

S. G.

14

r

CEYLON
JOURNAL OF SCIENCE

SECTION CL - ARCHAEOLOGY - ETHNOLOGY

VOLUME II PART I

DECEMBER 1928

PRICE Rs. 2.00

"The sister's son is in as great honour with the uncle as with the father. Some consider this tie of blood more sacred and closer. . . . A man's heirs however and his successor are his children, and there is no will." (*Sororum filius idem apud avunculum qui apud patrem honor. Quidam sanctiorem artiolemque hunc nexum sanguinis arbitrantur. . . . Heredes tamen successoresque sui cuique liberi, et nullum testamentum*). Note the epithet sacred. Here as elsewhere the bond between maternal uncle and nephew is a religious one.

For naming after the grandfather in Greece we have such well-known cases as Kimon, son of Miltiades, son of Kimon; Xanthippus, son of Perikles, son of Xanthippus.

There is a suggestion of exogamy in *Dīgha* II 148: *Mallā ca, Mallaputtā ca Mallasunisā ca Mallapajāpatiyo ca*. "The Mallas, sons of Mallas, daughters-in-law of Mallas, and wives of the Mallas." First we have the heads of the families, their wives, their sons, their sons' wives; the daughters do not appear because they are married out, the sons-in-law because they belong elsewhere. The term Malla evidently refers to the chieftains, heads of families, as appears lower down on the same page where each Malla is called forth in turn with his children, wife, retainers and advisers.

The Two Queens and the Two Ministers

Kirfel in his *Kosmographie* (p. 277) describing the Jain system of the world says the realm of the Vyantara is divided into eight divisions, each consisting of five cities. One of the cities lies at the centre and significantly enough is called *pura*, royal city. The others lie at the four quarters. Each division is ruled by an Indra who has two concubines.

This illustrates both the fivefold division of the kingdom discussed in vol. I, p. 105, and the two queens dealt with on p. 205 of the same volume. I was not aware at the time that Roth had already established a connection between the "five nations" of the Rigveda and the fact that the cosmical spaces or points of the compass are frequently enumerated as five, especially in the following text of the Atharvaveda III. 24. 2 *imā yāh pañca pradiśo mānaviḥ pañca kṛṣṭayah*, "these five regions, five human tribes."

With the two Sinhalese Adigars compare the King of Roruka's "two chief councillors" in *Divyāvadāna*, p. 545.

Plate VII of the Annual Bibliography of the Kern Institute for 1928 reproduces two images of Pallava kings, each with two wives. The number two is not for the sake of symmetry in the composition since one of the kings has both his queens on his left.

Mahāyānism in Ceylon

BY

S. Paranavitane,

Epigraphical Assistant to the Archaeological Commissioner

WITH FIVE PLATES

Ceylon is at present the home of the Theravāda, the earliest as well as the most orthodox of the various sects of Buddhism. This primitive form of Buddhism is known among the adherents of later sects as the Hinayāna "the Lesser Vehicle" in contradistinction to Mahāyāna "the Great Vehicle," the name given to the developed doctrines. By about the sixth century, the Mahāyāna had gained a decisive victory over the Hinayāna in India and its followers sent their missionaries far and wide. They also attempted to convert Ceylon to their form of faith and they seemed almost to have succeeded, but in the end the Theravāda emerged victorious and the story of the struggle is now almost forgotten among the Buddhists of Ceylon. The aim of the present paper is to investigate the part played by the Mahāyānists in the religious history of the island and to study any relics left by them in the shape of artistic or literary monuments, present day beliefs and practices of the Ceylon Buddhists. The materials available for such a study being very limited, the following notes are necessarily brief and sketchy.

Historical Sketch ⁽¹⁾

The Mahāyāna in India first comes into prominence about the beginning of the Christian era, though it is probable that its doctrines were prevalent in an undeveloped form even in earlier times. About the latter half of the second century, its doctrines were given an authoritative form by the genius of Nāgārjuna who is generally believed to have been a native of the Āndhra Country of South

(1) With this section may be compared Mr. E. R. Ayrton's Account of the Dhammaruci Sect in A.S.C. Memoirs, vol. I. pp. 15ff

India.⁽¹⁾ It was not long before the new doctrines were made known in Ceylon. In the reign of Vohāraka-Tissa (circa 263-285 A.D.), a heretical sect called the Vaitulyas (P. Vetulla) in the Ceylon chronicles, first make their appearance.⁽²⁾ The term Vaipulya sūtra is one of the commonest names of the scriptures of the Mahāyānists, and, in the Kashgar manuscript of the *Saddharmma-puṇḍarīka*, this name is spelt as Vaitulya-sūtra. Relying on this, Prof. Kern identified the Vaitulyavādins of Ceylon with the Mahāyānists;⁽³⁾ but this view has not gained universal acceptance on the plea that the reading of the Kashgar manuscript might possibly be a blunder of the copyist.⁽⁴⁾ Recently, however, Prof. N. D. Mironov has pointed out that the form Vaitulya is also met with in other and older ones than the Kashgar manuscript. Moreover, he has also brought evidence from Chinese sources to prove that the form Vaitulya was actually the older, and Vaipulya, though commoner, was later. There is, therefore, hardly any reason to question the identification of the Vaitulyas with the Mahāyānists.

According to Buddhaghosa's Commentary to the *Kathāvatthu*, the Vaitulyas upheld the views " (1) that Śākyamuni was not really born in the world of men, that he remained in the Tūṣita heaven, and only sent a phantom of himself to the world," and (2) that the Buddha did not himself preach the Law, that Ānanda preached it." These doctrines, it may be stated, find their parallels in such Mahāyāna works as the *Saddharmmapuṇḍarīka*.⁽⁵⁾

It was in the reign of Vohāraka Tissa that the Vaitulyas (or the Mahāyānists, as we may call them) became powerful or numerous enough in Ceylon to attract the attention of the Mahāvihāra monks; and were, for the time, suppressed. But the *Mahāvamsa* does not say that they first became known in the island at this particular period; probably their doctrines were not unknown before this reign, but did not command a following considerable enough to disturb the peace of the orthodox monks.

This attempt to suppress the innovating tendencies in religion did not prove a complete success. For, about forty years later, when Goṭhaka Abhaya was the ruler of the island, the Vaitulyas again gave trouble to the monks of the Mahāvihāra. This time, their leader was a monk from the Chola country named Saṅghamitta "who was versed in the teachings concerning the exorcism of spirits." He gained

(1) Winternitz, *Geschichte der Indischen Literatur*, Band II, p. 263.
 (2) *Mahāvamsa*, Ch XXXVI, v. 41.
 (3) *J.R.A.S.* for 1907, p. 432 et seq.
 (4) A. B. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, p. 157 n. 1.
 (5) *J.R.A.S.* for 1927, p. 241ff.

the favour of the ruling monarch and was appointed tutor to his two young sons. The elder prince Jeṭṭhatissa was not amenable to his teachings and when, after the death of Goṭhaka Abhaya, he ascended the throne, Saṅghamitta thought it prudent to leave the shores of this island. During the ten years which comprised the reign of Jeṭṭhatissa, the Vaitulyas lost their influence at court; but with the accession of Mahāsena, his younger brother, Saṅghamitta returned to the island. The king took the side of the new school of thought and under the guidance of his preceptor, launched a campaign of persecution against the adherents of the orthodox school. The Mahāvihāra fell upon evil days and the Mahāyānists reigned supreme for some time. A large number of the Mahāvihāra buildings, including the famous Lohapāsāda, was pulled down, and their materials were utilised to embellish the monastery of Abhayagiri. The king also forbade the giving of alms to orthodox monks who left the capital and fled to Roḷāṇa for refuge. But this success was not long-lived. The tide turned at last in favour of the Theravādins and the king himself was forced to change his religious policy.⁽¹⁾

The succeeding kings were upholders of the Mahāvihāra traditions and heretical schools do not figure in the chronicles during this period till we come to the reign of Silākāla (circa A.D. 574). This king spent his youth as a novice (*sāmaṇera*) at the monastery of Bodh-Gaya,⁽²⁾ and thus must certainly have come in contact with the teachers of the Mahāyāna school who were, at this time, in charge of this most important shrine of the Buddhists. Therefore, it is easily understandable that when Silākāla ascended the throne of Anurādhapura, he welcomed new doctrines hailing from the country of his early exile, in spite of protests from his spiritual advisers of the Mahāvihāra. The events are thus described in the *Mahāvamsa* :—

"Now, in the twelfth year of this king's reign a young merchant went up from this island to the city of Kāsi (Benares) and brought with him the Dhammadhātu from that country. And the king saw it, and being unable to discern between the true and false doctrine, he regarded it in the light of the doctrine of the Buddha, like to the grasshopper that dashes against the burning lamp thinking that it is gold. And he received the Dhammadhātu joyfully and paid great respect and reverence to it. And after he had placed it in a house hard by the king's palace he was wont to take it yearly to Jetavana, and

(1) The coming of the Tooth-Relic in Śrī Meghavaṇṇa's reign, though not expressly Mahāyānist, was another instance of the Indian influence. It is also noteworthy that this relic till later times was in charge of the Abhayagiri monks, and the Mahāvihāra-vāṣins do not seem to have been very enthusiastic about its worship.
 (2) *Mhv*, Ch XXXIX, v. 46.

hold a festival in connection therewith thinking that the act would benefit his people greatly." (Chap. XLI. vv. 37-40).

The *Nikāya Saṃgraha*, relates the story almost in the same words, but gives the further information that the merchant who brought the Dharmadhātu was named Pūrṇa and that it was a Vaitulyasūtra, i.e. a Mahāyānistic text. It also connects the monks of the Abhayagiri with the honours paid to this sacred book. (1)

There is no Mahāyāna work known to me which bears the title of Dharmadhātu, but this word is synonymous with Dharmakāya which means "the body of the law" and is the first of the three bodies of a Buddha according to the Mahāyānistic doctrine of the Trikāya. As will be seen in the sequel, this doctrine was not unknown in Ceylon during the mediaeval period; and there is also evidence to show that in the tenth century a book named Dharmadhātu was known and held in high esteem. There is hardly any doubt that the Vaitulyasūtra introduced to Ceylon from Benares in Silākāla's reign was a treatise dealing with the doctrine of the three bodies of the Buddha about which we will have more to say in dealing with the epigraphical evidence on the subject.

These heretical doctrines thus introduced seem to have flourished among the people till the reign of Aggabodhi I (564-598 A. D.) in whose reign an elder named Jotipāla is said to have refuted the Vaitulyas in a public disputation. (2) Their followers, unable to meet their opponents in open conflict had recourse to less honourable means. They managed to procure for one of the courtiers a high office of state and through him influenced the king in their favour. "After his death," in the words of the *Nikāya Saṃgraha*, "the monks of the two *Nikāyas* (i.e. the Abhayagiri and Jetavana) dismissed pride and lived in submission to the monks of the Mahāvihāra." (3) The heretical teachings, however, though officially not recognized are said to have had a following among the ignorant people of the land. And, as quite a large number of the people must have come under this category, we may conjecture that Mahāyānistic beliefs were considerably in vogue among the masses.

About this time, we have got the evidence from the writings of the Chinese pilgrims. Hiuen Tsiang says that the monks of the Mahāvihāra were opposed to the Great Vehicle while the Abhayagirivāsins studied both Vehicles and widely diffused the Tripiṭakas. (4) I-Tsing, on the other hand, says that in the Sinhalese island all belong to the Ārya-Sthaviranikāya and the Ārya-Mahāsāṃghika Nikāya is rejected. (5)

(1) *Nikāya Saṃgraha*, translation, p. 16

(2) *Mahāvamsa* Ch. 42, v. 35.

(3) *Nikāya Saṃgraha*, p. 17.

(4) Beal, *Buddhist Records*, Vol. II, p. 247.

(5) Takakusu, *I-Tsing's Record of the Buddhist Religion*, p. 10.

For nearly three centuries after Aggabodhi I, the chronicles contain no mention of the Vaitulya or any other heretical sect. In the reign of Sena I (circa A.D. 846), a heretical doctrine called the Vājiriyavāda was introduced to Ceylon. The *Nikāya Saṃgraha* describes the event as follows:—"After them, 1,126 years after the introduction of Buddhism and 1,362 years after the death of Buddha, King Matvala Sen became ruler of this country. But, he was not a man who had associated with men of learning. During his reign, an ascetic of the Vajraparvata Nikāya clad in the robes of a priest came to this country from Daṃbadiva, and lived in the dwelling called Virāṅkura. Having presented fifteen *kaṇḍas* of gold which he had brought to the cook of the royal household, Girivāsa Sen by name, he got him to sound his praises to the king, who, hearing of his virtues, just as the grasshopper leaps into the fire taking it for gold, went to the ascetic and being impressed with his secret discourse, which he called a confidential teaching, accepted the false Vājiriya doctrines, and abandoning the true doctrines such as the Ratanasūtra, which shine in power extending over a 100,000 crores of worlds, he by reason of his embracing these false doctrines fled from the palace he lived in, and giving up the city to the Tamils went to Polonnaruva and died there." (1)

As has already been conjectured by Sir Chas. Eliot, (2) the Vājiriyas seem to be identical with the Vajrayānistis, a school of Buddhism which flourished in Eastern India about this time and which was an exponent of the worst phases of Tantrism. (3) The monastery named Vajraparvata from which the Tantric doctrines were introduced to Ceylon cannot as yet be identified; but, it is probable that it was somewhere in North-Eastern India. It is said that the Vājiriyavādins composed the Gūḍhavinaya, i.e. the Secret Vinaya and in the above quoted passage they seem to have described their writings as "secret teachings." It is well-known that the Vajrayānistis often used very enigmatic language in their writings and some of their principal scriptures are known by such titles as Tathāgataguhyaka.

