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NEW EVIDENCE ON CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SRI LANKA AND THE DVĀRAVATĪ KINGDOM IN THAILAND*

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The history of Dvāravatī still remains skeletal even with the volume of research undertaken in the last hundred years, due mainly to the paucity of information. Even the name Dvāravatī was adopted on the basis of three sources. (1) The reference made by Hsuan Tsān in the seventh century about a kingodm called To-lo-po-ti[1], in the region between Burma and Cambodia. (2) The term *Sri Dvāravatī/śvara puṇya*[2] found on four silver coins. (3) The use of the term Dvāravatī, as part of the official titles of later capitals, Ayodhya and Bangkok.[3] Other than these, no reference to Dvāravatī is found in any chronicle or epigraph.

The actual geographical extent of Dvāravati is not known with certainty, again due to lack of information. Except for Husan Tsān's statement no other information epigraphic or literary has been found so far. Archaeological explorations have brought to light a number of ancient sites with distinctive Dvāravati finds. Most of these sites lay on the traditional trade routes on land, starting from the sea ports of Martaban and Thaton in Lower Burma, entering through the Three Pagoda Pass to the south western region of the lower Mae Nam basin and leading in the easternly direction towards the central plains of Angkor. On this route are found Pon Tuk, U-thong, Nakhom Paṭhom, Lopburi Korat and Prāchinburi. On the basis of the distribution of these sites, George Coedes, in 1928, located Dvaravati in the south-west region of Siam.[4] H. G. Quaritch Wales in 1966 observed, that "the culture of Dvāravati, if not certainly the dominion of that kingdom, at one time extended over an area that may have corresponded very nearly to that of the medieval kingdom of Siam, less the Lao and Malay states."[5]

Mainly on circumstantial evidence the people of Dvāravati have been identified as Mons who practised Theravada Buddhism.[6] The general countenance of the Dvāravati man may be recognized from human figures in sculptural works. The distinctive features are rough curly hair, projected and connected eye brows, flat nose and thick lips.[7]

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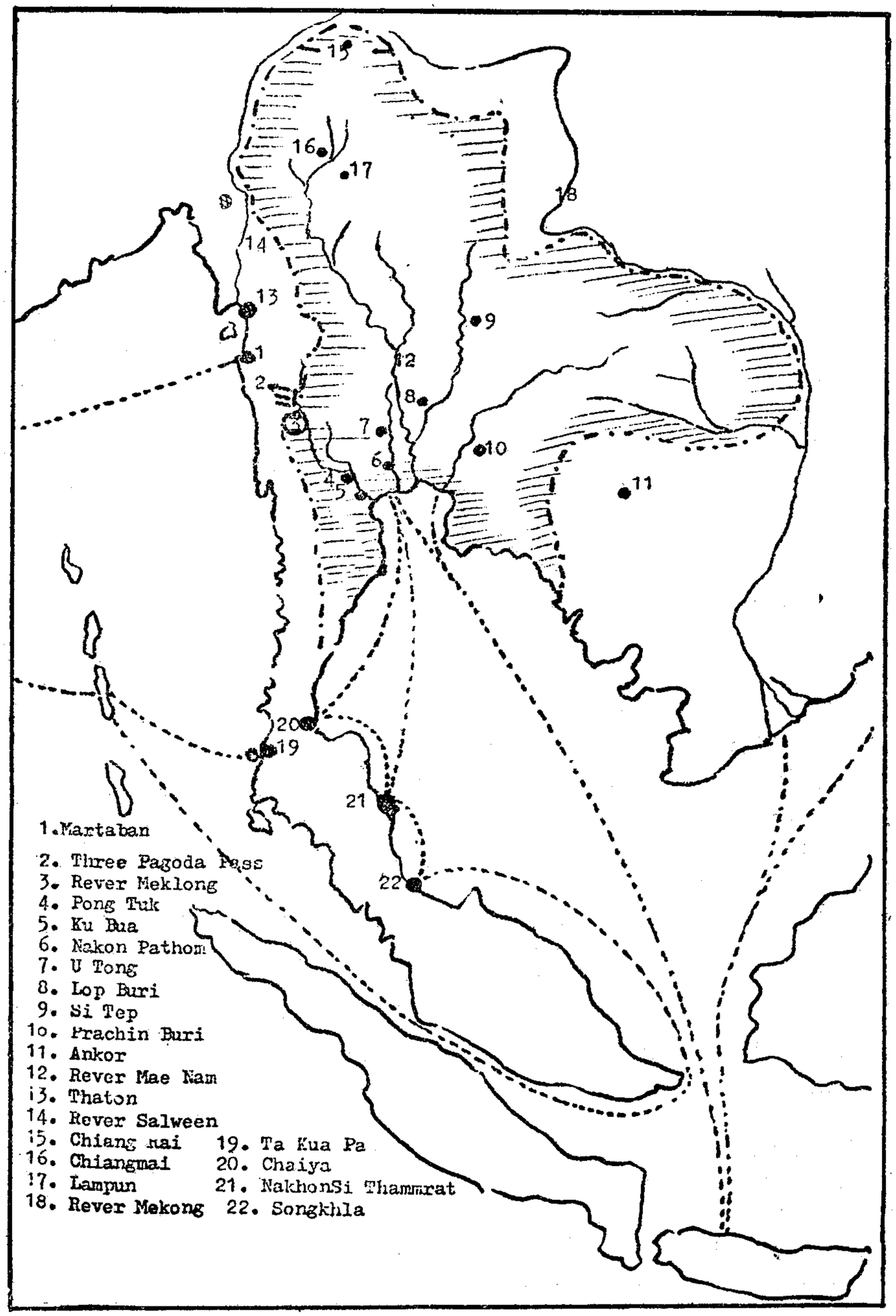
Ancient trade routes and Dvaravati sites.



