, and other spices and perfumes. They sold these wholesale or hawked them about on their shoulders. Besides, they claim to have paid the *sunka* regularly, filled the royal treasury with gold and jewels, and replenished the armoury. They bestowed gifts on men of learning and religion fully conversant with the four *samayas* and the six *darśanas*. Associated with them were many classes of merchants, soldiers and others such as *gavaras*, *gatriqas*, *seṭṭis*, *seṭṭiguttas*, *aṅkakaras bīras*, *bīravaṇigas*, *gaṇḍigas*, *gavuṇḍas* and *gavuṇḍasvamis*.[3]

'The Nānādesis then were a powerful autonomous corporation of merchants, whose activities apparently took little or no account of political boundaries. They visited all countries in the course of their trade, and everywhere they received recognition alike from the central government and from local agencies like the Village sabhās. They had their own mercenary army, doubtless for the protection of the merchandise in their warehouses and in transit'.[4]

The claims made in respect of their participation in international and sea-borne commerce is partially attested by evidence from inscriptions set up by the Nānādesis in Burma, Sumatra and particularly Sri Lanka. That the Nānādesis had an outpost in Burma is evident from a Tamil inscription from Pagan, which could be assigned to the twelfth century on palaeographic considerations. It records the construction of a hall, *maṇḍapa*, at a temple dedicated to Visnu and named after the Nānādesis, by a person called Kulasekhara Nambi of Makotaippaṭṭinam in Malaimaṇḍalam (Kerala).[5] He also made provision for burning a perpetual

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3. *ibid.*, p. 434.

4. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cōlas*, 2nd revised edition, Madras, 1960, p. 597.

5. E. Hultzch, 'A Vaishnava Inscription from Pagan', *Epigraphia Indica*, No. 27, p. 187-189.

lamp at the same shrine, which is described as being situated at the town of Arivaṭṭanapuram, otherwise called Bukkam. Their active participation in the overseas trade of the time is also suggested by the Tamil inscription from Loboe-Toewa in Sumatra, which is dated in the year 1010 of the Saka era (A.D. 1078) and was set up by the *Ticai-Āyirattu Annūrruvar*.[6]

The largest number of inscriptions and other archaeological artefacts, left behind by the Nānādesis and their associates in any region outside the kingdoms of South India, is to be found in Sri Lanka, where information pertaining to them has been steadily accumulating in recent years. All contemporary epigraphic notices on mercantile communities found in the island pertain exclusively to the Nānādesis or their associates, and this is in itself of considerable significance as providing a sufficient indication of the degree of importance attached to them in the island's trade. There are in all not less than twenty inscriptions which record the activities of the Nānādesis or their associates, and all of them except the one from Kalutara could be assigned to the eleventh and twelfth centuries on the basis of their contents and palaeography.[7] Among these, two inscriptions, those from Anuradhapura and Anaulundava near Polonnaruwa, are in Sinhalese, while all the rest are in Tamil. The Sinhalese inscription from Anuradhapura, which belongs to the reign of Queen Lilāvati,[8] refers to the Nānādesis and their customs-post, while the other Sinhalese

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6. *The Cōlas*, p. 596.

7. The palaeography exhibits features characteristic of developments since the fourteenth century. The text records the grant of fields made by a certain king to the temple of Kāli, founded by the *Annūrruvar*. The temple may have been established long before the inscription was set up and the evidence from the epigraph cannot by itself provide any basis for the claim that the *Annūrruvar* community flourished at the time when the inscription was set up. For the text of the inscription see A. Velupillai, *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions*, (*CTI*), pt. I, Peradeniya, 1971, p. 45.

8. D.M. de Z. Wickremasinghe, 'The Slab Inscription marked D/8 of Queen Lilāvati', *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, (*EZ*), vol.I, p. 177-182.

inscription which is fragmentary contains only the initial portion of their *prasasti* and does not add to our knowledge about the Nānādesis except for testifying to the fact of their presence in the environs of Polonnaruwa.[9]

There are about ten Tamil inscriptions which record the activities of the Annūrruvar, otherwise called Nānādesis. There are five inscriptions among them which incorporate the preamble or *prasasti*. Four of them, namely those from Vahalkada, Padaviya, Viharehinna and Detiyamulla specifically refer to the paṭṭinam of the Nānādesis.[10]

The inscriptions from the first three of these sites are of considerable historical importance as they record the transactions of the corporate institution of the *nagaram*. The preambles of these inscriptions, which are of modest proportions compared to those incorporated in some of the South Indian inscriptions of the Nānādesis, provides useful insights about the composite character of the corporate organization dominated by the Nānādesis and their commercial activities. Besides, they record valuable information pertaining to the administration and activities of corporate institution of the *nagaram*, which could, if properly interpreted, throw considerable light on an aspect of the history of the period which has remained obscure.

In the recent past the archaeological materials pertaining to the Nānādesis have been steadily accumulating and these add considerably to knowledge about that mercantile community. The present author's examination of the Tamil slab-inscription at Budumuttāva has revealed that it records some transactions of the Annūrruvar and a military community allied to them.[11] *Annūrruvanpaḷḷi*, *pattinenpumi* and *Vīramākālam* are some of the expres-

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9. D.M. de Z. Wickremasinghe, 'Polonnaruwa: Ānaulundāva Slab Inscription', *EZ*, vol. II, No. 38, p. 235-236.

10. *CTI*, pt. I, p. 53-57; *CTI*, pt. II, Peradeniya, 1972, p.16.

11. The author visited the site in response to the requests made over a long period of time by Piyatissa Senanayake, Assistant Lecturer, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya. He and Piyasena Gamlath, Assistant Librarian, University of Peradeniya, accompanied me to the site and made all arrangements for the examination of the inscribed slab. I am deeply grateful to both of them.

sions recorded in that inscription, which enable one to identify that epigraph as one set up by Annurruvar and the warriors in their service. The most important detail in the inscription pertains to the Annurruvuvan palli, a Buddhist monastery named after the Annurruvar. A major portion of the inscription is badly damaged on account of the fact that the stone slab had been used roughly for different purposes. The concluding portion of the inscription, which consists of twenty-seven lines of writing, could be deciphered if an estampage of it could be prepared. The slab is also of unusual interest on account of the variety of symbols depicted on it.

The bronze seal of the Nānādesis from Hambantota is one of the most sensational archaeological finds of antiquarian and historical interest in the island in recent years.[12] The seal is a solid-cast bronze of twelve ounces in weight and is 4.5 cm in height. It appears to be a miniature representation of 'the holy hill', the figure of which is said to have been painted on the flags of the Nānādesis. The seal designed at the bottom of the base of the bronze contains the figure of Durgā flanked on either side by a female. The representations of the canopy and pouch are also prominently displayed on the top portion of the seal. The inscribed label on the surface of its pedestal contains the expression *Nānādesin sakai*, which may be translated as 'the friends, allies or companions of the Nānādesis'. It is therefore evident that the seal was used as an instrument of authentication or authorisation by the Nānādesis in an area over which they exercised administrative jurisdiction, and such an area could only have been one that was encompassed by a *nagaram*. The seal, which could have been used for stamping receipts for the payment of tolls, or cloth and packs of commodities taken into the market areas controlled by the Nānādesis, provides fresh insights about the activities of the *nagaram* of the Nānādesis. Two miniature bronze images of Hindu deities, brought to light by archaeological excavations at Padaviya and the Jetavanarama complex, Anuradhapura, are among the most recent finds per-

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12. Information relating to its discovery was supplied to the author by Mr. M.H. Sirisoma, Deputy Archaeological Commissioner, who extended his courtesy by giving permission for a close examination of the object. Matters pertaining to the seal will be examined in the sequel.

taining to the activities of the Nānādesis. The expression Nānādesis, found inscribed in the form of a label on the pedestal of both these bronzes, suggest that they were donated by members of that corporate mercantile community.[13]

In his account of 'The South Indian Mercantile Communities in Ceylon Circa 1000-1200 A.D.', K. Indrapala clearly recognized the existence of a mercantile town called Vīrapattinam at Vahalkada.

> 'The records of the Ainnūrruvar refer to their declaring certain towns as Erivīrapattinam. From the context, there is little doubt that these were market towns, probably protected by the Ervīrar. But it must be admitted that there is a lack of clarity as to the nature of these towns. That the South Indian mercantile communities created such towns in Ceylon, too is known from the Vahalkada inscription. At Vahalkada there was a town named Kattaneri, which was declared a Nānateciya Vīrapattinam. ..... Possibly such towns were also set up in the other places where records of these mercantile communities have been discovered. We do not know how these towns were organized but from South Indian records we find that each such town had an official called Pattana-svami (Lord of the town) at its head.[14]

Some of the basic assumptions underlying these observations are based on an imperfect and inadequate knowledge of matters pertaining to the market towns and they require clarification and revision in the light of subsequent studies on the *nagaram* by Kenneth Hall. Besides, it could no more be a matter of speculation that there were possibly other towns set up by the Ayyāvole in the island beside the one at Vahalkada. Inscriptions attest

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13. The information about these two finds was supplied to the author by Mr. M.H. Sirisoma and Dr. Hema Ratnayake, Director of the Cultural Triangle Project, Anuradhapura.

14. K. Indrapala, 'South Indian Mercantile Communities in Ceylon, Circa 950-1250', *The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, New Series, vol. I, No. 2, July-December 1971, p. 107-108.

to the existence of such towns also at Padaviya, Viharehinna and Panduvas-nuvara during this period. Moreover, as will be seen subsequently, some of the references in the slab inscription of the Velaikkaras from Polonnaruwa suggests the existence of a *nagaram* in that city when the text of that inscription was formulated. These *nagaram* towns were not placed under the protection of any group of persons called *erivirar*. The expression *erivirar* means 'heroes of the road' and was applied to mercantile communities, presumably in recognition of their spirit of adventure and enterprise in the realm of commerce.[15] There is no more a lack of clarity as to the nature of the towns set up by the *Nanadesis* in the areas of their operations. It is also incorrect and misleading to assert that each of such mercantile towns, which were referred to as variously as *nagaram*, *managaram*, *dasamadipaṭṭinam* or *erivirapaṭṭinam* had an official called paṭṭanasvamin (Lord of the town) as its head. It was clearly so in a few cases, but a large majority of the *nagarams*, as could be gleaned from epigraphic evidence, were under corporate management and had governing councils, which adopted the committee formula as in the case of the assemblies called ur and sabha.

The historical information relating to the *nagaram* towns in the Tamil country, which had remained scattered, has been collected, correlated and analysed by Kenneth Hall in his monograph, *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Colas*. In that work the *nagaram* is aptly described both as a physically defined area, that is, a commercial district, inhabited by mercantile communities, and as a self-governing institution which administered such an area and its market place.[16] Inscriptions recording the activities of the *nagaram* indicate a definite pattern in the distribution of these towns throughout the entire Tamil country during Chola times. There was a maximum of one *nagaram* per each unit of polity called *nadu*. It is relevant to state here the observations of Kenneth Hall:

> 'Using those inscriptions which make clear references to the existence of a *nagaram* at a specified place,

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15. The name *Vira valanciyar* applied to one of the mercantile communities and the description of the *Nanadesis* as 'those who traversed the eighteen countries, *patinenpums erintarai*, in some inscriptions suggest that the term *vira*, 'heroic', and *eri*, 'subdue to conquer' could be used in relation to the characteristics and activities of the mercantile groups.

16. Kenneth Hall, *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Colas*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1980, p. 52, 104.

> one definite pattern of distribution becomes perceptible: that there was a maximum of one *nagaram* per *nādu* in Cōla times. If as has been argued in recent studies of regional administration under the Cōlas, the *nadu* was the most important regional political unit during these times, then I may argue that it is more than a coincidence that there was only one *nagaram* per nādu'.[17]

But, unlike in the units called nādu, there were sometimes many *nagarams* in some of the principal cities which were centres of dynastic power and intense commercial activity. At Tanjāvūr, for instance, there were four *nagarams* outside the walls of the city. They were those of Nittanotapperunteru, Mummuticolap-perunteru, Vīrasikhamanipperunteru and Tribhuvanamadevip-perankati.[18] All the *nagarams* were not of a uniform size; some were small and occupied the commercial area of a settlement, while some others were large and consisted of several quarters. The nagaram of Tiruvorriyur, Chingleput comprised of at least three quarters: Jayasingakula Kālapperunteru, the residence of Caliya; Tribhuvanasundarap-perunteru, the residence of the shepherds; and Narpattennayirap-perunteru, the residence of sculptors and artisans.[19] But each of the *nagarams* of Tanjavur, as seen earlier, was associated with only one of the big streets of that city. It should also be noted that, while the *nagaram* constituted the town of a settlement in an agricultural hinterland, in big cities it occupied one of the commercial sectors only. Another consideration that has to be noticed here is the tradition of classifying the *nagarams* into two categories, the larger and more prominent ones being distinguished from the rest by the designation *mānagaram* 'the great nagaram'.[20] The *nagarams* of Kancipuram and Mamallapuram were described as *managaram* from the

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17. *ibid.*, p. 124.

