Origins of Sinhala Culture

S.D. de Lanerolle

306·095493
De

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Mr James T. Rutnam
From the Author S. Paranavitana
29/3/76.

ORIGINS OF SINHALA CULTURE

862

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Ancient India

River in the Jungle (English translation in preparation)

Religions and Societies

Nirvana

Ancient Persian Empire

Buddhist Chronology (English translation in preparation)

Kurunegala and Gampola Periods in Ceylon History

Noble Eightfold Path and its Background (English translation in preparation)

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

ORIGINS OF SINHALA CULTURE

S. D. de LANEROLLE

LAKE HOUSE INVESTMENTS LTD
PUBLISHERS
41 W. A. D. Ramanayake Mawatha
Colombo 2

ASOKA TRADING CO.
183, Bambalapitiya Rd.,
COLOMBO 4.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

306.095493
De

First Published 1976

© S. D. de Lanerolle

Printed in Sri Lanka
by
Lake House Printers and Publishers Ltd
41 W. A. D. Ramanayake Mawatha
Colombo 2

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

This book is respectfully dedicated to
MRS SIRIMAVO BANDARANAIKE
Prime Minister of Sri Lanka
whose unyielding courage and personal charm
have made her a worthy representative
of that ancient race
the early beginnings of which
are discussed here.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

'Origins of Sinhala Culture' is the title of the English translation of 'අපේ සම්භව ඉතිහාසය' by S. D. de Lanerolle. The book had a mixed reception when it first appeared in 1950. Most readers frowned at the audacity of the author who dared to describe their cherished beliefs as false and of no substance. Nevertheless none of them tried to cross swords in defence and the reviews of the book were non-committal. In the meantime, some dons of the University of Ceylon recommended the book to their students for supplementary reading. To some extent this was a fulfilment of the Author's desire that serious thought should be given by local scholars to research on the ancient history and the social systems of India and Sri Lanka.

With the publication of this translation I am glad that the author is introduced to a larger circle of readers particularly in the West where scholars are interested in the study of Asian Culture. However, as the book is intended for the general reader, only a List of References and an Index are provided.

I have done my best to render the Sinhala into English that is simple and idiomatic. However, I must confess that my translation falls far short of the elegance of the language of the original to which Professor O. H. de A. Wijesekera bears testimony in his Foreword.

My thanks are due to Dr Wimal Dissanayake of the University of Sri Lanka for reading through the typescript and making a number of useful suggestions and to Mr Hema Amarasinghe, Manager, Publishing Department, Lake House Investments Ltd, whose cooperation made this publication possible in spite of the prevailing difficulties in book publishing.

K. D. de LANEROLLE

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

FOREWORD

On the invitation of the author I read his book entitled අපේ සමාජ ඉතිහාසය (History of Our Society). It was of such absorbing interest that I was impatient until I read through the entire book. I wish to mention a few of the ideas that dawned upon me.

At the outset I must say that of the books written on the subject in Sinhala no other book provides the reader with such delightful reading. This is solely due to the author's distinctive ability as a thinker. The book is replete with fascinating ideas that hold the attention of the reader. But, then, is a book of this nature to be judged only by the delight it provides to the reader? Hence I directed my attention to the many learned expositions of the author. The thorough and systematic analysis of the origin and the spread of culture and mythology, the position of theistic religions and the views on Yakkhas, Nagas and Devas are very striking. The author's discussions of the 'Kingdom of the Enlightened', Socialism and Religions disclose his sound knowledge of critical analysis. The development of cultures under the influence of certain features of the environment is explained remarkably well.

It should occur not only to me but to any other reader what a vast knowledge especially of Sociology the author should possess to write a book of this nature. Only a handful of students among us have made a critical study of both the historical and the prehistoric Aryan institutions and obtained such an insight into Buddhist literature and the history of Sri Lanka. I am confident that this book will be an incentive to Sinhala authors to produce works of real value on this subject.

The most important of the author's conclusions is his contention that the cradle of Sinhala Culture is the civilization of the Persians. One need not accept his hypothesis before one is satisfied that such a proposition is consonant with one's own studies and researches on the subject.

To conclude, I offer my congratulations to the author for having introduced a useful and fascinating subject with a book written in such simple and elegant language.

HEMACHANDRA WIJESEKERA

University of Ceylon
Peradeniya
28. 3. 1950

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

PREFACE

In writing this book I have two aims in mind; firstly, to show the reader how in the past the people of this Island gained great benefits by the successful effort they made to model their lives according to the teachings of a great humanist who saw the suffering of beings in this world and found its cause and the remedy for its eradication; secondly, to disclose to those who are in search of historical data on Sri Lanka and India, a neglected but rich field for research on Indo-Ceylon history.

It is the aim of history to record the experiences and the activities of man. It would seem at a casual glance that the evolution of man, the physical changes of the Earth, his home, and the development of his thinking process have no bearing on history. However, recent researches have revealed their importance in discovering the nature of the early stages of human life. For that reason, I have touched briefly on those aspects of man's existence too.

The aspirations and the achievements of ancient men have come down in conjunction with their lives and in course of time turned into present day religious beliefs. I have to show that these beliefs have no substance. The Holy Bible which comprises the history of the Jews is the foundation of the Christian religion. Jews who had no knowledge of the universe and the early stages of human development wrote that the earth was created by their god Jehovah about five thousand years ago. They thought that this creation was chiefly for their benefit. Therefore, all civilizations that were inspired by the teachings based on such a concept never recognized the equality of man. They even hated and suppressed those who held that view. So, it must be admitted that the worshippers of a god or a pantheon of gods cannot be fair to everybody alike. Supplicating even to a lesser god like Skanda (Kataragama) or to any other god with gifts (bribes?) to obtain favours to promote one's own selfish ends or to thwart another's claims is, to say the least, mean and reprehensible. In such a society, it is almost impossible to build up an enlightened culture.

It is because of these theistic religions based on self-interest that man is tempted to corrupt practices. If each of these religions is

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

examined individually it is clear that they are but reflections of corrupt society.

If studied intelligently much knowledge can be derived from history to guide the course of human endeavour. There are occasions in history, where men of wisdom have tried to make use of the knowledge so derived for the good of mankind.

Amongst them, the greatest was Lord Buddha. As a result of His efforts the common man was able to enjoy his rights for sometime. Yet, in course of time, as man failed to view history with the same intellectual vision, even His teachings were debased and polluted.

History is called the life story of a society. Just as a biography gives a description of one's life, so does history give an account of the activities of a society and the results emanating from such activities. A society can claim to possess a history only after its members have trained themselves to work in harmony and with intelligence. In the past there were many such societies in the world. Among them, the successive generations of societies which were helpful in shaping the Sinhala Culture will be dealt with briefly in these pages.

The ancient Sinhalas were sufficiently advanced to lay claims to a history. Sinhala society held an enviable position among contemporary societies. The special attributes of that society were preoccupation with all activities that led to man's advancement and the non-involvement in warlike pursuits for conquest and domination.

In this book chronology has been reckoned according to the Christian calendar. Although from very early times an accurate method of reckoning years had been followed in Babylonia and Egypt, the same cannot be said of other countries. It can be surmised that even the Greeks had not started the method of reckoning the year according to the movement of the sun until about the year 300 B.C. The Romans began to follow this system about the year 45 B.C. and India possibly about the year 57 B.C. What prevailed in India earlier was the system of reckoning the year by the lunar month. In writing this book I have taken the years connected with Lord Buddha and Emperor Darius from the lunar calendar of India and converted them into the solar calendar to fall in line with the reckoning of the Christian era.

I have made use of stories about gods found in Buddhist lore and incidents mentioned in Bible stories for the reason that these stories

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

contain facts relating to the early life of man although certain historians have rejected them as mere myths.

I have examined a large number of books by eminent authors for the purpose of collecting data for this work. I express my gratitude to them all.

Among others I am deeply grateful to Professor O. H. de A. Wijesekera of the University of Ceylon who extended a special favour by making a number of corrections in the original Sinhala text and writing a Foreword to it, a translation of which is reproduced here.

S. D. de LANEROLLE

183 Galle Road
Colombo 4

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

CONTENTS

	Translator's Note	ix
	Foreword	xi
	Preface	xiii
1	The Ancient World	1
2	Man	6
3	Civilization	9
4	The Sakyas	25
5	The Yakkhas	30
6	The Devas	32
7	Theistic Religions	37
8	The Kingdom of the Enlightened	40
9	Decline of the Ariya Magga	46
10	Socialism	48
11	More about Sakka, the King of the Devas	51
12	Beginnings of Sinhala Society	57
	References	71
	Index	73

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

1

THE ANCIENT WORLD

The progress of a country depends on its favourable location, the fertility of the soil, the water supply and the enterprise of its people. In the modern world it may be said that the last three factors are more important than the first. But, in the ancient world, it was the location of a country more than anything else, that influenced its progress. The ancient cultivator with his primitive implements did not like to settle down in a country with a heavy rainfall where the jungle tide spread with rapidity. Even if he settled down in such a place he had to lead a hard life facing the rigours of nature. Even today men living in countries covered by large forests are not free from savagery.

Countries with climates of extreme cold too, do not seem to have promoted human progress. Therefore, it is not surprising that the countries which prospered in the ancient world were those that had very little rain and were desert like for the greater part of the year. They were mostly the West Asian countries and the adjoining countries of Africa and Europe, situated within the temperate zone. Like an enormous crocodile that took the East Mediterranean Sea in its mouth, this territory extended past the Indus and along the Ganges as far as the Bay of Bengal. When one takes Greece and Asia Minor as the upper jaw, Egypt as the lower jaw, Assyria and Babylonia as the head, Media and Persia as the body, and North India as the tail, the length of this giant crocodile is about four thousand miles. It is also proportionately wide. When you consider the modern civilized world, this territory seems a very insignificant part of the earth. Nevertheless, this part of the earth was the cradle that bore the present civilization in its infancy. Its climate was grim but like a good parent it provided sustenance and protection to human life. There is no other part of the world that may be compared to this territory which went from one extreme to the other in respect of climate and physical features.

On account of a number of large mountain ranges at the centre with innumerable subsidiary ranges that branch off from them, this

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

territory is divided into a wide variety of regions. Owing to the scarcity of rain the majority of these mountains are denuded of vegetation. But, as most of them are situated above the snow-line, their peaks are eternally covered with snow. In summer, streams of water from the melting snow create the most beautiful oases in the dry and parched land. Lands bordering the Mediterranean, the Black and the Caspian seas, are highly fertile because they get a fair amount of rain which by no means is heavy.

A number of large rivers flow through this ancient world. Of these, the four rivers the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tigris and the Indus are of special significance. Egypt, one of the best known countries of the ancient world, is situated in the valley of the Nile. This river starting from Lake Victoria Niyansa on the equator flows northward to enter the Mediterranean Sea, covering a distance of nearly four thousand miles. The heavy rain in the highlands of Abyssinia causes a flood in the Nile every year, destroying the grain eating pests, and subsides leaving the debris of alluvial mud in the fields making the land fertile and ready to be cultivated. The farmer does not have to contend with the jungle tide as in the countries with a heavy rainfall. The flow of the river is perennial and it is possible to supply water to the fields throughout the year. Sunlight, so essential for the ripening of corn, falling from cloudless skies, brings in abundant harvests. Ancient Egyptians thought of their country as a bequest from the gods and called it 'The Gift of the Nile'.

As their means of livelihood came to them with the greatest of ease, the people of Egypt began to spend more and more of their spare time to discover and invent things that could make their lives more comfortable and meaningful. Step by step, they climbed up the ladder of civilization.

The waters of the Nile became not only the life blood of the nation but also their chief means of communication. One of the main impediments for the development of the Ancient World, so full of mountains, deserts, rivers and seas, was the lack of easy means of communication. From early times, people who lived on the sea-board of the Mediterranean Sea learnt to convert those disadvantages to their gain. Although it is not possible to say which country invented the first ship for voyages by sea, it must have been in the Mediterranean Sea that the newly invented ship sailed for the first

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

time. When this mode of transport came into use among nations, the Mediterranean Sea became an aid instead of an obstacle to communications. Therefore, for those who lived in the Nile valley it was possible to have easy intercourse with nations that lived in the Mediterranean seaboard. This led to the interchange of knowledge and learning resulting in the rapid progress of the Egyptians.

In Mesopotamia, the valley of the twin rivers Euphrates and Tigris, like the valley of the Nile, was suitable for the habitation of ancient man. A fertile soil, a ready supply of water and a bright sun were nature's gifts to this region. These two rivers with their combined length of over 3000 miles were like two highways from the distant mountains to the Persian Gulf. Even the people who lived far inland and nowhere near the sea were able to trade and exchange knowledge by communicating with India through the Persian Gulf, and by journeying along the river courses and across the Syrian deserts to the distant countries of the Mediterranean. Thus these two rivers were like two highways that connected the countries of the West and the East.

In North India, the valley of the Indus which flows through an arid region helped to sustain an ancient community with a noteworthy civilization. Although the Indus civilization was not as old or famous as the great civilizations that sprang up in the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, sites of very ancient and developed cities were found in places like Mohenjodaro and Harappa. The Indus valley was less fertile than the valleys mentioned above but it was big enough to hold a population many times larger. The value of the Indus as a means of communication was second to none. A great highway of communications between the East and the West Asian countries lay to the north of the river along its tributaries while the main river provided an easy means of communication to the people in regions bordering the Indian Ocean to reach the central Asian countries. The large rivers Syr Darya, Amu Darya and Tarim helped, like the Indus, to promote intercourse between the Western and the Eastern countries of Asia.

The attention of the ancient civilized men was drawn to the valley of the Ganges, a region of heavy rainfall, only after strong iron weapons and implements were available. Therefore, the civilization that spread there, is not so old. In the far east, the continent of China has a number of large rivers. As their valleys too were very

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

fertile, ancient civilizations existed there. But, China does not seem to have influenced the development of Sinhala culture to any extent and it is not intended to give an account of the Chinese civilization.

Modern man who is reluctant to walk a few miles and would rather fly in an aeroplane, drive in a car or travel by train, may think that because his counterpart in ancient times did not possess such vehicles, he too stayed confined to his home. But, when you consider the origin and the spread of ancient civilizations, it is clear that such a surmise is entirely wrong. As at present, in the past too, there was close connection between the countries of the East and the West. In very ancient times it was possible for the sailors of the Mediterranean seaboard to reach countries around the Indian Ocean by making use of a canal that was cut from the Nile to the Red Sea. Another trade route starting from the Mediterranean and running past the cities of Antioch and Aleppo extended as far as the Persian Gulf.

Generally, a desert lying between two cities is considered to be an obstacle for intercommunication but the ancients were not daunted by such a situation. It was never a difficult task to cross the desert with loads of goods after they were able to tame the desert camel which is able to live without water continuously for a number of days. The most eminent land route in the ancient world started from Syria on the Mediterranean and stretched as far as China passing great deserts, high mountain ranges and large rivers. From this route which ran along the Pamir Plateau, several routes branched off towards India. This trade route was able to carry civilization to Central Asia and the South Asian countries such as India and Sri Lanka. Another branch of the same trade route passing through Asia Minor extended as far as Abydos harbour.

Sri Lanka was then considered to be a rich and powerful country situated at the tip of the Indian peninsula which divides the Indian ocean into two. There is no doubt that Sri Lanka was the most important halting place on the sea routes across this largest expanse of water in the ancient world. A ship sailing from the West to countries bordering the Bay of Bengal or the Far East must arrive in Sri Lanka. It was the same when sailing from east to west. As the ancient ships could not sail against the direction of the wind, Sri Lanka was the most convenient

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

place for them to lay anchor until the monsoons changed. Naturally, Sri Lanka became a popular resort with foreign merchants who found a hospitable and peace loving people in a land which could provide them with ample quantities of food, a copious supply of drinking water and a healthy climate. Merchants from many lands must have come to Sri Lanka especially for costly pearls from her seabeds, precious stones from her reputed gem mines and spices such as cinnamon from her sunlit gardens—commodities that were more abundant here than in any other land. The island had all the requisites for the growth of an ancient civilization, the contributory factors being its highlands in the centre, wet with the rain that fell during two seasons of the year, a network of rivers stretching out in all directions like the cross threads of a spider's web and its large plains where dry climatic conditions prevailed.

There was still another factor that brought Sri Lanka into prominence. For the protection of their sea routes the great empires that wielded power from time to time could not but recognize the important strategic position of Sri Lanka, the key port in the Indian Ocean. Sumeria, Assyria, Babylonia, Media, Persia, Greece, Rome, Magadha, South India, China, Arabia, Portugal, Holland and Great Britain were some of the powerful kingdoms which at different periods in history traded with Sri Lanka having obtained concessions from her under treaty arrangements that were mutually advantageous.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

2

MAN

It was not only in the region which was described as the "Ancient World" in the previous chapter that man first settled down. Scientists prove with concrete evidence that even as far back as 50,000 years, there were men who were similar to us in appearance and actions in many parts of the earth. They lived on this globe scattered in places of diverse climatic conditions. Their remains can be found even in countries situated as far apart as France, China, Java, South Africa and America. It is impossible to say how many millions of years man took to reach that stage of development. The evolution of the present day man was the result of the effort made by an infinitely small living organism with no power of locomotion floating on water in the form of a speck of jelly, to adapt its life to face the changes in its environment. During an immeasurable length of time, for millions and millions of years, this living organism according to the experiences it gained, not only developed its body but also recorded in its mind all the successful devices it used in its fight against nature and learnt to impart this knowledge to its progeny.

Thus man has been able to dominate all other creatures on the earth. Everything, both spiritual and material which he has left us as a legacy may be called our "culture". Before man was civilized his life was no better than that of animals such as the monkey and the ape. Living on trees for a considerable length of time, eating leaves, fruits, insects, little birds and such tiny animals man has not left anything behind for us to form an idea of the type of life he led in that epoch.

