

Fourth Vesak Commemoration Lecture - 2006

Buddhism in Sri Lanka and South India: Interactions among Monastic Centres



Professor. S. Pathmanathan

Pluralism has been the key parameter in measuring advancement, progress and prosperity of human society today. In a way the basics of pluralism has been embedded into the human civilizational processes throughout the ages. As such, the conceptual designs of pluralism have gone through certain changes. Perhaps the concept has transcended boundaries of human imagination.

The philosophy expounded by Gauthama Buddha too harps on pluralism. The essentials of plural societies have been the basis for the present day humankind which is encompassed by the processes of an increasingly globalized world. While religions deal with enlightenment and emancipation, every religion stresses on the importance of inclusiveness.

Rediscovery of pluralism based on the present day need has also become essential prerequisite and perhaps there is also space for deconstruction. Such efforts require integrity and alternative paradigms.

*The Sri Lanka Deputy High Commission in Chennai in 2003 embarked on a unique experiment in exploring alternative avenues to rediscover the common heritage of pluralism in South Asia. Thus far we have been able to create substantive awareness on the concept of shared cultures between Sri Lanka and India through various activities. One of the most striking features among these is the **Vesak Commemoration Lecture** constituted since 2003. The first in the series of this discourse was delivered by Professor Sudharshan Seneviratne and the second lecture was delivered by Dr. Siran Deraniyagala. The Third lecture was delivered by Professor KNO Dharmadasa.*

The Fourth Lecture will investigate the interactions of Buddhist-monastic centers between Sri Lanka and South India. We thought such an inquiry is appropriate while we commemorate the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi in 2006.

We hope that the Fourth Vesak Commemoration Lecture-2006 by Professor S. Pathmanathan would further our understanding of the historical and religious interactions between the two countries.

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May 14, 2006*

Buddhism in Sri Lanka and South India: Interactions among Monastic Centres

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Fourth Vesak Commemoration Lecture - 2006
Russian Center of Science and Culture, Chennai, Tamil Nadu
May 14, 2006

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Buddhism as a major world Religion

Buddhism, which had developed as a major religion in the Indian sub-continent under the Mauryas, spread rather rapidly in Central Asia and China in the north and in South East Asia during the early centuries of the Christian era. Missionary activities were undertaken by monks attached to some of the principal monasteries, which were affiliated to particular sects into which Buddhism was divided in post Asokan times.

In the course of its expansion within and outside South Asia, Buddhism absorbed local cults and religious traditions in varying degrees. In the realm of thought and practice there was a continuous interaction with Hinduism in India and to a lesser degree in the kingdoms of South East Asia. This interaction and the assimilation of local cults had the effect of modifying Buddhism. It led to a considerable measure of diversity and pluralism in the tradition. Besides, in many instances the distinctions had a regional orientation.

The Buddhist sects have been classified rather arbitrarily into two major categories: the Hinayana otherwise called Theravāda and the Mahāyāna. The Theravādins resisted to the utmost, over a long and continuous period of time, the deviations from the original tradition in matters relating to doctrine and discipline as transmitted by the community of monks in pupillary succession since the days of the Buddha. Yet, inspired by the speculative philosophy of Nāgārjuna and his associates the Mahāyāna rapidly gained ground and became ascendant in the Buddhist world. It was in Sri Lanka that the Theravāda held ground because of royal patronage and the circumstance that its monastic establishments had flourished with an unbroken continuity almost throughout the historical period.

The spread of Buddhism had provided the impetus for the penetration of Indian cultural influences over a large part of Asia. Buddhist and secular literature in Sanskrit were studied at monasteries and schools attached to them in far off lands.² There was a search for manuscripts and a yearning for enhancing knowledge with zeal and a spirit of adventure. Monks and scholars travelled widely visiting sacred sites and monasteries reputed for their traditions of learning and scholastic activities. Some of them have left behind records of the impressions they had formed. The accounts of the Chinese travellers, namely Fa – Hsien, Tsuan Tsang and I'tsing are particularly significant as

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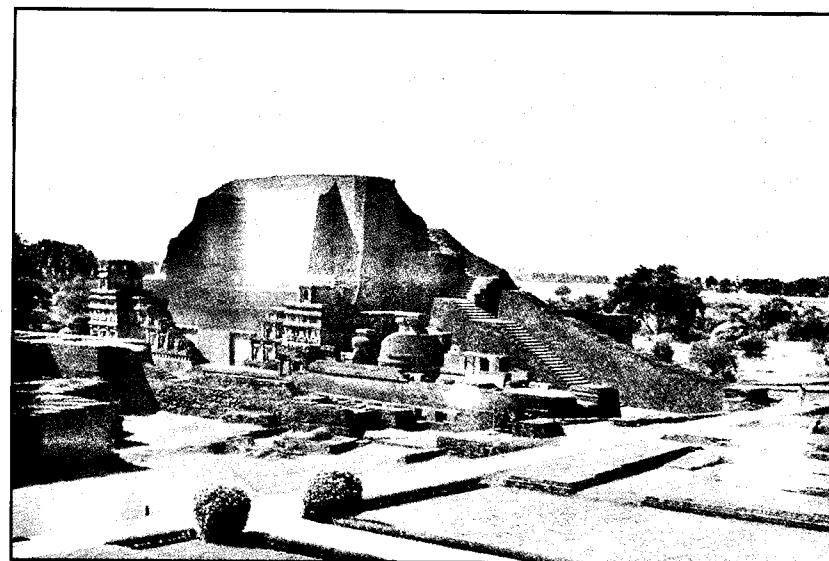
contemporary records depicting traditions, beliefs and practices relating to Buddhism in India and several other countries.³

Monarchs and merchants who had espoused Buddhism had invested enormous resources in establishing monastic centres, colleges, libraries and temples. Buddhism had provided the inspiration for spectacular developments in art and architecture in India, Sri Lanka, Central Asia and Southeast Asia where some of the Buddhist monuments were of unsurpassed magnitude and grandeur. The paintings of Ajanta, the cave temples of northwestern Deccan in India, the temples of Anuradhapura, Angkor, Borobodur and Pagan, the colossus of Bamiyan, and the paintings of Tun-Huan are some of the leading examples of such creations. In the first millennium of the Christian era Buddhism had contributed remarkably towards the progress of humanism and civilization in a major segment of humanity occupying a large part of Asia.

The Sri Lankan Phenomenon

According to tradition recorded in the Pali chronicles, Buddhism was established at Anuradhapura under royal patronage in the third century B.C by missionaries sent in accordance with a resolution of the third Buddhist Council, which met at Pataliputra in the reign of Asoka. Thera Mahinda, a son of Asoka, led the mission. Mahinda established the community of monks who took up residence at the Mahāvihāra in the neighbourhood of the royal palace. Subsequently, the theri Sanghamitta came to Anuradhapura and established the Bhikkhuni order.⁵ The sapling of the Bo tree at Buddha Gaya, which had been brought by her was planted at Mahāmegavana and in course of time it became an object of worship. The Mahābodhi became one of the most sacred centres of Buddhist worship. The Collar-bone of the Buddha was brought to the island around this time and deposited ceremonially at the Thūparāma, which developed into another sanctified centre of worship.⁶ Buddhism, which was established under royal patronage soon spread to all parts of the island as attested by a large number of Brāhmi inscriptions engraved mostly on the ledges of caves, which had become the abodes of monks.

Buddhism exerted a pervasive influence in the island during the Protohistoric and Early Historic periods. Its introduction coincided with the great leap from the Mesolithic culture to the formation of sedentary pastoral and agrarian communities. It was a consequence of the penetration of iron-using megalithic communities of South Indian origin.⁷ There was at the same time an assimilation of the elements of Vedic religion and culture among the class of elite because of the impact of progress in sea-borne trade in the South Asian region. Under the influence of Buddhism new social and cultural identities



Nalanda

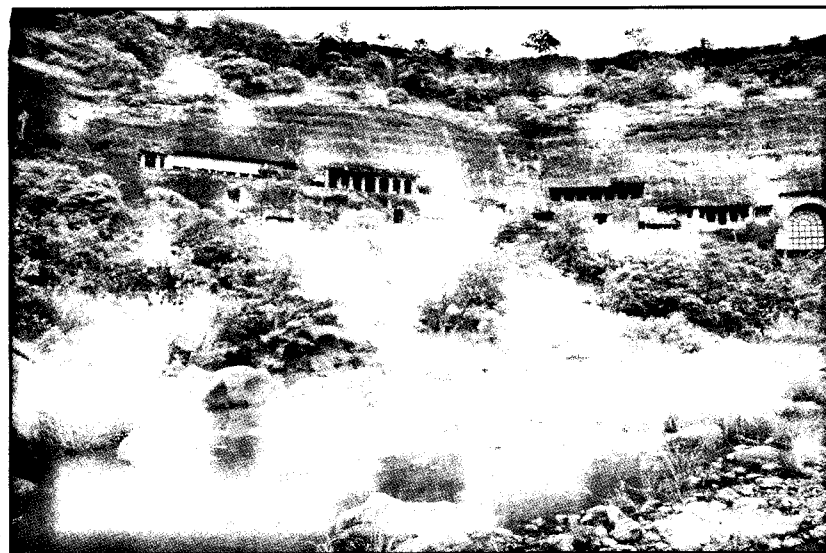
were forged. The art of writing was developed and a hybrid variety of the Brāhmi script was widely used. The Prākṛit language was adopted as the medium of learning and communication. It had the effect of displacing the local languages in course of time.⁸

It is significant that in the conservation and transmission of Buddhist literary heritage the Buddhist establishments of Anuradhapura held a unique position. The whole range of Early Buddhist literature that had been transmitted to them from India during the early stages of their development were preserved, copied and distributed among leading monasteries where they were deposited and studied with assiduity by generations of learned monks. The study, recital and reflection on them had been their principal avocation. These could not be preserved in the monastic centres in India because of political upheavals and sectarian rivalries among the Buddhist orders. Early Buddhist literary heritage, which is also an important component of Indian cultural heritage, was preserved almost in its entirety in the island, and transmitted from the Sri Lankan monasteries to Myanmar, Thailand and other South East Asian countries. Another notable contribution by the Sri Lankan monastic orders was the development of a wide range of commentarial literature, which served as the foundation for the extensive treatises of Buddhaghosa, which are unsurpassed in Pali literature because of their encyclopaedic character, a mastery of the tradition and intellectual vigour in exposition.