18. *ibid.*, p. 53-54.

19. *ibid.*, p. 53.

20. Kattucemmalapakkam (Aranvayal, Chingleput) and the *mānagaram* of Śivapuram (South Arcot) are two other such units referred to in contemporary inscriptions. *Trade and Statecraft under the Cōlas*, p. 51, 219, 221.

period of the Pallavas onwards. It is also significant that such a distinction between the two categories is encountered in the Tamil inscriptions set up in the island during the twelfth century.[21]

As the *nagarams* in Sri Lanka were also established by the *Nānādesis* and their associates, they could be expected to have exhibited some of the basic characteristics of their contemporary Indian counterparts. Such towns as did exist in the island have to be identified in order to describe their principal characteristics as self-governing institutions and centres of market-oriented exchange of commodities.

Nānātēciya Vīrapattinam at Vahalkada

That there was a *Vīrapattinam* at Vahalkada is indicated by an inscription of the *Nānādesis* from that locality.[22] The epigraph is undated and has no reference to any reigning king. Its preamble is a shorter version of that usually found in Kannada and Tamil inscriptions in India and is formulated in such a manner as to reflect the local situation. The palaeography of the record represents a stage of development intermediate between the Chola inscriptions in the island and those of the reigns of Parakramabahu I (1153-1186) and Nissankamalla (1187-1196). It may therefore be assigned to the early years of the twelfth century, although stylistically it has closer affinities with the inscriptions of the late eleventh century.

This inscription, engraved in two parts, separately in two different slabs of stone, records information of the utmost importance relating to the *Nānādesis* and the *nagaram* in the island. It records that a *Nānātēciya Vīrapattanam* was established at the site of Kattaneri by the *Ticai Āyirattannaurruvar*. This *Vīrapattinam* is said to have fallen on evil days in consequence of an indemnity paid to a certain Kuttipperuman. As the Cettis

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21. The *Vīrapattinams* of Padaviya and Viharehinna are referred to respectively as *nagaram* and *managaram* in the inscriptions found there.

22. *CTI*, pt. I, p. 54.

of 'the eighteen lands' and the *Virakkoti* made an appeal that this town should not be allowed to suffer eclipse or dissolution, (*patiṉeṇpumi naṭṭuc ceṭṭikaḷum Virakkoṭiyomum ippaṭṭinam alivupaṭalakatenru pin muraiyiṭṭa makkaḷum*) a group of nineteen individuals, each of whom is named and described with titles and designations, took steps to re-establish the town. In connexion with that work wooden planks and stone slabs were set up. It was also decided to waive the taxes on the shops in the streets of the town. The persons involved in this undertaking are said to have had rank, privileges and honour appropriate to their status (*piṭum Cirutum ayavum uṭaiyam nam*).

An important detail recorded in the inscription pertains to the circumstances that caused instability to the town. It is specifically stated that this resulted from the payment of an indemnity by the *Virapaṭṭinam* to a certain Kuttiperuman (*Kuttipperumanukkut taṇṭam iruttut talarci paṭṭamaiyin*).[23] The expression Kuttipperuman could be interpreted in two ways: it could either be an epithet of Siva, conceived in Hindu religious ideology as the Cosmic dancer, or the personal name of an individual. But the fact that Kuttipperuman is described as an enemy of the *Nanadesis* (*tecippakai*) and the consideration that a contribution made to a Shrine of Siva could not have been considereded as a fine or indemnity, *taṇṭam*, precludes the possibility of Siva being referred to as Kuttipperuman in this instance. Kuttipperuman, 'the enemy of the *Nanadesis*', ought to have been a warrior chief who induced the *Virapaṭṭinam* to pay a ransom by a demonstration of force. The fact that the *Virapaṭṭinam*, which had in its service armed retainers in considerable numbers, had to acquiesce in such a situation suggests that Kuttipperuman was one who wielded considerable power.

The state of anarchy and uncertainty which prevailed after the reign of Vijayabahu I (1055-1110) provided the setting for such a development. Commenting on the conditions in the island under the successors of Vijayabahu, the *Culavamsa* records:

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23. The word *talarci* in line 34 of this inscription has been deciphered as *tanraci* by Velupillai. As *taṉraci* makes no sense in the Tamil language, the correct reading should be *talarci*, a colloquial form of *talarcci*, which has the connotation of instability, infirmity and decay.

> 'The officers belonging to the retinue of the monarchs on both sides who were established on the frontiers, fought with each other continually. By setting fire to many flourishing villages and market towns, by piercing tanks filled with water, by destroying every where the weirs on the canals and by hewing down all useful trees like the coconut palm and others, they so devastated the kingdom that it was impossible to trace even the sites of old villages. And even the rulers did evil to the people letting their retainers plunder the towns and commit highway robbery'.[24]

The foregoing account provides sufficient indication of the fact that warriors in the service of Vikramabāhu (1110-1132) and his cousins had indulged in looting of towns and villages and that in such acts of cupidity they were left unrestrained by the rulers. Kuttipperumān, 'the foe of the *Nānādesis*', was presumably one such warrior who had dispossessed the *Virapaṭṭinam* of its wealth. His extortion was so heavy as to have strained its resources and shaken the *Virapaṭṭinam*. Yet, the fact that it found itself capable of survival and re-adjustment provides an indication of the strength of its organization. The origins of the *Virapaṭṭinam* at Vahalkada cannot be traced from extant sources of information. It may be assumed that it was set up by the *Nanadesis* during the eleventh century, when they extended their activities into the island, and such an impression seems to gain some support from the fact that it had flourished in a developed form before the inscription recording some details about it was set up.

Ayyampolil paṭṭinam of Padaviya

Another mercantile town, established and controlled by the *Nanadesis*, was the *Ayyampolil paṭṭinam* at Padaviya, about which some information is recorded in two inscriptions set up by the *Nanadesis* and which have been recovered from the architectural remains of the medieval monuments of Padaviya.[25] Both inscriptions are undated but could be assigned on palaeographic considerations to the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. These inscriptions seem to record the interaction between the

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24. *Cūlavamsa* (*CV*), ed. and trans. Wilhelm Geiger, 61: 63-67.

25. *CTI*, pt. I, p. 54-55; *CTI*, pt. II, p. 19-20.

Virapaṭṭinam and Hindu religious institutions. They provide the interesting information that the *Ayyampolil paṭṭinam* was also called a *nagaram*, as could be seen clearly from the expressions *'innakarai aranukku tecikalakki'* and *'i(n)nakaram iraṇṭam mitturu kaṇappaṭaiyarum'*, 'the members of the second army allied to this *nagaram*'.[26]

The expression *nakarai aranukku tēcikaḷakki* 'having dedicated the *nagaram* as (Nānā) desis in the service of (the temple of) Siva', is of considerable significance as providing an indication of the character of the *nagaram* and the nature of the relationship it had entired into with a Saivite temple. An important consideration that arises from a scrutiny of this expression is the identification of the *nagaram* with the Nānā-desis, *teci* being an abbreviated form of the name *Nānadesi*. It presupposes that the *nagaram* in this instance was established and controlled by the *Nānadesis*. As the *nagaram* is said to have been dedicated to the service of Siva, it would appear that the *nagaram* assumed the role of a custodian over the temple, its community and endowments just as the *Veḷaikkarar* had done in relation to some religious institutions in several localities in several localities in the island during the Polonnaruwa period. The *nagaram* in this particular instance may be presumed to have undertaken the responsibility of protecting the temple and its institutions. It is also of significance that this particular epigraph was found among the remains of Siva Devale No. I at Padaviya, which may be identified as those of the temple which was originally named Iravikula māṇikka-īśvaram after one of the epithets of the Chola King, Rājarāja I. The arrangements regarding this undertaking were made by a congregation comprising three categories of people, namely, some prominent merchants who are mentioned by name, the *nakaravar* and warriors (aṅkakkaran).

The second inscription from Padaviya, the text of which could only be partially deciphered on account of its worn out condition and of its letters being engraved too closely to enable recognition, also records some transactions undertaken by the *nagaram* in connexion with the religious institution.[27] That some icons were made and granted by them to a temple is clear from the

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26. *CTI*, pt. I, p. 55; *CTI*, pt. II, p. 19.

27. *CTI*, pt. II, p. 19-20.

expressions *Vikkirakañ Ceytu Kaṭuttōm*. An important detail recorded in the inscription relates to the *tavaḷam* or periodically designated market. A *tavaḷam* was organized by the *nagaram* and it was called *Vikkirama kaṭikait tavaḷam* of *Ayyampolil paṭṭinam*. The reference to money collected from the *tavaḷam* and invested with the *paṭṭinam* seems to suggest that there were arrangements for collecting tolls levied on traders for the facilities provided to them by the *nagaram*.

The origins of the *nagaram* at Padaviya could be traced from the early years of the eleventh century, when the *Nanadesis* are known to have secured a foothold there. When Padaviya was under Chola occupation, it developed as a military outpost and commercial centre of considerable importance. The Saivite shrine of Iravikula maṇikkaiśvaram was established and supported by Chola officials, warriors and merchants. The inscription dated in the 27th year of Rajaraja I, which records the donations made by many individuals, mentions of a *Nanadesi* merchant called Konnavil Venkaṭan. It is said therein that he made a gift of two bronze bells.

A one-line inscription found among the remains of Siva Devale No. I at Padaviya, which records the name of a merchant who laid a foundation stone of the shrine, provides further evidence about the presence of the *Nanadesis* there. This particular merchant is described as Teciyayattunai Cetti.[28] This inscription provides an indication of the fact that the long-distance traders called *Nanadesi Ticaiyayiravar Annurruvar* were among the founders and benefactors of the temple of Iravikula maṇikka iśvaram. Their close interactions and association with Chola officials and warriors is of considerable significance and it may be assumed that these traders played an important role in the organization and regulation of commercial activity in that locality in the period subsequent to the Chola conquest.

A Managaram at Viharehinna

The inscription of the *Nanadesis* from Viharehinna is of the utmost importance as it records some steps taken in connexion with the foundation of a *managaram*.[29] There is no indication in the

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28. *ibid.*, p. 24.

29. *CTI*, pt. I, p. 55-57.

inscription of its location but it may be presumed that the inscription was originally set up at a site within the limits of the *managaram*, which was probably located somewhere near Viharehinna, from where this inscription has been found. The epigraph is undated and does not record any information which could provide a clue to its chronology. In such a circumstance it has to be dated only on the basis of palaeographic considerations, on account of which it may be asigned to the late twelfth century. Although considerable portions of the text are incomprehensible on account of its archaic style and unusual construction, which are probably representative of a Malayalam dialect, some important details pertaining to the transaction could be obtained from an interpretation of some of the key phrases. That a *managaram* was established by the *Nanadesis* is evident from the expression *i manakaram atiyiṭṭatarkkavum*. It would appear that a certain Nayaka menavar, who performed many services, was remunerated with a thousand *kanam* of grain. The *managaram* had employed warriors in its service. As a certain *Senapati* Virakan, otherwise called Piran Cattan, was disinclined to remain in service, a person called Kankana natavar was engaged and invested with rank and honour.

The most striking information recorded in the inscription pertains to the incorporation of certain traders into the *Virapaṭṭinam*. Some persons, who were engaged by the Nanadesis in commercial operations and were receiving daily wages for their services, were relieved of that position and incorporated into the *Virapaṭṭinam (Yantantenruṭai Virapaṭṭinattukku vaippa)* and this seems to have been solemnized ceremonially by presenting them with (a special type of) sandals (*paṭukai taṭaiyiṭṭu*). Some houses are said to have been bought with money from the joint stock of the group (*potu ākiya kacu kuṭuttu viṭukoṇṭamaiyil*) and presumably given to them. The merchant *Ceṭṭis* 'who traversed the eighteen lands' are said to have been conferred a special designated group-name (*iññanam cātti kulappeyariṭṭu*) and some privileges. The inscription also seems to refer to the collection of tolls and dues (*pakkal parralum*) and the acquisition of political authority and administrative jurisdiction, presumably by the *Virapaṭṭinam* over the areas included within its limits (*pariṭai mel aracu peruvatākavum*). Some of the matters relating to this *Virapaṭṭinam* could be clarified and elucidated further, if a more successful attempt is made to decipher the relevant inscription and scrutinize its contents more thoroughly.