For some reason or other when man came down to live on the ground he got accustomed to use his hind legs for walking and the two forelegs for other actions. With practice spread over a period of hundreds of thousand years he has perfected these movements. His limbs and other parts of the body have developed in the best manner suited to one who lives on the land surface of the earth.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

As a result of his participation in a variety of activities, man began to develop an intellect. In course of time his brain surpassed that of any other animal. It is said that this species of animal got the name 'man' because he had a 'mind' which no other animal possessed. Also it can be surmised that he got the name 'man' because he had two hands which no other animal had. In Latin which is an Aryan language, the word 'manus' means hand.

One of the titles given to the ancient royal dynasty of the Persian Empire was 'Hakka-Manusia'. The royal dynasty of 'Manu' so often mentioned in Sinhala literature must be the same dynasty of Hakka-Manusia. In course of time, with divine powers ascribed to him, King Manu became the famous 'Indra', the chief god of the Aryans. Vishnu is called 'Saka Atha'. It is said that all beings including the devas originated from Vishnu. The Manu dynasty must have got the name Hakka-Manusia because they worshipped Vishnu. Saka (wheel) was the emblem of royalty in ancient times. So it would seem that the word 'Sakka' or 'Hakka' was used synonymously to denote royalty in the ancient world.

Apart from this it was the practice among the ancients to name an animal or an object after some special feature that is prominent in the animal or the object so named. Before the brain matured sufficiently to speak of a mind, man must have used names to distinguish one animal from another and in doing so must have called himself 'man' meaning 'he who has hands'. Even so, in course of time, if other animals too began to possess hands like us, their brains too would have developed like the human brain. Because of their versatility man used his hands, instead of his mouth, to fight against his enemies and to gather his food.

Man began to use stones as weapons when he learnt that a powerful blow could be dealt to an animal, with a stone taken into his fist. Realizing that a stone with a sharp point and of a size that could be conveniently taken into his hand was not so easily procured, he got into the practice of making his stone weapons by striking stone against stone.

It must be said that man's progress became swift with the use of weapons. As men of this epoch did not know the art of writing, they did not leave behind any books or inscriptions to enable us to know the nature of the life they led. After the lapse of a long period of time, the fantastic stories of our origin which primitive

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

man too must have believed, have come down to us in the form of myths chiefly about gods, and later committed to writing. Man's habit of converting ancient lore into myths still continues. Even at the present time which is supposed to be an enlightened age, we know that many people on account of their blind faith and the desire to exalt their religions, promulgate absolutely untenable falsehoods as true and abiding.

On account of man's readiness to accept such ideas and the effort of the clergy of all faiths who think only of the gain accruing to them as long as history is withheld under the guise of myths, a device to buttress the shaky religions from falling, the history of the ancient man will remain shrouded in mystery. Although the bigot attempts hard to place certain beings of the distant past on a pedestal and worship them as gods with divine powers, primitive man himself has left his mark in an indirect way for us to know about his real state.

Archaeologists have been able to find out important facts about the primitive people after excavating mounds of accumulated remains they found under large trees or near stone caves where primitive men spent their lives. Men of the stone age lived scattered over different parts of the world. Some vanished making no further progress. Some continue to live in the same state up to date. A few that advanced left an invaluable legacy of discoveries and inventions as an immortal symbol of their achievements before their final disappearance from the earth, while others still continue in their forward march along the path of progress that started thousands of years ago. Although primitive men lived practically in every part of the world it was only those who lived in particular places who were able to follow the path of progress. This must be attributed to the location and the climatic conditions of each of these places. Most of the countries which produced the background that was instrumental in shaping our lives until we came to the present level of development, were situated in that part of the world surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

3

CIVILIZATION

It is difficult to decide now which of the civilized groups of people who lived in the distant past deserves the first place of importance chronologically. Some historians think that the Minoan civilization of the Island of Crete in the Mediterranean is the most ancient. The Egyptian and the Sumerian civilizations too compete for the same honour. When the status of ancient civilizations is judged by their remains the Minoan civilization stands pre-eminent. But, the evidence available is insufficient to confirm the fact that it originated and developed in the island of Crete itself. Until such evidence is forthcoming it may be surmised that its civilization came from outside. Were it so, there must have been another civilization in a neighbouring country much older than the Minoan civilization. Nor is there sufficient evidence to show that the Minoan civilization originated in Egypt or in Sumeria. If it is not indigenous and also if it did not come from Egypt or Sumeria, it is worth while to find out whence it came. Even in respect of the civilizations of Egypt and Sumeria it has yet to be proved that they were built up by those respective people who lived there in the distant past.

It is but reasonable to think that the people who lived in large river valleys and islands which were easily overwhelmed by forest and swamp, fought a losing battle against nature. The formidable forces of nature could have been tamed only by those who had first settled in the neighbourhood of small rivers and gradually acquired the necessary skill and training to control nature. Therefore all civilizations that sprang up near large rivers can be surmised as having come from outside and taken root there. The truth of this becomes evident when one looks at the New World.

In North America, the best region in respect of climate and fertility is the valley of the Mississippi. Nevertheless the single ancient civilization of North America was born in the dry and unfertile volcanic region of Mexico and similar places to the south of it. The original inhabitants of the large and fertile valleys of

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

St. Lawrence and the Mississippi were still living in savagery until the Europeans developed the country. In South America too, in spite of the large and fertile valleys of the Amazon and the La Plata, ancient civilizations were found only in dry and less fertile Peru and such other places. The Europeans landed in South America about five hundred years ago but still they have not been able to develop even a hundredth part of the Amazon basin. The descendants of its early inhabitants are still leading a primitive life akin to savagery.

There are many reasons for the existence of very ancient civilizations in countries such as Asia Minor, Khurdistan, Media and Persia which have an adequate rainfall, a temperate climate and a large number of rivers. This region surrounded by enormous mountain ranges and divided into a number of plateaux by several rows of mountains has a number of volcanoes within it. That there is some connection between volcanoes and man's progress is evident from the fact that many of the countries with early civilizations have volcanoes.

This earth and the creatures living on it came into being by accident. What is meant by accident is that they came into being not by anybody's design but as a result of the natural law of cause and effect. The scientists say that billions and billions of years ago, a star moving in close proximity to our sun had caused an explosion on the surface of the sun resulting in parts of it being thrown into space and, in course of time, cooling down to form our solar system. Thereupon, on breaking up of the atoms in diverse ways, the birth of elements, animals and plants occurred. Again it is by accident that the correct temperature contributory to life was found on this earth. That temperature cannot be found either too far away from the sun or too close to it. That is why it is difficult to say whether there is any other planet in our solar system where civilized life exists. Even among animals living on the earth, only man is civilized. That civilization too is the result of his effort to remember and establish a large number of occurrences which too may be described as accidental. Man differs from the animal not because of a soul he is supposed to possess and which is denied to the animal, but because of this intellectual development called civilization. It would seem that such a development can begin easily in a land of volcanoes. For the purpose of obtaining fire, an all round aid for man, the people of volcanic regions did not have to wait until the

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

methods of creating fire were discovered. They must have obtained fire from gaseous springs which were continually burning and made use of it long before the people of other regions in the world.

From the Buddhist and the Bible stories, it would seem that human civilization first began in such a region. The ideas about Deva-Lokas (heavenly abodes of gods) and Apāyas (hells of eternal fire) so prominently depicted in Buddhist books could not have occurred to people living in regions other than those with snow-capped mountain peaks and volcanoes of belching fire. Many are the instances mentioned in Buddhist literature of burning hells of molten metal, and of red hot ashes and burning embers falling from the sky.

The Bible story is that Adam and Eve lived at first in Paradise and became civilized through contact with the Nagas (Serpents). Later they were expelled from Paradise by angels who were armed with shining swords. It may be surmised that these golden haired angels with shining swords in their hands belonged to an Aryan group of people who drove away the earlier settlers of Semitic origin in Paradise. Paradise is probably Persia. A similar story found in Buddhist books is as follows: At the beginning, the abode of the Asuras was on the top of Mera. Later, the Devas who had entered the place on peaceful pretext saw their opportunity when the Asuras were heavily intoxicated with liquor one festive day, and hurled them to the bottom of Mera and took possession of the abode of the Asuras. Both these stories bear testimony to the story of how the Aryans conquered Persia after driving away the Semitic tribes.

Buddhist literature says that the world of the Devas is situated on the top of Mera. Some writers try to identify the great Mera with the Pamir Plateau which is to the north of India. But they have no worth-while evidence to show that the Mera mentioned in books was situated there. The Pamir Plateau is a barren region in no way suitable for the habitation of people. The stormy winds that blow from the four corners have made the place so desolate that not even a mark of human occupation is found there, not to speak of any vestiges of ancient civilization. On the other hand, Mera mentioned in Buddhist literature is a fertile region comprising large cities adorned with magnificent palaces etc. In Persia, the fertile plateau named Mervdasht protected by a number of mountain ranges and watered by rivers Bendamir and Pulwar

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

is an ideal place for the birth of an ancient civilization. Archaeologists have recently unearthed a buried city of the early settlers who lived there about five thousand years ago. The wonderful ruins of the two Persian cities of Pasargadae and Persepolis are also located in this region.

The Buddhist Sakyas called these Aryans who lived in Persia by the name of 'deva'. They may have been so called because they worshipped a single god (deva) named Ahura-Mazda. Although Ahura-Mazda was a god of the Aryans it may be that he was not known by the same name among the Vedic Aryans.

Scholars have given different meanings to the word 'Ahura-Mazda'. Some of them are 'living knowledge', 'he who is eternal and all knowing' and 'the almighty that gives life'. Vishnu of the Vedic Aryans resembles Ahura-Mazda of the Persians. Modern scholars think that Vishnu does not appear to be a powerful god among Vedic Aryans, probably because his name does not occur very much in the Vedas. However, it can be said that he was the forerunner of all other gods because he is known by names such as 'Sipi Vishta' (giver of life).

As the Vedic Aryans were a warlike people always intent on conquest, they might have devoted more of their time to the worship of Indra, their god of war. But there is nothing to show that they considered Indra as a more powerful god than Vishnu. Indra was worshipped as yet another manifestation (avatar) of Vishnu. As Vedic gods have sought Vishnu's help on critical occasions there is every reason to believe that the Vedic Aryans thought of Vishnu as all powerful. The reason for the strained relations between the Iranian Aryans and the Vedic Aryans could have been the latter's neglect of the worship of Vishnu giving preference to the worship of lesser gods such as Indra. Of all the gods mentioned in Rig-Veda, it is only Vishnu that is included in the Trinity of the Hindu religion. During the age of the Upanishads, once again Vishnu becomes a force among the Indian Aryans. The reason for such a change may be attributed to the spread of the ideas and the power of the Persians in India.

Vishnu or Ahura-Mazda (to call him by his Persian name) is an unborn god. He is the Living Force. He is the Living Knowledge. He is the Universal Truth. There was a belief among the ancient Aryans that those who realized the Universal Truth were born in

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

this world from time to time to lead men on life's journey. Prince Siddhartha was one of them. So he was called Arahat Buddha. It may be surmised that whom Emperor Darius calls Ahura-Mazda is Lord Buddha. There is no reason why he who acknowledges the oneness of the Universal Truth and the Almighty God should not acknowledge the oneness of the personage who has realized the Universal Truth and the Almighty God. Therefore, a certain group of Aryans considered Gotama the Buddha as a god.

The Universal Soul or the Law of Cause and Effect conceived by ancient thinkers is not a set of imaginary concepts like Vishnu, Ahura-Mazda or Indra. Although, at first, there was no physical representation of Ahura-Mazda, in course of time, when the faith turned into a popular religion, an emblem became necessary to represent him. For this purpose they made either a wheel with two wings or a human form in the centre of a wheel with two wings. The Persians who at first worshipped only the Universal Soul, in course of time, began to worship other symbols that branched off from it. The chief among them was Vohumano otherwise called Bah-man and Asha-Vahista. Asha-Vahista was the Supreme Truth. He himself was the Light of the World. His chief function was to give heat and light for the protection of life of everything that was growing and living in the world. The Rig-Veda and the Atharva Veda depict Vishnu as a heavenly god that gives heat and light.

It is mentioned in Satapatha Brahmana that the decapitated head of Vishnu became the sun. It appears that he got the name of Vishnu in the connotation of 'flier'. In the Vedas Vishnu is often depicted as a bird. Vishnu went in the guise of a 'suparna' to steal the nectar. Vishnu's bird vehicle the 'garuda' is the same as suparna. At times, in Hindu mythology Vishnu is also depicted as a bird with a human head.

The Trinity mentioned in Hindu mythology may be taken as an idea developed among the Iranian Aryans. They idolized the three stages of nature, the Creation, the Growth, and the Destruction which they worshipped as Bah-man, Asha-Vahista and Ahriman. Although the Iranians considered Ahriman as the enemy of Ahura-Mazda, the Hindus thought that all the three gods in their Trinity i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara were equally necessary for the well-being of the world. Even the Buddhists who believed only in the power of nature, idolized this idea and worshipped it in the form

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

of god Uthpalavanna. The Theravada bhikkhus who condemned the worship of gods as low, endeavoured to stop the spread of god-worship in vain, for it spread rapidly in Iran, Central Asian countries and North India as Mahayana Buddhism. Not long after the parinirvana (death) of the Buddha, Mahayana Buddhism took root in Sri Lanka too. God Uthpalavanna is none other than Vishnu the one and only god of the Aryans.

Even after the Persians who settled down in Sri Lanka became Buddhists, they continued to worship their one and only god Uthpalavanna having converted him into a Bodhisatva. In later times this god of the Aryans came to be known as Vishnu among the Hindu Aryans and as Uthpalavanna among the Iranian Aryans. The worship of Uthpalavanna spread in Sri Lanka and Kashmir where the influence of the Iranian Aryans prevailed. It may be surmised that Devundara (Devinuvara) in the South was the head-quarters of the Iranian Aryans and the worship of Uthpalavanna. Even the stone edifice that was recently restored there, seems to be of Iranian architecture.

The worship of the serpent or the Naga must have started in Persia in the region described earlier in this chapter and spread throughout the ancient world. Even those Aryans who drove away the Semitic tribes and occupied their lands derived their civilization from the Nagas. These Aryan Nagas brought civilization to India and other countries of the East. As Babylonia was under them for a long time, their journeys to the East was by water. Ruins of their settlements are found beside many rivers in India.

Fortunately, early Buddhist literature is free from myths. But, on account of books written by those who later embraced Buddhism, and were long nourished by theistic traditions, the doctrine of the Buddha has been debased. The same may be said of history too. Nevertheless, if one examines these writings with care, one can gather much knowledge that is true about the ancient world. Therein one finds much information about different religionists such as Brahmas, Devas, Asuras, Manushyas, Nagas and Yakkhas.

From the descriptions given in these books, we see that the Brahmas and the Devas were highly cultured and extremely benevolent while the Asuras too were cultured and clever. But their religions were limited to their particular groups and never reached the world at large. On the other hand, Naga worship was popular

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

and spread throughout the ancient world. It was prevalent among people of every culture, of every nature, of every temperament and of every colour. The Yakkhas were a backward race who lived mainly in India and the countries to the east of it. They were dark in colour and given to the worship of demons. Although the word 'Manushya' (man) is often used to include the entire race of men, it was generally meant to denote only a group that worshipped its ancestors.

Buddhist literature gives an honoured place to the Brahmins. They are shown as a people, learned, wise and of high principles. As they worshipped Brahma they were called Brahmins. At the beginning 'Brahma' did not mean a god. They thought of the mind vested in man as the all-pervading creative force in the world. This they divided into the benevolent mind and the evil mind. They who cultivated the benevolent mind were known as Brahmins. Possessed of mental discipline, purity of character and seasoned wisdom, they became man's guide in the development of morals. Therefore, in later times, they turned out to be a special class of people acting as priests in society.

It does not seem that in the time of the Buddha, they had an independent kingdom of their own. Names of a number of Brahmalokas are mentioned in Dhamma books but they appear to be cities with concentrations of Brahmins rather than countries. May be they were a powerful race at an earlier period but during the time of the Buddha they were only the priests of other races. One cannot say definitely whether they belonged to an Aryan or a Semitic race. But their language can be considered as the mother language of the Indo-European groups of languages which we count as Aryan. They were in a very powerful position to spell good or evil in the world because of their wisdom, experience in state craft and non-attachment to any particular country. These Brahmins were of the greatest assistance to the Aryans in their invasions and the conquest of a major part of the world.

It may be said that the mother country of the Brahmins was Media. 'Media' means the central region (Madhya Desa). Akanita (Akanita Bamba Lova) mentioned in Buddhist literature was the chief meeting place of the Brahmins during the time of the Buddha. The capital of Media was known to the Greeks as Agbatana. According to the Behistun inscription set up by Emperor Darius it was

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

called Hagmatana by the natives. It is surmised that the word Hagmatana is formed by the combination of the three words 'hum', 'gum' and 'stana' which mean 'the place to which everybody goes'. It would seem from Buddhist literature too that the desirable place for the Brahmins to go is Akanita. In ancient times, the Brahmins must have had the practice of going to Hagmatana just as the present day Muslims go to Mecca, the Catholics to Rome and the Buddhists to Buddha Gaya. The Indians who believed in a life after death thought that Akanita, the place to which the Brahmins yearned to go, was a world that existed for the Brahmins to arrive after death. Those who recorded the Dhamma a number of centuries after the demise of the Buddha, wrote books giving credence to this belief.

To-day, in Media nothing remains of the Brahmin tradition. As they worshipped the universal soul and not any god, the Brahmins did not build any places of worship such as temples as others did. Even the very name Brahmin has disappeared from there. It is only in India that the name remains. Even there, no separate temples of their own exist. As they are an enlightened group, the Brahmins act as priests in temples belonging to people of different faiths.

As already mentioned it would appear that the Devas in Buddhist literature are the Persians. The Sakyas gave them that significant appellation because they worshipped the single god (Deva) called Ahura-Mazda. In the ancient world they were prominent in power and culture. They came among the historic races of the world like the sudden appearance of a comet in the sky. It is stated in an inscription set up by the Assyrian King Shalmaneser the Fourth that in the year 835 B.C. he had defeated a combined army of the Persians and the Medes and taken tribute from them.