"The most striking circumstance about Dvāravati", as Wales observes,[8] "is that neither from inscriptions nor from other sources have we any information about the political history of Dvāravati". The dating of Dvāravati is also a problem. It is generally believed that it was founded in the sixth century A.D. after the break up of the earlier kingdom, Funan.[9] A fair number of inscriptions have enabled historians to conclude that "Dvāravati exercised it's sovereignty from about 7th to 11th century until it was overrun by the Khmer empire".[10]

The corresponding period of Sri Lankan history marks the zenith of what may be called Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhism and the culture it inspired. Literature, painting, sculpture and architecture flourished undisturbed throughout the period. Some of the masterpieces in these fields were produced during this time. The three major centres of the Sangha, the Buddhist order, Mahāvihāra, Abhayagiri and Jetavana flourished side by side, competing with each other in the fields of arts and letters. They were in their full glory by the beginning of the eleventh century when the Anuradhapura kingdom fell into the hands of the invading Coḷa army. While the Mahāvihāra enjoyed the privilege of being the orthodox Theravada centre, Abhayagiri on the other hand, owing to its readiness to absorb fresh views from out side and to entertain the secular aspirations of its adherents, had developed a new school of thought, resulting in a combination of Theravada and Mahayana doctrines. This new "Dharma of the Sthavira school of the Mahayana sect",[11] as Hsuan Tsān heard of it, gave rise to innovative trends both in interpreting the Dhamma and Vinaya and influencing literature, art, sculpture and architecture in the later Anuradhapura period.

By this time the Abhayagiri had become famous as a centre for Buddhist travellers who took the traditional sea route connecting India with the lands in south-east and east Asia up to China. Great Mahayana teachers on their way to the eastern lands, stayed at Abhayagiri for some time before they reached their destinations. Similarly Chinese pilgrims together with fellow travellers from other countries, such as Sri Vijaya, on the sea route and Campa, Cambodia, Dvāravati and Burma on the land route, stopped at Abhayagiri before they left for India.

Besides, scholarly monks, mostly from Abhayagiri seem to have travelled to lands in south-east Asia, during this time for the propagation of Sri Lankan Buddhism, These travellers both Sri Lankan and south east Asian, carrying Sri Lankan religious and cultural souvenirs, had easy access to Dvāravati both by land and sea.[12] Under these circumstances it is natural that Sri Lankan Buddhism and culture reached Dvāravati and left their traces on Dvāravatī culture.

Sinhala and Amarāvati art styles reflected in the Dvāravati Buddha image have become live topics of discussion among art historians from the beginning of this century. Pioneer scholars on this subject such as George Coedes and Pierre Dupont have brought to light certain characteristics in the Dvāravati Buddha image, which they recognized as Sinhala and Amaravati features.[13]

The ideas of previous writers have been discussed by W.M. Sirisena. Several bronze statuettes of the standing Buddha found at Dvāravati sites are often cited as having distinctive features of Sri Lankan style. One such example is the famous Korat Buddha. Discussing the features pronounced in the treatment of drapery which are common to both the Korat Buddha and the Anuradhapura Buddha, and comparing them with that of the Amarāvati Buddha, Sirisena concludes that the Korat Buddha is similar to the Anuradhapura Buddha.[14] He strongly supports the theory of A. B. Griswold that this group of Dvarāvati Buddha images might have been imported direct from Sri Lanka.[15]

This group contains bronze standing Buddhas found at Korat, Narādhivāsa, Bedjrapuri, Nakhom Pathom and Dong Zuong.[16] These Buddha statues are almost identical with the bronze statuettes found at Medavachchiya, Veragala and Kurunegala in Sri Lanka,[17] in so far as the treatment of drapery is concerned. But a careful observer will detect some features in them that are not usually seen in the Sri Lankan Buddha image. The striking difference is in the position of the fore-arms. The fore-arms of the Dvāravati Buddha are stretched forward horizontaly with the right hand in *Vitarka mudra* and the left palm turned out in *Kataka mudra*, holding the folded hem of the robe.[18] No standing Buddha with a similar position of the fore-arms has been found so far in Sri Lanka, except for the seated bronze Buddha from Badulla, the provenance of which is not certain. The Buddha seated under the Näga hoods found in Prāchinburi, is also cited frequently as having Sri Lankan influence. The *paryankāsana*, drapery and the *dhyāna mudra* in this image are some of the distinctive features which are sited for purpose of comparision with the Anuradhapura seated Buddha.[19] But the *paryankasana* in the Dvaravati Buddha is not the same as in the Anuradhapua Buddha. The Anuradhapura Buddha has legs that are strictly superimposed one over the other and the soles are placed to the rhythm of the crossed legs. But the legs of the Dvāravati *paryankāsana* are crossed only at the ankles and the soles are stretched outwards[20] as in the free *paryankāsana* in the seated Buddha found in scenes of Amaravati bas-relief. Thus it will be clear that the Dvāravati Buddha is a synthesis of features inherent in different styles, the Sinhala style is one among them.

This, perhaps is the peculiar feature of the Dvāravati Buddha, that was observed by Dupont first and advanced later by Wales and others. Dupont termed this phenomena as "a fusion of Sinhala, Amaravati and post Gupta styles." However Dupont's theory that this fusion took place in Sri Lanka before the style was introduced to Dvāravati,[21] appears to be debatable. If the fusion or the synthesis took place in Sri Lanka how can we account for the presence of some

features quoted above, which are not common in Sri Lanka? On the other hand why examples associated with such features are not found anywhere in Sri Lanka ?

