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# INDIA – SRI LANKA BUDDHIST CULTURAL RELATIONS (SIXTH CENTURY CE TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY CE)

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*Abstract: There has been a great deal of historical writing on the subject of India - Sri Lanka cultural relations, two countries which had close contact since prehistoric time, due to their geographical proximity. However, the Buddhist connection is the major preoccupation of the early historiography of Sri Lanka as far as Indian culture is concerned. However, the traditional literary sources amplified selected themes for certain objective reasons according to their wish. Sri Lankan Chronicles were silent about non-Theravāda Buddhist traditions because the main thrust of these Chronicles is to establish the purity and authenticity of the Theravāda point of view.*

*The main objective of the article is to evaluate the way that the Sri Lankan were able to keep close contact of developments, in Indian Buddhist thought Theravāda as well as non-Theravāda through regular contact with Buddhist monastic centers throughout India. Chronologically this study forces on the period from the sixth and twelfth centuries which was marked by significant changes of Buddhist culture with the new form of Buddhist traditions.*

*This research study attempt has been made to explore India – Sri Lanka cultural relations, reevaluating previous research on the subject, while utilizing ancient historical writings, various interpretations of the recent archaeological findings and inscriptional details.*

**Keywords:** Buddhism, Cultural relations, India, Sri Lanka

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## Introduction

(Nilakanta, 1939: 17-8) two times on the same page. These two indications should be corrected as (Sastri, 1939: 17-39) which I include in the bibliography.

Sastri, K.A. Nilakanta (1939). *Foreign Notice of South India*, Madras: University of Madras.

There has been a great deal of historical writing on the subject of cultural relations between India and Sri Lanka - two countries which had close contact since prehistoric time, due to their geographical proximity. The major emphasis in these writings has necessarily been on the impact of Indian culture on Sri Lankan society. Most of the scholars have overestimated the extent of Indian influence by dividing the entire period of Sri Lankan history into North Indian period and South Indian period. It is to be noted that they emphasized North Indian period restricting to cultural relations, especially with Buddhism. The South Indian period was bound with political interaction between two regions. Incessant invasions of the cultural relations undertaken by South Indian rulers had undoubtedly left an indelible trail of the obliteration of certain other important aspects related to cultural and commercial relations (Liyanagamage: 1993: 74). However, subsequent research studies have accepted that Indo-Sri Lanka cultural contacts in the ancient period were not restricted only to the North Indian region. Sri Lanka's close geographical proximity to India and its easy accessibility by sea from all parts of coastal India were important factors in the cultural contact of the Island. Hence, looking up to India for cultural leadership is an important aspect to the Sri Lankan cultural scene. Therefore, scholars of history, culture, art, religion, language and human biology of the island are frequently asked to assess the nature and extent of bio-cultural relationship between Sri Lanka's ancient and modern peoples and their contemporaries in India (Somathilake: 2002: 84). However, it should be noted that this close proximity, especially to this Southern territory as well as the physical separation from the mainland in the form of an island, are factors of enormous importance with their bearing on the directions of the flow of the history of the island.

This article attempts to focus on the period from the sixth century CE, onwards since adequate attention has not been given to Buddhist cultural interactions between Sri Lanka and India. One of the most significant eras of the history

of South Asian Buddhism begins from the early part of the first millennium CE. It was marked by important trajectories and remarkable innovations introducing Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna (Vajrayana) Buddhist traditions. From the middle part of the first millennium CE, the new form of Buddhist tradition was spread throughout the Indian subcontinent and outside world as well. But there is a great decay of the continuation of cultural activities at the Buddhist sites in the Indian subcontinent after the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE. It clearly shows that Buddhism was losing ground in the subcontinent this period onwards. Owing to these reasons Sri Lanka - India cultural interactions underwent some decline after the twelfth century CE. Accordingly, the period between the sixth and twelfth centuries was marked by significant changes in the history of Buddhism in the South Asian region. It is for this reason that my attention in the present research study will focus on the chronological period from the sixth to the twelfth centuries CE.

Among the large volume of historical writings on the subject of cultural relations between India and Sri Lanka most of them were focused on cultural relations depending on the Indian and Sri Lankan literary tradition. But without considering recent archaeological findings and inscriptional details in both regions, such studies remain incomplete. The recent archaeological findings necessitated a re-examination of some of these textual details on the subject of cultural relations of the two countries. Hence, the present research study will explore cultural relations between the two countries by examining the accounts of ancient historical writings, various interpretations of the recent archaeological findings and inscriptional details.

