

**TELAKAṬĀHAGĀTHĀ  
IN A THAILAND INSCRIPTION OF 761 A. D.**

*New evidence on cultural relations between Sri Lanka and  
The Dvāravati Kingdom in Thailand*

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The present writer, being invited by the *Silapavathanatham, Bangkok*, conducted a research programme on cultural relations between Sri Lanka and Siam in ancient times. Accompanied by *Michael Wright* and *Sujit Wongthes* on a tour to *Prachinburi*, he had the opportunity to visit the ancient site of *Wat Sa Morakot* at *Dong Si Maha Bod*. To him there were three main attractions: the *Buddha Pāda lānchana*, the imprints of Lord Buddha's Feet, recently discovered at *wat Sa Morakot*, the Sri Maha Bodhi tree, which is believed to have grown from a sapling brought from Anuradhapura, and the inscription found at the temple complex of *Wat Sa Morokot* containing three delightful Pali stanzas in the *Vasantatilakā* metre.

With the first reading of these stanzas, the writer felt them very near and dear to him, so much so, that they were, as if lying hidden in some corner of his memory awaiting to respond. This instinct, kindled him to make an intimate study of the inscription; the results of which constitute this paper.

- I -

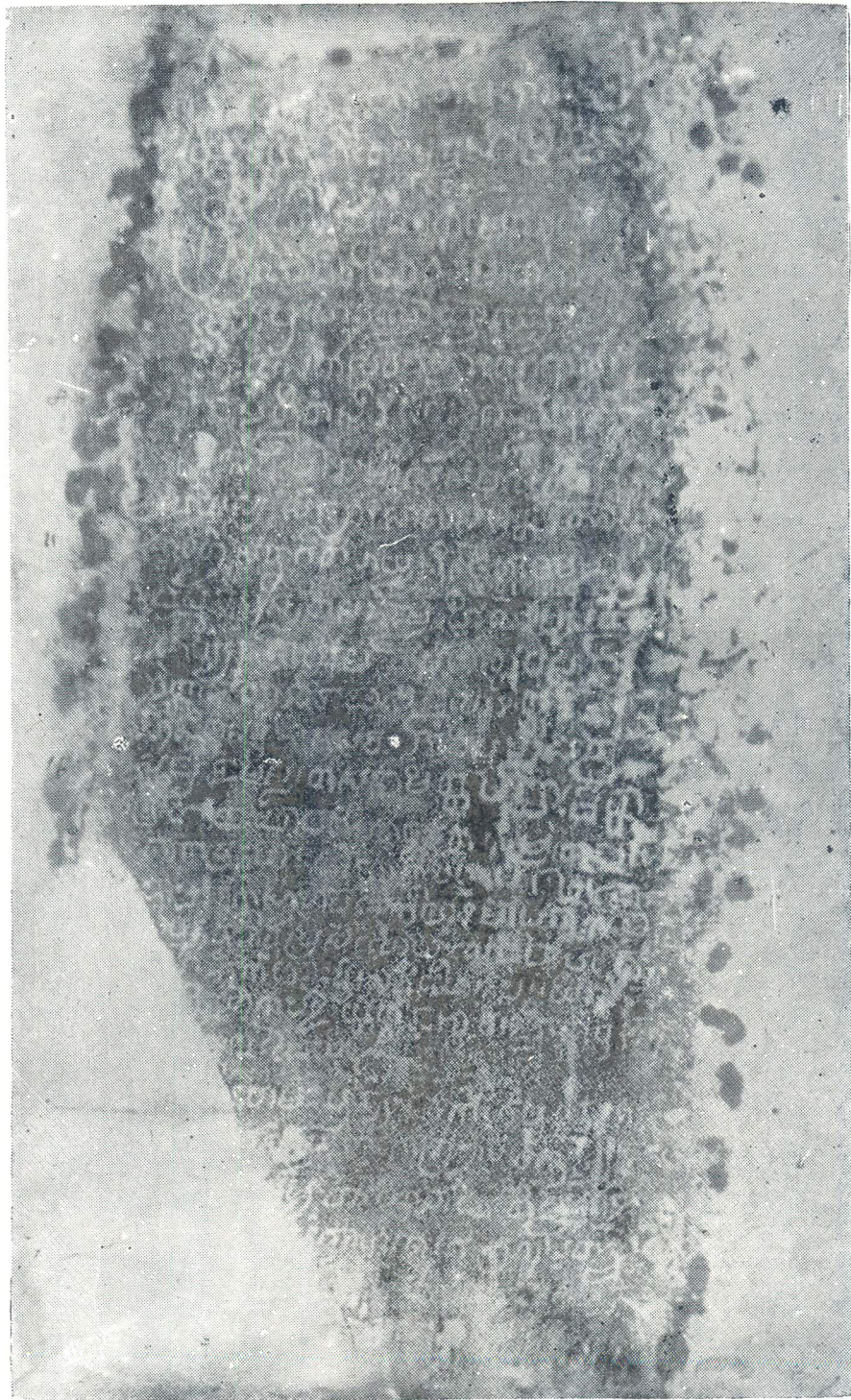
The *Noen Sā Buā* inscription, as it is called, is engraved on a slab of green sand stone, 177 c.m. high, 40 c.m. wide and 28 c.m. thick. It was first published in *Borankadi, Dong Si Mahaphot*, 1967, by the Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University. Next Prof. *Cham Thongkhamwan* of the Fine Art Department, published in the *Prachum Silacarik*. Again previous reading was revised by Col. *Ycm Praphrthong* and published in the *Carik Nai Pradesh Thai*, Vol. 1, in 1986. All the three publications are in Thai language.

