

## Lāhugala Slab Inscription

### Sirimal Ranawella

This inscription, engraved on a slab of stone measuring about 3 feet 4 inches by 1 1/2 feet was found at Lāhugala, situated about a mile to the south of the eighth mile post on the road from Pottuvil to Vāllavāya. The inscribed portion measures about 2 feet 8 inches by 1 foot 5 inches. There are 17 lines of writing with an average of 12 letters in a line; above the first line at the two corners there are symbols of the sun and the crescent moon. A few letters in the middle of lines 13 to 15 are obliterated due to weathering of the stone. The average height of the letters is about 1 1/2 inches.

The script as well as the language of the epigraph is Sinhala of the 12th and 13th centuries; the script has a general resemblance to that of the Saṅgamu Vihāra rock inscription of the two Kings Gajabāhu II and Parākramabāhu I (1153 — 1186), and the Diṁbulāgala rock inscription of Sundara Mahādevi, the Queen of Vikramabāhu I (1111 — 1132).

This record has been edited for the first time by Professor Abaya Aryasinghe in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*.<sup>1</sup> His reading of several lines of the text is questionable; his interpretation of the record based on that reading is therefore open to doubt.

The preamble of the record refers to a senior monk, His Lordship Lāmani Mugalan, who was attached to a religious establishment called Galaturu muḷa (Galatura fraternity) during the reign of a king styled *Soloṣā devayan vahanse* (His Majesty of sixteen years' reign). The relevant section of the text reads as "*Soloṣā rajayehi Galaturu-muḷa Lāmani Mugalan māhallan vahanse.*" Dr. Aryasinghe, having read this section as "*Soloṣā viyehi Galaturu-muḷa Lāmani Mugalan Māhalālān vahanse,*" has attempted to identify "*Galaturu-muḷa Lamāni Mugalan Mahā lālan vahanse*" as Mugalan Mahāsāmi, the father of Vijayabāhu I (1055 — 1110); for he says that "the dignitary Lāmani Mugalan Mahalālan is undoubtedly the same person featuring in the Panākaḍuva Copper Plate Charter of Vijayabāhu I. In that he is referred to as Mugalan Mahasāmiyan. It has been universally admitted that he was the father of Kitti, who later assumed the throne name Vijayabāhu."<sup>2</sup> This identification is not tenable for more than one reason. First, his reading of the word *māhallan* as *Mahalālan*, and interpreting it as "Chief Secretary" is incorrect.<sup>3</sup> The correct reading of that word is *māhallan*, which is quite clear and legible on the stone. Second, even if we are to accept *Mahalālan* as the correct reading of the word, there is no evidence to show that king Vijayabāhu's father Mugalan was ever a *mahalāna*, a Chief Secretary. The Āmbagamuwa

rock inscription of Vijayabāhu I has referred to his father as Abhāsalamēvan *maharajapā* (“His Majesty, the great king Abhāsalamēvan”).<sup>4</sup> The Panākaḍuva copper plate inscription, also of Vijayabāhu I, has introduced his father, as *apa piya Mahasāmiya Mugalan rajapā vahanse* (‘our father, His Majesty king Mugalan, the Great Lord’).<sup>5</sup> Here the word Mahasāmiya, used as a title of King Mugalan, is equivalent to that of *mapurumukā*, which was often used to refer to kings of the late Anurādhapura period. It is most unlikely that an inscription that was inscribed sometime after the demise of His Majesty king Mugalan would refer to him as *Mahalālan*, even if he had been a *mahale* before he became king.

Third, our inscription clearly shows that Lāmāni Mugalan was a senior monk attached to a fraternity of monks called Galaturu - muḷa (*Galaturu muḷa Lāmāni Mugalan māhallan vahanse*) which was one of the eight fraternities in existence during that period.