A third contribution, which as an achievement was unique to Sri Lankan Buddhism, was the development of a historical tradition epitomized in the Pali chronicles, the Dipavamsa and the Mahavamsa. This tradition had its origins in the historical traditions of early Buddhism, which focused on the life and career of the Buddha and the course of subsequent developments leading to the third Buddhist Council in the reign of Asoka.⁹ A notable feature of this tradition was the development of a scheme of chronology reckoned from the parinibbana of the Buddha. This tradition was the precursor and the prototype for historical traditions that were developed in the island. There was a shift of focus from Buddhism to dynastic history and this dynastic history was a version from a Theravāda point of view. As sources of information the chronicles are unique. It is also necessary here to note that the Pāli chronicles record relevant and relatively more authentic information on the history of Magadha. Until the discovery and publication of the Asokan inscriptions the traditional views on Asoka were largely coloured by the traditions recorded in these chronicles. They are also of great relevance for the study of the history of Buddhism in the island and particularly the interactions between Indian and Sri Lankan monastic centres.

The Development of Buddhism in Tamil Nadu

Buddhism does not seem to have had a decisive impact on Tamil society in India until the fourth century AD. In the Brāhmi inscriptions of Tamil Nadu, which belong to the same period as those of Sri Lanka, there is no reference to Buddhism. They record in Tamil the donations made to Jaina monks living in caves. In the whole range of early Tamil literature there are no references to Buddhism and its institutions. The progress of Buddhism could be traced from the fourth century AD on the basis of textual notices and archaeological remains. The remains of a Buddhist monastery excavated at Kāvērippaṭṭinam, which could be assigned to the fourth century, are believed to be the earliest archaeological relics of Buddhism in Tamil Nadu. Close contacts with Sri Lanka in the South and Andhra Pradesh in the North had provided the impetus for the development of Buddhist sects since the fourth century and Buddhism had flourished at the principal cities of Kāvērippaṭṭinam, Vañci and Kañcipuram. Unlike Jainism, Buddhism could not penetrate the rural landscape. It was an urban phenomenon and even in towns and cities its adherents were always in a minority. Its influence was confined to the class of elites and its patrons were mostly merchants. Unlike in Sri Lanka, the connections that Buddhism had with the monarchy was a tenuous one. It encountered competition and powerful opposition from Jainism, Saivism and Vaiṣṇavism.

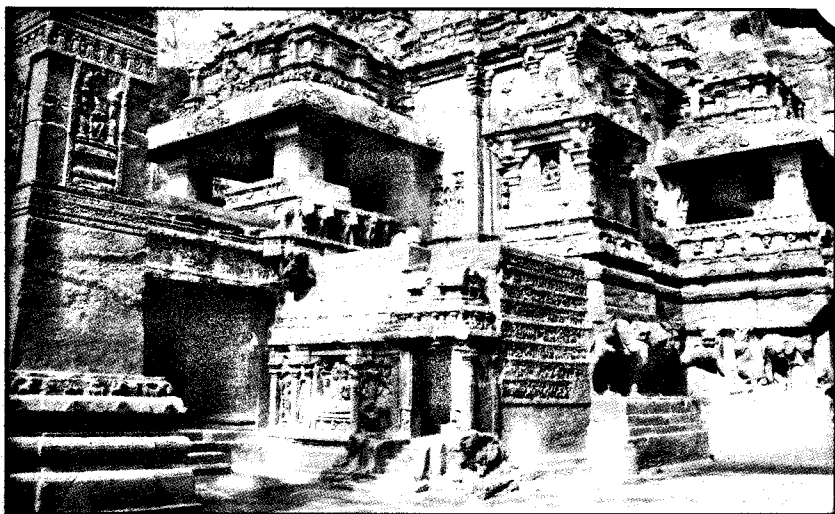


Ajantha

In Tamil Nadu there were two distinct periods of Buddhist activities. The first one corresponded to the early phase of the Pallava period (A..D. 400-650) and the second coincided with the peak period of Cōḷa imperial power. During the first of these periods Buddhism flourished in cities and towns that had a multicultural setting.

There was considerable diversity in the Buddhist tradition as found in the Tamil country. There were adherents of four principal sects: the Sthaviravāda, Yogācāra, Vajrayāna and the Dhyāna School. Close contacts were maintained with monastic centres in the Andhra country and those of Sri Lanka. The compendium of commentarial literature called the *Andha-atthakatha* was available for study in some monasteries. The influence of the Mahāyāna was strongly felt through the connections with the Andhra country. The adherents of the Sthavira School wrote in Pāli and the monastic centres of Anurādhapura with which they had maintained close connections were their major sources of inspiration.

During the Pallava period there were some outstanding monks in Tamil Nadu who had made remarkable contributions for the cause of Buddhism and the development of the major branches of Buddhist learning. The commentaries of Buddhadatta (5th century A.D) earned for him a wide and enduring reputation in the history of the Theravāda tradition.¹² Another great commentator on the



Ellora

Pāli texts was Dharmapāla who was residing at Kāñcīpuram when Tsuan-Tsang was visitor there. In his commentary on the Nettipakarana Dharmapāla says that he wrote this commentary while he was residing at the monastery at Nākapappinam, which is like a port for embarking on the ocean of Dharma.¹³ The Paramattha Dīpani, an exposition of the Khuddaka – Nikaya and the Paramattha Mañjusa, which is a commentary of Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* are the principal commentaries attributed to Dharmapāla.

There was another monk called Dharmapāla who became the head of the Nalanda monastery in Magadha. Dharmapāla had incomparable skill in debate and disputation. He had traveled widely in India. During the course of his journeys Dharmapāla had many successful encounters with the champions of rival sects. His election to the headship of the Nālanda monastery provides an indication of the reputation he had among his contemporaries. It was because of his vast knowledge and extra-ordinary abilities as a propagandist and dialectician.¹⁴

Another renowned Buddhist scholar from Kāñci was Dinnāga. He lived during the early part of the sixth century. In his travels in the north he had come under the influence of the great Mahāyāna theoretician, Vasubandhu. He wrote extensively on Buddhist logic. In the History of Buddhism Dinnāga occupies a special position as the founder of Buddhist logic.¹⁵ Bodhidharma of Kāñcīpuram acquired fame in another direction. He was an exponent of the Dhyāna School and in that capacity he had gone to China and engaged in

missionary work.¹⁶ His activities there had laid the foundation for the development of the "Lotus School", which had a wide following in Japan.

Vajrabodhi was yet another remarkable South Indian monk who lived in the seventh century. He studied at Nālanda and went on pilgrimage to sacred sites in North India before returning the South India around AD 689. He visited Sri Lanka and during his sojourn there lasting for a period of six monks, Vajrabodhi was engaged in propagating the Mahāyāna.¹⁷ Later, one of his disciples, Amoghavajra, had undertaken the task of consolidating the progress of the Mahāyāna in the Island.

The close connections that had existed among the Buddhist communities of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu is attested by the *Mañimēkalai*, which could be ascribed to the sixth century A.D. Sri Lanka is referred to as *Ilankā Tīvakam*. It also refers to two parts of the island, *nākanāṭu* and *irattina tīvakam* corresponding respectively to the northernmost and the central and southern parts of the island.¹⁸ The island of Mañipallavam located between *nākanāṭu* and *Tamilakam* is represented as a sacred site because of the existence of a Buddha image, which is believed to have had miraculous powers.¹⁹ According to this text *srāvakas* and other devotees from *Tamiḷakam*, *Cāvakam* and *Īlam* assembled there and experienced the removal of obstacles against the goal of enlightenment. The *Mañimēkalai*, is a product of a tradition of learning cultivated in the leading monastic centres of *Tamiḷakam*. It is essentially a work expounding doctrines and propagating the values of Buddhism.²⁰ In this work renunciation becomes the highest goal of human life and the noblest path towards relief from sorrow and suffering and that these are caused by deeds committed by individuals in previous births is a recurring theme. The triple gem – the Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha are described in several places in the text with deep veneration.²¹

The *Mañimēkalai* does not seem to have been written with a view to promoting the claims of any particular sect of Buddhism to superiority over others. It is essentially synthetic in character and the emphasis is uniformly on the fundamentals of Buddhist teaching and practice. The inexorable laws of *karman*, the misery of earthly existence, transcending the cycle of rebirths through renunciation and compassion to all living beings are items highlighted in this poem.