During this time, it is stated, the Ratnakūṭa sūtras and other writings of the Mahāyānistis were introduced to Ceylon. (4) The Ratnakūṭa, it may be mentioned, is the second of the seven classes into which the Mahāyāna sūtras of the Chinese Canon are subdivided. (5)

About this time, but the chronicles do not say precisely when, another heresy of the name of Nilapaṭa darśana appeared in Ceylon.

(1) *Nikāya Saṃgraha*, C. M. Fernando's translation, Colombo, 1908, p. 18.

(2) *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. III, p. 40.

(3) For an account of this school, see B. Bhattacharya in the Proceedings of the Third Oriental

Conference held in Madras, p. 120f.

(4) *Nik. Sam.*, p. 18.

(5) See Nanjio's Catalogue of the Chinese Tripiṭaka, p. 10f.

Legends as to its origin, its persecution and something about its tenets are given in the *Nikāya Saṅgraha*.⁽¹⁾ They seem to have worn blue robes and practised extreme forms of Tāntrism. Blue seems to have been a colour favoured by the Tāntrists, the word *Nil Sādhana*, according to Avalon, being a name for Tāntric practices.⁽²⁾

From the reign of Sena II, till the Chola conquest in the early eleventh century, there is no mention of the Vaitulyas or other heretical schools in the chronicles. But a study of the religious monuments of this period makes it clear that they were flourishing side by side with the Theravādins. After this time, no new schools of Buddhism were introduced into Ceylon from the continent and whatever traces of the existence of Mahāyanistic beliefs and practices we shall come across during the succeeding centuries were local developments of the cults introduced earlier. The reason why there was no new introduction of heresies from North India is evident. This was the time when Buddhism in Magadha, the last refuge of the faith in India, was steadily pursuing a downward course before its final extinction and the beliefs then prevalent had not vitality enough to impose their hold on other forms of the faith in foreign lands. Hereafter, the Indian influence on Ceylon religion has been mainly the introduction of Purānic forms of Hindu belief on the faith of the masses; and this is a process which is still going on.

After he had expelled the Cholas, Vijayabāhu I found Buddhism at such a low ebb that it was necessary to invite properly ordained *bhikkhus* from Burma to continue the line of spiritual succession. These were, of course, of the Theravāda school; but a certain section of the clergy seems still to have adhered to the Mahāyanistic doctrines. For, in the twelfth century, Parākramabāhu I found it necessary to summon a synod for the purification of the faith, expelled the heretical elements and unified the Buddhist Church in Ceylon. One consequence of this was the disappearance, as a separate sect, of the Abhayagiri monks who were notorious for their readiness to accept unorthodox teachings and who for over a millenium had played such an important part in the history of Buddhism in Ceylon. But some of the principal colleges of that institution such as Uturoḷmuḷa and Mahanet continued to flourish under the same names till the advent of the Portuguese. The famous scholar of the fifteenth century, Srī Rāhula belonged to the Uttaramūla (Uturoḷmuḷa) fraternity, and in keeping with the traditions of that body, we find him a worshipper of Mahāyana Bodhisattvas and given over to Tāntric magical practices.⁽³⁾

(1) *Nik. San. trans.*, p. 18 f.

(2) Sir Chms. Elliott, *op. cit.* Vol. III, p. 40 n.1.

(3) See below p. 56.

Such are the notices, in Ceylon chronicles, of sects which appear to have professed doctrines of a Mahāyanistic character. It will be noticed that the periods in which the Vaitulyas were strong in Ceylon synchronise with the dates assigned to some of the noteworthy developments in Mahāyanism in India. We have already seen that the first mention of the Vaitulya doctrines in the *Mahāvamsa* comes shortly after the time of Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Mādhyamika philosophy. Saṅghamitra's activities in Ceylon fall roughly into the period assigned to the great Mahāyanistic authors Asaṅga and Vasubandhu. The Yogācāra School of Buddhism came into being at this time and the introduction of magical practices into the Buddhist system is believed to have been due to Asaṅga. Quite in keeping with this trend of religious development, Saṅghamitra, the champion of Mahāyanism in Ceylon during the fourth century, is described as having been "versed in the teachings concerning the exorcism of spirits, and so forth." The sixth century, when we hear of the Vaitulyas in Ceylon again, was another great period of Mahāyanist literary activity. The characteristic feature of this age was the importance given to the study of logic by the Buddhists; and the celebrated logicians, Dimnāga and Dharmmakīrti are ascribed to this century. Hiuen Tsiang's accounts show public disputations on religious topics between the professors of different schools to have been a regular feature of the times. In Ceylon, too, Mahāyanists seem to have followed the same lines of action; for, when we come across them in the chronicles, they are represented as being defeated in argument by a champion of the orthodox school. The last mention of the heretics in the chronicles of Ceylon falls within the ninth century, the period of Vajrayāna or Mantrayāna Buddhism. Thus it will be seen that the principal revolutionary movements in the sphere of religious thought in India made their influence felt in the island of Ceylon, just as the main political changes on the continent had left their mark in Ceylon history.

Though the chief periods of Mahāyāna activities in Ceylon were due to external influence, and the persons instrumental in the propagation of these doctrines hailed from India; yet, Ceylon too seems to have produced Mahāyanist writers of some note. According to Beal,⁽¹⁾ Deva or Āryadeva, a Mahāyāna teacher of great reputation, who was called one of "the four suns that illuminated the world"⁽²⁾ was either born in Ceylon or dwelt there. But Nanjio says that he was not a native of Ceylon.⁽³⁾ The latter scholar, in his *Catalogue of the*

(1) *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. II, p. 180.

(2) The other three "suns" were, Nāgārjuna, Aśvaghōṣa, and Kumāralabha.

(3) *Catalogue of the Chinese Tripitaka*, Col. 370.

Chinese Tripitaka, mentions a monk of Ceylon (Sh-tsz-kwo or the country of the lion) named Saṅghavarman (San-kie-poh-mi) who translated into Chinese an extract from the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya. The Mahīśāsakas, it is true, were not Mahāyānists; but their doctrines were closer to the Mahāyāna doctrines than to the Theravāda, and their writings are preserved in the countries which had adopted that form of the faith. The eminent Tāntrist Amogha (Chinese Pu-kung), according to some accounts, was a native of Ceylon. He went to China in A.D. 719 and revisited India and Ceylon in A.D. 741, and it was in this island that he elaborated his doctrines.⁽¹⁾ He is said to have brought to China, a figure of the eleven-headed Avalokita (Kwan-Yin) which was taken to Japan in A.D. 743 and is still preserved in the Baiso Temple at Akasaka.⁽²⁾

EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE

The earliest inscription connected with Mahāyānism in Ceylon is a long but very fragmentary record engraved on a rock near the Sela Cetiya at Ambasthala, a few feet below the summit of the Mihintale hill.⁽³⁾ The characters are of the eighth century and closely resemble Grantha. It consists of a Sanskrit hymn in praise of the Buddha, in the Sragdharā metre. Not a single complete stanza can be made out; but in one we find reference made to the Nirmānakāya in the following words: *Naikākāra-pravṛttun tribhava-bhaya-haram viśva-rupair-upetaṃ vande nirmāna-kāyam, etc.* (I adore the Nirmānakāya, which prevails in the different manifestations, which assuages the fears of the three forms of existence, and which exists in all kinds of forms). In another verse we have the syllables *Sambho*... which evidently has to be restored *Sambhogakāya*. Thus we have two of the three bodies of the Buddha according to the Mahāyānist doctrine of Trikāya. Doubtless, the lost portion of the record must have contained the word *Dharmmakāya* also. This doctrine of the three bodies of the Buddha is a purely Mahāyānist one and, in its theistic principles, approaches the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Dharmmakāya or Dharmmadhātu "the body of the Law" is the essence of all the Buddhas and is described as "the one permanent reality underlying all phenomena and individuals."⁽⁴⁾ Sambhogakāya "the body of bliss" is "the radiant and superhuman form in which Buddhas appear in their paradises or when otherwise manifesting themselves in celestial

(1) Sir Chas. Elliott *op. cit.* Vol. III, p. 39.

(2) *J. R. A. S.* for 1894, p. 59.

(3) Müller *A. I. C.*, p. 52.

(4) A verse beginning with *Nirlepam nirlekaram sivaṃ avama-samarā vyāpitarā nisprapānam* seems to describe the Dharmmakāya.

splendour."⁽¹⁾ The Nirmānakāya, "the body of the transformation is the human form worn by Śākyamuni. The word *Dharmmadhātu* is not unknown in the Pali Literature in the sense of "the eternal truth,"⁽²⁾ but the other two terms are totally unknown in the sense in which they are used by the Mahāyānists. The inscription, towards its close, gives the name of the *bhikṣu* who was the author of this hymn, but unfortunately it is not quite clear. He is described as "a mine of Bodhisattva virtues" (*Bodhisattva-guṇākaraḥ*). Here, again we may trace some Mahāyāna influence as the ideal of the Bodhisattva was particularly extolled by the Mahāyānists. The fact that this record is written in the Sanskrit language, the unmistakable reference it contains to the developed doctrine of the Trikāya and its author being called a Bodhisattva are sufficient proof that this epigraph is a Mahāyāna document.

Next in point of date come the copper votive tablets, with Sanskrit inscriptions, found in the Iṅḍikatusāya at Mihintale. A short notice of some of these was given in the last number of this journal (vol. I p. 166).

Since then, some more of these plaques from the same monument and found at the same time have come into my hands. But it is not yet possible to identify these fragments with any of the published Mahāyāna texts.⁽³⁾ I give below the inscriptions on some of these plaques so that the reader may gain an idea as to their nature:—

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. (a) . . Bodhisatve- | (b) bhya Prajñāpāra..... |
| 2. (a) . . Śākyamuni-nnā- | (b) maṃ darśanīya..... |
| 3. (a) . . gata śokoya.. | (b) Bodhisattva..... |
| 4. (a) . . ruṣo māyā- | (b) kṛtam-abhini..... |
| 5. (a) . . dharmmān-asvabhā- | (b) vān karoti ya..... |
| 6. (a) . . ti yasy-edānī- | (b) m kalam, manyase..... |
| 7. (a) . . ti tat kim ma- | (b) nyase kā..... |
| 8. (a) . . sigghāsane | (b) niṣannaḥ punar-a..... |
| 9. (a) . . śāstraḥjēna | (b) draṣṭavyam tad-yathā.... |
| 10. (a) . . ti aṣṭānā- | (b) m-bhikṣu-śata..... |
| 11. (a) . . sena sārddham | (b) vipratipadya..... |
| 12. (a) . . Raśmi Bodhi- | (b) sattvam-edad-a..... |
| 13. (a) . . mitam sarvvaṃ-eka- | (b) rasam bhavati yad-u..... |
| 14. (a) . . Ratnākara Tathā- | (b) gatam-etad-avo..... |
| 15. (a) . . satvān ma- | (b) hā sattvān..... |
| 16. (a) . . tra Ratnākaro | (b) nāma Tathāga..... |

(1) Sir Chas. Elliott *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 32.

(2) See *Dīgha Nikāya* Vol. II, p. 8 and *Majjhima*, I, 396.

(3) Dr. Lüders, to whom these tablets were shown during his recent visit to Anurādhapura, had no doubt about their connection with the Mahāyānists.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 17. (a) . . . tatra Śākyamu- | (b) nir nnāme Ta..... |
| 18. (a) . . . pama Buddha- | (b) kṣetro |
| 19. (a) . . . Bhagavantama | (b) lyākhāksi..... |
| 20. (a) . . . varī hetuka- | (b) pratyaye |

Similar plaques with somewhat different inscriptions have been found in a *stūpa* at Vijayārāma, a monastery about 2½ miles north of Anurādhapura. They contain invocations to the goddess Tārā, the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (Mahākaruṇa) and Ākāśagarbha and the Buddhas Śikhin and Gaganabuddha⁽¹⁾ and abound in mystic syllables like *Om*, *Kili kili*, *huru huru*, *svāhā*, etc. They represent a very advanced stage of the Tantric cult and afford evidence that in the ninth century—to which period the plaques belong—Mahāyāna gods and goddesses were objects of popular adoration. The plaques have been reproduced on plates XX and XXI of Mr. H. C. P. Bell's *Sixth Progress Report*, July to September, 1891, and the inscriptions with explanatory remarks and translations published in pp. 12-15 of the same volume.

The plaques at Iṅdikāṭusāya and Vijayārāma show that the Buddhists of Ceylon, especially those with Mahāyānistic leanings, had the practice of depositing, in *caityas*, metal plates on which were inscribed short extracts from the Sanskrit Buddhist writings. Their purpose is explained in a passage in the *Saddharmma-ratnākara*. The 13th chapter of this work⁽²⁾ informs us that King Kassapa—which of the five who bore this name, it is not expressly stated—increased the height of the Abhayagiri to 140 cubits and deposited the Dharmmadhātu therein. Later in the chapter, the author includes the *dharmacetiya* among the five different kinds of *stūpas*. By this term he evidently meant a tope built to enshrine fragments from the Dhamma (the sacred texts). The examples found at Iṅdikāṭusāya and Vijayārāma are small and disconnected fragments and would bear the same relation to the whole body of the Dhamma as a small relic of the Buddha's body does to his corporeal frame. We have seen above that the Mahāyānists held that the Buddha had three bodies of which the Dharmmakāya or body of the law was the most important; and the earthly body, the Nirmāṇakāya, to which belonged the relics enshrined in the early *stūpas*, was the least. To the mind of the average man the Dharmmakāya must have been represented by the written words of the Buddha, and fragments of these would very well be called Dharmmadhātu and enshrined in *stūpas* instead of bodily

(1) I do not know of a Buddha of this name but there is a Mahāyāna Bodhisattva named Gaganagatīja.
(2) Colombo edition of 1923 p. 333.

relics. This way of reasoning must have been particularly welcome at a time when the zeal for building *stūpas* was unbounded while the supply of bodily relics of the Buddha must have necessarily been limited. It is probable that this extension of the veneration at first paid to bodily relics of the Buddha to metal fragments on which words attributed to him were written was due to the influence of the Mahāyāna conception of the three bodies.