Then, it has to be concluded that the so called fusion took place not in Sri Lanka but in Dvāravati itself. Such a view may weaken Griswold's theory of import, unless we assume that Sri Lankan sculptors manufactured bronze images for export, on demand from south-east Asian countries, with additions and omissions as the recipients had wished. Such an assumption however, is not baseless, for recent excavations in the Abhayagiri vihara complex conducted under the UNESCO Cultural Triangle Project, have brought to light some finds which suggest the existence of a factory manufacturing bronze images on a mass scale.

The foregoing argument, however, does not negate the view that the Sri Lankan influence is prominent in some of the Dvāravati Buddhas and that it is an indication of the existence of close relations between the two lands. It only suggests that the evidence usually cited in this regard is neither strong nor direct. In this background, perhaps, the *Neon Sā Buā inscription* of Prāchinburi, Thailand, may provide direct evidence on religious and cultural contacts between Sri Lanka and Dvāravati.

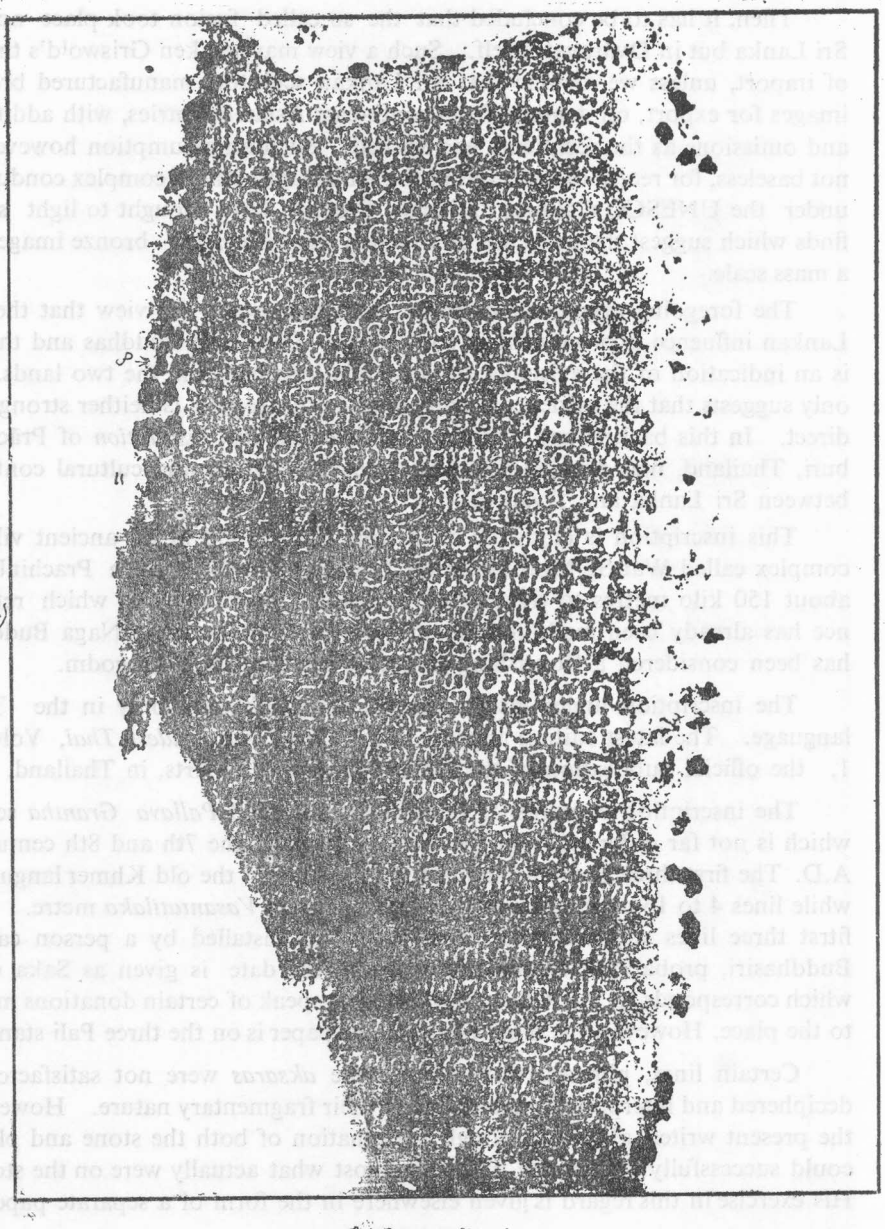
This inscription is engraved on a stone slab found at an ancient vihara complex called Wat Sa Morokot in the Don Si Maha Bo area in Prachinburi, about 150 kilo metres to the east of Bangkok. Prachinburi to which reference has already been made in connection with the Mucalinda Naga Buddha, has been considered a flourishing centre of the Dvaravati kingodm.

The inscription under discussion has been published only in the Thai language. The latest edition appears in the *Caruk Nai Pradesh Thai*, Volume 1, the official publication of the Department of Fine Arts, in Thailand.

The inscription contains 27 lines in the so-called *Pallava Grantha* script which is not far different from the Sinhala script of the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. The first three lines and the last ten lines are in the old Khmer language, while lines 4 to 16 contain three Pali stanzas in the *Vasantatilaka* metre. The fitrst three lines show that the inscription was installed by a person called Buddhasiri, probably a Buddhist monk and the date is given as Saka 683, which corresponds to 761 A.D. The last lines speak of certain donations made to the place. However, the main focus in this paper is on the three Pali stanzas.

Certain lines, phrases, words and some *aksaras* were not satisfactorily deciphered and interpreted, mainly due to their fragmentary nature. However, the present writer, after a thorough examination of both the stone and plate, could successfully restore the lines, to almost what actually were on the stone. His exercise in this regard is given elsewhere in the form of a separate paper.[22]

The plate together with an eye copy made by the present writer, transcription of the reading and the final text adopted in the official publication,[23] and the reading and text restored by the author together with the English translation are given below for easy comparison.