Our record also refers to a lady named Lāmkāpura Mahādevi, a niece of His Lordship Lāmāni Mugalan. It further says that this lady bore a daughter by the name of Siridevi, having cohabited with a king who was known as “*Soḷosā devayan vahanse*”. Professor Aryasinghe, relying on his identification of His Lordship Lāmāni Mugalan as the father of King Vijayabāhu I, proposes to identify Lāmkāpura mahādevi as a queen of that monarch, whom he had married when he was the yuvarāja, and Siridevi as a daughter born to her by that marriage; for he states “Lankāpura Mahādevi does not figure in records other than in our inscription. The use of the title *Mahādevi* here is justifiable since she became a consort of a *devayan vahanse*, a yuvarāja in this instance. Had she lived till Kitti became king as Vijayabāhu I, she would have had claim to the title *maheshi*.”<sup>6</sup> Identifications of Lāmkāpura Mahādevi and Siridevi as a queen and a daughter of Vijayabāhu I respectively are untenable for the reasons given above.

The record is not dated; however a study of its palaeography makes it possible to ascribe it to the early Polonnaruva period.

The object of the record was to register the donation of three *yālas* of land to a dignitary of a religious establishment whose name is unfortunately illegible on the stone, the name of the benefactor is not given in the record. Hence it is not possible to determine whether the donor of the three *yālas* of land was a king, an official, or some other person. According to our record, the recipient of this donation was a great- great- great - grandson of Siridevi, for it says “(he) who is of uninterrupted descent from the lineage of sons and

grandsons of Laṃkāpura Mahadevi's daughter named Siridevi, whom she had begotten unto His Majesty of sixteen years' (reign)." (*Laṃkāpura Mahādevin Soḷosā devayan vahanse kerehi hiṅḍā unvahanseta lada Siridevi nam diyaniyange daru-munuṃburu paramparāyen nō - pirihi ā*). According to this statement Sridevi's parents were a King styled *Soḷosā devaiyan vahanse* and a consort named Laṃkāpura Mahādevi. The real name of this *Soḷosā devayan vahanse* is not known. However this epithet suggests that he was a king who has ruled a kingdom for sixteen years, it can be rendered into English as "His Majesty of sixteen years' (reign)". The well-known Badulla pillar inscription of Udaya IV has in a similar manner referred to a former king who had ruled this country before the reign of Udaya IV by a similar epithet three times; once as a "*Satalosā vahanse*", and twice as "*Sataḷosā piriniviyan vahanse*".<sup>7</sup> Parānavitana who edited this inscription interprets both these epithets as "the Lord who expired in his seventeenth year",<sup>8</sup> and says "we may, with some reason, identify the ruler with Kassapa IV, as he was the only Sinhalese monarch before Udaya IV, the author of this edict, whose reign lasted for this particular number of years."<sup>9</sup> In the same way the epithet *Soḷosā devayan vahanse* can be interpreted as "His Majesty who died in his sixteenth (regnal) year." It is evident that this *Soḷosā devayan vahanse* had ruled this country sometime before the date of the present record, which, as has been mentioned before belongs to the early part of the Polonnaruva period; for the recipient of the grant mentioned therein, is said to have been a great - great - great - grandson descended "from the lineage of sons and grandsons of Siridevi, the daughter of His Majesty of sixteen years' (reign)." Therefore in order to identify this unnamed ruler we may have to look for a King with sixteen years' reign to his credit who ruled this country during the early part of the Polonnaruva period or the last four decades of the Anurādhapura period. A glance at the chronological list of kings of Polonnaruva indicates that there was not a single ruler with a reign of sixteen years belonging to that period. However in the chronological list of the kings of the later Anurādhapura period there is a king, Mahinda IV (956 - 972) who ruled for sixteen years, and we may identify him as the *Soḷosā devayan vahanse* mentioned in our inscription. In fact the author of the *Cūlavamsa*, who seems to have lived not long after the reign of Parākramabāhu I (1153 - 1186) and closer to the date of our record has referred to the last year of the reign of Mahinda IV in the following manner; "having thus performed these and other eminent, meritorious works in sundry ways the king entered in the sixteenth year into the heaven of gods" ("*evamādini puññāni ulārāni anekadhā katvā soḷasame vasse rājā so tidivam gato*")<sup>10</sup> and introduced Mahinda IV in a subsequent chapter dealing with the "descent of Kittī"

(Vijayābahu I) as “king Mahinda, who has held sway in Laṃkā for sixteen years”<sup>11</sup>, a phrase somewhat similar to the epithet *Soḷosa devayan vahanse*.