The Buddhanehela pillar of Abhā Salamevan (Udaya I), states that the reverend teacher Buddhāmitra was a son by anointing (*abhiṣekayen daru*) of the reverend teacher Harṣa. Commenting on this Mr. Wickremasingha writes:—"The expression *abhiṣekayen daru* 'son by sacred sprinkling,' however, connotes the prevalence of certain Brahmanic, or more likely northern Buddhist (Mahāyāna), rites not sanctioned by the southern Buddhist Church. The Vinaya rules, it is true, state that the preceptor (*upajjhāya*) ought to consider the pupil *saddhivihārika* as a son, but so far as I know, there are no rites to be performed in connection with the initiation of a pupil. The only formality that has to be observed is for the pupil to approach a senior monk, make his obeisance, and beg him three times to be his preceptor. If the latter express his consent by word or gesture the agreement is complete and binding. Among the Mahāyānists, on the other hand, the initiation of a neophyte is accompanied by a solemn ceremony lasting for about three days. One of the rites connected therewith is the *kalasi* or *udaka abhiṣeka* at which the consecrated water from the *kalasi* or pot is sprinkled by the *guru* on the pupil's head and prayers repeated over him."⁽¹⁾

Two weathered slabs were found in the monastery known as Puliyanakuḷam, the ancient Pubbārāma, to the east of Anurādhapura, both dated in the reign of King Abhā Salamevan, who may either be Kassapa V or Dappula V. One of these registers a benefaction made, among other things, for the daily supply of rice to a person who had daily to perform something connected with the Dharmmadhātu (Sin. *daham-daya*). The text here is incompletely preserved. It is possible that what he had to do was the daily recitation of the Dharmmadhātu. The other record, too, has the word *daham-daya*, but the text is even more fragmentary than the first. We have already mentioned that a Vaipulya Sūtra (Mahāyāna text) of this name was brought to Ceylon in the reign of Silākāla and that

(1) *E.Z.* Vol. I. p. 192-3. The names of the two teachers Harṣa and Buddhāmitra given in Sanskrit form and not in Sinhalese, as proper names as a rule are, in the inscriptions of this period, suggest that they were of Indian origin.

it was accorded special honours in the royal palace as well as in the Jetavana monastery. There is little doubt that the reference in these two records is to the Mahāyāna text of that name; and it follows that the inmates of the Pubbārāma monastery, in the tenth century, honoured Mahāyāna doctrines. This is not surprising, as we learn from another slab inscription from the same place that the Pubbārāma was connected with the Abhayagiri fraternity, the members of which were noted for their heterodox leanings.

The existence, in the tenth century, of a book entitled Dhammadhātu is further proved by an inscription on a bronze label found at Anurādhapura and now preserved in the Colombo Museum.⁽¹⁾ The inscription reads *Dahamā de patek* and is written in the Sinhalese characters of the tenth century. It means "two leaves from the Dhammadhātu"⁽²⁾; and the label was most probably attached to two sheets of copper inscribed with a part of the text of this sacred volume and was perhaps intended for enshrinement in a *stūpa*. An interesting point about this label is that the Sinhalese words *de patek* is written twice over, once in the Sinhalese characters and once in Nāgarī. Evidently, the Nāgarī script was associated in the mind of the engraver with mystic efficacy as it is to a great extent in the mind of the ordinary Sinhalese villager at the present day. This must have been due to its connection with Tantric cults, the professors of which, hailing as they did from North East India, used this script.

The introduction of this system of writing to Ceylon, somewhere in the ninth century, seems to have been due to the Vājiriyavādins (the Vajrayānists) whom we have already referred to. The inscriptions in this script hitherto discovered in Ceylon are not very many; the local script having been used even for writing Sanskrit as we find in the case of the Iṅdikāṣūyā and Vijayārāma plaques and the rock inscription at Ambasthala. In a copper plate discovered at the so-called Abhayagiri dāgāha, a Pali verse from the Vattaka Jātaka has been inscribed in Nāgarī. This is the only instance known to me of this alphabet being used for writing Pali in olden times.⁽³⁾

There is another copper plate from Anurādhapura, now in the Colombo Museum, which contains an inscription in Nāgarī characters

(1) No. 87 See *Spolia Zeylanica* Vol. VI p. 74.

(2) The Sinhalese word *daham daya* is equivalent phonetically with either P. *Dhammadhātu* or *dhamma-jātaka*. Mr. Wickremasingha whose interpretation of this record is given in *Spolia Zeylanica* Vol. VI, p. 74, adopts the latter view. But no *Jātaka* of the name of Dhamma-jātaka is known either in the Pali or Sanskrit Buddhist writings; and as there is evidence to show that a book called Dhammadhātu was held in special veneration by a section of the Buddhists in Ceylon, I have adopted the above rendering.

(3) See *E.Z.*, Vol. I, pp. 30-40. Mr. Wickremasingha has mistaken this as an example of "Mixed Sanskrit" and consequently the translation given by him is quite out of the point.

of about the ninth century. I read it as, *Om Vajrāti* ⁽¹⁾ *kṣa* (?) *raṃ*. This is evidently a *mantra* addressed to a Tantric deity. *Om* is the usual mystic syllable at the opening of a *mantra* and the last syllable *raṃ* what is called a *bijākṣara* in Tantric phraseology. From the analogy of known Tantric invocations, the remaining syllables ought to stand for the name of a deity in the vocative case. But I do not know of any Mahāyāna deity of the name Vajrāṅkṣa or Vajrātikṣa. But the occurrence of the word *vajra* as the first member of the compound leaves little doubt as to its Tantric character.

Of stone inscriptions in Ceylon inscribed in the Nāgarī script, only two examples are known. One of these is a slab from the Northern Dagaba area.⁽²⁾ It contains rules concerning the administration of a monastery and there is nothing Mahāyānist about them. But the introductory portion of the record, which was engraved on a different slab, has not been found and we are not in a position to judge whether it was a Mahāyānist document or not. The other is a slab found in the Rājagirileṇa at Mihintale. It is written in the Nāgarī script of the ninth century and is too much effaced to be deciphered. I could only make out the stanza *Ye dharmā*, etc., which brings the record to a close. Considering that Mihintale was, in the ninth and tenth centuries, much under Mahāyāna influence, this may have been a document of that school.

Clay votive tablets with Nāgarī legends have been found in considerable numbers and in different localities of Ceylon. The Colombo Museum possesses twenty-seven of these and the Kandy Museum nine. Similar tablets from Ceylon are also said to be exhibited in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. There are many more of these with private collectors. Those in the Colombo Museum come from Monaragala in the Uva Province, Dumbara in the Central and Tangalla in the Southern. Seven of them contain the so-called Buddhist creed and others bear longer inscriptions which owing to the minuteness of the letters and the wearing away of the tablets are well-nigh undecipherable. In three of them, I could read the words *Namo bhagavate* in the first line and *hāpaya pāra pāra svāhā* in the last two lines. This evidently was a Tantric charm. One tablet broken in two, contains 26 lines of writing which, excepting for a letter here and there, are illegible. One of the best preserved among them contains a representation of the Buddha seated in the *bhūmisparśa mudrā* within and arched shrine with a high pinnacle. Around this shrine are

(1) Can also be read as *nt*.

(2) *E.Z.*, Vol. I p.1. *et seq*

arranged twenty-four miniature stūpas and below the throne of the Buddha is a worn out Nāgarī inscription in three lines which probably contained the formula *Ye dharmmā*, etc. This tablet is almost identical with the one reproduced by Sir A. Cunningham in his Report for 1871-72 (Vol. III, plate XLVI, 3). Our tablet differs in having no Bodhi tree shown behind the shrine and fewer miniature stūpas. A point of interest about this is that on the back there is an inscription in Sinhalese characters of the ninth century. The letters were incised before the tablet was burnt. Almost all the ten letters are clear enough, but I am not able to make any sense out of them. They read:—(1) *Ta.. ta*, (2) *sam ha bha*, (3) *la hanu*, (4) *pati*. This Sinhalese inscription shows that the tablets were manufactured locally. M. Foucher is of opinion that these tablets were mementos brought by pilgrims to the chief centres of worship in India. He says of them, "Most frequently, they are simple clay balls, moulded or stamped with a seal and without doubt within the reach of all pockets and which served at the same time as *memento* and as *ex voto*. They are to be picked up nowadays on all Buddhist sites, even in the peninsula of Malacca and in Annam."⁽¹⁾ It is probable that these votive tablets were first introduced to Ceylon by pilgrims to Bodh-Gaya and other holy places in India. But later on, they seem to have been produced locally, probably from seals imported from the continent. The Nāgarī character, and the mystic syllable *svāhā* that occurs in several of them lead to the conclusion that they were in use among the followers of the Mahāyāna system.

MAHĀYĀNIST IMAGES FOUND IN CEYLON

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy has published two bronze figures, one of Avalokiteśvara and the other of Kuvera (Jambhāla),⁽²⁾ both of which are assigned by him to the eighth century. Another bronze from Ceylon depicting Vajrapāṇi⁽³⁾ and attributed by Dr. Coomaraswamy to the ninth century is now in the Boston Museum. He also says that there are other good examples of Māhāyāna bronzes from Ceylon in the British Museum.⁽⁴⁾ One of these is reproduced in Plate XI of *Examples of Indian Sculpture at the British Museum*. It represents Avalokiteśvara with a figure of the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha in headdress.

(1) *Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, p. 11.

(2) *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 166. See also *J.R.A.S.* for 1909 p. 288.

(3) *Ibid.*, fig. 299.

(4) *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 166.

On the plinth of the main building at Vijayārāma monastery, already referred to, there are representations in low relief of a four-armed deity attended by a female figure. (See Plate XXXII *a* and *b*). For a description of them, the reader is referred to p. 6 of Mr. Bell's *Sixth Progress Report* (July to September, 1891).⁽¹⁾ The deity does not hold any attributes in his hands; but it is probable that these details were originally worked in stucco and have since fallen off. It is not possible to say definitely what this deity is, but there is one detail which seems to give a clue. In the figure *L*, according to Mr. Bell's nomenclature, the deity holds down one of his hands in the bestowing attitude and below is the crouching figure of a ghost (*preta*) with upturned face and one of the hands uplifted evidently to receive the ambrosia which flows from the fingers of the deity. As this is a characteristic mark of images of Avalokita⁽²⁾, we may identify this figure with that Bodhisattva and the female by his side with his consort, Tārā. This identification becomes all the more probable when we consider that copper plaques inscribed with invocations to Avalokita and Tārā have been found at the place.

There is Mahāyānist rock sculpture at Vāligama in the Southern Province. (See Plate XXXIII). It is of colossal size and represents a figure in kingly attire, but the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha on the headdress and the lotus held in the hand indicate that it depicts Avalokiteśvara as has already been suggested by Dr. A. Nell.⁽³⁾ There is a local tradition that this figure represents a foreign king who left his native country because he suffered from leprosy, landed at Vāligama and was cured by a local physician. This tradition seems to preserve in a distorted way some facts regarding the Bodhisattva Avalokita. One aspect of this Bodhisattva, that known as Simhanāda Lokeśvara, is considered by the Mahāyānists to be the curer of all diseases⁽⁴⁾ and is particularly invoked to cure leprosy. It is stated that "the first success of Lamaism among the Mongols was due to the cure of a leprous king by means of the Simhanāda Sādhana."⁽⁵⁾ But the iconographical representation of this form of Avalokita, as found in Northern Buddhist countries, differs from that of the Vāligama figure.⁽⁶⁾ It may be possible that the particularisation of this aspect of Avalokita's beneficent influence with a distinct iconographical form was of later

(1) See Plates VIII and IX of the same report for drawings.

(2) See Ponsin's Article "Avalokiteśvara" in Hasting's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.

(3) *Influences of Indian Art*, p. 148.

(4) B. Bhattacharya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p. 35.

(5) Alice Gell, *Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 57.

(6) Bhattacharya gives an illustration of Simhanāda in a standing position similar to the Vāligama figure (Pl. XIX, *e*).

date than this sculpture and that the cure of leprosy was originally attributed to this Bodhisattva in a more general form. There is another tradition prevailing among the educated Buddhists that this figure is that of the god Nātha. This tradition agrees quite well with the Dr. Nell's identification as will be seen when we come to discuss the origin of Nātha. (1)

The most remarkable Mahāyāna sculptures in Ceylon are at Buduruvegala near, Vāllavāya in the Uva Province. (See Plates XXXIV and XXXV). A group of colossal figures has here been carved on the rock on a scale comparable to that of the Buddhas at Avukana and Sāssēruva. (2) The figures are in high relief. Some of the details are not carved in stone; but merely indicated and completed in stucco. They were also originally given a coating of paint, traces of which are still visible in some places. The feet and the pedestals of the figures were separately carved and joined to the main body. The central figure of the group is a colossal Buddha some fifty feet in height. The left hand is in the *abhaya mudrā* and the right held up towards the shoulders with the fingers bent inwards. The principal figure is attended on either side by two Bodhisattvas, the one on the Buddha's right representing Avalokita as proved by the figure of the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha in the headdress. The hands of the Bodhisattva do not hold any attributes and are in the attitude described as *kaṭakahasta* in Gopinatha Rao's *Elements of Hindu Iconography* (p. 16). The corresponding figure on the Buddha's left has no *dhyāni* Buddha in headdress; but as the triad of Buddha, Avalokita and Maitreya occurs very often in Buddhist iconography, we may identify this figure with Maitreya. The Bodhisattva to the right of the Buddha is attended on the right by a female figure and on the left by a male. The former holds in her right hand which hangs down by her side something which appears like an unblown lotus or a fruit. If the identification of the central figure with Avalokita is right she may represent Tārā. The male figure on the right holds the hands in the same pose as the chief figure in the group, but holds no attributes that would enable us to identify him. In Buddhist iconography, Avalokita is usually attended by Tārā on one side and Hayagrīva or Sudhanakumāra (3) on the other. The figure in question cannot be Hayagrīva as the horse's neck is not shown; therefore it may represent Sudhanakumāra. The Bodhisattva on the left side is attended by two male figures whose identity, it is not possible to

(1) See below p. 53.