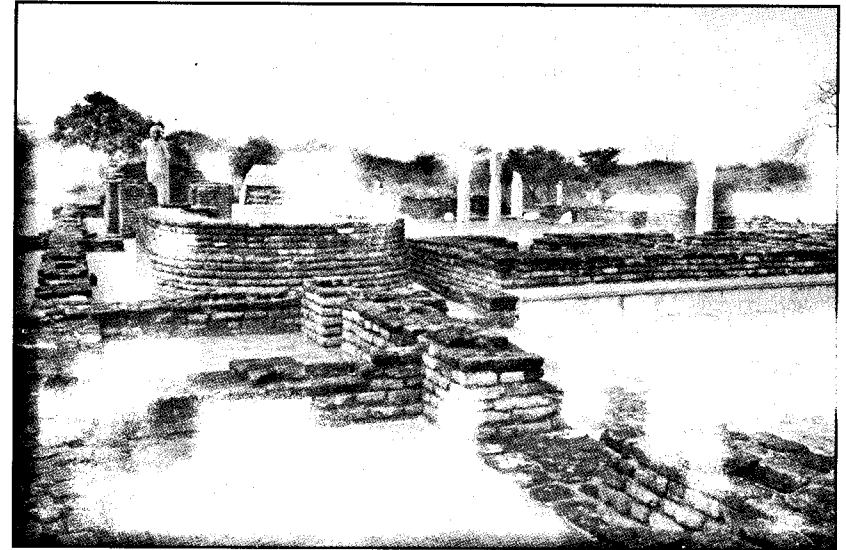
It is significant that the *pārāmitā* are referred to in some places in the text. The belief in the miraculous powers associated with the alms bowl called *amutacurapi* is one that was alien to early Buddhism. The monk and the

upāsaka as described in the *Maṇimēkalai* are not merely engaged in individual salvation but also deeply involved in matters pertaining to society and in providing relief to the distressed and those in want. On the whole the text projects the ideals of a synthetic Buddhism. Cāttanār, the author, of the poem highlights the fundamentals of Buddhist thought common to all the principal sects of Buddhism. The ethical ideas articulated by him are derived mainly from the traditions of early (Theravāda) Buddhism and the idealism of the Mahāyāna. Such an impression seems to be supported by his emphasis on cīlam (conduct), tānam (liberality) and tavam (meditation) as being the highest virtues.²³

Buddhism depicted in the *Maṇimēkalai* is a tradition confined to the urban setting, and presumably to the merchant community. The traditions which were developed into narrative proportions by Cāttanār seem to have mercantile connections and the metaphors and similes found in the text suggest a background of association with mercantile activity. The main events of the story are associated with three principal towns: Kāvripūmpaṭṭinam, Kāñci and Vañci.²⁴

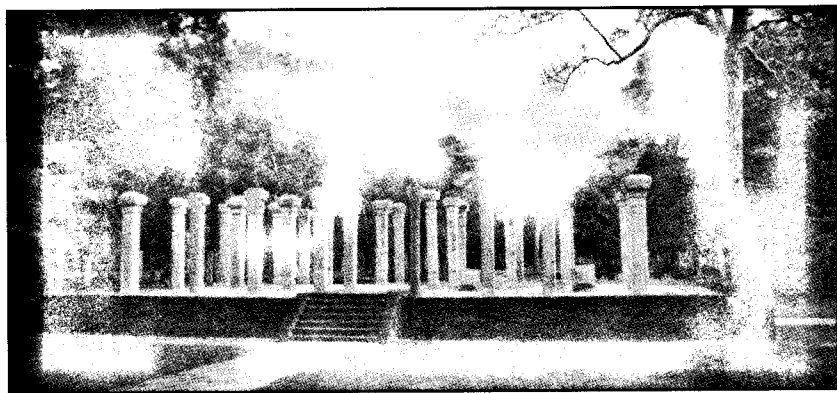
The allusion to the presence of the cāraḍar (wondering monks) from *irattina-tīvakam* at Vañci is significant. It suggests that Sri Lankan monks were found in Tamil Nadu in some capacity.²⁵ and this tradition is confirmed by Tsuan-Tsang who says that there were around 300 Sri Lankan monks at a monastery at the southern sector of Kāñcipuram. The account of *Pattini-teyvam* as found in the *Maṇimēkalai* is of special relevance in comprehending an aspect of the complex and multifaceted connections Sri Lankan Buddhism had with the tradition in South India. The Pattini cult had become very popular in medieval Sri Lanka. Buddhism assimilated it and Pattini was reckoned as one of the four guardian deities of Lankā. That the cult of Pattini had its origins and early development in South Indian Buddhism is clearly attested by the *Maṇimēkalai*. Pattini had already become a Buddhist deity in South India when the poem was written.²⁶ Besides, the account of the Buddha image at Maṇipallavam as found in the poem presupposes a close familiarity with the tales pertaining to the visits of the Buddha to the island as recorded in the Pāli chronicles. Such a situation suggests that the traditions relating to the early history of Buddhism as found in the island had been transmitted to the Buddhist monasteries in Tamil Nadu through a process mutual interaction.

In the seventh century Buddhism in South India was in a state of decline. Although Buddhism had not faded out many of the monasteries were in a state



Nagarjuna Konda

of dilapidation.²⁷ It had ceased to win over adherents among the local inhabitants. The monasteries in the principal cities of Kāñcipuram and Kāvripaṭṭinam were eventually abandoned. Under the imperial Cōḷas there was a revival of Buddhism in Tamil Nadu. Nakapattinam on the Coromandel Coast became the centre of Buddhist activities in South India. The principal monastic establishment was the Rājaraja-perumpalli otherwise called Cūḷāmaṇivarman – vihāram. It was constructed by the Sailendra kings, Cūḷāmaṇivarman and his son and successor, Sri Maraviḷayottungavarman at the beginning of the 11th century.²⁸ It developed into an extensive establishment under the patronage of the Cōḷa kings and merchant communities. The Rājendracōḷap - perumpalli was subsequently set up by local kings as an adjunct to this establishment. The Akkaçālaip-perumpalli, another institution that came into existence in the premises of this monastic establishment was, as suggested by its name²⁹ established and maintained by artisan communities affiliated to the Patineṇviṣaiyam, the most influential among the itinerant merchant communities of medieval South India. The most notable development in the Buddhist tradition was in art, particularly in the production of bronzes of which a substantial number have been unearthed at Nākaṭṭinam. They are deposited in archaeological museums in India,



Ruined Relic House, Abhayagiri, Anuradhapura

Sri Lanka, Myanmar, U.K and the USA. The inscribed labels on the pedestals of these bronzes reveal the characteristics of Buddhism as found in Tamil Nādu.³⁰

There was a considerable body of Tamil literature on Buddhism written during this period and fragments of some of the texts have been preserved in the commentary of *Vīracōḷiyam*.³¹ The *Vīracōḷiyam*, a treatise on grammar and poetics, was well known to some Sri Lankan monks as attested by the *Sidat Sangarava*, a Sinhalese text on grammar.³² There was a revival of Theravāda centres in parts of Tamil Nādu and it led to a revival of the interaction between the monastic centres in the two countries. Some South Indian monks of high reputation were invited by the kings of Sri Lanka and engaged in the task of re-establishing the monastic orders and colleges.

The Abhayagiri Vihāra, Jetavana and Buddhaghosa in Anurādhapura

A notable development in Sri Lankan Buddhism during the first four centuries of the Christian era was the penetration of Mahāyāna influences into the monastic establishments of Anuradhapura. The inspiration was from South India and the consequence was a schism in the Sangha leading to the formation of three *nikāyas*, which were respectively affiliated to the Mahāvihāra, the Abhayagiri Vihāra and the Dakkhina Vihāra. The conservative Mahāvihāra, which had a monopoly of royal support at the early stages, was successful in stemming the tide towards innovations in the initial stages. But, when it lost the support and patronage of the king during the height of the controversy under

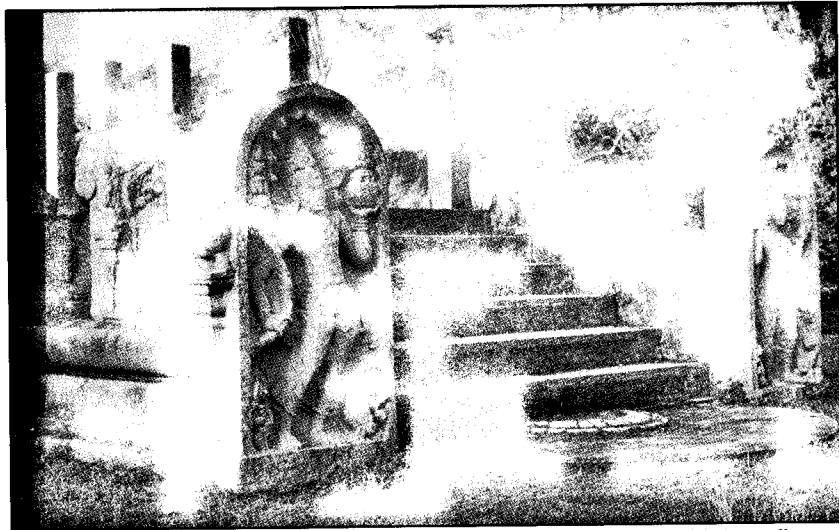
Mahāsena, it suffered major reverses and the two rival sects gained ground and became firmly established.