During this epoch the Persians had settled down in the region now known as Armenia. They could not have been a united nation under one king because Shalmaneser says that he took tribute from twenty five chieftains. Their country comprised a large number of cities and principalities governed by independent rulers. It is mentioned in Assyrian records that even after the death of King Shalmaneser during the time of his son and the grandson, tributes were still being taken from the Persians. Thereafter, for nearly a century no mention is made of the Persians in Assyrian records.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Again we come to hear of them during the regime of King Sennacherib. Then they had settled down in the region of the Bakhtiyari mountains on the border of Armenia. Although these mountains did not belong to Persia proper as they were on the border, the people living there could easily reach the high plateaux of Persia. About the time the power of the Assyrians was dwindling, the Persians, following the example of their kinsmen the Medes, arrived on the region of high plateaux, the country which was later to become famous after their name. There, all the tribes combined into one body to become a powerful united nation under a king by the name of Hakkamanusia.

The Persians belonged to the Aryan race. It is still not possible to say with certainty which region was their mother country. When the Semites and the Hamites who had reached a high state of civilization were the masters of the countries in the South, the Aryans started coming from the North and settling down in the South. To begin with they reared animals in large grasslands for a living. They led a simple nomadic life with common ownership of property. They were a people who loved freedom. Their leader was one of their choice. They were unlike the Semitic people who lived in large cities of the South and whose thinking was dulled by the false beliefs dinned into them by crafty priests. These Aryans held views that were both sensible and intellectual. It is difficult to fix the time of the first migration of the Aryans to the South. But, from the dark ages up to the historical times they might have come not once or twice but thousands of times in bands of varying numbers, large and small.

As the powerful Semitic kingdoms of the South were sufficiently strong to stop these encroachments, the migrating bands of Aryans too, in proportion to the pressure they had to meet from the South, deviated their routes either to the East or the West. At times, when they came across a mountainous region that could be easily protected, they would settle there and live in comparative safety. By the fusion of many clans which settled down in that manner, the Mede and the Persian races came into being. Those who went to the West passing Asia Minor reached Greece and other countries of Europe. Those who went east passing Media reached India and other countries of Asia. To get a glimpse of knowledge about these early Aryan migrations we have no historical records other than archaeological remains and stories in the form of myths.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Among the Aryans, the Greeks had developed the practice of keeping historical records from very early times. Homer's Iliad and Odyssey are undoubtedly the two oldest books that not only give the history of the Greeks but also provide valuable information about the many contending races in Asia Minor. Many scholars consider the stories in these books as myths but at the same time they admit that they are replete with historical events. About the same time in India, the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha were written. There again many think that the stories in them are mere fiction without even a semblance of history. It is true that they are full of mythical stories but to condemn them as total myths is wrong. As the events described in these books had been put into writing only after a lapse of centuries it is but natural that in the process of handing them down from generation to generation, many popular beliefs should get into the narrative. The poets, too, who composed these epics must have actually believed that they were dealing with gods and to make their works popular, added as many embellishments as possible. However, it is not difficult to ignore these embellishments and glean the truth.

Another obstacle to the correct undertaking of ancient history is the total rejection of what is said in the chronicles of one religion as utter falsehoods by the priests of another religion. Herodotus who was a Greek is acknowledged as the first reputed historian of the world. He is called 'the father of history'. When we think of the great advances made in the art of writing history at the present time, we see that his writings bear no comparison to modern standards. Nevertheless, if due recognition is given to the age in which he lived and wrote, he undoubtedly deserves the honour invested on him. Herodotus must have collected the material for his book from other Greek books and ancient records of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia and Persia. As he was a contemporary of the Persian Empire what he has written about it must be what he saw with his own eyes.

As already mentioned, because the Semitic races were holding the South, it was not possible for the Aryans to move in that direction. So, they divided themselves into two branches and went on to the west and the east. One of these small migrating bands settled down in the region to the north-east of Assyria now known as Azerbijan and in the region to the south-west of it. In Greek books this

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

region is mentioned as Media and the inhabitants as Medes. Among the earliest of the Aryan races to become civilized were the Medes. A reliable historical description of the Medes is given in an inscription set up by an Assyrian king in the year 835 B.C. At that time, it would seem that the Medes were not a strong race. However, long before that time, the Medes seem to have been a powerful race, for the Chaldean records show that the Medes had taken Chaldea about two thousand years before the Christian era and ruled over it for nearly two hundred and twenty four years. Also, the Medes are mentioned in books written by the Jews about three thousand five hundred years ago. Although the facts available are insufficient to give a good account about them in those times, there is enough evidence to show that they lived in many regions of the ancient world.

The ancient Medes worshipped nagas (serpents). Of the two periods during which the Medes were prosperous, the Bible, the Greek myths and the Chaldean records give various events of the earlier period. Also from the ancient stories about the Nagas prevalent all over the world, it is clear that there was a civilized race of ancient people living scattered in different parts of the world and speaking Aryan languages. In Buddhist literature too, it is mentioned that the civilization of the Nagas was very old and that it was the Nagas who brought arts and crafts to India for the first time. Their knowledge of the methods of irrigation was amazing. Hence, the other races thought of the Nagas as superhuman. They founded settlements near large and small rivers in India and other countries bordering the Indian Ocean. They introduced agriculture and various industries into these countries.

The beginning of the second epoch of their civilization is given in Assyrian records. Already it has been mentioned how in 835 B.C. King Shalmaneser defeated an army comprising Medes and Persians and obtained tribute from them. The Medes who were thus under Assyrian rule for nearly two centuries, having collected a large army of Aryans, suddenly invaded the Assyrian kingdom in the year 532 B.C. The invaders were defeated in a fierce battle by the Assyrian king Asshur-Bani-Pal who expelled their leader from the country. This reverse did not discourage the Median king who was known to the Greeks as Cyaxares. Realizing that his defeat was chiefly due to the lack of a proper training for his soldiers King Cyaxares gave

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

his army too, a training similar to the one given to the Assyrian army. When he was fully prepared, he invaded Assyria once again, and fighting furiously put the Assyrians to flight. Thereafter, he gave chase to the enemy leaving his own country open to attack. Either taking advantage of this situation or on the invitation of the Assyrian king, a powerful band of Sakyas (Scythians) entered Media. Thereupon, putting off his attempt to take the Assyrian kingdom, Cyaxares was compelled to return to his country. But, the Sakyas were successful in defeating the Median king in open battle and making their conquest of the country complete. Having settled down in Media, the Sakyas made their influence felt in the whole of the ancient world including Assyria and Persia. One cannot definitely say how long this power of the Sakyas lasted. Herodotus thinks that the period was about 28 years. The Medes, realizing that the Sakyas could not be defeated by force of arms, resorted to a plot by which they were able to kill the Sakya leaders and drive the invaders out of the country. Herodotus says that the chief of the Sakya leaders was one by the name of Madyes.

In the genealogy of Prince Siddhartha there is a king by the name of Maha Mandatu who went to the world of the Devas (Dev-Lova) and reigned over that kingdom for sometime. It is said that he set out for the place in his normal human form accompanied by a large retinue. But, on account of his unsatiable greed for kingly power, it is said that he had to pay the penalty of returning to earth. This Buddhist story is regarded no more than a myth. However, the historical record of Herodotus mentioned above shows how yet another effort of the Aryans for world domination failed.

Sometime after the Sakyas were driven out of Media, the Medes with the help of the Babylonians made war against Assyria for a number of years. They defeated the Assyrian king and having totally destroyed his capital city, divided the Assyrian kingdom equally between them. The fall of the Assyrians took place about the year 608 B.C. Thereafter King Cyaxares brought peace to a war-stricken world by coming to terms with Babylonia, Egypt and Lydia, the three most powerful empires of the day. Cyaxares was a great general but not a far seeing statesman. He made the mistake of allowing an ancient order of priests in Media known as 'Magi' to have a hand in state matters which ultimately resulted in his downfall.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

About the year 594 B.C. King Cyaxares died and his son Astyages succeeded him. Although his long reign was peaceful and prosperous, it spelled the country's doom. The earning of a livelihood became so easy that the people fell into habits of laziness, drunkenness and debauchery. Owing to the weakness of the king, the entire management of the state fell into the hands of the Magi who introduced into their religion all types of superstitious practices and elaborate observances that involved the expenditure of large sums of money. Poor citizens led a wretched life trodden under the heel of priests and officials. Gradually the Medes began to lose the skills and the ingenuity they possessed as a race. However, a thoughtful section of the people seeing the disaster that was overtaking their country became enraged with the king and his advisers, the priests.

Persia too, situated to the south of Media, was a country inhabited by the Aryans. It was a mountainous country, not so prosperous, and unlike their kinsmen the Medes, the people were unspoilt, with their natural gifts intact. The Persians who were believers in a single god did not favour the worship of a multiplicity of gods. Therefore the progressive elements in both countries secretly prepared the way for a revolution in the hope of achieving a national reconstruction. The leader of this secret movement was Prince Cyrus, the elder son of the Persian king. He was at the time a hostage at the palace of the Median king. Secretly, Prince Cyrus made his plan known to his father. At the opportune moment, on the pretext of visiting his aged father who was ailing, he obtained permission from the Median emperor to pay a visit to his native country. No sooner had the Prince left for Persia, than the Emperor realized that he had done a foolish deed, and despatched a strong body of men to capture the Prince and bring him back to the palace. The Prince met his captors on the way and expressed his willingness to return, but, as the day was far advanced he suggested that they should rest there for the night. The King's men seeing no objection to the Prince's suggestion, decided to stay the night there. The Prince invited the men to a feast that night and served them with strong drinks until they were fully intoxicated. In the morning, finding the Prince missing they once again gave chase and caught up with him. Once again, through his ingenuity the Prince managed to escape from his captors and reach the borders of his native land. There, with the assistance of an army that was awaiting his arrival he wiped out the entire band of his pursuers.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

The Emperor enraged at the outrageous manner of the Prince's escape, himself set out for Persia with a large army to capture the Prince. Near a city on the frontier, a fierce battle ensued and King Astyages triumphed over the Persians. Cambyses, the Persian king was killed in action. The defeated Persians fled to the capital city. King Astyages was determined to take both the capital and Prince Cyrus.

Persia is a high plateau surrounded by mountain ranges which are separated from each other by steep precipices and fearful gorges. A few passes through these gaps which did not afford any protection to an army were the only means of access to the country. It was through such difficult terrain that Astyages advanced towards Persia. The Persians attacked the enemy from all strategic points. But, the old king Astyages realizing the danger to him and his kingdom if young Cyrus became too powerful, fought with great courage and ferocity. He defeated the Persians at every engagement and reached the capital city. The Persian soldiers fought in fury and desperation to defend the hill overlooking the city where their homesteads and families were hidden, seeking protection from the advancing enemy. Again the Persians were driven out of their positions by the Medes, who commanded by their king, pressed on with their troops unmoved by the carnage wrought on the battle field. The Persians as a last resort retreated as far as the hill where their families had taken shelter. Unable to hear the lamentations of their folk and maddened by the vituperations of their wives, the Persian soldiers turned back and descending recklessly on the ranks of the advancing enemy began to cut them mercilessly regardless of the outcome. This unexpected onslaught put the Median ranks into utter confusion forcing them to run in all directions. Their camps were taken by Prince Cyrus, even the Emperor's regalia coming into his hands. The Prince, adorned in royal apparel, gave audience to his men, in the presence of both armies who hailed him as 'the King of the two countries Persia and Media'. The citizens of Media who were tired of the corrupt society that had sprung under the aegis of King Astyages and the Magi were only too glad to welcome King Cyrus.

King Cyrus came to be Emperor in the year 558 B.C. It is recorded in the Behistun stone inscription erected by Darius that Cyrus belongs to the ancient royal dynasty of Hakka-Manusia. Darius

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

says that he himself is the ninth king of this dynasty. That the kings of the Hakka-Manusia dynasty thereafter became the lords of the two Deva-Lokas (Worlds of Devas) and the Eastern Quarter is evident from such references in Buddhist books as the following:

දහසක් දිවැස් ඇති
දෙදෙව් ලොවට ම අදි පති
මට ඉදුරු දික් පති
දනෝ සක්දෙව්දු යයි පවසති

"Endowed with a thousand divine eyes,
I, chief of the twin worlds of the Devas
And lord of the region that to the East lies,
Am called (by the people) Sakka, the King of the Gods."

A brief account of the effort made by the early kings of this dynasty to defend their country from the Asuras is given in the Dhajagga Sutta. This Sutta reveals some rituals that were prevalent among the ancient races. Various Babylonian and Assyrian records show that when the ancients went to war, the images of their gods were carried to the battle field. Herodotus mentions that the Persians observed this custom.

The attempt made by most people to depict 'Sakka' of the Buddhist literature as non-human is most unworthy. They bring facts to show that Buddha gave the name of Sakka to god Indra of the Vedic Aryans and made him a Buddhist god. As proof they cite certain Dhamma texts. For the purpose of converting uncivilized groups into cultured societies the ancients devised the theistic cult. At a time when people lived in small groups, for fear of earning the disapprobation of the community, man abstained from breaking community laws. Then, the observance of some taboo was his religion. After death he expected to go to a world of shadows inhabited by his dead relatives.

In course of time when the number of small communities increased or when they emerged into large communities, the system of taboos did not have the desired effect. This gave rise to theistic religions. Because the fear of gods was instilled into the people's minds by their priests, everybody was frightened to break the customary laws which were accepted as the 'Word of God'. The king became not only the chief priest of the country but also a god in human form. Thus, the king's power became boundless and autocratic. His

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

laws and morality were not always for the good of his people. Nevertheless such communities reached a certain amount of prosperity within their circle. In order to enhance the status of their individual gods they often involved themselves in warfare. As each of these communities thought that its particular belief was the only true belief and all other beliefs false, they never thought of establishing a common society. Suffering from the tyranny of crafty priests and full of hate and jealousy engendered by theistic ideas, these countries could not progress but remained static for nearly twenty five centuries. During this period the effort of learned men was not to exercise their wisdom to find ways and means of solving problems pertaining to man's welfare but to study and promote rituals, sacrifices, incantations etc. involved in ceremonies connected with the worship of gods.

It was during such a barren period of history that the conquest by Cyrus took place. Cyrus who excelled in wisdom, good sense, ingenuity and power, did not take long to conquer all the important countries in Asia at the time. Among them were four powerful Empires. Leaving Egypt situated on the southern shores of the distant Mediterranean, Greece on the Northern shores, the Central Asian Steppes on the North of his domain inhabited by the Sakyas and India in the East, the rest of the ancient world came under his sceptre.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

4

THE SAKYAS

As a rule, the Sakyas of the North were a constant menace to the Empires in the South. They would enter one of these kingdoms suddenly, kill the inhabitants, burn their villages and towns and return post haste in the manner they came with all the booty they could gather. Sometimes they were repelled before any damage could be done. Yet there wasn't a kingdom that was powerful enough to stop these sudden attacks single handed. Nor was there a single country that could send an army into the territory of the Sakyas to bring them into submission. Nor could they unite for a common purpose.

Cyrus who knew that he was powerful enough to suppress the Sakyas, set out to the north at the head of a large army. Having conquered a number of races which were not so far under him, Cyrus advanced against the Sakyas who were living in Kashgar and Yarkand. These Sakyas were a brave race equally proficient in their movements both on foot and on horseback. Their women folk too took part in fighting on equal terms with their men. Once, when the Sakya king fell into the hands of Cyrus, his queen came with a mixed army of men and women and rescued her husband. But, their bravery and ingenuity could not deter Cyrus from his purpose. At last the Sakyas were brought under the empire of Cyrus. However, it is not certain whether their submission came after a defeat or because of their willingness to join the Empire after signing a treaty. Be that as it may, for nearly two centuries the Sakyas of the Eastern lands stood resolutely behind the Empire until it was destroyed by Alexander the Great. Sometime later Cyrus was fatally wounded in a fight against a North Indian race. But his generals with the help of the Sakyas were able to annex the province around the Indus to the Empire.

With no contemporary histories or lithic records to get at facts, now begins a dark period in India's history. However, this deficiency is generally minimized by the available Buddhist writings.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

As time passed, many myths have been added to these writings and students have found it difficult to separate the myths from history. Others for reasons best known to them do not allow the truth to be known. However, it may be possible in the years to come to know more facts about the history of India and of the ancient world through Buddhist sources.

The death of Cyrus occurred in the year 529 B.C. In the same year Prince Siddhartha attained Buddhahood. To the Sakyas whose great ambition was to build up an empire, the death of Cyrus was the most opportune moment. It was at this juncture that the leaders of a large number of provinces that were under Cyrus invited Prince Siddhartha who was the leader of the Sakyas in his own right, to become the King of Kings, the supreme head of a Chakravarti Kingdom. We know as a fact that Prince Siddhartha denounced the idea of a worldly kingdom giving preference to his cherished idea of a Kingdom of Enlightenment. This is neither a mere exaggeration nor an imaginary concept but a truth accepted by the ancients. Even for us moderns, it is not difficult to comprehend the truth of such a situation. Although the people of Aryana and Margiana, said to be the mother countries of the Sakyas, were prepared once again to engulf the world in sorrow, Prince Siddhartha realizing that the happiness and the peace of the world could never be won by war, stopped his compatriots from joining in such a venture. Not stopping at that, the Prince renounced his worldly life and took to the life of a monk. His purpose was to find a way of escape from sorrow and bring contentment and happiness to the suffering masses. On account of these selfless acts of his, the sacrifice of a Chakravarti crown and the dedication of his youthful life to the service of man, the world began to revere him with boundless veneration.

People of many races lived in India during the time of the Buddha. Nagas who spoke Aryan languages had lived there for a long time. It is not possible to say exactly when they first arrived in India. These Aryans either belonged to the same family of Aryans that had conquered Chaldea about 5000 years ago or were groups of Medes who had settled down during the time of the Median Empire. Whatever it be, by this time a large part of India was under their rule.