(2) The height of the figures at Buduruvegala has not yet been ascertained.

(3) Bhattacharya, *Bud Icon.* p. 37

determine. One of them holds a double *vajra* in the right hand. There is nothing so far found to indicate the period these sculptures may be assigned to; nor has it been possible to trace the mention of this place in the chronicles. Some of the figures, especially the Bodhisattva to the left of the Buddha, show a high degree of artistic merit and on grounds of style they may be ascribed to a period anterior to the Polonnaruva epoch. Probably, the ninth century would not be too early a date.

Dr. J. Ph. Vogel has published (1) a paper on a Mahāyānistic sculpture which came into the possession of a British soldier during the occupation of Kandy in 1815 and is now in the possession of Lord Carmichael. It is a small slab with the Buddha in the *bhūmiśparśa mudrā* in the centre attended by Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya and surrounded by seven other scenes from his life. Dr. Vogel is of opinion that it is a work of the Magadha school of art dating from about the eleventh century. It is of importance to show that at that period, there was intercourse between Ceylon and the Mahāyāna Buddhists of North Eastern India.

The fame of some of the Mahāyānistic icons in Ceylon seems to have reached the Buddhists of North India. In a manuscript from Nepāl written in the Bengali script of the eleventh century which is now in Cambridge and was utilized by M. Foucher in his valuable researches on Buddhist iconography, (2) there are miniature paintings of Mahāyānist deities with inscriptions giving their names and titles. Among these are included the following from Ceylon:—

Siṃhaladvīpe Dīpaṅkara āriṣasthana, (3) (the Buddha Dīpaṅkara of Ceylon). What makes this icon a Mahāyānistic one is that the Buddha is attended on the right by Avalokiteśvara and on the left by Vajrapāṇi. The Javanese Dīpaṅkara, on the other hand, is said to be attended by Avalokita on the left and Mañjuśrī on the right. (4) Another Buddha is named Siṃhaladvīpe Dīpaṅkara Abhayahasta (5) (the Buddha Dīpaṅkara of Ceylon with hand in the *abhaya mudrā*.)

Siṃhaladvīpe Jambhālah. (the god Jambhāla, *i.e.* Kuvera of Ceylon). (6) We have noted above (p. 48) that an image of this deity has been found locally.

Siṃhaladvīpe Ārogyasāla Lokanāthaḥ., (the Lokanatha, *i.e.* Avalokiteśvara of the hospital in Ceylon) (7) We shall revert to this image in the next section in dealing with the cult of Avalokita in Ceylon.

(1) See Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society for 1915 p. 208 and Plate XX.

(2) M. Foucher, *L'Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde* p. 15ff

(3) *Ibid* p. 79. Catalogue No. 3.

(4) *Ibid* p. 79

(5) *Ibid*, Catalogue, II, 10.

(6) *Ibid*, Catalogue I 18.

(7) *Ibid*, Catalogue I 20.

MAHĀYĀNA BODHISATTVAS IN CEYLON BUDDHISM AT THE
PRESENT DAY

I. Avalokiteśvara and Tārā

One of the chief differences between Mahāyāna and primitive Buddhism is the great importance attached by the former to the cult of the Bodhisattvas. The Mahāyānists recognise the existence of an innumerable number of Bodhisattvas of whom eight are considered of special importance. The only Bodhisattva common to both the Northern and the Southern schools of Buddhism is Maitreya, the Buddhist Messiah. The belief in this Bodhisattva constitutes one of the principal tenets of the popular religion of the Sinhalese Buddhists. But Mahāyāna Buddhists assign to Avalokiteśvara a far more prominent place than to Maitreya, look upon him as a Saviour of Mankind and invoke him in every difficulty.

It is generally believed that Avalokiteśvara is unknown to the Buddhism of Ceylon as it is practised to-day; and so far as I know, no scholar has traced any mention of this Bodhisattva in the Sinhalese writings. The late Rev. S. Beal made an attempt to identify the god Sumana of Adam's Peak with Avalokiteśvara, (1) but his hypothesis has not been endorsed by any other scholar. We have seen above that a considerable number of Avalokita images, both in metal and stone, have been found in Ceylon and that this deity was an object of popular worship in the ninth and tenth centuries. It would be surprising if no trace of his cult were found either in popular worship to-day or in the literature of the Sinhalese. As a matter of fact, the Bodhisattva Avalokita is still worshipped by the Ceylon Buddhists, but under the name of Nātha which has obscured his identity; and there are numerous references to him in late mediaeval inscriptions and in the Sinhalese literature of the fifteenth century.

At present there is a tendency to regard Nātha as but another name of Maitreya; but several inscriptions which mention Maitreya and Nātha as two distinct personages, disprove this view. For instance, the Laṅkātilaka inscription contains the phrase *Maitrī Bodhisattvayan vahansēt Lokeśvara Nāthayan vāhansēt* (the Lord Maitrī Bodhisattva and the Lord Lokeśvara Nātha) and the very late Asgiri Vihāra record says:—*Maitrī Nātha Lokeśvara Nātha rūpa dekalut* (two images of Maitrī Nātha and Lokeśvara Nātha). The Pāpiliyāna inscription of Parākramabāhu VI, too, mentions Nātha and Maitreya as two distinct Bodhisattvas. (2)

(1) *Buddhism in China*, p. 110ff; *J.R.A.S.* for 1883, p. 333ff.

(2) *Nātha Maitrī de lāna* [to the two personages Nātha and Maitrī.] (D. B. Jayatilaka's *Kaṭkāvat Saṅgāra* p. 44)

The word Nātha means "Lord" and is only a shortened form of the fuller epithet "Lokesvara Nātha" given in the above extracts. It is hardly necessary to mention that the epithet Lokesvara is one of the most familiar of the many names of Avalokiteśvara and was the one by which he was best known in Cambodia and Java. (1) The modern belief that Avalokita of Vāligama is Nātha provides further circumstantial evidence of the identity of the two (p. 50).

The *Tisara Sandeśa* (Swan's Message), (2) a Sinhalese poem of the fifteenth century thus describes the god Nātha whose image was in the shrine of the Buddha at Doravaka in the Kāgalla District:

"His beautiful head with matted hair is like unto a rain cloud with lightning attached to it. The eyelashes surpassed the hue of the blue lily and the sapphire. What are the two hands, like the trunks of white elephants, comparable to? (They) exhibited the splendour of a pair of streams flowing down the sides of a white mountain. The charming rosary hanging down his nectar-like body assumed the splendour of a line of blue geese—if there exist such—in the celestial river. With his feet and the shining nails, the brilliance of an evening cloud with stars strewn about it was shown; and the pride of a dew-strewn lotus contracting by the rays of the moon was set aside. Lord Nātha, distinguished with such marks of beauty, abides resplendant in that Buddha shrine. Bow down gladly to him, and pray him to fulfil thy heart's desire." (3)

The above description is mainly concerned with the glorification of the physical beauty of the god and it shows that this particular image of the Bodhisattva was white in colour and had an elaborate *jaṭā makuta*. Avalokiteśvara, too, is always white in colour, except in some images of Nepāl. (4)

The next verse praises Tārā, who is, according to the Tāntric texts, the consort of Avalokiteśvara, "Depart thou hence, without tarrying, after worshipping the Queen Tārā, who has adorned the magnificent mansion of Śrī Laṅkā, with the multicoloured canopy of (her) fame;

(1) Sir Charles Elliott, *Hinduism and Buddhism* Vol. III p. 123 n.3.

(2) *Tisara Sandeśa* is one of the many Sinhalese poems composed in imitation of Kalidāsa's celebrated work the *Meghadūta*. (See Geiger, *Litteratur und Sprache der Singhalesen* p. 12).

(3) *Vidu-laga-mā-kulek, vāni ruvin udula dala (hisa)*

Pāpat vāt-upulāi lān-miṭṭi pā dāniya

Sēkē sondek van yuvalat kum vāniya

Paṇḍera-giri-pasa hūnu, gaṅgul-āil yuvāla vilas-ala

Lān-ba dena laṅka akapāta ama-pīdev gata

Nūn-ba gaṅga sunil hasavāla āta ē siri gata

Paḍa-niyēni rasudula vatula taruvāla, sadaba pab-ale

Sāṇḍa rāṅini ākilena tusara rāṅṅil tarūbara man pahale

Sōṇḍa ruvinā yutu līl Natilīdu-ema mūnīvesa bābale.

Vāṇḍa tosālī ōṇudu yadu kulu dena lesa manadole (v. 126).

The text of this and the following verse from the *Tisara Sandeśa* is according to the new edition of that poem by the Hon'ble Mr. D. B. Jayatilaka which is now in the press. I am much indebted to him for giving me the correct texts of these two verses. The already

published versions are not quite accurate.

(4) Bhaṭṭācārya, *Buddhist Iconography* pp. 42-43.

who has eschewed vice and is adorned with virtue as if with jewels; and who unflinchingly bestows, like the Divine Cow, whatever is desired of riches." (1) The poet does not expressly say that Tārā was the *sakti* of Nātha; but as she is mentioned directly after Nātha and as her image was in the same shrine, this is implied. Moreover, she is called queen (*bisō*) the title of the wives of gods, in the Sinhalese literature of the period. (2) Hieuen Tsang, during his travels in India in the seventh century, observed a shrine in Magadha which housed an image of Buddha attended by Avalokita and Tārā as in the shrine at Doravaka.

This mention of Tārā also proves the prevalence of her cult as well as Avalokita's in Ceylon as late as the fifteenth century. No images of Tārā, I believe, have so far been noticed in Ceylon. But, as we have found incantations addressed to her in the ninth century, and as her worship continued as late as the fifteenth century at least, her images must have been known in Ceylon during the ninth and tenth centuries—the period when Tantric Buddhism was at its height in this island. Numerous images of female deities have been found in and around Anurādhapura. Most of these are in advanced stages of decay and have been taken for statues of Durgā. It is well-known that, during the period of Tantric Buddhism, the images of the Buddhist gods and goddesses resembled Hindu icons of corresponding deities to such an extent that it is very difficult sometimes to differentiate between the two. It is, therefore, possible that some of the so-called Durgā figures actually are Tārās and that the bronzes supposed to represent Pattinidēvi, the goddess of chastity, are the images of Tārā. The figure of a goddess found at Vijayārāma in Anurādhapura and now in the Colombo Museum (No. 96), labelled Durgā, is certainly a representation of Tārā. The figure bears an eye on the forehead, which is a characteristic of this goddess. Image numbered 55 in the same Museum also appears to be a Tārā.

The cult of Nātha or Avalokiteśvara seems to have been very popular in Ceylon during the fifteenth century; almost all the references to this god that we find in Sinhalese being in works dating from the reign of Parākramabāhu VI of Kōtṭe. The principal centre of the cult was at Toṭagamuva (near Hikkaḍuva in the Galle District) which was at that time the greatest seat of learning

(1) *Bōrā yasa viyana maharu Sri-Lak-māḍura vesekī*
Tōrā hāru dūsiṭi susiri-lakarīn lakala ckesi
Vārā nova rusiri sūru dōna Surahiden sadisi
Tārā bisav to da hāmada yāgun eyin no lasi (v. 127).

(2) For instance, the spouse of Vibhisaṇa, the god of Kālāṅṅya is styled *biso deviyān* in the *Sālahine Sandesa*, v. 106.

in Ceylon and was presided over by the celebrated Śrī Rāhula, poet and grammarian. The subject of the *Girā Sandesaya* (the Parrot Message), a Sinhalese poem by an unknown author, is a request to this Bodhisattva to bestow prosperity and long life on the reigning king, Parākramabāhu VI. The poet says:—
“Friend, depart thou after seeing the Lord Nātha celebrated throughout the world, who incessantly perfects himself in those virtues which make a Buddha, with the avowed object of leading to the city of Nirvāṇa, the countless beings who are fallen in the unfathomable ocean of *samsāra* and wander in distress.” (1) Śrī Rāhula himself was a devotee of the Bodhisattva; and among the benedictory verses at the close of his *magnum opus*, the *Kāvyaśekhara*, there is one stanza devoted to the glorification of Nātha. It reads:—
“May the Lord Nātha of Toṭagamuvihāra who manifests the qualities of the Sun and the Moon by his lustre and glory, is famed throughout the world and will become a Buddha in the future, be for ever victorious.” (2) The *Kokila Sandesa*, a poem of the same period, also mentions the god Nātha in connection with Toṭagamuva. As at Doravaka, the image of the Bodhisattva was in the same sanctuary along with that of the Buddha. For the poet says:—“Set up near this noble Buddha in a pleasing attitude, in appearance like the Mount Kailasa always enveloped by the effulgence of the moon; and of beautiful bodily form is the Lord Nātha who in a future age will become a Buddha. Bow down to him, so that your mind's desire may be fulfilled.” (3) The *Vadankavipota*, a short tract used as a school book according to the indigenous method of teaching—a work of no distant date—contains another invocation to Nātha, in which too, his connection with the temple of Toṭagamuva is emphasised. It is in the following words:—“O Nātha! king of gods, thou who abidest, meditating on the Dhamma in the temple of Toṭagamuva in the low country, who, countless *koṭis* of aeons past hast set thy mind on the Buddhahood and hast received the prediction from former Buddhas, who hast destroyed passions and art endowed with

(1) Mahata sasara-sayurehi kumuṭuvā sarana
Anata sata niyan-pura gonā yama aṭina
Satata Soḍḍuru budukuru guṇa dan purana
Diyata pasihūdu Natihūdu dāka gos sobana.
Girā Sandesa, verse 221.