The inscription contains 27 lines in so-called Pallava Grantha script with an average height of 2 c.m. The script is not far different from the Sinhala script of 7th and 8th centuries A. D. The first three lines and the last ten lines are in old Khmair language, while lines 4 to 16 contain three Pali stanzas in the *Vasantatilakā* metre. The first 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 stanzas spread in lines 4 to 16.

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 on both the stone and the plate, was successful in restoring the lines to almost what actually were on the stone.

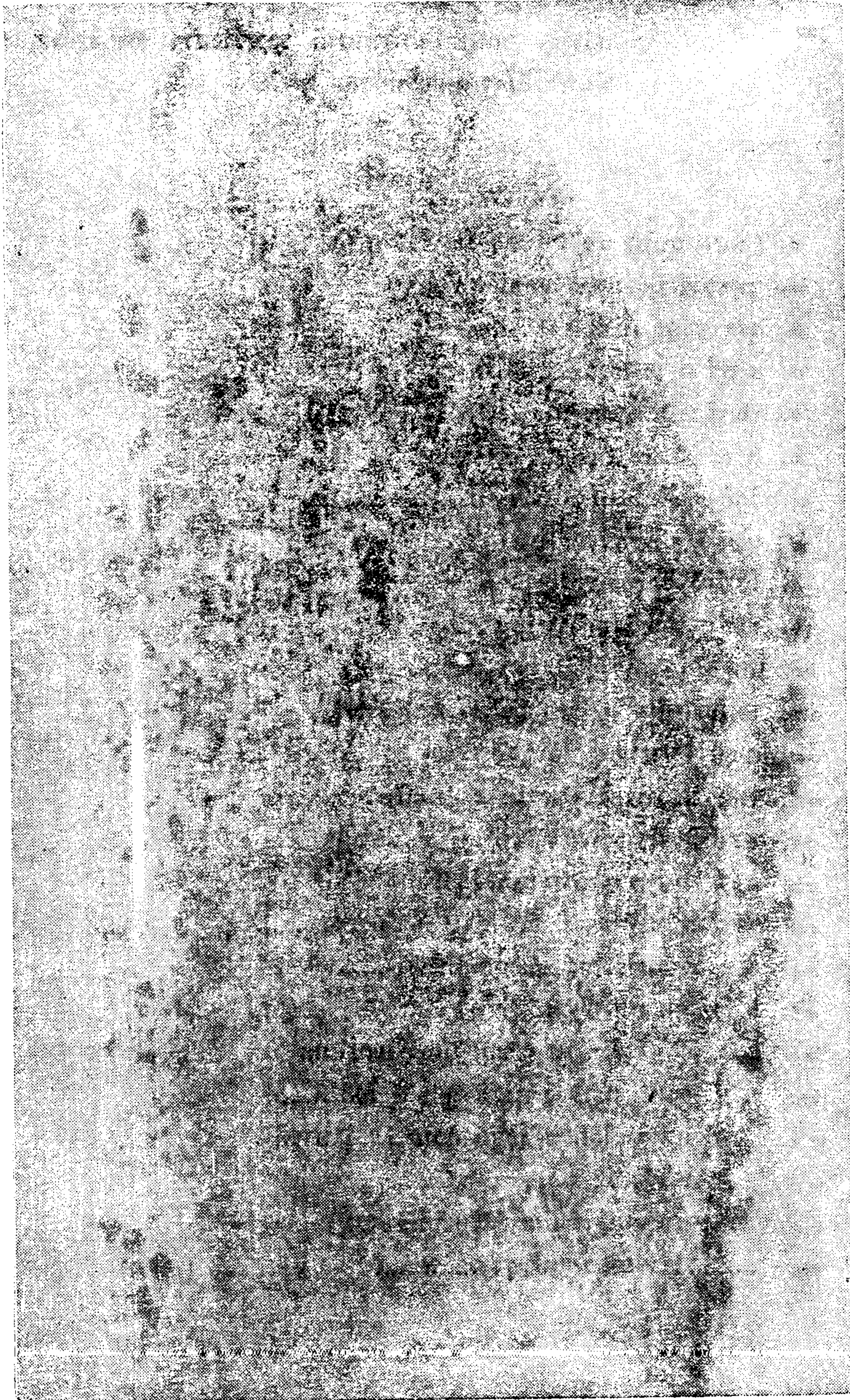
The plate, the Thai version of the reading and the final text adopted in The *Carik Nai Pradesh Thai*, the official publication<sup>1</sup> and their transcriptions are given below for easy comparison.