Among the vast amount of Pāli canon the *Mahāvamsa* together with its continuation, the *Cūlavamsa* and the *Dīpavamsa* the earliest remaining record of the Sri Lankan historical tradition and the *Samantapāsādikā*, the commentary of Vinaya Pitaka are more important on this regard (Perera: 1959: 50-1). These historical facts are

centered round the nucleus of the Buddha's life and the development of Buddhism. So they mainly present the history of Buddhism, the three Buddhist councils, Aśoka's patronage of Buddhism, the sending of missions, especially the mission of Mahinda to Sri Lanka, establishment and development of Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

Accordingly, the Buddhist connection is the major pre-occupation of the early historiography of Sri Lanka as far as Indian culture is concerned (Bandaranayake: 2000: 1). Though, this may not be a historical fact it is believed that it grew in support of the *Dhammadipa* concept which was always emphasized in the ancient chronicles (Smith: 1978: 18). But from the third century onwards, ancient literary traditions have not provided a clear picture of cultural contact of the two countries, apart from some indirect information. While they contain limited objectives on the one hand, Sri Lankan chronicles were silent about non-Theravāda Buddhist tradition although there are more national epics of the Sinhala Buddhists of the orthodox Theravāda sector. These chronicles were written at a time when the Mahāvihāra was challenged by non-Theravāda schools of thought. The main thrust of these chronicles is to establish the purity and authenticity of the Theravāda point of view and the primacy of the Mahāvihāra (Kiribamune: 1979: 89-101).

Consequently, they were quiet silent about the Sri Lankan Buddhist cultural contact with non-Theravāda Buddhist centres in India. Nevertheless, some details were mentioned, considering as heretical moments. So, most probably, the traditional literary sources amplified selected themes for certain unknown reasons according to their wish.

However, it is interesting to note that the inscriptions, and archaeological findings clearly suggest that the Sri Lankans were able to keep abreast of developments in Indian Buddhist thought regular contact with both Theravāda and non-Theravāda monasteries from the third century BCE onwards. The monks and nuns in both regions attempted to improve their knowledge of

Buddhism through this regular contact. But the ancient chroniclers have not highlighted cultural contact with India from the middle part of the first millennium CE, the period that the island had faced the real threat of South Indian political hegemony. According to the chronicles, the Anuradhapura kingdom was invaded by several Indian princes from first century BCE onwards.

According to the descriptions given by Sri Lankan chronicles, South Indian rulers who invaded the Island were enemies of Buddhism. They attempted to say that the royal patronage for Buddhism and Buddhist institutions had declined under this political hegemony. As Sirima Kiribanune has pointed out:

... Sri Lankan rulers (after the seventh century CE) had to reckon with the fear of South Indian political domination. This fear was shared by the Sri Lankan Buddhist Sangha, for Tamil rule could lead to a decline in royal patronage for Buddhism and Buddhist institutions (Kiribamune, 1986: 25).

Incessant invasions of the Island undertaken by South Indian rulers had undoubtedly left an indelible trail of destruction and suffering and, naturally they are highlighted in the Island's chronicles (Liyanagamage: 1994: 74).

From the mid nineteenth century there has been a major shift in the direction of Buddhist studies, because, on the one hand, literary works of Buddhist traditions came to be discovered one after another, and on the other hand, archaeological and epigraphic sources were considered a powerful historical witness of Buddhist history. Writing in 1949 on the impotence of inscriptional details for historical studies, L.S. Perera states:

...the inscriptions are contemporary records. These therefore reflect the conditions of the time they relate to, much more accurately than literary records, would, because the latter (literary records) were first handed down by word of mouth and then set down in writing. Further these have again gone through much editing before being put in the final form in which they have come down to us. ...The authors of the literary records, however, subject the material they had to the requirements of the story they had to relate, the moral they wished to teach or the point of view they wanted expressed (Perera: 2001: xvii).

Thus, it is clear that the archaeological and epigraphic details are more accurate, truthful and contemporary.