Vattagamani Abhaya (89-77 BC) who constructed the Abhayagiri Vihāra in Anuradhapura had recourse to the unusual step of handing it over to a certain Tissa thera as a special favour. Tissa had supported the king while he was in distress once he was dislodged from power by a group of invaders.³³ The king's action was viewed with disfavour by the authorities of the Mahāvihāra. As they were unable to demonstrate open hostility against the king, the authorities of the institution accused the thera Tissa for committing the offence of visiting the houses of laymen. As a measure of enforcing discipline they expelled him from the order.³⁴ One of the disciples of the victim, Bahalumassu Tissa protested against this action. He left the Mahāvihāra with a following of 500 monks and took up residence at the Abhayagiri vihāra.³⁵ This event led to a division of the sangha for the first time since the establishment of Buddhism in the country.

The fraternity of monks occupying the Abhayagiri Vihāra came under the influence of the adherents of the Mahāyāna. The disciples of Dhammaruci of the Vajjiputta Nikaya had arrived there from "Pallavārāma" in South India. The inmates of the new vihāra accepted their teachings and thenceforth they were known as the Dhammaruci Nikāya. "The Vajjiputtakas admitted the *pudgala*, a sort of soul in disguise, and thus differed from all other sects of early Buddhism in subscribing to a heresy at variance with the doctrine of *anattha*, the corner-stone of Buddhist philosophy"³⁷ The location of Pallavārāma cannot be precisely determined. As the early Pallavas had exercised control over Vengi it is probable that this monastery was somewhere in Andhra Pradesh.

In the reign of Bhātikā Abhaya (BC 22-7), there was a dispute between the monks of the Mahāvihāra and those of the Abhayagiri Vihāra. It was provoked by disagreements on the interpretation of a passage in the *vinaya-piṭaka*.³⁸ The king had to intervene and hold an inquiry, which was conducted by a learned *brāhmaṇa* named Digha Kārāyana.³⁹ The dispute was settled in favour of the Mahāvihāra.

In the reign of Vohārika Tissa (214 – 236 AD) there was a decisive shift towards the Mahāyāna. The monks of the Dhammaruci Nikāya adopted the *Vaitulya - Pitaka* as embodying the essence of the teachings of the Buddha.⁴⁰ Their action provoked hostile reactions. The matter was reported to the king who ordered an inquiry under his minister Kapila. Kapila reported adversely against the *Vaitulya - Pitaka*. On the orders of the king the *Vaitulya* texts were



Residence of a Chief Monk, Abhayagiri, Anuradhapura

burnt and the monks who had adopted them were severely punished.⁴¹ However, the progress of the Mahāyāna could not be suppressed by royal proclamation and the disputes between the two sects assumed serious proportions in the subsequent period.

Dispute arose once again between the adherents of the orthodox sect and the Mahāyānists in the reign of Goṭhābhaya (253 – 266 AD). Some of the monks of the Abhayagiri Vihāra propagated the doctrines of the Vaitulya-vāda. The king intervened and suppressed the movement with stern measures. Commenting on the king's action the *Mahāvamsa* says: "Purifying the doctrine by suppression of heresy he seized *bhikkhus* dwelling in the Abhayagiri (Vihara), sixty in number, who had turned to the Vaitulya doctrine and were like a thorn in the doctrine of the Buddha, and when he had excommunicated them, banished them to the further coast."⁴²

As events proved subsequently, the arbitrary and partisan conduct of the king was the prelude to a great disaster. His son, Mahasena, had become a convert to the Vaitulya-vada, and during his reign the Mahāvihāra was for a time disestablished and disendowed under a royal proclamation. The conversion of the new king is attributed to Sanghamitta, a monk of youthful vigour and exceptional talents, from a monastery in Kāverippaṭṭinam.⁴³ It is in connection with him that one encounters in the Pāli chronicles the earliest authentic notice of Sri Lankan connection with a monastic centre in Tamil Nadu.

Around this time there were some Buddhist monasteries in and around Kāverippaṭṭinam in the Cōla country. As an exponent of the Mahāyana Sanghamitta was supremely successful. His mastery of Buddhist learning, debating skills and intellectual powers had attracted Goṭhābhaya. The king appointed Sanghamitta as the teacher of his two sons, the princes Jeṭṭha Tissa and Mahāsena.⁴⁴ Jeṭṭha Tissa had a strong partiality towards the Theravāda, but the younger of the two princes, Mahāsena, succumbed to the influence of Sanghamitta. He became a zealous advocate of the cause of the Mahāyāna.

In the reign of Mahāsena (278 – 301) the Mahāvihāra suffered major reverses. It was abandoned for a period of nine years because of hostile action on the part of the king.⁴⁴ In the meantime; the Abhayagiri Vihāra forged ahead with enlarged buildings and extended establishments. Mahāsena, who is one of the two greatest builders among Sri Lankan kings, was responsible for the construction of the Jetavana temple of unsurpassed magnitude and grandeur. The new establishment became a pivotal centre of Mahayanism. It is significant that some extracts from the *Prajñā - pāramita* engraved on copperplates has been discovered in the course of archaeological excavations conducted under the auspices of the Cultural Triangle in 1983 at the *Jetavanārāma* site.⁴⁶

The progress made by the non-orthodox sects in the reign of *Mahāsena* were consolidated and thereafter the fraternities of monks attached to the Abhayagiri and the Dakkhina monasteries were generously supported by the kings of Anuradhapura. They seem to have been larger than the Mahāvihāra. The Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hsien who visited the island during the early fifth century found that there were 5,000 monks in the monasteries of the Abhayagiri Vihāra whereas there were only 3,000 monks in the Mahāvihāra.⁴⁷

Since the fifth century the monasteries of the rival sects at Anuradhapura instead of engaging in confrontation among them directed their energies towards the development of monastic libraries and traditions of learning which acquired an international reputation. Many monks from several parts of India and China visited them for the purpose of study and copying manuscripts that could not be found elsewhere. It was in such a situation that the contacts between the monastic centres of South India and Sri Lanka assumed an unusual importance. There is however, no evidence of any institutional affiliation. The interactions were personal and yet they were highly significant because of their decisive impact on the conservation and enrichment of literary heritage that was of considerable diversity. It became part of a shared heritage that was transmitted to countries beyond the region of South India and Sri Lanka.

The contributions of Buddhadatta and his junior contemporary Buddhaghosa represent the peak period in the development of Pali literature. Buddhadatta who was born at Uraiyūr in the Cōla country, was ordained as a monk at the Mahāvihāra in Anurādhapura.⁴⁸ He had studied deeply the early Buddhist literature recorded in the Pali language and preserved in the monastic libraries of the Mahāvihāra. His life and work had provided the impetus for the development of Buddhist learning of Theravada orientation in the Tamil country. The *Abhidhammāvātara*, *Madurattha-Vilasini*, *Vinaya - Vinicchaya* and *Uttara - Vinicchaya*, which are attributed to him, are extensive works that were learnt with assiduity by the inmates of monasteries in South India and Sri Lanka over a long period of time. The *Uttara - Vinicchaya* is said to have been written while he was residing at Anuradhapura.⁴⁹ The other texts were written after his return to South India. "At the end of his book, the *Vinaya-Vinicchaya*, we are told that it was written by Buddhadatta of Uragapura (*uragapurena buddhadattena racito'yam*), and the same appears at the close of the *Abhidhammāvātāra*."⁵⁰

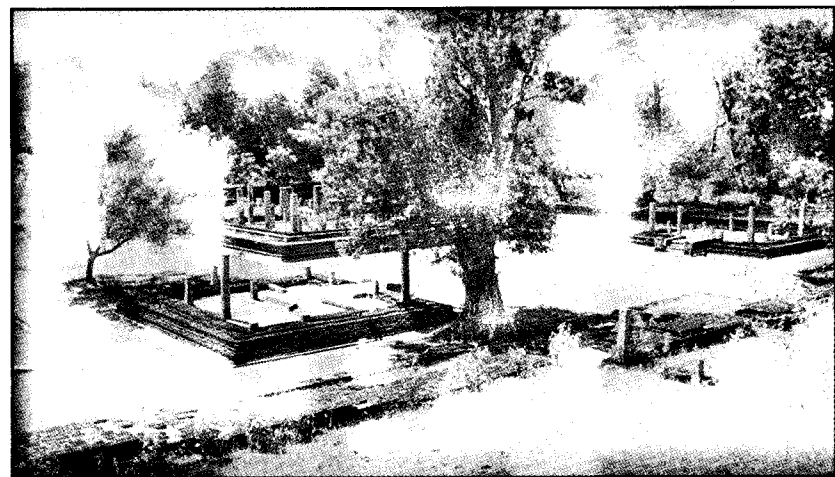
In the introductory stanzas of this work he says that he wrote the text while residing at the monastery established by Venhudasa at Bhūtamaṅgala-gama, in the Cōla country, during the reign of Accuta Vikkama.⁵¹ A Sri Lankan tradition attributes to Buddhadatta the authorship of *Madurattha - Vilāsini*, and the *Jinālaṅkāra*. The former is a commentary on the *Buddhavamsa*, which is a compilation of legends dealing with the lives of Gotama.⁵²

The works of Buddhaghosa are the most extensive and outstanding in the entire range of Pāli literature produced after the days of Asoka. Buddhaghosa had travelled widely in India before he had come to Anuradhapura. He had spent some years in the monasteries of Tamil Nadu prior to and after his visit to the island. He was according to a tradition recorded in the Pali chronicle, born at Buddha Gaya. The *Mahāvamsa* says:

"A Brāhmaṇa youth born in the neighbourhood of the Great Bodhi tree, accomplished in arts and sciences, one who had mastered the three Vedas, was well versed in knowledge, skilled in all disputes, himself a schismatic wanderer over Jambu – dīpa, assuming the character of a disputant."