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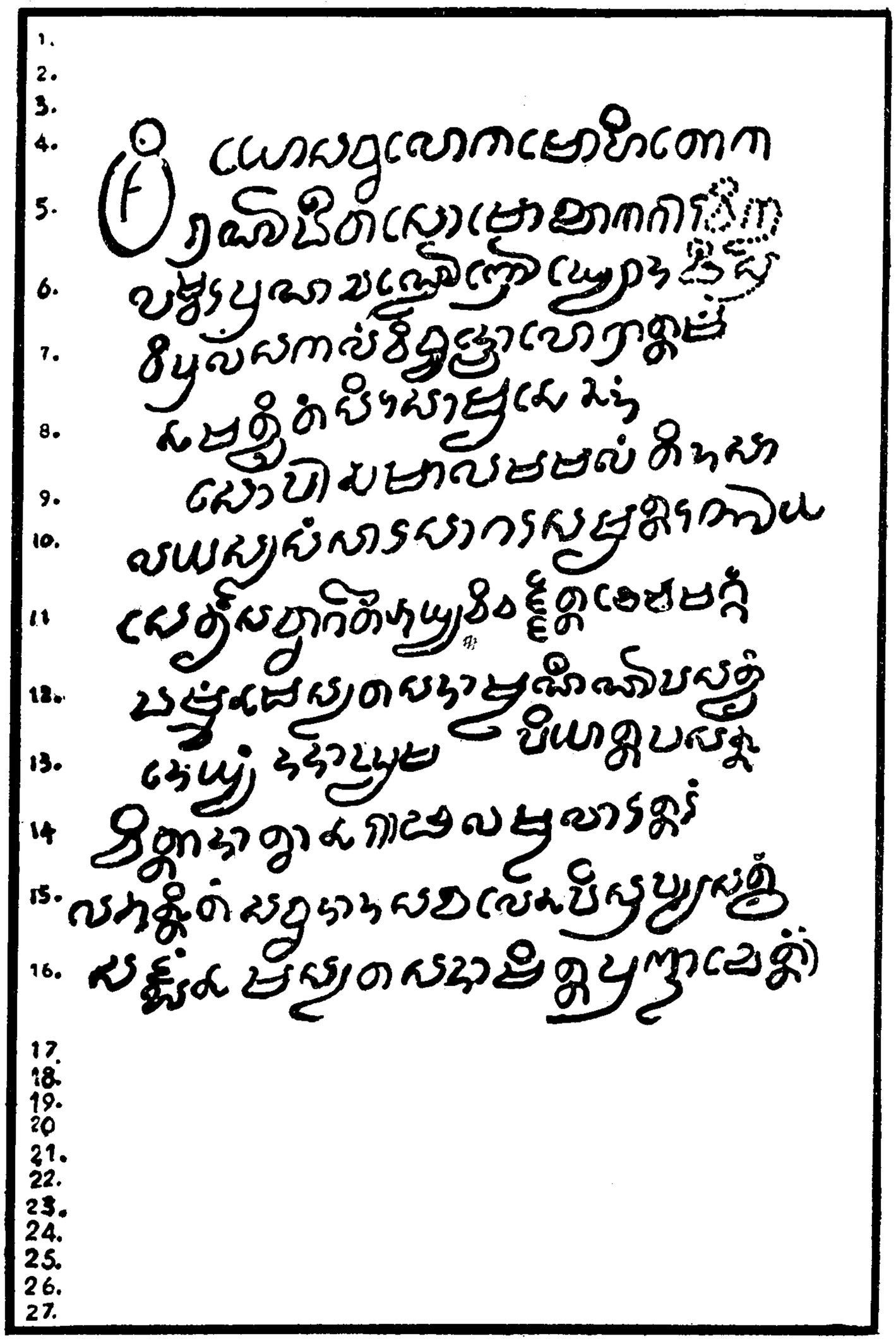

The transcription of the reading adopted in the official publication; only the lines containing three Pali stanzas:

4. Sri yo sabbalokamohito ka-
5. ruṇādhivāso mokh*an*karo (*nirama*)
6. *laṃvar*a puṇacando ñoyyo da (*mona*)
7. vi*ku*laṃ sakalaṃ vibuddho lokut*taro*
8. namatthi taṃ sirasā munendaṃ.
9. sopānamālamamalaṃ *tiranā*
10. layassa saṃsāra sāgara samuttaranāya
11. setuṃ *sambāratirayyapicajiatta*khemama (ggaṃ)
12. Dhammaṃ namassata sadā muninā pasatthaṃ
13. deyyam dadapyamapi yātta passanna
14. cittā dātvā narā phalamu*lam ratta* (*nam*)
15. *saranti* taṃ sabbadā dasabalenapi suppasatthaṃ.
16. sanghaṃ namassata sadā mittapuññakhettaṃ.

The reading improved by the author; aksaras imporved are underlined in both versions, and the reasons for such improvements are given elsewhere, see note 22.