*Mendis Rohanadeera*



1.  
 2.  
 3.  
 4. (i) ວາສຍາວາກເອທິເທກ  
 5. ງາວິທິສາເອທິເທກ  
 6. ບຸກຍາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາ  
 7. ວິບຸລິສາວິທິສາວາວາວາ  
 8. ວິບຸລິສາວິທິສາວາວາວາ  
 9. ວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາ  
 10. ວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາ  
 11. ວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາ  
 12. ວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາ  
 13. ວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາ  
 14. ວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາ  
 15. ວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາ  
 16. ວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາວາ  
 17.  
 18.  
 19.  
 20.  
 21.  
 22.  
 23.  
 24.  
 25.  
 26.  
 27.

An eye copy of the relevant part of the inscription prepared by the author



๒๒๒ สระบัว ตอนที่เป็นภาษาบาลี ระหว่างบรรทัดที่ ๔-๑๖ รวม  
พิมพ์ไว้ในลำดับต่อไปด้วย

คำจารึก

๑. (๖๘๓ ฉนม) ฉลุ นกษัตริ มว โรจ เชษฐ
๒. วุฑฐวาร นุ(ราเตง) วุฑฐสิริ ปุริดิษจ
๓. วุระ ศาษุญ เนาะ ๑
๔. ๑ ศรี ๑ โย สววลอกโมหโต ก-
๕. รุณาธิวาโส โมขำ กโร (นิรม)-
๖. ถึ วรปุณจณโท โฉยโย ท(โม น)
๗. วิกุลิ สกถึ วิวุทธิ โลกุตตโร
๘. นมตถึ ตึ สิริสา มุเนนุทึ
๙. โสปานมอลมมถึ ติริณา-
๑๐. ลยสุส สงุสสารสากรสมุคฺตรณาย
๑๑. เสตุ สิววารตีรายยปี จชชตตเชวมม (กุกั)
๑๒. ชมมึ นมสุส ต สทา มุณินา ปสตุถึ
๑๓. เทยบิ ททา ปุยม ปิยาตุตปสนน-
๑๔. จิตฺดา ทาตุวา นรา ผลมุถึ รตุต (นั)
๑๕. สรานุติ ถึ สววทา ทสวเลนปี สุปปสตุถึ
๑๖. สงุณิ นมสุส ต สทา มิตฺตปุณฺณเขตฺติ
๑๗. วุระ โค เนะ โฝง ตึ อญ ชวน ค กมฺรเตง .....
๑๘. .. ค วุระบาท โนรู อุนาถุค ปญฺญา .....
๑๙. .. อุนาถุค สีลาปญฺญาปปริชา .....
๒๐. .... วุ อัจติ ปุริส (ณเยด) เลง บาป เนะ
๒๑. .... อุนาถ เนาะ วุ อัจติ โยก บ โย .....
๒๒. .. (วุ อัจติ) โยก บ โยยด กวน .... วุ อัจติ
๒๓. .... ย ไทย .....
๒๔. .... ดปะ บุนุยะ เนะ (กิริยานุญขารมึ)
๒๕. .... โคตุรกุลปาทว .....

วิเคราะห์คำจารึก

๑๕๖

เฉพาะตอนที่เป็นภาษาบาลีระหว่างบรรทัดที่ ๔-๑๖

โย สพุพโลกมหิโต	กรุณาธิวาโส
โมกข์ กโรสี อมล	วรูปุณณจนุโท
เนยโยทโยนวิกุล	สกล วิพุทุโธ
โลกุตตโร นมถ ต	สิรสา มุเนนุท ๗
โสปาณมาลมมต	ตริณาลยสส
สัสสารสาคร สมุตตรณาย เสตุ	
สมโพธิตรมปีจุดตรเขมมกุก	
ธมม นมสสถ สทา มุณินา ปสภูช ๗	
เทยย ททนุคยวมมียตตปสมนจิตตา	
ทตวา นรา ผลมุล รตน สรนุติ	
ต สพุพทา ทสพเลนมี สุปสภูช	
สงม นมสสถ สทา มิตปุณณเขตต ๗	

คำแปล

พระพุทธเจ้าพระองค์ใด ทรงเป็นผู้ที่ชาวโลกทั้งปวงเทอดทูนแล้ว ทรงมีพระกรุณาเป็นธรรมอยู่ประจำพระหทัย ทรงกระทำความรอดพ้นให้ไม่มีมลทิน ทรงเป็นคุณพระจันทร์เต็มดวงที่ประเสริฐ ทรงทราบแจ้งชัดถึงความเกี่ยวพันต่าง ๆ ทั้งยังทั้งหย่อนของบุคคล ที่พระองค์ควรทรงแนะนำทั้งสิ้น ทรงเป็นผู้ข้ามพ้นโลกได้ เชิญท่านทั้งหลาย มีมเหศวรนามไว้ว่าพระพุทธเจ้าพระองค์นั้นผู้เป็นพระจอมมุณีเทอญ