### North Indian Contacts

As a result of Aśoka's propagation of Buddhism in the third century BCE, it spread throughout India and the outside world (Gombrich: 1984: 77-89). Thence onwards Buddhists were able to maintain regular contact with Buddhist centres in India. Bodhgaya, the site of the Buddha's enlightenment was an important pilgrim centre of the Buddhist world from the earliest times. Sri Lankan monks, layman and pilgrims went to Bodhgaya, from the third century onwards. An important incident has been reported by the Chinese traveller Wang-Hiven in seventh century CE, which was related to the Gupta Emperor Samudragupta (320-380 CE). In his report Wang-Hiuen mentioned that the Sri Lankan King Meghavarna (301-32 CE), directed monks to visit the monasteries built by Aśoka to the east of the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya. These two monks paid their homage to the Bodhi tree but the monasteries did not offer them any hospitality. After coming to know of this incident Sri Lankan King Sri Megavarna sent envoys with gifts of precious stones to emperor Samudragupta requesting his permission to build a Sri Lankan monastery at Bodhgaya. Up to the time of Wang-Hiven, in the seventh century CE, the monastery was occupied by Sri Lankan monks. But, it is important to note that Sri Lankan sources do not make any reference to this incident.

There are also some epigraphic records that record details regarding Sri Lankan endowments to Bodhgaya, a Buddhist centre during this period. A monk named Mahanama from Sri Lanka has left a record mentioning a gift to a Buddha image and of a shrine built at the site dated in accordance with the year 588-9 CE. (Archaeological Survey of Ceylon- A Review: 1908-09: 157). Another Sanskrit inscription of sixth century CE, recorded the donation of a Sri Lankan monk named Prakhyatakitti (Archaeological Survey of Ceylon: A Review: 156-7). He is described as a pious

monk of royal descent who visited the holy sites and longing to attend to the state of the Buddha, caused a 'Kara' to be made at the place sacred to the *triratna*. The inscription ends with the usual prayer that whatever merit may be accumulated by reason of this pious act, be transferred to his teacher, preceptor, parents and to the whole multitude of sentient beings, so that they might attain to the supreme wisdom.

Another votive inscription written on the broken pedestal of a Buddha statue records the piety of a Sinhalese layman Udayasiri who commissioned the image in order to be liberated from the world of woe. This is written in characters of the ninth century (Fleet: 1888: Plates 71&72). Taranatha also records interesting facts regarding the Sri Lankan monks who lived at Bodhgaya during the reign of Dhammapala (770-810 CE) (Gunawardana: 1978: 244-246). R.A.L.H. Gunawardana stated several important factors emerge from Tharanatha's records of Sri Lankan monks: proof of the presence of the Sinhalese monks at Bodhgaya, the monks maintained a close relationship with the Saindhavas, both groups opposed Tantric practices and the two tried to convert the followers of the Mahayana to their own teaching (Gunawardana., 1978: 244-246). Thus, the Sri Lanka monks played a very important role at Bodhgaya and were very influential. A slab inscription datable to the ninth or eleventh century records the gift of a pious king and was written by a Sinhalese monk named Ratanasirijinana, (Mitra: 1878: 194-197). It is important to note that all these inscriptions are written in Nāgari characters and belong to the sixth to twelfth century. That apart, all these inscriptions written by or for Sinhalese pilgrims, further testify to the existence of vital and continuing communications between Bodhgaya and the monasteries at Sri Lanka.

An inscription issued in the fifty first regnal year of King Lakshmana Sena (1229 CE), records the donation of an endowment to the shrine of Mahabodhi and the grant of responsibility to a Sinhalese *Sangha* to control the management of the

endowment (Cunningham: 1892: 76-79). Though, this has not been relevant to the period under review, it clearly shows the prominent position that the Sinhalese monks occupied among the contemporary Buddhist community at Bodhgaya. That apart, the Tibetan monk Dharmaswamin who visited Bodhgaya in the thirteenth century, mentioned that there were three hundred monks from Sri Lanka who handled the control of the main shrine and they enjoyed exclusive right to sleep within its sacred precincts (Roerch: 1959: 73-74). These epigraphic and literary evidence suggests frequent pilgrimages of Sri Lankan monks to Bodhgaya from about the second century BCE, until about the thirteenth century and that there was a large monastery for the Sinhalese Buddhist monks, which was managed by themselves (Karunatikake: 1990: 141-6).