The arrival of the Sakyas was a very recent occurrence prior to the time of the Buddha. At first, they did not look like a self-

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

supporting community who had gone out of their country and taken root in their new home. They were more like a band of spies sent out of their native land. The ease with which they integrated with the Nagas shows that both these races had close kinships even before they left their respective motherlands. Darius records in the Behistun inscription that the Sakyas called themselves "huma varga." The Latin word 'homo' (man) carries the same meaning as that of the Sakya's 'huma'. To describe themselves they must have used this word meaning 'human' because they worshipped the 'manushya' or the humans, in this instance, the dead relatives. The Buddha very often used the name of the religion of the race to differentiate one race from another. The word frequently used to denote the Sakyas and the other ancestor worshipping races was 'manushya'. The Manushyas, Nagas, Devas and other religionists mentioned in Buddhist literature were united not because of their colour or their blood relationships but because of the similarity of their faiths and modes of thinking.

It was not only in India that the Sakyas settled down. They settled down in several countries in Europe too. It has been mentioned already that the word 'Scythian' was used in Greek books to denote the Sakyas who settled down in Europe. Herodotus gives a good account of the customs and the practices of these Sakyas. There is reason to believe that some of their atrocious practices described by Herodotus were prevalent among the Sakyas who settled down in Sri Lanka. According to him when they killed the enemy in battle the victims' heads were cut off and piled up to be shown to their leader. Thereafter they removed the skin of the scalp with the hair to be kept with them as mementos. It is mentioned in the Mahavamsa that after the war in which Pandukabhaya defeated his uncles, the pile of heads collected was like a heap of gourds. This shows that a part of the dreadful custom described by Herodotus was practised here as well.

Another custom prevalent was that the blood of the first enemy to be killed by a Sakya should be drunk by the killer. History provides sufficient evidence to show that this custom too prevailed among the Sakyas in Sri Lanka. One well-known example is the longing of Vihara Maha Devi who was with child to drink the water used for washing the blood-stained sword that killed the general of King Elara's army. According to Herodotus worship

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

of the sheathed sword was practised by the Sakyas. But there is no evidence to show that the Sakyas who came to India and Sri Lanka did so. However, it is worth-while to investigate if a lion holding an unsheathed sword used as the Sinhala emblem has any connection with the aforesaid custom of the Sakyas.

Before the time of the Buddha, the Sakyas were hated by the rest of the world because of their savage behaviour. The Sakyas too never pleaded for mercy nor did they ever offer it. Herodotus says that the Sakyas of the Central Asian countries were a cruel and hardy race who earned their livelihood by rearing cattle and horses and hiring themselves as mercenary soldiers to neighbouring kingdoms. He calls them Asian Scythians. They lived scattered from the Black Sea to the Tarim Valley. Of them, a few who belonged to certain clans that came in contact with civilized races had become civilized. The Scythians who lived in the West, closest to Greece, became related to the Greeks by inter marriage. Those who lived in the East integrated with the Assyrian, Median and Persian races. So it can be surmised that the Sakyas of the Eastern countries became civilized earlier than their brethren elsewhere.

About this time there occurred a crisis which compelled them to act most courageously if not brutally. Owing to some change in the climatic conditions of the Central Asian region which was their homeland, a scarcity of water arose, a situation wherein they had either to starve to death owing to the failure of their crops or to set out in search of other fertile lands. So they turned towards India, a country so large and so fertile. The Buddha saw the dreadful carnage, the massacre of the helpless Indians that would ensue from an impending invasion of the Sakyas who were ruthless and so well trained in combat. As it was not possible to stop the Sakyas by force, the Buddha with the idea of making this ruthless race a blessing to mankind, taught them the Aryan Way known as the Noble Eightfold Path.

As it was not possible to create peace and happiness through such means alone, the Buddha with the help of his estimable friend Darius, the Emperor of Persia, thought of getting a suitable place to settle the Sakyas. There is every justification to accept the view that the Island of Sri Lanka was the land offered to the Buddha by Darius for the settlement of the Sakyas and that the Sinhala race came into being by an admixture of the Sakyas so settled, with the

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Nagas and the Devas who were already living in the island. It is not intended to describe here how far those two acts of the Buddha were successful in solving the problem of the Sakyas as the contemporary history of the ancient world can provide the answer.

It was not only the Buddha who attempted to discipline the Sakyas. A great effort was made by Siddhartha Mahaweera, another leader of the Sakya race. But very few Sakyas followed his teachings which were based on the practice of self-mortification, a doctrine quite different from the Middle Path expounded by the Buddha and not so conducive to man's welfare.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

5

THE YAKKHAS

In ancient times there lived in India a race of people known as Yakkhas as mentioned in Buddhist literature. When the Aryans came to the eastern countries they gave the name Yakkha to the natives, probably because their religion was the worship of Yakkhas. Although the Yakkhas were a race of hunters who lived mainly in mountain caves, under large trees and rocks, some of them seem to have lived in towns as well. As the Yakkhas were great foresters and India a country of large forests, the Yakkhas must have been a source of real danger to the newly arrived Aryans. Buddhist books describe how on a number of occasions the Buddha saved the lives of helpless persons who had been taken by these people of the Yakkha faith either for eating their flesh or for the purpose of offering them as sacrifices to the Yakkha deities. At that time even in certain powerful kingdoms the worship of Yakkha deities prevailed as the state religion. The story of the Ālavaka Sutta is that when in the city of Alavipura the king's son was brought to the Yakkha temple for sacrifice, the Buddha preached the Dhamma to Ālavaka, the Yakkha priest and saved the life of the child and that thereafter the people of Alavipura became followers of the Buddha.

People who worshipped Yakkhas considered various natural phenomena as Yakkha deities. A special feature of the Yakkha religion was to invest natural phenomena such as lightning, rain, wind, mountains, waterfalls etc. with Yakkha nomenclature and to offer them human beings and animals as sacrifices in the hope of obtaining their help. Even today Yakkha worship exists in India and Sri Lanka.

The Aryans after they came to India indulged in the Yakkha worship. To the religious rites involved in the worship of their god Rudra, later known as Isvara, the Aryans tagged on the rituals performed in the worship of the Yakkha deity known as Mahakāla. The supreme Yakkha deity must have originated from a natural sight seen on the top of a rocky mound. It is not surprising that

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

the roaring thunder and streaks of lightning on the summit of a mountain on a dark, stormy night should give the primitive man of limited intelligence the impression of a non-human performing a weird dance. The dance of Isvara (Siva) on the summit of Kailas would seem breathing life into natural phenomena. On account of the uncompromising attitude of the Buddhists and the Jains, the worship of Mahakāla has become a part of Hindu worship only after it was stripped of its severity. But the worship of Mahakāli the Yakkhini, the spouse of Mahakāla is still full of savage rites performed by the ancient Yakkhas.

In the time of the Buddha, the forest dwelling Bhikkhus suffered a great deal owing to the molestations of the Yakkhas. To curb such behaviour on the part of the Yakkhas, the Buddha summoned the Yakkha chieftains to a conference where they volunteered to make a declaration on the future good behaviour of the Yakkhas towards the monks. The Buddha made the monks commit it to memory before they went back to their dwelling places in the forest. Even today, this declaration known as Ātānātiya Sutta is recited at pirith ceremonies which are conducted to ensure the protection and the well-being of the listeners.

It must be said that the Yakkhas did not possess much intelligence. During the time of the Buddha people of other races in their thousands followed the Aryan Path but very few Yakkhas seem to have done so.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

6

THE DEVAS

In India during the time of the Buddha there was a well-known race of people called the Devas. The modern historians think that they were not real men but some kind of aerial spirits that existed only in the imagination of credulous people. But, if the Buddhist books are read with care, one would find that the Devas too were men and women of flesh and blood, with hopes and fears like ours and all the ills we are exposed to. The Buddha has said in no uncertain terms that there was no creator. On several occasions he had declared that there was no being superior to man. So, it is impossible for us to imagine how after such a firm declaration, the Buddha could have associated himself with a group of non-humans supposed to possess superhuman powers. Such an idea can be entertained only by those who believe in gods but certainly not by Buddhists who are conversant with the Dhamma. Therefore, it is our duty to find out who they were, this race of people who with such fervour and devotion helped the Buddha to spread the Ariya Magga all over the ancient world. It is the duty of the Buddhists to investigate the credibility of the statements in ancient Buddhist books which have become targets for the ridicule of modern critics. The effort of the unthinking Buddhists to confirm such ideas without investigation on account of a blind faith engendered by their association with other religionists, has become an obstacle to the dissemination of the truth. In Buddhist literature the most eminent place is given to the Devas. King Sakka was so powerful that he was able to help the Buddhists to overcome all difficulties. Contemporary history shows that such a mighty people lived nowhere in the world other than in Persia. Therefore, to establish the fact that the Persians were the Devas mentioned in Buddhist literature, an account is given here of the connections which the Persians had with the contemporary races of North India.

Already it has been mentioned that King Cyrus had conquered a number of provinces in India. Darius, an emperor who came after

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Cyrus also added a number of regions to the Empire. In Buddhist books the name given to the countries under the Persians in ancient India is Chatur-Maha-Rajika. This was the large territory comprising modern Afganistan, Kashmir and Punjab situated to the south of the mountain ranges Hindukush and Karakorum in the basin of the Indus.

Many are the instances of the various types of help given to the Buddha by the Satraps who were the governors of the different parts of Chatur-Maha-Rajika. The word 'Varam' is used to denote these princes. In the inscriptions of Darius he calls them 'Khshatrapa' which means 'looked after by the king'. In Sinhala there is the tradition of 'four varam kings'. It would seem that 'varam' was the name given to the provincial kings under the Emperor. When the regions around the Indus were under Persian rule, their influence on the countries around the Ganges must have been considerable. The Sakyas who were the allies of the Persians must have undoubtedly received the full support of the Emperor who was quick to see his advantage in helping the Sakyas to consolidate their power in India.

As it is said that Sakka, the king of the Devas, visited Rajagaha on a number of occasions to meet the Buddha, it is possible that Indian kings such as Bimbisara owed some kind of allegiance to the Persian Empire. Otherwise an Emperor would not have left his kingdom to visit another independent country situated at such distance.

There is a small episode described in the Parinibbana Sutta about the construction of Pataliputra which became the capital of Magadha after the death of the Buddha. In his last journey on the way to Kusinara, the Buddha took lodgings one evening in the village of Patali. Before retiring for the night, when the Buddha inquired about matters concerning the village, Venerable Ananda told him that there was a large number of enterprising Devas settled down in the village. According to historical records it was about this time that King Ajasat converted the village of Patali into a city. An archaeological survey conducted some time back on the site of the ancient city revealed the fact that all the buildings there had been erected according to the very plans of the buildings in Persepolis, the ancient capital of Persia, and without doubt the work too had been done by the Persians. By this it is clear that the Devas men-

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

tioned in the Parinibbana Sutta were none other than the architects and the artisans who had come from Persia to build the city of Pataliputra. This is not the solitary instance mentioned in Buddhist literature of the building of houses, palaces etc. by the Indian races according to the plans obtained from the Devas. The *Mahavamsa* says that in Sri Lanka the Lova Maha Paya was built according to the plan of the mansion of Birani, the Deva princess.

It is difficult to understand why modern historians who do research on Indo-Ceylon history have ignored the history of ancient Persia. Especially in the writing of Buddhist history, a study of the history of Persia is all important because the religion of the Persians had much to do in the shaping of the doctrine of the Buddha. In the study of the modern history of India and Sri Lanka, even if we forget that there is a country called Great Britain, it is not an omission so bad as the omission of the Kingdom of Persia in the study of the ancient history of these two countries. When the entire Indo-Ceylon culture is indebted to Persia, the effort made by the modern historians to show the world that Indian culture is wholly indigenous, deserves the contempt of historians seeking the truth. The torch of learning lighted by the Persians illumined the whole of Asia. Buddhist literature bears testimony to the fact that the Sakyas were mainly responsible for the dissemination of this knowledge.

During the time of the Buddha, the king of the Persians (Devas) was Darius. He became king in the year 521 B.C. He died in the year 485 B.C. Emperor Darius and the Buddha were contemporaries for full thirty five years. By nature Darius was kind and generous. He was a worthy statesman too. He was the first ever to occupy a throne with the noble idea 'a king exists for the people, and not the people for the king.' For the sake of better government he divided the Empire into many parts and each of them was placed under a capable officer. He provided the people with many requisites that were necessary for a happy life in a cultured society. He constructed roads and set up rest-houses to provide safety and hospitality to travellers. They say that one of the royal highways constructed by him was two thousand five hundred miles long. He was no dictator, but conducted the affairs of the state with the assistance of a cabinet.

As Darius' regime was comparatively peaceful, knowledge that

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

had been jealously guarded so far in ancient countries such as Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and Lydia gained a free run and penetrated into the rest of the world. For the first time during his regime, men began to acquire a systematic knowledge of the world. The Greeks who were in the Emperor's service carried descriptions of the Eastern countries to the West. Although most of these accounts were full of myths, they were able to create a desire in men to go out and look at things for themselves. The reputation of the Empire had reached far and wide so that it was possible for those travelling under its aegis to enter any country without fear or suspicion. Therefore, in this epoch the learned carried knowledge and erudition from country to country. For the first time it was during this time that man thought of arts and sciences such as Ayurveda, Astronomy, Architecture and Painting as the heritage of all mankind and not of any particular individual or race. To any impartial thinker it should occur that of all the important periods in world history that of Darius was the most brilliant. Owing to the invaluable assistance received from Emperor Darius, the Noble Eightfold Path—the way of living for the good of all mankind—preached by the Buddha, spread far and wide.

The small kingdom of the Greeks occupied a very eminent place among the civilized nations of the time. Books written by the Greek thinkers of the day are useful even today in shaping modern thought. Modern historians do not give credit to the Empire for the resurgence of the Greeks. However, it was because of the Persian kings who brought peace, progress and enterprise to a large continent comprising millions of square miles, that the Greeks living in close proximity to the Empire were able to make their country rich and powerful by their commercial dealings with the Empire. As the country achieved economic freedom, the citizens were able to make scientific discoveries and engage themselves in literary pursuits. It is true that the Empire was not directly responsible for the greatness of Greece but one has to admit that indirectly the Empire was the most important contributory factor for the eminence of Greece. Up to date European scholars have led the world in the dark without giving the Empire the meed of praise it richly deserves for the part it played in bringing about the enlightenment that prevails in the world today. The Asian scholars too with implicit faith in the European scholars have not paused to seek the truth.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

In India during the time of the Buddha there were a large number of faiths other than those main religions mentioned above. The Buddha realized that it was impossible to convert such heterogeneous groups of people into a virtuous and unselfish society. It was his idea to take the Sakyas as the main body and build around it a larger society of the stature of a world organization. Avidya (ignorance) is the cause of all evil. So he trained a band of disciples conversant with the problem, who were able to dispel Avidya from the minds of men and lead them on the Noble Path. With no attachment to property or kith and kin, they dedicated their lives entirely to the good of mankind and were quick in going to the aid of the distressed. Thus they earned the name of 'Arahath' the followers of the Ariya Magga. In course of time Ariya Magga came to be known as Buddhism (Doctrine of Buddha) because it was founded by the person possessing 'Buddhi' (Enlightenment) or by him who has acquired the 'Right Understanding'.

Those who followed the Ariya Magga never worshipped gods or paid homage to them. It was Buddha's view that there was no being greater than man and that by training his mind there was nothing that he could not achieve. This was a great blow to all manner of god worshippers. So they rose to a man against this new teaching. As Emperor Darius, the greatest ruler on earth at the time, had given his unstinted support to the Buddha, those who had taken to the Ariya Magga received aid from progressive people everywhere.

Why was this doctrine preached? What is this doctrine? What benefit did the world gain from it?

To find answers to these questions we have to examine facts from the very beginning of human society.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

7

THEISTIC RELIGIONS

In the remotest times man's religion was the taboos of the family. The head of the family who controlled the observance of these taboos was the god of the family. The punishment for the breaking of these taboos was death. The fear, the other members of the family had towards the head of the family who carried out the punishments, was boundless. Through fear the primitive man thought that all natural phenomena which he could not understand were the manifestations of the deeds done by the invisible deceased head of the family. Further, he thought that the head of the family whose duty it was to see that the taboos and the practices of the family were honoured, was supported by the dead leader living in an invisible form. As the family grew and in course of time became a large group, the leader who had power over the group became their tribal god. At times a number of tribes were caused to unite and made into a powerful kingdom under a king. Such a king after his death was thought of as a national god who was always looking after their welfare intent on making them a powerful nation. Thereafter, all the kings of his line ruled over them by the grace of their national god. Jehovah of the Jews and Indra of the Aryans were two such gods. As the Jews were not able to build an empire they continued to worship their one and only god Jehovah. Polytheism, the belief in more than one god, spread in almost every country which was powerful enough to conquer other lands. Polytheism exists in every country where there are groups of people who think in different ways and hold different views.

The chief god of the Christian religion professed by the modern Europeans is the same god Jehovah of the Jews. Among the Jews he is a tribal god. After the Roman Emperors accepted him as their god he became an international god. As long as the Roman Empire was all powerful this god too was powerful. The Europeans made a great effort to make his power and glory spread throughout the world. They fought terrible wars and committed inhuman

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

massacres in the name of this god. But, after the fall of the Empire, he once again became a tribal or a national god. Now the Europeans do not get together to spread his glory in the world. They make an effort individually to glorify each of their national gods. Although they say that their nameless god is the same, it is clear that he has different guises. The guise of the god of the present day Britains is not the same as the guise of the god of the Italians. Again both of them differ from the guise of Jehovah of the Jews. If for some reason or other the United Kingdom declares war against Italy, the British people will pray to God imploring him to annihilate the enemy not because he is a just god but because they regard him as a partial god who will take their side irrespective of the rights or the wrongs of their cause. The Italians too think on the same lines and do the same thing. So do all others.

Jehovah is still a jealous god and a harsh god among the Jews. God among the savage nations of Africa is a shallow and noisy god. The English god is mellow and compassionate. The American god of the United States is a member of the line of Jehovah but his present guise is that of Maheswara, the chief god of Ancient India, a country that was as powerful as the modern U.S.A. Thus in course of time this single Jehovah has changed into so many god images, each different from the other. In course of time, the philosophy of the nations that professed faith in each of these god-images changed, not due to any greatness of their gods but because they fell into line with the ideas of the great thinkers who were born from time to time in those countries. The vision of Englishmen changed with the advent of thinkers such as Bacon, Mills, Webb and Shaw. Today, they consider that the world belongs to all mankind and that its citizens are God's children. But these altruistic ideas are not universal. A large portion of Englishmen still think in the same old way. As long as the progressives outnumber the reactionaries so long will the English race exist for the good of mankind.