เชิญ ทนทั้งหลาย นมัสการพระธรรมที่พระมุณีตรัสสรรเสริญไว้ว่า เป็นระเบียบมันได้ สำหรับทอดข้ามอาศัยไปสู่พระอมลธรรมเป็นสะพานเพื่อการเดินข้ามไปสะดวก จ้ะ หวังน้ำ คือสังสารวัฏ อีกทั้งยังเป็นมรรคอันเกษม ที่ไต่ขึ้นตั้งแห่งพระสัมโพธิญาณ ทุกเมื่อเทอญ

คนที่ หลายมัจฉิตเลื่อมใสแล้วในความที่พระสงฆ์สืบวงศ์จากพระอรหันต์ ผู้ไม่มีความขี้เกียจของเรา พวกนั้นถวายสิ่งที่ควรถวาย ครั้นถวายแล้วต่างระลึกถึงพระรัตนันเป็นต้นเดิมแห่งผล (พระพุทธรัตนะ พระธรรมรัตนะ) เชิญท่านทั้งหลายนมัสการ

The reading proposed by *Carik Nai pradesh Thai*, line by line

4. Sri yo sabbalokamahito ka -
5. ruṇādhivāso / mokkhāṃ karo (nirama) -
6. laṃ varapuṇacanda / ñeyyo da (mo na) -
7. vikulaṃ sakalaṃ vibuddho / lokuttaro
8. namatthi taṃ sirasā munendaṃ //
9. sopāṇamālamamalaṃ tiraṇā -
10. layassa / saṃsārasāgarasamuttaraṇāya
11. setuṃ / saṃbbāratīrāyyapi cājattakhemama (ggaṃ) /
12. Dhammaṃ namassta sadā muninā pasatthaṃ //
13. deyyam dadāpyamapiyāttapasanna -
14. citta / dātvā narā phalamulaṃ ratta(naṃ)
15. saranti / taṃ sabbadā dasabalenapi suppasatthaṃ /
16. sanghaṃ namassata sadā mittapuññakhettaṃ //

The Final text.

Yo sabbalokamahito - karuṇādhivāso  
*Mokkhaṃ karosi amalaṃ* - vara puṇṇa cando  
*Ñeyyo damo navikulaṃ* - sakalaṃ vibuddho  
 Lokuttaro namatha taṃ - sirasā munendaṃ  
  
 Sopāṇa māla mamalaṃ - *ti raṇā* layassa  
 Saṃsārasāgara samuttaraṇāya setuṃ  
*Sambodha tiramapicuttara khemamaggaṃ*  
 Dhammaṃ namassatha sadā muninā pasatthaṃ  
  
 Deyyam dadantyamapi yattha pasanna citta  
 datva narā *phalamulaṃ ratanaṃ saranti*,  
 Taṃ sabbadā dasabalenapi suppasatthaṃ  
 Sanghaṃ namassatha sadāmita puññakhettaṃ

The words in italics are the main concerns of this writer and they will be examined in consultation with the plate, and the reading adopted by the *Carik* <sup>2</sup>

*mokkhaṃ karosi amalaṃ* line 1, verse 1

This does not appear to be grammatical in Pāli, *Karosi* being second person present tense singular verb, requires a corresponding subject like *maṃ*, which is impossible in the context. *mokkhaṃkaro* <sup>3</sup> is clear on the plate, but the next three aksaras are not clear at all, <sup>4</sup> though *niramalaṃ* has been suggested, and corrected as *si ama*. <sup>5</sup> If *si* is replaced with *ti* to make *karoti*, which is grammatically correct with *yo*, then *mokkhaṃ Karoti amalaṃ* does make sense, but in the relevant space on the plate, it is impossible to discern *a* and the aksara looks more like *vi*, and then it reads as *mokkhaṃ karoti vimalaṃ*, yet *ti, ma*, aksaras are not free from doubt.



*varapunn̄a cando*, line 1, verse 1

This seems to be correctly read and restored but *vara pun̄a cando* without a qualifying adjective does not yield a complete sense and also does demonstrate poor poetry. Since the first three aksaras of line 6 on the plate are clearly seen as *laṃ, va, ra*, and if *va* can be read as *ba*, then we can make *lambara* and read together with two preceding aksaras *vima*, it makes *vimalambara*, which yet is open to doubt. Any way let us tentatively restore the second line as *mokkham̄karo su vimalambara pun̄a cando*.

*tiraṇālayassa*, line 1, verse 2

*tira ṇālayassa* looks clumsy and meaningless, *tira ṇālaya* can be considered a compound with *tira ṇa* and *ālaya* as the two components, but the first word *tiraṇa* is uncommon in Pali. Unfortunately on the plate too though *ti* and *layassa* are clear, the two aksaras in between are very difficult to decipher. The space demands one short and one long syllable — ◡, to fit in to the *Vasanta tilaka* metre eg; *ti — ◡ layassa*. If the two syllables can be identified as *dasā*, then it makes *tidasālayassa*; when arranged the line as *sopā ṇamālamamalcṃ tidasālayassa*, it yields the meaning, *(the Dhamma) a stainless flight of steps to the abode of the heaven of Tidasa (tāvatiṃsa)*

*sambodhi tīramapicuttara khemamaggam̄*, line 3, verse 2

The whole line except for the last word *khemamaggam* looks like a riddle, and too far remote from the plate. Some aksaras which are very clear on the plate have to be replaced or totally rejected, if the line is to be read as proposed. For example *yya* has to be replaced with *ma* which is of an entirely different shape and *jja* has to be totally rejected if *cajjatta* is to be rendered as *cuttara*.