Thus, it is clear that there was community of Sinhalese monks who were permanent residents at the monastery of Bodhgaya. It is possible that these monks contributed to the propagation of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and that they also exercised influence in India. Meanwhile, not only the monks, some laymen, who travelled as pilgrims to India were influenced by Buddhist doctrinal variations that gained ground in the Buddhist sites there. In the sixth century CE, King Silākāla (526-539 CE), who spent his youth, as a novice at the monastery at Bodhgaya brought with him the hair relics when he returned to Sri Lanka and housed them in a beautiful shrine (*Mahāvamsa*, XXXIV: 59). According to the *Mahāvamsa*, King Vijayabahu I (1070-1100 CE) had sent a mission to offer precious stones and pearls to the shrine at Bodhgaya to mark his enthronement as the ruler of Sri Lanka (*Mahāvamsa*, LX: 23).

Buddhist monasteries in Orissa also played a significant role in the propagation of Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka and in Southeast Asian countries. Since its inception Buddhism flourished in Orissa. According to the Sri Lankan chronicles, the Buddhist cultural interaction between Sri Lanka and Orissa goes back to the fourth century CE. The authors of *Mahāvamsa*

and *Datuvamsa* clearly mentioned that a tooth relic of Buddha was brought by Guhasiva, king of Kalinga and was known to have been enshrined at Dantapura, the capital of the country (*Mahāvamsa*, XXXVIII, 92; *Datuvamsa*, 20). It was the object of veneration for many centuries by the Buddhists of Kalings, but the subjugation of the Buddhist dynasty by a ruler of a different family persuaded the vanquished monarch to send the sacred object, which he revered so much, to a place where it was bound to receive due honour. Consequently, the Kalinga king enjoined his daughter and son in-law, Hemamala and Dantha to find refuge for themselves, as well as for the tooth relic, in Sri Lanka during the reign of king Sirimeghavanna (301-328 CE). It was conveyed to the Abhayagiri Vihāra for the public display (*Mahāvamsa*, XXXVIII, 92; *Datuvamsa*, 20). From the above discussions we can form an idea of the close cultural relationship between these two regions in the Post Christian Era.

When Hiuen-tsang visited Wu-t'u, (Orissa) he found Buddhism in a flourishing condition with more than hundred monasteries humming with the activities of myriad monks who were all Mahayanists (Watters, 1905: 193). Among the many establishments throughout the region, he made a special mention of the hill monasteries of Pushpagiri, doubtfully identified with one or the other of the two contiguous hills of Lalitagiri and Udayagiri near Ratnagiri. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the account of Hiuen-tsang provides more evidence that most of those monasteries were intimately associated with the Mahāyāna doctrine when he visited the area. A large number of sculptures and archaeological evidence bears witness to the Buddhist creed, indicating Mahāyāna affinities to these monasteries. Later, these monasteries also made a great contribution to the evolution of Buddhist sculpture, particularly to the development of Tantric Buddhism. Ratnagiri Mahāvihāra was one of the most important temples of the Tāntric doctrine.

Cultural contacts of Orissa with Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia had been prevailing from ancient

time. There is no doubt, that the monastic centres of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, stimulated the new doctrinal development in Sri Lankan Buddhism. But the Sri Lankan chronicles were silent about these influences because the Mahāyāna and Tāntric systems were considered 'heretic'. Hence, they would reject some important details of the Buddhist cultural interactions between these two regions.

### South Indian Contacts

It is well known, that Buddhism was flourishing both in Sri Lanka and South India from a fairly early period, but while the Sri Lankan sources provides a clear and most reliable picture of the condition of faith in the Island, we are not so fortunate with the early history of Buddhist contact with South India. According to the inscriptions of Aśoka one can trace the introduction of Buddhism to South India to the third century BCE. (Hikosaka: 989: 4-10). Since then, close cultural affinities between Sri Lanka and South India became more intense.

However, the Sri Lankan chronicles were silent about the South Indian Buddhist interaction up to the second century BCE. It is said in the *Mahāvamsa*, that an inauguration ceremony was held in connections with the construction of the *Mahāstupa* in Anuradapura in the reign of king Duttagamini. Among the Buddhist emissaries who came from several region of India and outside, the identity of Pallavabogga might have been a region of the Pallavas and as such, a place in South India (Pillary: 1975: 51-2).