4. Sri yo sabbalokamohitō ka
5. ruṇādhivāso *mokhā*karo (*ravi*ku)
6. laṃbara puṇa canḍo ñoyyo da (*dhiṃsu*)
7. vi(*pu*)laṃ sakalaṃ vibuddho lokutta*maṃ*
8. namatthi taṃ sirasā munendaṃ
9. sopānamälamamalaṃ ti (*dasā*).
10. layassa saṃsāra sāgara samuttaranāya
11. setuṃ sa*bbāga*tī *bha*yya*vivaj*jitta khema maggaṃ
12. Dhammaṃ namassata sadā muninā pasatthaṃ
13. deyyaṃ dadappyamapi yātta pasanna
14. cittā dātvā narā phlamulārattaram,
15. *labhanti* taṃ sabbadā dasabalenapi suppasatthaṃ
16. sanghaṃ namassata sadāmitta puňna khettaṃ

The final text given in the official publication

Sri Yo sabbalokamahito karuṇādhivāso,
mokkhaṃ *karosi amalaṃ* vara puṇṇa cando,
ñeyyo *damo navikulaṃ* sakalaṃ vibuddho,
lokut*taro* namatha taṃ sirasā munendaṃ

sopānamālamamalaṃ *tiranā*layassa,
saṃsāra sāgara samuttaranāya setum
sam*bodha tīra mapi cuttara* khema maggaṃ
dhammaṃ namassatha sadā muninā pasatthaṃ

deyyam dadantyamapi yattha pasanna cittā,
datvā narā phalamu*laṃ ratanam s*aranti,
taṃ sabbadā dasabalenapi suppasatthaṃ
Sanghaṃ namassatha sadā mitapuññakhettaṃ

Final text adopted by the author:

Sri Yo sabbalokamahito karuṇādhivāso,
mok*khākaro ravikulam*bara puṇṇa cando,
ñeyyo*dadhiṃ* suvipulaṃ sakalaṃ vibuddho,
lokutta*maṃ* namatha taṃ sirasā munidaṃ

sopāna mālamamalaṃ ti*dasāl*ayassa,
saṃsāra sāgara samuttaranāya setuṃ,
sa*bbāgatī bhaya vivajjita* khema maggaṃ
dhammaṃ namassatha sadā muninā pasatthaṃ

deyyaṃ *tadappamapi* yattha pasanna cittā,
datvā narā pha*lamuḷarataraṃ labhan*te,
taṃ sabbadā dasabalenapi suppasatthaṃ
sanghaṃ namassatha sadāmita puñña khettaṃ

places restored by the author are underlined in both versions.

The translation rendered by the author[24]

Pay homage, with (bowing) head, to that great sage, the highest of the world (the sage), who is an abode of kindness, a mine of emancipation, the full moon in the sky of the solar clan, and who has understood the entire vast ocean of knowledge

Pay homage always, to the Doctrine, praised by the sage, (the Doctrine) which is the stainless flight of steps to the abode of *tidasa* heaven; the bridge to cross the ocean of *samsara;* and which is the path of safety to avoid fear of all evil.

Pay homage always to the community, which is an unmeasurable field for merit, (the community) which is, having offered even a little that should be offered with delighted mind, human beings obtain very great benefit; and which has been well praised by the ten-powered one.

After restoration of the three stanzas, one fine evening when the writer was reciting them in the sweet *Vasantatilakā* metre, it suddenly dawned on him, that he had read them in the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*. His memory was correct, they form part of the opening verses of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* in which it runs as follows:[25]

1. Lankissaro jayatu vāraṇa rāja gāmi,
   Bhoginda bhoga rucirāyata pīna bāhu,
   Sādhūpacāra nirato guṇasannivāso,
   Dhamme ṭhito vigata kodhamadāvalepo,

2. Yo sabba loka mahito karuṇādhivāso,
   Mokkhākaro ravikulambara puṇṇacando,
   Ñeyyodadhiṃ suvipulaṃ sakalaṃ vibuddho,
   Lokuttamaṃ namatha taṃ sirasā munindam

3. Sopānamālamamalam tidasālayassa,
   Samsāra sāgara samuttaraṇāya setuṃ,
   Sabbāgatī bhaya vivajjita khema maggaṃ,
   Dhammaṃ namassatha sadā muninā paṇitaṃ

4. Deyyaṃ tad appaṃapi yattha pasanna cittā,
   Datvā narā phalam uḷārataraṃ labhante,
   Taṃ sabbadā dasabalen api suppasatthaṃ,
   Sanghaṃ namassatha sadāmitapuññakhettaṃ

5. Tejobalena mahatā ratanattayassa.
   Lokattayaṃ samadhigacchati yena mokkhaṃ,
   Rakkā na catthi ca samā ratanattayassa
   Tasmā sadā bhajatha taṃ ratanattayaṃ bho.

In comparison it will be clear that stanzas 2, 3 and 4 of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* are identical word for word with the three stanzas in the *Noen Sā Buā Inscription* at Prachinburi. Before we proceed to question as to how the same stanzas appear in two different documents in two lands so far removed, it is necessary to introduce the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*, and to clear some points about the authenticity of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*.

The *Telakaṭāhagāthā*, the stanzas of the oil cauldron is a Pali poem of 100 stanzas, (most of the editions contain ony 98) in the *Vasantatilaka* metre. These stanzas are believed to have been recited by a Thera called Kalyāṇa in the reign of Kelaṇitissa, (250—200 B.C.) who was an independent ruler at Kelaṇiya. The historical tradition connected with the stanzas is given in brief in the *Mahavaṃsa*. It says, that Kalyāna Thera was suspected of having a love affair with the queen consort and was ordered to be killed and his body

thrown into the sea.[26] The *Rasavāhini* composed in the early part of 13th, century, gives more details about the Thera's death. It informs us that the Thera was hurled into a cauldron of boiling oil. The Thera at that instant attained *Vipassana*. Standing up in the boiling oil, like a royal *haṃsa* in an emerald vase, he recited 100 stanzas.[27]

According to the *Seḷaḷihiṇisandesa* "a decorated hall which the merit seeking people built over the spot, where stood the cauldron of hot oil, into which the Thera was thrown,"[28] was still in existence in the Kelaniya temple when the poem was composed in 1451 A.D.