The existence of another *nagaram* called *Nānātēciya paṭṭinam*, in the environs of Panduvasnuvara, which was the capital city of the principality of Dakkhiṇadesa in the twelfth century, is shown by an inscription of the *Nānādesis*.[30] This particular inscription has come to light from Detiyamulla in the Giritalana Korale, a division of the Devamadi Hatpattu in the Kurunegala District. A *paṭṭinappatai*, 'a roadway to the town' or 'streets of the town' is referred to in the inscription. Besides, a *Nānātēciya paṭṭinam* also is referred to therein, but the details pertaining to it cannot be gathered as much of the text of the inscription cannot be deciphered on account of its badly worn-out condition

A nagaram in Polonnaruwa

A re-examination of the references to the *Vaḷañceyar* and the *Nagarattar* in the slab inscription of the Veḷaikkaras from Polonnaruwa suggests that there was a *nagaram* established by the *Nānādesis* in the environs of that city. Epigraphists and historians, who have edited or commented upon the contents of the inscription, have explained the word *nagarattar* occurring in it as being the name of a mercantile community. In doing so they were only applying to the word a connotation which is attached to it in modern usage, and understandably their explanation has hitherto found general acceptance, and this was especially so because much of the details pertaining to the *nagaram* were unknown till recently.

S. Paranavitana, who edited the inscription concerned in *Epigraphia Indica*, makes the following observations in relation to the *nagarattar:*

> 'The Nagarattars, who are mentioned in this inscription along with the Valañjiyars, were also an influential community of merchants, who, at a time that we are speaking of, had their mercantile establishments not only over South India and Ceylon, but also in Burma and other parts of Further India. The Nagarattars comprised within their ranks another class of merchant called Nānādesa. The Vaḷanjiyar and the Nagarattars are at present represented by the Banajiga and Nagartta communities of the Kanarese country'.[31]

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30. *CTI*, pt. II, p. 15-18.

31. S. Paranavitana, The Polonnaruwa Slab Inscription of Vijayabāhu, Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XVII.

The basic assumption underlying these observations are false and the ideas associated with them require some clarification. Paranavitana's assertion that the Nagarattar "had their mercantile establishments ..... also in Burma and other parts of Further India" is unfounded and misleading. It arises from his confusion of the *Nanadesis* with the *Nagarattar*. It may be observed that the *Nagarattar* are nowhere referred to in the inscriptions set up by the Nanadesis in any part of South East Asia. His claim that they were a sub-division of the *Nagarattar* is unfounded and presumably arises from a serious misunderstanding. Whatever relationship that existed between the *Nagarattar* and the *Nanadesis* was in the reverse order. Contemporary inscriptions, particularly those from Karnataka, testify that the vast federation of long-distance traders called *Nanadesis* sometimes incorporated the *nagaram* within their membership.

In order to determine the true significance of the word *Nagarattār* found in the inscription concerned, one has to carefully consider its different connotations in both medieval and modern times. The name *Nagarattar* is applied to a mercantile community which has attained a position of great influence and high social status in contemporary Tamil society. The corresponding Kannada form *Nagarita* has been applied in the same manner as the name of a mercantile community in Karnataka. But the crucial point regarding our investigation on the *Nagarattar* relates to the semantic changes associated with this expression. Inscriptions recording the activities of mercantile communities in the medieval kingdoms of South India do not convey the impression that the word *Nagarattar* was applied as the name of a community and it would appear that the word acquired that connotation in relatively modern times. One is therefore prompted to find an alternative and a more appropriate explanation of the word on the basis of evidence from medieval epigraphy.

Commenting on the word *nagaram* Kenneth Hall observes:

> 'A *nagaram* is identified in Pallava and Cōl. inscriptions by the words *nagaram*, *nagarattar* and *nagarattom*. The difference among these words is indicated in the inscriptions. For example, in an inscription from Mamallapuram, the *nagarattar* of the *nagaram* established and defined the quarters of their *nagaram* as recorded by the "Karnam" (Clerk) of the nagaram on the orders of the *nagarattom*..... In inscriptional Tamil, Nagarattar

> is the third person plural of the noun nagaram.... Since the collective term *nagarattom*, translated "We the members of the *nagaram*" is usually encountered when reference is made to a group decision or action, it would seem that the *nagaram's* nagarattar were members of a corporate assembly of the *nagaram*. Thus, as with the designations *ur* and *nadu*, *nagaram* indicated both a place and the assembly that administered that place'.[32]

Since the word *nagarattar* was applied in contemporary inscriptions to designate the residents of a *nagaram* and the members of a corporate assembly of the *nagaram*, the most plausible explanation of the word *nagarattar* found in the text of the inscription from Polonnaruwa is that it was applied to a *nagaram* which had an army of *Velaikkaras* in its service. Such an explanation gains support from the presence of the *Nanadesis* in and around Polonnaruwa during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. A short Tamil inscription found in a Siva devale between the North Gate of that city and the Rankot Vihara in Polonnaruwa and which could be assigned to the eleventh century on palaeographic considerations runs:

> *Svasti Srī Bhahicinakayil Bholappaḷḷi*
>
> *Srī patineṇpūmit-tēcit ticai viḷaṅkum*
>
> *ticaiyāyiravar aiññūrruvar pati palli.*[33]
>
> 'Hail prosperity. The Bholappalli of Bhahicanakay is the palli (monastery) of the town of Ticai-ayiravar ainnurruvar,
>
> 'The Five Hundred of the Thousand Directions', the (nana) desis of the eighteen lands, who are famous in all directions'.

The reference to 'the monastery' of the town (*paṭi*) of the *Ticai-ayiravar aiññūrruvar*, as found in this inscription, is of special relevance to the present investigation. The inscription

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32. *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Cōlas*, p. 52.

33. *CTI*, pt. II, p. 12.

seems to record the construction of a Buddhist monastery (*paḷḷi*) in 'the town', *pati*, established by merchants of the *Ayyavole* fraternity. The word *pati* denotes a settlement or a town and many other items, but the context in which it occurs in this epigraph clearly indicates that it is applied to designate a settlement of the *Aiñnurruvar*. The basic question that specifically concerns us is about the character of this settlement. It is useful here to recall the observations of A. Velupillai on the word *pati* as found in this inscription. He says: The word '*pati*' means city. The Vihare is said to belong to the thousand persons and five hundred persons of all directions..... The mercantile corporation obtained charters from reigning monarchs and managed its affairs in cities called Vīrapaṭṭanas in places where it established itself. Most probably a part of Polonnaruwa constituted a *Vīrapaṭṭinam*'.[34] Such an explanation gains support from an interpretation of the same word found in the following extract of the inscriptional preamble of the Chola King Rajendra II (1054-):

> *Natikaḷum nāṭum patikaḷum anekam alittanan*
> *vaḷavanennum molipporuḷkettu vekaven caḷukkiya*
> *ahavamallan.....'* [35]
>
> 'The Chalukya Ahavamalla raged with fury on hearing the reports that the Chola King (who advanced into Rattapadi) and destroyed many rivers, 'districts' and towns....'

What is significant in the foregoing description is the distinction maintained between *nāṭu* and *pati*. If *pati* denoted a settlement which could be described as a village or the settlement of an agricultural community, the distinction maintained in the account between the two terms would be meaningless. As *pati* is represented as belonging to a category of settlements distinct from the *nāṭu* (district), it is clear that it was used in contemporary Tamil epigraphy as a generic term of identification in respect of towns. The *pati* referred to the inscription of the *Aññurruvar* from Polonnaruwa may therefore be recognized as a market town - a *nagaram*. Such a *nagaram* could have been one of the commercial sections of that city. The market areas of Polonnaruwa are described with some degree of poetic exaggeration in

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34. *ibid.*, p. 11.

35. *Cātaciva Pantārattār, A History of the Later Cholas*, pt. I, Annamalainagar,

the *Cūlavaṃsa*. In its account of the constructional work undertaken by Parakramabāhu I (1153-86) the chronicles assert:

> 'Further in this beautiful town the all-wise (King) had different kinds of streets laid down, many hundreds in number, adorned with many thousands of dwellings of two, three or more storeys and provided with bazaars where all wares were to be had and in which day by day there was incessant traffic of elephants, horses and chariots'[36]

That the *Nānādesis* were established in the environs of Polonnaruwa is also suggested by the evidence from two other inscriptions. As seen earlier, the fragmentary inscription from Anaulundava, near Polonnaruwa, which could be assigned to the twelfth century on palaeographic considerations, testifies to their presence in and around the city of Polonnaruwa. Another epigraphic record which provides an indication of their participation in the commercial life of that city is a fragmentary Tamil inscription of the *Āṉṉurruvar*, which has been brought to light through excavations at Polonnaruwa conducted under the auspices of the Cultural Triangle.[37]

The administrative functions of the nagaram

The mercantile towns described as *nagaram* in the Kingdoms of South India seem to have exercised comprehensive administrative rights over the lands and peoples included within their respective territorial limits. Inscriptions recording the details relating to the establishment of such units suggest that the tenurial right, '*nagarakkāni*', which legitimized their autonomy was obtained from the King and his government on the condition that a fixed amount in kind and money from the assessed revenues of the *nagaram* was paid to the King's officials.[38] Except for this obligation, to which the *nagaram* members were

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36. *CV*, 73: 148-150.

37. *UNESCO - Sri Lanka Project of the Cultural Triangle, Ālahana Parivena, Polonnaruwa*, Third Archaeological Excavation Report, 1982; ed. P.L. Prematilleke, p. 128.

38. *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Cōlas*, p. 38, 122.

collectively responsible, they do not seem to have been subjected to any control or interference from any external agency save under abnormal circumstances.

The membership of the *nagaram* and its standing committees seems to have been confined exclusively to members of trading communities, while others were under the jurisdiction (*kīlkkalanaikal*) of the *nagaram*.[39] As administrative institutions the *nagarams* managed the affairs of their market places and exercised administrative rights over the surrounding lands. They regulated and controlled commercial activities and, for the conveniences of traders, provided such services as police protection, street clearance and garbage collection.[40]

They collected two types of taxes, market cesses as well as land taxes, and in some cases their revenue collections were from a large variety of items. The revenue collections of the *nagaram* of Sungantavirtta Colanallur, for instance, were the cesses on flowers sold in the market (*kataippu*), lime trees, dry crops, red water-lilies, areca-nuts, betel leaves, saffron, ginger, sugarcane, the share of the karanam (clerk) who measured the paddy, the tax on looms (*tari irai*), the tax on oil mills (*cekkerai*), the tax on trade (*cettirai*), the tax on goldsmiths (*taṭṭar paṭṭam*), tolls (*vari-ayam*), the tax on shops (*ankaṭippaṭṭam*), the tax on weights (*iṭai-vari*), the fine on rotten eggs (*aḻukal carakku*), the salt-tax (*uppayam*), and cesses on elephant-stalls and horse-stables.[41] In certain instances, as in the case of Mummuticolapuram, the *nagaram* charged fees for using its market (*nilakkūli*) and for police protection (*patikaval*).[42]

The administration of the *nagaram* was organized along the lines of that of the rural assemblies called *sabha* and *ur* and the Committee formula was widely adopted, the *nagara variyam* being the most important among several such standing Committees.[43]

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39. *ibid.*, p. 104.
40. *ibid.*, p. 58.
41. *ibid.*, p. 123.
42. *ibid.*, p. 55.
43. *ibid.*, p. 56.

Another important Standing Committee was the annual Supervision Committee. Such Committees were also appointed for the management of temples, other institutions of public utility and lands. The *nagarams* had under their service persons who performed certain designated functions and were remunerated for their work. The most important among them were those who had the designation *Nagarakaraṇattan*, *Nagarakkaṇakku* and *Nagarak-kaṇkaṇi*.[44] The first of these was applied to the employee who recorded the transactions and activities of the *nagaram* under construction. The *Nagarakkaṇakku* was one who maintained the accounts of the *nagaram* while the *Nagarakkaṇkaṇi* was the designation of the person(s) appointed to supervise the undertakings which were under the purview of some of the Standing Committees of the *nagaram*.

The foregoing description of the *nagaram* administration provides a firm basis for interpreting intelligibly some of the information found in inscriptions recording the activities of the *nagaram* in the island. Yet, it may be pointed out that one cannot expect the administration of the *nagarams* established by the *Nanadesis* in the island to be a mere replica of that of their Indian counterparts, particularly on account of the consideration that even in India the institutions of the *nagaram* were subject to periodic and regional variations.