However, from this time onwards, we can find evidence for close relations between Buddhists of South India and Sri Lanka. As mentioned in the *Sihala-Vatthu Pakarana* and *Sahassa-Vatthu-Pakarana*, the port of Kāveripattanam is always mentioned as a port of landing used by the Sri Lankan monks on their way to pilgrim centres in India. An inscription found at Nagarjunakonda, in the Krishna valley dated to third century CE, indicates the presence of a Sri Lankan Buddhist community in Andhra region. It is noteworthy, that Sri Lankan monks studied South Indian

commentaries such as *Andhakathakata* when they were in South India. On the other hand, the famous commentator Buddhaghosa, his contemporary-Buddhadatta and other commentator Dammapala had extended their religious activities from South India to Sri Lanka the fifth and Sixth centuries CE. It has been suggested that Sri Lankan and Buddhist communities in South India, i.e. Āndra, Kanchi, Kāveripattanam, Nāgapattanam had close contacts from earliest times up to sixth century CE. By the sixth century CE, Sri Lankan and South Indian interactions were confined to Pallava region because of their political relations. Apart from inadequate studies, no attempt has so far been made by scholars to study the Pallava and Sri Lankan Buddhist cultural interaction after the sixth century CE. Nevertheless, many research studies have been done on Pallava influence on the development of Sri Lankan scripts, art and architecture. But no one has highlighted the Buddhist ideological influence on Sri Lankan society taking into account these factors.

By consulting inscriptional and literary evidence R.A.L.H. Gunawardana has done important research on Buddhism in this area and highlighted how Theravāda Buddhism and the Pāli language were flourishing up to the sixth century CE. (Gunawardana: 2005: 55-89). Since the beginning of the sixth century CE, the fortune of this religion acquitted a new dimension. There are considerable evidence indicating that the propagation of Mahāyāna Buddhism in this area with the help of scholars such as Dignāga, Dhammapāla, Bodhidharma, Dharmakirti and Vajrabodhi who were the most famous to embrace Mahāyāna Buddhism in this area.

Among them Vajrabodhi was a remarkable South Indian monk who lived in the seventh century CE, and maintained close cultural relations with Sri Lanka. Before his visiting Sri Lanka, he stayed for a considerable time at the Pallava country, when Kānchi was facing a terrible disaster due to famine. The King Narasinhavarman II implored Vajrabodhi to pray for the alleviation famine (Minakshi: 1993: 136). He was a guest

of honor of Abhayagiri Vihāra when he stayed for six months in Sri Lanka during which he supposedly preached Mahāyāna doctrine to the ruler of Rohana – the southern region of the island (Sastri: 1939: 17-8). Then during the reign of Sri Silamedha or Sri-Sila (Chi-li-chi-lo), he paid a second visit to Sri Lanka (Sastri: 1939: 17-8). It is important to note that different accounts spoke of a disciple of Vajrabodhi, named Amoghavajra who arrived to China with his teacher, and was a native of Sri Lanka but some believe that he would have been a Brāhmin of Northern India (Joshi: 2002: 169). After the death of his teacher, in 741 CE, Amoghavajra returned to India via Java and Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka he was honoured by king Silamegha in 742 CE, and had again undergone training and education under Acharya Samantabhadra in Sri Lanka (Joshi: 2002: 169).

Among the Chinese pilgrims, Huien-tsang was quite important for recording the contacts of South Indian and Sri Lankan Buddhists in his *Si-Yu-Ki*. He described the popularity of Buddhism in Kanchi in mid-seventh century CE (Sastri: 1939: 17-8). It is evident that Kanchipuram rose in importance politically and culturally, during the Pallava period maintaining close contacts with Sri Lanka.

One of the other important centres of Buddhism was Nāgapattanam as a centre of commerce on the East Coast which attracted merchants, scholars and pilgrims from many regions. A Buddhist temple is said to have been erected here for the benefit of Chinese Buddhists at the instance of a Chinese king during the rule of Pallava King Narasinhavarman II (695-722) (Ramachandran: 1954: 14). As mentioned earlier, Culamanivarman Vihāra was constructed in Nagapattinam at the beginning of the eleventh century by the Sailendra King Culamanvarman and successor, son Sri Maravijayayottungavarman, when the Chola dynasty was ruling (*Epigraphia Indica*, XXII., 257). It was developed into a multi-faceted establishment under the patronage of the Chola kings and merchant communities under the imperial Cholas (Pathmanathan: 2006:

11). Statues numbering some three hundred and fifty, ranging from the early Chola to the Vijayanagara tradition represented Buddha, Lokanatha, Shadakari Lokesvara, Maiteya, Tara Jambala, Vasuddhara and votive stupas of diverse shapes and quality were found at Nāgapattanam revealing its importance for a long period (Mitra: 1971: 194-197). Buddhist activities between Nāgapattanam and Sri Lanka continued until about the fourteenth century CE. (Paranavitana: 1994: 17-25).