One may note that in the account of the *Mahavaṃsa*, nothing is mentioned about the oil cauldron or the stanzas. This leads us to a number of questions. Has this episode anything to do with the poem in the first place? In other words, was the episode, an actual event based on which, the stanzas originated? Did these details about the oil cauldron and the stanzas really constitute an integral part of the episode? If so, why was that part ignored by the author of the *Mahavamsa*?

In order to find answers to these questions one has to consider the purpose of the author in narrating this episode. If one examines the order of the narrative followed by the author in this part of the chronicle, it will be clear, that his main concern had been to trace the descent of Duṭṭhagāmiṇi, the hero of the chronicle. For this purpose the author had to narrate the sequence of events that led to the deportation of Vihāradevi, the mother of the hero from Kelaniya to Rohana to be wedded to Kāvantissa, the father of the hero. The sinful act of killing the innocent Arahanth, made the sea god flood the land: the King had to appease the sea god by sacrificing his own daughter, Vihāradevi; the vessel which carried Vihāradevi drifted over to Rohana; such was the sequence of events. In this context how the Thera was put to death and what he uttered before the death would have seemed to be irrelevant. The author therefore may have ignored that element of the episod as a dispensable detail. On the other hand, it is also possible that these details were not available to the author of the *Mahavamsa*. The *Rasavāhini* would have drawn them from another source. It is common knowledge that some components of a historical tradition, or an entire tradition, which was not available to the *Mahavamsa*, was at the disposal of later writers from other sources. The expedition to the Cola country led by Gajabāhu in the 2nd century A.D., is a clear example. The absence of details about the oil cauldron and 100 stanzas, in the *Mahavamsa*, therefore, does not negate the fact that the episode discussed above was the historical background of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*.

The present version of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* does not contain, any information about the author or the origin of the peom. This too poses the question whether the peom *Telakaṭāhagāthā* is really the hundred stanzas mentioned in the historical episode. It has to be noted however, that although nothing is directly

mentioned about the author or the background, a close examination of the internal evidence reveals that the poem has some bearing on the episode. The verses are given in the form of a religious exhortation of a person who seems to be well versed in Dhamma Vinaya. The person appears to be addressing his audience directly. He opens with a blessing upon the king of Lanka. "May the victory be, for the lord of Lanka who is always engaged in wholesome deeds, an abode of virtues, established in the Dhamma, and who has driven away anger and pride", says the hero of the poem. Having appealed to the audience to venerate the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, in the next four stanzas, (the first three of them appear in the Parchinburi inscription) again in stanzas 6 and 7 he eulogizes the king of Lanka and urges the audience to follow, King's righteous way of life, which is full of kindness and acts of welfare to others at the expense of sleep even in the night. "Persons engaged in the welfare of others like the lord of Lanka, are rare in the world, therefore, come nearer to the king and live according to the Dhamma", the hero of the poem appeals to the audience. This is really "an apt attitude of an innocent passionaless holy man towards his murderer who committed a sinful act in sheer ignorance of facts."[29] This attitude expressed in the first six stanzas may be regarded as indicative of the fact that the *Telakaṭahagāthā* is the hundred verses said to have been recited by the Thera in the episode discussed above.

According to the *Rasavāhini*, the Thera recited hundred *Dhammagāthā*.[30] The *Saddharmālankāraya*, which is the Sinhala version of the *Rasavāhini*, also says that the Thera recited one hundred stanzas called *Dhammagāthā*. This celarly indicates that these hundred stanzas were known to both the authors as *Dhammagāthā*, not as *Telakaṭahagāthā*. The name *Telakaṭahagāthā* therefore appears to be a title rendered by the later literati in order to preserve the memory of the historical event connected with the poem.

The *Saddharmālankāraya* relating the event says

"Ekala terun vahansē telkaṭāraychima väda hinda ;
Lankissaro jayatu vāraṇa rāja gāmi.
Bhoginda bhoga rucirāyata pīna bāhu.
Sādhūpacāranirato guṇasannivāso.
Dhamme ṭhito vigatakodhamadāvalepo, yanādīn Dharmagāthā naṃ vū gāthā siyayak vadārā".[31]

This may be translated as "at that time the Thera, standing in the oil cauldron itself, having recited hundred stanzas called *Dharmagāthā*, which begins with the stanza, "Lankissaro jayatu vārana, etc." This clearly indicates that the above stanza beginning with Lankissaro was the first of the hundred stanzas recited by Kalyana Thera and it is the same stanza that stands as the opening stanza of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*. We may therefore conclude that the present *Telakaṭāhagāthā* is the hundered stanzas said to have been recited by

Kalyāṇa Thera, in the historical episode. With regard to the date and the authorship of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* there are two possibilities. One is that Kalyāṇa Thera himself composed it in the 3rd century B.C. The other is that a poet of a later date composed it from pure imagination, as if they were recited by the Arahanth in the historical episode. If we approach the second possibility to find the date of the poem, we can work backwards. We noted earlier that the poem was in existence, although under a different name, in the late fourteenth century, for the author of the *Saddharmālankāraya* to quote the opening verse in his work. Again in the early thirteenth century, it is possible, that the poem was available to the author of the *Rasavahini*, for him to refer to its origin. Guruḷugomi, at a date closer to 1157 A.D. commenting on the five sinful acts, in his *Dharmapradipikā*[32], has quoted stanzas 78, 79, 80, 81 and 82 from *Telakaṭāhagāthā*.[33] this means that the poem was available at a date closer to 1157 A.D.