As such the whole line deserves to be read and interpreted afresh. The line starts with the third aksara of the eleventh line on the plate. The third and fourth are clearly visible as *sabā*. The next aksara, in no way can be recognized as *ra* or *dha*. The aksara is of the shape ◡ which easily can be identified as *ga*, and the next *ti* is clear. Thus we can form the word *sabbāga. ī. sabba + aga. ī*. The aksara next to *ī* has been read as *ra*, but a sharply focussed eye on the plate, would catch it as ◡ which can then be identified as *bha*; the next is very clear and correctly read as *yya*, thus making *sabbāga. ī bhayya*, meaning "all fears resulting from evil". The next aksara to *yya* is identified as *pi*, but as it appears on the plate there is no opening at the neck and the upper part of the aksara is also not broad enough to be identified as *pi*. As such it can be easily recognized as *vi*. The aksara next though read as *ca*, also can be *va*, as well. The conjunct aksara next has been recognized as *jja*, but with the faint mark over the upper *ja*, it may be

read as *ji*, and with the next conjoint *ita* the word forms itself *vivajjitta*. The last two words *Khema maggaṃ* are clear and correctly rendered. Thus we get the line as *sabbāga.ī bhayya vivajjitta khema maggaṃ*, "the path of safety devoid of fears of all evils."

*datvā narā phalamulaṃ ratanaṃ saranti*, line 2, vers 3.

*Phalamulaṃ* is uncommon in textual Pali language. *Saranti* appears to be incompatible in the context, where a close examination of the plate will help recognize the first two aksaras as *labha* making the word *labhanti*;

**Elongation of vowels and duplication of consonants a; peculiar phenomenon.**

As evident on the plate there are some vowels elongated without reasons such as to keep pace with the metre, as for example, *yāttha*, in line 13; *dātvā*, in line 14. Also at some places consonants are duplicated unnecessarily; for example *bhayya* and *vivajjitta* in line 11, *rattanaṃ* in line 14. and *mitta* in line 16.

How can we explain this phenomenon? Could it be due to the peculiar way of Pali pronunciation adopted by the ancient people of Dvāravati? If so, it can be surmised that the scribe executed his engraving while somebody was reciting the stanzas, and that he incised aksaras as he heard them.

- II -

After the preliminary survey outlined above, one fine evening, when the writer was reciting these stanzas aloud, while relaxing alone, it suddenly dawned on him that he had read some similar stanzas in the *Telakatahagāthā* which he had committed to memory when reading for his first Degree. Being kindled with this, he rushed to the library and was surprised to note that these stanzas form part of the opening verses of the *Telakatahagāthā*, in which they run as follows: <sup>6</sup>

### TELAKATAHAGĀTHĀ

#### Ratanattayaṃ

1. Lankissaro jayatu vāraṇarājagāmi  
Bhogindabhogarucirāyatapaṇḍabāhu  
Sādhūpacāranirato guṇasannivāso  
Dhammeṭhito vigatakodhamadāvalepo.
2. Yo sabbalokamahito karuṇādhivāso  
Mokkhākarō ravikulambara puṇṇacando  
Ñeyyodadhiṃ suvipulaṃ sakalaṃ vibuddho  
Lokuttamaṃ namatha taṃ sirasā munindaṃ

3. Sopāṇamālamamalaṃ tidasālayassa  
Saṃsārasāgarasamuttaraṇāya setuṃ  
Sabbāgatībhayavivajjitakhemamaggaṃ  
Dhammaṃ namassatha sadā muninā paṇītaṃ.
4. Deyyaṃ tadappamapi yattha pasanna cittā  
Datvā narā phalamulārataraṃ labhante  
Taṃ sabbadā dasabalenapi suppasatthaṃ  
Sanghaṃ namassatha sadāmitapuññakhettaṃ
5. Tejobalena mahatā ratanattayassa  
Lokattayaṃ samadhiḡacchati yena mokkhaṃ  
Rakkhā na ca'tthi ca samā ratanattayassa  
Tasmā sadā bhajatha taṃ ratanattayaṃ bho!

In comparison, it is clear that the three stanzas appearing in the *Noen Sā Buā* inscription are identical with opening stanzas 2, 3 and 4 of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*. Before discussing the contents and the authenticity of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*, let us attempt to restore the inscription, relying faithfully on the akṣaras appearing on the plate, refining the reading given in the *carik* and the rendering suggested above by the author and, comparing them with the stanzas of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*.