Some information pertaining to the administration of the *Nanateciya Virapaṭṭiṉam* of Vahalkada is recorded in the inscription set up by the Nanadesis at that locality. It records the names and designations of nineteen persons who are therein collectively described as the *paṭṭiṉam*. Only a correct interpretation of the expression *paṭṭiṉamakaiyum*, 'being the *paṭṭiṉam*', would enable one to comprehend the text of the inscription. The true significance of this expression has eluded the ingenuity and imagination of those who have earlier commented on the details of this inscription. The fact that it occurs in the text just after the names and titles of many individuals in itself suggests that it is used as a qualifying expression describing collectively all those individuals. The only plausible explanation that could be offered about it is applied in relation to the nineteen individuals, implying that all of them constituted the *virapaṭṭiṉam* of the *Nanadesis*.

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44. *ibid.*, p. 113.

In this specific instance *paṭṭinam* does not denote a physically defined area occupied by the *paṭṭinam* or the general assembly of its resident merchants. As it is applied as a term of description in relation to a select group of persons, it is clear the expression *paṭṭinam*, in this specific instance refers to an institution, 'the governing council', administering the *Virapaṭṭinam*. A scrutiny of the designations of its members provides further fresh insights about the administration of the *Virapaṭṭinam* of Vahalkada. The names and designations of those who constituted the *paṭṭinam*, as found in the inscription, are:

1. Cēṭṭi pāli takkiṇa patinen_pūmināṭṭuc_Ceṭṭi Teciya maṇṭai alakiyamaṇavaḷanarana munrutaram-alaik kalaṅkata kaṇta naṭṭuc ceṭṭiyar, otherwise called Tecikku innatan vaṭakkuc ceṭṭiyar.

2. Perrān vītiviṭankan, otherwise called Aṭaikkala naṭṭuc ceṭṭi.

3. Vēlān Ampalakkūttan, otherwise called Virakan.

4. Tevan ūtaiyār, otherwise called Virakan Cēnāpatic-ceṭṭiyar.

5. Ceṭṭi tēvan, otherwise called mūnru taram tiṇkalankata kaṇta aṅkurruvar viṭan.

6. Corutai appan.

7. Ariñci kuḷaiccān, otherwise called Māṇṭai tōṇakkāra kaṇattar paṭṭavarttanam.

8. Kaṇṭan aṭaimān nūrāyiran, otherwise called Cēnāpati aṇṭan.

9. Ceṅkaṇmālar, otherwise called Teci piṅṅan.

10. Vītirācan, otherwise called Vikkan Ilapiyānai

11. Talaittalālukaṇra tēci paṭṭavarttanam.

12. Kaṇṭan Jayankoṇṭān, otherwise called maṭikaiyaṇṭan.

13. Cēṇṭan etirāḷan mallan, otherwise called Tecimatavaraṇam.

14. Cittan cattan,otherwise called Valanceyar Cenapati Valañceyantan.

15. Konan matavan,otherwise called Valankaiyantan.

16. Pattalakan tevan,otherwise called Mumunatakkaliru.

17. Un innatan Teci Cankan.

18. Akkacalai Vikkiramatittan,otherwise called Ilañcinkam.

19. Kanapati Colan,otherwise called Vittam Muriparan.

It is interesting to find that all these persons are referred to with two or more names. It would appear that one of them was a personal name,while the others were epithets conferred on the respective individuals in recognition of their attainments and achievements. It may be assumed that such epithets,some of which signify positions of rank and honour,were conferred on them by the community of merchants in recognition of ones valour, spirit of adventure and special contributions to the cause of the corporate community's advancement.

The epithets applied to the members of the *pattinam* suggests that they were of three principal categories: merchants, warriors and persons responsible for certain specific administrative functions of the town. Among the nineteen names of the list, seven (1, 2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 17) could easily be recognized as those of merchants,while four others had epithets suggesting that they were leaders of armed retainers. A third category consisted of persons (Nos. 10, 12, 18) who could be identified as those responsible for some specific aspects of *nagaram* administration on the basis of their epithets or titles. There were yet five others among the members of the *pattinam*,who cannot be included into any of these categories on the basis of the descriptions given about them in the inscription. As the *pattinam* was established and dominated by a mercantile community it may be assumed that these four individuals were also merchants.

The details pertaining to three individuals, namely, Ilañcinkam, Kantam Jayankontan and Vikkan Ilapiyanai are of the utmost importance as they illustrate certain aspects of the administration of the *nagaram* at Vahalkada. They are described respectively

as *Akkacālai Vikkīramātittan*, *Mati-Kaiyāntān* and *Vītirācan*. The expression *Akkacālai Vikkiramatittan* suggests that Vikkiramātittan, who was otherwise called Ilancinkam, was associated with some work at the *kkacālai*. Commenting on this expression, K. Indrapala observes: "It may mean either that this person owned a mint or that he worked in a mint. In either case it would be difficult to dispute the fact that minting of coins formed one of the activities of some of the members of the South Indian mercantile communities under discussion". However, it is difficult to endorse this view as no specimens of coins issued by the mercantile communities have hitherto been recognized or identified anywhere in the island or in those parts of India which came within the sphere of their activities. Therefore, a more plausible explanation of the *akkacālai* is that it was a foundry where metal workers were engaged in craft production. Such an explanation gains support from the consideration that artisans and other commodity producers were often found in association with mercantile communities at many localities in India. They were among the residents of mercantile towns and were considered as being subject to the authority of the *nagaram*. A Chidambaram inscription, for instance, describes *taccar* (carpenters), *kollar* (blacksmiths), *taṭṭar* (goldsmiths) and *kōliyar* (leather workers) as residents who were subject (kilkalanaikal) to the authority of the *nagaram*.[45] Vikkiramātittan of the *akkacālai* referred to earlier may be considered as a *nagaram* functionary who supervised or organized work pertaining to metal craft production within the limits of the *Virapattinam*.

The expression *maṭikaiyāntān*, 'the superintendent of the customs post', used in the inscription from Vahalkada as an epithet of a person called Kaṇṭan Jayankoṇṭan is significant as one that provides some indication of the character of the Vīrapaṭṭinam. The word *matikai* and its corresponding Sinhala form *maḍighaya*, encountered in Sri Lankan epigraphy from the twelfth century

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45. In the Lankatilaka Tamil Inscription of the reign of Bhuvanekabahu IV (1344-1359) the expressions *ulmaṭikai* and *puramaṭikai* are recorded in connection with revenues from commercial transactions. The Sinhalese Rock Inscription of the same date from that site contains the corresponding Sinhalese forms *atuḷu-maḍighaya* and *piṭa-maḍighaya*, which are translated by S. Paranavitana as inner customs house and outer customs house respectively. *University of Ceylon Review*, vol. XVIII, Nos. 1 & 2, January, 1960, p. 12.

onwards, designated a customs post where tolls were levied on merchandise on transit.[46] The fact that a person described as *Maṭikai-antan* was included in the governing council of the *Vīrapattinam* presupposes that there was a customs post set up within the *Virapaṭṭinam* with arrangements for its proper management. It also implies that the *Vīrapaṭṭinam* exercised administrative jurisdiction over the area encompassed by it and collected tolls at the customs post. It may also be recalled here that in the reign of Queen Lilavati the *Nanadesis* had established a customs-post at Anuradhapura, as noticed earlier.

Another designation, *Vīrācan*, applied to a certain Vikkan Ilapiyanai, also suggests the assignment of certain specific functions of *nagaram* administration to certain individuals. The expression *Vīrācan* translates 'King of the streets' in a rigidly literal sense. But, when it is considered that grand eloquent terms were often used in contemporary literary and epigraphical texts to describe individuals of even lesser ranks, an appropriate explanation of the expression concerned is that it designated the rank of an individual who supervised and organized work pertaining to the streets of the town. On the basis of ascertained facts relating to *nagaram* activities such work could only have been connected with arrangements for security (*paṭikaval*) or street clearance and garbage collection. It may be assumed that Vikkan Ilapiyanai was one who was vested with responsibility by the *Virapaṭṭinam* for organizing and conducting such work.

That the *Vīrapaṭṭinam* at Vahalkada had once exercised the right of collecting taxes from its market-places is suggested by the expressions, *periya kaṭaiyam koḷḷarakavum*, 'they shall not levy taxes on shops in the bazaar', found in a fragmentary inscription recording some details relating to the *Virapaṭṭinam* of Vahalkada. This arrangement regarding the remission of such taxes made by the governing council of the town was a measure of relief in consideration of the fact that the *paṭṭinam* had suffered in consequence of paying a heavy ransom to an individual, as seen earlier.

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46. An inscription dated in the reign of Rajendra Chola refers to merchant groups called *Caṅkarapaṭiyar* and *Vaṇiyar* in connection with an endowment made to a Saivite Shrine at Mantai. As *Caṅkarapaṭiyar*, *Caliyar*, *Vaṇiyar* and *Viyapankal* traditionally described as *nagaram* merchants, it may be assumed that the merchant groups referred to in this particular inscription were in some way associated with a *nagaram*.

A close scrutiny of the inscription at Vahalkada reveals that the *nagaram* of the *Nānādesis* at that locality, unlike most of its counterparts in India, adopted the practice of assigning specific functions of *nagaram* administration to single individuals and not to committees. But there is some reason to imagine that the committee formula was adopted by the Nānādesis of *Ayyampolil paṭṭinam* at Padaviya. There is a general reference to members of the committee who were skilled in accomplishing their tasks (*ciriya tolil variyan*) in the preamble of one of the inscriptions they had set up in the premises of Siva Devale No.1 at Padaviya.

The commercial and cultural activities of the nagaram

That the Nānādesis and their associates played a most important role in the commercial life of the island during this period is suggested by both the distribution of their *nagarams* and other establishments over a wide area in the island and the consideration that all contemporary epigraphic notices on mercantile communities and activities pertain to them exclusively. In the principality of Rajarata corresponding to the northern portions of the island the Nānādesis or their associates had established their *nagarams* at Padaviya, Vahalkada and Viharehinna. Besides, they had their outposts, which were established also in the three principal cities of that principality: Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Mantai. The localities of Detiyamulla, Budumuttava and Galtenpitiya, where they have left behind their inscriptions, were included in the principality of Dakkhinadesa. The first of these sites was in the neighbourhood of Panduvasnuvara, which was the principal centre of dynastic power in that principality, besides being a focal point of considerable constructional and cultural activity. The modern village of Budumuttava covers an area that was included in the medieval town of Magama (otherwise called Vikkirama Calamekapuram in a Tamil inscription).

The composite character of the mercantile elements in the *nagarams* is suggested by the descriptions found in inscriptions recording their activities. It may be assumed that such groups as the *Viravalañciyar*, *Cettis*, *Cettiputras*, *Kavares*, *Kamundasvamis*, *Vaṇiyar* and *Caṅkarapaṭi* referred to in local inscriptions were associated with the *Nānādesis*, otherwise called *Ticai-ayirattaṉṉūrruvar* in their trading operations. The close association of so many groups of traders at *nagaram* towns presupposes close interaction between the Nānādesis, who were long distance traders, and other trading groups, whose activities were restricted to

local and regional commercial oeerations. The tone and contents of the inscriptions at Vahalkada, Padaviya and Viharehinna suggest that the *nagaram* towns in the island were established on the initiative of the *Nānādesis*. Such towns, like their Indian counterparts, were essentially market towns dominated by mercantile groups and were the points of inter-section between two realms of commercial activity, regional or internal trade,and maritime commerce. Such an impression is supported by the description of the commercial activities of the *Nānādesis* as found in their inscriptions.

The preambles of some of the inscriptions of the *Nānādesis* found in South India and Sri Lanka describe the areas of their commercial operations as

(1) the eighteen *paṭṭinam* (market towns)

(2) the thirty-two *vaḷarpuram* (prosperous coastal towns)

(3) and the sixty-four *kaṭikait-tāvaḷam*.[47]

The distinction maintained among these three categories of market centres is of significance as providing an indication of a recognition of three different levels of market-oriented commodity exchanges in the regions where the *Nānādesis* were engaged in commercial activity. Besides, the account presupposes a close link among all these three categories in the form of a closely knit commercial network through the agency of the *Nānādesis*. The *paṭṭinam* were the inland emporia, usually described as the *nagaram*, while the *vaḷarpuram* were port towns which provided the setting for international commerce.

The *nagaram* linked the villages of the surrounding hinterland into a community of exchange and provided the setting for the market-oriented exchange of goods and services. Such centres where merchants, artisans and craftsmen occupied permanent sectors of the community, had streets of permanent shops, where exchanges were continuously transacted.[48] Grain and other surplus products from the village were taken by traders to the *nagarams* market where they were sold either in bulk or retail. Merchants based in the

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47. *Trade and Statecraft under the Cōlas*, p. 142.