It has been already mentioned that god Indra of the ancient Aryans was a tribal god like Jehovah. During the time of the Buddha there were several manifestations of god Indra. The ancient Indians who worshipped those several manifestations of Indra and various other gods and Yakkhas were not much different from the Indians of today. They were always ready to pick quarrels

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

in the name of their individual gods. A miniature of what happened in those days can be seen from the present troubles between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Theistic religions not only caused dissension between societies from without but also broke each society into fragments from within. The ordinary citizen was repressed by the rulers as well as by the priests. The poor people thought that all this burden was placed on them with the connivance of the gods they worshipped. So these helpless creatures with their trembling hands uplifted and their tear-stained faces turned towards heaven implored their gods for some relief. Yet they never thought of raising a finger against these parasitic rogues who sponged on them. The priests robbed them of even the little they had by teaching them that everything happened according to one's fate. It was the priests' teaching that to strike one's good luck, one should give generously what one owns to the priests. What millions of people earned by the sweat of their brow was either robbed by the rulers or taken by the priests by deceit.

In this dark and distant period hardly anybody came forward to help these dispossessed people. Even the few who were keen on helping them were not free from the fetters of the wily priests. Not knowing exactly what should be done to cleanse a corrupted society, they distributed their wealth among the needy and went into solitude praying to gods to grant them power to eradicate corruption from the world, thus wasting their time and energy in a useless quest. They were weak and frightened to give up the traditional customs and religious principles that were detrimental to the growth of an enlightened society. Their conduct aggravated the poverty in the land and ignorance among the masses. Until the Buddha appeared there was none in the world who understood the plight of contemporary society and thought of a social revolution for the purpose of healing the ills that beset the world.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

8

THE KINGDOM OF THE ENLIGHTENED

Prince Siddhartha was born at a time when man's existence was so debased as described in the previous chapter. As he was born in a free and warlike race not enslaved by theistic religions, Prince Siddhartha was undaunted in thought and action. From his childhood it was his practice to exercise his mind on human problems. As the Sakyas were also known to be travellers, it was possible for the Prince to know much about the social conditions prevailing in other countries. By comparing and contrasting the facts he got from outside with the knowledge he acquired from his own experience, Prince Siddhartha realized that it was the entity called society that was responsible for its own iniquity and not any persistent and inordinate destiny called fate. At the time, there was a band of worthy recluses who had cut themselves off completely from society and gone to lead an austere life in the forest. They were praised for their comprehension of the truth about everything in this world. In the role of disciple, Prince Siddhartha spent six years in the company of these estimable men but he found that they too were helplessly groping in the darkness of theism with no hope of a ray of light. At the end, Prince Siddhartha with the determination to find the truth himself, sat down under the Bo-tree at Gaya for contemplation. After deep meditation within the compass of a single night, he realized the unique process by which society could be cleansed.

"The cause of all suffering in the world is the iniquity that exists in society. A country rises or declines according to the actions of its rulers. The government of a country is like a mirror that reflects the condition of its citizens. It is not possible to expect a benevolent government in a country whose citizens are ignorant, selfish, shameless, crafty and cruel. Even if a government is set up by a few benevolent men, it will not take long before it is rendered impotent at the hands of the selfish majority. Therefore, what the intelligent statesmen should do is to bring about a complete change in the

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

people's agelong attitude towards life. A mere change of government is of no use. The growth of Passion (Lobha), Ill-will (Dosa), and Ignorance (Moha) has subjected the world to sorrow. The world will be a pleasant place to live in only when these three roots of evil are eradicated. Passion is not merely sensuous pleasures. Longing is another name for it. It includes all desires. Man earns more wealth than what he needs. As wealth is limited everybody cannot gather it in equal quantity. This is the cause of ill-will among men. So, they envy each other. They hate each other. One robs another's wealth. In robbing murder is committed. Evil is perpetrated through passion. When passion is controlled or eradicated there is no room for ill-will. But the control of passion or longing is a formidable task. Man's habit of gathering wealth is due to his fear of the uncertainty of his future. It is the desire of everybody to earn something and keep it for future contingencies such as sickness and old age.

If desire ends there, no harm is done. But, when the acquisition of wealth becomes a habit there will be no limit to it. If man is to be weaned from this habit his fear has to be removed. To erase that fear he must be guaranteed security. For a period of ten thousand years and more, man has tried to make himself secure as best as he could so that the gathering of wealth has become second nature to him. He has no idea of the quantity he should possess. Even if he owns the whole world he would gain no satisfaction. Acquisitiveness has become an instinct which cannot be eradicated by mere words of advice. Man's habit of hoarding wealth will not disappear as long as wealthy men and private possessions exist in the world. To wean men from this habit two things may be done. One is for a benevolent government to confiscate all the wealth in the country and supply all the needs of the people. The other is to distribute the wealth equitably and impartially among the people regardless of class, caste, or creed. However, it is not easy to change a social order that has lasted so long. They will rise to a man to defend their vested interests. A revolution at such a time will result in bloodshed. Thereby, my object will not be achieved. What I should do is quite clear. Ignorance, the cause of all these ills must be expelled from the minds of the people. Then the progressives will be more powerful than the reactionaries and in course of time they will be able to set up a government that can bring peace and contentment to the world. To train the citizens for that purpose I shall establish a model

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

kingdom or what may be called the 'Kingdom of the Enlightened'. Its domain should not be confined to one country but the entire world.''

According to these and similar ideas that occurred to him, Lord Buddha established a system which came to be called 'Buddhism' but herein introduced as the 'Kingdom of the Enlightened'. Among the citizens of this kingdom there were no differences of class, caste, clan, creed or race. Anyone could become a citizen of this Kingdom. By promising to follow a number of simple rules which have to be observed by all citizens, one could obtain citizenship as an ordinary member. Those preliminary rules are now known as the Ti-Sarana (Three Refuges) and Pan-Sil (Five Precepts). But these ordinary members did not constitute the Buddha Sāsana. From among them he selected at random those who were fit to join the noble band who were expected to follow the Middle Path as enjoined by him. They had to abandon the one extreme of highly sensuous living and the other extreme of giving extreme torture to the body. They were those who accepted the mode of living called the Noble Eightfold Path, i.e.

Right Understanding (*Samma-ditthi*)
Right Mindedness (*Samma-sankappa*)
Right Speech (*Samma-vaca*)
Right Action (*Samma-kammanta*)
Right Livelihood (*Samma-ajiva*)
Right Effort (*Samma-vayama*)
Right Attentiveness (*Samma-sati*)
Right Concentration (*Samma-samadhi*)

It was Lord Buddha's teaching that if one followed the Noble Path, the world would some day be a supremely peaceful place to live in. The followers believed in the doctrine of Cause and Effect. They rejected age long beliefs that were not worthy of acceptance. The Buddha said that the body exists as *Nama* (mind) and *Rupa* (corporeality) and that there was no such thing as 'soul' which took on birth at different levels. They did not believe in a life before or after death. The idea of a soul exists only in man's mind. Man is obsessed with this idea of a soul because for ages he has been thinking in terms of an 'ego' or a 'self' which in turn created a longing (*thanha*) that would not be satiated. Man's reluctance to leave behind the wealth he collected in his lifetime was such that he began to find ways and means of taking it with him. The very

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

first plan he devised was to bury the dead man's treasure along with his body in the belief that his immortal soul could use it after his death. When his egoism was not appeased even by such a practice he wanted a guarantee while yet alive that his property would come along with him after his death. So, a crafty section of the people seized the opportunity to tell him that by doing meritorious acts he could get material wealth in his existence after death. The effort of those who followed the Noble Eightfold Path was not to establish such a foolish belief but to create a peaceful and generous society through gradual training in virtuous living.

Present day Buddhism teaches a method of gaining the happy state of Nirvana after the destruction of the threefold sorrows of birth, decay and death. But, we don't see that the followers of the Aryan Way ever countenanced such a view. The real members of the Aryan Society known as 'Arahants' who had comprehended the Ariya Magga also known as the Noble Eightfold Path and had destroyed the threefold evils of *Lobha*, *Dosa*, and *Moha* never believed in a birth after death. Even in the extant books on Dhamma which have been subjected to corruption with the insertion of deleterious doctrines, nowhere is it said that Arahants were born again. On the other hand when one's existence is confined to Nama (mind) and Rupa (corporeality) without an 'ego' or 'soul' the unanswerable question arises as to who attains Nirvana. The innumerable lives (skandas) formed repeatedly, like the water bubbles on the surface of a reservoir caused by the natural phenomenon of falling rain, cannot be reduced by a handful of them attaining Nirvana. The modern Buddhists yearn for a Nirvana which they hope to attain after death. But, the doctrine of Nirvana preached by the Buddha is entirely different from what the present day Buddhists believe as Nirvana. Nirvana is only a consciousness that springs in the mind of a person who has become chaste by discarding all impurities of thought and action.

The true Aryan Society was composed of those who had travelled the Ariya Magga and reached its higher stages (Marga Phala). As they had discarded the three fold evils of Longing, Ill-Will, and Ignorance, it was on them that the responsibility of government in the Kingdom of the Enlightened rested. Eighty persons selected out of millions of this society's members were appointed to serve on the executive body. The organization served as an example to

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

the world of how a democratic government should be run. Any member could express his or her views fearlessly and question the validity of others' views which were in doubt. A vote of the members was taken in arriving at a decision. No member ever acted on blind faith. Even the word of Lord Buddha, the Head of the Kingdom, was examined critically by its members.

The fact that one believes in another's views does not mean that one understands those views. Most people in the world accept what they hear or see without inquiry. They borrow ideas from others and peddle them among the people without the ability to explain their true meaning. The followers of Ariya Magga were different. When they heard something they paused to think about it from the stand point of the speaker. Again and again they examined its credibility. They saw what was true as substantial and what was false as trash. Once they ruminated over an idea and found it acceptable they found it quite easy to make others comprehend it because, by now, the idea had taken the complexion of a thought that was conceived by themselves. So, they were successful in spreading the message of the Buddha among the people in many countries. They declared that nothing should be accepted as true without inquiry simply because they were the ideas of the ancients; or because they were the traditions of the race; or because they were the words of the priests or the writings found in books. Thereafter, the prevailing false beliefs and meaningless customs and practices that were obstacles to the growth of an enlightened society began to relax their hold on people. On account of the great power wielded by the Buddha, kings of the time gave up their habit of suppressing free thought and allowed progressive ideas to spread in their kingdoms. The enthusiasm displayed was such that within a short time there wasn't a single kingdom in India that did not welcome these promulgators of the Ariya Magga.

For the first time a realization of the vast possibilities of the human being dawned on man. Even though it was not possible to control the working of nature (*karma*) within the lifetime of a person, the followers of the Ariya Magga endeavoured hard to inculcate in the minds of people that by discovering how nature operates, it would be possible to apply that knowledge to the well-being of man. These ideas which spread in the world owing to the great enthusiasm of the Persian Emperor were accepted by the

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

savants of the West. Socrates and other thinkers of Greece discarded the false beliefs prevalent in their country and became seekers after truth. We cannot say that this seed sown by the Buddha spread amazingly throughout the world. However, now after twenty five centuries, it has received a new life. Then the question arises why such a true doctrine did not spread throughout the world for such a long time. The Buddha preached his doctrine in India, the land of his birth. The people of India were devoted to a blind faith. They were sorely depraved because of their ignorance (*avidya*). It was impossible to make a good society of them by the addition of a small number of those who followed the *Ariya Magga*. For a brief moment Indian society soared to ennobling heights but soon fell into the same old mire.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

9

DECLINE OF THE ARIYA MAGGA

The influence of the Ariya Magga on society began to wane after the demise of Lord Buddha and his noble band of disciples. The number of those who entered the Brotherhood of Monks solely for the sake of worldly gain increased. The solicitude of the Empire for the followers of the Ariya Magga declined. As a result of this loss of contact with the Empire, their knowledge of the world too dwindled. Consequently, they became narrow minded and devoid of proper judgement. They began to think of the Devas and the Brahmas who went all out to help them during the time of the Buddha not as human beings but as a species of non-humans with super-human powers. The Brotherhood of Monks who at the beginning led a selfless life for the good of the public weal now allowed their noble ideals to deteriorate into a religion dedicated to selfishness and pursuit of pleasure. Bhikkhus (monks) who at first were teachers and social workers began to act as priests.

When the cultural pursuits in India declined, the friendship of other countries with India too declined. So, the priests were in a position to convince the people that friendship of the Buddhists with the Persians and the Medes during the time of the Buddha was some form of communion held with two species of non-humans. As they did not get the same high degree of respect and the fourfold requisites received by the Bhikkhus of the Aryan Society, these priests devised a means of obtaining them. So they began to act as mediators to send the devotees after their death to the World of the Devas (heavens), a place created by their fertile imagination. They said that as man was born over and over again it was possible to postpone the receipt of his reward or punishment for his good or evil actions in this life to a future existence. They said that one who went to the heavens (worlds of Brahmas and Devas) or hell could be born over and over again in this world as a man, an animal or a non-human. To the ancients who never argued about these matters, it was the absolute truth. For a few centuries after the

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

death of the Buddha, the Indian society was so enveloped in blind faith that it was not powerful enough to doubt the priests' word. Thus Buddhism too fell into the company of other religions i.e. Brahmanism, Theism and Yakkha worship. The present forms of Hindu worship in India came into being by a combination of all these religions.

Owing to the influence of Buddhism many virtues such as discipline, chaste living, self-respect and generosity have become features of the Indian society of the present day. Although the Ariya Magga seems to have disappeared completely from India, just as a cloud cannot hide the sunlight for ever, it crops up from time to time breaking the shackles of blind faith. As the Ariya Magga is a way of living founded on truth, so wherever there are men in this world who have the capacity to comprehend the truth, it must be understood that Ariya Magga too is there.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

10

SOCIALISM

The lamentable cry often heard these days is that an attempt is being made to destroy Buddhism. This is the selfsame cry raised by all those who follow institutionalized religions against those who hold the view that only social service and not religious worship, can help mankind. It is true that socialistic ideas can be a danger to the form of 'religion' now practised by Buddhists. It is also equally evident that no machinations of any faction can do the slightest harm to the doctrine preached by the Buddha. It is clear that once again this doctrine is going from strength to strength in the world.

Today, the followers of the Ariya Magga are known by different names. Some day perhaps these different groups will be able to amalgamate their socialistic ideas with the Ariya Magga. The theists make an attempt to get people to adhere to good moral conduct by the twofold devise of reward and punishment. They promise a celestial heaven of untold pleasures to those who are good and frighten the evil doers with an underworld of hell-fire. Socialists abhor this method. According to them it is a crime to mislead people and keep them in the dark. Therefore, the extremists such as the communists make an effort to change the world overnight by force. This effort too is not the result, as it ought to be, of a perfect understanding of man's nature. Like the act of the person who placed the lighted lamp under the thatched roof for safe keeping such precipitous action will put civilization into jeopardy.

Thus we see that both these courses of action are equally fruitless. According to the Buddha those who are led astray and are subjected to suffering through their ignorance can be made to lead a pleasant life in a peaceful society when they are taught how to free themselves from ignorance. Everybody will work for a common goal when ignorance and selfishness are expelled from human society. To attain this object a most enlightened form of education has to be established. Such a form of education can never be established

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

with the people's present day beliefs as its foundation. Just as an edifice erected on sand will soon fall to the ground so will a culture built on untenable beliefs collapse in time.

Lord Buddha's last admonition to the Bhikkhus was:

Handadāni bhikkhave āmanthayāmi vō,
Vaya dhammā samkhārā appamādēna sampādētha

"Everything is impermanent so that one should not lose time in performing good actions with diligence." If man moulds his life accordingly nothing but good will accrue from it.

In man's culture gathered over a period of centuries in the past, there are many things which are out of tune with the present. In his ignorance man clings to them not letting them go because they have come down as a legacy from generation to generation from his ancestors. Children are forced to assimilate them. That is not acting with diligence. When they are known to be the customs and practices accumulated over the years and are now out of date, they should be discarded just as the serpents cast off their old skins to enter an invigorating new life. If we follow the advice of the Buddha there is no need for us to look back or to stay where we are. We have to move on like an army that had set fire to its overnight camp. We have to make up our mind to convert the rough narrow road we are traversing into a smooth broad highway. We must know that the culture of today is inadequate to the one born tomorrow. Processions, bali ceremonies, fire walking, alms giving, pirith chanting, church going, praying, preaching and quoting scripture will not in any way bring about an advancement in man's culture. He will be only moving in a vicious circle that leads him nowhere. An advancement is possible only if he understands the truth about life and follows the Noble Eightfold Path which teaches the right method of living in a changing world. Then only will a new life enliven the world.

Those who do not believe in gods or the existence of a soul are condemned as materialists. I do not understand how a body of men who are free from false beliefs and intent on the good of mankind, could be condemned as materialists when in fact they should be hailed as a blessing to all humanity. Man is pre-eminent among living creatures. He attained that position not because he believed in the Creation nor because of a faith he had in a life after death nor

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

because he made sacrifices to gods but because with his knowledge he was able to utilize natural resources for his needs. The word 'materialist' is used by false believers to describe even those who have fought against nature and conquered it. World history gives accounts of how these false believers have put to death thousands of men of learning branding them as mortal enemies of mankind—men who have sacrificed themselves in the service of man. Further, these bigots try to mislead the world by hailing as saints certain persons who have died foolishly for the sake of their beliefs. Such harmful ideas gain ground when they are planted in the immature minds of growing children. Without a critical examination of these ideas it is highly dangerous to present them to children as their 'culture'. By diverting the thinking process of children in the wrong direction the great damage caused to mankind is not at all worthy of an enlightened society.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

II

MORE ABOUT SAKKA, THE KING OF THE DEVAS

It has been mentioned already how the Buddhists within such a short time have converted into non-humans the Sakka and his retinue who helped the Buddha with such zeal to spread the Ariya Magga in the world. It is sad to think what colossal ignorance there will be in the world in a couple of centuries if the present system of education continues as it is. To show how easily false beliefs take root in men, an attempt is made here to prove by presenting facts from history and Buddhist literature that Sakka was none other than a human being.