Let us examine whether the reading and the editing can be still improved with the help of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*:

- Line 4, in *mohito*, *mo* aksara is correctly read and editing as *mahito* is justified.
- Line 5, in *moklām̄karo* a dot like mark over the akṣara *kh* is not seen on the plate, and the rest *mokhākaro* is correctly read and has to be edited as *mokkhākaro*. The last three aksaras read as *nirama* and edited as *si ama* by the editor of *Carik* and *tivima* by us, demand further revision in the light of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*. As noted above these three aksaras are almost totally defaced, but with the scarcely visible signs in the relevant space *raviku* as given in the *Tela* can be easily accommodated, in the context of the plate.
- Line 6, The first two syllables can be read as *lamba* and read together with the last three aksaras of line 5 it makes *ravikulambara* as given in *Tela*. *puṇacando* reading is correct and editing it as *puṇacando* is justified.  
*Ñoyyo* reading is correct and should be edited as *ñeyyo*, the last two aksaras read as *mo na* need revision. If one were to decipher more carefully one will discover the aksara *dhim*, *su*, which then will tally with *ñeyyodadhim* in the *Tela*, which means "the ocean of what should be understood."

Line 7, The second aksara is read as *ku*, and taken together with two aksaras on either side it makes *vikulaṃ*, but in the *Tela* we get the word *suvipulam*: with *su* as has been suggested to be the last aksara of line 6. On the plate the remnants of the second aksara can easily make *pu* instead of *ku*, thus tallying with *suvipulaṃ* in the *Tela*.

The last aksara is read as *ro*, but looked at more carefully, *ma* with a dot over it, comes out clearly making the word *lokuttamaṃ* exactly as it appears in the *Tela*.

Line 8, *namatthi* is faithful to the plate and editing as *namatha* is desirable. *ne* in *munendaṃ* is correctly read, but may be edited as *munindaṃ*, since *muni* + *indaṃ* should combine as *munindaṃ*, which is the word in the *Tela*.

Line 9, The last two aksaras already suggested above as *dasā* tallies with the *Tela*.

Line 11, The revised reading adopted above as *sabbāgatī bhayya vivajjittakhemamaggcṃ* is confirmed by the *Tela* and *bhayya, vivajjita* may be edited as *bhaya, vivajjita*.

Line 12, Both *na* in *munina* on the plate are cerebral, but editing it as dental is justified and is in accordance with the *Tela*. The last word appearing on the plate is *pasatthaṃ*; but the *Tela* has it as *paṇītaṃ*, to mean 'narrated' which appears to be the most appropriate in the context, "*muninā paṇītaṃ dhammaṃ*." "the Dhamma narrated by the sage." On the other hand there is *suppasatthaṃ* in line 15, used in the same sense as *pasatthaṃ* on the plate; and this amounts to the fault of using repetition, *punaruttadosa*, which in no way can be attributed to the author of the *Tela*, especially considering his erudition and mastery of versification, as amply demonstrated in his work. In the circumstances *paṇītaṃ* appears to be the ideal in the context. But the word *pasattham* is quite clear on the plate and cannot be rejected. What could be surmised is that the author of the inscription may have made a slip in his memory in using the word *pasattham* in place of *paṇītam*. Yet to be more fair by the author of the inscription, Buddhasiri, we may adopt *pasatthaṃ*, what is actually on the stone.

Line 13, *dadāpyamapi*, is almost accurate to what is on the plate, although it slightly differs from *tadappamapi*, of the *Tela*; *da* instead of *ta* and *pya* for *ppa* may be attributed to faulty hearing of the engraver, as such *tadappamapi, taṃ + appaṃ + api, deyyaṃ* "that even a little that should be offered" may be adopted instead of *dadanti + yaṃ + api* as has been edited. Editing of *yāttha* as *yattha* is desirable.

Line 14, *dātvā*, as read and *datvā* as edited are both acceptable. The last seven aksaras have been read and adopted as *phalamulāṅ ratanam*; In the *Tela* this phrase appears as *phalamulāṅ rataram*, *phalam + ulāṅ rataram* “greater benefit”, a meaning well appropriate in the context. When we look at the plate, there is a vague dot over *la* which cannot be taken seriously. On the other hand, a vertical stroke parallel to the right arm of *la*, is seen, which can not be ignored. When *la* is read with the parallel vertical stroke, it becomes *lā*, The next two aksaras have been correctly read as *ratta*, and the final aksara, though read as *nam*, can also be recognized as *ram*. Thus we get *phalamulāṅ rattaram* which, when edited as *phalamulāṅ rataram*, is what appears in the *Tela*. Now we have *deyyam tadappamapi yattha pasannacittā, datvā narā phalam ulāṅ rataram labhanti*, meaning “to whom, having offered even that little that should be offered, human beings obtain very great benefit,” exactly what is in the *Tela*.

Line 15, The first four aksaras which have been read as *saranti* are corrected above as *labhanti*.

In the light of the above examination we can now produce the final text as it appears on the stone slab.