48. *ibid.*, p. 105.

nagaram could also collect commodities from nearby villages through their agents,,who would distribute by sale luxury items and other products of distant origin in the settlements surrounding the *nagarams*. Besides, the *nagarams* were visited by itenerants and their caravans laden with commodities of distant origin and the wholesaling of their goods was negotiated in the open markets. As a marketing institution the *nagaram* provided facilities for traders and charged from them levies in the form of taxes and tolls for the services they provided. As noticed earlier, the *Virapaṭṭinam* of Vahalkada had arrangements for the proper maintenance of its streets. It also exercised the power of levying taxes on shops and bazaars (*periyakaṭaiyam*).[49]

An institution which served as an instrument for regulating and controlling commercial activity in the *nagaram* was the *matikai*. The *Virapaṭṭinam* of Vahalkada had as one of its members a person called Kaṇṭan Jayankoṇṭan,who had the designation *Matikaiaṇṭan*, 'the superintendent of the customs-post'. Such a designation implies that the *Virapaṭṭinam* of that locality had within its premises and under its control a customs-post,where tolls were levied on merchandise on transit. As a self-governing and marketing institution the *Virapaṭṭinam* seems to have exercised a supervisory control over all commercial transactions in its markets. The Nānādesis at Anuradhapura are said to have supplied spices and other requisites for an alms-hall,set up there on the initiative of Queen Lilavati, from the proceeds of a *madighaya*, in accordance with an arrangement made by the Queen.[50] The control of *madighaya* by the Nānādesis presupposes that they administered a marketing institution in a commercial sector of Anuradhapura.

The *tavaḷams*, another category of market centres, often referred to in inscriptions recording the activities of the *Nānādesis*or their associates, were, as suggested by the expression *kaṭikai* (period) prefixed to them,periodic markets held on designated days of the week. They are specifically referred to in inscriptions as sites where the traders called *Ceṭṭi* and *Ceṭṭi-*

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49. *CTI*, pt. II, p. 7.

50. Paranavitana has pointed out that D.M. de Z. Wickremasinghe, who edited this inscription,has incorrectly read the expression *madighaya* as *masisaya*. See *UCR*, vol. XVIII, Nos. 1&2, p. 12.

puttirar conducted commercial transactions in accordance with the norms (*dharma*) of the *samayam*, the corporate organization of long-distance traders. It is generally assumed, with some justification, that bands of traders halted with their caravans at such centres for conducting commercial transactions with local traders and commodity producers.[51] It would appear that the *nagaram* and *tavaḷam* were closely connected to each other in a commercial network encompassing internal and foreign trade.

There were instances where the *tāvaḷam* was integrated with marketing cycles of the *nagaram*. One of the inscriptions of the *Nānādesis* from Padaviya suggests that a *tavaḷam* called *Vikkirama-katikait-tavaḷam* was attached to the *nagaram* of *Ayyampolil paṭṭinam*.[52] The fact that the collections from this *tavaḷam* were deposited with the *nagaram* presupposes that the *tavaḷam* was under the control of the *nagaram*. Such periodic markets were probably organized by the *Nānādesis* and other mercantile groups associated with them at several localities in the Island. The evidence from the Tamil inscription of the *Aññurruvar* from Ataragalla is of some relevance in this connection. That epigraph, dated in the regnal year of a Chola King named Rājendra, refers to an institution called *Aññurruvan-ambalam*.[53] This *ambalam*, (generally defined as a resting place) named after the *Aññurruvar* was presumably set

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51. *The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, New Series, vol. I, July-December, 1971, No. 2, p. 108.

52. *CTI*, pt. ii, p. 20. In the published version of the text *Vikkirama-kaṭikaittavaḷam* has been incorrectly read as *Vikkirama-kaṭikaitaruvāḷam*.

53. Much of this inscription is badly damaged and most of the letters are not clear, except those in the first and last two lines of the text. The author had an opportunity of examining the inscribed slab at its present location. The letters representing the expression *Aññurruvan ambalam*, which occur in two places in the text, are however very clear. The inscribed slab was originally found amidst the architectural remains of a structure which may be identified as the monument referred to in the inscription. The principal remains were found to be rectangular granite pillars. These remains were removed from their position in recent times by the employees of the Irrigation Department in the course of constructing an irrigation channel. The author was assisted by Piyatissa Senanayake in his attempt to scrutinize the inscription and examine the archaeological remains (contd.)

up by them and designed for their own purposes. It would appear that it was used as a place of rest, where they halted caravans laden with packs of commodities in the course of their journeys across the country. The fact that it was located in the vicinity of the Ataragalla tank and about a quarter of a mile from a medieval Buddhist monastery, the remains of which are still to be found, is of significance as providing some indication of its historical setting. The site of this *ambalam* appears to have been a central place, a marketing region where the *Aṉṉurruvar* had participated in commercial enterprises.

The *nagarams*, which served as agencies for the penetration of the *Nanadesis* and their associates into the interior parts of the island, appear to have maintained close connections with long-distance traders and merchantmen operating at the sea-ports. The fact that all the *nagarams* in the island were set up by the *Nanadesis* themselves in itself presupposes such close connections. Of particular relevance in this connection is the description of a certain Ariñci Kulaiccan as *Mantai toṇakkara paṭṭavarttanam* which expression translates: "The chief of the guild of the boatmen of Mantai". Such a description of a member of the *Viṟapaṭṭiṉam* is significant as providing an indication of the character of the *Viṟapaṭṭiṉam* of Vahalkada. It illustrates that this particular market town had wide-ranging connections and served as a point of intersaction between two different levels of commercial activity - long-distance trade and regional or internal trade. Ariñci Kulaiccan was evidently a cargo-shipper who organized the transport of merchandise that passed through the port of Mantai.[54] It would appear that the *Viṟapaṭṭiṉam* at Vahalkada had a stake in commercial and transport operations at the sea-port of Mantai and had its interests secured there through 'the chief of the guild of boatmen', who was afforded sufficient recognition of being incorporated into the *Viṟapaṭṭiṉam*, and his agents. Such an arrangement also presupposes that the prosperity of the *nagaram* and its communities depended considerably on the stimulus provided by maritime commerce. Another important factor of consequence to the fortunes of the *nagaram* was the relative stability of dynastic power in the whole region in which the mercantile communities involved with the *nagarams* had their commercial outposts and establishments.

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found scattered at the site. See *South Indian Inscriptions*, vol. IV, no. 1415, for a text of the inscription. The version, however, is defective.

54. Ariñci is referred to as the name of a locality in an inscription of a Chola-Pandya prince.

The meagre evidence that could be gathered from relevant sources suggests that harmonious relations were fostered between mercantile associations and kings. The rulers, who clearly recognized the advantage to be secured through the promotion of commerce, displayed a marked tendency towards extending facilities and privileges for traders whose enterprises had the potential of providing considerable revenue to the government in the form of customs duties on luxury items and taxes on commodity exhanges in markets. The mercantile communities had a proneness to support those who exercised authority with a view to securing facilities and privileges in relation to their establishment and operations. The role of mercantile communities in the political and military enterprises of monarchs and their agents is far from being clear, but there is unmistakable evidence of their mutual interaction and collaboration with regard to the establishment and maintenance of religious and cultural institutions.

The *Nānādesis* and their associates, who secured a foothold in Sri Lanka after the Chola conquest, had interacted closely with Chola military subordinates and other agents in the island. The *Cūlavamsa* even assigns to merchants a role in the Chola conquest of the island. Commenting on the political conditions that prevailed there on the eve of the Chola conquest, this chronicle asserts:

> 'As he wandered from the path of statecraft and was of very weak character, the peasants did not deliver him his share of the produce. As the prince in his tenth year had entirely lost his fortune, he was unable to satisfy his troops by giving them their pay. All the Keralas who got no pay planted themselves one with another at the royal palace, determined on force, bow in hand, armed with swords and (other) weapons..... But the King duped them. Taking with him all his movables, he escaped..... to Rohana..... But in the remaining parts of the country Keralas, Sinhalas and Kannatas carried on the government as they pleased. But a horse-dealer, who had come hither from the opposite coast, told the Cola King on his return about the conditions in Lanka. On hearing this, the powerful (prince) with purpose of taking possession of Lanka, sent off a strong body of troops.'55

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55. This account relates to the reign of Mahinda V (982-1017), who lost his throne at Anuradhapura in consequence of a revolt led against him by his troops.

The foregoing account suggests a close and even intimate relationship between the Chōla King and the particular horse-trader who had visited the island. It may also be assumed that traders who visited distant lands were used by Chōla Kings to obtain first-hand information about the conditions prevailing in neighbouring kingdoms and that decisions regarding military activities against such kingdoms were sometimes taken on the basis of information obtained through merchants. But it is very doubtful that this account in itself could be cited as conclusive evidence in support of the claim that Chōla military expeditions were motivated by considerations of commercial expansion. The Chōla conquest, however, seems to have provided the setting for the penetration of the South Indian mercantile communities into the interior parts of the island on a scale that was unprecedented. As seen earlier, the *Nānādesis* had secured a foothold at Padaviya and Polonnaruwa during the period of Chōla occupation. In the town of Padaviya, where their settlement gradually evolved into a *nagaram*, the *Nānādesis* were closely interacting with Chōla warriors and their other agents in matters relating to the construction and maintenance of the Saivite temple of Iravikula-mānikkaīsvaram, named after one of the epithets of the Chōla King, Rājarāja I.[56] Some of the foundation stones of that monument are said to have been laid by merchants. In an inscription of Rājarāja, found among the architectural remains of that monument, a person named Konnavil Venkaṭan, who belonged to the Nānādesi fraternity of merchants, is mentioned as one among those who donated bronze lamps, bells and other such objects to the temple. Among those who were associated with him in the donation were warriors and Chōla officials.[57]

The *Nānādesis* seem to have gained control over the management of this temple and its endowments in course of time. Their *nagaram* - the *Ayyampoḷil paṭṭinam* - had concerned itself with the administration of the temple and its endowments in the period that followed the fall of Chōla power in the island. In one of their inscriptions the *nagaram* is said to have been dedicated to the service of the temple of Siva. The same epigraph mentions also of a temple of Kāli, which was presumably constructed and maintained by the *nagaram* of the *Nānādesis*. In one of their inscriptions from Padaviya the *Nānādesis* claim to have made images of

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56. K. Indrapala, 'An Inscription of the time of Rājarāja Cōla I from Padaviya', *Epigraphia Tamilica*, Jaffna Archaeological Society, June 1971, p. 32-36.

57. *ibid.*

deities and gifted them to a temple, and this claim is partially confirmed by the recent discovery of a bronze image of a Hindu deity with the label '*Nanadesi*' inscribed on its pedestal.

The *Vaṇiyar* and *Caṅkarapāṭiyar*, two communities generally identified with the *nagaram* in Tamil literature and epigraphy, were settled at the city of Matottam, otherwise called Rajarajapuram under the Cholas. They were found to be interacting closely with an agent of Rajendra Chola, called Cirukulattur Uṭaiyan, in connection with an endowment made to the Saivite temple of Tiruviramiśvaram, a Chola foundation at Rajarajapuram. His donation consisting of four *kaku*, given for the purpose of burning perpetual lamps at the shrine, were distributed among corporate mercantile communities, who assumed responsibility for administering the endowment. The *Caṅkarapati* merchants received a deposit of one *kacu*, while each of the communities called *Vaḷaikkay vaṇiyar* and *Verrilai vaṇiyar* received one *kacu*.[58] Such interaction between Chola warriors and mercantile communities at Mantai and Padaviya suggests a very close connection and a certain degree of inter-dependence between the local Chola administration and merchants in matters of common concern.

The texts of two twelfth century inscriptions illustrate that a similar kind of relationship had existed between the Sinhalese monarchy and the *Nanadesis* and other itinerant mercantile communities. The Nainativu Tamil inscription of Parakramabahu I is of special relevance as it records that King's proclamation regarding facilities provided for merchants. The relevant portion of the text runs:

> '..... the *paradesis* should come and stay at (the port of) Uratturai. They should be protected. The *paradesis* from many (foreign) ports should come and assemble at our port(s). As we have a special concern for elephants and horses and if the boats which bring elephants and horses for us get wrecked, a fourth share (of the cargo) should be taken for the government and the other three parts should be left for the owner. If boats (laden) with merchandise get wrecked an exact half should be taken for the

58. *SII*, vol. IV, No. 1414B.

government and the other exact half should be left to the owner'.[59]

The King's instruction that the *paradesis* from foreign ports should be encouraged to call and assemble at his port and that they should be protected is of particular significance as providing an illustration of a conscious effort on his part to promote commerce. The arrangements stipulated in the edict addressed to port authorities were designed to attract itinerant merchants to the King's ports and win their confidence by providing facilities required for orderly commercial transactions.[60] Another important consideration arising from a scrutiny of the inscription is the King's special concern for the trade in elephants and horses. As these animals are specifically said to have been brought for the King, it may be assumed that he had close and even direct dealings with itinerants who were specialist in the trade of elephants and horses. In the text of the inscription a distinction is maintained between the merchandise brought for the King, and general merchandise. The fact that merchants who brought elephants and horses for the King were allowed to retain three quarters of their cargo in cases of ship-wreck, while others who brought other merchandise were allowed to retain only a half of the cargo in such a situation, reveals that special concessions were allowed to traders who had dealings with the royal court. The development of Ūratturai (Kayts) as a centre of elephant trade and a port visited by itinerants provide an indication of the measure of its increasing importance in the twelfth century.