"Having there (in Jambu – dīpa) composed an original work called *Ñānodayam*, he at the same time wrote the chapter called *Attha-sālīni*⁵³ on the *Dhamma - Sangini*."

As a staunch adherent of the Theravāda, Buddhaghosa set upon himself the task of defining and reformulating the Theravāda tradition in such a manner



Residential Complex, Abhayagiri, Anuradhapura

that it would not be overwhelmed by the advancing tide of the Mahāyāna. He accomplished this basic task with superb skill. He wrote comprehensively and extensively and his numerous works had the effect of illuminating the Theravāda tradition. The commentaries on the Tripitaka were available in several versions in the monasteries of Anuradhapura. These were modified and elaborated versions of an original tradition developed in India as suggested by a reference in the *Sumangala-Vilāsini*. In the opening stanzas of that look, Buddhaghosa says that the commentary on the *Digha-Nikāya* was rehearsed by 500 monks at the first council.⁵⁴

"His *Visuddhimagga* is the only book in which the whole of the Buddha's system is well depicted in an abridged compilation of three pitakas, together with quotations from the commentaries on the passages from the pitakas mentioned therein." The *Visuddhimagga*, which was the first work he had written in Anuradhapura, is an encyclopedia of doctrine.⁵⁵

A monumental composition of Buddhaghosa was the *Samatapāsādikā*. It is a voluminous compilation dealing with the vinaya texts. Apart from its value as a commentary to explain the rules of moralities etc., embodied in the vinaya, it contains a great mass of social, political, moral and religious, and philosophical history of Ancient India. A monk named Sanghabhadra in 489 AD translated it into Chinese quite soon after.⁵⁶

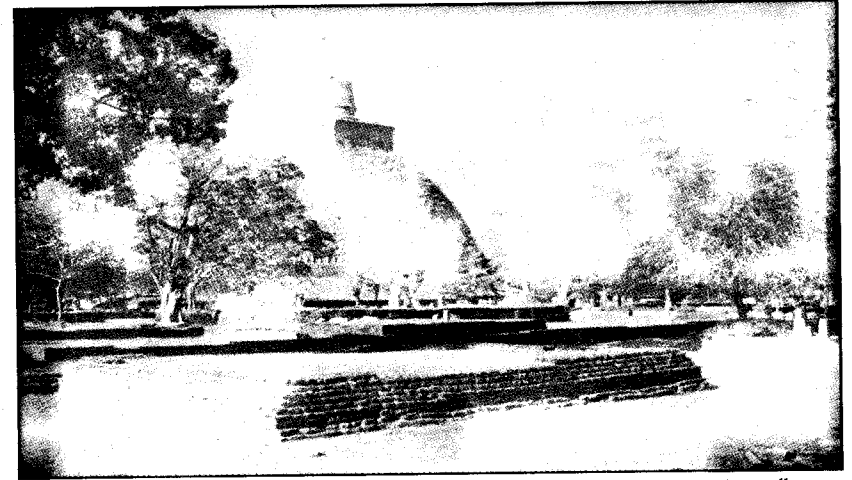
Buddhaghosa wrote commentaries on the *Digha - Nikāya*, *Majjhima - Nikāya*, *Samyutta - Nikāya* and *Anguttara - Nikāya*. They are respectively the

Sumangala - Vilâsinî, Papañca-sûdani, Sârattha - ppakâsini and the Manoratha - pûrani, Buddhaghosa says that at the time of compiling the work he was living at Kâñcipuram with his friend Jotipâla.⁵⁸ Besides, it is also significant that he wrote the Papañca - Sûdani while was living with the Thera Buddhmitra at Mayûrapattinam.⁵⁹ In the seventh century, Dhammapâla, who was born at Kâñcipuram wrote the *Paramattha - Mañjusa* as a commentary on the *Visuddhi - magga* of Buddhaghosa.

Information pertaining to parallel developments in the monasteries of the Abhayagiri and the Dakkhina - vihâra establishments is not recorded in local chronicles. It would seem that they had maintained close connections with centres in foreign countries and directed their energies to missionary work. In the seventh century, Vajrabodhi, a native of South India, had visited Sri Lanka and stayed there for six months. Vijrabodhi who was born in 661 AD, had studied at Nâlanda and had gone on pilgrimage to Kapilavastu. During his sojourn in the island he was engaged in propagating the Mahâyâna. He returned to Kâñci and from there left for China. On his instruction one of his disciples, Amoghavajra, came to Sri Lanka from Canton in China. He was honoured by the ruler Silâmegha and is credited with having fixed the Mahâyâna doctrine in its final form.⁶⁰

There was a revival of Buddhism in Tamil Nadu under the imperial Cōlas in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The history of this development could be traced only in outline on the basis of fragmentary information from extant sources. It had a multifaceted character as in the earlier period. In the polemical writings of the Jaina and Saiva Siddhanta traditions considerable attention was paid to Buddhism. The Madhyâmika, Yogâcâra, Sautrântika and Vaibhâshika doctrines are reviewed in considerable detail in the the Civañânacittiyar, which was written in the 14th century. They were highlighted as the principal schools of Buddhism probably because of the fact that they had a considerable following and influence in contemporary South Indian society.

In recent times there has been a steady increase in the accumulation of Buddhist antiquities in Tamil Nadu. There is a considerable number of Buddha images scattered at isolated sites in many parts of the country. A preponderant majority of the images are from the heartland of the Cōla kingdom. Among the antiquarian remains, those pertaining to the Cûlâmañivarma - Vihâram are the most impressive. The tower of Nâkapaṭṭinam, which was described sometimes as the 'China Pagoda' had survived until the mid - nineteenth century as the only architectural remnant of medieval Buddhist temples in the country. The Leyden plates are of the utmost importance as sources of historical information pertaining to the temples of Nâkapaṭṭinam. The bronzes unearthed at the

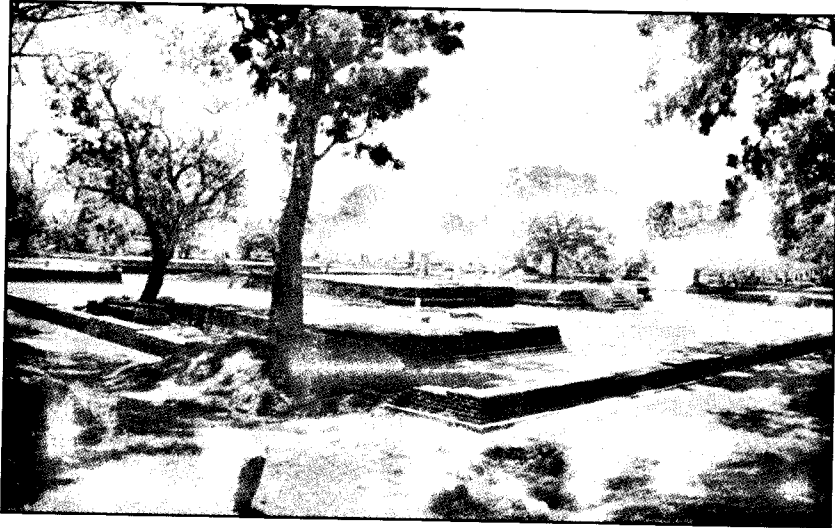


Jetavana Stupa, Jetavana, Anuradhapura

premises of this temple and the inscribed labels on their pedestals reveal in considerable measure the facets of ideology and practices of the Buddhist tradition established at Nâkapattinam. It was essentially a mercantile Buddhism with international connections. The sources of inspiration in art and ideology were from the kingdoms of the Pâlas in North India and the Sailendras in Cāvakam.

There was a considerable body of Buddhist literature in Tamil.⁶² The *Kuñṭalakêci* was written for the purpose of propagating Buddhism. Only fragments of this work have survived in the form of quotations in Jaina polemical writings and in commentarial literature. The *Pimpicârak - katai* was another such text. The *Vīracōliyam*, a treatise on Tamil grammar and poetics was written by a Buddhist author, Puttamittirar of Ponpaṭṭi, in the reign of Virarājendra. The introductory stanzas contain a eulogy of the Cōla king. Peruntēvanār, who wrote the commentary on this work, has recorded in the form of quotation fragments from a variety of Buddhist texts in Tamil that have subsequently been lost. In the tradition that could be gleaned from the Tamil texts there is a strong Mahâyâna flavour.