4. sri, yo sabba lokamohito ka -
5. karuṇādhivāso / mokkhāro (raviku) -
6. lambara puṇa cando / ñoyyoda (dhiṃ su) -
7. vi (pu) lam sakalam vibuddho / lokuttamam
8. namatthi tam sirasā munindam //
9. sopānamālamamalam ti (dasā)
10. layassa / saṃsāra sāgara samuttaraṇāya
11. setum / sabbāgatī bhayya vivajjita khema maggam /
12. dhammam namassata sadā munīna pasattham //
13. deyyam dadapyamapi yāthapasanna
14. cittā / dātvā narā phalamulāṅ rattaram
15. labhanti / tam sabbadā dasa balenapi suppasattham /
16. sangham namassata sadā mitta puṇṇa khettaṃ /

#### final version

1. Yo sabbalokamahito karuṇādhivāso  
Mokkhāro ravikulambara puṇṇa cando  
Ñeyyodadhiṃ suvipulam sakalam vibuddho  
Lokuttamam namatha tam sirasā munindam
2. Sopānamālamamalam tidasālayassa  
Saṃsārasāgara samuttaraṇāya setum  
Subbāgatī bhaya vivajjita khema maggam  
Dhammam namassatha sadā munīna pasattham<sup>6</sup>

3. Deyyaṃ tadappamapi yattha pasanna cittā  
 Datvā narā phalamulārataraṃ labhanti  
 Taṃ sabbadā dasabalenapi suppasatthaṃ  
 Sanghaṃ namassatha sadāmita puññakhettaṃ

**Translation <sup>7</sup>**

1. Pay homage, with (bowing) head, to that great Sage; the highest of the world revered by the entire 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.
2. Pay homage, always, to the Doctrine, preached by the Sage; (the Doctrine) - which is the stainless flight of steps to the abode of Tidasā heaven (tāvatiṃsa); the bridge to cross the ocean of Saṃsāra, and which is the path of safety devoid of fears of all evil.
3. Pay homage, always, to the Community - (the Community) - which is an unmeasurable field of merit, to which, 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.

The rendering of the *Noen Sā Buā* inscription in the way suggested above and comparing it with the three stanzas in the *Tela* which are identical to the text on the plate, one is compelled to deduce that the Text of the inscription has been borrowed from the opening of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*.

- III -

We now propose to deal with the question of the authorship and authenticity of the *Telakatahagāthā*. In doing so we would firstly quote Professor G. P. Malalasekera, the renowned author of the *Pali Literature of Ceylon*.

“The *Telakaṭāhagāthā* - the stanzas of oil cauldron, is a delightful Pali poem of 100 stanzas which ..... purport to be the religious exhortations of a great Elder named Kalyāṇa Thera, who was condemned to be cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, on suspicion of his having been accessory to an intrigue with the Queen Consort of King Kālaṇi Tissa, who reigned at Kālaṇiya (306-207 B.C.). The story is related in brief in the 22nd chapter of the *Mahāvamsa*. The *Rasa-vāhini*, written by Vedeha in the first half of the thirteenth century, gives us greater details of the story. There we are informed that the King's attendants placed a cauldron of oil on the hearth and, when the oil was boiling, hurled the Thera into it. The Thera at that instant attained vipassanā, and, becoming an Arahat, rose up in the boiling oil and remained unhurt, “like a royal hamsa in a emerald vase” and in that position reciting a hundred

stanzas, looked into the past to ascertain of what sin this was the result. He found that once upon a time when he was a shepherd, he cast a fly in boiling milk, and this was the punishment for his former misdeed. He then expired, and the king had his body cast into the sea. A vihara seems to have been built later on the spot where the Thera was put to death, for, the *Sālahi isandesa*, written in 1451 A. D., refers to it as still existing.

“The decorated hall, which in their zeal  
The merit - seeking people built upon  
The spot where stood the cauldron of hot oil  
Into which King Kālaṅgi-Tissa threw  
The guiltless sage, a mere suspect of crime”

Neither the author of our version nor his date is known. There is no doubt, however, that he was a member of the Order, well versed in the Pitakas and commentarial literature.

The stanzas show great depth of religious and metaphysical learning. The verses embody in them the fundamental tenets of Buddhism and are an earnest exhortation to men to lead the good life. They open with a blessing upon the king, apt beginning for the utterances of a holy man before his murderer.”<sup>8</sup>

The author or the date of the composition of the *Tela* is not mentioned in the work. Malalasekara assigns the poem to either the tenth or the early part of the eleventh century A. D., but it is only a conjecture not based on any concrete evidence. Now we see that stanzas 2, 3, 4, of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* have been quoted in the *Sā Buā inscription* of 761 A.D. As such the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* should have been available in Prachinburi before 761 A.D., which leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the *Telakaṭāhagāthā* predates the inscription.

If we accept that the actual poem was recited by the Arahat himself as given in the chronicles, then the date would be some where around 250 B.C.

If that is the case then the poem would have been brought down through oral tradition to be committed to writing in the vaṭṭagāmiṇi Athaya period (89-77 B.C.) like the *Tripitaka*, *Heṭṭa aruva*, the commentaries in original Sinhala and history of the Sāsara. The written *Telakaṭāhagāthā* then would have been refined and perhaps recomposed in Pali in the 5th century A. D. in the same manner as the Sinhala commentaries mentioned above were refined and translated in to Pali by the learned Acariyas like Buddhaghosha, and also in the same way as the *Mahavamsa* came to its final form in the hand of Mahanama Thera in 5th century. Thus the 5th century A. D. can be the latest date of the *Telakaṭāhagāthā*.