As has been stated earlier, the present record refers to a lady named Laṃkāpura Māhadevi who was a consort of *Soḷosā devayan vahanse*; we are told that she gave birth to a daughter named Siridevi having cohabited with that king. From the way the birth of Siridevi is mentioned here Laṃkāpura Mahādevi evidently was not the chief queen (“*agga mahesi*”) but a consort of that king. According to the Chronicle king Mahinda IV, whom we have identified as *Soḷosā devayan vahanse* had as his chief queen a Kālinga princess, whose name is not known.<sup>12</sup> The Chronicle refers also to another “gracious consort of the King, Kitti by name, his equal in fame.”<sup>13</sup> It is thus evident that Kitti was a consort of Mahinda IV. Hence we may presume that Laṃkāpura Mahādevi was a lady from the king’s harem, or another consort of the king

As to the historical importance of this record, it reveals the name of a junior queen or a concubine of Mahinda IV, and that of a religious dignitary who was attached to the Galaturu- muḷa Fraternity during the reign of that king; it has also referred in addition to the Buddhist fraternity named Galaturumuḷa to another Fraternity called Vilgammuḷa. This information will be useful for those who study political and religious history of the later Anurādhapura period.

### පෙළ

1. සොළොසැ රජයෙහි ගලතු
2. රුමුළු ලැමැති මුගලන් මාහල්
3. ලන් වහන්සෙගෙ යෙහෙලි වූ
4. ලංකාපුර මහාදෙවීන් සොළො
5. සැ දෙවයන් වහන්සෙ කෙරෙහි
6. හිඤැ ලන්වහන්සෙට ලද සිරිදෙ
7. වී නම් දියණියන්ගෙ දරුමුනුබු
8. රු පරම්පරයෙන් නො පිරිහී ආ
9. විල්ගම්මුළ වැඩ වැසැ පියන් කො
10. ටැ දෙවනුවැ ගලතුරුමුළු මහලුක

11. මි කොට මුලිනිගුළු පිඩිත් පිරිවනැ
12. හත්ගමු පරපුරටි පැවැති මිරි
13. සිව්වි මවුග(ම)..... වහන්සෙ
14. ට මෙ සෙලෙහි ශිලා ලෙබ කරවා
15. දිවහලුණු..... රිලෙහි ය
16. හළ හා (මු)දුන්පත්තු සුභලැ වී
17. දෙයාළ පමුණු කොට දුන්තෙයි

### Transcript

- 1 Soḷosä rajayehi Galatu
- 2 rumuḷä Lämäni Mugalan māhal
- 3 lan vahansege yehelizvū
- 4 Lamkāpura Mahādevin Soḷo
- 5 sä devayan vahanse kerehi
- 6 hiṅdä unvahanseta lada Siride
- 7 vi nam diyaniyange dāru munuṃbu
- 8 ru paramparāyen nopirihī ā
- 9 Vilgammuḷa vādā vāsā piyan
- 10 tā devanuvā Galaturumuḷa mahalu ka
- 11 m koṭa Mulinugula Piḍit pirivana
- 12 Haṅggamu parapuraṭ pāvāti Miri
- 13 siviṭi Mivuga (ma) .... vahanse
- 14 ṭa me selehi sila-lekha karavā
- 15 Divahaluṇu .... rilehi ya
- 16 haḷa hā (Mu) dunpattu Suṅgulä vī
- 17 deyāḷa pamuṇu koṭa dunneyi