Lord Buddha on every occasion has used the term 'Sakko Devanam Indo' to denote Sakka. The term means 'Sakka, the king of the Devas.' Earlier we had explained that Sakka's retinue was called Devas because they worshipped gods (devas). Here the word 'Indo' is used only to mean 'king'. The word does not seem to have any connection with the vedic 'Indra'. There is no doubt whatsoever that the word 'Sakka' is used here as a dynastic appellation as already mentioned. A stone inscription set up by Darius gives 'Hakka-Manusia' as the dynastic name of his line of ancestors. Mrs Rhys Davids who did not know the close connection between the Buddha and Darius thinks that 'Sakka' must be the name of a lineage of kings and that to show the divine origin of the Sakyas, the leader of the Devas of Thidasa Pura too may have been called by that name by the Buddha.

It is clear from the Sakka Samyutta Sutta that Sakka always took precedence over Brahma. On all occasions that both of them visited the Buddha, Brahma came as Sakka's companion. So it has to be understood that Sakka was superior to Brahma as well. During the Middle Ages of the Christian era when a Roman Emperor was reigning, there was a dignitary known as the Pope who was the chief ecclesiastic. Spiritually his power was greater than that of the Emperor but in mundane affairs the Emperor was supreme. The similarity between the status of these two Roman personages

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

and the two Persian chiefs is something that should be investigated by historians. The Maha Brahma like the Pope of the present day seems to have exercised his power over his co-religionists living in foreign lands.

Sakka Samyutta Sutta gives a number of names alternative to 'Sakka'. One of them is 'Maghava' which means priest. After the death of Emperor Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, a Magha became the king of Persia as the result of a plot. It was by putting him to death that Darius ascended the throne. After he became king, Darius began to ill-treat the Maghas so that they left Media and Persia and settled down in other kingdoms. It is mentioned in Indian literature that a race of people called Magha came to India where they settled down and mixed themselves with Brahmins. It is possible that the kingdom of Maghada of ancient India got that name after the settlement of the Maghas. This is also another instance that should be investigated.

Sakka is also called 'Purindada'. As the word means 'destroyer of fortresses' it may be that he was so named after he destroyed the world famous fortress of the Babylonians.

Another name given to Sakka is 'Vāsava'. It may be he was so called to mean 'the Inheritor of the Earth'. It is stated that whenever the Persians conquered a country they demanded from the vanquished as tribute soil and water of the land as a mark of the stability of the conquest.

'Sahassa Chakku' (thousand eyes) is another name for Sakka. It is said that the Emperor had appointed a band of officers to report the events that took place in the Empire. These officers were so vigilant that the Emperor was in a position to know every deed, just or unjust, that was done within the Empire. As reports came in on all crimes perpetrated by the ruling officials and the undesirable elements in society, the Emperor punished the evil-doers and brought redress to the oppressed even without any complaints being made by the victims. As a result the idea that the Emperor had a thousand eyes to witness the condition of the people spread throughout the world. Herodotus too mentions that the Emperor had such a band of officers and that they were called the 'eyes' of the king. Because he had thousands of such officers to report on the affairs of the state, metaphorically he was given the name 'Sahassa Chakku'.

The belief that when an innocent person fell into a plight

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

his throne of emerald stone became warm giving him the signal for immediate action must have had its origin in his great concern for the people. Also, it so happened that when the followers of the Ariya Magga, as a part of their obligation to society, complained to the king of the corruption and other vices prevalent in the country, the king sent for the culprits and after careful investigation gave them the punishments they justly deserved. Buddhist books reveal the fact that Venerable Mugalan, one of the two chief disciples of the Buddha, was a confidant of the Sakka and that often he used to visit the kingdom of the Devas. It appears that the Venerable Mugalan was waylaid and beaten to death by a band of robbers who mistook him for an informant of their misdeeds on his way to the capital city of Darius.

The Buddha has used the word 'Kosiya' to accost Sakka. On his first visit to the Buddha, Sakka was introduced to him by Panchasikha, the Royal Musician. After the customary greetings, when Sakka stood before him, the Buddha accosted the visitor with the word 'Kosiya'. Dr Rhys Davids thinks that Kosiya is a dynastic name. It was the practice for a king to address another king by the name of the latter's kingdom. Kosiya is the name of a country of the Persian Empire. Darius was so addressed because he was either a Kosian or the King of Kosiya. A vedic name attached to Indra is 'Kaushika'. It is mentioned that Indra was so called because he was attached to the Kushikas. Probably the Kushikas were the Kushaites, a race of people that lived in Kosiya.

Another name for Sakka is 'Sujampathi'. Sakka was so called because he was the husband of Suja, an Asura maiden. Sakka had three wives in addition to Suja. They were Nanda, Chitra and Sudharma. In this respect there is a strong resemblance between the description of Sakka given in the Sakka-Samprayutta Sutta and the description of Darius given by Herodotus.

After Darius became Emperor he had three wives, all Persians by the name of Atossa, Athisthone and Parmese and a fourth Phaedima, the daughter of Otanes of another race. As already mentioned Sakka too had four wives. In naming the wives of Darius it is not certain whether Herodotus gave the actual Persian words or gave Greek words equivalent to their meaning. Nevertheless if 'Nanda' is taken to mean 'Thosa' (joy), it can be Atossa and 'Chitra' can be Athisthone. It is not possible to say how

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Sudharma became Parmese. As Herodotus says that Phaedima was of noble birth it is possible that she came to be called Suja (high birth) in Buddhist literature.

'Vajrapani' is another name for Sakka. It can be surmised that Sakka was so called to mean 'he who holds a diamond weapon in his hand'. Perhaps this weapon must have been a club capped with a large diamond. Buddhist books mention that the two columns on either side of Chitrakuta the entrance to the great city of Sakka are embellished with images of Sakka with the diamond weapon in hand. After Cyrus became Emperor, Sakka-pura, the city of Sakka was founded on the victory square in commemoration of his great victories. The first building put up by him was known as 'Vijayothpaya'. The Greek name for the city of Sakka was Persepolis. Sakkapura was not built for the occupation of ordinary citizens. It comprised a number of palaces and audience halls especially built for the occupation of the Emperor and his consorts.

At the foot of a rocky eminence and adjacent to it, this citadel is built on a terrace of dressed blocks of stone, 1500 feet long, 950 feet broad and twenty feet high. Archaeologists such as Ker Porter and Flandin say that it was not surprising that this city with its stone pillars, walls and flights of stairs was the marvel of the ancient world. In the same manner, as mentioned in Buddhist books, there is the carved likeness of the Emperor (Sakka) with the diamond weapon in one hand and the sceptre in the other clearly seen on a door. By looking at it one can easily imagine what Sakka's diamond-weapon looked like. There are some stone pillars around Thuparama Dagoba at Anuradhapura in the shape of this diamond weapon. Mr Hocart says that these stone pillars take the shape of the diamond weapon of Avalokiteswara Bodhisatva.

Sakkapanna Sutta provides further evidence to show that Sakka was a human being. Having heard that Sakka had come to ask questions from the Buddha, Mahali, the king of the Lichchavis came to the Buddha to find out if it was true that Sakka had visited him. Mahali knew that it was not easy for one to see the Emperor even if one visited his palace. So Mahali who thought that the Emperor would not go to such a distant country to see the Buddha, inquired from the Buddha if it was not somebody else in the guise of the Emperor that came to see him. Then the Buddha told Mahali that it was not so. It was Sakka himself who came and that he

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

knew Sakka personally and what more, he was aware of all his attributes that raised him to that exalted position. This little dialogue does not give the impression that Mahali and the Buddha were talking about a non-human. If there was a belief in Buddha's time of a Sakka who could be invisible and vanish into thin air, there was no need for Mahali to ask such a question nor the Buddha to give such a reply.

Further accounts of Deva-lokas are found in Anguttara Nikaya. There is a long description of a tree called 'Parasathu' which blooms once a year. Its flowers which remain fresh for four months are like the red lotuses whose fragrance permeates in all ten directions. During the flowering season of this tree the Devas move about in an outburst of jubilation. In Pali dictionaries the meaning given to 'Parasathu' is Erabudu (Erythrina Indica). It is difficult to understand how these scholars came to that conclusion.

In my opinion parasathu is the rose which is the national flower of the Persians. On their buildings too, rosettes are seen. The rose tree grows large and luxuriantly in Persia. It is from Persia that the rose tree and the art of extracting its perfume were taken to other countries of the world.

In the seventh year of his attainment of Buddhahood, the Buddha, it is said, spent three months in the palace of the Sakka. Buddhist books say that at the end of this period of three months Sakka created a golden ladder for the Buddha to descend from his palace. If the Sakka or the Buddha had the power of going through the air what was the necessity for a ladder. Bhikkhu Huien Tsan the traveller says that he saw a model of this ladder in India. In Ceylon too there were paintings of this ladder. For this ladder to be such a popular sight it must have been an exquisite piece of clever workmanship actually used by the Buddha. There is no reason to disbelieve the journey of the Buddha to the city of Sakka as mentioned in Buddhist books. There is no doubt whatsoever that on the occasion of the inauguration of these beautiful buildings put up by Darius, the chief among the guests invited was the Buddha. It can be surmised that the ladder which was constructed to descend from the Deva-loka was the flight of steps leading to the lower ground from the high terrace on which the palace was built.

The most successful piece of construction that has been designed by ancient architects to give a building an edifying look is the ascend-

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

ing flight of steps built in the foreground. There are a number of such flights of steps in the city of Sakka. Even today two of them are marvels that cause wonder to the spectator. European scholars say that in regard to their size, beauty and conception they are unsurpassed up to date. A special aspect of Buddhist architecture too was the emphasis they laid on the flights of stairs in a building, a feature they may have copied from the Persian architects.

Now it should be clear from the facts given that Sakka, the king of the Devas was none other than Darius, the king of the Persians who ascended the throne in the year 521 B.C. Darius was not only the Buddha's friend and chief lay disciple but also his partner in laying the foundation of the Sinhala race in Sri Lanka.

It has been mentioned already that the 'Sathara Varam' kings were the governors known as Satraps who served under Darius. Facts about these governors are abundant in Buddhist literature. In Mahāsamaya and Ātānātiya Suttas their names are given as Dhratharāshta, Virudha, Virupāksha and Vaishravana. Mahāsamaya Sutta says that they were the kings respectively of the countries in the East, the South, the West and the North. Of these countries, we can surmise that those of the East and the West were the modern Afghanistan and the North Western Provinces. The northern countries were the basins of river Tarim and the upper Indus which comprise modern Tibet and Ladak. As the great commercial highway of the ancient world ran through this region there is no doubt that Vaishravana was a very powerful and wealthy king. According to Mahāsamaya Sutta, Dhatharāshta was also known as Hansa Raja (King of Swans). According to the book Sumangalavilasani he was the king of the Gandharvas. It is said that he was so called because of his sovereignty over a thousand swans but it is more probable that he got this name because he was the king of the small state of Hansa situated in the Himalayan heights. The name 'Kumbhanda' is given to the subjects of Virudha. Their country may have been Kashmir. It is the custom of the shepherds of that country to go about in winter carrying an earthen pot containing hot coals tied to their bellies. For this reason it may be that the Buddhists called them Kumbhandas. Virupaksha was the king of the Nagas.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

12

BEGINNINGS OF SINHALA SOCIETY

The *Mahavamsa* records the arrival of the Buddha at Mahiyangana on the full-moon day of Vesak in the ninth month of his attainment of Buddhahood. At the great convention of the Yakkhas held on that day the Buddha obtained a pledge from them to allow the Sakyas to live in peace in the island of Lanka. Thus the twin birth of the Sinhala nation and the Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka occurred on that memorable day. From the fact that permission had to be obtained from the Yakkhas, it is evident that they were the permanent settlers of Sri Lanka. At the time of the arrival of the Buddha there were three races of people here, e.g. the Yakkhas, the Nagas and the Devas. As already mentioned the Nagas and the Devas were Aryans who had come from foreign lands. The Yakkhas must have been a race similar to the uncivilized people of the Melanisian Islands. Such a conclusion is possible when we consider the folk tales prevalent among the Sinhalas about the Yakkhas.

It is said that the Melanisian savages exhume the bodies of their dead a few days after burial and scrape the flesh off the bones. Once this is done they collect the bones and suck the marrow found inside the hollow of the bones. Some of the stories told of the Yakkhas in this country are reminiscent of this loathsome practice.

Although the Ceylon Veddas, the descendants of the Yakkhas have given up this habit they still continue to suck the marrow from the bones of dead animals. They call it 'kulal kanava' (eating the throat). In fact what they mean by 'kulal' is not the throat but the marrow found inside bones. The origin of the meaning of the two words commonly used in Sinhala 'kulal kagannava' which mean 'going at each other's throat' may be attributed to the Vedda language. The ancient stories about the Yakkhas snapping at the throats of their victims and drinking blood may have sprung from this practice of the Yakkhas. Some time ago I heard the following story from a friend of mine who spent some time with the Veddas in the Vedda country. One day, having

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

shot a deer and distributed the meat among the Veddas he brought home to his hut a leg of venison which he hung above the fire-place. Then he had his dinner and went to sleep. Shortly afterwards, hearing the sound of footsteps he woke up. Looking in the direction of the fire, to his dismay, he saw the figure of a Vedda standing by the heap of burning logs and looking steadfastly at him. Though unnerved, my friend had shouted 'Who are you? Why have you come?' The Vedda's reply 'I have come to eat kulal' was so blood curdling that in spite of himself, summoning courage, he took his knife into his hand and while still in bed bawled out, ''Yes, now you can eat kulal''. The Vedda having displayed his utmost pleasure at his words, went to the leg of venison which he lowered from its position and began to separate the thigh bone from the flesh at its joint. Having done so he heated the bone at the fire and began to suck the marrow. That was how my friend learnt the meaning of 'kulal kanava'.

It is not possible to say definitely when the Nagas came to Sri Lanka. During the time of the Buddha almost all the sea-ports of Sri Lanka were in their hands. As the Nagas were traders and travellers they did not take the trouble to unify their kingdoms and develop them. Though severally independent, there were a number of Naga settlements in Lanka bound to each other by ties of kinship. Three of them are mentioned in reference to Buddha's second visit to Sri Lanka. This visit of the Buddha was for the purpose of settling a dispute among the Naga kings of the three kingdoms, i.e. one a group of sea-girt islands, another a settlement associated with Kannavaddhamana mountain and the third the kingdom known as Kalyani. The first of these could be Nagadeepa comprising Jaffna Peninsula with the islands off the West coast and the area on the North Western coast of Sri Lanka. According to a document found in a treasure trove buried about the year 50 B.C. during the reign of King Vasabha, it is clear that Jaffna Peninsula was known by the name of Nagadeepa. Also, there is evidence to show that from very ancient times the place was a centre of international trade.

Investigations made by Dr Paul E. Peiris revealed the fact that this region is full of remains pertaining to Buddhist culture. Coins belonging to different nations of the ancient world were found scattered underground. The popular belief among the Buddhists is that the Buddha came to a small island in this region to settle

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

the dispute among the Nagas but the *Mahavamsa* gives quite a contrary view. In this war Mahodara and Maniakkhika were allies against Chulodara whose country they invaded. It was on the battle field where the armies met that the Buddha preached on the evils of war and so it is certain that the place he visited was Kannavaddhamana. As there is no detailed description for the identification of this-place it is through extraneous evidence that we have to arrive at a decision.

The Pali word Kannavaddhamana gives the meaning, 'aluth nuvara' (new city). Kanna means 'new' or 'young' and Vaddhamana (Sri Vardhana) is the name given to several ancient cities of India. Nevertheless, in Indian languages the word does not connote 'a city'. In the ancient Persian language the word 'Vardanam' is used to mean 'a city'. Therefore, it is possible that Kannavaddhamana was a city built by the Nagas. At the present time in Sri Lanka, there are two well-known places by the name of Aluth Nuwara. One is on the bank of the Mahaveli in Bintenna where the Mahiyangana Vihara stands. The other is situated in Sathara Korale close to Mavanella. Both these are very ancient cities. According to the *Mahavamsa*, the city in Bintenna seems to have existed even before the Buddha came to Sri Lanka. Although there is not much evidence to decide on the antiquity of the city in Sathara Korale, stories connected with Devatha Bandara or Dedimunda, the god of Aluthnuwara, are very ancient. Both Dedimunda and Upulvan may have been the names used in Sri Lanka for Avalokiteswara. The word 'Dedimunda' probably means Vajrāyudha (diamond weapon). As Sathara Korale belonged to the ancient Principality of Kalyani, Chulodara's kingdom could not have been there.

There is another region which may be considered as the kingdom of Chulodara. From the Pali word it is also possible to derive into Sinhala the word 'Mulla-diva' or 'Mulla Nagara'. The Pali word 'kanna' can mean 'kona' (corner) or 'mulla' (nook). As the word 'Vaddhamana' can mean region or province, its meaning in Sinhala may be given as 'diva'. On the Eastern coast of Sri Lanka there is a place called 'Mullativu' which closely resembles the word 'Mulla-diva'. There is no doubt that this city was an important sea-port and that it was the centre of commercial undertakings between Magadha and Sri Lanka. Although modern

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

scholars think that Jambukola of the *Mahavamsa* is Jaffna it is clear that they have come to this conclusion without taking the geographical factors into account. It is difficult to believe that the ancients would have selected Jaffna as the sea port of Anuradhapura. They would have selected a port on the Eastern or the Western coast easily approached and nearer the city rather than distant Jaffna which is situated on a shallow lagoon and communicated through another large lagoon.