The fragments of the Tiruccōpuram inscription of the reign Jaṭavarman Sundara Pāndya provide some idea of the organization of a Buddhist monastery in Tamil Nadu. It refers to a certain Cāriputtira - Paṅṭitan who made some arrangement for some temple services from the incomes from lands over which he had authority. It is noteworthy that he is referred to in the first person.



Residential Complex, Jetavana, Anuradhapura

Obviously, the inscription was set up to record some arrangement that was made on his initiative. There is a specific reference to rights on lands assigned to teachers (*pākāriya urimaikaḷ*). The occurrence of the word *caṅkattār* presupposes that there was a body of monks attached to the institution. The temple (*kōyil*) and worship (*pūcai*) conducted there are also mentioned in one of the fragments. A territorial division called *Vēcālippāṇi - nāṭu* is also referred to. The temple lands were probably located within it. On the basis of the fragmentary information from this inscription it may be assumed that there was, at Tiruccōpuram in Natuvilnāṭu otherwise called Rājarāja - vaḷanātu, a Buddhist monastic establishment. It had a monastery, a temple and a school, all which were supported with benefices in the form of some land assignments. In his capacity as the leader of the community of monks Cāriputtira - Paṅṅitan had exercised authority over the establishment. It could also be assumed that all other contemporary monastic establishments in Tamil Nadu were organized on similar lines. Such a situation is comparable to the Sri Lankan phenomenon.

There was a revival of the Theravada tradition, particularly in the Cōḷa country. It led to a revival of Pāli studies. Associated with this movement were a number of eminent monks who were reputed because of their profound knowledge and mastery of the tradition. Inevitably, this movement had close connections with the monastic centres in Sri Lanka. The information pertaining to this connection is derived from contemporary Sri Lankan sources of a diverse background. Monks traveled from one country to another and were

engaged in a co-operative endeavor in sustaining and enriching a common heritage that was considered to have been inspired by the teachings of the Buddha. The role of some of the Sri Lankan monarchs in fostering this tradition of interaction was particularly significant.

One of the earliest exponents of the Theravāda in the Cōḷa period was Anuruddha who summarized the *Abbidhamma* in two works called *Paramattha - Vinicchaya* and *Nāmarūpa - Pariccheda*. He was from Kāverinagara of Kāñci but lived in a town called Tañja in Tambaraṅṅṅa.⁶⁵ Another monk who attained celebrity was Kassapa who had come from a *brāhmaṇa* family. In the *Sāsanavamsa* he is said to have lived in Damilaraṅṅa.

In the *Vinayasārththa - Dīpaṇi* of Vācissara, Kassapa is described as one who was famous in the Cōḷa country. This was because of his strong views regarding the observance of *Vinaya* rules. The *Vimativinodani*, the third sub-commentary on the *Vinayatthakathā* is ascribed to him. A controversy arose between the Cōḷa and Sinhalese monks over a passage in that text concerning the consumption of liquor. "This was settled by Buddhappiya Mahāthera who held that demerit resulted from taking intoxicating liquor consciously or unconsciously.⁶⁶ But, Sāriputta, had said, in his *Sārattha - Dīpaṇi Vinayaṅkā*, that no offence was committed by drinking liquor unintentionally.⁶⁷ Besides, some acrimonious disputes seem to have prevailed with regard to the proper procedure in fixing the boundaries for the performance of *Sanghakammas*. "In the work on this topic composed by Vācissara, he boasts that he has refuted all views accepted by the Colians and established those approved by the Sinhalese."⁶⁸

Attention may now be focused on Ananda Mahāthera who had a decisive influence on the community of monks in the Cōḷa country. The fragmentary inscription of Sundaramahādevi, a consort of Vikramabāhu I (111-1133) records a eulogy of Ananda Thera. It translates: "Ananda Mahāthera who has attained psychic power, who is like unto a banner raised aloft in the land of Lankā, who is a *thera*... the monks of Tambaraṅṅṅa and who, the wise one, has effected...of the religious discipline among the Cōḷas."⁶⁹ Evidently Ananda *thera* had spent some time in the Cōḷa country where he had performed the task of purifying the Sangha. When the inscription was set up in A.D.1137 he had returned to the island and was probably at Polonnaruva where he was honoured and rewarded with some benefaction by the royal court.

A dignitary called Ānanda *thera* is described in contemporary texts as the teacher of Buddhappiya Dipāṅkara and Veheha who were eminent *theras* of the 12th and 13th centuries. In the colophon of his grammatical work *Rūpasiddhi*,

Buddhapiya gives the following information on himself and his teacher: “This perfect *Rûpasiddhi*, was composed by that monk who received the title of Buddhapiya and was named *Dipânkara* – a disciple of Ānanda, the eminent preceptor who was like unto a standard in Tambapanni – he (*Dipânkara*) was like a lamp in the *Damiḷa* country, and being the resident - Superior of two monasteries including *Balâdicca*, caused the religion to shine forth”⁷⁰

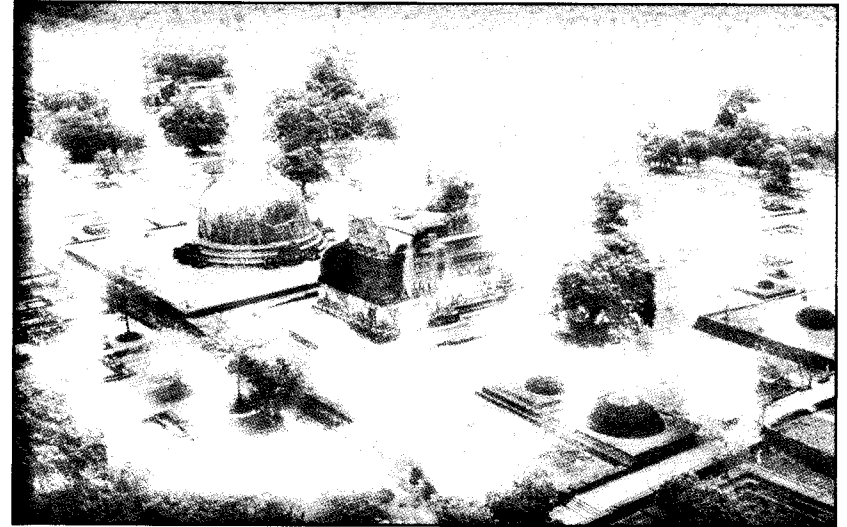
There is here a reference to two eminent monks. One of them was the teacher and the other was his disciple. The teacher, *Vanaratana Ānanda mahâthera* was from *Tambapanni* and the other was from *Damilâraṭṭha*. The relationship between them is symbolic of the close interaction between the monastic centres of the two countries. *Buddhapiya Dipânkara* claims that he was the custodian of two monasteries including *Bâlâdicca*. The commentary on the *Rûpasiddhi* asserts that the other monastery was the *Cûdâmaṇikârâma*.⁷¹ Because of the reason that *ârâma* and *vihâram* have the same connotations; the *Cûdâmaṇikârâma* could be identified as the *Râjarâjap - perumpalli* at *Nâkapâṭṭinam*. The custodial function that *Buddhapiya Dipânkara* had over that establishment presupposes that it had at some stage passed under the control of the monks affiliated to the Theravada sect in *Tamil Nadu*.

In the early years of the 13th century monks had to leave the island in considerable numbers and seek refuge at the monastic centres of *Tamil Nâdu* because of the turmoil in the island under *Mâgha* of *Kalinga* who adopted policies hostile to Buddhism.

Commenting on this unprecedented development the Mahavamsa records:

“Now some of the grand theras with *Vâcissara* at the head, who sought that protection for *Lankâ* on which depended the continuance of the order, had crossed the vast ocean despite its raging waves, had betaken themselves to the lands of the *Pândus*, *Cōḷas* and other (peoples). Now *Vijayabâhu* sending forth his great dignitaries summoned all these theras who were a mine of mercy back from there.”⁷²

One of such theras was *Bhadanta Ānanda*, the author of the *Upâsaka - Janâlaṅkâra*. It was written by him during his sojourn in the *Pândya* country during the first half of the 13th century. In the introductory stanzas of this work the author records vital information about some aspects of Buddhism in *Tamil Nâdu*, which is otherwise unknown. *Ānanda thera* says that he wrote this text while he was residing at the *Guṇâkara - perumpalli* at the town of *Sirivallabha*. It was under *Codaganga*, who was a *vanniyar* feudatory prince in the *Pândya*



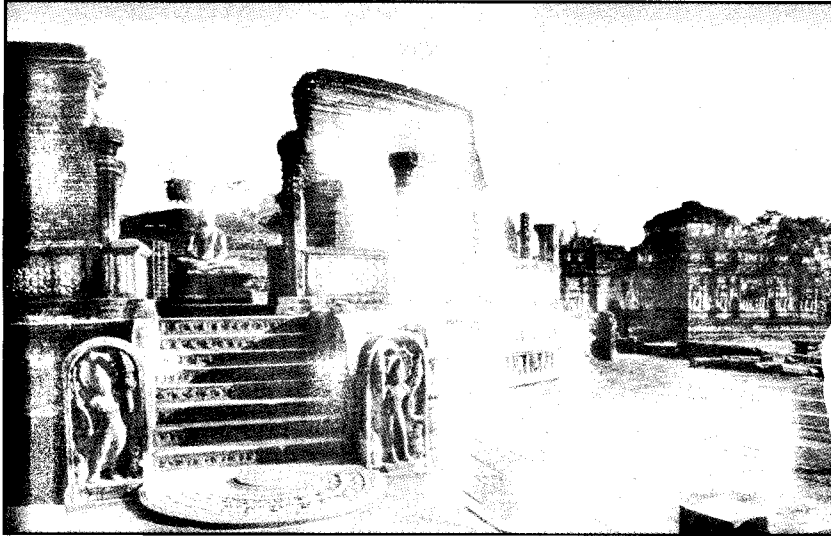
Alahana Parivena, Polonnaruva

kingdom. Three monasteries including the *Gunakara - perumpalli* were established by *Codaganga* at the behest of the monk called *Lokuttuma*, who was born of a wealthy and illustrious family settled in that town. It is interesting to note that *Bhadanta Ānada* was living there with several others who had fled from the island because of a great confusion that was prevailing there.⁷³

While confirming the *Mahāvamsa* account of the exodus of monks from the island to South India the *Upâsaka - Janâlaṅkâra* informs that some of them were accommodated in the monasteries established by *Côdaganga*.