(2) Sri pā hiru tarihūdu teda yasa diyata pasihūdu
Matu vana Budu radu sātade Toṭagamuvoharu Natihūdu
(*Kāvyaśekhara*, Canto XV v. 24).

(3) Muni-viru vetama mema mānaram lesa pihitī
Nara turu kelesa gira men saḍḍa kān dāvatī
Visturu ruvin yutu matu Budu van ta sītī
Nat-isupu namdu siduvana lesa ta-sita aṭī
Kokila Sandesa, v. 79.

miraculous powers, and who doest lengthen the life of whose devotees. To thee, I bow down with the two hands placed on my brow. May thou grant me wisdom. (1)

I have already referred to the fact that the god Nātha is mentioned in the Asgiri Vihāra Wall inscription of Śri Vikrama and the Laṅkātilaka inscription of Bhuvanaikabāhu IV. These records tell us that the image of this Bodhisattva was set up, among those of other deities, in those shrines. In the monastery which Parakramabāhu VI of Kōṭṭe built at Pāpiliyāna to commemorate his mother, this Bodhisattva received daily worship; for, the inscription recording his endowments to the *vihāra* states that everything required for the daily offering of victuals and other objects necessary for his worship were provided for. (2) Nātha is also mentioned in a rock record at Sagama (3) in the lower Hēvāhāṭa, Central Province. This inscription dates from the reign of Bhuvanaikabāhu V and mentions a donation for the perpetual offerings of rice to the god Nātha of Senkaḍagala (Kandy) in the name of the two brothers Alakeśvara and Devamantriśvara, whose attempts in the unification of the political power and the Buddhist Church in Ceylon, this Bodhisattva is said to have helped by appearing to them in a dream. This Alakeśvara was the dominant figure in Ceylon politics towards the end of the fourteenth century; and according to the contemporary writings he is credited with reforming the church by expelling the monks of reprehensible character and of heretical leanings. It is significant that the champion of orthodoxy at that period was particularly devoted to the worship of Avalokiteśvara, a Mahāyānistic deity. Evidently, orthodoxy at that time did not hesitate to recognise Bodhisattvas of heretical origin. The standard of the times must have differed widely from that of the Anurādhapura days. Perhaps the very fact that Nātha was of Vaitulya origin was then forgotten.

The Vēgiriya Devāla inscription dated Śaka 1337 and Buddhist Era 1957 has for its subject matter the dedication of certain fields for the daily offerings to Lokeśvara Nātha. A fragmentary record at Gaḍalādeniya in the Central Province dated Śaka 1264 also mentions Nātha and Metteyya together.

(1) Pāta Totagamu vihāre vāda sīlīna deviyāni dalaṃ sīhi keṭa.
 Āta kap-leka gavaṃ budiḥ hava pafā vivaraṃa lallin sulututā
 Vīta rāgat erallī nuvanāt āyā vadhana karaṃa hānuvīṭa
 Dōta mudunē tabā vāden Nātha devirāja nuvanā den maṭa.
 (2) *Ātikāvat Saṅgāra* p. 43 ff.
 (3) *J.R.A.S., C.B.* Vol. XII, p. 364.

Nātha is also mentioned in the 87th chapter, v. 3, of the *Mahāvamsa* and in the very late 100th chapter, v. 248. (1)

The well-known inscription ascribed to Mahinda IV at Mihintale, enumerating the different shrines on this sacred hill, says, "the relic house, the house containing the auspicious colossal stone image, the house of the great Bodhi tree, (the shrine) Nayiṇḍa, the house of the goddess Miṇināl," etc. (2) Mr. Wickremasingha thinks that Nayiṇḍa, in the above passage is "probably equivalent to Sanskrit *Nāgendra*, P. *nāginda* 'Nāga or snake king.'" (3) It is doubtful whether snake kings were worshipped in Buddhist temples to such an extent as to be mentioned in the same breath as the Bo-tree, the sacred relic house and the Buddha image. Etymologically, *nayīṇḍa* can certainly be equated with Skt. *nāgendra*, but it can equally well be derived from Skt. *Nāthendra* "the Lord Nātha, i.e. Avalokiteśvara." And, as we have had so much evidence that Mahāyānistic beliefs were current in Mihintale during the period of this inscription, it is reasonable to derive Nayiṇḍa from *Nāthendra*, and identify the building in question with a shrine dedicated to Avalokita.

A shrine of a goddess named Miṇināl (Skt. *Maṇinālā*) is mentioned immediately after this deity. If Nayiṇḍa is Avalokiteśvara, it is tempting to suppose that Miṇināl was a local name of Tārā, Avalokiteśvara's wife. Dr. Sten Konow, in an article in the *Bihar and Orissa Research Society Journal*, (4) has proved that the word *Maṇipadme*, in the famous Tibetan formula "*Cm Maṇipadme h.m.*" is the vocative of the name *Maṇipadmā* and that this is one of the appellations of the Tantric goddess Tārā. One of the meanings of the word *nāla* is "a lotus flower" and it could thus be used as a synonym for *padma*; and hence *Maṇinālā*, in Sinhalese *Minināl* is equivalent to *Maṇipadmā*, i.e. Tārā.

The best known of the shrines dedicated to Avalokiteśvara at present in Ceylon is at Kandy. (See Plate XXXVI). This is the Nātha Devāla, situated to the west of the Temple of the Tooth. The Devāla stands on a raised enclosure access to which is had through a flight of steps facing the Temple of the Tooth. Besides the shrine of the Bodhisattva, the terrace also contains a small *stūpa* in which, it is said, is deposited the Bowl relic (*pātra dhātu*) of the Buddha which, along with the Tooth, was

(1) *Nātha Metteyya devādi devānaṃ ca mahiddhinaṃ* (ch. 87, v. 3) and *Metteyya bodhi sattaṃsa Nātha deva varassa ca* (ch. 100 v. 248). Prof. Geiger (*Ceylon. v. 11*, p. 611) identifies Nātha with Visnu.
 (2) *Dā-gelī Isā, Maṇigū maha sala pīlāma-gelī Isā, Mahaboy-gelī Isā, Nayiṇḍa Isā, Minināl devādiṃ gelī Isā* (*E.Z.* Vol. I. p. 92).
 (3) *E.Z.* Vol. I. p. 103 n. 6.
 (4) Vol. XI, p. 1 et seq.

kept in the royal palace. There is also an image house and a Bo-tree which are however of recent date. The shrine itself is not very large but is remarkable as the only building in Kandy entirely built of stone. In architecture, it differs from the other religious buildings in Kandy, and resembles, externally a Hindu shrine; but the Buddhist origin of the edifice is shown by the dome which takes the shape of a *stūpa*. The ground plan is the usual Indian one; to wit, a cella and a *maṇḍapa* in front of it. The date of this building is unknown. An inscription on its walls, which could have been helpful in its determination, has its date effaced, but according to the Sagama inscription, above quoted, Kandy was already a seat of this cult as far back as the fourteenth century. Thus the Nātha Devāle would be the earliest historical building now existing in Kandy; and the city seems to have enjoyed a certain amount of fame as an abode of this deity before it came into political prominence as the seat of the later Sinhalese kings.

The worship is conducted by lay priests called *kapurālas* who, as a class, are very ignorant; and the image of the god is shut out from public gaze as in Hindu temples. The same mystery prevails in the conduct of the ritual. The present writer has not seen the image of this Bodhisattva in the Kandy temple, but images of Nātha are not uncommon in Buddhist shrines. He is generally attired as a king with a lotus in one hand and a figure of the Buddha on the forehead. Davy (1) gives an illustration of Nātha, based on a Kandyan drawing, with four hands. Of the first pair of hands, the right is in the bestowing attitude and the left in the protection. The right hand of the second pair holds a *triśūla* and the left a lotus. No Buddha is shown in the head-dress. In the annual festival connected with exhibition of the Tooth Relic in Kandy (the *perahāra*) the image of Nātha is given the highest place of honour next to the Sacred Tooth. (2) During the time of the Kandyan kings, the Nātha Devāle was a place of great importance and one of the four devāles of Kandy, the other three being Pattini Devāle (the shrine of the goddess of chastity), Mahā-Viṣṇu Devāle and the Kataragam Devāle.

It was at the Nātha Devāle, that an important ceremony connected with the inauguration of the Sinhalese kings of Kandy

(1) *Account of the Interior of Ceylon*, plate facing p. 198.

(2) Before Kirtti Sri's time, it appears that the annual procession had nothing to do with the Tooth, but was mainly concerned with the public exhibition of the images of Nātha and other gods. (See Pridham Vol. I. p. 339) So, it is probable that this festival was originally one of Mahāyānistic origin.

—that of choosing a name and the putting on of the regal sword—was held. Pridham describes this ceremony in the following words:—“It was the duty of the astrologers to ascertain a fortunate period for the ceremony, and invent fortunate names; each individual being required to write a name on a plate of gold set with precious stones, and deposit it in the Nātha devāla. On the day fixed, which was sometimes a year or two after the election, the prince went in great state to the Maha-Viṣṇu devāla, where he presented offerings and made prostrations to the god. Thence, he passed to the Nātha devāle, and having gone through the same religious ceremony, inspected the plate, chose the name that pleased him, and read it to the first Adigar who proclaimed aloud “This is the name that the gods have chosen for the king to bear.” Then, the gold plate, the *nalalpate* on which the name was inscribed, was tied to the Prince's forehead by a member of the Pilima Talauva family, which, being of royal descent, enjoyed this privilege and that of putting on the regal sword. The sword having been girded on the Prince, the Kapurala presented a pot of sandal powder, in which the Prince, now King, dipped his fingers and touched the sword, and this ceremony was performed in the Maha as well as in the Nātha-devāle.” (1) As most of the Kandyan institutions preserve old tradition, as it was an article of faith with the Abhayagiri monks in the tenth century that every king of Ceylon was a Bodhisattva, (2) and as the epithet of *Bodhisattvāvatūra* (an incarnation of the Bodhisattva) was applied to the late kings of Ceylon, it is probable that the king's receiving of his regal name and sword at the hands of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara was an ancient custom.

Another important ceremony connected with the Nātha Devāle was performed during the New Year celebrations. On this occasion, “the royal physicians had to superintend the preparation of a thousand small pots of the juices of wild medicinal plants at the Nātha Devāle, from whence, carefully covered and sealed they were sent to the palace, and distributed with much ceremony to the other temples.” (3) This practice shows that Nātha was considered a god of healing, like one form of Avalokiteśvara. The image of Avalokita named “the Lokanātha of the hospitals in Ceylon” referred to on p. 51 shows that Avalokiteśvara was, in Ceylon, worshipped for his healing activities.

(1) Pridham, *Ceylon and its Dependencies* Vol. X p. 342.

(2) See *E.Z.* Vol. I p. 240.

(3) Pridham I, p. 384.

The *Sarīputra*, a Sanskrit work on iconometry in use among the image makers of Ceylon, has a chapter containing *dhyānas* of the different deities. (1) In this Nātha is described as follows:—

Karabhṛta(2) *śubhapadmaḥ kundakarpūragauraḥ*
Svajata makuta divyālamkṛtam jotināmgaṃ
Śirasi nihita Buddho hīnadīnukampī
Jayatu namitavandyo jñānado Nātha devaḥ.

“Victory to the honoured and worshipful Nātha, bestower of wisdom; who holds a beautiful lotus in the hand; who is white in colour like the lily flower and camphor; whose crest is adorned with heavenly ornaments (?)., who bears on his head (the figure of) a Buddha and who is compassionate towards the helpless and the indigent.” When this *dhyāna* was composed, the general characteristics of Avalokiteśvara seem to have been attributed to Nātha; for instance, the holding of the lotus in his hand and the *dhyāna* Buddha on forehead. His attribute of compassion for the suffering of humanity is specially mentioned.

The same manuscript gives eight different forms of this deity which are interesting as showing the fusion which took place, in later times, of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. They are:—(1) Śiva Nātha, (2) Brahma Nātha, (3) Viṣṇu Nātha, (4) Gaurī Nātha, (5) Matsyendra Nātha, (6) Bhadra Nātha, (7) Bauddha Nātha, and (8) Gaṇa Nātha. The different characteristics of each of these aspects of the deity, as described in the manuscript, are given below:—

1. Śiva Nātha:—

Sumukhantrinayanañcāpi, kirītoragakunḍalam
Akṣamālā caturbāhus trīśūlam
Varadābhaya hastañca vyāghra carmāmbarānvitam
Śaṅkhavarṇṇa vṛśārūḍham Śivanāthasya lakṣaṇam.

“Of beautiful face, possessing three eyes, adorned with a crown and a bracelet formed of a serpent; holding a rosary; having four arms: a trīśūla; two hands in the bestowing and pro-

(1) This book exists only in manuscript. The chapters dealing with the measurements of the different parts of images have been translated into English and published by Dr. Coomaraswamy in his *Medieval Sinhalese Art*. The verses given here are copied from a manuscript of this book in the Colombo Museum Library. I have also procured from a Buddhist monk a manuscript containing the *dhyānas* alone. It may be doubted whether these actually belong to the *Sarīputra* as the text in both the manuscripts is corrupt and consequently there are several places in this and the Sinhalese paraphrase which accompanies the rest of the book does not extend to this chapter. The verses that follow which are unintelligible to me. The Sanskrit in which they are composed is barbarous and some of the grammatical mistakes that we find in them may be due to the author's defective knowledge of the language. In those places where I have not been able to make out a satisfactory text I give the reading as found in the manuscript and leave the doubtful words untranslated.

(2) Both the manuscripts have *kruta*.

tection attitudes; having a robe of tiger's hide, and riding on a bull of the colour of chank. Such are the marks of Śiva Nātha.”