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59. The translation given slightly modifies the version given by K. Indrapala. The word *snekam*, used in the inscription to characterize the King's attitude towards elephants and horses, has the connotation 'friendship'. It implies that the King had a special preference for those animals. Because of this I have substituted the words 'special concern' for 'liking' found in his translation. Besides, the word *paṇṭaram* has been rendered here as 'government' in preference to the word 'treasury' used by Indrapala. In the South Indian inscriptions word *paṇṭaram* is usually found when references are made to the King or the government. For a text and translation of the inscription see Indrapala, K. 'The Nainativu Tamil Inscription of Parakramabāhu I', *UCR*, vol. XXI, No. 1, April 1963, p. 63-70.

60. Indrapala's assertion that the edict of Parākramabāhu I (contd.)

The expression *paradesi*, applied to mercantile communities in this inscription, could be explained in two different ways. It is often used as a term of description in relation to aliens and people of foreign origin. It was also applied in epigraphy, during the period under consideration, to designate a community of traders affiliated to the *Nānādesis*.[61] Some inscriptions recording the activities of the *Nānādesis* refer to the *paradesis* as one of the many mercantile communications affiliated to them, while others refer to three categories of merchants called *svadesi*, *paradesi* and *nānādesi*. The *paradesis* referred in Kannada inscriptions were probably a South Indian mercantile community which specialized in foreign trade and were affiliated to the *Nanadesis*. The Nainativu inscription of Parakramabahu presumably applies the expression *paradesi* to designate the members who belonged to such a community. Such an impression seems to be supported by the consideration that the *Nanadesis* claimed in some of their inscriptional preambles to have traded in elephants and horses and the fact that some of their South Indian *nagarams* had in their markets elephant-stalls and horse-stables.[62]

The Anuradhapura slab-inscription of Queen Līlavati (1997-1200, 1209-1210, 1211-1212), one of the consorts and successors of Parakrama-bāhu, also provides evidence about the close relationship that existed between the merchants and the royal court. It records:

> '..... For the purpose of giving alms to the full satisfaction of the poor that throng into Anurādhapura from various quarters, she caused

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at Nainātivu "was addressed to the foreign traders who frequented the port of Urazturai" is wrong and is doubtless based on a misunderstanding of the tone of the contents of the inscription. It was obviously addressed to the port authorities, who were expected to regulate commercial activities, to levy duties and to administer the port.

61. *Paradesis* are mentioned along with a large number of other communities as being associated with the *Nanadesis* in a few Kannada inscriptions. See *Epigraphia Carnatica*, vol. VII, p. 158-159; *Annual Report on Epigraphy* (Madras) 1918, p. 174.

62. *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Cōlas*, p. 123.

> an alms house with the title of Pala-balavi medhavi to be established, protected and maintained. And for supplying spices and the like / required / for it, she caused the *maḍighaya* called *pala balavi medhavi* to be built in the neighbourhood of the alms house by the Nanadesi merchants.'.[63]

The above passage implies that the *Nānādesis* were involved through the instrumentality of the court in the maintenance of an alms-house established at the behest of the Queen. They were responsible for supplying spices and other requisites for their charitable institution from the proceeds of the *maḍighaya*, which they established, and for this purpose the monarch made a perpetual endowment of four *yaḷas* of fields, thirty serfs and hundred and fifty oxen and buffaloes. The text of the inscription has much wider implications than have ben recognized by the editor of the inscription. The administration of the 'customs house' and the endowment are two points that require clarification and rather detailed consideration. The fact that the *maḍighaya* was constructed by the *Nanadesis* and that spices and other requisites for the charitable institution were to be supplied from the proceeds of the *maḍighaya* by the *Nanadesis* suggests that the *maḍighaya* was an institution that was left under their management. The management of a customs-house by a mercantile community presupposes that it had some jurisdictional control over an area in which the *maḍighaya* was located. It would appear that the *Nanadesis* were in control of a marketing institution, a *nagaram*, in a commercial sector of Anuradhapura. Lilavati's endowment, therefore, had the effect of recognizing and legitimizing the status which the *Nanadesis* had attained in that sector. The consideration that the endowment made by the monarch was intended to be a perpetual one also seems to reinforce the conclusion that the settlements of the *Nanadesis* at Anuradhapura was considered to be of a permanent nature. It is not clearly stated in the inscription who the recipients of the endowment were. But the tone and contents of the inscription, and particularly the consideration that the endowment was made for the purpose of providing supplies to the alms-hall instituted by her, and the fact that the *Nanadesis* provided these supplies, suggest that they were the recipients of the grant and that they assumed responsibility for the administration of Lilavati's endowment.

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63. *EZ*, vol. I, p. 177-182.

The *Nānādesis*, who are generally described in their inscriptions as adherents of a Hindu religious sect and promoters of the values and ideals associated with Hinduism, appear to have interacted closely with Buddhism and its institutions in some of the localities in the island where they had their settlements. A brief inscription from Polonnaruwa, which could be assigned to the period of Chola occupation on palaeographical considerations, refers to a Buddhist foundation in a settlement of the *Aññurruvar (Aññurruvar pati paḷḷi)*. The *Valañciyar* and the *nagaram* had participated in some capacity in the arrangements made for the protection and maintenance of the Temple of the Tooth Relic at Polonnaruwa. They presumably negotiated the terms of the arrangement with the army of the *Velaikkarar*, whose services were sought by Thera Mugalan and some of the ministers of state during a period of crisis in the city. A Buddhist institution with which the *Nanadesis* were very closely associated was the *Aññurruvan paḷḷi* of the town of Magala, which is referred to in their slab-inscription from Budumuttava. The expression, which means 'the monastery of the Aññurruvar', is applied in the inscription as the name of an institution. The fact that a monastery was named after the mercantile community called *Aññurruvar* suggests that it was either founded by the *Aññurruvar* or that they had undertaken the responsibility of protecting and maintaining it as the *Velaikkarar* had done in the case of the Temple of the Tooth Relic at Polonnaruwa. Such an undertaking on their part presupposes that they were established at Magala. The architectural remains of this institution are covered by a mound almost by the side of an irrigational channel of the Magalla tank. It may also be mentioned here that the *Aññurruvan paḷḷi* was situated in very close proximity to the Hindu Shrine called Vikkirama calameka isvaram.

The *nagaram* and its military establishments

The inscriptions of the *Nānādesis* found in the island are of unusual interest on account of the information they provide on the military establishments of the *nangram* to an extent not encountered in the epigraphs they had set up elsewhere. Two of the many communities referred to in inscriptions as their associates could clearly be recognized as military communities. They are *aṅkakkarar* and *Koṅkavaḷar*.[64] the *Koṅkavaḷar* are referred to only once, whereas the *Aṅkakkarar* are mentioned in the inscriptional preambles of the records pertaining to the three *nagarams* of

64. *CTI*, pt. II, p. 112.

Padaviya, Vahalkada and Viharehinna.[65] Other groups, the *Vīrokkoti*, referred to in at least four inscriptions, may also be recognized as one associated with military functions.

The word *Koṅkavāḷar*, which is applied in the inscription from Vahalkada as the name of a community, literally means 'the swordsmen of Kongu'.[66] It is probably that this particular group of warriors derived their name from the fact that they were originally recruited from the predatory tribes inhabiting the land called Koṅku-tēcam. That the *Aṅkakkārar* held a much more important position in the activities of *nagarams* in the island is suggested by the contents of the inscriptions from all the three localities of Padaviya, Vahalkada and Viharehinna. They are referred to as the associates of the mercantile communities in all the inscriptions from these sites. Besides, they are found to be associated with some prominent merchants, and the *Nakaravar* in some deliberations pertaining to the town at Padaviya. The word *Aṅkakkāran*, which is found in the Kannada and Tamil inscriptions of the *Nānādesis* and other mercantile communities, is generally defined as one applied to soldiers and particularly those employed as body-guards of Kings, princes and others of social consequence. The word *aṅga* in most Indian languages denotes body or limb, and the expression *aṅkakkāran*, which is derived from it, would normally have the connotation of a body-guard, guardian or companion in arms. Such an explanation is supported by the evidence from one of the inscriptions from Tiruvannamalai recording the views undertaken by a number of individuals that they would sacrifice their lives in defence of their chieftain, who was styled *Malayaman Sarrukkuṭṭatan* and *Vanniyarnayan*. The epigraph concerned refers to a person called *Añcatan* as an *Aṅkakkāran*, implying thereby that *Aṅkakkārar* were in actual fact armed retainers of chieftains and others. A more interesting consideration and one which provides fresh insights about the military group of *Aṅkakkārar* is the description of *Añcatan Aṅkakkāran* as a *Velaikkāran*.[67] Such

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65. I cannot find any reference to *erivīrar* or *munaivīrar* in any of the inscriptions in the island.

66. The Vahalkada inscription of the *Nānādesis* makes a reference to the *Koṅkavaḷar*.

67. The text of the inscription recording the vow runs: *Svasti Śrī. Iraiyuran periya uṭaiyan Irājarāja Cetiyarayan Velaikkran Ancatanana Aiyan Aṅkakkāranen....* which translates: 'I, Aiyan *Aṅkakkāran* otherwise called Añcatan, a *Velaikkāra* of Rājarāja Cetiyarayan, the *Periya Uṭaiyan* of Iraiyur...' *Annual Report on Epigraphy*, Madras, 1934/35, p. 61.

a description implies that the *Vēḷaikkārar* or some of them were *Aṅkakkārar*. Therefore the *Aṅkakkarar* mentioned in the inscriptions of the *Nānādesis* in the island could be recognized and identified as *Vēḷaikkarar*.

The *Vīrakkoti*, referred to in at least four inscriptions recording the activities of mercantile communities, may be recognized as a military community closely associated with the functions of the *nagaram*. The expression *Vīrakkoṭi* meaning 'the flag of heroism' occurs in the inscriptional preamble of the Chola King, Vīrarājendra, in connection with a description of the celebration of military victory. The King is therein credited with having prominently displayed 'the banner of heroism' and 'the banner of dedication'. The expression undoubtedly had a military connotation, as could be seen from the context in which it is used in the Chola inscription, and when it is applied as the name of a community, that community may justifiably be recognized as a military community. In the inscription from Vahalkada they are said to have been involved in matters relating to the resurrection of the *Vīrapaṭṭinam*. The boundary posts of the town also seem to have been laid by them.[68] There is some indication in inscriptions that the *Vīrakkoṭi* assumed responsibility for engraving on stone texts recording the transactions of the mercantile communities and the *nagaram*. It would appear that they were assigned certain important functions of *nagaram* and its administration.