However the most important questions that arise from our study are how, when and through whom this Sri Lankan text reached Prachinburi, possibly the dvāra, the gate way to the Dvāravati kingdom. Could it be that the knowledge of *Telakaṭāhagāthā* was brought by Buddhasiri himself, who was the author of the inscription? If so was he a Sri Lankan monk or a Dvāravati monk who had been in Sri Lanka before 761 A. D.? Whatever it may be in the light of this new evidence it can now be established that the Sri Lankan Theravada literature has found its way to south-east Asia, even before 8th century A. D. through Dvāravati, and not in the eleventh century through Ramaññadesa as has been generally believed.<sup>9</sup>

Since the *Noen Sā Buā inscription* stands out as a glaring testimony to cultural contact between Sri Lanka and Dvāravati kingdom, the Bodhi tree after which the area was known as Dong Si Maha Bod, also could have some connection with Sri Lanka. It is noteworthy that the legend connected with Si Maha Bod, has it, that it was brought from Anuradhapura. The use of the term Si Maha Bod - supports this belief, for the sacred Bodhi tree at Anuradhapura has usually been referred to in literature throughout the period as Sri Maha Bodhi, Siri Mā Bo, or Mahā Bodi. It is also possible that Buddhasiri, the author of the inscription, planted Sri Maha Bodhi having brought it from Sri Lanka, as had been the general habit of pilgrims from that region to Lanka, bringing, on their return, sacred objects such as corporal relics of the Buddha, replicas of the Foot print on Sumana-kūta and saplings of the Sri Maha Bodhi at Anuradhapura.<sup>10</sup> If so, both the inscription and the Si Maha Bodhi can have a common birth certificate, with the father as Bhikkhu Buddhasiri, place as Dong Si Maha Bod, Prachinburi and the date as 761 A. D. On the other hand it is also not impossible that the *Buddha pāda lāchana* discovered in Februari, 1986 at the same site at *wat Sa Morakot, Dong Si Maha Bod* - too would have been connected with this episode. It should be noted that in line 26. of the *Noen Sā Buā inscription*, there is a phrase as "*Phra Pāda Pratistha*" which means, 'established the Foot print'. The question is who established it? Was it Buddhasiri, the author of the inscription, himself, or some one else related to him?

If so the date of the establishment of the *Buddhapāda* too would be the same as that of the inscription and the *Si Maha Bod*. This will then point again to the influence of the Foot print worship prevalent in Sri Lanka in the Anuradhapura period, as has been remarked by Professor H. S. H. Prince Subhadradis Diskul, in his article "*A pair of Lord Buddha's Foot prints at Sa Morakot, Dong Si Maha Pho, Prachinburi.*"<sup>11</sup>

Thus the three monuments; the *Noen Sa Bua inscription*, *Si Maha Bo*, and the *Buddhapada* at *wat Sa Morakot* can be considered as concrete evidence on close cultural contact between Sri Lanka and the Dvaravati Kingdom as early as the eighth century A. D.



## Notes

1. *Carik Nai Pradesh Thai*, vol, 1,2529, B.E., the plate, p. 180; reading, p. 182, text, p. 185;  
*Silpavathonatham*, (Art & Culture), Vol. 7, No. 9, July, 1986, plate p. 102, text, p. 105.
2. Carik p. 182
3. Read as *mokhāṅkaro*, on p. 182, *Carik*.
4. The last three aksaras of line 5 on the plate, *Carik*, p. 180.
5. op. cit. pp. 182, 183.
6. The complete poem edited by Mudliar, Edmond R. Goonaratne with an introduction, appears in the *Journal of The Pali Text Society*, 1884, pp. 49 - 68.
7. The author is indebted to Dr. L. P. N. Perera, Professor of Pali, the present Vice - Chancellor of Sri Jayavardhanapura University, Sri Lanka, for assistance in this translation.
8. Malalasekara, G. P.; *The Pali Literature of Ceylon*, 1958 p. 162-163
9. ....Pagan contacts with Ceylon begin with Anuruddha (fl.c. 1044-1077); and it was only at, or after the end of his reign that complete copies of the Sinhalese Tipitaka began to reach Pagan.....G. A. Luce & Tin Htway, *A fifteenth century inscription and library at Pagan, Burma, The Malalasekare Felicitation Volume*, ed. by O. H. de S. Wijesekare, 1976, Colombo, p. 204.
10. For example Mahasami Sri Sraddha Raja Culamuni, in mid fourteenth century A. D. ".....brought (a sapling) from the Sri Maha Bodhi of the city of Sinhales...and planted it." Inscription 2, *Prachum Silacarik*. (line, 54)
11. *Muang Boran Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 3. 1986, p. 31. Also read "The worship of Buddhapāda and Buddhapada Lānchana in ancient Sri Lanka and their conceptual difference." Mendis Rohanadeera, paper read at the Second South Asian Archaeological Congress held in Colombo Sri Lanka 1 - 10 December 1987.