2. Brahma Nātha:—

Caturmukham caturbāhum pītavarṇṇa samāyutam
Jaṭmakuṭasamīyuktam ratnakunḍalabhūṣitam
Hemayañjñapvītañca abhayaṃ pustakaṃ tathā
Svarṇṇahamsasamārūḍham Brahma nāthasya lakṣaṇam.

“Having four faces and four hands, of a yellow colour, having a crest of matted hair; adorned with a bracelet of jewels, and a sacrificial cord of gold; one hand in the protection attitude, and another holding a book; riding on golden goose. Such are the characteristic marks of Brahma Nātha.

3. Viṣṇu Nātha:—

Dvīhastam śamkhacakrañca, kirīta makutañvitam
Kunḍalam hemavastrantu (1) utpalavarṇṇamevaca
Garudavāhanārūḍham Viṣṇunāthasya lakṣaṇam.

“Having two hands, holding the chank and the discus, adorned with a crown and a tiara, a bracelet and a golden robe; in colour that of the lily flower (blue) and riding on a *garuḍa* bird. Such are the marks of Viṣṇu Nātha.

4. Gaurī Nātha:—

Dvīhastam puṣpagaṇḍaṇca mauḷikam padmakunḍalam
Svetāngam śyāma vastrantu keśarivāhanantathā
Gaurī Nātham viśuddhena lakṣaṇena prakīrtitam.

“With two hands; holding a bunch (?) of flowers; adorned with a diadem and a lotus flower as earring; of white body and dark green robe; with the lion as vehicle—the Gaurī Nātha has thus been described in true characteristics.

5. Matsyendra Nātha:—

Caturbhujantrinetrañca, pāsadaṇḍāyudhantathā
Kuṇḍikā (2) homahastañca, purī bhādra samaulikam
Śaṅkha kambala hārañca, rakṭāmbara dharānvitam
Yugamatsyasaṃārūḍham Matsyendra nāthamevaca.

“Having four hands and three eyes, and holding a noose and a staff as weapons, with a vase and oblations in the hand. (3)

(1) MISS. read *mutpala*.

(2) MISS. reads *kuṇḍikā*.

(3) What is meant by the word *purībhādra* is not clear to me.

crest; carrying a chank, a woollen blanket and necklace; dressed in a red robe; and riding on a pair of fishes—such is Matsyendra Nātha.

6. Bhadra Nātha :—

*Dvibhujam gauravarṇaṅca, pharaśum kukkuṭadhvajam
Kiriṭam vāsikañcāpi, raktāmbara dharānvitam
Mayūra vāhanañcaiva, Bhadra nāthasya lakṣaṇam.*

“With two hands; of a white colour; holding an axe (pharaśu) and a cock-standard; with a diadem and vāsika (?); clad in red garments; and peacock as the vehicle—these are the marks of Bhadra Nātha.”

7. Bauddha Nātha :—

*Dvibhujam śvetavarṇaṅca, abhayaṁ varadaṁ tathā
Akṣamālā kirīṭaṅca, śvetaṅgam śyāma vastrakam
Padmāsanaṁ tathā cāpi, Bauddha Nāthasya lakṣaṇam.*

“Two hands, a white complexion, the protection and bestowing attitudes of the hands, a rosary, a diadem, a white body, dark green robe, and a lotus-seat,—these are the marks of Bauddha Nātha.”

8. Gana Nātha :—

*Caturbhujantrinetaṅca, pāsāṅkuśa dvi hastakam
Abhayaṁ varadaṁ caiva, kuṅkumaṁ varṇamevaca
Svarṇa yajñopavītaṅca, garuṣa vastra dharānvitam
Mekhalā valayaṅgeṣu karaṇḍika dharānvitam
Musikārūḍhamevāpi, Gaṇanāthasya lakṣaṇam.*

“Four hands, three eyes, two hands (holding) noose and an elephant goad, the other two hands in the abhaya and varada mudras, a saffron colour, a golden sacrificial thread, a white robe, girdle and bangles on the limbs; holding a small casket (?) and a rat as vehicle—these are the marks of Gaṇa Nātha.

From the above, it will be noticed that in Ceylon, Nātha or Lokeśvara was believed to be identical with all the members of the Hindu Trinity. Avalokita has so many characteristics in common both with Śiva and Viṣṇu that M. L. de Vallee Poussin, in his article on this Bodhisattva in *Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, says “Avalokita is the Viṣṇu of the Buddhists” and in the course of the same article he continues “Avalokita is a Buddhist Śiva, an ascetic and a magician.” There is also a belief among certain Buddhists that Nātha is but another name

for Śiva. His identification with Gaurī, the *śakti* or female energy of Śiva, the Supreme Brahmā and Matsyendra Nātha is supported by the following verse from a Nepālese inscription of A.D. 1672, which runs :—

*Matsyendraṁ yogināṁ mukhyāḥ
Śaktiḥ śaktim vadanti yaṁ
Bauddhā Lokeśvarantaśmai
Namo Brahma svarūpine. (1)*

“The chiefs of the Yogins call him the King of Fishes (Matsyendra), the devotees of the female deities call him *śakti*, the Buddhists call him Lokeśvara. All honour to this being whose true form is Brahman.” (2) It is well-known that Avalokita has been transformed in China and Japan into a female deity (Kwan-yin). Commenting on this, M. Poussin says :—“This identification of Avalokita with the Śakti *par excellence*, i.e. with the personification of the cosmic female energy, shows, that the Chinese transformation of Avalokita into a woman had probably been already effected in India.” (3) Our manuscript furnishes a striking confirmation of this theory, as according to it Gaurī was herself only one aspect of this all-embracing Bodhisattva.

Of particular interest is the mention of Matsyendra Nātha as a form of the god Nātha. The above verse shows that in Nepāl, he is considered to be a form of Avalokiteśvara, and this gives still further support, to our identification of Nātha. The cult of Matsyendra Nātha is very popular among the Buddhists of Nepāl, and he is considered to be the guardian deity of that country. His worship is not prevalent in any other Buddhist country and he is also unknown to Brahmanism. The cult of Matsyendra Nātha seems to have been introduced into Nepāl in historical times and Prof. Sylvain Lévi is of opinion that though he is now known only in Nepāl he was not a deity who had his origin in that country. (4) Perhaps, the knowledge of Matsyendra Nātha in Ceylon was due to the Vajrayānists, the Vājriyavādins of the Ceylon writings. Matsyendra Nātha is considered to be the patron of a class of ascetics who practise the mystic meditation called Haṭhayoga. M. Sylvain Lévi says (5) that the image named “Nepale Būgāma Lokeśvaraḥ” in M. Foucher’s *Iconographie*, pl. IV., 1 is one of Matsyendra Nātha. But the description of the deity as

(1) *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IX p. 192.

(2) *Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, II, 260.

(3) *Ibid.*

(4) For a detailed account of Matsyendra Nātha, see S. Lévi's *Le Népal, Etude Historique d'un Royaume Hindou*, Tome I. pp. 347-357

(5) Lévi, *op. cit.* p. 353.

given in our manuscript does not agree with this painting. It is curious to note that this Bodhisattva who is already identified with Śiva and his spouse Gaurī is also considered to be the same as Gaṇa Nātha, who, according to Hindu mythology, is the son of Śiva. What is meant by Bauddha Nātha and Bhadra Nātha, I cannot say. But for the position of the hands, the description given in our manuscript of Bauddha Nātha agrees with the representation, in Nepāl, of the Ādi Buddha (the Primordial Buddha).⁽¹⁾

II. Samantabhadra

Saman or Sumana whose abode is on the Adam's Peak (in Sinhalese Samanoḷa) is included among the four guardian deities of Ceylon. In popular belief, he is counted as one of the Bodhisattvas who are ready to help mankind in distress. He is mentioned in the *Mahāvamsa* ⁽²⁾ in connection with the first and third of the supposed visits of the Buddha to this island. The mountain which is his abode is sometimes called Sumanakūṭa and very often Samantakūṭa. The Sinhalese word Saman may be derived from either Sumana ⁽³⁾ or Samanta and it is possible that "Samanta kūṭa" means "the peak of Samanta"; the deity being known by this name as well. Perhaps, the word Sumana was a learned rendering of the vernacular name of which Saman is the later representative. The *Maṇimekalai*, a Tamil poem attributed to the sixth century, mentions this peak by the name *Samantam* as well as *Saman-oli*.⁽⁴⁾ On the whole, there is reason to believe that Samanta was one of the original names of this deity.

Mr. Beal has tried to prove that Saman is the same as Avalokiteśvara; identifying Adam's Peak with Mount Potala which, according to Mahāyānist writings, is the abode of that Bodhisattva, and Saman with Samantamukha (one form of Avalokiteśvara) to whom Buddha is said to have delivered a sermon on that mountain.⁽⁵⁾ But the reasons he advances for the identification of Mount Potala with Adam's Peak are not convincing and hence his hypothesis has not been accepted by other scholars.⁽⁶⁾

On the other hand, there is some evidence for the identification of Saman with Samanta bhadra, one of the eight principal Bodhisattvas of the Mahāyānists.⁽⁷⁾ He was not a very important

(1) See Bhattacharya, *Buddhist Iconography*, plate 5.

(2) *Mahāvamsa*, Chapter I.

(3) A Yakkha named Sumana is mentioned in the Āṭānāṭiya Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya (Vol. III, p. 205).

(4) See V. Saminatha Aiyar's Edition (1921) pp. 119 and 336.

(5) See *J. R. A. S.* for 1883 p. 333 and *Buddhism in China* p. 119.

(6) *Iconography*, p. 100.

(7) *Dharmasūtragraha*, p. 3.

figure in Indian Buddhism, but holds a prominent place in Chinese Buddhism. He is represented as green in colour and riding on an elephant. The vehicle (*vāhana*) of the god Saman is also an elephant and his colour blue or green. In Sinhalese the colours blue and green are both expressed by the word *nil*⁽¹⁾ and the confusion of these two colours in images of Saman was no doubt due to this elasticity of meaning. Just as the god Saman is associated with a sacred hill in Ceylon, so is Samantabhadra in China. His abode is the sacred mountain called Omei.⁽²⁾ In the miniature painting of this Bodhisattva, reproduced in Foucher's *Iconographie*, he is represented with a mountain in the background.⁽³⁾ These facts, together with the name, suggest that Saman and Samantabhadra have a common origin. In the plate facing p. 52 of Upham's *History and Doctrine of Buddhism* (London, 1829), there is a drawing depicting Saman, green in colour and riding an elephant. The left hand holds a sceptre and a bow. According to M. Foucher, the Nepālese figure of Samantabhadra also holds a sceptre in the left hand; but there is no bow.

At present, the principal seat of this Bodhisattva's cult is at Ratnapura (Sabaragamuva), where one of the most magnificent of the processions of the Ceylon Buddhists is annually conducted. The Saman Devāle inscription ⁽⁴⁾ gives the name of the god as Lakṣmaṇa, one of the heroes of the Rāmāyana. This name is due to the Hinduising tendencies which are marked in Ceylon Buddhism in late mediaeval times. From about the thirteenth century down to the Portuguese times, there was a steady influx of South Indian Brahmins to Ceylon, probably owing to the political revolutions of the time caused by the Muhammadan invasions. Most of them found favour at the Sinhalese court ⁽⁵⁾ and seem to have been entrusted with the conduct of the worship of the local divinities. As may be expected, they transformed most of these local deities into Hindu gods; and in doing so, were very often led by similarities or fancied resemblances in name and attributes of the gods. Thus, by the addition of one more syllable at the beginning of the name the god Saman was easily supposed to have been the brother of Rama. But at the present day, very few of the votaries of Saman seem to be aware that he was once supposed to be a hero of the Rāmāyana.

(1) For instance, grass is said to be *nil* (green) and the colour of the sky too is indicated by the same term.

(2) Sir Chas. Elliott, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. II p. 23. and Foucher's *Iconographie* pp. 120-1.

(3) Foucher, *Iconographie* pl. VI, 2.

(4) *Ceylon Antiquary*, Vol. II, pp. 36ff. This inscription is no longer extant. The published version being from an old manuscript copy from the original.

(5) As witnessed by the many copper plate grants issued to Brahmins, whose names betray their South Indian origin, by Sinhalese Kings of the 14th and 15th centuries.

III. Upulvan

It may reasonably be supposed that the other gods of Ceylon Buddhism, too, were evolved from Mahāyānism in the same way as Nātha and Saman; but their identification with the Hindu deities has been so complete that very little or nothing can be gleaned about their original characteristics either from literature or from tradition. However, a brief mention of Upulvan (P. Uppalavaṇṇa), the most popular of the local gods, may not be out of place.

This god is now considered to be the same as Viṣṇu, but at the same time it is believed that he is one of the future Buddhas. The merging of Uppalavaṇṇa with Viṣṇu seems to have occurred not more than three or four centuries ago; for the *Kokila Sandesa*, a work dating from the last quarter of the fifteenth century, would make us understand that Uppalavaṇṇa was a different personage from Viṣṇu. (1) The Lamkātilaka inscription, in enumerating the images of gods set up in that shrine mentions Viṣṇu along with Suyāma, Santuṣita, Śakra, Brahma and Maheśvara, but includes Upulvan (Uppalavaṇṇa) as a distinct deity in a class including Sumana, Vibhīṣaṇa and Kumāra, the guardian deities of Ceylon. In the various descriptions of this god, that we have in Sinhalese literature of the fifteenth century, there is nothing to indicate that he was then held to be Viṣṇu. No mention is made of his *vāhana* or his weapons. His image is described as in kingly attire without any plurality of hands. The only thing in common between the two is the colour. On the other hand, the descriptions do not furnish any particulars that would help us in tracing the origin of the god. In one place, it is said that when the Buddha was assailed by the Evil One at the foot of the Bo-tree, all the other gods who had come to pay their homage took to flight while Uppalavaṇṇa alone remained by his side with bow in hand. (2) The principal seat of this deity in the fifteenth century was, and still is, at Devundara near Matara, in the Southern Province. The Portuguese historian De Queyroz mentions that Chinese pilgrims came to worship at this shrine and their benefactions were recorded in Chinese inscriptions. (3) The Chinese do not worship the god Viṣṇu and there is no reason why they should have done so in Ceylon. But, on the other hand, if Uppalavaṇṇa was a local form of one of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas, the veneration paid to him by the Chinese is easily explained.