### Translation

A *yāla* (of land) at .... rila in Divahalūṇa and two *yālas* of paddy (land) at Suṅgula in Mūdunpattu have been donated as a *pamuṇu* (hereditary property), having inscribed (that fact) on this stone to His Lordship .... of Mivugama in Mirisiviṭa, which had passed on to successive generations of the Haṅgamu (Order);<sup>14</sup> and who having while residing at Vilgammuḷa practised meditation subsequently underwent higher ordination at Galaturu - mula; and who is of uninterrupted descent from the sons and grandsons of Siridevi, the daughter begotten by cohabitation with His Majesty of sixteen years' (reign) the senior monk who was attached to Galaturu - muḷa during the reign of His Majesty of sixteen years' (reign).

### Comments

(L. 1) *Soḷosā Rajayehi*: "During the reign of His Majesty of Sixteen (years' reign)." An expression very much similar to this occurs in the well known Vallipuram Gold Plate inscription of King Vasabha as "*Maharaja Vahayaha rajehi*." Paranavitana, who edited this inscription, has rendered it as "In the reign of the great king Vaha (ba)."<sup>15</sup>

(L. 1-2,9,10) *Galaturumuḷa* (Pali, *Selāntaramūḷa*, *Selāntarāyatana*, or *Selāntara Samūha*); *Vilgammula* (Pali, *Sarogāma-mūḷa*, *Sarogāma-samūha*): these were two of the eight Buddhist fraternities that came into being towards the end of the Anurādhapura period.

(L.9-10) *Vāda piyan-koṭa*: "Having practised meditation as a resident (monk)" - the word *vādavāsa* indicates "inhabiting" or "dwelling." The word *piyan* is equivalent to *padhan* in Pali, a house which is used for practising meditation is called a *padhāna-ghara* in Pali. The Mādirigiriya pillar inscription of Kassapa V of the tenth century has referred to such a place as *piyangala*; thus the word *piyan* is equivalent to the word *padhāna*, meaning meditation.<sup>16</sup>

(L. 14) *Silālekha karavā*: "Inscribed on stone" This expression is found in a number of inscriptions belonging to the Polonnaruwa period.<sup>17</sup>

### Notes

- 1 E. Z. Vol. VI, pp 126 - 132.
- 2 Ibid, p. 127.
- 3 See E. Z. Vol. VI Plate 27
- 4 E. Z. Vol. II, pp. 210, 213.

- 5 E. Z. Vol. V, pp 20, 21, 25.
- 6 E. Z. Vol. VI, p. 129.
- 7 E. Z. Vol. V. pp. 182, 184, 185, 187. A - II. 23 - 24, 44 - 45; C - II. 44 - 46.
- 8 E. Z. Vol. V, pp. 189, 190, 194.
- 9 E. Z. Vol. III, p. 87.
- 10 C. V. Vol. I, translated by W. Geiger, chapter 54 verse 56. The meanings of the two words *pirinivayan* and *tividam gato* are similar. Both words can be rendered as “deceased”.
- 11 C. V. Vol. I, chapter 57, verses 25 - 27; U. C. R. Vol, VIII. No. 2, p. 108.
- 12 C. V. Vol. I, chapter 54, verse 9.
- 13 C. V. Vol. I, chapter 54, verse 50.
- 14 **Haṅgamu parapurat pāvāti.** This expression occurs in a slightly different form as *parapurväsi*, which is rendered as “residing by succession” by Parānavitana, but that interpretation is not applicable to this context. *Haṅgamu parapurat pāvāti* would be more accurately translated as “belonging to successive generations of the Haṅgama Order.” (E. Z. Vol. V, p. 263).
- 15 E. Z. Vol. IV, pp. 232, 237.
- 16 E. Z. Vol. II, pp. 29,30,31
- 17 E. Z. Vol. II, pp. 107, line 12; 170, line 24; pp. 224, 225 line 25.