Mullativu is situated on the North East in the great northern plain of Sri Lanka. The rain falling on the northern plain reaches the sea through rivers flowing in three directions owing to a water divide in the shape of a two pronged fork. The ancient region of Kannavaddhamana or Mullativu is situated in the basin of the three rivers Yan Oya, Ma Oya and Par-Aru that flow eastward. Its ancient works of irrigation bear testimony to the fact that it was the first region in Sri Lanka to be developed. Mullativu, the chief seaport of Sri Lanka in the trade with the countries of Eastern India including Magadha, was connected to Anuradhapura by a great highway and to Mavatu Thota on the West coast by another great highway. This is evident by the ruins found along the road between these three places at Kanukkeni, Pandara Kulam, Nedunkeni, Olumadu, Ariyamadu, Omanthei, Mamaduva, Puliyan Kulam, Vavuniya, Irathpiniya Kulam and Pavath Kulam. Another famous highway starting from Mullativu and passing through the city of Upatissa had spread as far as Magama in the South via Mihintale, Ritigala, Vijitapura and Dumrakgala (Dimbulagala). It may be surmised that this highway was not constructed by the Sinhalas but had existed even before their time. Soon after the Median Emperor was defeated King Cyrus sent out his troops to capture all the territories that were under the Emperor. It is not possible to say definitely if his troops came to Sri Lanka as well.

However, it is not difficult to believe that Sri Lanka was taken by the naval force sent out by Darius along the Indus to the Indian Ocean. This is evident from the fact that Darius offered Sri Lanka for the settlement of the Sakyas. Even though the Sakyas made Sri Lanka their home and the culture grew according to the Ariya Magga, the country must have been under the Persian Empire for a long time, at least until the latter was destroyed by Alexander the Great. As it is recorded that the navy of the Persian Empire con-

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

sisted entirely of the Median, the Persian and the Sakya personnel, the force that came to the Indian Ocean must have been mostly of the Sakyas. The *Mahavamsa* story of the invasion of Vijaya is probably the very story of the capture of Sri Lanka by the Persian Emperor. Vijaya must have been the leader of that naval force. He was either a Persian, a Median or a Sakya. As he had come along the Indus he must have landed at a port on the West Coast of Sri Lanka. The *Mahavamsa* does not give a detailed account of the place where he landed. The tradition is that he landed at a place close to Puttalam.

The *Mahavamsa* says that Vijaya was a rebel who was banished from the country with a gang of seven hundred tough young men. Up to date the people of this country give credence to this story. It may be because there were no historical records about Vijaya that the authors of books such as *Deepavamsa* and *Mahavamsa* wrote about him just as they pleased. They have made this mistake owing to their ignorance of contemporary history. But it is surprising that modern historians who are conversant with the ancient world and its economic condition should still believe that story.

Even before the lapse of a hundred and fifty years since the first visit of the Buddha to Sri Lanka, during the reign of Pandukabhaya, the boundaries of villages and towns of the entire country had been demarcated. There is evidence to show that the most inaccessible places in the country were not only known but occupied. Therefore, it is certain that it was not a mere seven hundred outlaws but thousands of settlers, capable and intent on developing the country, that came to take part in this great scheme of colonization. Today, at a time when there is so much accumulated wealth with plantations of coconut, rubber and tea to give stability to the country's economy, with a system of communications comprising roads and railways, with thousands of trained workers and modern machinery and tools, it has not been easy for a population of nearly twelve million to develop the forest clad areas of the dry zone. When such is the position even today, is it possible for us to believe that even seventy thousand people, leave alone seven hundred, could within such a short period bring a country like Sri Lanka to such an advanced stage in development notwithstanding the hostile attacks from the savage Yakkhas and other enemies from across the sea.

Therefore, without being fully satisfied with the *Mahavamsa* story

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

about the early history of Sri Lanka it must be our endeavour to arrive at the truth by falling in line with the contemporary history of other lands. On the other hand merely because certain stories related in the *Mahavamsa* cannot be believed, it is not wise to relegate the history earlier to the period of King Devanampiyatissa to the sphere of fiction and imagine that ancient Sri Lanka is devoid of history.

The pioneer settlers would have certainly worked hard to bring Sri Lanka to the state of prosperity that existed during the reign of Devanampiyatissa. It is impossible to imagine that there was a time of greater activity in Sri Lanka than the early period since the arrival of Vijaya. Also, it is not possible to believe that their enterprise would have succeeded without help from outside. Sakyas too were not so formidable a race to undertake such a stupendous task. On the other hand the settlement of the Aryans here was different from the usual practice prevalent at the time, of one race conquering another bringing its people to utter slavery by plundering what they owned and despoiling their lands. The Sakyas had to find land fit for habitation by reclaiming virgin forests and inhospitable marshes. This pioneer enterprise meant hard work, heavy expenditure and much planning. We have to conclude that all the expenditure was borne by the Persian Emperor. This island developed by the Sakyas on a plan thought out by the Buddha and with economic aid given by the Persian Emperor, became a great country in the ancient world. The rest of the world called it Dharmadeepa or the Island of Peace.

At that time no country other than the Persian Empire had the resources to develop within two centuries a country of 25,000 square miles with a climate and rainfall conducive to the quick growth of large forests. Apart from the heavy expenditure borne by him, the Emperor who had a fatherly interest in the newly settled people of Sri Lanka, must have placed all the available scientific knowledge and equipment at their disposal. Men, clever and proficient in the methods of irrigation and stone work, must have come to this country from Media and Persia.

It is easy to believe that the Persians, the expert road builders of the ancient world, themselves constructed a durable stone paved highroad to connect the Southern ports which traded with the countries of the far East, with the ports of the North which carried

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

on trade with India and other countries of the North. To this day the remains of this road can be seen in thick jungle. The distances too, between important places in the Island had been measured and fixed. There is no possibility of attributing to Sinhalas this devotion to matters concerning roads as some special skill developed by them in the island itself. If it were so, that skill could not have disappeared from them and thereafter ceased to exist. It does not appear that the Indian nations too had the knowledge of making roads. There is a reference in Greek writings to a royal highway that stretched from Taxila to Pataliputra during the Maurya period. It is certain that the Persians who were occupying the Indus region were its builders and not Chandragupta or an earlier Indian king. The concern of the Persians about this road in Sri Lanka already mentioned, is borne by the existence of fortresses along it at Thanthrimalaya, Ritigala, Nuvara-gala, and Govinda-hela which may have been built by them. Thanthrimalaya situated near the junction where the road to Anuradhapura branches off from the ancient Mullativu -Manthottam road seems to have been an important strategic point. As 'thanthri' is one of the names applicable to the ancient soldier, 'thanthrimalaya' must have been a fortress from very ancient times. In this country there are a number of families by the name of Vela-thanthri, Vahala-thanthri etc. who are the progeny of the ancient soldier. As it is stated in the *Bodhivamsa* that a bo-sapling (Phala-Ruha-Bodhi) was planted at Thantrimalaya it is possible that the place was converted to a Vihara after the time of King Devanampiyatissa. At Thanthrimalaya there are paintings supposed to have been drawn by primitive men. On a stone surface there, a small structure is built out of smooth dressed stone. Although John Still and others say that it was a cubicle made for the use of bhikkhus I am inclined to think that it is a structure made for Uthpalavanna, a god worshipped by the people of Sri Lanka even before Theravada Buddhism began to spread in the country. This and the structure at Nuvarakele have been built in a style closely resembling that of the temple of Uthpalavanna at Devundara. At Sanchi too there is a similar building. Archaeologists think that it must have been a Vishnu temple but it is possible that it was also a temple dedicated to Uthpalavanna. Although the ancient Sinhalas had realized that the construction of permanent roads was for the public weal, once the influence of the Persians who first thought of road making as a public duty began to decline in the country, it is plain

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

that the art of road construction and the realization of its importance disappeared from Sri Lanka.

As the Sakyas had conquered Media and lived in that country long before their arrival in Sri Lanka they had learnt the methods of conserving water for agriculture. After they were driven out of Media, the Sakyas gave up their nomadic life to a great extent. As they depended on cultivation for a living they had to master the art of conserving water. After they came to India too their occupation was cultivation. Nevertheless there is no mention of their building tanks for conserving water either in India or in the Northern countries they had occupied earlier. Although from very ancient times there were large ponds, ten to twelve acres in extent in South India, these small reservoirs of water do not fall into the category of tanks. Some modern historians say that the Sinhalas must have improved their tank construction following the example of ponds in South India. But, this is not plausible because there are many countries in the world with ancient ponds but without a semblance of any advanced tank construction. The answer to the question how the Sinhalas developed such a highly advanced mode of tank construction not found in any other part of the world, must be found from the said land of Media.

In Media, a country subjected to the intense heat of the sun, it is the practice to take water for cultivation through tunnels cut underground. When such a tunnel has run a certain distance a hole is dug into it from the surface of the land above. As the tunnel is connected to a stream there is a constant flow of water in the tunnel. It is said that in Media, even today, there are such tunnels built two to three thousand years ago, each miles long and branching off to form several tunnels with quite a large number of holes. At the bottom of a particular hole there was some contrivance by which it was possible at any given spot to lift the water to the surface or to channel it to a branch tunnel or even to completely stop the flow of water. There is evidence to show that in Sri Lanka too there were underground tunnels to take water from an area of heavy rainfall to a region of scanty rain. Dr. R. L. Brohier refers to such a tunnel. Although it is not possible to say definitely when or by whom this tunnel was constructed, it may be considered as an effort to introduce the Median methods to Sri Lanka. In my opinion the tank building which was perfected in

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

ancient Sri Lanka was an imitation of what was obtained in Media. The Sinhala engineers were able to build tanks thousands of acres in extent because they knew well how to construct the 'biso-kotuva' (valve pit) and the tunnel scientifically. The Sinhalas from the day they settled down in Sri Lanka began the construction of tanks. There is no doubt that even their very first tank was perfect in all respects.

The Median cultivators carried the water through underground tunnels to protect it from the heat of the sun. They could not afford to lose their small and precious supply of water which they got only once a year, by allowing it to evaporate under a hot sun. They had devised a method of admitting only the right quantity of water into the tunnel lest it should be damaged from the rush of water from the streams that swelled during the season of melting snow. They did not build tanks which would have been useless in their country as the water so collected in an open space would have soon evaporated under a burning sun. As all the rivers in the northern plain of Sri Lanka go dry after the rainy season, the method of carrying water through tunnels is unsuitable. The ancient engineers of Sri Lanka seeking a method appropriate to the region, selected a suitable place in a valley through which a river flowed. Then they built a bund across this spot and collected the rain water preventing its flow to the sea. To send the water so collected to the irrigation channels, they used the same tunnel which they had devised in their mother country. The safety of the bund and the irrigation channels was assured by the 'bisokotuva' and the tunnel however much the level of the water in the tank rose and increased the pressure on the bund. The excess water collected in the tank was let out over a stone spill (vāna).

The Sinhalas were able to acquire a culture that was second to none in the ancient world because of their discovery of the method of building tanks. All other kingdoms without an exception that came up in the world became prosperous by robbing their neighbours. But Sri Lanka became a rich country with the wealth earned by its citizens through lawful enterprises. As they made every endeavour to lead their lives according to the Noble Eightfold Path preached by the Buddha, it was with compassion for others that they set about their work. The kings of Sri Lanka unlike the kings of most other lands did not desire kingship solely for the

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

purpose of kingly power and sensual pleasures. There is a charge often brought up by some people whose object it is to belittle the culture of the Sinhalas that ancient Sinhala kings of Sri Lanka killed each other in their greed for kingship.

However, we do not see a single instance of the ancient kings destroying each other through greed for power. They did not utilize their wealth to erect stupendous palaces like the kings of Assyria, Babylonia, Media, Persia and India. The major part of their wealth was expended on public works such as tanks, irrigation channels, temples and hospitals. Thus every village could boast of a tank, a temple, a physician or a hospital. It is the opinion of certain historians that by building a temple for each village the ancient kings saddled the country with an unbearable burden. Of course, it is true that at the present time most temples are a burden to the country, but the ancient temples were different.

The Buddha expected his disciples to expel Ignorance (Avidya) from the minds of the people. Therefore, automatically, the Bhikkhus became the teachers of the country. The presence of an elderly Bhikkhu with a number of other Bhikkhus was tantamount to there being a school in the village with a present day headmaster and a few assistant teachers. All that was necessary for the upkeep of these monks who were trained to lead a simple life was supplied with the greatest ease by the villagers themselves. In course of time each of these novices of the village temple received an adequate education to fit him for the calling of a teacher. It was possible to give this education through the hundreds of pirivenas (colleges) that sprang up in different parts of the Island. Teachers of these pirivenas entered the great seats of learning such as Mahavihara and Abhayagiri that had been founded at Anuradhapura and other centres for higher education. On account of this plan of teacher training it was possible to conduct the education of the country without an undue burden on the state. Such a method gave equal opportunities to everybody in the country to reap the benefits of education. There were no restrictions in the admission of children to the temple school on the score of class, caste or creed. The Gamarala's (Village Squire) child sat at the feet of the venerable teacher of the temple alongside the child of the meanest householder of the village as equals.

As only persons desirous of serving the society entered the

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Order, the monks of those days were better qualified to impart learning than most of the present day teachers who join the profession only as a means of earning a living. Apart from this, the ancient teachers were very versatile because they were able to spend their full time to equip themselves for their calling. Also from time to time they indulged in travelling often spending long periods at different types of educational institutions.

The village temple was the village reading room, assembly hall, art gallery and place of worship. At times it was the home for the aged and the destitute children of the village. In short all that was necessary for a happy and salutary life was supplied by the temple. We have to admit that sometimes Sinhala kings erected large edifices such as the Ruvanveli Seya and the Abhayagiri Chetiya. But, when we think of the occasions on which they were erected we have to realize that the work on those buildings was undertaken as a matter of urgency. When the country was under a foreign enemy for a considerably long period of time the standard of the country's arts and crafts such as stone work, metal work, wood carving and decorative painting would have reached such a low level that it was the duty of a progressive monarch to start work on a large scale to give a good training to the citizens in the said occupations. Moreover, the kings started on such projects of a religious character as a matter of expediency to keep the men who served in a large army occupied until normal occupations were found for them. They felt that the immediate disbandment of the army was not in the best interest of the country.

Owing to these and other farseeing courses of action taken by the ancient kings whose guiding principles were embodied in the Noble Eightfold Path, for nearly two thousand years, the Sinhala Nation was able to protect itself successfully from hundreds of foreign attacks. Every village was provided with a tank, a dam (amuna), a canal and a field. There was no scarcity of brave youths who were prepared to lay down their lives in defending these amenities against all attacks at all times. As every village possessed a temple, there was always in the village an elderly monk who was competent to tell the villagers about the value of learning, good morals and mutual co-operation. Therefore, the Sinhalas unlike the people of most other ancient countries did not become slaves to beastly habits and false beliefs. We see that Sinhala kings have very often gifted tanks

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

and irrigation channels to temples. Modern historians have misunderstood this action of the kings. They say that the kings used the wealth of the country to maintain thousands of idle monks. As already mentioned we must not forget the fact that these temples had educational institutions, hospitals and homes for the destitute. Moreover, the experts in different branches of knowledge were mostly the monks. So-what the kings did by gifting a tank to the temple was handing it over to a body that could protect it and distribute the water equitably. As there was a powerful organization elected by the people to attend to the activities of each temple, the gift of a tank to the temple was similar to the entrusting of a public concern like the Labugama Reservoir to the Municipality of the City of Colombo.

Thus the Sinhala kings were able to run the entire education of the country without salaried teachers appointed by the central government. They were able to maintain all irrigation works with the exception of large public works like Kalaveva, Minneriya Tank and Yodha Ela through voluntary bodies such as village councils. This too contributed to the stability of the Sinhala kingdom. It was not possible for an enemy to dominate the country either by the capture of the capital city or by cutting the country into a thousand segments. The dwellers of each village either despoiled or intact went on calmly with their daily work until such time as word should come from the king for attack. Although there were time honoured methods of succession to the throne, the people never hesitated to get rid of a weak or an undesirable king by force.

Prince Pandukabhaya did not shirk his duty of saving the country from his uncles whose selfish exploits had alienated the sympathy of their countrymen. It would seem that the whole country approved of his action.

The death of Sangatissa who neglected a king's duties and gave himself to drunkenness was desired not by those who were greedy for power but by the peaceful peasants who valued the well-being of the country as a whole.

Prince Gotabhaya had to come forward to depose King Siri Sangabo who acted under a misapprehension that his weakness in state craft was his piety. In spite of the remorse that such an act would bring him Prince Gotabhaya had to yield to the wishes of the people who saw the danger in having a weak king at the head

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

of the State. Today, those who are ignorant of true facts mention Gotabhaya's name with ingratitude forgetting that he was one of the greatest of monarchs that ruled over Sri Lanka and the founder of a dynasty of kings whose service is a proud record of work done for the well-being of the people.

Even King Kashyapa, the First who is condemned as a patricide confined his father King Dhathusena to prison as he had to pay heed to public opinion prevailing at the time. Although the *Mahavamsa* mentions that Prince Mugalan fled to India for fear of his brother Kashyapa, there is no evidence for us to accept such an opinion. A cruel king, Mihiragula by name, of the 'Huna' race began to oppress the people of North India most ruthlessly about the year 502 A.D. A powerful king named Yashodharman of Malavi with the help of other Hindu and Buddhist kings drove him out of India. There are reasons to believe that Mugalan's journey to India was to take part in this war. As he went to India at the head of an army, a large sum of money had to be despatched there for its upkeep. So a powerful section of the people must have opposed the government for taking part in a foreign war. There is no doubt whatsoever that the leader of the opposing party was Kashyapa. Mugalan had spent nearly twenty years in India. The friendship between Mugalan's son Kumaradasa and Kalidasa must have begun during this time. It may be surmised that to stop the annual remittance of money to India by King Dhathusena for Mugalan to have a life of ease at the royal court of a wealthy country Kashyapa kept his father under custody. It was not the return of a rebellious Mugalan who had secretly left his native land that Kashyapa feared but the return of a Mugalan accompanied by a proud and well trained army, victorious in battle, backed by the generous help of mighty Yashodharman and the direction of a number of famous generals. It is mentioned in the *Mahavamsa* that Mugalan returned with sixteen illustrious men. A painting named 'the Invasion of Sinhala' at Ajanta depicts a procession of men on elephants and horseback, soldiers on foot and some women. The friendship between Kumaradasa, the son of Mugalan, with Kalidasa who was in Malavi has been already mentioned. All these facts go to show that Mugalan was a member of the royal court of King Yashodharman. Kashyapa built the fortress at Sigiriya as he knew that Mugalan would return with a powerful army and the war with his brother would last long. As the whole country support-

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

ed him, Kashyapa did not fear to fight in the open. He was defeated only because of an error in his strategy.