(1) Verse 25 which tells "The lily coloured god in glory shines, in endless prowess, the mighty Viṣṇu's peer." Here Uppalavaṇṇa is compared to Viṣṇu and if he was considered by the poet to be Viṣṇu himself this is meaningless. See Mudaliyar W. F. Gunawardhana's note on this verse, *Ceylon Antiquary* Vol. IV, p. 157.

(2) *Māyāra Sandesa*, v. 4.

(3) See P. E. Peiris, *Portuguese Era* Vol. I, p. 239.

The earliest mention of this deity is found in the *Mahāvamsa*, Chapter VII, where it is said that when the Buddha was just about to enter *nirvāna*, he saw that his doctrines would, in the future, be glorified in Ceylon and requested Sakka, the king of heaven, to ward off any evil that might happen to Vijaya who had just then landed in Ceylon. Sakka entrusted this mission to Uppalavaṇṇa who came to Ceylon and by the power of holy water protected Vijaya the Sinhala from the machinations of the she-demons. In the Northern version of the legend of Sinhala as given in the *Karaṇḍavyūha*, the part played by Uppalavaṇṇa in the *Mahāvamsa*—that of rescuing Sinhala and his companions—is performed by Avalokiteśvara who is identified with the magic horse. (1) This would lead one to the conclusion that Uppalavaṇṇa was a local name of that Bodhisattva. The epithet *Kihirāli* or *Kirāli* which is a corruption of the two words *kihiri-li* and means *khadira* (2) wood is very often applied to this god and mention is made of several images of Uppalavaṇṇa fashioned out from this particular wood. This epithet, therefore, must have been given to him owing to *khadira* wood being considered particularly appropriate for images of the deity. (3) *Khadira* or *kaira* was the wood sacred to Avalokita and his spouse Tārā. M. Foucher mentions an image of the Bodhisattva from Koṅkana in South India, named Śrī Kairavana Lokanātha. (4) But the colour of Uppalavaṇṇa presents a difficulty. Avalokita is painted white except in Nepal where he is sometimes red.

A PALI WORK ON TEN BODHISATTVAS

There is extant in Ceylon an almost unknown Pali work named *Dasa-bodhisatt-uppatti-kathā*, "Stories about the births of the ten Bodhisattvas." (5) It gives the antecedents and the future careers of these Bodhisattvas and the manner in which they met Gautama Buddha. Though the work is not included in the Canon, the narrative is put into the mouth of the Buddha and the author attempts to pass off his work as a *sutta*. It is well-known that the Mahāyānists, when they wanted to propound any new doctrines, however much they may have been against the spirit of early Buddhism, did not hesitate to put the words into the Buddha's mouth and to invent the places and occasions of their discourses. This was particularly obnoxious to the Theravādins who did not add any new *suttas* to the *Tripitaka* at least after the

(1) Rajendra Lal Mitra, *Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, p. 97.

(2) *Acacia Catechu*.

(3) See Clough's Sinhalese Dictionary s.v.

(4) Foucher, *Iconographie*, pp. 104 and 138.

(5) Printed at Ambatāna in 1926.

scriptures had been commented upon by Buddhaghosa. Since it is not included in the canon, it must be of later date than Buddhaghosa and the narrative was fathered on the Buddha because the author was not one of orthodox views. The work perhaps owes its origin to Mahāyāna influence and was composed at a time when the people, familiar with Mahāyāna doctrines, were hankering after more Bodhisattvas than were allowed to them by the Theravāda scriptures. It is true that the ten Bodhisattvas, excepting Maitreya, have nothing in common with those of the Mahāyānists. Some of them like King Kośala, we meet very often in the *Nikāyas* while others like Pāriṣeṣya are also mentioned in the Pāli canon. This was, it seems, an attempt by the Theravādins to counteract the influence of the heretical teachings on the multitude, by adopting the weapons of their opponents. Prof. Minayeff, in his edition of the *Anāgatavaṃsa*,⁽¹⁾ mentions a Burmese manuscript containing an account of the future Buddha Maitreya in prose and verse. Two verses in it contain the names of ten personages who have been declared by the present Buddha to be on the path to Buddhahood. Ten Bodhisattvas headed by Metteyya are also mentioned in an old Siamese inscription and Sir Chas. Elliott quotes it as an instance of Mahāyāna influence on the Buddhism of Siam.⁽²⁾

SANSKRIT BUDDHIST WRITINGS KNOWN IN CEYLON

The Iḍḍikāṣūya and Vijayārāma plaques show that the Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures were not only known in Ceylon, but were considered by some sects to be so sacred that extracts from them were inscribed on copper and enshrined in *stūpas*. A large number of heretical works almost all of which appear, by their titles, to have been written in Sanskrit and of a Mahāyānist or Tantric character, was known to the author of the *Nikāya Saṃgraha* who lived towards the close of the fourteenth century. But, unfortunately, he curtly dismisses them all with the remark that "the different methods adopted in these several works are too many to permit of recital here." The titles of these books are :—

(1) Varṇapīṭaka of the Hemavatas, (2) Aṅgulimālapīṭaka of the Rājagirikas, (3) Gūḍha Vessantara of the Siddhārthakas, (4) Rāṣṭrapālagarjīta of the Pūrvaśailīyas, (5) Ālavaka garjīta of the Aparāśailīyas, (6) Gūḍhavinaya, (7) Māyājālatantra, (8) Samājatāntra, (9) Mahāsamaya-tattva tantra, (10) Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra, (11) Bhūtaśānta tantra, (12) Vajrāmṛta tantra, (13) Cakrasaṃvaratantra, (14) Dvādaśacakra-

(1) *J.P.T.S.* for 1886 p. 33 ff.
(2) *Hinduism and Buddhism*, III. 84.

tantra, (15) Bherukādbhūta tantra, (16) Mahāmāyā tantra, (17) Padaniḥkṣepa tantra, (18) Catuspīṣṭa tantra, (19) Parāmarḍa tantra, (20) Māriyudbhava tantra, (21) Sarvvabuddha tantra, (22) Sarvvaguhya tantra, (23) Samuccaya tantra, (24) Marici kalpa, (25) Herambha Kalpa, (26) Trisamaya kalpa, (27) Rājakaḷpa, (28) Vajragandhāraḷpa, (29) Māriḷguhya Kalpa, (30) Suddhasamuccaya Kalpa, (31) Māyamarīcī Kalpa, (Nos. 6–31 all composed by the sect called the Vajraparvatavāsins, *i.e.* the Vajrayānists), (32) Vaitulyapīṭaka of the Vaitulyavādins, (33) Ratnakūṭa Sūtras of the Āndhrakas, and (34) Akṣarasāriyasūtra of the Mahāśāṃghikas.⁽¹⁾

Of these, *Rāṣṭrapālagarjīta* is perhaps the same as *Rāṣṭrapālaparīpṛcchā* published by L. Finot in the *Bibliotheca Buddhica* Series⁽²⁾ and *Aṅgulimāla garjīta* might be identical with the work named *Aṅgulimālika* quoted in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*.⁽³⁾ Nos. 13 and 16 may be compared with *Cakrasaṃvaratantrarāja* and *Mahāmāyā Sādhana* ascribed in the Tibetan Tangyur to Indrabhūti, the founder of the Vajrayāna school.⁽⁴⁾ *Trisamaya kalpa* (No 26) in our list and *Trisamayārāja* quoted by Śāntideva were perhaps the same work. As regards No. 15 and No. 23, it may be mentioned that Bherukā and Samuccayā are names of two Mahāyānist goddesses appearing in Nepālese writings,⁽⁵⁾ and the *dhāraṇī* charm called Vajragāndhārī⁽⁶⁾ may be compared with our No. 28. The Ratnakūṭa Sūtras have already been commented upon. The other names cannot be traced in lists of Sanskrit Buddhist literature available to me; but only a small portion of this literature has been preserved and possibly these works may be found in Chinese and Tibetan translations. Besides the *tantras*, the Mahāyāna charms called the Dhāraṇīs seem to have been known in Ceylon. In the palace that Parākramabāhu I built at Polonnaruva, a special chamber called Dhāra-nīghara⁽⁷⁾ was set apart for the recital of *mantras*.

The grammatical and other works of Candragomin were studied in Ceylon during the mediæval period and the Jātakamālā of Āryaśūra seems to have been widely known.⁽⁸⁾ The author of the Pāli *Haṭṭhavanagallavaṃsa* has drawn inspiration from that work for a considerable number of verses in his composition. In the Sinhālese *Saddharmamālaṃkāra*, the first story of the Jātakamālā, which is not included in

(1) *Nikāya Saṃgraha*, translation p. 9 f.
(2) Winternitz, *Geschichte der Indischen Literatur* II 246.
(3) *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, translated by Bendall and Rouse p. 131.
(4) Bhāṭṭācārya in the *Proceedings of Third All India Oriental Conference*, p. 134.
(5) R. L. Mitra, *Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal* pp. 2 and 247.
(6) *Ibid* p. 202. A charm named Gandhārī Vījā is mentioned in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and in *Therī Gāthā*.
(7) *Mhv. Ch.* LXXIII v. 71. Wijesinha translates it as "house of Viṣṇu."
(8) The Sinhālese Grammar *Siddat Saṃgraha* mentions the name of this author.

the Pali Jātaka collection, is given in detail and this story is, in fact, known to almost every Buddhist in Ceylon. Another such story, the Maitrībala Jātaka is illustrated among the frescoes of the Northern Temple at Polonnaruva. (1) The Sinhalese work *Dharmmapradīpikā* of Guruḷugomi, an author who flourished somewhere in the thirteenth century, quotes several verses from the work of Āryaśūra. (2) The Jātaka Mālā, it is true, cannot be called a Mahāyāna work; but it is held in high esteem by the Mahāyānists. Guruḷugomi has also quoted two verses from the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, which is decidedly Mahāyāna in its contents. But the particular verses (3) quoted contain nothing to which the orthodox Buddhists of Ceylon could have raised any objection. However, it is interesting to show that Śāntideva's work was known and studied in Ceylon till at least the thirteenth century. The author of the *Pājūvaliya*, who lived in the reign of Parākramabāhu II, also appears to have come under the influence of the Mahāyāna teachings. In the introductory chapter of his work, he has a rather long argument to establish that it is only the state of a Bodhisattva that is worth striving for and the attainment of Nirvāṇa by being an *arhat* or a *pratyekabuddha* should not be one's aim.

SUMMARY

We may now sum up in a few words the results of our enquiry. All the principal changes in the doctrine and practice of Buddhism which took place in India were introduced to Ceylon and were vigorously opposed by the orthodox Church. In the ninth and tenth centuries, Mahāyānism was particularly strong in Anurādhapura, some of the outlying monasteries as the Vijayārāma and the Pūrvārāma having adopted that creed. Mihintale, the cradle of Buddhism in Ceylon, was also to a great extent under the same influence. The worship of Avalokita was introduced and he continues to receive the homage of the Ceylon Buddhists up to this day. There is also reason to believe that other Bodhisattvas were not unknown and are being worshipped still under the guise of Hindu gods. Tantric beliefs were also prevalent at this time and the magical practices of Ceylon as they exist to-day may possibly be influenced by them. Direct intercourse with Mahāyāna

(1) A. S. C. Annual Report for 1909 p. 36.

(2) *Dharmmapradīpikā*, 1915 Edition, pp. 79, 80 and 114.

(3) The two verses are:

Mukhyaṃ daṇḍādīkaṃ hitvā, prerake yadi kupyati

Dveṣṇa preritassopi dveṣḍveṣastu me varam

Kiyānto mārayisyāmi durjānān gaganopamān

Mārite krodhacitte tu mārītāsarvvasutravah

Dharmmapradīpikā, 1915 Edition pp. 157, 158.*Bodhicaryāvatāra* VI, 41, V, 12.

countries(1) ceased from about the eleventh century and after the restoration of the Orthodox Church by Parākramabāhu I, the separate existence of heretical schools ceased; but the orthodox Buddhists, themselves had by this time imbibed some of the Mahāyāna doctrines, such as the worship of Avalokita, the use of spells and mystic diagrams. Then came the Hindu influence, and the Bodhisattvas were identified with the great gods of the Hindu pantheon. The influence of the Mahāyāna has been, in the words of the chronicler, among the ignorant people of the land. And, therefore, it is natural that some aspects of the popular religion should have affinities with what are known as Mahāyānistic beliefs and practices.

(1) Not taking into consideration the intercourse with China for which there is evidence in the 14th century.

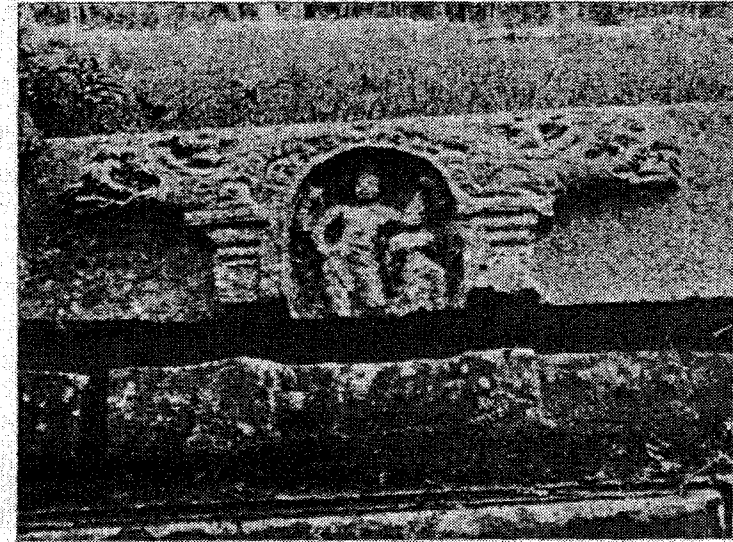


Fig. 1
Vijayārāma bas relief, East side.