It may be assumed that the military communities associated with the mercantile communities occupied permanent sectors of their *nagaram* and were employed to provide a measure of security vital for inspiring public confidence in the *nagaram's* ability to protect merchants, their caravans and public institutions from the depredations of brigands. Besides, bands of armed retainers

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68. The relevant portion of the text reads: *Kallum palakaiyum naṭṭinom paṭinenpumi Virakkoṭiyom*; "We, the *Virakkoṭi* of the *patinenpumi* ('the eighteen lands') have set up stones and planks". Presumably these were set up as boundary markers of the *Virapaṭṭinam*. The expression *'patinenpumi'*, which is often found in the inscriptions of the mercantile communities, may have been used in this particular instance as a term of reference in relation to the *Aññurruvar* who are sometimes described as *patinenpumitteci ticai-ayiravar annurruvar*, "The *Aññurruvar* of the thousand directions, the (Nana)desis of the eighteen lands". It is clear from the tone of the expression that the *Vīrakkoṭi* were performing an important task for the *Vīrapaṭṭinam*.

accompanied merchants and their caravans laden with packs of commodities on their journeys across the country. The increasing influence of military communities in the affairs of the *nagaram* seems to be reflected by their involvement in the decision-making processes and institutions of the *nagaram*. Warriors, who seem to have constituted an important element in the population of the *nagaram*, appeared to have secured for themselves certain honours and privileges normally not conceded to other non-mercantile sectors of the population. Unlike the artisans, craftsmen and other commodity-producers affiliated to mercantile communities, who were assigned a subordinate status in the *nagarams*, the warriors seem to have enjoyed a status that was on par with that of the merchants and played a key role in the organization of activities. Their roles and status entitle them to be described as the allies of the mercantile communities, placed on an equal footing in matters of social status and ceremonial functions. Such an impression is supported by the consideration that they were the only non-mercantile group in the *nagaram* to be incorporated into its organization and assigned responsibilities relating to the undertakings of the *nagaram* in addition to their primary function of protection. It may be recalled that the *Virapaṭṭinam* of Vahalkada had four warrior chiefs in its membership. The *nagarams* in the island seem to have displayed a tendency towards increasing militarization owing to certain social pressures operating in the peculiar Sri Lanka context. Such an impression gains support from an examination of the symbols and other representations of figures carved on some of the inscribed slabs of the *Nānādesis*. The representations of weapons such as swords of two different kinds, knives, bow, arrow, trident and *kōlam* are depicted at the bottom of the inscribed slab of the *Nānādesis* at Budumuttāva.[69] The depiction of the figures of weapons along with some of the symbols associated with mercantile communities on the inscribed slabs of the *Nānādesis* at Budumuttāva, Detiyamulla and Viharehinna has to be conceded some significance. The representations of figures found on inscribed slabs are symbolic and generally indicate the social function traditionally assigned to the people concerned with the transactions recorded in the text of the inscriptions, the principal exceptions being the instances where they are representative

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69. The representations of a knife, spear and dagger are found engraved on the slab at Detiyamulla. The figures of a sword and some other weapons are also traceable below the inscribed portion of the slab at Viharehinna.

of values associated with imprecatory notions. The representations of weapons along with symbols associated with mercantile communities suggest a very intimate connexion, almost amounting to kinship or a spiritual bond between them and the groups of warriors, and presumably the latter were formally incorporated into the corporate mercantile associations and their institutions.

The references to army units and 'army commanders', as found in the inscriptions, provide insights into the nature of the military establishments associated with the mercantile communities. The term *senapati*, which is used exclusively to designate the leader or commander of an army is applied in the Vahalkada inscription as a designation in respect of three individuals: (1) Virakan Cenapatic Cettiyar, (2) Kantan Ataiman Nurayiran, otherwise called Cenapati-antan, and (3) Cittan cattan, the *Valanceyar Cenapati*. Another military leader was Konan Matavan, who is described as the leader of the *Valankai* troops. The specific reference to so many persons of the rank of *senapatis* presupposes that the *Virapattinam* of Vahalkada had in its service three or four army units placed under the charge of separate leaders.

Army units were to be found even at the *nagaram* of *Ayyampolil pattinam* at Padaviya. Such a unit, called *Kalikanap-perumpatai*, is referred to in one of the inscriptions from Padaviya.[70] As evident from its name, this particular army unit was named after Kali or Durga, one of the favourite deities of the *Nanadesis*. Another inscription from Padaviya makes mention of 'the second army allied to the *nagaram*': *(i(n)nakaram iranṭam mitturukanappataiyarum)*, thereby implying that the *nagaram* had more than one army unit within its premises.[71] The *Valankaip perumpatai*, which is referred to in connection with the *nagaram* of Padaviya, was to be found also at the *Virapattinam*, described as a *mangaram* in the Viharehinna epigraph.[72] The presence of army units having the same name at both those *nagarams* is of some significance. The Tamil expression *perumpatai* is the equivalent of the *Mahatantram*, a Sanskrit expression, which is applied in the slab-inscription

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70. *CTI*, pt. I, p. 55.

71. *CTI*, pt. II, p. 19.

72. *CTI*, pt. I, p. 56.

of the Velaikkaras as the name of their army. Another expression which has military connotations is *Viramakalam*, referred to in the slab-inscription of the *Nanadesis* from Budumuttava. As lexicographers define the term *Viramakalar* as warriors belonging to an army unit named after *Viramakali* the expression *Viramakalam*, found in the Budumuttava epigraph, may be recognized as the name of an army unit. Such a conclusion is re-informed by the consideration that there was at the *nagaram* of *Ayyampolil pattinam* of Padaviya a unit called *Kalikanap-perumpatai*, which was named after the goddess Kali, who is represented as the goddess of war in Hindu mythology.

It now remains to consider the relationship between the mercantile communities and the *Velaikkarar* at Polonnaruwa. The *Velaikkarar* assumed custodianship over the Tooth Relic Temple in that city on the request of Mahathera Mugalan and the ministers of state. This was done in accordance with a resolution adopted at the assembly of the *Mahatantram*, 'the great army' of the *Velaikkarar*.[73] Among those who were invited for this assembly were the mercantile community called *Valanciyar* and the *Nakarattar*. The presence of the *Valanciyar* and the *Nagarattar* is easily explained if the *Mahatantram* of the *Velaikkarar* is considered as an army in the service of the *nagaram*. The plausibility of this explanation is supported by the fact that armies called *perumpatai* were in the services of the *nagarams* of Padaviya and Viharehinna and the consideration that warrior chief, who was a member of the *Virapattinam* of Vahalkada, is described as 'the Senapati of the Valanciyar' (*Valanciyar Cenapati Valankaiyantan*). It may also be recalled here that the military community of *ankakkarar*, referred in the inscriptions from Padaviya, Viharehinna and Vahalkada, could with justification be identified as *Velaikkarar*.*

S. PATHMANATHAN

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73. For a detailed discussion of the contents of the slab inscription of the *Velaikkaras* from Polonnaruwa, reference may be made to S. Pathmanathan 'The Velaikkarar in Medieval South India and Sri Lanka', *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, vol. II, No. 2, p. 120-137.

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THE BUDDHA AND PHILOSOPHICAL MODELS

A philosophic understanding of some of the traditional stories, legends, fables, etc. which were woven around the Buddha and his disciples, makes explicit an unique characteristic. That is, the Buddha's remarkable ability and mental power to construct and manipulate multifarious models towards explaning human conditions. The Buddhist tradition, which was firmly established on commentaries, sub-commentaries, fable-writing, grammar-works, etc. it appears neglected this central conceptual area. The present communication attempts to make explicit this neglected territory, briefly, by way of drawing forth some of the models that the Buddha appears to have manipulated to explain away human misery, human conditions, etc. Out of numerous models that are recorded in the Nikaya literature we choose for demonstration four. They are (a) the model involving moral-causality; (b) the model envisaged as regards Angulimala; (c) Akkosaka Baharadvaja and the model contemplated there; and (d) the model explicit as regards Kisagotami.

A moral-causality

To begin with, we shall take up the key idea in the Buddha's first ever sermon, the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*,[1] and the men to whom it was addressed and explained.

His enlightenment, according to the Buddha, revealed to himself that human misery was something definitively caused. And if so, the removal of the cause must necessitate the removal of the effect, namely, human misery also.[2] He thought of 'rolling forth' this professed idea to the five hermits by way of a model which is called "truly morality-oriented causality" (*paticcasamuppada*).[3] One may, however, argue that the *paticcasamuppada* itself is the Dhamma and therefore an issue pertaining to a model

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1. The *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*.
2. The *Samyutta Nikaya*, ii. 20, 21.
3. The *Samyutta Nikaya*, ii. 26 (see also my "Is the Buddhist Notion of 'Cause Necessitates Effect' (*paticcasamuppada*) Scientific?" in *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Wisconsin, U.S.A. (1879) vol. I. no. 2, p. 7-22.

is an extreme *tour de force*. We, of course, differ here. The Buddha's apprehending the *paticcasamuppāda* (causality) by way of his unique Enlightenment is one thing and his trying to explain human misery by way of some moral ideas is another thing. Accordingly the two of them cannot be thought of as similar. They are significantly different. That is to say, conceptually, they are different. The first notes "experiencing *paticcasamuppāda*" by the Buddha, the fully enlightened one. It is not only something which is logically limited to himself but is also not theory-bound. Whereas the second of these emphasizes an objective conceptual model which can be made use of for an explanation or an exposition.

Our scrutiny here relates to the latter category only. In respect of the five hermits, the Buddha had to explain his concept of morality-oriented causality (*paticcasamuppāda*). So he adopted a model to drive home his idea. The following items clearly demonstrate the view about the Buddha's causal model:

(a) That depending on craving, there arise volitional actions;
(b) That depending on craving, there arises clinging;
(c) That depending on clinging, there arises becoming;
(d) That depending on becoming, there arises birth;
(e) That depending on birth, there arises decay and death, and so on.[4]

Stated in an abstract form, the above causal examples point to the following: "whenever X, then Y; whenever not-X, then not-y." But, then, what is the logical nature of the relation between (i) craving and clinging, or (ii) birth and decay-death or (iii) X and Y? Employing the conceptual tools of his day, the Buddha explained the above to the five hermits with considerable success. Philosophically looking at this explanation, the Buddha's causal model appears to have made explicit the following characteristics:

(1) a kind of one-one relation,
(2) a kind of moral-necessary relation.

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4. The *Samyutta Nikāya*, ii. 25.

To unpack the issue, it is a morality oriented one-one necessary (causal) relation which holds valid in either direction. There is no space for exceptions; a kind of necessary causal relation which is neither true nor false empirically. It must be emphasized that the Buddha's causal model is different from commonsense causal models, or the Aristotelian causal model or the Newtonian causal model, or the quantum causal model or any other. Characteristically it is a kind of morality-oriented causality and not an empirically-oriented causality that the Master explained to the five hermits. The Buddha's words are as follows: *tathata avitathata anannathata idappaccayata ayam vuccati... paticcasamuppado*. The central idea here is as follows: "objectivity, necessity, conditionality, regularity, unassailability, sacrosanctity."[5] The morality-oriented causal model is clearly seen here. If one does not understand this covert point, the exercise certainly amounts to a wrong pursuit. By way of this model, the Buddha successfully explained the origin and cessation of human suffering to the five hermits, namely, Kondanna, Baddiya, Vappa, Mahanama and Assaji. (ii) These hermits symbolised a psychological type similar to a reasoning type with a significant difference. That is, a reasoning-type-cum-faithful type. It is not clear whether modern psychology permits this kind of categorization. That is, the five hermits were once faithful to the Buddha during the latter's early struggle toward attainment of Buddhahood, though they disagreed afterwards and deserted him in the process. Accordingly, the five hermits represent a dual type, namely, a combination of a reasoning-type and a faithful-type. The five hermits certainly belong to the reasoning psychological type but with an important difference. That is, no sooner were they convinced as to the nature of reality of things taught by the Buddha than they gave up their own scepticism. Embracing the Dhamma is emphasized here. They were not worrying themselves too much over the issue. In this sense, the five hermits were differently placed in comparison with Culamalunkyaputta, who was worrying too much over ten empty issues (*ayyakata* theses).

Angulimala

However, the Buddha worked out a different model to bring Angulimala under control and order. Certainly, the Buddha did not preach the morality-oriented causality to Angulimala towards

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5. *ibid.* ii. 26.

achieving this goal. In this context it is tempting to note the change of conceptual technique to suit the person's own character and individual psychology. The change of model and technique can be stated as follows: Angulimāla's only aim was to complete the proposed garland of thousand fingers for his teacher. He needed only one more of such fingers to make a total of one thousand fingers, when he met the Buddha. Obviously he ran hurriedly and precipitately to vaniquish the Buddha and obtain the finger he needed so that the garland would be complete. Surprisingly for rough Angulimāla, he failed to catch up with the Buddha, who appeared to be moving away faster than himself. Angulimāla, being very tired, as he was running all day long, brought himself to a halt and roared, "Stop, you monk." To which the Buddha replied, while himself in motion, "I have stopped; now you stop." The Buddha's reply baffled and confused Angulimāla. For the Buddha, while himself moving all the while, had uttered "I have stopped; now you stop." Ironically, it was Angulimāla who had stopped running himself, while the Buddha, moving all along, had expressed the view that it was he who had stopped. Only an intelligent person would understand the point that the Buddha was driving at. As Angulimāla was an intelligent man himself (*viññu*), he at once grasped it. That is that the Buddha had extinguished all craving (hence 'stopped') but Angulimāla himself had not extinguished all craving and therefore needed to do so (hence "you stop"). Interpreted in a modern psychological sense, Angulimāla symbolises a psychological type, a person endowed with incomparably great intelligence, and therefore, hardly needing much instructions to spark off understanding. It must be noted, however, that this anger-psychological-type is very different from the witty-psychological type represented to a great extent by the Buddha's chief disciples, namely, Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna. According to the Nikāya literature both of them were not only endowed with incomparably great intelligence but also wisdom dominated their total personality in the sense of wit, peace and good speech. Angulimāla, certainly lacked peace, wit and good speech. In respect of Angulimāla, the Buddha did not preach sermons involving morality-oriented-causality, as was the case with the five hermits. To say the least of it, now we see two significantly different techniques being made use of by way of two models by the Buddha regarding the five hermits, and Angulimāla.