Next we find that the stanzas 2,3, and 4 appear in the *Noen Sā Buā* inscription in Prachinburi, Thailand. The version given in the inscription agrees word for word, except for one, the last word of the second stanza. Instead of "muninā paṇitam" in the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*, the inscription has "muninā pasatthaṃ". This, the present author has pointed out elsewhere, is an error in the inscription.[34] The appearance of these three stanzas in the Prāchinburi inscription may be explained in three ways.

The first is that they were Transcribed from the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*. The second is that the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* borrowed them from the inscription. The third possibility is that both brorrowed from a third source. Since a possible third source has not been found either in Sri Lanka or in Thailand, we have to reject the third possibility and turn to the second. Could it be that the *Telakatāhagāthā* borrowed it from the inscription? We saw earlier the pattern in which the author of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* had arranged the opening stanza. It is very unlikely that he borrowed only three stanzas from elsewhere and inserted them between the first and the fourth stanzas. The erudition explicit in the poem also negates the possibility of its author borrowing from elsewhere. We are therefore, left with the first, that the inscription quoted from the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*, and as such the latter is the original source.

We noted that the date of the Prachinburi inscription was 761 A.D. That means that the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* was available at Prachinburi by at least 761 A.D. The present writer could not find any evidence so far to push the date of the poem beyond 761 A.D. This may perhaps, invite us to consider the possibility of the origin of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* in the Dvāravati kingdom. We noted earlier that the poem was rooted firmly in the Sri Lankan literature. We also noted that the historical background of it was strictly confined to a Sri Lankan historical and geographical context. It is extremely difficult therefor to believe that such a poem would have originated in a country far removed from

it's historical background. In the circumstances we may conclude that the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* is essentially a poem that originated in Sri Lanka. In order to see whether its date goes beyond 761 A.D. we can turn to the first possibility proposed earlier, that Kalyana Thera composed it in the third century B.C. For this purpose it is necessary for a moment to look into the origin and development of religious literature in Sri Lanka.

It is well known that the *Tripitaka* and the original commentaries made on them, the *Heḷa Aṭuvā*, possibly in original Sinhala, were introduced to Sri Lankan monks by Arahanth Mahinda. Those pioneer Theras handed them over to successive generations by oral tradition until they were written down in the first century B.C. in the reign of king Vaṭṭagāmiṇi Abhaya.

The *Dhammagāthā* of Kalyana Thera may have been in Heḷa, the original Sinhala and the work continued in the oral tradition until it was written down in the first century B.C. Subsequently, the *Heḷa Aṭuvā* and the related literature like the *Mahavamsa-aṭṭhakathā* were refined, perhaps recast and translated into Pali in the fifth century A.D. The *Dhammagāthā* of Kalyana Thera would have undergone the same process as the *Heḷa Aṭuvā*. The *Dhammagāthā* which would have been in embryonic form in the earliest stage was later developed to the present form in the fifth century A.D. as in the case of the *Maha vamsa*. Thus the possible date for the present version of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* may be the fifth century A.D.

However, the actual date of the original *Telakaṭāhagāthā* is of less imortance here, as we are mainly concerned about the fact that the stanzas 2,3 and 4 of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* have made their appearance in Prachinburi by 761 A.D. This means that the knowledge of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* had reached Prachinburi. It does mean that the whole poem ; its historical background and the knowledge embodied in it, had reached Prachinburi by 761 A.D., if not earlier. "The verses in the poem embody in them the fundamental tenats of Buddhism and are an earnest exhortation to men to lead the good life."[35] It is certain that this knowledge inspired the life and culture of the Dvāravati people at least from 761 A.D. if not earlier. This evidence is therefore, undeniable in respect of the religious and cultural contacts that existed between Sri Lanka and the Dvāravati kingdom.

We proposed earlier to deal with the question of how Buddhasiri, the author of the inscription would have received this knowledge. He would have received it from a native of *Dvāravati* who visited Sri Lanka, if Buddhasiri himself was not that native. Otherwise he would have received it from a Sri Lankan; probably a monk, if Buddhasiri himself was not a Sri Lankan.

It is interesting to note that the Sinhala monks from the Abhayagiri were making their appearance on the Ratubaka plateau, in central Java Just across the gulf of Siam to the south, only 31 years after the Sri Lankan text was known at Prachinburi. The inscription dated 792/3 A.D. found on the Ratubaka plateau, brought to the notice of the scholarly woild by J. G. de Casparis, the distinguished authority on south-east Asian history, informs us about Sinhala monks and a monastery called Abhayagiri on the Ratubaka plateau.[36] Having translated the phrase "abhayagiri vihārah kāritah Sinhalānām" as "this Abhayagiri Vihara of the Sinhalesse ascetics, was established"[37] de Casparis remarks, that the mention of Sinhalese monks here gives no indication that they were in Java at the time.[38] But he does not exclude the possibility "that the Javanese monastery was built for Sinhalese monks and that the Sinhalese bhikkus went to Java in the latter half of the eighth century."[39] On the other hand, S. Paranavitana, translating the same phrase as "the Abhayagiri Vihara was established for the Sinhalese monks"—which appears to be more appropriate in the context,—argued that the Abhayagiri Vihara in Java was built for the benefit of the Sinhalese monks who had arrived in that Island.[40] As to who would have initiated the cultural contact between Sri Lanka and Java, de Casparis suggests "that the Indonesian pilgirms who would have travelled by way of Ceylon would have on their return requested the king to build a second Abhayagiri Vihara in Java"[41] Paranavitana, on the other hand, arguing in favour of the presence of Sinhala monks in Java, suggests indirectly, that not only would the initiative have been taken by the Sinhalese monks, but also that they would have been there to propagate Sinhala Buddhism.[42]

A pertinent question which may be raised in this context is whether the same people who introduced the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* in Prachinburi be it Buddhasiri or his associates, appeared on the Ratubaka plateau, thirty one years later, for the same purpose as in Prachinburi. Secondly did these two Buddhist centres situated in the same region,with easy access to each other on the traditional southern sea route. maintain cultural interactions during the *Dvāravati* period ?.