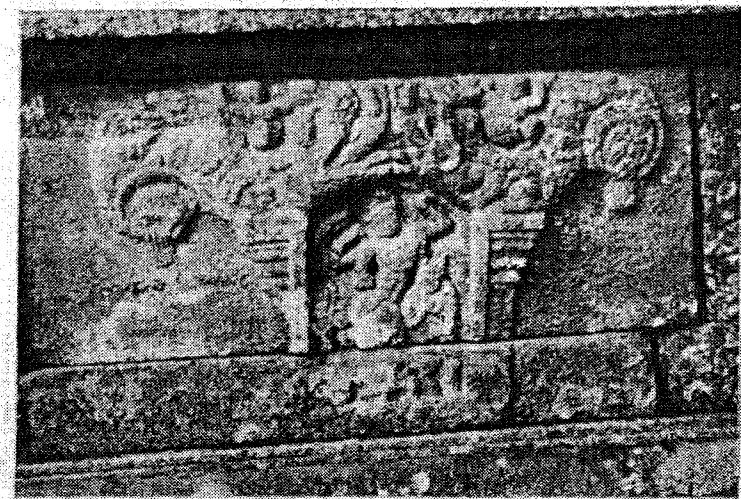
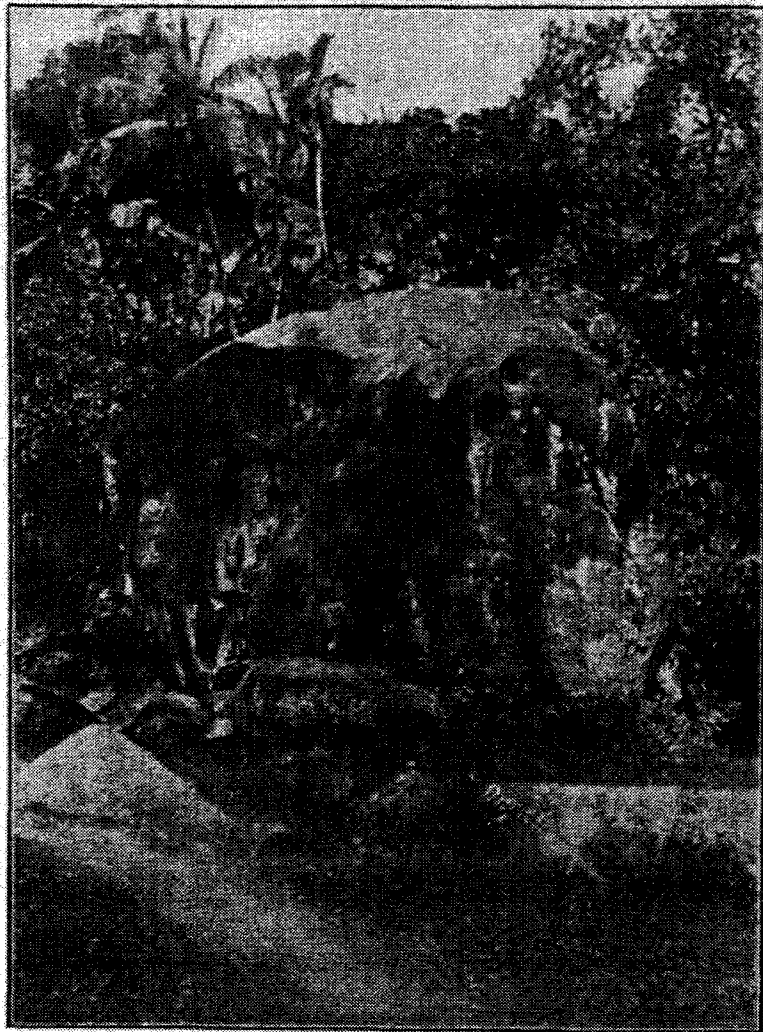
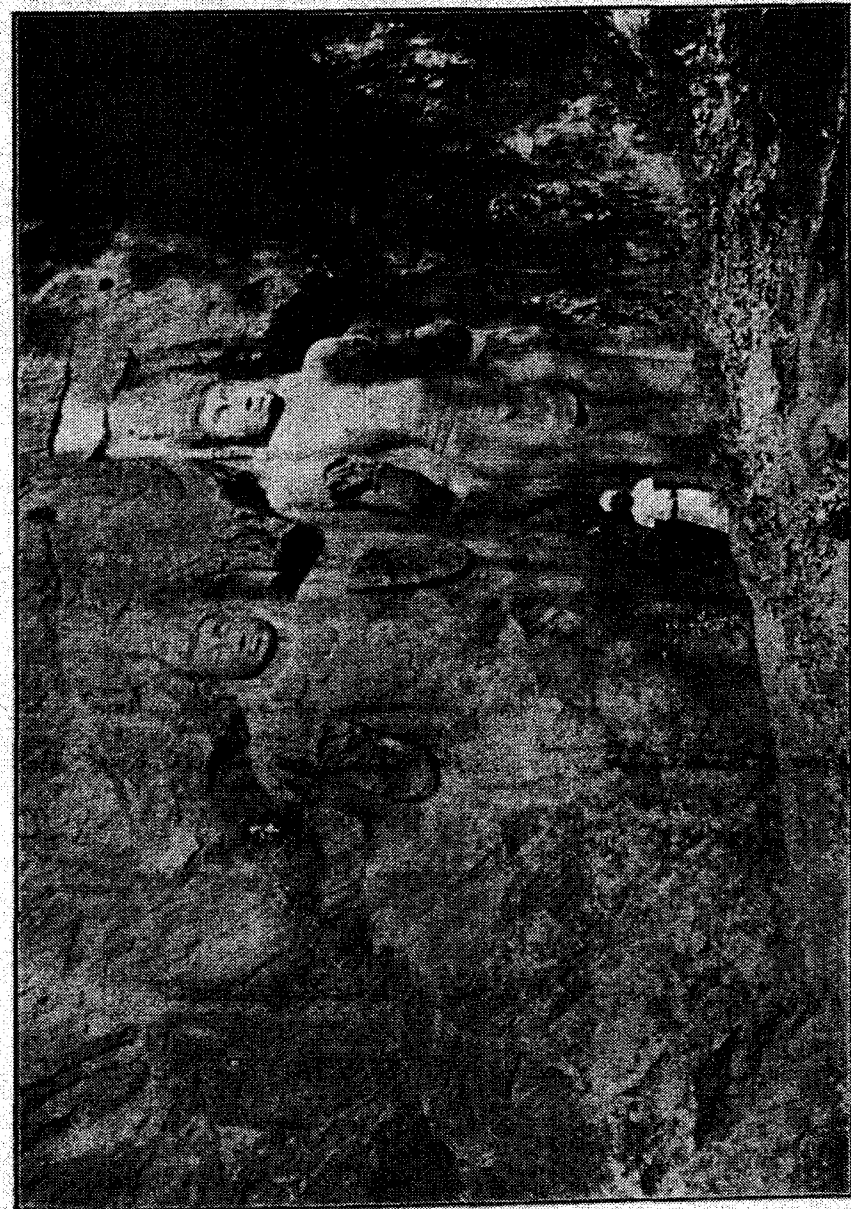


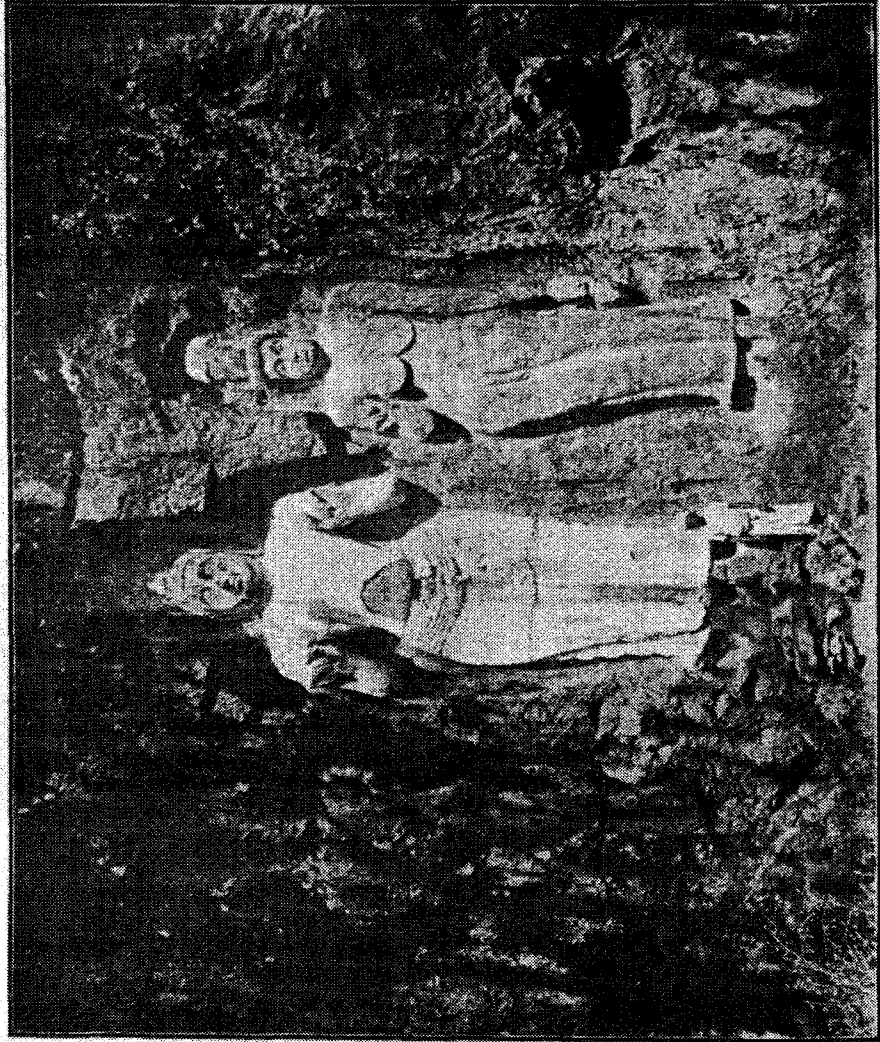
Fig. 2
Vijayārāma bas relief, East side.



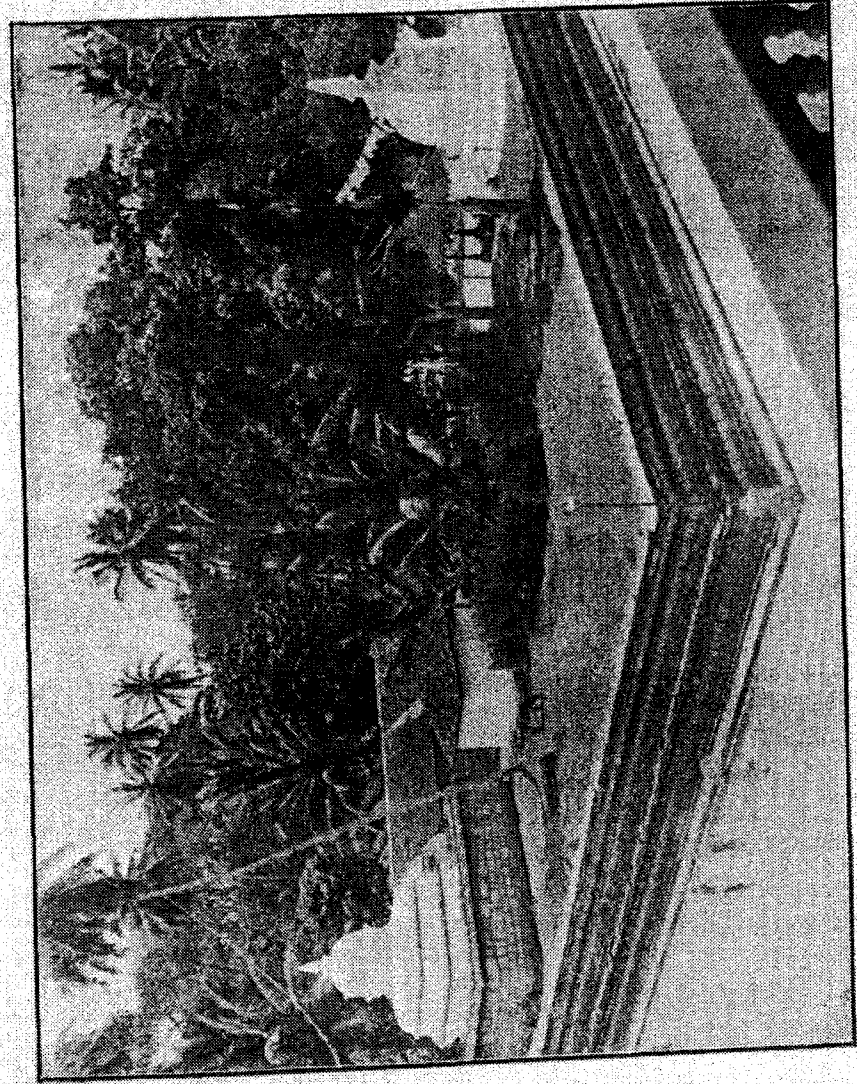
Kustarijogola,



Budurivégala, figures at the North end.



Budhuvāgala, figures at South end.



Nātha Temple, Kandy.