When conditions of peace and normality were restored the *Sri Lankan* monks returned to the island. *Vijayabâhu III* (1232-1235), who established a new kingdom in the southwestern part of the island, initiated measures to facilitate their return. The chronicle states: “Now *Vijayabâhu* sending forth his great dignitaries summoned all these theras who were a mine of mercy back from there.”⁷⁴

In the reign of *Parâkramabâhu II* (1236-1271) some of the leading theras from the *Cōḷa* country were invited to render assistance in re-establishing the community of monks on a formal basis. In this connection the *mahāvamsa* says:



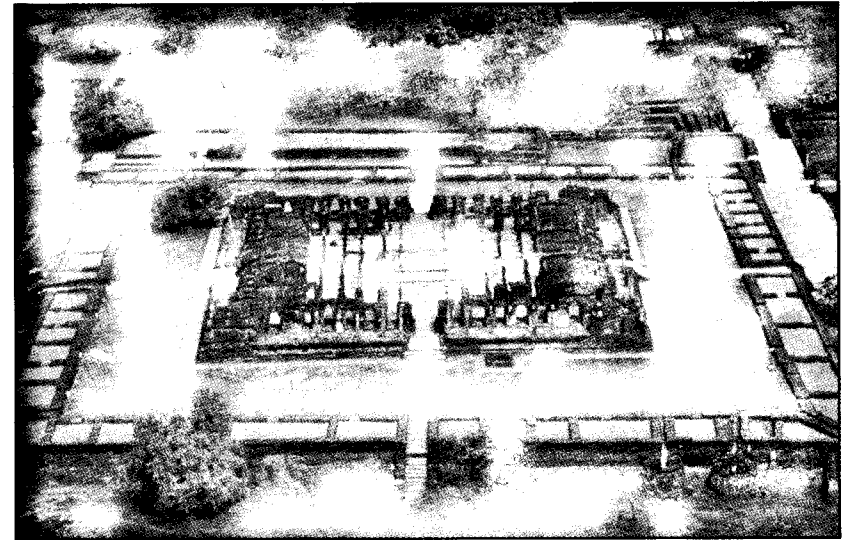
Vatadage or Circular Stupa House, Polonnaruva

“Then the king (Parâkramabâhu II) sent many gifts to the Cōḷa country and caused to be brought over to Tambapanni many respected Cōḷa *bhikkhus* who had moral discipline and were versed in the three *Piṭakas* and so established harmony between the two orders.”⁷⁵

Parâkramabâhu invited to Sri Lanka also a leading *mahâthera* named Dhammakittihî “radiant in the glory of moral discipline” from Tambaraṭṭha.

Commenting on the relations between the Buddhists of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu the Sri Lankan historian Amaradasa Liyanagamage makes the following pertinent observations:

“Parâkramabâhu II was also keen to improve the knowledge of the Dhamma in the bhikkhu community, which was then at very low ebb. With the reflection that theras who were acquainted with the sacred texts were rare in the island he had all the books brought from Jambudvîpa, had many bhikkhus instructed in the sacred texts, as also in all sciences such as philosophy, grammar and the like, and thus made of them cultivated people. Although Jambudvîpa meant the entire Indian subcontinent and even much more, in this context, in all probability, it meant the Cōḷa country where Theravâda Buddhism was very much alive during this period.”⁷⁶



Baddasimapasada or Chapter House, Polonnaruva

He further continues:

“Learned treatises were composed by Cōḷa monks on *Abhidhamma*, grammar and so forth, subjects on which books are said to have been brought to Sri Lanka from Tambaraṭṭha during the reign of Parâkrâmbâhu II, have come down to us. Some of them indeed were written not too long before the age of his rule. Thus not only the mahâtheras from the Cōḷa country but also their learned treatises on the Dhamma and so forth, some of them written by themselves, came to the aid of Parâkramabâhu II in his efforts at the restoration of Buddhism... At the conclusion of the Higher Ordination (*upasampada*) ceremony held towards the end of Parâkramabâhu’s (II) reign, when lavish gifts were distributed among the participant bhikkhus their colleagues in South India were not forgotten. Parâkramabâhu (II) sent many articles of use to the bhikkhus settled in the Pāṇḍya and Cōḷa countries.”⁷⁷

The close relations between the Buddhist dignitaries of Sri Lanka and those of South India continued into the 14th Century. Parâkramabâhu IV (1302 - 1326) of Kurunagala elevated to high office an outstanding Cōḷa mahâthera. “To the office of royal teacher the king appointed a grand thera from the Cōḷa country, a self-controlled man versed in various tongues and intimate with philosophic works.” He became the head of the prestigious Sirighanânanda Parivena that was established and assigned to him by the king.

Foot Notes and References

1. S. Pathmanathan, "Buddhism and Hinduism in Sri Lanka": Some Points of Contact between two Religious Traditions (Circa AD 1300-1600), *Kalyāni Journal* Volumes 5 and 6, University of Kelaniya, 1986-1987, pp. 78-112.
2. In Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand, where the Theravada was securely established Buddhist sacred literature was in the Pali language.
3. Fa-Hsien had visited India and Sri Lanka in the early fifth century. His account of Buddhist practices and institutions is of exceptional importance as a source of historical information. Tsuan Tsang had traveled widely in Central Asia and India. He was a contemporary of Sri Harsa of Kanauj. He had a proneness to record what he saw and heard rather uncritically in his narrative. His notice on the state of Buddhism in the Tamil country is particularly interesting. I-tsing arrived at Tamruk in India in 673 AD. He visited many of the sacred sites of Buddhism in North India. He was at Nālanda for ten years until 685 when he returned to China by the sea-route. On the way he disembarked at Sri Vijaya where he lived for two years. His *membirs* were written during his sojourn in that city. I-tsing did not visit South India and Sri Lanka. K.A.Nilakanta Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India* University of Madras, 1939, pp. 13-18.
4. *Mahāvamsa* (Mv), 12:1-8
5. Mv., 18:4-5; 19:53-
6. Tradition claims that the Alms Bowl and the right Collar-bone of the Buddha were brought to Anuradhapura and deposited there soon after Buddhism was formally established by Thera Mahinda.
The *Mahāvamsa* records: " Sakka, the lord of the gods, took from the Cūlāmaṇi - Cētiya the right Collar-bone (of the Buddha) and gave it to the *sāmanera*. Thereupon the ascetic Sumana took the relic and the bowl with the relics likewise and returning to the Cetiya Mountain he handed them to the *thera*."
"And here the King founded a *vihāra*, the *thūpa* of which had been built before; for that reason this *vihāra* was known by the name Thūpārāma"
7. K.Indrapala, *The Evolution of an Ethnic Identity – The Tamils in Sri Lanka*, M.V.Publications, Sydney, 2005,Pp.65-86.
8. Ibid. Pp. 92 - 95.
9. Mv., Chapters II – V, XII - XIII
10. "There were more than 100 Buddhist monasteries with over 10,000 Brethren all of them of the Sthavira School... This country had been frequently visited by the Buddha, and the King had erected topes at various spots where the Buddha had preached and admitted members into the order. The capital was the birth place of Dharmapāla P'usa who was the eldest son of a high official of the city." K.A.Nilakanta Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India*, Pp.102-103.
11. K.Sivaramalingam, *Archaeological Atlas of the Antique Remains of Buddhism in Tamil Nadu*, Institute of Asian Studies, Chennai, 1977, pp. 34-35.
12. Ibid. p.49.
13. The *Madhurattha – Vilāsini*, *Abbidhammāvātāra*, *Vinaya - Vinicchaya and Uttara -Vinicchaya* are the commentaries attributed to Buddhadatta, Ibid. 39.
14. Ibid. Pp.33-34.
15. Dinnāga was born in a Brahmin family at Simhavaktra, which is identified as Ciṅkapperumāḷ Kōyil in Kāncipuram. He was the founder of the school of Buddhist logic, and is often referred to as the founder of the medieval system of *nyāya* as a whole. He joined the Vatsiputriya School. Finally, he became a disciple of Vasubandhu, studied all aspects of Buddhist philosophy and attained celebrity as a versatile scholar, Ibid., p.41.
16. Ibid, pp.42-43.
17. Vajrabodhi, a native of South India, was born in 661 AD. He studied at Nālanda till his twenty-sixth year, and then went on a pilgrimage to Kapilavastu in 689 before he returned to Southern India. Soon he had a vision in which he was ordered to visit Sri Lanka and to go and worship Mañju Sri in the Middle Empire of China. He crossed the sea and was solemnly received in the island. There he spent six months in worshipping the holy relics. *Foreign Notices of South India*, pp.17-18.
18. *Manimekalai U.Ve. Cāminataiyar, ārām patippu*, Kapir accakam, Cennai, 1965 (quoted as: Manimekalai Pp.119, 336.
19. Ibid.
20. S.Pathmanathan, "The Manimekalai in its Historical setting", *A Buddhist Woman's Path to Enlightenment, Proceedings of a Workshop on the Tamil Narrative Manimekalai*, Uppsala University, May 25-29, 1995, p.39.
21. Ibid. P.40
22. Ibid. P.42
24. Ibid, p.44.
25. The author of the *Manimekalai* had the notion that monks from Tamil