The few examples given above are for the purpose of demolishing the argument prevalent generally among the moderns that it was the practice among the ancients to kill one, for the other to become king. When these several examples are critically analysed it is clear that these events should find popular approval in a public minded society. Although there was no system of electing representatives to the Royal Assembly by popular vote, the expulsion of an undesirable king by the will of the majority shows that there was a quantum of democracy in ancient Lanka.

There is ample evidence to show that the early kings of Sri Lanka who were trained in the observance of the Ariya Magga spent their entire life for the welfare of the people. The king as well as his officers always thought of themselves as the servants of the people. They thought it their noble duty to provide the people with food, education, health and peace. They were not reluctant to destroy any impediment whatsoever that stood in the way.

Now it should be quite clear to the reader how for a period of over two thousand years the Sinhala Kings sustained the nation and what path they trod to achieve this end.

Finally it must be said that the principle of the kings in ancient Lanka was to select as officers of the crown, men who followed the Ariya Magga and were trained to act in a spirit of self-sacrifice. This obviated the necessity to pamper a bureaucracy with all facilities for a comfortable living. The all important task before us now is to make a thorough inquiry into the conditions that prevailed in the country after the passing away of the ancient kings and the conditions prevailing today and to consider the knowledge so obtained in the light of what has been said in the pages of this short history of the Origins of Sinhala Culture.

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

REFERENCES

Adikaram E. W.	—	Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon
Ballon, Robert O.	—	The Bible of the World
Banerji, K. D.	—	Prehistoric Ancient and Hindu India
Beal, Samuel	—	Buddhist Records of the Western World
Bose, K. B.	—	Lord Buddha and His Doctrine
Brohier, R. L.	—	Ancient Irrigation works of Ceylon
Brown, P.	—	Indian Painting
Burlingame, Eugene Watson	—	Buddhist Legends
Childe, V. Gordon	—	The Aryans
Codrington, H. W.	—	A Short History of Ceylon
Coomaraswamy, Ananda	—	Hinduism and Buddhism
Darmesteter, James	—	Selections from Zend-Avesta
Darwin, Charles	—	The Origin of Species
Davids, T. W. Rhys	—	Early Buddhism
Davids, Mrs Rhys	—	Outline of Buddhism
— do —	—	Sakya or Buddhist Origins
— do —	—	Buddhist Psychological Ethics
de Plessis, Comte	—	The Human Caravan
Dodwell	—	The Cambridge Shorter History of India
Eddington, Sir Arthur	—	The Expanding Universe
Fisher, H. E. L.	—	A History of Europe
Fitzgerald, C. P.	—	China
Foucher, A.	—	Beginnings of Buddhist Art
Foxe, John	—	The book of Martyrs
Frazer, Sir James George	—	The Golden Bough
Geiger, W.	—	Mahavamsa Translation
— do —	—	Culawamsa Translation
Glover, T. R.	—	The Ancient World
Grimm, George	—	The Doctrine of The Buddha
Havell, E. B.	—	A Short History of India
Jayaswal, K. P.	—	History of India
Keith, A. Berriedale	—	A History of Sanskrit Literature
— do —		The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads
Kimura, Ryukan	—	Historical study of the terms Hinayana and Mahayana and the origin of Mahayana Buddhism
Longhurst, A. H.	—	The Story of the Stupa
Mackay, Ernest	—	The Indus civilization
Malalasekera, G. P.	—	Thus have I heard
Max Muller, F.	—	A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature
— do —	—	The Upanishad Translation
Mc Cabe Joseph	—	Dhammapada Translation
— do —	—	The testament of Christian civilization
Mendis, G. C.	—	The Early History of Ceylon
Monier-Williams, Sir Monier,	—	Buddhism in its connection with Brahamanism and Hinduism

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Nehru, Jawaharlal	—	The Discovery of India
Oldenberg, H.	—	Dipavamsa Translation
Oldham, C. L.	—	The Sun and the Serpent
Oman John Campbell	—	The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India
Parker, H.	—	Ancient Ceylon
Pradhan, Sitanath	—	Chronology of Ancient India
Radhakrishnan, S.	—	Indian Philosophy
— do —	—	The Hindu View of Life
— do —	—	Gautama the Buddha
Rapson	—	The Cambridge History of India Vol. I
Rawlinson, George	—	The Five great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World
Rawlinson, H. G.	—	India
Ridley, C. N.	—	Man the Verdict of Science
Smith, Vincent A.	—	The Early History of India
Thomas, E. J.	—	Buddhist Thought
— do —	—	Life of Buddha
Thompson, R. Campbell	—	Semitic Magic
Toynbee, Arnold J.	—	A Study of History (Abrgt.)
Tylor, Sir Edward B.	—	Anthropology
Vogel, J. Ph.	—	Buddhist art in India, Ceylon and Java
Wells, H. G.	—	A Short History of the World
Whitehead, A. N.	—	Adventures of Ideas

Ceylon Journal of Science
Epigraphia Zeylanica
Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
Reports and Memoirs of Ceylon Archaeological Survey
Sir Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume, Poona
Spolia Zeylanica
The Ceylon Antiquary and the Literary Register
The National Geographic Magazine
University of Ceylon Review

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

INDEX

Abhayagiri, 66, 67
Abydos, 4
Abyssinia, 2
Adam and Eve, 11
Afganistan, 33, 56
Africa, 1, 6, 38
Agbatana, 15
Ahriman, 13
Ahura-Mazda, 12, 13, 16
Ajantha, 69
Ajasat, 33
Akanita, 15, 16
Ālavaka, 30
Alavipura, 30
Aleppo, 4
Alexander the Great, 25, 60
Aluthnuwara, 59
Amazon, 10
America, 6, 9, 10, 38
Amu Darya, 3
Ananda, Venerable 33
Ancient World, 1, 2, 6, 14, 15
Anguttara Nikaya, 55
Antioch, 4
Anuradhapura, 54, 60, 63, 66
Apayas (hells), 11
Arabia, 5
Arahant, 13, 36, 43
Archaeologists, 8, 12, 54, 63
Architecture, 14, 35
Ariya Magga, 28, 32, 36, 43-48, 51, 53, 60, 70
Armenia, 16, 17
Aryan, 7 11, 15, 17, 19, 26, 28, 31, 43, 46, 57
Aryana, 26
Aryans, 7, 11-14, 17, 18, 21, 23, 26, 30, 37, 38, 61
Asha-Vahista, 13
Asia, 1, 3, 4, 14, 17, 24, 28, 34, 35
Asia Minor, 1, 4, 10, 17, 18
Assur-Bani-Pal, 19
Assyria, 1, 5, 16-20, 23, 28, 35, 66
Astronomy, 35
Astyages, 21, 22
Asuras, 11, 14, 23, 53
Ātānātiya Sutta, 31, 56
Athisthone, 53
Atossa, 53
Avalokiteswara, 54, 59
Avidya (Ignorance) 36, 45, 48, 49, 66
Ayurveda, 35
Azerbijan, 18

Babylonia, 1, 5, 14, 18, 20, 23, 35, 52, 66
Bacon, Sir Francis 38
Bah-man, 13
Bakhtiyari, 17
Behistun, 15, 22, 27
Bendimir, 11
Bengal, 1, 4
Bhikku, 31, 46, 49, 66
Bible, 11, 19
Bimbisara, 33
Bintenna, 59
Birani, 34
Biso-Kotuva, 65
Black Sea, 1, 8, 28
Bodhisatva, 14
Bo tree, 40, 63
Brahma, 13-16, 46, 47, 51, 52
Britain, 5, 34, 38
Brohier R. L., 64
Buddha, Lord 13-16, 23, 26-36, 38, 39, 42-47, 49, 51, 53-59, 61, 62, 66
Buddha Gaya, 16, 40
Buddhism, 14, 36, 42, 46, 48
Buddhist, 11-16, 19, 20, 23, 25-27, 30 32-34, 43, 46, 48, 51, 53-58, 69

Cambyses, 22, 52
Caspian Sea, 2, 8
Catholics, 16
Chakravarti, 26
Chaldea, 19, 26
Chandragupta, 63
Chatur-Maha-Rajikaya, 33
China, 3-6
Chitra, 53
Chitrakuta, 54
Christian, 19, 37, 51
Chulodara, 59
Colombo, 68
Communists, 48
Creation, 13, 49
Crete, 9
Culture, 6, 49, 50
Cyaxares, 19-21
Cyrus, 21, 22, 24-26, 32, 33, 52, 54, 60

Darius, Emperor 13, 15, 22, 27, 28, 32-36, 51-53, 55, 56, 60
Dedimunda, 59
Deepavamsa, 61
Devanampiyatissa 61, 63

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Devas, 11, 12, 14, 16, 20, 23, 27, 29, 32-34, 46, 51, 53, 55-57
Devundara, 14, 63
Dhajagga Sutta, 23
Dhamma, 15, 16, 23, 30, 32, 43
Dharmadeepa, 62
Dhatusena, 69
Dhratharāshta, 56
Dimbulagala, 60
Dosa (Ill-will), 43

Egypt, 1, 2, 3, 9, 18, 20, 24, 35
Elara, 27
English, 38
Euphrates, 2, 3
Europe, 1, 17, 27
European, 10, 15, 35, 37, 38, 56
Evolution, 6

Flandin, 54
France, 6

Gandarvas, 56
Ganges, 1, 3, 33
Garuda, 13
God (Almighty), 13, 23, 38
Gotabhaya, 68
Govinda Hela, 63
Greece, 1, 5, 17, 24, 28, 35, 45
Greek, 15, 18, 19, 27, 28, 35, 53, 54, 63

Hagmatana, 16
Hakkamanusia, 7, 17, 22, 23, 51
Hamites, 17
Hansa Raja, 56
Harappa, 3
Herodotus, 18, 20, 23, 27, 28, 52, 53
Himalaya, 56
Hindu, 12-14, 39, 47, 69
Hindukush, 33
Hiuen Tsang, 55
Hocart, 54
Holland, 5
Huma Varga, 27
Huna race, 69

Iliad, 18
India, 1-5, 11, 12, 14-19, 24-28, 30, 32-34, 36, 38, 45-47, 52, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 66, 69
Indra, 7, 12, 23, 37, 38, 51, 53,
Indus, 1-3, 25, 33, 56, 60, 61, 63
Iran, 14
Iswara, 30, 31
Italy, 38

Jaffna, 58, 60
Jains, 31
Jambukola, 60
Java, 6

Jehovah, 37, 38
Jews, 19, 37, 38
John Still, 63

Kailas, 31
Kalaveva, 68
Kalidasa, 69
Kalyani, 58, 59
Kannavaddhamana, 58-60
Karakorum, 33
Karma, 44
Kashgar, 25
Kashmir, 14, 33, 56
Kashyapa, 69
Kaushika, 53
Ker Porter, 54
Khurdistan, 10
Kingdom of the Enlightened, 26, 40, 42
Kosiya, 55
Kumaradasa, 69
Kumbandas, 56
Kushaites, 53
Kusinara, 33

Labugama, 68
Ladak, 56
La Plata, 10
Latin, 7
Law of Cause and Effect, 13, 42
Lichchavi, 54
Lobha (Passion) 41, 43
Lova-Maha-Paya, 34
Lydia, 20, 35

Madyes, 20
Magadha, 5, 33, 52, 59, 60
Magama, 60
Magha, 51
Magi, 20-22
Mahabharatha, 18
Mahakāla, 30
Mahakāli, 30
Mahamandatu, 20
Mahāsamaya Sutta, 56
Mahavamsa, 27, 34, 57, 59-62, 69
Mahaveli, 59
Mahavihara, 66
Mahayana, 14
Maheswara, 13, 38
Mahiyangana, 57, 59
Mahodara, 59
Malavi, 69
Man, 7, 41-43
Maniakkhika, 59
Manthottam, 63
Manu, 7
Manushya, 14, 15, 27
Ma Oya, 60
Marga Phala, 43

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Margiana, 26
Materialist, 49, 50
Maurya, 63
Mecca, 16
Medes, 16, 17, 19-22, 26
Media, 1, 5, 10, 15-17, 19-22, 26, 28, 52, 60-62, 64-66
Mediterranean Sea, 1-4, 8, 9, 24
Malanasian, 57
Mera, 11
Mervdasht, 11
Mesopotamia, 3
Mexico, 9
Middle Ages, 51
Middle Path, 29, 42
Mihintale, 60
Mihiragula, 69
Mill, John Stuart 38
Minneriya, 68
Minovan Civilization, 9
Mississippi, 9, 10
Moha (Ignorace), 41, 43
Mohenjodaro, 3
Monks, Brotherhood of 46
Mugalan, Prince 69
Mugalan, Venerable 53
Mullativu, 59, 60, 63
Muslim, 16, 39

Naga, 11, 14, 19, 26, 27, 29, 56-59
Nagadeepa, 58
Nanda, 53
Nāma (Mind), 42, 43
Nile, 1, 3, 4
Nirvana, 43
Noble Eightfold Path, 28, 35, 36, 42, 43, 49, 65, 67
Nuvaragala, 63
Nuvarakele, 63

Odyssey, 18
Otanes, 53

Painting, 35, 67, 69
Pali, 55, 59
Pamir Plateau, 4, 11
Panchasika, 53
Pandukabhaya, 27, 61, 68
Pansil, 42
Paradise, 11
Parasathu, 55
Parinibbana Sutta, 33, 34
Parmese, 53, 54
Passion (Longing), 40
Pataliputra, 33, 34, 63
Peiris, Paul, E. 58
Persagadae, 12
Persepolis, 12, 33, 54
Persia, 1, 5, 10-12, 14, 17, 18, 20-22, 28, 33, 34, 52, 55, 62, 66
Persian, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12-14, 16-19, 21-23 28, 32-35, 43, 51-53, 55, 59
Peru, 10, 11
Phaedima, 53, 54
Pirivena, 66
Polytheism, 37
Pope, 51, 52
Portugal, 5
Puliyan Kulam, 60
Pulwar, 11
Punjab, 33
Purindada, 52
Puttalam, 61

Rajagaha, 33
Ramayana, 18
Red Sea, 4, 8, 27, 32
Religion, 8, 14, 27, 32, 36, 37, 39, 47 48
Rhys Davids, Dr 53
Rhys Davids, Mrs 51
Ritigala 60, 63
Roman, 37, 51
Rome, 5, 16
Rudra, 30
Rupa (Corporeality), 42 43
Ruvanveliseya, 67

Sakka, 7, 23, 32, 33, 52-56
Sakkapanna Sutta, 54
Sakka Samyutta Sutta 51-53
Sakya, 12, 16, 20, 24-29, 33, 34, 36, 40, 51, 57, 60-62, 64
Sanchi, 63
Sangatissa, 68
Satapatha Brahmana, 13
Sathara Korale, 59
Satraps, 53, 56
Scythians, 20, 27, 28
Semitic, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18
Sennacherib, 17
Shalmaneser, 16, 19
Shaw, Bernard 38
Siddhartha, Mahaweera 29
Siddhartha, Prince 13, 20, 26, 40
Sigiriya, 69
Sinhala, 3, 7, 28, 33, 56, 59, 60, 63-70
Sipi-Vishta, 12
Siri Sangabo, 68
Siva, 31
Socialism, 48-49
Socrates, 45
Soul, 42, 43
Spill (Vāna), 65
Sri Lanka, 4, 5, 14, 27, 28, 30, 34, 56-66, 69, 70
St Lawrence, 10
Sudharma, 53, 54
Suja, 53, 54
Sujampathi, 53

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Sumangalavilasini, 56
Sumeria, 5, 9
Suparna, 13
Syr Daria, 3
Syria, 3, 4

Tank, 64-68
Tarim, 3, 28, 56
Taxila, 63
Thanha (Longing), 42
Thanthrimalaya, 63
Theistic, 14, 23, 24, 37, 39, 40, 47, 48
Theravada, 14, 63
Thidasapura, 51
Thuparama Dagoba, 54
Tibet, 56
Tigris, 2, 3
Ti-Sarana, 42
Trinity, 12, 13

Upatissa, City of, 60
Uthpalavanna, 14, 59, 63

Vaishravana, 56
Vajrapani, 54
Vajrayudha, 59
Varam, 33
Vasabha, 58
Vāsava, 52
Vavuniya, 60
Vedas, 12, 13, 23
Vedda, 57
Vesak, 57
Victoria Niyansa, 2
Vihara-Maha-Devi, 27
Vijaya, 61, 62
Vijayothpaya, 54
Vijitapura, 60
Virudha, 56
Virupāksha, 56
Vishnu, 7, 12-14, 63
Vohumano, 13
Volcanoes, 10, 11

Webb, Sydney 38

Yakkha, 14, 15, 30, 31, 47, 57, 61
Yan Oya, 60
Yarkand, 25
Yasodharman, 69
Yodha Ela, 68

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Samuel D. de Lanerolle was born in 1900 at Kethewatta in Bomiriya, a village on the outskirts of Colombo. He began his career as an accounts clerk in a leading mercantile firm in Colombo but soon changed his profession to book trade. This gave him an opportunity to read widely and acquire a knowledge on many subjects pertaining to man and his social background. He is a bachelor free from domestic ties, and his comments on society have been unfettered and disinterested. His interests are mainly Ancient History, Natural History and Bibliography. Few writers in Sri Lanka have expressed views in such a convincing and forthright manner. "Origins of Sinhala Culture" is a typical example of his writings.

LAKE HOUSE INVESTMENTS LTD
Publishers
41 W. A. D. Ramanayake Mawatha
Colombo 2, Sri Lanka

Digitized by Noolaham Foundation.
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org