Akkosaka Bharadvaja

When one's mentality is muddled up with anger, one does not see things in their proper perspective; and one becomes as restless as a night-fly before a lamp. Akkosaka Bharadvaja was plagued by this mentality. Moreover, this classic story shows how skillfully the Buddha used Bharadvaja's restlessness and anger to help him comprehended a doctrine which goes against his own anger-stream.

Akkosaka Bharadvaja, on hearing his brother's converson to the Buddha-Dhamma, lost his temper and ran to Veluvana to take revenge from the Buddha. Having gone there, he rebuked and reproved the Buddha. However, once Bharadvaja ceased his bombardments, the Buddha calmly put the following question to him: "Akkosaka, if you invite a group of Brahmins to a meal at your house, and if they do not turn up, what would you do with your cooked meal?" Akkosaka replied that he would himself eat the entire cooked meal. Then the Buddha replied, "Akkosaka, in the manner that you yourself would relish alone what you had prepared for your invitees, who refused your meal, you should take back with you what you have uttered against me here just now. For nothing of what you said of me is applicable to me, nor would I accept any of it." No sooner were these words said than Bharadvaja calmed himself and felt regret over the vicious words he had flung against the Buddha. In modern psychological terminology, Akkosaka Bharadvaja symbolises the anger-type, similar to Angulimala. Bharadvaja's restless nature was cleverly manipulated by the Buddha to help him get rid his own anger-stream.

Kisagotami

The model that the Buddha manipulated regarding Kisagotami is very different from the models just mentioned. Having seen her only child dead at a tender age, Kisagotami suffered shock and developed a kind of loneliness and emptiness. With the dead body clutched to her breast, she wept and called for help to bring her son to life again. When people directed her to see Buddha, the great physician (*sallakatta*) she ran to him. Certainly, the Buddha welcomed her. Besides, a distinct prescription was given by the Buddha. That is that she should bring him some mustard seeds from a house in which no one had died. In the pursuit of this prescribed medicine to bring life back to her dead

son, Kisāgotami found no such life-giving mustard seeds in any hut, or house or mansion, though she travelled to and fro. For there was no house to which she went where someone had not died. Slowly but surely Kisāgotami realized the fact that the Buddha had wanted her to grasp through self-verification, namely, that death is implied in all human existence. There was no serious sermon delivered by the Buddha to Kisāgotami here; secondly, there was no intellectual discussion relating to the nature of a human person, suffering, misery, emptiness, alienation, etc. The technique simply involved self-grasp through self-verification. This model and the technique are different from the models and techniques which are noted earlier in the communication.

Conclusion

Having dealt with some of the conceptual models that the Buddha supposedly manipulated, we may conclude that there are other similar models yet to be noted and made explicit. Some such models are evidently found in fables and legends woven around such characters in the Nikāya literature as Ālavaka, Rajjumālā, Vāsetti, Patacārā and Nandakumara. These fables, legends etc. need to be understood and examined philosophically and it is timely that a comprehensive study of such be undertaken. Overtly or covertly, a dissimilar conceptual model appears to be embedded in every such story, legend or fable.

A.D.P. KALANSURIYA

BOOK REVIEWS

An Introduction to the Buddhist Philosophy of the State
By Rev. Kamburupitiya Ariyasena, Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Peradeniya (Lake House Printers) Rs. 15; foreign: US$2.

The book under review represents an attempt by Prof. Kamburupitiye Ariyasena to elucidate a much neglected aspect of early Buddhist political thought encountered in the Pali Canon. The author's intention is to discuss the impact of Buddhism on Brahmanical political speculations. The customary procedure among scholars has been somewhat different in that they sought to interpret the characteristic features of Buddhist political philosophy in the light of the major tradition of Hindu socio-political ideology. In this short but poignant study, the author tries to give an exposition of the Buddhist philosophy of the political state, discussing among other things, the origin of kingship as narrated in the *Agganna Sutta* of the *Dighanikaya*, the source of political authority, the purpose of political organization, the factors motivating political revolutions, and the aspirations of the Buddhist political ideal state.

Prof. Ariyasena's research is of great contemporary relevance in that it shows how the validity of political authority can be derived from two fundamental sources - the common consent of the people and the unfailing observance of the ten principles governing lawful political behaviour. *Kutadanta Sutta* and *Cakkavatti Sihanada Sutta* show how supreme legislative power vested in the people can be successfully exercised to secure maximum social justice. The author also focuses attention on how the *Cakkavatti Sihanada Sutta* analyses the phonemenon of economic instability and social degradation. At a time when fundamental human rights and liberties are sacrificed on the altar of oppression and violence, this study could enlighten the reader on how an ideal political machinary can be established on Buddhist principles such as popular consent, *ahimsa* and other dharmic virtues.

In elaborating the Buddhist attitude towards state-craft, Rev. Ariyasena has exercised little restraint to show where writers like A.S. Altaker have succumbed to misleading interpretations regarding the Buddhist theory of kingship. The author

undoubtedly displays his firm grasp of Buddhist thought and the principles of democratic politics. Perhaps this study would have been more successful had he devoted some time and attention on the two other related subjects, namely, the Buddhist theory of jurisprudence and political psychology. The ethical basis of the Buddhist political state deserves greater emphasis.

However, it is very encouraging to see that the author has depicted the state as the seat of moral authority. This no doubt is an essentially Buddhist perspective. Rev. Dr. Ariyasena's book can be very useful to scholars and laymen alike.

G.D.K. NANAYAKKARA

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Caste Conflict and Elite Formation: The Rise of a Karava Elite in Sri Lanka, 1500-1931.
By Michael Roberts, Cambridge University Press, 1982.
xxx, 382 p.

In 1969 Michael Roberts read a paper entitled, "The ise of the aravas" before the Ceylon Studies Seminar at Peradeniya. A decade later the study has grown into a book - a fascinating book, which all Sri Lankan scholars should read and indeed possess. In some respects the book extends beyond what you would expect from the title, exploring wide-ranging subjects, including the nature of caste in modern South Asia, the concept of kingship among the Sinhalese, caste interaction and rivalry in Sri Lanka, particularly in the nineteenth century, and factors contributing to the rise of a Sinhalese *elite* under colonial rule. As the author himself puts it, "... it is believed that the achievements of the karava *elite* will provide a window to the Sinhalese world in metaporphosis." (p.16)

The most successful section of the book is undoubtedly the author's description of "the emergence of an *elite* of capitalists and western-educated men and women among the karava people in Sri Lanka during the colonial era". (p.1) He points out that "Many of these karava families rose from relative obscurity. In pre-British times only a handful of karava *mudaliyars* or chief headmen

possessed a significant degree of status and power." (p.1) By the end of the nineteenth century the situation was very different. Roberts points out that 84 percent of the arrack renters of the Western Province between 1858 and 1899 were karava. So were almost 40 percent of owners of graphite mines at the turn of the century. (p. 109-110). Statistics on the principal Sinhalese buyers of waste land from the Crown in the period 1860-1889 show that over 80 percent of the total purchase price was paid by karavas (Table 9, p. 310). Statistics from 1917 and 1927 are brought in to show that over 50 percent of the plantation owners were karava (Tables 10 and 11, p. 311-315) By the early twentieth century the karava almost accounted for over 40 percent of the major Sinhalese owners of urban property in Colombo (Tables 13 and 14, p. 318-319). This was indeed a remarkable achievement for a group estimated at being numerically only 8.5 to 10 percent of the total Sinhalese population (Table V, p. 303).Roberts' account is no mere collection of statistics. He brings the entire story to life by interspersing accounts of the rise of individual families (eg., the saga of the de Soyzas of Moratuwa, p. 102-106)

Where debate could arise is in Roberts' explanation of why the karavas produced a disproportionate share of the Sinhalese *elite* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His argument revolves around the concept of 'marginality'. To Roberts, who follows Bruce Kapferer in this regard, a marginal group is not just a group in the periphery but one which is "routinely and systematically exposed to contradictory processes" (p.15). He argues that the karavas,like the salagamas and the duravas,were involved "in the dialectical process of integrative and separative forces". (p. 285) The karavas - mostly recent immigrants to Sri Lanka - had not become involved in ritual services to the goyigama caste or to the temple. They also did not control much paddy land. The occupation that they were "constrained to take up" was assessed low in pollution terms. The conversion of many of them to Catholicism by the Portuguese encouraged separative tendencies. "Had Portuguese rule continued,it is likely that this fissiparous,less-acculturative role would have led the karava to a position that was broadly analogous with that of the Maronite Christians in the Lebanon or the Armenians in Asia Minor" (p.3),

As it was, most karavas returned to Buddhism,but the location of the karavas on strategic positions in the coast and the identification of many karavas with the "occupational culture of fishing," led them to greater westernization and commercialisation amongst them in contrast to both the goyigama and the non-goyigama castes

of the interior. They developed individual initiative and entrepreneurial skills. Many of them made the transition to trading and carpentry, both of which were becoming lucrative in the nineteenth century. Those who had some capital then moved into revenue farming (especially in arrack), the purchase of crown land and of plantations and the acquisition of urban property. Roberts argues that the karava possessed a caste conciousness at least as far back as the early nineteenth century: "... the karava could not escape their karava-ness." (p. 212). This is why the karava elite campaigned against disabilities imposed on their caste. "... The karava capitalist was not the Homo-Economicus of the West. His economic goals were devoted towards socio-political ends or moderated by such ends."(p. 290) This *elite* thus began to adopt the status symbols and style of life of the goyigamas and as a result became further integrated into Sinhalese society. There is much to be said for this explanation. Roberts has often marshalled an impressive collection of evidence to bolster his thesis. However, some linkages are less well supported than others. For instance, Roberts eventually places a great deal of emphasis on the "occupation culture of fishing" as a factor which enabled the karavas to outdistance others; but the evidence he presents is all based on contemporary (twentieth century) studies, and even there, the evidence is somewhat ambiguous in respect to the development of individual entrepreneurship as opposed to traditional norms of co-operation. Roberts himself mentions that people of other castes were also fishermen and that all karava were not fishermen. The evidence he presents would justify a hypothesis. It is not sufficient to accept the explanation.

There is perhaps a more fundamental objection that might be raised. Roberts himself gives considerable weightage to westernization and commercialisation as factors that enabled the rise of the karava *elite*. There is plenty of evidence that goyigamas and other castes of the westernized sea-board played a major role in indigenous economic activity in the nineteenth century. There is little doubt in my mind that if Roberts had simply compared the groups along the sea-board with one another (excluding even those of the same caste in the interior of the low country), there might well have been a different perspective - one in which marginality theory would have somewhat less validity. Indeed, debate will no doubt rage as to whether it was the new karava *elite* rather than the karava as a whole who were "marginal" and had developed caste-conciousness. There are many instances of *elite* groups appealing to kinship and caste groups to strengthen their hand and thereby creating a new social cohesion among such groups.

To be fair by the author, however, one has to review the book he has written rather than suggest that he should have written a different one. Roberts' book goes beyond the emergence of the karava *elite* in the economic sphere. He charts the social impact of this development. The karava *elite* began to challenge goyigama predominance in Sinhalese society. In this respect the karava sometimes joined hands with salagama and durava spokesmen; but Roberts is careful to show that the picture is more one of caste-interaction than of a coalition against the goyigamas. The establishment of separate Buddhist *nikayas* as a response to goyigama efforts to monopolise higher ordination among the *sangha*, the intense lobbying for honours and distinctions from the British government, and the quest for political representation are all well discussed in Chapter V. (p. 131-129)

Throughout his work Roberts has made extensive use of the work of a number of scholars. All such instances are fully acknowledged in the body of the text or in his numerous foot-notes. Indeed, such acknowledgements are so meticulous that they sometimes tend to obscure Roberts' own prodigious research. There are few instances where Roberts' use of jargon tends to slow the reader. For instance he defines marginality, "as a property of structural processes in which the marginal group, institution or activity must be seen in relational terms in its fullest interaction with other components in the polity," (p. 233). However, such instances are rare and the book as a whole is well written. The text is illustrated with seven maps and sixteen tables. The glossary (p. xv-xxiii) is of limited use to Sri Lankan readers, but anyone with an interest in delving further into the subject would find the select bibliography (p.341-363) extremely useful. I personally found the list of caste pamphlets and caste literature, 1864-1930, provided in Appendix 3 (p. 336-340) quite valuable. The Index (p. 365-375) is adequate and the separate index of place names (p. 386-392) makes it easier to use the book as a reference work. The printing and binding are excellent.

In sum therefore, Michael Roberts' work represents a significant contribution to Sri Lankan scholarship. If it stimulates controversy and reexamination of some long held assumptions, it would be squarely in the tradition of his previous work.

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