- Nadu went on pilgrimages to Sri Lanka. The monks called cāranar who had gone on pilgrimage to the peak of Samantakūṭam are said to have gathered at the town of Vañci. Ibid, p.49.
26. “A careful examination of the references to Kaṇṇaki in the *Maṇimēkalai* suggests that Kaṇṇaki had been elevated to the position of a deity when the poem was written. She is described as m̄aperum Pattini, “the Goddess of immeasurable virtue”, whose images were installed in temples dedicated for her worship. The heroine *Maṇimēkalai* is said to have visited a shrine of Pattini at the town of Vañci. In the *Maṇimēkalai* Pattini is represented as a deity closely connected with Buddhism and as one who promotes the cause of Buddhism.” Ibid, p.47.
27. The mattavilasa of Mahendravarman contains a description of monks living in Kāñci. It refers to a monastery called Rājavihāram in the city. As Devasoma, one of the characters of the play, remarks that heaps of riches collected from the revenues of many other monasteries were accumulated at this monastery it may be assumed that the Rājavihāram was the headquarters of a sect to which many institutions were affiliated. Tsuan Tsang asserts that in the Dravida country of which the capital was Kāñci, there were to be found about a hundred monasteries with over ten thousand monks. Besides, he adds that there was to the south of Kāñci a *sanghârâma*, which was the resort of the most eminent men of the country. The Chinese pilgrim also testifies that he had seen 300 monks from Sri Lanka sojourning there. Ibid., p.46; C.Minakshi, *Administrati and Social Life Under the Pallavas*, University of Madras, pp.223-225
28. S. Pathmanathan, “Buddhism in Nākaṭṭinam: The Cūlāmanivarman Vihāram of Nākaṭṭinam”, *Buddhism among the Tamils in Pre-colonial Tamilakam and Iḷam* Part 2 Editor – in Chief: Peter Schalk, Co-Editor: Ālvāpillai Vēluppillai, Uppsala, 2002, pp.569-584.
29. S. Pathmanathan, “The Akkacālaip - perumpalli at Nākaṭṭinam”, *Sri Lanka Journal of Humanities (SLJH)* Volume 23 (1& 2), University of Peradeniya, 1997, pp. 1-12.
30. S. Pathmanathan, “Buddhism in Nākaṭṭinam”, *Buddhism among the Tamils...* Uppsala, 2002, pp. 585-609.
31. Ibid. pp. 603-604; *Ponparri Kāvalar Puttamittirar Iyarriya Vīracōliyam Peruntevanār Uraiyuṭan, 1970, Alaṅkārappaṭalam.*
32. Scholars have discerned traces of the influence of the *Vīracōliyam* on the *Sīdat – Sangarāva*, a Sinhalese text on grammar written in the reign of Parakramabahu II (1236 – 1271). In connection with the *Vīracōliyam* it has been claimed that it has been classified as a transfer grammar for Buddhists speaking an Indo – Aryan language who had to learn Tamil. “ Anne Monnius has made it clear that this grammar anticipates an audience of multilingual connoisseurs who are not only well versed in literature, but have a sophisticated grasp of literary theory as well. It represents a self – declared effort at mediating between two literary languages, at attempting to incorporate into Tamil grammatical and literary theory a variety of Sanskrit linguistic and literary forms.” *Buddhism among Tamils...* Editor – in - Chief: Peter Schalk, Uppsala, 2002, p. 523.
33. The *Mahāvansa* (Mv) Translated into English by Wilhelm Geiger, Colombo, 1960, 33:79-83.
34. Mv, 33:95
35. Mv, 33:96
36. The *Nikāya Sangrahaya* translated into English by W.F.Gunawardana, Colombo, 1908, p.12.
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Prof. S. Pathmanathan

Professor Sivasubramaniam Pathmanathan was born in March 1940, and had his initial University education at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. His doctoral studies were conducted at the University of London where he had submitted his research "The Kingdom of Jaffna; 1250 1450" and part of which was published in 1978.

Professor Pathmanathan became the Professor of History of University of Peradeniya in 1995, the post he holds till today. Prior to that, he was the professor of History at the University of Jaffna from 1986 to 1994. From 1994 to 1999 Professor Pathmanathan was the Chairman of the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka.

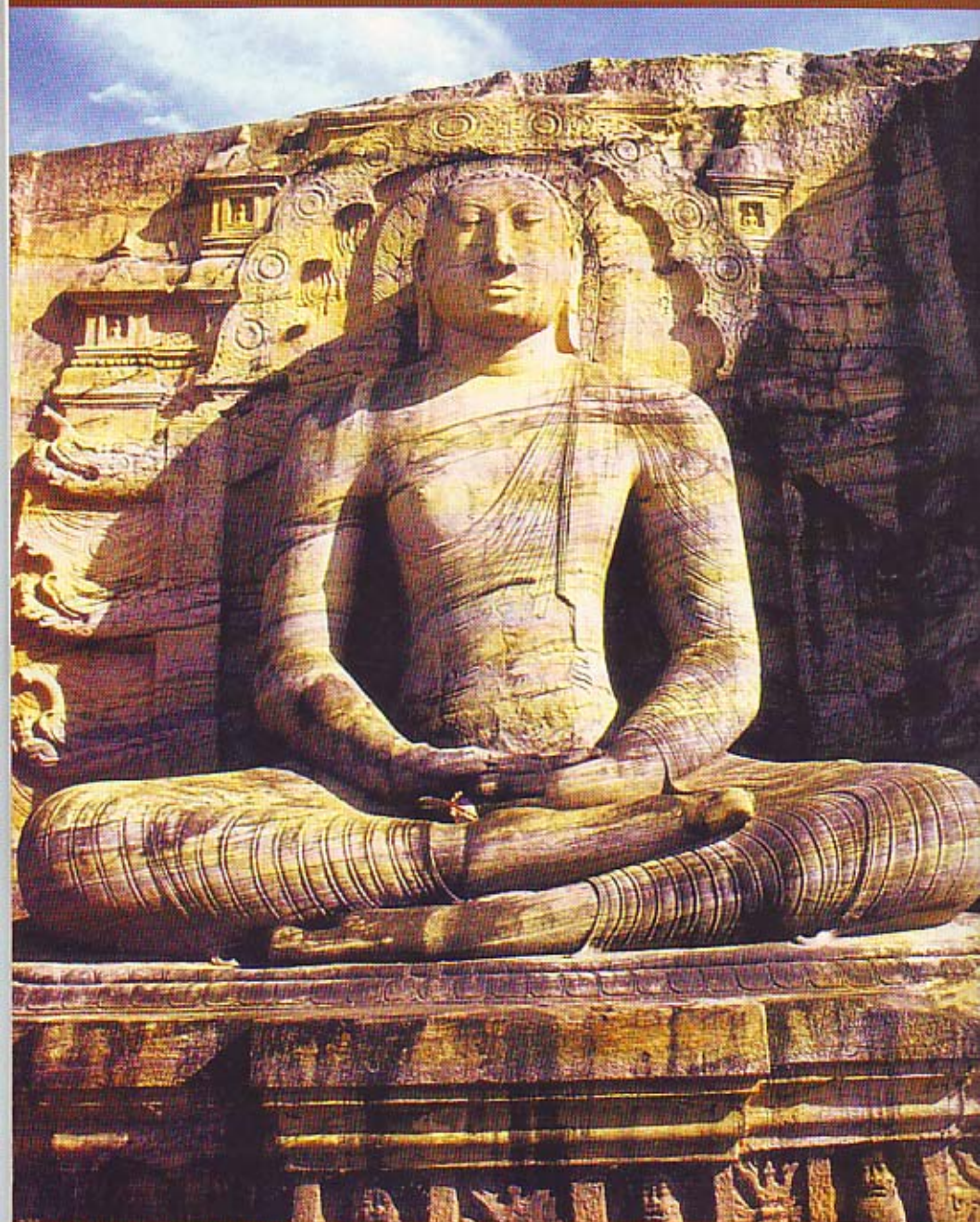
Professor Pathmanathan was the visiting Professor at the Institute of Indology and Tamil Studies at the University of Cologne and Visiting Professor at the University of Uppsala. Since 1991, Professor Pathmanathan is working as the Editor-in-Chief of Tamil Encyclopedia.

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