Kāveripattanam port is another important centre of Buddhism in the Corromandal Coast, which had close contact with the Sri Lankan Buddhist community. Sri Lankan literary sources, such as *Sahassa-Vatthu Pakharana* and *Sihala-Vatthu Pakharana* refer to details of friendly relations between Sri Lanka and Kāveripattanam Buddhist communities from earliest times. During the reign of Ghotabhaya (249-262 CE), *Mahāvamsa* records, the close contacts of Mahayanist Buddhist communities among these two regions. King Ghotabhaya expelled sixty monks of the Vaitulya sect from the Abhayagiri monastery and banished them from the country (*Mahāvamsa*, 36: 11-13). These monks went over to Kaveri. An Indian monk called Sanghamitta, having heard of the expulsion of the Vaitulya monks, crossed over to Sri Lanka to explain and popularize the Vaitulya doctrine. Buddhist writer Buddhadatta of the sixth century CE, and a contemporary of the great Pāli commentator Buddhagosa, are said have been in residence in a monastery at Kāveripattanam, where they authored some of their work (Malalasekara: 1994: 94).

The flourishing condition of the monasteries of Kāveripattanam and Kānchipuram could be seen in the Tamil works – the *Manimekalai* and the *Cilappadikaram*. Out of the two, *Manimekalai* would have been written between sixth to ninth centuries, and is important for evidence in the cultural interaction between India and Sri Lanka. S. Pathmanathan has drawn our attention to the details of the close connection

existed between the Buddhist communities of both regions as was highlighted by *Manimekalai* (Pathmanathan: 2006: 9-11), It refers to Sri Lanka as Ilanka Pivakam as well to two part of the Island namely: Nakanatu and Irattina Tivakam meaning Northern-most and central and Southern part of the island respectively.

Though, there was little evidence for the proof of Buddhist cultural interaction during Chola period (in South India and Northern part of the island), between these two regions, important facts on the same, emerge after the victory over the Chola. The fragmentary inscription from Polonnaruwa, belonging to Sundaramahadevi, a consort of Vikramabahu I (1111-1133 CE), is important in this regard (*Epigraphia Zeylanica*, 1944: 71-72.). It compares a monk named Ananda to a banner raised aloft in the land of Lanka. Ananda probably resided at Polonnaruwa where he was honoured and rewarded with some benefactions by the royalty. Attention has to be focused onto the last two lines of the inscription that records his influence on the monk communities in the Tambarattha and Chola land. That apart, a Pāli grammatical work *Rupasiddhi Sannaya* written by South Indian monk Buddhapiya, gives important information of his teacher named Ananda (*Maharupassiddhi Sannaya*: 444). In the colophon of his work, he states that ‘this perfect *Rupasiddhi*, was composed by a monk who received the title of Buddhapiya and was named Dipankara-a disciple of Ananda, the eminent preceptor who was like unto a standard in Tambapanni – he (Dipandara) was like a lamp in the Damila country and being the resident – superior of two monasteries including Baladica, caused the religion to shine forth (Pathmanathan, 2006: foot note no. 70). So it is clear Buddhapiya was the custodian of two monasteries including Baladica. That apart, the commentary of the *Rupasiddhi* mentioned that the Cudamanikarama, was the other monastery which came under his control. This may be identified with the Culamanivarma monastery build at Nagapattanam by the king of Sri Vijaya

(Chakravarti: 1933: 242). However, attention has to be focused on Paranavitana’s identification of the teacher of Buddhapiya as the Ananda of the Sundaramahadevi’s inscription and was accepted by R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, too (Paranavitana, 1944: 17-25).

## Conclusion

Thus, the interactions between the Buddhist communities of the two countries were significant during the period under review. Sri Lankans were able to keep close contact with the developments in Indian Buddhist thought through regular contact with Buddhist monastic centres throughout India without regional bias (South India or North India). Political enmity also does not seem to have affected the cultural relations. By considering ancient chronicles most of the scholars attempted to suggest Sri Lanka - India Buddhist cultural contact was created mainly based on the Theravāda tradition. But because of the close and regular contact various developments of Indian Buddhist thought affected Sri Lankan Buddhist very soon as evidenced by the epigraphic and literary records. Hence, the new doctrinal and cultural developments of Buddhism from the sixth century onwards and its expansion throughout the region created a new Buddhist world.

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