If further research and more evidence can answer these two questions we should be able to understand how and why some Javanese sculptural features are seen in Dvāravati art, and further we will be able to undersatnd more clearly how this so-called fusion of Indian, Sri Lankan and Javanese art styles, took place in *Dvāravati*, giving rise to what may be termed the Dvāravati style.

NOTES

1. The restoration of To-lo-po-ti as Dvāravatī has been suggested by some scholars as early as 1870, (Regionald le May, *A Concise History of Buddhist Art in Siam*, Japan, 1927, p. 24. Note 1.) ; George Coedes proposed Dvāravatī in 1929, *Recueil des inscriptions du Siam*, Bangkok, 1929, pt. 1, Note 1.

2. M. C. Subhadradis Diskul, *Art in Thailand: A brief history*, Bangkok, 1981, Fifth edition, p. 4.

3. *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 1.11, pt. 1., p. 100.

4. Coedes, *op.cit.*, p. 1, also see the map. Ancient trade routes and Dvāravati sites.

5. H. G. Quaritch Wales, Dvāravati in south-east Asian Cultural History, *JRAS(GB)*, 1966, p. 40. for more details, see the same author, Chapter I, The formation of Dvāravati, *Dvāravati, the earliest kingdom of Siam, London*, 1969.

6. Dorothy H. Fickle, The Kingdom of Dvāravati, *The Artistic Heritage of Thailand*, Bangkok, 1979, p. 58.

7. Check with the human figures in plates, 23, 24 in Subhadradis Diskul, *op.cit.*

8. Wales, *op.cit.* p. 40.

9. *ibid.*, p. 40.

10. *ibid.* p. 41.

11. Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Eastern World*, Vol. 11, p. 247.

12. For further information, see S. Paranavitana, *Ceylon and Malaysia*, Colombo, 1966, pp. 178—183; also R. A. L. H. Gunawardana, *Rohe and Plough.* Monasticism and Economic Interest in Early Medieval Sri Lanka, University of Arizona Press, 1979, pp. 277—281.

13. For Wales assessment on Dupont see, *op.cit* pp. 41—43.

14. W. M. Sirisena, *Sri Lanka and South-East Asia*, Leiden, 1978, pp. 151—153. Regarding two different views on the so-called Amaravati Buddha, read, Douglas Barrett, The later school of Amaravati and its influence, *Art and Letters*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, p. 41—53, and Siri Gunasinghe, A Sinhalese contribution to the development of the Buddha Image *Ceylon Journul of Historical and Social Studies, CJHSS*, Vol. III, 1, pp. 59—61.

15. A. B. Griswold, Imported images and the nature of copying in the art of Siam, *Essays offered to G.H. Luce*, Vol. II, pp. 41—58.

16. Figures 9, 5, 8, 12 and 6 respectively, produced in Griswold's Essay, *op.cit.* pp. 45—47.

17. Senarat Paranavitana, *Art of the Ancient Sinhalese*, Colombo, 1970, plates 89, 90; for Kurunegala Buddha, Kamburupitiye Vanaratana Thera, *Lakdiva Budu Pilimaya*, Matara, 1985, plate XXV.

18. See note 16.

19. Read Sirisena's discussion on previous writers. *op-cit.* pp. 152—153,

20. Subhadradis Diskul, *op.cit.* plates 7, 12.

21. P. Dupont, *L' archaeologie mone du Dvāravatī*, Paris, 1959, p.258.

22. M. Rohanadeera, The Noen Sā Buā inscription of Don Si Maha Bo Prachinburi, *Journal of the Siam Soctety* 1988, Vol. 76, pp. 65—89; The Telakaṭāhagāthā in a Thailand Inscription of 761 A.D., *Vidyodaya Journal of Social Sciences*, 1987, Vol. 1, pt. 1.

23. *Caruk Nāi Pradesh Thai*: Vol. 1, for plate, p. 180, reading, p. 182, final text, p. 185.

24. The author is grateful to Dr. L. P. N. Perera, Professor of Pali, Sri Jayawardhanapura, University, for helping him in rendering the English translation.

25. *The Telakaṭāhagāthā*, ed., Mudliyar Edmond R. Goonaratne, *JPTS*, 1884, pp. 49—68.

26. The *Mahāvamsa*, W. Geiger, Chapter 22, verses 13—22.

27. *Rasavāhinī*, ed., Saranatissa Thera, Vidyasagara Press, 1986, p. 57.

28. *Selalihinisandesaya*, verse 70.

29. G. P. Malalasekera, *The Pali Literature of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1958, p. 163.

30. *Rasavāhinī*, *op.cit.* p. 57.

31. *Saddharmālankāraya*, ed., M. Piyaratana Thera, Colombo, 1971, p. 510.

32. *Dharmapradīpikā*, ed., Ratmalāne Sri Dharmārāma Thero, 1915, pp. 105—113, for the date read Introduction, p. 11.

33. *JPTS*, *op.cit.* p. 65.

34. See note 22.

35. Malalasekera, *op.cit.* p. 163.

36. J. G. de Casparis, New Evidence on Cultural Relations between Java and Ceylon, *Artibus Asia*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 241—248.

37. *ibid.*, p. 245.

38. *ibid.*, p. 246.

39. *ibid.*, p. 247.

40. Senarat Paranavitana, *Ceylon and Malaysia*, Colombo 1966, p. 189.

41. de Casparis, *op.cit.* p. 248.

42. Paranavitana, *op.cit.* p. 187.